

## World and Nation

# Armenian Muscovites walk out; strike closes factories, transit

MOSCOW (AP) — Thousands of Armenians stayed away from work on Tuesday in a general strike that shut down factories and mass transit in a city at the center of an ethnic dispute, a local resident said.

Also Tuesday, the Tass news agency announced that two officials were dismissed from the Communist Party for alleged negligence that led to the violence between Armenians and Azerbaijanis.

The resident of the city of Stepanakert, reached by telephone from Moscow, said public transport was not running and that factories and other businesses in the city were

closed in a strike that had been going on for several days.

"People aren't working," the woman said. Asked how many, she answered: "Many thousands. Everyone." She hung up the telephone before a reporter could ask her name or other questions.

In Moscow, dissident journalist Sergei Grigoryants said the general strike had been under way for about a week.

Telephone calls to Stepanakert city offices and radio and television stations did not go through.

Stepanakert is the main city of Nagorno-Karabakh, a region in the re-

public of Azerbaijan. Armenians want the Armenian-dominated region to be made a part of their neighboring republic.

Strikes and street rallies began in the region in February, subsided and then broke out again recently.

On Monday, an estimated 300,000 Armenians staged a street protest in Yerevan, the capital of Armenia, calling for annexation of Nagorno-Karabakh, said Grigoryants, who is half-Armenian and half-Russian.

The demonstration took place in the same square outside Yerevan's Opera Theater where February's demonstrations were held.

Armenians began agitating in mid-February for the right to annex Nagorno-Karabakh. At the end of the month, ethnic rioting broke out in the Azerbaijani city of Sumgait. At least 32 people — six Azerbaijanis and 26 Armenians — were killed.

Most of the 160,000 residents of Nagorno-Karabakh are ethnic Armenians, most of them Christians. Since 1923, the region has been part of Azerbaijan, whose titular ethnic group is predominantly Moslem.

The Soviet government rejected the demand to change jurisdiction over Nagorno-Karabakh, opting instead for a program of social and economic development.

# High court favors U.S. rules to allow gray market sales

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Supreme Court, in a victory for bargain hunters, Tuesday upheld federal regulations that allow a multibillion-dollar "gray market" in which costly imported goods are sold at reduced prices.

The justices, voting 5-4, said the U.S. Customs Service does not have to shut down the gray market — famous-name, foreign-made goods bearing valid U.S. trademarks sold in this country without approval from trademark owners.

By a separate 5-4 vote, the court struck down another Customs Service rule that could be used to expand the gray market. But lawyers for leading discounters said invalidating that regulation will have little impact.

"I think the Supreme Court's ruling today is a great victory for American consumers and for the right of merchandisers in the United States seeking to bring products manufactured abroad into the United States at realistic and honest prices," said Nathan Lewin, representing a discount dealer, 47th Street Photo Inc. in New York City.

Discounting brand-name imports — everything from German automobiles and French champagne to Japanese cameras and watches — is a business producing an estimated \$5 billion to \$10 billion a year.

The gray market began to flourish when the value of the dollar on the international exchange rose dramatically in the early 1980s. But the recent decline in the dollar apparently has not depressed substantially the American appetite for gray market foreign goods.

The gray market is created when foreign goods are purchased abroad and sold through discount retailers in the United States in competition with the owners of U.S. trademarks of those products.

The discounters do not charge a mark-up that helps cover advertising, warranty and service costs.

In other matters, the court ruled by a 5-3 vote that states sometimes may execute convicted murderers even if the constitutional right to a lawyer help was violated.

# Yearly fight against rent hikes begin

NEW YORK (AP) — Ah, springtime in New York: The first robin in Central Park. The first ballgame at Yankee Stadium. And the first angry protester ejected from Police Headquarters in the annual brawl over city rents.

"People get frustrated, people get thrown out, their blood pressure goes way up," said John J. Gilbert III, head of a landlord group, in summing up the yearly hike-or-hold-the-rent fight before the city Rent Guidelines Board, which begins its hearings Wednesday.

The proceedings match angry tenants with irate landlords, with roughly the same results as introducing Billy Martin to patrons in a topless bar. Rhetoric is thick and animosity thicker, with supporters on both sides cheering, jeering and (with the aid of police) disappearing during the session.

Slightly more than 50 percent of the city's apartments are covered by the board's guidelines under a system that has its roots in the city's World War II housing scarcity. Although the

owners routinely request double-digit increases on one- and two-year leases, the board generally grants a much lower increase. This year, Gilbert asked for increases of 15 percent on one-year leases and 19 percent on two-year leases.

The hearings — once held privately, but opened to the public by court order in 1979 — are held inside Police Headquarters for security reasons. Dozens of police officers are assigned to the hearings, and others are available if verbal arguments get out of hand.

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