

# Mirror Gala Raises \$135,000

By Alin K. Gregorian

Mirror-Spectator Staff

NEWTON, Mass. — A glamorous gala on Friday, November 3, capped off the 85th anniversary commemoration events for the *Armenian Mirror-Spectator*.

The event raised a total of \$135,000, which will go toward the newspaper's operational budget.

The event was short on speeches and long on fun and surprises.

About 200 people attended the program, which included comments from and awards to the four guest journalists, Robert Fisk, David Barsamian, Amberin Zaman and Philip Terzian.

Fisk received the lifetime achievement award from the *Armenian Mirror-Spectator*, while the other three received awards of excellence.

Fisk joked while picking up his award from Edmond Azadian, the head of the Tekeyan Cultural Association of the US and Canada, and the senior columnist for the *Mirror-Spectator*, that the award is usually given to someone in the twilight of life and asked if the editorial board of



From left, Nicole Babikian Hajjar, Kevork Marashlian, Harry Parsekian and Hrip Parsekian

the paper had spoken to his physician.

In his introduction, Azadian paid tribute to Fisk and his body of work, calling him "a warrior for the truth."

Both Barsamian and Terzian spoke briefly using humor deftly to thank the

newspaper for the award.

Zaman also spoke briefly, but her remarks about her ailing mother, whom she could not visit because she cannot return to Turkey, elicited sighs from the audience.

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## Journalists Discuss Armenian Genocide and World Events at *Mirror-Spectator* Symposium

By Alin K. Gregorian

Mirror-Spectator Staff

WELLESLEY, Mass. — The two-day celebrations marking the 85th anniversary of the *Armenian Mirror-Spectator* got off to a cracking start on Thursday, November 2, at a symposium on the lush campus of Wellesley College, at the Diana Chapman Walsh Alumnae Hall, featuring a panel of four exciting, world-famous journalists: Robert Fisk, David Barsamian, Philip Terzian and Amberin Zaman.

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David Barsamian addresses the audience at the symposium while the panel looks on.

## Greater New York TCA Banquet to Be Celebrated in Grand Style

PARAMUS, N.J. — The anniversary of any exemplary organization is one to be remembered, but when it is one named after a legendary cultural icon, and dedicated to preserving and

enhancing the culture of a people, it is one to be honored and celebrated in grand style.

By Florence Avakian  
Special to the Mirror-Spectator

The 70th anniversary banquet of the Tekeyan Cultural Associate (TCA) will take place on Saturday evening November 18, at the Terrace at Biagio's, 299 Paramus Road, under the auspices of the Eastern Diocesan Primate Archbishop Khajag Barsamian

For this 70th Platinum Anniversary, a number of notable features will take place, including 6 P.M. cocktails and a silent auction with valuable prizes – tickets to special events, rugs, jewelry, electronics, as well as a sumptuous dinner and live entertainment and dancing by Elie Berberian and Ensemble. Several personalities who have been associated with the organization for decades will be featured at this gala event.

see TCA GALA, page 7



Artemis and Nazar Nazarian

TINA

## NEWS IN BRIEF

### Syrian Army Liberates Deir ez-Zor Genocide Memorial

DEIR EZ-ZOR, Syria (PanArmenian.net) – The Armenian Genocide memorial in the Deir ez-Zor Governorate has been liberated by the Syrian Arab Army (SAA) after being occupied by Islamic State forces for several years, Al-Masdar News reports.

Prior to its liberation, the memorial had been badly damaged by various groups, including the Islamic State, the source says. Pictures of the memorial released by the Syrian army reveal the extent of damage that the conflict has caused over the years. On September 21, 2014, the memorial complex was blown up, reportedly by IS members.

The memorial complex served as church, museum, monument, archive center and exhibition site. It was under the direct administration of the Armenian Prelacy of the Diocese of Aleppo. Every year, on April 24, tens of thousands of Armenian pilgrims from all over the world visited the complex.

### Indiana Recognizes Armenian Genocide

INDIANAPOLIS, Ind. — Gov. Eric J. Holcomb issued a proclamation memorializing the Ottoman Turkish Empire's annihilation of close to three million Armenians, Greeks, Assyrians and Syrians, making the Hoosier State the 48th US state to properly recognize and condemn the Armenian Genocide, reported the Armenian National Committee of America – Eastern Region (ANCA-ER).

Holcomb also declared November 6-12, 2017 as "Armenia Awareness Week" and invited the citizens of Indiana to "duly note this occasion."

"We welcome this proclamation by Governor Holcomb, making Indiana the 48th state in the union to officially re-affirm this international crime against humanity," said ANCA-ER Community Outreach and Communications Director Artur Martirosyan. "This proclamation serves as a reminder not only for the citizens of Indiana, but also for the denialist government of Turkey, which has been trying to hold truth hostage."

"The Armenian community in Indiana is small, but mighty," said ANC of Indiana Chairperson Seda Arzumanyan. "Armenians have called Indiana home for several generations. We are glad to see the Hoosier State join the rest of the nation in properly memorializing and condemning this horrific atrocity."

Iraqi Christian Relief Council Board Member Denise Bubeck said, "I am so very thankful Indiana has joined in remembering the Armenian Genocide, the Holocaust, past and present genocide; preserving the historic memory and ensuring that these atrocities will never occur again."

## INSIDE

### Anniversary To Remember

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## ARMENIA

## News From Armenia

## Prime Minister Donates One Year's Salary to Hayastan All Armenian Fund

YEREVAN (Armenpress) – Prime Minister Karen Karapetyan is donating more than 10 million drams to the Hayastan All Armenian Fund, executive director of the fund Ara Vardanyan said.

On November 1, Karapetyan visited the fund to get acquainted with the 25 years of activities and programs. “The prime minister visited the fund at our invitation, for which we are very grateful. First of all, I presented all the programs which we carry out, and also upcoming programs. A surprise happened for us; when we were in the financial department, where donations are usually made, the prime minister said that for this fundraiser he is donating his one year's salary, which is a bit over 10 million drams,” Vardanyan said. This year's telethon will take place on November 23.

## Historic Ghazir Carpet Donated to Armenian Genocide Museum-Institute

YEREVAN (Armenpress) – Aspet Hamalian and the Armenian Embassy in Lebanon, in accordance with the will of Beirut resident Hrayr Mkrtich Srapian, donated a carpet of unique value to the Armenian Genocide Museum-Institute. The donor of this donation highlighted the importance of preserving the memory of the Armenian Genocide and transferring them to the future generations. The carpet has been created by Armenian orphans of the Ghazir orphanage in 1925. A similar carpet created by them was donated to US President Calvin Coolidge in gratitude to the American people for assisting the Armenians.

During the 1920s about 1,400 Armenian female orphans who survived the Genocide were sheltered in the Ghazir orphanage. In addition to other crafts, they also learnt carpet weaving. During 1923 to 1930 more than 3,000 carpets were woven here, and more than 1,000 Armenian orphans received carpet-weaving certificates.

The carpet belonged to the Srapian living in Beirut. The father of the donor was Armenian Genocide survivor Hovhannes H. Srapian.

## Armenia, Azerbaijan Ministers Set For More Peace Talks After October Summit

YEREVAN (RFE/RL) – A senior official in Yerevan said on Friday, November 3, that Armenia's and Azerbaijan's foreign ministers are planning to hold fresh talks on the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict.

Presidents Serzh Sargsyan and Ilham Aliyev pledged to intensify the peace process and bolster the ceasefire regime in the conflict zone when they met in Geneva on October 16. The US, Russian and French mediators announced in the Swiss city that they will soon hold follow-up “working sessions” with Foreign Minister Edward Nalbandian and his Azerbaijani counterpart, Elmar Mammadyarov.

Mammadyarov said earlier this week that he may meet with Nalbandian in Moscow on November 16. The Azerbaijani minister is scheduled to meet with the mediators there on that day. Nalbandian will accompany Sargsyan on a trip to the Russian capital expected next week.

Armenia's Deputy Foreign Minister Shavarsh Kocharian confirmed that a meeting of the two foreign ministers is “planned.” “It will be announced as soon as there is an agreement [on its conduct],” he told reporters.

Speaking right after the Geneva summit, Sargsyan again ruled out any peace deal that would lead to the restoration of Azerbaijani control over Karabakh. That statement angered Azerbaijani officials. They accused the Armenian president of breaching understandings reached with Aliyev.

Sargsyan shrugged off those accusations. “I have not uttered even half a word about our conversation [with Aliyev] to anyone,” he said on October 26.

# Foreign Minister Nalbandian Visits Israel

TEL AVIV, Israel (Armenpress) – Foreign Minister of Armenia Edward Nalbandian, who is in Israel on an official visit, met on November 7 with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu.

The meeting kicked off in an expanded format with the participation of the delegations, afterwards, private conversation took place.

Greeting Nalbandian, Netanyahu highlighted the importance of the visit and noted that Israel is ready to expand relations with Armenia, stressing that a great potential for cooperation exists between the two states.

Thanking the Israeli leader for the invitation and the reception, Nalbandian conveyed the greetings and warm wishes of President Serzh Sargsyan. He noted that in the recent period activation of Armenian-Israeli interactions is tangible and expressed his conviction that based on the rich historical friendly relations between the two peoples, new impetus will be given to Armenian-Israeli relations.

The interlocutors noted that it's symbolic that the visit takes place in a jubilee year of establishment diplomatic relations between the two states, the 25th anniversary, expressing conviction that it's a good opportunity to evaluate the past path and take new steps aimed at developing the relations.

During the meeting the sides also discussed the bilateral agenda of Armenian-Israeli relations, and issues of cooperation in international platforms. A reference was made to economic issues.

Netanyahu and Nalbandian touched upon the rich Armenian historical heritage in Israel. They also exchanged views on pressing regional and international issues and developments in the Middle East.

Nalbandian presented the efforts of Armenia and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) Minsk Group Co-chairs aimed at the peaceful settlement of the Nagorno Karabakh conflict.

While in Israel, Nalbandian visited the Holocaust Memorial in Jerusalem, Yad Vashem, and laid a wreath at the memorial of the Holocaust victims. Following the tour in the Holocaust museum, the Armenian FM wrote in the guest book of Yad Vashem, “The most important lesson we learn in Jerusalem, at Yad Vashem, and in Yerevan, at Tsitsernakaberd memorial complex, is that new genocides



Foreign Minister Nalbandian at the Yad Vashem Memorial in Jerusalem, signing the guest book.

and crimes against humanity can be prevented only by the joint efforts of the international community. The moral obligation of the Armenian and Jewish peoples who have passed through the horrors of the genocide is to stand in the front line of those efforts.”

Nalbandian also met on November 7 with Minister of Jerusalem affairs and heritage of Israel Elkin, who noted that he has many good memories of his visits to Armenia. They also spoke about the rich Armenian historical and cultural heritage in Israel and the activities of the Jewish community in Armenia.

## Armenian Parliament Attacker Dies in Jail

YEREVAN (RFE/RL) – A fourth person jailed in connection with a deadly 1999 attack on the Armenian parliament, which plunged the country into a serious political crisis, has died in prison.

The Armenian Justice Ministry said on November 3, that, Eduard Grigoryan, who was serving a life sentence in Nubarashen prison, complained of chest pains before being rushed to a hospital and pronounced dead there early in the morning.

Gor Ghlechian, the spokesman for a ministry division managing Armenia's prisons, said that relevant authorities will conduct forensic tests to ascertain the cause of Grigoryan's death.

A doctor by training, Grigoryan was one of the five gunmen who burst into the National Assembly and sprayed it with bullets on October 27, 1999. Then Prime Minister Vazgen Sargsyan, Parliament Speaker Karen Demirchian and six other officials were killed in the shooting spree that thrust Armenia's government into turmoil.

The gunmen were led by Nairi Hunanian, an obscure former journalist who accused the government of corruption and misrule and called for regime change. They surrendered to police after overnight negotiations with then-President Robert Kocharian.

Several other men were also arrested in the following days. One of them, Norayr Yeghiazarian, was charged with supplying weapons to the armed group, which also comprised Hunanian's younger brother Karen and uncle Vram Galstian.

Yeghiazarian was found dead in pre-trial detention in 2000. Law-enforcement authorities said at the time that Yeghiazarian, an electrician by profession, accidentally electrocuted himself to death while using a heating stove in his cell.

Galstian was found hanged in his Nubarashen prison cell in 2004 just months after an Armenian court sentenced him, the Hunanian brothers and the two other gunmen to life imprisonment. The prison administration

claimed that he committed suicide.

Another man, Hamlet Stepanian, was sentenced in December 2003 to 14 years in prison on charges of helping the gunmen enter the parliament. Stepanian suddenly died in prison in 2010 of what officials called a heart attack.

Those prison deaths fueled more allegations of a high-level cover-up of the parliament shootings. Some relatives and supporters of the assassinated officials still suspect Kocharian and the current President Serzh Sargsyan (no relation to Vazgen), who was Armenia's national security minister in October 1999, of masterminding the killings to eliminate increasingly powerful rivals.

Hunanian insisted throughout his marathon trial that he himself had decided to seize the parliament and try to topple the government without anybody's orders. But many in Armenia believe that the ringleader and his accomplices had powerful sponsors outside the parliament building.

Ruzan Minasian, a journalist for *Aravot*, who covered the parliament attack trial, described Grigoryan as the “ideological leader” of Hunanian's group. She suggested that the former pediatrician, who died on Friday, could have shed more light on the shootings.

“According to the prosecution, Edik Grigoryan's role was the same as Nairi Hunanian's,” Minasian said. “But he looked more composed. You could probably call him their gray cardinal.”

A Facebook account opened in Grigoryan's name in 2014 promised major “revelations” regarding the October 1999 attack. It was disabled shortly after attracting Armenian media attention.

“Maybe he wanted to say something,” Minasian said. “Or maybe he wanted to test our mood. Why not?”

## Sargsyan Receives Scientists Yuri Oganessian and Ani Aprahamian

YEREVAN (Armenpress) — President of Armenia Serzh Sargsyan on November 6 received renowned scientists, physicists, foreign members of the National Academy of Sciences of Armenia Yuri Oganessian and Ani Aprahamian, the press service of the Presidential Office announced.

They arrived in Armenia to participate in the World Conference in Yerevan on November 6-8, as well as to discuss issues relating to the strategy of the A. I. Alikhanian National Science Laboratory. In addition to his

key role in world science, Oganessian is the chairman of the international scientific board of the Alikhanian National Science Laboratory appointed by the Armenian Prime Minister.

An international commission was formed by Oganessian in 2009-2010 which observed and submitted proposals to the government on transforming the Yerevan Physics Institute into a National Scientific Laboratory, and in 2011 he was appointed chairman of the international scientific board of the abovementioned foundation.



## INTERNATIONAL

# Assad Sets Sights on Kurdish Areas, Risking New Syria Conflict

By Tom Perry, Ellen Francis, Laila Bassam

BEIRUT (Reuters) — With Islamic State near defeat in Syria, Damascus is setting its sights on territory held by Kurdish-led forces including eastern oil fields, risking a new confrontation that could draw the United States in more deeply and complicate Russian diplomacy.

President Bashar al-Assad and his Iranian allies appear to have been emboldened by events in Iraq, where Kurdish authorities have suffered a major blow since regional states mobilized against their independence referendum, analysts say.

Rivalry between the Kurdish-led Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF), supported by the United States, and the Syrian government backed by Iran and Russia is emerging as a fault line with their common enemy — Islamic State — close to collapse in Syria.

Syria's main Kurdish groups hope for a new phase of negotiations that will shore up their autonomy in northern Syria. Assad's government, however, is asserting its claim to areas captured by the SDF from the jihadist group, known in Arabic by its enemies as Daesh, in more forceful terms.

On October 29, Damascus declared Islamic State's former capital at Raqqa would be considered "occupied" until the Syrian army took control — a challenge to Washington which helped the SDF capture the city.

And the eastern oil fields seized by the SDF in October, including Syria's largest, will be a target for the government as it tries to recover resources needed for reconstructing areas it controls, according to a Syrian official and a non-Syrian commander in the alliance fighting in support of Assad.

"The message is very clear to the SDF militants and their backers in the coalition, headed by America: the lands they took from Daesh are rightfully the Syrian state's," said the non-Syrian commander, who requested that his name and nationality be withheld.

"Regarding the resources of the Syrian people in the east — oil and so on — we will not allow anyone to continue to control the country's resources and to create cantons or to think about self-

government," added the commander, who is part of a military alliance that includes numerous Iran-backed Shi'ite militias from across the region.

The Syrian official said the SDF could not keep control of oil resources. "We won't permit it," said the official, speaking to Reuters on condition of anonymity as he was giving a personal view.

The United States has not spelt out how military support for the SDF will evolve after Islamic State's defeat, a sensitive point due to the concerns of its NATO ally Turkey.

Ankara regards Syrian Kurdish power as a threat its national security as its forces are fighting Kurdish PKK rebels over the border in Turkey.

The US-led coalition, which has established several military bases in northern Syria, has been helping the SDF shore up control of the recently captured al-Omar oil field in Deir al-Zor province.

"Many people will say that will help them with (political) negotiations, but only if the United States remains with them, otherwise they are going to get clobbered," said Joshua Landis, an expert on Syria and head of the Center for Middle East Studies at the University of Oklahoma.

"I think the Syrian government is going to push on some of these oil wells, in the same way as Iraq just pushed to get Kirkuk oil, and in the same way the Iraqi push is going to embolden the Syrian army," he said.

Iraqi Kurds took control of large areas outside their autonomous region during the fight against Islamic State. However, last month's independence referendum prompted Western opposition and fierce resistance from Baghdad, Ankara and Assad's Iranian allies, and the Kurdish authorities have since lost much territory to Baghdad, including oil producing areas around the city of Kirkuk.

The Syrian official said this should serve "as a lesson for the Kurds in Syria, so they think about the future."

Regional sources say the US unwillingness to stop Iraqi government forces, backed by Shi'ite militias, from recapturing Kirkuk sent an encouraging message to Assad and his Iranian allies to retake the SDF-held oil areas in Syria.

With critical military support from Russia and the Iran-backed militias, Assad has recovered swathes of central and eastern Syria from Islamic State this year, having defeated many anti-

Assad rebel factions in western Syria.

The Kurdish YPG militia, the dominant force in the SDF, controls the second largest chunk of Syrian territory — around a quarter of the country. Syrian Kurdish leaders say they are not seeking secession.

The YPG and Damascus have mostly avoided conflict during the Syrian civil war, setting aside historic enmity to fight shared foes. Kurdish-led regions of northern Syria have meanwhile focused on establishing an autonomous government which they aim to safeguard.

Moscow has called for a new "congress" of Syrian groups that may start work on a new constitution. The Russian Foreign Ministry published on Tuesday a list of 33 groups and political parties invited to a meeting in the Black Sea resort of Sochi on Nov. 18.

A Syrian Kurdish official told Reuters the administration in northern Syria had been invited to the congress. Kurdish officials said they discussed their political demands with the Russians as recently as last month.

A senior Kurdish politician said government statements directed at the Kurdish-led regions of northern Syria were contradictory, noting that the Syrian foreign minister had said in September that Kurdish autonomy demands were negotiable.

"One day they say we are willing to negotiate and then someone else denies this or puts out an opposing statement," Fawza Youssef said in a telephone interview with Reuters. "One of them declares war and the other wants to come negotiate. What is the regime's strategy? Dialogue or war?"

After the final defeat of Islamic State in Deir al-Zor, "the situation will drive all the political sides and the combatants to start the stage of negotiations," Youssef said.

The SDF has also pushed into Arab majority areas, including Raqqa and parts of Deir al-Zor, where it is working to establish its model of multi-ethnic local governance.

Analysts believe the Syrian Kurdish groups could use the SDF-held Arab areas as bargaining chips in negotiations with Damascus.

"There is no other option than to negotiate," Youssef said. "Either a new stage of tensions and attrition will start — which we are 100 percent against — or a stage of dialogue and negotiations will start."

## International News

### Erdogan's Turkey Can Never Join EU: Özdemir

BERLIN (Armenpress) — Co-chair of the German Green Party Cem Özdemir has announced that Turkey led by Recep Tayyip Erdogan will never become a European Union (EU) member state, according to German Deutsche Welle.

"Every normal person knows that Turkey cannot become an EU member state with Recep Tayyip Erdogan. Instead, it's necessary to discuss the measures aimed at releasing the German hostages in Turkey," Özdemir said. The German parliamentarian of Turkish origin has announced that one of the priorities of German foreign policy should be the release of the Germans arrested in Turkey.

### Armenian Genocide Memorial Vandalized in French city of Vienne

PARIS (Armenpress) — In the French city of Vienne, a memorial of the Armenian Genocide victims has been vandalized, *Le Dauphine* reported.

Both sides of the memorial have been marked with insults.

The Union of Armenian Associations of Vienna has condemned that act and has decided to file a complaint to the authorities. "There is no hate or desire of revenge in the hearts of Armenians but no one and nothing can stop their struggle for law, justice and truth," reads the statement of the Armenian union.

### Russia, Iran, Turkey Ready to Discuss Initiative on Syria

ASTANA (Tass) — Countries acting as guarantors of Syrian peace settlement — Russia, Turkey and Iran — are prepared to discuss Moscow's proposal for convening the Congress for National Dialogue of the Peoples of Syria, the Foreign Minister of Kazakhstan Kairat Abdrakhmanov said on October 31.

"They agree to discuss in the format of the UN-sponsored Geneva process the Russian Federation's proposal to convene the National Dialogue Congress, on which the Russian side informed the guarantor countries," he said.

The new round of talks will be held in second half of December. "The sides have decided to hold the next high-level international meeting on Syria in Astana in the second half of December 2017," he said reading out the text of a joint statement by Syrian peace settlement guarantor countries.

"Emphasize progress in the fight against terrorism and elimination of Daesh/ISIL, Nusra Front and all other individuals, groups, undertakings and entities associated with Al-Qaeda or Daesh/ISIL as a result of the launch of the de-escalation areas and reaffirm their determination to take all necessary measures to continue the fight against them within or outside the de-escalation areas," the document says.

The document stresses the necessity for the conflicting parties "to take confidence-building measures, including the release of detainees/abductees and the handover of the bodies as well as identification of missing persons, to create better conditions for political process and lasting ceasefire."

### Armenia Offers Investor Entry to Global Markets

YEREVAN (Armenpress) — For all potential investors, Armenia presents itself not as a market of 3 million people, but a territory which proposes entry into several major markets, Prime Minister Karen Karapetyan told a press conference last week when asked about his assessment on Armenia's economic benefit from its nearly three-year membership in the Eurasian Economic Union.

"Today, during talks with all potential investors and our partners we say that when you come to Armenia, don't come as if you are entering into a market of 3 million, rather come to a territory, a country, where we will maximally provide a business environment, security, where, depending on your interests, you can enter the Eurasian Economic Union, the European Union, the US, Iran," Karapetyan said.

He reaffirmed that the free economic zone with Iran will start at the end of November, which in its turn will ensure a market of 82.5 million people.

## Sargsyan Says Russia to Supply Armenia Weapons

YEREVAN (Public Radio of Armenia) — Moscow will supply a new batch of weapons to Armenia in the near future under a \$200-million agreement signed in 2015. The implementation of a new \$100-million loan agreement will start after all interstate arrangements are in place, Armenian President Serzh Sargsyan said in an interview with RIA Novosti.

"Until the end of the current year, we will be implementing the previous agreement," said Sargsyan. "We are waiting for new supplies in the coming days."

"We have signed a new agreement, which has to pass through all instances in Armenia and Russia and then be ratified. After that we'll start working with Russian producers to implement the program," continued Sargsyan.

According to the draft agreement, which the Armenian government approved on October 12, the Russian Federation will provide the Armenian side with a state export loan to finance the supplies of military products of Russian production.

The Armenian side will use the loan to cover up to 90 percent of the cost of each contract for the supply of products, calculated in dollars.

The loan will be issued with a maturity of 15 years at 3 percent per annum. Armenia should use credit funds between 2018 and 2022.

Meanwhile, in the interview with RIA Novosti, Sargsyan added that the Comprehensive and Enhanced Partnership Agreement between the European Union and Armenia does not provide for the closure of the Armenian Nuclear Power Plant.





## INTERNATIONAL

# After Iraqi Kurdish Independence Vote Backfires, 'I Do Not Regret It,' Says Barzani

IRBIL (NPR) — Masoud Barzani stepped down last week as president of Iraq's Kurdistan regional government. The independence referendum he pushed through resulted in a military attack by Iraqi forces. But, he tells NPR, "I am very proud that we have given the opportunity for the Kurdish people to express their vote." He says the region will reassess its relationship with the U.S.

There's a light rain falling in the hills around Masoud Barzani's palace north of Irbil. Last week, Barzani stepped down as president of the semi-autonomous Kurdistan regional government in northern Iraq, a position he's held for 12 years. But the building, with its soaring staircases and footsteps of staff echoing through vast marble hallways, is still distinctly presidential.

The Kurdistan region Barzani was instrumental in carving out from the ruins of Saddam Hussein's Iraq has been turned upside down. Barzani, 71, pushed through a historic referendum for Kurdish independence in September. But it backfired, and instead of the repercussions he expected — economic sanctions and temporary border closures — the Iraqi government sent in troops.

Iraqi forces, including Iranian-backed Shiite paramilitaries, took back the city of Kirkuk, oil fields and towns and cities in a large swath of northern Iraq. Federal troops are retaking borders with Iran, Turkey and Syria that the Kurds have controlled since the 1990s.

The Kurds have also lost territory they've held since 2014, when Peshmerga fighters moved in to fight ISIS after entire divisions of the Iraqi army collapsed.

It's undeniably a disaster. Barzani, though, seems unchanged.

Although no longer president, Barzani remains head of the Kurdistan Democratic Party, the dominant party in the regional government. Crucially, he still leads Peshmerga fighters loyal to his party. And as one of the founders of modern-day Kurdistan, he retains enormous influence in many parts of this tribal region.

He walks into an interview with NPR — his first since Kurds went to the polls on September 25 — wearing his usual traditional Kurdish clothing, khaki baggy pants and a tunic with a cummerbund, along with the red and white headdress of his Barzan tribe. He has the bearing of the Kurdish fighter he cherishes as his core identity.

Barzani professes to have no regrets. He says "of course" the consequences his region has suffered were worth it to make clear that Kurds want independence.

"I am very proud of the result. I am very proud that we have given the opportunity for the Kurdish people to express their vote — and I do not regret it," he says.

Asked about the expectation that he take some responsibility for the aftermath, Barzani says it was a collective decision to hold the referendum and not his alone.

He accuses specific Kurdish leaders from the rival Patriotic Union of Kurdistan of treason in handing over Kirkuk. And he blames the United States for allowing Iranian-backed Iraqi paramilitaries working with Iraqi troops to attack the Kurds.

"They were using American weapons — Abrams tanks and other things the American government gave to the Iraqi government to use in the fight against ISIS. But they used it against the Kurdish people, and the Americans

stayed silent," he says.

The U.S., the U.K. and almost every other ally had warned Barzani not to hold the referendum in September. U.S. officials brokered a deal with Baghdad to open negotiations with Irbil. If those failed, the U.S. would promise to recognize the need for a referendum.

But Kurdish officials say the offer came too late — two days before the vote, when Barzani had already made clear the referendum would go ahead.

## Post Saddam Hussein

After Saddam Hussein's genocidal campaign against the Kurds in the 1980s, the United States created the conditions for the Kurdistan region to flourish, leading a no-fly zone in 1991 protecting the Kurds from air strikes. For the first time in Iraq, the Kurds gained control of their borders, creating a region that — while not exactly democratic — was seen as the most stable, prosperous and US-friendly in Iraq.

Kurdish leaders had made clear the September vote would not trigger an immediate declaration of independence. Until the last moment — at a press conference the evening before the referendum — Barzani seemed to think the worst repercussions would be border closures or economic sanctions. But with so many fault lines in the Middle East, no country was willing to see the breakup of Iraq.

"We were expecting some kind of reaction, but we had not calculated on military attack," Barzani tells NPR.

The Kurds and their Peshmerga fighters have been one of the strongest U.S. allies for two decades. US-backed Kurdish forces — often unpaid and under-equipped — played a crucial role in the multinational fight against ISIS.

Barzani sees the U.S. willingness to allow Iran-backed Iraqi forces to attack the Kurds as an inexplicable surrender to Iranian influence.

"We regard ourselves as friends of the people of the United States, as friends of the government of the United States but ... we have to revise our relationship with those who are responsible for this," he says. "I can say we are going to have a very strong revising of our relationship."

He says the Kurdish people see it as betrayal. "From 2003, the people of Kurdistan have received the American people with hearts and flowers," he says. "The love and hope and trust that people had in the United States has declined and is decreasing day by day."

Instead of relying on the United States, Barzani says, the Kurds could improve their relationship with Russia.

Barzani's nephew Nechirvan is the region's prime minister. He and deputy prime minister Qubad Talabani — another of the new generation of Kurdish political leaders — have been trying to persuade the Iraqi government to sit down to talks.

In much of the rest of the country, Iraqi Prime Minister Haider al-Abadi is riding a wave of popularity for regaining Kirkuk. He insists the Kurds have to renounce the referendum — declaring it null and void — before he'll sit down to negotiations to stop further Iraqi military movements.

Masoud Barzani says that's impossible. In a concession, the Kurdish government has said it would "freeze" the results of the referendum and put seeking independence on hold.

"Who can annul 3 million votes?" asks Barzani. "It's really very meaningless, this insistence. There is no way they can be annulled."

## Hezbollah Blames Saudi Arabia For Forcing The Lebanese Prime Minister to Resign

BEIRUT, Lebanon (BBC) — The leader of Lebanon-based Shia group Hezbollah has said that Saudi Arabia forced the Lebanese prime minister to resign.

Saad Hariri stepped down in a televised broadcast from Saudi Arabia on Saturday, denouncing Hezbollah and its Iranian backers, and saying he feared for his life.

But the chief of Hezbollah, Hassan Nasrallah, said it was a Saudi decision "imposed" on him.

Saudi officials have denied this.

"It was not his intention, not his wish and not his decision to quit," Sheikh Nasrallah said in a televised address.

He questioned whether Mr. Hariri would be able to return from Saudi Arabia, but also called for calm, amid fears that violence could erupt in Lebanon.

### 'No Death Plot'

Separately, despite Hariri saying he feared assassination, the Lebanese army says it has not discovered any assassination plots in the country.

In addition to the army, Major General Abbas Ibrahim, the head of Lebanon's General Security intelligence agency, has also said he has no information about any plots to kill politicians in Lebanon, Reuters news agency reports.

The Lebanese Internal Security Forces, meanwhile, have denied reports that they foiled a recent assassination attempt in Beirut, Lebanon's capital.

However Saudi Gulf Affairs Minister Thamer al-Sabhan has said Mr. Hariri's bodyguards had confirmed that there was an assassination plot against him.

He also denied in an interview with a Lebanese TV station that



Prime Minister Saad Hariri speaks in Saudi Arabia, announcing his shock resignation.

Saudi Arabia pushed Mr. Hariri to resign.

As he resigned on Saturday, Mr. Hariri blamed Iran for meddling in several countries, including Lebanon, and said he felt the climate was similar to that which "prevailed" before his father, former Prime Minister Rafik Hariri, was killed by a bomb in 2005.

The attack was widely blamed on Hezbollah, which wields considerable power in Lebanon but denies it was involved.

Iran has denounced Mr. Hariri's assertions, with an adviser to the Supreme Leader accusing the US and Saudi Arabia of being behind the move.

The ex-PM is close to Saudi Arabia, Iran's chief rival for regional influence.

Correspondents say Hariri's sudden departure has plunged Lebanon into a new political crisis and raised fears that it may be at the forefront of the regional rivalry between Shia-led power Iran and Sunni-dominated Saudi Arabia.

Hariri's father, Rafik al-Hariri, was assassinated in 2005.

Hariri became prime minister in December 2016, after previously holding the position between 2009 and 2011.

He has made several recent visits to Saudi Arabia. His announcement on Saturday came a day after a meeting in Beirut with Ali Akbar Velayati, an adviser to Iran's Supreme Leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei.

After taking office last year, Mr. Hariri promised a "new era for Lebanon" after two years of political deadlock.

The coalition government he led brought together almost all of the main political parties in Lebanon, including Hezbollah.

## Turkish Journalist Speaks on Armenian Genocide Recognition During Visit to Echmiadzin

ECHMIADZIN, Armenia (Armenpress) — Turkish journalist Serdar Koroglu highlighted the role of Turkish and Armenian civil societies in the peace building process between the two peoples, while talking with reporters in Echmiadzin. He was there to participate in an international conference on seeking ways to establish peace in the region.

He declared: "I think that civil societies have a great role here. You know that there are political and historical troubles between our countries, but the establishment of social peace is above all this." The Turkish journalist thinks that the day when the Turkish people will say, "Yes, the Genocide took place," is not still near because it is a long process. "Following the assassination of Hrant Dink, some awakening occurred. Many started to speak about those realities. Now many people know that the Genocide took place, but acknowledging it is a more complicated process. No one wants to know that his grandfather or grandmother was a murderer. No one wants to be the grandson of a murderer," the journalist said. According to him, coming to Armenia is as hard for Turks, including himself, as it is for Germans to go to Jerusalem.

Speaking on his vision concerning Armenian-Turkish relations, Koroglu highlighted the continuation of tete-a-tete dialogue. "Football diplomacy was a very good opportunity for normalizing Armenian-Turkish relations. I think such measures at the official level are of key importance, since issues cannot be solved with closed doors. We need new measures. We have to open our doors and speak to each other more. I see the solution in this way," he concluded.



# Community News

## Stopping Violence Against Women: From the Local to The Global

WATERTOWN – The New England Chapter of the Armenian International Women's Association (AIWA) announces a panel presentation on November 28 at 7 p.m. at the Watertown Free Public Library, 123 Main St.

The panel, "Stopping Violence Against Women: From the Local to the Global," will bring together perspectives relating to violence against women: in New England, nationwide, and in the Republic of Armenia. It will touch on issues relating to Title IX, women's health, and the importance of engaging men in ending violence against women. A question-and-answer and opportunity for discussion will follow the panel.

Panelists include: Judy Norgisian (moderator), Tsovinar Harutyunyan, Wendy Murphy and Craig Norberg-Bohm.

Norsigian is past executive director and co-founder of *Our Bodies Ourselves*. She was an author and editor for the various editions of *Our Bodies, Ourselves*, the organization's landmark book on women, health and sexuality. She has appeared on numerous national television and radio programs, including "NBC Nightly News," Al Jazeera, "The Today Show," "Good Morning America," "The Early Show," "Oprah," "Fox News" and *The Current*.

She now volunteers for various projects related to women's health and climate change.

Harutyunyan is a United National Population Fund (UNFPA) Armenia Program Analyst. Based in Armenia, Harutyunyan researches and speaks on issues relating to women's health and gender-based violence. Her work focuses on implementing the United Nations Sustainable Development Goal 5: Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls. Harutyunyan works with UNFPA partners to recommend public policy to overcome challenges and create opportunities for gender equality – with a particular interest in the areas of gender-based violence and prenatal sex selection.

Murphy, Adjunct professor of sexual violence law at New England Law Boston, and co-director of the Women's and Children's Advocacy Project. A former Visiting Scholar at Harvard Law School, Wendy prosecuted child abuse and sex crimes cases for many years. In 1992 she founded the first organization in the nation to provide pro bono legal services to crime victims. She writes and lectures widely on the constitutional and civil rights of women and children, and criminal justice policy. She is a contributing editor for Women's eNews and writes a regular column for *The Patriot Ledger*. Wendy has published numerous scholarly articles including the first law review article in the nation to explain the legal relationship between sexual assault on campus and Title IX. Wendy's impact litigation in the area of campus sexual assault, beginning in the 1990s, includes landmark victories against Harvard in 2002, and Harvard Law school and Princeton University in 2010, cases which led the way to widespread awareness and reforms.

Norberg-Bohm, consultant in private practice, recently retired from Jane Doe Inc. (the Massachusetts Coalition Against Sexual Assault and Domestic Violence, where he worked for 15 years. Craig is founder and past director of Jane Doe Inc.'s Massachusetts White Ribbon Day Campaign. Craig was one of the founders of RAVEN (Rape and Violence End Now) in St. Louis, Missouri, one of the earliest men's centers in the U.S. established to engage men to end men's violence against women. Craig is a founder and currently co-chairperson for the North American MenEngage Network, a chapter of The Global MenEngage Alliance. He is also currently president of Community Works, a fundraising federation made up of cooperating social justice organizations across the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

The program is sponsored by AIWA, New England Chapter, and the Watertown Free Public Library.



Very Rev. Fr. Pakrad Berjekian presenting a gift to Guest of Honor, Nina Hachigian, former ambassador to the Association of Southeast Asian Nations.

## Gala Raises \$100,000 for San Diego Church Campus

SAN DIEGO, Calif. – With a festive "Carnival in Venice" theme, the Fifth Bridge to the Future Gala Dinner and Dance was held on September 30, 2017 at the Sheraton Hotel and Marina Bay Tower in San Diego, California. More than 160 guests attended the event that raised \$100,000 for a new Armenian Church campus near Del Mar in the City of San Diego.

Daniel Cohen, Emmy-Award winning CBS 8 "This Morning" and CBS "News 8" co-anchor, served again as the celebrity master of ceremonies and auctioneer.

The gala was chaired by Suzanne Meader and organized over many months by the Gala and Trust Fund Committees of St. John Garabed Armenian Church, which is shepherded by the Very Rev. Pakrad Berjekian.

The evening began with a cocktail reception and Chefs' Appetizer Affair, featuring delicacies from six of San Diego's finest restaurants: Aladdin & Amardeen, Meze Greek Fusion, Havana 1920, Parc Bistro Brasserie, Pushkin and Solare. The Gala raffle winner was Vahe Guzel from San Diego.



Philanthropist Carol Vassiliadis receiving recognition from Very Rev. Pakrad Berjekian and Past Gala Chair Kathy Kassardjian

ner. The young artist performances, and entertainment during the cocktail hour, was provided by Sona Baghdasaryan.

Berjekian delivered an inspirational invocation and blessing. He also acknowledged donor and past honorary chair, Carol Vassiliadis, for her continuous support and generosity.

The guest of honor, Nina Hachigian, ambassador to the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) from 2014 to 2017, delivered the keynote speech. She reflected on her years of service, and on the years of dedicated work of the San Diego Armenian community that have led up to this special moment in its history – including the legacy of her late father, Dr. Jack Hachigian, who helped conceive of the Bridge to the Future project and campus, commissioning a series of large-scale stone cross sculptures (khatchkars) which will be featured at the new campus' Armenian Heritage Park.

During the dinner musical entertainment was provided by NRG Music Production Group. Dancers Thalia Hagopian and Aram Simavonyan performed the Italian "Tarantella" and other dances which they also choreographed. An exciting Raise the Paddle round and spectacular live auction galvanized the audience.

The approved property is located at 13860 El Camino Real in San Diego, just one-half mile from the ocean.

The proceeds from this event will support the construction phase of the Bridge to the Future campaign.

Harry Krikorian, chairman of the Trust Fund Committee, and Jim Sahagian, chairman of the Building Committee, shared special updates and progress with the gala audience.

## New Christian Education Center Dedicated at Sts. Vartanantz Armenian Church, Chelmsford

CHELMSFORD, Mass. – On Sunday, September 17, the west wing of the church complex of Sts. Vartanantz Armenian Church was dedicated as the Agnes Manoogian Christian Education Center. Through the generosity of her husband, William Hausrath, four classrooms were completely renovated and furnished with bright children's school furniture and instructional equipment to provide bright environment for the parish children to learn and experience their Armenian Christian Heritage. The late Agnes Manoogian Hausrath was an active member of the church, and taught Sunday School for many years.

The Very Rev. Simeon Odabashian, Vicar, officiated at the dedication ceremony and offered his congratulatory remarks. "It is so wonderful to visit the Sts. Vartanantz Church to share this most happy moment with the parishioners. I offer my blessings and best wishes for the success of your Sunday School program." Odabashian also offered the sermon during the Divine Liturgy prior to the dedication ceremony and congratulated Father Khachatur Kesablian, the church pastor, on the 12th anniversary of his ordination into holy priesthood of the Armenian Church.

Also present for both the Divine Liturgy and Dedication Service were the Rev. Matthew Cadwell, rector, and parishioners of the Emmanuel Episcopal Church, Wakefield as Hausrath was an active member of the parish. At a reception following the dedication hosted by the Sunday School, Cardwell reflected on the far reaching stewardship of the late Mr. Hausrath, "Bill's generosity had no limits as he actively sought many causes to support both for our church in Wakefield as well as to honor his wife's Armenian heritage." Remarks were also offered by Susan Manoian Clark of the Sunday School Board; Bruce Kayajanian, Parish Council Chairman; George Simonian, Memorials Committee; Mary-Lee DiZigio, niece of the late William and Agnes Hausrath; and Kesablian. "I want to thank our wonderful church family for their dedication to make this a most successful and memorable day for our parish. And I pray to God to grant repose the souls of Mr. and Mrs. William and Agnes Hausrath, our benefactors, whose thoughtfulness and generosity will be cherished for generations to come."



Dedication Service of the new Christian Education Center led by Father Khachatur Kesablian, pastor; Rev. Matthew Cadwell, Rector of the Emmanuel Church in Wakefield; and the Very Rev. Simeon Odabashian, Vicar.



The family of the benefactor, William Hausrath, and Father Khachatur unveil the plaque which memorializes the Christian Education Center in memory of Agnes Manoogian Hausrath, a former Sunday School teacher and member of the Sts. Vartanantz Women's Guild.





## COMMUNITY NEWS

# Administration Praises Armenia for Progress at Capitol Hill Independence Day Celebration

WASHINGTON — The Embassy of the Republic of Armenia, the Congressional Caucus on Armenian Issues, and the Congressional Wine Caucus, in partnership with the Armenian Assembly of America and Armenian National Committee of America, hosted a reception on Capitol Hill celebrating Armenia's 26th Independence Day and the Silver Jubilee of United States-Armenia diplomatic relations in October. The event was sponsored by the Armenian Assembly.

Special guests who attended the event are US State Department Bureau of European and Eurasian Affairs Deputy Assistant Secretary Bridget Brink, US Department of Commerce Deputy Assistant Secretary for Europe Dale Tasharski, Adjutant General of Kansas Major General Lee E. Tafanelli, US OSCE Minsk Group Co-Chair Ambassador Andrew Schofer,

Armenia, and from Armenia to the United States," Assembly Co-Chair Barsamian said.

Hovhannissian welcomed guests, and stated: "We are celebrating our thriving relationship with the United States, a reliable friend and partner that helped Armenia face formidable odds as our country 26 years ago embarked on a nation building mission and embraced the family of freedom loving nations." He continued: "We celebrate these milestones at the US Congress, in recognition of the leadership role that Congress and its Congressional Caucus on Armenian issues played in fostering and cementing the reestablished relations between our nations. In this jubilee year, we were fortunate to host a large Congressional delegation to Armenia to see the fruits of our cooperation."

Representatives Royce, Pallone, and Speier were joined by House Foreign Affairs Committee Ranking Member Eliot Engel (D-NY), Rep. Judy Chu (D-CA), Rep. David Cicilline (D-RI), Rep. Luis Correa (D-CA), Rep. Jim Costa (D-CA), Rep. Eliot Engel (D-NY), Rep. Anna Eshoo (D-CA), Rep. Tulsi Gabbard (D-HI), Rep. Raja Krishnamoorthi (D-IL), Rep. Sheila Jackson Lee (D-TX), Rep. Jim McGovern (D-MA), Rep. Linda Sanchez (D-CA), Rep. John Sarbanes (D-MD), Rep. Brad Schneider (D-IL), Rep. Brad Sherman (D-CA), and Rep. Dina Titus (D-NV).

State Department Deputy Assistant Secretary Brink, expressing her appreciation for the strong partnership between the US and Armenia, generously credited her longtime working relations with the leadership of the Armenian Assembly. "This year, Armenia celebrates 26 years of independence. In this time, it is quite remarkable how much progress has been made. We all remember all too well the difficult years immediately after independence. But in a relatively short period of time, Armenia has modernized its economy and has become a tech hub in the region, created a vibrant political system that allows space for civil society, and has built a strong, enduring partnership with the United States, of which I am deeply proud," she said.

Brink also thanked Armenia for its contributions to North Atlantic Treaty Organization



Guests enjoying a musical performance at Armenia's 26th Independence Day Celebration

former US Ambassador to Armenia John Evans (2004-2006), Armenian Ambassador to the US Grigor Hovhannissian, Artsakh Permanent Representative to the US Robert Avetisyan, Greek Ambassador to the US Haris Lalacos, Georgian Ambassador to the US David Bakradze, Kazakhstan Ambassador to the US Erzhan Kazykhanov, including other Ambassadors and diplomats, St. Mary Armenian Church Reverend Father Hovsep Karapetyan, and Armenian Missionary Association of America (AMAA) Executive Director Zaven Khanjian, as well as Armenian Assembly Co-Chairs Anthony Barsamian and Van Krikorian and Board Members Oscar Tatosian and Joyce Stein.

"As we celebrate diplomatic relations between the United States and Armenia, we are honored to have top diplomats who represent our country, both here in the United States to



Armenian Assembly Co-Chair Anthony Barsamian, Armenian Ambassador to the US Grigor Hovhannissian, US State Department Bureau of European and Eurasian Affairs Deputy Assistant Secretary Bridget Brink, and Armenian Assembly Co-Chair Van Krikorian



Armenian Assembly Executive Director Bryan Ardouny, Co-Chair Anthony Barsamian, Rep. Tulsi Gabbard (D-HI), Board Member Joyce Stein, Public Affairs Associate Danielle Saroyan, Co-Chair Van Krikorian, Board Member Oscar Tatosian, and Joe Stein

(NATO) operations in Afghanistan and Kosovo, as well as the nation's generosity for welcoming over 20,000 Syrian refugees. "These actions underscore the shared strategic interests between our two countries," she added.

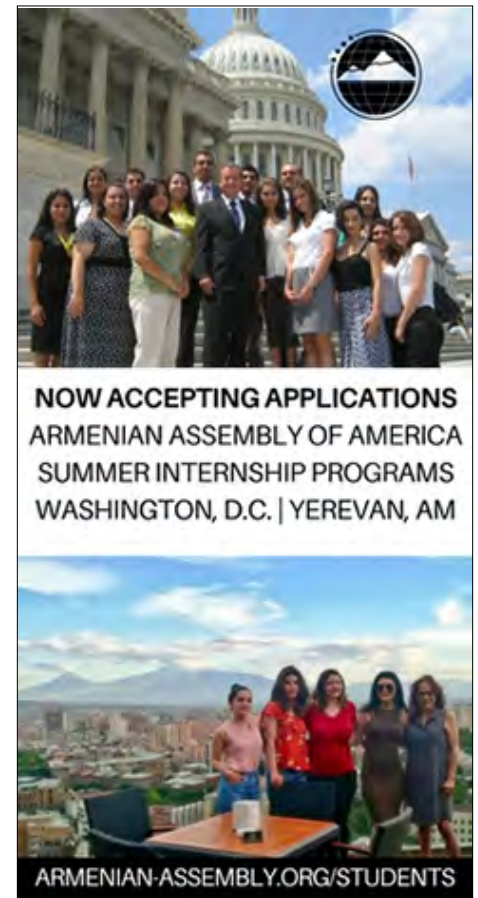
House Foreign Affairs Committee Chairman Ed Royce (R-CA) congratulated Armenia on this occasion, stating: "It is a pleasure to be here with you tonight to celebrate 26 years of Armenian independence. In 1991, the Armenian people courageously expressed their desire for independence from the Soviet Union in a referendum. The United States established full diplomatic with the newly sovereign state that same year, and since that time we have enjoyed good cooperation on a host of shared foreign policy, security, and human rights priorities in the region. As we celebrate the freedom that the Armenian people gained over two decades ago, let us also keep in mind those in Artsakh who continue in their struggle for independence."

"Keep up the support. Do not give up by any means, because you are being successful with your help, as well as what we do on the congressional level to make a difference in Armenia," Rep. Pallone told the guests. "On the day of independence, we were at the celebration with the [Armenian] President, and he talked about the IT sector, which grew over 30 percent in one year in Armenia. So, despite the boycott, despite the military buildup in Azerbaijan, [and] despite all the negative things that are happening around Armenia in an effort to try and isolate - they are thriving, they are improving their economy, they are improving their democracy, and that's just as true in Artsakh as well."

Speier echoed the positive message from their visit to Armenia. "The trip was magical and exhausting. We met with everyone, and I came back with all kinds of hope and optimism," she stated.

The event featured a photo exhibition announcing next summer's 2018 Smithsonian Folklife Festival, which will focus on the cultural heritage of Armenia. The 2018 Festival will feature hundreds of artisans, designers, musicians, and chefs from Armenia.

A capacity audience filled the House Rayburn Building Foyer and had ample opportunity to interact with their elected Representatives as well as enjoy musical performances. Guests also sampled Armenia's brandy and wine courtesy of the Armenian Embassy.



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## COMMUNITY NEWS

# Greater New York TCA Banquet to Be Celebrated in Grand Style

TCA, from page 1

Honorees will be grand benefactors of the banquet, and lifelong Tekeyan members and supporters Artemis and Nazar Nazarian, whose TCA ties have been nurtured by their families since childhood. Artemis who was born in Aleppo, Syria, and came with her family to Boston at the age of 2, learned to read and write Armenian in the Ramgavar (ADL) building. In a conversation, she related her pride in having five clergymen in her family, the most distinguished of whom was former Jerusalem Patriarch and Diocesan Primate Archbishop Tiran Nersoyan. Her uncle, Garabed Sulahian, was head of the ADL, she related.

Nazar Nazarian, born in Beirut also has had life-long ties and service with the ADL and its cultural arm, the Tekeyan Cultural Association. The Nazarians have been long time benefactors for dozens of causes, including the Tekeyan Cultural Association, ADL, the Armenian General Benevolent Union (AGBU), where Nazar served on the Board of Directors for many years, Armenian schools in California and Beirut, Camp Noubar, the Eastern Diocese, St. Vartan Armenian Cathedral, St. Nersess Armenian Seminary, Javakhk Armenians, Echmiadzin's Chancellery Building and Drtad Madour Chapel, Yerevan's Radiology Center, among many others.

The banquet's keynote speakers will be two Tekeyan and ADL leaders, Edmond Y. Azadian and Hagop Kassardjian.

A noted writer, and author of many books in Armenian and English, Azadian has been advisor from the diaspora to Armenia's Ministry of Culture, a member of Armenia's Academy of Sciences, and advisor to the Alex and Marie Manoogian Museum in Detroit.

Frequently published in newspapers and literary magazines, he has been associated with the *Armenian Mirror-Spectator* for the last 50 years. He has been editor-in-chief of the daily *Arev* newspaper in Cairo, Egypt, assistant editor of the daily *Zartonk*, as well as editor of more than 21 books, and publisher of 1500 articles, reviews and essays. One of his latest publications is dedicated to Vahan Tekeyan.

Hagop Kassardjian has been a decades-long Tekeyan, ADL and AGBU leader in the Middle East and Europe. He played an important role in restarting the *Zartonk* daily in Beirut, as well as its Arabic language supplement. He was elected to the Lebanese Parliament twice, and led the Lebanese-Armenian friendship coalition in Parliament. In 1992, he became a member of the Tekeyan's Founders Body, and its chairman in 2011.

The role of master of ceremonies will be in the capable hands of Jerry Misk, son of Tekeyan

Executive Committee member Helen (nee Khourshidian) Misk. He a New York trial lawyer who has been a member of AGBU Camp Noubar for 41 uninterrupted years, as a camper, counselor and committee chairman. He recently joined TCA "to help further enrich the Armenian youth with poetry, music, art and literature."

The Tekeyan Cultural Association was established in 1947 with the laudable goal of preserving Armenian culture and literature in the diaspora, as well as promoting cultural and educational ties with the Armenian homeland, irrespective of political and ideological differences.

It was named after one of Western Armenia's greatest and celebrated poets Vahan Tekeyan who survived the Armenian Genocide. His acclaimed works are learned and recited by countless Armenian schoolchildren and adults worldwide.

Today, the Tekeyan Cultural Association chapters are active in sixteen countries in North and South America, Europe, the Middle East and the Republic of Armenia.

Before the TCA's creation, there were several independent cultural associations, but Armenians were still trying to get on their feet following the Genocide. After economic and social conditions improved, the concern of the new generations turned to preserving their Armenian heritage and culture.

This tax-exempt and non-profit organization was formally established with the support of the Armenian Democratic Liberal Party (ADL) in 1947, and TCA chapters were founded in several countries.

In 1969, the Tekeyan Cultural Association was established in North America – the United States and Canada, with its headquarters in Watertown, Massachusetts. Today, in the US, TCA chapters are active in New York, Boston, Detroit, Glendale, Pasadena and Los Angeles, with groups also in Philadelphia, Chicago and Fresno. The Canadian chapters are in Montreal, Toronto and Vancouver.

The North American groups support several activities, including theatrical, newspapers, book publications, lectures, art exhibitions, conferences, radio shows, youth groups, and also have a number of building centers. In Armenia, the chapters support five schools through the Sponsor A Teacher program, and endorse a number of cultural awards.

The TCA Greater New York Committee includes Honorary Chairman Hagop Vartivarian, Chairperson Hilda Hartounian, Vice Chairperson Diana Mkhitarian, Secretary Taleen Babayan, Treasurer Barkev Kalayjian, and members Harout Chatmajian, Carmen Gulbenkian, Ani Hovanessian, Vartan Ilanjan, Helen Misk, Jerry Misk and Marie Zokian.

## Celebrated Director Krikor Satamian Honored with St. Sahag-St. Mesrob Medal

LOS ANGELES – On November 1, Karekin II, Catholicos of All Armenians, bestowed St. Sahag-St. Mesrob Medal of Honor and Holy Encyclical upon popular actor and director Krikor Satamian who was honored for his life-long dedication to the arts and contribution to Armenian theatre.

Surrounded by friends, family and colleagues at the Western Diocese of the Armenian Church, Satamian accepted the award, thanking Karekin II and the Diocese. "Receiving this medal of honor is an unparalleled moment for me. It has been a great journey and I feel lucky to have had this unique opportunity to do what I love," said Satamian. "I am proud to serve the Armenian people through Armenian theatre and cultural programs of AGBU."

Satamian's decades-long commitment to his craft has had a significant impact on the development of theater across the diaspora. In 1960, he first joined the famous AGBU Vahram Papazian Theatre Company in Beirut, Lebanon, as a young actor and later was appointed as its artistic director. In the following years, he became AGBU's national artistic director in New York and had since established several AGBU theater companies in Boston, Detroit, New York, Philadelphia, Los Angeles and Buenos Aires. Since 2013, Satamian is the artistic director of the AGBU Krikor Satamian Theatre Group in Los Angeles, previously known as the AGBU Ardavazt Theatre Company.

Satamian has directed over 87 plays, three operettas and has acted in over 70 plays, shows and films, including "24," "Subterfuge," "Mad TV" and "Suddenly Susan." He also worked with celebrities like Brooke Shields, Joey Travolta and John Cusack. He also taught drama at the American University of Beirut (AUB), his alma mater, and the AGBU Manoogian-Demirdjian School in Canoga Park for thirteen years.

The St. Sahag-St. Mesrob Medal is awarded for significant contribution to the arts, culture, education, literature and science.



His Holiness Karekin II, Catholicos of All Armenians, bestowed St. Sahag-St. Mesrob Medal of Honor and Holy Encyclical upon renowned actor and director Krikor Satamian.

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## COMMUNITY NEWS



From left, Hripsime Parsekian, Nicole Babikian Hajjar and Harry Parsekian



Kevork Marashlian



From left, Nicole Babikian Hajjar, Susan Demirchian and Piruz Bogossian

# Mirror-Spectator Gala Raises \$135,000

GALA, from page 1

Serving as mistress of ceremonies was Anaide Nahikian, who leads the Advanced Training Program on Humanitarian Action (ATHA) at the Harvard Humanitarian Initiative.

Nicole Babikian Hajjar, the chair of the 85th celebration committee, opened the program with a brief overview of the event. She was surprised by an award from Kevork Marashlian, the former Tekeyan Cultural Association executive director, for her tireless efforts in organizing the program.

Marashlian was also surprised, albeit reluctantly, by *Mirror-Spectator* editor Alin K. Gregorian, for his decades of help to various groups in the community. His daughter surprised him by arriving from Washington.

Members of the committee for the 85th anniversary aside from Babikian Hajjar included Zela Astarjian, Carolyn Atinizian Yardemian, Nigoghos



Atinizian, Pirouz Bogossian, Mary Goudsouzian, Stephen Kurkjian, Kevork Marashlian, Anahid Mardiros, Hrip Parsekian, Herman Purutyan, Peter Yapoudjian, Arlette Yegumians and Barbara Chrakian Tellalian, as well as *Mirror-Spectator* staff Gregorian, Aram Arkun, Marc Mgrditchian and Hasmik Saroyan. Serving as coordinator was Sara Janjigian Trifiro.

Present were Hagop Vartivarian, the chair of the ADL Press Committee, as well as Saro and Hilda Hartounian from New Jersey. Hilda Hartounian is the chair of the Greater New York Chapter of the Tekeyan Cultural Association.

The audience danced to the music of the Black Sea Salsa Band.

Extra photos and clips from the gala, as well as a full video of the symposium the previous night are expected to be available shortly at [www.mirror-spectator.com](http://www.mirror-spectator.com). All gala photographs here were taken by Jirair Hovsepian



From left, Marlene Fereshetian, Piruz Bogossian and Nicole Babikian Hajjar



Saro and Hilda Hartounian



From left, Dr. Shant Parseghian, Jean-Jacques Hajjar and Vache Astarjian



From left, Kevork MARashlian, and Dr. Mohammed and Maggie Saab



From left, Susan Demirchian, Ani Stepanian, Marlene Fereshetian and Roset Atinizian



Kevork Marashlian, third from right, with Hrip and Harry Parsekian, right, and members of his family, including his wife, sister, daughter, brother-in-law and nephew





## COMMUNITY NEWS



From left, Alex Yerevanian and his brother, Armen, Nicole Babikian Hajjar, Anaide Nahikian, Jean-Jacques Hajjar and Florence and Yervant Nahikian



From left, Sergey Arutyunov, Alin K. Gregorian, Tsoleen Sarian and Robert Avakian



From left, Nicole Babikian Hajjar, Kevork Marashlian and Harry Parsekian



Harry Parsekian dances with Zela Astarjian



Jack and Dorothy Keverian



Nancy Kalajian



The Black Sea Salsa Band



From left, Alis Marashlian, Rosalyn Minassian, Hilda Hartounian, and Vartiter Marashlian



From left, Joseph Dagdigian with Jack and Eva Medzorian



Houry Boyamian with Edmond Azadian and her husband, Avedis Boyamian



From left, David Barsamian, Ruth Thomasian and Jason Sohigian



Kevork Marashlian with Nigoghos and Roset Atinizian



MC for the evening Anaide Nahikian





COMMUNITY NEWS



From left, Peter Koutoujian, Tsoleen Sarian and Hayk Demoyan



Armenian Mirror-Spectator Gala committee



From left, Philip Terzian, with Robert and Carine Avakian



From left, Tsoleen Sarian, Hayk Demoyan, Barbara Merguerian



Anthony Barsamian, left, with Robert Fisk



George and Zepour Kouyoumjian



From left, Nicole Babikian Hajjar, Rita Gouloupoulos, Rouzan Abrahamian, Veronica Sagherian, Houry Boyamian, Marlene Fereshtetian, Alin K. Gregorian and Rosalyn Minassian



Lily Kocharians, left, and Ani Hovsepien, with Torgom Kocharians in the foreground



From left, Mihran and Rosalyn Minassian with Hilda and Saro Hartounian



Kevork Atinizian, left, with Adrienne Alexanian and Paul T. Boghosian, at right, with other guests





## COMMUNITY NEWS



# Journalists Discuss Armenian Genocide and World Events at *Mirror-Spectator* Symposium

SYMPOSIUM, from page 1

*Armenian Mirror-Spectator* assistant editor, Aram Arkun, also the executive director of the Tekeyan Cultural Association, served as moderator.

The theme of the evening was “Journalism and ‘Fake News,’” especially concerning the Armenian Genocide.

A standing-room capacity crowd of about 150 people was present for the program.

Fisk, the Middle East correspondent for *The Independent*, and a seven-time recipient of the British Press Awards’ Reporter of the Year, spoke at length about his experience documenting many atrocities, including the Armenian Genocide.



Aram Arkun speaks with Robert Fisk seated at left.

He spoke about going to the Deir Zor desert in Syria in 1991, where bones, “skeletons of your ancestors,” as he called them, could be readily found packed in caves or poking out of the sand.

“We took some of the bones out of a hole and put them in the Deir Zor Memorial,” he said. “The bones are real. Your Armenian [ancestors’] dead bodies [speak] from the ground.”

The Deir Zor monument, which had been opened in 1990, was blown up by ISIS, on September 21, 2014.

Fisk said the connection between the events that have befallen Armenians in Syria and ISIS should be explored. He spoke at length about the various Christian members of the clergy who have been killed, the number of churches that have been blown up and the Armenians who have been taken hostage and killed by ISIS.

Going back further in history, Fisk proceeded to use sources from Britain, Australia and New Zealand to contradict what the Turkish government has presented in its denial of the Armenian Genocide.

He recounted the story of John Davidson, a First World War veteran of the Australian Light Horse, had witnessed the



from left, Robert Fisk, Amberin Zaman, Philip Terzian, Aram Arkun and David Barsamian

Armenian genocide and written about it. His grandson, Robert Davidson, had contacted Fisk.

Fisk had written in a column about Davidson’s account: “The Australian Light Horsemen were appalled at the brutality done to these people. In another instance his company came upon an Armenian woman and two children in skeletal condition. She signed to them that the Turks had cut the throats of her husband and two elder children.”

He then spoke about the account of a Persian writer, Mohammad-Ali Jamalzadeh Esfahani who had lived in Lebanon. He had gone to Istanbul, then Constantinople, in 1915, where he witnessed the Armenian Genocide and encountered many corpses during his journey. He wrote about what he had seen in books that were eventually published in 1963 and 1972.

Fisk also quoted Hanna Arendt in her comments about the Armenian Genocide.

The group of witnesses is diverse, he said; “Persian, British, Australian, New Zealander and Jewish woman are all lying about the Armenian Genocide,” he asked incredulously.

He spoke at length about what Armenians should mark after the Genocide centennial.

“I asked [Armenians] what are you going to do at the 101st

anniversary? You haven’t yet won recognition,” he said. “The British Foreign Office says ‘Denial is an option.’”

In order to battle the post-centennial slump, he suggested that Armenians mark other anniversaries connected with the Genocide. One of them, he said, is the centennial in 2018 of



Aram Arkun and Robert Fisk with the audience

the death of Captain Robert Nichol, a New Zealander, who was killed as he fought to save the Armenians’ lives that their army had found in the Syrian desert.





COMMUNITY NEWS

A 2016 Fisk column details how in that battle, “Australian cavalymen emptied their supplies and water bottles for the Armenians.”

“Descendants of that brave captain who died trying to save your people,” should be celebrated, he suggested.

Fisk added that the Armenian Genocide Museum and Memorial has a rich trove of photos that have not been seen by many. According to him, the Red Army looted German archives after World War II and took many boxes of photos, among which were those from the Armenian Genocide, to Russia.

“Keep the Genocide alive. Keep going and don’t stop your campaign,” he urged, noting that the Armenians should more



Philip Terzian, left, with Donald Tellalian

loudly celebrate their Turkish allies.

He suggested Armenians submit a list of Turks whom they want to honor to the government of President Erdogan. “If he signs it, he is acknowledging the Genocide, and if he doesn’t sign it, he is acknowledging the Genocide.”

The next speaker was Amberin Zaman, a veteran journalist who is currently a columnist for the online portals Diken and Al Monitor. She was previously a correspondent for *The Economist*, the *Los Angeles Times* and the *Washington Post*,

among others. Zaman, who is half Turkish and half Bengali, has often written about the Armenian Genocide and the need for its recognition.

Zaman caught the audience off guard by greeting them in Armenian, saying hello and that she was very happy to be at the gathering.

“I find myself speechless when I am faced with Armenians,” she said. “I feel deep shame as a Turk. It is very personal to me.”

She then proceeded to tell the story of her great-grandfather, Mehmet Emin Kalmuk, who sent by the Sultan to study in Paris before returning home. “There were always stories about what a great patriot my great-grandfather was because he had burned all those documents,” she said to the shocked audience.

He had been the director of the postal and telegraph authority during the final days of the Ottoman Empire. When the British anchored their ships off the coast of Istanbul, he started burning the telegrams.

Later, she said, she realized what that meant and delved into the history. She went to Deir Zor with Khachig Mouradian, formerly the editor of the *Armenian Weekly*, and journalist David Barsamian, another guest at the panel.

The bones she found there haunted her, she said. “We [the Turks] are the ones suffering paying the price, because we still haven’t faced the truth,” she said.

As for other fake news, she spoke about the current domestic situation in Turkey and their fight against Kurds, both in



Amberin Zaman

Turkey and in Syria, who are the top opponents of ISIS.

“Turkey has kept saying that people fighting ISIS are worse than ISIS,” she said.

She said she respects the Kurds for their “courage and sacrifice,” noting that the creation of the PKK (Kurdish Workers’ Party) was the result of oppressive Turkish policies.

When she sent a Tweet in support of Kurds, she said she was “bombarded with hateful tweets.” She is often said, as an insult, to be “Kurdish, Jewish, Armenian,” she said.

It is impossible for her to return to Turkey, where she still has a family. “The justice system hardly deserves to be called



The audience at the Wellesley-based symposium



Nicole Babikian Hajjar and Jean-Jacques Hajjar



Aram Arkun with Edmond Y. Azadian



Judith Saryan with David Barsamian



David Barsamian



Amberin Zaman with Marc Mamigonian





## COMMUNITY NEWS

that.” She addressed the recent arrest of Osman Kavala, someone who has often encouraged the recognition of the Armenian Genocide in Turkey, but also is well-connected and wealthy. Again, the alleged crime is his involvement with Fethullah Gulen, the Turkish cleric now in exile in the US.

“The story is completely insane. Turkey is the empire of fake news. Everything is the fault of outsiders,” she said.

Veteran journalist Philip Terzian, the senior editor at the *Weekly Standard*, who has been a finalist for the Pulitzer Prize, offered brief and witty remarks.

Terzian chuckled at the “fake news” moniker. “Fake news is as old as antiquity,” he said. “Conjecture, folklore, mythology, world history,” all of them contain fake news.

During the past century, he said, the government of Turkey has peddled fake news, but he said, “we all have an Armenian story.” His is that his family on his father’s side was from Sepastia. He came to Philadelphia in 1907 by way of Marseille. His great-grandmother, however, was sent back to the Ottoman Empire from Ellis Island as she had contracted an eye infection on the trip over. “She was never heard from again,” he said somberly.

The Genocide, he said began long before 1915. It began with the initial deportation of the Armenians, Greeks and Bulgarians out of the Ottoman Empire. He recounted how many American leaders, including Henry Cabot Lodge and President Woodrow Wilson, were so sympathetic to the plight of the Armenians. He also praised the remarkable amount of money raised by people in the US to help the Armenians.

David Barsamian, the founder and director of the Colorado-based national program Alternative Radio, spoke from the heart regarding the family history of the Armenian Genocide.

“I grew up in the shadow of the Genocide. These were incredible characters that went through this experience,” he said.

He also spoke about his trips to Turkey and to Western Armenia, where he had met many Kurdish people, including a mayor “who apologized to me for what his grandparents and



Philip Terzian

the target of a sustained military attack, and forced to leave for Bangladesh. So far, around 600,000 have been uprooted by the actions of a government led by “the darling of the West,” Prime Minister and Nobel Prize winner Aung San Suu Kyi.

“We need to speak up,” he said, about this “genocide.”

The frequent critic of mainstream media criticized the state of journalism in the US and deferred to another Armenian-American, Ben Bagdikian, the dean of the Graduate School of Journalism at the University of California, Berkeley, who had derided “the media monopoly” in the US. The number of entities that own major news outlets, Barsamian said, had diminished continuously even more than when Bagdikian had criticized the number, to the point now when about four or five corporations “control most of what Americans see and feel.”

Barsamian also spoke about other causes dear to him, including the plight of the Palestinians in the century since the Treaty of Balfour was signed, and the current state of siege on journalism globally.

“Our profession is under attack. A journalist was almost beaten to death in Islamabad,” he said. Another, a 27-year-old, was just shot to death in India, while a third was just recently killed in a car

bomb in Malta. The last case, that of Daphne Caruana Galizia, has connections to Armenians and Artsakh as one of the stars of the corruption stories she was working on based on the Panama Papers was the Aliyev family of Azerbaijan.

He then spoke about the verbal attacks on Iran by the Trump administration, which seems to imply that the nuclear

accord is not working despite evidence to the contrary by the International Atomic Energy Agency, as well as Saudi Arabia, where Trump did a “sword mambo,” despite that country reportedly being behind “the jihadi movement” globally.

A brief question-and-answer period followed during which Fisk suggested that the problem with much of current journalism is its reliance on the Internet, instead of on-the-ground reporting.

Terzian, usually of a different stripe than Fisk politically, agreed that historical background was lacking in much of today’s reporting. That particularly applied to the question of Karabakh, as many journalists are unfamiliar with the history of the region in which Soviet dictator Stalin just amputated the region from Armenia and gave it to Armenia.

*Symposium photos were taken by Sara Janjigian Trifiro*



From left, Aram Arkun, Jean-Jacques Hajjar, Missak Kelechian and Nicole Babikian Hajjar

great-grandparents did to my mother’s village. He said ‘every time I meet an Armenian, I feel shame.’”

The experience shook him and he urged Armenians to celebrate their allies, be they Kurds or Turks.

He also addressed the need for worldwide empathy for the situation of the Rohingyas, Muslim people living in Myanmar, who have been



Documentary filmmaker Yung Chang from Canada



Robert Fisk with Aram Arkun



Marc Mamigonian with Amberin Zaman and Aram Arkun



Several college students helped out with both programs.



From left, Houry Boyamian, Robert Fisk, Aram Arkun and Alin K. Gregorian



From left, Jean-Jacques Hajjar, David Barsamian, Judith Saryan and Houry Yousoufian



The Astarjian family with Robert Fisk, center, and Anita and Missak Kelechian





## COMMUNITY NEWS

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# Arts & Living

## Author Chris Edwards to Speak about Family Role in His Transition

WATERTOWN — Author Chris Edwards (Eskandarian) will speak at the Armenian Museum of America, on Thursday, November 16, at 7 p.m.

He will discuss changing gender and the powerful role family played in his transition. The program will be in honor of Transgender Awareness Month.

A question-and-answer period and a reception will follow the presentation.

Boston advertising creative director Chris Edwards, son of Ed and Nancy Eskandarian, will discuss life before, during and after his gender transition in heartfelt and hilarious detail. He describes the fear and relief of coming out to his parents and sisters as well as his extended family of Armenians or “Armos” as he likes to call them, and explains



Chris Edwards (Eskandarian)

the powerful role their support played in his success both at home and at work. His memoir, *BALLS: It Takes Some to Get Some*, is an Amazon best-seller, Foreword Reviews Indies gold-winner and rated one of the best books of the year by Shelf Awareness.

Edwards made his advertising debut in 1993 as a copywriter at Arnold Worldwide, a high-profile ad agency in Boston. There he used the principles of branding and marketing, along with his ever-present sense of humor, to orchestrate what was quite possibly the most widely accepted and embraced gender transition of its kind — at a time when the word “transgender” didn’t exist.

After building an award-winning career spanning nearly 20 years, he left his Arnold post as executive vice president, Group Creative Director to write his memoir. Since then he has become a sought-after speaker, keynoting at conferences and inspiring audiences at places like Apple, Google and Harvard with his courageous story and compelling message that we all have the power to control how others define us.

For more information visit [www.armenianmuseum.org](http://www.armenianmuseum.org).



The cast of “The Monk” at the end of the opera

## ‘The Monk’ Opera Performed in New York

NEW YORK — Brooklyn’s Master Theater was transformed into the shores of Lake Sevan during the world debut of Barsegh Kanachian’s opera “The Monk,” on Friday, October 13, as part of the First Time Around the World Stage series.

The tragic opera, which for the first time featured the talents of the Astghikner Vocal Ensemble and the Shushi Dance Ensemble, was performed under the skilled direction of Gosh Sargsyan and Maria Sahakyan, along with musical director Knarik Vardanyan and choreographer Seta Kantardjian.

Organized under the auspices of the Diocese of the Armenian Church of America (Eastern) with Archbishop Khajag Barsamian presiding and hosted by the Sahakyan brothers, the youthful voices of the performers filled the grand stage as the aesthetic beauty of the Shushi Dance Ensemble accentuated the beautiful love story of Seda, the prince’s daughter, who becomes the object of a young monk’s affection on Armenia’s Lake Sevan.

Hailing from Armenia, Sargsyan discovered this musical masterpiece piece after 80 years of silence.

“The stunning love story is a battle between faith and love and was lost in the dirty archives of Armenia,” said Sargsyan, who has decades of experience working with child actors in Armenia at the Abovyan Armenian State Pedagogical University. “While the monk saves Seda from drowning in the ocean, he loses the peace of his body and soul.”

In the audience was special guest Seda Kanachian, the 90-year-old daughter of the composer, who had traveled from Boston to witness the American premiere of “The Monk” that her father had originally staged almost a century ago at the Grand Theater in Beirut, Lebanon. Kanachian wrote the libretto based on the drama “Ancient Gods” by Levon Shant and staged the world premiere in 1939, dedicating it to his wife Christine, who played the part of Seda.

“Today is the happiest day of my life,” said Kanachian. “I was 12 years old the first time my father performed this opera and today, after 78 years, I am still enjoying this dream.”

Though staging a successful rebirth of “The Monk” was rewarding for the cast, crew and audience, it came with months of hard work.

“We had many difficulties and obstacles, but thanks to our creative team, faith and devotion to our work, we were able to overcome these challenges and present this opera to music lovers,” said Sahakyan, founder of Astghikner Vocal Ensemble, which includes children of all ethnic backgrounds and was established at the St. Gregory Mission Parish of Brooklyn in 2015.

One of the challenges, according to Sahakyan, who studied vocals and piano at the Komitas State Conservatory of Yerevan, was working with a younger generation of students, ages 4 to 16, who did not have formal musical training and who were performing on stage for the very first time.

Sargsyan flew in from Armenia to direct the group of actors prior to the show, spending four to six hours a day at rehearsal with the cast.

What motivates both Sahakyan and Sargsyan is their mission to preserve the Armenian treasures of music, which they are able to convey through the creation of The First Time Around The World Stage Program, a series that will continue to stage Armenian-American cultural projects, while welcoming children of all ages and backgrounds.

“Our ensemble is a nation-friendly ensemble that accepts everyone and the children’s voices spread the beauty of our culture,” said Sahakyan, noting that her

see MONK on page 16

## New Names Of Armenia Perform For Washington Community

BETHESDA, Md. — New Names of Armenia, a group of talented young musicians, performed on Sunday, October 29, to a capacity crowd at Landon School Auditorium here. The event was organized by Armenian Community Event Planners (ACEP).

Among the attendees were Robert Avetisyan, the permanent representative of Karabakh (Artsakh) to the US, dignitaries from the Embassy of Republic of Armenia, Rev. Hovsep Karapetyan of St. Mary’s Armenian Apostolic Church, as well as Armenian community leaders from Washington and Baltimore. Rev. Sarkis Aktavookian of Soorp Khatch Armenian Apostolic Church was in New York attending the 50th Anniversary Ordination of Archbishop Oshagan Choloyan, Prelate of the Prelacy of the Armenian Church of America (Eastern).

Members of New Names of Armenia who travelled to the US were Tatul Hambardzumyan (duduk), Meri Musinyan (kanon), Kristine Yengoyan (kanon), Tigran Mardanyan (piano), Artur Krishchian (violin), Pavel Mnatsakanov (piano), Aram Krishchyan (violin), Arsen Zakaryan (clarinet) and Narek Baldryan (singer).

Their repertoire, under the musical directorship of Nona Voskanyan, was a mix of classical and Armenian folk music, showcasing their talent as Armenia’s cultural representatives. The audience’s delight was shown in many standing ovations but if there was a moment of awe, it would have to be the two young kanon players. Every hand stroke was precisely synchronized; every rhythm was in unison.

New Names of Armenia was created in 1989 by Silva Mekinyan whose presence at the concert was acknowledged. Mekinyan called the young artists “the future of Armenia.” The young musicians range in age from 10 to 24 and are enrolled in Armenia’s prestigious music institutions and have graced the stages of national and international competitions.

During the group’s weeklong stay, the young artists performed at a Congressional reception dedicated to the 25th anniversary of diplomatic relations between the US and Armenia, the Armenian Embassy and for the staff of the World Bank. They stayed at the residences of Dr. Teny Abrahamian, President of ACEP and Shakeh Issayans, and were guests of Homenetmen at their annual Halloween party at Soorp Khatch Armenian Apostolic Church.

ACEP was established in the aftermath of the Centennial Commemoration of the Armenian Genocide held in Washington in May 2015, is composed of members of St. Mary’s and Soorp Khatch Churches, working for unity of the Greater Washington community. To date, the group has hosted concerts with Armenian Public Radio and Miqael Voskanyan Jazz Ensemble and organized 2016 and 2017 New Year’s Eve banquets.

ACEP will be organizing its next event, New Year’s Eve 2018 featuring singer Armen Aloyan from Los Angeles. For reservations call Garbo Afarian or Onnik Sivaslian.





## ARTS &amp; LIVING

## Kevork Mourad Exhibition Ongoing at Brandeis University

WALTHAM, Mass. — An exhibition of new works by Kevork Mourad (b. Syria 1970), an artist known for paintings made in collaboration with composers, dancers and musicians, will feature work created in response to the war in Syria and the destruction of the artist's beloved city of Aleppo.

Of Armenian descent, Mourad understands the necessity of remembering and the defiant role of creativity in the face of tragedy, mediating the experience of trauma through detailed yet abstracted imagery that both celebrates identity and mourns its loss. His work asks viewers to stop and uncover the fragments of a culture destroyed: textiles, ancient walls, Arabic calligraphy, and bodies crushed by conflict. Working almost solely in black paint as a way to hone in on the subject, his paintings are both theatrical and lyrical, the line reflecting the music that is such an integral part of his practice.

An 18th-century etching from the Rose's permanent collection by Italian artist Giovanni Battista Piranesi will accompany Mourad's work, demonstrating a centuries-old artistic fascination with the city in ruins.

A series of public programs in November, including a multi-day workshop titled "Culture Cannot Wait," will bring a range of experts working to preserve cultural heritage in times of crisis to the Waltham campus, presented in collaboration with the International Centre for the Study of the Preservation and Restoration of Cultural Property, Rome, and Brandeis's Heller School for Public Policy.

Organized by Kristin Parker, Deputy Director, the exhibition and accompanying programs are funded by a grant from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation.

The exhibit will continue until January 21, 2018, at the Mildred S. Lee Gallery.



"The Immortal City" by Kevork Mourad

## Applications for AGBU Summer Internship Program Now Open

NEW YORK — Every year, the Armenian General Benevolent Union (AGBU) empowers young people from the diaspora and Armenia through its professional development programs, including the flagship AGBU Summer Internship Program. Interested applicants are welcome to apply to the Summer Internship Program 2018 by December 1.

The AGBU Summer Internship Program prepares young people for the future and helps them get closer to their roots and peers through enriching cultural, educational and social activities. Throughout the years, carefully selected placements that match interns' background and career goals have ensured the success and sustainability of the program. In addition, the network of host organizations and companies continues to grow, including new industries.

Last summer, the AGBU Summer Internship Program offered placements to 76 young adults from 13 countries. Interns gained valuable hands-on experience in leading organizations and companies in New York, Yerevan, Paris, London and Buenos Aires. In 2017, the New York Summer Internship Program (NYSIP) and the Yerevan Summer Internship Program (YSIP) reached a significant milestone, celebrating their 30th and 10th anniversaries respectively.

NYSIP's 25 participants interned in major host organizations and institutions, including AXA Advisors, Children's Museum of the Arts New York, Fitch Ratings, Michael Aram Studios, NewsDeeply and the Permanent Mission of Armenia to the United Nations. YSIP's 28 interns gained experience in several leading companies, including Arabkir Medical Center, Deem Communications, Europe in Law, Grant Thornton Armenia, Izmirlian Medical Center, Microsoft Armenia, National Instruments and Synopsys Armenia.

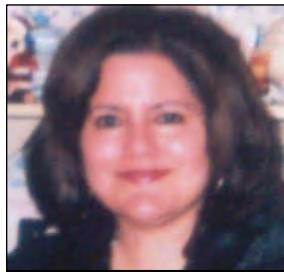
For George Tarabelsi, a student at the University of Massachusetts, YSIP was a special opportunity. "This internship has been educational and has exposed me to various types of operations. As an aspiring physician, shadowing doctors in different departments has allowed me to gain a better understanding of what specifically I would like to pursue in medicine,"

said George.

Houshig Kaymakamian, of Lebanon, saw diplomacy in action while interning at Armenia's Permanent Mission to the UN and the Lebanese Consulate in New York. "International Affairs wasn't just a concept or theory in a textbook, it was real work that adds real value in the world," said Kaymakamian. "At various UN meetings, I witnessed diplomats negotiating with skill and grace and I realized that one day I want to be in their shoes."

Interns had full exposure to life and culture in the United States and Armenia through the wide array of activities, ranging from workshops, classes, sightseeing and visits to Artsakh and Gyumri to meetings with high-ranking officials, clergy and community leaders, including His Holiness Karekin II, Catholicos of all Armenians; His Eminence Archbishop Khajag Barsamian, Primate of the Eastern Diocese of the Armenian Church in America; Armenia's Permanent Representative to the UN; Artsakh's minister of foreign affairs and others.

In its first year, Buenos Aires Summer Internship Program (BASIP) hosted five participants from China, Estonia and the United States. For four weeks, the BASIP participants interned in Merval (Mercado de Valores de Buenos Aires), E-Planing, Bolivia y Divina, Cámara Argentina de Comercio e Industria,



## Recipe Corner

by Christine Vartanian

### Baked Eggplant and Tomatoes

#### INGREDIENTS

2 eggplants, cut into 1/2-inch slices  
2 medium white onions, sliced thinly  
1 large baking potato, peeled and diced or sliced  
4 large cloves garlic, chopped or minced  
2 tablespoons fresh lemon juice  
1/2 teaspoon each dried oregano, garlic powder, and basil  
1 (28 oz.) can crushed tomatoes  
1 cup low-sodium tomato sauce  
Olive oil  
Sea or Kosher salt, black pepper, paprika, Aleppo pepper  
Chopped fresh parsley, green onions and mint  
Fresh lemon wedges

#### Yogurt Garnish

2 cups plain white yogurt  
2-3 cloves garlic, minced (or more or less to taste)

#### PREPARATION:

Prepare the yogurt garnish by combining the yogurt and minced garlic in a medium bowl, cover, and chill before serving. Lightly sprinkle both sides of eggplant slices with salt and pepper. Sauté eggplant in olive oil until both sides are browned. Remove eggplant and drain on paper towels.

In the same pan, sauté the onions, potatoes and garlic in olive oil until onions are lightly browned. Season with lemon juice, salt, pepper, oregano, garlic powder, and basil to taste.

To assemble, layer the eggplant, onions, potatoes and garlic in a prepared casserole dish and pour the crushed tomatoes and tomato sauce evenly over the dish. Sprinkle with paprika or Aleppo pepper.

Place the casserole on a cookie sheet and bake in a 375-degree oven for about 35-45 minutes or until the tomatoes are bubbly. Remove casserole from oven and let set for 10 minutes.

Garnish with chopped parsley, green onions, mint and fresh lemon wedges. Serve with warm Italian or Armenian bread, rice, lentil, or bulgur pilaf, and a tossed Armenian salad. Serve with Yogurt Garnish.

\*Eggplant, onions and potatoes may also be grilled for this recipe then assembled and baked with the tomatoes, if desired.

Serves 4-6.

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

Fundación Luisa Hairabedian and Estudio Singerman & Makon.

Interns were introduced to Argentinean business environment and gained first-hand experience. "The professionals we spent time with were very helpful and knowledgeable. I really learned a lot from these individuals. They really showed interest in us," said Simon Nahigian, a student at the University of Southern California.

Interns in London and Paris took full advantage of the placements in several major European organizations, including Backes & Strauss, Newscape Capital Group, StoneHedge Partners, Wigmore medical, OTS Solicitors, Amber Capital, Kafard Films, Southside Interactive and Daniel Rosange et Associés.

Kristina Ayanian, of Boston, made new friends in London, connecting with them on a deeper level. "I have never felt so close to a group of people in such a short period of time. I will always treasure the bond our group had

and I am looking forward to a reunion soon," she said. "Working for Newscape Capital Group was one of the best experiences for my professional career. I was able to gain experience in a side of finance I was not familiar with. I finally figured out what I want to do with my career."

Carl Kilajian, a third-year student at the University of Montreal, learned a lot about finance and accounting during his internship. "Professional experience within Daniel Rosange & Associates, a Parisian accounting firm, is very valuable because I have been supervised and trained by energetic specialists of the field for the total duration of the program," said Carl.

Interns in both countries attended much-expected talks, lectures and visited iconic landmarks, including the Louvre, Musée d'Orsay and the Palace of Versailles and trips to Oxford, Manchester and Brighton.

For more information about the AGBU Internship Program and applications, visit <https://agbu.org/program/internships/>

## 'The Monk' Opera Performed in New York City

MONK From Page 15

father had originally staged almost a century ago at the Grand Theater in Beirut, Lebanon. Kanachian wrote the libretto based on the drama Ancient Gods by Levon Shant and staged the world premiere in 1939, dedicating it to his wife Christine, who played the part of Seda.

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## ARTS &amp; LIVING

## C A L E N D A R

## CALIFORNIA

**NOVEMBER 14 — Tuesday, *Forced into Genocide, Memoirs of an Armenian Soldier in the Ottoman Turkish Army*** by Yervant Alexanian, presented by his daughter, Adrienne G. Alexanian. She has spent years preparing her father's manuscript for publication. She is an educator and recipient of the Ellis Island Medal of Honor. Introduction by Sergio La Porta, Foreword by Israel W. Charny. Presented by the Armenian Studies Program, Fresno State, AGBU Greater Fresno Area and the National Association for Armenian Studies and Research. Books will be available for purchase. Book signing during reception. 7.30 p.m., Fresno State University Business Center, Room 191, 5245 N. Backer Ave., Fresno.

**NOVEMBER 15 — A presentation of *Forced into Genocide, Memoirs of an Armenian Soldier in the Ottoman Turkish Army*** by Yervant Alexanian, presented by his daughter, Adrienne G. Alexanian. She has spent years preparing her father's manuscript for publication. She is an educator and recipient of the Ellis Island Medal of Honor. Introduction by Sergio La Porta, Foreword by Israel W. Charny. Wednesday, St. Leon Armenian Cathedral, 3325 North Glenoaks Blvd, Burbank. Presented by the Ladies Auxiliary of the Western Diocese.

AGBU, Armenian International Women's Association, Ararat-Eskijian Museum, National Association for Armenian Studies and Research, Knights of Vartan. Book signing during reception. 7.30 p.m. RSVP (310)277-4490.

**NOVEMBER 16 — Thursday, Abril Bookstore and the Armenian Assembly of America present Adrienne G. Alexanian's presentation of her father's memoir, *Forced into Genocide: Memoirs of an Armenian Soldier in the Ottoman Turkish Army*.** 7:30 p.m. Introduced by Mihran Toumajan. 415 E. Broadway, Suite 102, Glendale.

**NOVEMBER 18 — Join the Armenian EyeCare Project for its 25th Anniversary Gala** at 6:30pm at the Balboa Bay Club in Newport Beach. The organization will honor Founder Dr. Roger Ohanesian for 25 years of dedicated service to Armenia in the field of eye care. The fun-filled evening includes an authentic Armenian dinner, roving entertainers, a silent & live auction, Tom Bozigan & his band and Artur's Armenian Dance Troupe. To RSVP or for more information, call 949-933-4069, email [leslie@eyecare-project.com](mailto:leslie@eyecare-project.com) or visit [eyecareproject.com/25th-anniversary-gala/](http://eyecareproject.com/25th-anniversary-gala/)

## MASSACHUSETTS

**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 (SNDC). 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 13 — Trinity Men's Union Dinner and Meeting — Honoring All Veterans with Guest Speaker** Charles S. Sahagian, WW II Armenian-American veteran who was recently awarded France's Highest Military Honor, Monday, 6 p.m., Social Hour, 7 p.m., Dinner; Charles and Nevart Talanian Cultural Hall, Holy Trinity Armenian Church of Greater Boston, 145 Brattle St., Cambridge. Sahagian will talk about his experience in WW II, before, during and after the war. All are welcome! Open to the public. Donation for the losh kebab and kheyra dinner is \$15 per person. RSVP requested by November 12 to the TMU at [tmuhtaac@gmail.com](mailto:tmuhtaac@gmail.com) or call Dave Dorian, 617.501.4300.

**NOVEMBER 16 — Armenian Museum of America, Book Series: author Chris Edwards (Eskandarian): *Changing Gender*** and the powerful role family played in his transition. Q & A and book signing & reception following the presentation. 7 p.m., 65 Main St., Watertown, MA (3rd floor, Adel & Haig Der Manueelian Galleries).

**NOVEMBER 17 and 18 — Saints Vartanantz Armenian Church, Annual Food Festival and Fair**, 180 Old Westford Rd., Chelmsford. Phone 978-256-7234. Armenian Food and Pastries, and Vendors, Friday and Saturday, 11 a.m. to 7 p.m. Live Armenian Music and Dancing, Friday - 4:30 - 7 p.m. Tours of the church sanctuary and complex - Friday, 11 a.m. and Saturday, 4 p.m. Tavloo Tournament - Saturday, 2 p.m.

**NOVEMBER 18 — The Armenian Women's Welfare Association's 41st Annual Luncheon/Auction** will



**On December 10, the Erevan Choral Society and Orchestra will hold its annual Christmas Holiday Concert, at 7 p.m., at the Holy Trinity Armenian Church of Greater Boston, in Cambridge, Mass., under the direction of composer and conductor Konstantin Petrossian. The program will also feature Madrigal Singers from Arlington High School. Traditional Armenian and Western sacred and holiday music will be performed. For more information, call Holy Trinity Armenian Church at 617-354-0632.**

be held at the Oakley Country Club, 410 Belmont Street, Watertown on Saturday, at 11 a.m. Ticket price is \$75. Proceeds to benefit the mission of the AWWA, which include the Armenian Nursing & Rehabilitation Center in Jamaica Plain and the Hanganak NGO Clinic in Stepanakert, N-K, Armenia. For more information about this event, please call Stephanie Ciccolo at 617-522-2600.

**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](mailto:archives@projectsave.org).

**NOVEMBER 28 — "Stopping Violence Against Women: From the Local to the Global,"** a panel on violence against women in New England, nationwide, and in the Republic of Armenia. Sponsored by the Armenian International Women's Association and the Watertown Free Public Library. Featuring Wendy Murphy, Attorney and Adjunct professor at New England Law Boston, Tsovinar Harutyunyan, United National Population Fund (UNFPA) Armenia Program Analyst, Craig Norberg-Bohm, consultant and formerly of the Massachusetts Coalition Against Sexual Assault and Domestic Violence. Moderated by Judy Norsigian, past executive director and co-founder of Our Bodies Ourselves and AIWA Board member. 7 p.m., Watertown Free Public Library, 123 Main St., Watertown, Free and open to the public.

**DECEMBER 1 and 2 — Trinity Christmas Bazaar, Friday, 12-9 p.m., Saturday, 10 a.m.-7 p.m.,** Holy Trinity Armenian Church of Greater Boston, 145 Brattle St., Cambridge. Featuring delicious Armenian dinners, a la carte menu and take-out meals; booths and vendors — perfect for doing your Christmas shopping; Armenian gourmet foods, delicacies and pastries; raffles, and more. Activities for Children, Peter Adamian Hall: Friday, 7-9 p.m., All Aboard "The Polar Express" Pajama Party, recommended for children ages 5 and older; Saturday, 11 a.m., Children's Entertainment. Visit with Santa, Saturday, 1-2 pm, and have your photo taken too.

Charles and Nevart Talanian Cultural Hall. For further information, contact the church office at 617.354.0632, or log onto <http://www.htaac.org/calendar/event/449/>

**DECEMBER 10 — Christmas Holiday Concert, Erevan Choral Society and Orchestra**, 7 p.m., Sunday, Church Sanctuary, Holy Trinity Armenian Church of Greater Boston, 145 Brattle St., Cambridge. This year's concert, under the direction of Composer Konstantin Petrossian, music director and conductor, will open with the Arlington High School Madrigal Singers and feature the vocal quartet the Bostonians. The program will consist of traditional Armenian and Western sacred and holiday music. The public is invited to attend this complimentary concert which is a gift to the community. For further information, call the Church office, 617.354.0632.

**DECEMBER 17 — Candlelit Labyrinth Peace Walk, Armenian Heritage Park on The Greenway**, Boston, 4:30 – 6 pm. Quiet holiday reflection and celebration. Tie a ribbon with your wish on the Wishing Tree. Hot Chocolate & Cookies, hosted by The Bostonian Hotel Boston All are invited. RSVP appreciated, please email [hello@ArmenianHeritagePark.org](mailto:hello@ArmenianHeritagePark.org)

## MICHIGAN

**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 Kaghizees of historic Western Armenia. Funds raised will help in development of the school's multi-purpose auditorium.

## NEW JERSEY

**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.

## NEW YORK

**NOVEMBER 16 — Join Armenia Tree Project and Paros Foundation** for a fundraiser to support kitchen renovations, beautification and environmental education at the school in Rind, Vayots Dzor. Featuring live performance by singer/songwriter Hooshere and silent auction featuring fine art and luxury gift items. Almayass Restaurant, 24 E 21st Street, New York. 7:00 pm to 10:00 pm. Donation: \$100 in advance, \$125 at door. For more information, [info@armeniatree.org](mailto:info@armeniatree.org).

## NEVADA

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

## 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, Providence. Wednesday, 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.

*Calendar items are free. Entries should not be longer than 5 lines. Listings should include contact information. Items will be edited to fit the space, if need be. A photo may be sent with the listing. Items should be sent no later than Mondays at noon.*





## COMMENTARY

## COMMENTARY

# Marking Two Centennials Impacting Armenian Life

By Edmond Y. Azadian

Two major events that took place one hundred years ago are being treated almost silently, although their reverberations affect the world until today.

One of those events was the October Revolution of November 8, 1917 and the other, the Balfour Declaration of November 2, 1917.

Although outwardly it seems they have no relevance to Armenian life and history, in fact, they have affected the lives and the history of Armenia and Armenians profoundly.

The October Revolution sought a fair economic system instead of the feudal one existing in Russia. It was inspired by Karl Max's theory of revolutionary socialism, and was propelled and implemented by Vladimir Lenin.

Marx's theory advocates that the proletariat overthrow the yoke of the capitalist structures within a society to take over communal ownership and governance of the means of production and eventually establish a society without class divisions.

The theory was simplified for popular appeal, like Jesus' parables, to catch the imagination of the masses in a conflagration.

The motto was: "From each according to his capacity to each according to his needs."

This simplistic philosophy was to be imposed over society by the government, actually by the government of the proletariat.

The Industrial Revolution had modernized the production of goods and services in Europe, leading to a greater disparity in income distribution. Marx's theory was developed based on the premises of economic life in Europe rather than the feudal system of Russia.

Despite the revolutions that took place in several European countries in 1848, none of them came to adopt socialism as imagined by Karl Marx.

The irony was that Marx's theories took root in Russia, in a backward agrarian society where the means of production did not match those of Europe, nor were production of goods and services in abundance. Thus, the misapplication of the theory to the reality on the ground was doomed since its inception. But the theory and the implementation of that theory were forced on the Russian people and the experiment of a social laboratory began, with awful consequences for the people and for humanity as a whole.

After 70 years of experimentation, the theory ran out of steam and the structure that it had developed – the Soviet Union – collapsed on its own, without any shots fired from outside enemies.

Armenia became entangled with this huge social experiment because it had been part of the former Tsarist empire. It had hardly attained independence in 1918 when Soviet forces overran former territories on the periphery of the empire.

For 70 years, the life of the people in Soviet Armenia was shaped by this system. Armenians shared the terror of Stalin's rule as they sacrificed 300,000 males during World War II in defense of the homeland, far more proportionately to their number in the Soviet Union.

On the other column of the balance, Armenia shared the phenomenal economic development of the Soviet Union; industry, science, arts, literature developed at a rapid rate and rural Armenia moved to the threshold of the space age.

One restrictive, negative factor, ironically, worked in favor of the Armenians: that of a travel ban. Indeed, Armenians historically and instinctively have a propensity to abandon their ancestral homeland to make other countries prosper – the population was forced to live on the land and maybe for the first time in history, 4.5 million Armenians lived together and developed a common national consciousness. The attraction of a burgeoning homeland became so compelling that almost 200,000 Armenians before and after World War II repatriated from the diaspora.

After the collapse of the Soviet Union, the floodgates of emigration opened wide and no one to this day has devised a policy to stop the population hemorrhage. Thus, one of the ills of the Soviet system became a blessing for Armenia, sealing its future.

The other event whose centennial is being marked this year has a more indirect impact on Armenian life, or to be

more specific, on the Armenian Diaspora. That is the Balfour declaration of 1917.

After centuries of persecution in Europe and Russia, the Jews sought to establish a homeland. A Viennese journalist, Theodor Herzl, came up with the ideology of Zionism to inflame the imagination of Jews scattered around the world. They were offered by the British a vacant piece of land in Africa, and one in Russia by Stalin in later years.

But the goal of the Zionists was to repatriate to their historic homeland in Palestine. Eventually, Herzl's dream was realized in 1948.

Chaim Weizmann, a British scientist and a Zionist leader, and Louis Brandeis, a US Supreme Court Justice, were instrumental in bringing about the issuance of the declaration by the British Foreign Secretary Lord Arthur James Balfour, who on November 2, 1917, wrote to the leader of the Zionist Federation Lord Walter Rothschild: "His Majesty's Government view with favor the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people and will use their best endeavors to facilitate the achievement of this object, it being clearly understood that nothing shall be done which may prejudice the civil and religious rights of existing non-Jewish communities in Palestine or the rights and political status enjoyed by Jews in any other country."

Later on, the declaration was relegated to the League of Nations for implementation.

In the 1930s, while Britain maintained its mandate over Palestine, the British government tried to opt out of the commitment, but it was too late. The Jews had already begun repatriating from around the world, starting agricultural communities (kibbutzes).

Jewish armed insurrection had already begun in Palestine against the British occupation and the local Arab population. The King David Hotel in Jerusalem, which was the British headquarters, was blown up in 1946 and a campaign against the Palestinians was launched. Massacres like Deir Yassin and other areas intended to terrorize the local population. Lehi, the paramilitary organized group of militants, was no different than the Palestine Liberation Organization or Hamas. David Ben-Gurion, Yitzhak Shamir, and Menachem Begin were instrumental in carrying out those raids. They were leaders who later became respected statesmen.

When Israel declared independence, Armenians had to empathize with the Jewish people who had suffered the same historic trauma.

As to the caveat in the Balfour Declaration to observe the "civil and religious rights of existing non-Jewish communities," it suffices to say that 700,000 Palestinians were deported from their land and today 1,500 Armenians remain from a community of 25,000. On the day of independence, the Jewish population was 600,000. Today the population is 8 million.

What was the liberation of the Jewish people was the *nakba* (catastrophe) for the Palestinian people.

The conflict and the controversy continue to this day and they have spilled out onto the Middle East.

Egypt fought three major wars with Israel until the late Anwar Sadat signed a peace agreement with his Israeli counterpart, Menachem Begin, in 1979. By that time, the affluent Armenian community in Egypt had dwindled from 55,000 to 4,000.

Since 1948, the Middle East has been a war zone. The Israeli-Palestinian conflict has mushroomed to become a global issue and Europe's and especially the US's unilateral support of Israel has pitted the Islamic world against the West, relegating an innocent bystander's position to Israel.

The 1982 invasion of Lebanon by Ariel Sharon decimated the Palestinian forces there, and scared away one of the most stable Armenian communities in the diaspora. The later invasion and occupation of Iraq destroyed the local Armenian community, similar to the one that followed in Syria.

The Armenians have suffered unintended consequences from the wars, sustaining collateral damage.

Armenians from all the prosperous Middle Eastern countries flooded into Europe and the US, bringing fresh blood to these communities in the West. But on balance, the damage is much higher than the benefits.

Very few people are marking this week those two centennials. Armenians have a saying: "The fire burns where it hits."

Two muted centennials and one destiny: the Armenian destiny.

# Mirror Spectator



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## COMMENTARY



## My Turn

By Harut Sassounian

## Istanbul Armenian Community's Dilemma In Trying to Elect a New Patriarch

A major controversy has been brewing in Istanbul for several years among members of the Armenian community over plans to elect a new Armenian Patriarch.

The controversy has long historic roots and more recent complications which started with the terminal illness of Patriarch Mesrob Mutafyan who is unable to carry out his duties because of dementia.

When some members of the Istanbul Armenian community tried to elect a new Patriarch to replace the incapacitated Mesrob Patriarch, the Turkish government officially announced that as long as the existing Patriarch is alive, no new Patriarch can be elected. Even the request to elect a Coadjutor Patriarch was rejected by the Governor of Istanbul.

The Turkish government used the excuse that the Armenian community's constitution of 1863 contained no such office as Coadjutor Patriarch. The problem was that the Turkish government had declared the constitution to be invalid several decades earlier. If the government was basing its decision on a defunct constitution, it meant that it was recognizing its validity. If the constitution is valid, then the community has the right to elect delegates who in turn could elect a new Patriarch. Regrettably, the Armenian community did not think of bringing this contradiction to the attention of the Turkish government.

We remember that Mesrob Patriarch also faced opposition from the Turkish government prior to his election in 1998. Eventually, he went to Ankara and "made a deal" with

Turkish officials behind closed doors, which allowed him to be elected Patriarch. Soon after, he started promoting various Turkish causes, including going throughout Western Europe to advocate for Turkey's membership in the European Union and several visits to the United States to make public appearances at the Turkish government's request!

Earlier this year, some members of the Istanbul Armenian community decided to make another attempt to elect a new Patriarch motivated by their dislike of Archbishop Aram Ateshyan, Vicar General ("pokhanort") of the Patriarchate, and their desire to have a full-fledged Patriarch. The problem was Archbishop Ateshyan would not resign from his post, blocking the door for new elections.... After much pressure from Armenians locally and around the world, particularly by His Holiness Karekin II, Catholicos of All-Armenians in Echmiadzin, Armenia, an agreement was reached for Archbishop Ateshyan to resign and for the Primate of the Armenian Church in Germany, Archbishop Karekin Bekjian to be elected as Locum Tenens ("deghabah") to organize new Patriarchal elections.

Soon after this agreement, a group of prominent Istanbul Armenians formed a committee to initiate the Patriarchal elections, even though everyone in the community knew that the Turkish government was against such an election. As a matter of fact, while Archbishop Bekjian was being elected as Locum Tenens, Archbishop Ateshyan received a letter from the Governor of Istanbul informing him that the Turkish government does not recognize Archbishop Bekjian's election and continued to consider Archbishop Ateshyan as the legitimate Vicar General. Unfortunately, Archbishop Ateshyan presented the letter to the Initiating Committee only after they had elected Archbishop Bekjian to his post. This episode increased the antagonism of those opposing Archbishop Ateshyan and continued their support for Archbishop Bekjian.

To resolve this dilemma, Archbishop Bekjian wrote a letter to the Governor of Istanbul asking for a meeting. After waiting for 60 days for a reply, Archbishop Bekjian flew to Germany to meet with Catholicos Karekin II during his visit there.

While Archbishop Bekjian was out of Turkey, the Governor of Istanbul invited Archbishop Ateshyan, Bishop

Sahag Mashalian and the head of the Initiating Committee for a meeting. The timing was no coincidence. It was clear that the Governor did not want to meet with Archbishop Bekjian, someone whose election he did not recognize!

The argument in the local Armenian community intensified between those who considered themselves to be realistic, acknowledging the Turkish government's role in the Patriarchal elections, and those who rejected any interference by the Turkish government. The supporters of Archbishop Ateshyan pointed out the uselessness of going against the wishes of the powerful Turkish government that had jailed thousands of opposition members and even defied major countries such as Germany and the United States. Furthermore, Archbishop Ateshyan's proponents indicated that if Catholicos Karekin II could intervene in the elections of the Istanbul Patriarchate, an autonomous branch of the Armenian Church, then it would be understandable, no matter how undesirable, that the President of Turkey would have the right to interfere in elections held in his own country.

To make matters worse, before Archbishop Bekjian returned from Germany, five members of the Initiating Committee had resigned after meeting with the Governor of Istanbul. The rest of the committee members wanted to wait until Archbishop Bekjian's return before making a decision.

Following Archbishop Bekjian's arrival in Istanbul, after consulting with the Initiating Committee, he announced that he would write a letter to the Turkish Minister of Interior, asking for a one-on-one meeting. Defying Istanbul Governor's clear instructions, Archbishop Bekjian continued to remain in his post.

Archbishop Bekjian's intent to meet privately with the Minister of Interior is fraught with pitfalls. As was the case with Patriarch Mesrob, Archbishop Bekjian could make a private deal with the Minister, pledging to carry out the Turkish Government's instructions henceforth. During his tenure as Primate of Germany, Archbishop Bekjian had spoken out periodically about the Armenian Genocide.

Archbishop Bekjian's other option would be to resign from his post, opening the door for Archbishop Ateshyan to be elected Patriarch, which would be against the wishes of the majority of the local Armenian community, but complying with the preference of the Turkish government.

## LETTERS

## Killing Mayr Hayastan

To the Editor:

Thank you *Armenian Mirror-Spectator* for again spotlighting the oppressive condition of women in Armenia, "Armenians Urged to Value Their Women As Abortions of Girls Skew Population," (10/28/17). While programs and initiatives attempt to address this issue, it is not enough.

The situation begs this question: If vicious marauders continuously invaded and attacked Armenia, abusing women and striking death to their wombs, what would our response be? Would we hope for incremental improvements? I attended a presentation, led by World Vision, at the United Nations focusing on "Prenatal Sex Selection in Armenia" and spoke briefly with a representative to express my concerns and ask about their interventions. She stated, "We work closely with the Armenian Apostolic Church." They do not engage other Christian churches or ministries, or present the Gospel she explained. "We partner with the Armenian Apostolic Church, they have the power." Yes, I silently agreed, they have power – political, financial and social clout. The Armenian Apostolic Church could have eradicated this culture of abortion long ago.

*Siroon Hye Gnekner*, how is this power working out for you? Do you feel closer to God? Do you sense the security of God's love? Are you finding godly counsel and safety in your time of pain, provisions in your time of need? Is the church a place of refuge, where the power of the Holy Spirit can speak into your life?

If the Armenian Apostolic Church would strip themselves from the contaminated lifelines of politics and wealthy donors, they might cry out to God and hear from Him, receiving true compassion for Armenia's women.

They might preach true conviction into the hearts of Armenian men and even mothers-in-law, weighing them with "godly sorrow that leads to repentance" – only changed hearts can change lives.

Without the power of God, we are left with the strategies of men to incrementally improve the devastation of the unborn and the hidden violence against women. No woman grieved upon a gurney or beaten behind closed doors wants an incremental improvement. Our Christian faith calls us to "speak up for those who cannot speak for themselves." We must cry out for reform and spiritual revival with fervor as though it were the Ottomans but also with shame, because it is our own causing this dark plight.

Lisa Stepanian  
New York, New York

# 85 Years The Armenian Mirror-Spectator

## A Letter from the Armenian Assembly

Dear Friends:

As the *Armenian Mirror-Spectator* celebrates 85 years of excellence in journalism, the Armenian Assembly of America is proud to join with Armenians and non-Armenians alike in the United States and across the globe, in extending its heartfelt congratulations and sincere appreciation for all the extraordinary work the *Mirror* does on a daily basis. It is truly remarkable.

For 85 years, you have informed, inspired and shaped the national dialogue on Armenian issues by highlighting and explaining key national and international developments. Your accomplishments are testament to the countless hours, energy, and dedication of the *Mirror's* outstanding leadership as evidenced by the plaudits the *Mirror* receives from its supporters and readership.

The Armenian Assembly, which was founded in 1972 as a non-partisan umbrella organization for all Armenians, is proud of the many years of cooperation and constructive collaboration with the media in Armenia and America. From our early days and throughout the decades, the Assembly has appreciated and admired the outstanding work of the *Mirror*. Your timely and compelling coverage is to be commended and serves as trusted and reliable source of news.

We are honored to congratulate you on this landmark anniversary and wish you many more years of success. We are counting on you to continue to connect and inspire us all.

Best wishes,

Anthony Barsamian  
Co-Chair  
Armenian Assembly of America

Van Krikorian  
Co-Chair  
Armenian Assembly of America

## Abaka Newspaper Congratulates Fisk for Receiving Honor

On behalf of the Editorial Board of *Abaka*, the first and trilingual Armenian weekly of Canada, published by the Armenian Democratic Liberal Party and the Tekeyan Cultural Association of Montreal,

We extend our warmest appreciation to the distinguished international journalist Mr. Robert Fisk, and congratulate him on the occasion of his being honored by the *Armenian Mirror Spectator*, in Boston.

The wide circle of the readers of *Abaka* and thus the Armenian community of Canada, join us to thank wholeheartedly the courageous defender of many just causes around the globe and in particular, the righteous cause of the Armenian Genocide.

We wish him continuing strength and determination to raise his voice in defense of so many nations around the world whose rights are continuously undermined under the ruthless pressure of the powerful few.

The Editorial Board of *Abaka*  
The executives of the ADL and TCA Montreal, Canada





From the filmmaker of "Paradise Lost" and "Metallica: Some Kind of Monster"



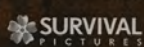
A Joe Berlinger Film

# Intent to Destroy

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A RADICALMEDIA AND THIRD EYE MOTION PICTURE COMPANY PRODUCTION IN ASSOCIATION WITH BLOOM PROJECT  
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ORIGINAL SCORE BY SERJ TANKIAN EDITED BY CY CHRISTIANSEN DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY BOB RICHMAN  
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ABRAMORAMA

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