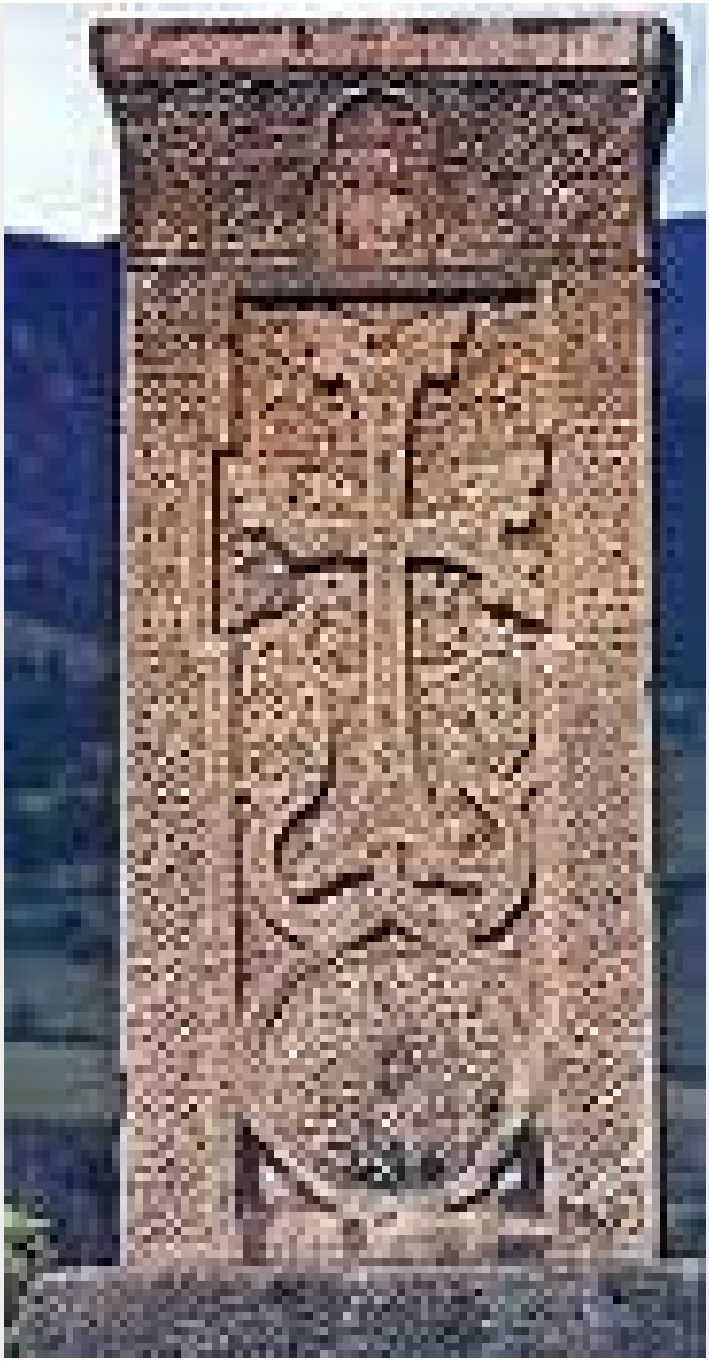
NEWS FLASH! THERE ARE KHATCHKARS IN ARMENIA

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Category: Opinions



Avedis Kevorkian, Philadelphia, PA USA, 17 June 2011

It has been many years since I last dealt with USELESSCO, the Paris-based United Nations boondoggle that is charged, among other things, with preserving the culture of the 192 member countries of the UN.

However, successive Directors-General are more concerned with not offending the Muslim nations than they are in preserving the entities that come under the heading of culture when they are located in Christian countries. (I have never checked, but I doubt if they are concerned with Jewish culture, either.)

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It all began when I undertook to get the organization to act on the destruction of the Armenian, Greek, and Maronite churches, monasteries, and cemeteries in the Turkish-occupied north of Cyprus. To sum it up–since that effort is not the subject of this essay–I failed. In a personal discussion with the then Director-General when I asked why he didn't criticize Turkey for the destruction, his answer was, "It would be provocative." Letters to his successor also produced nothing.

What prompts this confession of failure is the news that an exhibition of Armenian *khatchkars* in the Paris headquarters turned into a sort of fiasco as -- according to reports -- at the last minute "all place names and informational map, as well as a photo of the Armenian cemetery in Jougha after the stone crosses had been destroyed by the Azerbaijani government" were hastily removed.
In addition, the report continues, "UNESCO officials not only found any mention of Armenian crosses in Turkey and Azerbaijan objectionable but references to crosses in Karabakh as well."

Setting aside the insult and the obvious pressure applied by Turkey, removing the references is like mounting an exhibition of the "History of Jazz" and not mentioning New Orleans.

But the most amazing part of the evening occurred when "UNESCO staffers removed the organization's official flag from the exhibit hall and didn't show for the opening ceremony, claiming that they were otherwise engaged."

An organization mounts an exhibition in its own headquarters building and its officials do not attend the opening ceremonies?

There is a very important lesson to be learned from this insult, but I doubt if the Armenians will learn anything from it. The Lesson is that the Turks are ever vigilant, and fight their corner very well, and the Armenians should begin to, also.

The last time I heard the word "provocative," was when a friend reported his conversation with the Armenian representative to the United Nations Commission on Human Rights, based in Geneva.

Some of you may recall that in one surprise election, many years ago, America was not re-elected to membership, and Armenia was. Living in London, at the time, I contacted a friend who had one foot in Geneva and asked if he knew the Armenian representative. He said he did, and I asked if he would do something that would criticize (to say the least) Turkey.

Intrigued, he asked what. I suggested that Armenia raise the matter of Turkey's violation of the Human Rights of the Cypriots in its occupation of the northern 37 percent of the island. I said that without America on the Commission, there would be no one to protect Turkey. He agreed, and asked that I prepare a resolution.

I did so, he changed one word (as I recall), and he took the resolution to Geneva on his next visit.

About a month later, he called to suggest that we have lunch at his office. I went and, while we were eating, he said that he hoped that what he was about to say wouldn't upset my digestion. Then he told me that he had had his meeting with the Armenian representative who listened to the idea, and, according to my friend, completely aghast, said that he would not raise the matter because "It would be provocative."

Needless to say, America has been re-elected to the Commission in every election, and Armenia has not.
And, of course, Turkey has not been criticized by that UN body.

Thus, I am certain that Yerevan will not mount a major protest with the UN's Secretary General, coupled with a formal note of protest at the action of the Muslim-fearing officials at USELESSCO.

I have no doubt that irate Armenians will discuss the matter with other irate Armenians and will be more irate, and then will write irate letters to the Armenian publications who will write irate editorials which will be read by more irate Armenians.

It is also ironic that this insult should take place in Paris where there is a group of individuals who are trying to set up a world Congress of Armenians which, no doubt, will show that collectively the

Armenians will be able to do nothing as they have so far have succeeded in doing nothing individually.

But all is not lost, and we should be grateful to the Turks and USELESSCO. Apparently it is all right to say that Armenia has *khatchkars*.