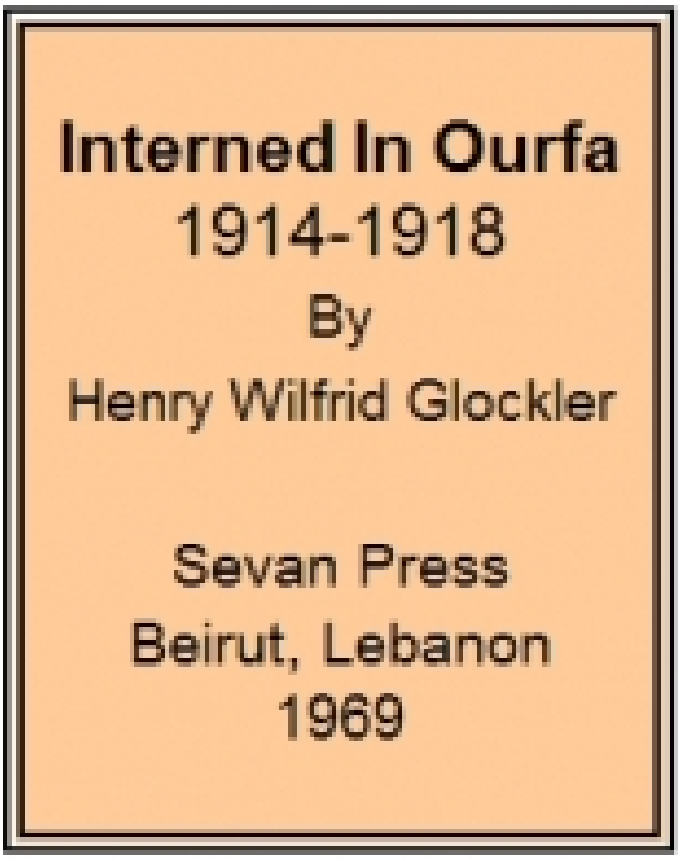
# MEMORABLE INTERVIEW

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**Category:** Opinions

Vahe H. Apelian, Ohio, 4 January 2013

My first job interview in America remains the more memorable among the many first time experiences I had in the New World after I landed at the J.F. Kennedy Airport on July 11, 1976 as another immigrant. The weeklong Bicentennial Celebration had barely ended. The interview was with the American Cynamid Corporation, which has long folded away. According to Wikipedia it was a leading American conglomerate that became one of the nation's top 100 manufacturing companies during the 1970s. Apprehensive as I was to be punctual and yet not too early, I lingered around the building and presented myself to the receptionist just few minutes before the appointment time. I was asked to wait, but the wait was getting longer than I thought it would. An ominous sign I thought to myself. Who, I wandered, would take genuine interest and offer a job to a new comer like me who is not a local graduate and has no local work experience? Let alone to the fact that I had no experience in the field I wanted to make a career - pharmaceutics - other than relevant education.

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I was immersed in my thoughts when a very distinguished looking gentleman stepped out and met me. He apologized for the delay and escorted me to his office and had me seated on a chair across his desk. He then welcomed me in Arabic to my total surprise. I asked him how is that he has learned Arabic. Adding further excitement to my initial surprise, he told me that he was born and raised in Lebanon and that his father was a longstanding employee of the American University of Beirut (AUB), my alma mater.  We started chatting about Lebanon and AUB to break ice but I remained distracted at the sight of his nameplate on his desk facing me. It spelled his name, Robert Glockler. The last name appeared very familiar to me, even though it is not a common name one would ordinarily encounter. Looking back I wander if my natural inclination to wander off had not become all too evident by my distraction to my detriment.

Some time back I translated my late uncle's – Dr. Antranig Chalabian's - narration in the late Antranig Dzarougian's weekly Nairi about the serendipitous events that lead to the publication of Dr. Stanley Kerr's book titled ***The Lions of Marash***. My translation of his article was posted in Keghart.com. The Kerrs resided in Trention, NJ. It turns out they socialized with the Glocklers. Henry Wilfrid Glockler was an employee of the American University of Beirut and was deported - for lack of a better word – at the onset of the World War I into the interior of the Ottoman Empire. He thus became an eyewitness to the atrocities committed against the Armenian subjects of the Empire. He had his eyewitness accounts penned down. The manuscript that was written in 1918 had remained dormant in Henry W. Glockler's archives. Upon the recommendation of Dr. Stanley Kerr, he sent his manuscript to Antranig Chalabian who had it edited, found sponsors and had the memoirs published as a book.

Having made a connection to the name on the nameplate I was facing, I digressed the conversation and in the spur of the moment blurted out if he was by any chance related to Henry Glockler. From the looks of his face it became apparent that he was caught by surprise. He told me that Henry was his father and wondered how was it that I had heard of his name. Without going into the details, not mentioning that I had accompanied my uncle many a time to the printer's shop, nor did I mention that I had read the book, I said instead that Antranig Chelebian was my uncle. He responded something to the effect that it was a small world indeed and that he had heard so much about him from his father.

*Interned in Ourfa 1914-1918* by Henry Wilfrid Glockler was published in 1969 by Sevan Press in Beirut. It is 154 pages long. The book is "Dedicated To the thousands of innocent Armenian men, women and children of Ourfa, Turkey, who perished amid the horrors of the infamous genocide of 1915-18."

Both of these books, *The Lions of Marash* and *Interned in Ourfa* were published at the aftermath of the 50th Anniversary commemoration of the Armenian Genocide. I remember vividly the community wide 50th Anniversary commemoration in the sport stadium named after the late Lebanese President Camille Chamoun. I believe that the occasion marked a turning point in our pursuit for the just resolution of the Armenian Genocide. It marked the end of our indoor mourning. We seemed to have broken for good the shell that had confined us for so long. There was much excitement in the air that stemmed from a confidence that instinctively comes about after having overcome what may have appeared to be insurmountable odds.

> ***Source: IOBA; The above graphic posting was made following VTiger's question to the author. Please see the remarks in the comments section.***

As to my interview with Henry Wilfrid Glockler's son, Robert, it took a new turn. The formalities for the job interview gave way to a new discovered familiarity. He invited me for lunch at the company's

cafeteria and I stayed with him in his office long after that.

Not too long after my interview, I got an invitation to the company's research facility in Princeton, NJ. When I presented myself there, I found out that all the department heads were lined up to interview me for a job opening commensurate with my education and the level of experience I had. I am sure that Robert Glockler had made that possible. I do not know how my interview went. Almost right after the interview I noted to the company that I received a job offer from the Schering-Plough Corporation that few years ago also ceased to exist as well. This time around it was thanks to another Armenian connection. Henry Apelian, a relative, was a director at the company's international division. He recommended and presented me for an interview. I was offered a job that set me in my career path.

Dr. Antranig Chalabian passed away in 2011. I do not know if he ever became aware that the book he edited, found sponsors and had it published is now being retailed for hundreds of dollars on the Internet as an out of print rare book. I became a beneficiary of his interest in Armenian history. My first job interview in America became a source of comfort for me. My immediate and extended family members were still in Lebanon. I was away from home and by myself, but I was not all alone.