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# massis Weekly

Volume 26, No. 38

Saturday, OCTOBER 28, 2006

## Armenian-Azeri Talks Again Inconclusive

PARIS -- The foreign ministers of Armenia and Azerbaijan met in Paris Tuesday for talks that again produced no breakthrough but kept open the possibility of a crucial Armenian-Azerbaijani summit on Nagorno-Karabakh before the end of this year.

Foreign Minister Vartan Oskanian said he and his Azerbaijani opposite number Elmar Mammadyarov discussed "new ideas" on how to break the current deadlock in the peace process that were suggested by international mediators during their previous talks held in Moscow on October 6. He told RFE/RL that they agreed to hold yet another meeting three weeks later.

Oskanian said he and Mammadyarov presented their governments' responses to the unspecified ideas put forward by the American, French and Russian co-chairs of the OSCE Minsk Group. "I can't say that there is full congruence in positions," he said. "There are differences. But there are also possibilities to bring our positions closer. So we need to continue to work on it."

"That's why we agreed to hold another round of talks, most probably in Brussels around November 13, so that we continue our discussions to narrow down the differences," continued Oskanian. "If that materializes, it will make possible a meeting between our presidents during this year. There is also a possibility that the co-chairs may come to the region in preparation for the presidents' meeting."

Mammadyarov and other Azer-



Mammadyarov, left, Douste-Blazy, center, and Oskanian pictured before the talks

baijani officials did not immediately comment on the Paris talks that began in the presence of French Foreign Minister Philippe Douste-Blazy.

According to Oskanian, the talks continue to center on the basic principles of a Karabakh settlement that call for the conflict's gradual resolution that would culminate in a referendum on Karabakh's status.

Oskanian said the mediators' "new ideas" are aimed at bridging Baku's and Yerevan's differences on some key elements of the proposed peace deal. He did not give details, saying only that he visited Stepanakert following the Moscow talks to discuss the issue with Karabakh's ethnic Armenian leadership. "In Karabakh, we managed to formulate a common position on those new ideas," he said.

Karabakh officials have repeatedly expressed serious misgivings about the proposed peace formula, unlike official Yerevan which seems to find it largely acceptable.

## Oskanian Demands Free Elections

Armenia can no longer afford to hold elections falling short of democratic standards and must therefore "draw the line" under its post-Soviet history of electoral fraud, Foreign Minister Vartan Oskanian said in a newspaper interview published on Thursday.

"Everyone must realize that we simply have no more room for holding bad elections because this time the damage to our people would be not only moral but also material," he told the "Haykakan Zhamanak" daily.

In remarks clearly directed at the country's leadership, Oskanian specifically warned of a repeat of serious fraud in parliamentary elections expected next spring. "Some people, political forces would have to be held answerable, prob-

ably during the elections," he said without naming anyone. "If there are violations and if there are [negative] consequences as a result, it will be obvious who those people are and they must be really held answerable before the people."

Analysts say the HHK's unofficial leader, Defense Minister Serzh Sarkisian, considers its victory vital for the success of his reputed presidential ambitions.

The freedom and fairness of the 2007 elections will be essential for the provision of \$235 million in additional U.S. assistance to Armenia under the Millennium Challenge Program. The first major installment of the aid package promised by the U.S. government is not ex-

Continued on page 3

## Azeri Soldier Said Killed Near Karabakh

An Azerbaijani soldier was shot and killed overnight by ethnic Armenian forces near the territory of Nagorno-Karabakh, Azerbaijan's Defense Ministry said Saturday.

The soldier was killed by Armenian fire near the Fizuli region along the so-called line of control separating Azerbaijani and Karabakh forces, Azerbaijan Defense Ministry spokesman Ramiz Melikov said.

Senor Asratian, a spokesman for

the Nagorno-Karabakh military, denied the shelling. "Nagorno-Karabakh has staunchly adhered to the cease-fire" in place since 1994, he said.

On Wednesday, Armenian officials accused Azerbaijani forces of fatally wounding an Armenian soldier near Nagorno-Karabakh.

Regular skirmishes along a buffer zone around the enclave underscore persistent tensions in Nagorno-Karabakh.

## Reporters Without Borders

### Press Freedom In Armenia Continues to Decline

Citing continuing attacks on local journalists and widespread "self-censorship", Armenia continues to rank below most other countries of the world in terms of the protection of press freedom according to the Paris-based Reporters Without Borders (RSF) organization,

The annual Worldwide Index of Press Freedom released by the Western media watchdog group rates 168 nations on indicators such as censorship, intimidation and violence against journalists. Armenia shares a lowly 101st place in the rankings with the southern African state of Malawi, up from 100th rank it occupied last year.

The RSF director for Europe and the former Soviet Union, Elsa Vidal, downplayed the slight change, saying that it does not indicate an improvement of press freedom. She argued that the country has lost 12 places in the RSF rankings in the past three years.

Speaking to RFE/RL, Vidal said that Armenian journalists working for private media continue to routinely exercise "self-censorship" and that government censorship of state-owned broadcasters remains the norm. She also cited fresh instances of violence and intimidation of Armenian journalists reported

during the period covered by the latest RSF survey. "Two journalists have been threatened, and five others attacked since September 2005," she said.

The most recent of those attacks occurred less than two months ago when unknown men ambushed and beat up Hovannes Galajian, editor of the opposition newspaper "Iravunk." It was strongly condemned by leading Armenian media associations and human rights campaigners. Armen Harutiunian, the state human rights ombudsman, warned last month that violence against local reporters seems to become "systematic" and poses a serious threat to freedom of expression. The New York-based Committee to Protect Journalists added its voice to those concerns, saying that the Armenian authorities "do little to apprehend and prosecute the perpetrators."

Another New York-based group, Freedom House, branded the Armenian media "not free" for a fourth consecutive year in its annual survey of press freedom around the world that was released recently. The Freedom House ratings of Armenia have markedly worsened since the April 2002 closure of the country's sole television station not loyal to the government.

## Government Signals Russian Control Of Iran-Armenia Pipeline

Prime Minister Andranik Markarian on Wednesday effectively confirmed reports that Russian energy companies are set to gain a controlling stake in a key pipeline which is due to start pumping Iranian natural gas to Armenia next year.

Markarian indicated that his government will likely sell the first Armenian section of the under-construction pipeline to ArmRosGazprom (ARG), the Russian-Armenian joint venture that owns Armenia's gas distribution network.

The 40 kilometer section was reportedly covered by a controversial April agreement that allowed Armenia to temporarily avoid a surge in the price of gas imported from Russia in return for handing over more energy assets to Gazprom, the state-run Russian monopoly. The most important of them is the incomplete

but modern Fifth Unit of the country's largest thermal power plant located in the central town of Hrazdan.

Gazprom initially confirmed but later refuted reports that it will also get hold of the Armenian pipeline from Iran as part of the deal. Officials in Yerevan also denied that.

However, the Yerevan daily "Haykakan Zhamanak" reported last week that the Russians will after all win control of the pipeline through the ARG operator, in which Gazprom and the Russian-owned group ITERA hold 45 percent and 10 percent shares respectively. The remaining 45 percent belongs to the Armenian government. The paper cited a Russian document which presented the takeover

Continued on page 3

## Turkish Watchdog Urges Boycott of French TV Programs

Turkey's state broadcasting watchdog recommended Wednesday that television stations not broadcast French media programs, the latest backlash against a French law that would criminalize denial that the mass killings of Armenians in Turkey was genocide.

Members of the broadcasting group said they had decided by an unanimous vote that their recommendation would stay in place until France took the law completely off its agenda. French films, TV series and music account for about 10 percent of the content on Turkish radio and televi-

sion, according to figures provided by the broadcasting watchdog. It was not immediately able to say how much Turkish broadcasters pay annually for French content.

Saban Sevinc, a member of the watchdog's board, said French films were third in popularity in Turkey behind American and Turkish films. "France is trying to raise its voice in the world film sector. (We) hope this decision will make some noise, even if it's small, in the French film industry and art world and make them ask 'What have we done?'"

## Jugha Erased From the Face of the Earth



Photo Jean Eckian

**Evgénios Haitidis (Greece), Jim Karygiannis (Canada), Ueli Leuenberger (Switzerland), Steven Sim, historian (Scotland) at the press Conference**

Tuesday, October 17th, 2006, an international delegation comprised of representatives of different National Parliaments and a Scottish history-of-art specialist, were received by Mr. Koichiro Matsuura, Director-General of UNESCO, from whom they will be solemnly requesting an international investigation and open denunciation of the crime perpetrated on the memorial site of Jugha (Djoulfa/Julfa) by the army of Azerbaijan.

The delegation was formed at the behest of the Parliamentary Group Switzerland-Armenia – mainly the Co-Chairmen – the National Councillors Dominique de Buman (Vice-Chairman of the Christian Democratic-Party) and Ueli Leuenberger (Vice-Chairman of the Green Party) – with the support of Mr. Charles Aznavour, Ambassador of Armenia to UNESCO. The Parliamentarians will submit to the Director-General exhaustive documentation on the subject, as well as a signed Memorandum in which five recommendations will be presented to the state of Azerbaijan, among which, the construction of a Christian memorial on the site of the old cemetery. If Azerbaijan did not answer these rec-

ommendations, the delegation of the members of Parliament will ask the exclusion of Azerbaijan of UNESCO.

Moreover, the organizers of this exceptional meeting, regretted not assistance of the Armenian government.

On the 30th of August 2006, the Azeri authorities refused permission to a delegation of European Parliamentarians to go to Nakhijevan and to certify the massive destruction of the ancient «Crosses of Stone» (Khatchkars) of the cemetery of Jugha.

The first Khatchkars appeared in the 9th century. The cemetery of Jugha was divided into three sectors. The first sector included tombs from the period of the 9th to the 13th century, the second sector from the 14th to the 15th centuries, and the third from the 14th century through 1605 – covering a total area of 1600 square meters.

In the framework of the «Year of Armenia» celebrated in France in 2006 and 2007, the Louvre Museum will be offering to visitors an exhibition of 40 celebrated Khatchkars brought directly from Armenia. This will feature from 17th February to 14th May 2007.

**Jean Eckian – Paris, France**

## “Committee Talaat Pasha” Demonstrates in Paris Despite Prohibition

**PARIS** -- Prefecture of Police force of Paris dissuaded, Saturday October 21, an ultra Turkish nationalist organization to demonstrate in Paris on the "Place de la Bastille". The "Committee Talaat Pasha" created in year 2005, had as an intention to protest against the French bill penalizing the negation of the Armenian Genocide. This organization which has ramifications



with Ankara says victim of arbitrary to the freedom expression. Yalcin Büyükdaglu, member of the Committee of Talaat Pasha and the presidential Council of the Working Party (Turkey) declares in an press release reproduced by Collective VAN (armenian french website) "the grounds of France will groan of slogans such as: " Armenian genocide is an international lie". In March

**Continued on page 3**

## Javakheti Armenian Activist Beaten Up and Arrested In Yerevan

More than a dozen members of Armenia's parliament have condemned as politically motivated the beating and ensued arrest in Yerevan of an Armenian nationalist activist from Georgia's restive Javakheti region.

Vahagn Chakhalian, a leader of the United Javakheti organization campaigning for the Armenian-populated region's greater autonomy, was taken to custody and later charged with illegally entering Armenia on October 11 just hours after being assaulted by a large group of unknown men.

Chakhalian, his parents, brother and another United Javakheti activist, Gurgen Shirinian, were reportedly stopped and beaten up by the assailants as they arrived in Yerevan in a car. Shirinian is said to have been stabbed and hospitalized with life-threatening wounds. Nobody has been detained in connection with the incident so far.

Armenian law-enforcement authorities have targeted Chakhalian instead, saying that he crossed into the country without a valid Georgian passport and must stand trial on relevant charges. A Yerevan court has already allowed to them to keep the young man in pre-trial detention.

In a joint statement, 15 Armenian parliamentarians, most of them affiliated with the opposition Artarutyun alliance, claimed a "shameful link" between the beatings and the criminal proceedings, demanding Chakhalian's immediate release. They accused the Armenian authorities of trying to please the Georgian government which has been accused by United Javakheti of rigging local elections held in Javakheti earlier this month. "Instead of solving the brutal crime committed against national activists, the law-enforcement

bodies of the Republic of Armenia are trying to cover it up and punish its victims by 'legal' means," the statement said.

United Javakheti rallied hundreds of supporters in the regional town of Akhalkalaki. The demonstration turned violent, with the protesters seizing the local government building before being dispersed by police.

The ethnic Armenian group, which ran on the ticket of a major Georgian opposition party, claims to have been robbed of victory in the October 5 polls held across Georgia. The local election commission rejected the allegations. Official vote results showed the National Movement Party of President Mikhail Saakashvili winning the majority of votes in most parts of the country, including Javakheti.

In a surprise move, the ruling party formed an electoral alliance with another, more famous Akhalkalaki-based Armenian group that has long been demanding a status of autonomy for Javakheti. The Yerevan daily "Haykakan Zhamanak" reported on Thursday that Armenia's leadership played a major role in the deal with the group Virk and is now keen to help the Saakashvili government neutralize other local nationalist groups.

Meanwhile, Chakhalian's arrest has infuriated United Javakheti supporters. Scores of them marched towards the Armenian border to demand his release from jail last week.

The Javakheti section of the Georgian-Armenian frontier has long been largely porous, with Georgian and Armenian border guards routinely allowing local residents to cross it with documents other than passports.

**[www.massisweekly.com](http://www.massisweekly.com)**

**ARA TCHOBANKRIKORIAN**

I WISH I WAS  
REALLY HEADLESS.

Ara Tchobankrikorian  
2006



## Armenia Fund's 9th Annual Telethon Set to Air Internationally

### Nationwide Broadcast in All Armenian Communities

LOS ANGELES -- Armenia Fund United States Western Region is pleased to announce the domestic and international broadcast coverage lineup of its upcoming 9th Annual International Telethon. The telethon will be aired on Thanksgiving Day, November 23, 2006 in all Armenian communities around the United States and the world.

As part of the Rebirth of Artsakh project, proceeds from the live 12 hour program will benefit the regional development of Hadrut, Nagorno Karabakh. The funds will go towards building new drinking water pipelines as well as reconstructing healthcare facilities and schools that fell victim to the war and years of neglect. In an effort to eradicate poverty in this war ravaged border region, Armenia Fund will also implement a comprehensive agricultural development project to impact 1,000 farmers in 8 Hadrut villages. A similar regional development program is currently underway in the

northern Martakert region using the funds raised during last year's Telethon 2005.

President of the Nagorno Karabakh Republic, Arkady Ghoukasian and Mrs. Naira Melkoumian Chief Executive Officer of Armenia Fund International will be present during the telethon. The live program is set to air internationally from Glendale Studios, California. Below is the listing of the domestic broadcast stations in the United States and their times in respective local time zones.

H1-Armenian Public Television will also air the live program in Armenia, as well as on satellite in Europe, the Middle East, Asia, and the United States. Viewers with a Globecast World TV satellite may tune in to H1-Armenian Public Television and view the live 12 hour program. The Telethon will also be webcasted live for 12 hours on [www.armeniafund.org](http://www.armeniafund.org) from 8am-8pm PST.

For detailed broadcast information log on to [www.armeniafund.org](http://www.armeniafund.org)

## Russian Control Of Iran-Armenia Pipeline

### Continued from page 1

as a fait accompli that will be formalized by January 1.

Markarian appeared to confirm the information as he spoke to reporters after his cabinet's regular question-and-answer session in parliament. "We are not talking about the sale [of the pipeline] as such," he said. "It's just that Armenia may invest in the charter capital [of ARG] or we will jointly make investments because it would be illogical to have two gas distribution networks in Armenia."

Markarian added that Moscow and Yerevan hope to reach agreement on the issue by the time the pipeline comes on stream later this year or early next.

Defense Minister Serzh Sarksian, who has been actively involved in Russian-Armenian energy dealings, also strongly hinted at the pipeline's imminent transfer under ARG control. He said he will ask the ARG chief executive, Karen Karapetian, to publicly "explain the situation in great detail."

The pipeline from Iran was supposed to end Armenia's strong dependence on Russian gas and other energy resources. Critics say that by putting it under de facto Russian control the Armenian government would only deepen that dependence. Moscow is thought to have already made sure that the pipeline's diameter is not large enough to re-export Iranian gas to Georgia and other countries.

## Oskanian Demands Free Elections

### Continued from page 1

pected to be disbursed before the polls. The European Union, for its part, has made it clear that their failure to meet democratic standards would jeopardize Armenia's participation in the European Neighborhood Policy program of preferential ties with the bloc's neighbors.

Both the United States and the EU have strongly criticized just about every presidential and parliamentary elections held in Armenia and monitored by the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe until now.

Still, the West appears concerned about the Armenian governments failure so far to formally ask the OSCE to monitor the vote. The U.S. ambassador

to the OSCE headquarters in Vienna, Julie Finley, on Thursday continued to press Armenian leaders to extend such an invitation, stressing the need for the deployment of a "long-term" OSCE monitoring mission on the second day of her visit to Yerevan.

"None of the officials has said that they don't want observers," Finley told reporters. "What they have said is that the government is awaiting the announcement of the date of the elections before they can do anything."

"We would encourage the government to invite the OSCE to conduct a long-term observation as well as a short-term observation because we all know that the lead-up to the election is as critical as election day itself," she said.

## "Committee Talaat Pasha" Demonstrates in Paris

### Continued from page 2

the Armenians. Arrived in great number on the spot, the forces of order have constrained the demonstrators to make disappear the banners negotiationists and dissolve the gathering. One hour later, calms it reconsidered the emblematic place of the French Revolution of 1789. Let us recall that, one century later, July 14, 1889, day for day, "young Turks"

created the "Committee of Union and Progress".

Moreover, in the day and night of October 16, Ara Toranian, editor of the "Nouvelles d'Armenie Magazine" (News of Armenia) and Mourad Papazian, chairman of CDCA (dachnaksutyun organization of France), were victims of breaking and entering on their computers. Investigation organizes.

Jean Eckian - Paris, France

## Armenian Community Health Fair



GLENDALE -- The recent Armenian Community Health Fair organized by the Armenian American Medical Society of California, the Armenian American Nurses Association, and the Armenian Dental Society of California was an overwhelming success.

Over 300 attendees from the Armenian Community visited the St. Mary's Church, in Glendale on Saturday, October 14th. Various free screenings, such as blood pressure, blood sugar, cholesterol, dental exams, breast exams, spinal checks, bone density tests, and spirometry checks, were held. The Los Angeles County Office of Women's Health's Mobile Van Unit was on hand to offer free pap tests, clinical breast exams and diabetes testing.

The event was a very crucial ingredient for the multicultural, multilingual public education campaign. It encouraged many Los Angeles County Armenian women to seek regular, free pap testing to prevent cervical cancer. "It's Not Flu As Usual" brochures distributed by Krikorian Marketing Group were supporting the County of Los Angeles Public

Health campaign that targets families and individuals, the medical community, businesses, and community organizations. The brochures, which will be distributed throughout the community, will be supported by a media advertising campaign that will emphasize the importance of "Clean Hands" as the best form of preventive care to avoid the Pandemic Flu. The campaign will be in Armenian, Russian, Arabic and Farsi languages.

Major Sponsors included Glendale Adventist Medical Center, Glendale Memorial Hospital & Health Center, Kaiser Permanente, Hollywood Presbyterian Medical Center, QueensCare, Huntington Memorial Hospital, Los Angeles County Women's Health Dept., Krikorian Marketing Group, Comprehensive Community Health Clinics, Willow Imaging, Verdugo Hospice, ARS Mental Health Services, and Daylight Adult Health Day Care Center.

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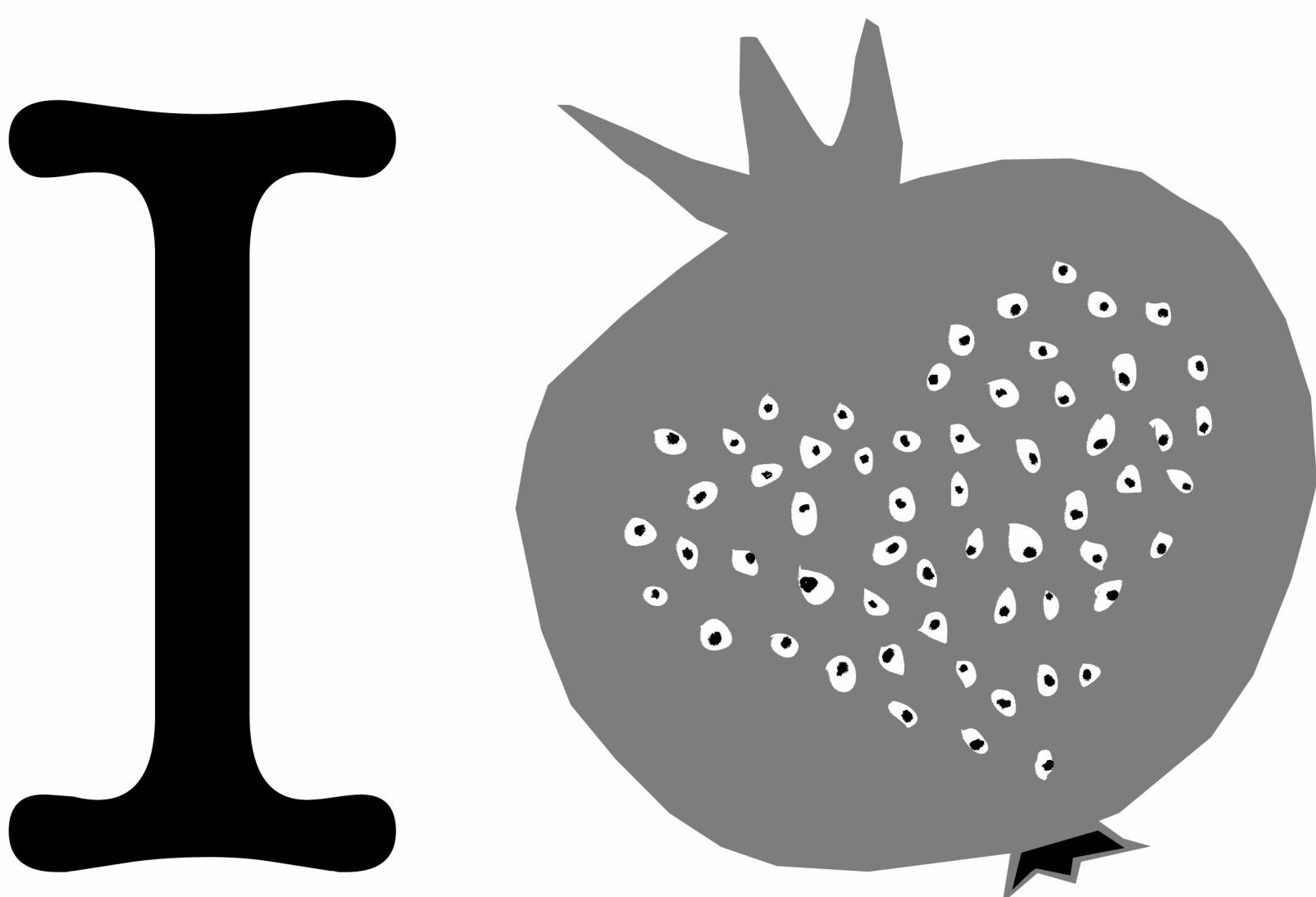
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