

THE HOWARD KARAGHEUSIAN COMMEMORATIVE CORPORATION

**75 YEARS  
OF  
SERVICE**

**NEW YORK  
1996**



**MIHRAN KARAGHEUSIAN**  
Founder and President (1921–1933)



LEILA KARAGHEUSIAN  
Founder and President (since 1933)

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**1996**

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\* \* \*

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***Seated—left to right: Mr. Richard J. Varadian, Dr. Vartan Ghugasian, Dr. Pergrouhi Svajian, Miss Leila Karagheusian, Harry A. Dorian, Esq.***

***Standing—left to right: Miss Irma der Stepanian, Dr. Bedros Yavru-Sakuk, Dr. Louis M. Najarian, Dr. Rita Zorian, Mr. Michael Haratunian, Dr. Walter C. Bandazian. Missing from the photo: Mr. Edward Janjigian.***

## FOREWORD

**T**he seventy-fifth anniversary of the Howard Karagheusian Commemorative Corporation offers the opportunity to present to our people a review of its social, medical, and educational services in the Middle East, Europe, and Armenia.

The picture of its vast field of service is given in this booklet through its history, narrated briefly by the Foundation's Directors, and as exemplified by the statistics of one year (1995). What is less tangible, yet more significant, is its mode of operation and its spirit.

The Karagheusian family has been the epitome of quiet and non-publicity seeking service. The establishment of the Foundation was a distinct expression of noble human kindness to turn a misfortune—the loss of an adolescent son—into goodness through service, such as the gathering of orphans and giving them a “Home.”

This noble legacy was firmly upheld in its formative years and thereafter by Mr. and Mrs. Noubar Tavitian in their direction of the Foundation's activities in different fields and in every country where the Foundation spread its service.

After Mr. and Mrs. Mihran Karagheusian, their daughter, Miss Leila Karagheusian undertook the chief responsibility in the nineteen thirties due to Mr. Karagheusian's business demands. She proved to be the embodiment of modest, quiet, sacrificing, and attentive efforts, always mindful of the needs of her people. She worked without discrimination, with highly demanding standards, which became the hallmark of her governing bodies and her staff. The centers of the Foundation became exemplary on an international level and served as centers for training in social work. They became models and recognized by governments as such.

Thus, in a short period of time, the Karagheusian Foundation widened its enterprise for orphans, establishing preventive and treatment centers for health and nutritional provisions for needy children. It established residences in Athens, Syria, and Lebanon; organized summer and evening classes in language, typing, home economics, dressmaking,

and art for children who had not been able to complete school. These courses yielded double benefits of employment and improvement of living standards of poverty stricken families. Dr. Karam Harfouche, Professor of Medicine at the American University of Beirut during the fifties wrote that the social life and health of the heavily populated lower class of Bourj Hamoud indicated a marked improvement in the quality of the life of the Armenians compared to their non-Armenian counterparts due to the services of the Karagheusian Foundation. Here it must be noted as an aside, that the Foundation has always welcomed and assisted needy non-Armenians as well as Armenians.

Today, Miss Leila Karagheusian, at an advanced age, derives a deep satisfaction from the Foundation's efforts in a new field of service. That new field is Armenia, where four dental clinics, in four different cities, including one in Artsakh, operate with state of the art equipment and with devoted and capable staff members providing needed dental care for 5-15 year old Armenian youngsters. The demand for care at the clinics is so great that it takes several months to obtain an appointment. The clinics are also utilized for in-service training of local dentists in Armenia.

Leila Karagheusian, with the grace of her more than nine decades of life, brings her attentive presence to the administrative work and meetings of the Foundation's governing bodies, inspiring alert, enthusiastic, and caring service, without publicity. It was in this vein that characteristically she did not accede to requests for public observances of the seventy-fifth anniversary of her Foundation.

We offer this booklet, on the occasion of the seventy-fifth anniversary of the Howard Karagheusian Commemorative Corporation, as a memorial to the Karagheusian Family and the Karagheusian Foundation, with sincere pride, pleasure and appreciation, and to provide the Armenian people with a glimpse of what they may expect from the Howard Karagheusian Commemorative Corporation in the decades ahead.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS  
HOWARD KARAGHEUSIAN  
COMMEMORATIVE CORPORATION

1996





աուրբոտ Գարակեօգեան Յիշատակի Հիմնարկին եօթանասունհինգամեակը բա-  
րեպատեմ աոիթը կ'ընծայէ մեր ժողովուրդին ներկայացնելու անոր ընկերային,  
առողջապահական և կրթական ծառայութիւնը Միջին Արևելքի, Եւրոպայի և  
Հայաստանի մէջ:

Իր ընդարձակ ծառայութեան պատկերը այս գրքոյկին մէջ կը պարզուի անոր անցեալի և  
ներկայի պատմականով՝ հակիրճ կերպով նկարագրուած Հիմնարկի տնօրէններուն կողմէ, իբր  
օրինակ ծառայող մէկ տարուան (1995) վիճակագրութեան մը յարակցութեամբ: Նուազ  
մատչելի և սակայն յոյժ կարևոր հանգամանքը՝ Հիմնարկին գործելու ձևն ու ոգին են:

Գարակեօգեան գերդաստանը բիրեղացումը եղած է լուռ ծառայութեան: Հիմնարկին  
հաստատումը խօսուն արտայայտութիւնն է մարդկային ազնիւ բարոյական տեսիլքին—  
դժբախտութիւն մը՝ պատանի զաւկի մը կորուստը, վերածել ծառայութեան բարիքի, հաւաքել  
որբեր ու անոնց տալ ՏՈՒՆ:

Այս վեմ ժառանգը ամփոք պահուեցաւ Տէր և Տկն. Նուպար Դաւիթեաններու տնօրէնու-  
թեամբ Հիմնարկի գործունէութեան զանազան մարզերուն մէջ և ամէն երկրի, ուր Հիմնարկը  
տարածեց իր բարիքը՝ իր կազմաւորման շրջանին թէ այնուհետև:

Տէր և Տկն. Միհրան Գարակեօգեաններէն ետք, երբ իրենց դուստրը՝ Օր. Լիլա Գա-  
րակեօգեան, ստանձնեց գլխաւոր պատասխանատւութիւն երեսունական թուականներուն,  
եղաւ մարմնացումը համեստ, լուռ, զոհաբեր ու բժախնդիր ջանքերու, միշտ ականջ դնելով  
իր ժողովուրդին կարիքներուն: Գործեց առանց խտրութեան, բժախնդիր մակարդակով, որոնք  
կարգախօս դարձան իր վարչական գործակիցներուն և պաշտօնեաներուն համար: Հիմնար-  
կին կեդրոնները դարձան օրինակելի՝ միջազգային չափանիշով, և ծառայեցին իբրև հա-  
մալսարանական ուսանողներու վարժութեան կեդրոն՝ ընկերային ծառայութեան մարզին մէջ,  
պետութիւններու կողմէ աննշցուելով իբրև տիպար կեդրոններ:

Այսպէս, կարճ ատենէն Գարակեօգեան Հիմնարկը ընդարձակած էր որբերու խնամա-  
տարութեան ձեռնարկը՝ հաստատելով կարիքաւոր երախաներու սննդական և առողջա-  
պահական արգելիչ և բուժիչ դարմանատուններ, կառուցելով բնակարաններ Աթէնք, Սուրիա  
և Լիբանան, կազմակերպելով ամառնային և իրիկնային դասընթացքներ դպրոցագոյրկ կամ  
թերուս պատանիներու՝ լեզուի, մեքենագրութեան, աւտոնին տնտեսութեան, ձեռագործի,



գեղարուեստի մարզերում մէջ: Այս դասընթացքներէն բխող զոյգ բարիքներ եղան՝ գործի առաջնորդել պատանիներ և բարելաւել ապրելակերպը աղքատիկ կամ համեստ ընտանիքներու, այնպէս մը որ յիսունական թուականներուն Պէյրութի Ամերիկեան Համալսարանի Բժշկական Բաժանմունքի դասախօս Dr. Karam Harfouche Պուրճ Համուտի հայափոփ աղքատիկ, շատ համեստ դասակարգին ընկերային կեանքին մասին կատարած ուսումնասիրութեան մէջ կը գրէր թէ հայ համայնքին կեանքի որակը զգալի բարելաւում կը յայտնաբերէ բաղդատմամբ ոչ-հայ դրացիներու՝ շնորհիւ Գարակէօզեան հիմնարկի ծառայութեան: Թէև Հիմնարկը ջանացած է ծառայել հայութեան, պէտք է յիշել որ իր դուռը բաց պահած է ոչ-հայ կարօտեալներու ևս՝ բնականաբար նուազ ծրագրեալ շեշտով:

Այսօր, Օր. Լիլա Գարակէօզեան, իր յառաջացեալ տարիքին, հոգեկան յաւելեալ գոհունակութիւն մը ունի ի տես Հիմնարկին ծառայութեան նոր դաշտին, որ Հայաստանն ու Արցախն են, և ուր չորս տարբեր քաղաքներու մէջ չորս դարամանատուններ կը գործեն նորագոյն տեսակի կազմածներով, նուիրեալ և ձեռնհաս պաշտօնէութեամբ, ծառայելու համար 5-15 տարու հայորդիներու ատամներու առողջութեան այնպիսի թափով մը, որ հարկ կ'ըլլայ 7-8 ամիս սպասել ժամադրութեան թուականին հասնելու համար: Դարմանատունները նաև կը ծառայեն իբրև ատամնաբոյժներու վերապատրաստումի կեդրոններ:

Լիլա Գարակէօզեան՝ իր ինը տասնամեակները գլոյ անցնող շուքով՝ իր աշալուրջ ներկայութիւնը կը շարունակէ բերել վարչական գործին և վարչական ժողովներուն, ներշնչելով արթուն, աշխոյժ, բժախնդիր ծառայութիւն, միշտ լոյեալն: Այսպէս է որ ան չընդառաջեց որևէ հրապարակային ելոյթի՝ եօթանասունհինգամեակին առիթով:

Հետևաբար, այս գրքոյկը կ'ընծայուի իբրև յուշամատենան Գարակէօզեան Ընտանիքին և Գարակէօզեան Հիմնարկին՝ վերջինին եօթանասունհինգամեակին առիթով, և կը մատուցուի մեր ժողովուրդին՝ իբր նախերգանք գալիք տասնամեակներու գործունէութեան:

ՎԱՐՉԱԿԱՆ ՄԱՐՄԻՆ  
ՀԱՌԻԸՐՏ ԳԱՐԱԿԷՕԶԵԱՆ  
ՅԻՇԱՏԱԿԻ ՀԻՄՆԱՐԿԻ

1996



LETTER OF BLESSING AND OF APPRECIATION  
FROM HOLY ETCHMIADZIN  
TO  
THE HOWARD KARAGHEUSIAN COMMEMORATIVE  
CORPORATION

29th July 1996

Beloved friend  
Miss Leila Karagheusian, and  
Distinguished Members of the Board of Directors,

We were delighted learning that this year you will be celebrating the 75th anniversary of the foundation of the Howard Karagheusian Commemorative Corporation and will be publishing a book dedicated to the seventy five years of your continuous and bountiful services to the needy people, particularly the children of our Armenian nation around the world.

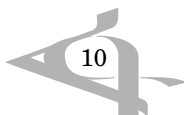
Here, in the Mother See of Holy Etchmiadzin, we first render thanks and glory to God our Heavenly Father for the great gift He made towards His Armenian people through the establishment of the Howard Karagheusian Foundation which in the last seventy five years has been a real blessing for our people in different areas of human need.

We pray also for the heavenly rest and eternal bliss of the young Howard Karagheusian in whose name the Foundation was created and also for the rest of the soul of Mihran Karagheusian who made the memory of his son a source of goodness and happiness for so many thousands of children who were deprived of happiness because of poverty and sickness and other kinds of social evil and human suffering.

We pray to our Lord Jesus Christ for the good health and the highly deserved happiness of Miss Leila Karagheusian who through personal commitment, wholehearted engagement and enlightened leadership directed the work of the Karagheusian Foundation for so many decades. Having personally known her, we would like to express our unwavering admiration for the exemplary dedication she showed so magnificently and magnanimously all through her life.

On this happy occasion we extend also our most sincere appreciation to Mr. Noubar Tavitian and his devoted wife Anahide (now of blessed memory) for their immeasurable contribution to the promotion of the work of the Howard Karagheusian Foundation for so many years.

\* \* \*



Dear members of the Board of Directors,

We warmly welcome your voluntary and most devoted part of vigilant work in the carrying on of the mission of the Howard Karagheusian Foundation. Your personal engagement is the tangible and eloquent expression of your love for and dedication to your own Armenian nation. May God strengthen you all.

We have followed the work of the Howard Karagheusian Foundation from the early years of our priestly ordination. We have seen marvelous work accomplished in Syria, Lebanon, Greece and other countries in the Middle East. Today we wholeheartedly welcome the work initiated and being carried on so efficiently here in our Motherland of Armenia, in our new Independent Republic. The Karagheusian Foundation in our own assessment has not only contributed towards the alleviation of the pain and the suffering of needy people, but also has offered a highly significant contribution to the recovery and redressment of our people right after the deadly blow that befell our whole nation because of the genocide of 1915. The orphaned nation has been now converted into a self respecting and respect imposing nation not only here in Armenia but in the whole of the Diaspora. The time of despair has turned into a time of hope and determination for a brighter future and for greater achievements. In this transformation process the name of the Karagheusian Foundation will be written in golden letters.

As Catholicos of All Armenians here in the Mother See of Holy Etchmiadzin we witness in humble gratitude to God the growing pace of betterment of the life of our Motherland. The seventy five years of so rich heritage in social service of the Foundation should be pursued with ever-increasing advance in our own country where we find the new center of focus as we have entered a new era of freedom, independence and democracy.

We urge you to continue to participate in the positive social change of our country and people. The 75th anniversary should become a crowning and turn into a new era for future growth of your invaluable services.

With that vision in mind, we convey to you our fatherly love and blessings and our readiness to stand by you in all your commitments and activities for the future. May God be your guide and the love of your nation be your drive and the happiness be your reward.

With love and prayers,



KAREKIN I  
Catholicos of All Armenians





The President of the Republic of Armenia  
Levon Ter-Petrosian

On behalf of the People of the Republic of Armenia

Gratefully acknowledges

Howard Kapaghisian  
Communitative Corporation

For distinguished service in providing urgently needed  
humanitarian assistance to the people of Armenia

August, 1994

*Levon Ter-Petrosian*  
Levon Ter-Petrosian



Սրտի անհուն գոհունակությամբ խմացանք որ 1996 տարին 75-ամեակն է Հաուըրտ Գարակեօզեան Հիմնարկության կեանքին ու ծառայության:

Հայրապետական այս Օրհնության Գիրով գոհությամբ ու փառք կու տանք Աստուծոյ, որ մեր ժողովուրդը արժանի դարձուց իր հաւաքական կեանքին մէջ ունենալու մարդասիրական այս մեծ կազմակերպութիւնը, որ մեր ժողովուրդին համար դարձաւ բազում բարիքներու առատահոս աղբիւր մը: Արդարեւ, քրիստոնէական մաքրամաքոր ապրումներէ, մարդկային ազնուագոյն զգացումներէ և ազգային նախանձախնդրութենէ առաջնորդուած է որ Միհրան և Զապէլ Գարակեօզեան ամուր կը հիմնէին այս Հիմնարկութիւնը՝ այդ ճամբով արտաշայտելու իրենց հաւատքը առ Աստուած, իրենց սէրն ու ծառայութիւնը մեր ժողովուրդին և այդ ճամբով անթառամ պահելու իրենց վաղամեռիկ զաւկին՝ Հաուըրտի յիշատակը:

Եւ ահա նոյն այս հաւատքով ու տեսիլքով Գարակեօզեան Հիմնարկութիւնը եօթանասունըփինգ տարիներ շարունակ Նիւ Եորքէն մինչև Յունաստան, Պոլիսէն մինչև Սուրիա և Լիբանան հաւատարմօրէն ու անշահախնդրօրէն ծառայեց մեր ժողովուրդին՝ կարիքաւոր ընտանիքներուն հաց ու տուն հայթայթելով, ուսանողներուն բժշկական խնամք ու սնունդ տալով, հիւանդներուն դեղ ու դարման գտնելով և հասնելով հոն, ուր կար կարիք, օգնութեան կանչ ու ծառայութեան հրաւեր:

Եօթանասունըփինգ տարիներու կեանքն ու գործը Գարակեօզեան Հիմնարկութեան կարելի է բնորոշել պարզ ու խորունկ մէկ բառով՝ ԾԱՌԱՅՈՒԹԻՒՆ: Այս Հիմնարկութիւնը չիօսեցաւ երբեք, այլ՝ գործեց. փառք ու պատիւ չփնտռեց, այլ՝ ծառայեց: Ծառայութիւնը դարձաւ իր գոյութեան նպատակը, իր գործին մղիչ ոյժը: Ծառայեց ան բոլորին՝ առանց խտրութեան: Ծառայեց հեռու ամէն տեսակ լուսարձակներէ: Ու ծառայութեան մէջ տեսաւ ան իր վարձատրութիւնն ու փառքը:

Հոս կ'ուզենք կարևորութեամբ յիշել, թէ Մեծի Տանն Կիլիկիոյ Կաթողիկոսութեան Անթիքիասի մէջ հաստատման ընթացքին, Կաթողիկոսարանի վերակազմակերպման և Դարեվանքի հիմնադրութեան մէջ մեծ եղաւ Գարակեօզեան ընտանիքին ծառայութիւնը: Ամերիկայի մէջ որքա՜ն աշխատանք տարին Միհրան և Արշակ Գարակեօզեանները, որպէսզի Նիւ Իարք Ռիլիֆին պատկանող Անթիքիասի որբանոցը փոխանցուէր Մեծի Տանն Կիլիկիոյ Կաթողիկոսութեան ու աստանդական ու թափառական մեր ժողովուրդը այս հողին վրայ հաստատէր Կիլիկիոյ Կաթողիկոսութեան դարաւոր Ս. Աթոռը:

Գարակեօզեան Հիմնարկութեան ծառայութեան մէջ իր կեդրոնական տեղը և մեծ դերը ունեցաւ Օր. Լէյլա Գարակեօզեանը: Ոչ միայն ան մօտէն հետևեցաւ Հիմնարկութեան լայնածաւալ գործունէութեան, այլ ծառայութեան նոր դաշտեր ու հորիզոններ բացաւ անոր առջև: Այստեղ հարկ է յիշել անհուն երախտագիտութեամբ, Լէյլաւանի ժողովրդային տուններու մեծ ծրագիրը, որ իրագործուեցաւ երջանկալիշատակ Խորէն Ա. Կաթողիկոսի և Օր. Լէյլա Գարակեօզեանի միացեալ ճիգերով: Այսօր հակառակ իր յառաջացեալ տարիքին, Օր. Գարակեօզեան նոյն խանդավառութեամբ ու յանձնառութեամբ կը շարունակէ իր անսակարկ բաժինը բերել Գարակեօզեան Հիմնարկութեան տակաւ աճող աշխատանքներուն՝ Հայաստանէն մինչև Լիբանան:

Ահաւասիկ քրիստոնէական հիմունքով ու ազգային դիմագիծով կառուց մը, որ միայն մեր ժողովուրդին սէր ու բարիք, հոգածութիւն ու ծառայութիւն բաշխեց և դարձաւ սիրելի՝ անխտիր բոլորին:

75-ամեակի այս հանգրուանին, սրտի պարտք կը զգանք առաջին հերթին վերակոչել յաւետ անթառամ յիշատակը Միհրան և Զապէլ Գարակեօզեաններուն, որոնք որպէս պերճախօս վկայութիւն իրենց քրիստոնէական ամուր հաւատքին և մարդկային ու ազգային արժէքներուն նկատմամբ իրենց ունեցած խոր գիտակցութեան, հաստատեցին քրիստոնէական սիրոյ ու յոյսի, հաւատքի ու ծառայութեան այս կառույցը:

Հայրապետական օրհնութեամբ ու ջերմ սիրով կ'ողջունենք Օր. Լէյլա Գարակեօզեանը: Բարձրօրէն կը գնահատենք իր անձնուէր ծառայութիւնը մեր ժողովուրդին: Կ'աղօթենք առ Բարձրեալն Աստուած, որ իրեն շնորհէ քաջառողջութիւն ու նորանոր ծառայութեամբ բեղուն երկար կեանք:

Հայրական սիրով կ'ողջունենք Հիմնարկութեան հին թէ՛ նոր խնամակալները, տնօրէններն ու պաշտօնէիներն, և բոլոր անոնք, որոնք անցնող տարիներուն սիրոյ ու նուիրումի ճամբով իրենց այրիի լուման դրին Գարակեօզեան Հիմնարկութեան ծառայութեան զանձանակին մէջ:

Թող Առաքելին պատգամը միշտ ուղեցոյցը մնայ Գարակեօզեան Հիմնարկութեան բոլոր սպասաւորներուն՝ «Հոգով եռացէք, Տեսո՛ն ծառայեցէք» (ՀՌՈՄ. ԺԲ. 11) Աստուծոյ փառքին և մեր ժողովուրդին հոգևոր ու ազգային կեանքի ծաղկումին համար:

Ողջ լերութք ի Տէր, զօրացեալք շնորհօք Ս. Հոգւոյն և յաւետ օրհնեալ ի մենջ. Ամէն:

**ԱՐԱՄ Ա. ԿԱԹՈՂԻԿՈՍ**  
Մեծի Տանն Կիլիկիոյ

LETTER OF BLESSING AND OF APPRECIATION  
FROM HOLY JERUSALEM  
TO  
THE HOWARD KARAGHEUZIAN COMMEMORATIVE  
CORPORATION

22nd November, 1996

Miss Leila Karagheusian  
President of the  
Howard Karagheusian Commemorative Corporation  
New York.

Dear Miss Karagheusian,

Seventy five years have elapsed, three quarters of a century of humanitarian work, providing health, medical and social welfare to a great number of needy children by the opening of pediatric centers and since 1993 opening dental clinics in Armenia.

Armenia today, more than ever before stands in dire need of such assistance, and we are confident that this noble work shall go a long way in alleviating the plight of the desperate children of our nation. There is nothing nobler than rendering assistance to and thus inspiring hope into the hearts of God's children and our fellowmen.

Countless souls in various countries have so far benefited from this noble organization regardless of racial or religious differences, irrespective of any political affiliations. A spontaneous, indiscriminate assistance, that knows no segregation whatsoever.

Your parents of blessed memory, the founders of this noble corporation, shall always be remembered for their magnanimity of Spirit. Their names shall be perpetuated; their whole-hearted assistance granted to needy children can never be forgotten.

May the Almighty shower his choicest blessings upon you, as the noble heir of this humanitarian organization's founders, Mr. & Mrs. Mihran Karagheusian.

May the memory of the untimely death of Howard be blessed forever, and may his soul rest in eternal peace in the Kingdom of Heaven.

Prayerfully,

Archbishop TORKOM MANOOGIAN  
Armenian Patriarch of Jerusalem



**ՀԱՌԻԸՐՏ ԳԱՐԱԿԷՕԶԵԱՆ ՀԱՍՏԱՏՈՒԹԵԱՆ  
ԳՈՐԾՈՒՆԷՈՒԹԵԱՆ 75-ԱՄԵԱՅ ՅՈՒՆԵՍԿՈ  
ԱՌԹԻԻ**

75-ամեայ գործունեություն... Գրեթե մի ամբողջ դար միշտ այնտեղ, որտեղ պետք է ամոքել հիւանդին, խնամել որբուկին, ապաւէն լինել մերժումին ու լքումին, որտեղ պետք է սերմանել բարին, գեղեցիկը, մարդկայինը: Եւ այդ ամբողջ ընթացքում՝ միշտ ազգանուէր, միշտ՝ աշխարհով մէկ սփռուած հայ մանուկների կողքին՝ որպէս հովանաւոր ու ապաւէն: Այսպիսին է Հաւուրտ Գարակէօզեան Հաստատութեան առաքելութիւնը, այսպիսին է աշխարհով մէկ բարիք սփռող այն խաչը, որ արդէն 75 տարի պատուով ու հպարտութեամբ կրում է այն:

Հաւուրտ Գարակէօզեան Հաստատութիւնը հիմնուել է 1921 թուականին՝ Նիւ-Եորքում: Նրա հիմնադիր Միհրան Գարակէօզեանը իր այս նախաձեռնութեամբ նպատակ է ունեցել յաւերժացնելու իր վաղամեռիկ միակ որդու՝ 14-ամեայ Հաւուրտի յիշատակը: Եւ ցաւից ծնունդ առած այս բարեբեր ձեռնարկը արդէն 75 տարի առաքինութեան ու մարդկայնութեան լուսապսակով է զարդարում վաղամեռիկ Հաւուրտի անունը, ու տարէց-տարի աճում է այդ լուսապսակը՝ նորանոր օրհնություններով ու երախտիքներով հզօրացած: Իրաւամբ՝ լաւագոյն յաւերժացումը...

Շուրջ 5 տարի է, ինչ Հաւուրտ Գարակէօզեան Հաստատութիւնը իր մարդասիրական գործունեությունը տարածել է նաև Հայաստանում, նախ՝ աղետաւոր, չետոյ՝ անկախութեան լուսաւոր, բայց՝ դժուարին ճանապարհին իր առաջին քայլերը կատարող Հայրենիքում: Տարածել է՝ ի մի բերելով նոյնատիպ առաքելութեան իր հարուստ փորձը Պոլսի ու Փարիզի, Աթէնքի ու Հալէպի, Պէյրութի ու Այնճարի հայկական գաղթօճախներում: Արգասաւոր է նրա գործունեությունը Հայրենիքում: Նորքի բարձունքում գտնուող Հայաստանի Հաւուրտ Գարակէօզեան Հաստատութիւնը այցելուներին հիացմունք է պատճառում իր գործունեութեան որակով ու կազմակերպութեամբ: Մանկական ատամնաբուժական ծառայութիւնը, որ ծաւալուած է այստեղ, արդէն իր մասնաճիւղերն ունի Գիւմրիում, Ստեփանակերտում ու Գորիսում: Այդ ծառայութեան կողքին գործում է նաև մի ուրիշը՝ աղջիկներին՝ ասեղնագործութեան, իսկ տղաներին՝ փայտագործութեան արուեստին հաղորդակից դարձնելուն ուղղուած: Եւ այստեղ էլ ակնառու են արդիւնքները: Իսկ որքա՞ն ծրագրեր կան: Իսկապէս որ՝ անսահման է բարին, ու նաև՝ անսահման է եռանդն այն մարդկանց, ովքեր արդէն 75 տարի ապրում են բարին՝ Հաւուրտ Գարակէօզեան Հաստատութեան դրօշի ներքոյ: Ուրեմն, թող բազմապատկուի ու բարգաւաճի նրանց սերմանած բարին, և բարի երթ նրանց բարեբեր ու ազգանուէր ծրագրերին:

**Հայաստանի Հանրապետութեան  
Առողջապահութեան Նախարարութիւն**

## ՀԱՌԻԸՐՏ ԳԱՐԱԿԷՕԶԵԱՆ ՅԻՇԱՏԱԿԻ ՀԱՍՏԱՏՈՒԹԵԱՆ 75-ԱՄԵԱՅ ՈՒՂԻՆ

Յիրաւի Մարդասիրութիւնն ու Բարեգործութիւնը սահմաններ չեն ճանաչում: Հայ ժողովուրդը շատ լաւ գիտէ նրանց էութիւնը և նաև մարդասիրական ու բարեգործական հաստատութիւնների արժէքը ումը:

Դարասկզբին Երիտթուրքերի կազմակերպած համազգային աղէտից փրկուած իւլեակները կենսապայմաններ ու սփոփանք գտան ազգային ու միջազգային բազում մարդասիրական հաստատութիւնների օգնութեամբ, ինչպէս՝ Հայկական Բարեգործական Ընդհանուր Միութիւնը, Մելգոնեան Կրթական Հաստատութիւնը, Գալուստ Կիլլպէնկեան Հիմնարկութիւնը, Ամերիկայի Միսիոներական Ընկերութիւնը, Համազգային Մշակութային Ընկերութիւնը, Դպրոցասէր Տիկնանց Վարժարանը, Հայ Օգնութեան Միութիւնը, Վարդան Ճինիշեան Ֆոնտը, Մխիթարեանց Մուրատ-Ռաֆայէլեան Վարժարանը և տասնեակ այլ հիմնադրամներ: Համազգային երախտագիտութեան արժանացած այս կազմակերպութիւնների շարքում իր ուրոյն տեղն ունի Հաւուրտ Գարակէօզեան Յիշատակի Հաստատութիւնը՝ վարչականօրէն ինքնուրոյն, ազգային, կրօնական և քաղաքական կազմակերպութիւններից անկախ, այլ միայն՝ ազգային միասնականութեան ըմբռնումով, բոլորի հանդէպ գործակցական դիրքորոշումով մի հաստատութիւն, որի հիմնադրման 75-ամեակն է այս տարի:

1921 թուականին Նիւ Եորքում, Միհրան և Զապէլ Գարակէօզեանները ի յաւերժացում իրենց վաղամեռիկ որդու՝ Հաւուրտի յիշատակի, հիմնում են Հաւուրտ Գարակէօզեան Յիշատակի Հաստատութիւնը՝ հայ մանուկների խնամքի և կրթութեան կազմակերպման նպատակով:

Գարակէօզեան Հաստատութեան գործունէութեան առաջին շրջանը սկսում է Պոլսում, ուր 1921 թուականի Օգոստոսին բացում է Հաւուրտ Գարակէօզեան Տունը և իր խնամակալութեան տակ է վերցնում շուրջ 100 դեռատի հայ որբերի: Այն որբանոց էր, բայց կոչւում էր Տուն՝ հայ որբուկների ընտանեկան ջերմութիւն ու քաղցրութիւն հաղորդելու միտումով:

Երեք տարի յետոյ, 1924 թուականին, քաղաքական աննպաստ պայմանների հետևանքով սաները փոխադրում են Ֆրանսիա, ուր նրանց են միանում նաև Յունաստանից բերուած ուրիշ հայ որբեր: Այստեղ որբերի համար ստեղծում են կեցութեան և կրթութեան բաւարար պայմաններ և ընդունելով ֆրանսիական կրթական պետական ծրագիրը, բայց պահպանելով նաև հայերէնի դասաժամերը, հինգ տարուայ ընթացքում կարողանում են կրթութեան որակը բարձրացնել ֆրանսիական պետական պահանջների մակարդակին, որի համար էլ 1929 թուականին ֆրանսիական կառավարութիւնը բարերար Միհրան Գարակէօզեանին պարգևատրում է «Լեժիոն տ'Օնէօր»ի «Շվալիէ» շքանշանով:

1930-ական թուականներին ԱՄՆ-ի տնտեսական ճգնաժամի տարիներին Միհրան Գարակէօզեանը մեծ նիւթական անկումներ կրելով հանդերձ, հաստատութեան ֆիզիքական յատկացումները պահպանելով անգամ, կարողանում է պահպանել Գարակէօզեան Տան գոյութիւնը և շարունակել հայ մանուկների կրթական և առողջապահական սրբազան գործունէութիւնը:

Աւելի շատ զբաղուած լինելով իր տնտեսական գործունէութիւնը բարելաւելու խնդիրներով, Միհրան Գարակէօզեանը 1933 թուականին Գարակէօզեան Հաստատութեան Կենտրոնական Վարչութեան նախագահի պարտականութիւնները փոխանցում է իր դստեր՝ օրիորդ

Լէյլա Գարակէօզեանին, որն էլ գլխաւորելով Հաստատութիւնը ո՛չ միայն պահպանում է ծնողների կողմից նախանշուած ուղին, այլև հաւատարիմ մնալով մարդասիրական և բարեսիրական սրբազան նպատակներին՝ աւելի է ընդլայնում թէ՛ ասպարէզը և թէ՛ աշխարհագրութիւնը:

Ֆրանսիայում Հաւուրտ Գարակէօզեան Տունը գործում է մինչև 1936, ուսում տալով և արհեստներ սովորեցնելով շուրջ 200 որբերի:

Այնուհետև Հաստատութիւնն իր գործունէութիւնը փոխադրում է Աթէնք, ուր 1938-ից ծաւալելով լայն գործունէութիւն, Բ. Համաշխարհային Պատերազմի դժուարին տարիներին նեցուկ է կանգնում հայ կարիքաւոր ընտանիքներին՝ ստանձնելով «մանկանց առողջապահութեան և բարեկեցութեան գործը»: Հիմնելով Գարակէօզեան Առողջապահական Կենտրոն և Հայ Առաքելական, Հայ Աւետարանական և Հայ Կաթոլիկ դպրոցների աշակերտների առողջութեան ու կրթական պայմանների բարելաւման ամենօրեայ աշխատանքին զուգահեռ, ծաւալում է նաև մանկախնամութեան և ընկերային ընդարձակ ծառայութիւն՝ տրախտմայի և մալարիայի համաճարակային պայքար, թոքախտի բուժում, հիւանդապահութիւնների տնային այցելութիւններ, կաթի և ձկան իւղի բաշխում, գաղթականների բնակարանների յատկացում, Ամերիկայից բերուած հագուստեղէնի բաշխում, աղքատների կերակրման խոհանոց, ծերերի օգնութեան թոշակ, օդանաւային ուժակոծութիւններից աղետեալների օգնութիւն և այլն, և այլն: Ժամանակի պահանջներին համապատասխան օգնութեան ձևերը փոփոխութիւն կրելով հանդերձ, Հաստատութեան յունաստանեան գործունէութիւնը շարունակում է մինչև 1995:

1939 թուականից սկսած Հաստատութիւնը, զուգահեռաբար, նոյնատիպ գործունէութիւն է ծաւալել նաև Սիրիայում և Լիբանանում, և հիմնուած Բէյրութի, Այնճարի, Հալէպի, Ղամիշլիի և Քեսաբի Գարակէօզեան մանկախնամ կենտրոններն ու դարմանատները իրենց գործունէութեան 55 տարիների ընթացքում բուժել, կրթել և խնամել են հազարաւոր հայ մանուկների ու պատանիների, և այսօր էլ շարունակում են մնալ պատմէշի վրայ և կատարել իրենց սրբազան առաքելութիւնը:

Ամենայն գնահատանքի և երախտագիտութեան արժանի Գարակէօզեան Հաստատութիւնը, ի հարկէ, չէր կարող յաղթահարել Խորհրդային Միութեան երկաթեայ վարագոյրը և մարդասիրական գործունէութիւնը տարածել Մայր Հայրենիքում:



*The staff of the dental clinic in Nork, Yerevan.*

Աշխարհի չորս ծագերից Հայաստանի աղետեալ ժողովրդին օգնութեան փութացող հայ և օտար կազմակերպութիւնների առաջին շարքերում էր Գարակէօզեան Հաստատութիւնը, որն 1988-1992 թուականների ընթացքում Հայաստան առաքած դեղորայքով, սնունդով, հագուստեղէնով թեթևացնելով մեր ժողովրդի հոգսը, այնուհետև հաւատարիմ մնալով մնալուն կառույցներ և շարունակական ծրագրեր իրագործելու իր սկզբունքին, մէկ միլիոն դոլար տրամադրելով, Հայ Բարեգործական Ընդհանուր Միութեան հետ համատեղ հիմնել է Երևանի վերականգնողական վիրաբուժութեան բաժանմունքը, որն այսօր էլ շարունակում է առողջապահական առաքելութիւնը «Էրեբունի» հիւանդանոցում և կենքի կոշում Հայաստանի բազում քաղաքացիների, Արցախում և Հայաստանի սահմանամերձ շրջաններում խեղուած հայ քաջարի այրերի:

1991-ին Գարակէօզեան Հաստատութեան Կենտրոնական Վարչութեան պատուիրակների (Վերապատուելի Ռ. Սարգսեան, Դոկտ. Տարագճեան, Դոկտ. Պանտազեան) և Հայաստանի Առողջապահութեան Նախարարութեան (Նախարար Մ. Նազարէթեան) միջև ստորագրուել է առաջին համաձայնագիրը Հայաստանում Գարակէօզեան Հաստատութեան կենտրոն հիմնելու և մանկական անվճար ատամնաբուժարան բացելու մասին:

1992-ին, այդ նպատակով, նախարարութեան կողմից յատկացուել է Նորքի «Նարինէ» առողջարանի տնտեսական մասնաշէնքը, որի շին-վերանորոգման աշխատանքները սկսուել են նոյն թուականին, գարակէօզեան Հաստատութեան միջոցներով:

Նոյն թուականին գրանցուել է «Հայաստանի Հովարդ Կարագյոզյան» հաստատութեան կանոնադրութիւնը:

1993-ի Ապրիլի 27-ին տեղի է ունեցել Հայաստանի Հ. Գարակէօզեան Կենտրոնի պաշտօնական բացումը, և Մայիսի 3-ից սկսել է գործել մանկական ատամնաբուժական կլինիկան 3 կաբինետներով՝ չափեցած ամերիկեան ժամանակակից սարքաւորումներով, գործիքներով, բուժանիւթերով և այլ անհրաժեշտ իրերով:

1993-ի Յուլիսից Կենտրոնում գործում են ձեռագործի և փայտի գեղարուեստական մշակման խմբակներ, ուր յաճախում են Նորք թաղամասի 12-15 տարեկան պատանիներ և աղջիկներ, որոնք անցնում են ծրագրաւորուած ուսուցողական դասընթաց և արդիւնքներն ամփոփում հաշուետու ցուցահան-



*The dental clinic of Gumri, Armenia.*

դէսնէրով: Մինչև այժմ այդ խմբակներն ունեցել են 80 շրջանաւարտներ և այսօր էլ ուսումը շարունակում են 40 երախաներ:

1994-ին Երևանի կլինիկայում բացուել է ատամնաբուժական չորրորդ կաբինետը, որը 1995-ի Յունիսից պրոֆիլաւորուել է որպէս օրթոդենտիկ կաբինետ:

1995-ի Օգոստոսի 1-ից բացուել է Գարակէօգեան Հաստատութեան Գիւմրիի մասնաճիւղը՝ մանկական ատամնաբուժական կլինիկա 4 կաբինետներով:

Ծրագրուած է որ 1996-ի Օգոստոսից գործեն նաև Ստեփանակերտի և Գորիսի մասնաճիւղերը՝ 2-ական ատամնաբուժական կաբինետներով, և Երևանի կլինիկայի հիմնգերորդ ատամնաբուժական կաբինետը՝ բոլորն էլ դարձեալ կահաւորուած ամերիկեան ժամանակակից սարքաւորումներով և գործիքներով:

Անցած 3 տարիների ընթացքում Երևանի կլինիկայում անվճար արդէն բուժուել են 8500 երախաներ (բացի անհրաժեշտ այցելութիւնների թուից), իսկ 1500-ն էլ հերթագրուած են բուժում ստանալու համար:

Գիւմրիի կլինիկայում անցած 10 ամիսների ընթացքում բուժուել են 2500 երախաներ և 1300-ն էլ՝ հերթագրուած են:

Բուժուած և հերթագրուած բոլոր երախաները ստացել են կանխարգելիչ բուժման լրիւ կամ մասնակի կուրս և սովորել ատամների խնամքի

կանոնները՝ ապահովուելով կլինիկայի կողմից անվճար ատամի խոզանակներով և ֆտորային մածուկներով: Իսկ 1993-ին կլինիկայի կողմից ատամի խոզանակներ են տրուել նաև Երևանի մանկապարտէզների և տարրական դասարանների 120,000-ից աւել աշակերտների:

1993-1996, Ամերիկայի հալ մասնագէտ պրոֆեսորների 6 այցելութիւնների ընթացքում, Երևանի Կենտրոնում իրականացուել է ուսուցողական հսկայական աշխատանք, ուր բացի Գարակէօգեան կլինիկաների ատամնաբուժներից, ընդգրկուել են նաև հանրապետութեան և Արցախի տարբեր ստոմատոլոգիական կլինիկաների մի քանի տասնեակ մասնագէտներ և բարձրացրել իրենց մասնագիտական որակաւորումը:

1996-ի Մարտից Երևանի կլինիկան ծառայում է նաև որպէս ուսումնական բազա Երևանի բժշկական ստոմատոլոգիական բաժնի ուսանողների համար: Անցած 4 ամիսների ընթացքում մանկական ատամնաբուժութեան գործնական ուսուցում են անցել աւարտական կուրսի 72 ուսանողներ և 6 ինտերնիստներ:

Գարակէօգեան մայր Կենտրոնի Վարչութեան՝ անձամբ նախագահ Օր. Լէյլա Գարակէօգեանի, Հայաստանի Առողջապահութեան Նախարարութեան և Հայաստանի Գարակէօգեան Հաստատութեան Խորհրդատու Մարմնի անդամների և ողջ աշխատակազմի փոխհամաձայնեցուած, ծրագրաւորուած և հետևողական աշխատանքի շնորհիւ, չնայած կարճ ժամանակամիջոցին, Հայաստանի Գարակէօգեան Հաստատութիւնը դարձել է օրինակելի Կենտրոն՝ թէ՛ կազմակերպական, թէ՛ գործնական-բուժական օգնութեան, թէ՛ մարդասիրական օրինակելիութեան, թէ՛ ուսուցողական և թէ՛ Հայրենիք-Սփիւռք յարաբերութիւնների ժամանակի ոգուն համապատասխան, արդիւնաւէտ գործնականութեան առումներով:

## EMERGENCY RELIEF

### • Contribution to the Reconstructive and Plastic Surgery Clinic:

HKCC	\$750,000
Miss Leila Karagheusian	\$250,000

### • Program for Winter Relief \$100,000

Իր գոյութեան 75 տարիների ընթացքում Գարակեօգեան Հաստատութեան Վարչութիւնը մշտապէս հետևել է հիմնադիր Միհրան Գարակեօգեանի պատգամին... Որքանոցի հիմնադրման առիթով ասուած. «Ուսումը գործնական կեանքի պատրաստութեան ծրագիրով» տրուի, նաև «Քրիստոնէական և հայեցի ոգիով» ներշնչուի:

Երախտապարտ ենք արժանաչիշատակ Միհրան, Զապէլ և Հաուրրտ գարակեօգեաններին և շնորհակալ՝ Գարակեօգեան Հաստատութեան Կենտրոնական Վարչութեան նախագահ, անանձնական ուրախութեան անշահախնդիր հետևորդ, կեանքի միակ նպատակը Գարակեօգեան Հաստատութեան ծրագրերի իրագործման և մարդասիրութեան մէջ տեսնող, բազմապատակ ազգային բարերար և բարեսէր Օր. Լէյլա Գարակեօգեանին. Անահիտ և Նուպար Դաւիթեաններին՝ աւելի քան 50 տարի Գարակեօգեան կենտրոնների գործունէութիւնը ղեկավարելու, ծրագրեր կազմելու և իրագործելու, Գարակեօգեան Հաստատութեան պատմութիւնը շարադրելու և ապագայ սերունդներին յանձնելու նուիրական ծառայութեան համար. ինչպէս նաև շնորհակալութիւն Գարակեօգեան Հաստատութեան Կենտրոնական Վարչութեան փոխ-նախագահ Դոկտ. Բերկրուհի Սվաճեանին, Դոկտոր Յարութիւն Տորեանին, Էտուարտ Ժանճիկեանին, Մուշեղ Յարութիւնեանին, ընդհանուր տնօրէն Վարդան Պանտազեանին, Վերապատուելի Ռոպերթ Սարգիսեանին, Դոկտոր Պետրոս Տարագճեանին, ատամնաբոյժ դոկտորներ Պետրոս Եսվրու-Զագուկին, Վարդան Ղուկասեանին և բոլոր կենտրոնների բոլոր աշխատակիցներին՝ իրենց անշահախնդիր ներդրման համար:

Աչքի լոյսի պէս պահպանենք ու զարգացնենք ազգային մնայուն արժէքներ դարձած մեր բոլոր բարեգործական հաստատութիւնները՝ ի փառս Ազատ Անկախ Հայաստանի և ի բարօրութիւն հայ ժողովրդի ի Հայաստան և ի սփիւռս աշխարհի:

**Կամօ ՏԷՐ-ՊԵՏՐՈՍԵԱՆ**



*The staff of the dental clinic in Gumri, Armenia.*

A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE ACTIVITIES OF THE  
HOWARD KARAGHEUSIAN COMMEMORATIVE CORPORATION  
FROM ITS START IN 1921 TO 1970

CHAPTER 1 - TURKEY  
(1921-1924)

BACKGROUND, ORIGIN AND PURPOSE

During the First World War, 1914–18, the Armenian population of Turkey was ruthlessly deported, by order of the central government, from its ancestral home in Eastern Turkey as well as from other regions of the country where they had long been living. Most of them perished, either through slaughter or privation and disease. Among the survivors were several hundred thousand orphans in a pitiful state. As soon as conditions allowed, Armenian and non-Armenian—mostly American—welfare agencies hastened to physically rescue these homeless children and also ensure their mental and moral development.

At the same time as these children were straying in the wastes of Anatolia and Syria, living on herbs and roots, a fourteen year-old boy, smitten with pneumonia in the Spring of 1918, was breathing his last in a well-to-do home in New York. His father, MIHRAN KARAGHEUSIAN of New York, Rug Manufacturer, and his wife Zabel vowed that their beloved Howard would not have died in vain. By 1921, they had made up their minds; they would start a foundation the purpose of which would be: to perpetuate Howard's memory by striving to save from disease and the consequences of ignorance and indigence deprived children of the Armenian people of which Mihran and



*Howard Karagheusian*

Zabel themselves had been part. They were doubtlessly motivated in their choice of this purpose, as much by the topical emergency mentioned above as by the source of their own bereavement. In the same year, a “Howard Karagheusian Commemorative Corporation” was registered in the State of New York. It was to be managed by a board of directors in New York City, the members of which would consist of Mihran himself and a few kinsmen and friends of his choice.

#### AN ORPHANAGE IN TURKEY

The purpose first took shape as a boys’ orphanage in Constantinople where a large number of the deportation survivors had concentrated. A local committee of four members was appointed by Mihran Karagheusian himself; two of them were his own cousins, the two others were friends in whom he had full confidence. A large enough building with grounds was rented for three years in a beautifully located suburb. Dr. Krikor Tavitian, chairman of the local committee, was also appointed director; he moved with his family to a house adjoining the Home. In November 1921 the first group of boys, aged six to twelve, were admitted, soon followed by others, reaching a total of near one hundred. They had been selected in accordance with criteria agreed upon.

Mihran wished the institution bearing the name of Howard to be much more than a mere shelter for the homeless. He wanted it to be as nearly as possible a real home where the boys would not only be decently fed and clothed, but would also receive a well-grounded—though elementary—education preparing them to become self-supporting, honest Christian members of their community. Mihran did not favor higher academic studies. He would rather have his boys be trained in manual skills, which could better ensure their livelihood and save them from becoming a burden to their community. He would also lay great stress on the formation of Christian character.



*The building of Couzgoundjouk, Istanbul*



## UNEXPECTED DEVELOPMENTS

Hardly had a year elapsed since the first boys' admission, when political upheavals put into question the very existence of the "Howard Karagheusian Home" in Turkey. The institution was being visited and admired as a model one to which none of the many orphanages in the community could be compared. In the late summer of 1922, the war smoldering in Asia Minor between the Greek army of occupation and the Turkish nationalist army led by Moustafa Kemal flared up abruptly leading to a battle which ended in a rout of the Greek forces. Within a few days, the Turks had reached Smyrna (Izmir) and set the city on fire. The victorious Turkish nationalist Army, in high spirits, were now making their way towards Constantinople.

The Christian population in the city was thereupon seized by panic and started leaving the country in fear of outbursts of Turkish nationalistic and religious fanaticism, which might even lead to massacres as had happened in the not too distant past. There were to be none this time. However, Dr. Tavitian, who was deeply involved in Armenian community affairs and who was in frequent contact with the Allied occupation authorities, was strongly advised by the latter to do likewise. After an exchange of many cables with Mihran in New York and much thought and consultation with his colleagues of the committee, he finally decided to follow the advice. In his absence, the two remaining members, Mihran's cousins Aram and Sarkis Karagheusian, would assume responsibility while the doctor's wife, Aroussiag, who was already involved in the household day-to-day care of the Home, would assume the internal management. She was Mihran's first cousin and very much dedicated to the welfare of the boys.

## IN SEARCH OF A COUNTRY TO SETTLE IN

Daily life continued with little change for a time. But soon, problems arose. There was vexation on the part of Turkish neighbors of the Home. The Turkish internal administration, which had been lax until then, now became very strict in the enforcement of regulations, both existing ones and new ones which were being issued. The Home was required to apply for an operation permit. The committee sought without success to obtain support and protection from the U.S. high commissioner on the plea of Mihran's American citizenship.

Finally, the committee's application to the Turkish authorities met with a blunt refusal and all the boys of the Home had to be dispersed in December 1923. The older ones were apprenticed in manual trades; the others, numbering about seventy-five, were placed temporarily in two boarding schools, pending a decision as to the future of the Home.

During the year 1923, the doctor was studying general conditions in Rumania as well as in neighboring countries in view of an eventual transfer and settlement of the Home, which obviously could no longer remain in Turkey. The outcome was a recommendation to Mihran that the Home be moved to France, where conditions were more stable and favorable than in any of the other countries of the continent, and where Armenian communities were growing through massive immigration.

#### THE MOVE TO FRANCE

Upon Mihran's recommendation, Dr. Tavitian reached Paris in November 1923. Through acquaintances, he was able to apply for and obtain an official permit for the settlement of the Home in France. He also started inquiries about large buildings near Paris available for purchase, but was prevented by ill-health from following up the search. Mihran then decided to come over to France himself in the following summer, with his family, to resume the search and conclude. The doctor died in April 1924. His wife was willing to continue her involvement when the Home would be operating again in France. Her son Noubar, aged 23, was available and likewise willing to work for the new Home. Their engagement by HKCC was finalized by Mihran when he came to France in June 1924. He was accompanied by his wife Zabel and his daughter Leila, aged 22, whom he was eager to see involved in the new project. Both wife and daughter were looking forward, as much as was Mihran, to re-starting the Home in France.



*Zabel Karagheusian*

In mid-July 1924, Mihran and his family, accompanied by an architect advisor and Noubar, drove in a hired car due south west from Paris towards the Loire valley. After half a dozen of buildings had been visited, Mihran chose "La Gaudinière", an imposing château built in 1865 by the Duc de la Rochefoucauld. It measured about 150 x 90 feet, was five stories high, thus providing ample space for the purpose in view; the estate included 200 acres of surrounding forest land and several auxiliary buildings: stables, servants' quarters, a chapel, gate-keeper's lodge. The deal was concluded in August at a very low price. There

would be much expense, however, for altering the inside of the building to suit the requirements of the Home and also for providing facilities which were lacking: a water pumping and distributing system, central heating, and an autonomous electric current generating plant.

Mihran made financial and administrative arrangements with Noubar, who was entrusted with the general management pending the appointment of a director. Noubar and his mother moved to La Gaudinière in September.



*La Gaudinière*

## CHAPTER 2 - FRANCE (1924-1936)

### STARTING ANEW

In October 1924, the Constantinople committee shipped via Marseilles to la Gaudinière the group of remaining seventy-five boys of the Home with an escort of five adults and ninety-seven crates of bedding and furniture. The building was far from prepared for this premature arrival on October 18th. The Constantinople committee had thought it wiser, in view of the political uncertainty prevailing in Turkey, to make immediate use of the exit permit obtained rather than wait till La Gaudinière building would be ready to receive its new residents. However welcome, this overnight increase of eighty bodies to house, feed and keep busy was to raise enormous difficulties. Converting a grandiose French château with its auxiliary premises to the needs of a home for Armenian orphans was to prove a constant challenge to the architect's imagination, to the donor's generosity and to the patience and endurance of the entire population of la Gaudinière from late autumn 1924 to spring 1925. Regular school routine was out of question; classrooms, dormitories and dining-rooms would not be available until March/April. With the cold and the damp oozing into the château both from the surrounding forest outside and from the freshly plastered walls indoors, the only warm shelter was the kitchen, where no workmen were involved and where, therefore, most of the daily life could go on.

The first winter was lived through without any serious incident or health problem. The French authorities and population showed great understanding and friendliness towards the newcomers: the local sports club organized joint football games; a newspaper appearing weekly in Vendôme—the nearest city, with a population of 10,000—published an article welcoming the Armenian survivors of Turkish persecution; a delegation from la Ville-aux-Clercs, the nearest village, consisting of the postmaster, the teacher, and the veterinarian came to the château to establish friendly contact. In short, as spring drew near and as more and more space in the building could be put to use, fewer occasions arose to regret the comforts of the Constantinople building.

### THE FOUNDER'S FIRST VISIT—FUNDAMENTAL DECISIONS

Early in June 1925, Mihran Karagheusian, with his his wife Zabel and his daughter Leila, crossed the Atlantic to visit the memorial to their beloved Howard; as they were to do

each summer almost to the very end of the twelve-year period of the institution's life in France. The first and foremost problem was the choice of an overall director. A French pastor who had been warmly recommended was engaged by Mihran for a trial period. He was expected to set up and implement an educational program comprising both the curriculum of studies and the moral and spiritual development of the boys. Noubar would remain in charge of administration and finance, his mother of internal management.

The next matter discussed, in consultation with the architect, was the program of repairs and improvements to be carried out during the following twelve month period. Throughout the existence of the institution, varying amounts had to be spent each year for fundamental repairs or essential improvements to the building. High was to prove the cost of the low price paid for the purchase of the property!

A further decision taken was to raise the number of residents to the full capacity of 120. Hence, some forty boys, selected in accordance to set criteria from the orphanages of Greece and in Constantinople, were brought over in November 1925, in addition to some five or six others chosen from needy families recently arrived in France.

#### TOWARDS AUTARKY

Two factors in this second Howard Karagheusian Home were to lead to a policy of striving towards maximum self-sufficiency. One was the isolation and difficulty of access of the place; the second was the objective of training the boys in manual skills. The automobile, the lifeline of the Institution, had to be kept in working order; hence a workshop with a mechanic was set up where one or two boys having reached age 16 were apprenticed. Likewise a shoemaker, a tailor, and a knitting woman were engaged in order to start a shoe-shop, a tailor's shop, and a knitting room and to offer training to a number of apprentices. Other boys were employed to operate the electrical generating plant and pumping station, the central heating and hot water supply boilers; still others became assistants to the cook and to the gardener. Vegetable and fruit gardens and, later, a small poultry farm were started; their production was to cover the greater part of the needs of the Home.

The apprenticed boys would, after a year or two of service in the institution, be placed with artisans of near-by towns or of Paris to complete their training and become self-supporting. However, many of the boys had to be assisted financially for some time to help them tide over the passage from institutional working conditions to those of the open market.

The boys below the age of apprenticeship, subject to the academic program, were all divided into teams for the performance of various household duties by a system of weekly

rotation. While engaged in these chores, they were under the authority of the general surveillant. The maintenance of the building and the functioning of household services came thus to depend on the boys to a very large extent.

#### THE EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM—THE DIRECTORSHIP

Before two years had elapsed, the French director had proved ineffective and was discharged. By virtue of an agreement concluded with the local educational authorities, a French couple were appointed to apply the official primary school curriculum to the boys of La Gaudinière. All studies would thenceforth be in French; Armenian was to be taught by the Armenian teachers outside regular school hours only. Under this new regime, the boys made good progress in the French language. By June 1935, twenty-two had obtained the Primary School Certificate.

#### BENEFITS EXTENDED TO FRENCH BOYS

Mihran was anxious to express in concrete ways his appreciation of the hospitality which France had shown in allowing his institution to settle in France. In 1927, ten French boys of ten to twelve years of age, selected from needy families, were admitted to board with the Armenians boys. In 1928, one of the larger outhouses, formerly servants' quarters, was fitted out to serve as a summer vacation center for one hundred French boys of indigent homes. The selection and full management of this center was entrusted to a French Summer Camp Association.

#### THE ALUMNI OUTSIDE

As the number of boys placed out increased, the need was felt of organizing an alumni assistance system. Besides those not earning enough and still dependent on subsidies, there arose cases of illness to which the management could not remain indifferent. Tuberculosis prevailed at the time, especially among the young. About six cases arose during the twelve years the institution operated in France; two of them proved fatal. As the largest number of alumni were concentrated in the metropolis, a former surveillant who had resigned to pursue professional studies was appointed to remain in touch with these former protégés, give out subsidies and attend to those needing help in the event of illness, and to those applying for labor permits. For it should be borne in mind that all the boys were aliens and

as such, unauthorized to employment without a special permit. Moreover, they were homeless aliens, since they had lost their original Turkish nationality without having yet become naturalized French citizens; a circumstance making them subject to supplementary restrictions.

#### THE IMPACT OF THE DEPRESSION

The consequences of the financial crisis and of the resulting depression, triggered by the New York Wall Street crash in autumn 1929, began making themselves felt in France about two years later. In the Home, the management, after having exhausted all possible means of cutting down running expenses, had finally to reduce the number of inmates by putting an end to all admissions. For the last few years, the only boys admitted had been those of needy Armenian immigrant families in France; as from 1931, these boys, upon terminating their school course at la Gaudinière, would be sent back to their homes, leaving to their families the care of finding them jobs as apprentices; none were taken to replace them; the many urgent requests on the part of distressed families were turned down. By 1934, the roll call was down around fifty, from a maximum of 120 in 1928.

It became increasingly difficult to place out boys having reached the age of apprenticeship. Many of those already placed lost their jobs; some of these were accepted back at La Gaudinière, but made to give service in exchange for their room and board.

#### THE BUILDING IS DESTROYED BY FIRE

Early one morning in November 1934, flames were seen issuing from the top floor of the château. The alarm horn was sounded, all adults and older boys mustered to the fire hoses and extinguishers. The fire brigades from neighboring towns had also been called and were soon on the spot with their pumps. All in vain: by the end of the day the whole internal timber work of the huge building had turned to ashes; there only remained a useless stone and brick carcass. The boys and the personnel had to make the best of scanty lodgings in the outhouse fitted out to receive French boys during the summer. This make-shift arrangement, with all courses being held in the vast dining hall divided into four classrooms by means of cardboard partitions, could not continue for long. Insurance settlement could only be obtained seven months later.

## IN SEARCH OF A FUTURE COURSE

In the two years following this crucial event the future of the work was discussed extensively between New York and the management. The menace of war in Europe looming on the horizon, as well as the costly ten-year experience of La Gaudinière, were factors which decided against tying up a large sum in real property. Though there undoubtedly was a great need for various types of philanthropic work in France within the Armenian communities, hard hit by unemployment and labor restrictions, the conditions prevailing among Armenian refugees in Near Eastern countries were judged to be worse; appeals had been pouring in from welfare agencies operating in those fields. In the summer of 1936, it was finally decided by Mihran, Leila and their advisors that Noubar accompanied by his wife Anahide as his assistant would spend a few weeks in Greece exploring possibilities of starting, for the benefit of indigent Armenian refugees, some welfare work which would involve no investment in real estate.



*Full group of students, with Mrs. Zabel Karagheusian in their midst, 1933*



## WINDING UP THE WORK IN FRANCE

In summer 1936, La Gaudinière was vacated. The personnel was discharged with severance indemnities. The older boys were placed out as apprentices with allowances for those still unable to support themselves. The younger ones—by this time all children of families settled in France or having relatives abroad—were sent back to their homes or helped in their applications to travel to their relatives. The property was put up for sale.

## CONCLUDING ASSESSMENT

Notwithstanding the excessive cost of operation due to the unfavorable circumstances mentioned, the fact remains that 251\* Armenian boys were provided, during some of their formative years, with the privileges of a good home: physical well-being, elementary education and a real family atmosphere. The spirit of brotherhood fostered by this atmosphere induced them, in 1931, to form an Alumni Association which would until 1945 meet monthly in the Tavitian home in Paris. During the World War II (1939-45), this Association would send food parcels to comrades on the front or in prison camps in Germany. Soon after the end of the war, they started a practice of meeting every year in July for a picnic under the old cedar tree next to the ruins of the château; and also of holding a service in the Armenian church of Paris in October in the memory of Howard, of the founder, his family and all departed personnel and comrades.



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\* of whom 81 came from Armenian needy families in France.

## CHAPTER 3 - GREECE (1937-1970)

### FIRST STEPS IN GREECE

Greece was to be the future field of activity. The Tavitiants—Anahide being from this point on her husband Noubar's close assistant—spent a few weeks in Greece, in autumn 1936, studying possibilities of usefulness to the Armenian needy in Greece.

In compliance with the guiding principle laid down—service to children involving no investment in real estate—the Tavitiants' report recommended medical and health service and supervision within the framework of the three Armenian schools of Dergouti. This was a refugee settlement near Athens consisting of improvised, tumble-down shacks sheltering a destitute population of about 5000, comprising around 1000 school children aged 5 to 16. This recommendation was agreed to by Head Office. In October 1937, work started in the new field.

A thorough medical examination of all school children by three temporarily employed general practitioners was the first step taken in Athens. 56% of the pupils were found to have health problems in need of attention; above all trachoma, a serious and contagious eye disease, with which more than half of the school population was found to be afflicted. Arrangements were made with two ophthalmologists to examine all the school children and treat the cases surgically twice a week, and with a trained nurse to instill eye-drops daily as prescribed. The HKCC staff negotiated with the school principals, and supervised the sessions maintaining order and recording on cards for close follow-up. This eye treatment program was carried out in cooperation with a major Greek welfare organization.

The main treatments applied were, besides those for the eyes, surgical operations on the throat and nose (110 tonsil and adenoid operations by December 1940), several weeks' summer rest in a mountain resort (eighty benefited in 1938, over 150 in 1939), and administering of tonics. The children under care numbered 450 in March 1939. Remedial action was reinforced through home-visiting by a nurse for instructing parents in measures of prevention and hygiene. Lectures by the ophthalmologists at parents' gatherings were also resorted to for arousing awareness of their role in preserving and furthering the health condition of their offspring; moreover, parents were encouraged to attend treatment sessions—as were also the school teachers—in order to make both these groups feel more concerned in the well-being of this youth.

Antibiotics being still unknown at the time, the methods of treating trachoma were long, tedious and painful. Hence its persistence in the settlement still twenty years after its

occupants had contracted the disease in the deserts of Syria and Mesopotamia, and communicated it to their children. By June 1940, out of over 500 afflicted 240 were declared healed and were discharged; they had been under treatment for periods varying between ten and fifteen months, had had their eyelids scraped by the ophthalmologist twenty to thirty times and received instillation in their eyes on about one hundred days. The lightening of the case load now made it possible to extend treatment to adults in the family so as to reduce the risk of their children's reinfection.

#### THE PERSONNEL AND THE BASE

The Athens HKCC set-up consisted, for about three years, of two visiting ophthalmologists, one permanent Armenian secretary familiar with the area and fluent in Greek, a girl clerk, one part-time nurse, and one home visitor. In April 1941, a young Armenian was added to become subsequently the director of the Athens Branch: Yervant Djedjizian. Two rooms had been rented in the heart of Dergouti to serve as office and base of operations.

#### INVOLVEMENT IN COMMUNITY AFFAIRS

Unlike the isolated and self-contained La Gaudinière project in France, the new work in Greece was to depend very much for its effectiveness on close contacts with Armenian community agencies. These agencies were mainly the three Armenian denominational hierarchies—Apostolic, Catholic and Evangelical—which owned and operated the schools; and also the Blue Cross and the Armenian General Benevolent Union (AGBU). In 1938, Noubar became a member of the AGBU's Housing Sub-committee. This was a body cooperating with the Athens representative of the "Nansen International Office for Refugees," an offshoot of the League of Nations, in a project for the construction of 133 apartments for re-housing Armenian families still under refugee status living in the precarious settlements of the Athens area. These were destined to be pulled down in order to make the land available for urban development. Providing decent dwellings for families of Dergouti school children was indeed an objective fully germane to the HKCC program.

#### WORLD EVENTS...

While the HKCC work in Athens was thus expanding rapidly, clouds were gathering on the political horizon, with the Munich affair of September 1938, the German invasion of

Czechoslovakia in March 1939, and the landing of Italian forces in Albania soon after. These ominous events did not prevent Leila from undertaking a two-month visit to Greece which she had long been contemplating. Before the outbreak of World War II, Leila inspected the activities in process, held numerous conferences with the Tavitians, saw many personalities and even visited a charity in the island of Samos she had been interested in for many years. The work was entrusted to the care of the general assistant Miss Azad Hayrabedian, who had proved fully reliable; she would have as her adviser a mature Greek lady, head of an important international agency. The war had started! Noubar was nevertheless able to return to his job in December, and Anahide to join him in May 1940. Three days after their arrival in Athens, the German offensive westward, after several months of the “phony war”, took the world by surprise.

#### THEIR IMPACT ON THE HKCC PROGRAMS

Even though through most of the year 1940 Greece was not a belligerent, war conditions in Europe were making themselves seriously felt; for Greece, a rather arid country, depended very largely on imports for its subsistence. Cod liver oil, of which large use had been made in the schools, was no longer available; this was replaced, starting February 1940, by a daily cup of pasteurized milk distributed to between two and three hundred



*The dental clinic in Athens.*

undernourished children coming for eye treatment. This was stopped in August 1941, when milk could no longer be obtained. Another selected group numbering from forty to eighty was likewise made to drink milk before going to school every morning, from July to November 1940. This latter project was made possible through a special grant from the Ladies' Committee of the New York Chapter of AGBU.

A Danish Mission project serving 125 meals daily to needy school children was taken over by the HKCC in April 1940. This distribution was continued till December 1940.

At the end of October, Greece itself became involved in the war. In the Greek army, resisting successfully to the Italian forces in the snow-clad mountains of Albania, numerous cases of frozen limbs occurred. This led to the setting up of a central organization which gave out wool in hanks to bona fide parties undertaking to knit, for a price, socks, stockings and gloves to be sent to the soldiers at the front. Such wool was obtained by the HKCC and was distributed to some fifty Armenian women, who were thus enabled to add about 40,000 drachmae to the family income for the 2,200 woolens they produced from December 1940 to March 1941.

#### GREECE UNDER OCCUPATION

Early in April 1941, the German armored tanks broke suddenly through the Yugoslavian border, crushed all resistance, and reached Athens on April 27th. The HKCC Athens thus had to stretch as far as it could the few months' remittance it had received in advance; to this was added a most unexpected and welcome gift from the USA Legation, obtained through Mr. Archer, director-general of Near East Foundation.

The connection had its origin in Mihran Karagheusian's long standing membership on the board of directors and his frequent participation in the fund campaigns and activities of the organization, particularly in its earlier days as "Near East Relief".

#### HKCC AS A WELFARE CATALYST

The HKCC personnel in Athens had acquired experience in establishing contacts with Greek and international social and welfare agencies as well as government departments. This experience was to come in particularly handy at this juncture when the Athens Office could afford no expenditure but its employees' salaries, and faced the prospect of total stoppage within a few months.

In January 1939, a group of ladies formed the Athens Armenian Charitable Society (AACS), a non-political body for relief purposes only. They raised some money, obtained a



*A soup kitchen in Athens.*

subsidy from the Office of the High Commissioner for Refugees; but this was far from enough for a relief plan they had drawn up in consultation with the HKCC staff for the crying needs of the war-stricken settlements. They appealed to Mr. Archer for a NEF subsidy. In response a sum of \$1,000 monthly, matched by an equal amount from Mihran Karagheusian, for three consecutive months starting February 1941, was allocated to AACS for the implementation of their plan in association with AGBU. They were to render account to NEF.

One of the principal items on the AACS plan was a free meal project. Through the Office of the High Commissioner for Refugees, 1,200 daily free meals were obtained for Armenian needy families, from a newly formed Central Greek Agency operating a network of free meals for the entire country; 60,000 daily for the Athens area alone.

This free meal distribution came to an end a few months after Greece had been occupied; foodstuffs could no longer be found and transportation had become extremely difficult. The bitter period of starvation in Greece had begun!

In April 1941, a British ship loaded with ammunition was hit by German bombers in the harbor of Piraeus. The resulting violent explosion partly destroyed a near-by Armenian refugee settlement. 275 families fled to the Armenian district of Kokkinia where they found

shelter in the four schools. The AACCS came to the rescue through the HKCC which obtained free meals via the Office of the High Commissioner and improved the sanitation in the schools so as to adapt it to the needs of the new occupants.

By the end of 1940, the 133 apartments built under the League of Nations/AGBU re-housing scheme in the suburb of Nea Smyrni had all been allotted to families from several settlements, including many from Dergouti under the HKCC care. The staff would hence regularly visit the new settlement for routine treatments. In August 1940, they found a number of the inhabitants in bed with fever and shivers. They suspected malaria which had been a scourge in the country until its near eradication in recent years, largely through the efforts of the Rockefeller Foundation. The suspicion was confirmed by Dr. C. Dimisas, in charge of Malaria Control at the Ministry of Health. Dr. Dimisas was particularly keen on nipping the epidemic in the bud by making sure that the quinine and atebirin pills were being taken as prescribed. In September 1940, out of 133 houses, 116 had at least one, more often two, persons lying down with malaria. The epidemic was finally checked; but the patients' organisms, weakened by undernourishment due to the growing scarcity of food supplies on the market, fell an easy prey to other diseases, particularly beriberi.

#### UNDER WAR CONDITIONS

The HKCC Office was closed officially on May 31st 1941, and all but three employees discharged. Once more Azad was left in charge with two counselors: Miss Zoe Demetracopoulou, the Greek lady who had been asked to fill this role two years earlier and Mr. Michaelides, the legal advisor of Near East Foundation who had been very useful to the HKCC on several occasions. Azad had as helpers the young clerk Dzovig and Yervant Djedjizian, whom she was to marry in 1944. With the limited funds available she could only carry on for a few months. The trained nurse, Mrs. Israelian, the ophthalmologist Dr. Tsopellas and also Dr. Dimisas were willing to continue giving their services within the limits of their material possibilities; for all of them felt that the beneficent actions initiated should proceed, on however reduced a scale, in order more readily to be revived as soon as conditions would allow.

The only two activities the skeleton HKCC office could continue on its remaining funds were eye treatment and malaria control. As the schools did not run as from December 1941, there were very few children coming for eye instillation; the ophthalmologist would come down 2-3 times a month for checking, directing treatments and operating. In addition, however, Mrs. Israelian, whose home was in the settlement, would take care of isolated cases of eye disease, either child or adult, who would call at her door at odd times of the day. After schools had re-opened, in 1943-44, the ophthalmologist was able to re-examine 650

pupils (89% of total attending school); he found only three new cases of trachoma, all three on very young children newly admitted.

In Nea Smyrni, Dr. Dimisas continued visiting malaria patients as long as public transportation was available. The malaria epidemic had receded, but other diseases were rife resulting from acute undernourishment; in the winter of 1941–42 alone, there were forty deaths in the 150 odd families recently settled.

The food shortage had turned into famine in 1941–42; men and women were dying by dozens daily in the streets of Athens. The Head of the Greek Church appealed by radio to the world at large for urgent relief. The appeal was heard. A delegation of the International Red Cross from Geneva visited Athens to examine the situation. The occupying authorities gave assurances that they would allow food and medical supplies to enter Greece. Whereupon shipments reached the country from various neutral countries and were distributed to the population, often through soup kitchens set up by local welfare organizations, including Armenian ones. The years 1943 and 1944 were hence less tragic than the preceding two.

Armenian relief agencies became quite active in 1943. Leaving aside all partisan considerations, they joined together in efforts to rescue their famished kinsfolk through free meal distributions and free clinics. Doctors took turns in attending to patients visiting the clinics. Azad and Yervant were asked to help in organizing and running these services; they willingly did, according to the fundamental principles of the HKCC policy in Greece: unreserved cooperation with any agency striving to relieve misery.

In spite of the dire conditions, the tradition of a Christmas gathering open to all the HKCC beneficiaries was maintained. Only twenty-five attended in 1942, forty in 1943 (220 had come in 1938!). The gifts consisted of walnuts, raisins, apples, tangerines, and oranges.

The three HKCC employees were able to draw their salaries till mid-1943. As authorized by Noubar, Azad had sold whatever equipment and supplies she could in order to stretch the funds available. Azad and Yervant then started giving some private English lessons as a means of livelihood.

## RESCUED

The International Red Cross (IRC) had opened an office in Athens to supervise the distribution of the supplies it was furnishing to local relief agencies. Late in 1943, Azad and Mrs. Israelian, through their connections, succeeded in interesting IRC in their trachoma project; for this agency was precisely about to start a network of soup kitchens in the Athens area especially for children afflicted with trachoma. IRC was willing to provide food supplies if the HKCC would undertake to cook meals and feed them on the spot to underfed



trachoma sufferers. Azad and Yervant—now her fiancé—were greatly perplexed; they were eager to seize this opportunity for reviving the work and giving good food to Armenian starvelings; but they did not see how, having no funds, they could set up a soup kitchen on their narrow premises, provide the equipment and the personnel...

Just at this time providential circumstances enabled Yeraz (acronym for YERvant and AZad) to borrow the equivalent of \$1,000 from a local business man, to be repaid by the HKCC New York in US currency as soon as conditions would allow.

## THE REVIVAL

The HKCC staff, spurred by the prospect of new openings for the work, set about organizing a soup kitchen; displaying unbelievable resourcefulness in improvising the equipment and materials needed and which were absolutely not to be found on the market... The foodstuffs —beans, peas, lentils, pasta, sugar, olive oil, powdered milk, etc.—were issued from a central store house; from there they had to be conveyed—by a man-drawn cart during the first few months—over a distance of three miles of bad road. Finally, on Feb. 1st 1944, the soup kitchen started operating, on six days a week. The fifty beneficiaries of the first day were gradually increased to a maximum of over 120 in December 1945. Inspectors from the Red Cross came periodically to check; they always expressed their satisfaction at the way the project was run.

In 1944, political events seriously affected the work. With the defeat of the German armies in Russia and in France, the Greek patriotic resistance movement, which had long been latent, broke out in the summer months, bringing about violent reactions on the part of the German forces.

When British forces were landed in Greece, there was open fighting between them and communist Greek resistance forces were strongly armed and undoubtedly encouraged by the Soviet Union. After some bloody combat in and around Athens in the winter of 1944–45, the area finally remained in the hands of the British army, though the civil war between communist and pro-government Greek forces was to continue in the provinces for several more years.

Under such circumstances, the policy of the HKCC could but be the emergency and short term relief of victims of the disorders. The occupants of the burnt-down huts by the Germans in Dergouti were sheltered and fed for several weeks on the HKCC narrow premises until the huts could be rebuilt again. As communications with Head Office were re-established and funds could be transferred again, several feeding programs were added to the soup-kitchen for trachomatic children: meals were prepared for school children living too far to be able to have lunch at home; meals were also served in Nea Smyrni; the



*Athens' cup of milk, 1939.*

distribution of milk and of cod liver oil to the undernourished was resumed. Besides feeding, articles of clothing received from abroad were given out to families, as were also "CARE" gift parcels, mostly from family relatives in the USA using the HKCC office as a channel. The office also would write out case histories for the sponsorship programs which gradually developed. In the medical line, Dr. Dimisas, who was now the regular part-time doctor and medical adviser of the office, re-started regularly visiting Nea Smyrni families; these had particularly suffered from war privations inasmuch as they had just moved in when the dark period began. A regular clinic was opened in rented rooms. Medicines and surgical operations were provided as needed. Some first class surgeons were willing to lower their rates or even to operate free as a contribution to the benevolent purpose of the HKCC. School children were vaccinated against typhoid with vaccine first obtained in June 1944; eighty to start with, gradually increasing to comprise the entire school population.

In April 1946, Noubar returned to Athens to re-assume his function in the HKCC, after five years' interruption. In August, the office was moved to new, much more spacious and convenient premises still in the Dergouti settlement; the HKCC was to occupy these premises for the rest of its career in Athens. Further activities were engaged in. A much

needed dental clinic was started for school children in June 1947; an important subsidy from an American welfare agency had made this project possible. Further, a series of practical lectures with demonstrations was initiated for making school teachers more aware of the symptoms of ill health or abnormality they could detect among their pupils; they were instructed to report their observations to the doctor, for preventive action to be undertaken as needed.

A review of ten years' trachoma treatment in schools (1938-48) showed the proportion of cases to have come down from over 50% of the total to 9%. Though the measures applied were no doubt effective, a recession of the disease was observed throughout the world during the same period.

#### AT CRUISING SPEED

From 1949 to the end of the period covered by this account (1970), the Athens HKCC pursued, on a steadily diminishing scale, most of the activities mentioned in the preceding sections, and added a few others. The contraction of the work was caused by the drop in the number of Armenians in Greece from an estimated 30,000 in 1938, to 10,000 in 1969. This drop was due to emigration to Soviet Armenia in 1946-47 and to other lands thereafter. Moreover, Armenians who remained in Greece felt more permanently settled, especially after Greek citizenship had become accessible to them through legislation enacted in 1968.

By 1970, the number of school children had come down from around 1,000 in the period 1938-47 in Dergouti alone, to some 400 in the whole Athens area. Trachoma had practically ceased, as already stated, but other eye complaints continued being identified and treated: mainly conjunctivitis and blepharitis. Five schools were under the HKCC medical supervision, two of which were located in the distant settlement of Kokkinia. Dental examination and treatment likewise covered the entire school population. This project was largely subsidized by the Congregational Church World Service. A project was started in 1947, and pursued throughout the period covered, for the examination of school children's chest condition in view of detecting incipient tuberculosis and applying treatment as needed. Surgical operations on the throat, nose and ear continued as before. Typhoid vaccinations yearly to all school children were likewise pursued.

The soup kitchen, started in 1944 for trachoma sufferers, was converted with the virtual disappearance of this eye disease into a canteen for school children in need of supplementary feeding; 100 to 150 benefited, until 1967, when the project was terminated as being no longer justified. Milk supplied in powdered form by AGBU was mixed, warmed, and distributed by the HKCC to as many as 400 children in several schools far apart.

The Athens HKCC's role as a "welfare catalyst", earlier described, was resumed upon the

return to normal peace conditions and very much expanded in the years 1947 to about 1957. During this period many welfare agencies were glad to have found—for the channeling of their offerings, food, clothing, medicines or sponsorship—an organization such as the HKCC; its staff's close acquaintance with the population, its professionalism and reputed integrity could ensure the best possible use of their gifts. The principal agencies thus served or cooperated with were: The Swiss Friends of the Armenians, the Danish Mission, the Congregational Church World Service, the World Council of Churches, the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation, the U. N. High Commissioner for Refugees, the Armenian General Benevolent Union and the Armenian Blue Cross.

A new activity in which the Athens HKCC lived up to its reputation of impartiality and cooperativeness was the Joint Summer Camp project. In 1948, the HKCC persuaded two major agencies, AGBU and the Blue Cross, to join in setting up a much needed summer camp for underfed boys and girls of school age. During ten successive summers the camp operated harmoniously, thanks to the HKCC's binding link. It thus provided several weeks' fresh air, good food and outdoor activities to two to three hundred children at each season. In 1958, each one of the two agencies decided to run its own separate camp. The HKCC then agreed to help each one of them separately. This meant doubling the burden which the HKCC staff had to bear for setting up the camp and pulling it down, for storing the equipment, as well as for providing medical supervision during the sessions. The directors were nonetheless willing to assume it, and thus succeeded in maintaining friendly relations with both sides. The two separate camps were repeated each summer on the same terms until the late 1960s, with the HKCC helping both parties equally.

#### REFUGEE RE-HOUSING

Mention was made earlier of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees' interest in settling the refugees on a permanent basis in the countries where they were then residing. In 1958, the Athens representative of this agency proposed to the HKCC a joint re-housing scheme. After lengthy negotiations and much red tape an agreement was reached; lay-outs were drawn by an architect, and plots of land were bought near Nea Smyrni. Fifty apartments of different sizes were to be built, financed 72% by the HKCC and 28% by UNHCR; the HKCC share would be refunded by the occupants in monthly installments over a period of twelve to twenty years, while the UNHCR share was non-refundable. At the end of the period and upon payment of all dues, the occupants would become proprietors of their apartments. A new plot had to be purchased. Construction started in December 1961, and was terminated in two stages, 1962–63. The candidates were selected and approved by UNHCR and the Ministry of Welfare. The buildings were inaugurated officially on

June 24th 1964, in the presence of officials of the three parties concerned and Miss L. Karagheusian who unveiled a plaque bearing an explanatory inscription in Greek, English and Armenian.

After the fifty families had entered the apartments allotted to them, the Athens office organized a follow-up system in order to ensure the best possible use of their new living quarters. Most of the families came from the ramshackle huts of the refugee areas. The change of environment to decent dwellings called for constant efforts on the part of the HKCC staff to inculcate into the new settlers the notion of proper maintenance and upkeep of their dwellings. Meetings were periodically called by the HKCC director and held in each of the seven blocks of the project to discuss matters of common interest and assign tasks such as the daily cleaning of the staircases, landings, and the regular care of the gardens; tasks which were unknown to the newcomers.

On her visits to the field, Miss L. Karagheusian would call on many of the homes personally. She would usually express satisfaction at the cleanness and neatness of the homes and at the gardens in full bloom. A survey dated November 1970, noted changes in the fifty families' living conditions after six to eight years of occupancy: a majority of them had equipped their kitchens with electric ranges and refrigerators; built cupboards; repainted or whitewashed their walls; put in a telephone; many had also bought washing machines, radios, television sets; a few had even bought cars. It was also noted in the survey that there was a much greater diversity of occupations among the breadwinners than in the past, when there had been a predominance of cobblers. As citizens they now had access to many occupations from which they had been denied as refugees.

The joint UNHCR-HKCC re-housing project in Nea Smyrni, which took most of the staff's time in the 1960's, was undoubtedly one of the most successful of all refugee re-settlement ventures in the Athens area. It was often visited and pointed out as a model with respect to construction, to educational action on the inhabitants, and also with respect to the payment of monthly dues. These had started being collected from the very first month months after the family had moved in; lapses were much more frequent under the latter system. The total cost of the project was about \$300,000, of which \$65,000 were contributed by UNHCR, leaving roughly \$235,000 as the HKCC's share. The families' monthly installments ranged, according to the size of the apartment, from eight to eighteen dollars.

#### THE ATHENS STAFF

In the summer of 1948, the Tavitians left Athens to assume charge of new HKCC projects developing in Lebanon and Syria. Yervant Djedjizian became director of the Athens Branch of HKCC, with his wife Azad as his close assistant. They were well seconded by Dzovig

Topdjian. Mrs. A. Israelian continued serving as assistant to the ophthalmologist and also to Dr. Dimisas, respectively in the treatment of eye diseases and in the medical supervision of school children. She also initiated a first-aid course, gave lectures on health subjects to parents and teenagers, and kept on arranging for surgical operations at reduced fees by some of the best specialists in the city. She resigned to retire in 1958.

In 1961, Yervant, in his middle forties, began showing signs of a slowly progressing incapacitating disease which turned out to be multiple sclerosis. By October 1963, he had become totally unable to exercise his function. By then, most of the activities had dwindled to the point where Azad alone could handle them with her helpers. She was kept fully busy, however, by the housing project and faced courageously the unexpected difficulties it was beset with.

In July 1972, Yervant passed away. *“He was deeply mourned... His part in the building up of the Karagheusian work in Athens will remain unforgotten. His skill as an organizer, his Christian character, his untiring perseverance and inexhaustible patience, as well as his kindly disposition and cheerful sense of humor, had won for our Agency in Athens the confidence and goodwill of all. HKCC is indebted to Yervant, ably and devotedly seconded by his wife, not only for the continuance of its activity through the four tragic years of war and famine, 1941–45, under unbelievably difficult conditions, but also for the consolidation of our Agency’s position through the reputation of efficiency, integrity, impartiality and cooperativeness which it acquired both in the Armenian community and with Greek and international relief authorities.”* (quoted from N. Tavitian’s annual report for 1972).



## CHAPTER 4 - LEBANON AND SYRIA

(1941-1948)

#### BACKGROUND TO HKCC INVOLVEMENT IN LEBANON AND SYRIA

After Turkey had been defeated in the First World War, Armenian survivors of the 1915–16 deportation were able to return to their native towns and villages (1918–1919). In the following three years, however, the Turkish nationalist movement, started under the leadership of Mustafa Kemal, grew in importance until it finally gained the upper hand. Armenians felt unsafe and abandoned their homes or were once more ousted therefrom. Those in Constantinople, Smyrna and the western areas of Turkey left for Greece; those of the interior of Asia Minor and the eastern provinces escaped to the nearest countries where they could feel safe: Lebanon and Syria, both under French Mandate. 50,000 of them settled there, mostly in the outskirts of the principal cities: Aleppo, Beirut, Tripoli, Latakieh. The underdeveloped, mainly rural economies of these countries were unable to absorb such a mass of additional labor; hence, the miserable conditions prevailing among these refugee families had little improved in the following two decades.

In 1938–39, 20,000 more were added to this mass: the Sandjak of Alexandretta, a strip lying in the North of Syria, having been given back to Turkey, Armenians living in this territory had to leave it once again; they trekked to re-settle, likewise in Lebanon or Syria. When the Second World War broke out in 1939, there were about 70,000 Armenian refugees living under precarious conditions in these two countries.

On the local level relief had been forthcoming through the French mandate authorities, AGBU, the Swiss Friends of the Armenians (SFA), the American Red Cross, Near East Foundation (NEF) and others. Dr. Bayard Dodge, President of the American University of Beirut (AUB) and a good friend of Mihran Karagheusian, had been personally instrumental in inducing some of these agencies to intervene. He had also encouraged the many Armenian doctors and nurses of his Medical Faculty to give their services to these people in distress. In addition, he had made many of the faculty's facilities available for this purpose, notably the pharmacy, at a time when medicines were scarce on account of the war raging in Europe.

What made the condition of most Armenian refugee groups in Lebanon particularly tragic, was the outbreak of malaria in their areas of settlement: along the Beirut River, in Ras-ul-Ain near Tyre and particularly in Anjar. Anjar lay 40 miles east of Beirut; the French mandate authorities had expropriated there a large tract of land in view of establishing a rural community for some 4,000 of the Sandjak refugees. Here these authorities had also

started building for them small individual houses which, however, were unfinished in the summer of 1939, when the group arrived.\* The severe winter, at an altitude of 1,000 meters, followed by the malaria epidemic in the succeeding summer, took a heavy toll on the Anjar population, especially among their infants and children.

#### THE ANJAR CLINIC

Local welfare agencies turned their attention to Anjar. In October 1940, a children's clinic was opened by a group of AUB doctors and nurses encouraged by President Dodge, who had secured its financing through Mihran Karagheusian. It was to operate as an HKCC project, the first under this label in Lebanon—although Mihran had on many earlier occasions contributed personally important sums to relief projects for refugees, usually through Dr. Dodge. The purpose of this clinic was to be not only treatment of sick children, but also the education of mothers in the care of their children, and also for the application of preventive measures such as immunizations. An AUB pediatrician and a graduate nurse were put in charge. Besides the pediatrician's examination of cases and their treatment (100–180 cases per month with one weekly session) children were also weighed for follow-up of their growth, vaccinated against smallpox and typhoid; free medicines were issued, milk was given out, superficial injuries were dressed, home visits were paid by the nurse for checking on treatments and for general instruction in child care. The annual HKCC budget rose progressively from \$1,440 in 1941, to \$4,000 in 1947; in addition, \$2,600 were spent in improving the premises in 1944–45. These amounts do not include contributions from other agencies, including AGBU gifts, principally for infants' milk.

#### FIRST HKCC PROJECTS IN BEIRUT

In 1941, Mihran Karagheusian, again through President Dodge, started contributing to several projects in Beirut for meeting the health needs of the Armenian refugee population. The most important one was a children's clinic in a Beirut Armenian settlement, Bourdj-Hammoud, for which the HKCC would provide \$3,000 annually. It was to be administered by a committee composed of eight members, mostly Armenian, appointed by President Dodge. They were AUB medical and nursing personalities: a representative of AGBU, a representative of the French Medical Faculty and the AUB treasurer.

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\* This group came from the villages of Musa Dagh, made famous by Franz Werfel's novel "The Forty Days of Musa Dagh."



The clinic opened formally in November 1941. A pediatrician, a graduate nurse and auxiliary personnel were engaged on a full-time basis. Although the general conception and the purpose of this clinic were similar to those of the Anjar clinic, their admission policies were to differ somewhat. The 40,000 strong population of Bourdj-Hammoud, where the Beirut clinic was located, comprised roughly 25,000 Armenians, 10,000 Moslems and 5,000 Christians of other denominations, unlike the exclusively Armenian population of Anjar. The Beirut clinic was to be open to all sick children of needy families of the neighborhood. Emphasis would be laid, as in Anjar, on prevention and education in hygiene for mothers and also for school teachers. Prevention and educational action, however, could only be applied to Armenian cases.

The diseases most commonly met were digestive tract disorders in summer, infections of respiratory organs in winter; and diseases due to faulty development and under-nourishment throughout the year; in addition to infectious diseases—mostly malaria and typhoid fever.

General health supervision of school children was soon added to the program. This comprised the annual examination of the entire student body of the schools, recording of findings and follow-up of dysfunctions and defects, in cooperation with the family. This project covered between three and six hundred boys and girls from six to fourteen.

Trachoma and other eye diseases were as rampant among Beirut refugee school children. Under the direction of AUB ophthalmologist Dr. Baghdassarian, treatment was applied both in the clinic and in schools. In the years 1942–47, the number of trachoma sufferers dropped considerably from a maximum of 140 clinic cases subjected to 6,000 treatments to only ten who received 500 treatments. In the same period, the number of school children treated varied between a minimum of 250 in two schools (1941), and a maximum of 1,300 in eight schools (1943). In 1946, the number had dropped to 680 in eleven schools.

The diseases and defects observed both in the clinic and in the schools pointed to poor sanitation in the environment as one of the principal causes. Malaria has already been mentioned; it was spread by mosquitoes breeding in the undrained Beirut River bed. Some latrines had been provided by AGBU for the refugees arriving from the Sandjak in 1939, but their number and capacity were inadequate, and there had hardly been any maintenance. The dwellings were improvised shacks made of random boards, of flattened out petroleum cans or of corrugated metal sheets. The school buildings were just as bad. Garbage collection was practically non-existent on most of the area; a very defective sewer network served only certain sections of the area.

In 1944–45, the HKCC contributed \$2,500 for some sanitation improvement projects: nine schools were provided with latrines, urinals, washing troughs, septic tanks and water reservoirs. AGBU had also contributed to the cost of these jobs. Stagnant water surfaces around the Beirut River bed were sprayed to prevent the breeding of malaria mosquitoes.

In 1941, the clinic budget had been \$3,000; wide acceptance by the public had resulted in the expansion of the clinic's services; Dr. Dodge was able to obtain a corresponding increase in the HKCC's annual allowance, which thus reached \$6,600 in 1947.

#### ALEPPO

In 1940, the miserable condition of the refugees from the Sandjak reaching Aleppo had moved Mrs. Altounyan, the English wife of the founder and director of one of the city's oldest and best private hospitals, to appeal to Mihran Karagheusian for a relief fund which she undertook to personally manage. The outcome was a noon meal for four to five hundred needy Armenian school children of the city. The project, which was run on an annual allowance of \$4,800 to \$5,300, filled a great need. It was continued till 1949.

A second Aleppo venture was the so-called "Anonymous Donor Project." Vartan Jinishian, a New York rug merchant and one-time partner in the A. & M. Karagheusian business, had entrusted a total sum of \$30,000 to the HKCC, between 1946 and 1948, to be used for relief of needy Armenians in Aleppo. He insisted on his name remaining unmentioned so that he might not be pestered with appeals. Hence the "Anonymous" designation of his project. Leon Zenian, founder of the Sunday Schools of the Armenian Apostolic Church and a good friend of the Karagheusians, was asked to manage this sum for the purpose in view as best he considered. He was well acquainted with the Armenian communities of Lebanon and Syria, he himself being a long time resident of Beirut. He set up a closely-knit committee representing all three Armenian denominations. This Anonymous Donor Committee, in consultation with Zenian, decided to help widows with children under twelve by providing them with food, clothing, and medical care. Some forty such widows having fifty-seven children in all were thus being helped in 1948.

#### 'REPATRIATION'

The migratory movement to Soviet Armenia (1946-7) did not have any marked effect on the HKCC activities, even though one third of the Anjar settlers had joined the group departing from Lebanon. The clinic load, be it in Anjar or in Beirut, hardly showed any drop; the number of people needing the services which these clinics could render was large enough to fill the places of those who had left.

## CHAPTER 5 - LEBANON - BEIRUT (1948-1970)

### A FULL TIME MANAGEMENT FOR AN EXPANDED PROGRAM

In 1945–48, the increased the HKCC activities in Lebanon and Syria could no longer be managed by volunteers provided mostly by the American University of Beirut (AUB). Moreover, President Dodge having retired in 1947/8, was no longer there to coordinate and stimulate their action. Hence the assignment of the Tavitiants to Beirut as directors for this area; Yervant and Azad Djedjizian were left in charge of Athens. The Tavitiants landed in Beirut in August 1948. They were guided in their first steps by a Near East Foundation worker, and introduced to the field by Levon Zenian.

The Beirut Clinic Committee appointed by President Dodge, though now to be relieved of its administrative function, was to remain as an advisory board; but its President, Dr. H. Yeni(komshian), would continue representing the HKCC in official relations with the government. With funds and authority now deriving solely from the HKCC, representation on the Committee of the French Faculty and of AGBU was no longer relevant; so that the committee as reconstituted comprised Dr. Yeni, President; Dr. A. Baghdassarian, vice-President; Me. H. Chamlian, legal advisor; and two ex-officio members of the AUB faculty, in re-affirmation of the HKCC's "genetic link".

### THE FOUNDER'S DEATH

The passing away of Mihran Karagheusian in October 1948, so soon after the change of management, created considerable commotion in Armenian circles. Mihran had become almost a legendary figure through his numerous charities.

A solemn memorial service was held in the Antelias Cathedral, led by Catholicos Karekin I Hovsepian in person. Similar services followed in Beirut, Anjar, Aleppo and Athens, thus starting a tradition which was observed throughout the years.

Incidentally, these memorial services, followed by a gathering of local personalities of all groups and allegiances invited to the celebration, furnished occasions for affirming the HKCC's impartiality, and readiness to associate, cooperate and serve, irrespective of political, religious or other considerations.

This came as a surprise to many; so exceptional seemed, in the Beirut community context of the time, an Armenian welfare agency not only financially independent of public support

but also unlinked to any national movement. A most valuable asset, owed to the inspiration of the founder.

#### THE HKCC BUDGET

The financial resources of the HKCC greatly increased with Mihran Karagheusian's demise. The annual appropriation for Lebanon and Syria of \$20,000 in 1948, was raised to \$60,000 in 1960, and to \$118,000 in 1970. A considerable expansion of the program was thus made possible.

#### THE BEIRUT CLINIC; ITS RAMIFICATIONS

With full-time professional attention now available, the Beirut clinic's activities gained in depth and scope from 1948 on. In depth, through closer attention to procedures and introduction of more refined methods in the registration of cases, in the recording of findings, in the follow-up on treatments prescribed and in the investigation of family conditions; through closer and more frequent contacts and exchanges between the management and the personnel as well as with other agencies in related fields. The following activities were expanded or newly started:

- Immunizations in the clinic were increased considerably, up to 8,000, mostly against polio, diphtheria, and smallpox.
- Larger quantities and a greater variety of free medicines became available beginning in 1963, thanks to a system of state subsidy.
- A weekly distribution of powdered milk for undernourished babies became a permanent feature; it was restricted to some forty to fifty of the neediest, and was accompanied by the nurse's instructions and general counseling.
- A graduate social worker was engaged for home-visiting and family case work; average yearly total of visits roughly 300. In the late 1960s, family case work and assistance had become a dominant part of the social workers' daily schedule, in response to deteriorating social conditions due in a measure to the large number of Armenians immigrating from Syria into Lebanon, also to overcrowding, housing shortage after successive fires in one of the settlements, and political uncertainty resulting in growing unemployment.
- A weekly "well baby" consultation hour was initiated, at which the nurse rather than the more intimidating doctor would give advice to mothers coming of their own accord with their babies in non-diseased condition. The nurse's sisterly,

informal manner would bring the health message home to the mothers, more receptive in such circumstances than when worrying over their baby's ailing condition.

- In the late 1960s, a laboratory technician was being employed on the premises for stool examinations for the detection of intestinal parasites in school children; and also for blood and urine tests prescribed by the pediatrician.

During the period covered by this chapter, the clinic's patient load varied between 1,700 and 2,500 individual children from 1,300–1,700 families. The most significant change was that of the proportion of non-Armenian to Armenian families applying to the clinic: one out of seven in 1950, to one out of three in 1963. This reflects the gradual increase of the Moslem element in the local population, especially after many Armenians had left for Soviet Armenia in 1947. However, due to the differences in language and customs, Armenian families could make much more use of the preventive and educational possibilities of the clinic than could the other groups. A marked improvement was indeed observed in the late 1960's in Armenian mothers' child care practices.

## THE SOCIAL CENTER

As a further step towards mothers' education in hygiene and child care, courses in these subjects were started for girls of the area in their teens; most of them would stay at home pending marriage, after having graduated from primary school. At that age they were likely to be more receptive to instruction than later when beset by family tasks. However, hygiene and child care would hardly sound attractive to teen age girls as subjects of study; hence, courses in English and embroidery were offered as bait. The appeal of English lay in its usefulness as a means of communication, including with relatives in the USA; that of embroidery in the possibility it gave, at the time, of earning some money. Registering for English or embroidery compulsorily involved following courses in child care and general hygiene.

Thus came into being the Social Center where child care and general hygiene were taught by the graduate nurse, embroidery by a young girl who was an expert in the art, and English by the Tavitians. As and when instructors could be found, other activities were added: home economics, Arabic, dressmaking, cooking, folk-dancing, first-aid. The dressmaking class would turn out an average of fifteen graduates each year. Interest in home economics spread to the near-by Armenian school where the HKCC was asked to set up a course for the uppermost class. The cooking class on the HKCC premises, of about a dozen girls—including occasionally a young housewife or two from the area—would wind up the annual course with a banquet served to a few distinguished guests and consisting of

dishes the group had learned to prepare during the twenty-five sessions they had followed. A team of Social Center girls was trained in folk dances by the wife of an AUB professor and was able to participate regularly in the annual Folk-dancing Festival held on the AUB grounds. A number of Social Center girls followed the first-aid course of the Lebanese Red Cross, and in 1956, one of them came out first in the country-wide annual contest; she received her prize from the hands of the president of the Lebanese Republic.

The Social Center became very popular; each year as many as seventy to eighty girls would register for these courses. Besides the direct benefit the girls could derive from the courses, they were given an opportunity of showing initiative, as in organizing parties and events. Through their contact with American community ladies volunteering to spend a weekly hour or two in English conversation with them, at the center or in these ladies' homes; through their joining the folk-dancing and first-aid groups; the girls' minds had opportunities of opening up to views and prospects wider than those they could entertain in their very traditional and confined environment.

Later, a section was started for young working men comprising evening classes in English and Arabic; thirty to forty of them would register; they formed an autonomous association and developed such activities as panel debates, recitals, theatricals, and also hikes, volley-ball and ping-pong competitions.

#### THE CHILDREN'S PLAYGROUND

Early in 1949, a Mrs. Rosine Hagopian, Armenian American, was referred to the Tavitiens as likely to help her out in a scheme for a children's playground she had determined to start when she saw Armenian children romping about in the mud and on garbage heaps because they had nowhere else to play. Land was expensive, the houses in the area were very closely built, leaving little open space. Mrs. Hagopian's proposal came as a challenge which the HKCC was willing to take up. One of the Armenian school principals was persuaded to let his backyard be used temporarily for the purpose. Between sixty and 120 boys and girls aged five to thirteen were made to gather there twice a week, and allowed to play with a see-saw, a swing and a sand-box, under the supervision of a young girl leader. Later, a larger plot was obtained; handicrafts were introduced: fretwork, cutting out pictures from magazines, cardboard work, embroidery for girls. A ping-pong table indoors and a volley-ball net outdoors were features subsequently added.

The HKCC playground gained considerable popularity. In the 1960s, it was host on several occasions to American Community School "Brownies" for joint games.

In 1957, a young Arab student in social work of the Beirut College for Women, who was doing her field work assignment at the HKCC, started on its premises a separate play-



*The children's playground, 1958.*

ground for Arab children of the neighborhood. Between 25 and 35 of them would gather at each of the 40-50 yearly sessions held.

### SCHOOL HEALTH

This program was at first restricted to a single, very poor school; the purpose being to deal more thoroughly than had been possible with a larger number. Every one of the 280 pupils was exhaustively examined by the doctor in morning sessions extending over several months. The doctor was assisted by a nurse; the child's mother would be present in order to be informed and counseled. Special efforts had also to be exerted to integrate this health supervision program into the school routine; or the school principal and teachers would sometimes resent this interruption in their pupils' time-table.

By and by, the value of the program came to be appreciated and soon other school principals applied for inclusion. A second school could be added in 1957, seven more in 1969, bringing up the total to some 1,800. The findings were recorded on individual cards; the most frequently observed problems were intestinal parasites, nose and throat growths,

enuresis and undernourishment; remedial action was implemented as far as possible and followed up by the nurse, with financial assistance within budget limits.

Typhoid vaccination was extended to practically all the schools of the area (around thirty, comprising roughly 8,000 boys and girls). Following exhaustive medical consultations, this was replaced in 1968 by polio vaccination, considered more effective.

Eye treatment covered fifteen schools (4,500 children) at its maximum. The drop in the incidence of trachoma continued steadily throughout; it was believed to have been greatly fostered by improvements in sanitary conditions, in particular by the reduction of dust due to the tarmacking of roads. Vision testing was initiated in 1957; around twenty schools—about 5,000 boys and girls—were tested, correction prescribed where needed and followed up. For example, in 1969, out of the total tested, 282 cases were referred to a specialist; of these 123 were provided with glasses—the HKCC often participating in the cost.

#### ENVIRONMENTAL SANITATION; SCHOOL BUILDINGS

The HKCC's efforts to induce local authorities to provide regular garbage collection, drainage of stagnant water surfaces, even with the active support of the World Health Organization and the AUB School of Public Health, proved quite fruitless. Some improvement was observed only from 1952 on, when Bourdj-Hammoud was set up as a separate municipality with an energetic and objective Armenian mayor at its head. By 1955, the cases of disease ascribable to unsanitary environment had considerably decreased, partly due also to the greater availability of antibiotics on the market, and of their wider use in the clinic. As regards school sanitation, the HKCC continued exercising supervision over the maintenance of the washing facilities, urinals and toilets of a few of the most poorly provided schools, through a man paying visits, instructing the janitors and furnishing cleaning supplies.

A fund-collecting campaign through AGBU initiated by Miss L. Karagheusian in 1952, as well as her personal donations, brought some improvement in the general material condition of the schools and, accessorially, in that of their sanitary installations.

#### THE PREMISES

In September 1949, the clinic moved to more spacious, likewise rented quarters near by, in the heart of the population served. However, more space was needed for the expanded activities. At this juncture, the Swiss Friends of the Armenians (SFA), with whom the Athens office had had frequent dealings, who were also very active in Beirut, offered the



HKCC the free use of a property they owned in the same area and which had become redundant through the reduction of their activities. This property, Emmanuel House, consisted of a two-story, rather shabby building which had served as a home for the aged, and an adjoining yard. The offer was accepted with gratitude. The upper story was still occupied, but the ground floor and the adjoining yard provided enough space for the social center activities and for the playground. The clinic, however, remained in the rented flat.

In 1955, the SFA decided to sell Emmanuel House, first choice being proposed to the HKCC. After some hesitation, Head Office took the option. The property was registered in the name of the HKCC New York. The flimsy old building was pulled down and a new one was put up consisting of two stories and a flat roof which could be used for laundry purposes. The ground floor became the center of all educational and social activities, including the home economics classroom and kitchen and a stage for theatricals; the yard was used as the children's playground, while the clinic, waiting room, nurse's office and storage space were moved to the floor above early in 1957. In the course of the ensuing nine years, adjoining small properties were also bought, bringing the total area occupied by the HKCC to slightly less than 10,000 sq. ft. which had cost roughly the equivalent of \$35,000.

## PUBLIC RELATIONS

The HKCC Beirut clinic, or better, Child Health and Welfare Center, was often visited by personalities and groups in the field of health and welfare. An AUB class in public health would be led once each year to the center on appointment and given explanations about its activities, objectives and methods. Beirut College for Women classes in sociology and social work likewise visited the center quite often to be acquainted with the social environment. Several students of these classes came regularly for their field work credits.

The World Health Organization representative in Beirut was also in frequent contact with the director in connection with environmental sanitation problems.

The HKCC work also came to be known in government circles. In 1949, it was invited to participate in a meeting of regional non-governmental welfare agencies held under United Nations auspices; in 1950, to a social seminar of Arab states held in Cairo.

In 1967, the Jinishian Memorial Fund started operating in Beirut and Aleppo; the HKCC directors and personnel were called upon to help the newly formed committee in its first steps in the field of social assistance; they readily responded to the call.

Through its actions as well as through articles in Armenian papers signed by Anahide Tavitian, the HKCC played an important part in acquainting the Armenian community, especially the well-to-do category, with social work in general and as applied in the local context; and also with primary school attendance problems which had escaped attention.

## CHAPTER 6 - LEBANON - ANJAR (1948-1970)

### INTRODUCTORY

Some time after the American University doctors and nurses had set the Anjar clinic going in 1940, its administration was transferred to the Near East Foundation (NEF). This agency's local director was Mr. Leonti Feldmahn, a seventy-year old "White" Russian gentleman. The Beirut Clinic Committee had no responsibility for the Anjar clinic, even though both clinics were being financed by the HKCC. The funds were channeled separately, through AUB for Beirut, through NEF for Anjar.

In 1950, NEF decided to withdraw from Lebanon. By virtue of an agreement between the boards in New York, the HKCC took over the NEF responsibilities in Anjar together with the ownership of the equipment. The transfer became effective February 15, 1951.

This meant the addition of the following activities to those under the Beirut directors' authority: the pediatric clinic, malaria control, sanitation, milk marketing, recreation and a children's clinic in the near by Moslem village of Mejdal.

Mr. Feldmahn as well as the half dozen employees now on the HKCC payroll would go on managing the projects as in the past; the Beirut directors would pay weekly visits to confer and to exercise overall supervision.

In 1961, Mr. Feldmahn had to resign, after a very full career. His successor was John Mesrobian who had the great advantage of being fluent in both Armenian and Arabic.

Significant happenings in the chronicles of the Anjar village during the period under review were the extension of apple orchards, which became an important source of income for the village from 1960 on; the distribution of electric current through connection to the public network in 1962; and finally at about this last date, the construction of a fine new church building replacing the earlier shanty.

### THE ANJAR CLINIC

At the time of the transfer to the HKCC, this clinic was staffed with a resident physician, a graduate nurse, and a practical nurse to assist her. During the years when the malaria epidemic had raged, a resident physician had been a necessity; but by 1953, when the general health of the Anjar population had returned to a "non-emergency" situation, a physician holding consultation hours three mornings a week was to prove quite adequate

for the pediatric needs of a population of 5,000. The nurse, on the other hand, as well as her assistant, had their homes in the village. In addition, a number of village girls were given, one at a time, the opportunity of serving six months in the clinic so as to acquire elementary notions and practices in nursing which they could then spread to their neighborhood.

Around 2,000 cases would be seen annually by the physician; the patient load consisted of 500 odd babies and children under twelve.

Great stress had been laid, in the days when American University volunteers had served the clinic, on preventive and educational measures. The emphasis was maintained throughout the succeeding years.

A maternity service had been started by the AUB volunteers and was continued by NEF. A graduate midwife took charge of deliveries; she also held pre-natal consultations with mothers. This service was continued under the new management.

The infant mortality in 1944, soon after the malaria epidemic, stood at 272%; by 1950, it had dropped to 87%.

In 1952–3, the practice was started by the clinic physician of examining the children of the two Anjar schools for detecting conditions requiring attention; parents were informed and advised to take measures, in the application of which the HKCC would participate.

In 1956, some social activities were initiated by Beirut Social Center girls for the benefit of their Anjar sisters: dressmaking and needlework groups, cooking classes, folk-dancing. The remoteness of Anjar was the principal reason why these activities could not develop into a coherent program as in Beirut. However, the ultimate purpose of raising the level of motherhood in Anjar was also being pursued and attained in a good measure in the clinic itself through Dr. B. Minassian's contact; he would give time talking and explaining to mothers; they did show signs, by the end of the period reviewed, of greater awareness in the care of their children.

#### MALARIA CONTROL; SANITATION

In 1940–42, the very severe malaria epidemic of Anjar had been successfully curbed through the joint efforts of the French authorities, the AGBU, AUB and others. However, there were still in 1948–50 isolated cases of the disease, and the menace persisted. Mr. Feldmahn had organized a system of close supervision of water surfaces in and around the village. However, the sanitary control of the environment is, in the nature of things, the duty of a public, rather than that of a private, body. In 1954, following repeated approaches, the Ministry of Hygiene finally took over the responsibility for malaria control in the Beka, the region wherein lay Anjar. Mr. Feldmahn's team continued none the less supervising for several years the village and its immediate surroundings.

Water for the village was supplied through conduits from springs one-and-a-half mile distant; at first there were only a few public fountains where women could come to fill their pitchers; but in 1951–52, the municipality was able to build a distribution network leading to individual homes. Upon the municipality's request, Mr. Feldmahn's team would, as far as the budget permitted, ensure the maintenance of the system, in particular by cleaning the leaves and rubbish which accumulated on the surface of the reservoir in which the spring water collected. In addition this team also kept an eye on irrigation canals, repaired any damage and sprayed insecticide.

Garbage collection remained deficient; a cart and donkey with a driver were provided by Mr. Feldmahn for this purpose, but by 1955, only few housewives would take the trouble to lay aside the home refuse in a sack or a pail ready for the collector's round. Even in later years, no more than about one half of the housewives would pile up their refuse and deliver it to the collector. As from 1962, the municipality assumed half the cost of this as well as of all other the HKCC services in Anjar relating to sanitation.

#### MILK MARKETING

In 1947–48, there were an estimated 100–150 milk cows in Anjar. Mr. Feldmahn had obtained through his NEF employers an appropriation of \$3,000 from the HKCC for the purchase of a truck to convey daily to Beirut, for sale at a better price than could be obtained in rural surroundings, the milk produced by these cows. In November 1948, hardly 300 pounds were being transported; for 1949, the daily average was 1,000 pounds; during the 1960's, it reached a peak of 3,000.

Milk production was then the most important source of income of a large proportion of the villagers until it was superseded by apple orchards in the early 1960's. The number of cows kept in Anjar rose from an estimated 150 in 1947–8 to 610 in 1954. In the 1960's, quality requirements became increasingly stringent. In 1966–67, an "agricultural extension service" was started by the HKCC for inducing producers to better feed and manage their herds; to submit them to regular veterinary supervision; to apply artificial insemination. Spot inspections were carried out in the barns for testing the purity and quality of the milk at the source. Cooling and storing installations were set up at the collecting center.

A number of agencies—President Harry Truman's Point Four Program in the 1950's, and later the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (UNFAO), a Danish dairy mission and the Lebanese Ministry of Agriculture's services—were all very helpful to the HKCC in its endeavors to benefit Anjar milk producers.

## RECREATION

In 1948, Mr. Feldmahn was able to obtain a small appropriation from the HKCC through NEF enabling him to pay the salary of a young teacher in Anjar for leading a modest recreation project. In the parish school premises, this leader would guide and supervise, several afternoons and evenings in the week, a few dozen children occupying themselves with outdoor games and sports, hobbies and handicrafts. However limited in its means and possibilities, a change in many Anjar children could be noted, according to Mr. Feldmahn, after two years' operation: "*They were more sociable, less self-centered, more disciplined and much cleaner*". The project was terminated in 1964, as the leader was no longer available and other possibilities of recreation became available in Anjar.

## THE MEJDEL CHILDREN'S CLINIC

Mejdel was the nearest village to Anjar. It lay two miles to the south west, had a population of 3,000, all Moslem Sunnites. NEF had started a rudimentary clinic, possibly with a view to "balancing" the favors bestowed upon Anjar with some benefit to the near by indigenous population; so as to forestall in a measure any possible feelings of envy. The HKCC had the choice of refusing to take over this project, but considered it wiser not to.

The permanent personnel consisted of one resident graduate nurse midwife and a village woman helper. The only medical presence was that of the Anjar physician on two afternoons a week—reduced to one in 1954. During the week, the graduate nurse would receive the mothers with their babies, examine, diagnose and administer the treatment according to her best judgment. For cases which she judged beyond her, she would advise the mother to return on the doctor's next consultation day. If she thought the case urgent, she would instruct the mother to take the child to the earliest medical consultation hour in Anjar.

1,300–1,500 cases were seen annually by the doctor in about one hundred sessions. The nurse-midwife would deliver seventy to eighty babies during the year.

Because of the language barrier and of the remoteness of the village, the Mejdel clinic program could not be much developed. Its principal value resided in the permanent presence of a graduate nurse. In 1968, the HKCC temporarily turned over the Mejdel clinic to a Swiss Evangelical Mission, paying an annual compensation equivalent to the last full year's operating expenses. The mission provided a graduate nurse who commuted daily from Anjar. The doctor remained unchanged. The clinic was thus re-activated. Alterations were made in the premises and running water was brought in.

## CHAPTER 7 - SYRIA (1948-1970)

### FIRST MEASURES

It was once again L. Zenian's helpfulness and excellent contacts with Armenian communities which enabled the Tavitians to find a director for Syria who was to serve the HKCC most devotedly and effectively during over thirty years (1949–81), until his untimely death. Thanks to Kevork Nersoyan, the HKCC was to develop in Aleppo a program, much less extensive than in Beirut, but fully coherent. Of the two HKCC activities operating in Aleppo in 1948, the soup kitchen for school children was terminated in 1949.

### 'ANONYMOUS DONOR PROJECT'

This was the second HKCC involvement in Aleppo. It was to continue being administered by the committee formed by L. Zenian, with the Tavitians as advisers and consultants. The newly appointed HKCC Aleppo director was elected member and secretary of the committee. In this capacity, he was to assume many of the tasks entailed in implementing the program.

Upon the taking over by the HKCC of a children's clinic, the mothers under the Anonymous Donor sponsorship were instructed to refer their sick children to the clinic pediatrician. The cost of prescriptions and treatments would be assumed by the committee.

Each year, for the renewal of the list of beneficiaries, the committee members would spend hours of their free time visiting needy families in view of the final selection of the worthiest. Such dedication as theirs would hardly have been met with in Beirut; the tradition of voluntary welfare work had remained much more alive in the Aleppo Armenian community.

In 1953, a very full report of three years' activity was prepared by the committee and sent to New York, where it was shown to Vartan Jinishian himself. His interest was aroused and he was moved to increase his allocation. This enabled the committee to raise the number of children beneficiaries from fifty-seven to seventy-five. The project could now no longer be considered a measure of emergency. It had become a permanent institution; as such, it deserved a constructive and educational feature. A mature woman was engaged to regularly visit the beneficiaries' homes and instruct the mothers—usually of low educational standard—in the better use of the food products given out and in the better management of their home.

In the early 1960's, economic conditions deteriorated, leading to a rise in the cost of living; the number of benefiting families had to be reduced in 1963; but five years later the budget could be raised sufficiently to allow an extension of benefits to provincial towns. Up to thirty-five widows with children in Damascus and Kamishli were added to the sixty odd of Aleppo. However, Kessab, a community which unlike all the others, had never been uprooted, refused a proposal of assistance; the leading men asserted that the community would never leave a widow unprovided for. Neighborly feelings of solidarity had not been warped in Kessab by deportation and dependence.

A chronicle of the twenty years' activity of the Anonymous Donor Project was prepared by the Aleppo director in Armenian and published in 1970.

#### THE ALEPPO CHILDREN'S CLINIC

In December 1948, a children's clinic, financed for only a limited period by a wealthy Armenian, was taken over by the HKCC from the committee which operated it, just as the term of financial support was coming to an end. This clinic was to become the HKCC's chief locale in Aleppo. The personnel consisted of a Beirut French Medical Faculty graduate physician, a graduate nurse and a maid. The rented premises were large enough to provide space for the Aleppo director's office. Both the personnel and the premises were maintained under the new management.

In 1949, a young woman with two years' secretarial experience was engaged to relieve the graduate nurse of clerical duties. Another young woman, well acquainted with the community, was engaged for home-visiting. She was briefed on the objectives and methods of her task: means testing, checking on serious cases and on the due application of the pediatrician's prescriptions, elementary instruction in baby care and home management. The families to be visited were indicated to her by the pediatrician, to whom she would report her findings. The yearly number of home visits varied from 200 to 600.

In the full years after the HKCC had taken over the clinic, the number of individual cases yearly seen by the pediatrician would fluctuate between 1,800 and 2,500; of total number of visits to the clinic, between 5,400 and 6,700; of treatments applied in the clinic by the nurse, 600 to 1,900; of free medications issued by the pediatrician to the mothers for their children, 150 to 1,900. About one fourth of the patients applying to the clinic were non-Armenian, mostly Moslem.

The peak in the clinic activity was reached in the years 1956-57; thereafter, the number of visits gradually decreased, due mainly to the slow but steady emigration of Armenians; by 1965, an estimated 10-15% of them had left the country. This movement was caused by deteriorating economic conditions and increasing restrictions on community activities.

The physician and an assistant would, every year in the spring season, visit the Armenian schools to vaccinate their pupils against typhoid fever, quite common at the time in Aleppo. The vaccine was furnished free by the Syrian medical authorities. Virtually the whole Armenian school population of Aleppo—over 9,000—was covered by this program. An outbreak of cholera in the Middle East, in 1966, led the clinic team to vaccinate the children and adult inmates of twenty-five Armenian schools.

#### JOINT AGBU-HKCC FEEDING PROJECT

The discontinuance of the soup kitchen project for school children should not be taken to mean that these no longer needed extra nourishment. Many of them would come to school on an empty stomach. Hence, in December 1948, a breakfast began being served every morning during two to three winter months to over 400 selected children in eighteen schools of the city and its suburbs. The milk, in powder form, was a gift of the AGBU New York Ladies' Committee; sugar and crackers were provided by the HKCC. The HKCC also paid two supervisors' salaries. Responsibility for the distribution, the mixing and warming of the milk lay with an AGBU local committee member and the HKCC director, assisted by volunteer AGBU ladies. The project was an immediate success. The donating ladies felt encouraged to renew and increase their annual gift in the four succeeding years; so that by 1954, 1,650 boys and girls were benefiting from the project in twenty-six different schools. A sampling showed a group taking this breakfast to have gained thirty to thirty-five times more weight during the period of observation than a control group.

In the last two years, however, the initial enthusiasm had waned: the burden was proving too heavy, both on the HKCC personnel and on the volunteers. The project was discontinued in 1955.

#### EYE DISEASE CONTROL IN ALEPPO SCHOOLS

During the Tavitiants' very first visit to Aleppo, their attention was drawn, among various needs, to that of combating the eye diseases widespread among Armenian children. In October 1948, they were introduced to an ophthalmologist, Dr. Robert Jebejian, who was particularly well informed in this field and was willing to cooperate in an eye disease control project under the HKCC management, to be undertaken in Armenian schools.

Starting late in 1948, a practical nurse, who had earlier been trained by Dr. Jebejian, would visit the schools to treat with eye drops children previously diagnosed by the specialist as having trachoma (30–40%) or some other eye disease. For four years



consecutively, this procedure was applied to a growing number of pupils: up to 2,000 in thirteen schools. At the end of the school year, 40% of those treated were found no longer needing treatment. At the close of the four-year period, the improvement in the condition of eyes was considered justifying the termination of wholesale treatment; teachers were briefed on the symptoms to be observed and were provided with eye drops to apply if and when needed. A check by the doctor three years after mass treatment had ceased showed the improved condition to have persisted.

An attempt was made, with only partial success, to extend the treatment of eye diseases to the children of Armenian schools in provincial towns of Syria: Rakka, Deir-ez-Zor, Hassitche, Kamishli. In this latter town, trachoma was particularly rife among the children of a Kurdish tribe in the process of recovering its Armenian ethnicity, after having been forced into Islam a few generations earlier. The prevalence of eye disease was explained by their extremely primitive living conditions.

Vision-testing was also given some attention. Only two or three schools in Aleppo took the trouble, however, to use the chart with Armenian characters which Dr. Jebejian had personally prepared and had had printed for distribution in Armenian schools of the Diaspora.

As will have been noted, eye disease control by the HKCC in Aleppo schools was not to attain the degree of elaboration of the Athens and Beirut programs.

#### THE CALOUSTE GULBENKIAN SCHOOL DENTAL CLINIC

In 1963, the HKCC and the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation (CGF) came to an agreement whereby the HKCC would set up and manage a Dental Clinic for school children in Aleppo with funds furnished by the CGF. A preliminary examination by the dentist of 1,300 children below age fifteen had shown the sorry state of their teeth; few of them were without caries; and yet, only seven out of those 1,300 had ever been taken to the dentist.

The clinic started operating in July. In the subsequent full years about 140 sessions would be held; the number of children seen and treated rose to 400 odd, the number of treatments to 1,200. An indication of the progress made by children in their willingness to submit to the dentist's care is the steady increase in the number of cases he was able to deal with in each session: from an average of 6.2 in 1964, to 10.2 in 1967, to 17.5 in 1970.

#### THE ALEPPO PROGRAM'S PRECARIOUS POSITION

Throughout the twenty and more years covered by this chapter, there prevailed in Syria

a climate of instability, if not insecurity. The juntas in power changed four or five times during this period. Such instability could hardly favor economic well-being, particularly in the lower classes.

The resulting discontinuity of contact between the Aleppo and Beirut Directors and the infrequency of the latter's visits to the Aleppo activities prevented expansion of the program. If these were able to proceed and develop as they did, that was entirely thanks to the absolute reliability and unsparing efforts of the Aleppo director, Kevork Nersoyan, and to his ability to get along with people.

The HKCC never had any legal recognition in Syria as it had in Lebanon; three to four applications were filed at different times, with successive regimes; nothing came out from any of them. Nevertheless, typhoid and other vaccines were issued to the clinic by official health authorities and the HKCC clinic was able to have a stand at an exhibition in Damascus in 1954; these were taken as signs of tacit recognition.



*Left to right: Dr. Pergrouhi Svajian, and Anahide and Noubar Tavitian in Brummana, Lebanon, 1960.*

## CHAPTER 8 - TWO PROJECTS IN COOPERATION LEBANON AND SYRIA (1948-1972)

### INTRODUCTORY

A resume of the HKCC's history would be incomplete without a review of two important welfare ventures carried out in Lebanon and Syria in close cooperation with organizations engaged in related fields. Instances of such cooperation in Greece were mentioned. This aspect of the HKCC's activity became equally significant in Lebanon and Syria.

### TUBERCULOSIS DETECTION AND FOLLOW-UP

HKCC workers had noticed in the course of visits to homes in Aleppo on various occasions, some cases of TB patients in whom the disease had been arrested after hospitalization in the Azounieh Sanitarium in Lebanon, but in whom there was now danger of relapse due to unfavorable living conditions in the family. This was brought to the attention of the sanitarium management. In 1956, an agreement was concluded with them by the terms of which the HKCC undertook to initiate and supervise, both in Beirut and in Aleppo, socio-medical follow up action by a graduate social worker whose salary would be paid by the Azounieh committee.

Operations having been delayed by the civil war of 1958, it was not before 1959 that the service could be started. A very useful link was thus established between the patient, his/her family, the sanitarium medical director and the Beirut anti-TB center. This center had recently been endowed, through the World Health Organization, with up-to-date equipment and trained personnel. A graduate social worker was engaged for Aleppo as well, where an anti-TB center was also in existence. The result of these actions was a greatly reduced proportion of relapses and of treatment interruptions due to patients' premature and unauthorized departures from the sanitarium. In the mid-1960's, new drugs were introduced by which TB could be treated with much reduced periods of hospitalization. The social workers' task would then consist in ensuring that the patient regularly came to the anti-TB center to submit to his/her prescribed treatment.

## RE-HOUSING PROJECTS

### INTRODUCTORY

In 1952, Leila Karagheusian had been deeply shocked by the sight of the slum living conditions of Armenian refugees in the Karantina settlement, right within the Beirut city limits. In her interview with President of the Republic, Camille Chamoun, in 1954, and again in 1956, she had brought up the problem of rehousing these refugees. She had added that she herself was ready to contribute a considerable sum, though certainly by far not enough for an undertaking of such magnitude. The president had insisted that it was up to the Armenian community in Lebanon to plan and collect funds for this purpose. As a result perhaps of some hint or pressure on his part, a Central Re-housing Committee was set up by the Beirut Prelacy early in 1957. This committee proved unable to raise money, or to take any concrete step, mainly because of the strong opposition to the Armenian Church hierarchy bred by the 1956 Catholicate election.

In May of the same year, the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation (CGF), which had recently been set up in Lisbon, sent representatives to inquire about the needs of the Armenian community in Lebanon. When told about the slum problem and the Prelacy Re-housing Committee, the CGF expressed willingness to contribute £50,000 (ca. \$140,000) towards the solution of this problem, subject to their approval of a layout of the buildings and of a plan for the management of the project; the body in charge of management to be recognized by the government and to comprise representatives of the CGF and of all community currents of opinion.

After a few months, the Prelacy Re-housing Committee submitted to the CGF a layout and a management plan according to which it was to be the sole decision taker; neither the CGF nor any outside party were to have a say. The CGF rejected the proposal. A deadlock resulted, also partly due to the civil war of 1958.

In 1959, as a means of resolving the deadlock, the CGF approached the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), with which it had had dealings in connection with other housing projects elsewhere. UNHCR proposed to entrust implementation to the Swiss Friends of the Armenians (SFA), an organization wholly outside Armenian political currents and acceptable to all. It turned out, however, that SFA could not itself purchase land. Long negotiations followed. Finally, SFA formed a distinct body which was recognized by the government in 1965; this was the EHLAN, acronym for the French wording of “Mutual Aid Association for the Rehousing of Needy Lebanese Armenians”. This body was made up of representatives of SFA, UNHCR, of the donating agencies and a legal adviser; the ex-officio president was the SFA director in Beirut.

Leila Karagheusian, who was to contribute through the HKCC \$280,000 to the project had, by 1963, been so disappointed by the delays incurred that she attempted a breakthrough. She came that year especially to Beirut to initiate negotiations for the purchase of a plot, hoping that the availability of land, an essential factor of the project, would precipitate action. It did, in fact, though not quite in the way she had anticipated. Catholicos Khoren and his immediate counselor, Khatchig Babikian, Esquire, President of the Armenian Community Lay Council and Armenian Deputy to the Lebanese Parliament, stepped in upon hearing of Leila's venture. She agreed with them to bear the entire cost, \$420,000—to be channeled through the HKCC—of a second re-housing project to be implemented by the Catholicate for the construction of one hundred apartments for Karantina Armenian refugee families and for the management of the new settlement created thereby. Thus was constituted in 1965 the HABEAS Committee (HABitat Et ASsistance) composed of the Catholicos as president, Maitre Khatchig Babikian, Khosrov Yeramian, AUB professor of engineering, and Noubar Tavitian representing the donor. A special decree, of March 1967, authorized the Catholicate to build low cost housing and receive contributions to this end.

#### PROJECT 'A'

The EHLAN Project ("A") though earlier conceived than that of the Catholicate, had a much heavier administrative structure; it was much more subject to internal frictions, and was hence slower in its operations. In 1966, a Swiss project manager was appointed who was to take matters well in hand; his salary was paid by SFA, but he was subject to the EHLAN Committee. After the architect and the contractor had been engaged, a piece of land about 18,000 sq. m. was bought in 1965, in Rauda, in the suburb of Bauchrieh. Layouts were prepared, discussed at length and approved early in 1966. A building for a social center was also provided, the cost of which would be partly supported by SFA. The building permit was obtained in May 1968. Thereafter construction proceeded quite rapidly under the supervision of a technician supplied by a German overseas technical assistance organization. The apartments were completed in 1971; the formal unveiling ceremony of a commemorative plaque took place in June 1972, in the presence of Leila Karagheusian. By the end of the year some fifty families had been settled by social workers. The project manager, Mr. Hupfer, was particularly active in preparing the carefully selected occupants for a mode of collective living entirely new to them. Social activities were initiated under the direction of a graduate social worker who had been engaged at an early stage, in 1970, and gone through some preparation for her task.

From a report by Mr. Hupfer for 1977, the following particulars have been gathered



***“EHLAN” low-cost housing project, Raouda, Beirut, June 29, 1972.  
Left to right: Anahide Tavitian and Mr. Werner Hupfer, Director of project;  
Mr. Leslie Goddyear, Deputy-Director United Nation’s High Commissioner for  
Refugees; and Miss Leila Karaghuessian.***

showing the stage of development which the project had attained: there were in all 132 apartments, about thirty having been added to the original number thanks to donations obtained from various sources, including some German and Swiss organizations. There were also fifteen workshops being operated by the inhabitants, mostly cobblers and tailors. Monthly repayments varied according to the size of the apartment, between sixty and ninety-five Lebanese pounds; only two thirds of these dues had been collected in 1977.

#### **PROJECT ‘B’**

The purchase of land for this project was much delayed by long-drawn-out negotiations for buying the very plot on which the Karantina shacks had been erected. This having finally proved non-feasible, a 15,000 sq. m. piece of land was bought in December 1965, at

Fanar, in the suburb of Jdeidi, not very far (about half an hour's walk) from the Project A settlement. After the architect and contractor had been selected through a bid for tenders, and layouts had been elaborated and submitted, a building permit was applied for and obtained in September 1967. In November, the Catholicos presided over a cornerstone laying ceremony in the presence of 150 guests including high government officials. Construction work was terminated by early 1969. The endless formalities and dealings with government departments, the documents that had to be handled for full possession of the land, were all successfully negotiated by the law office of Khatchig Babikian, Esquire.

The selection of families resulted from exhaustive investigations by social workers. Priority was given to families whose shacks had burnt down in fires which had raged in the Karantina settlement in February 1965, and again in May 1968.

Leila Karagheusian donated \$70,000 in 1968 for the construction of a 400 pupil primary school building alongside the apartments. The school was named, in memory of her father, the "Mihran Karagheusian School".

A survey of the HABEAS settlement dated February 1980, indicates that by that date, the total number of apartments in the settlement was 193 with a total population of 1,200. The additional apartments had been built through donations and through the proceeds of monthly repayment dues. Leila Karagheusian's total contribution to HABEAS had reached \$942,000 (1977).

## GENERAL

Both settlements suffered serious damage during the fourteen years' fighting which started in 1975. The resulting breakdown of the country's economy, transportation and public services seriously hampered the consolidation and the development of both communities.

In July 1968, in an official ceremony held at the summer residence of the Catholicate, Leila Karagheusian was awarded the decoration of the "Lebanese Order of the Cedar", Officer's rank, for valuable services rendered to Lebanon, by the Minister of Planning and Social Affairs, Joseph Najjar. The three members of the HABEAS Committee also received this decoration, Knight's rank.

Noubar TAVITIAN

Miss Leila Karagheusian, who has been the President of the Foundation since 1933, always visited the field as often as possible. However, these trips were being more difficult to make and, after the last trip to Lebanon and Syria in 1972, it was decided to employ an Executive Director, to oversee the work in the field and the administration of the head office in New York. In 1975, Dr. Walter Bandazian was employed in that capacity and continues to serve.

An Executive Committee of the Board of Directors was established in 1987, to serve the Board of Directors between meetings, in view of the Foundation meeting only twice a year.

The Foundation, in keeping with its stated purposes, provided health, medical and social services to Armenian refugees and displaced persons who had, for political and religious reasons, departed their native lands for distant and safe havens.

The Foundation office in Greece, began to receive refugees as early as 1975, from various countries including Lebanon, Syria and Iraq. These persons were in need of health and social assistance, and our office staff provided the necessary help in making available visits to physicians and hospitals, as well as preparing the necessary papers in order to have them legally reside in the countries or facilitate their emigration from Greece. While the influx was relatively small between the years 1975–80, the situation in Iran in 1981, precipitated a large number of Armenian Iranians to enter Greece, in search of stability. This condition remained until 1995, when the Foundation terminated its work in Greece, because of diminishing need.

In Germany, Belgium, and Holland, thousands of refugees from Turkey became situated in these countries, and the Foundation became instrumental in facilitating the needs of these Armenians. While the government of the countries mentioned provided governmental health care, the people were disadvantaged in that they did not know the language of the host countries nor the folkways and mores. The Foundation provided primarily social



*Walter C. Bandazian*



assistance in addition to Armenian language study, lectures regarding personal hygiene, classes for expectant mothers, and adult language offerings. Social centers were established in Cologne, Brussels, and Amsterdam. While the work in Cologne and Brussels has been phased out, the work in Holland continues. Hundreds of refugees have been assisted as a result of the programs initiated by the Foundation.

Since 1989, the Foundation has assisted Armenia. First, relief was provided after the killer earthquake of December 7, 1988. The Foundation has also provided emergency relief in providing kerosene stoves and fuel oil for the people of Armenia. Since 1993, dental clinics for children have been established in Yerevan and Gumri. It was in the Karagheusian clinics that, for the first time in Armenia, there was a preventive dentistry program for children and, since 1993, thousands of children have been treated. In 1996, the Foundation will establish two additional clinics—in Goris and Stepanagerd.

The Foundation was able to make a difference in uplifting the welfare of the Armenian people in Lebanon, Syria, Greece, Germany, Holland, Belgium, and Armenia.

Walter C. Bandazian, Ph.D.

August 20, 1996



## A BRIEF SURVEY OF THE HKCC ACTIVITIES IN LEBANON AND SYRIA 1970 - 1996

### LEBANON

As Mr. Noubar Tavitian approached retirement in 1970, Rev. Robert Sarkissian, a French national of Armenian descent, was appointed Associate Director in July 1970 to gradually assume the HKCC work. The transitional period from 1970 to 1973 went smoothly.

These last twenty-five years were years of unrest in the region. In Lebanon, a bloody civil war started in April 1974 and continued to October 1990. Numerous areas of the country were destroyed. During this period of continuous war, the life of the population was highly disrupted, and emigration weakened the communities. The Karagheusian Centers made their contribution in an effort to alleviate the sufferings of the impoverished and distressed people.

### MEDICAL SERVICES

The Pediatric Clinic maintained a high attendance through the years with a range of 10,000 to 13,000 visits per annum. Dr. Vahram Yenikomshian, the pediatrician, headed the medical team. A second pediatrician joined the medical team in 1987. The Pediatric clinic continued to focus its efforts on prevention and education.

The anti-tuberculosis service, initiated in the sixties, was developed in cooperation with the government's anti-TB office and the Azounieh Sanitarium. This developed into a chest and respiratory disease clinic with the addition of a chest specialist.

In 1974, the medical services expanded its reach by establishing the following services:

- In 1974, the school health service was established. Two physicians with two different teams examined regularly about 5,000 school children per year, providing them with medicine and counseling. When the Armenian Archbishopric of Lebanon canceled its School Health Committee in 1978, it gave the HKCC a free hand for the medical



*Robert J. Sarkissian*

supervision of its schools. The School Health Services of Karagheusian are used as a model by the American University of Beirut, the Ministry of Health, and UNICEF.

- In 1977, a special room was equipped with up-to-date equipment to provide ophthalmologic care to children. The Christoffel Blinden Mission - Germany donated the equipment. This facility was under the able guidance of Dr. Aram Baghdassarian. The center serves nine to ten thousand school children annually. About 2,000 are followed up by ophthalmologists or nurses.
- In 1982, the HKCC launched a dental care campaign that resulted in the establishment of a fully equipped dental clinic in 1986. The clinic operates daily for dental treatment and counseling.
- In 1987, the HKCC opened a gynecological clinic in the newly acquired building. The office clinic operates under the supervision of the Gynecology Department of Hotel Dieu Hospital. The HKCC gynecologic clinic has become a very popular place of counseling and guidance for young mothers-to-be.

#### SOCIAL SERVICES

The social services, which were established in the 1960's, expanded after 1975 with the worsening of the situation in Lebanon. Emergency relief in food, financial aid, assistance for medical care, and hospitalization increased year by year until 1991. At times, the social assistance budget took half of the total budget and reached even 75% during the hottest years of the war. Six social workers did their best to alleviate the distress of the population. New services were created to answer to the need: Emergency Relief, War-Wounded Service, School Social Service, Handicapped Services, Refugee Program,

Sponsorship Programs, and medical services attached to different hospitals, etc. The social center continued to develop its group activities. It offered to the community a range of programs: Dress-making School, Cooking, Painting Embroideries, Flower-making, First Aid, Typing, Speech Therapy, and Folk Dancing. These were organized and conducted by professionals. From 1973 to 1977, summer camps were organized for hundreds of children with the active participation of the HKCC staff.

In addition to activities for young people, the center offered educational opportunities through lectures to school directors, teachers, and other adults.

The Karagheusian Foundation was alert in warning local authorities and families about community issues and participated in different awareness campaigns and in different programs of sanitation of public places and schools.

#### REHOUSING PROJECTS—HABEAS AND EHLAN

The Foundation kept an active participation in the committees of HABEAS and EHLAN

rehousing projects. In HABEAS, the second phase of rehousing brought the number of families relocated to about 200. A third phase of construction (1986-1992), due mainly to the efforts of His Holiness Karekin II, H.E. Khatchig Babikian, Esquire, and Rev. Robert Sarkissian (forming the Habeas Committee), gave shelter to 72 other new families. The HKCC operated the Dispensary in Leilavan, securing the daily presence of a social worker and a nurse until 1994. After this date, only a social worker took care of the Dispensary. In EHLAN, the Karagheusian Foundation contributed to the budget by paying the full salary of an administrator from 1984 to 1994.

The role of the HKCC as a catalyst for good relations and harmonious cooperation between medical and social agencies of the community was maintained and reinforced for the great benefit of all.

#### BEKA'S CLINIC

In the Armenian village of Anjar, Beka'a, the attendance of the HKCC Pediatric Clinic



*Habeas building, Beirut, Lebanon, 1974.*

decreased regularly during the last ten years due mainly to the improvement of hygienic conditions in the village. The presence of the clinic with its nurses and regular bi-weekly visits of the pediatrician are always appreciated and welcome.

In 1987, the School Health Service was extended to Anjar's three schools belonging to the different Armenian religious communities. The implementation of the school medical service, the dental check-ups, and the vision testing programs supplemented the services rendered in the HKCC clinic and reinforced its impact and influence upon the population.

Besides the medical action, the milk marketing project continued under the responsibility of the HKCC until 1975. During 1972-1973, in cooperation with the General Directorate of Cooperatives and the Friedrich Herbert Foundation, the HKCC Directors trained the farmers of the Beka'a, specially those of Anjar, Mejdél Anjar, Bar Elias, and Harara, in cooperative management. This training period resulted in the handing over of all the Milk Marketing Project and its extension service to a newly formed farmers' cooperative, the Manager of which, Mr. Jean Mesrobian continued to be employed by the HKCC until December 1975.

The Milk Marketing Project under the leadership of the HKCC expanded and went up to seven tons of milk collected and marketed daily from about twenty villages of the Beka'a. These were most probably the best years of farming in the Beka'a Valley.

The presence of the HKCC both in Anjar, the Armenian village, and in Mejdél-Anjar, the Moslem village, was a factor of peaceful cohabitation during the Lebanon war. Our clinic in Mejdél-Anjar was and is always highly appreciated by the inhabitants of the area.

## SYRIA

As mentioned earlier, Mr. Kevork Nersoyan, the charismatic Director of the HKCC Syrian Branch, led the Pediatric Center of Aleppo and the Anonymous Donor Program in Aleppo, Damascus, and Kamishli for 34 years until his demise in 1981.

In October 1980, Dr. Bedros Darakjian, the pediatrician in charge of the clinic since 1978, was appointed Branch Director. The HKCC Center was moved in 1982 to a more appropriate area in a district more populated by Armenians.

The relocation of the center, together with the new management, facilitated the improvement of the pediatric services and the creation of the social center. As of 1983, the Pediatric Clinic developed its services implementing a well-baby consultation service, a milk mother program, and an assistance program for medicines, treatments, and hospitalizations.

Parallel to the development of pediatric service, the social center of Aleppo launched new activities. In 1982, a First Aid class was launched which became very popular. The main

problem was how to limit the number of participants in this class. The same year started a dress-making course, followed by painting, flower-making, and embroidery classes that were highly appreciated by the Aleppo Armenian community.

The HKCC also reached Kamishli, a city in the far North East of Syria at the Turkish and Iraqi border. There, a few widowed families were helped through the Anonymous Donor Program. In 1984, the HKCC opened a pediatric clinic on the premises of the Armenian Archbishopric, aimed specially at the medical supervision of school children. Thus, the School Health Service of Kamishli developed regular care of 1100 Armenian children. In 1992, a dental clinic was added to the pediatric clinic, meeting an important need in the community.

#### REFOUSING PROJECT

The Anonymous Donor Program that helps widowed families in Syria since 1946 continued its annual support to about 60 families every year. The help to families consisted mainly in essential food provisions and clothes to the children. The rehousing program relocated 40 families from Zeytoun Khan, Huluk, and Gurun Camp. An additional 50 families were rehoused with the cooperation of the Jinishian Memorial Program.

The Karagheusian work commands admiration and appreciation by its professionalism and its impartial approach for the great benefit of the poor and the destitute.



*Dr. Bedros Darakjian*

Robert J. SARKISSIAN, M. div., M.P.H.

## LOCAL ADVISORY COMMITTEES

### LEBANON

The Local HKCC Advisory Committee for Lebanon reorganized in 1968 was composed as follows:

Dr. Hovsep Yenikomshian	Chairman
Dr. Hagop Yacoubian	Vice-Chairman
Me. Hratchia Chamlian	Secretary
Mr. Vahe Djazmadarian	Comptroller
Dr. Aram Baghdassarian	Treasurer
Mrs. Sylva Karayan	Counselor
Miss Marie Naltchayan	
Dr. Vazken Der-Kaloustian	
Mr. Melkon Hazarabedian	

During the fifteen year war of Lebanon, emigrating and departing members were replaced with new ones:

Dr. Harutune Armenian  
Mrs. Sossie Balian  
Mr. Hagop Demirdjian  
Dr. Zakaria Meguerian  
Dr. Steve Yenikomshian

However, in 1987 two or three members only of this honorable team were living still in Beirut. The Lebanon committee was then reconstituted with the following members:

Dr. Zakaria Meguerian	Chairman
Dr. Ropovt Chorbajian	Vice-Chairman
Dr. Antranik Manugian	Vice-Chairman
Mrs. Sossie Balian	Secretary
Mr. Garbis Markarian	Comptroller
Mr. Mihran Shekerjian*	Treasurer
Mr. Vosgeperan Arzoumanian	Treasurer
Judge Zohrab Ayvazian*	Counselor
Me Noubat Toursarkissian	
Mrs. Arsho Tutundjian	
Mrs. Alidz Barsumian	
Mr. Melkon Hazarabedian	†Aug. 94
Dr. Harutune Yozgatlian	†Oct. 94

\* Deceased

### SYRIA

The Syrian Advisory Committee is formed now as follows:

Father Augustine Koussan	Chairman
Mr. Krikor Baytarian	Vice-Chairman
Mrs. Hilda Chalhassian	Secretary
Mrs. Suzan Apartian	Counselor
Mr. Hagop Kassabian	Counselor
Mr. George Aynilian	Counselor

### ARMENIA

The Local HKCC Advisory Committee for Armenia is formed as follows:

Mr. Kevork Baghdassarian  
Mr. Hovanes Bekmezian  
Prof. Edward Garabedian  
Ms. Gohar Haratunian  
Mr. Ardashes Hovannesian  
Mr. Michael Kushakjian

## STATISTICS - 1995

### **ARMENIA**

#### **Yerevan**

Dental Clinic - Yerevan (Children to age 15) - 12,023 children examined and treated.

#### **Gumri**

Dental Clinic - Gumri (5 months) - 4,848 children examined and treated.

### **LEBANON**

#### **Beirut**

Child Health Center - 11,268 visits by patients.

School Health Service - Elementary Grade - 4,040 children examined.

Ophthalmological Service - Schools - 7,465 children examined.

Dental Clinic - 2,728 children examined and treated.

Obstetric-Gynecological Service - 1,102 consultations.

Family Service - 3,723 cases seen.

Leilavan Clinic - Habeas Social Service (Housing Project "B") - 3,593 visits.

#### **Anjar**

Child Welfare Center - 1,164 visits.

School Health Service - 317 students examined.

#### **Mejdel**

Child Welfare Center - 942 visits.

### **SYRIA**

#### **Aleppo**

Child Health Center - 4,026 visits.

Dental Clinic - 3,929 visits.

School Health Service - 4,744 examined.

#### **Kamishli**

Child Welfare Center - 896 visits.