OF COURSE WE ARE A SUPERIOR PEOPLE; JUST ASK US AND WE WILL CONFIRM IT

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By Avedis Kevorkian, Philadelphia PA, 10 December 2008

There are approximately 150 Jews in Taiwan. There is no synagogue, but services are usually held in a tiny office in a hotel's annex. Smaller than the average living room, there is the Holy Ark, bookshelves, a dozen chairs, and a dining-room table with *siddurim* and newspaper clippings.

The rabbi is a former businessman without Yeshiva or Theological Seminary or Biblical-school training. He is 89-years-old, and has been at it since 1975.

Usually there is no *minyan* (ten men needed for a religious service), and often the rabbi is alone when he conducts *Shabbat* services. On Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur, he may get as many as 60 people so those services are held in the American Club in Taipei, the island-country's capital.

Oh, Yes. There is also a Holocaust Museum.

True, it isn't in the capital; it's in Tainan, a city 90 minutes by train to the south. True, it is not a stand-alone museum; it is in a church.

It used to be, when I wanted to needle or otherwise embarrass the Armenians (Yes, it's a nasty job, but someone has to do it) about the fact that there is no Armenian Genocide Museum in this country, I used to posit the hypothetical question "If the Jews in Nome, Alaska, were to announce that there was to be a Holocaust Museum in their city, how many minutes would it take after the announcement for the fund-drive to be over-subscribed?"

Now, I will bring up the 150 Jews in Taiwan and. . .well. you get the picture.

And, speaking of the Jews, over whom we Armenians are far superior (and if you don't believe that, ask an Armenian and he will confirm it), the Jewish Community in Philadelphia is building a new Museum--one dedicated to Jewish history, not limited to the Holocaust. Oh, you say, there is already such a museum. Yes, but, "it's now too small."

And, where is the new museum under construction? Directly opposite the Liberty Bell Pavilion on Independence Mall. The present museum also faces the Mall, but it is set back in its own idyllic surroundings and is located a few-hundred feet to the north of the new one.

So it will be that when the millions of visitors come to Philadelphia to visit the Liberty Bell--the country's holiest shrine--they will see the Jewish Museum. They can hardly not see it. A public-transport bus will stop at its front door (temporarily moved during construction), a half-dozen public-transport buses stop at the opposite corner, a public-transport bus stops at the corner to the north, the Subway has a stop at the intersection, two tourist-bus companies vying for trade use the two corners to the north to start and end their tours of the city. The three-building Independence Hall complex (the Hall, the first Supreme Court Building, the first Congress Building) is one block to the left of the new Museum site, and the Tourist Information Center is one block to the west..

What is interesting about the project is that a few scant months ago, the site was occupied by a major television company which decided to move to newer quarters. Hardly had it left, when the building was being razed. And,

before anyone could ask what was happening, the announcement of the Jewish Museum was made and was followed immediately by the construction work.

I haven't been by the site for about a week, and it is possible that the building is finished and visitors are touring the building. All right, I'm joking.

But, isn't it remarkable that the Armenians cannot build themselves a Museum in the nation's capital? It took long enough for the idea to gel, and it took long enough for an empty building to be acquired, and now there is a fight about what color to paint the walls of the second-floor broom closet. So, some of the involved Armenians have gone off in a huff. (A "huff" is one of those high-wheeled carts that the Armenians brought with them when they left Ottoman Turkey. It helps the Armenians to live in the nineteenth century, even in twenty-first-century America.)

And, speaking of the Jews. We are now in the Noble Prize season.

Anyone want to take bets on how many Armenians will be named Laureates? Or, how many Jews will? No, I thought not.

But, we are superior, don't forget that.

So superior that we can't fund and build a Genocide Museum.

But let us return to those 150 Jews in Taiwan. Scattered among 23-million Taiwanese, they are living anonymous lives and will die anonymous deaths, but they have ensured that when they have gone, they will have left behind a Museum to honor the dead of their genocide.

And, we Armenians. . . .