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***Nakosha* was established in 1997 with the view of advocating free speech and establishing a social link among our Australian and worldwide communities, especially those in our homeland.**

***Nakosha* is growing with a contemporary generation of Assyrians who are aware of their identity, with an understanding and appreciation of our culture, language and heritage.**

***Nakosha* is a non-profit publication. Holding a neutral stand within the community, its views are not religiously or politically motivated – they are based on human values not sectarian beliefs.**

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# editorial

**N**akosha always prefers to focus on the positive. Unfortunately, modern Assyrian history is not always a positive experience. But as a friend once told me, the best revenge against past atrocities is to live well and not burn valuable energy on the past. That's why in this *Tabakh* (August) issue of *Nakosha* we choose to see Remembrance Day more as a time to reflect on *present* problems affecting our 'nation'.

Being a non-religious publication, we never talk about *Muslim* atrocities against *Christians*. A remembrance day could quickly turn into an excuse to strengthen traditional hatreds. Besides, history is full of examples of Christian horrors against mankind. In the 12th and 13th centuries, the Inquisition was born, with Christians killing Christians, during the time of the Albigenian heresies. Hundreds of thousands of people died because their Christianity did not agree with official dogma.

Today, Judeo-Christian United States-led U.N. trade sanctions against Iraq are causing deaths, both Muslim and Christian, in the Middle East.

Christians are quick to point out that these atrocities are not God's doing, but mankind's twisting of religion to satisfy its own twisted ideologies. The same can be said for Islam.

Instead, *Nakosha* prefers to speak of *people's* injustices to people, and *governments'* tyrannies against people.

That's why on the 7<sup>th</sup> August we ask you to light a candle and not forget *today's* genocides.

Still, it's true that from bad, something good often comes about. Up until the Gulf War in 1991, funds to Bet-Nahrain always came through in dribs and drabs, with families slaving away in the diaspora to send

money to their relatives in Bet-Nahrain. It was up to the individual to care for his own. Events in 1991 radically changed things. The *Assyrian Aid Society (AAS)* was established in Iraq to create a formal system of assisting Assyrians in their ancestral lands. Youash Tower writes about his recent trip to Melbourne from Sydney to establish the Melbourne chapter of the *AAS*.

It's easy to get emotional when talking about helping people in their 'ancestral lands', but if asked to put the names of Assyrian villages and cities on a map, most diaspora Assyrians would draw a blank look. I was born in Kuwait, my parents in Iran, came here when I was two, and haven't the foggiest about exactly where our fellow Assyrians in the Middle East live... so rather than saying the *AAS* sends funds to 'some village in Iraq', the new series *Assyrians in the East* will aim to give those cities' and villages' names a meaning. To be published 2 to 3 monthly (depending on how thick and fast we can get a hold of info), any e-mail contributions from readers will be gladly welcomed.

Which brings me to my pet subject and next point – language. I was pleasantly surprised when in this month's *Caricature on Life* not one reader responded with "Hey, I'm in Australia (or America, or Blagoveshchensk, for that matter) I don't need to speak Assyrian!" My answer to this frequently heard comment is that, funnily enough, if you were in the Middle East it probably would be *less* important to speak Syriac as you'd at least be closer to the culture there. No, better to say, "I'm in Australia, I *should* be speaking Assyrian!"

Enjoy.

*Sennacherib Daniel*

## George Chaharbakhchi

Saturday, 11<sup>th</sup> August, 7 pm. Macedonian Social Club, 512 High St. Epping

Part of proceeds will go to the *Assyrian Aid Society- Australia*



## MESOPOTAMIAN TABLETS GO ONLINE

Courtesy of Newsbytes News Network (June 28); by Ned Stafford

(ZNDA: Berlin) Last week, the first cuneiform digital library was launched on the Internet - a collaboration between University of California in Los Angeles and the Max Planck Institute in Berlin. Creators of the Cuneiform Digital Library Initiative (CDLI) are convinced that the site's launch (<http://cdli.mpiwg-berlin.mpg.de>) represents a major step forward in global scholarly teamwork. Peter Damerow, a research scholar at the Max Planck Institute in Berlin, says "the rich historical source of cuneiform literature" is spread out in museums around the world. This means only a few specialists able to spend a lot of time travelling and hanging out in museums are now able to view the tablets online. Damerow said "Making these sources easily available by means of computer technology will fundamentally change the

situation of a whole discipline."

The digital library, whose director is Robert K. Englund, professor at UCLA, now contains 3,200 tablets from the Vorderasiatisches Museum in Berlin (<http://www.smb.spk-berlin.de/vam/e/s.html>). But tablets from other museums will be added to the digital collection, including the Louvre in Paris, the Hermitage in St. Petersburg and the Yale Babylonian Collection in New Haven (USA). The project is funded by the National Science Foundation (NSF) and the National Endowment for the Humanities. Putting digital photos of the tablets online is only a first step. For those who never learned how to read cuneiform, the group is developing Web site transcription and translation tools. "In short, a hidden treasure of our cultural heritage will be made accessible by applying the power of information technology," Damerow said.

## ASSYRIAN REPRESENTATIVE SPEAKS BEFORE IRAN'S MAJLIS IN ASSYRIAN

(ZNDA: Tehran) Last week Mr. Yonathan Bet-Kolia, the Assyrian representative in Iran's Parliament or Majlis, offered a speech before his Parliamentary colleagues in the Assyrian language. This was the first time in the history of Iran's Majlis since 1905 that a represented religious minority group was

allowed to conduct a speech in its native language.

Mr. Bet-Kolia listed the following in emphasizing the significant religious and academic accomplishments of his constituents in Iran.

Mr. Bet-Kolia then directed the attention of the members of Majlis to the inequalities faced by Assyrians as victims of religious and ethnic discrimination at school and workplace. He expressed his regret in witnessing discrimination against Non-Moslems, including Assyrians, when applying for jobs in public and government sectors particularly in the educational areas.

Mr. Bet-Kolia also reminded his colleagues in the Majlis about the small budget passed earlier this year for the promotion of the cultural activities of the religious minorities in Iran. He then thanked them for taking into account the importance of such a budget resolution.

Permission to build new Christian centers and churches in Iran was the next item on Mr. Bet-

Kolia's wishlist. Currently, no new buildings for the purpose of religious worship are permitted in Iran.

Lastly, Mr. Bet-Kolia requested that his constituents in Iran be permitted to publish books and periodicals in the Assyrian language, reminding the members of Majlis that it was the Assyrians who published and distributed the first newspaper in Iran, entitled "Rays of Light" in mid-19th Century.

## IRAQI ARCHEOLOGISTS UNCOVER ASSYRIAN TEMPLE & WINGED BULLS

Courtesy of Agence France-Presse (July 7)

(ZNDA: Badgdad) Iraq said last Friday that a team of archeologists have uncovered the remains of an Assyrian temple and statues of winged bulls dating back to the 8th century B.C. Jaber Khalil Ibrahim, head of Iraq's archeology department, told the official INA news

agency that the find was made in Nimrod, 35 kilometres (22 miles) southeast of the northern city of Mosul.

Inscriptions on the two bulls indicated the site dated back to the time of one of the most prestigious Assyrian kings, he said.

Iraq, and especially northern Beth-Nahrain, contains more than 10,000 archeological sites, most of which have still not yet been uncovered, according to official statistics.

## ISHTAR'S TEMPLE DISCOVERED IN IRAQ

Courtesy of Agence France-Presse (July 20)

(ZNDA: Nimrod) The [same] team of Iraqi archeologists have [also] unearthed the remains of an Assyrian temple and sculptures in the north of the country dating back to the era of King Assurnasirpal II in the 9th century B.C. The head of Iraq's archeology and heritage department, Jaber Khalil Ibrahim, said that two giant winged lions, frescoes and

reliefs had also been found at the Nimroud site, 30 kilometres (20 miles) south of the town of Mosul.

"It's only the second time in 150 years that winged lion statues have been found on this site," he said, adding that the sculptures stand five metres (more than 16 feet) tall.

"Two identical statues were discovered by a British archaeological mission in 1850," said Ibrahim. "One is currently on display in Mosul museum and the other in Britain."

Dozens of Iraqi archeologists have been toiling for the past five months at the site, where winged bulls have also been found in the past.

"The lower parts of the (lion) sculptures are in relatively good condition but their heads are damaged by erosion," added M o z a h e m M a h m o u d Hussein, head of the archaeological team.

The cuneiform inscriptions on the base date them to the 884-860 B.C. reign of King

# Assyrian W



Assurnasirpal.

The newly-found temple contains a room 20 metres (66 foot) long and inscriptions of the names of King Assurnasirpal II and his son Salmanasar III and an account of a huge celebration to inaugurate the town of Nimroud.

## TURKS AND ARMENIANS FORM A RECONCILIATION COMMISSION

Courtesy of Reuters (July 10); based on an article by Stephanie Nebehay

(ZNA: Geneva) A group of prominent Turks and Armenians are establishing a reconciliation commission to promote dialogue between their peoples divided since the Genocide of the Christians in Anatolia during World War One.

"It is the first time there has been an attempt at structured dialogue between civil society in Turkey and Armenia and the Armenian Diaspora," Ilter Turkmen, a former Turkish diplomat and senior U.N. official, told the

news conference. "...It is a turning point in the relations between two peoples."

A statement issued after three-day talks in Geneva said the 10-member commission hoped to foster better ties between Turkey and Armenia, which have no diplomatic relations. The [genocide] issue remains a source of international tension. Ankara reacted angrily when first a House of Representatives sub-committee and then the French parliament recently recognized that genocide had occurred.

The talks, which follow recent secret meetings in Vienna, Austria, come as Turkey tries to advance its European Union candidacy.

The Commission aims to support projects in business, tourism and culture and would also make recommendations to the members' respective governments, according to the statement.

Gunduz Aktan, a former Turkish ambassador who writes for the Radikal newspaper, said: "When it comes to qualifying events 85 years ago in the Ottoman Empire, Turks around the table will not accept them as genocide.

"We certainly consider them terrible tragic events, but they do not fall within the definition of genocide accepted under international humanitarian law."

Alexander Arzoumanian, a former Armenian foreign minister who chairs the Armenian National Movement based in the capital Yerevan, said: "In Armenia, most of the

population and diaspora community consider it as genocide.

"This is one of the issues we are going to address through our work," he added. "We just made an important historic step, but we have a long way to go."

Van Krikorian, of the Armenian Assembly of America, said: "The Armenian genocide is very fundamental to who we are."

**During 1915 and 1923, nearly 750,000 Assyrians and 350,000 Greeks (Pontic) perished along with one and half million Armenians living in Turkey, then Ottoman Empire.**

## MICROSOFT RELEASES WINDOWS XP WITH NATIVE SYRIAC SUPPORT

Microsoft Inc. made available today its latest operating system Windows XP Professional Release Candidate 1 (RC1). This is the first operating system to have native Syriac support. Users can simply click on the language control (located on the task toolbar), choose Syriac, and type away using

numerous applications, including Office XP (for word processing, desktop publishing, databases, spreadsheets, presentations, web design), Internet Explorer (for web browsing), Outlook Express (for writing emails), as well as many of the Microsoft accessories (Notepad, Paint, etc.). Any application that uses Uniscribe's functionality for text input and output will automatically have Syriac support, paving the way for developers to write Syriac applications. Windows XP Professional RC1 is available now from the Microsoft Web Site [www.microsoft.com]. *Click on Syriac on the task toolbar and type Syriac in many applications.*

*Name your folders and file in Syriac!* Native Syriac support means that the language is implemented at the operating system level. This allows the user, for instance, to name files and folders in Syriac (see image on right). The operating system also knows about Syriac dates and time. For example, when the user inserts an automatic date in Word XP, it will write the name of the day and the month in Syriac.

Having a hard time locating keys? The On-Screen Keyboard helps you find any letter, vowel or diacritic mark; you can also type using this tool. Because of the lack of a 'standard' Syriac keyboard layout, the user has the option of using two different keyboards, one modeled after the Arabic keyboard and the other is phonetic. The image

below shows the On-Screen Keyboard used in conjunction with Notepad.

*The On-Screen Keyboard helps you find Syriac keys.*

Windows XP ships with one Syriac font, Estrangelo Edessa, which Windows uses as a default font. Designed for Beth Mardutho's Meltho Fonts, Estrangelo Edessa was provided to Microsoft to be included in the Windows XP distributions. The Meltho fonts package includes over 20 other fonts, available free of charge from Beth Mardutho [www.bethmardutho.org]. These fonts can be used now in Windows 2000/XP-RC1 and Office XP.

Beth Mardutho worked with Microsoft for the past four years to make this happen. Central to the success of this story is Paul Nelson of Microsoft's Complex Scripts Group. Nelson was the communication link between Beth Mardutho and Microsoft and developed much of the Syriac features inside Windows. Back in 1998, Beth Mardutho took part in a meeting with the Unicode Consortium and the International Standard Organization (ISO)

when a proposal to add Syriac to the coding standard Unicode was presented. Subsequently, due to the generous contributions of Beth Mardutho's benefactors and the hard work the Meltho team, the Meltho fonts became available to the public free of charge in 2000.

*Send E-Mails in Syriac!*

**Call For Support** - Beth Mardutho is an academic institute whose goal is to globalize the Syriac language. The Institute is currently working on creating the largest digital eLibrary of Syriac books and journals on the Internet, among other projects. These projects are made possible by our generous benefactors. Become a part of bringing the Syriac language into the Third Millennium by supporting Beth Mardutho through membership. Members are entitled to a number of privileges outlined on the Institute's web site. Go to [www.bethmardutho.org](http://www.bethmardutho.org) and click on Gifts Online. *Become a member today!*

**Beth Mardutho: The Syriac Institute New Jersey**

**Courtesy of**  
**Zinda**  
magazine  
"Think Assyrian"

[www.zindamagazine.com](http://www.zindamagazine.com)

# World News

# هەمەلایەتی ئێران؟

This year on August the 6th Iraq will mark the eleventh year anniversary of the 1990 sanctions imposed against it by the United Nations. What's most ironic is that the day after - the 7th of August - is a day Assyrians around the world will commemorate as Assyrian Remembrance Day. Communities around the world will gather in local centres and lament the genocide of Assyrians during WW1 and Simele.

Meanwhile, back in home, in the Middle East, the people of Iraq will have entered yet another year of U.N. imposed sanctions in today's 'invisible' genocide of the Iraqi - and subsequently Assyrian - people.

It would be all too easy to quote Western eye-witness accounts of dead Iraqi and Assyrian children - instead the first-hand eye-witness account of an Assyrian will be used to give a better understanding of the effects of the U.N. imposed sanctions.

In front of a local Melbourne community meeting two years ago, Mar Melis Zaia gave a personal account of his visit to a Baghdad hospital. "We toured a children's ward and witnessed sick and dying children," he said with his head slightly tilted downwards. He explained in Syriac how a Shiite lady, pleading for assistance, had approached his group. Her child had been suffering from a disease that, ironically, required Western medicine, and she had noticed that the bishop was from the West and may be able to help her. She pleaded her case before him. Mar Melis explained how he took the name of the medicine and gave her his word that he would send it to her upon returning to Australia. "The medicine cost only a few dollars in Australia," he said looking up at the amazed crowd.

Upon continuing the tour of the children's ward he was suddenly hit by a repugnant odour. Following the odour, he saw what appeared to

be a refrigeration room where what looked like wooden fruit boxes had been stacked to the ceiling. After enquiring about the boxes and the awful stench he was shocked when told the grim answer. "The refrigerated room was a children's morgue, and the boxes, which had been stacked to the ceiling, were coffins holding the bodies of dead Iraqi children," he said grimly. The continued U.N. bombing of Iraq meant that even electricity production was limited to a few hours per day. Denied electricity by the U.N. in order to keep the children's bodies from decomposing, their odour had wafted through the children's ward.

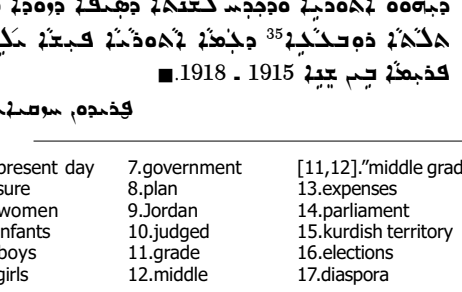
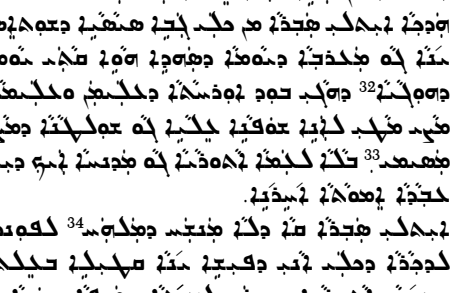
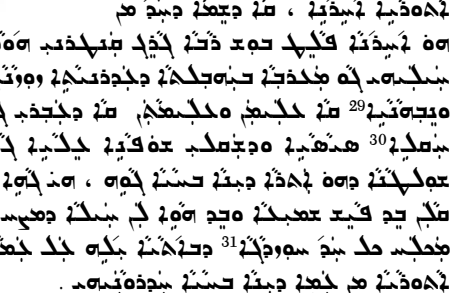
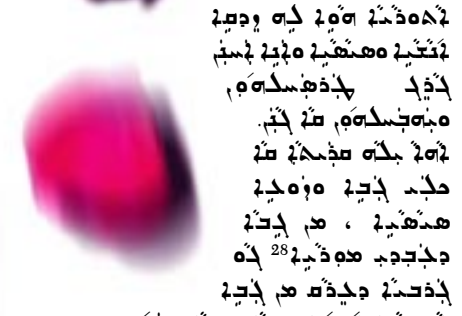
Today's genocide will not be mentioned in Assyrian commemorations around the world. Today's Iraqi and Assyrian Genocide committed by the U.N. and supported

by the U.S. and Australian governments will continue unabated in its eleventh year.

According to the U.N.'s conservative figures an estimated 33,000 Assyrian children will have died as a result of the sanctions. Assyrian Remembrance Day will be hollow, almost an oxymoron, if we fail to remember today's genocide. But sadly the majority will choose to ignore the facts and will stay focussed on the genocides of the past.

After all, who *today* remembers the Assyrians? ■

David Chibo



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 1918 - 1915

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| 2.sure        | 8.plan       | 13.expenses             |
| 3.women       | 9.Jordan     | 14.parliament           |
| 4.infants     | 10.judged    | 15.kurdish territory    |
| 5.boys        | 11.grade     | 16.elections            |
| 6.girls       | 12.middle    | 17.diaspora             |



# SEYFO

١٨. reasons 19. situation 20. tyrannies 21. hospital 22. control 23. sure

٢٤. individual 25. political 26. because 27. case 28. competition 29. morals

٣٠. fields 31. negative effect 32. meditative 33. pay 34. light 35. quarters

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Critics of Assyrian remembrance days often argue that by focussing on the past, we are forgetting atrocities committed against Assyrians *today*. The Toma brothers, Ninb and Ninos, are two Assyrians that clearly don't subscribe to that point of view. To them, genocide commemoration is not so much a 'huddling over the dead' but rather an ongoing recognition of what affects Assyrians today as a result of past *and present* hostilities.

From Sydney, Australia, Ninb and Ninos Toma came down to share their views with a gathering of over 70 people from our community here in Buchan St., Meadow Heights, Melbourne on 1<sup>st</sup> July. The *Assyrian International Seyfo Committee*, established by youths in Europe (the majority of who were born in the diaspora), aims to ensure Assyrians remember *Seyfo* and work together to achieve its global acknowledgement by governments. They wish to do this by internationally run lectures and research of documents – particularly those in the British Museum – to prove the existence of the *Seyfo*.

'Had a genocide actually taken place during World War I in Turkey?' they began by asking. Members of the audience were invited to give an account of their personal stories, of which there were plenty. But how does the *Seypa* continue today?

At the time of the *Seyfo* there was a substantial population of Assyrians in the Ottoman Empire – over 650,000 of them perished. Had they lived, how much more of a presence would Assyrians have there today? Now there are only 5,000, mostly in big cities. Villages once populated by Assyrians are now virtually ghost towns, with the remaining Assyrians mostly elderly. The young are leaving. Why? Is it for monetary reasons? No, Ninb argued – the real reason is *security*. Fear has become a part of the mentality of Assyrians in the area – a fear for one's future. When prospects of a safe life are to be found in the 'free world', they are taken.

There are other sorts of *Seyfo*. The compulsory changing of surnames was cited; the changing of names of villages (occupied by Assyrians for thousands of years) to Turkish ones; the altering of the flow of rivers to bypass the village of Khabour to deprive the people of life-giving water, diverting it to Arab villages; the loss of the Syriac language by youths; the denial of being Assyrian – "Sorry, I'm an Aussie, not Assyrian" – these are all brands of *Seyfo*, argued Ninb and Ninos.

Check out their website [www.freeassyria.com](http://www.freeassyria.com) or email to [seyfo@freeassyria.com](mailto:seyfo@freeassyria.com) for more info. ■

Sennacherib Daniel

# Profiling the Assyrian community one by one...

**Melody Ghahramani, 28**  
**Second year Ph.D. student in Applied Statistics at the University of Alberta in Edmonton, Canada.**

**1. From a global perspective what does Assyria mean to you?**

I struggled with this one and will skip it because I think I haven't quite figured it out. See question 2

**2. What gives you a sense of identity?**

First and foremost, speaking Syriac gives me my identity. While growing up in the Middle East, non-Assyrians would identify me as a Christian. However, after emigrating to North America and meeting other immigrants, I feel there ought to be more to being Assyrian than speaking Syriac and being a Christian. I have yet to figure out what exactly more there is to my identity as an Assyrian. I suppose I could include the foods we eat or our types of dancing but these things are still not enough; for me at least, to define an identity.

**3. What is the most significant event of Assyrian history in the 20th century?**

I would have to say all the massacres experienced by the Assyrians in the 20th century are significant. Given how almost everyone you meet has a relative who was affected by the massacres, I don't see any other events coming nearly as close to the significance of these events. I did not want to pick out a particular massacre as the most significant because I did not want to start ranking the events pitting them against each other.

**4. What was the low point of your life?**

After I completed my Master's degree, I accepted a job offer with a company located on the Eastern coast of the United States. Feeling adventurous, I decided to accept the job offer even though I did not know a soul there. The low point came after realizing that it was not the right job for me. Going



to work became an agony. I started to doubt myself. I wondered whether I had wasted my time all these years at University and what was my purpose in life anyway.

**5. What was the high point of your life?**

Believe it or not, finally figuring out what I should be doing with my life was a high point. Gone were the days of wandering aimlessly. Now I had a goal and I could focus. I decided to pursue a doctoral degree in order to be able to teach at college or university level. I have taught as a teaching assistant and students have found me helpful, which is quite a relief!

**6. What are your favourite pastimes?**

I enjoy hiking, swimming, watching movies and reading about Assyrians and Assyrian history. I have recently been frequenting Assyrian forums on the internet which has given me a chance to read what others are thinking. This I find especially valuable as there is no Assyrian community where I live except a handful of people.

**7. What is your favourite Assyrian dish?**

My favorite dish has been and always will be *dolma*;

especially stuffed tomatoes and hot peppers.

**8. What is your favourite Assyrian song?** Currently, my favorite Assyrian song is *Parpoolen Biakh* by Walter Aziz on his *Change* CD. I like the tempo and the Spanish Guitar sound in the background. Also, it is a believable song about someone who is longing for his lover's return.

**9. What is your favourite non-Assyrian dish?**

I like Thai food as it has elements of Indian (the curries) and Chinese.

**10. What is your favourite non-Assyrian song?**

*La Vie en Rose* by Edith Piaff is my all-time favorite non-Assyrian song. I love her voice, the tune is catchy and the lyrics are easy to follow if you have a functional understanding of French. (For adult readers only: the song seems to go well with a glass of wine also).

**11. Future goals?**

For the time being, I would like to complete my Ph.D. hopefully having maximized the experience along the way. Personally, I would like to become a better Assyrian by understanding as much of my history as I can. This way, I will be able to educate non-Assyrians about us which I will be unable to do while my knowledge consists of superficial things such as food and dancing.

**12. What is your philosophy on life?**

I have two philosophies which I try to abide by. I try to enjoy life. That is, I want to enjoy school, work, family and friends or any other thing I do. Sometimes, we don't have a choice and have to do things we don't like. But if I do have a choice after all, then I won't sit around and say 'if only my life circumstances were like him or her, then I would do something about that which ails me'. And secondly, I try to learn from my mistakes.

## Learn Your Language

ܠܒܝܬܐ	<i>beth</i>	house of/place	<i>beth</i>	ܒܝܬܐ
ܠܒܝܬܐ ܐܪܚܝܘܬܐ	<i>beth arke</i>	library/archives	<i>beth arke</i>	ܒܝܬܐ ܐܪܚܝܘܬܐ
ܠܒܝܬܐ ܓܙܐ	<i>beth gazo</i>	treasury	<i>beth gaza</i>	ܒܝܬܐ ܓܙܐ
ܠܒܝܬܐ ܕܝܢܐ	<i>beth deeno</i>	court (law)	<i>beth deena</i>	ܒܝܬܐ ܕܝܢܐ
ܠܒܝܬܐ ܐܫܥܪܐ	<i>beth aseere</i>	prison	<i>beth aseere</i>	ܒܝܬܐ ܐܫܥܪܐ
ܡܕܪܫܬܐ	<i>mdrashto</i>	school	<i>mdrashta</i>	ܡܕܪܫܬܐ
ܠܒܝܬܐ ܩܪܝܥܐ	<i>beth kreehe</i>	hospital	<i>beth kreehe</i>	ܒܝܬܐ ܩܪܝܥܐ
ܠܒܝܬܐ ܫܘܫܘܬܐ	<i>beth hwooshyo</i>	jail	<i>beth khwooshya</i>	ܒܝܬܐ ܫܘܫܘܬܐ
ܠܒܝܬܐ ܝܠܕܐ	<i>beth yaldo</i>	birthday	<i>beth yalda</i>	ܒܝܬܐ ܝܠܕܐ
ܠܒܝܬܐ ܢܗܪܝܢ	<i>Beth Nahrain</i>	Mesopotamia	<i>Beth Nahrain</i>	ܒܝܬܐ ܢܗܪܝܢ





# Do you speak Syriac with your Assyrian friends?

**A** **M/35/???** - Yes I do. Because since there're a few of us living here in our city "Edmonton" it's the only thing we have now to keep our true identity..."ASSYRIANS"

**M/42/???** - Yes I speak Syriac with my Assyrian friends, why? because I miss speaking it, there aren't many Assyrians around me.

**M/35 /USA, Phoenix, AZ** - Yes, we insist on making it a habit to speak our language so that we don't forget our language and our kids don't forget our language. Outside our home they can learn or speak any language they want.

**M/23/Chicago Ill.** - Yes I do speak Assyrian with my parents and siblings in the house and as much as I can with friends I also encourage a lot of my friends to do the same. The reason for that is very simple... many children died and many women were raped. Many men were hung for the simple fact that they refused to deny their language and their roots. If today in the land of the "free" we do not speak that language we are sending a strong statement which implies that the blood shed and the terror that our ancestors lived through was for nothing. If today as Assyrian we do not speak the language that our mother/father speak then how can we say we are Assyrians and pretend to care about the Assyrian Cause? For if we can not keep this language that has keep us whole as a nation alive how can we expect our sons/daughters tomorrow to even remember who Assyrians were? For this Assyrian Language that we speak is Truly ALL we have.

**M/26/Austria-Vienna** - Yes, I speak with everyone Assyrian, who can speak this language.

**M/52/Chicago, USA** - Yes I speak Assyrian with my friends because this is my language.

**F/24/???** - Well it is really bad to say that my parents did not teach us no Syriac and no Assyrian, but as for me I understand Suryoyo and Assyrian and I am trying now to learn the both, well that is as for me ...

**M/37/San Jose, United States** - Yes, because Assyrian is my mother tongue and at home we

have always spoken Assyrian. I also ask my Assyrian friends to speak to me in our language if they are able to do so.

**M/25 /???** - Yes I do , because I feel more comfort speaking Syriac when speaking with Assyrian friends.

**M/56/San Francisco, USA** - With those who speak it: Yes I do. As for why: Because that is my primary language and happen to be proud of my heritage. Therefore, any opportunity I have, I always speak in my native tongue.

**F/27/Toronto-Canada** - No, because I don't know the language, neither my friends.

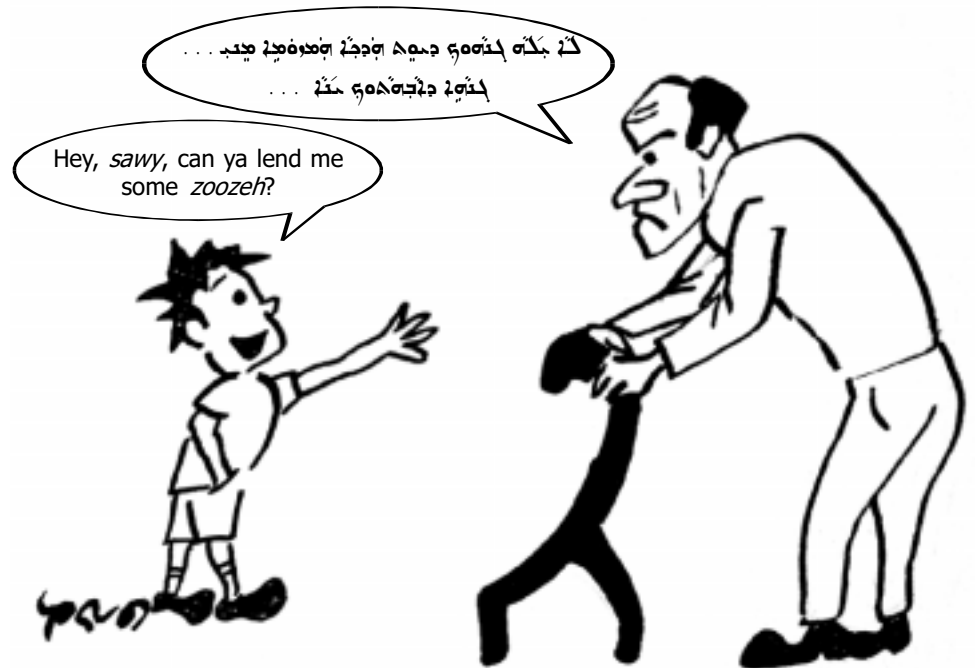
**M/20/U.S.A-Reseda** - Speaking Syriac with friends and even family members has become a second language within the Assyrian community in the United States. Speaking Syriac with fellow friends seems very hard and many do not use it as their mother language. Other consequences also fall in this category. Syriac is never taught, yet English the basis standard of communication within the United States has been the leading language that is spoken here. Therefore, English is widely used. Hence, even communicating with family members (fellow teens) is very hard. We all use English. But, when it comes to communicating with our parents, Syriac is widely used.

Well only when there are Assyrians around me, so whenever I have the chance I do.

**M/26/ Södertälje-Sweden** - Yes I do, because it is our mother language.

**M/17/Sydney, Australia** - Well, speaking the dialect of Syriac that is spoken in Iran I have difficulty in understanding Assyrians from Iraq so we speak English so that everybody understands each other, but there is a heavy dose of Assyrian words often mixed. And whilst I am with Assyrians whose dialect I can understand I often speak Assyrian.

**M/28/Chicago, USA** - My friends and I speak both. Probably more English than Syriac because of our comfort level. Unfortunately, English has become easier to speak than Syriac. It's due to our surroundings, environment, and daily routine. We spend most of our time working or in school, and both of those places are strictly English. We get home turn on the TV - English. We speak to our parents and siblings for about 5 or 10 minutes a day in Syriac. Then during the weekend we hang out with friends on occasion. By then, you are not thinking, "I have to make sure to speak Syriac." We just want to enjoy each other's company because that time is brief. So we speak in whatever tongue comes naturally. The daily grind in America



**M/66/ Newport Beach, California, USA** - No; have lost what little I knew as an American-born child of Assyrian parents. Was then encouraged to speak English, not "old-country," as was typical of the "melting pot" culture of the 30's in the United States. Also, there are no Assyrians in the immediate area.

**M/48/???** - Sure I speak Assyrian why should I deny my roots and identity but I can assure you not everyone I know do that for example all my sisters daughters they don't and their mother did not speak with them Assyrian!? Don't know why but almost all my relatives children same thing and have no idea why their parents when they were among Arabs in our country were very proud of their language and identity but in the West they don't give a damn for the language nor heritage!!!!??...

**M/35/Toronto-Canada** - Yes, I do speak Syriac with my Assyrian friends, and there are many of us here in Toronto. This language makes us feel closer to each other.

**F/21/New Jersey USA** - I speak Strictly Assyrian for I am Assyrian and not Syrian friends?

does not allow us to concentrate on speaking Syriac. I wish I could speak Syriac all day, but that will not pay the bills.

**M/18/ Sydney, Australia** - Not all the time. I try to but often it isn't practical to explain certain things, such as concepts or expressions. Often Syriac words are interspersed through typical conversations, though pure conversation in Syriac is only used as a means of being secretive when among non-Assyrians, etc.

**M/27/Sacramento, USA** - Yes - Without our language, there is no hope for us...

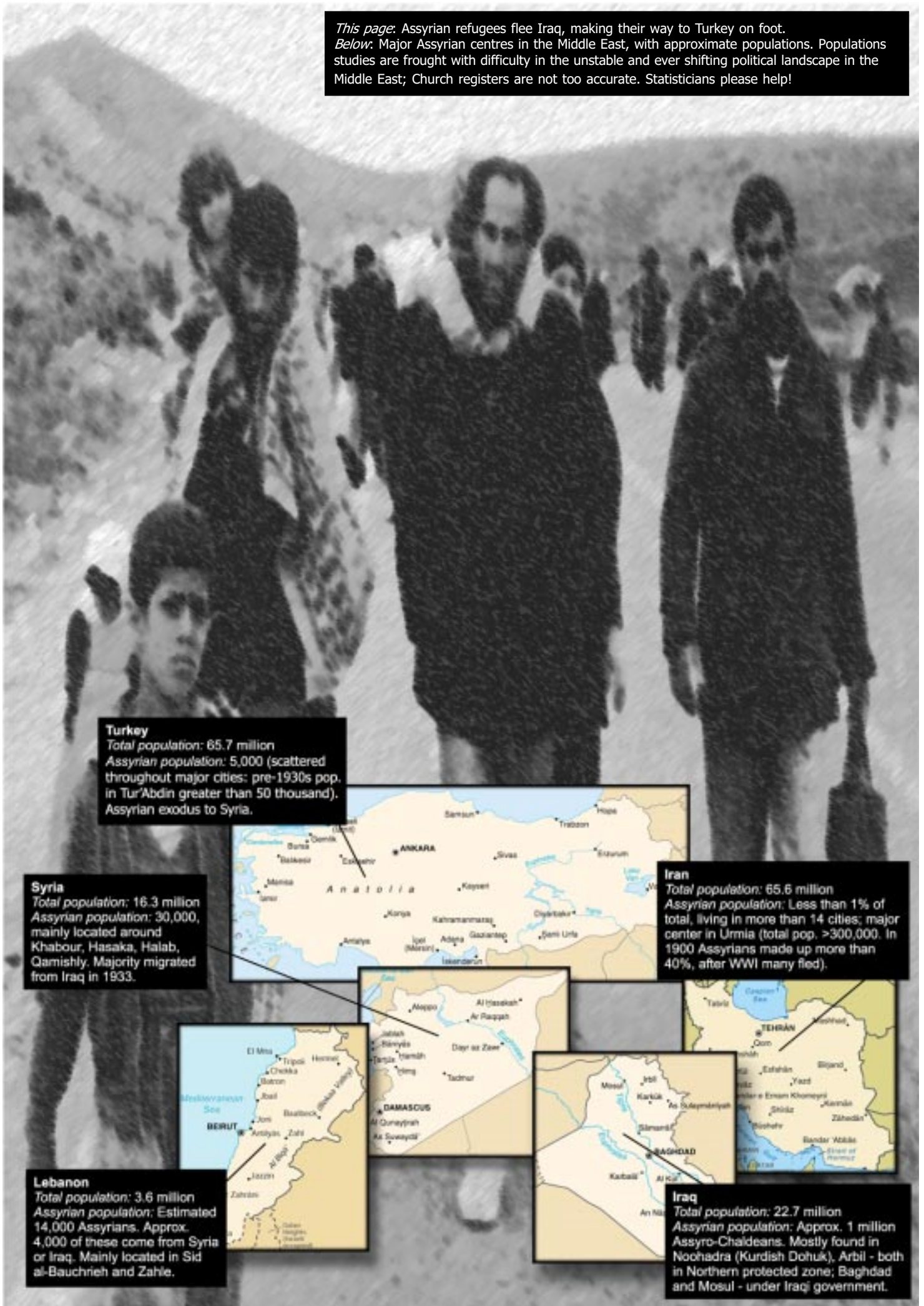
**M/16/Toronto, Canada** - I do speak Syriac with my Assyrian friends. However, most of them do not always speak Syriac with me. I speak Syriac because that is my native tongue. It is in my blood! I was not born a Canadian, American or Australian! I was born ASSYRIAN and therefore I must speak the mother tongue with my fellow Assyrians.

**M/50/Franklin Park, Illinois, US** - YES, WITH ALL ASSYRIANS AT WORK PLEASE, FRIENDS ANDRELATIVES.

**F/39/San Diego, CA** - Yes. because it is my first language.

*Caricature on Life is a question-based opinion survey of Nakosha's worldwide Internet readers. Readers are sent a question upon the Internet publication of Nakosha. Besides making minor spelling corrections, our readers' responses are left as raw as possible in order to allow a platform for the expression of their thoughts. Anyone interested in responding to questions posed on the Caricature on Life section can e-mail their details to [nakosha@hotmail.com](mailto:nakosha@hotmail.com).*

*This page:* Assyrian refugees flee Iraq, making their way to Turkey on foot.  
*Below:* Major Assyrian centres in the Middle East, with approximate populations. Populations studies are fraught with difficulty in the unstable and ever shifting political landscape in the Middle East; Church registers are not too accurate. Statisticians please help!



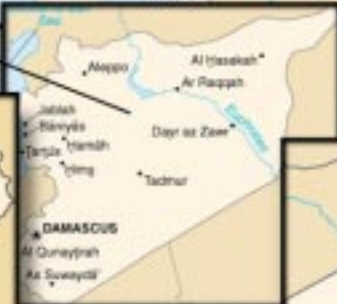
**Turkey**  
 Total population: 65.7 million  
 Assyrian population: 5,000 (scattered throughout major cities: pre-1930s pop. in Tur'Abdin greater than 50 thousand).  
 Assyrian exodus to Syria.



**Iran**  
 Total population: 65.6 million  
 Assyrian population: Less than 1% of total, living in more than 14 cities; major center in Urmia (total pop. >300,000. In 1900 Assyrians made up more than 40%, after WWI many fled).



**Syria**  
 Total population: 16.3 million  
 Assyrian population: 30,000, mainly located around Khabour, Hasaka, Halab, Qamishly. Majority migrated from Iraq in 1933.



**Lebanon**  
 Total population: 3.6 million  
 Assyrian population: Estimated 14,000 Assyrians. Approx. 4,000 of these come from Syria or Iraq. Mainly located in Sid al-Bauchrieh and Zahlé.



**Iraq**  
 Total population: 22.7 million  
 Assyrian population: Approx. 1 million Assyro-Chaldeans. Mostly found in Nochadra (Kurdish Dohuk), Arbil - both in Northern protected zone; Baghdad and Mosul - under Iraqi government.



# Assyrians

# In

# The

# East

**G**eography was always one of my favourite subjects at school. Learning about other countries and where they fit in the world somehow seemed to broaden your horizons and helped you understand where you fit in the world. Then one day a friend asks me about the geography of modern-day Assyrians – and I was stumped. I knew about the *ancient* Assyrian empire, but not much about our people today. Assyrians in the west may send their Middle Eastern counterparts financial assistance and talk about helping Assyrians in ‘our homeland’, but where exactly is this ‘homeland?’ he asked. “You know”, I said, “Mesopotamia, the area between the two famous rivers.” But he wanted to know more – where are the major centres for Assyrians in their own land? What are conditions like for them there, politically, culturally, and economically? I had to admit, having lived practically all my life in the diaspora, I wasn’t too sure.

“The Middle East” - these words are relatively new. The English were the first to use this phrase after World War II – it was the name given to their military command in Egypt. During WW II, the Middle East referred to the territories of Turkey, Greece, Cyprus, Lebanon, Iraq, Iran, Palestine (now Israel), Jordan, Egypt, The Sudan, Libya, and the various states of Arabia itself (including Saudi Arabia, Kuwait and Bahrain). World events since have expanded or contracted the definition, and no doubt ongoing political changes will continue to alter it further. But whatever definition is used, in most people’s minds it brings up the image of a Muslim world – just look at how the

*Encyclopaedia Britannica* refers to it – “at its ‘inner core’ it is ‘a Muslim Arab world’”.

So where do the modern-day Assyrians fit in their ancestral homeland, this ‘Muslim Arab world’?

While Assyrians can be found throughout much of the Middle East, in this new series we will concentrate only on those areas that have been historically associated with Assyrians, and where Assyrians call their ‘home’. While Assyrians can today be found in places such as Jordan, these areas are not traditionally viewed as native Assyrian soil. There were no Assyrians living in Jordan prior to the Gulf War – most Assyrians living there are really ‘in transit’, escaping from hardships elsewhere. Other areas, such as Saudi Arabia, have never had an Assyrian community – these places are truly the ‘inner core’ of the *Britannica’s* ‘Muslim Arab world’.

Those areas on which we will concentrate most heavily will be cities in Iraq, Iran, Turkey, Syria and Lebanon. As there is no worldwide census which accurately conveys the numbers and demographics of Assyrians we will necessarily rely greatly on current day anecdotes and information passed onto us from Assyrians currently living in, or recently arrived from, the Middle East. If any information presented is not accurate we welcome readers to contribute. Any reader who would like to pass his or her stories onto us can do so by emailing [nakosha@hotmail.com](mailto:nakosha@hotmail.com) or [sdaniel70@yahoo.com](mailto:sdaniel70@yahoo.com). Contributors remain anonymous if they wish.

By better knowing our homelands and the current situation of Assyrians living there, we hope to strengthen the collective identity of Assyrians in the diaspora. ■

*Sennacherib Daniel*

Moreland United Soccer Club...

# Scores in Europe

**I**talians rule soccer – well, at least they *did* rule until a team of young players from our own community here in Melbourne, Australia went to Italy to show them just how soccer is *really* played.

Competing against the Italians on their home turf in Chieti, Abruzzo (central Italy), in sweltering 35-plus degree heat and on a dry, gravelly field, the *Moreland United Soccer Club Inc. (M.U.S.C.I.)* managed to make the Italians sweat with a cool score of 2-0, taking home the *Il Gemellaggio Culturale Sportivo Australia-Chieti* trophy (trust the Italians to use 'culture' and 'sport' in the same sentence).

The under-16s made their two-week tour of Italy on 4<sup>th</sup> July this year. Being winter here in Melbourne, the boys had to spend four days acclimatising to the hot European summer. "The boys were playing at a significant handicap in these conditions," said Claudio Sciarra, M.U.S.C.I.'s coaching coordinator, "yet they managed to come back with the trophy."

Four hot days in Chieti were followed by another boiling 8 days competing for the *Eurosportivo Cup*. Held in a different Italian city each year, this year's *Cup* was kicked off in beautiful Rimini. The team drew against the Swedes 1-1: unfortunately this was the deciding match and a draw was not enough to get them through to the finals. The *M.U.S.C.I.* team also played against

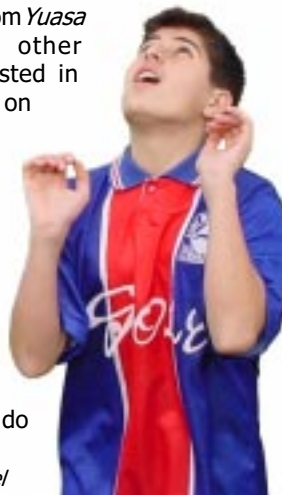
Denmark, Norway and Italy.

For a club to have moved from amateur level to Provisional League 1 in 4 short years and to play against European teams in the *Eurosportivo Cup* is no mean feat – especially when considering their shoestring budget.

Sport is an expensive activity, and soccer is no exception: it costs *at least* \$AUS4000/player/year to keep him on the field. Multiply that by the number of members – over 80 – and you see just how expensive it can get.

For those young players to keep representing our community, more support is needed – whether that be financial or moral support. Major financial support comes from *Yuasa* and *Tycon* – other businesses interested in having their logo on the club uniforms or calendar can apply to *M.U.S.C.I.* for details. With the *Club* growing so fast and representing us overseas, it would be a wise business move to do so! ■

*Sennacherib Daniel*



## ***the low-down:***



***Age:***

over 10 years; incorporated since 1996

***Where:***

Moomba Park Grounds, Anderson Rd. Fawkner

***Coaching coordinator:***

Claudio Sciarra

***Secretary:***

Michael Eyar

***Assistant Secretary:***

Nasir Dawood

***Treasurer:***

Ninos Youil, Ashur Hano

***Teams:***

Seniors, Reserves, Under 16s, U15s, U12s, U10s.

***Greatest Achievements:***

Recent European games; reaching Provisional League 1 in 4 years.

Assyria Youth Association presents

## ***ASSYRIAN MARTYRS- THEIR SPIRITS LIVE ON***

*Smeleh* – a drama / NSW Uni. Representative on Genocide / Amnesty International NSW branch Mr Anton Boski on human rights / Collect your free badge from the Assyria Youth Association member in your area and wear it throughout the week 6th to 12th August / For more info: [assyria\\_youth@hotmail.com](mailto:assyria_youth@hotmail.com)

Thursday 9th August,

4:00-7:30PM

Fairfield AMPHITHEATRE

Spencer St. Fairfield NSW