

THE ARMENIAN Mirror-Spectator

Volume LXXXVIII, NO. 10, Issue 4504

\$ 2.00

The First English Language Armenian Weekly in the United States Since 1932



Nicole Babikian Hajjar Leads *Mirror* 85th Anniversary Gala Benefit

By Sara Janjigian Trifiro

WATERTOWN - *The Armenian Mirror-Spectator* will mark its 85th anniversary with a two-day celebration including a symposium titled "Journalism and Fake News: The Armenian Genocide and Karabagh" on November 2 at Wellesley College, and a gala benefit under the theme of "Reflecting, Connecting, Inspiring" on November 3 at the Boston Marriott Newton. These celebratory events will feature an impressive line-up of speakers and honorees, including internationally acclaimed British journalist Robert Fisk, Middle East correspondent for *The Independent* and seven-time recipient of the British Press Awards' "Reporter of the Year"; columnist for *Diken* and *Al Monitor* and former Turkey correspondent for *The Economist* Amberin Zaman, writer and director of Alternative Radio David Barsamian, and Philip Terzian, a senior editor of *The Weekly Standard* in Washington. Chairing the gala benefit is Nicole Babikian Hajjar, of Lexington Massachusetts.



Nicole Babikian Hajjar

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'The Last Inhabitant' Shown at Venice Film Festival

VENICE, Italy (Artsakhpress) - The film "The Last Inhabitant" was screened at the Venice Film Festival under the patronage of the governor of Venice Luca Zaia, upon the initiative of the Italian partner Blue Art Association, Fisch Art Cultural Foundation, in association with Orietta Trevisanato Zampieri.

The director of the film, Jivan Avetisyan, along with Lithuanian producer Kestutis Drasdauskas, American producer Adrineh Mirzayan, and actress Sandra Daukshitte Petrulene, were present at the festival earlier this month.

The exhibition was promising, as the main purpose was to spread word of the film in Italy and organize its distribution. The negotiations are continuing.

The showing of the film was paired with a cocktail party. The audience shared their impressions, and in general the opinions were very positive and full of praise and gratitude. In this regard, Jivan Avetisyan singled out a rumor that many Italians touched upon.

"The Venice Film Festival is one of the few unique ones that evaluates the horizons, highlights and accepts movies about human destinies, and it is not an accident that within the framework of the Italian film festival, under the high patronage of the governor of Venice Luca Zaia, 'The Last Inhabitant' had an

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General view of the gathering

ADL Youth Forum in Yerevan

YEREVAN - On September 17, Yerevan hosted the first Armenian Democratic Liberal Party (ADL or Ramgavar) Youth Alliance Forum, attended by ADL members, Armenians from both the Diaspora and the Republic of Armenia, leaders of the ADL Central Executive Committee and the Supreme Council, as well as representatives of Tekeyan Cultural Association from around the world.

The purpose of the Youth Forum was to present to the party members and guests the activities that the younger members of the party have been carrying out during the past months. It showcased future projects, raised questions and issues of concern for the young people. It also attempted to provide solutions together with implementation methods.

The opening speeches were made by Chairman of the Central Board of the Liberal Democratic Party of Armenia Hagop Avetikian, Chairman of the ADL Supreme Council Vartan Nazerian, and Edmond Y. Azadian, member of the Supreme Council of the ADL as well as Chairman of the Central Board of the Tekeyan Cultural Association of the United States and Canada.

In their talks, they highlighted the role of youth in the party, and highly appreciated their enthusiastic activities in the regional clubs, where they remain loyal to party ideology and principles.

At the end of the event, 100 young men and women joined the ADL ranks, solemnly taking their oaths.



Dr. Yerem Yeghiazarians

Getting to the Heart of the Matter

By Alin K. Gregorian
Mirror-Spectator Staff

SAN FRANCISCO - In a San Francisco lab, Dr. Yerem Yeghiazarians hopes to treat heart disease, stroke and a whole host of other serious illnesses with the pioneering use of stem cells and newly discovered technologies. Yeghiazarians is the Director of the University of California, San Francisco, Translational Cardiac Stem Cell Program.

Cardiovascular disease is the number one cause of death in the world. There are about one million heart attacks and about half a million strokes yearly in the U.S. Estimated cost of care for cardiovascular diseases is staggering (more than \$320 billion). Yeghiazarians' lab was the first to identify a specific protein secreted by stem cells that has the ability to protect heart muscle cells under low oxygen conditions that are created during a heart attack and the first to demonstrate that specific proteins secreted by stem cells have the ability to rescue dying brain cells during a stroke. The work is geared to treating patients who suffer a heart attack or a stroke with novel therapies that decrease the damage to the heart and the brain respectively.

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NEWS IN BRIEF

Military Hospitals in Armenia to Be Merged With Civic Ones

YEREVAN (Arka.am) - Military hospitals in Armenia will be integrated with civilian hospitals, Armenian Defense Minister Vigen Sargsyan said at the 6th Armenia-Diaspora forum that started in Yerevan on September 18. "Military hospitals are often better equipped and have more resources than district hospitals. Together with the ministry of health we will launch a pilot project to merge military and civic hospitals in Sisian, Berd and Vardenis," he said. He said the planned merger will allow the army to help ordinary citizens, adding that military hospitals too have problems. One of these problems, he said, is modernization of the Central Military Clinical Hospital. "We have the best resuscitation and surgical departments. However, the condition of the building is unsatisfactory. With our foreign partners, we are discussing the construction of a new modern military hospital. We also aim to purchase modern equipment," Sargsyan said.

Health Ministry Declares No Import of Chickenpox Vaccine to Armenia Now

YEREVAN (PanARMENIAN.Net) - The Armenian Health Ministry on September 19 said that no chickenpox vaccine will enter the Armenian market for now.

Earlier, Cadila Healthcare had said it entered into an exclusive agreement with Russia-based Pharm-Aid for the technology know-how for chickenpox vaccine production.

Through this agreement, Zydus would gain access to the public and private market segments in Russia, Armenia, Belarus, Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan, Cadila Healthcare said in a statement.

Chickenpox vaccine, also called Varicella, is caused by the varicella-zoster virus, which leads to a highly contagious childhood disease.

Gayane Sahakyan, the National Immunization Program Manager at Armenia's Health Ministry, said the country's national vaccination schedule envisages no investments in chickenpox vaccines at least to 2020. "Our vaccination budget has been approved until 2020, and no such amendment is expected," Sahakyan said.

"Armenia acquires all the vaccines from the United Nation Children's Fund and from pharmaceutical companies pre-qualified by the World Health Organization. The standards are high, and a pharmaceutical company with a one- or two-year history cannot pass pre-qualification." Sahakyan said that the newly-established company cannot consider Armenia as a potential market for the coming 10 years.

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Glendale's Mayor

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ARMENIA

News From Armenia

Armenian Scientists Possess Knowledge Necessary to Make Nuclear Weapons

YEREVAN (News.am) – Some Armenian specialists possess the knowledge for nuclear weapon technology. Samvel Harutyunyan, President of the State Committee of Science, on September 11 stated the aforesaid at the session of the National Assembly. In his words, there are such scientists in Armenia and beyond, they are aware of this matter, and they can start the respective work at any time. “But it’s not hard to imagine that, unfortunately, Armenia has no such technical means yet,” Harutyunyan added.

Armenia Imports Transportation Worth Over \$105 Million in 2017

YEREVAN (Panorama.am) – Armenia imported vehicles for land, air and water transportation worth a total of \$104.91 million in January-July 2017. The figure shows a \$27.85 million increase over the indicated period of the past year, according to the data released by the National Statistical Service (NSS) of Armenia.

The imports of the vehicles amounted to \$82.1 million in January-July 2016. The released data also shows that in the same period Armenia imported machinery, equipment and mechanisms worth \$316.1 million, growing by 34.9 percent compared to January-July 2016.

Henley & Partners: Armenia Improves Standing on Nationality Quality Index

JERSEY (PanARMENIAN.Net) - Armenia took the 97th spot in the annual Henley and Partners-Kochenov Quality of Nationality Index (<https://www.nationalityindex.com/>), improving its position due to new opportunities for living and working abroad.

In the 2015 edition of the report, Armenia was placed 110th.

Compiled by Henley & Partners, the index provides an objective assessment of citizenship in different countries of the world. The experts ranked 195 citizenships based on a number of indicators for the period between 2012 and 2016.

The improvement of Armenia’s performance in 2016 was primarily due to the expansion of possibilities for living and working visa-free abroad. Belarus, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Russia have now become available for Armenians.

Germany leads the 2016 list, followed by France, Denmark, Iceland, Sweden and Norway.

Azerbaijan claims the 107th position, while Georgia comes in 104th.

Armenian IT Firms’ Direct Taxes Top Those Of Major Supermarket Chains

YEREVAN (PanARMENIAN.Net) – It turns out that Armenia-based IT companies pay more taxes than major supermarket chains that have multiple stores in Yerevan. According to Pan-Armenian.net’s own calculations, the biggest 10 firms in the information technologies sector have paid direct taxes worth 3.4 billion drams (AMD) in 2016.

Major supermarket chains, on the contrary, have paid AMD 1.1 billion less in the reporting period.

The list of 1000 major Armenian taxpayers, released by the tax service, includes Synopsys, Mentor Graphics, Oracle, Softline International, PicsArt, CQG, Monitis and a number of other companies. Synopsys, by the way, is the biggest company in terms of direct tax payments.

Sixth Pan-Armenian Armenia-Diaspora Conference Begins in Yerevan

YEREVAN (combined sources) – The Sixth Pan-Armenian Armenia-Diaspora conference, initiated by the Armenian Diaspora Ministry, opened Monday, September 18 at the Karen Demirchyan Sports and Concerts Complex in Yerevan. The conference, called “Mutual Trust, Unity and Responsibility” brought together around 1,800 representatives of Armenian diaspora organizations from more than 71 countries. Various leaders and representatives of the clergy, pan-Armenian structures and commu-

cy, the attempt to eliminate the consequences of the Armenian Genocide and the task of world-wide preservation of the Armenian identity.

The event began with welcoming remarks by Armenia’s Diaspora Minister Hranush Hakobyan, and was followed by speeches by Armenian President Serzh Sargsyan, Artsakh Republic President Bako Sahakyan, Catholicos of All Armenians Garegin II, and Catholicos of the Great House of Cilicia Aram I.

Sargsyan expressed his hope for a

have launched reforms in all parts of our country, in all spheres to ensure Armenia’s worthy place in the world. That is why our reforms are aimed at not only settling today’s problems, but also laying foundation to make Armenia competitive on the international arena.”

He expressed his belief in the abilities of Armenians to succeed, declaring: “We are proud of the fact that our nation, unlike many other nations, preserved its identity and managed to constantly develop and create. We have survived battles, persecutions, oppression, genocide and extermination attempts. Amid all the hardships, our nation has never lost its self-respect and dignity, never abandoning the dream to build an independent Armenia. Our current difficulties are incomparable with the ones experienced by our ancestors. As a result, we are here today and have an independent country. This is a supreme value. I am confident that the idea to build a modern, effective, logical and developing state built on good history traditions is an inspiring goal to unite around.”

Foreign Minister Eduard Nalbandian in a speech to the conference on that same day, September 19, declared that he could not rule out the return of some territories surrounding the borders of Artsakh. However, he explained, “Do not think that we can naively believe someone and just give something away. When saying ‘return’, I mean those territories the return of which would not threaten Artsakh’s security and would not become a threat to the Karabakh conflict resolution.”

He also noted that the position of the Armenian side on the settlement of the conflict did not change. It desired a peaceful solution. However, “In case of war, if it is not possible to stop it immediately, Armenia will recognize the independence of Artsakh, which will mean an end to the negotiations with all the ensuing consequences,” Nalbandian said. According to him, if the recognition of Karabakh by Armenia would have immediately resolved all the problems, Armenia would have done so a long time ago.



Led by Minister of Diaspora Hranush Hakobyan, participants in the Sixth Pan-Armenian Armenia-Diaspora Conference visited the Armenian Genocide Memorial Complex (Tsitsernakaberd) early morning on September 19 and paid tribute to the memory of the Armenian Genocide victims. The guests were accompanied by acting director of the Armenian Genocide Museum-Institute, Suren Manukyan.

nity organizations, as well as journalists and activist individuals gathered in capital Yerevan.

There are large delegations from the Russian Federation (259), the USA (213), France (92), Lebanon (107), Syria (44), Iran (56), Argentina (35), Canada, Turkey and Georgia. Representatives of the communities of Malaysia, Thailand, Singapore, Japan, Mexico, Ethiopia, Sudan and Myanmar are participating in the conference for the first time.

The conference comprises 3 plenary sessions and 16 topical discussions in four categories, related to the country’s economy, defense policy, politics, modern challenges, regional issues, the national security agenda, foreign poli-

strategic dialogue at the conference between Armenia and the Diaspora. He stated that in order to combat worrying demographic trends, the goal of increasing Armenia’s population to four million by 2040 had been adopted, which meant not only increasing the birthrate and life expectancy of Armenians, but altering negative trends of emigration. He pointed out that the increasing spread of anti-Armenian propaganda internationally by Azerbaijan may lead to a hardening of Armenians’ position on compromise.

On September 19, Prime Minister Karen Karapetyan spoke at the conference, pointing out that the modern world, including Armenia, is undergoing structural reforms. He said: “We

Garo Paylan in Armenia

YEREVAN (HayernAysor.am, armradio.am) – Garo Paylan, MP of the Kurdish Peoples’ Democratic Party (PDP) of Turkey, arrived in Armenia on September 16 to participate in the September 18-20 “Armenia-Diaspora: Mutual Confidence, Unity and Responsibility” meetings and on September 19, the festive concert dedicated to the 10th anniversary of the “Armenians in Origin” television program scheduled within the framework of the conference.

Deputy Minister of Diaspora of Armenia Vahagn Melikyan, MP Shirak Torosyan, and writer of the program “Armenians in Origin” Manana Hakobyan met Garo Paylan at Zvartnots International Airport.

At the Sixth Armenia-Diaspora Conference in Yerevan, Paylan declared that “only democratic Turkey will open the borders with Armenia.” He said that Turkey will neither manage to solve the Kurdish issue, nor establish democracy without facing the fact of the Armenian Genocide.

“Unless Turkey becomes a democratic state, we’ll have to wait for decades. Do we have the right to pass this issue

on to the coming generations? No, we don’t. Four generations of Armenians have been struggling for a just solution to the great injustice that befell the Armenian nation,” the MP said.

“Turkey is living a dark winter now,” Paylan said, and voiced regret over the fact that the West keeps its eyes closed concerning human rights violations in

the country.

“A great crime was committed 102 years ago, and it continues into now, because a crime unpunished leads to new crimes,” the lawmaker said.

Paylan said he dreams of equality and peaceful co-existence of peoples. “I believe that we will once have the justice that will lead to the recognition of the Armenian Genocide, and I will keep struggling for this,” Paylan concluded.



From left, Deputy Minister of the Diaspora of Armenia Vahagn Melikyan, writer of the television program “Armenians in Origin” Manana Hakobyan, visiting MP of Turkey Garo Paylan, and MP of Armenia Shirak Torosyan and his wife Garine at Zvartnots International Airport’s VIP lounge. MP Garo Paylan, center, in Yerevan.



ARMENIA

Summer Camp In Armenia Helps Displaced Youth Settle In

By Anahit Hayrapetyan

LAKE SEVAN, Armenia (UNHCR.org) - The still waters and stunning landscape of Lake Sevan in Armenia make it a popular beach destination for tourists. But this year it also became the setting for a summer camp that helped 40 displaced young people from Syria, Iraq and Nagorno-Karabakh find confidence, opportunities and friends in their new home.

Set up by Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA) NGO Vardenis to promote social and cultural integration, the two-week-long camp also worked to improve the emotional and psychological wellbeing of displaced and refugee youth. Activities



Activities at the camp included theatre, music, art, team-building and sports. © UNHCR/Nareg Dekermenjian



Displaced and refugee youth gathered at the spectacular Lake Sevan. © UNHCR/Nareg Dekermenjian

included theatre, music, art, team-building and sports.

"I had never been to Lake Sevan before," says Maral, a Syrian girl who attended the summer camp. "What I liked most was swimming in the lake with my new friends, and our leader Nareg who was protecting us from the waves. I feel at home in Armenia and I am honored to be part of my new homeland."

Despite the trauma and difficulties that many participants had already experienced in their young lives, their resilience, optimism and determination shone through.

"I made many friends at camp," says Aram, a boy displaced from the landlocked mountainous region of Nagorno-Karabakh, where conflict escalated in April 2016. "We were similar and different at the same time - similar with our stories of having lost our homes, and different with our language, traditions and culture."

Varditer Hambarzumyan, director of YMCA Vardenis NGO, says the summer camp gave children like Maral and Aram crucial life-skills for the future. These, she says, will "make a positive impact on the children, leading them to a dignified future with self-confidence, respect towards other

and a sense of solidarity."

UNHCR's Representative in Armenia, Christoph Bierwirth, was in the audience on the final day when the young campers gave an impressive performance of Armenian songs, traditional dances and pantomime.

"Seeing so many young people from different backgrounds and places of origin, young local Armenians and displaced youth from Syria, Iraq and Nagorno-Karabakh working, debating, relaxing and interacting together offers a sign of hope and shows that integration can work, if all are ready to engage," he says.

At the end of the camp, the children received certificates of acknowledgement from UNHCR and awards for creativity and talent, intelligence and enthusiasm, mobilisation and leadership skills. But they are not the only ones to benefit.

"The time we spent at the YMCA camp will remain unforgettable," says Nareg, a camp leader from Australia. "I heard the testimonies of the campers, and I am impressed by their spirit and strength. I am now full of empathy towards refugees in the world, I now feel different and think differently."

US Congressmen Hold Meetings in Yerevan

YEREVAN (news.am) - Armenian National Assembly Deputy Speaker, the Head of the National Assembly Friendship Group Armenia-USA Arpine Hovhannisyan, and the Chairs and Deputy Chairs of the Armenian National Assembly Standing Committees met with a delegation of the House of Representatives of the US Congress, which was comprised of members of Congressional Representatives Frank Pallone, Jackie Speier, Anna Eshoo, Tulsi Gabbard, James Sensenbrenner and David Valadao, Armenia's presidential press service reported.

Arpine Hovhannisyan considered important the development of relations with the House of Representatives and the implementation of cooperative programs. She highly assessed continuous American support aimed at the strengthening of the democratic institutes and civil society of Armenia, as well as the implementation of reforms and economic development.

The Deputy Speaker touched upon the steps taken in Armenia after the constitutional reforms, the works of harmonization with legislation and



US Congressmen in Yerevan

judicial-legal reforms, emphasizing the complementing of the Armenian-American legal systems in the legal-contractual field.

Arpine Hovhannisyan deemed important the signing of an Agreement on Exclusion of Double Taxation between the Two Countries. During the meeting, the Deputy Speaker referred to the problem of Syria's refugees and has noted that Armenia is one of the leading countries in Europe accepting refugees from Syria.

The representatives of the Armenian National Assembly Standing Committees highlighted the further deepening of US-Armenia parliamentary cooperation, and touched upon the issues of cooperation in different spheres and the regional problems. They attached importance to the continuous efforts of the USA, as an OSCE Minsk Group Co-Chair country, aimed at the peaceful settlement of the Nagorno Karabakh conflict and the provision of peace and stability in the region.

In addition, President of the Nagorno-Karabakh Republic Bako Sahakyan met with several of the US Congress representatives at the NKR Permanent Representation in Yerevan.

They discussed issues related to US-Artsakh relations, Azerbaijani-Karabakh conflict settlement and regional processes.

President Sahakyan considered such meetings important and noted that the development of relations with the US is of special importance for Artsakh. The head of state highly rated the work being carried out by the US lawmakers to reinforce and expand bilateral ties.

For substantial contribution to the process of recognition of the independence of the Artsakh Republic, President Sahakyan handed "Gratitude" medals to Representatives Frank Pallone, Anna Eshoo and Jackie Speier.

Pallone told reporters after this meeting that "We will do our best to propel forward the process of Artsakh's recognition. One of our colleagues has already been there [to Artsakh]. We will also visit."

Armenian Businessman Urges Diaspora Armenians to Invest in Their Homeland

YEREVAN (Arka.am) - Businessman Arsen Ghazaryan, who is chairman of the Union of Industrialists and Entrepreneurs of Armenia, on September 19 urged today Diaspora-based Armenian entrepreneurs to invest in their homeland and win new markets across the Russia-led Eurasian Economic Union, the European Union and the United States. According to him, today a significant part of Armenian enterprises operate at 10 to 20 percent of their capacity. They badly need fresh investments to boost output. He said also that about half of agricultural land in the Ararat Valley is not cultivated, as farmers have no money for it. "Now we are trying to create agricultural cooperatives, to enlarge them and if we

are able to attract substantial investments for the processing industry, we will be able to start any production - from tomato paste to caviar," Ghazaryan said during the sixth Armenia-Diaspora forum.

In his words, these products will not have sale problems, since there are orders from the USA and Europe. The entrepreneur reminded that more than 1000 Armenian goods are entitled to the GSP + program in the US and EU countries. "The Armenian market should not be viewed only as an opportunity to squeeze between the local oligarchs to trade in the local market. We should look more broadly: to produce in Armenia and sell to foreign markets - from Iran and Georgia to Europe and from Russia to

Kazakhstan," Ghazaryan said. On Armenia's membership in the Russian-led Eurasian Economic Union (EEU), he said it coincided with tightening of international sanctions against Russia, the collapse of the Russian ruble, a reduction in the volume of transfers to Armenia by 60 percent, which was the main source of financing for the local consumer market. "Over the past year and a half, we were not able to export Armenian brandy to the Russian market because of the fluctuation of the ruble and the uncertainty with the contracts, but now we have overcome these difficulties," Ghazaryan said. According to him, it is Armenian membership in the EEU that allows convincing Diaspora businessmen to invest in Armenia.



INTERNATIONAL

International News

Azerbaijan Hosts Turkey For Air Force Drills

BAKU (RFE/RL) - The air forces of Azerbaijan and Turkey have begun a two-week military exercise in Azerbaijan. The Azerbaijani Defense Ministry said that TurAz Qartalı-2017 (Turkish-Azerbaijani Eagle 2017) drill got under way on September 18.

It said that 30 military aircraft would be used in the exercise, which focuses on practicing joint search-and-rescue operations, the destruction of ground targets with air strikes, and other maneuvers.

According to the ministry, the exercise is part of an annual military cooperation plan between the two countries and will end on September 30.

Azerbaijan and Turkey have close relations and are foes of Armenia, sandwiched between the two countries. Azerbaijan's armed forces began their own exercise on September 18. Some 15,000 troops, 150 armored vehicles, 120 artillery, rocket, and mortar pieces, and 20 military aircraft are involved in the September 18-22 exercise.

Armenians in France Vow to Help Karabakh Military

YEREVAN (Associated Press) - A charity created by Armenians living in southern France says it will purchase winter field uniforms for the military in Nagorno-Karabakh region.

The announcement on September 19 by Matsak Poladian of the Union of Armenians in Nice, France, underlined the diaspora's role in supporting cash-strapped Armenian.

Speaking at a conference in Yerevan, Armenian President Serzh Sargsyan emphasized the continuing tensions and vowed to uphold Nagorno-Karabakh's self-rule.

Double Taxation Agreement with US Can Be Signed

YEREVAN (News.am) - If there is political will, it is possible to resolve the matters related to the signing of a new double taxation agreement between Armenia and the US, although this process usually takes a long time. The Ambassador of Armenia to the US, Grigor Hovhannissian, who has arrived in Yerevan together with several members of the US House of Representatives, on September 19 told this to reporters. He expressed optimism concerning the signing of the said document.

"This agreement is on the agenda of the government of Armenia; we have discussed it today," Hovhannissian noted. "The parliamentarians know that this is a lengthy process, and we agreed that we will continue working with the government to speed it up."

Erdogan Has Closed-Door Meeting with Jewish Representatives in New York

NEW YORK (Turkish Minute) - Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan meets representatives of the Jewish institutions in the US ahead of the 72nd session of the United Nations General Assembly as well as to pay a number of varied visits.

Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan on Monday had a closed-door meeting with representatives of US Jewish organizations in New York, the Cumhuriyet daily reported on September 19.

Erdogan met with US Jewish representatives at his hotel during his visit to the US to participate in the 72nd United Nations General Assembly.

The Turkish president also had meetings with NATO Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg and Somali-American Ilhan Omar, the assistant minority leader of the Minnesota House of Representatives.

Erdogan was accompanied in his meetings by Foreign Minister Mevlüt Çavuşoğlu, Energy and Natural Resources Minister Berat Albayrak and his spokesman Ibrahim Kalin.

2017 Hrant Dink Award Goes to Eren Keskin From Turkey and Ai Weiwei from China

On September 15, Hrant Dink's birthday, the Hrant Dink Foundation presented the International Hrant Dink Award this year to Eren Keskin from Turkey and Ai Weiwei from China. The award is presented annually to people who work for a world free of discrimination, racism and violence, take personal risks for their ideals, use the language of peace, and by doing so, inspire and encourage others. With this award, the foundation aims to remind all those who struggle for these ideals that their voices are heard, their works are visible, and that they are not alone, and also to encourage everyone to fight for their ideals.

Eren Keskin was born in 1959 in Bursa, Turkey. A graduate of the Faculty of Law of Istanbul University, she joined the Human Rights Association of Turkey in 1989, where she worked for many years as a director. During the state of emergency of the early 1990s, she took part in committees formed to fight against the grievous human rights violations in the Kurdish-majority areas; during visits to the region she became the target of verbal as well as armed attacks.

In the 1990s, nearly 200 court cases were brought against her. Because she had used the word 'Kurdistan' in an article published in the newspaper *Özgür Gündem* [Free Agenda] in 1995, she spent six months in jail. In 1997, she founded the Legal Assistance Office against Sexual Abuse and Rape in Custody. In 2002, in a case brought against her for a speech she gave on the subject of sexual torture by the state, she was sentenced to ten months in prison. That same year, the Disciplinary Board of the Union of Turkish Bar Associations



Eren Keskin

investigation process. The site was closed by official decree.

In 2010 a demolition order was issued for his newly built studio in Shanghai, where he wanted to teach architecture classes. He was ordered to be placed under house arrest; although the order was rescinded the next day, it was followed by attempts to prevent him from leaving the country.

In 2011, he was apprehended. His studio was searched, materials confiscated, co-workers detained. He was held for three months. Since 2015 he uses his art installations on the flight from the Middle East to Europe, to draw the world's attention to the refugees' struggle to survive.

As part of the ceremony, the people and organizations from Turkey and from around the world who raise hope for the future with their actions were saluted with the video "Inspirations 2017". They included Hombres Tejedores ("Men Who Knit"), which criticizes the patriarchal social system; Mehmet Nesim Öner, who won a gold medal at the Paralympic Games; Startblok, which offers opportunities for young nationals and refugees to live together; Future Vision Acrobat, which brings together disadvantaged youth in Rwanda; Lice Seeks Justice, which works on finding new witnesses and informing the public; Immigrants in US who organized a boycott against Trump's migration policies; Majed Alesa, who in his music video goes against socially imposed roles on women; Çorbada Tuzun Olsun, which distributes soup to homeless with the help of volunteers; Victoria Emah Emah, who brings hope to children orphaned by AIDS; activists who turned a dormitory of University of Oxford into a shelter for homeless; DEF RAP group, which connects people with and without hearing impairments; activists who resisted the pipeline passing through Standing Rock in North Dakota; and Syrian women who share the hope of life in Women to Women Refugee Kitchen

The award ceremony was hosted by Ece Dizdar and the opening speech was made by President of Hrant Dink Foundation Raket Dink. During her speech, Dink referred to the ones who got in jail for expressing their thoughts, and concluded her words by saluting the human rights defenders who were detained and arrested on July 5.

The award ceremony started with Ayşenur Kolivar's performance of *Da im Yusuf Orti*, a traditional Hamshentsi song. Brenna MacCrimmon, Muammer Ketencoglu, women from Sayat Nova Choir, Helesa and Dalepe Nena also took the stage during the night. The award jury for this year is composed of Theresa Kachindamoto, Diyarbakır Bar Association, Étienne Balibar, Christophe Deloire, Raket Dink, Atom Egoyan, Michel Marian, Murathan Mungan, feminist author and human rights activist

whom we lost last June, Şirin Tekeli. The International Hrant Dink Award was presented to the following individuals and organizations in the past years: Theresa Kachindamoto, a tribal chief who works for children's human rights and education rights; Diyarbakır Bar Association, a civil society organization that works for human rights and rule of law, in 2016; women's rights activist from Saudi Arabia Samar Badawi and LGBT association KAOS GL, in 2015; forensic medicine specialist and human rights defender ebnem Korur Fincancı and activist Angie Zelter in 2014; human rights defender Nataša Kandi and Saturday Mothers / People in 2013; writer İsmail Beşikçi and human rights organization International Memorial Society Russia in 2012; journalist-writer Ahmet Altan and journalist, human rights defender Lydia Cacho in 2011; the Conscientious Objection Movement of Turkey and prosecutor Baltasar Garzón in 2010; the journalist-writer Alper Görmüş and journalist-writer Amira Hass in 2009.

Wiesbaden Musician Renews Ties to Armenia

By Muriel Mirak-Weissbach
Special to the Mirror-Spectator

WIESBADEN, Germany - On Sunday, September 17, solo clarinetist Heiner Rekeszus performed in a farewell concert in Wiesbaden, before going into retirement. The 65-year-old musician was co-founder of the Chamber Music Association of the Hessian State Orchestra in Wiesbaden, which is celebrating its 25th anniversary this year.

What few people know is that the idea leading to the foundation of the chamber music series was born in Armenia. It was during a concert tour of the State Orchestra in Yerevan on the anniversary of the Hessian-Armenian Friendship that the solo cellist, Stephan Breith, presented the suggestion to the director, Peter Janowsky, that a chamber music series be organized, independent of the orchestra. As recounted in a program brochure to honor the 25th jubilee, it was in "this relaxed atmosphere" in Yerevan that "organizational and bureaucratic hurdles that had been often raised" against such a proposal "disappeared into thin air. The musicians' enthusiasm spread to Director Janowsky and the series was born."

What even fewer people attending the concert knew is that Yerevan has become the beneficiary to a magnificent musical gift presented by Rekeszus. Years ago, he received the estate of the Wiesbaden Kurhaus-Orchester, an orchestra which used to perform for the guests at the spa health resort here. Having learned that another Wiesbaden musician had donated musical scores to the Yerevan Komitas State Conservatory, Rekeszus decided to follow suit and contacted the Mirak-Weissbach Foundation, which had mediated the delivery. Just a week before his farewell concert, Rekeszus received a thank-you letter from the Conservatory, in acknowledgement of the precious gift. A truck had just delivered seven palettes carrying over 4,000 pounds of musical scores and books to the library of the conservatory.

In an upcoming interview, Rekeszus will talk about his experiences as a musician and his links to Armenia.



Ai Weiwei

issued a decision to bar her from working as a lawyer for one year. During this period, the mainstream media engaged in a smear campaign against her.

Within the framework of a support campaign for the *Özgür Gündem* newspaper, she served for three years as its co-editor in chief. Today, there are still 143 open cases against her, one for a speech she made, and the others concerned with this duty which she performed voluntarily.

Ai Weiwei was born in Beijing in 1957. After the Cultural Revolution, he returned to Beijing. He studied animation at Beijing Film Academy. In 1983, he went to New York to continue his arts education. He left school and made a living by painting portraits on the street. In 1993, he returned to China.

In 2008, after the Szechuan Earthquake, he visited the region and realized that the government did not provide factual information on the disaster. Creating a 'Citizens' Investigation' website, he released information on faulty construction and sub-standard materials used in schools which caused the death of countless people, shared stories of students who had perished, and published articles about the earthquake during the



INTERNATIONAL

Celebrations of the 300th Anniversary of the Foundation Of the Mekhitarist Abbey of San Lazzaro in Venice

SAN LAZZARO, Venice - The Mekhitarist Congregation is delighted to announce the official inauguration of the ceremonies for the 300th Jubilee of the Foundation of the Mekhitarist Abbey of San Lazzaro in the Venetian Lagoon.

The official start of the jubilee year on September 8 was preceded by a series of events which included a performance by the world-renowned Tallis Scholars. Their concert, which included two Armenian sacred works, was given on July 14 in the magnificent surroundings of St Mark's Basilica and was attended by Patriarch of Venice Francesco Moraglia.

September 8 is a crucial day in the history of the Mekhitarist Congregation: it was on this day in the year 1700, that Mekhitar founded his Order in Constantinople; it was on September 8, 1715 that he arrived in Venice; and it was on September 8, 1717, that he established his Order's permanent headquarters on the Island of San Lazzaro, after being granted permission to do so by the Serenissima, the Most Serene Republic of Venice.

Finally, it was on September 8, 1810, that an imperial decree issued by Napoleon granted the Mekhitarist monks leave to maintain their Congregation on the island of San Lazzaro, while all other religious congregations in Northern Italy were banned and their possessions confiscated.

On September 8, 2017, at 11:00 am, the solemn celebration of the Divine Liturgy for the Nativity of the Saint Mary the Virgin was officiated by the designated Prior of the Monastery,



Patriarch of Venice Francesco Moraglia receives the traditional Armenian bread and salt welcome upon arrival to San Lazzaro, with Msgr. Levon Zekiyian, Pontifical Delegate for the Mekhitarist Congregation, to his left.

Fr. Seroppe Jamourlian in the presence of Msgr. Levon Zekiyian, Pontifical Delegate for the Mekhitarist Congregation, in the church of the Abbey.

On Saturday, September 9, at 4:00 pm, the premiere of the documentary film on the life of Abbot Mekhitar, directed by Hakob Papazyan (Armenia, 2017), was screened at the Moorat-Raphael College to a select audience. Among

those present, besides Msgr. Zekiyian, was the Diaspora Minister of the Republic of Armenia Hranush Hakobyan, the Armenian Ambassador to Italy Victoria Bagdassarian, and the Armenian Ambassador to the Vatican Mikayel Minasyan. At 6:00 pm, a Solemn Vespers service in the Armenian rite was celebrated at St. Mark's Basilica in which Patriarch Moraglia and the high clergy of Venice also participated.

Several events took place on Sunday, September 10. At 11:00 am, the Divine Liturgy was celebrated in the church of the Monastery, by Msgr. Zekiyian in the presence of Mgr. Moraglia.

After the celebration, at 1:00 pm, the Congregation welcomed all those who had attended the Liturgy to lunch. At 3:30 pm, an exhibition on the history of the Abbey of San Lazzaro and its foundation was officially inaugurated.

The exhibition, which is housed on the monastery premises, will remain open from September 10, 2017 to September 10, 2018. At 5:00 pm in the monastery church, a concert of Armenian sacred and secular music was given by the duduk player Aram Ipekdjian and the Edesse Ensemble, directed by Justine Rapaccioli.

The Mekhitarist Congregation officially declares that the year 2017-2018 will be devoted to the celebration of the 300th anniversary of its foundation. Other events will take place to celebrate the extraordinary figure of Abbot Mekhitar and the role of the Congregation in the religious, cultural, and social rebirth of the Armenian nation, both within its historical homeland and in its various colonies that already existed in those times (from India to Amsterdam and London). The planned events will be announced in due course by the organizing committee via the Armenian press and other official channels. The Congregation will be delighted to welcome all visitors to the Abbey of San Lazzaro, particularly during the planned events for the Jubilee celebration.

'The Last Inhabitant' Shown At Venice Film Festival

VENICE, from page 1
opportunity to be shown," Avetisyan said. "My first emotions are indescribable, and I am happy that my film, which I consider also that of the Armenian people, is able to live beyond our borders and come out in such a film festival. I hope that this show will be an impetus for the continuity of Armenian-Italian cooperation, and the film distribution will be made in Italy and it will also be shown at Italian cinemas."

The film's executive producer, Adrine Mirzayan, also emphasized the role of the Diaspora in promoting Armenian films.



Jivan Avetisyan with Antonia Arslan

old heritage of Armenians, highlighted Armenian-Italian friendship, and the contributions of Venetian Armenians in Venice's trade, culture, and politics. He noted that Avetisyan, in his turn, is making a great contribution to Armenian cinema, uniting Venetians and local Armenians around the Armenian people and its history.

The filmmaker thanked the organizers for the warm reception and a gift exchange ceremony was held at the end of the celebration as a sign of respect and friendship. Avetisyan presented the governor with a Karabakh rug. He mentioned that the carpet was woven by women whose spouses, sons or brothers participated in the war, and today they fight at the frontier of life and freedom. "This is not just a rug with Armenian letters, but also includes the power, energy, dedication, the aspiration of victory, freedom and peace of Armenian women. There is life in this carpet created by the work of these women," said Avetisyan.

A press conference on the film "The Last Resident" was attended by the film crew, Ambassador Baghdasaryan, and Italian-Armenian writer Antonia Arslan, who is of Armenian origin.

Arslan touched upon the artistic value of the film. Mirzayan spoke about filmmaking in the United States.

On the initiative of ARTsakh Arts and Cultural Foundation, "The Last Inhabitant" was scheduled to be shown at the Los Angeles Pacific Theaters on September 15.

Kestutis Drazdauska in his speech emphasized the importance of international recognition. "Thanks to Jivan Avetisyan's huge potential, good script and history, he has managed to bring together international figures. Our cooperation with Jivan will continue in the next film project, which, I am sure, will also be a great success," he said.

The film was based on Tsovinar Khachatryan's book, *The Last Inhabitant of Gyurjevan*.

The acting team, along with some of the Armenians' favorite actors, featured internationally renowned actors from Iran, Lithuania, Greece, the United States and Russia. The composer is Serj Tankian.



President Serzh Sargsyan speaking at the United Nations in New York

President Sargsyan in NY for UN Meetings

New York - President of Armenia Serzh Sargsyan has come to the United States of America to take part in the 72nd session of the United Nations General Assembly in New York City, where he delivered a speech on September 19. During the visit, President Sargsyan will meet with UN Secretary General António Guterres. The President of Armenia is holding other bilateral meetings in New York, and has already met with President of Poland Andrzej Duda and President of the International Red Cross.



President Serzh Sargsyan, at right, with President of Poland Andrzej Duda

Community News

UN Ambassador Zohrab Mnatsakanyan to Receive Honor at International Day of Peace Celebration

NEW YORK – Each year the International Day of Peace is observed around the world as a day devoted to strengthening the ideals of peace within and among all nations and peoples. On September 22, the Association for Trauma Outreach & Prevention (ATOP) and Meaningfulworld will celebrate The International Day of Peace at the majestic Down Town Association located in trendy Tribeca.

This year's theme is "Art for Peace" and the work of several accomplished artists will be available for sale through a silent auction. ATOP/Meaningfulworld will recognize and honor several organizations and individuals whose work deserves special recognition for their efforts made to achieve peace locally and globally.

This year Meaningfulworld is also celebrating its 26th anniversary of healing, peace-making, transforming pain and generational trauma, and establishing Peace and Forgiveness Gardens globally in over 46 countries and 20 states in the United States.

Along with the auction fine art, distinguished guests will be honored with peace awards in recognition of their dedication and contributions to serving humanity and building peace. Distinguished peace award recipients include Zohrab Mnatsakanyan, Ambassador to the United Nations (UN) of the Republic of Armenia; Ashley Tobias, the developer of an anti-bullying educational program; and the International Institute of Peace.

Born in Yerevan, Armenia, Mnatsakanyan is a graduate of the Moscow State Institute of International Relations and holds a Master's Degree from Victoria University, UK, in Western European Politics.

Mnatsakanyan has been decorated with the Medal of Mkhitar Gosh of Armenia (2011) for distinguished service in diplomacy. He is an advocate of human rights and an educator on genocide. He has played a critical role in the ongoing implementation of parliamentary resolutions, laws and declarations, which have led to the acknowledgement and assertion of the Armenian Genocide.

On September 11, 2015, after years of persistent diplomatic efforts, the Republic of Armenia succeeded in having the UN General Assembly adopt by consensus a generic reso-



UN Ambassador Zohrab Mnatsakanyan

lution on all genocides. The resolution establishes December 9 as the "International Day of Commemoration and Dignity of the Victims of the Crime of Genocide and the Prevention of this Crime."

Ambassador Mnatsakanyan spoke about his "sense of duty" while presenting the proposed resolution to the General Assembly on September 11. Paying tribute to Raphael Lemkin who had coined the term genocide, the Ambassador stated "For the victims of our past inaction, the International Day will render dignity. The denial to millions of the sanctity of life is ultimate injustice. Justice denied haunts generations of survivors. We speak from experience."



Mayor Vartan Gharpetian of Glendale

Glendale's Mayor Vartan Gharpetian Talks Politics

GLENDALE, Calif. – Glendale is a unique city for Armenians in the United States. With one of the largest concentrations of Armenians outside of the Republic of Armenia, four out of five of the members of the city council are now Armenian, as is the current mayor, Vartan Gharpetian. The mayor declared that there are many other exemplary aspects to his city. He said, "There are over 60 languages spoken in Glendale. It is a family-oriented city. The way the city was formed in the beginning, the mentality of the forefathers of the city and my predecessors, is why there are good schools and good, safe neighborhoods. Culturally it is rich too. We Armenians are rich in culture."

By Aram Arkun
Mirror-Spectator Staff

Gharpetian has played an active role in Glendale public life for almost two decades. He left his native Tehran when 24 years old in 1986 to come to San Francisco. He went to Armenian school for nine years and then a Persian public high school in Tehran. He went to community college at the College of Marin, and then studied optometry at Concorde Career College from 1992 to 1993. Looking for a more concentrated Armenian community, he got married in Glendale and eventually moved there, in 1999. He got involved in the Ararat chapter of Homenetmen (Armenian General Athletic Union, a scouting and athletic organization affiliated with the Armenian Revolutionary Federation). He later served eight years as vice president of the board of the Davidian and Mariamian Educational Foundation (DMEF), which promotes the teaching of Armenian language and culture in afterschool programs at Southern California schools.

Gharpetian began working in real estate, and now is a realtor and the chief executive officer of Glendale Commercial, Inc., a full service real estate and development company. He quickly became involved in the public sphere and in various non-profit organizations based in Glendale. In 2004 he became a commissioner for 4 years of the city's Design Review Board, served on the Parks, Recreation and Community Services commission from 2011-13, on the Historic Preservation Commission (2011-2013), and then became chair of the Housing Authority from April 2015 to April 2016.

In connection with this service, Gharpetian said, "I am committed to preserving those of our properties that are worthy of being preserved," and noted that there are seven historic districts now in Glendale, and over 108 historic properties registered on local, state and national levels. He developed an interest in preservation when he used to live in the San Francisco area, and restored over 35 homes there over a fifteen-year period as part of his business. In Glendale, however, he no longer has the time and primarily focuses on commercial real estate.

Gharpetian also served on the Civic Advisory Board of the Glendale Adventist Medical Foundation, and the boards of the Glendale Police Foundation, the Glendale Historical Society, the Glendale Chamber of Commerce, and the Glendale Association of Realtors.

see MAYOR, page7?

Giragosian, Yerjanian Ordained as Deacons in Pasadena

PASADENA, Calif. – On Sunday, September 10, Primate of the Western Diocese of the Armenian Church Archbishop Hovnan Derderian celebrated the Divine Liturgy at St. Gregory the Illuminator Armenian Church and ordained eleven altar servers. Aleksan Giragosian and Armand Yerjanian were ordained into the Diaconate.

Shant Kurdian, Nareg Kurdian, Johnathan Dergazarian and John Yagubian were ordained as sub-deacons. Alexander Mnatsakanian, Andre Mnatsakanian, Garen Matossian, Saro Matossian and Armen Matossian were granted four levels of acolyte.

Giragosian is from a very committed family of Armenian Democratic Liberal Party and Tekeyan Cultural Association (TCA) supporters. His grandfather, Deacon Yervant Yetenekian, was one of the key people involved in the creation of the TCA Beshgetourian Center in Altadena, California. He is a recent graduate of the University of California Los Angeles School of Law.

Armand Yerjanian is one of the leaders of the Armenian General Benevolent Union Armenian Youth Association Scouts in Pasadena and of the Armenian Church Youth Organization of America in the Western Diocese. He has volunteered to help various Armenian organizations, and has helped the TCA office at the Beshgetourian Center with its computer issues.

In his message to the altar servers, the Primate said: "Today's ordination is most uplifting for us all. These young servants have shown the willingness to



Aleksan Giragosian, left, and Armand Yerjanian

serve God and this holy sanctuary. ... In particular, I would like to extend my deep appreciation to Deacon Alex and Deacon Armand, who from an early age have continuously and relentlessly served St. Gregory the Illuminator Armenian Church. They have given us hope for a brighter future. It is through this kind of celebration that anniversaries become meaningful."

Following the ceremony, a luncheon celebrating the newly-ordained altar servers was held in Geragos Hall. Directed by Elise Tashjian, the St. Gregory Choir presented a special choral program to celebrate the occasion. For videos and more pictures, see <http://www.wdacna.com/news/816/Primate-Celebrant-at-St-Gregory-the-Illuminator-Armenian-Church-in-Pasadena>.



COMMUNITY NEWS

Glendale's Mayor Vartan Gharpetian Talks Politics

MAYOR, from page 6

A Democrat, Gharpetian began to be involved in politics. He said, "This was a natural transition for me." He ran unsuccessfully for the Glendale City Council, in 2009 and 2014, before being elected to his first term in 2015. He was elected mayor on May 1, 2017 by his fellow council members. This is not simply a matter of rotation, as elections for mayor by the council must be conducted annually.

The position of mayor is a part-time volunteer job, which can take anywhere between 5 and 50 hours a week. Gharpetian said, "I spend as much time as necessary to do my job right." He said he gets a monthly stipend, roughly between 1,300 and 1,500 dollars, including a car allowance.

Gharpetian explained his motivation to become mayor: "There are some issues in the city that I did not agree with. I had a different vision and I thought I could do better." One of his important objectives, he said, was to improve the quality of life in Glendale. He explained that congestion and parking issues arose due to the dense structure created in south Glendale by businesses built from the 1950s to the 1970s. Even cleaning the streets in the morning is difficult at present. He said, "One of my goals is to provide enough parking, so that when people come home from work they can find a place to park."

Gharpetian said, "When you are newly elected, you need to get to know the system better and learn how it works so you can be efficient. I was elected for the first time on the city council in 2015, so I became the chair of the Housing Authority my very first day." As a consequence, he said, "I know the zoning code by heart."

Among the difficulties facing Glendale, Gharpetian explained, was affordable housing. He said, "Our seniors are in a tough position. Rents are raising while income plateaued." The city was being overbuilt, and many new apartment buildings were catering to the entrepreneurial class, primarily with one-bedroom apartments. Gharpetian said, "My idea is to develop projects that serve everybody. We have to build projects that will serve families as well." Entry level housing thus is very important for him, he stated, and he is working to bring 4-500 units of affordable housing.

As a big soccer fan and coach, he said he was instrumental with his colleagues in allocating about 10.5 million dollars for soccer fields, and is working on getting a soccer stadium in town. He wants to increase the amount of open space in the city, such as through parks.

In order to bring new businesses to Glendale, Gharpetian said he is trying to make improvements in the sales and property taxes. He wants to build a technology hub in Glendale, and create incentives for manufacturing technology components. For example, Gharpetian said, computer chips could be built in Glendale. The mayoralty is connecting the existing technology companies through hosting events, and also looking into making a cluster area for them.

Though Glendale is in general economically in good shape, with a low unemployment rate (4.7 percent in December 2016), and an annual municipal budget of over 840,000,000 dollars according to the mayor, like many other American cities it grapples with how to support families in poverty. This year, with the changes that the Trump administration is bringing to federal spending, Gharpetian said that he fears that rental housing assistance for low income families through Section 8 of the Housing Act of 1937, might be cut back, along with Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds from the US Department of Housing and Urban Development.

According to the city website (<http://www.glendaleca.gov/government/departments/city-clerk/boards-and-commissions-community-development-block-grant-advisory-committee>), each year the city receives approximately \$3,400,000 in CDBG funds, and an advisory committee of five members, four of whom this year are Armenian, participates in the preparation of a spending plan. A small portion

of this money goes to Armenian organizations operating in Glendale like the Armenian Relief Society (ARS) and Homenetmen Glendale "Ararat" Chapter.

Gharpetian declared that over 45 percent of the population of Glendale, or around 90,000 people, is Armenian. It is this concentration of population that makes Glendale different for Armenians. He said, "Whenever you have a majority of the population from a certain race or ethnic group, it will have its programs, schools, churches, and festivals." He said that in Glendale, as wherever else Armenians have gone in the world, "first we build our churches, then we build our schools and then our organizations; and that old-fashioned lifestyle is continuing here."

He made sure to stress that Armenian public officials in Glendale "are elected to serve the community as a whole...We don't discriminate." For example, he said, the independence of the first Republic of Armenia, May, 28, was celebrated right outside of City Hall, and, he said,

Glendale has a sister city program with both Ghapan, from over 10 years ago, and Gyumri, starting 3 years ago. Gharpetian said that cultural programs are shared between the cities and the countries.

Furthermore, the Glendale police department has gone to Armenia to provide training and advice. Gharpetian said he wants to send a delegation from the Glendale Fire Department to show how training takes place here. He added, "I made a motion last year to send 12 of our fire trucks that are retired but in very good shape to Armenia. I am raising funds for the cost of transfer. We also sent some ambulances to Armenia from Glendale."

Glendale has an arrangement with Adventist Health Glendale to send volunteers annually to border towns in Armenian and provide free clinics and medical care. Private Armenian organizations in Glendale of course also aid Armenia directly. For example, the Armenian Medical Society provides mobile clinics for Armenia and keep them there.

members. He said, "We are no longer newcomers. Our children were born here. It will take another generation, and I think this issue will be resolved. As my father used to tell me, wherever you go in the world the sky is the same color—you will find arrogant people everywhere."

He also felt that internal political Armenian community dissension has decreased. He said, "That divide, if you will, I have not seen it in a long time. The way this [last municipal] election went is a testimony to this. If you look at our city council's makeup, Ara Najarian is from Lebanon, Zareh Sinanyan from Armenia, and I am from Iran. This community is past the mentality of where you are from comes first—we are all Armenian-Americans first."

Gharpetian also pointed out that the city council seats were non-partisan in terms of American political parties. He supported fellow Iranian-Armenian Vrej Aghajanian, a Republican and a personal friend, for example, in the election.

As an Armenian, Gharpetian said "our job is to build the next generation." His focus is on the youth, and, he said, "how to keep them involved through sports and education." For example, the Homenetmen Ararat basketball programs for youth under 16 have over 2000 members, all run on a volunteer basis. Soccer programs are also very active in Glendale.

He said, "It all comes down to your families and how you raise your children. You have to instill Armenian values and teach being a good Armenian American. You don't have to give one up to do the other. The numbers help. We have so many Armenian associations here—the Armenian Society of LA, the Armenian National Committee (ANC), the Armenian General Benevolent Union (AGBU), Ararat Homenetmen, the Tekeyan Cultural Association, and many others. When you have a cultural event, and out of around 100,000 Armenians, 2 percent show up you have a packed house."

He encourages Armenians, like any other group of people, to get involved in politics. He commented, "We have young kids getting elected on the school district and college board. Of course you have to mentor and open doors for them. Internships are very important for them. We are part of this community and need to be involved."

Thirty percent of registered voters, he said, are Armenian, and probably half of the Armenians are registered. He said, "If you look at other nationalities, their percentage [of registration] is very low, maybe 8-to 12 percent. But because our overall numbers are smaller, we need a bigger percentage to make a difference. It is a challenge. We have to constantly educate people about the rights and privileges of voting, and keep registering people. Organizations like the AGBU, ANC and the Armenian Society of LA, and the Armenian political parties, must do the registration. Local political parties do their share. It is a collaborative effort to increase the numbers of voters."

Gharpetian spoke briefly about his family. They have close ties with Armenia. He said, "My uncle moved back to Armenia in 1947, and I have so many relatives, first cousins, second cousins, and third cousins, with whom we kept in touch. If not every year, every other year we visit Armenia and do what we can to help the country."

He exclaimed, "I have a great family. My wife Armina is a dentist, and is a member of the Glendale Board of Education [she was its president until this April]. I have three daughters. My oldest is 19, named Nazeli, is attending Woodbury University. My second daughter, Nayra, is in ninth grade, while our 10-year-old Nelin, is in elementary school."

He said, "We go to a lot of Armenian events as a family. We try to attend every event in Glendale." The children go to public schools, and attended DMEF classes. They also went to Armenian summer camps. The mayor himself pursues several hobbies, including collecting classic cars, antiques and Armenian rugs.

Gharpetian promises to stay in municipal government for at least several terms. He said, "I need to be here a certain amount of time to achieve my goals and deliver my promises. After that I must see where my family, life and health is. Every elected official has ambitions to go to a higher position and I am not exempt from this."



Glendale City Hall: wall with pictures of Gharpetian's predecessors, the former mayors of Glendale, including many Armenians

"If other nationalities or religious groups want to do the same thing here they are welcome to do so."

The programs the city provides are for the population as a whole. The recreation centers of the Glendale Parks and Recreation Department provides English as a Second Language classes, as well as exercise and yoga classes. There are a few adult recreation centers for the entire population. Glendale Community College has many classes, and there are elderly Armenians who go there to learn English. Armenian organizations like Homenetmen and ARS have programs for the elderly.

As a result of the DMEF programs since 1978, the dual immersion concept entered the public school curriculum some eight to ten years ago, and now not only do two Glendale schools have Armenian dual immersion programs, but it led to similar programs in seven or eight different languages in different Glendale schools.

The Glendale municipality because of its large Armenian population has a variety of connections with the Republic of Armenia.

When asked about negative publicity about Armenians in the local media, Mayor Gharpetian said, "It is not just Armenians—it is against every nationality. It is a matter of getting used to a new neighbor. We [Armenians] moved to Glendale around 35-45 years ago, when a wave of Armenians came in. We proved to be a good, peaceful community which improved the quality of life in Glendale. Property values went up."

As far as crime goes, he stressed that "most of the crimes by Armenians are white collar crimes. We like any other community have our bad apples. I have not seen robberies, home invasions and drive-by shootings [by Armenians]." He said he did not know of any Armenian gangs in Glendale. In addition, he said "the general drug issue is there, but not as much as in our neighboring cities. Ours is a confined area because our police department is very, very proactive."

Gharpetian said, "There will always be people upset with things, but elections are the proof" of the acceptance of Armenians, since non-Armenian votes are necessary to elect council

ARAM ARKUN PHOTO



OBITUARY

Dr. Robert A. Aslanian (1943-2017)

GREENWICH, Conn. – Dr. Robert A. Aslanian, oral surgeon, mentor and artist, passed away on September 11, surrounded by his loved ones. He was 74 years old. A medical professional in the Greenwich community for 45 years, Bob, as he was called, was known for his high level of professionalism, integrity, compassion and gentle nature. He was cherished and loved by his family, friends and patients.

Born in New York City on February 6, 1943, into a close-knit Armenian family and community, Bob was the son of the late Mary and Arsen Aslanian. His father served in World War II and did not return until Bob was three years old. Bob received his undergraduate degree from New York University (Heights Colleges) and received his Doctor of Dental Surgery from the NYU College of Dentistry in 1968; he went on to post-graduate training in oral surgery at Hartford Hospital (University of Connecticut Health Center), after which he opened his oral surgery practice, currently Infinity Oral Surgery, at The Medical Building, 49 Lake Ave., in 1971.

Bob served on the attending staff as an Oral Surgeon and Chief of the Section of Dental and Oral Surgery at Greenwich Hospital from 1982 until his passing. Bob also was Consultant in Dentistry and Oral Surgery at Dental Care of Stamford and at Connecticut Health of Greenwich. In addition to his extensive involvement in the Greenwich dental community, Bob was Assistant Clinical Professor at New York Medical College in Valhalla, New York. Bob was a Diplomate of the American Board of Oral Surgery and Maxillofacial Surgery and held dental licenses from New York and Connecticut. He was a Life Fellow of the American Society of Oral and Maxillofacial Surgeons and a Life Member of the American Dental Association, the Connecticut Dental Society, which he served as President and the Connecticut Society of Oral and Maxillofacial Surgeons.

Bob has been named as a Top Dentist in Connecticut Magazine's survey of Connecticut dentists. Alibis, a Greenwich organization for special needs children and adults, presented Bob with the Outstanding Health Professional of 2008 Award for his caring and compassion. Bob was past President of the Armenian-American Health Professional Organization (AAHPO) of the Tristate Area.

"Bob was a strong believer in Armenian health care professionals helping the Armenian community. As an early leader of AAHPO, he fostered the growth of this

nascent organization and laid the foundation that continues to be instrumental in all we have accomplished today. He continued his involvement for many years, helping with the 2009 Armenian Medical Congress in New York, and leading a medical workshop at St. Gregory's," noted current AAHPO President Lawrence V. Najarian. Najarian said, "He was deeply committed and always willing to lend a helping hand." Bob presented a case study of a Gigantiform Cementoblastoma of the Mandible to the Armenian World Congress held in New York City.

In April 2016, Greenwich Hospital honored Bob with grateful appreciation for his 45 years of service to the hospital. In June 2017, he received the monthly Quality Award in recognition of his exceptional contribution to Greenwich Hospital's "Commitment to Service Excellence".

Bob taught at his alma mater, New York University School of Dentistry, and continued in that position until his passing. His love for his students and colleagues was boundless. Bob's community service included speaking to high school students considering careers in dentistry and the allied dental professions, to whom he presented explicitly illustrated lectures about how smoking and chewing tobacco can cause cancerous lesions in the mouth and throat. His frankness made a strong impression on students. The Greenwich Health Association presented Bob with the Outstanding Volunteer Health Care Professional Award for his dedicated and continuous service to youth in anti-smoking education programs throughout the town. Bob lectured on dental health issues to the Greenwich Men's Club.

Bob served as a deacon and usher at The First Presbyterian Church in Greenwich and was a member of the Men's Club at Saint Gregory the Enlightener Armenian Church in White Plains. Bob was an accomplished landscape painter who firmly believed in using pure oils as his medium. Bob expressed a deep love for art. He inherited this talent and passion from his father, with whom he exhibited in father-son shows throughout the area. These paintings were displayed in Bob's dental office, and his seven-foot high painting of Noah's Ark was presented to the First Presbyterian Church.

Bob and his wife Gloria, were members of local and national Puppetry Guilds and attended puppet festivals throughout the United States. He was especially admired by members of the Puppetry Guilds for carving detailed facial and hand features using dental tools. Together, Bob and Gloria volunteered for an after-school marionette class at The

Edison School in Port Chester, New York. Marionettes made by Fourth and Fifth Grade students were incorporated into their language arts enrichment studies and resulted in a fully-staged production from the "Tapestry" series by Henry Neff. Bob loved working with the students, and they were thrilled to have him share his talents with them.

Combining his professional skills and artistic talents, Bob's dental drawings were featured in many publications. Bob met his future wife and childhood neighbor, Gloria Koomruian, when he was five years old. He became extended family to the Koomruians: Charles, Claire, Grace and Gloria. Bob married the love of his life, Gloria, in 1967. They celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary earlier this year. He is survived by his wife Gloria; their two children, Grace Aslanian and Dr. Harry Aslanian; his daughter-in-law Dr. Meg Rydell and three grandchildren, Elise, John and Annika Aslanian. He also leaves behind his loving brother Richard Aslanian; his sister-in-law Lynn Aslanian; nephew Brian Aslanian and nieces Lily and Lia Aslanian; his sisters-in-law Claire Davidian, Reverend Doctor Grace Koomruian and Sylvia Koomruian; his nieces Karen Davidian and Ruth Elias and nephew Charles Koomruian and extended family member



Luke Bentley.

All are welcome to a memorial service, conducted by clergy from The First Presbyterian Church of Greenwich and Saint Gregory the Enlightener, at the First Presbyterian Church of Greenwich (1 West Putnam Ave. at Lafayette Place) on Sunday, September 24, 2017 at 2:30 p.m., and to the reception that follows in Fellowship Hall at Church. To leave an online condolence, please visit www.cas-tiglioneff.com.

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Julie (Touloukian) Mesrobian

WALTHAM, Mass. – Julie Mesrobian passed away peacefully on September 14, surrounded by her loving family. She was the beloved wife of Edward Mesrobian for 55 years; and the devoted mother of Janet Mesrobian, her husband John Moroney, and Ellen Tufankjian and her husband Greg. Julie was the loving grandmother of Morgan and Alexander Moroney and Matthew and Michael Tufankjian. She is also survived by her brother Dr. Robert Touloukian, his wife Reverend Janice Touloukian and their family, as well as extended family, nephews and nieces.

Born and raised in New York City, Julie was the daughter of the late Edward and Shakeh (Topalian) Touloukian. She was the niece of Haroutune ("Harry") Touloukian, godfather of St. James Armenian Church and benefactor of the Armenian General Benevolent Union. She graduated from Hunter College and had a successful business career, including serving as the Manager of Grants Administration at Harvard Medical School.

Active in the Armenian community, including at St. James and other organizations, Julie was a member for many years of the Hai Guin Scholarship Association, which raises money to provide scholarships for Armenian students, including serving for the past two years as its treasurer.

Julie took joy in spending time with her fam-



ily, summers on Cape Cod and Martha's Vineyard, and planning amazing holiday celebrations, especially Christmas and Easter. Her warmth, kindness, and strength will be missed by all.

Her funeral service was at Saint James Armenian Church in Watertown on September 21 at 11:00 a.m. Arrangements were by the Aram Bedrosian Funeral Home of Watertown.

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COMMUNITY NEWS

Nicole Babikian Hajjar Leads Mirror 85th Anniversary Gala Benefit

GALA, from page 1

Nicole took on this responsibility because of her long-standing connection with the *Mirror-Spectator* and her deep belief in the fundamental role the paper plays in the Armenian community. She views the *Mirror* as “a major voice in the Armenian press, a window to our greater community, and a platform to make our individual voices heard. The *Mirror* keeps us all connected and engaged, and often times inspired by the many stories and profiles it sheds a light on.”

Nicole was born and raised in Beirut, Lebanon where she received her BA in Economics from the American University of Beirut (AUB), followed by a Translator Diploma from Universite Saint-Joseph. Before moving to the US in 1994, Nicole worked as a sworn translator (she is fluent in French, Arabic, English and Armenian) and a copywriter in advertising.

Upon coming to the United States, Nicole looked to the *Mirror-Spectator* for access to the greater Armenian community through the diversity of topics and areas the paper covered, from the arts and culture, to politics and local and international events.

Throughout years of volunteering and philanthropy, Nicole has faithfully stepped up to the call of her community. Before chairing the *Mirror's* 85th Anniversary, she has been leading the Board of the YerazArt Foundation for almost 10 years, dedicating her time and resources to supporting and promoting young, talented musicians from Armenia. “Whenever I asked the press to cover any of our concerts or other events,” recounts Nicole, “the *Mirror* was always there for us. Not just for me, but for so many others who work hard at supporting charitable initiatives throughout our community. It therefore felt natural for me to give back and be there for the *Mirror*,” she adds.

Nicole has chaired numerous fundraisers for various Armenian organizations including the Armenia Tree Project, Project SAVE Archives and Hamazkayin, in addition to her many years of service to St. Stephen's Armenian Elementary School in Watertown and to the New England Chapter of the Worldwide Alumni Association of her alma mater AUB. “To sum it up, I call myself a professional volunteer,” she says jokingly.

Nicole has passed this deep commitment to service to her children. Her daughters Serena and Anelga both interned at the *Mirror* prior to their high school senior years and found the experience rewarding, informative and enriching. They enjoyed working in a fun environment

and being exposed to the wealth and diversity of opportunity within the Armenian community.

Citing the many innovations currently in the works at the *Mirror*, Nicole mentioned the release of a new mobile-friendly and interactive website: “The *Mirror* needs to stay relevant in the new media landscape. We also need to meet young readers where they are and how they consume the news.” Commenting on the recent increase in the paper output from 16 to 20 pages, she noted: “This expansion in scope and subjects calls for the hiring of additional of reporters and correspondents throughout the world.” She adds: “And with 85 years of print material in store, the digitization of past issues is imperative

to allow researchers and future generations to tap into this invaluable source of content.”

Nicole likes to recall what a fellow committee member said at one of their very first meetings: “If the *Mirror* were to shut down, I would feel left in the dark.”

“Let's do our part to not only keep the lights on, but to make sure they shine wider and brighter into the future,” she concludes.

All readers and supporters of the *Mirror* are invited to attend the symposium and the gala benefit in celebration of the *Mirror's* 85th Anniversary. For reservations and sponsorship opportunities, please contact Aram Arkun at (917) 743-9005 or tcadirector@aol.com.

Getting to the Heart of the Matter

HEART, from page 1

This will result in smaller heart attacks and lessen the chances of developing congestive heart failure after an event and also lessen the neurologic side effects from a devastating stroke.

According to Yeghiazarians, the factors secreted by the stem cells are the key in how stem cells improve the cardiac function. In fact, injecting the stem-cell-secreted proteins, even in the absence of live stem cells, improves cardiac function, decreases the scar size, and results in fewer dying heart muscle cells from a heart attack. This has led to the possibility of developing an off-the-shelf medication as a novel therapy.

The drug is in the development phase, which is expected to be completed within the next few years.

In addition to these exciting discoveries, Yeghiazarians' lab has also developed a propri-

etary technology to assess the stress level of a cell and has automated the system. Using this technology, it has been able to perform high throughput testing of drugs to discover new therapies for a host of diseases including Parkinson's, Alzheimer's, muscular dystrophies and diabetes.

Yeghiazarians was born in Iran and came to the United States in the wake of the Iranian Revolution at the age of 15 with his family, who settled in the Boston area. He received his undergraduate degree in biology and biochemistry from Brandeis University and later attended the Johns Hopkins School of Medicine in Baltimore. He received his internal medicine and cardiology trainings and his chief residency at the Harvard-Medical-School-affiliated Brigham and Women's Hospital in Boston before coming to San

Francisco in 2003.

In addition to his duties at the lab, he is Professor of Medicine and holder of the Leone-Perkins Family Endowed Chair in Cardiology at UCSF. And also, he is Director of the Translational Cardiac Stem Cell Program, co-Director of the Adult Cardiac Catheterization Laboratory and Director of the Peripheral Interventional Cardiology Program.

He is the immediate past president of the San Francisco Board of the American Heart Association.

The lab is now in the midst of a major fundraising drive with the goal of raising at least \$10 million.

To find out more about the work of the lab, visit <https://stemcell.ucsf.edu/cardiovascular-reaching-cure-0>



Executive Director Position Manoogian Manor, Livonia, MI

The Manoogian Manor, founded by Alex and Marie Manoogian, a fully licensed non-profit facility providing assisted living and personal care services for seniors, is currently taking resumes for the position of its Executive Director. A 90-bed premier community that has just gone through a major multi-million dollar renovation is known for its outstanding resident care programs. Potential candidates should have extensive experience in the industry, having run similar or larger programs in the past.

- Michigan Assisted Living Administrator's License will be required.
- A passion for working with seniors
- College degree BA/BS, preferably in Business Administration, Hospital Administration, Hospitality, or health-related field.
- Must have a minimum of three years of executive managerial experience in senior living, assisted care, nursing home administration or similar.
- Must possess excellent written and verbal communication skills.
- Must demonstrate a warm, outgoing, and compassionate personality.
- Must have demonstrated integrity, maturity and leadership skills.
- Must have knowledge of community agencies and appreciation for social/life history status of the residents.
- Knowledge of the Armenian language and or culture is a plus

Interested candidates should send resume with cover letter to: Manoogian Manor, Attention Gregory Jamian at jamiang@americaremedical.com

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COMMUNITY NEWS

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November 3
2017**

Reception, Meet the Awardees
6:30 P.M.

Dinner and Program
7:30 P.M.

Mistress of Ceremonies

Entertainment

Anaide Nahikian

Leader, Advanced Training Program
on Humanitarian Action at Harvard
Humanitarian Initiative

Black Sea Salsa



COMMUNITY NEWS

Tellalian Speaks in Washington on Armenian Heritage Park of Boston

WASHINGTON - Donald J. Tellalian, the principal architect of Boston's Armenian Heritage Park, spoke on September 12 at St. Mary Armenian Church Cultural Hall with more than fifty community members in attendance.

In her introduction, the master of ceremonies, Mrs. Leda Zenian, said, "The Boston Armenian community, led by the Boston chapters of the Knights and Daughters of Vartan, accomplished an extraordinary project under the leadership of our guest, Donald Tellalian. They built a genocide memorial in the heart of Boston, diplomatically called "Armenian Heritage Park," which was officially opened in 2012 by the foreign minister of the Republic of Armenia and the governor of Massachusetts. The whole project cost 6.5 million dollars. All Armenian organizations—namely more than 35 of them—worked together and raised the funds under the guidance of Barbara Chrakian Tellalian, the wife of our guest speaker, who is also present here with us."

Donald J. Tellalian (AIA), recently retired, was the founding principal of Tellalian Associates Architects & Planners, LLC, a Boston based firm whose projects include several preeminent cultural, educational and historic institutions.

Among his many projects are the Museum of National Heritage, Lexington, Mass.; Harvard's Arthur M. Sackler Museum, Cambridge, Mass. (working with the design architect Sir James



Donald Tellalian during his presentation (photo credit: G. Manoug)

Stirling, London); The Walters Art Museum, Baltimore, Maryland; Veterans' Memorial Cemetery, Winchendon, Mass.; Ironworkers Local 7 Headquarters and Apprentice Training Facility, Boston, Mass., as well as the preservation/restoration of the Massachusetts

Historical Society and Old State House, Boston, MA, for which he received the Bostonian Society's John Hancock Award for Preservation of Boston's Historic Heritage.

His professional and community service includes course lectures and design juries at the Boston Architectural College and Wentworth Institute of Technology and serving, for many years, on the Newton Historical Commission. He is the recipient of the Historic Newton Preservation Award. Don served as Parish Council Chair, Holy Trinity Armenian Church of Greater Boston, Cambridge and most recently as designer/architect of Armenian Heritage Park on The Rose Fitzgerald Kennedy Greenway, Boston.

Born in Troy, NY, he graduated from Troy High School in 1954 and went on to Carnegie Mellon University, graduating with highest honors with a Bachelor of Architecture in 1959. As a Palmer Fellow, he earned a Master of Fine Arts in Architecture from Princeton University in 1962. A recipient of a Fulbright-Hays Fellowship in 1965, he pursued independent studies at the Università degli Studi di Roma on the subject of Environments for Art, A Study of Museums and Exhibit throughout Italy.

Tellalian, who was invited by the local Knights and Daughters of Vartan organization, provided captivating insights and details on what was involved in the realization of the Armenian Heritage Park. He took the audience

back in time to 2002, and shared with a slide show presentation the history, the politics, and the technical aspect of building the Armenian Heritage Park in an affluent and strategic location in Boston. Tearing down the Route 93 elevated highway and building under it the tunnel called "the Big Dig" gave ample space for beautification of downtown Boston, which became called The Rose Fitzgerald Kennedy Greenway.

All major communities, including the Greeks, Jews, Italians and Arabs, wanted to build cultural centers on that land, but all failed. Only the Armenian community succeeded. Two Armenian legislators at the Massachusetts State Legislature, Peter Koutoujian and Rachel Kaprielian, helped pass legislation granting the Armenian community a parcel of land to commemorate the Armenian Genocide. Then,



From left, Barbara Tellalian, Donald Tellalian and Rev. Fr. Hovsep Karapetyan (photo credit: G. Manoug)

through multiple layers of collaboration among governmental personnel as well as Armenian organizations, the Heritage Park became a reality.

The Armenian Heritage Park contains an abstract sculpture, a split dodecahedron, which changes configuration every April, for 25 years. The sculpture is seated on a reflecting pool consisting of the representation of the nine lost "vilayets" or provinces of Western Armenia, with water pouring as tears from them. Those tears then reemerge as a single jet of water in the adjacent Labyrinth. The Park Foundation has many endowed funds, the principal being the K. George and Dr. Carolann S. Najarian Endowed Fund Lecture on Human Rights at Faneuil Hall in memory of Dr. Najarian's father, Avedis Abrahamian.

Fr. Hovsep Karapetyan, pastor of St. Mary



Master of ceremonies Leda Zenian (photo credit: G. Manoug)

Armenian Apostolic Church of Washington, D.C. in his closing remarks congratulated Tellalian for his historic achievement and wished that the Armenian community of Greater Washington can one day be able to construct such a historical monument.

The evening ended with a reception where guests were able to enjoy Mr. and Mrs. Tellalian's presence.

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Arts & Living

Halidé Adivar Edib on Komitas

By Meliné Karakashian, PhD

MORGANVILLE, N.J. - I first heard the name of Halidé Edibe in Turkey, in 1997, while on a tour when the tour guide referred to the Genocide of Armenians as “The dark days of our country’s history...” and stated that she had read Halidé Edibe’s writings. I then read a passage in a newspaper, on a meeting of Edib with Komitas [Gomidas] Vartabed after the latter’s return from exile, in 1915. I kept this article and read it again when writing my book on Komitas’s mental state [see *Komitas: Victim of the Great Crime*, Yerevan: Zangak, 2014]. I subsequently bought Edib’s *Memoirs (Memoirs of Halide Edibe*, A. Pankoff, editor, 2005/1926) where Edib not only writes about her encounter with Komitas, but about becoming the principal of the orphanage in Antoura [Lebanon, then Syria] on the invitation of Cemal Pasha; I knew about the Antoura orphanage, having read my teacher’s, Karnig Panian’s memoirs of his childhood, from Gurun to the orphanage and more. Needless to say, both subjects interested me, Komitas’s mental state and happenings at the orphanage in Antoura, since I explore the psychological consequences of the Genocide.

Halidé Edib was the daughter of Sultan Abdul Hamid’s secretary, Edibe Bey. She attended a Christian Greek school and was raised appreciating tolerance, according to the introduction to her *Memoirs*. Halidé Edib was a highly respected writer, novelist; in the intro-



Halidé Adivar Edib

duction, H. Dak states, “Although not the first, Halide Edib (1882-1964) is the most prolific Ottoman-Turkish woman writer, with 21 novels, four short story collections, two dramas, four scholarly works and a two-volume autobiography.” [p. v]

Reading her *Memoirs*, the reader learns about the Turk Ojak [Turkish Hearth] where Komitas was invited to perform a few weeks before his imprisonment. Edib writes: “It is in that hall that I came to know Goumitas /sic./ Vartabet, the Armenian priest, musician, and composer. He was one of those musicians, actors, and lecturers of fame whom the Ojak invited to address its weekly audiences.

“Goumitas had become very famous with the Anatolian songs and the music of the old Gregorian chants which he had collected during years of patient labor in Constantinople and Anatolia. He had trained a choir of the see KOMITAS, page 13



Ayvazovsky’s painting “Chaos: The Creation of the World” on display at the National Gallery of Armenia

Exhibition Dedicated to Ayvazovsky’s 200th Anniversary Opens at National Gallery of Armenia

YEREVAN (Panorama.am) - An exhibition entitled “Hovhannes Aivazovsky: Creation” opened at the National Gallery of Armenia (NGA) on September 14, depicting the great Armenian painter’s artistic path based on the works preserved in the NGA’s painting and graphic collections and in various archives.

The opening ceremony was attended by Minister of Culture Armen Amiryan, Foreign Minister Eduard Nalbandian, Minister of Science and Education Levon Mkrtchyan, Ambassador Mikhail Shvidkoy, the Russian Federation (RF) President’s special representative on cultural cooperation and RF Foreign Ministry special envoy, and other high-ranking officials.

The exhibition for the first time displays the prominent painting “Chaos: Creation of the World” from the collection of the Mekhitarist Congregation in Venice. The exhibition will continue until January 18, 2018.

This year marks the 200th anniversary of the birth of the world-famous seascape painter Aivazovsky. The anniversary is included in UNESCO’s list of memorable dates in 2017.

Apart from the exhibition, an international conference “Borders of Marine Art” dedicated to this anniversary was held in the fresco hall of the National Gallery of Armenia on September 15-16.

Director of the State Russian Museum Vladimir Gusev declared there that “It is a great honor and privilege to participate at this conference, considering the fact that Hovhannes Ayvazovsky is as great as Armenia’s culture and art.” Gusev referred to Ayvazovsky as “one of the brightest stars” in the rich Armenian cultural heritage.

“Languages, borders, political developments, and ideology are at the heart of the division of peoples around the world. Yet there is another world that comes to unite them, which is the world of art. That is why we should not divide Ayvazovsky and his legacy. I guess I would not offend by stating that Aivazovsky is yours, but a little bit of him is ours. In Russia, you will hardly find anyone who doesn’t know Aivazovsky and does not admire his art,” Gusev said.

The museum director recalled exhibitions opened at the Russian State Theatre and the State Tretyakov Gallery earlier this year, where visitors lined up outside the museum entrances to attend the exhibition.

The “Borders of Marine Art” conference was attended by Armenian and foreign experts, specialists, art critics, art collectors, publishers from Theodosia, Moscow and St. Petersburg, and representatives of museums and cultural centers.

Apart from Vladimir Gusev, among the guests of the conference were Director of the Ayvazovsky Museum in Theodosia Tatyana Gayduk; the Head of the Division of Paintings from the 19th and 20th Centuries at the State Tretyakov Gallery Galina Churak; and art critic, longtime researcher of Aivazovsky’s creativity and author of number of books and articles Ivan Samarin from London. Armenian-American Andreas Roubian, possessor of one of the largest collections of Ayvazovsky’s works, spoke to reporters on September 15 about the conference.



Director of the State Russian Museum Vladimir Gusev

Armenian Museum Of America Presents New Exhibition, Launches New Brand and Identity

‘Scars of Silence’ Exhibition to Coincide with the Launch of Museum’s New Brand and Identity

WATERTOWN - The Armenian Museum of America has announced a new special exhibition, titled *Scars of Silence*, to open this fall in the Adele and Haig Der Manuelian gallery on the third floor of the museum.

The Armenian Museum is launching a new branding campaign with the opening of this exhibition. Under the new leadership of Michele Kolligian, president of the board of trustees, the museum is updating its website, collateral, programming, and gallery displays.

The exhibition, curated by Jennifer Liston Munson, includes excerpts from a film by Nubar and Abby Alexanian and photographs by Nubar Alexanian. *Scars of Silence* chronicles an Armenian-American father and daughter as they embark on a journey to their ancestral homeland as a powerful act of reparative resistance. The work reveals the legacy of the Armenian Genocide (1915-1923), bringing to the surface the profound consequences of Turkish denial—psychological and political—that have contributed to the subconscious suppression of loss for three generations, and offers a timely and provocative personal account of what it means to be Armenian today.

The Armenian Museum’s newly appointed director of exhibitions and creative services, Jennifer Liston Munson (also an artist and designer at the MFA) came upon the project while viewing photos at Project SAVE, Armenian Photograph Archives (also based in Watertown). When Nubar and Jennifer met, a dynamic collaboration began as they connected conceptually and aesthetically with a shared vision to link the legacy of the past to the present. Issues of identity, loss, and reclamation reveal publicly a deeply personal narrative to create an intimate exhibition that allows the viewer to linger and contemplate notions of awakening and belonging.

“We hope to invite new audiences to the Museum as well as those who haven’t visited in a while to share this important story that will resonate with Armenian Americans as well as others touched by loss and renewal,” said Munson.

Nubar Alexanian is an acclaimed photojournalist and filmmaker who for the past 40 years has worked for magazines in the US and Europe, including *Life Magazine*, *The New York Times Magazine*, *Fortune*, *Geo*, *Time*, *Newsweek*, and *National Geographic*. His production company, Walker Creek Media LLC, was created in 2006 and produces short documentary films for nonprofit organizations.

Abby Alexanian is a nonprofit social impact consultant in Boston and recently received an MBA and Master in Public Policy from the Heller School for Social Policy and Management at Brandeis University.

Jennifer Liston Munson is an artist and designer whose work is held in many private and corporate collections. She is the senior exhibition graphic designer at the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston and is the director of exhibitions and creative services at the Armenian Museum of America. Since 2001, she has collaborated with museum professionals to create over 70 world-class special exhibitions and permanent galleries for museums, galleries, and private collections.

The Armenian Museum of America houses and preserves objects of art and culture collected from Armenian families and donors from see MUSEUM, page 13



ARTS & LIVING

Halidé Adivar Edib on Komitas

KOMITAS, from page 12

Armenian youth and was considered a great leader among the Armenians."

Edibe is correct in that Komitas knew Turkish well; however, she is incorrect in stating that Komitas had collected his music in Constantinople. By the time Komitas moved to Constantinople in 1910, he had already collected rustic songs in Armenia and Western Armenia or Anatolia. Edibe continues: "As he appeared in the long black coat of the priest, his dark face as naïve as any simple Anatolian's, and his eyes full of the pathos and longing which his voice expressed in its pure strong notes, I felt him an embodiment of Anatolian folk-lore and music.

"The airs were the ones I had often heard our servants from Kemah and Erzeroum sing. He had simply turned the words into Armenian. But I did not pay any attention to the language; I only felt the inner significance of that tender and desolate melody from the lonely wastes of Anatolia." [p. 371]

Komitas, in his autobiography dated June 24, 1908 states clearly: "I was born on September 26 [Julian calendar], 1869 in Asia Minor, in the city of Godin or Kutahya. They christened me on the third day and called me Soghomon. My father, Kevork Soghomonian, was a native of Kutahya, while my mother Takouhi Hovhannisian, a native of Brusa. Both were

Armenian. Both families were known for their singing voices.... The songs were composed by my mother and father in the Turkish [Dajig] language and music, a few of which I had already written down in 1893, in my native town, are still sung with great admiration by the elders there...."

Kutahya Armenians spoke Turkish. Takouhi composed songs in Turkish. Kutahya Armenians like other Armenians in Turkey were severely punished for speaking Armenian. Therefore, Komitas's familiarity with the Turkish language and the fact that he rearranged the songs his mother sang in Turkish do not make him a Turk. He was an Armenian whose roots went back to the Tsgghna Village in Koghtn county, Nakhichevan, formerly Armenian, now in Azerbaijan.

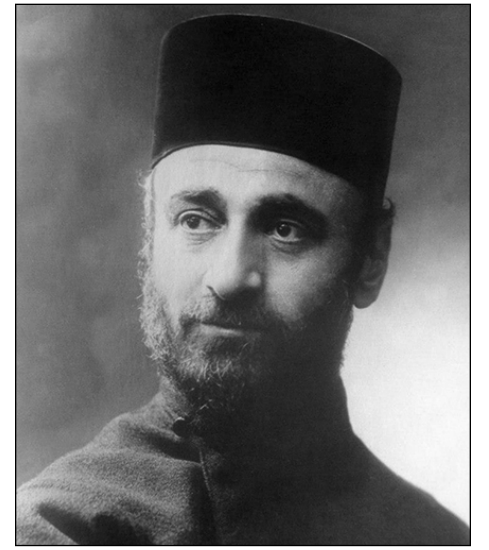
Edib continues: "The acquaintance that began that day continued, Goumitas often coming to my house to sing. He continued to come even after the Armenians and Turks were massacring each other. We both silently suffered under the condition of things, but neither of us mentioned it. Mehemmed Emin and Yahia Kemal Beys, both great poets who had always taken a humanitarian view of nationalism, were interested in his personality and came to hear him. Youssouf Akchura also came, prompted by his love of music, but he declared that Goumitas had done a great harm to the Turk by

stealing his popular culture in the form of music and songs."

These concepts were not unique to Edibe and Akchura. In March of 1915, at the Ojak, at the conclusion of Komitas's performance, the audience composed of Turkish and non-Turkish music-loving society had sighed; some had shouted, "May God protect him from the evil eye." [Karakashian, p. 93]. The speaker of the day had stressed that the child of Anatolia, the Armenian priest, through his dedication and hard work had given wings to Armenian music, presenting the folk songs he collected as Armenian national heritage, while Turkish clergy had not done that....

Komitas continued his work until his imprisonment on April 23, 1915.

Edib wrote further: "Goumitas came from Kutahya and was of very poor parents. They knew no Armenian, and Goumitas learned it only in later life. His parents were probably of Turkish descent, from the Turks who had joined the Gregorian church. The Byzantine rulers had called in Turkish tribes to form a barrier against the Saracenic invasions, and though these were mostly put along the southern frontiers, some might have moved elsewhere.... He was an Armenian nationalist whether his origin was Turkish or Armenian, but in temperament and heart he was a real Anatolian Turk if unconsciously...."



Komitas Vartabed Soghomonian

"As a man and as an artist Goumitas was of a quality one rarely meets. His asceticism, the pure and beautiful simplicity with which he taught the Armenians, might well have been imitated by other nationalists. His way of expressing Anatolia both in song and in feeling was profoundly worth hearing."

And referring to an encounter after his exile, in 1915, Edib writes: "Goumitas one day sang an Ave Maria in Armenian which belonged to the sixth century, a thing of rare mystical beauty; and the utter ecstasy and religious emotion of the air so fascinated me that I asked him if he had set any of the Psalms to music.

"Yes," he said, "the one-hundred-and-first."

"Are you too tired to sing it?" I asked.

"He had thrown himself into the low chair near the piano, and his face was white and full of strange lines of pain.

"He began singing without moving from the chair. As he began to sing I felt that the air had none of the sacred and humble beauty of the Ave Maria.... It awed me and made me feel strange. I instinctively took the Bible from the bookcase near me and found the last stanzas of Psalm 1010, "I will early destroy all the wicked of the land: that I may cut off all wicked doers from the city of the Lord.

"It was the cry of the hatred and vengeance of his soul for my people.... In 1915 the Ojak generously used its influence to have him spared from deportation, but in 1916 he had a serious disturbance in his mind, which gave way under the strain of those horrible times. Dr. Adnan begged Talaat Paasha to allow him to go to Paris for a cure, and this was accorded to him. He is still in an asylum."

My book, of course, presents the events differently as we know through research.

Armenian Museum of America Presents New Exhibition, Launches New Brand and Identity

MUSEUM, from page 12? around the world. The Museum holds its collection in trust for future generations as objects of witness and survival to serve as a record of Armenian creativity, ingenuity, and wisdom for those who are familiar with Armenian history and culture, as well as for those to whom these objects, manuscripts, and ephemera are a new experience.

The Armenian Museum is launching a new branding campaign with the opening of this exhibition. Under the new leadership of Michele Kolligian, president of the museum's board of trustees, the museum is updating its website, collateral, programming, and gallery displays.



armenian museum of america | art culture eternity

"We were inspired by the circular Armenian symbol of eternity to create our new logo and we hope our new fresh look will help to engage visitors of all cultures to explore our collection of precious objects and special exhibitions," read a part of a statement released by the museum. For more information, visit www.armenian-museum.org or call 617 926-2562 ext. 4.

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ARTS & LIVING

Matenadaran Publishes New Volume of Catalogue of Armenian Manuscripts

YEREVAN – Yerevan’s Mesrop Mashtots Institute of Ancient Manuscripts (the Matenadaran) published volume IX of *The General Catalogue of Armenian Manuscripts of the Mashtots Matenadaran*. The Armenian General Benevolent Union (AGBU) sponsored the publication of this volume, as part of its mission to preserve and promote Armenian heritage and culture.

This volume is comprised of overviews of 300 manuscripts from the 11th to 19th centuries, No. 2701-3000, mainly from the well-known New Collection. All manuscripts are of a particular scholarly and artistic value. Over 20 manuscripts that include correspondence of Catholicos of All Armenians, Primate of Dioceses and prominent clergymen from the 18th to 19th centuries serve as primary sources of Armenian history of the same period. It is a major publication for scholars of Armenian and the Middle Eastern studies as well as related fields.

Acting Director of the Matenadaran Vahan Ter-Ghevondyan; Head of the Depositories of the Matenadaran Gevorg Ter-Vardanean; editor of Volume IV Karen Matevosyan and Deputy

Director of AGBU Armenia Hovig Eordekian delivered welcome speeches during the catalogue presentation in July 2017. “We are delighted to support the publication of this monumental catalogue for the benefit of academic circles, philologists and the ones interested in our manuscripts to study their historical and cultural values,” said Eordekian.

The Matenadaran houses around 300,000 documents, over 100,000 books and 17,000 manuscripts. Researchers and tourists travel from all over the world to see its national treasures, including the Gospel of Lazarus and Hakob Meghapart’s Parzatumar, one of the first Armenian books ever printed.

This initiative is one of many ways AGBU has supported the Matenadaran over the years. AGBU also financed the publication of volume III of *The General Catalogue of Armenian Manuscripts of the Mashtots Matenadaran* and *Herald of the Matenadaran* (*Banber Matenadaran*), an academic periodical. Acknowledging the need to advance Armenian Studies, AGBU also provides scholarships to doctoral students working in the Matenadaran.



AGBU sponsors publication of Volume IX of the *General Catalogue of Armenian Manuscripts of the Mashtots Matenadaran*.

Son of Vladimir Putin’s Billionaire Pal Ties Knot with His Glamorous Bride in ‘Magical’ Wedding Ceremony in Moscow

By Zoey McDougall

MOSCOW (mirror.co.uk) - The son of Vladimir Putin’s billionaire pal has tied the knot with his very glamorous bride at a lavish wedding ceremony in Moscow. The ceremony and reception saw groom Karen Karapetyan wed his bride named only as Lilit - with over 200 guests watching.

Unfortunately, the president of Russia did not make it to the “magical” day, but other guests enjoyed food, drinks and dancing at one of Moscow’s most prestigious venues.

Karen is the son of Samvel Karapetyan, 52, believed to be the world’s richest Armenian, though he now runs businesses mainly in Russia. The owner of the Tashir Group property company, Karapetyan Senior is believed to be

worth 2.9 billion pounds, according to Forbes. His son’s wedding was at Moscow’s Cathedral of the Transfiguration of the Armenian Apostolic Church before a reception at the Safisa banquet hall. The party, attended by around 200 guests, was decorated with flowers, candles and threads of dangling glass beads sparkling under the lights.

Notable guests included Russian President Vladimir Putin’s spin doctor Dmitry Peskov, 49, his wife the Olympic ice dance gold medallist Tatiana Navka, 42, and starlet Vera Brezhneva, 35, once named as Russia’s Sexiest Woman. Putin’s goddaughter Ksenia Sobchak hosted the evening, also attended by President of Armenia Serzh Sargsyan, 63.

Bride Lilit had two dresses for the day, picking one with a rich skirt for the ceremony and a simpler one for the cake-cutting and dancing. The wedding cake was immense and decorated



Karen Karapetyan and his new wife Lilit

with fresh flowers.

If the aim was to impress, the wedding had the right effect on social media users. One said: “This is so cool! Fiancées of rich guys are so lucky, she got such a magical wedding.”

Another, known as Solie, wrote: “This gorgeous wedding gown. I am blown away.” And a third added: “This was such a fantastic wedding. The bride is so pretty, her dress is a ‘killer’. Wishing you a lifetime of happiness.”

Recipe Corner

by Christine Vartanian

Fresh Mint and Parsley Salad

INGREDIENTS

- 3 cups coarsely chopped fresh mint
- 2 cups chopped flat-leaf parsley
- 2 medium tomatoes, seeded and diced or 10-12 cherry tomatoes, cut in half
- 3-4 Persian cucumbers, cut into chunks
- 2 cloves minced garlic
- 1 medium red or white onion, sliced thinly
- 1 medium green or red bell pepper, sliced thinly
- 1 bunch scallions, trimmed and thinly sliced (white and light green parts)
- 1/2 cup Kalamata olives, sliced
- Kosher or sea salt and coarse black pepper, dash of paprika, sumac or cayenne pepper
- Olive oil, fresh lemon juice, red wine or balsamic vinegar
- Chopped pistachios or slivered almonds as garnish
- Crumbled feta cheese as garnish

PREPARATION:

In a medium bowl, combine the mint, parsley, tomatoes, cucumbers, garlic, onions, bell pepper, scallions, and olives, and toss. Drizzle with olive oil and season with salt, pepper, spices, and lemon juice or choice of red wine or balsamic vinegar, and toss again.

Sprinkle with pistachios, almonds or crumbled feta cheese, if desired, and serve. This salad may be made a day ahead of time, covered and chilled.

Serves 4.

*Christine’s recipes have been published in the *Fresno Bee* newspaper, *Sunset* magazine, *Cooking Light* magazine, and at <http://www.thearmeniankitchen.com/>



Lilit’s dress engulfed the entire aisle, as the couple took their vows



ARTS & LIVING

US-Funded Areni Cave Preservation Project Completed

ARENI, Armenia (Panorama.am) – On September 19, US Ambassador to Armenia Richard Mills, Jr. and Minister of Culture Armen Amiryany attended a ceremony celebrating the completion of the Areni Cave preservation project funded by the US State Department's Ambassadors Fund for Cultural Preservation (AFCP). The American grant funded installation of a protective fence, lighting, and pathways to protect the important finds while supporting tourism and continuing conservation of the site.

"We as humans share a common story. Armenians, Americans, no matter where you are from, it is ancient cultural sites, like the Areni Cave, that help us understand our interwoven history. That is why the US government's Ambassadors Fund for Cultural Preservation supports efforts like the preservation work here in Areni," said Mills.

As the US Embassy had previously reported, the recent discoveries at Areni had led to more tourists visiting the site. This flock of tourists eventually came to endanger any unfound objects and potentially interfered with ongoing archeology. Therefore, the US government stepped in with its \$52,870 grant, awarded in 2013.

Mills declared at the ceremony: "We are not only protecting the finds that will be made here tomorrow. We are also building Armenia's future, allowing sustainable and protective tourist visits to the site, and helping to stimulate Armenia's economy by strengthening options available for tourists. With the paths and lighting installed now, thanks to the Ambassadors Fund for Cultural Preservation, visitors can see the home of these unique artifacts without tram-

pling on tomorrow's discoveries."

Ambassador Mills and the Minister of Culture Armen Amiryany were joined at Areni Cave by the Embassy's Armenian partners who worked on the preservation, including Boris Gasparyan and experts from the Institute of Archaeology and Ethnography, led by Director Pavel Avetisyan.

Hakob Hakobyan. A major restoration of the St. Hovhannes Church in Meghri, with its amazing medieval frescos, is also on-going thanks to the AFCP.

"The fact that so many projects in Armenia are funded by the highly competitive U.S. Ambassadors Fund for Cultural Preservation speaks to two facts. First, it shows Armenia has a valued place in our shared human history. And second, it



Areni Cave

The US Embassy stated that since 2005, ten sites in Armenia have been funded through the AFCP, totaling \$934,000. These include grants to create a climate controlled storage space for the Armenian National Film and Photo Archive, preservation of khachkars at the Noratus Medieval Cemetery, the reinforcement of a medieval bridge in the Garni Gorge, and the moving and renovation of two murals in Gyumri, one by Rafayel Atoyan and another by

speaks well to the close partnership and support we find here with our Armenian partners," Ambassador Mills said.

While in Areni, Ambassador Mills announced the latest project to be funded by the AFCP, a \$143,000 grant to continue restoration and preservation work at the Dashtadem fortress. Building on a grant awarded in 2013, the latest funding will allow archaeological excavations and restoration of the inner surrounding wall of the fortress.

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THE UNEXPECTED GUEST
by Agatha Christie

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OCTOBER 28 & 29

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ARTS & LIVING

CALENDAR

MASSACHUSETTS

SEPTEMBER 30 — AN EVENING WITH SIBIL, renowned Armenian Singer from Istanbul (www.sibilmusic.com), joined on stage by Zangakner Ensemble and other local musicians, 7 p.m., Ellsworth Theatre at Pine Manor College, Chestnut Hill. Sponsored by the Armenian International Women's Association (AIWA). For info & tickets, at \$100, \$75, & \$50, contact aiwainternational.org/sibil or 617-926-0171.

OCTOBER 4 — Wednesday, Sts. Vartanantz - Hye Point Golf Outing @ Butter Brook Golf Club, Westford. \$150 includes Golf, Lunch, Dinner, and 20 Raffle Tickets. 10:00 a.m. shotgun start. Registration desk on October 4 open at 9:00 a.m. Contact: Mark at 508-633-7447; Steve, 978-808-2820; or email StsVGolf@earthlink.net. Proceeds to benefit scholarships for Diocesan youth programs.

OCTOBER 5 — Panel Discussion, "Expanding Inclusion of Media Literacy in Education in Armenia: Challenges and Opportunities," with the participation of five young women from Armenia's media literacy organizations and schools, Thursday, 7:30 p.m. National Association for Armenian Studies and Research, NAASR Center, 395 Concord Ave. Co-sponsored by the Cambridge Yerevan Sister City Association (CYSCA) and NAASR / Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation Lecture Series on Contemporary Armenian Issues. Contact hq@naasr.org for more information.

OCTOBER 10 — Reducing and Managing Stress: Walking the Labyrinth. 5:30 p.m. Armenian Heritage Park on The Greenway in partnership with Hollister Staffing. HUBweek program. Networking Reception follows at Hollister Staffing, 75 State Street. RSVP appreciated at HUBweek or hello@ArmenianHeritagePark.org

OCTOBER 13-14 - St. James 70th Annual Bazaar 11am-8pm Delicious Armenian Food and Pastries. Silent Auction, Attic Treasures, Booths and Vendors. Super Raffle (Apple Products, Electronics, and Children's Prizes), \$100 Raffle and Children's Activities. St. James Armenian Church - 465 Mt. Auburn St., Watertown. Sponsorship opportunities available. For more information contact 617.923.8860 or at www.stjameswatertown.org/bazaar

OCTOBER 11 — Geometry as Public Art: Celebrating the Immigrant Experience. Armenian Heritage Park on The Greenway, Boston. 5:30pm. HUBweek program. Reception hosted by The Bostonian Hotel. RSVP appreciated at HUBweek or hello@ArmenianHeritagePark.org

OCTOBER 13 — Friday, 7:30 p.m. Film Screening: "They Shall Not Perish: The Story of Near East Relief," at the Scottish Rite Masonic Museum (formerly the National Heritage Museum), 33 Marrett Road, Lexington (at the intersection of Route 2A and Massachusetts Ave.). Co-sponsored by National Association for Armenian Studies and Research and the Near East Foundation. Featuring a panel discussion with Taner Akcam, Hayk Demoyan, Shant Mardirossian, and Nora Nercessian, moderated by Marc Mamigonian. Contact hq@naasr.org for more information.

OCTOBER 14 — Armenian Friends of America, Inc. Present HYE KEF 5 Dance Featuring: ONNIK DINKJIAN. 7 p.m. - Midnight, 123 Old River Road • Andover. AFA room rates until 9/16/17 • Call 978-975-3600. Ticket Prices Include Buffet and Dance • Cash Bar Only. \$55 if purchased before 9/1/17 • \$65.00 after 9/1/17. \$50 for Students 21 and under. Continuous Buffet 7:30 - 9:30 pm. Advance tickets only. John Arzigian - 603-560-3826, Lucy Sirmaian - 978-683-9121, Peter Gulezian - 978-375-1616, Sharké Der Apkarian - 978-808-0598, To Benefit: The Armenian Churches of the Merrimack Valley (St. Gregory Armenian Apostolic Church of N. Andover, The Armenian Apostolic Church at Hye Pointe, Haverhill, Sts. Vartanantz Armenian Apostolic Church of Chelmsford, Ararat Armenian Congregational Church of Salem, NH) www.ArmenianFriendsofAmerica.org. John Berberian / Oud, Mal Barsamian / Clarinet, Ara Dinkjian / Keyboard, Ron Tutunjian / Dumbeg

OCTOBER 19 — The Battle of Bash Aparan. Lecture by Dr. Dikran Kaligian. Presented by the National Association for Armenian Studies and Research and the Armenia Tree Project. At NAASR, Belmont, Thursday, 7:30 p.m.

OCTOBER 22 — Annual Banquet of Holy Trinity Armenian Church of Greater Boston, Celebrating the 56th Anniversary of the Consecration of Holy Trinity Armenian Church, Sunday, 12:30 p.m., Charles and Nevart Talanian Cultural Hall, 145 Brattle Street, Cambridge. Save the date; details to follow.

OCTOBER 26 — Annual Fall Dinner and Drawing sponsored by the Friends of Holy Trinity 1000 Club, 6:30 p.m., Charles and Nevart Talanian Cultural Hall, Holy Trinity Armenian Church, 145 Brattle St., Cambridge. All are invited, and you don't have to be a member of the 1000 Club to join us for a delicious losh kebab and pilaf dinner; \$9.99 per person; tickets on sale at the door. Regular monthly raffle drawing at 8 p.m., plus five \$25 door prizes. "One-time" numbers will be sold on the night of dinner; special offer: purchase five "one-time" numbers for \$20, save \$5. For further info, contact the Holy Trinity Church office, 617.354.0632, or email office@htaac.org.

NOVEMBER 2 — Thursday: Symposium on Armenian Issues in the International Press. "Journalism and "Fake News": The Armenian Genocide and Karabagh. Journalism is changing at a rapid pace. Join the Armenian Mirror-Spectator along with Robert Fisk from Beirut, Lebanon, David Barsamian, Philip Terzian and Amberin Zaman to discuss the issues facing journalism today and their impact on the Armenian Case. Wellesley College, Alumnae Hall Ballroom, 106 Central Street, Wellesley, MA. Doors open at 6:00 pm, Program starts 7:00 pm. Reception to follow, free admission.

NOVEMBER 3 - 85th Anniversary Benefit Gala of the Armenian Mirror-Spectator, the first English-language Armenian newspaper in the United States. Boston Marriott Hotel, 2345 Commonwealth Ave. Newton, MA. Reception, Meet the Awardees | 6:30 PM; Dinner and Program, 7:30 PM. 2017 Lifetime Achievement Award to Robert Fisk, Journalist, Middle East correspondent for *The Independent* of London based in Beirut, seven time recipient of British Press Awards' Reporter of the Year; 2017 Excellence Awards to David Barsamian, founder and director of Alternative Radio, and Amberin Zaman, columnist for Diken and Al Monitor, former Turkey correspondent for *The Economist*. Mistress of Ceremonies Anaide Nahikian, Leader, Advanced Training Program at Harvard Humanitarian Initiative, Entertainment, 12 Musicians of Black Sea Salsa. For Reservations please call Aram Arkun (917) 743-9005 (cell), Email: tcadirector@aol.com.

NOVEMBER 3 and 4 — Annual Autumnfest Bazaar sponsored by the Armenian Church at Hye Pointe, at our new location 1280 Boston Road, (Rte 125) Bradford MA, Friday 12 - 7 pm and Saturday 12 - 7 pm. Lamb, Losh, Chicken Kebab and Kheyma. Dinners served all day. Pastry table, Armenian cuisine, gift baskets, raffles for cash and prizes. For more info, visit www.hyepointearmenianchurch.org or call (978) 372-9227.

NOVEMBER 10 — Benefit dinner for Armenia Tree Project's 100th anniversary living memorial to General Dro and the Battle of Bash Aparan, presented by the Armenia Tree Project and the Kanayan family. Armenian American Social Club, Watertown. Details to follow.

NOVEMBER 12 — From Armenia to Boston for the first time. Beloved singer RUBEN SASUNCI, live in concert with the Sayat Nova Dance Company of Boston (SNDP). Sunday, at 4 p.m. at Shaw Auditorium - Watertown High School, 50 Columbia St. Tickets: \$45 and \$35 to be reserved from front to back, in the order calls are received. For tickets and info, please call Mike Demirchian (617) 240-8266 or Vrej Ashjian at (339) 222-3429.

NOVEMBER 18 — Armenian Women's Welfare Association Lucheon/Auction will be held on Saturday, at the Oakley Country Club in Watertown.

NOVEMBER 19 — The Westin Waltham Boston Hotel, Project SAVE will celebrate with a Thanks Giving brunch event to honor Founder Ruth Thomasian's vision and 42 years of service and to acknowledge the many volunteers, photo donors and supporters who have contributed to Project SAVE. An event for the community to come together and celebrate as we look ahead to the future. For more information call 617-923-4542 or email: archives@projectsave.org.

MICHIGAN

OCTOBER 8 — The Tekeyan Cultural Association will present the stage play "All Rise, the Court is in Session" at the Lawrence Technological University Mary Marburger Science and Engineering Auditorium. 3 p.m. The play is a drama by one of Armenia's prominent playwrights, Perch Zeytuntsyan, performed by the TCA MHER Megerdchian Theatrical Group from New York. Adapted and directed by Gerald Papasian from Paris. The play recounts the trial proceedings of Soghomon Tehlirian who avenged the

extermination of his nation and family by assassinating Talaat Pasha in Berlin on March 15, 1921. The play will be in Armenian with English subtitles. For reservations and other questions, you may contact Eventbrite or: Karine Koundjakian at 248-761-9844; Shoushan Minassian at 248-762-4641; Pamela Coultis at 248-646-7847; Noreen Masropian at 248-376-0899; Doris Krikorian at 734-464-7973; Yvonne Korkoian at 248-254-3029 or Diana Alexanian at 248-334-3636

DECEMBER 2 — Nor Keghi Kef Time III Pagharch Dinner and Dance Fundraiser for Nor Keghi School in Armenia, 6.30 p.m. St. John Armenian Church Hall, Southfield. Continuous music by an assembly of Detroit's All-Star Armenian Musicians will again entertain attendees to the third "Pagharch" feast that residents of the historic Armenian district dined on for centuries at the start of the winter season in mountainous Keghi district. The government of Armenia on Feb. 1962 renamed the region of Ashdarag to Nor Keghi to honor the history of Kephizees of historic Western Armenia. Funds raised will help in development of the school's multi-purpose auditorium.

NEW HAMPSHIRE

SEPTEMBER 30 — Shish Kebab supper at the historic Ararat Armenian Congregational Church in Salem NH. 4:30 - 7. Delicious meal with shish kebab, pilaf, vegetables, salad and dessert! Adults \$15; children 12 and under \$7.50

NEW JERSEY

OCTOBER 7 — Kalfayan Orphanage of Istanbul Charity Fund Event. Please save the date for the Gala banquet celebrating the 150th anniversary of the orphanage at St' Leon's Armenian Church, Fairlawn. Held under the Auspices of Archbishop Khajag Barsamian (Primate), Diocese of the Armenian Church of America (Eastern).

NOVEMBER 18 — Save the date. Gala banquet celebrating the 70th anniversary of the Tekeyan Cultural Association. At the Terrace at Biagios. 299 Paramus Road, Paramus. Featuring Elie Berberian and his band from Montreal.

NEVADA

NOVEMBER 10-12 — Association of Armenian Church Choirs, 2017 Convention & Assembly, Las Vegas. Saint Geragos Armenian Apostolic Church, Contact: website: www.aaccwd.com • email: events@aaccwd.com. The AACCCWD is an organization of the Western Diocese of the Armenian Church of North America.

PENNSYLVANIA

SEPTEMBER 23 — Sayat Nova Dance Company of Boston is headed back to Pennsylvania to celebrate Armenian Independence Day, with its 30th anniversary production of "The journey continues..." At Centennial Hall of Haverford School, 450 Lancaster Ave., Haverford. Saturday, 7 p.m. Doors open at 6 p.m. Tickets are going fast so please reserve your seats ASAP. For tickets, call Ana Torcomian at 610-659-7839, Alina Ashjian at 617-8521816 or email sayatnovadancecompany@gmail.com. Tickets are \$30, \$40 and \$50 with discounted rates available for groups of 20 or more.

RHODE ISLAND

SEPTEMBER 13, 2017-MARCH 14, 2018 — Armenian Film Festival "The Nation's Past & Present" Sponsored by Cultural Committee of the Sts. Sahag & Mesrob Armenian Church, in Hanoian Hall, 70 Jefferson Street, ProvideWednesday, October 11, , at 7 pm, "Garni, Geghard" Wednesday, November 15, 2017, at 7 pm, "Armenia" (Yerevan, Echmiadzin, Khor Virap, Zvartnots, Sevan, Dilijan, Lori) Wednesday, January, 24, at 7 pm "Country of Armenian Kings - 2" (Ani, Kars, Edesia, Musaler)Wednesday, February, 21, at 7 pm, "Country of Armenian Kings - 3" (Cilicia, Kharbert, Adana, Zeytoun) Wednesday, March, 14, 2018, at 7 pm. All presented in English, donation of \$10.

OCTOBER 22 — The Cultural Committee of Sts. Sahag and Mesrob Armenian Church & The Rhode Island Orthodox Clergy Fellowship presents - Spiritual Music Festival, 6:00 p.m., Sanctuary of Sts. Sahag & Mesrob Armenian Church, 70 Jefferson Street, Providence.



COMMENTARY

COMMENTARY

Diaspora: A Function of Armenia's Foreign Policy

By Edmond Y. Azadian

When the Soviet Union collapsed, Armenia was not ready to formulate a coherent foreign policy as it lacked trained diplomats. But soon the ranks of the Foreign Affairs Ministry were filled with diplomats from the old Soviet schools and diaspora elements.

The foreign policy of any given country is developed by competent diplomats but foreign policy challenges play a major role in defining that policy.

The diasporan leadership and press sometimes have unrealistic expectations of Armenia's diplomacy. More powerful factors may come to hurt Armenia's foreign policy; like the Islamic Conference members that sometimes gang up on Armenia in the United Nations to pass resolutions favoring Azerbaijan. That setback is decried as a defeat for Armenia's foreign policy, whereas the reason is a simple mathematical equation created by the large Islamic bloc votes. On the other hand, when Armenia's diplomacy scores some gains in Latin America, such as Chile and Bolivia, that success is often ignored.

Any country's foreign policy is not the only result of the resources it commends, such as oil and natural resources, strategic location and the value of that location for the major powers and military might. In the case of Armenia, there is the diaspora factor. The major powers which are endowed with military might sometimes are able to resolve diplomatic problems by the sheer threat of that might, without firing a single shot.

The diasporan potential may play the role of an extension of Armenia's foreign policy when that diaspora is sufficiently empowered and politicized. Countries like Israel and India have powerful diasporas that take it upon themselves to resolve some diplomatic problems on behalf of their respective countries.

Armenians cannot conduct political advocacy or lobbying in all

It is ironic that thus far, it has been easier to mobilize that force against Armenia rather than for it. The drop in the amounts raised during various telethons benefitting the country is a testament to that adverse fact.

Unfortunately, the church in Armenia and in the Diaspora cannot be counted on as a political actor, like it is in Russia and Georgia.

The Armenian presence in Europe and especially in France is more visible politically. The fact that almost all presidents in France – from François Mitterand to Jacques Chirac, Nicolas Sarkozy and François Hollande – have appealed to the Armenian community for votes is a testimony to that power.

One of the more active groups in Europe is the European Armenian Federation for Justice and Democracy, headed by Hilda Chobanian. Effective advocacy is carried out by this group in Brussels and in other European centers.

Armenian political groups almost always operate independently of other similar groups if not in direct competition with each other. In France, that trend has been tamed and opposing Armenian groups work under the umbrella of the Coordination Committee of Organizations in France (CCAF), headed by Ara Toranian and Mourad Papazian.

More recently, the Armenian General Benevolent Union (AGBU) launched an advocacy program for human rights in Europe headed by Nadia Gortzounian and Nicolas Davidian. Other individuals and groups have also been in the lobbying business elsewhere in Europe – in Switzerland, Germany, Greece and the Scandinavian countries. The coordination of the activities of these groups with Armenia's foreign policy establishment is questionable. Most of the times, Armenia's embassies in those countries fail to perform coordinating roles.

Turkey and Azerbaijan

Turkey and Azerbaijan have laid a blockade around Armenia and they represent an existential threat to the latter. Armenia has no other choice but to use frontal diplomacy with these two



the countries of the world. Their opportunities are limited to the United States, Europe and Russia. As South American countries recover from military dictatorships, they provide the opportunity to minorities to play bigger political roles in those countries.

The leading Armenian advocacy group in the United States is the Armenian National Committee of America (ANCA), under the leadership of Aram Hamparian and Ken Khachikian. The ANCA derives its strength from its regional branches as well as its headquarters.

Since 1970, the Armenian Assembly of America has also emerged as a strong advocacy group. At this time, its leadership is comprised of lawyers, namely Anthony Barsamian and Van Krikorian, with Bryan Ardouny serving as executive director. Seldom do these groups seem to cooperate; instead most of the time they seem to be competitors, trying to score points against each other.

With the influx of immigrants from Armenia to the US, a potential for political action has been created, especially in Southern California. It is a potential which is being used by individual politicians with local agendas. This potential still remains mostly untapped. It represents a challenge for the traditional political parties and advocacy groups to energize and politicize that massive immigrant population.

Azerbaijan runs media programs in Armenia to present its case to a hostile audience there and yet Armenia fails to launch similar actions.

Azerbaijan is a multi-ethnic society comprising Lezgis, Talish, Kurds and other minorities which have been oppressed and many of their leaders languish in jail. There is no policy in place in Armenia to speak in defense of those persecuted minorities which could become political assets eventually.

Turkey's case is different. Onetime enemies of the Armenians, the Kurds have become allies through necessity. Sooner or later, a Kurdistan will emerge within Turkey's current borders either as an independent country or an autonomous region. Kurdish claims cover part of historic Armenia. Armenians may not be entitled to share a piece of those Kurdish lands but accommodations may be made with them to preserve Armenian cultural and architectural heritage in an eventually liberated Kurdistan, if proper and prudent relations are established with them. Unlike Armenians, the Kurds still occupy their lands and thus they have 90 percent of the argument on their side.

Armenians can also create a factor on the land by awakening the dormant and hidden Armenians in the eastern parts of modern Turkey. Broadcasts bearing to that population may awaken see DIASPORA, page 17

Mirror Spectator



Established 1932
An ADL Publication

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The Armenian Mirror-Spectator is published weekly, except two weeks in July and the first week of the year, by:

Baikar Association, Inc.

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SUBSCRIPTION RATES:

U.S.A.	\$80 a year
Canada	\$125 a year
Other Countries	\$190 a year

© 2014 The Armenian Mirror-Spectator
Periodical Class Postage Paid at Boston, MA
and additional mailing offices.

ISSN 0004-234X

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to The Armenian Mirror-Spectator, 755 Mount Auburn St., Watertown, MA 02472

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New Stalinist Cult in Armenia?



By Hayk Demoyan

It seems that a pro-Stalinist flavor slowly is seeping through Armenia as official policy. Recent public discussion on television and social networks on the renaming of streets in Armenia, especially after the closure of the "Eclipse" exhibition hosted by the Home/Museum of Hovhannes Tumanyan in Yerevan, indicates dangerous developments in cultural and memory policies in Armenia. Shortly after halting the exhibition, Deputy Minister of Culture Arev Samuelian showed up with an official statement, saying that such an exhibition on Stalinist purges is "a little bit political." What exactly does it mean to be "a little bit political" in the case of a museum exhibition, or what should be reviewed to allow it to be opened again? She did not specify. Instead, no clear and sound explanations were given as to why three weeks after its opening the ministry suddenly decided to stop it.

Those examples are not a simple illustration of the new identity crisis Armenia faces. This is not even a banal example of censorship through cultural policies in Armenia since its formal independence. It is rather bald evidence of mixed signals on Armenia's future internal and external political preferences and the disastrous consequences to be expected.

My experience with neo-Stalinist initiatives are in part known and unknown over the last three years. Many remember the episode concerning the question of the erection of Anastas Mikoyan's statue in downtown Yerevan. In 2013, being a member of the Yerevan city council (*avagani*), I voted against such a decision, though it passed almost unanimously. Under heavy pressure from the public and descendants of the victims of Stalinist crimes, the implementation of this decision however was halted, and the Mikoyan bust ready to be put in place in one of the central squares of Yerevan mysteriously disappeared.

Another example was in December 2016, when with the status of a member of the Public Council of the Republic of Armenia, I made a suggestion to the Ministry of Communication and Transport of the Republic of Armenia and Haypost to issue a special postal stamp for 2017 in memory of victims of Stalinist crimes. My offer was accepted and put on the list of stamps confirmed to be issued for this year. However, after I quit the abovementioned board due to corruption concerning Haypost (the private Armenian national postal company), I found out that my offer was simply removed from the list of preplanned stamp releases for 2017.

I assume that the decision of stopping the exhibition condemning Stalin period purges certainly was made on the highest level and is connected with the revival of the cult of Stalin in Russia. Quite recently, in June while responding to Oliver Stone, Russian President Vladimir Putin said that the "excessive demonization" of Soviet dictator Josef Stalin "is one means of attacking the Soviet Union and Russia." Certainly such an exhibition in Armenia in some circles was regarded as an "attack on Russia," and it would have been more honest to confess this in the Ministry of Culture rather than to engage in verbal gymnastics in order to justify such a decision before cameras.

The fear of being punished and fatal conformism is not the only visible signs of the total psychological and moral crisis we face in Armenia. After the generation of 1988, public opinion in Armenia as a denominator and essential factor in state-building processes simply disappeared. In a situation where an older generation of intellectuals with a clear feeling of their responsibilities also disappeared, we now have a marginalized society which will never raise a voice. Instead, it will support any initiative from above, be it Stalinist, Bolshevik or Maoist.

One question above all comes to mind: where do we go? After that, another crucial question will be posed to us: who are we?

P. S. Although Mikoyan's bust disappeared, it certainly is kept in a hidden place waiting for the right time to be erected. If this happens, it will herald a new beginning for us all, a move which leads us to nowhere...

(Dr. Hayk Demoyan is a US Fulbright visiting scholar at the Davis Center for Russian and Eurasian Studies of Harvard University. He is researching identity transformation processes in the South Caucasus. From 2006 to 2017 he held the position of director of the Armenian Genocide Museum Institute in Yerevan. Demoyan is the head of the scientific council of the Armenian Genocide Museum and Institute. He is also a chief editor of the International Journal of Armenian Genocide Studies published starting in 2014. The views and opinions expressed in this article are solely those of the author. This is the first in an ongoing series of opinion pieces from him.)

Intolerance toward 'The Other' in Turkey

By Raffi Bedrosyan

Just when one thinks the level of hatred and intolerance in Turkey toward minorities cannot get any worse, something shocking happens which surpasses even the worst incidents of the past.

Aysel Tugluk, formerly a human rights activist, is a member of parliament for the province of Van in Turkey from the pro-Kurdish People's Democratic Party (HDP). Along with the two co-leaders of the party and 11 other fellow deputies, she was arrested and kept in jail, without any trial, since December 2016, based on charges of "supporting a terrorist organization." Her 78-year-old mother, Hatun Tugluk, of Alevi descent and originally from Dersim, passed away last week. As per her will, she was to be buried in an Ankara cemetery. The jail authorities relented to release Aysel Tugluk temporarily so that she can attend her mother's funeral and burial. Just as her mother's coffin was lowered into the grave, a group of 30 fanatical ultranationalists showed up with a tractor, chanting slogans such as: "These are Turkish lands, these are not Armenian lands," "This is not an Armenian cemetery," "Burial of Alevis, Armenians and Kurds not allowed here," "Seeds of Armenians not allowed in a Turkish cemetery," and more ominously, "If you don't remove this coffin, we will shred it to pieces."

Soon the mob increased to 100 people, who started throwing stones at the mourners, including Aysel Tugluk. Although there were a large number of policemen present, they just watched the mob without interfering. In fact, several attackers seemed to know the policemen and addressed them with their names. At the end, Tugluk had no choice but to remove her mother's coffin from the grave, and decided to have her transported to Dersim for burial there. The jail authorities refused to allow Aysel to travel to Dersim as the funeral permission was only for Ankara. So, while Aysel's mother's body travelled to Dersim, Aysel went back into jail.

The level of intolerance and hatred displayed during this incident is revolting. It is a generally accepted fact that any living person defined as "the Other," that is non-Turk, non-Sunni Moslem, will be subject to discrimination, insults and even physical attacks in Turkey, but this incident showed that the dosage of attacks has now reached dead people. There is no question that the attack was organized and planned, with the mob arriving just in time equipped with a tractor and prepared slogans, and obviously condoned by the state or deep state. The governor of Ankara minimized the incident as a provocation by a few drunken persons. The Minister of Interior posed with one of the attackers, both smiling, after the incident. All attackers were released after questioning.

In 1915, the main "Others" were the Armenians, who were almost wiped out with the genocide, resulting in huge transfer of wealth, lands and property to the government, as well as government-sanctioned plunderers and attackers. The fanatics who attacked Hatun Tugluk's grave, shouting "This is not an Armenian cemetery," obviously do not remember that the entire Turkish lands had become a graveyard for the Armenians one hundred years ago. Unknown Armenian grave sites have long disappeared, and the known ones are still deliberately being destroyed, such as the one in Lake Van where toilets and changing cabins were recently installed over the Armenian cemetery.

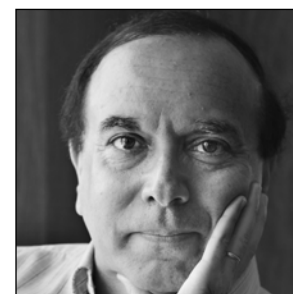
Hunting for treasures in Armenian graveyards is still rampant, with even websites created deciphering Armenian alphabet and signs for potentially rich findings in the graves.

After eliminating the main "Others," the Greeks, in the Pontus and Aegean regions in the early 1920's, it was the turn of the Istanbul Greek "Others" in 1955 to be attacked, again on a September night. Ultranationalist mobs attacked the houses, shops and churches of the Greek minority in Istanbul, as revenge for the alleged bombing of Kemal Ataturk's house museum in Thessaloniki, Greece. All 73 Greek churches in Istanbul were burnt, more than 5000 properties demolished, hundreds of Greeks murdered, several hundred Greek women raped, and two Greek priests forcibly circumcised. Greek cemeteries were also attacked and newly buried bodies removed in search of gold teeth.

Years later, it was revealed that it was Turkish government intelligence forces themselves who planted the bomb at Kemal Ataturk's house, organized and transported the attacking mobs in trucks, as well as supplied them with wooden clubs, all one standard size. The majority of the Greek "Others" just left Turkey after this incident.

So now, the main "Others" left in Turkey are the Kurds and the Alevis. However, one hundred years of brainwashing preached in schools and mosques still keeps hatred alive against the Armenians. Therefore, attacks or insults on Kurds and Alevis must also include the swearword 'Armenian'. When government forces fought against the Kurdish militants in Diyarbakir for the past two years, they wrote on the walls of bombed out buildings or taunted the Kurds with loudspeakers "Armenian bastards, seeds of Armenians." Perhaps Hatun Tugluk from Dersim did have Armenian roots, perhaps not. But that is not the issue, as long as the ultranationalists can direct their hatred of the Armenian to include all the remaining "Others".

For a few years, until two years ago, the Turkish government had preached respect for democracy and human rights, tolerance and equality for minorities and all "Others," promoting peace and ending the war with the Kurds. The term "Turkey for Turks" was almost replaced with "Turkey for all citizens" for a few short years. But now, Turkey can be defined as "Turkey for Turks who support President Erdogan." Hrant Dink once said: "Yes, we have our eyes on these lands, but not to take them away. We want these lands so that we can be buried under them." It seems that even that cannot be tolerated by the Turks for 'the Others'.



(Raffi Bedrosyan is a civil engineer and concert pianist, living in Toronto, Canada. He has donated concert and CD proceedings to infrastructure projects in Armenia and Karabakh, in which he has also participated as an engineer. He helped organize the reconstruction of Surp Giragos Diyarbakir/Dikranagerd Church and the first Armenian reclamation of church properties in Anatolia since 1915. He gave the first piano concert in the church since 1915.)

Diaspora: A Function of Armenia's Foreign Policy

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their sublimated identities which have been oppressed by the Turkish government and society in general. Programs in Armenian, Turkish, Kurdish and Hamshen Armenian presenting their history and heritage will do the job and Armenians may also develop a contingent on their ancestral lands and use it as a political factor.

Georgian Challenge

Armenia has very special and sensitive relations with Georgia, the only other Christian nation in the region. But the Georgians always side with Armenia's enemies, Turkey and Azerbaijan, knowing full well that their exercises are directed against Armenia. Even the deliberate choking point at

Upper Lars customs gate, the only passage from Armenia to Russia, is a compliment and complement to the blocking countries' policy.

Javakhk Armenians are persecuted and pushed to leave their historic homeland and Armenian churches are confiscated. Additionally, Georgia participates in all oil and gas lines and rail networks that deliberately isolate Armenia. Yet, Armenia's government has a cautious policy toward its troubling neighbor. It is formatted as follows: "Armenia does not have any problems with Georgia that cannot be resolved." Yet they are not resolved.

If the Armenian government ships textbooks to Javakhk schools, that will reflect in the balance sheet of Georgia-Armenian official relations.

Therefore, the challenge is for the Diaspora Armenians to do the following:

To send representatives to stir awareness of national identity, like those sent by some Western countries to promote color revolutions.

To support Javakhk's ailing economy to staunch the outflow of the population.

To develop public awareness through media and demonstrations in the West about the usurpation of churches and persecution of the Armenians.

These are some actions that Diaspora Armenians can take which official diplomacy in Yerevan is incapable of doing.

The Diaspora can become an effective extension of Armenia's foreign policy, if it is mobilized and politicized enough, with a clear political agenda of its own.



COMMENTARY



My Turn

By Harut Sassounian

Americana Executives and ANCA Meet to Resolve a Contentious Relationship

Representatives of the Armenian National Committee of America and senior executives of the Americana shopping mall in Glendale met on September 5 and agreed to put their future relationship on a better footing.

This was the first meeting in more than a dozen years between the two groups, precipitated by the refusal of Americana to provide paid advertising space on its billboard for "Architects of Denial," an Armenian Genocide documentary. The producers of the documentary were told by Americana that the subject was "too political." This was a puzzling and irritating response since Americana had seen neither the documentary nor the text of the display ad that was being rejected simply because it was about the Armenian Genocide.

After several attempts asking Americana officials to explain the true reason for rejecting the display ad, they became even more adamant in their refusal. The most insensitive sentence in one of their emails to the documentary producers was that Americana had received comments on this controversy "ranging from the Armenian community to the Turkish Consulate." This highly offensive statement was equating the voices of descendants of the Armenian Genocide to that of a Turkish diplomat who represents a

denialist autocratic regime the predecessors of which had committed the Genocide!

To make matters worse, this was not the first time that Americana had taken a negative position on an Armenian Genocide-related issue. Three years ago, Americana officials had refused to allow three young Armenians who had leased a kiosk from Americana to sell T-shirts that carried texts related to the Armenian Genocide. After an outcry from the local Armenian community, Americana reversed its decision allowing the sale of the T-shirts. They called their initial decision "a misunderstanding."

In a similar development last month, shortly before the Glendale Chapter of the Armenian National Committee of America (ANCA) had called a press conference on the public portion of Americana grounds to announce a boycott, Americana officials reversed themselves, not only allowing the display ad for the documentary, but showcasing it "at no cost to the producers."

This was a positive first step. Americana's owner, Rick Caruso, agreed to meet with the Armenian National Committee of America to discuss how to improve relations between the local community and the shopping mall.

Mr. Caruso attended the September 5 meeting along with Americana's Executive Vice President of Operations Jackie Levy, Executive Vice President of Communications Nancy Murray, Senior Vice President of Community Relations Rick Lemmo and Senior Vice President of Planning, Government and Community Relations Sharon Keyser. The Armenian delegation consisted of ANCA-Glendale Chairman Artin Manoukian, ANCA Western Region Board Member Berdj Karapetian, ANCA Western Region Advisory Board Member Harut Sassounian, former ANCA Western Region Executive Director Elen Asatryan, and ANCA Glendale Community Outreach Director Margarita Baghdasaryan.

The September 5 meeting proceeded in a cordial atmosphere. Mr. Caruso agreed to take concrete steps to improve the shopping mall's relationship with the local Armenian

community. Americana promised to form a special community relations team to focus exclusively on its partnership with Armenians.

"We are pleased that Mr. Caruso has agreed to work on initiatives to improve relations with the Armenian American community and regain our trust and confidence," stated ANCA-Glendale Chairman Manoukian.

In turn, Jackie Levy, Americana's Executive Vice President of Operations announced: "We value the very productive meeting with the ANCA-Glendale leadership and look forward to strengthening our relationship, which includes continuing to celebrate our deep appreciation for the Armenian community. Establishing this new community relations team will ensure that our partnership will continue in a very meaningful way."

Thus, a long-standing contentious relationship between Americana and the Glendale Armenian community is in the process of being resolved amicably. Mr. Caruso, the owner of Americana, was very gracious in his remarks at the meeting and spoke very positively about Armenians. In the coming months, there will be more contacts between the two sides to come up with plans to strengthen their cooperation so that the disputes are resolved through friendly discussions rather than resorting to protests and boycotts.

More than two dozen Armenians and non-Armenians appeared at the Glendale City Council meeting to complain about Americana's initial rejection of the display ad. To their credit, all five Glendale City Council members, led by Mayor Vartan Gharpetian, supported the community's demands and were present during ANCA's press conference at Americana. Also supporting the Armenian community's wishes was California State Senator Anthony Portantino who played a major role in helping to resolve the controversy and attended the ANCA press conference.

The resolution of this controversial issue indicates the importance of community participation and activism in matters that affect Armenian Americans.

Turks Deny All Evidence of Genocide; Azeris Deny Any Evidence of Corruption

By Harut Sassounian

For over a century, no matter what evidence is presented to the Turkish government about their guilt as perpetrators of the Armenian Genocide, they always claim it is fake and deny the facts.

Similarly, despite all evidence presented to Azeri leaders about their misuse of billions of dollars for bribery and corrupt practices, they always deny the facts and blame Armenians, other countries, and certain individuals who are supposed to be against them.

Last week was no exception. *The Guardian* and dozens of newspapers around the world reported that the Azeri government had paid around \$3 billion in bribery to many individuals and institutions throughout Europe from 2012-2014. *The Guardian* reported that there were more than 16,000 such transactions. In this major scandal, not only the Azeri government is guilty of corruption but also all those European officials who took the bribe to carry out illegal favors for the Aliyev regime.

What *The Guardian* describes as the "Azerbaijani Laundromat" involves "a scheme to curry influence, pay lobbyists, apologists, and European politicians to launder cash [which] comes from companies linked to Azerbaijan's President Ilham Aliyev, state ministries, and the International Bank of Azerbaijan, the country's largest bank, which recently filed for bankruptcy protection. The cash was transferred from four offshore-managed UK companies. From there it was spent in various countries, including Germany, the UK, France, Turkey, Iran, and Kazakhstan." *The Guardian* forgot to add Belgium and Italy...

The illegal Azerbaijani money was funneled to four UK companies through a small branch in Estonia of Danske, Denmark's largest bank. Two of these shadowy offshore companies were

Scottish limited partnerships, Hilux Services and Polux Management, overseen by agents in the British Virgin Islands.

Who are some of the beneficiaries of these illegally transferred funds? According to *The Guardian*, "one of them is Luca Volonte, the Italian former chair of the Center-Right European People's party group in the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of

Christian Social Union.... Between 2012 and 2014, when he was no longer an MP, his foundation received 819,000 euros. The cash included 61,000 euro payment made two weeks after Lintner visited Azerbaijan as an election observer. He praised the poll as up to 'German standards.' He says the payments were for legitimate work, and that he did not personally benefit from the money or know about the original

officials who benefited from these funds. One Azeri firm—Baktelekom MMC—paid more than \$1.4 billion into offshore bank accounts.

Interestingly, it was also revealed by a Hungarian newspaper that at the time Hungary extradited Ramil Safarov, the Azeri ax-murderer of an Armenian soldier during NATO exercises in Budapest in 2004, Azerbaijan made several bank transfers totaling \$7 million to the Hungarian bank MKB. This is yet another example of Azerbaijan's corrupt use of secret slush funds to gain favors in Europe and elsewhere.

The Azeris, of course, would not admit their wrongdoing and blamed everyone from Armenians to billionaire George Soros and the international media. "Azerbaijan's presidential aide, Ali Hasanov, said the stories by the *Guardian* and other media partners were a smear. Hasanov said the regime was the victim of a 'scandalous' campaign organized by British intelligence, the Armenian diaspora and the U.S," according to the *Guardian*. Hasanov blamed certain anti-Azerbaijan circles who are "controlled by the funds of the Armenian diaspora in the West, in particular the US"

Furthermore, the Azeri government blocked access to the website of the Organized Crime and Corruption Reporting Project (OCCRP), which had published the details of the "Azerbaijani Laundromat," following a leak of data to the Danish newspaper Berlingske.

UK Prime Minister Theresa May announced last week that the National Crime Agency will investigate the corrupt practices of the four UK companies linked to Azerbaijan. Also, several members of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe intend to expand the existing investigation of Azerbaijan's persistent corruption schemes!



Azerbaijan's President Ilham Aliyev hosting a dinner in honor of Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan's birthday on April 25, 2016 (Photo: Official Website of the President of Turkey)

Europe (PACE). Volonte was among PACE delegates who controversially voted against a 2013 report criticizing Azerbaijan's human rights record. The leaked data shows he received more than \$2 million. He has been indicted in Italy for money laundering and corruption amid an investigation of what has been dubbed 'caviar diplomacy.' He denies any wrongdoing."

Another high-profile beneficiary, according to *The Guardian*, is "Eduard Lintner, a former German Member of Parliament with the

source of the funds."

According to *The Guardian*, "Cash was also sent to Bulgarian and Swiss bank accounts belonging to Kalin Mitrev, who was then a private consultant, but now works for the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development in London. Mitrev says the money was private income from legitimate consultancy work and that he was not aware of the original source of the funds. He denies doing any wrongdoing."

There are also several high-ranking Azeri offi-



Turkish Government Harasses International Scholars in Berlin

We write on behalf of the Workshop for Armenian-Turkish Scholarship and the Lepsiushaus Potsdam to express our deep concern about recent efforts by Turkish authorities to prevent scholars based in that country from participating in a conference in Berlin entitled "Past in the Present: European Approaches to the Armenian Genocide." We consider such actions to be an attack on free speech and academic freedom, indeed, to extend such intellectual repression beyond the borders of Turkey. We share the concern of the Middle East Studies Association (MESA) of North America that such actions seriously and scandalously damage scholarship and the free exchange of knowledge.

The Workshop on Armenian-Turkish Scholarship (WATS) is a series of international



Lepsiushaus in Potsdam, Germany

academic workshops, founded at the University of Chicago and the University of Michigan in 2000 as the "first forum where Turkish, Armenian, and other scholars could create a community of Turkish, Kurdish, Armenian, and other scholars to conduct an informed debate" relating issues surrounding the fate of Ottoman Armenians, an event generally accepted as the Armenian Genocide. Despite the efforts of Turkish nationalists who deny the established facts of history, the latest workshop, the tenth in the series, took place on 15-18 September at the European Academy Berlin, co-organized by

the University of Michigan, USC Dornsife Institute of Armenian Studies, and Lepsiushaus Potsdam, under the auspices of Dr. Martina Munch, Minister for Science, Research, and Culture of the State of Brandenburg.

The conference has come under sustained attack by Turkish ultra-nationalist political circles in Turkey and Germany. Long-time deniers of the Armenian Genocide in the international arena declared that the conference will "serve imperialism and the interests of Kurdistan" and framed the Kurdish issue as forming "the second Israel," clearly an anti-Semitic slur.

We consider that a democratic society requires a free exchange of ideas, and such pressure on academics in Turkey has already had a chilling effect on university scholars, who have in the last decades helped to build up a high level of academic professionalism and achievement. Turkey has been hurt by the current atmosphere of intimidation and threats as evidenced in the treatment of the scholars who wished to attend the WATS conference in Berlin.

We will be vigilant from this moment on in our efforts to protect the rights and freedoms of all academics and call on the Turkish government to restore the academic freedoms that have been and are being violated in Turkey. We demand as well that the Turkish state desist from interfering in intellectual exchange and expression outside of Turkey. There is no substitution for independent research and the presentation of research findings in academic settings and in scholarly meetings. These exchanges are fundamental to academic freedom. Such interference infringes on the democratic order in Turkey and in hosting countries. The events surrounding the WATS conference in Berlin demonstrate one more instance of the Turkish state's refusal to respect basic human rights' protections both under Turkish law and Turkey's clear international obligations.

WATS Organizing Committee
Lepsiushaus Potsdam
Berlin, September 17, 2017



Armenia's Erna Mirzoyan

A Winner of New Wave 2017 Song Contest, Receives 2 Million Rubles

SOCHI, Russia (Panorama.am) - The three singers who took the first spot at the New Wave 2017 international music contest of young pop singers have shared the prize money amounting to 6 million rubles at the finale of the song festival, RIA Novosti reports.

Representative of Armenia Erna Mirzoyan (Erna Mir) led the song contest with 362 points after the summing up of the results of the first three days of the contest.

Mirzoyan, known in Armenia as part of the Voices of Artsakh music ensemble, shared the first spot with representatives of Uzbekistan and Moldova.

During the closing ceremony of the contest, the announcers said that this is a unique incident in the history of the New Wave contest when three participants claim the first place.

The other representative of Armenia, Syuzanna Melkonyan, who finished third in the Armenian national selection in 2017 Eurovision song contest, came the second with 357 points.

The contest has been organized annually since 2002 by Russian composer Igor Krutoy and Latvian composer Raimonds Pauls. Young singers between the ages of 16 and 30 are eligible to compete in the festival. This year the festival was attended by 14 participants from 9 countries. The festival was held in Russia's Sochi from September 8-14.



Robert Fisk

Journalist, Middle East Correspondent for *The Independent*
Seven-Time Recipient of British Press Awards' Reporter of the Year



David Barsamian

Writer, Founder and Director of Alternative Radio



Philip Terzian

Senior Editor at *The Weekly Standard* and Pulitzer Prize finalist



The Armenian Mirror-Spectator

SYMPOSIUM ON ARMENIAN ISSUES IN THE INTERNATIONAL PRESS

Journalism and "Fake News": Armenian Genocide and Karabagh

Aram Arkun, Moderator

Journalism is changing at a rapid pace, including how the news is produced, distributed and consumed. Join *The Armenian Mirror-Spectator* along with a panel of internationally acclaimed journalists to discuss the issues facing journalism today and their impact on the Armenian case.

Thursday

November 2, 2017

Wellesley College, Alumnae Hall Ballroom
106 Central St, Wellesley, MA
Doors Open at 6:00 P.M. • Program: 7:00 P.M.
Reception to Follow • Free Admission

Amberin Zaman

Columnist for *Diken* and *AI Monitor*, former Turkey Correspondent for *The Economist*

