LEBANESE BANKER CHAMPION OF ARMENIANS

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Category: Opinions

By Hamo Moskofian, Beirut, 13 June 2010

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During the darkest days of Lebanon's civil war, the Lebanese veteran banker Michel El Khoury helped the endangered Armenian community in every way possible…through his influential friends in political, military and economic circles.

The Christian businessman protected Armenian families who were caught in violent crossfire and sometimes were subjected to blockades, because of street battles between rival armed militias.

When electricity and water were cut off to Armenian-populated areas in Eastern Beirut and its suburbs it would have been suicidal to supply bread and food, and milk for babies to these war-torn sectors. However, Mr. El Khoury, “the unknown hero”, challenged the odds and provided all kinds of essentials. He also kept from harm’s way a number of Armenian community leaders who supported the community's policy of “positive neutrality”, something that did not sit well with certain circles. He even managed to liberate kidnapped Armenians.
Now the Lebanese banker closely follows the events surrounding Armenia and Nagorno-Karabagh. He is amazed that to this day Christian Europe and America make no effort to end the suffering of the Armenian nation. He is astonished that the newly-independent republics of Armenia and Nagorno-Karabagh remain subject to blockade by “humanitarian” Turkey--the perpetrator of genocide and mass deportations—and its cousin Azerbaijan--the organizer of massacres of Armenians in Baku, Sumgait and adjacent regions.

Regarding the recent attack on the Peace Flotilla by Israel, Mr. El Khoury says, “I strongly condemn the attack, the killing and wounding of innocent people, but I like to ask the prime minister of Turkey Recep Tayyip Erdogan and the president of Azerbaijan Haydar Aliyev, why there still exists a blockade on the borders of Armenia?”

In visible excitement, he continues, “Why this silence from Europe and America, who considered Armenians their 'little' allies, and later endorsed the Lausanne and Locarno pacts, deliberately forgetting that this martyred nation had lost 1.5 million of its sons and daughters, and was 'accused' of being collaborator of Western powers?”

Six months ago, during Christmas and New Year, this Lebanese benefactor of Armenians visited

Yemen. There, he distributed gifts to the children wearing the distinctive red Santa Clause outfit!