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Armen Sarkissian and ADL Central Committee Meet in Yerevan

YEREVAN – Armen Sarkissian, the candidate for president of Armenia proposed by the current president, Serzh Sargsyan, met on February 11 with members of the Central Committee of the Armenian Democratic Liberal Party (ADL) and Vartan Nazerian, president of the ADL Supreme Council, at the ADL headquarters in Yerevan.

Hagop Avedikian, ADL Central Committee chairman, introduced Sarkissian and noted that his candidacy for president encouraged the party, noting that



From left, Eduard Manukyan, Hagop Avedikian, Levon Avagyan, Suren Sargsyan, Armen Sarkissian, Seyran Gharibyan, Vartan Nazerian, Armen Manvelian, Karen Kakoyan and Nelly Gourzadyan



From left, Vartan Nazerian, Armen Sarkissian and Hagop Avedikian

ADL members are well aware of his activity in both Armenia and the diaspora, and thus they expect the creation of a new

political culture in Armenia.

Sarkissian declared that he first wished to hear the expectations and approaches of see ADL, page 20



Metropolitan Museum to Host Major Exhibit on Armenian History, Manuscripts

NEW YORK –For the first time in the history of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, a large-scale exhibition dedicated solely to the Armenian history and culture in the medieval period will take place in the fall. Curated by Dr. Helen C. Evans, “Armenia!” will cover the 4th to 17th century and portray the significance of Armenian art to the world during the Middle Ages.

By Taleen Babayan
Special to the Mirror-Spectator

Opening on the 27th anniversary of the Republic of Armenia’s independence, the exhibition will be on view from September 21, until January 13, 2019 and will feature some 140 Armenian works of art from around the globe.

The Mary and Michael Jaharis Curator for Byzantine Art at the Met, Evans has curated many significant exhibitions during her tenure, including “The Glory of Byzantium (843-1261)” in 1997 and “Byzantium: Faith and Power (1261-1557)” in 2004, that included major works of Armenian art. She also co-curated the Morgan Library and Museum’s 1994 exhibition, “Treasures in Heaven: Armenian Illuminated Manuscripts.” Thanks to Dr. Evans’s efforts, Armenian art is also now installed in the Met’s permanent galleries of medieval art.



Helen C. Evans

see MET, page 12

Government Cancels Patriarchal Election In Istanbul

ISTANBUL (Combined Sources) – Archbishop Aram Atesyan will continue serving as the patriarchal vicar for the Armenian community of Istanbul, the patriarchate’s religious council decided on Monday, February 5, according to Ermenihaber.am.

The Istanbul Governor’s Office sent a letter to the Armenian Patriarchate of Constantinople on February 5, noting that it does not recognize Archbishop Karekin Bekjian, who had been serving as Locum Tenens, but recognizes Aram Atesyan as Vicar General, Agos reported.

The letter signed by Istanbul’s Deputy Governor Ismail Peltek also noted that there are no conditions for holding new patriarchal elections, considering that Patriarch Mesrob Mutafyan is alive. It is mentioned that health issues are not enough to consider the patriarchal seat vacant and that Aram Atesyan keeps his position as General Vicar.

The letter indicates that all actions that led to the election of Karekin Bekjian as Locum Tenens are invalid.

The Patriarchal seat was declared vacant in 2016 due to the health of Patriarch Mutafyan. Mutafyan, who suffers from dementia and has been incapacitated for years, continues to be recognized by the Turkish state as the leader of the Patriarchate, as the Istanbul Governor’s office says his illness does not meet the state’s criteria for electing a new patriarch.

The Istanbul Governor’s office said the only criteria for a patriarchal election are the death of the sitting patriarch, his resignation or the vacancy of the position for other reasons.



Archbishop Aram Atesyan

see PARTRIARCH, page 5

NEWS IN BRIEF

Russian Army Official Arrives in Armenia on Working Visit

YEREVAN (News.am) – Aleksandr Dvornikov, Commander of the Southern Military District (SMD) troops of the Russian Armed Forces, has arrived in the Russian military base in Armenia, on a working visit.

Vadim Astafyev, head of the SMD press service, told about the aforementioned to reporters, according to RIA Novosti news agency of Russia.

Dvornikov inspected the combat duty of the Russian pilots at Erebuni military airport in the capital city of Yerevan. He inspected the military infrastructure at this airport as well as that in Yerevan, where the Russian servicemen and their family members are accommodated.

Astafyev added that the SMD commander will also inspect the Russian military base in Gyumri, and take part in the events by the joint staff of the Russian and Armenian armed forces.

Bulgarian President Visits Armenia, Talks Business

A business delegation from Bulgaria has visited Armenia and discussed the development of business ties between the two countries. The delegation included the Bulgarian president’s secretary for economic growth and investment affairs, the CEO of an agency for SMEs, representatives of the association of industrial capital and chambers of trade and industry. Armenia was represented by deputy prime minister Hovannes Azizyan, who hosted the event at the ministry of economic development and investments.

During the meeting, the stakeholders discussed increased economic and investment cooperation. “Trade turnover has been developing between our two countries and exports should be diversified,” said Mr Azizyan.

Amongst the main areas which have perked interest are pharmaceuticals, mineral water and alcoholic beverage production. The Bulgarian team also scrutinized Armenia’s tourism potential, and the scope for future cooperation given Bulgaria’s expertise in attracting large numbers of visitors.

The trade delegation is part of the Bulgarian President Rumen Radev’s official visit to Armenia. Besides business, the two countries discussed and signed agreements relating to the regulation of labour migration, as well as cooperation in fields of technology, communication and culture.

“Our peoples expect closer and more effective cooperation from us,” the Bulgarian president said.

According to official Armenian data, exports from Armenia to Bulgaria totalled 286.2 million US dollars in 2017 (an increase of 87.8 per cent).

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News From Armenia

US Mission Alarmed By Death Threats Against Armenian Editor

YEREVAN (RFE/RL) – The US Embassy in Yerevan expressed concern on Sunday, February 4, at death threats made against the editor of an Armenian media outlet critical of the government.

“Attacks on the media, such as those advocating harm to the director of MediaLab recently, are anathema to a free press that is vital to democracy,” the embassy wrote on its Twitter page.

The editor, Marianna Grigorian, received the threats on Facebook after her MediaLab.am publication posted on January 28 a cartoon that mocked Defense Minister Vigen Sargsyan in connection with a recent large-scale purchase of flowers for the Armenian Defense Ministry.

“Don’t you think that you’ve gone over the top?” a Facebook user commented on Grigorian’s page before warning the MediaLab staff to avoid the fate of the French satirical weekly Charlie Hebdo that was attacked by Islamist gunmen in January 2015. The terrorist attack left 12 people dead and 11 others wounded.

According to Grigorian, the user using the name “Hayk Berman Ohanyan” continued to threaten her with private messages sent in the following days. In of those messages, he hinted that her young daughter’s safety is also at risk. Grigorian stopped sending the girl to school as a result.

The editor was summoned and questioned by the Yerevan police on Friday after lodging a complaint with Armenia’s Office of the Prosecutor-General. A police spokesman said on Monday, February 5, that law-enforcement authorities are conducting an investigation but refused to give any details. It was not clear whether they have identified the person who made the death threats.

Grigorian insisted, meanwhile, that “Ohanyan” is not a fake user and that the police should be able to track him down. She said she has managed to find the man’s phone number.

Most Dairy Companies in Armenia Produce Shoddy Sour Milk

YEREVAN (Arka) – Armenia’s state food safety agency has monitored the country’s sour milk market and discovered major problems, the regulator’s press office reported on February 13.

Remarkably, a member of the Armenian media did its own monitoring and released the results of its study to the public just one week ago. It has become known after laboratory examinations that only three of the ten examined samples showed conformity with the set standards, while the other seven were not fit for consumption – vegetable oil, E. coli bacilli and excessive content of yeast fungi were found.

The state agency said in its press release that it has inspected the companies which produce shoddy sour milk. According to the release, the regulators have toured Chanakh, Dustr Marianna, Echmiadzin Kat, Tamara, Bonila, Arzni Kat and Pargev and found a number of common problems.

In particular, Chanakh faced problems in the organization of raw materials processing – 150 kilograms of sour milk made in a clear breach of technical standards was discovered there. This batch of sour milk has been destroyed.

Dustr Marianna had problems with the purchase of raw materials and improper paperwork in the production process. The same problems were found at Tamara, Echmiadzin Kat and Pargev.

Arzni Kat uses raw materials from its own farm, which significantly lessens risks, but despite that, the company had improper paperwork.

Faults were found at Bonilat in its raw materials purchasing. Furthermore, E. coli bacteria have been seen in its products dated from February 5. Bonilat-made sour milk has been pronounced to be dangerous. The production process has been halted and appropriate recommendations have been made.

The sour milk produced by Chanakh on February 6 was announced to be dangerous as well.



The Angels Network members

Science and Technology Angels Network (STAN), Launched

YEREVAN – At a press conference on February 5, a new initiative, the Science and Technology Angels Network (STAN), launched by the Foundation for Armenian Science and Technologies (FAST) was announced.

The speakers at the press conference were FAST founder Artur Alaverdyan, FAST Founding CEO Armen Orujyan, and co-chairs of the Angels Network Ruben Arutyunyan and Igor Khalatian.

The purpose of the Angels Network is to facilitate joint investments in science and technology startups in Armenia, as well as to share and engrave the best international practice in the country.

The initiative has united 18 investors and entrepreneurs of Armenian descent from Armenia and abroad, that in addition to financing, offer advice and mentorship to Armenian startups, as well as introductions and connections for their development.

Minimum annual investment is set to \$10,000 per member for the first four years of the network’s operation. Starting from the fifth year of operation the minimum annual investment will be set to \$20,000.

FAST assists in setting communication between the network and the startups, and supports in further development opportunities, organizes pitching and other events, provides legal support, and performs due diligence assessment of startups.

“We are not your typical ‘angels’.

The ‘business angels’ invest in companies in the early stages, when the entrepreneur has realized the idea and needs additional funding. We focus on quality and not quantity, so we will prioritize startups with scientific and technical base that contribute to the

“It is extremely important that these businesses come from science, so that the invested money goes to science, and a scientist, who makes a discovery, gets a chance to commercialize it and takes it to the global market. We aim to build connections between business



At the press conference, from left, Armineh Petrossian, Rouben Harutyunyan, Igor Khalatian, Armen Orujyan and Artur Alaverdyan

development of these areas not only in Armenia, but worldwide. We will give more than money: our time, knowledge, and experience,” said STAN Co-chair Ruben Arutyunyan.

“We can help with not just financing, but experience and knowledge as well. All 18 investors in our network are people with vast experience in various areas,” said STAN co-chair Igor Khalatian.

and science,” said FAST co-founder Arthur Alaverdyan.

“I’m pleased with this addition to ecosystem and with the fact that the Foundation will support people who develop mechanisms that can be helpful to Armenia’s scientific and business communities,” highlighted FAST CEO Armen Orujyan.

For more information, visit <http://www.fast.foundation/#/>

Armenian Mining Giant Announces Mass Layoffs

YEREVAN (RFE/RL) – Three weeks after suspending production operations at a massive copper mine in Armenia’s northern Lori province, an Armenian mining company said on Friday, February 2, that it has decided to lay off hundreds of workers.

The company, Vallex Group, sent many of its 1,215 employees working at the Teghut deposit on indefinite leave on January 12. It attributed the move to “planned prophylactic repairs” of the mine’s waste disposal facilities.

In its latest statement to the press, Vallex said it will lay off most of the workers due to what it expects to be a “prolonged stoppage” of mining and ore processing at Teghut. The company claimed that the stoppage is necessary for the realization of its plans to significantly increase its output.

It said it needs to hire Armenian and foreign consultants for “scientific

research” to be conducted for that purpose. That will take some time, the statement added without elaborating.

The Armenian government did not immediately react to the announcement. Nor had government officials in Yerevan commented on the recent suspension of mining at Teghut.

The Teghut mine is one of the largest employers in the economically depressed region. The mass layoffs will therefore deal a major socioeconomic blow to the local population.

Vallex said almost all employees of the mine will receive notices about the impending termination of their contracts. It promised to provide some of those workers with jobs at other enterprises owned by the mining giant. They include a copper smelter in the nearby town of Alaverdi and metal mines in Nagorno-Karabakh.

The Liechtenstein-registered company resorted to the layoffs despite reporting a 32 percent surge in its combined operating revenue, which totaled \$358 million last year thanks to increased international prices of copper and other non-ferrous metals. The Teghut mine generated over 42 percent of that revenue.

The Teghut operator already announced in August plans to increase copper ore extraction at Teghut. These plans met with strong resistance from some residents of two villages close to the mining site. They said that higher pollution levels have had negative effects on their fruit orchards.

In recent months, environment protection groups have repeatedly reported toxic leaks from Teghut’s waste disposal dump contaminating a nearby river. The company has denied those reports.



ARMENIA

Aleppo Cuisine Center Preparing to Launch in Yerevan and Provide Jobs

YEREVAN – After months of preparation, the Aleppo Compatriotic Charitable Organization (Aleppo-NGO), a Syrian-Armenian humanitarian relief organization, is nearly ready to open its new Middle Eastern restaurant. Named Aleppo Cuisine, it will be located on Koghbatsi Street in the heart of Yerevan.

In addition to a small on-site café, the Aleppo Cuisine Center will offer catering and delivery services, and will produce a wide array of frozen foods for distribution to grocery stores and restaurants across Armenia.

Developed with the intent of providing jobs to individuals who have fled to Armenia during the Syrian conflict, Aleppo Cuisine will also distribute a share of its profits to refugee families whose breadwinners are incapacitated by illness or disability. In addition, the cuisine center will regularly donate food to vulnerable local populations.

Aleppo-NGO's president, Ani Balkhian, relates that she and others at Aleppo-NGO had the idea for a cuisine center while considering ways to help refugees who arrived in Armenia via the NGO's Save a Life program from 2015 to 2017. "We brought people here," Balkhian says, referencing Aleppo-NGO's evacuation of hundreds of Armenians from Syria at the height of the conflict, "and we feel a responsibility to help them rebuild their lives."

Vrej Kolandjian, the past chairman of the Parish Council of St. Kevork Armenian Apostolic Church of Houston, Texas, who had raised more than \$120,000 for the Save a Life project, helping rescue over 250 Syrian-Armenians by resettling them in Armenia, said: "Armenia and specifically Aleppo Armenians need jobs more than anything else. Jobs will empower women and give them a sense of security, dignity and self-accomplishment. The Aleppo Cuisine Center will do just that! In that perspective, we are starting immediately a global campaign called Create-a-Job; \$3,000 will secure one full year salary for one refugee."

Two factors convinced NGO leaders to focus on a cuisine center. First, they say, they took note of the rising demand for Western Armenian and Middle Eastern food in Armenia. Tsola Beshlian Vizoyan, Aleppo Cuisine's prospective head chef, observes that "Syrian cuisine has quickly become very popular in Yerevan. Over the past few years, locals have definitely developed a taste for it." Evidence for her claim is scattered across the city: from Erebuni to Arabkir, more than 40 restaurants—the vast majority owned and operated by recent refugees from Syria—now focus on Middle Eastern cuisine.

As restaurateurs scramble to keep up with demand, Aleppo Cuisine's large-scale production and distribution service will address major gaps in the market, increasing the availability of Middle Eastern and Western Armenian cuisine at catered events, grocery stores, and beyond.

The second factor that convinced Aleppo-NGO to open a cuisine center was the skill set of the refugee population. "The women of our community," says Harout Zoulamian, a member of Aleppo Cuisine's leadership team, "are talented, energetic, and hardworking, and their culinary expertise is a great untapped resource. We are convinced that they can accomplish anything they set their mind to."

Since December, Aleppo Cuisine's prospective employees have participated in a variety of business, hygiene and safety training sessions, and are now concluding the preparation process with hands-on practice in a mock kitchen. Zoulamian notes that the women entered the training with a wealth of knowledge and experience regarding Middle

Eastern cuisine. "They already knew how to prepare all of the dishes," he says. "Ichli kufta, madzunov kufta, yalanchi, pastries, desserts, you name it – they can make it perfectly." The training thus sought to draw on these existing skills and prepare the women to work as a team, to produce much

best ways to build dignity. So I have great hopes for this enterprise and the impact it will have on the women who participate. It's proof that we as Syrian Armenians are not broken, that we're still fighting, and that we have a fierce will to survive."



The employees at Aleppo Cuisine

larger quantities of food, and to meet uniform quality standards.

"When you give someone a fish, you feed them for a day. When you teach them how to fish, you feed them for a lifetime. This is our philosophy," Zoulamian says. "The cuisine center isn't a temporary aid initiative. It's a sustainable foundation on which families can build their lives in Armenia."

Balkhian agrees, declaring: "Aleppo Cuisine Center's technical training differs from other training programs for Syrian refugees: it offers a direct path to sustainable employment and income for some of the most vulnerable members of our community."

Aleppo-NGO hopes to employ up to 70-90 Syrian-Armenian women and persons with disabilities within its first 60 months of operations. Work hours will be personally tailored for each employee, allowing individuals with unpredictable schedules to participate. For many of the employees, the center will represent the end of a months-long – or even years-long – search to find a job that accommodates their family responsibilities.

In the words of Beshlian-Vizoyan, "A job is one of the most important ways someone can feel strong, one of the

The Aleppo Cuisine Center will be headquartered at 83 Koghbatsi Street, and is scheduled to open for business as soon as the remodeling is completed in the next few months. The cuisine center's space was bought thanks to a generous donation from St. Kevork Armenian Apostolic Church in Houston, under the leadership of Vrej Kolandjian, Dr. and Mrs. Österbauer-Tanielian and another donor who remains anonymous. The kitchen, meanwhile, has been fully equipped with new appliances provided by GIZ, Germany's flagship international development agency, which has been implementing the Economic Integration of Syrian Refugees in Armenia (EISRA) program for the past two years.

Aleppo-NGO's leadership has ambitious plans for the cuisine center's future. One hundred percent of the profits will be used for humanitarian relief assistance and re-investment into growth—hiring new employees, increasing services and production amounts, and eventually expanding to a second location.

One day, Zoulamian says, Aleppo Cuisine's products will be found throughout Armenia, and will even be exported internationally. "There are no limits in our mind as to where we can go."

Lawyers Postpone Rallies in Armenia as Parliament Passes Controversial Bill

YEREVAN (OCMedia) – Lawyers in Armenia have postponed planned protest rallies after Parliament passed in its second hearing a controversial bill which would allow judges impose fines on lawyers for contempt of the court. The authorities offered to meet with lawyers to discuss the bill.

In a February 12 statement, the Chamber of Advocates of the Republic of Armenia, which organized the protests, said it plans to continue protesting the bill even now it has passed, and is asking the president of Armenia not to sign it.

However, it said that the protest rallies planned for February 14, 15, and 16 have been postponed.

The Chamber said on February 7 that hundreds of lawyers went on strike throughout the country, protesting the draft law it says "targets lawyers." It is a non-profit organization claiming

almost 2,000 members.

The bill, drafted by the government, has faced criticism as lawyers fear it will be used to limit their rights during court hearings. It would allow judges to fine them up to 100,000 drams (210 dollars).

Armenian law already penalizes contempt of court, but the draft would introduce additional fines exclusively for lawyers.

However, the Chamber claims there is no need to establish a penalty for lawyers separately. It argues that the bill may "endanger lawyers' independence."

The Chamber quoted the Ministry of Justice on February 12 as announcing that it was ready to discuss the amendments with lawyers. The Chamber welcomed the offer, but argued that it needed guarantees for its members' independence.

(PRESS SERVICE OF THE CHAMBER OF ADVOCATES OF THE REPUBLIC OF ARMENIA)



Chamber of Advocates



International News

Afrin's Last Armenian Reminded of Genocide by Turkish Attack

AFRIN, Syria (Public Radio of Armenia) – Harot Kevork, the last living Armenian in Afrin has talked to the Kurdish Mezopotamya Ajansi about the memories of the Armenian Genocide, Akunq.net reports.

The operation in Afrin that have now entered the 19th day, remind Harot, 61, of the horrors of the Armenian Genocide. His family fled the Armenian Genocide to Ezaz and then Aleppo.

Kevork, who moved to Afrin 50 years ago, is a blacksmith. Speaking to the agency, Kevork said there were many Armenian families that moved from Aleppo to Afrin. Many died in the war, others migrated as a result of the conflict.

"I'm now the only Armenian here. Together with other people living here we take care of our city. Turkey has been continuing its attacks for 100 years. It is killing women and children just like 1915. Genocide found us a century later," he said.

Kevork said Afrin was the only city in Syria untouched by war, and added that the city that has given refuge to a number of people is now being destroyed.

"We were exiled from our homes in Turkey and came here. Now they are trying to force us out of the city. We demand that this war and attacks be stopped. Our call is addressed to all peoples of the world," he said.

Erdogan Cancels Visit to South America

ISTANBUL (Agencia Prensa Armenia) – Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan suspended his official visit to Brazil, Uruguay and Venezuela scheduled for early February.

The government of Turkey planned a tour of South America after meeting with Pope Francis at the Vatican on February 5. In recent days, many newspapers reported the dissatisfaction of the Armenian community in Uruguay and possible demonstrations against the visit of the Turkish leader. According to Uruguayan sources, several agents of the Turkish government traveled this week to organize the security of the president.

The Armenian National Committee of Uruguay explained that "the negotiations prior to this eventual visit showed that Uruguay continues to be a key objective of the denialist apparatus of the Republic of Turkey due to the Uruguayan State policy of recognition and condemnation of the Armenian Genocide."

The suspension of the trip also occurs in the framework of a major military operation launched against the Kurds of Syria in Afrin on January 20.

Prominent Argentine Academic Dr. Pascual Ohanian Passes Away

BUENOS AIRES (Agencia Prensa Armenia) – Dr. Pascual Carlos Ohanian, a lawyer, teacher and journalist and one of the most important South American academics of Armenian studies, passed away on February 7.

Ohanian was born in Buenos Aires in 1932. Recipient of an honorary degree from the National Academy of Sciences of Yerevan, he has worked in Armenology since 1964, writing on genocide, human rights, crimes against humanity and terrorism. He was rector of the Argentine-Armenian Marie Manoogian Institute.

He was the author of *Turkey, Genocidal State (1915-1923)*, published in 1986 and *The Armenian Question and International Relations* (6 volumes).

In 2003, the Museum-Institute of the Armenian Genocide in Yerevan published his book *The Protection of Human Rights and Genocide of the Turkish State against the Armenian Nation* in Russian. It was published in English in 2004 and in Arabic in Beirut in 2007. For many years, Ohanian was a columnist for *Diario Armenia*, the oldest and most important Armenian newspaper in South America.

Azerbaijan President Calls for Return To 'Historic Lands' in Armenia

By Joshua Kucera

BAKU (Eurasia.net) – Azerbaijan's president has said claimed that large parts of Armenia's territory are Azerbaijan's "historic lands," vowing to return to them. The fraught assertion threatens to derail any progress, however slight, in peace talks between the two countries in recent months.

"Yerevan is our historical land and we Azerbaijanis must return to these historical lands," President Ilham Aliyev said at a congress of his New Azerbaijan Party on February 9. The speech was in effect the opening of his campaign for a fourth presidential term; earlier in the week Aliyev had unexpectedly announced snap elections to be held in April.

In the speech, Aliyev also referred to the Zangezur region, in far southern Armenia, and the region around Armenia's Lake Sevan (known in Azerbaijani as the Göyçe region) as "our historic lands." Azerbaijanis' return to those territories, he added, "is our political and strategic goal, and we need to work step-by-step to get closer to it."

Aliyev's phrasing left some ambiguity as to exactly what he meant by Azerbaijanis "returning" to Armenia, but the spokesman for Azerbaijan's foreign ministry, Hikmet Hajiyev, said that it did not imply any territorial claims. "It is not a territorial claim, but restoration of historical justice," Hajiyev said in an email interview with Eurasianet.org by email. "Azerbaijanis have the right to return to their historical lands, to claim their properties and visit the graveyards of their great-grandfathers."

The question of "historical lands" in the Caucasus is a fraught one. In the pre-Soviet era, the region was far less ethnically divided: Armenians did in fact represent a minority in the areas that Aliyev mentioned, and Muslims (including Azerbaijanis) the majority. But Azerbaijanis were only a small minority in Baku before the Soviet era; on the eve of World War I they were nearly outnumbered by Armenians. Armenians, meanwhile, were the majority in much of eastern Turkey before being driven out in the World War I genocide.

Soviet Armenia and Azerbaijan became much more ethnically homogeneous through the course of the 20th century, and the war between the two sides in the 1990s finalized that process. There are now only tiny numbers of Armenians living in Azerbaijan, and vice versa, mostly elderly widows.

Armenian officials responded to Aliyev's comments by casting doubt on Azerbaijan's historical presence on its own lands. "The statement about territorial claims of the president of Azerbaijan, a state appearing on the political map of the world only 100 years ago ... yet again demonstrates the racist character of the ruling regime in Baku," said Tigran Balayan, spokesman for Armenia's foreign ministry.

One clear effect of Aliyev's comments seems to be a cooling of hopes for progress in talks over Nagorno Karabakh, which had made some fitful steps forward as of late. "Until Azerbaijanis rejects their maximalist, unrealistic expectations about the negotiations, but instead rave about seizing Yerevan or Zangezur, we will not harbor much hope that the issue will be resolved," Armenian President

Serzh Sargsyan said at a February 12 press conference interview.

Aliyev has in the past made similar claims about parts of Armenia being Azerbaijan's historical home, but Baku now appears to be laying the intellectual groundwork to make the case more aggressively. Since his speech, gGovernment officials' twitter Twitter accounts have been promoting a high production quality video, produced by the Ministry for Youth and Sport, arguing for Yerevan's Azerbaijani origins. "The city ... is clearly one of Azerbaijan's cultural centers," the video's narrator says.

"The younger generation, and the entire world, should know about that," Aliyev said in his speech. "I am glad that scientific work is being done, films are being produced, exhibitions are organized about the history of our ancestral lands. In the years ahead we must be more active in this direction, and presentations and exhibitions should be organized in various corners of the world."

Aliyev's claims this time also appear to be connected with the 100th anniversary of the founding of the Azerbaijan Democratic Republic, with which the current regime has a complicated relationship. While the government likes to use the ADR's progressive legacy – it was the first Muslim country to give women the right to vote – it is uneasy with the embrace of the ADR by Azerbaijan's current-day liberal opposition.

In the past, Aliyev has blamed the ADR leadership for the loss of Yerevan and Zangezur to Soviet Armenia. While his comments last week did not repeat that accusation, some pro-government commentators made the connection.

"This year is the 'Year of the Republic,'" said one commentator, Arzu Nagiyev. "In this context, it is important to pay attention to the

issue of Azerbaijan's historical lands, to whom and by whom these lands were given away."

"In the days [of the ADR], a discussion took place about a capital for Armenians," wrote Farhad Mammadov, an analyst at the government-run Center for Strategic Studies, in a Facebook post on Aliyev's comments. "The only city in the South Caucasus where Armenians were a majority was Alexandropol (today's Gyumri), but it was then occupied by the Turks. On May 29 [1918], Fatali Khan Khoyski [first prime minister of the ADR] explained the handover of Yerevan to the Armenians, saying: 'The concession of Yerevan is a historical necessity, but for us it is an unavoidable and bitter reality.'"

Other Azerbaijani commentators justified Aliyev's statements by pointing to similar comments by Armenians, who at times brag about "drinking tea in Baku" after a decisive military victory over Azerbaijan. Armenians also appear increasingly uninterested in Nagorno Karabakh – the de jure Azerbaijani territory that is de facto controlled by Armenian forces – returning to its former multi-ethnic state.

"Unlike Armenia, where as a result of ethnic cleansing hundreds of thousands of Azerbaijanis and Kurds who had lived there for centuries were expelled, and which occupies Azerbaijan's territory and is trying to legalize its territorial gains, President Ilham Aliyev speaks about Azerbaijanis returning to Yerevan and Zangezur, to the place where they historically lived, not raising the issue of joining those territories to Azerbaijan," Azerbaijani MP Rasim Musabekov told local media. He said, "This is one of the fundamental differences between Baku and the Armenian chauvinists who contravene international laws."



Ambassador Armen Sarkissian in Milan

Armen Sarkissian Meets with Armenian Clerics in Milan

MILAN, Italy – Armenian Ambassador to the UK, a possible presidential candidate from the ruling Republican Party of Armenia Armen Sarkissian met with representatives of the Armenian national and spiritual institutions in Milan.

The meeting was held in the Armenian House of Milan, the Armenian Spiritual Mission in Italy reported.

During the meeting, Sarkissian presented his vision of Armenian future and listened to the views and ideas of those present. He also touched upon Diaspora's involvement in various programs.

The sides exchanged views over justice, health and education programs in Armenia.



INTERNATIONAL

Turkey's Afrin Operation Draws in Armenians, Azeris

By Emil Sanamyan

AFRIN, Syria (Eurasia.net) – As Turkey's military intervention in Kurdish-majority Afrin, Syria, entered its third week, a parallel public relations battle has raged on airwaves and social media, with varying messages tailored to Armenian and Azerbaijani audiences.

The Kurdish Democratic Federation of Northern Syria, which has administered the Afrin area since the start of the Syrian Civil War in 2012, and its People's Protection Forces (YPG) have accused Turkish forces of a variety of abuses, including killing civilians in air strikes. Kurdish forces released a video showing members of a Turkish-allied Syrian militia abusing the body of a dead female YPG fighter. The YPG also tried to portray itself as victorious on the battlefield, publishing dozens of recordings of its forces successfully targeting military vehicles of the Turkish forces and its allies.

The Turkish government, in turn, tried to present its fight against YPG – effectively a branch of long-time enemy number one, the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) – as a battle against the Islamic State (IS). Turkish officials accused the YPG of indiscriminate rocket fire into Turkish border towns and claimed that “utmost care and sensitivity” were taken not to harm civilians, highlighting cases of Afrin residents being “thankful” for actions of the Turkish forces.

As Turkey and the Kurds battled for international public opinion, there were several examples of more specific signaling to the publics in Azerbaijan and Armenia.

Accounts associated with the Azerbaijani lobby in Turkey distributed photos, apparently taken in the war zone, showing messages written on shells like “Karabakh is Turkish, will remain Turkish” with a hashtag for the Turkish official name for the Afrin operation, “Olive Branch.” Bottom of Form



Armenian-Turkish leftist guerrilla Nubar Ozanyan, who was killed fighting in Syria in 2017 and whose image has been used to build Kurdish-Armenian solidarity. (photo: Marxist-Leninist Communist Organization –Proletarian Way)

Goksel Gulbey, head of the Turkish Association that Struggles Against International Baseless Armenian Lies (or ASIMDER for short), claimed that Kurdish forces were receiving help from Armenia – particularly from among its Kurdish Yezidi minority – though it didn't furnish any evidence to

that effect.

The YPG, for its part, sought to highlight its affinity for the Armenians. Last year, Kurdish fighters put on events and produced films dedicated to veteran leftist guerrilla Nubar Ozanyan, a Turkish-born ethnic Armenian who was killed fighting for YPG and against ISIS in Raqqa in August 2017. Ozanyan's obituaries highlighted the fact that Ozanyan, nicknamed General Mardaket, also fought in the Karabakh war in the early 1990s.

Since the start of the Afrin fighting, local officials highlighted the cases of the few ethnic Armenians still living in Afrin killed or injured in the Turkish bombing. Northern Syria, particularly the city of Aleppo, used to have a large Armenian community, descendants of the Armenian genocide in Turkey. Earlier this week, a Facebook account associated with the YPG published a video of its female fighters dancing to a traditional Armenian song, drawings thousands of viewers, many with Armenian names.

While on social media Armenians and Azerbaijanis could be seen cheerleading for Kurds and Turks, respectively, official reactions have not been as enthusiastic. A spokesman for Azerbaijan's foreign ministry issued a statement offering generic support to Turkey's fight against terrorism. The Armenian government issued a general statement of concern over the escalation in fighting and reacted to reports of ethnic Armenians injured or killed in bombing.

(Emil Sanamyan's reports are supported by the Institute of Armenian Studies at the University of Southern California)

Government Cancels Patriarchal Election In Istanbul

PATRIARCH, from page 1

In March 2017, Bekjian was elected patriarchal locum tenens after arriving in Istanbul.

The move has drawn a fierce reaction from the Turkish-Armenian community. The Turkish-Armenian weekly *Agos* said the letter was “historic” in terms of charting the relationship between the Armenian community and the state in an editorial published on February 8.

“The Justice and Development Party has openly intervened in the traditions of the church and told them they cannot elect their own patriarch,” the article said.

On March 15, 2017, Karekin Bekjian, Primate of the German Diocese of the Armenian Apostolic Church, was elected Locum Tenens of the Istanbul Patriarchate. Following the election, a notice was handed out by Archbishop Atesyan to the Clerical Assembly that stated it was illegal to start the election process. The notice was from the Governor's office to the press and was signed by Deputy Governor Aziz Mercan.

Archbishop Karekin Bekjian, whom Turkish authorities refused to recognize as elected patriarchal locum tenens of the Armenian Patriarchate of Istanbul, released a letter before leaving Turkey, *Agos* reports.

“After serving abroad for more than 50 years, my reason for coming to Turkey was to end the transition period which had lasted nine years. I thought it would be enough to proceed with faith and conscience in this matter, in order for our church and people to achieve success in the patriarchal election. Only now I understand how wrong I was,” Bekjian said in the letter.

He said that after assuming tenure he faced a shocking reality, “most important being that from the very first day it was clear that the election process will not be able to be advanced transparently, under fair election rules. I don't think it's necessary to mention all examples. I neither want to

remember nor remind those sad and sorrowing examples,” he said.

“The recent developments are not a consequence of one day. It is so unfortunate that this process, the target of which was seemingly I, was aimed to sabotage the 85th patriarchal elections. This was a result of a long lasting and planned campaign, which began from the very first day that I was elected locum tenens,” he said, adding that he fears that all of this can even more divide the Armenian community.

The archbishop mentioned that particularly after the letter from the Interior Ministry he is forced to leave Istanbul, and stressed that he isn't by nature someone who engages in conflicts.

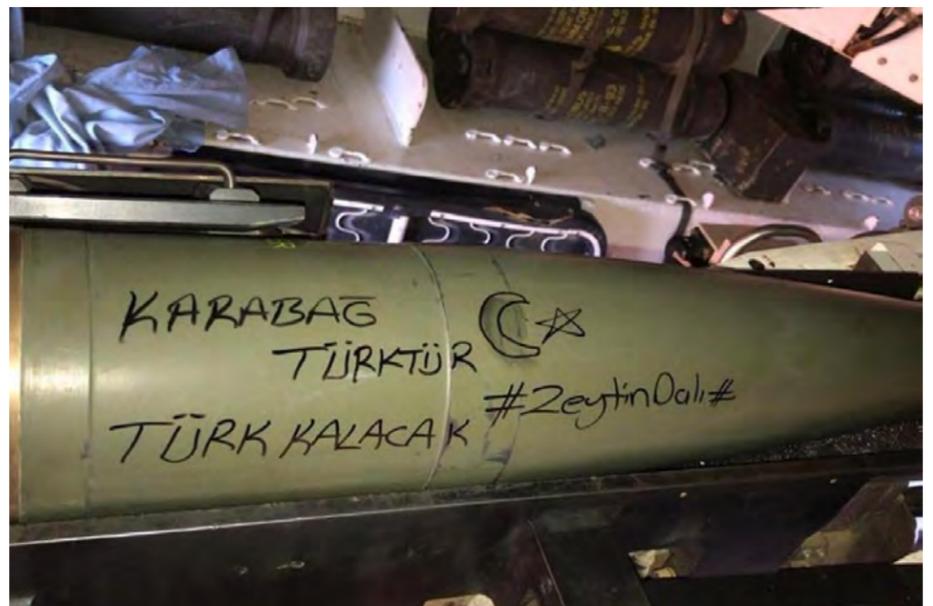
“My presence should not anyhow cause more damage to the Armenian community which already suffered damage,” he added. “I decided to leave the country with the goal to begin a new service in the upcoming period, praying for my brother Archbishop Mesrop Mutafyan, who is ill for a long time, his dear mother Mary Mutafyan and you – my dear spiritual brothers,” Bekjian said in the letter.

The situation in Armenian Patriarchate of Constantinople was schedule to be discussed at Holy Ekmadzin during the meeting of the Supreme Spiritual Council.

After the Istanbul Governorship stopped the process of the election of the Patriarch, Atesyan prayed at the Feriköy Church and was protested. Besse Pakak, an attorney, protested and was taken to the Feriköy Police Station.

Kabak started to recite the *Der Voghormia* (Lord Have Mercy) prayer by raising the Bible in her hand. Kabak was taken out by those around him in the church.

(Reports from PanArmenian.net, Armenpress, *Agos*, Public Radio of Armenia and news.am were combined for this story. See related articles, pp. 17, 19, on this issue)



A Turkish shell, purportedly used in Turkey's Operation Olive Branch, with “Karabakh is Turkish, Will Remain Turkish” and the hashtag associated with the operation written on it. Armenians and Azerbaijanis have been targeted by both sides in the conflict.

President Sargsyan Receives OSCE Minsk Group Co-Chairs

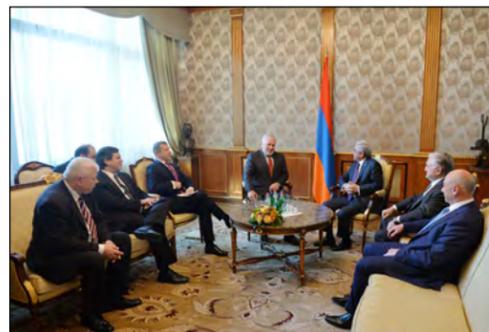
YEREVAN (president.am) – On February 9, President Serzh Sargsyan received the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) Minsk Group Co-Chairs Ambassadors Igor Popov of the Russian Federation, Stéphane Visconti of France, and Andrew Schofer of the United States of America, as well as the Personal Representative of the OSCE Chairperson-in-Office Andrzej Kasprzyk, who have arrived in Yerevan within the framework of their regional visit.

The Co-Chairs presented to President Sargsyan the outcomes of their meetings held in Baku. President Sargsyan drew the attention of the Co-Chairs to the recent statements voiced in Baku, noting the latter once again attest to how far Azerbaijan is from the readiness to advance the negotiation process on the basis of proposals presented by the Minsk Group Co-Chairs, as well as demonstrate the response of Baku to the continuous calls of the Co-Chairs to prepare societies for peace.

The interlocutors attached importance to that within the negotiation process the sides adhere to the commitments aimed at the peaceful settlement of the conflict, as well as highlighted the necessity to implement the agreements reached in Vienna, St. Petersburg and Geneva.

The OSCE Minsk Group Co-Chairs briefed the President of Armenia on their forthcoming work plans.

Serzh Sargsyan reaffirmed Armenia's readiness to continue together with the OSCE Minsk Group the efforts towards the peaceful settlement of the conflict through negotiations.



President Sargsyan with OSCE co-chairs

Community News

Armenian Genocide Commemoration to Be Held at Times Square April 22

Holocaust Remembrance To Be Marked

NEW YORK – On Sunday, April 22, from 2 to 4 p.m., thousands will gather in Times Square (43rd St. & Broadway) to commemorate the 103rd anniversary commemoration of the Armenian Genocide. In recognition of Genocide Awareness Month in April, Holocaust Remembrance Day (Yom HaShoah) will also be commemorated, along with other genocides committed in contemporary history.

This powerful event, free and open to the public, will honor the 1.5 million Armenians who were massacred by the Young Turk Government of the Ottoman Empire and the millions of victims of genocide worldwide. Speakers will include well-known artists, politicians, academics and humanitarians. Armen McOmber, Esq. and Prof. Nvair Beylerian, co-director of the Center for Peace, Justice, Reconciliation at Bergen Community College, will preside over the program, the theme of which is “Truth, Justice and Recognition.”

“These killings, which were labeled crimes against humanity and civilization at the time, exactly fit the definition of the word genocide, which was coined by Raphael Lemkin, a Polish-Jewish lawyer in 1943,” said Dr. Dennis Papazian, founding director of the Armenian Research Center at the University of Michigan-Dearborn. “In the long run, Turkish recognition of the Armenian Genocide is critical, since Turkey is the responsible successive government of the Ottoman Empire.”

The commemoration arrives on the heels of the newly published book, *Killing Orders*, by Turkish historian Dr. Taner Akçam, who has pieced together documents from trials that emerged from the Armenian Genocide, which he refers to as the “smoking gun” and hopes it will “remove the last brick in the denialist wall.”

“My firm belief as a Turk is that democracy and human rights in Turkey can only be established by facing history and acknowledging historic wrongdoings,” said Akçam in a *New York Times* interview titled, “Sherlock Holmes of Armenian Genocide Uncover Lost Evidence.”

The Astghikner Vocal Ensemble of the St. Gregory the Illuminator Mission Parish of Brooklyn, New York, will sing the Armenian and American anthems, kicking off the program.

“The international community needs to not only recognize the Armenian Genocide but shine a light on its history for all to see,” said Beylerian. “Acknowledge it, study it, talk about it and emphasize to the world how easily the horrors repeat themselves over and over and over again.”

The 103rd Armenian Genocide Commemoration is organized by the Mid-Atlantic chapters of the Knights & Daughters of Vartan (www.kofv.org), an international Armenian fraternal organization headquartered in the United States, and co-sponsored by the Armenian General Benevolent Union (www.agbu.org), the Armenian Assembly of America (www.aaainc.org), the Armenian National Committee of America (www.anca.org), the Armenian Council of America and the Armenian Democratic League - Ramgavars.

Participating organizations include the Diocese of the Armenian Church of America, Prelacy of the Armenian Church of America, Armenian Missionary Association of America, Armenian Catholic Eparchy for U.S. and Canada, the Armenian Church Youth Organization of America (ACYOA), the Armenian Youth Federation (AYF-YOARF), Armenian youth organizations and university Armenian clubs.



The Armenia booth

Armenia Appears at Major East Coast Travel Show For First Time

BOSTON – Armenia had a booth at the thirteenth annual *Boston Globe* Travel Show from February 9 to 11 at the Seaport World Trade Center. It was sponsored by the State Tourism Committee of the Ministry of Economic Development and Investments of the Republic of Armenia with support from the Marriott Hotel of Yerevan, Armenia.

The motto of the booth was “Armenia: the land of warm hospitality.” Makar Melikyan and Lusine Shirinyan of the Embassy of the Republic of Armenia in Washington, DC were the organizers, while a travel agent provided touristic information, and took the contact information of visitors to the booth.

On Sunday, February 11, there was an Armenian cultural performance, with duduk player Tigran “Tiko” Avetisyan as well as singers Meghri Dervartanian and Hovhannes Khacheryan, who performed two songs.

Boston area volunteers like Armine Hovhannissian, Arminé Manukyan, Sona Antonyan, Piruz Bogossian, Anna Elmezian, and many others helped make the booth a success.

Armenia had a special ad placement on the visitor information page of the travel show. Armenia was the only state from the Caucasus with an exhibit booth. From the general region, in addition to Armenia, Turkish Airlines had an exhibit booth. There were some 150 state and private exhibitors from all see TRAVEL, page 11



Visitors to the Armenia booth

Women’s History Month to Be Commemorated On March 4

BELMONT, Mass. – “Women’s Activism during the Western Armenian Renaissance” will be the focus of a program on March 4 commemorating Women’s History Month and sponsored jointly by the Armenian International Women’s Association (AIWA) and the National Association for Armenian Studies and Research (NAASR). The program will take place at 2:30 p.m. at the NAASR Center, 395 Concord Ave.

Dr. Hasmik Khalapyan, who is teaching courses at the American University of Armenia on Armenian History, the psychology of gender, and the Armenian women’s movement, will be the featured presenter.

A graduate of the State Institute of Foreign Languages in Yerevan with BA and MA degrees in English and French Linguistics, Khalapyan earned her PhD in History from Central European University in Budapest. She has taught at several higher educational institutions, including UCLA and Yerevan State University.

Khalapyan has lectured and published widely on various aspects of modern Armenian history, including religion and secularism, the emergence of philanthropy, theatre, fashion, marriage laws and many other topics. She also the academic director of AGBU’s Armenian Virtual College and editorial director of the Virtual College’s Multimedia E-Book Series, and she participates in programs promoting the teaching the Western Armenian language.

In the Women’s History Month program, Khalapyan will consider the effects of the Armenian Renaissance of the late 19th and early 20th centuries (Zartonk) on the status



Dr. Hasmik Khalapyan

and roles of Armenian women. The 1863 Armenian Constitution defined new perceptions of the nation and new forms of obligations and rights. This new meaning allowed for the entry into the public sphere of socially hitherto invisible groups, among them women.

The many distinguished Armenian women writers who emerged during this period did not confine themselves to literary pursuits, however, but organized social and humanitarian projects to advance the people’s education, improve medical facilities, and promote social reform. Khalapyan will describe how “modernity” among the Ottoman Armenians gave rise to a “philanthropic public sphere” that facilitated women’s participation in these areas.

The Armenian International Women’s Association is a global network dedicated to empowering Armenian women everywhere. AIWA’s mission is to promote and enrich the social, economic, and personal advancement of Armenian women worldwide through education and other community activities that unite Armenian women, promote gender equality, and emphasize our Armenian cultural heritage.

The March 4 Women’s History Program will be followed by a reception and is open to the public free of charge. Further information is available by contacting AIWA at info@aiwainternational.org, or NAASR at hq@naasr.org



COMMUNITY NEWS

Dole Institute Award Recipients Examine Legacy of Armenian Genocide

LAWRENCE, KS – The Robert and Elizabeth Dole Archive and Special Collections at the Dole Institute of Politics announced the recipients of two grants related to the Armenian Genocide of 1915-1917, on February 10. The institute has awarded an archival fellowship to author Michael Bobelian and a travel grant to Professor Julien Zarifian.

Bobelian is an award-winning author, lawyer, journalist and the institute's Archival Fellow for Armenian Advocacy. His book *Children of Armenia: A Forgotten Genocide and the Century-Long Fight for Justice* (Simon & Schuster, 2009) is the seminal work on the aftermath of the Armenian Genocide.

As the Archival Fellow, Bobelian will work with Dole Archives staff to create a web-based learning module with primary sources documenting the US response to the World War I-era Armenian Genocide and former US Sen. Bob Dole's advocacy on behalf of Armenians and Armenian Americans.

Bobelian gave a public lecture titled "The United States and the Armenian Genocide" on February 15 at the institute.

The recipient of a Dole Archives travel grant is Zarifian, associate professor in American history at the University of Cergy-Pontoise in France. This academic year, he is a Fulbright



Michael Bobelian speaks at Tufts University in 2011.

Scholar with the University of Southern California Shoah Foundation Center for Advanced Genocide Research. His research interests include US foreign policies in Eurasia,

the role of ethnic groups in US politics and the importance of memory issues in US political life.

His current and primary research project is

titled "The US and the Question of the Armenian Genocide, from 1915 to the Present."

The University of Kansas (KU) World War I Centennial Committee and the Max Kade Center for German-American Studies at KU are cosponsors of the program and the fellowships.

Gravely wounded in the mountains of Italy during World War II, Bob Dole credits his physical and mental recovery largely to Dr. Hampar Kelikian. Kelikian was an Armenian surgeon who lost family members to the Armenian Genocide before fleeing to the US. As a soldier, citizen and US senator, Dole has been a champion for Armenia, a role that includes seeking US recognition of the 1915-1916 Armenian Genocide. During the Centennial Commemoration of World War I, both the history of the Armenian Genocide and Dole's advocacy for its recognition can inform our responses to contemporary crises.

The Robert J. Dole Institute of Politics is ded-



Prof. Julien Zarifian



The Dole Institute of Politics

icated to promoting political and civic participation as well as civic discourse in a bipartisan, philosophically balanced manner. It is located in KU's West District and houses the Dole Archive and Special Collections. Through its robust public programming, congressional archive and museum, the Dole Institute strives to celebrate public service and the legacies of US Senators Bob Dole and Elizabeth Dole.



HAMAZKAYIN ARMENIAN EDUCATIONAL AND CULTURAL SOCIETY
WASHINGTON DC
AND
KNIGHTS AND DAUGHTERS OF VARTAN



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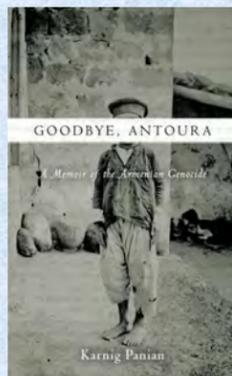
GOODBYE, ANTOURA

A MEMOIR OF THE ARMENIAN GENOCIDE

Featuring a presentation by

Houry Panian Boyamian

Principal, St. Stephen's Armenian Elementary School
of Watertown, Massachusetts
and daughter of author Karnig Panian



Saturday, February 17, 2018, 7:30 p.m.

Soorp Khatch Armenian Apostolic Church
Arabian Hall

4906 Flint Drive, Bethesda, Maryland, 20816

Reception to follow
Books available for purchase and signing

Wisconsin Hye Notes

By Naomi Basdekian Zeytoonian

Racine enjoyed a few weddings last year. Belated congratulations to April Johnson and Nathaniel Kadamian and also to Crystal Densmore and David Schaefer.

Sadly we lost a very active and dear parishioner of Holy Resurrection in South Milwaukee, Mary Haidarian, who will be sorely missed.

The summer days were short and sweet as all the Midwestern churches held their annual picnics which were all awesome and well attended. The Godfather of the Cross at St. Mesrob Armenian Church last month was beloved parishioner, Chatschick Grigorian who turned 100 years old on January 19, 2018. It was a most amazing and joyous event.

Rev. Avedis Kalajian, pastor at St. Mesrob, has initiated some wonderful new programs including many for the youth. These new programs have brought in many new faces and are of interest to a variety of parishioners, both old and young alike!

Our sympathies to the Shirley and Levon Saryan and family on the loss of Shirley's mother, Martha Auer and to the family of Marie Chardukian on her recent passing.

Before I close, I must send congratulations to graduates Alina Grigorian, from the University of Wisconsin -Whitewater, with a bachelor's in social work and who is now in the master's program in Williams Bay, Wisc. and to Caitlin Zeytoonian who graduated from Boston College Law School, passed the Massachusetts Bar and is now employed as an attorney in Boston.

To all my loyal readers with whom I have also communicated, it's been over 50-plus years covering areas from Washington, DC (my hometown) to Boston, South Florida and finally Wisconsin; its time to end my line. Thank you everyone and have a great New Year of happiness and success combined with good health.

God Bless you everyone!



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COMMUNITY NEWS

Georgetown University Armenian Students Association Remembers Genocide

By Katrina Schmidt

WASHINGTON (*The Hoya*) - The Armenian Students Association (ASA) staged a silent demonstration in Red Square on February 8 to raise awareness about the 1915 Armenian genocide and its global legacy today. Seven representatives of the ASA, which is in the process of becoming a university-recognized student organization, distributed 400 flyers about the history of the genocide throughout the demonstration. The students wore black tape over their mouths to protest in silence.

The Armenian genocide occurred in 1915, when leaders of the Ottoman Empire developed a plan to kill or forcibly push out Armenians living in the region. Nearly 1.5 million Armenians were killed during the genocide, which did not end until the early 1920s.

The genocide is widely recognized as such by many historians and governments. The United Nations defines genocide as the "intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial or religious group," combined with the use of certain destructive methods, including killing, to eliminate that group.

The event commemorated the annual national ASA "Stain of Denial" protest, when chapters at dozens of universities organize silent protests to spread awareness about the genocide, according to the *Daily Bruin*, the student newspaper of the University of California, Los Angeles. The demonstration aims to condemn denial of the Armenian genocide, particularly by the Turkish government.

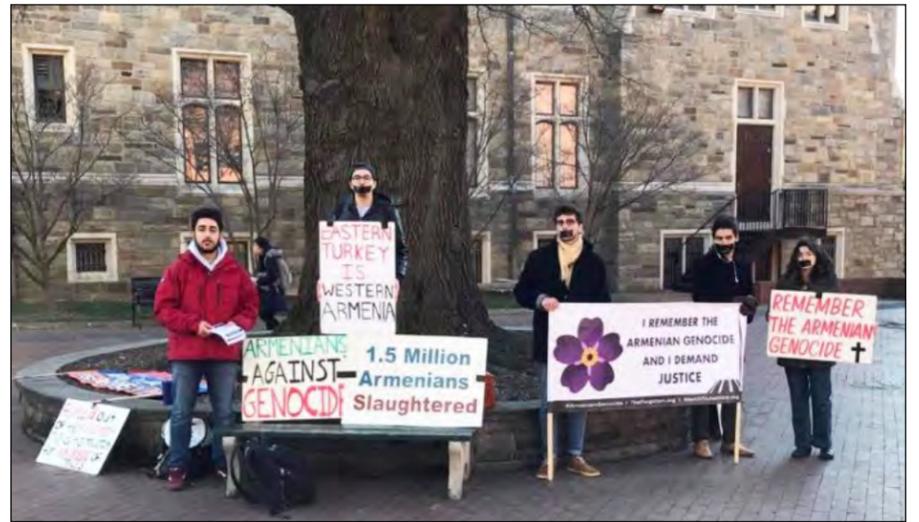
Haik Voskerchian (COL '19), president of the ASA, said the demonstration was well-received by the student body. "Students have been very welcoming and active," Voskerchian said about the demonstration. "Most people have been very interested."

However, the Turkish Government denies the genocide, particularly its scope and extent, Voskerchian said. Turkey does not deny that deaths occurred, but refuses to refer to it as a genocide and estimates the number of Armenian deaths to be around 600,000.

"We're trying to commemorate the genocide and condemn it," Voskerchian said.

The United States does not consistently refer to the events as genocide, though in several capacities it has. The US House of Representatives passed resolutions acknowledging the genocide in 1975, 1984 and 1996, according to the Armenian National Committee of America. On April 22, 1981, President Ronald Reagan lamented the Armenian genocide in a proclamation in remembrance of the Holocaust. In addition, 48 out of 50 states have officially recognized the genocide, with the only exceptions being Mississippi, Alabama and the District of Columbia.

Recent presidents, however, have refrained from using the word "genocide" when referencing the massacres. Former President Barack Obama abstained from referring to the Armenian Genocide as a genocide on the 100th anniversary in 2015, CNN reported. Similarly, President Donald Trump was criticized when he did not use the term "genocide" in a statement released April 24, 2017, on Armenian Genocide Remembrance Day and the 104th



Members of the Armenian Students Association participated in a silent protest in Red Square on Thursday, February 8 at Georgetown University (photo credit: Armenian Students Association Facebook Page)

anniversary of the genocide.

ASA is a national student organization with chapters at 31 colleges and universities, including Harvard University, Brown University and Stanford University, according to the ASA website. Georgetown University's chapter has 12 active members, though there are around 30 people on the listserv, according to Voskerchian.

For Armenian students like Nareg Kuyumjian (SFS '21), an ASA member, the demonstration had personal meaning.

Kuyumjian said his great-grandparents on both sides of his family were the only survivors

of the genocide in their families. His great-grandparents on his mother's side were able to escape to Syria, while his great-grandparents on his father's side left for Lebanon. Eventually, both families made it to the United States and settled in Los Angeles.

"I've had the privilege to grow up as an American citizen, but I owe it to my ancestors and the struggle they went through," Kuyumjian said. "I've had the opportunity to grow up in such a great nation, and I realize that it is because of their sacrifices that I have been able to do so."

Area Clergy Gather to Commemorate Vartanantz

FOWLER, Calif. - The Feast of Saints Vartanantz was commemorated at the St. Gregory the Illuminator Armenian Church in Fowler with the participation of the area Armenian churches, their clergy and congregations on Thursday, February 8.

The Divine Liturgy celebrated by Rev. Kevork Arakelian, visiting priest of Sts. Sahag-Mesrob Armenian Church of Reedley, was assisted by altar servers from the area churches. Badveli Mgo Mekredjian, associate pastor of First Armenian Presbyterian Church of Fresno, presented the scripture reading of the day, Very Rev. Dajad Ashekian, parish priest of Holy Trinity Armenian Church of Fresno, chanted the Gospel of the day, Rev Vartan Kasparian, visiting priest of Sts. Sahag-Mesrob Armenian Church of Reedley, presented the Holy Chalice, with Der Zaven Markosyan, parish priest of St. Mary Armenian Church of Yettlem, conducting the confession.

Host parish priest, Der Yeghia Hairabedian, of St. Gregory Armenian Church of Fowler, welcomed all worshipers, clergy, and members of the Knights and Daughters of Vartan. Spiritual messages were presented by Der Yessai Bedros, parish priest of St. Paul Armenian Church of

Fresno, and Badveli Nerses Balabanian, senior pastor of Pilgrim Armenian Congregational Church of Fresno, in Armenian and English respectively.

As an introduction to the Civic Program which followed the Divine Liturgy, Der Yeghia said, "I am most pleased to have enjoyed the spiritual enrichment of our worship service as our traditional manner in which we commemorate the Holy Vartanantz Feast. Now it is my pleasure to commence tonight's program by inviting first of all, the Commander of the Knights of Vartan Yeprad Lodge, Sbarabed Ara Karkazian, to offer his words of welcome."

Featured speaker Mark Poochigian, Esq., eloquently highlighted the episode of the Battle of Vartanantz and of Commander Vartan and his courageous companions. Poochigian emphasized that technically the battle was lost; however, in reality the war to protect and keep our Christian faith was not only won, but remains as an everlasting victory to this day.

The evening came to a conclusion with a reception of food and pastries in Armenian Style, hosted by the Knights and Daughters of Vartan, in the Church's Markarian Hall.

ALAIN EKMALIAN PHOTO



First row, left to right, Joe Topoozian, assistant choir director Yeretzgin Sandra Arakelian, Der Zaven Markosyan, Badveli Mgo Mekredjian, Badveli Nerses Balabanian, Der Vartan Kasparian, Der Kevork Arakelian, Deacon Bill Sahatjian, Rev. Dajad Ashekian, Deacon Randy Tellalian, Der Yeghia Hairabedian, Der Yessai Bedros, Richard Hagopian and Rose Hagopian, second row, l to r, Deacon Ed Niksarian, Sub-Deacon Alan Farsakian, Deacon Hagop Iskenyan, Deacon Steve Adams, Deacon Allan Jendian, Deacon Dennis Atkins, Sub-Deacon Ari Adams, and organist Philip Hagopian.

Donations

Sirop and Maro Bedrosian donated \$250 to the Tekeyan Cultural Association in memory of late members Papken Megerian and Antoine Bazarbashian.

Anahid Megerian has donated \$50 to the Tekeyan Cultural Association in memory of Antoine Bazarbashian.

Kevork and Silva Keushkerian donated \$100 to the Armenian Mirror-Spectator in memory of Antoine Bazarbashian.

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COMMUNITY NEWS

Knights and Daughters of Vartan Sponsor Essay and Film Contest for High School and College Students

NEW YORK – Pulitzer Prize-winning *New York Times* journalist Nicholas Kristof has been a champion of creating awareness and exposure about genocide through his weekly columns. His courageous reporting on genocides that occur to this day around the world, as well as his efforts to shed light on denials of past genocides, including the Armenian Genocide, make him one of the foremost leading journalists in the world today.

One of his famous quotes is: “You will be judged in years to come by how you responded to genocide on your watch.”

For the Knights and Daughters essay contest, students are asked to react to Kristof’s quote as a member of their generation in the 21st century. Participants are asked to say whether they agree or disagree and to use events from the 20th century and the present day as a basis for the essay, citing specific examples.

What is required is originality, not a research paper.

High School and college students are invited to participate in an essay contest as part of the 103rd Anniversary Commemoration of the Armenian Genocide that will be held in Times Square (43rd St. & Broadway) on Sunday, April 22, 2-4 p.m.

Deadline for the submissions is Sunday, April 1.

The contest is open to all high school and college students around the globe. Essays must be 1,000 words or less. Only one essay per student may be submitted. All essays should be double spaced, have 1 inch margins, include page numbers, include essay title, be typed in 12 point font, be in Microsoft Word format only. No zip files or Google documents are permitted.

The 1st, 2nd, and 3rd place winners chosen by the judges will be awarded \$300, \$200 and

\$100, respectively.

The best essays will be published in print and online.

The winners in each division will be contacted directly and announced to the mainstream and Armenian media the week of Monday, April 9.

Submit essays to Taleen Babayan via email at april24nyc@gmail.com.

A film contest is also going to take place. In 2016 the film “The Promise” made facts about the Armenian Genocide available to millions of people around the world. Film, particularly short film, has become a powerful language in conveying history to a wide audience.

The Knights & Daughters of Vartan invite filmmakers of all ages and experience levels to submit entries in its first annual short film competition, as part of the 103rd Anniversary Commemoration of the Armenian Genocide that will be held in Times Square (43rd St. &

Broadway).

This year’s theme is Memory, Tragedy, and Truth. Contestants can explore any aspect of the Armenian Genocide within this theme. Entries should not exceed 5 minutes in length. Each entry should include a short synopsis of the entry and how the film represents the theme “Memory, Tragedy and Truth”; a short bio of the contestant and an email address. Any kind of device can be used to make the short film.

This competition is open to contestants around the globe, who can submit one film only. Prizes include first place (\$300), second (\$200) and third (\$100).

Deadline is Sunday, April 1. The winners in each division will be contacted directly and announced to the mainstream and Armenian media the week of Monday, April 9.

Submit films to Taleen Babayan via email at april24nyc@gmail.com.

St. James Purchases Defunct Watertown Library Branch

WATERTOWN – St. James Armenian Church announced on February 6, that it had closed on the purchase of 481 Mount Auburn Str., the property located adjacent to the church sanctuary (the former East Branch library). The purchase of the library property has been a vision for the parish from the time the library’s doors

were closed over a decade ago.

In fall 2016, the Town of Watertown solicited bids for the purchase of the property. At a Special Parish Assembly held on October 30, 2016, St. James parishioners voted in favor of placing a bid on the property. Through the hard work of our Parish Council, some dedicated

parishioners, and legal counsel, the parish successfully submitted a \$1.2-million bid, which was accepted and later unanimously approved by the Watertown Town Council.

The church extended its gratitude to volunteers who supported the purchase as well as to attorney Jim McDermott and his colleagues at Holland and Knight for their pro bono legal counsel throughout the bid and purchase process.

There are no immediate plans for the property, other than to tear down the existing library at some point given its current condition.

The church said in a statement, “We now

move on to the next step. While we are all very happy and pleased with this important purchase, we must work together as a parish to contribute financially to support this acquisition for our parish and its legacy. Doing this, we follow in the footsteps of the founders of St. James who had the vision for our church, and those who had the vision to build our Cultural and Youth Center. Now it is our turn. You will hear more about Project 481, the fundraising efforts, and we thank you in advance for your support. This is indeed a milestone – congratulations to all of our parishioners for this important step in the life of St. James.”

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Standing front of 481 Mt. Auburn Street (the former East Branch library, now owned by St. James Armenian Church) are St. James Pastor Rev. Fr. Arakel Aljalian and Parish Council Chair Gail Boroyan (front row, center), Director of Watertown Community Development & Planning Steve Magoon and Town Manager Mike Driscoll (front row, left), St. James legal counsel Jim McDermott and John O’Neill of Holland & Knight (second row, right), with St. James Parish Council Members and parishioners.

Read News in Armenian at:





COMMUNITY NEWS



The group attending the urban retreat

Urban Retreat Seeks to Reconnect People to Church

By Taleen Babayan

Special to the Mirror-Spectator

NEW YORK — An innovative approach to discussing spirituality and religion brought together close to 40 Armenian young professionals from across the country during the Urban Spirituality Retreat held February 3-4 weekend at the Lexington Hotel.

Organized by Solange Merdianian, Lara Setrakian and Michelle Nahabedian, with the support of the Armenian General Benevolent Union (AGBU), the event aimed to create an engaging experience into the spiritual world and offer participants the opportunity to not only hear from speakers but also discuss and share their thoughts, concerns and ideas in regards to the Armenian faith and culture.

“Our goal is to share the light of what we come from,” said Setrakian, a journalist, who encouraged everyone to embark on this journey together “in a spirit of non-judgment.”

The idea for the weekend retreat emerged from last summer’s AGBU Focus Weekend, held in Beirut, Lebanon, during a daylong summit to brainstorm ideas of how to make the Armenian community stronger. Merdianian brought up the topic of exploring ways to deepen relationships with the church.

“Our religion and culture is very related and we need to find a space for each one of us to get to know it more,” said Merdianian, a mezzo-soprano musician. “For me it was through singing and creating a spiritual connection through our music and our Badarak.”

To begin the program, Merdianian offered a musical meditation to the group, singing *Der Voghormia* (God Have Mercy), followed by the *Hayr Mer*, which everyone sang in unison.

Discussing faith and fellowship, Very Rev. Daniel Findikyan, director of the Krikor and Clara Zohrab Information Center at the Eastern Diocese, stressed the importance of Christian education and the significance of Armenian monasteries, which have diminished over the centuries.

“The Armenian monasteries were the theological engines of the Armenian Church,” said Findikyan, nothing they also served as artistic centers where monks composed music. “We are now a church trying to survive without an engine.”

In order to combat the lack of quality education in Sunday Schools and help answer the question of “who we are as Christian Armenians,” Findikyan, along with several others, formed the quarterly magazine *The Fellowship of St. Voski*.

“Our idea was to create a resource for educated, urban people exploring life’s questions, who don’t have much to draw on aside from the Badarak,” said Findikyan. “We said we wanted to be part of the solution to provide resources.”

The magazine covers significant figures in the Armenian Church in “modern, intelligent terms,” as well as “explaining the traditions and history of Christian Armenian life.”

“We are here to be of support to the Armenian Church and the children of the Armenian Church through this publication,” he said, remarking that St. Voski was a first century disciple of St. Thaddeus and a miracle worker of Greek descent, who is cherished yet unknown among Armenians.

Recounting his personal journey as he searched for a spiritual home, Deacon Eric Vozzy, who works in the Creative Ministries Department at the Eastern Diocese, shared how he had been a member of various churches throughout his life, despite being baptized in the Armenian Church as an infant. In the midst of a “vocational crisis” when he was 24 years old, Vozzy decided to attend Bible School in Charlotte, North Carolina to study theology. During his time there, he was invited by Fr. Stepanos Doudoukjian to St. Nersess Armenian Seminary to meet with Findikyan and discuss his faith.

Through his deep theological discussions with Findikyan, Vozzy realized he truly is Orthodox and enrolled in seminary in 2011, successfully graduating with a master’s degree in Diaconal Ministry.

“My conversion was more about being in communication with God,” said Vozzy. “It’s

out Armenian history and the Armenian Kingdom, including Shushan, Sophia, Shahandukht, Shahandukht II, Kataranide and Mariam Bagratuni, who built two churches on the shores of Lake Sevan.

“These Armenian women built, endowed, served and gave life and energy to institutions that embodied their faith,” said Ervine. “They challenge us today in exactly the same way that they challenged their contemporaries.”

“Whatever we are and whatever we possess it is all a tool in the hands of faith.”

Director of Ministries at the Eastern Diocese, Very Rev. Mesrop Parsamyan spoke about Christian Meditation and how to handle stressful and burdensome schedules.

He noted that the word “meditation” comes from the Latin *meditatio* meaning to contemplate, ponder and “to unveil the mystery which is in our hearts.”

“If non-Christian meditation practices aim at

tion (recollect and read from the Holy Scriptures), meditation (reflection and prayer) and conclusion (thank God and carry a word and phrase for the day.)

Parsamyan finished with a meditation on Luke 8:22-25 (Calming of the Storm) followed by the St. Mesrob Masdots sharagan (hymn).

At the conclusion of the presentations and discussions, the group had time to digest and reflect on the conversations by breaking out into sessions to talk about their own personal experiences, their relationship to the church and what changes they would like to make in their faith and culture.

The participants were grateful to have the chance to share their opinions among their contemporaries and welcome new ways of discussing these relevant topics.

“It was refreshing and enlightening to see how many like-minded young professionals were engaged in the day’s activities,” said



Dr. Roberta Ervine

about union with the divine and that’s what I was drawn into with Orthodoxy.”

“Faith, for me, was an abstract idea,” he continued. “But there’s a fullness that’s only found in Church. The Armenian Church has a voice for the whole world.”

Dr. Roberta Ervine, associate professor of Armenian Studies at St. Nersess Armenian Seminary, spoke about the significant role of Armenian queens in regards to the Armenian faith.

“For Armenians, faith has always had a visible and positive effect on life,” said Ervine, whose focus was on “royal women who chose to visibly show their faith and construct projects that are still standing.”

Ervine elaborated on royal women through-

emptying the mind, Christian meditation engages the mind and the heart in prayer,” said Parsamyan. “Meditation is reflecting on God’s word with the help of the Holy Spirit.”

He remarked that meditation is a process that involves both the heart and the mind and quoted St. Gregory of Datev who said that prayer “is like human being, the words of the prayer, which comes out from the mind, are the body and the desire and affections, which proceed from the heart are the soul.”

After highlighting the importance of the heart and the mind during meditation, Parsamyan gave the participants practical tools on how to start a lifetime of rich Christian meditation. He presented them with the structure of the Christian meditation, which is prepara-

Gregory Surabian. “Given today’s generally anti-religious climate, the discussion of religion and spirituality in our community is more important than ever if we are to ensure the existence of our Christian identity in the future.”

“It was nice to be around a group of people who all have different stories as far as their relationship with the Armenian Church and have reached a point in their lives where they want to learn more about the church itself and its deep connection to the Armenian culture,” said Linda Ravul. “The topic of spirituality has been an integral part of the Armenian Church and culture and hopefully we can spark conversation and essentially make changes for our community today and generations to come.”



COMMUNITY NEWS



Armenia Appears At Major East Coast Travel Show for First Time

TRAVEL, from page 6 corners of the world in Boston in what was one of the largest consumer travel shows in the United States.

This was the first time the Armenian government has organized such an exhibit on the East Coast. According to Melikyan, "this Boston trade show is one of the premiere American venues for the promotion of tourism, travel and country branding. Consequently, this was an important first step for the Armenian Embassy to take in order to establish Armenia's presence." Shirinyan and Melikyan added that there will be an increased Armenian presence in such venues in the United States on a regular basis in the future.

Portantino Brings Lusine Chinkejian on Board Sacramento Team

GLENDALE – Recently state Sen. Anthony J. Portantino (D-La Cañada Flintridge) announced the addition of Lusine Chinkejian to his Sacramento office staff. Chinkejian will be working on broad public policy issues including those of concern and impact to the Armenian American community in the 25th Senate District. She will also help staff the State Senate Select Committee on California, Armenia and Artsakh Trade, Art and Cultural Exchange. Senator Portantino Chairs the Committee.

Chinkejian, who speaks fluent Armenian, graduated from John Burroughs High School in Burbank, is an attorney and a recent graduate of UC Davis School of Law. Prior to that, she attended UC Berkeley, receiving a BA with Departmental Honors in political science and a minor in Spanish.

"I am very grateful and excited to have Lusine join our staff. It is important for me to have a representative who has significant public policy experience and understands the unique concerns within the district. Lusine has attended high school in SD 25 which enables her to better assess the needs of the district and the Armenian American community," observed Portantino.

Chinkejian comes to the Senator's staff from the California Assembly Committee on the Judiciary, where as an intern she prepared bill analyses for the legislative record on issues of education, civil law and public safety. Chinkejian was also the senior section editor for the Journal of Juvenile Law and Policy during her time at UC Davis School of Law.

"I'm so thankful and thrilled to join a team that works tirelessly to ensure the success and well-being of the community at large in the 25th Senate District. In particular, Senator Portantino's strong advocacy for education is admirable and I look forward to contributing to that effort," expressed Chinkejian.

Portantino represents nearly 930,000 people in the 25th Senate District, which includes Altadena, Atwater Village, Bradbury, Burbank, Claremont, Duarte, Glendale, Glendora, La Cañada Flintridge, La Crescenta, La Verne, Los Feliz, Monrovia, Montrose, Pasadena, San Dimas, San Marino, Shadow Hills, Sierra Madre, South Pasadena, Sunland-Tujunga, and Upland.



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COMMUNITY NEWS

Metropolitan Museum to Host Major Exhibit on Armenian History, Manuscripts

MET, from page 1

Evans, who received her PhD from the Institute of Fine Arts at New York University, has taught courses on Armenian art at Columbia University and currently serves as president of The International Center for Medieval Art (ICMA).

Taleen Babayan spoke with Evans about the upcoming "Armenia!" exhibition at her Met office in January.

Taleen Babayan: Where did the idea emerge from to organize a full-scale exhibition such as this?

Helen Evans: I did my dissertation on the Armenian manuscripts of Cilicia and I have wanted to do an exhibition as long as I've been at the Met. In each of the big exhibitions I curated, there have been significant Armenian loans to always position Armenia as an important element of the Eastern Christian world.

TB: Are there other organizations hosting the "Armenia!" exhibition in conjunction with The Met?

HE: This is a Metropolitan Museum exhibition, so no group is officially hosting it with us, but a number of very major Armenian institutions and organizations have been very supportive. Our most important loans and the great bulk of the show are coming from institutions that are Armenian and that have preserved Armenian culture. In the Republic of Armenia with the support of the Ministry of Culture, we have loans coming from several museums. The Madenataran (the Mesrop Mashtots Institute of Ancient Manuscripts) is lending manuscripts that span the medieval era; the History Museum of Armenia is lending us lots of wonderful sculptural pieces, so people know Armenians didn't just create manuscripts; the Mother See of Holy Ekmadzin is lending us 20 quite marvelous pieces, and we very much appreciate His Holiness's loans. In Jerusalem, the Patriarchate is lending to us a manuscript by Toros Roslin (a prominent Armenian manuscript illuminator in the Middle Ages) that has never left Jerusalem since its arrival there in the 1400s. We will be able to show the importance of Roslin in America. And we're stressing several other individual Armenian artists, so you think of Armenians as artists and not just manuscripts representing a whole culture. In Antelias, the Holy See of Cilicia is also lending generously, and the Mekhitarist Monastery in Venice is sending their best manuscripts. The Calouste Gulbenkian Museum in Portugal is lending, as well as the Alex and Marie Manoogian Museum in Detroit and the Armenian Museum of America in Watertown, along with the Eastern Diocese, which is lending a copy of the Voskan Bible. We have certainly tried to represent Armenians protecting their own culture.

TB: Are there any other highlights featured in the exhibition?

HE: We are going to have the exhibition cover the Middle Ages in the Christian East from the conversion of Armenians beginning in the 4th century to the printing of books in Armenian that become widely available in the Armenian centers in the East, such as the Voskan Bible (mid-17th century). We will be covering major centers of Armenian culture from the homeland out to Cilicia and beyond into Kaffa (a city in Crimea) and Italy, and then back to the homeland and out to New Julfa (in present day Iran). I'm excited we're borrowing sculpture, because manuscripts are what people associate Armenian art with, and that's totally appropriate. But it's nice to have reliquaries and textiles and the entire breadth of what a culture normally has. We have some spectacular manuscripts coming and reliquaries both from Antelias and Ekmadzin.

TB: What is the curating process like? How long have you been planning and what challenges have you faced during the process?

HE: In one way I've been planning this since finishing my dissertation, so decades and decades. I've tried to show since "The Glory of Byzantium (843-1261)" in 1997 that Armenia was an important section of an Eastern Christian community that operated within the sphere of the Byzantine Empire. "Byzantium: Faith and Power (1261-1557)" in 2004 continued to demonstrate that Armenia was affluent. This time I'm able to say that here is a specifically important culture that people don't think about. The goal of the exhibition from the museum's perspective is to show that Armenian art is part

of the world's art and should be considered in that role. The Met's former director, Philippe de Montebello, published in a book that the khatchkar at the Met (on loan from Armenia) is to be part of the world's art. With this exhibition, we're trying to make many people recognize that.

TB: Why has Armenian art been overlooked throughout history?

HE: There are multiple reasons. One is that Armenian art has been seen by many scholars as something that never talked to anyone else and thus became irrelevant. The way we are looking at the history of art is that it's a hybrid of cultures we don't think about. What the Met has been doing while I've been here is demonstrate that Eastern Christian art is important to everyone's art.

TB: What other Armenian pieces are on display in The Met?

HE: We have very few Armenian works that belong to the Met. Oddly enough, a great number of them arrived in the first decades of the 20th century, where they were catalogued to the Islamic department because they came from the Ottoman Empire and the Islamic world. I think I'm the first curator to have put them on display. We rotate the manuscript leaves and the manuscripts we acquired with very generous support of members of the Armenian community, particularly the Hagop Kevorkian Fund, which is also generously supporting this exhibition. In 2008, Jack Soultanian, our objects conservator who is Armenian, and I spent time in greater Armenia arranging to have a khatchkar and it was a difficult thing for the Republic of Armenia They didn't really know America, so we were sending them drawings of where the work would be shown in the Met. The Armenians took us to the Lori region and I found the khatchkar among the several they were willing for us to find. When they lent khatchkars previously, to an exhibition in Paris, there were riots because some came from cemeteries and people weren't happy to see cemetery stones moved elsewhere. We carefully borrowed something that came from a deserted fort and had no family ties. At first there was resistance, but now at the History Museum in Armenia, they say a khatchkar is at the Met and it's reverberated well for them.

What I seek to do in the medieval galleries at the Met is to show the breadth and importance of East Christian communities, the most powerful of which was Byzantium. I think it's very important that we realize — and the Met is moving towards these things — that Armenia controlled access to the Eastern trade routes. We're going to open the exhibition with a wonderful map of the world by an Englishman named Matthew Paris. This map has always been very important to world studies because it's one of the world's oldest maps; yet no one has paid attention that the map is oriented so that the east is at the top and shows the two mountain peaks of Mount Ararat. They knew this because Armenian monks in England told them where Mount Ararat is and that Noah's Ark landed there. We don't think about Armenian monks traveling to England in the 1200s.

In the 17th century, the Armenians go out of New Julfa and this is in part the end of the show. Armenians control external trade for Shah Abbas of Persia and his successors and expand outward to India, where Armenians take over the internal and external trade routes, and Indochina. Armenians were amazing at network building. My essay will have an image of the philosopher Jean-Jacques Rousseau, because he wears Armenian merchant clothing during a period he is ill and has to wear loose robes. He knowingly and willingly adapts the wardrobe of an Armenian merchant, which he knew about because his father spent time in Constantinople. Rousseau dressed as an Armenian, like Frenchmen or Englishmen, who used Armenian dress to gain greater access to the trade routes in the East.

TB: You've traveled to Armenia throughout your career. How was it traveling to Armenia to prepare for this exhibit and seeing the culture's art?

HE: I first went to Armenia in 1982 to work on my dissertation and the people in the Madenataran were incredibly lovely to me. I spent a lot of time in Armenia this round for this exhibit. Armenians have preserved so much more of their culture than people think they have, because people say so much was destroyed, and

it was, but so much of everyone's culture has been destroyed. Armenians have done an amazing job of preserving, even if not in perfect form, sites and manuscripts and reliquaries that move around. The History Museum of Armenia is beautifully installed and very well-informed. The Madenataran's library has very good tour guides and handsome displays of its manuscripts route and how they were brought out of the collapse of the Ottoman Empire. We have a manuscript in the exhibition written in Cilicia but it ends up in New Julfa in the 1600s. Things were cared for and moved. Others remained when the Armenian population left.

TB: An exhibition of this kind doesn't come around too often, does it?

HE: This is the second Armenian exhibit of any scale in the United States. The first one in 1994 was the Morgan Library's exhibit, "Treasures in Heaven," that I participated in. The catalogue authors are largely Americans and they include what we anticipate being the next generation of scholars teaching about Armenia at American universities. The goal of the exhibition in terms of making people know about Armenia is that Armenian art and culture will be relevant in classes. I would like to think in five to ten years, if you were doing a survey of art history, you would put an Armenian object in it. Right now you do not. When I started, you didn't put much of Byzantium at all and now there are larger sections of Byzantium in standard books. I just think Armenia is incredibly important for its own ability to create a self-identity and

also it's very important for the degree in which it moved ideas and goods on its trade routes.

It's an incredibly exciting culture. I've always been very interested that we live in New York City and we're bombarded with influences. What do we pick to care about? Armenians were bombarded with influences and they created a thread that's very Armenian and at the same time they interacted quite extensively. So I hope what will come through is how great the culture is and how it was an important player on international trade routes. In fact, Marco Polo goes thru Ayas (modern-day Turkey), because Armenians could facilitate his route to China.

TB: Armenian history is very rich and layered, as you have mentioned. What would you like both Armenian and non-Armenians to take away from this exhibition?

HE: What I hope everyone will learn, and this is the standard I have for all my exhibits, is that after they walk through the exhibition, even without reading the labels, they can say whoever those people were, they were interesting. I have heard people say this at the end of my exhibitions, so I know it happens. I want the show to be accessible in a way that Armenians will learn the breadth of their Armenian culture. If they are non-Armenian, I hope they will learn that Armenia has great art from the objects, labels, and catalogue and the importance of the church to Armenians and how it's part of the larger Christian sphere. It is their belief in Christ through their unique church that helps keep Armenians united over vast distances.

On the Town: Agape Circle Supports Nonprofits in Glendale and Armenia

GLENDALE, Calif. (*Glendale News-Press - LA Times*) - I was recently introduced to the women's charitable group the Agape Circle of the Western Diocese of the Armenian Church, which raises funds to benefit nonprofits here and in Armenia. Agape takes its name from the Greek word meaning universal, selfless, unconditional love that transcends and serves regardless of circumstances. Members consider their group as a bridge for the Western Diocese to offer loving support to organizations and programs that benefit the collective community.

By Joyce Rudolph

A recent luncheon benefited Children's Hospital Los Angeles and the YWCA of Glendale's domestic violence program. Special guest attending was Archbishop Hovnan Derderian, primate of the Western Diocese of the Armenian Apostolic Church of North America. Under the archbishop's leadership, the Western Diocese became a founding member of the Armenian Ambassadors of Children's Hospital Los Angeles in 2015.

Alice Chakrian, chair of the Agape Circle, serves on the Armenian Ambassadors Leadership Council, representing Archbishop Derderian. The council is made up of community members, organizations and businesses that support a healthy future for all children.

The Agape Circle has raised and donated \$100,000 to such Children's Hospital programs as the vision center, Children's Center for Cancer and Blood Diseases and others.

The women's group also supports the projects of Dr. Thomas C. Lee, director of the Retina Institute in the Vision Center. Lee provides innovative noninvasive and surgical treatment to children in Armenia suffering from retinal diseases, retinopathy of prematurity and pediatric ophthalmological issues.

For the YWCA of Glendale's domestic violence shelter, the Agape Circle did a warm and inviting makeover of the computer lab. The shelter's clients use the computers to search for jobs, housing and other resources to help them gain their independence. The software is provided in English as well as ESL instruction to help those who speak Spanish or Armenian.

Receiving recognition at the luncheon was Glendale resident Jasik Boniatian Jarahian, general manager of the Armenian Relief Society. She handles the financial services of the society including orphan sponsorships, needy families and homelessness programs, coordinates local assistance programs and donations as well as programs in towns and villages of Armenia.

Entertainment was provided by the newly established Meghety Ladies Chamber Choir, directed by Nora Roumian Bairamian. The choir's mission is to present Armenian folk songs transformed into a more contemporary genre for all audiences to enjoy.



Agape Circle Chair Alice Chakrian, from left, Jasik Boniatian Jarahian, Thomas C. Lee, M.D., Archbishop Hovnan Derderian, Glendale Mayor Vartan Gharpetian and YWCA Glendale Executive Director Tara Peterson. (Joyce Rudolph / Glendale News-Press)

Arts & Living

Lark Musical Society Concert on March 4 Dedicated to the Centennial of AMAA

By Joyce Abdulian

LOS ANGELES – As a response to the Armenian Genocide perpetrated by the Turkish government, during which 1.5 million Armenians were killed, in 1918 in Worcester, Mass., the leaders of the Union of Armenian Evangelical Churches of the United States of America met. This auspicious group founded the Armenian Missionary Association of America (AMAA) – with Rev. Mihran T. Kalaidjian as its first executive director. Their prophetic commitment: “Our martyred Armenian Nation will survive and continue to exist as a Christian Nation. Therefore, it is indispensable that we contribute to the revitalization of our Armenian Heritage and spiritual life.”

For one hundred years, this mission of the AMAA has been faithfully implemented in more than 24 countries around the world: schools, churches, summer camps, community centers, health outreach and facilities, orphan care, milk funds, soup kitchens, disaster relief, theological students aid, scholarships, and Haigazian University in Beirut.

The Lark Musical Society is joining with the AMAA to celebrate this Centennial Year. The program will feature Beethoven’s Choral Symphony No. 9, known as Ode to Joy. “This work is one of the most valuable creations of Western Civilization, and in itself a miracle, considering Beethoven was deaf when he composed and conducted it,” said Lark founder and conductor Vatsche Barsoumian.

The other piece on the program is Anton Bruckner’s *Te Deum* – a hymn of joy and thanksgiving to God. The three-parts work is a progression of praise for the “Father of immense majesty” from the 12 Apostles, to the company of the Saints, and finally to the army of Martyrs – a fitting progression of praise for the AMAA as well, for all its world-wide outreach these 100 years.

The Lark Mastersingers and Lark Orchestra, under the direction of Barsoumian, will feature soloists: Soprano Shoushik Barsoumian, Mezzo Soprano Garineh Avakian, Tenor Berj Karazian, and Bass Abdiel Gonzales.



Lark Orchestra and Chorus

“The spirit of these masterpieces is the spirit behind the good works of the Armenian Missionary Association of America. Join us in marking an incredible achievement in the life of this organization. Long may they continue to serve. Long may they spread their Faith and Love,” Vatsche Barsoumian added.

“We hope that this concert will be an occasion for joy and thanksgiving as we celebrate The Armenian Missionary Association of America, and we praise God for its 100 years of service to communities worldwide,” Nazareth E. Darakjian, MD, President of the AMAA Board of Directors said.

This celebratory evening on March 4 will begin at 6 p.m. in the Ambassador Auditorium in Pasadena, 131 S. St. John Ave. A Pre-Concert lecture will be given by Doris Melconian at 5 p.m.



Orkian on stage

Kev Orkian Tickles Funny Bones in New Jersey

MAHWAH, N.J. – Crossing the Atlantic to great fanfare, British-Armenian comedian, musician and actor Kev Orkian entertained audiences on Sunday, February 4, at Mahwah High School, in an event hosted by the Armenian Relief Society’s NJ “Shakeh” Chapter.

By Taleen Babayan
Special to the Mirror-Spectator

An award-winning comedy pianist, Orkian shared with his audience a two-hour variety show consisting of his one-man comedy routine, and exhibiting his piano and singing skills while intertwining his experiences in the entertainment world as a London-born Armenian.

During his two-hour set, in both Armenian and English, Orkian quickly earned laughs as he displayed energy and enthusiasm while engaging with the audience through his signature off-the-cuff remarks. Covering a range of humorous topics – from his experiences on the

see ARS, page 14



ARS NJ Shakeh event committee and ARS East USA Regional representatives with Kev Orkian

‘The Last Inhabitant’ Comes to Watertown

WATERTOWN – The Armenian Business Network and the Fish Eye Art Cultural Foundation host the Boston Premiere of “The Last Inhabitant” and the opportunity to meet the award winning Director Jivan Avetisyan Saturday, February 17, at the Charles Mosesian Cultural and Youth Center Keljik Hall, in Watertown.

Doors open at 6 p.m. with a reception and the film will start promptly at 6:45. Following the screening there will be a question-and-answer period where attendees will have the opportunity to meet the director.

“The Last Inhabitant” was one of very few, from 85 submissions, to receive Golden Globe coverage on the Golden Globe Entertainment page www.goldenglobes.com/articles/last-inhabitant-armenia. “The Last Inhabitant” is currently being circulated and honored throughout the world in various film festivals, and was an official entry to the 2017 Golden Globe Awards as a “Best Foreign Film” nominee, and was also presented at the 69th Cannes International Film Festival “Marché du Film.”

The film, which was inspired by true events, tells the story of Abgar (played by Alexander Khachatryan), the last Armenian resident of a town in the disputed territory of Nagorno-Karabakh bordering Armenia and Azerbaijan. In 1988, Abgar’s small mountainous village is turned upside down overnight due to the inter-ethnic conflict between Armenians and Azeris as they fight for power and resist mass deportations of Armenians in the region. Despite these rising tensions and bleak horizons, Abgar relies on the friendship of his neighbor Ibrahim (played by Homayoun Ershadi) to help him survive and eventually find his lost daughter (played by Sandra Daikusate-Petruelene). With a moving soundtrack by none other than System of a Down’s Serj Tankian, Avetisyan’s film tells a powerful story of the bonds of family and friendship overcoming the hardships of war that is still painfully relevant in the modern era.

For Avetisyan, who was himself raised in Nagorno-Karabakh and has family fighting in the area, “The Last Inhabitant” was heavily inspired by his own experiences and history.

“The terror, tragedy and timeliness of Jivan Avetisyan’s stories are unmatched,” said Alex Kalognomos, executive producer of the Los Angeles Greek Festival. “His characters represent the struggle that all Armenians feel as a result of losing their homeland. Avetisyan’s gift as a filmmaker is how he gives resonance to this Armenian story so it can reach all people, touch all souls. He is one of a kind. Anne Bedian is brilliant and Adrineh Mirzayan is one of our best producers ever!”

Net proceeds from this event will benefit the Fish Eye Art Cultural Foundation and the production of Avetisyan’s next feature film “Gate to Heaven” slated to start in Spring 2018.

Admission is \$20 per person for the screening and reception.

For an additional \$100 per person donation anyone can attend a private dinner in Avetisyan’s honor.

Tickets can be purchased at www.eventbrite.com/e/the-last-inhabitant-boston-premiere-tickets-42873979226 or contact George Haroutounian at george.harout@yahoo.com.

No tickets will be sold at the door.

To see a trailer of the movie visit https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5Nras4Uj_Z4



ARTS & LIVING

Screen Icon Susan Sarandon and Painter Tigran Tsitoghzyan Star in Arthur Balder's 'American Mirror'

YEREVAN — A new film by American director Arthur Balder, featuring actress Susan Sarandon and Armenian painter Tigran Tsitoghzyan is completed, and its first trailer is airing on the net and TV stations across Armenia. It is expected to debut in the Golden Apricot Film Festival of Armenia in July.

"American Mirror" has three protagonists. One of them is Sarandon, the other Tsitoghzyan, and the main third one is French-Thai actress Florence Faivre (on the rise in the American TV series thanks to her stellar appearance lately in such franchises as "Agents of SHIELD" who actually plays the role of the ever-lasting-never-reachable Muse around whom all Tigran's art seem to gravitate one way or other. This complex relationships between intellect, appreciation of aging and of beauty, and unattainable perfection in life, set the basis of a film that is not a documentary but neither entirely a fiction story.

Arthur Balder recognizes the potent influence of the author of such an iconic movie as "The Color of Pomegranates" in saying: "What Parajanov does in that movie sets the basis of an approach that presided my idea since the beginning: instead of talking, reciting or repeating

about the impossibility of perfection outside the frame of the canvas."

The director, honored with two consecutive awards by the Association of Latin Entertainment Critics of New York for his previous works ("Little Spain" and "Reality of the Imaginary"), both invited to be premiered at MoMA in NY, as well as the Lady Of the Victory of the Critics Circle of Mexico as a further Latin-American recognition, along with that of the Hispanic Organization of Latin Actors of New York as outstanding documentary filmmaker, has worked hand in hand with American producer David Shara, both taking care of an audiovisual artistic work that in the producer's words "from the set-out was poised to defy the boundaries between documentary and fiction."

Sarandon and Tsitoghzyan discuss time and identity, and how the apparently in conflict values of beauty and aging are perceived in our modern society dominated by social media, as he limns her portrait during a timeless sitting session.

The film reveals how Tigran, a highly dedicated and painstakingly trained craftsman, brings the ancient spirit of the old masters into a unique

post-modern hyperrealism deeply interwoven with NYC's culture and social landscape. Shot over the period of three years, the film takes us on a rare, thought-provoking, timeless reality-and-fiction setting to reveal how one of the most striking artists in recent art history climbs up the art-world ranks on the winding journey to success and recognition.

The director commented on the experience of working with Sarandon: "Nothing I could say about the co-star of 'Thelma and

Louise' would be new. Apart from what is evident about her natural, great talent, I can add from a personal perspective after working with her that she is an extraordinarily generous woman and above all she is a strong personality."

The film also counts with the participation of "The Pyramid" star Ashley Hinshaw, and such top models as Hilary Rhoda and Sirey Moran, jewelry designer and casting director Morgan Shara, Melissa Wood, Sasha Rukoskaya, Natalia Golba, opera singer Bella Jazmin de la Guia. To see a trailer, visit <https://youtu.be/Fn3bx0pgovg> The film official Website is www.tigranmovie.com



Tigran keeps painting over and over the Muse



Tigran and Susan during a setting session for her portrait.

merely the literary merits of a poet, Parajanov tries to reproduce vividly the poetical impressions and images provoked in him by the reading of the poet's writings. So a cinematic approach to Tigran's art should be cinematic, in my opinion, letting the particular powers of filmmaking give us glimpses of what is behind the painting instead of clear, objective answers, so behind and around their making: that is introspection, surrealism. It is impossible to navigate those waters without allowing a space to poetics in filmmaking. Donald Kuspit, as a sort of 'Deus ex machina' appears in a dream of the artist unveiling the hidden meaning of art, while the relationship between the artist and the Muse talks

Kev Orkian Tickles Funny Bones in New Jersey

ARS, from page 13

Armenian Heritage Cruise, being raised by Armenian parents, performing for the Royal Family, meeting fellow Armenians from Mumbai, and a one-on-one with Desmond Tutu — Orkian easily connected with his audience.

What was closest to his heart, however, were his experiences in Armenia.

"I've toured around the world but one of the greatest things I ever did was perform in Armenia," said Orkian, who is a regular in the UK comedy circuit and is involved in London's West End theater scene.

During his time there, he filmed a documentary titled, "Armenia Uncovered," where he interviewed Charles Aznavour, Henrikh Mkhitaryan and Djivan Gasparyan, among other contemporary accomplished individuals.

Orkian highlighted the intelligence of Armenians, especially in the homeland, and how he impressed he was when he saw young children designing robotics at the Tumo Center.

"I'm fed up of hearing what happened one hundred years ago," said Orkian, a semi-finalist on Simon Cowell's "Britain's Got Talent." "What I want to do is show the world who we are now."

While his performance had meaningful

moments, he didn't stray too far from his comedy, ending it with two musical pieces, one a satire of an opera that involved him simultaneously singing and playing the piano and the last number of the show a rock and roll song, a piece of advice he once received from musician Jerry Lee Lewis.

At the conclusion of the performance, Committee Member Knar Kiledjian presented Orkian with a plaque.

"There is nothing as contagious as laughter and good humor," said Kiledjian. "Always try to find a reason to laugh because it will give life to your years."

Kiledjian thanked Orkian and recognized the committee members, ushers and everyone in attendance.

"A big thank you to ARS and for all of you coming to see the show," said Orkian, who is currently on a world tour.

"I love performing for the Armenian community. Honestly, it's like coming home from home."

Before Orkian's performance, a presentation by the ARS highlighted the non-profit's accomplishments in the United States, Armenia and Artsakh. Proceeds from the evening's performance benefited the organization's programs worldwide.



Recipe Corner

by Christine Vartanian Datian

Grilled Chicken and Mixed Greens Pitas with Garlic Sauce

INGREDIENTS

3 large grilled or baked chicken breasts, skin removed, diced or shredded (or use diced or shredded turkey breast)
6 medium pitas, regular or whole wheat
5-6 cups mixed greens, chopped spinach, parsley and green onions, and fresh mint (combined)
4 Roma tomatoes, thinly sliced
2 large Japanese eggplant, halved lengthwise
1 cup hummus (homemade or store bought)
1 cup garbanzo beans, washed and drained
1 English cucumber, sliced thinly
1 medium red onion, sliced thinly
1 cup roasted red bell peppers, chopped
1 cup artichoke hearts, packed in oil, drained and chopped
Crumbled feta cheese, toasted pine nuts or walnuts
Olive oil
Lemon wedges

GARLIC SAUCE

1/2 cup olive oil
4-5 cloves garlic, mashed or minced
2-3 tablespoons fresh lemon juice and zest of 1/2 lemon
1 teaspoon each dried basil, parsley and oregano
1/4 teaspoon dry/ground mustard
Fine sea salt, black pepper
Ground sumac or paprika

PREPARATION:

Combine the garlic sauce ingredients in a medium bowl or container and chill before serving.

In a large bowl, toss the mixed greens, spinach, parsley, green onions, mint, cucumbers, and garbanzo beans together, and set aside.

Lightly brush pitas with olive oil and grill or bake until slightly crispy; do not burn or over bake pitas.

Brush eggplant slices with olive oil, season with salt and pepper, and grill on each side for 2-3 minutes. Remove eggplant from grill, cut into medium pieces, and set aside.

To assemble, spread equal portions of hummus on top of each pita, and then arrange the red onions, roasted peppers, and artichoke hearts in a circular pattern (like a pizza). Add the diced or shredded chicken and grilled eggplant pieces, and top each pita with a generous portion of mixed greens.

Drizzle with garlic sauce and garnish with feta cheese and toasted pine nuts or walnuts. Serve with fresh lemon wedges and extra hummus or plain yogurt on the side.

Serves 6.



ARTS & LIVING

'Fusion' in the Best Way at West Hollywood Omakase Counter

By Andy Wang

LOS ANGELES (*Food and Wine*) — John-Carlos Kuramoto is a Mexican-Japanese chef who grew up in Monterey Park, a community with an abundance of Chinese restaurants in L.A.'s San Gabriel Valley. So his culinary influences run deep.

At Ainoko, his new Mexican-Japanese omakase counter in West Hollywood, Kuramoto pours hot oil, flavored with sweet garlic and chile de árbol, over hamachi that he serves with togarashi peanuts, shiso and a citrus emulsion.

"I love the profile of sweet, salty and spicy at the same time," Kuramoto says. "I think it's super addicting. You can't use it all the time. But in a tasting menu, you can use it here and there for a dish that will really pop off."

Ainoko's hamachi is a beautiful dish that no doubt has Mexican, Japanese and Chinese influences, but it's also inspired by the hamachi tostada with peanuts that Jon Shook and Vinny Dotolo's Animal serves.

For Kuramoto, Ainoko, which means "half-breed" in Japanese and is a word that's often been used with a derogatory connotation, is about celebrating what it means to be biracial. It's also about celebrating the wonders of L.A.'s diverse food scene.

"Whatever food we want now [in L.A.], it's going to be a half-breed, it's going to be a mix of cultures anyway," Kuramoto says. "We embrace food from all different cultures. That's what L.A. is."

Ainoko is also about embracing the word "fusion," a word that makes many other chefs cringe in 2018. Kuramoto is refreshingly earnest about what he does. Ainoko is the work of a chef who loves seeing how different kinds of food connect people in L.A. Ainoko was created with the knowledge that what makes L.A. food so remarkable is the mixture of cultures that treat acid and heat and umami in different ways.

"We always said that Los Angeles is a melting pot, and it's even more of a melting pot now than it has been," Kuramoto says. "So many diners are used to tasting so many different

types of food. Fusion is really great because you can bring people together. You can show them different flavors and philosophies with every bite."

So Ainoko's frequently-changing \$85 tasting menu includes about a dozen courses that might include banchan featuring persimmons and butternut squash. The banchan is a tribute



John Terzian

to the little dishes that start most meals in Koreatown, of course, but it's also a showcase for whatever looks the most gorgeous at the farmers' market.

On the night I visit, the tasting menu also features an ahi tuna tostada and a nori blini topped with caviar. Then I'm dazzled by how both a guajillo purée and an epazote beurre blanc add depth, including smokiness and herbaceousness, to perfect Hokkaido scallops. Other standout dishes I try include a pork "toro" jowl taco inspired by the grilled fatty pork neck that Thai restaurant Night + Market serves. Ainoko's version is a lettuce wrap with a kimchee-apple salad that helps cut the richness of the pork.

Kuramoto also serves me a spot prawn aguachile with Indonesian green curry. The

curry is inspired by the green curry noodles that Kuramoto ate while he was interning at Ming Tsai's Blue Ginger in Massachusetts. Ainoko's cilantro-infused aguachile and galangal-laden curry is a potent and pleasing pairing.

Kuramoto is just 30 years old, but he's already had a long and impressive career. He started interning at Long Beach's Renaissance Hotel as a teenager before going to culinary school. He spent about a year cooking under Mark Peel at Campanile. Then in 2011, Peel connected Kuramoto with Michael McCarty of Michael's Santa Monica. McCarty was looking for a new executive chef. Kuramoto got the job after impressing McCarty with a 12-course tasting menu. That's how Michael's ended up with a 23-year-old running its kitchen.

Kuramoto would go on to open West Hollywood's The Nice Guy, known for its red-sauce dishes and celebrity clientele, in 2014. The Nice Guy is part of the H.Wood Group, a nightlife/restaurant operator with hot spots where Drake, Justin Bieber and assorted Kardashians and Jenners have held court. Back

in 2014, Kuramoto started telling H.Wood Group co-founder John Terzian about his idea for Ainoko.

When Terzian decided to open a Mexican restaurant, Petite Taqueria, in West Hollywood, he called Kuramoto. And now Petite Taqueria, which debuted in October 2017, is a buzzy Mexican restaurant where Kendall Jenner recently celebrated her birthday with tacos, tamales, nachos and family members like Kris, Caitlyn, Kim, Kanye and Kourtney.

Petite Taqueria is also where you'll find Ainoko, where the jovial Kuramoto chats with guests about every course and where he has a little shelf behind the counter with cookbooks from the chefs who run Night + Market, State Bird Provisions, Nopalito and Pujol. Kuramoto is totally doing his own thing at Ainoko. (Ainoko's menu is handwritten every day. Kuramoto also gives guests an "open letter" about his background and the origins of Ainoko. The first sentence: "Food transcends unlike any type of art.") But he's proud to tell customers how the work of other chefs has galvanized him.

There's been no bigger driving force than Ming Tsai, who taught Kuramoto something he'll never forget: "Respect the origin of a dish and then you can do whatever you want."

Tsai "is the foundational piece of what Ainoko is," Kuramoto says. "He's the number one chef when it comes to fusion. He did it the correct way. He was basically born and raised in a Chinese restaurant, and then he went to Le Cordon Bleu in France and cooked all over France. When he opened his own restaurant, he cooked with French technique while staying humble to his Chinese background. Ming was great to me in terms of talking about what fusion means: Stick to the origin of the dish and then expand upon it."

One of Kuramoto's favorite Monterey Park restaurants is Tokyo Fried Chicken Co., so he riffs on that experience by serving Tokyo fried quail with honey ponzu. It's a refined take on what's essentially bar food, and it's definitely the only time I've eaten quail with my fingers a few feet away from the exact spot where a Jenner danced and pounded a piñata.

But this is L.A., where unlikely combinations thrive, where the last savory course I eat at Ainoko is a DIY A5 wagyu taco that has elements of shabu shabu, sukiyaki and a French dip. You swish the beef into a broth made with Kuramoto's grandmother's sukiyaki recipe. Then you put the beef into a tortilla and can freely re-dip the taco as many times as you want.

My dessert courses include butterscotch budino, which is inspired by a dessert Kuramoto likes at Pizzeria Mozza. Ainoko's version includes yogurt sabayon and Japanese whiskey.

Ainoko is part of the H.Wood Group's major push into restaurants. The hospitality company

recently hired culinary director Lord Maynard Llera, a chef with Filipino roots who previously cooked at Bestia. The Ainoko counter might be used for some pop-ups as H.Wood works to develop restaurants, which could include a Filipino place. Meanwhile, L.A. meat lovers are eagerly anticipating this year's opening of H.Wood's Slab BBQ, the restaurant debut of backyard pitmaster Burt Bakman.

Terzian says H.Wood is working toward launching something like a dozen "concepts" in the next five years. And despite his nightlife success at Shorebar and Bootsy Bellows, Terzian's all-in when it comes to food. H.Wood isn't abandoning bars and nightclubs, but Terzian says almost every new idea he has is a restaurant.

"I'm a huge believer in helping chefs grow, being the impetus for their growth," Terzian says. "I feel like nobody gives a shot to people who are under them. When we decided to open a Mexican concept, I didn't want to do it without John-Carlos. My role is almost like a producer of movies. It's about spotting the right talent in different places."

It helps to be in L.A., where personality-driven restaurants like Bestia dominate the dining scene and where audacious upstarts like E.P. & L.P. prove that you can merge aggressive flavors and hot nightlife crowds. Food in L.A. connects all kinds of people, even A-listers.

If H.Wood does open a Filipino restaurant, it won't be because Terzian and his crew are trying to chase L.A.'s modern Filipino moment. Like with Kuramoto's food at Ainoko, Llera's Filipino cooking is based on the love he has for his heritage and its flavors. Another possibility for H.Wood, Kuramoto says, is an izakaya-style, State Bird Provisions-like version of Ainoko, where servers bring around trays or carts of food and interact heavily with their customers in a party-hearty atmosphere. That would be the type of place where Kuramoto could reinterpret dim sum while Terzian, who says he's "a maniac" about perfecting the look and feel of his venues, could let the lights dim some.

"These chefs, they have a passion," Terzian says. "And my whole thing is getting that passion out of them while also catering to what guests want. That's the ultimate balancing act, the hardest thing."

Terzian deserves credit for giving Kuramoto creative freedom. Ainoko offers the type of inventive, experimental tasting menu that would probably draw big crowds at a cash-only pop-up space inside an industrial loft on the edge of a hard-to-find neighborhood. Having Ainoko inside a prime piece of West Hollywood real estate is an unexpected delight.

During my dinner at Ainoko, Kuramoto tells me I must be having a good time eating around L.A. these days.

It's been fun, I say, and that's largely because there are many chefs who are really digging into their heritage and serving exactly the food they want to make.

Kuramoto asks if the nation's political climate is part of the reason behind this.

So we talk about how both preparing and consuming food can seem (as GQ's Brett Martin wrote when he named L.A.'s Salazar one of the country's best new restaurants in 2017) like an act of defiance and how it makes sense that chefs and restaurant owners want to take back their heritage and celebrate it unconditionally. I tell Kuramoto that I believe a big part of what's happening in L.A. is also about how the dining scene is maturing, how L.A. has become a confident city that does things on its own terms and doesn't worry about what the rest of the world thinks.

Kuramoto brings up the fact that it seems like every prominent chef in New York is opening in L.A. simultaneously. This is that moment in time, when everything is changing. If nothing else, Kuramoto says with a smile, he knows that chefs like him will always have a job.

Something about our conversation gets Kuramoto amped as he thinks optimistically about the pure possibility of the future, a world where food and nightlife and celebrity and culture and art overlap, a world where boundaries matter even less than they do now in L.A.

"We don't even have to be tied down to restaurants anymore," Kuramoto says. "We can do anything."

Ainoko, 755 N. La Cienega Blvd., West Hollywood, 310-855-7223

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ARTS & LIVING

CALENDAR

MASSACHUSETTS

FEBRUARY 17 — The Boston Premiere of the film "The Last Inhabitant," a 2017 Golden Globe Awards "Best Foreign Film" nominee, by award winning Director Jivan Avetisyan. Saturday, 6– 9:30 p.m., Charles Mosesian Cultural & Youth Center Keljik Hall, 465 Mount Auburn Street, Watertown. Boston Premiere. by Fish Eye Art Cultural Foundation & Armenian Business Network. Donation to this event is not tax deductible.

MARCH 1 — The Armenian Memorial Church of Watertown will hold its annual Lenten kufte supper on Thursday evening, at 6:30 p.m. in the church hall. Gourmet dinner features the delicious home-made lentil kufte, salad and Syrian bread. The popular tahine bread, also homemade, will be the dessert. This special dinner always attracts a full house. Tickets are \$18 for adults and \$10 for children 10 and under, and will be available at the door or by calling the church office at 617-923-0498. 32 Bigelow Ave., Watertown.

MARCH 4 — Women's History Month Celebration: Dr. Hasmik Khalapyan, of the American University of Armenia, will discuss "Women's Activism During the Western Armenian Renaissance, 1860-1914," presented by the Armenian International Women's Association (AIWA) and the National Association for Armenian Studies and Research (NAASR), 2:30 p.m. at NAASR, 395 Concord Ave., Belmont. Open to the public free of charge. Info: 617-926-0171 or info@aiwainternational.org

MARCH 8-11 —The Global Cinema Film Festival of Boston (GCFB) 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.

MARCH 13 — Armenian Business Networking (ABN) Winter Business Networking event, Tuesday, 6:30 p.m., the Sheraton Commander in Cambridge. Stephen Demirjian guest speaker from The Achieve Institute shares methods on creating greater personal and work

life success. This event is free of charge. RSVP: armenian-businessnetwork@gmail.com

MARCH 18 — Book Presentation by Adrienne G. Alexanian, Forced into Genocide, Memoirs of an Armenian Soldier in the Ottoman Turkish Army, Sunday, 12:30 p.m., Charles and Nevert Talanian Cultural Hall, Holy Trinity Armenian Church of Greater Boston, 145 Brattle St., Cambridge. This book is a riveting memoir of Yervant Edward Alexanian, an eye-witness to the massacre and dislocation of his family and countrymen in Ottoman Turkey during WW I, while he served as a conscript in the Turkish Army. Reception and Book Signing to follow Presentation. All are welcome! Log onto <http://www.htaac.org/calendar/event/527/> for further information.

APRIL 11 — A recap on the status of the documentary project "Neighbors in Memory," accompanied by a panel of community members shedding light on the state of Armenian-Turkish relations as they live and witness it. Wednesday, 7 p.m., Capitol Theatre, 204 Mass. Ave., Arlington. Screenings, discussions and refreshments. For more information: gonca59@gmail.com

APRIL 21 - MAY 13 — Off-Broadway production by Pan Asian Repertory Theatre of Joyce Van Dyke's play, "Daybreak:" the lyrical story of two Armenian women friends, survivors from 1915, who are transported with their families into the 21st century future. Starring Lorraine Serabian as Victoria. Performances at the Beckett Theatre, 410 W. 42nd St., New York, Tuesdays through Sundays; weekend matinees; discount tickets for seniors, students and groups. For tickets and information: Telecharge: www.telecharge.com or call (212) 239-6200. Or contact the theatre: info@panasianrep.org, (212) 868-4030.

MAY 5 — Saturday, Kentucky Derby Watch Party, Fun and festivities to support Armenia Tree Project, At the elegant/historic Gore Place in Waltham. Details to 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 Nevert Talanian Cultural Hall. Details forthcoming.

APRIL 14 — Saturday, St. James Great Gatsby Gala! A Roarin' 20s Celebration! Live Jazz & Armenian Music, Passed Hors D'oeuvres, Mezza and Dessert Stations and more. St. James Armenian Church – 465 Mt. Auburn Street, Watertown, 8 p.m., Tickets \$100. Purchase online at www.stjameswatertown.org or contact info@stthagop.com.

WASHINGTON, DC

MARCH 16 — The Cultural Committee of the Sts. Sahag & Mesrob Armenian Church presents new and exclusive screening ARMENIAN FILM FESTIVAL "THE NATION'S PAST & PRESENT" Presented in English. In Egavian Cultural Center, 70 Jefferson Street, Providence, RI 02908. Donation \$ 10, Friday, at 7 pm - "Our Yerevan – Capital of Armenia" (Matenadaran, Museums, Cascade, Ani Plaza hotel, modern architecture, Vernisazh,...)

RHODE ISLAND

FEBRUARY 17 — Saturday, 7:30 p.m., presentation of the book Goodbye, Antoura: A Memoir of the Armenian Genocide by Houry Panian Boyamian, principal, St. Stephen's Armenian Elementary School, Watertown, MA, organized by Hamazkayin of Washington DC and Knights and Daughters of Vartan. Soorp Khach Armenian Church Arabian Hall, 4906 Flint drive, Bethesda, Md. Free Admission, Reception to follow.

FEBRUARY 18 — Sunday, 1 p.m., presentation of the play "Vartanantz" written and directed by Naira Tashjian, St. Mary Armenian Church hall, 4125 Fessenden Street, NW, Washington, DC, organized by Knights and Daughters of Vartan. Free Admission and Reception.

MARCH 10 — Saturday, 6:30 p.m. Benefit theatrical presentation for the teachers of Knights of Vartan School in Armenia. Taleen Babayan's "Where Is Your Groom? II" At Northern Virginia Community College, Annandale Campus, Ernst Community Cultural center, 8333 Little River Turnpike, Annandale. Tickets \$30. By credit card go to paypal.me/DaughtersofVartanUS or call Takuhi at (301) 219-4041.

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.

Missak Kelechian to Speak about Armin Wegner, 'Righteous German Soldier' at Talk

MISSION HILLS, Calif. — The Ararat-Eskijian Museum, presents a talk by Maurice Missak Kelechian, an independent researcher, titled "Armin T. Wegner, The Righteous German Soldier," on Sunday February 18, at 4 p.m. Ararat-Eskijian Museum/Sheen Chapel, 15105 Mission Hills Road.

Wegner, whose photographic collection documents conditions in Armenian deportation camps in 1915-1916, was born in Germany in 1886. At the outbreak of World War I, he enrolled as a volunteer nurse in Poland during the winter of 1914-1915, and was decorated with the Iron Cross for assisting the wounded under fire. In April 1915, following the military alliance of Germany and Turkey, he was sent to the Middle East as a member of the German Sanitary Corps. Between July and August, he

used his leave to investigate the rumors about the Armenian massacres that had reached him from several sources. In the autumn of the same year, with the rank of second-lieutenant in the retinue of Field Marshal von der Goltz, commander of the 6th Ottoman army in Turkey, he traveled through Asia Minor.

Kelechian's presentation will focus on Wegner and his motivations to pursue the Armenian cause from 1915 until his death in 1978. He will address a number of questions, including: Why did he risk his life by taking forbidden photos of Armenians? Besides the two dozen known Armenian Genocide photographs, were there additional photos? Do any of Wegner's books, ostensibly burned by the Nazis, survive? Also, Kelechian will present for the first time newly-uncovered correspondences between Wegner and a German woman who was living in Lebanon and married to an Armenian man.

Kelechian is an electrical engineer with extensive experience with key US Department of Defense global logistics operations. He is an independent investigative researcher passionate about finding untold stories of courageous expressions and service to humanity by the US government, its people, and Near East Relief organization that became the catalyst for the survival of hundreds of thousands of Armenian victims between 1915-1930.

Admission is free (donations appreciated).



Armin T. Wegner during World War I



The younger members of Zangakner (Aram Arkun photo)

Zangakner Performs at the Armenian Church of the Holy Translators

By Aram Arkun

Mirror-Spectator Staff

FRAMINGHAM, Mass. — Members of the Zangakner Performing Arts Ensemble gave a performance of part of its Armenian repertoire to help celebrate Poon Paregentan at the Armenian Church of the Holy Translators on Sunday, February 11 after the Divine Liturgy. Zangakner was led by its director and founder Hasmik Konjoyan. A number of the children and their families attend this church regularly.

The full ensemble is preparing for its major annual concert on June 3.

COMMENTARY

Erdogan Anoints Atesyan

By Edmond Y. Azadian

The US has been warning its Turkish ally to stop the carnage in Afrin, Syria, where Kurds are battling the invaders. The European Union has passed a resolution condemning Turkey's actions in Syria. Germany has halted the supply of military hardware to Turkey. And yet, President Recep Tayyip Erdogan's administration ignores all warnings and continues to extend its toxic "olive branch" to the Kurds.

When world powers cannot contain the bully, it is not realistic to stop him in his domestic policy. What has been taking place in the Istanbul Armenian community can be defined as a mini-tragedy, compared to Erdogan's adventures on the world scene.

For almost 10 years, the Istanbul Armenian community has been in turmoil because it has not been able to elect its patriarch. The Erdogan government is trampling on all treaty obligations and Armenian community laws and traditions to keep the community in limbo. It is further pitting the clergy against one another, creating artificial dissension in the community.

Ten years ago, incumbent patriarch Archbishop Mesrob Mutafyan developed dementia, losing completely his capacity to perform the functions of his office. All medical reports confirmed that his condition was irreversible. Based on those reports, the Religious Council of the Patriarchate in Istanbul retired the patriarch to pave the way for a new election.

The same Religious Council elected Archbishop Aram Atesyan as vicar general. During his tenure in that position, the latter proved to be a useful political tool in the hands of the Turkish authorities. He wrote a scathing letter to Erdogan blaming the German Bundestag for adopting an Armenian Genocide resolution. He also sent a supportive letter to the marauding Turkish soldiers in Afrin. God only knows what other commitments he has made to the authorities to continue such subservient conduct.

Besides his political activities, he has been blamed in the community for his corruption. Questions have been raised about his deals on confiscated properties returned to the community. Therefore, he has ingratiated himself to the authorities and some wealthy Armenians benefiting through sweetheart deals.

The community had applied to the authorities to fix a date for the election of a new patriarch. The authorities kept dragging their feet, although they were obligated under the Treaty of Lausanne to allow religious freedom for the Armenian minority to run its communal affairs according to its traditions. The foot-dragging and government restrictions lasted for almost nine years, during which time Archbishop Atesyan's conduct exasperated the community. The Religious Council once again convened to elect a locum tenens. This time around, two candidates competed, Atesyan and Archbishop Karekin Bekjian. Atesyan was soundly defeated and there was hope in the community that its ordeal was coming to a close.

The two clergymen visited Echmiadzin, where agreement was reached that with the election of the locum tenens, the office of vicar general would be terminated. Atesyan refused to give up, however, claiming all along that he was the only person recognized by the Turkish authorities. Bekjian pressed the council to apply for an election date to find out if the government really backed Atesyan.

On February 5, 2018, all hell broke loose when a letter was received at the patriarchate annulling the election of the locum tenens and the decision of the council to retire the ailing patriarch. The Istanbul governor ordered the Religious Council to rescind its actions, except the election of Atesyan as vicar general, and return to the situation prior October 26, 2016. The governor argues that as long as Mutafyan is alive, conditions are not ripe for an election.

Following that order, Minister of the Interior Suleyman Soyulu invited the leadership of the Armenian community to a lavish banquet at the Ciragan [Chiraghan] Palace to explain why the government had to violate the community's rights and impose its will by appointing a hated clergyman to the helm of the patriarchate. The minister also distributed expensive pens to the leaders as souvenirs.

The community leaders are in a hostage situation and cannot do anything but bow their heads to the diktat of the government. Only two people have raised objections, attorney Sebuhan Aslangil, who has criticized the government's missive, and the

Parish Council Chairman of Gedikpasa Church, Harutyun Sanli, who made derogatory remarks about Atesyan. The minister in turn demonstrated his irritation, which translates no doubt to something like, how is it that these givours [infidels] can dare to criticize the government's decision.

After the arrival of the government's letter, Atesyan issued a communique informing the public that before all those traumatic events, he had flown to Ankara to get his marching orders. He also gave an oblique signal to Archbishop Bekjian when he quoted St. Peter's Letter to the Romans, in which obedience to the rulers is glorified and punishment administered to trespassers. Bekjian resigned his post and is planning to leave Istanbul soon.

The unspoken argument against Archbishop Bekjian is that as primate of the Armenian Diocese of Germany, he has participated in Armenian Martyrs' Day commemorations, which in Erdogan's legal system is an insult to Turkishness. Yet Erdogan has been insulting the entire Turkish-Armenian community, and the world Armenian community for that matter, by imposing a brain-dead clergyman in a vegetative state on the throne of the patriarchate.

Throughout these developments, the domestic Armenian press kept a strict neutrality. But now that Atesyan's anointment by Erdogan's administration has been confirmed, the latter has been scrambling to win over Atesyan. A minor incident of protest has revealed this shift. A parishioner named Besse Kabak began singing *Der Voghormia* [Lord Have Mercy] at the



St. Vartanants Church of Gedikpasa, just before Archbishop Atesyan began his sermon. Police intervened and took the protestor to the police station, supposedly out of concern for Atesyan's safety. Some Armenian papers have been severely critical of the protest. We cannot definitively confirm whether they were concerned about the dignity of the moment or assuring the largess of Atesyan, who controls the purse strings of the patriarchate.

This cavalier treatment has left the majority of the Istanbul Armenian community irate. Of course, there are some detractors. And also there are some wealthy Armenians benefiting from the gravy train, and desecrating the traditions of the Armenian Church.

Despite all these revelations, there are people who are ready to give reverential treatment appropriate for deserving and honorable clergymen to Atesyan during his visits abroad.

Once again, it is Garo Paylan who has taken the bull by the horns, challenging Erdogan's dictatorial behavior. Indeed, when the latter visited Athens last December, he complained that the Greek government had refused to allow the local Turkish community to elect its mufti. Paylan in response stated to the "sultan," what nerve you have to complain in Greece that a religious leader is not allowed to be elected when you prevent the Armenian community in your own country from electing its patriarch. Paylan has also tried to place the issue of the patriarchal election on the agenda of the Turkish parliament for debate.

There may be a few foolhardy members of the Istanbul Armenian community who raise their voices in protest. But as a whole, the community stays silent, especially under Erdogan's martial law, where any dissent is attributed to Feto's terrorist movement.

Paylan's voice may be heard beyond Turkey's borders. But most importantly, Diasporan Armenians can give a cold shoulder when Atesyan travels, if they have any spine left.

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Erdogan Wants to Challenge the Lausanne Treaty ? Let's Take a Look



By Philippe Raffi Kalfayan

Observers were surprised when President Erdogan questioned the fair application of

the Lausanne Treaty recently. In a visit to Athens in December, he asked for its revision, claiming that “the Muslim minorities on the Greek border of Western Thrace were not able to choose their own chief mufti, while the Christian communities in Turkey enjoyed greater freedom when choosing their Patriarch.” Previously, he had declared that Lausanne was not such a great victory, because Turkey had to give away some [now Greek] islands. Meanwhile, he praised the Lausanne Treaty as the result of the first victory for the independence of Turkey.

The reaction of the CHP [Republican Kemalist Party] was prompt, condemning those comments, recalling that the Lausanne Treaty is the title deed of the Republic of Turkey.

We should take a closer look at that treaty, especially the conditions in which the treaty was concluded, its consequences for Armenians inside or outside the country, and how it has been applied so far by Turkey.

A Diplomatic and Moral Defeat of Western Allies; A Legal Nightmare for Armenians

In the Treaty of Sèvres, Turkey recognized an independent Armenia. It admitted to the massacres and agreed to deliver those responsible for the massacres committed on Turkish soil to the Allied Powers with the latter having the authority to establish tribunals and conduct criminal trials. Further, Turkey agreed to a new system of Capitulations, which protected the Allied Powers and their nationals from Turkish courts. The Treaty of Sèvres also established duties on Turkey to protect minorities. The Allied Powers signing the Treaty of Sèvres were the British Empire, France, Italy and Japan. Armenia was among the Principal Allied Powers and could present its memorandums and claims.

The promises of the Treaty of Sèvres were short-lived as Turkey failed to ratify the treaty. The rise of the nationalist movement under Mustafa Kemal (later “Ataturk”) changed the dynamics within Turkey. On the ground, the war between Turkey and Armenia and the subsequent agreements between Turkey and Russia led to the non-ratification of the Sèvres Treaty by Turkey. Moreover, the unstable situation of Armenia’s frontiers and of its domestic politics made the Council of the League of Nations refuse Armenia as a member of the League.

In the meantime, the Allied Powers lost focus and cohesion and signed bilateral agreements with the Government of Angora. On July 24, 1923, about three years after signing the Treaty of Sèvres, Turkey and the Allied Powers signed the Treaty of Lausanne which established the boundaries of Turkey largely as they exist today. The parties to that treaty were Turkey, the British Empire, France, Italy, Japan, Greece, Romania, and the Serb-Croat-Slovene State.

Despite the coordinated efforts of Lord Curzon [UK], the promised homeland and justice for Armenians totally disappeared from the treaty terms. No Armenian delegation was accepted into the discussions. However, two delegations [the Paris Delegation and Republic of Armenia] came and presented their claims.

Even before the Turkish delegation joined the conference, the Turkish Cabinet

approved a three-page brief consisting of 14 items, where the first item, related to the eastern frontiers, stressed: “there can be no ‘Armenian Homeland’; if the question comes up, the negotiations shall be terminated.” Although the Armenian Homeland gave rise to heated debates, the Turkish delegation, headed by Ismet Pasha [later “Inonu”], stood inflexible and the Allies gave away.

Noticeably, the United States of America recalled particularly the official guarantees given by the Powers and by the League of Nations for the establishment of an Armenian homeland. The United States Senate refused to give its consent to the Treaty of Lausanne as the treaty failed to provide justice for the Armenians.

Almost 100 years later, Turkey plays the same scenario of blackmail to its advantage. The promises made to the Kurds for the establishment of a homeland are sacrificed for geopolitical interests: the US ones in the context of the new Cold War with Russia and of Europeans’ protective politics; Turkey supposedly containing flows of migrants.

Lausanne: ‘Protection of Minorities’ or à la carte Violation of Minorities’ Rights

Unlike the Treaty of Sèvres, no reference was made in the Treaty of Lausanne to the Armenians, to the massacres and deportations or to the means by which perpetrators of those crimes would be held accountable. The Treaty of Lausanne imposed duties on Turkey regarding its minorities, defined in an ad hoc section of the Treaty as non-Muslims. Article 37 indicates that “Turkey undertakes that the stipulations contained in articles 38 to 44 shall be recognized as fundamental laws and that no law, regulation nor official action shall conflict or interfere with them or prevail over them.”

Since the treaty is international, there is no incompatibility with the 2004 Constitution, where it stated that “international treaties on fundamental rights have precedence over national laws treating the same subject.” After the coup in 1982, the constitution imposed by the military regime was in clear violation of the treaty, because it proscribed the use of languages other than Turkish.

The first violations of the treaty occurred as soon as 1926 with regard to positive rights, such as religious marriage ceremonies. In order to protect itself, the Turkish state asked that non-Moslem minorities give up their rights and agree to civil marriages before the church or synagogue ceremonies. The Armenians waived their rights under article 42 by a letter on January 3, 1926 (a decision taken by an Extraordinary General Assembly composed of the Patriarchate locum tenens, the religious and secular members of the Council, and the “representatives of the Nation”), where “their commitment to the Republican Government and the hope to earn back the confidence they were having before” were the grounds for their decision. The Jewish community leadership did the same. As for the Greeks, Greece lodged a complaint in September 1926 with the League of Nations claiming that the provisions of the Treaty were not being observed.

Under Article 40 of the Treaty, the Turkish nationals belonging to non-Muslim minorities “shall have an equal right to establish, manage and control at their own expense, any charitable, religious and social institutions, any schools and other establishments for instruction and education (...).” The Turkish government never stopped interfering in the affairs of the Patriarchate: this is true those days

(Istanbul Governor’s Office cancelled the election of Karekin Bekjian, who was unanimously elected last year). Back in 1932, the Turkish Government even prevented the Istanbul Patriarchate delegate from taking part to the election of Catholicos in Echmiadzin.

The current violation of Armenian minority rights to elect their patriarch sheds light on Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan’s remarks about the non-respect of Moslem minorities’ rights in Greece. Erdogan picks on a non-existent violation in Greece in order to retaliate against the Treaty in Turkey. Indeed, article 45 of the Treaty provides reciprocity as for the protection of minorities: “the rights conferred...on the non-Moslem minorities in Turkey will be similarly conferred by Greece on the Moslem minority in their territory.”

The Instrument for Final Plundering of Armenian Properties

The surrender of the Allied Powers in Lausanne was total and had an even worse outcome on Armenians’ rights.

Despite the claims submitted to the League in the 1920s and 1930s demanding restitution for properties and citizenships – the most vocal and organized claims were filed by Levon Pachalian (Paris) and Ohannes Essayan (Athens) – neither succeeded. The official line was that all Armenians who had left the country before or during the war were considered “fugitives” and “guilty” and thus could not be protected by the Treaty.

The Law on “Abandoned Properties” (April 20, 1922) deprived all those “fugitives” from their properties. In addition, Turkey allegedly declared during the Lausanne conference (on July 17, 1923) its privilege to consider the right to return in Turkey to those nationals, who have left the country before [the War] and who will not present inconveniences; all others being deprived of their nationality. On June 8, 1929, Turkey completed its legislative arsenal by withdrawing the competence of Turkish civil law tribunals for admitting and reviewing cases related to “abandoned properties.”

The legal opinion drafted in 1929 by four internationally renowned consultants did not change that situation. Some individuals, such as Mrs. Nektar Duz, repeatedly filed a very well argued claim on her father’s properties. It unsuccessfully continued until 1938, though she was not considered a “fugitive.”

Thanks to this extremely despicable trick, Armenian survivors of the Genocide were turned into fugitives, since they allegedly escaped the country at a time they should have been at the side of Turkish people, fighting for its existence.

Political and Legal Perspectives of Challenging the Lausanne Treaty

An international treaty is a primary source of international law and challenging it would be rather difficult, although this treaty is built on a complete abstraction of International Wrongful Acts (massive and systematic massacres, enforced deportations and disappearances, stolen properties, enforced Turkification and conversion to Islam) in the meaning of the Law on State responsibility. By surrendering to Turkey’s blackmail in 1923, the Allied Powers are to be held accountable for the prejudice and harms caused to the Armenian Nation by the content of that Treaty since they betrayed their commitments of Sèvres.

The acts perpetrated in 1915-1923 were undeniably prohibited by the Treaty of Berlin (1878) and the Laws and Customs of War of Hague Convention (1899) and thus were wrongful acts. Thus it follows that the

laws depriving the victims or their heirs from their citizenship and properties consequent to the enforced deportation are unlawful.

A second avenue is legally challenging the treaty’s application toward Armenians. Turkey consented that “any difference of opinion as to questions of law or of fact arising out of these Articles” between Turkey, another party to the Treaty of Lausanne, and any other power that is a member of the Council “shall be held to be a dispute of an international character under Article 14.” Turkey then consented to have such a dispute referred to the Permanent Court of International Justice (PCIJ), the interstate court of the League.

The United Nations (UN) determined their role as to the minority treaties, including the Treaty of Lausanne. It is established that the UN assumed the role of the League of Nations under the treaties, even though it is “not legally the successor” of the League.

The next question relates to the state that could bring the claim. Consistent with Article 44 of the Treaty of Lausanne, the United Kingdom, France, Italy, Japan, Greece, Romania, and the Serb-Croat-Slovene State (its successors Serbia, Croatia, and Slovenia), as parties to the Treaty, could lodge a claim against Turkey in the ICJ, successor of PCIJ in the UN system.

Members of the Security Council, especially the US, due to its stance at the time of the Treaty, would be ideal candidates to challenge the unfair application of the Treaty. This perspective would of course imply a revision of the current Armenian foreign policy and objectives.

The third question concerns the merits of the claim. At first, it would appear that what happened in Turkey in 1915-16 would not be relevant to the Treaty. Yet, a number of possible acts constitute a continuation of the Genocide that could fit within a violation of the Treaty’s minority protection measures: the Armenian women and girls who endured sexual violence, were forced into marriages, and also forced to convert to Islam; Armenians in Turkey that hide their Armenian identity up to this day. Perceived threats and insecurity due to being Armenian have caused them to deny their religion, which is at odds with the protection of freedom of religion under Article 38 of the Treaty; Acts of deportations and banishment of Armenians that occurred after the Treaty; the removal in the summer of 1929 of 30,000 Armenians from Harput, Diyarbakir and Mardin; Discriminatory tax revenues in 1942, etc.

No case was ever filed by a State before the PCIJ to seek enforcement of the minority protections in the Treaty. Any claim under the Treaty would face formidable obstacles due to the elapsed time and to the political consequences.

The perspective of revising the Lausanne Treaty is then quite tempting and Erdogan’s statement laudable, although unlikely to happen unless the geopolitical situation undergoes dramatic changes in the region: not so unrealistic a scenario today.

Nevertheless, the case would not be a substitute for a formal claim against Turkey for reparations due to the Genocide. Although never ratified, Sèvres Treaty contains provisions that may have legal effects if Armenians decide to invoke them today.

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



COMMENTARY



My Turn

By Harut Sassounian

ANCA and US Armenians Should Sue The Daily Caller and Forbes Magazine

In recent years, scores of “hired pens” have written derogatory commentaries about Armenia and Armenian-Americans. Many of these anti-Armenians commentators are paid by the governments of Azerbaijan or Turkey.

It is sad that some countries resort to such cheap tricks to repair their damaged reputation and disparage others. These countries have serious domestic problems widely known throughout the world without anyone getting paid to publicize them. The governments of Azerbaijan and Turkey have paid millions of dollars to public relations and lobbying firms in the United States and Europe trying to whitewash their tarnished images. Political leaders in Washington, London, Paris, Berlin and Moscow are not fooled by these tricks. They know well the extent of miserable conditions and human rights violations in these two Turkic countries.

Today, I feel obligated to respond to a particularly deceitful article that appeared on February 5, 2018 in the Daily Caller which is “a conservative American news and opinion website based in Washington, DC. It was founded by political pundit Tucker Carlson and Neil Patel, former adviser to former Vice President Dick Cheney,” according to Wikipedia. Carlson left the website to focus on his Fox News television program

“Tucker Carlson Tonight.”

The Daily Caller’s article, written by Raoul Contreras, is titled: “Armenian Influence Presents a Case Study on the Foreign Agents Registration Act.” The writer quotes from earlier article published by *Forbes* magazine on November 27, 2017 which falsely claims that “the Armenian National Committee of America (ANCA) is purported to be a ‘non-government organization,’ but is widely believed to have deep ties to Russian influence. The Committee betrays Armenia’s post-Soviet nation’s longstanding tradition as a proxy to its former motherland.” This sentence is a complete lie as ANCA does not represent the policies of Russia or any other country. It solely represents the views of a large segment of the Armenian-American community. The writer of the *Forbes* article is Mfonobong Nsehe, an Africa specialist, who knows very little about Armenia or ANCA.

Based on the falsehood published by *Forbes*, The Daily Caller claims that “ANCA represents views of the government of Armenia and, by proxy, the Russian government. Without registration, that may violate FARA [Foreign Agents Registration Act] and lobbying laws.”

Contreras highlights the fact that Armenia has signed a military treaty with Russia, but, fails to understand that Armenia has no choice but to enter into such a defensive pact. Should Armenia recklessly risk its existence when someday Azerbaijan and Turkey put into practice their hostile and threatening warnings? Contreras ignores the fact that Armenia also enjoys close economic, political and military relations with Western Europe and the United States.

The Daily Caller’s Contreras concocts another lie in referring to contributions made by Armenian-Americans to U.S. political candidates. He falsely calls them “questionable campaign contributions.” A small amount of political donations are given by ANC PAC (Political Action Committee) which is a separate entity from ANCA and perfectly legal. Furthermore, Contreras does not seem to know that ANCA is a 501(c)(4) IRS (Internal Revenue Service) entity that has the

right to make political endorsements. Contreras wrongly calls the ANCA’s endorsements “potentially illegal.” They are not illegal under American law!

Contreras then brings up a long-settled issue – the 2009 complaint by CREW (Citizens for Responsibility and Ethics) – in Washington with the Justice Department, the IRS and the Congress, alleging that ANCA violated FARA by not registering as a “foreign agent.” This complaint was thoroughly reviewed and dismissed nine years ago! Contreras does not have the honesty to report that CREW’s complaint had been dismissed by the IRS!

Contreras goes on to recount ANCA’s success in blocking the Senate confirmation of Matthew Bryza as Ambassador to Azerbaijan. This is a great accomplishment and ANCA is rightly proud of it.

Finally, Contreras quotes from a Washington Post editorial of 2010 which claims that ANCA’s “lobbying has made reconciliation between Armenia and Turkey, and between Armenia and Azerbaijan, more difficult – thus helping perpetuate Armenia’s impoverishment and overdependence on Russia.” It is laughable when non-Armenians like Contreras, US publications, and hostile nations like Azerbaijan and Turkey, tell Armenians what is in their best interest. Armenians know much better than anyone else what is in their interest. They don’t need a lecture from anyone!

Rather than suggesting that ANCA should register as a foreign agent, Contreras himself should do so for propagating the interests of Azerbaijan and Turkey in the United States!

ANCA and Armenian-Americans should consider suing Contreras, The Daily Caller and *Forbes* for anti-Armenian defamation. The Daily Caller noted at the end of its article that “the views and opinions expressed in this commentary are those of the author and do not reflect the official position of The Daily Caller.” *Forbes* published a similar note at the end of its article. Publishing lies is defamatory and nothing to do with the writer’s opinion. These two publications must be held responsible for disseminating falsehoods.

The Failed Istanbul Armenian Patriarchate

By Raffi Bedrosyan

THE NEVER-ENDING MANIPULATIONS and power games at the Istanbul Patriarchate took a turn for the worse this week. In 2008, the Istanbul Patriarch Archbishop Mesrob Mutafyan was stricken with incurable dementia, incapacitating him into a vegetative state. The cleric next in line at the Patriarchate, Archbishop Aram Atesyan was appointed the Acting Patriarch at that time, with the expectations that unless Patriarch Mutafyan recovers miraculously, elections should be held to decide a successor. For the past nine years, Acting Patriarch Atesyan resisted all attempts of the Istanbul Armenian community, other Patriarchate clerics and even the Echmiadzin Catholicosate, to hold the elections. Finally in March 2017, Archbishop Atesyan relented, allowing the Religious Council of the Patriarchate to start the election process, which elected Archbishop Bekjian from the Diocese of Germany as “locum tenens,” a caretaker cleric until a new Patriarch is elected to replace the ailing Patriarch Mutafyan and the Acting Patriarch Atesyan.

Both Atesyan and Bekjian were supposed to be candidates in the elections, along with four other eligible clerics. But now, following a meeting with the Turkish Minister of Interior and a letter received from the Istanbul Governor, the Religious Council of the Istanbul Patriarchate has declared that there will be no elections and Archbishop Atesyan will continue serving as Acting Patriarch until Patriarch Mutafyan dies. Archbishop Bekjian has resigned and is on his way back to Germany. How is all this possible?

It is possible because Archbishop Atesyan is a favorite of the Turkish government and the Turkish government returns the favor by calling null and void the election process and the selection of the “so called” or “alleged” locum tenens Archbishop Bekjian to oversee the election process, even though these are all spelled out in the legal authority of the Istanbul Patriarchate and the Lausanne Treaty defining the legal rights

of the minorities to freely elect their religious leaders. But however the government, or more appropriately, the leader of the government President Erdogan interprets the laws, that is what counts. Archbishop Atesyan is ‘proud to call President Erdogan as my brother’. Archbishop Atesyan was a fierce critic of Germany for passing the Armenian Genocide resolution in June 2016.

Archbishop Atesyan wished Erdogan success in starting the Afrin invasion in Syria, killing Kurdish (and some Armenian) civilians. It is natural that the Turkish government will interfere to the benefit of an Armenian religious leader so much in line with its priorities.

I have had two occasions to communicate directly with Archbishop Atesyan. First was when I planned to give a concert at the newly reconstructed Surp Giragos Armenian Church in Diyarbakir, during the Centennial Commemoration of the Armenian Genocide in April 2015. As part of the concert program, in addition to my piano performance of Armenian composers, I had proposed to invite a well-known Armenian and a Kurdish opera singer to present songs of Komitas, a noted victim of the Genocide. Archbishop Atesyan opposed the idea of the concert in “his church” and suggested that I hold the concert somewhere else in Diyarbakir. At the end, the concert did take place in the church of course, in the presence of more than a thousand attendees, including elected officials, local Kurds and Turks, but most significantly, hundreds of hidden Armenians. Instead of the two singers, I ended up playing the Komitas works in the church myself, so meaningful and symbolic, hundred years after the Genocide.

The other occasion was when my friends and I approached him about the subject of the thousands of abandoned Armenian churches in Turkey. For a few years in the early 2010’s, there was a window of opportunity by an apparently liberalized Turkish government to allow return and reconstruction of Armenian churches. The reconstruction of Surp Giragos Church is one example, even though the situation has dramatically worsened in the past two years. But earlier on, there was some willingness by the government to return or restore Armenian churches, as our cultural heritage in Anatolia. We even had discussions with government officials on specific churches in Van, Sivas and Malatya.

Unfortunately, Archbishop Atesyan turned down these attempts by stating: “I (meaning the Patriarchate) cannot even take care of the Armenian churches in Istanbul, what do I need to have more churches in Anatolia?” I am not sure whether to call this line of thinking shortsightedness or toeing the line in the eyes of the state.

But my intention is not to blame Archbishop Atesyan or the Turkish government that sees him as their man. I would like to focus on the attitude of the Istanbul Armenian community and more specifically, its non-religious leaders, who are the elected leaders of dozens of charitable organizations attached to the Istanbul Armenian churches, schools and hospitals. The charitable organizations are all supposed to be under the control of the Istanbul Patriarchate and act in unison, with the wealthier foundations owning large assets supposed to help the less fortunate foundations. But this rarely happens, and as long as there is no interference from the Patriarchate, most of the lead-

ers, with a few exceptions, treat the charitable organizations as their own personal empire without much consideration for the overall benefit of the community.

The community itself is deeply divided, apathetic or unable to voice any protest, except for a few young intellectuals gathered around the *Agos* daily and a few progressive NGOs.

After what happened this week at the Patriarchate, one would expect the community to organize and take some protest actions against the unilateral takeover by Archbishop Atesyan. A possible protest action could have been boycotting the church where religious services were to be conducted by Archbishop Atesyan and instead attend church services at other Armenian churches. But the church where he delivered mass was full this Sunday and there was only one lonely

PRESIDENT ERDOGAN INTERPRETS THE LAWS, THAT IS WHAT COUNTS. ARCHBISHOP ATESYAN IS ‘PROUD TO CALL PRESIDENT ERDOGAN AS MY BROTHER’. ARCHBISHOP ATESYAN WAS A FIERCE CRITIC OF GERMANY FOR PASSING THE ARMENIAN GENOCIDE RESOLUTION IN JUNE 2016.

Armenian lawyer among the crowd who dared protest, by singing aloud a prayer ‘Der Voghormya’. Upon instructions from Archbishop Atesyan, she was immediately removed from the church by Turkish police officers and taken to the police station.

As the saying goes, people deserve the leaders they have. While we lament and complain and protest against unfair treatment of Armenians by other nations, we should also recognize our own weaknesses.



Greece, Turkey Try to Calm Tensions after Aegean Sea Crash

ATHENS, Greece (AP) — The prime ministers of Greece and Turkey worked late Tuesday to calm escalating tensions after a Greek coast guard vessel was damaged in a collision with a Turkish patrol boat in the Aegean Sea, the site of a boundary dispute.

A government official in Athens said Prime Minister Alexis Tsipras of Greece and Turkish Prime Minister Benali Yildirim spoke by telephone about the circumstances of the boat crash. The official asked not to be named pending an official announcement.

No one was hurt in the collision, which happened near uninhabited Aegean islets over which Turkey and Greece nearly went to war in 1996.

Turkey's ambassador in Athens was summoned earlier in the day to receive an official complaint, while the Greek Foreign Ministry accused Turkey of "escalating and provocative conduct."

Tensions between the NATO allies already were rising over the warships Turkey deployed in recent days to block a rig from reaching a location of Cyprus where Italian energy company Eni is scheduled to drill for natural gas.

Cyprus has been ethnically divided into a Turkish north and a Greek south since 1974. The internationally recognized government is on the Greek Cypriot side. Only Turkey recognizes the breakaway north, where it keeps thousands of troops.

By Derek Gatopoulos and Suzan Fraser

Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan defended the presence of the warships, telling lawmakers from his party Tuesday that companies involved in the gas venture should not "step out of line."

"We recommend that foreign companies don't allow themselves to be an instrument of issues that surpass their limits and strength, by trusting the Greek Cypriot side," Erdogan said. "Their show of strength lasts only until they see our ships and our planes."

Turkey opposes the drilling, which it says disregards the rights of Turkish Cypriots. It also claims as its own part of the area Cyprus has designated for exploratory drilling.

The Cypriot government says it has a sovereign right to drill, and that if the search is successful, any income would be shared equitably if the island is reunified.

Cypriot President Nicos Anastasiades refrained from direct comment on Erdogan's statements, but said Turkish naval activity should cause no public alarm.

"There's no reason for anyone to worry," he told reporters in the capital, Nicosia. "Actions are being taken in such a way so as to avert any kind of crisis."

Cyprus joined the European Union in 2004,

but only the southern part enjoys full membership benefits. Turkey's bid for EU membership has been stalled for some time.

EU Commission spokesman Margaritis Schinas said EU authorities were monitoring

the incident in the Aegean closely, adding that Turkey should avoid any "friction, threat or action" against an EU member state.

Nicholas Paphitis in Athens, Greece, Costas Kantouris in Thessaloniki, Greece, Menelaos Hadjicostis in Nicosia, Cyprus, and Lorne Cook in Brussels contributed. Follow Gatopoulos at <http://www.twitter.com/dgatopoulos> and Fraser at <http://www.twitter.com/suzanfraser>



Greek authorities say a Turkish coast guard vessel rammed one of their patrol boats near a disputed territory in the Aegean Sea

BENEFIT THEATRICAL PRESENTATION FOR THE TEACHERS OF
KNIGHTS & DAUGHTERS OF VARTAN SCHOOL IN YEREVAN, ARMENIA

A PLAY BY TALEEN BABAYAN

WHERE IS
YOUR GROOM? II

Փեսայն Ռիփ է

SHE THOUGHT ALL HER PROBLEMS WOULD END
ONCE SHE FOUND HER "PESA"...

Saturday, March 10 at 6:30 p.m.

Northern Virginia Community College - Annandale Campus
Richard J. Ernst Community Cultural Center, CE Building
8333 Little River Turnpike, Annandale, VA 22003

Tickets: \$30 (children 7 & under free)
Tickets available by credit card at paypal.me/DaughtersofVartanUS
Or by calling/texting Takuhi - (301) 219-4041

Armen Sarkissian and ADL Central Committee Meet In Yerevan

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the party concerning his candidacy, domestic issues in Armenia and pan-Armenian affairs, and then he would present his vision. He said, "I have come to listen to you," and recalled his visits during the first years of Armenia's independence to the offices of the ADL newspaper Azg, when he was preoccupied with the idea of creating Armenian fonts for computer programs.

The ADL leaders spoke about the necessity of the rule of law in Armenia, changing the domestic atmosphere, constructing relations anew with the diaspora, and using diasporan networks productively and solving pan-Armenian issues. They specifically spoke about the necessity of creating a new political culture which



Ambassador Armen Sarkissian, right, with ADL Supreme Council President Vartan Nazerian

will aid the development of knowledge and education and the independence of mass media.

Sarkissian one by one addressed these issues and presented his own approach and vision. He spoke about spurring the development of professions, education and knowledge, and, by utilizing Armenia's wonderful human potential, assuring Armenia's role in international progress as well as a larger market for its economy.

Sarkissian inspired optimism about carrying out changes in Armenia. He set out two approaches concerning the position of president, governance and leadership. The first is an executive function for which government exists. However, if he achieves the position of president, he would want to take on the role of leading the country toward a new manner of working, by means of a high level of education and rules that are accepted throughout the world.