

Armenian Christmas at St. Vartan's Cathedral as it Kicks off 50th Year

NEW YORK — Temperatures in New York City approached zero degrees Fahrenheit on Saturday, January 6. But inside the city's St. Vartan Armenian Cathedral, worshippers were warmed by the celebration the Feast of the Nativity and Theophany of Our Lord Jesus Christ — informally called “Armenian Christmas.”

Archbishop Khajag Barsamian, Primate of the Diocese of the Armenian Church of America (Eastern), celebrated the Divine Liturgy and delivered a sermon that touched on the theme of peace, as it relates to the story of Christ's birth, to the spiritual atmosphere of the church, and to pressing concerns of the world today.

Pointing behind him to the icon adorning St. Vartan Cathedral's altar, he called its image “the face of Peace: the face of the infant Christ, held in the arms of his loving mother, Mary. Is there a more beautiful, inspiring image in all of human history? For two thousand years, the church has preserved this beautiful image of the Nativity of Jesus, and the message of peace underlying it.”

He said that the atmosphere of peace explains why every church is called a “sanctuary”: “a sacred place of harmony and safety, where all are welcome, and none are turned away.” He went on to note: “In this



Primate Khajag Barsamian at the altar performs the blessing of water.

new year of 2018, the magnificent sanctuary around us — St. Vartan Armenian Cathedral in New York — will mark the 50th anniversary of its consecration.”

Place of Peace

“St. Vartan Cathedral was built as our ‘national home’: a place of peace; a true

sanctuary,” he said. “The cathedral is a source of spiritual strength for faithful people across our Diocese. It opens welcoming doors to all of our countrymen — and to people of any background. It welcomes those who may have strayed from their

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Marshal Bagramyan In Rediscovered Film Talks of His Pre-Soviet Life

By Haykaram Nahapetyan

Mirror-Spectator Video Correspondent

“The Red Army was as multiethnic as the Soviet Union, but its generals were overwhelmingly Russian. Very few non-Slavs reached high rank and the highest proportion of those who did were Armenian — from the smallest Soviet Republic in area,” wrote British scholar Geoffrey Jukes about Marshal Hovhannes (Ivan) Bagramyan in a book edited by Harold Shukman called *Stalin's Generals* (New York, 1993).

Jukes' observation was ultimately correct given that more than a half million sons and daughters of Armenia fought bravely and covered themselves with glory during the World War II. Suffice to say that the only non-Slavic commander of a front in the Red Army was Armenian — Hovhannes Bagramyan.

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Marshal Hovhannes (Ivan) Bagramyan

Istanbul Street Named after Armenian Photographer Ara Güler

ISTANBUL (Public Radio of Armenia) — Tosbaga Street in the Beyoglu district of Istanbul, Turkey, has formally been named after famous Istanbul Armenian photographer Ara Güler.

Güler photographed the sign of the street named after him and posted it on his Twitter account.

The renamed street, photographed by Ara Güler

Güler has lived at this street for many years, and his photo studio is also located there.

Güler, who was recognized as “Photographer of the Century” and is also known as the “Eye of Istanbul,” was born in the city in 1928. He began his journalistic career in 1950, he has received many Turkish and international awards and titles, and he has photographed numerous world-renowned personalities.

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NEWS IN BRIEF

Armenian Organization Attacked on Christmas Eve in Brussels

BRUSSELS, Belgium (Panorama.am) — Unidentified people opened fire at the Office “Sahakyan Union” of the Armenian community in Schaerbeek neighborhood of Brussels, Ermenihaber reported, adding the incident took place the night of January 5. According to the source, nobody was injured during the attack, and only the door and windows of the building were damaged. The organization does not operate currently.

It is believed the attack in the mostly Turkish-populated district of the Belgian capital was motivated by nationalism, with the source citing the date of the assault conducted on the eve of the Christmas.

The Istanbul-based Agos daily wrote that the area was a scene of violence six years ago, when Armenian and Assyrian organizations in the district were a target of periodic attacks.

Tensions have been running high in the immigrant Turkish community of Brussels, following the decree by Emir Kan, the Turkish head of the municipality, banning Kurdish rallies in the district.

Armenia Presidential Election ‘Most Probably’ Will Be Held On March 2

YEREVAN (PanARMENIAN.Net and Armenpress) — The presidential election in Armenia will most probably be held on March 2, with discussions on possible candidates set to launch this week, lawmaker from the ruling Republican Party of Armenia Vahram Baghdasaryan told reporters on January 15.

“Currently you can't know the names of candidates since we didn't have discussions over this issue. When we will begin the discussions during this week and will have a decision, you will know about it”, he said. Incumbent President Serzh Sargsyan's term in office will end April 9, 2018. Until then, in accordance to the Constitution, the Parliament will elect a new president, and the government will submit its resignation after Sargsyan's term is completed. Then, the parliament will elect a prime minister, who will form a new government.

In response to a question whether the candidate might be from the diaspora, the lawmaker said only that the future presidential hopeful must be acceptable to the outside world.

Baghdasaryan said he might have several options in mind but failed to divulge more details anyway.

President Serzh Sargsyan had said earlier that the National Assembly must elect the fourth president of Armenia by March 9, 2018, and the new prime minister after April 9.

INSIDE

Simon Simonian

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ARMENIA

News From Armenia

Karabakh Soldier Killed

STEPANAKERT (Public Radio of Armenia) — A private in the Artsakh Defense Army, Harutyun Khachatryan, died on January 16 of a gunshot wound, when on duty at one of the military units in the northern direction.

The Artsakh Defense Ministry said in a statement the incident took place at about 01:15 “under unknown circumstances.”

An investigation into the details of the case is under way.

Sargsyan Awards National Hero Medal to Hovhannes Chekijyan

YEREVAN (Armenpress) — A solemn ceremony honoring and presenting the Order of Homeland, “Order of Homeland” to People’s Artist, Director of the State Academic Choir of Armenia Hovhannes Chekijyan took place on January 16 at the Presidential Palace of Armenia.

During the ceremony People’s Artist, composer Tigran Mansuryan introduced the biography of Chekijyan, his creative past and achievements.

Sargsyan handed the “Order of Homeland” to the National Hero of Armenia congratulated him and on behalf of the Armenian people wished Chekijyan health and new successes. At the awarding ceremony, President Sargsyan addressed a congratulatory message to Chekijyan.

Armenia Question on ‘Jeopardy!’ TV Show

CULVER CITY, Calif. — Every once in a while, questions pertaining to Armenia pop up in the daily television game show “Jeopardy!” produced by Sony Pictures Studios. On January 9, host Alex Trebek gave the clue that “its provinces include Aragatsotn and Ararat,” and a contestant quickly responded “what is Armenia” to win the point. See our website for the video clip (<https://mirrorspectator.com/2018/01/16/armenia-question-jeopardy-tv-show/>).

TCA Tekeyan-Shake Ghazarian Contest Accepting Submissions

YEREVAN — The Central Board of the Tekeyan Cultural Association (TCA) of Armenia has announced the following categories for awards in various creative categories for 2017, all through the TCA Shake Tekeyan-Ghazarian Endowment Fund: literature, music, visual arts and drama. Those who wish to participate in the contest for 2017 may present their works from January 22 to March 1 at the TCA Yerevan office during the regular work week (Monday to Friday) from 11 a.m. to 6 p.m. at the second floor of 50 Khanjyan Street, or contact the office for further information (email tekeyan@arminco.com; telephone 552-632, or 520-783).

Defense Minister Receives US Ambassador

YEREVAN (Armenpress) — Defense Minister of Armenia Vigen Sargsyan received Ambassador of the USA to Armenia Richard Mills on January 16.

During the meeting the work done in 2017 in the sidelines of Armenian-US defense cooperation were summed up and the main themes for cooperation for 2018 were outlined.

Sargsyan presented the goals that will be included in the seven-year program to modernize the armed forces of Armenia and for which Armenia expects cooperation with the US.

Mills stressed the readiness of the US Defense Ministry to cooperate with its Armenian counterpart in the spheres of mutual interest.

An agreement was reached to hold bilateral defense consultations in Yerevan during which future cooperation would be developed. Issues of regional security were also discussed at the meeting.



Catholicos of All Armenians Karekin II making his way to the Mother See of Holy Echmiadzin

Feast of the Holy Nativity and Theophany Celebrated at Mother See of Holy Echmiadzin

ECHMIADZIN — On January 6, in the Mother See of Holy Echmiadzin, a solemn celebration of the Feast of Christmas and the Blessing of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ was celebrated. The patriarchal Divine Liturgy was celebrated at Mother Cathedral on the occasion of the holiday.

Catholicos Karekin II, Supreme Patriarch and Catholicos of All Armenians, led the service.

Deacons Volodya Deacon Najaryan, Deacon Gevorg Mirzoyan, Deacon Artur de Armanian and Deacon Suren Janibekyan were on the patriarchal rampart.

By distributing his patriarchal blessing to the devout nation, the Armenian Patriarch entered the holy temple under “Hrashapar.” After the descent to the Holy

Desert, His Holiness went to the Holy Tent, where the Patriarchal Divine Liturgy began.

At the sacred ceremony, as an adjunct, were in attendance the Supreme Ruler of the Mother See of Holy Echmiadzin. Bishop Hovnan Hakobyan and Director of the Department of the Mother See of Holy Echmiadzin, Bishop Mushegh Babayan. This year, the Patriarchal liturgy was also attended by small scribes serving in different churches for their dedicated service. During the Divine Liturgy, Karekin II conveyed to all Armenians the “Messiah was born and was revealed” to the angelic preacher, addressing his patriarchal message on the occasion of the feast.

Armenia Recognizes Genocide Against Iraq’s Yazidis

YEREVAN (RFE/RL) — Armenia’s parliament unanimously passed on Tuesday, January 16, a resolution recognizing as genocide the 2014 mass killings of Yazidis in Iraq which were committed by the Islamic State (IS) extremist group.

The National Assembly also called on the international community to track down and prosecute those directly responsible for the killings and “take measures to ensure the security of the Yazidi population.”

Thousands of Yazidis were seized by IS when it overran Iraq’s northwestern town of Sinjar in August 2014, and most of them remain unaccounted for. The town was regained from IS in late 2015 and 30 mass graves of Yazidis have since been found there. But an unknown number of the ethnic minority, which practices a unique religion that IS considers heretical, was moved to neighboring Syria.

The US government officially declared in March 2016 that IS is “responsible for genocide” against Yazidis as well as Christians and other religious and ethnic minorities in Iraq and Syria. A subsequent report released by United Nations investigators similarly concluded that the Islamist militants’ actions against Yazidis meet a 1948 UN convention’s definition of genocide.

In its resolution, the Armenian parliament said it “recognizes and strongly condemns the genocide of the Yazidi people perpetrated by terrorist groups in 2014 in Iraqi territory controlled by them.”

The main sponsor of the resolution is Rustam Makhmudyan, the parliament’s sole ethnic Yazidi member representing the ruling Republican Party of Armenia (HHK). Presenting the document to fel-

low lawmakers on Monday, Makhmudyan drew parallels between the 2014 atrocities against Iraqi Yazidis and the 1915 Armenian genocide in the Ottoman Empire.

The Ottoman Turks also killed and displaced many Yazidis during the First World War. Thousands of them fled to what is now the Republic of Armenia.

There are an estimated 50,000 Yazidis living in Armenia at present, making them the country’s single largest ethnic minority.

President Serzh Sargsyan condemned the mass killings and deportations of Iraqi Yazidis shortly after they were first reported in the summer of 2014.

Sarkisian instructed Armenia’s Foreign Ministry and diplomatic missions abroad to “redouble their efforts to adequately raise the issue in the international arena.”

The move followed a series of street protests staged by Yazidis in Yerevan. They said that the Armenian government is slow to react to the atrocities.

In April 2016, leaders of Armenia’s Yazidi community inaugurated a memorial in downtown Yerevan to Yazidis and other people massacred by the IS extremists. Said Avdalian, the leader of a Yazidi youth group, hailed the Armenian parliamentary resolution on Tuesday as a “historic event.”

Nadia Murad and Yazda Welcome Recognition Of Yazidi Genocide by Armenia

YEREVAN (Armenpress) — The Yazda organization and the UN Goodwill Ambassador for dignity of Survivors of Human Trafficking Nadia Murad have welcomed the adoption of the resolution recognizing the genocide of the Yazidi people by the National Assembly of Armenia on January 16. “The recognition of the Yazidi Genocide by the Armenian parliament today is a historic moment for the entire Yazidi community worldwide and for victims of this genocide. We welcome this important step especially as it comes from a country which, in recent history, has suffered greatly from genocide,” reads the statement posted in the official website of the Yazda organization.

“I am touched by today’s decision and I would like to express my grati-

tude to the people of Armenia and their representatives in Parliament. Acknowledgment of the Genocide means a lot to me and all the victims of genocide,” Murad said. “The Yazidi genocide is the latest major crime of our century, the world should recognize this crime and accept the fact it happened, not only recognize it, but take the steps to stop it and adopt mechanisms to ensure it will not be repeated in the future,” said Murad Ismael, Yazda Executive Director.

Yazda and Nadia Murad expressed their gratitude to the Standing Committee on Foreign Relations, to MP Rustam Makhmudyan, leader of the RPA fraction Vahram Baghdasaryan, leader of the ARF fraction Armen Rustamyan and the Tsarukyan and Yelk fractions.



ARMENIA

Armenian Defense Chief under Fire over Fundraising

YEREVAN (RFE/RL) — Defense Minister Vigen Sargsyan has provoked a storm of criticism for launching a fundraising campaign for the medical treatment abroad of an Armenian soldier seriously wounded during his military service.

In a weekend Facebook post, Sargsyan said that the soldier, Albert Dallakian, needs \$45,000 to undergo surgery in a foreign clinic. He argued that Armenian law bars the government from covering Dallakian's medical expenses because the required operation can also be performed in Armenia.

"But the likelihood of Albert's quick recovery would be much higher in foreign clinics which have much greater experience and skills on this matter," wrote Sargsyan. "So I advised his family to collect the required sum through such fundraising. I personally and several of my friends will provide 10 percent of the necessary \$45,000."

The appeal for private donations triggered a torrent of angry comments from Facebook users who said that the Armenian military is obliged to ensure adequate treatment for soldiers without turning to private citizens for financial assistance.

Many of them pointed out that it was Sargsyan who engineered in late 2016 a special tax for raising financial compensations to the

families of soldiers killed or seriously wounded in action. Others said the government should cut back on spending on personal needs of senior military officials and use that money for soldiers' treatment.

The minister angrily responded to one abusive comment and blocked other critics, who also used offensive language, from his social media account.

Some opposition politicians added their voice to the chorus of disapproval on Monday. One of them, Aram Sarkisian of the Yelk alliance, suggested with sarcasm that the minister be appointed head of a state-backed charity.

"[Privately] raising money is definitely not the defense minister's function," he told RFE/RL's Armenian service (Azatutyun.am). "This is not how such problems must be solved. There are state mechanisms for solving such problems."

Another Yelk leader, Nikol Pashinian, described Sargsyan's initiative as "strange" and "inappropriate."

But Eduard Sharmazanov, the spokesman for the ruling Republican Party of Armenia (HHK), dismissed the criticism. "I see nothing extraordinary [in Sargsyan's initiative,]" he said.



Defense Minister Vigen Sargsyan speaks during parliamentary hearings on military draft in Yerevan.

"Furthermore, I think that the defense minister has acted like a normal, caring person."

Seyran Saroyan, a retired army general elected to the Armenian parliament on the HHK ticket, also defended the 42-year-old minister. "He's written a seven-year plan on strengthening our army. Instead of helping the guy [implement it] we are going after him," complained Saroyan.

Catholicos of All Armenians Visits Children's Hospital

ECHMIADZIN — On January 5, Karekin II, Supreme Patriarch and Catholicos of All Armenians, visited the Yolyan Center for Hematology.

Accompanying him were Bishop Anushavan Zhamkochian, Director of the

Social Services Office of the Mother See of Holy Echmiadzin and Marcos Mangasaryan and the visiting pastor of the Center.

The director of the center, Dr. Smbat Daghbashyan and the staff of the Center greeted the Catholicos at the entrance. The

catholicos toured the Hematology Center, got acquainted with the conditions of the center and familiarized himself with modern equipment.

Then he visited the children and their parents, who were gathered in the children's playroom, congratulating the New Year and the Lord's Christmas Eve. Speaking about the Christmas Council, Catholicos Karekin II underlined that God has given his love and abundant gifts to everyone according to their needs, enabling everyone to live. He encouraged the little ones with this faith and hope and wished them a quick recovery, to return to their normal lives.

The Director of the Center thanked the catholicos for his visit to Armenia, highlighting the cooperation between the church and the center and regular assistance. Daghbashyan emphasized the usefulness and beneficial influence of visiting clergy on the lives of children receiving treatment in the center.

Finally, the catholicos spoke with the doctors. He praised their dedicated service and thanked them for the care shown to children.

The Catholicos of All Armenians presented children with crosses, children's Bibles and other gifts, as well as providing material support to their families by the Mother See.



Catholicos of All Armenians visiting children at the Yolyan Center

Sargsyan Drops First Hint on Next Armenian President

YEREVAN (RFE/RL) — Armenia's next president must be a renowned but politically inexperienced individual who speaks foreign languages, President Serzh Sargsyan said on Tuesday, January 16.

Sargsyan commented on his possible successor at a meeting with a group of elderly artists and intellectuals.

"In Serzh Sargsyan's view, the future president must speak foreign languages, have broad connections in both Armenia and the [Armenian] Diaspora, enjoy a good reputation, and, most importantly, be an impartial person who has never engaged in politics and been a member of a political party," the presidential press office said in a statement. It did not cite him as naming anyone who he thinks would be fit for the post.

Sargsyan will complete his second and final presidential term on April 9 in time for Armenia's transition to a parliamentary system of government. The next Armenian president will be elected by the parliament, rather than popular vote, by March 9 and have largely ceremonial powers.

The parliament is controlled by the ruling Republican Party of Armenia (HHK), putting Sargsyan in a position to install his choice of the next head of state. Meeting with parliamentary leaders last week, Sargsyan said his successor should enjoy "broad-based support" in the National Assembly.

Armenian newspapers claimed late last year that Gagik Harutyunyan, the chairman of Armenia's Constitutional Court, is Sargsyan's preferred presidential candidate. However, Harutyunyan insisted in December that he has received no such offers and is not interested in the job.

Some media outlets have since speculated that Foreign Minister Edward Nalbandian, who is fluent in English, French and Russian, may become president. Citing an unnamed government source, the Yerevan daily Zhamanak said on Tuesday Armenia's ambassador to Britain, Armen Sargsyan (no relation to the president), is also a potential candidate.

Human Rights Watch: Women and Children in Armenia Remain at Risk Of Domestic Violence

YEREVAN (news.am) — In December 2017, Armenia's parliament passed a law on violence in the family, but women and children remain at risk until the government comprehensively changes how police respond to complaints of violence and provides accessible, Human Rights Watch reported.

The organization spoke with 12 survivors of domestic abuse in Armenia. The women said their husbands or male partners punched them and raped them. Children witnessed abuse against their mothers, often for many years, and several women said their husbands committed violence against their children.

Those interviewed said that when they reported abuse to police or other authorities, the authorities did nothing to prevent further violence or hold the attackers accountable.

"Armenian authorities have failed to protect women and others from domestic violence, putting women's and children's health and lives in jeopardy," said Jane Buchanan, associate Europe and Central Asia director at Human Rights Watch. "The new law is one important step, but until authorities take reports of domestic violence seriously and ensure that women and children get the legal, medical, and social help they need, the danger remains."

Armenia's Coalition to Stop Violence against Women reported that at least four women were killed by their partners or other family members in the first half of 2017, and at least 50 were killed between 2010 and 2017.

Eighth-Century Settlement Discovered in Lernagog

YEREVAN (Public Radio of Armenia) — An 8th century B.C. settlement has been discovered at "Lernagog-1" site near the village of Lernagog in Armenia's Armavir Province.

For the first time in the region archaeologists have uncovered a settlement, whose lower layers date back to the late 8th century or early 7th century B.C, Pavel Avetisyan, Director of the Institute of Archaeology and Ethnography of the Armenian National Academy of Sciences, told a press conference today.

"Before that the most ancient settlements found on the territory of Armenia dated back to the 6th century B.C.," he said.

Specialists say that architectural traces found at the site prove that the area had been populated since the 8-7th centuries B.C.

Archaeologists have also discovered traces of a clay construction, which testifies to the fact that people mastered clay architecture.

According to Arthur Petrosyan, researcher



Archaeologists in Lernagog

at the Institute of Archaeology and Ethnography, it's now a proved fact that residents of this part of the Armenian

Highlands were active participants of the processes taking place at the beginning of the Neolithic era.



International News

Russian, Iranian FMs Discuss Syrian Settlement

MOSCOW (Armenpress) – Russian foreign minister Sergey Lavrov and his Iranian counterpart Mohammad Javad Zarif discussed the Syrian settlement and the situation around the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action on the Iranian nuclear program during a phone conversation on January 16, the Russian foreign ministry said, TASS reports.

“The sides exchanged views on a number of vital international issues, in particular the Syrian settlement in the context of holding the Syrian National Dialogue Congress in Sochi and also the situation around the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action on the Iranian nuclear program,” the ministry said.

Iranian Firm to Build Bridge on Armenia-Georgia Border

TEHRAN (Public Radio of Armenia) – The Iranian Ariana Tunnel Dam Co. will construct a new bridge on the Armenian-Georgian border under a loan agreement signed between the Republic of Armenia and the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD).

The agreement on the designing and construction of the Bagratashen Bridge was to be carried out within the framework of the “Armenia Northern Corridor Modernization Project” was signed at the Armenian Ministry of Transport, Communication and Information Technologies today.

Minister Vahan Martirosyan said voiced hope that the victory in the tender would be the first step and the Iranian company would continue to participate in projects implemented in Armenia, particularly the construction of a tunnel in the north of the country expected under the same modernization project.

Ariana Tunnel Dam Co. was chosen to implement the project from among seven bidders.

Syrian-Armenian Students Present Letter Of Thanks to Representative of Russian Embassy

YEREVAN (Armenpress) – A group of Syrian-Armenian students gathered outside the Russian Embassy to present a letter of gratitude to the Russian Federation for the continuous support aimed at liberating the country during the years of war and assisting its people.

The organizers of the initiative were the Syrian Student Union in Armenia and the International Humanitarian Development NGO.

Head of the Syrian Student Union in Armenia Julia Pampalyan said almost all students who arrived in Armenia from Syria participated in the campaign.

“I am from the city of Aleppo. I arrived in Armenia in 2012. I study at the Yerevan State Medical University. I left Syria because it was dangerous there. Terrorist movements started, they were everywhere, even entered universities, churches, they attacked everywhere. My relatives now are in Syria, we had 3 young losses, now everything is destroyed there. We express our gratitude both to Russia and Armenia since Armenia also provided aid by sending food,” she said.

Nasri Nasri also arrived in Armenia in 2012. The relatives are now in Syria. “Three years ago when I returned back, the situation was bad, but this summer I also visited there, the situation had greatly improved. This year I graduate and will return to my relatives,” the student said.

The head of the Union presented the letter of gratitude to the advisor of the Russian Ambassador who promised to give the letter to the Ambassador and said Russia will continue providing assistance now more focusing on the humanitarian direction.

“The most important thing is the revival of that country which is not an easy task. We think that we all, including by the assistance of Armenia, will be able to address this difficult task,” the advisor said.

Turkish Attack on US-Backed Kurds In Syria Believed Imminent

By Martin Chulov in Beirut, and Kareem Shaheen

ISTANBUL (*Guardian*) – Turkish troops and tanks near the Syrian border are making final plans to attack the US military’s Kurdish partners inside northern Syria as tensions between Ankara and Washington near unprecedented levels.

Ahead of a widely expected incursion, the Turkish president, Recep Tayyip Erdogan, on January 16 threatened to “destroy all terror nests,” a reference to Kurdish forces that the US has used as proxies in the fight against Islamic State (Isis) and Turkey views as a subversive threat.

Tensions over the Kurds, which have tested relations between two nominal allies for the past three years, spiked over the weekend, when Washington announced it would raise a border force

from the Kurdish-dominated Syrian Defense Force, which led the battle against Isis in north-east Syria.

Ankara views the Syrian Kurds as an extension of the Turkish Kurdish PKK, with whom it has fought a four-decade insurgency inside its borders. It has vowed not to allow Kurdish groups to dominate its border with Syria.

The area most likely to be invaded by Turkish forces is a 60 mile-stretch lying between the towns of Afrin and Manbij, one of the most bitterly contested pockets of territory during the Syrian conflict. The US-raised force is proposed for north-east Syria, which Ankara is not thought to be targeting for a ground attack.

The move seems aimed to strike a symbolic wedge between the north-east and a smaller Kurdish presence along Syria’s north-west border. It would also stake a new marker for relations between Erdogan and the Trump administration, which have steadily deteriorated over the Kurdish issue.

Erdogan said he had not consulted Donald Trump on any planned operations.

“Last time we spoke, he said he would get back to me. He still didn’t. So I’m not planning to call him. In a short span of time, we will destroy all terror nests, one by one, in Syria, starting from Afrin and Manbij regions,” Erdogan said. “Those who stabbed us in the back and appear to be our allies ... cannot prevent it.”

Erdogan said it would be a joint operation involving the Turkish army and Syrian rebels backed by Ankara, and urged Nato to act to protect Turkey’s borders. The Turkish foreign minister, Mevlüt Çavuşoğlu, went further in criticism of the Trump administration, saying Washington ought to clarify “whether it chooses to be with its allies or terror groups”.

Ankara has been a prominent backer of the anti-Assad opposition since late

2011, arming rebel groups and allowing political opposition to organize.

Its involvement became more direct in mid-2016, when it sent troops to fight Isis and to establish its influence in the same area it intends to invade.

The Turkish fear then, and now, is that the Kurds have ambitions to establish a self-governing canton in north Syria along the entire border. The Syrian Kurds claim to have no links to the PKK, but they receive significant backing from the Turkish group and follow the same leader, Abdullah Öcalan, who has been jailed on an island off Istanbul for almost 20 years.

The Syrian Kurds had spearheaded a US-backed campaign to oust Isis from its self-proclaimed capital of Raqqa, a battle that finished in the autumn. Erdogan repeatedly tried to extract a pledge from the Trump administration to halt the supply of weapons to the Kurds in the aftermath of the Raqqa campaign.

The US had vowed to ask its allies to surrender weapons once the fight against Isis had been completed. A senior Turkish official told the *Guardian*: “This is plainly ridiculous. It could not happen even if they wanted it to. All the serial numbers of the weapons have been erased to start with.”

Bashar al-Assad and Russia, which has backed him into a winning position on the battlefield, support Turkey’s plan, which they see as limiting US influence in the war-ravaged country.

“Afrin is not within the coalition area of operations,” said a US military spokesman, in a statement seemed designed to reassure Ankara that the proposed Kurdish border force will not creep into areas that Turkey deems to be extra sensitive.

US-backed rebels and Turkish-supported groups have fought alongside each other throughout the war, particularly in Idlib province, where Russia, Iran and Syrian troops have mounted a new offensive against the opposition in recent weeks. However, as the war has dragged on, alliances and agendas have splintered.

Japanese Helped Save Armenians And Greeks During 1922

By Philip Chrysopoulos

YEREVAN (Public Radio of Armenia) – Researcher Vicken Babkenian wrote how a Japanese ship saved the lives of hundreds of Armenians and Greeks from genocide in Smyrna in 1922, and the overall humanitarian aid provided by the Japanese.

Babkenian, along with Professor Peter Stanley, are the authors of the book *Armenia, Australia and the Great War*.

In the book, they wrote about the widely unknown humanitarian aid that the Japanese showed towards Greeks and Armenians, during that turbulent time.

The most remarkable story of Japanese humanitarianism during the 1922 Smyrna catastrophe is about the captain and crew of a Japanese ship, who saved many lives.

Hundreds of thousands of Armenian and Greek refugees had fled to the quay of Smyrna as Turkish troops entered and occupied the city on September 9, 1922. The Turkish occupation was followed by the massacre and deportation of Armenian and Greek civilians.

About 20 allied ships were at the harbor watching the events, as a fire broke out in the Armenian quarter four days later, which eventually destroyed most of the city. One ship was from Japan, and it was the one that mobilized the rescue of desperate refugees.

Anna Harlowe Birge; the wife of the American Professor Birge of the International College at Smyrna, witnessed the helpless refugees crowding each other off the wharves as Smyrna began to burn. Men and women could be seen swimming around in the hope of rescue, until they drowned. She wrote:

“In the harbour, at that time, was a Japanese freighter, which had just arrived loaded to the decks with a very valuable cargo of silks, laces and china representing many thousands of dollars. The Japanese captain, when he realized the situation did not hesitate. The whole cargo went overboard into the dirty waters of the harbour, and the freighter was loaded with several hundred refugees, who were taken to Piraeus and landed in safety on Greek shores,” wrote Stavros T. Stavridis in an article published in the *American Hellenic International Foundation’s Policy Journal*.



INTERNATIONAL

AGBU Marks International Day of Commemoration of Victims of Genocide

NEW YORK — The Armenian General Benevolent Union (AGBU) participated in efforts to raise awareness on genocide and human rights issues through thought-provoking discussions in Beirut, New York and Paris, in support of the United Nations' initiative.

The programs featured well-known activists, pundits, journalists, scholars and witnesses of war crimes.

"December 9, the United Nations-designated day for remembrance of genocide victims, is another opportunity for us, as one Armenian nation, to be a leading voice in this global conversation and to help shape a world free of these preventable human tragedies," said AGBU President Berge Setrakian. "AGBU remains committed to supporting the efforts of the international community to prevent genocides and wars against humanity, and to promoting a critical dialogue based on lessons learned through our history of survival."

In September 2015, the United Nations passed a resolution — introduced by Armenia — declaring December 9 as the International Day of Commemoration and Dignity of the Victims of the Crime of Genocide and of the Prevention of this Crime. It aims to raise awareness of the UN Genocide Convention.

Beirut

On December 7, a day-long seminar titled Preventing and Combatting Human Rights Violations: A Responsibility for All took place in the American University of Beirut (AUB), focusing on the role of education, civil society and media in genocide prevention. The seminar was held in partnership with the Issam Fares Institute for Public Policy and International Affairs at AUB and in collaboration with the Foundation for Human and Humanitarian Rights in Lebanon, UN Global Compact Lebanon Network, UMAM Documentation and Research Center, CEMAM Research Center for the Modern Arab World at the Saint Joseph University and L'Orient-Le Jour.

Dr. Keith David Watenpaugh, professor of human rights studies at University of California, Davis, opened the conference delivering a keynote speech on satirist Yervant Odian, who was among the few Armenian intellectuals to survive the genocide. Watenpaugh further examined comparative genocide studies during

and school curricula as it would promote transitional justice and end impunity.

Speakers on the second panel discussed the role of civil society in raising awareness of human rights violations and shared Lebanon's

le Jour; Preethi Nallu, the founder of Refugees Deeply; and Ayman Mhanna, the executive director of the Samir Kassir Foundation, who shed light on the role of the media in genocide prevention and the incitement of hatred. Fawaz

Paris

On December 9, AGBU Europe, the European Grassroots Antiracist Movement (EGAM)/ Elie Wiesel Network and Nouvelles d'Arménie held a conference titled "How to



(from left to right) Award-winning director Evgeny Afineevsky; Omer Ismail, of Enough Project; former journalist Sherine Tadros; Akshaya Kumar, Of Human Rights Watch; Evan Cinq-Mars, of Center for Civilians in Conflict; Dr. Bridget Moix, of Peace Direct, and Oscar-winning director Terry George.

experience of overcoming the consequences of the civil war. It featured Leila Zahoui, a founding member and secretary general of the Lebanese Association of History (LAH); Maitre Carmen Hassoun Abou Jaoude, a professor at the Holy Spirit University of Kaslik and a researcher at the Saint Joseph University's Research Center for the Modern Arab World (CEMAM); Hoda Barakat, the regional human rights education project manager at Amnesty International; Lokman Slim, the political activist and founding member of the UMAM Documentation and Research, and Fadi Abi Allam, Lebanese Prime Minister's consultant on human security issues. Jaoude presented a pilot project in the Lebanese schools, which helps

shared her experience covering conflicts and examined journalists' alignment and objectivity. "I am biased to humanitarian issues and I do not believe in neutrality," said Fawaz.

The panels were moderated by Dr. Ohannes Geukjian, the acting chairman of AUB's Political Science and Public Administration Department; Wail Kheir, the managing director of Foundation of Human and Humanitarian Rights in Lebanon, and Habib Battah, the founder of Beirut Report and an instructor at AUB.

New York

Advancing Civilian Protection: Human Rights in Times of Upheaval, which took place on December 6 before a capacity crowd at the Harvard Club in New York City, shed light on past and ongoing atrocities with the goal of engaging stakeholders and the public to take action. The panel event co-hosted by News Deeply focused on the importance of documenting crime against humanity as they happen, listening to the communities on the ground, ensuring a timely response and, most importantly, preventing the atrocities before they even happen.

Both sessions were moderated by Anna Therese Day, an award-winning independent reporter and social media researcher. The first session featured Evan Cinq-Mars, the United Nations advisor at Center for Civilians in Conflict; Omer Ismail, senior advisor at Enough Project; Akshaya Kumar, deputy United Nations director at Human Rights Watch; and Dr. Bridget Moix, US senior representative at Peace Direct. The speakers explored ongoing crimes against humanity, early warning signs and the role of local experts and civil society activists in the prevention of mass crimes.

In the second session, the conversation focused on the power of storytelling and the role of films and the media in documenting atrocities and educating the public, as well as encouraging people to take action. Award-winning directors Evgeny Afineevsky (*Winter on Fire* and *Cries from Syria*) and Terry George (*The Promise* and *Hotel Rwanda*), as well as Sherine Tadros, representative and head of New York (United Nations) Office, Amnesty International, engaged in a meaningful discussion, sharing their experiences of shaping narratives around human suffering.

Stop the Killing."

The conference was comprised of three panels and featured practitioners, scholars, journalists and witnesses who explored topics ranging from the responsibility to protect and early prevention to post-conflict reconciliation and eye witness accounts about crimes in the Central African Republic, Iraq and Syria. Speakers also highlighted the continuing controversy around the legitimacy and effectiveness of external interventions to protect the victims of atrocities.

The conference featured Frank Engel, member of the European Parliament and chair of the Elie Wiesel Network for the prevention of mass crimes; Dr. Cristina Stefan, director of the European Centre for the Responsibility to Protect (ECR2P); Jack Mayerhofer, chief of staff at the Auschwitz Institute for Peace and Reconciliation (USA); Delkhwas Hacı, director of the global Yazidi non-profit Yazda (Sweden); Godefroy Mokamane, board member of the Interfaith Platform in the Republic of Central Africa; Beate Klarsfeld, a well-known German activist; Nadia Gortzounian, president of AGBU Europe; and Benjamin Abtan, president of European Grassroots Antiracist Movement (EGAM).

Among the many excellent points raised, Mayerhofer focused on the practice of establishing task forces responsible for the prevention of atrocities in Latin America. "Genocide is a process, it requires planning and organization. The good thing about that is that planning can be interrupted. The earlier you start, the more effective you can be," said Mayerhofer. Hacı, a young Yazidi woman originally from Iraq, shared a harrowing account of the Sinjar massacre by the Islamic State, saying, "Although it has been over three years since the attack on Sinjar, thousands of Yazidis remain in Islamic State's captivity, but the Iraqi authorities and the international community have failed to take meaningful action to assist or rescue them."

The panels were moderated by Nicolas Tavitian, staff coordinator of AGBU Europe; Christopher Metz is staff coordinator and development officer at EGAM, and Ara Toranian, editor-in-chief of *Nouvelles d'Arménie*.

For more information on the International Day of Commemoration and Dignity of the Victims of the Crime of Genocide and of the Prevention of this Crime, visit <http://www.un.org/en/events/genocideprevention/day/>



(from left to right) Dr. Cristina Stefan, Jack Mayerhofer, MEP Frank Engel and moderator Nicolas Tavitian. Speakers explored topics ranging from the responsibility to protect and early prevention to post-conflict reconciliation tools.

the first panel, which also included scholars Dr. Vicken Tcheterian, a lecturer in history and international relations at the University of Geneva and Webster University Geneva, and lawyer Dr. Nidal Jurdi, the deputy regional representative at the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights. They emphasized the importance of including genocide and human rights themes in the university

teach children about the Lebanese Civil War. "We wanted to encourage dialogue between the generation of war and the younger generation to know what has happened and to avoid possible future war and violence," she said.

The conference concluded with a panel featuring Youmna Fawaz, a prominent investigative reporter and journalist at Al Jadeed TV; Jeanine Jalkh, the *Grand Reporter* and *L'Orient*



85
Years

REFLECTING • CONNECTING • INSPIRING

The Armenian Mirror-Spectator

Thank you for your support. We had a great 85th anniversary symposium and gala, and, as long as you continue to support us, we will work to further improve the *Mirror* both in its print and digital version.

We want to let our readers know that we have been working hard over the past year to bring you more news and services.

Feel free to visit us in our Watertown Baikar Building headquarters, or call, write or email us with your comments and suggestions.

- We increased the print edition of the paper from 16 to 20 pages weekly.
- We improved the paper quality used in printing the paper.
- We have begun to increase our coverage of events in various parts of the world through special correspondents.
- We redesigned our website (www.mirrorspectator.com), which now offers more functionalities: you can see videos, comment, and contact us directly. You can directly input *free* calendar notices for your events. You will also shortly be able to pay with credit cards for your subscriptions or make gifts online.
- We are now sending out emails twice a week with links to new articles and videos from our website. Please send us (info@mirrorspectator.com or through our website) the email addresses of your friends so that they too can enjoy this *free* service.

The Armenian Mirror-Spectator hopes your New Year will be a great one—and that along the way we can continue to keep you informed about developments in the Armenian world. Keep your friends and family in the loop by buying them a print subscription, and send us their emails to get weekly notices.

www.mirrorspectator.com

Community News

FAR Develops Vocational Training Center for Armenian Children With Special Needs

NEW YORK — On January 9, the Fund for Armenian Relief (FAR) Board of Directors met at the Diocesan Center in New York to evaluate FAR's operations and set plans for the current year and beyond. Archbishop Khajag Barsamian, Diocesan Primate and FAR Board President, presided.

Five years ago, FAR embarked on the ambitious Breaking the Cycle of Poverty Program (BCPP), aiming at self-sustainability for the people of the Berd Region in Tavush Province in Armenia. Under the board's supervision, a multi-layered, multi-year program to address problems in economic development, healthcare, children's nutrition, education and labor force development was developed.

Assessing the results of the first stage of BCPP, the directors were glad to see major progress in advancing to the objectives set by the program. In addition to tangible accomplishments, the Board stressed as one of the most important results of FAR's work in that borderline region the fact that people in the region are gradually regaining hope that changes are possible. Moreover, they are starting to make these changes themselves to have a better life.

The Board expressed its deep appreciation to the Mardigian Family for their visionary generosity and continued support, which would make it possible to extend the program for five more years.



Marta Batmasian, with FAR Board member Oscar Tatosian in the background

The directors approved a new program of FAR for the next five years: the development of a Vocational Training Center for Armenia's children with special needs, which was made possible thanks to a grant from James and Marta Batmasian. As envisioned, the new center will become a state-of-the-art facility, to support older children in need from the entire country to get ready to lead independent lives and to become contributing citizens of the country. It will give them vocational and life skills crucial to live dignified independent lives.

The suggested model and approach of this new FAR endeavor is in tune with today's reform in Armenia's education system, pursuing inclusion. In the meantime, with this project FAR would be able to create a model that expands the concept of inclusion from the classroom to the workplace.

Reviewing financial statements from 2017, the board expressed satisfaction with the financial standing of the organization, and noted significant growth in its assets which will enable FAR to set more ambitious goals to meet the critical needs of the Armenia's people.

The Board also reviewed progress made in "rebranding" FAR to increase its global visibility and broaden its donor base.

The Board members agreed to collectively visit Armenia in the fall of 2018 to evaluate progress in FAR's mission of improving the quality of life for Armenia's citizens.



(PHOTO BY DAN ADDISON, UNIVERSITY COMMUNICATIONS)

Leon Yacoubian vowed to do something to help the Armenian people, even as he pursues his undergraduate degree at UVA.

Engineering Student Tackles Housing Problem In Armenia, from Virginia

CHARLOTTESVILLE, Va. — Leon Yacoubian is a fourth-year student at the University of Virginia, but he's already putting his education to use on the other side of the planet.

An ethnic Armenian majoring in civil and environmental engineering, Yacoubian and some of his fellow students are seeking to develop housing for Armenians still suffering from a 1988 earthquake. Each of his proposed structures, which house four people, measures about 158 square meters (or about 1,700 square feet) and costs around \$7,500 — costs he hopes will be defrayed by donations from Armenian expatriates. "There are more Armenians living outside Armenia than inside," he said.

A week before he came to the University in 2014, Yacoubian toured Gyumri, Armenia, with his father and was badly shaken. He saw the destruction that persisted from the earthquake more than a quarter-century earlier, with survivors still living in the shipping crates that were supposed to be their temporary shelter.

"I was in shock," said Yacoubian, who has lived in the Armenian capital of Yerevan — about 55 miles from Gyumri — since 2012, when his family escaped the Syrian civil war. "I saw where nature had overgrown the fallen buildings. I thought 'Why am I so lucky? Why am I here and they are there?'"

Yacoubian was determined to do something about the plight of the Gyumri residents. He launched the "Tuff Armenia Project" in the fall of 2014 with the goal to design and engineer small houses made out of tuff, a local volcanic ash that he hoped could be formed into building blocks.

There are about 7,000 people in Gyumri who are still affected by the earthquake. Yacoubian's teams are focusing on one district, Number 104, known as the Bus-Stop District, which has about 400 residents, requiring about 100 structures.

He now has two teams working on it. One is a field team of engineering students who have been to Gyumri and seen the problem firsthand. The team's expenses were defrayed by a \$20,000 Jefferson Public Citizens grant and a \$10,000 Center for Global Health grant as they gathered material for research and analyzed the data.

The second team comprises students for whom the Tuff Armenia Project is a classroom exercise. Yacoubian's project has been included in two civil engineering classes, "Civil Engineering Research and Design," offered in the fall, and "Civil Engineering Design and Practice," offered in the spring. Fourteen students signed up.

"Leon convinced us that these courses would benefit from the real-world project," said Leidy Klotz, an associate professor of civil and environmental engineering and an associate professor of architecture. "We were looking for a way to do this. Architecture students were part of the team that traveled to Gyumri and we are exploring ways to have a merged architecture and engineering capstone opportunity through coursework as well."

see ENGINEERING, page 9

From a Scary Delivery to a Happy Ending

LOS ANGELES (*People*) — Alexis Ohanian is reflecting on the moment he almost lost his wife, Serena Williams, and their daughter.

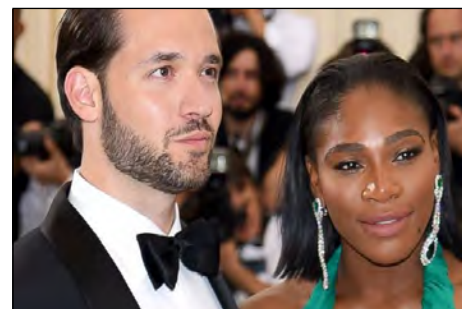
The Reddit co-founder shared a photo from Williams' *Vogue* photo shoot on Instagram Thursday with their 4-month-old daughter Alexis Olympia, and began his caption with a sweet note, writing, "This one is going on the desk at work."

Ohanian, 34, continued, "I can't imagine life without these two," referring to *Vogue*'s February cover story in which Williams, 36, described her difficult experience giving birth to her first child and the subsequent major health complications which followed.

Ohanian continued, "This ordeal, as well as the weeks and months after, has made me an even bigger advocate for paid parental leave (not just for my employees — men & women alike — but for all). We're blessed in a lot of ways and I couldn't imagine a new parent going through all of that without all the support, financial security, and flexibility we had."

Williams revealed to *Vogue* that her plummeting heart rate reached dangerously low levels during contractions, leading to an emergency cesarean section.

Though the surgery went well, what followed was a six-day battle with a pulmonary embolism



Alexis Ohanian and his wife, Serena Williams

that led to multiple surgeries and a handful of additional medical troubles for Williams.

"That was an amazing feeling," Williams recalled of having a crying newborn fall silent when laid on her mother's chest seconds after birth. "And then everything went bad."

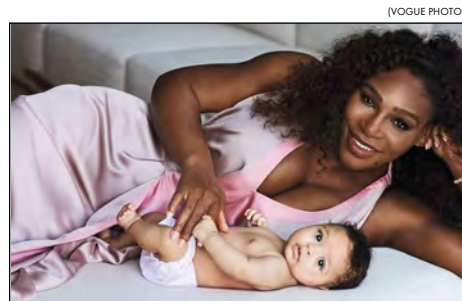
Symptoms of Williams' problems began the day after her daughter's birth, as Williams experienced sudden shortness of breath while recovering in the hospital.

Having had blood clots in the past and because she wasn't taking blood thinners due to her c-section, she knew that the breathing problems she was experiencing were due to another pulmonary embolism and immediately told the nearest nurse (between gasps for breath) that she needed a CT scan with contrast and IV heparin.

The nurse, however, thought Williams was just feeling confused from her pain medication. Instead, doctors performed an ultrasound of her legs, which ultimately revealed nothing.

"I was like, 'A Doppler? I told you, I need a CT scan and a heparin drip,'" Williams remembers.

When they finally listened, the CT turned up several small blood clots, which had settled into her lungs. "I was like, 'Listen to Dr. Williams!'" she jokes as she was put on the blood thinner drip.



(VOGUE PHOTO)

Serena Williams and Alexis Ohanian Junior



COMMUNITY NEWS

Armenian Bar Association Partners with City of Glendale to Combat Elder Abuse

GLENDALÉ — In late 2017, the administration of a prominent Los Angeles-area Armenian high school alerted the public that a group of youths, pretending to be students from the school, had entered apartment buildings and approached homes with the intent to target and swindle the elderly. These young impostors claimed to be Armenian school students and concocted a scheme of abject dishonesty in which they fabricated a sales pitch that they were collecting much-needed funds for the betterment of their school library.

Understandably, many elderly Armenians responded to what they believed to be genuine calls for financial assistance and handed over their money for what they thought was a good cause. To help bring these deceitful acts to an end, the Armenian Bar Association moved swiftly and contacted Onnig Bulanikian, Director of the City of Glendale's Community Services and Parks Department. The Armenian Bar proposed partnering with the Department's Senior Services Division to present to the senior-citizen community a series of "Know Your Rights" lectures so that they may be made aware of and in a better position to protect themselves from such and other deplorable attempts of abuse.

"The elderly members in our community are an especially vulnerable segment of the population who, unfortunately, sometimes find themselves to be the victims of abuse and financial scams designed to take advantage of them," said Saro Kerkonian, Chairman of the Board of the Armenian Bar

Association. "Working with Glendale city officials, we identified the areas of greatest need and developed a program to educate the elderly and their caretakers to heighten awareness of the issues and take steps which will protect them from falling prey to the unscrupulous who seek to take advantage



"Working with Glendale city officials, we identified the areas of greatest need and developed a program to educate the elderly and their caretakers..."

—Saro Kerkonian

of our senior citizens," added Lucy Varpetian, Armenian Bar Association member and senior assistant city attorney for the City of Glendale.

To accomplish the goals of the partnership, two primary objectives were set into place: First, the City of Glendale's

Community Services and Parks Department translated into Armenian a detailed informational brochure, which explains the various forms of abuse that the elderly can be subjugated to, provides tested methods which the elderly can implement to avoid becoming victims of abuse, and also provides references to social service agencies which can assist once an act or acts of abuse take place. The brochure will be disseminated throughout the City of Glendale, at locations such as the public social service centers, libraries, City Hall, and other similar public-gathering venues.

The second manner in which the elderly will be served through this program is by way of public forums where noted experts in the field will speak about the subject of elder abuse and financial scams directed at the elderly. The first two presentations will be taking place on January 17, at 10:30 a.m. at the Adult Recreation Center located at 201 E. Colorado St., Glendale, (presented in Armenian). The second lecture which will be presented in English will be held on February 8, at 10:30 a.m. at the Sparr Heights Community Center, 1613 Glencoe Way, Glendale.

Los Angeles Deputy District Attorney and active Armenian Bar member, Amy Ashvanyan, who has successfully prosecuted numerous defendants accused of elder abuse, will impart her years of prosecutorial expertise to attendees at these first two events. Admission to the events are free of charge. For more information, call (818) 548-3775.

OBITUARY

Judge Jacob Hagopian Leaves Twin Legacy of Service

NARRAGANSETT, R.I. — US District Court Magistrate Judge Jacob Hagopian relished his years on the federal bench, but even more so his two decades in the U.S. Army, where he rose to become the youngest colonel at the time in 1968.

Such was the remarkable life of Hagopian, who died November 10 at age 90 with his family by his side.

"He had a love for court and country. You always knew as much as he loved the court, it came second to the Army," US District Court Chief Judge William E. Smith said.

Hagopian grew up poor in a Manton Avenue tenement in Providence, the son of the late Peter and Varvar Hagopian, who fled the Armenian Genocide. He left Mount Pleasant High School to enlist in the Army at age 17 and quickly rose through the ranks.

"He was true to his roots. He never forgot where he came from," said Thomas G. Shaffer, program director for the Master of Studies in Law at Roger Williams University School of Law who clerked for Hagopian from 1999 to 2008.

Mark J. Hagopian recalled two instances that captured his father's values, both during his time in the Army in the late 1940s at Fort Bragg. Although the Army was integrated at the time, Hagopian took pride in riding with the soldiers of color at the back of the bus, Mark said.

"That was his choice, because they were men of honor," Mark said.

Another time, Hagopian picked up his friend and fellow Rhode Islander John "Black Jack" Warrick for a ride in his convertible. Both men wore their Class A uniforms, bringing all they passed to salute regardless of Warrick's race. It was based on more than just a laugh, but on principle, Mark said.

"He was straight as an arrow. He was kind of a walking testament to old-fashioned virtues. Honor, valor permeated every aspect of what he did," 1st US Circuit Court of Appeals Senior Judge Bruce M. Selya said of his friend.

Those qualities made him the go-to judge for handling settlement conferences.

"He was always a man who did his homework, listened. He had a strong moral sense of right and wrong," Selya said.

"He was extremely fair," said Karen Ellsworth, who covered Hagopian for years at the *Providence Journal* and became friends with the judge and his wife of 64 years, Mary. "He did not make you feel like he was better than you."

While Hagopian's judicial career wins praise, so do his years in the military, including time spent engaging in electronic eavesdropping between Soviet and East German military forces in Berlin and as a parachutist with the 82nd

Airborne Division. He earned his GED, undergraduate and law degrees while serving in the military and raising five children. He later enrolled in the Judge Advocate General's School and was soon assigned as an officer in the Judge Advocate General Corps.

"He looked at life as a series of challenges," his son Mark said. "There was no challenge that wasn't worth taking."

Hagopian retired as a military judge in the Court of Military Review in 1970 while in line to be appointed a brigadier general, according to his family. The next year he was named a federal magistrate, a position he held through his retirement in 1992. He was recalled to the bench six months later, taking on many of the cases brought by prisoners at the Adult Correctional Institutions. He fully retired in

2012.

"He was a man who had not one, but two sterling careers," Selya said.

Hagopian was also known for his warm manner and for taking others under his wing, including young soldiers as well as Roger Williams University School of Law students.

"He mentored one person after another. He always looked out for the underprivileged," Mark Hagopian said.

In addition to his son Mark and his wife, Hagopian is survived by daughter Mary Lou Hagopian-Lamb; sons Dana A. Hagopian, Jan C. Hagopian and Jon G. Hagopian; and five grandchildren. The funeral was held from Saints Sahag & Mesrob Armenian Church, Providence. Burial, with full military honors, was held in Arlington National Cemetery.



Robert Sanasarian Keeper of Watertown Memories

WATERTOWN — Robert Sanasarian of Watertown died on January 12.

He was the uncle of Roxanne Baker of Brookline, Kevin Baker of Randolph, Joy Morgan and her husband George of RI and the late Mark Asadoorian and the great-uncle of Mark and Marina Morgan. He was the son of the late Aram and Vartouhi (Jerian) Sanasarian and brother of the late Audrey Baker and Arpie Asadoorian.

Services were at St. James Armenian Church, 465 Mt. Auburn Street, Watertown on Thursday, January 18. Interment followed in Ridgeland Cemetery, Watertown.

He was a member of the St. James Choir for more than 70 years. He was also a member of St. James Men's Club, served as a bingo volunteer. He was also a member of Knights of Vartan, Ararat Lodge #1.

Armenian Mirror-Spectator correspondent Nancy Kalajian interviewed Sanasarian at length for a piece that appeared in late fall, about the history of old Watertown. (<https://mirrorspectator.com/2017/11/30/tribute-old-watertown-bob-sanasarian-walks-memory-lane/>)

Giragosian

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COMMUNITY NEWS

Engineering Student Tackles Housing Problem in Armenia, from Virginia

ENGINEERING, from page 7

Students working on the Armenia Project incorporated it in their civil and environmental engineering capstone experience in the fall in Klotz's research and design course, and will continue in the spring design and practice course under Brian Smith, professor of civil and environmental engineering and the chair of the department. The team also enrolled in professor James Groves' interdisciplinary engineering design course.

Yacoubian said the class project is split into three sections: one dealing with site selection, a second team designing the house and a third team working with the tuff stone material. He said tuff has proven to be an unreliable building material, but still can be used as a façade material. Yacoubian said it is important in designing the buildings to make them look as if they belong to their surroundings.

The teams are preparing architectural designs and shovel-ready engineering plans, and Yacoubian said project members are working with non-governmental organizations in Armenia to build the structures. He said the houses, which would be built on girders supported by pylons, would be "half-

built," meaning they would have two bedrooms, a bathroom and a kitchen, with space for the homeowner to expand the structure.

"The residents can build the rest, if they want additional bedrooms or a workshop for a home business," Yacoubian said.

The survivors are very interdependent, he said. "It is a tight community and they rely on their neighbors. They share community gardens and rely on each other for child care and sharing space. It is a tight community and we want to maintain that and keep families together."

He said it is important that the people in the communities have a sense of being part of the solution.

"We want to design this 'with' the people, not 'for' the people," Yacoubian said. "We need to listen to what they are saying. We need to see them as people and not just data points. Everyone has a story to tell."

He said at one point they gave the Armenians disposable cameras and told them to photograph negative and positive things in their lives. The people all said that their families and their gardens were "positive," while rubble, trash, rust and mold were "negative," he said.

While Yacoubian's project is focused on the problems in Armenia, the lessons are not limited to one crisis.

"The Armenian problem is unique, but the lessons are certainly transferrable," Klotz said. "For example, learning about the unique needs of a community, understanding available material and human resources in a region and designing accordingly."

And the problems can be approached in many different ways.

Bethany Gordon is part of the field team. A first-year PhD student in civil engineering from Richmond, Gordon is experimenting with virtual reality as a way of presenting engineers with problems to be solved in far-away places such as Gyumri.

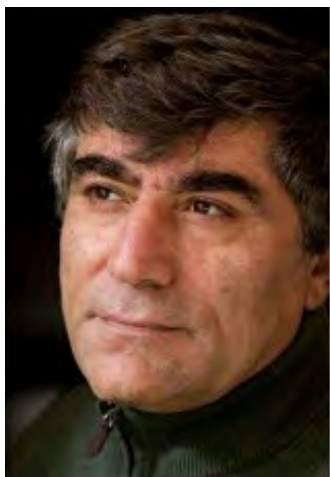
"Virtual reality can give you an understanding of someone else's world in minutes," Gordon said in a podcast that won an international competition this summer. "It's not a perfect understanding, and maybe you are not aware of all the cultural nuances, but ... you can make that connection in five minutes by sitting on your couch and looking through a \$10 virtual reality viewer."

Gordon, who received her undergraduate

degree in civil engineering from UVA, wants to integrate virtual reality into her research, which involves developing sustainable design interventions for civil engineers using behavioral science and neuroscience. Gordon is also starting to explore the idea that increasing the blood flow to the parts of an engineer's brain dealing with empathy will produce more sustainable designs. She is also working on the hypothesis that the later in the process an engineer commits his or her design to a model, the more willing the engineer is to change the design.

Yacoubian said he sees the problem in Gyumri as a "wicked problem," a social or cultural problem that is difficult or impossible to solve for as many as four reasons: incomplete or contradictory knowledge; the number of people and opinions involved; the large economic burden; and the interconnected nature of these problems with other problems.

"I see the issue in Gyumri as having no singular solution," he said. "Instead, there needs to be a multitude of solutions, each tackling a root problem instead of a symptom. I see the Tuff Armenia Project as one step toward a solution for one of the problems."



WE REMEMBER HRANT

Commemorating the 11th Anniversary of the death of Hrant Dink

"LET US COME TOGETHER TO HONOR HIS MEMORY"

SUNDAY, JANUARY 21, 2018

Following Church Services—12:30pm

Hosted by Friends of Hrant Dink

REFLECTIONS BY

OHANNES KILICDAGI

Academician, Agos Newspaper Columnist

GAYE OZPINAR

Attorney & Human Rights Activist

Reception to follow. All are welcome.

St. James Armenian Church

Armene & Veronica Tarvezian Hall

465 Mount Auburn St., Watertown MA

Middle Eastern Restaurant to Replace East Nashville Bar

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (*Bizjournals*) — The former home of Holland House Bar & Refuge in East Nashville will buzz with booze and food again in 2018, when Middle Eastern restaurant Lyra takes over the West Eastland Avenue building.

Helmed by chef Hrant Arakelian and his wife, Elizabeth Endicott, Lyra will offer a variety of Middle Eastern options in a "nice, modernist setting," Arakelian said. Endicott, a restaurant industry veteran, will handle the bar program at the restaurant, which the couple hopes to open in late spring.

Holland House's July closure, which came amid an ongoing legal battle between restaurateur Terry Raley and his former partner and landlord, Cees Brinkman, was a shock to many in East Nashville and left a void in one of the neighborhood's trendiest areas.

Arakelian's plan to take over the space continues the surge of new restaurants joining the ranks of Nashville's food scene and adds to the growing diversity of dining options in Music City.

"We've been looking for a place to do this style of restaurant for a while," said Arakelian, a veteran of the Holland House kitchen who has also worked at Butchertown Hall in Germantown

and Etch in downtown Nashville, among other hotspots. The building, he said, "screams" for a "good restaurant" to call it home.

Arakelian, a Nashville native whose family



Chef Hrant Arakelian

roots are in Lebanon, expects Lyra to offer "reasonable" prices and not be overly expensive or formal.

Read News in Armenian at:



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Applications and other information may be obtained from:

**Armenian Students' Association
Scholarship Committee**

333 Atlantic Avenue • Warwick, RI 02888

Tel. 401-461-6144 • Fax 401-461-6112

email: headasa@aol.com

Deadline for returning completed applications: March 15, 2018



COMMUNITY NEWS

Armenian Christmas at St. Vartan's Cathedral as it Kicks off 50th Year

CHRISTMAS, from page 1

faith. Who need consolation in a time of trial. Who seek a place of shelter in the storms of life. St. Vartan Cathedral is a sanctuary for all our people. And it is calling its sons and daughters home in this golden anniversary year."

The Primate concluded by inviting all to visit St. Vartan Cathedral in 2018, especially during the celebration on May 5-6, in the presence of His Holiness Karekin II, the Catholicos of All Armenians. "I invite you to enter this sanctuary to find the peace that cannot be found anywhere else in the world. Within these walls—within the walls of every Armenian Church—the peace of our Lord Jesus Christ is waiting to be discovered," he said.

The Very Rev. Mamigon Kiledjian and Very Rev. Mesrop Parsamyan also participated in the Armenian Christmas service at the cathedral.

Hratch Kaprielian served as godfather for the *churorhnek* (Blessing of Water) ceremony, which commemorates the baptism of Jesus by the hand of John the Baptist.

"It is the 50th anniversary year of St. Vartan Cathedral and I am very grateful for the opportunity to serve as the godfather of the cross," said Kaprielian. "We have to preserve our Armenian identity and stay stronger together."

For the third consecutive year, the Diocese broadcast the Armenian Christmas liturgy over the Internet. The live broadcast with a running narration was watched by some 10,000 viewers on Livestream and Facebook. Hundreds more have tuned in the recorded program in the days that followed.

The sacred music of the Divine Liturgy was rendered beautifully throughout the service by the St. Vartan Cathedral Choir, under the direction of conductor Khoren Mekanejian. Accompanying on the organ was Florence Avakian.

A traditional home blessing and Christmas reception were held in Haik and Alice Kavookjian Auditorium following services on January 6. The St. Vartan Cathedral's Shushi Dance Ensemble junior group delighted the crowd with their performance.

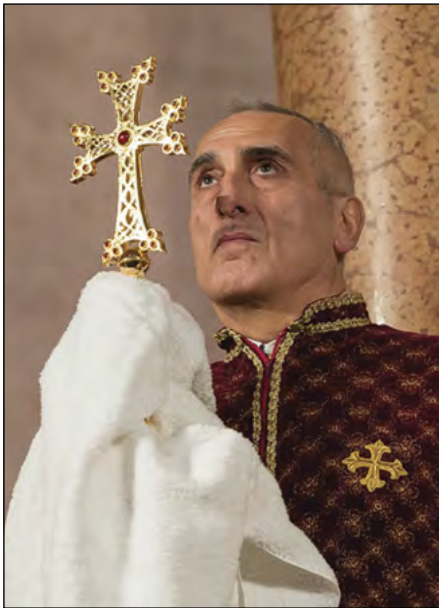
An Armenian Christmas Eve service was held on the evening of January 5. The celebrant was Fr. Mesrop Parsamyan, the Diocese's Director of Ministries.

Parishes across the Eastern Diocese also held Christmas services on January 5 and January 6, with some performing the Blessing of Water service on Sunday, January 7.

—Photos of Armenian Christmas liturgy by Albin Lohr-Jones.



Children performed at Kavookjian Auditorium.



Hratch Kaprielian served as godfather for the *churorhnek*.



Loving family members at the joyous occasion



A singer in the chorus

Street Renaming to Honor Armenians in Bayside

By Fr. Abraham Malkhasyan

BAYSIDE, N. Y. — Three years ago, in January 2015, as the Holy Martyrs Genocide Centennial Committee began plans for their year of celebratory events, the idea to symbolically co-name 210th Street from Horace Harding Expressway to 58th Avenue as "Armenia Way," was born.

With the help of Garo Sekdorian, former member of Community Board 11 (CB 11) that serves Bayside and the surrounding communities, Dr. Lynn Cetin (chair of the Centennial Committee) and I embarked on a mission to make this dream a reality.

While Dr. Cetin drafted a letter to the Community Board describing the connection of Armenians to Bayside, I personally went door-to-door to all the neighbors on 210th Street to secure their support of symbolically renaming the street. It was important that they understood that the co-naming would not change their actual address, but just be a symbolic gesture to our community.

Navigating the world of community politics was new to me and no easy task. With the tremendous help of Garo Sekdorian, I sent letters to community leaders and politicians seeking support for this project. Despite our efforts and the many connections I made with many prominent community members, the project fizzled and the dream of seeing "Armenia Way" on 210th Street dwindled over the next two years.

Last fall, with a new political climate in the community, I revitalized the street co-naming project and resubmitted an updated letter to

Community Board 11. With the support of State Senator Tony Avella and City Council Member Barry Grodenchik, the project regained new life. On December 11, 2017, after almost three years of waiting, I was invited to the Transportation Committee board meeting

chairs) and I attended the CB 11 meeting in Bayside. In my public remarks, I thanked the local community for their support of Holy Martyrs and the Armenian community for the past six decades. This co-naming is our way of remembering those who established our com-

loves us back!" said Dr. Cetin.

Community Board Chair Christine Haider told her own story about her connection to Holy Martyrs. A non-Armenian living in the area, Holy Martyrs was the only available kindergarten for her son 49 years ago. She spoke highly of the school and the education her son received.

Eileen Miller, another Community Board member, stated that she has lived down the block from Holy Martyrs for 12 years and complimented our church community for being welcoming to the neighbors of all religious backgrounds.

After three years of waiting and some setbacks, on the evening of January 8, Community Board 11 voted unanimously to co-name 210th Street from Horace Harding Expressway to 58th Avenue as "Armenia Way."

After the vote, which brought applause and congratulations from all, those of us attending reached out to Sekdorian, who now lives in Florida.

"What a beautiful gift to Holy Martyrs on its 60th anniversary!" wrote Sekdorian upon receiving the news.

I am humbled and grateful to all who supported this project from day one. I am especially thankful to our wonderful neighbors on 210th Street and the members of CB 11. I am excited to see "Armenia Way" on the corner of 210th Street and will notify all of you about the official street sign unveiling once I am made aware of the details.

(Fr. Abraham Malkhasyan is pastor of the Armenian Church of the Holy Martyrs, Bayside, NY.)



The "Armenia Way" block of 210th Street in Bayside, Queens (NYC)

of CB 11 to present the co-naming project. Dr. Lynn Cetin and I attended the meeting and were excited to hear the committee unanimously vote in approval of the co-naming of 210th Street. Now, one more step was needed — the approval of the entire community board.

On January 8, 2018, Dr. Cetin, Bruce Ashbahian (Holy Martyrs' 60th Anniversary co-

munity years ago and thanking them. Cetin told the attendees that Holy Martyrs' annual Street Festival is a way our community has given back to our neighborhood.

"Our community has discussed many times about relocating our church, but we have always said that we love Queens and are grateful to the community here. We hope Queens



COMMUNITY NEWS

Saugus Dinosaur May Have New Neighbors This Spring

By Bridget Turcotte

SAUGUS, Mass. (Itemlive.com) – The first of eight buildings guarded by the orange dinosaur in the \$150-million Essex Landing development on Route 1 is nearing completion and residents are expected to move in by spring.

At the top of the hill, just behind the 20-foot, 6,000-pound dinosaur, developers are breaking ground on a second apartment building.

“It will be on the very top back of the hill with views of Revere Beach and downtown Boston,” said developer Michael Barsamian. “We view this location as a 10. It’s close to Boston, it’s close to the airport. It will be close to the new casino. A lot of people don’t look at Saugus as that kind of location, but it’s getting more and more desirable.”

TB Holdings Inc., an entity managed by Barsamian and Michael Touchette, bought a vacant 1.2-acre site next to the golf course in 2013 for \$3.3 million, and they closed on the 1.4-acre golf parcel in September for \$1.4 million. The

project has an overall timeline of five years.

The first building will house either an 8,200-square-foot restaurant with a banquet space, or two smaller restaurants, with one-bedroom apartments on the upper floors, said Barsamian. He hopes to find a middle- to high-end restaurant that serves Italian cuisine.

Behind it will be a free-standing space to house Kane’s Donuts’ third location, a 3,500-square-foot cafe with a drive-through. The family-owned original store is on Lincoln Avenue. Last year they opened at International Place in downtown Boston. The cafe and the combined total of 350 residential units are expected to be open by April, said Barsamian. Each apartment will be listed for \$2,200 to \$2,500 per month.

An extended stay hotel will be positioned just behind the dinosaur. The Lenox Hotel will partner with developers to create a boutique hotel on site.

The Dinosaur will be refinished with a fresh coat of orange paint and will remain a fixture of the development.



The orange dinosaur in Saugus

Marshal Bagramyan in Rediscovered Film Talks of His Pre-Soviet Life

BAGRAMYAN, from page 1

December 2017 marked the 120th anniversary of Marshal Bagramyan’s birth. During the Soviet era several biographies of the high-ranking commander were published and media outlets would feature stories and news about him frequently. However, the Communist-era publications generally tended to depict Bagramyan as a purely Soviet and Communist officer, offering only few (if any) details of his Armenian profile. However, recently the archive service of the Public TV Company of Armenia discovered and published a video segment (<https://www.facebook.com/EshayemiskDu/videos/168444303757649/>) on Bagramyan in which he himself

tells the story of his life prior to becoming a Red Army Commander. His memoirs, published in Yerevan in 1979, also provide certain details related to his pre-Soviet life and struggles.

Bagramyan volunteered for the Czarist army in the fall of 1915, when he was only 17 years old. As a technician at the Transcaucasian Railroad he often saw Russian trains arriving from the Western Armenian front that transported Genocide survivors. “Trains from Kars would carry...thousands of refugees, overwhelmingly elderly Armenians, women and children. Those were the handful of ‘lucky ones’ that escaped the

Turkish yataghan with the help of the Russian Army,” wrote Bagramyan in his memoirs. Such heartbreaking images of suffering Armenians might have affected his decision to join the war.

First, Bagramyan was engaged in the battles against Ottoman Turkish troops in Persia (Iran). Then, as a private in Russia’s Caucasian Expeditionary Force, he walked hundreds of miles from Persia to Mesopotamia (present-day Iraq). After the revolution in Russia in 1917, he participated in the self-defense struggles against the Turkish troops in Sarikamish. That is when Bagramyan met the legendary Andranik (Antranig). As he recalls in his memoirs, Andranik watched Bagramyan’s detachment (he had become a cavalry officer by then) and praised his service. Andranik had been appointed to command the defense of Erzurum (the historic Armenian fortress of Karin). Unfortunately, in February of 1917, Erzurum fell into Ottoman Turkish hands. According to Bagramyan’s biographer Aramayas Mnatsakanyan, after learning that Erzurum was lost, Bagramyan burst into tears. “That’s when I realized the scale of the forthcoming disaster,” he wrote later in his memoirs.

The future marshal fought courageously in the battles of May 1918, particularly in Sardarapat. The 100th anniversary of this historic fight will be celebrated in 2018.

After the Sovietization of Armenia, Hovhannes Bagramyan joined the Red Army and advanced rapidly in his career. He was the most educated high-ranking commander of the Soviet Army. Bagramyan graduated from 10 schools and academies in total: the local school of his native village of Chardakhlu, a school in Elizavetopol (currently, the town of Gyanja in Azerbaijan), attended cavalry classes in the town of Armavir (a settlement in Russia named after the historic Armenian capital), the Armenian gymnasium of Armavir, Red Army Academies, and others.

In 1937, during the Great Purge he was on the verge of arrest: Bagramyan’s service in the Armenian national units prior to the 1917 Revolution had not been forgotten. His junior brother Aleksey was arrested by Soviet Azerbaijan’s NKVD state police. Bagramyan was fired from the Red Army and worked as a draftsman for few months.

The late 1930s was a period of rapid militarization of the Soviet Union and the numerical expansion of its military personnel. The Red Army lacked educated commanders and the variety of schools Bagramyan attended, as well as the support from politician Anastas Mikoyan and his military comrade Georgiy Zhukov saved his career and possibly his life. He was reinstated to active service.

At the early stage of the Great Patriotic War (as World War II was known in the Soviet Union), Bagramyan was the chief of the operational department of the Southwestern Front (Ukraine). He moved rapidly from one commanding position to another and by late 1943 became the commander of the First Baltic Front: an important front that would eventually advance to Eastern Germany and capture Koenigsberg, the capital of

Eastern Prussia and the second capital of Nazi Germany.

It was during this period that Bagramyan received a letter from the United States. A woman with the same last name as his, Anahit Bagramyan from New York, but originally from Van, was looking for her brother Hovhannes, who had joined the Tsarist Army in 1915. However, General Bagramyan was not from Van. He was born in Chardakhlu, a village situated in Northern Karabakh. The general’s daughter suggested that he confirm that he was that woman’s lost brother in order to make her happy and not disappoint her. However, according to writer Hrachya Kochar’s story, “The General’s Sister,” Bagramyan declined her proposal, saying that he couldn’t lie to her.

Instead, the general wrote back to Anahit as follows: “My dear sister, I was not born in Turkish Armenia, but in the Caucasus, and up until now never had a sister Anahit. But from now on you can consider me your brother. It was not the same mother that gave us birth, but it was the same nation that did it. We do carry common sentiments and feelings. Now I know that I have a sister overseas and I am in debt to her. Your brother Hovhannes.”

I am interested in Hovhannes Bagramyan’s biography and I am working on a book about this prominent marshal. I would be glad to learn if the descendants of the general’s “sister” Anahit Bagramyan know about this story and by any chance have kept the letter from the prominent military man.

In July of 1944 Bagramyan was awarded with the Golden Star Medal of Hero of the Soviet Union, and later in 1955 he became Marshal of the USSR (there were only 41 military officers during the entire history of the USSR who became Marshals). In 1977, he received his second Golden Star Medal of Hero of the USSR.

Even though national Armenian heroes of the late 19th and early 20th century were not very welcome in Soviet historiography, an exception was made for Andranik Pasha Ozanian. Andranik was fairly well known to the masses. This author may dare to assume that this was thanks to Bagramyan’s efforts in large part. Bagramyan spoke several times of Andranik, and praised him in his book of memoirs. When in 1976, during a meeting at the Yerevan State University he was asked to tell about Andranik, after Bagramyan’s few first words: “Andranik was a brilliant and courageous commander, a true hero...”, the audience suddenly burst in applause. In 1972, during his working visit to France, Bagramyan went to Pere Lachaise cemetery, where Ozanian was buried. He placed a wreath on his grave and saluted his former commander.

It was during this trip that France’s TF1 invited Marshal Bagramyan to appear on French TV, where he was interviewed regarding the 1943 battles around city of Kursk. With the help of Armenia’s First Channel’s Paris correspondent Mariam Ter Gulanyan, we were able to find the copy of the video, a portion of which can be seen at the *Mirror-Spectator* website.

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Arts & Living

Inside Markarian Designer Alexandra O'Neill's Greenwich Village Aerie

NEW YORK (*Vogue*) – During the day, Alexandra O'Neill's Greenwich Village apartment doubles as her brand's headquarters. The Markarian team of four taps away at their laptops on the Bertioia dining chairs, surrounded by clothing racks displaying the Spring and Resort collections, while at night, O'Neill invites friends over for dinner parties. Menus are created based on what is fresh at the nearby Union Square Greenmarket and served on her favorite zodiac Laboratorio Paravicini plates and vintage French tablecloths or Zsuzsanna Nyul table linens. On the evening before my visit, a gaggle of friends had gathered for Halloween costume-making, and during my tour of the apartment, the feather-and-jewel-festooned headdresses were displayed alongside Markarian's Spring '18 Saturn clutches.

The smooth, clean lines and muted hues of Alexandra O'Neill's Greenwich Village apartment might seem to exist in sharp contrast to the festive frills of her clothing line, Markarian, but a love of textiles and attention to detail suffuses both. "I love doing prints and over-the-top for the



Markarian designer Alexandra O'Neill

clothing because it changes seasonally, but your home is more permanent and you're never going to get sick of neutrals," explains the designer, her Yorkie, Winston, curled on her lap and her Maltese, Milly, peering up from the antique Persian rug (brought back from a family trip to Turkey). "But I have all my interesting pops." Those pops include a pair of cobalt mid-century pendant lamps above the matte black-painted kitchen and gem-color velvet pillows from ABC Carpet & Home on the oyster white sofa.

During a complete gut renovation of the pre-war one-bedroom, O'Neill uncovered and restored many of the original moldings and design elements that had been hidden and built over through the years. Cove lighting was replaced with moldings modeled after the originals, and the lowered kitchen and hallway ceilings were pushed back up to their original height. For O'Neill, the decision to take on the task of decorating the apartment on her own was an easy one. "I'm so specific in the taste that I have and the things that I like that it translates to my home as well," she explains, still admitting she couldn't have done it without her nimble project manager. "And I'm such a homebody, so if I'm not comfortable in my home it's not ideal."

A giant Cire Trudon Odalisque candle accents the ledge below the French windows, which O'Neill had installed throughout the apartment. By deepening the existing windowsills and pulling the bookshelves further out into the room, she created two cozy window seats, one used to display treasures and the other, dressed with a Madeline Weinrib pillow, as her reading nook, a grapevine charmingly climbing up the outside of the window. The rose gold mirror above the mantelpiece hides the TV where O'Neill likes to watch "Stranger Things" or "Versailles," though during my visit, the entire wall is obscured by the rack of Markarian Spring dresses with floor-length feathery metallic fringe that tickles Winston's snout as he passes.

The self-professed 1stdibs junkie sourced many of her mid-century gems from some of her
see MARKARIAN, page 14



Bedouine (Azniv Kornejian)

Bedouine A Solitary Daughter

LOS ANGELES (*Broadsheet*) – "I don't need your company to feel saved," sings Azniv Kornejian on "Solitary Daughter."

The sweeping and self-possessed soliloquy off her self-titled debut album is a declaration of defiance against the recurring "male savior" trope. It sure is timely as a growing number of women stand up to reclaim their spaces and their voices.

By Daniela Frangos

Bedouine. "It was a very confusing involvement and something snapped in me where the illusion shattered. I realized: 'Oh, I don't need this. I don't need any bit of it.' And it felt like I was shedding skin when I was writing that. So, the song just kind of poured out of me."

The show-stopping track, which was cut on Kornejian's first take, is just the singer and her pawnshop-bought Silvertone acoustic guitar, save for a smattering of orchestral flourishes. Its quiet intimacy and self-assurance harks back to the vintage folk of Nick Drake, Joan Baez and Joni Mitchell.

"There were a lot of beautiful, lilting melodies back then," Kornejian says of that era. She particularly loves the warmth and texture those songs had, a rarity in the age of slick digital production. "You do have to ask yourself if you're being derivative when your music evokes a lot of '60s and '70s music, but I think the tone has a lot to do with it, and that's just something I prefer; the sound of tape and the sound of the equipment from that era."

Kornejian's origin story is a fitting tale for a rambling folk singer. Especially one named after the nomadic tribes of the Middle East. Born in Aleppo, Syria, to Armenian parents, she grew up in an American compound (where her father worked as an electrician) in Saudi Arabia before her family upped stumps to the US by way of a green card lottery. She passed through Boston, Houston, Austin and Savannah before settling in the hip Los Angeles neighborhood Echo Park – for now, anyway.

"It's definitely the longest I've been anywhere in my adult life," she says from her LA apartment on a sunny winter's day. "This is a great place, I think, to put down roots. But it has its challenges. The neighborhood has changed so rapidly. It's become so expensive so quickly ... sometimes I fantasize about getting out of the city and going into the desert. Though I'm not really sure how I would do, if that would feel isolating after being somewhere like LA."

Kornejian's music is transportive. The idea of passage – across time and place – seeps into each song: the call of someone for whom home is everywhere and nowhere. Her newest song, Louise, released on the deluxe edition of her debut album, is about her family's decision about whether or not to stay in or flee war-torn Syria. It's sung entirely in Armenian.

"It's funny, I couldn't even tell you," she says of her motivation to sing in her parent tongue. "Maybe I was listening to a lot of bossa nova and Astrid Gilberto ... thinking, 'I could probably take advantage of knowing a second language.'"

see BEDOUINE, page 14

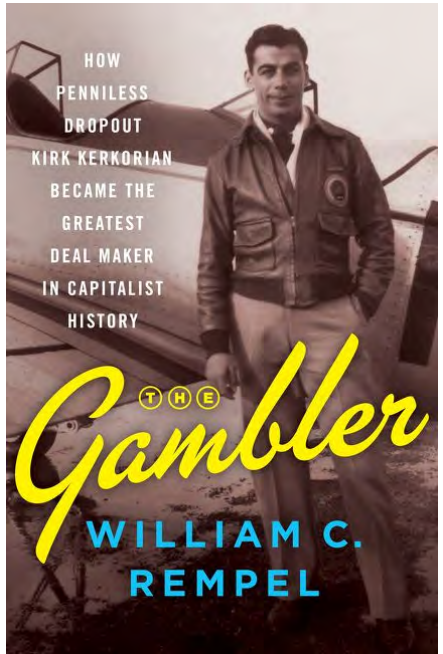
Acclaimed Journalist William Rempel to Present New Biography of Kirk Kerkorian at NAASR

BELMONT, Mass. – William C. Rempel, a veteran investigative reporter who spent more than three decades at the *Los Angeles Times*, will present his new book, *The Gambler: How Penniless Dropout Kirk Kerkorian Became the Greatest Dealmaker in Capitalist History*, on Thursday, February 1, at 7:30 p.m. at the National Association for Armenian Studies and Research (NAASR) Center, 395 Concord Ave.

The program is open to the public and copies of *The Gambler* will be available for purchase and signing by the author.

The Gambler is the rags-to-riches story of one of America's wealthiest and least-known financial giants, self-made billionaire Kirk Kerkorian—the daring aviator, movie mogul, risk-taker, and business tycoon who transformed Las Vegas and Hollywood to become one of the leading financiers in American business.

In this engrossing biography, Rempel digs deep into Kerkorian's long-guarded history to introduce a man of contradictions – a poorly educated genius for deal-making, an extraordinarily shy man who made the boldest of business ventures, a careful and calculating investor who was willing to bet everything on a single roll

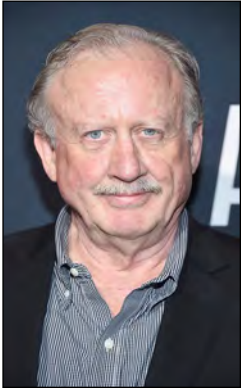


of the dice.

Rempel's 36-year career at the *Los Angeles Times*, both as a writer and an editor, produced a collection of high-profile projects. His groundbreaking reports on Osama bin Laden and al Qaeda were published before the terrorist attacks of

September 11, 2001, and his extensive coverage of supertanker safety flaws began years before the 1989 Exxon Valdez disaster.

Rempel's work has been recognized with numerous journalistic honors, including an Overseas Press Club award and the Gerald Loeb Award. He was also a finalist for the Goldsmith Prize for Investigative Reporting. And in 2015 he toured the former Soviet states of Ukraine and the Republic of Georgia for the US State Department, meeting with professional and student journalists to advocate the value of aggressive investigative reporting in those young democracies.



Author William Rempel



ARTS & LIVING

As Saudi Arabia Relaxes its Controls on Culture and Entertainment, Artists Dream – and Worry

By Kareem Fahim

JIDDAH, Saudi Arabia (*Washington Post*) – The government of this ultraconservative kingdom has lately become a tireless patron of the arts, sponsoring concerts by Western performers such as New Age artist Yanni and promoting comic festivals and book fairs. Cinemas, banned for decades, are set to open soon.

The thaw is part of a push by Saudi Arabia's 32-year-old crown prince, Mohammed bin Salman, to ease some social restrictions, and the flurry of official announcements has thrilled a generation of young Saudis for whom a night of music or movies most often meant trips abroad.

But the plans have raised concerns, too, about the kind of cultural scene that emerges in a place governed by an austere religious creed and where the benefactor is an absolute monarchy that takes a dim view of unfettered speech. The undertaking has raised questions here

about the role of independent artists who had toiled in the kingdom for years, navigating bureaucratic hurdles and rigid social boundaries to win international recognition for the Saudi arts.

Would the government's plans give a boost to independent curators, underground musicians and first-time filmmakers? Or would it lash art to the whims of government ministries and privilege only those artists favored by the state?

"Art should be away from any agendas. That is what makes us concerned," said Abdunasser Gharem, co-founder of a pioneering Saudi arts collective called Edge of Arabia. His own work, including paintings and installations, often is shown abroad.

The debate over culture gets at the nature of the sweeping changes underway in Saudi Arabia under Mohammed. A focus on entertainment and culture is central to a plan to diversify the country's oil-dependent economy while expanding some social freedoms. Saudi officials and the crown prince's supporters say the changes – including allowing women to

drive (a concession promised by the late King Abdullah) and curbing the authority of the "religious police" – represent a long-delayed effort to drag the kingdom into the modern era. Some initiatives, such as the opening of cinemas, have also promised a vast economic opportunity.

But critics warn that it will take years to determine whether highly touted government reforms – for example, to stamp out corruption and curb extremist discourse – were meant to change an ossified system or simply repackaging it.

In embracing the arts, the Saudi leadership drew a lesson in image-making from its ally and neighbor, the United Arab Emirates, which long ago recognized that its homegrown cultural scene was also a "powerful tool of soft power and diplomacy," said Beth Derderian, a doctoral candidate in anthropology at Northwestern University who studies the development of arts and culture in the UAE.

Other moves by the Saudi leadership have stirred confusion about its priorities, including the recent purchase by a Saudi prince of a

painting by Leonardo da Vinci for \$450 million – a vast sum, given the government's stated commitment to anti-corruption and austerity measures. After media reports indicated that the real buyer had been Mohammed, Saudi offi-



Beth Derderian

cials said the painting had been acquired for the new Louvre Museum in Abu Dhabi, the capital of the UAE.

Artist Abdunasser Gharem fixing his hattah, the headpiece traditionally worn by Saudi men, at Gharem Studio in Riyadh on Dec. 16, 2017. (Iman Al-Dabbagh/For The Washington Post)

From his bustling studio in a villa in the capital, Gharem launched a residency program six years ago to nurture young Saudi artists. In a country where many view contemporary art with suspicion, the studio was a rare incubator of creativity. It reflected a small Saudi scene that flourished over the past decade – despite occasional clashes with religious figures and the government.

"We were under pressure for years. It made the scene organic," Gharem said on a recent evening in his studio.

But artists also faced peril. One, Ashraf Fayadh, a Palestinian poet, curator and artist, was convicted on apostasy charges in 2015 and sentenced by a Saudi court to death by beheading. The accusations, which Fayadh's lawyers said stemmed from a personal dispute, included charges that his poetry had promoted atheism.

After an international outcry, the sentence was reduced to eight years in prison, along with 800 lashes.

Efforts to foster culture are coming as artists are feeling increased pressure because of tensions in the wider Persian Gulf. A feud has divided the gulf monarchies, pitting Qatar against Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, the UAE and Egypt. In addition, surging hostilities between Shiite Iran and the Sunni gulf states have fueled an increasingly vicious sectarian enmity.

The resulting atmosphere of often-strident nationalism has largely quieted dissenting voices in the media, on social networks and in the arts.

The tensions have been apparent in the past few years in the UAE, long considered a cosmopolitan hub for artists across the region, including immigrants who grew up in that country. But in recent years, it has become more difficult for some artists, especially those who are Shiite Muslims or originally from Iran, either to travel to the UAE or renew their visas for access to the country, Derderian said.

At a recent exhibition in Abu Dhabi, a painting by Gharem was removed, he said, after an official complained. The painting, called "Prosperity Without Growth," depicted a figure wearing clothes that suggested he was both a Sunni and Shiite Muslim – a message about unity that apparently was too toxic for the moment.

"It's not the time to tell the truth," Gharem said.

see ART, page 16

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ARTS & LIVING

Inside Markarian Designer Alexandra O'Neill's Greenwich Village Aerie

MARKARIAN, from page 12

favorite dealers on the site. “I love 1stdibs so much, I got almost everything from there,” she says. In the foyer facing the kitchen, a 1stdibs-sourced console is home to a pencil-on-paper portrait of O'Neill's great-grandmother Abby, a trio of blown glass vases scored at the 28th Street flower market, and a brass conch shell vase gifted from her college best friend.

The living room is the heart of the home. A pair of large, Ad Reinhardt-esque abstract canvases created by O'Neill in college hang above the Restoration Hardware sofa. Topiaries in John Derian Tuscan pots are framed on the windowsill by the greenery of the courtyard below. A pair of James Sansum chairs flanks the Milo Baughman burl wood coffee table layered with interior design books, a baby alligator head from Key West, and tropical fronds in a green copper vase.

“It's my little marble palace,” O'Neill jokes of the floor-to-ceiling marble bathroom which faces the prodigious shoe and handbag closet lit in the hallway by Charlotte Perriand's iconic wall sconces. There was a walk-in closet, but O'Neill, ever the design perfectionist, got rid of it so that the doors of the apartment would line up on a single axis.

The petite bedroom is made to feel bigger by the windows, the built-in cubbies above the bed, and the bookshelves that form an alcove around the bed, hosting everything from *The Wizard of Oz* to Margaret Atwood's *Alias Grace*, her current read. “It's small but it gets so much light,” she says. The wooden shutters give the bedroom a European air, as do the antique trinkets gleaned over many years of visiting the Paris and London flea markets. “I always pick up a little something from my travels,” she says, lifting a bronze candlestick from Paris: “I call it my 18th-century flashlight.”

The brick terrace has recently received some needed love and care, just in time for winter hibernation. O'Neill added a lattice border and 18-inch trellis, as well as a Serena & Lily wicker bench and Sicilian ceramic head, picked up during her sister's Positano wedding in 2016, to keep her fig tree company. “Look, it's producing its second crop!” she says proudly, holding the ostiole of a fig in her palm. “The second I stopped taking care of them, they started doing better,” she says of her trees.

She does take care of her flowers though. O'Neill makes a weekly pilgrimage up to the 28th Street flower market. Her favorite, Dutch

Flower Line, is so beloved that she recently hosted a Markarian dinner there for Fashion Week. “I love it. I'll usually do giant green palms here,” she flits her finger around the living room, “and then branches in the kitchen slash hallway, and little flowers everywhere else. That's always my pop of color – the cloth-



A Markarian design

ing on the racks also helps!”

(Editor's Note: The label is name for Benjamin Markarian, considered one of the greatest astronomers of the 20th century. He worked at the Byurakan Observatory in Armenia starting in 1946 on theories of star-formation, clusters and super-clusters. He went on to discover the Markarian Galaxies in the 1960s and published a catalog of 1469 galaxies called Markarian catalog (First Byurakan Catalogue of Markarian galaxies). Markarian also discovered a string of galaxies moving with a common motion. Markarian received many honors during the course of his career.)

of a culture shock. “Because we lived in an American compound, you didn't really have a sense of what life really was for women outside of [it],” says Korkejian. “It felt really insular and protected. When I was in Massachusetts, when we weren't living in a neighborhood that was gated, I felt really vulnerable.”

These days Korkejian works as a music editor in Hollywood – she recently worked on Kumail Nanjiani's autobiographical rom-com “The Big Sick.” A possible byproduct of her day job, Korkejian's own music has a cinematic quality – not grand or epic in scale but quiet and intimate and revealing (the swoony, elegiac ebb and flow of highly re-playable album track Dusty Eyes could easily soundtrack a tale of lost love). It makes you sit up, lean in close and listen.

“I just really love the quiet,” says Korkejian. “I love things that are really simple and have so much space in them. To me the perfect balance of something that's simple but also really melodic. I think that might sum up how I like writing.”

It might also sum up how she likes to live her life.

“Leave me alone to the books and the radio snow,” she repeats on Solitary Daughter. “I don't want your pity, concern, or your scorn. I'm calm by my lonesome I feel right at home.”

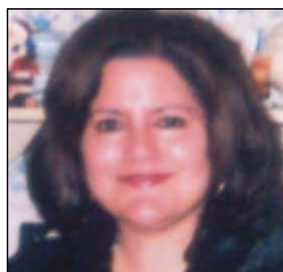
Bedouine: A Solitary Daughter

BEDOUINE, from page 12

“That subject had been weighing on my mind as well,” she says of the song's lyrical inspiration. “I have family in Syria still who were there throughout the war. Thankfully, everything has settled down since, but there was a time that I didn't quite understand why they were staying in harm's way. I stayed with that long enough to sympathize and empathize that you can't just pick up everything and expect to be able to get back on your feet. Some of my family did leave, but some of them didn't feel as comfortable doing that.”

Displacement is a topic we keep coming back to. It's hard to avoid when chatting to the itinerant artist. She describes her move from Saudi Arabia to the US as “jarring,” though concedes: “In some ways, I felt like I was primed for [it].”

“Living in an American compound, going to an American school, English was more or less my first language.” Still, after spending the first 10 years of her life in a gated community, the vast metropolis of Boston was something



Recipe Corner

by Christine Vartanian Datian

Armenian Chicken, Rice and Lemon Soup

INGREDIENTS

4 cups fresh or canned chicken broth (turkey broth may be substituted)
4 cups water
2 skinless boneless chicken breasts, cooked and shredded or diced (or any cooked chicken)
1/2 medium onion, minced
2 stalks celery, diced
1 medium carrot, diced
3/4 cup basmati rice or a large handful of crushed vermicelli (or egg noodles)
Juice of 2 lemons and zest from 1 lemon
2 eggs, beaten
Dried crushed mint and chopped parsley
1 teaspoon sea or Kosher salt
Black or white pepper and paprika
Slice lemons

PREPARATION:

In a large pot, bring the chicken broth and water to a full boil. Season with salt and pepper, add the rice or vermicelli, onion, celery and carrot, and cook over medium heat until rice is tender, about 20-22 minutes, stirring occasionally. Add the shredded chicken, stir a few times, and cook for 10 minutes longer until full combined.

Beat the eggs with the lemon juice in a medium bowl for a few minutes until frothy, stir in 1/2 cup of the soup broth, and then gradually pour the egg mixture into soup; season to taste. Add the lemon zest, if desired, and stir constantly taking care that broth does not curdle. Remove from heat when soup is hot.

Garnish with parsley, dried crushed mint, paprika and sliced lemons. Serve with Armenian madzoon or Greek yogurt, a crusty Italian or French bread or warm pita bread on the side.

Serves 4-6.

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

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ARTS & LIVING

Influential Middle Eastern Intellectual Simon Simonian's Legacy Described in New Volume

Simon Simonian was a prolific author, editor, publisher and teacher who played an influential role in Armenian diasporan life. An initial attempt at presenting his legacy in English has been made by Levon Sharoyan of Aleppo, in *Simon Simonian: The Last Scion of the Mountaineers (On the Occasion of the*

By Aram Arkun
Mirror-Spectator Staff

the Armenian-language periodicals *Kantzasar*, *Aztag* and *Harach*, and then as a volume in Armenia, this short work was translated into English by Dr. Vahe H. Apelian and published in 2017 by Hratch Kalsahakian with the sponsorship of the Simon Simonian Fund.

This volume is not a scholarly monograph but a very personal approach to Simonian's works. Sharoyan's grandfather "Shoemender Levon" is one of the Sasun Armenians living in Aleppo about whom Simonian wrote in his stories, and Sharoyan grew up reading Simonian's various writings. Several Simonian family members edited and proof-read the translation.

Simonian was born in Aintab in 1914. His father was from the Germav village of Sasun. His family fled to Aleppo in 1921. Simonian was accepted to the newly opened Seminary of the Catholicate of Cilicia in Aleppo and graduated as part of its first class in 1935 together with the future Archbishop Terenig Poladian and Catholicos Zareh Payaslian. He then returned to Aleppo to be a teacher of Armenian language and history at the National Haigazian School till 1938, and again from 1941 to 1946. He taught from 1938 to 1941 at the Gulbenkian Armenian School.

One of Simonian's most important legacies is the publication work of the Sevan publishing house, which he first started in

1945 in Aleppo and restarted in 1954 in Beirut. He published and edited two issues of a literary periodical called *Sevan* in 1946, sponsored by the Armenian Teachers' Association of Aleppo, which printed the works of many prominent writers, including Catholicos Karekin I Hovsepian, Nigol Aghpalian, Vahan Tekeyan and Hagop Oshagan.

In 1946 Catholicos Karekin I invited Simonian, the former seminarian, to work in Antelias, Lebanon, as a tenured lecturer of classical and modern Armenian and its literature at the Seminary. The next year he was also appointed as chief editor of *Hask*, the monthly organ of the Catholicate of Cilicia. He held these positions until 1955, and also taught at the Armenian General Benevolent Union's Hovagimian-Manougian High School for boys and the Tarouhi Hagopian High School for girls until 1960. Catholicos Karekin I in this period entrusted him to edit his unpublished scholarly works, of which only one volume was published in 1951, and the *Hask hayakidagan Darekirk*, an Armenological yearbook, in 1948, 1951, and 1957.

However, the death of Catholicos

Karekin I in 1952, and ensuing political turmoil, led Simonian to leave his positions connected with the Armenian Church and restart his Sevan publishing house in Beirut. He published the works of both established and new authors, as well as Armenian textbooks, and turned into one of the greatest Armenian publishers in Lebanon, printing over 475 titles of 190 authors during 27 or 28 years. Sevan continued to publish even after the onset of the Lebanese civil war in 1975 but it was bombed, leading to massive damages, and printed its last work in 1983.

When his printing house was in good order, Simonian published the first issue of his new weekly newspaper, *Spiwrk* [Diaspora], in 1958. It was a literary and cultural journal with well known regular contributors from different segments of the diaspora, and special editions dedicated to new young writers. Simonian's independent perspective led to opposition in both the diaspora and Armenia. Simonian served as editor until the end of December 1974, after which his brother-in-law Kevork Ajemian took over.

When still 25 or 26 years old, Simonian began to prepare an influential series of textbooks on Armenian history, some of which are still used in Armenian schools in the diaspora today. Sharoyan praises their patriotic nationalistic style but does not closely analyze them. Sharoyan notes, incidentally, that Simonian claimed his textbooks were plagiarized by the Aleppine Armenian intellectual Armen Anoush-Marashlian (1907-1958).

Sharoyan presents as one of Simonian's most important achievements the volume *Arewelahay kraganutiwn* [Eastern Armenian Literature] (1962), which Sharoyan describes as "an eight-hundred-page-long book that reminds one of a heavy-set bible." It contains biographical information and examples of the works of 42 authors, as well as an appended dictionary for 6,500 obscure or unfamiliar words from Armenian provincial dialects and a chronology of the cited authors' works.

Simonian had begun penning stories about the lives of Armenians from Sasun in Aleppo from the 1940s, and eventually published them in 1968 with the title, in Armenian, of *The Twilight of the Mountaineers*. The first story of this collection, "He Was Different," appears in the present volume in English translation in the appendix. He published two other literary anthologies of his stories, in 1967 and 1970, title *Sipanay Kacher* [Daredevils of Sipan]. In 1972, he published *Ler yev Jagadakir* [Mountain and Destiny], which combined all the stories in *The Twilight of the Mountaineers* with some pieces from the latter two volumes.

He wrote several novels, of which only two were printed. The first, *Gu khntrvi khachatsevel* [Please Overlap], was published in 1965, and the second, *Anzhamantros*, in 1978. Sharoyan points out that Simonian's decision that the latter should only be disseminated after his death does not have any rational explanation and was "a wrong and an unjustifiable act" which lessened the impact of the novel on contemporary readers.

Sharoyan concludes his book with a description of Simonian's 1983 visit to the United States, where he was honored in New York, Los Angeles and Philadelphia (the latter event hosted by the Tekeyan Cultural



Simon Simonian's mother Menoush with her first husband Bedo Donoyan, who are described in his short story, "He Was Different"



The cover of the third printing of one of Simonian's Armenian history textbooks



Simon Simonian at the editor's desk at the Sevan Publishing House

Association). Simonian died on March 24, 1986 and his former student Catholicos Karekin I Sarkisian gave the eulogy. Sharoyan finds that "perhaps Simon Simonian did not receive the recognition he deserved for his literary accomplishments," but that interest in his works increased after his death.

There are minor errors of language and editing in the volume. For example, on page 50 Sharoyan writes that in 1945 there were three Armenian literary periodicals in Aleppo, yet on the same page he writes that the third, Simonian's *Sevan*, was first published in 1946.

At times, the author's indulgent personal approach leads to what for most readers is superfluous information. For example, he declares: "Thirty years after Simonian's death, as I write these sentences, let it be known that I recently procured a copy [of *Anzhamantros*] from our Kristapor Library and read the book patiently from the very beginning right to the very end." However, overall the volume provides readers with a useful introduction to Simonian, and is illustrated with interesting photographs from the Simonian family archives.



ARTS & LIVING

C A L E N D A R

CONNECTICUT

FEBRUARY 10 — Hye Hearts Dance. Second big annual event. Back By Popular Demand! 8pm - ??? LIVE MUSIC featuring Harry Bedrossian (oud, vocals), Mal Barsamian (clarinet), Bruce Gigarjian (guitar), Charlie Dermenjian (dumbeg). Continuous dancing with DJ Chris Habibian. Hosted by the Tri-Church Cultural Committee. Holiday Inn, 1 Bright Meadow Blvd., Enfield, CT (just off Interstate 91). Hotel \$89 room rate. 860-741-2211, mention "Hye Hearts" Adults \$45 advance, \$50 at the door. Students & Adults 80+ \$30 advance, \$35 at the door. Children 12 & under free. Mezzeh included. Cash Bar. Reservations for up to tables of 10. To purchase tickets: <https://hyeheartsdance2018.eventbrite.com> or mail checks (made payable to TCCC) to: Gary Hovhanessian, 81 Cope Farms Rd., Farmington, CT 06032. RSVP & Questions/Info: David Jermakian 413-727-2586, davidjermakian@gmail.com and Gary 860-690-5959 or gary-hov@aol.com. Tri-Church Cultural Committee includes members of the Armenian Church of Holy Resurrection, New Britain, CT and St. George Armenian Church, Hartford, CT and St. Mark's Armenian Church, Springfield, MA.

MASSACHUSETTS

JANUARY 21 — "We Remember Hrant," commemorating the 11th anniversary of the death of Hrant Dink, Sunday, following church services, St. James Armenian Church, Armene and Veronica Tarvezian Hall, 465 Mount Auburn St., Watertown. Reflections by Ohannes Kilicdagi, Agos columnist, and Gaye Azpinar, attorney and human rights activist. Reception to follow. All are welcome. Hosted by Friends of Hrant Dink.

FEBRUARY 1 — Thursday, 7:30 p.m.: William C. Rempel, The Gambler: How Penniless Dropout Kirk Kerkorian Became the Greatest Dealmaker in Capitalist History, NAASR Center, 395 Concord Ave., Belmont, MA 02478. Contact NAASR at 617-489-1610 or hq@naasr.org.

FEBRUARY 10, 2018 — Poon Paregentan Dinner Dance - Family Kef Night, Sts. Vartanantz Armenian Church, 180 Old Westford Rd., Chelmsford. Featuring Jason Naroian Ensemble: Jason Naroian – Vocals and Dumbeg, Joe Kouyoumjian – Oud, Ara Jeknavorian – Clarinet, and Dave Anisbigian – Guitar, and. Children Activities - 5 pm and Dinner/Dancing at 6 p.m. Paid in advance tickets



The Hye Hearts Dance will take place on February 10 in Connecticut, hosted by the Tri-Church Cultural Committee, at the Holiday Inn, 1 Bright Meadow Blvd, in Enfield. The dance will feature musicians Harry Bedrossian, pictured above, Mal Barsamian, Bruce Gigarjian and Charlie Dermenjian and DJ Chris Habibian. To purchase tickets: <https://hyeheartsdance2018.eventbrite.com>

must be received by February 6: Adults \$25, Students (6-12 years old) \$10, and 5 & under, free. At the door: Adults \$35 and Students \$15. For reservations, contact Maria Kazanjian (617) 240-3686 or Ria.tk@verizon.net. Tables of 8 can be reserved in advance with full payment Checks made payable to: Sts Vartanantz Armenian Church.

FEBRUARY 13 — Tuesday, 6:30-8:30 p.m. at Watertown Free Public Library. Budgeting and credit scores 101. Come learn about creating a budget worksheet, how to improve and maintain your credit score. Hosted by Armenian International Women's Association New

England and CFA Society Boston. Free and open to the public. Registration recommended at aiwanewengland@gmail.com.

MARCH 8-11 —The Global Cinema Film Festival of Boston (GCFF) announces its 2018 Official Selections. The 3rd annual global event will be held at the Studio Cinema, 376 Trapelo Road, Belmont, MA. Festival kicks off on March 8, at 6 p.m. with Red Carpet Event and film screenings until 10 p.m. Film screenings will continue from Friday, March 9, through Sunday, March 11, 2018 from 12 to 11 p.m. For more info visit @ www.worldwidecinemaframes.com. globalcinemafilmfestival@gmail.com

MARCH 11, 2018 — "Jazz and Art for YerazArt" on Sunday, 5 p.m., at Anoush'ella Saj Kitchen, 35 W Newton St., Boston. More information will follow.

MAY 5 — Save the date! Annual Meeting, Armenian International Women's Association (AIWA). Details to follow. Contact: info@aiwainternational.org or 617-926-0171.

MAY 11 — Welcome His Holiness Karekin II, Supreme Patriarch and Catholicos of All Armenians, to Celebrate with Rev. Father Mampre A. Kouzouian on the 60th Anniversary of his Ordination to the Priesthood. Holy Trinity Armenian Church of Greater Boston, 145 Brattle Street, Cambridge. Hrashapar Service in the Sanctuary followed by a Celebration in the Charles and Nevart Talanian Cultural Hall. Details forthcoming.

RHODE ISLAND

JANUARY 24 —The Cultural Committee Proudly presents New exclusive showing ARMENIAN FILM FESTIVAL THE NATION'S PAST & PRESENT Presented in English In Egavian Cultural Center, 70 Jefferson Street, Providence, RI 02908 Donation \$ 10: "Armenia"Wednesday, January, 24at 7 pm (Yerevan, Echmiadzin, Khor Virap, Zvartnots, Sevan, Dilijan, Lori); "Country of Armenian Kings – 2," Friday, February, 16, at 7 pm (Ani, Kars, Edesia, Musaler), "Country of Armenian Kings – 3," Friday, March, 16, at 7 pm (Cilicia, Harbert, Adana, Zeytoun)

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 no later than Mondays at noon.

As Saudi Arabia Relaxes its Controls on Culture and Entertainment, Artists Dream – and Worry

ART, from page 13

Other Saudi artists were more optimistic. "We say, 'In movement, there is a blessing,'" said Mohammed Hafiz, co-founder of Athr, a contemporary gallery that opened in 2009, who has advised the government on its foray into culture.

Hafiz said officials are approaching the arts as a "holistic ecosystem" of theaters, museums, auction houses and other venues that would bolster arts education and nurture an embrace of art in society at large. One of the most ambitious projects, the King Abdulaziz Center for World Culture, features a library and museum, and it recently launched a competition to promote contemporary Saudi artists.

And critically, Hafiz said, the government is consulting local artists as it moves forward – among them Ahmed Mater, one of Saudi Arabia's best-known contemporary artists, whose work, including large-scale photographs, videos and installations, is being shown at the Brooklyn Museum.

There was bound to be a period of "trial and error," Hafiz acknowledged. But, he said, "you stay still and nothing happens. ... The whole society is moving much faster than it was before."

Among young artists, a sense of possibility has taken hold.

Nada AlMojadedi, a filmmaker, said it would take time for Saudi audiences to embrace local content. They "haven't been accustomed to watching stories about themselves," she said. But the government's encouragement – or at least its endorsement of cultural events – has

been a boon, she added.

Her short film, called "Zaina's Cake," was screened at a film festival sponsored by the Saudi oil company Aramco last spring that was attended by filmmakers from across the country, she said. During one recent week, it played in Riyadh and the eastern city of Dammam.

Khaled Nadershah, a 26-year-old filmmaker shooting his first feature in Saudi Arabia, praised the plans to open cinemas and support filmmakers as encouraging first steps.

"People need to see that there is such a thing as Saudi movies and that the industry is real," he said.

His ambition is broad – to tell "all the untold stories about my culture and society," he said. His is a small, self-financed film called "Exit 5," about a divorced woman struggling to get her parents' approval to study abroad.

He is less concerned with negotiating social taboos than with the challenge of finding a platform for an independent film. New cinemas are opening, but the Saudi audience that will fill the seats is largely obsessed with U.S. mainstream entertainment, he said.

"There is a new wave of artists trying to find a Saudi popular culture," he said. "It's so inspiring. But I can't say we are quite there yet."

Ahmed Mater said he had agreed to head a government-sponsored art institute in part to represent his generation of independent artists. "They will have a voice and a say in the purpose and direction of the institute," he said in a text message, referring to a project by the Misk Foundation, sponsored by the crown prince.

Mater, whose work has been confrontational at times – for instance, documenting the ravages of development in Mecca, Islam's holiest city – said he did not think the government's embrace would stifle Saudi artists.

"On the contrary, it provides windows through which new opportunities can spring," he said. "The art scene will continue as it is; I think the nature of conversation, creativity, connections assures that."

'Creation of the Universe: and Eve. Where is Adam?'

FRESNO – A new exhibit will open at the Armenian Museum of Fresno at the exhibition hall, with an opening reception on January 26, 6 to 8 p.m. featuring an artist talk by Lucy Janjigian. The exhibition is titled "Creation of the Universe: and Eve. Where is Adam?"

Janjigian is a widely traveled and noted Jerusalem-born painter and sculptor whose main focus is on Biblical themes and the trials and tribulations of humanity. She has had numerous commissions and exhibited extensively throughout the United States, Middle East and Europe. Her artwork is on display in private collections and institutions.

Lucy Janjigian came to the United States in 1952 and settled in Tenaflly, NJ.

Her works hang in numerous public, private and corporate collections. Her paintings illustrate a narrative dialogue and bare her inner soul.

Creatively designed, her abstract works have been inspired by nature and her trav-

els. Artspeak critic Sean Simon has compared her paintings to those of Kathie Kolowitz, Max Beckman and Jose Clemente Orozco. The strength of her expressionistic and cubistic technique as well as her vividly contrasting colors heighten the starkness of her graphic power.

Her love of painting combined with her many years of Bible study resulted in these three series of paintings that reflect her Christian faith: "Journey to Resurrection," "Biblical Parallels" and "The Story of Two Women / From Guilt to Redemption."

The series many find most emotionally stirring is the one most personal to her, "Uprooted" based on the tragedies and hardships experienced by her family and friends during The Armenian Genocide.

These four series have been professionally produced into videos complete with narration by the artist over dramatic music based on the paintings, one of which will be presented during the opening night reception.

The exhibit will be up through June 22.



COMMENTARY

COMMENTARY

Armenia in Transition

By Edmond Y. Azadian

Armenia cannot entertain or exercise any political culture which is alien to the region, just as it cannot isolate itself from the corruption and cronyism which have defined the post-Soviet era.

Russian President Vladimir Putin and Prime Minister Dmitri Medvedev have been playing musical chairs in the Kremlin to perpetuate Mr. Putin's rule well into the 2030s. Azeri President Ilham Aliyev changed to country's constitution to perpetuate the Aliyev dynasty's rule forever, with his wife Mehriban Aliyeva appointed as vice president to assure a smooth succession. In neighboring Turkey, the ruling AKP party succeeded in holding a referendum to consolidate the pedestal of Sultan Erdogan. Now, it is Armenia's turn to follow the trend.

President Serzh Sargsyan, after serving two terms, had his back against the wall. He could not even emulate the Russian model because he could not find a reliable partner to swap offices with and he feared falling into the trap he had designed himself for his predecessor. Former Armenian President Robert Kocharyan, under whom Sargsyan served as prime minister, had believed that by ushering Sargsyan to the presidential palace, the throne would be waiting for him at the end of the presidential term.

It is part and parcel of the post-Soviet political culture to cling to power as long as possible by altering the government structure to skirt democratic principles.

Armenia held its referendum in a timely fashion to convert the system from presidential rule to parliamentary. Thus, political parties were empowered to elect the president, taking away the citizens' right to speak. The name of the game is indirect democracy. There will certainly take place a power transfer from the office of the president to the prime minister, with the former mainly playing a ceremonial role.

At the end of the long New Year holidays, Armenia entered

Kocharyan, Serzh Sargsyan, Arkady Ghukassyan, Alik Harutyunyan, Seyran Ohanian and others.

When once Levon Ter-Petrosian brought up this trend, he was accused of pitting Karabakh Armenians against the citizens of Armenia proper.

At this point, Gagik Harutyunyan is still needed in his position, which he has occupied since independence. He is a survivor, as he has ingratiated himself to all succeeding administrations by rubberstamping many controversial issues and legislations.

Nalbandian has the best chance because of his suave diplomacy and linguistic skills.

There is no room to guess who would be nominated to the position of prime minister because all those changes were made to perpetuate Mr. Sargsyan's and his Republican Party's rule. Therefore, on April 9, all he has to do is change his hat from president to continue to rule the country as prime minister. The only technicality remains for his party to nominate him for the position and to garner 50 percent of the votes. Technically, the president has to nominate the prime minister and he has the power to turn down the candidate selected by the parliament but in reality, that option is off the table. If the unforeseen happens, Mr. Sargsyan is savvy and experienced enough to have an alternative candidate up his sleeve who will not tip the cart.

Citizens in Armenia do not anticipate any changes in their daily lives, because the same leadership cannot offer anything other than what it has provided thus far. In anticipation of the forthcoming elections, Sargsyan has forewarned against price hikes. But in a cabinet meeting, he confided that the market fluctuations reflect world trends. However, before those trends cross Armenia's borders, they are subject to the oligarchs' monopolies, which can distort commodity prices.

Cosmetic changes have also been introduced in the tax code. The tax rate for the poor, receiving less than 175,000 drams a year has been reduced a few percentage points, which will be offset by the rise of commodity prices and rampant inflation (15 percent). And as the prices of food items climb, the salaries and

pensions remain stationary to further strain family budgets.

Any citizen earning 175,000 drams a year or more will pay 2 percent more in taxes, which will further stifle the middle class. The middle class is the backbone of any society, and Armenia has yet to learn how to cultivate and enlarge this group.

It is almost embarrassing to find out that neighboring Georgia has been able to curtail corruption but Armenia cannot. Some cynics argue that Armenia has to run a parallel shadow economy to be able to pay the election bribes!

The president's promise to increase the population to 4 million by 2040 has yet to be backed by an economic plan. With the pace of emigration and the death rate, Armenia has been experiencing a negative population growth. Perhaps the

only other alternative remains to set up a number of fertility clinics to boost the population.

The diaspora certainly does not have a say in the forthcoming governmental structure change, although there is talk that the president needs to appeal to the diasporans, which until recently the government treated in a cavalier manner. Armenia's perspective of Diasporan Armenians was shaped in the Soviet era and it continues to resist change. That policy is not limited to the current administration but refers to all successive leaders. They do not possess the wherewithal, perspective and mechanisms to work with organized structures; therefore they opt to enlist individuals of means who are more susceptible to be impressed by the glitter of medals. Or they wreak havoc by infiltrating parties to morally bribe some "hopefuls" among the leadership to play them against others. Even the ARF, which is a more disciplined party, has sustained some stress when the silence and cooperation of some party members in Armenia are bought.

Armenians outside the country may be considered to be more naïve and romantic for refusing to accept the current reality, wishing a more prosperous future for the people in Armenia, trying to halt emigration, raising the economic standards of living, etc.

We hope against hope that the transition would bring radical change in Armenia and its relations with the diaspora.

It is not mutually exclusive to love Armenia and to point out some of its disastrous trends.



the pre-election mode, although no visible political activity has been witnessed yet and the mood may continue since the political scenario remains so transparent.

It is anticipated that a new president will be elected by March 2 of this year and take office on May 9, at the end of President Sargsyan's term.

It takes two-thirds votes (79) of the parliament to elect the president.

Which party can propose candidates for president? Certainly not the opposition Yelk (Exit) party of Nikol Pashinyan, because it cannot garner more than 9 votes. Gagik Tsarukyan's Prosperous Armenia party can command enough votes to come up with its own candidate, but it does not seem to be a possibility after that party's internal shake-up. The ruling Republican Party, joined by its coalition partner, the Armenian Revolutionary Federation (ARF), can command a majority and it will exercise that power. Although the head of the parliamentary faction of the Republican Party Vahram Baghdassarian has feigned ignorance about any discussion to nominate the next presidential candidate, names have already been circulating which include Bako Sahakyan, the current president of Nagorno Karabakh, Arkady Ghukassyan, the former president of Karabakh, Gagik Harutyunyan, the president of the Supreme Court, and Edward Nalbandian, the current foreign minister.

Incidentally, many statesmen, after completing their apprenticeships in Karabakh, have moved to occupy positions of power in Armenia. The traffic has only been in one direction: Robert

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COMMENTARY

How to Make Hate Speech an Asset Against Inherent Evil



By Philippe Raffi Kalfayan

A RECENT COLUMN in the *Armenian Mirror-Spectator* (“Intolerance Toward ‘the Other’” by Raffi Bedrosyan) reported on a shocking event that happened in Turkey during the inhumation of a non-Turkish person, displaying an unequalled degree of

hatred and intolerance toward the “other” to the extent that the family had to forcibly renounce burying its relative in that cemetery, because the protesters claimed the cemetery soil was forbidden to Armenians. This is the occasion to stress that such discriminatory intolerance is a source of evil and may prompt or result in most severe violations of international human rights law, namely crimes against humanity, the supreme form of which is genocide.

In Turkey, the ideology and then the Constitution of the Republic of Turkey rely upon constitutional segregation, both ethnic and religious. The Constitution recognizes exclusively “Turkishness” and the Treaty of Lausanne, considered as a fundamental law, distinguishes the Muslim from the Non-Muslim.

Since the time before the Genocide, the “other” is seen as an enemy (“the enemy of the interior”) when it relates to minorities, or as a “giaour” (infidel) as it relates to non-Muslims.

Already in the 19th century, the Armenian Christian minority was seen as “other” because [of the need to be] “protected” either by the Western nations or/and by the Russian Empire. They became “enemies” for the purpose of justifying the “final solution” in 1915.

Peter Balakian quotes in *The Burning Tigris* British ethnographer William Ramsey, an enthusiast of Turkish civilization who spent more than 10 years in the country, and described what being a “giaour” implied: “The Turkish law (...) was synonymous with unspeakable contempt (...) The Armenians (and the Greeks) were dogs, pigs (...) good for spitting when their shadow was grazing a Turk, good for humiliation, mats to clean the mud off. Imagine the inevitable result of several centuries of slavery, to endure insults and scorn, centuries during which nothing of what the Armenian possessed – nor his properties, nor his house, nor his life, nor his own person, nor his family – was sacred or escaped violence – an unreasonable and gratuitous violence – and when resisting it in a violent way meant death.”

Nowadays, racism and nationalism are on the rise in almost every big nation. It is therefore not surprising to observe a violent resurgence of old ghosts in Turkey. Witness the recent creation of the first racist political party, which singles out Turks as a superior race (www.hurriyetdailynews.com/first-racist-political-party-founded-in-turkey-in-2017-turks-presented-as-superior-race-125310).

In Azerbaijan, the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict and the humiliation of the Azeri army have given rise to official hatred, enshrined as national doctrine. The Azerbaijani leadership has even endorsed the denial of the Armenian Genocide and perpetuates the falsehood.

Edward Nalbandian, minister of foreign affairs of the Republic of Armenia, in his address at the 24th Meeting of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) Ministerial Council (Vienna, December 7, 2017) stated that “Azerbaijan continues to practice anti-Armenian hate speech, it calls all Armenians of the world its number one enemy, writes in the textbooks that Armenians are genetic enemies of Azerbaijan, erases all traces of indigenous Armenian cultural heritage and religious sites, and claims that territories of Armenia are ancient Azerbaijani lands.”

Hate speech has become the main vector of discrimination against Armenians in Turkey as well as in Azerbaijan.

Hate Speech and International Crimes

Hate speech is a form of discrimination and has been a significant element in the commission of crimes of genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes because it incites to intolerance and violence against a person or a group of persons. Past and current examples are legion: slavery and human trade, colonial crimes, genocide and crimes against humanity (Hereros and Namas in Namibia, Armenians in the Ottoman Empire, Rwanda, European Jews, Muslim Bosnians in former Yugoslavia, Apartheid in Israel and South Africa, African tribes in Central Africa and Sahel, etc.).

Although widely recognized as source of evil and duly prohibited by regional and international treaties, it does not prevent hate speech to prosper across all continents. Today’s official discourses in many countries are based on nationalistic and religious exclusions, and may lead to humanitarian disasters.

The direct and public incitement to commit genocide is one of the five acts punishable by the Genocide Convention. Any advocacy of national, racial or religious hatred that constitutes incitement to discrimination, hostility or violence is prohibited by the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR, art. 20.2). The UN Convention on Elimination of all forms of Racial Discrimination’s preamble reads “(...) that any doctrine of superiority based on racial differentiation is scientifically false, morally condemnable, socially unjust and dangerous, and that there is no justification for racial discrimination, in theory or in practice, anywhere.” Art. 4(c) emphasizes that “States Parties shall not permit public authorities or public institutions, national or local, to promote or incite racial discrimination.” The general recommendation number 35 about “Combating racist hate speech” issued by the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD), recommends (Art. 13) that the States parties declare and effectively sanction as offences punishable by law: (a) All dissemination of ideas based on racial or ethnic superiority or hatred, by whatever means; (b) Incitement to hatred, contempt or discrimination against members of a group on grounds of their race, color, descent, or national or ethnic origin; (c) Threats or incitement to violence...; (d) Expression of insults, ridicule or slander of persons or groups or justification of hatred, contempt or discrimination..., when it clearly amounts to incitement to hatred or discrimination. CERD adds (Art. 14) that public denials or attempts to justify crimes of genocide and crimes against humanity, as defined by international law, should be declared as offences punishable by law, provided that they clearly constitute incitement to racial violence or hatred.

It is not by coincidence that the Republic of Armenia took the lead at the UN Human Rights Council (HRC) in 2015 to draft a resolution about the Prevention of Genocide, where they successfully inserted during preliminary session the Art. 9 “Condemning the intentional public denial or glorification of crimes of genocide and crimes against humanity as defined by international law, and notes with concern that public denials create a risk of further violations and undermine efforts to prevent genocide.” This article has disappeared in the final draft adopted by the HRC on April 7, 2015, although the preamble clearly “notes with concern that attempts to deny or to justify the crime of genocide, as defined in the Convention and established as such under international law, may risk undermining the fight against impunity, reconciliation and efforts to prevent genocide.”

The ECRI, which is the Council of Europe’s commission combating racism and intolerance, considers that hate speech is to be understood as the advocacy, promotion or incitement, in any form, of the denigration, hatred or vilification of a person or group of persons, as well as any harassment, insult, negative stereotyping, stigmatization or threat in respect of such a person or group of persons. It recognizes that hate speech may take the form of the public denial, trivialization, justification or condoning of crimes of genocide, crimes against humanity or war crimes which have been found by courts to have occurred, and of the glorification of persons convicted for having committed such crimes.

Both Turkey and Azerbaijan have ratified the UN Convention combatting racial discrimination, and are parties to the Council of Europe and European Court of Human Rights.

Hate Speech in Turkey: A Social Phenomenon at State level

The last ECRI report on Turkey (June 2016) denounces that “hate speech is expressed increasingly by officials and other public figures, including senior representatives of the state and some members of the opposition.” The report gives the prominent example of President Erdogan’s televised statement: “They have said I am Georgian [...] they have said even uglier things – they have called me – pardon my language – Armenian, but I am a Turk.” A recent research has unveiled the underlying high levels of intolerance: around 70% of the respondents to a recent survey had negative views and attitudes towards Jews and Armenians (Anti-Defamation League 2015; Küçükcan 2010: 16).

Most reported hate speeches go unpunished and ECRI further states that they are not aware of criminal court convictions for hate speeches targeted at Kurds, Alevi or non-Muslim communities. On the contrary, law enforcement authorities use Art.216 of the Criminal Code on incitement to hatred almost exclusively in cases of offensive speech concerning the majority religion, i.e. Muslim Sunni.

Erdal Dogan, a lawyer, told *Today’s Zaman* on March 20, 2014 that the problem of ethnic and racial discrimination is deeply rooted in Turkey and will not be resolved soon. “Since the founding of the Turkish Republic, our country had been built according to the concept of ‘oneness’. To ‘Turkify’ everyone, governments normalized hate speech and did not recognize ethnic or religious differences.” He further adds, “the goal of such policies was to label as an enemy all those who were not Sunni Muslim Turks.”

Baskin Oran, a prominent political scientist, and one of the two co-authors of the official report on minorities ordered by Prime Minister Erdogan in 2004, kept saying that the definition

of citizenship in Turkey is the fundamental matter sustaining discrimination against minorities.

Uzay Bulut, a journalist, reminded in an article titled “Turkey: Normalizing Hate” that insulting non-Turkish and non-Muslim people has almost become a social tradition in Turkey. Prejudice and hate speech have become normalized.

In 1996, in Turkey’s parliament, then interior minister and current MP from the Nationalist Movement Party (MHP) Meral Aksener, said that the leader of the PKK (Kurdistan Workers’ Party), Abdullah Ocalan, was “Armenian semen.” She then clarified the remark by saying, “I did not refer to the Armenians living in Turkey. I referred to the Armenian race in general.” Bulut recalls that “Armenian semen” or “Armenian sperm” are the most popular swear words in Turkey, often used for Kurds, as well.

Perinçek Case

Here we may point, despite its shortcomings, to the decision of the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR) Grand Chamber in the Dogu Perinçek case. The judges have indeed voluntarily truncated and biased the interpretation of Perinçek’s statements denying the Armenian Genocide to avoid those to be qualified as the manifestation of anti-Armenian racism. Thus, the unfortunate outcome of the decision, confirmed by the decision of the French Constitutional Court on January 8, 2016, is that hate speech and the Jewish Holocaust denial are unique in the sense that antisemitism is at the root of Holocaust denial while racial discrimination would not be at the root of other genocides’ denial.

Non-governmental organizations, parties to the Perinçek case, have failed imposing the reality of the link between the anti-Armenian hate speech and genocide denial. The Armenian government did not want to challenge the integrity of freedom of expression (nor did the government of Turkey).

Meanwhile, the Court asserts (para. 227) “the right of Armenians to the respect of their dignity and that of their ancestors, including their right to respect for their identity constructed around the understanding that their community has suffered genocide.” This de jure association between the Armenian identity and the suffered genocide restores the link between hate speech and genocide denial in the light of the respect to human dignity; a promising and potential argument for future legal battles around those questions.

In June 2015, Turkish nationalists protesting in front of the German Embassy in Ankara in the aftermath of the adoption by the German Parliament of a resolution recognizing the Armenian Genocide, shouted: “The best Armenian is a dead Armenian.”

Azerbaijan, Hate Speech and Karabakh

In the ECRI report concerning Azerbaijan (March 2016), one can read that “almost all of the 196 hate speech items dealing with ethnic conflicts were targeted at Armenians. Politicians and civil servants were the main disseminators of hate speech, followed by journalists.” Other sources confirm recurrent hate speech towards Armenians, which is connected to the conflict over Nagorno-Karabakh, the frequent ceasefire violations at the contact line and the resulting deaths and injuries. The Advisory Committee of the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities for example noted “a persistent public narrative surrounding the conflict over Nagorno-Karabakh identifying invariably Armenia or Armenians as ‘the enemy’ and openly promulgating hate messages.”

According to other sources, there is a conflict-ridden domestic political discourse and Azerbaijan’s leadership, education system and media are very prolific in their denigration of Armenians. Political opponents are accused of having Armenian roots or of receiving funds from Armenian sources. What is worse, an entire generation of Azerbaijanis has now grown up listening to constant rhetoric of Armenian bashing. According to a 2012 survey, 91 percent perceived Armenia as Azerbaijan’s greatest enemy (Caucasus Research Resource Centre et al. 2013: 21).

In a recent article, Anzhela Elibegova, co-author of a book titled *Armenophobia in Azerbaijan* writes that “Armenians are the perfect external enemy for Azerbaijani authorities who use the current situation to aim their propaganda machine in the necessary direction, falsify history and disseminate Armenophobia domestically. She quotes many official declarations showing that Armenophobia emanates from the head of state, President Ilham Aliyev. The excerpts of his speeches are given as examples to show that the targets of its Armenophobia are not Karabakh Armenians, but the Armenian nation, which “will soon perish from the world map.”

Others in power there offer even more aggressive declarations. Ogtay Asadov, chairman of the National Assembly of Azerbaijan said: “During the last century Armenians violently massacred over two million Azerbaijani people and Turks. Armenian nationalists are the ones responsible for all these murders.” Elman Mammadov, a member of the National Assembly of Azerbaijan noted: “It is not clear why Turkey tolerates Armenian people on its lands. What is the reason Turkey does not require Armenians to free their lands? Turkey should be a state without Armenians [...]. If Turkey and Azerbaijan unite, they may wipe Armenia off the map of the world. Armenians should beware of this [...].” And Hafiz Hajiye, Leader of the New Musavat Party offered: “Our sons in Armenia will set the nuclear plant in Armenia to explode so that no Armenian is left in that territory.”

see HATE, page 20



COMMENTARY



My Turn

By Harut Sassounian

President Trump Gets Slapped Twice In One Week at the United Nations

President Trump added two new major mistakes last month to the long list of misguided foreign and domestic policy decisions throughout the year.

On December 18, 2017, the United States vetoed a United Nations Security Council resolution that called for the reversal of President Trump's announcement to recognize Jerusalem as Israel's capital and move the US Embassy to that city. All the other 14 members of the Security Council, including Britain and France, voted for the resolution which correctly asserted that "Jerusalem is a final status issue to be resolved through negotiations." It further called for all states to refrain from moving their diplomatic missions to Jerusalem.

The status of Jerusalem is a highly controversial and emotional issue for Jews, Muslims and Christians. Israel captured the eastern part of Jerusalem during the 1967 Arab-Israeli war and annexed it in violation of international law. Israel considers Jerusalem its "undivided and eternal capital." Palestinians, on the other hand, consider East Jerusalem to be the capital of an eventual Palestinian state. Immediately after the UN vote, Palestinian leader Mahmoud Abbas announced his refusal to meet with Vice President Mike Pence during his upcoming visit to the Middle East. The trip was postponed to a later date. Thousands of protesters

demonstrated in many Islamic countries against President Trump's decision on Jerusalem. The Palestinian leadership announced that they will no longer consider the United States as an honest broker of peace between the conflicting sides.

During the Security Council session, UN Middle East envoy Nickolay Mladinov warned that President Trump's unilateral action lessens the chances of peace, "undermining moderates and empowering radicals."

President Trump justified his decision by basing it on a 1995 law passed by Congress to move the US Embassy to Jerusalem. However, all US Presidents since then have signed a national security waiver postponing the move every six months. They did not wish to undermine the Arab-Israeli peace negotiations and inflame the passions of the Arab and Islamic world.

The fact that Trump had made a promise during his campaign to transfer the US Embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem cannot excuse his recent decision. As I wrote a year ago, Trump had made an unwise promise and keeping it could become dangerous.

To make matters worse for the US, the UN General Assembly, where the United States does not have veto power, overwhelmingly adopted a resolution on December 21, 2017, declaring President Trump's decision recognizing Jerusalem as Israel's capital as "null and void." It is highly embarrassing for a Superpower like the United States to have 128 countries vote against it, only 8 other countries supported it, 35 abstained, and 21 were absent. Thus, President Trump has made the United States the laughing stock of the world, particularly since the US and Israel were supported by tiny countries that most people have never heard of, such as Togo, Micronesia, the Marshall Islands, Nauru, and Palau.

In contrast, many of the major countries voted against the US in the UN General Assembly: France, Britain, Germany, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, Greece, Turkey, Italy, Japan, Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, South Korea, Singapore, South Africa, Spain, Sweden, and dozens of others.

As if this embarrassment was not sufficient, President

Trump and his UN Ambassador, Nikki Haley, proudly declared that the United States would cut off aid to any country that voted against the US. This is a ridiculous statement, as the United States is not going to eliminate aid from many of these 128 states. Furthermore, when a world power like the United States provides foreign aid, it does so to pursue its own interests. By cutting off aid, the United States would jeopardize its own national interests. Giving foreign aid does not mean that the United States automatically buys a country's sovereign right on how to cast its vote at the UN and try to intimidate it into submission.

Regarding the Jerusalem issue, there was much discussion in the Armenian press about the appropriateness of Armenia voting against the US at the UN on December 21. The fear was that Armenia would not receive foreign aid from the US and would antagonize Israel.

In my opinion, these points are not valid. I am confident that Armenia's many supporters in the US Congress would restore the aid against the wishes of the White House, in the unlikely possibility that President Trump would carry out his threat.

With regard to relations with Israel, Armenia does not have much of a risk as Israel has not been friendly with Armenia. It has no Embassy in Yerevan, has refused to recognize the Armenian Genocide, and has sold billions of dollars of lethal weapons to Azerbaijan to kill Armenians. Even Azerbaijan, despite its love-fest with Israel, voted against the US decision. Needless to say, Turkey also voted against it.

Furthermore, abstaining from voting at the UN or being absent would have isolated Armenia from the rest of the world, from Armenian communities in Arab and Islamic countries, and contradict the wishes of the Armenian Patriarchate in Jerusalem which has condemned the US decision.

Finally, Israeli leaders should not celebrate President Trump's decision on Jerusalem, as it is not in Israel's interest to antagonize the rest of the world and isolate itself. Israel needs to win over other countries, especially Palestinians, to arrive at a peaceful resolution through negotiations, not bullying or violence.

Historic Ordination of a Deaconess in the Tehran Diocese of the Armenian Church

By Dr. Hratch Tchilingirian

The Primate of the Diocese of Tehran ordained a young woman as a deaconess in Tehran's St. Sarkis Mother Church on September 25, 2017. Even as the office of deaconess had existed in Armenian Church convents for centuries, this was a historic first. It is the first time that a lay woman, not a nun, was ordained a "parish deacon."

Twenty-four year old Ani-Kristi Manvelian, an anesthesiologist by profession, was ordained – along with Mayis Mateosian – by Archbishop Sebouh Sarkissian, the Primate of the Diocese of Tehran.

"What I have done is in conformity with the Tradition of the Church and nothing else," said Archbishop Sarkissian. This was his personal initiative as a diocesan primate in order, as he explained, "to revitalize the participation of women also in our church's liturgical life," adding, "do not be surprised, a woman could also become a servant of the Holy Altar."

Deaconess Ani-Kristi has been involved in the life of the church in Tehran since she was very young. She used to perform the duties of an acolyte during church services, such as reading the psalms and carrying the ceremonial candle.

In explaining the purpose of the ordination, Archbishop Sarkissian said: "Today, our Church is confronting the imperative of self-examination and self-critique. It is imperative to rejuvenate the participation of the people in the social, educational and service spheres of the Church. It is our deep conviction that the active participation of women in the life of our Church would allow Armenian women to be involved more enthusiastically and vigorously, and would allow them to be connected and engaged. They would provide dedicated and loving service [to the people]. The deaconess, no doubt, would also be a spiritual and church-dedicated mother, educator, and why not, a model woman through her example. It is with this deep conviction that we are performing this ordination, with the hope that we are neither the first nor the last to do it."

According to the Primate, parish priests in Tehran are watchful and keen to recruit more women who fit the profile of prospective deaconesses.

What is special and novel about Deaconess Ani-Kristi Manvelian's ordination is that she is a "parish" deacon – that is, she is not a member of a convent or a religious order, like the Kalfayan Sisters in Istanbul or Gayanyants Sisters at Birds Nest in Jibel, Lebanon, who have a few sisters among their



ranks and are not ordained deaconesses.

Like her male counterparts in the Armenian Church, if and when Deaconess Ani-Kristi marries, she will continue to serve as a deaconess.

Deaconesses have been part of the Christian tradition from the early years of the faith. There are numerous references in the Epistles and early Church writings.

In the Armenian Church tradition, the development of the office of female diaconate is divided into four historical periods according to Fr. Abel Oghlukian, the author of a study on the subject: (a) 4th-8th centuries in Greater Armenia; (b) 9th-11th centuries in Eastern and Cilician Armenia, where the term "deaconess" is included in the book of ordination; (c) 12th century and on, where there are "literary references and rites for the ordination of deaconesses in liturgical texts in Cilicia and eastern Armenia; and (d) 17th century renewal of female diaconate.

The last ordained monastic deaconess in the Armenian Church was Sister Hripsime Sasounian in Istanbul. The late Patriarch Shnork Kalustian of Constantinople ordained Sister Hripsime of Kalfayan Sisters (established in 1866) as a dea-

coness in 1982, using the canon of ordination used for male deacons. The Damascus-born Deaconess Hripsime was 54 years old at the time. She passed away in 2007.

In North America, Seta Simonian Atamian was the first adult woman ordained as an acolyte, a lower rank, by Archbishop Vatche Hovsepian of the Western Diocese in 1984 at St. Andrew Armenian Church, in Cupertino, Calif. However, when in 1986 she moved to the East Coast of the United States, she was not allowed by the local diocese to serve on the altar in the Armenian Church.

Even as this is a most welcome step by Archbishop Sebouh Sarkissian and the Diocese of Tehran (under the jurisdiction of the Catholicosate of Cilicia), the Armenian Apostolic Church has yet to formally restore the office of female diaconate.

Today the question is how to revive the female diaconate for the pastoral life of local parishes rather than in monastic settings or convents, which are virtually non-existent as viable institutions.

(Dr. Hratch Tchilingirian is a scholar at University of Oxford [www.hratch.info]).



How to Make Hate Speech an Asset Against Inherent Evil

HATE, from page 18

Those political declarations could have been interpreted as intimidation pressures, if one had not witnessed already inhumane criminal acts resulting from this hatred dissemination.

The first example is that of Gurgen Margaryan, a lieutenant in the Armenian Armed Forces, hacked to death in his sleep by Azerbaijani Lieutenant Ramil Safarov in Budapest, Hungary in 2004. Both men were participating in a NATO-sponsored English-language training course at the Hungarian University of National Defense within the framework of the “Partnership for Peace” program. The gruesome murder sent shockwaves across the world for its barbarity. Safarov was sentenced to life imprisonment but under questionable circumstances was extradited to Azerbaijan in 2012, where he received a hero’s welcome by both the government and people.

The second example is related to the “April war” occurrences (April 2-6, 2016). In the village of Talish (Nagorno Karabakh), three elderly members of the Khalapyan family, including 92-year-old Marusya Khalapyan were brutally tortured, mutilated and killed. Three servicemen, Hrnt Gharibyan, Hayk Toroyan and Kyaram Sloyan were beheaded by Azerbaijani military in the vicinity of Talish. Photos of Azerbaijani soldiers posing with the head of Kyaram Sloyan were shared on social networks. Eighteen other servicemen were listed as missing in action. Their bodies later transferred to the Armenian side had signs of torture and mutilation.

Although this column has no intention to elaborate on the topic of Nagorno-Karabakh self-determination, it must be highlighted briefly that self-determination is divided in two concepts. The internationally coded one is the internal self-determination. It foresees the implementation of self-determination with the consent of the sovereign State and relying upon democratic and rule of law principles. The un-coded one, the external self-determination proceeds of the casuistic method and is often arbitrarily assessed by the so-called

“international community.” The threshold imposed for considering the second concept are egregious and repeated violations of international human rights laws against the minority group. If the State responsible does not stop or prevent them, it should then either consent on its own for the minority or oppressed group to the right to secession, and consequently accept constitutional changes of its state structure, or run the risk of a “remedial secession” by force.

Nagorno-Karabakh is a de facto case of unilateral secession, although legally implemented in respect to the USSR Constitutional provisions regarding the autonomous republics. Whether the situation at the time was meeting the criteria fixed in the Quebec case for exceptional circumstances of secession, both parties have their own arguments and it will remain a controversy.

This question does not matter any longer. In fact, secession from the State in which a people forms a part is regarded by many prominent authors and some States as a right of last resort if the denial of fundamental rights of minority groups is sufficiently blatant and irremediable – in other words if the said groups are victims of attacks on their physical existence or integrity, or of a massive violation of their fundamental rights. This is what the Supreme Court of Canada stated in substance in this reference case.

The doctrine of the CERD states that “[...] the external aspect of self-determination implies that all peoples have the right to deter-

mine freely their political status and their place in the international community based upon the principle of equal rights and exemplified by the liberation of peoples from colonialism and by the prohibition to subject peoples to alien subjugation, domination and exploitation.” It further emphasizes that “in accordance with the Declaration on Friendly Relations, none of its initiatives should be construed as authorizing or encouraging any action which would dismember or impair, totally or part, the territorial integrity or political unity of sovereign and independent States conducting themselves in accordance with the principle of equal rights and self-determination of peoples and possessing a government representing the entire population of the territory without distinction of race, creed or color.”

It is submitted therefore that the current official policy of hatred and racial discourse promulgated by Azerbaijan will lead to the elimination by any means of Armenians from Nagorno-Karabakh. The OSCE Minsk Group came to this conclusion long ago. As a result, the current diplomatic process should recognize this fact and its consequences.

(Philippe Raffi Kalfayan is an international legal expert, the former secretary general of the International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH), an associate researcher at the Paris Human Rights Center at the University of Paris 2 Pantheon Assas.)

Istanbul Street Named after Armenian Photographer Ara Güler

GÜLER, from page 1

He studied at Getronagan Armenian High School. His father owned a pharmacy, but had many friends that belonged to the world of art. Ara Güler came into contact with these people and they inspired him to opt for a career in films/cinema. He worked in film studios and joined courses of drama under Muhsin Ertugrul. Later, he leaned towards journalism and abandoned cinema. In 1950, he joined *Yeni Istanbul*, a Turkish newspaper, as a photojournalist. During the same time, he studied economics from University of Istanbul. Then he started working for Hürriyet.

In 1958 when *Time-Life*, the American publication, opened its bureau in Turkey, Güler became its initial correspondent. Soon enough he started to get commissioned by other international magazines, such as *Stern*, *Paris Match* and *Sunday Times*, London. In 1961, he was hired by *Hayat* magazine as the chief photographer.

In this time, he met Marc Riboud and Henri Cartier-Bresson, who recruited him to join Magnum Photos. Ara was presented in 1961 *British Photography Yearbook*. In the same year, the American Society of Magazine Photographers made him the first Turkish photographer to become the member of this organization.

In 1960s, Ara’s work was used in books by notable authors as a means of illustration and were shown at different exhibitions around the world. In 1968, his work was displayed at the Museum of Modern Art in New York in a show called, Ten Masters of Color Photography. Moreover, his photographs were also shown in Cologne’s fair, Photokina in Germany. Two years later, *Türkei*, his photography album was published. His images related to art and its history were featured in magazines, like *Horizon*, *Life*, *Time*, and *Newsweek*.

Ara traveled for photography assignments to countries, such as Kenya, Borneo, New Guinea, India, Pakistan, Afghanistan, Kazakhstan, Iran and other cities of Turkey. In 1970s, he also took photography interviews with noteworthy artists and politicians, like Salvador Dali, Marc Chagall, Ansel Adams, Alfred Hitchcock, Imogen Cunningham, Willy Brandt, John Berger, Maria Callas, Bertrand Russell, Pablo Picasso, Indira Gandhi, and Winston Churchill.

His work is included in the collections of institutions worldwide, such as Paris’s National Library of France; New York’s George Eastman Museum; Das imaginäre Photo-Museum; Museum Ludwig Köln; and Sheldon Memorial Art Gallery.

Foto Muhabiri, a book by Nezih Tavlas recounts the life of Ara in a chronological method and the book also highlights 80 years in the history of Turkey.

His philosophy on photography is that he attaches great importance to the presence of humans in photography and considers himself as a visual historian. According to him, photography should provide people with memory of their suffering and their life. He feels that art can lie but photography only reflects the reality. He does not value art in photography so he prefers photojournalism.

He has won several awards for his work, including Turkey’s Photographer of the Century, 1999; Master of Leica, 1962; France’s Légion d’honneur; Lifetime Achievement Lucie Award, 2009; and Turkey’s Grand Prize of Culture and Arts, 2005. In 2004, he was given honorary fellowship by Istanbul’s Yildiz Technical University.

Güler also published books of his photographs, including *Living in Turkey*; *Sinan: Architect of Süleyman the Magnificent*; *Ara Güler’s Creative Americans*; *Ara Güler’s Movie Directors*; and *Ara Güler: Photographs*.

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