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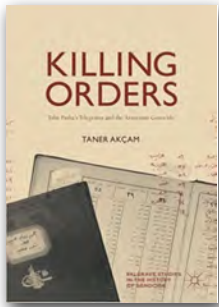
The First English Language Armenian Weekly in the United States Since 1932

Killing Orders Lays Bare Orders for Armenian Annihilation by Turkish Government

By Alin K. Gregorian

Mirror-Spectator Staff

WORCESTER — Prof. Taner Akçam has been at the forefront of finding evidence confirming the Armenian Genocide and the role of the Ottoman central government in the murders for decades. His latest book, *Killing Orders: Talat Pasha's Telegrams and the Armenian Genocide*, is the latest volley he has launched to bring down the curtain of denial of the Turkish government.



The book, published this week by Palgrave Macmillan, is an expanded with additional two new chapters available only in English-language

translation of his book on Naim Bey, which was originally published in Turkish last year.

In it, Akçam literally shows the orders from the central government to exterminate Armenians in various parts of the country. Many have referred to the book's explosive content which once and for all shows that not only the genocide happened but that it was done on orders of the central government, as an "earthquake" in the field of Armenian Genocide studies.

see AKÇAM, page 8



(AP PHOTO)

People pray next to the closed doors of the Holy Sepulchre Church on February 25

Israel Suspends Plan to Tax Jerusalem Church Properties

By Nebi Qena

JERUSALEM (AP) — Jerusalem's mayor on Tuesday, February 27, suspended a plan to impose taxes on properties owned by Christian churches, backing away from a move that had enraged religious leaders and led to the closure of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre.

In a statement, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's office said a professional team was being established to negotiate with church officials to "formulate a solution."

"As a result, the Jerusalem Municipality is suspending the collection actions it has taken in recent weeks," it said.

There was no immediate reaction from church leaders, and it was unclear whether the Church of the Holy Sepulchre would reopen.

Roman Catholic, Greek Orthodox and leaders of other Christian denominations closed the famed church on Sunday to protest an order by Jerusalem Mayor Nir Barkat to begin taxing their properties.

The church is revered as the site where Jesus was crucified and see HOLY SEPULCHRE, page 20



Prof. Tessa Hofmann at the genocide memorial

Ecumenical Altars of Remembrance in Berlin

By Muriel Mirak-Weissbach

Special to the Mirror-Spectator

BERLIN — It was a bitter cold day in mid-February, with a strong wind that chilled to the bone. As we walked from the bus stop and entered the Luisenkirchhof III cemetery through the huge gate, I thought about the women and children being deported from their homes in Ottoman Empire over a hundred years ago, and what immense suffering they must have faced as they wound their way through inclement weather, on their march toward death.

My guide and companion, Prof. Tessa Hofmann, was as warmly bundled up as I was, so we could go on walking up to the central chapel and beyond, with no fear of freezing. On the other side of the chapel, the path continued until we reached a façade of massive altars, which stretched out to the left and right in front of us. The three altars in the middle stood solemn and dignified, each with a cross of a different kind placed in the arch. The first altar on the left with its graceful *khachkar* must be the house of the Armenians; the next had a cross with arms of equal length to designate the house of the Greeks from Asia Minor, Pontos and Eastern Thrace; and the third displayed the cross of the Aramaens, Assyrians and Chaldeans.

see ALTARS, page 5

Wallenberg Foundation Decries Israeli Vote not To Recognize Armenian Genocide

By Tamara Zieve

JERUSALEM (*Jerusalem Post*) — The International Raoul Wallenberg Foundation expressed "deep disappointment" in the Knesset's rejection of a bill to recognize the Armenian Genocide earlier this month.

Deputy Foreign Minister Tzipi Hotovely said that while Israel had sent a parliamentary delegation to the 100th anniversary event in Yerevan, it will not take an official stance on the matter, "in light of its complexity and diplomatic repercussions, and because it has a clear political connection."

The Raoul Wallenberg Foundation sent a letter on Thursday, February 22, to Knesset Speaker Yuli Edelstein, with a copy to Hotovely and Yesh Atid leader Knesset Member Yair Lapid, who sponsored the bill.

Edelstein called on the government in 2015 to change its stance, and in 2016 the Knesset Education Committee recognized the genocide.

However, any motion for official state recognition of the genocide has failed to go through.

"Regrettably, this voting down has been repeating itself, time and again, for the last few years, as a constant ritual," read the letter, signed by foundation chairman

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NEWS IN BRIEF

Azerbaijan Distorts Reality over Khojaly

YEREVAN (Armenpress) — Twenty two Members of the European Parliament MEPs representing the Club of Azerbaijan's Friends in the European Parliament have signed a declaration where nothing is mentioned about "genocide," or Armenians or Armenia. A day before the Azerbaijani mass media spread information that allegedly the European parliament has adopted a declaration over the "Khojaly events." Earlier, in a meeting with Azerbaijanis in the Georgian city Marneuli, President of Georgia Giorgi Margvelashvili did not yield to the provocation of one of the participant young men, who asked the President to honor the memory of the victims of the so-called "Khojaly events" with a minute of silence. Azerbaijani media outlets note that the ceremony of the one-minute silence did not take place, instead Margvelashvili noted that he follows Nagorno Karabakh conflict settlement process. "Georgia is against the escalation of Nagorno Karabakh conflict," he said.

Paylan Requests Explanation on Gov. Patriarchate Interference

ISTANBUL (Armenpress) —Armenian-Turkish Member of Parliament representing the People's Democratic Party (HDP) Garo Paylan has sent an inquiry to Interior Minister Süleyman Soylu regarding the Istanbul government's interference and obstruction of the Armenian Patriarchal election, Agos reports.

In the inquiry, Paylan said that in 2017, before the constitutional referendum, President Recep Tayyip Erdogan had promised the Armenian community of Turkey to deal with the patriarchal election issue.

Paylan mentioned that Patriarch Mesrop Mutafyan is incapacitated due to severe illness, which was the reason of Aram Atesian's appointment as patriarchal vicar in 2010, however the appointment was against the rules of the Armenian Church. Although Archbishop Karekin Bekjian was elected as locum tenens on March 15, 2017 in accordance to the constitution and necessary procedures, the Istanbul Governor's Office sent a letter on February 5, 2018 to the patriarchate, claiming they only acknowledge Atesian.

"In the case when the Armenian community was waiting for the patriarchal elections to which it is entitled, state interference in the process both ignores our church traditions and causes despair within the community," Paylan said. In this context, he asked the interior minister on what grounds the state interfered in the patriarchal election process.

He also asked why the process was stopped and why the deputy governor used the term "socalled" when addressing the elected locum tenens.

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ARMENIA

News From Armenia

Parliament Observes Moment of Silence in Honor of Sumgait Victims

YEREVAN (Armenpress) — A moment of silence was observed in the Armenian parliament during hearings on the Sumgait pogroms on February 27.

Larisa Alaverdyan, president of the Against Legal Arbitrariness NGO, offered to pay tribute to the victims of the event during the parliamentary hearings titled “Sumgait Pogroms: Armenophobia as Azerbaijan’s State Policy.”

Alaverdyan stressed that survivors of the Sumgait pogroms are among the participants of the discussion. “I bow before all of you,” she said

Prayer for Peace Offered In the Mother Cathedral

ECHMIADZIN — On February 23, with the blessings of Karekin II, Supreme Patriarch and Catholicos of All Armenians; in response to an appeal made by Pope Francis on February 4, a special prayer for peace was offered during the Great Lent Evening Service in the Mother See of Holy Echmiadzin, for peace in war-torn nations, in particular for the Democratic Republic of Congo and for South Sudan.

Present at the Prayer for Peace were the Supreme Spiritual Council members and staff of the Mother See.

With the awareness and participation of different Churches and representatives of Christian denominations, this prayer for peace aims to create a new witness for the establishment of gospel peace in all those countries where Christians need more peace and security.

PM Inspects Digital Armenia Foundation Activities

YEREVAN — Prime Minister Karen Karapetyan visited the Digital Armenia Foundation headquarters in late February, where he was presented the final version of the “Armenia Digital Transformation Agenda 2030” framework document.

Foundation Director Eduard Nersisyan advised that within the framework of the first phase, called “digital jump,” it is envisaged to implement large-scale infrastructure development projects and programs aimed at providing a common digitalization environment in all areas of public governance.

He provided details of the platform to be established between different management systems, the launch of digital service centers, digital statistics and other programs that will help reduce administrative costs, processing deadlines, improve transparency of services and provide online services based on the one-stop-shop principle.

Highlighting the foundation’s activity, Karapetyan stressed that along with long-term programs swift initiatives should be taken leading to tangible results in order to propel the digitalization process.

Armenian-made Zangi App Presented at GSMA Mobile World

YEREVAN (Amenpress) — The GSMA Mobile World Global Conference is underway in Barcelona, where Armenia is represented with the Zangi mobile app. Armenia’s minister of transportation, communication and information technologies Vahan Martirosyan visited the Zangi app pavilion at the conference on February 27 and viewed the rendered services. This is the second time that Zangi is participating at GSMA Mobile World.

Zangi is a safe, private, secure messaging app that works everywhere. Extremely low bandwidth consumption allows users to make high-quality video and audio calls, send messages, and work collaboratively from anywhere with anyone.



President Michel Aoun toasts with Armenian President Serzh Sargsyan and Prime Minister Karen Karapetyan

Lebanon’s President Aoun Visits Armenia

YEREVAN (Combined Sources) — Lebanese President Michel Aoun arrived for a state visit in Armenia on Thursday, February 22. He was received by President Serzh Sargsyan.

The presidents held a meeting followed by a press conference, during which they confirmed the close ties between the two nations.

“The interstate relations between our countries have a history of just 25 years, but the friendship between our peoples is centuries-long,” Sargsyan said as he welcomed his Lebanese counterpart at the Presidential Palace.

“The Armenian community has played a great role in the reinforcement of friendship between our peoples. We

is best relished by thousands of Lebanese Armenians with their peaceful and creative activities, devotion to Lebanon and filial love for Armenia,” Sargsyan said.

“While walking down Beirut streets, the Armenian breath exists everywhere. I feel great pride that our compatriots have been able to manifest themselves as dignified and law-abiding Lebanese citizens in all areas of public life, contributing thus to the development and prosperity of Lebanon. And I feel grateful to the people of Lebanon and the Lebanese authorities for the opportunity of self-assertion granted to the Armenians,” he continued.

tainable development of our two peoples,” Sargsyan said.

In turn, Aoun thanked President Sargsyan for a warm welcome, stressing that this was his first trip to Armenia and, while being an official-political visit, it bears a special character.

“Going through this land, burdened with historical faith and martyrdom, cannot be a simple or traditional outing. We had chosen two monuments as the evidence of that history. Yesterday we visited the Mother Cathedral of Echmiadzin, one of the oldest churches in the world, where we had a feeling of firmness of faith, which made the Armenian people a champion among the world’s nations, proclaimed its identity and belief in the first centuries. It required courage and sacrifice when Roman persecution reached their peak.

“The second is the monument to the victims of the Armenian Genocide, where the heartbeat is accelerating to the brutal images of children, women and men who stand out as the reflection of heroism, sufferings and wounds against the backdrop of an eternal fire,” Aoun said. “These horrific scenes expose the idea of destruction with which the entire Orient was consumed at the outset of the twentieth century. Our two peoples were victims of that idea. The Armenians were killed with the sword, the Lebanese people through famine. Unfortunately, that same mentality once again has appeared in recent years, leading to hundreds of thousands of victims. Undoubtedly, the failure to face history and the lack of accountability for the past leads is an incentive for today’s massacres,” Aoun said.

He thanked Sargsyan for the warm welcome.

“Let me raise my glass to the wellbeing of both countries and peoples, to the true peace that should be based on tolerance, the respect of others’ right to dignified life and freedom,” he said.

“I must say that the Armenian community had a great contribution to Lebanon’s development and prosperity. They are quite seriously engaged in all fields of their activity and responsible circles. We rely on them very much in all fields. We are a broad society, and the Armenian community managed to maintain their culture and identity in Lebanon. Of course, we attach importance to and are proud of this pluralism and cultural diversity since we are able to benefit from them and develop Lebanon,” Aoun said.

He returned to Lebanon later in the week.



Lebanese President Michel Aoun makes his way to Echmiadzin

are grateful for the people and authorities of Lebanon for the careful attitude towards our compatriots,” he added.

Sargsyan also expressed his gratitude to the Lebanese authorities, including the Parliament, for acknowledging the fact of the Armenian Genocide.

Later, Sargsyan hosted an official dinner in honor of Aoun, during which they exchanged toasts and touched upon the Armenian-Lebanese interstate relations. Sargsyan and Aoun talked about the two peoples’ common history, the hardships faced together and their destinies that are intertwined with many threads of spiritual and cultural affinity.

“The Armenian-Lebanese friendship stems from Antelias, Burj Hamud and Ainchar down to the bust of the world-famous Lebanese writer, philosopher and art figure Jubran Khalil Jubran near Beirut Street at the heart of Yerevan. Indeed, all this

He praised the Haigazian University whose graduates, according to the President, continue to provide a lifeline for Armenian communities in the region and around the world.

President Sargsyan expressed gratitude to friend Lebanon for standing by the Armenian people during the tragic events of history and accommodating a portion of Genocide survivors.

“Unfortunately, the Middle East is experiencing new tragedies that reaffirm that the philosophy of the Armenian Genocide is still persistent in the 21st century, and that our struggle to prevent them is not yet over.

He expressed Armenia’s readiness to support Lebanon.

“The well-known Arab saying states that a true friend is a single soul in two bodies. I think this is best characterized by the Armenian-Lebanese relations, where there are no unsolvable issues, where the sides’ mutual understanding serves the welfare and sus-



ARMENIA

‘We Lose 1,400 Girls a Year. Who Will Our Boys Marry?’: Armenia’s Quandary

By Suzanne Moore

YEREVAN (*The Guardian*) – Sometimes it seems there are so many ways to destroy women that the methods become invisible to us. There are some women you will never see because they will never be born.

Amartya Sen talked of “missing women” in his famous 1990 essay because of technologies that enable prenatal sex selection.

Most people are aware this happens in China and India, but I am in Armenia, talking to a nervy woman in her early 30s. We are in the eastern region of Gavar, which is second only to China in the number of female fetuses that are aborted. Here, 120 boys are born for every 100 girls.

The woman, who has two young daughters, tells me her girls say: “Let’s go to church to light a candle to get a little brother.” They want a boy, she wants a boy, her husband wants a boy. This is why she has had nine or 10 abortions – she is not sure exactly, and is vague about a “vascular condition” given as a reason to terminate the pregnancies.

She droops slightly when asked for more detail. “If I get pregnant again and it’s a girl ...” She trails off. She is not sure what she will do. She has heard of doctors in the capital, Yerevan, who could help her. Sex selection, for that is what we are talking about, became illegal in Armenia in 2016.

The woman says that if she gets rid of the next baby, she will not be sad. “My husband will be sad. He accuses me of eliminating all these children.” He is away for more than half the year working in Russia, as many Armenians are. “But,” she says defiantly, “in some years my girls will leave. I will be all by myself.”

This is one part of what propels prenatal sex selection – a need to ensure the family lineage, and the belief that boys will provide in old age. Girls grow up, marry and leave. They move in with the husband’s family. Boys are an investment. Girls are a loss. This I hear repeated over and over again. It is hard to reconcile with the modern women – doctors, journalists and politicians – who are everywhere in Yerevan. Some of the biggest pressures on women to have sons come from other women: mothers-in-law.

Dr Hrachya Khalafyan, who runs the Sevan medical center in Yerevan, was shocked when he first heard about Armenia’s sex imbalance.

If the trends are not reversed, Armenia will have lost almost 93,000 women by 2060.

Where once they used to have seven or eight children, women in Armenia today give birth just once, on average. In the past, if the last child was a girl, she might be called the Armenian word for “Enough” as if no one could be

bothered to name her. Doctors now encourage women to celebrate carrying a girl, yet I hear the stories of what happens in “other places” where women are not allowed to be told the sex of their child at the 12-week scan. There are ways to find out, apparently, such as the pocket in which the doctor puts their pen – left for a girl, right for a boy.

Armenia really needs its missing women. “We lose 1,400 girls a year. In the long term who will our boys marry? How will we consolidate the Armenian nation? We are only 3 million people. We have no right to such losses. There will be no mothers to give birth to girls,” says Khalafyan.

“Son preference” is a euphemism, maybe, but a necessary one. Sex selective abortion has been steadily growing across the Caucasus and Asia (Armenia has the third highest rate in the world, behind China and Azerbaijan) and it will continue to happen as fertility levels drop. When green campaigners talk of population growth being the world’s biggest problem, they need also to factor in gender. When people have fewer children, they want boys.

Data collected in Armenia in 2010 started to bring home the sex imbalance: there were 115-120 boys being born for every 100 girls. Anecdotally, people talked of school dances in which boys were forced to dance with one another as there were so few girls.

In 2011, the UN population fund began its advocacy work around sex selection, and in 2017 it launched a global program to prevent gender-biased sex selection. After initial resistance, the Armenian government backs the UNFPA campaign. The country is already seeing results. In 2014, the ratio was 114 boys for 100 girls; last year, the figure stood at 110 boys for every 100 girls.

Efforts by the UNFPA and humanitarian agencies such as Save the Children are proving successful because they look at the specific conditions that lead to pre-natal sex selection: contraception, emigration, men as the key breadwinners, inheritance, family lineage and conflict.

Conflict was an issue raised by the head teacher of a school in Gavar, where the classes have more boys than girls. Araxia Verdanyan says the impact of the war hangs over its people. Armenia is at war with Azerbaijan over Nagorno-Karabakh. “Our soldiers are killed on a daily basis. We need girls to reproduce. We need boys to defend the border,” she says. Here a boy child is always another soldier.

Ministers explain the political strategy to raise the profile of girls. Contraception and health are promoted as priorities. All key professionals are trained in giving a positive message about girls. And a woman has three days to change her mind after she has requested an abortion at 12 weeks.

I go to a puppet show, “Ne’s Journey,” performed by the Armenian Center of International Union of Puppeteers, in

a high school where national folk tales are given a twist. It is the girl’s wisdom that saves the day. Girls defeat the demons and save themselves, too. The charismatic puppet master, Armen Safaryan, tells his young audience: “God decides whether we are girls or boys. Respect and love are contagious. I speak from travel and experience, and I treat men and women as the same. We are just beginning and we need our girls. We must end this murder.”

‘The Word Is Your Weapon’

Some of the most impressive work I see being done is in a seminary, by an amazing psychologist called Inga Harutyunyan. In a classroom in the Gevorkian seminary in Vagharshapat, in the complex of the Mother See of Holy Echmiadzin, eager young priests are trained. These are highly educated young men.

Harutyunyan has established a relationship with the church. Privately, she tells me about ancient Armenian matriarchies and goddesses. But the key is in the way she talks to the priests. “You are clergymen,” she tells them. “The word is your weapon,” and then she gives them texts from the Bible that emphasize respect for women.

Getting the church on your side, along with the government and civil society is quite something. This is the strategy in Armenia: to work with everyone; not to alienate any group, but to promote the value of girls and women right across the culture. And it’s working.

“We are not ‘girl averse’, as they are in India,” says Vahan Asatryan, a researcher at the International Centre for Human Development. He suggests the answer to ending sex selection lies in looking at the issue in specific contexts. How it works in Nepal, for instance, is different from what’s happening in Vietnam.

He talks about fertility rates as the big issue. Everyone stresses this is about not being for or against abortion. Abortion, he repeats, is simply the mechanism by which sex selection happens. The right to abortion is an achievement of civilization. Armenia allows termination up to 12 weeks without restrictions.

The introduction of ultrasound in the mid-1990s has exacerbated sex selection across all the former Soviet republics, however.

The key to change is situating this debate at the very heart of Armenian society, to ensure the survival of the nation.

If the trends are not reversed, Armenia will have lost almost 93,000 women by 2060. That’s an awful lot of potential mothers. Everyone talks of extending choice and opportunity for women. Interestingly, “no one is blamed for what is happening ... Everyone is part of the solution,” says Asatryan.

“We can’t change gender stereotypes in two years, but we can look at the data. We can talk about human rights.”

At a conference to advance gender equality and combat prenatal sex selection in Tsaghkadzor, a ski resort, community workers, activists and doctors from across the country share their experiences. Many men blame women for the sex of their own children, not realizing that the Y chromosome responsible for the male sex is transferred from the man’s genome.

I have coffee with Margaret, a young woman who works with children with disabilities. She believes everyone has a right to life.

She loves all children, she explains. She tells the women she works with: “You know when you want your husband to buy you an expensive handbag and you persuade him to? Well surely you can do that with a baby? Talk to him, tell him you want to have a girl. Persuade him. Tell him you want her to live.”

Activists See Environmental Reasons For Armenian Mine Shutdown

YEREVAN (RFE/RL) – Production operations at a large copper mine in northern Armenia were halted last month because of its faulty waste disposal facilities, environment protection activists claimed on Monday.

A private mining company, Vallex Group, sent the vast majority of its 1,200 employees working at the Teghut deposit on indefinite leave on January 12, citing the need for “planned prophylactic repairs.” Vallex announced on February 2 that it will lay them off due to what it expects to be a “prolonged stoppage” of mining and ore processing at Teghut. It claimed that it needs time to commission feasibility studies on its plans to significantly boost production there.

In the months leading up to the shutdown, Armenian environmentalists repeatedly reported toxic leaks from Teghut’s waste disposal reservoir contaminating a nearby river. Vallex denied those reports.

Rafael Afrikanian of the Union of Informed Citizens (UIC) said on Monday that he and other members of the Yerevan-based civic group traveled to Teghut shortly after the announcement of the mass layoffs. He said they witnessed and documented evidence of Vallex of dumping industrial waste into the Debed river through a pipe during the night hours.

Levon Galstian, who leads the non-governmental Armenian Ecological Front, claimed that the pipe was secretly laid seven months ago in breach of the Armenian government’s environmental regulations. He insisted that Vallex is not allowed to do that.

Artur Grigorian, another environmental activist, echoed the allegations, saying that his Ecological Right group has decided to sue Vallex.

Galstian also alleged that the Liechtenstein-registered company temporarily shut down the

mine to avoid a bigger environmental disaster. “The company stopped operations because the tailings dump could crumble at any moment,” he told a joint news conference with the other activists.

Vallex declined to immediately comment on these claims. A spokeswoman said the company would only respond to written inquiries.

RFE/RL’s Armenian service (Azatutun.am) already sent such a request for comment earlier this month. Responding to it, Vallex did not clearly explain whether the Teghut shutdown had to do with its tailings dump.

Meanwhile, the Armenian Ministry for Environment Protection said it cannot comment on the claims before inspecting the site. A ministry spokesman acknowledged that no environmental inspections have been conducted at Teghut ever since operations there began in late 2014.

Lena Nazarian, an opposition parliamentari-

an who also spoke at the news conference, said that she was not allowed to enter the site when she travelled to Teghut recently. “The lack of transparency in their activities raises many suspicions,” she said of Vallex.

It remains unclear when Vallex plans to reopen the mine. The Teghut operator said on February 2 that it will keep a skeleton staff of around 300 employees who will guard the site and look after its industrial equipment. It also said that 200 other laid-off workers will be transferred to other mining enterprises belonging to Vallex. Those include a copper smelter in the nearby town of Alaverdi and metal mines in Nagorno-Karabakh.

Teghut generated over 42 percent of Vallex’s total operating revenue which soared by about 32 percent to \$358 million last year. The mining group benefited from increased international prices of copper and other non-ferrous metals.



International News

Iran Ready to Increase Gas Exports to Armenia

YEREVAN (Public Radio of Armenia) — Iran is ready to increase the volume of gas supplied to Armenia, Iran's Energy Minister Reza Ardakanian said in Yerevan on February 27 during the 15th joint economic commission meeting between Iran and Armenia.

Asked whether the gas price could be lower than that offered by Russia, he said Iran's Petroleum Ministry and Armenia's Ministry of Energy will soon hold talks on the issue.

Ardakanian said he believes there is a lot of potential for the development of cooperation between the two countries not only in the energy sector, but also agriculture, tax and road communication, mining, etc.

According to him, the free economic zones, construction of the Iran Armenia 3rd third high-voltage power transmission line and the Meghri HPP will come to contribute to the development of trade between the two countries.

"We hope the negotiation between Iran and the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU) will produce good results in the future. I'm confident that Armenia's role and the friendly ties between our two countries will contribute to the development of relations with EAEU," Ardakanian stressed.

Armenia's Minister of Energy Infrastructures and Natural Resources Ashot Manukyan said he sees no obstacle for the development of cooperation between the two countries.

"To eliminate any obstacles, we opened the Meghri free economic zone on the territory of Armenia. There is also the Aras free economic zone operating on the Iranian territory. I'm confident the cooperation between these two zones will help overcome any legislative differences," he said.

Sevak Khanaghyan Will Go to Eurovision

YEREVAN (Public Radio of Armenia) — Sevak Khanaghyan, on February 26, won the right to represent Armenia at Eurovision song contest in Lisbon later this year. The winner decided by a combination of international experts jury and public votes. Sevak got the maximum 12 points from both the expert jury and the televote for his song *Qami*, written by himself, Anna Danielyan and Viktorya Maloyan.

Nalbandian: Armenia Implements National Plan for Human Rights Protection

YEREVAN (Armenpress) — Armenia continues to implement National Plan of Action for Human Rights Protection, the main objective of which is to formulate a unified policy document in the area of human rights protection. We have a good record of submissions of national and follow-up reports to the UN treaty bodies Foreign Minister of Armenia Edward Nalbandian announced in his speech at the High Level Segment of the 37th Session of the UN Human Rights Council.

"Armenia supports the Universal Periodic Review process and we are going to submit our UPR second midterm report on a voluntary basis. Our country is completing its transition to parliamentary system of governance. Throughout the whole process of transition including the Constitutional referendum, the subsequent amendments of the key laws in Armenia and the parliamentary elections were conducted in an inclusive manner, in close cooperation with our international partners and have demonstrated that the progress achieved in upholding fundamental freedoms is sustainable and irreversible", Nalbandian said, adding that Armenia will continue the reform process in the country also making use of the good offices provided by partners, including the United Nations.

"I would like to assure of Armenia's continued commitment for the further consolidation of democratic institutions, rule of law, strengthening of judiciary, good governance, which remain high among our priorities," Nalbandian concluded.

Dutch Parliament Members Targeted in Turkish Media

By Janene Pieters

AMSTERDAM (NL Times) — Turkish media sources are targeting five Dutch parliamentarians with a Turkish background, calling them traitors after the Tweede Kamer (lower chamber) officially recognized the Armenian Genocide. They've also received threats via social media, two of them confirmed to RTL Nieuws. Tweede Kamer president Khadija Arib called this "unacceptable."

Last week the lower house of Dutch parliament voted that the mass slaughter of thousands of Armenians during the reign of the Ottoman empire in 1915 should be recognized as a genocide. A large majority in the Kamer voted for this motion on Thursday.

On Saturday morning, the Turkish website En Son Haber opened the attack on five Dutch parliamentarians with Turkish backgrounds — Dilan Yesilgöz (VVD), Cem Lacin (SP), Sadet Karabulut (SP), Zihni Özdi (GroenLinks) and Nevin Özütoğ (GroenLinks). "The five Turks who have betrayed the motherland," the website reads, along with photos of the parliamentarians. Other Turkish news sites also published similar reports, according to RTL.

Since then, the parliamentarians have been facing threats and abuse on social media. "I am constantly receiving

reports of hate messages. There is a lot of scolding, I'm not going to translate that literally, there are also threats coming in," SP parliamentarian Lacin said to the broadcaster. GroenLinks parliamentarian Özdi confirmed this. "There are a lot of things coming in. The most creative verbal abuse, but also threats. I'm making screenshots of everything and I will report the most concrete threats," he said.

Neither of them will give in to this clear intimidation, they said. "I'm not going to keep my mouth shut. I'm a Dutch member of parliament and I'm proud of it. These reports are disgraceful, this is really demonization. The message is: you're of Turkish origin, so you can not think this. That is very bad, to say the least," Özdi said. Lacin added: "I find this a very bad thing. I was born and raised here. I'm simply a Dutch representative of the people."

Kamer president Khadija Arib called this frontal attack on Dutch parliamentarians and their voting behavior completely unacceptable. "Parliamentarians are elected representatives of the people who must be free to express their opinion," she said to Nieuwsuur. "Threatening or inciting threats in response to them expressing these opinions is unacceptable. It does not fit in a democracy and in an open and free society like ours."

The Tweede Kamer recognizing the

Armenian genocide has no effect on Dutch policy. The government will continue to refer to this mass murder as "the issue of the Armenian Genocide," Minister Sigrid Kaag of Foreign Affairs said last week. The government will, however, send a representative to the commemoration of the genocide in the Armenian capital of Yerevan in April.

The relationship between the Netherlands and Turkey has been extremely tense since the Netherlands refused to let Turkish Ministers enter the country to campaign for a referendum that gave Turkish president Recep Tayyip Erdogan more power. Turkey accused the Netherlands of Nazism, fascism, and mass murder in Srebrenica, and imposed a number of sanctions against our country. The Dutch government in turn did not congratulate Erdogan when he eventually won the referendum. Talks between the two countries on restoring the relationship recently collapsed, and the Dutch government officially recalled the Dutch ambassador to Ankara.

Last week the Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs also released a statement in response to the Kamer recognizing the Armenian genocide, here too referring to Srebrenica. The Ministry called the Kamer's decision to recognize the Armenian genocide inappropriate for a country "that looked the other way during the genocide in Srebrenica."

Czechs Release Syrian Kurdish Leader, Won't Extradite to Turkey

By Amberin Zaman

PRAGUE (Al-Monitor) — Syrian Kurdish leader Salih Muslim has been released from detention in Prague, leaving Turkey fuming.

A top Syrian Kurdish leader detained on Saturday, February 24, in the Czech capital Prague at Turkey's request was freed today, prompting angry reactions from Ankara.

In a statement, the Turkish Foreign Ministry asserted that Salih Muslim's release following a court hearing today displayed "the insincerity" of European countries in the fight against terrorism. Deputy Prime Minister Bekir Bozdag went further, claiming that freeing Muslim was a violation of international law and amounted to support for terrorism. Relations between the two NATO allies would suffer, he added.

According to Foreign Minister Mevlut Cavusoglu, Turkey sent a diplomatic note to the Czech Republic to protest the move and will continue to pursue the former co-chair of Syria's Democratic Union Party (PYD), counted among the most influential Kurdish political groupings in Syria, wherever he went. "For us, Salih Muslim is a terrorist. His release is a scandal." Turkey has demanded that Muslim, a Syrian national, be extradited to Turkey. There were unconfirmed reports Muslim will have to wait for at least another hearing pending Turkey's submission of evidence against him before he can leave the country.

Turkey insists that both the PYD and its armed wing the People's Protection Units (YPG), the US-led coalition's top ally in the fight against the Islamic State (IS) in Syria, are terrorist groups that threaten its national

security. On Jan. 20, Turkey launched a large-scale military operation against the YPG-controlled Afrin region and has vowed to eject the YPG from the long slab of territory it controls along the Turkish border. The accusations stem from the PYD and YPG's allegiance to Abdullah Ocalan, the imprisoned founder of the Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK), which has been fighting on and off for Kurdish self-rule inside Turkey since 1984.

Speaking to reporters following his release, Muslim said he was holding meetings in Europe to explain what was happening in Afrin. "They tried to silence us. They failed," he said.

Muslim was in Prague to speak at an international conference on regional security in the Middle East convened by the University of California's Center for Middle East Development and co-hosted by the Czech Republic, the Netherlands and the United States, The New York Times reported. Muslim was detained at the Marriott Hotel where he was staying a few hours after the conference ended.

In a February 22 interview with Al-Monitor, Muslim acknowledged that he had met Ocalan in Damascus before he was forced out of Syria in 1998 and makes no secret of his admiration for him. But the PYD and the YPG deny they are part of the PKK, saying Ocalan has inspired their thinking and nothing more. Although many PYD and YPG leaders were previously in the PKK, neither is listed as terrorist groups by either the United States and the European Union, paving the way for joint cooperation against IS.

For a while, Turkey was similarly pragmatic in its approach. Until 2015, when peace talks and a 2½-year ceasefire between Turkey and the PKK collapsed, Muslim used to meet with senior Turkish officials to discuss the PYD's

role in the Syrian opposition. He helped plan a joint operation to retrieve the remains of the grandfather of the founder of the Ottoman Empire from a shrine near the town of Kobani and relocate them to a new site near the Turkish border. At the time, around 1,000 YPG fighters wounded in the battle against IS were treated in state-run Turkish hospitals.

Turkey now claims that Muslim was involved in a March 2016 car bomb attack in the heart of Ankara that left at least 37 people dead and over a hundred wounded. The attack, which targeted police personnel, was said to have been carried out by PKK operatives who drove the bomb-laden car and perished in the blast. The Kurdistan Freedom Falcons, which is described in turn as a radical splinter faction of the PKK and its urban terror wing, claimed responsibility for the explosion. Muslim was added to the list of wanted suspects in the prosecution's indictment a year later. The precise nature of the allegations and evidence against him remain unclear, though the state-run Anadolu news agency reported charges against him include damaging public property and national unity, premeditated murder and transporting dangerous materials. Muslim said he had not traveled to Turkey since February 2015. Observers say Muslim's indictment is likely part of Turkey's broader effort to convince the United States and European countries to end their support for the YPG.

Muslim told Al-Monitor that he had offered to mediate between Turkey and the PKK when he still had contact with Turkish officials. "I told them I knew certain people [inside the PKK], we can go to Qandil." He said the offer to negotiate still stands, provided that Turkey halts its attacks on Afrin.



INTERNATIONAL

Ecumenical Altars of Remembrance in Berlin

ALTAR, from page 1

Placed between the first and second altars is a huge plaque with the names of these Christian communities, and the inscription: "Commemorate the victims of the Ottoman genocide 1912-1922." On the lateral wings of each of the Altars of Remembrance are 'icons of annihilation,' scenes from the genocide. The design of the memorial was inspired by the principle of Christian medieval sacral architecture: "Unity in diversity." And the cross, in its several variations, stands as the universal Christian symbol of hope and resurrection.

On the ground in front of the ecumenical memorial are stone plates, inscribed with the names of the main places of origin of the victims. Sixty-eight such stone plates are planned, seven of which have been completed and bear the names of Bitlis, Diyarbakir, Edirne, Nusaybin, Smyrna, Trabzon and Van.



House of the Armenians



House of the Aramaens

that she should have been among the founders; Hofmann is one of the earliest genocide researchers in Germany to have published scientific studies on the Armenian genocide. The author of numerous books and a professor, she has campaigned for genocide recognition, as chairwoman of the human rights organization, "Working Group Recognition – Against Genocide, for International Understanding" (AGA).

After looking into various possible sites and discussing the project with the relevant authorities, this location was chosen. In May 2012, the administration of the Protestant Luisenkirchhof III granted the FÖGG three former tombs for their permanent use and maintenance. Thanks to contributions of the state of Berlin (Land) and the German Foundation for Protection of Historical Monuments (Deutsche Stiftung Denkmalschutz), the altars were professionally restored. Financial donations by private persons made possible the transformation into a memorial.

Were there political difficulties in establishing such a memorial in Berlin? I could imagine protests emanating from Turkish quarters. They had tried to intervene, but too late. The FÖGG organizers were wise to operate in total discretion until the arrangement received official sanction from the authorities. They also took special care in formulating the name of the memorial, for example, in the designation "Ottoman genocide."

What Is the FÖGG?

The association that is responsible for building the memorial grew out of an idea born at a scientific conference at the Berlin

Technical University in 2002, on the theme of the genocide of Christians in the late Ottoman Empire. As explained on its web-site (<http://www.genozid-gedenkstaette.de>), an organizing committee called "Speak with one voice!" was founded, and in 2008 it embraced the idea of an ecumenical place of mourning in Germany's capital. The then-mayor of the district of Charlottenburg-Wilmersdorf, Monika Thiemen, lent her support, as did the Commemorative Plaque Commission of the same district. This reflects the historical ties of the Charlottenburg district to the communities involved; two Armenian communities of Berlin and one of the four Syrian orthodox communities have been located there for decades.

In November 2011, the founding members of the organizing committee joined with other representatives of the Armenian, Greek and Syrian Orthodox (Aramaen) communities to estab-



House of the Greeks

According to what communities lived there, the names are inscribed in Armenian, Greek and/or Aramaen. In the interstices between the larger plates are smaller, rounded stones, which may bear the name of an individual or family. Descendants of the survivors are contributing funds to honor their ancestors.

This memorial, the only one of its kind in the world, is intended to be an inclusive place for mourning, learning and reconciliation. A large, glass enclosed information board is to be erected along the pathway, to provide visitors with background information, texts and maps, on the genocide.

Tessa Hofmann has good reason to be proud of this memorial. It was largely through her efforts and those of her colleagues in the Förderverein für eine Ökumenischen Gedenkstätte für Genozidopfer im Osmanischen Reich (FÖGG) e.V. that the memorial came into being. And it is no accident

lish the FÖGG, which was officially recognized in early 2012 as a charitable association. Politically unaffiliated, the FÖGG is however engaged in human rights, especially the prevention of genocide. Its statute specifies that its aim is to promote art and culture, and the Luisenkirchhof memorial is its main project. The memorial site is to provide a place for members of these communities to gather for commemorations and requiem services. In fact, as Hofmann explained to me, every year such events take place: on April 24th for the Armenians, on June 15th for the Syrians and September 14th for the Greeks.

Now the FÖGG is raising funds for a virtual memorial site on the Internet, which is already under construction. It will provide documentation on the contribution Christian communities made to their local or regional culture, and how they were destroyed. For more information on the initiative and how to contribute, see <http://www.genozid-gedenkstaette.de>

The Parikian Collection: A New Treasure Made Public

By Hratch Tchilingirian

LONDON — Eton College formally launched the collection of some 650 volumes of rare early Armenian printed books from the 16th to 19th centuries, bequeathed to the school by renowned British-Armenian violinist Manoug Parikian (1920-1987).

The event at Eton on February 20, 2018 coincides with the 350th anniversary of the printing of the first Armenian Bible by Voskan Erevantsi in Amsterdam in 1666, a limited edition of which is included in the Parikian Collection, with an impressive binding designed by the pre-eminent 17th-century Dutch bookbinder Albert Magnus.

Although acquired in 1988, the collection was catalogued nearly 30 years later — by Dr. V. N. Nersessian, former Christian Middle

East Section curator at the British Library and with the support of the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation — and is now available for researchers.

Over the decades, with his wife Diana (Carbutt) (1927-2012), a well-known antiquarian bookseller and herself a musician, Manoug Parikian had assembled a valuable collection of early Armenian printed books. Upon his death in 1987, the collection was given to Eton College, where their two sons, Stepan and Levon, had been educated. It is said that London-born Diana, daughter of a chartered accountant, "always used the Armenian alphabet for the cost-coding of her books, something that may baffle the provenance detectives of the future but will stand as a hallmark of books of distinction in libraries the world over."

Manoug Parikian was born in Mersin, Cilicia (today Turkey) in 1920, but grew up in

Cyprus where the family escaped after WWI. He studied music in London at the Trinity College of Music (1936 to 1939) and made his solo debut in 1947 in Liverpool. He led a very successful career as a soloist in Britain and across Europe, the Middle East, Canada and the Soviet Union at the time. Parikian led the Liverpool Philharmonic (1947-48), London Philharmonia Orchestra (1949-57) and various other chamber orchestras. He also taught at the Royal College of Music (1954-1956) and at the Royal Academy of Music (since 1959), and is known for his many important recordings. As noted in his biography, Parikian "inspired many younger English composers to write major works for his instrument."

The Parikian Collection at Eton includes outstanding volumes "from the first half of the 17th century to 1850 and beyond," covering "the principal centres of Armenian

printing," explains Dr. Nersessian in his introduction. "Of particular interest is a small selection of 16th-century western publications, mostly in Latin, introducing the use of Armenian founts prior to the emergence of Armenian printing."

The launch at Eton College started with an exhibit of some of the rare books in the library, followed by a presentation on early Armenian printing by Dr. Gagik Stepan-Sarkissian. The celebration was crowned with a concert by the Chilingirian Quartet, led by Levon Chilingirian, Manoug Parikian's nephew.

Manoug Parikian's legacy certainly adds great scholarly and cultural value to the rich Armenian collections of manuscripts and rare printed books found in various British institutions, such as the British Library, Oxford, Cambridge, Durham universities and others.

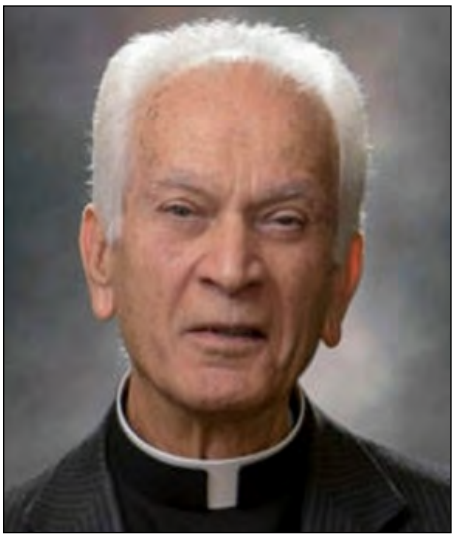


Community News

Catholicos of All Armenians to Celebrate 60th Anniversary of Ordination of Rev. Kouzouian

CAMBRIDGE, Mass. — On Friday, May 11, Holy Trinity Armenian Church of Greater Boston will welcome Karekin II, Supreme Patriarch and Catholicos of All Armenians, to Celebrate with Rev. Mampre A. Kouzouian the 60th anniversary of his ordination to the priesthood.

Under the auspices of Archbishop Khajag Barsamian, Primate of the Diocese of the Armenian Church of America (Eastern), this “Celebration of a Life of Service” will begin with the Hrashapar Service at 6 p.m., in the sanctuary, to Welcome the catholicos. All are invited to attend.



Rev. Mampre Kouzouian

The 60th anniversary celebration banquet will follow at 7:15 p.m. in the Charles and Nevart Talanian Cultural Hall.

Advance reservations will be required for the banquet. Further details will be announced.

Funds raised will support the children at the Muratsan Chemotherapy Clinic of Yerevan State Medical University and homeless individuals and families in the Echmiadzin area, under the auspices of the Mother See of Holy Echmiadzin and at the request of Kouzouian.

“This is indeed an historic event for our parish — honored to have the Catholicos of All Armenians in our presence and honored to have the opportunity to witness ‘A Life of Service’ as we celebrate our former pastor’s 60 years of faithful, dedicated service to the Armenian Church and her people,” said Rev. Vasken A. Kouzouian, pastor of Holy Trinity Church.



Catholicos of All Armenians Karekin II

A committee under the leadership of Rev. Vasken Kouzouian and Nancy Dorian Kasarjian, chair, is planning this auspicious occasion.

The catholicos will be visiting the United States to preside over the 50th anniversary celebration of St. Vartan Armenian Cathedral in New York City. That celebration will include a Concert of Sacred Music and historical photo exhibit on the evening of Saturday, May 5; and a Pontifical Divine Liturgy on Sunday, May 6 — all taking place at the Cathedral complex located at 630 Second Ave.

For information on St. Vartan Cathedral’s 50th anniversary celebration, log onto the website of the Eastern Diocese, www.armenianchurch.us.



Ambassador Zohrab Mnatsakanyan

Heroes of Artsakh Remembered

NEW YORK — The 30th anniversary of the birth of the Artsakh Movement

By Taleen Babayan

Special to the Mirror-Spectator

was marked in an educational and artistic manner on Thursday, February 22, at AGBU’s New York City headquarters, featuring the

meaningful portraits of Davit Hakobyan and special remarks by Ambassador Zohrab Mnatsakanyan, Permanent Representative of Armenia to the United Nations and Robert Avetisyan, Permanent Representative of Artsakh to the United States.

Prior to the speaking portion of the evening, guests had the opportunity to walk around the gallery and view Hakobyan’s photographs, which depict the heroic soldiers against the backdrop of the mountainous and picturesque land of Artsakh, and converse with the photographer, who was present at the event. Hakobyan, the official photographer of Armenia’s President Serzh Sargsyan, donated the proceeds of his sold portraits to the AGBU Fund for Artsakh, which supports rebuilding efforts, educational initiatives and construction projects in the Republic since its 1994 ceasefire with Azerbaijan.

In his remarks, Mnatsakanyan profoundly thanked Hakobyan for his images, which send powerful messages to the rest of the world, and emphasized the importance of “spreading the word about Artsakh.”

“This exhibition is about those young boys of Armenia who are defending our homeland and that is the biggest message of our confidence and capabilities,” said Mnatsakanyan.

Although Armenians as a Diaspora are “scattered all around the world,” Mnatsakanyan stressed that no Armenian is “indifferent” to their homeland.

“This is about all of us,” he continued. “Because if there is no Artsakh, then our entire identity is shattered.”

Mnatsakanyan expressed certainty in Armenia and Artsakh, despite its many setbacks and gave assurances for a bright future.

“This is a nation that has seen a lot of tragedy,” said Mnatsakanyan. “But this is a nation that has come out victorious because it stands very firm on its feet even in the face of obliteration.”

Recalling the ethnic cleansing of Armenians in Azerbaijan and Artsakh between 1991 and 1994, and how almost 40 percent of land had once been lost to the Azeris, he noted that Armenians overcame these obstacles and “the people of Artsakh won.”

In response to the four-day war in April 2016 when Azerbaijan broke the 1994 ceasefire, Mnatsakanyan said that it proved Artsakh is always ready to defend itself.

“I pay tribute to the 97 young boys we lost in those four days,” concluded Mnatsakanyan. “Those are not just statistics. They are 97 young men with names and families and loved ones. They have our respect and we bow our heads.”

Avetisyan gave a situational update on the current status of Artsakh, noting “although we are thousands of miles away from the front line we still feel responsibility.”

Providing a historical sketch of the Artsakh Movement, Avetisyan said the people of Artsakh attempted to assert their independence various times during

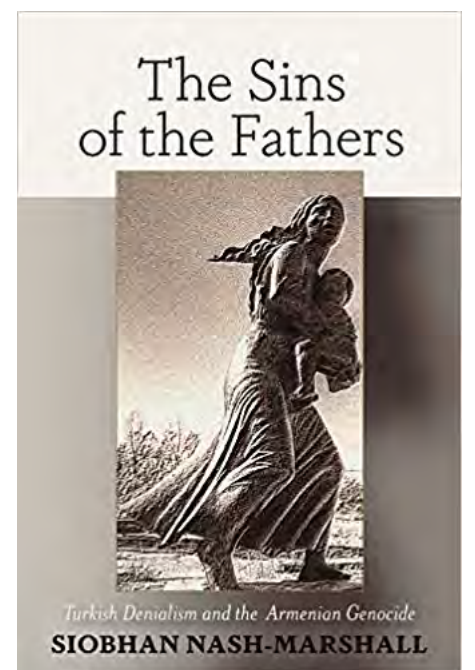
see ARTSAKH, page 7

Siobahn Nash-Marshall to Examine Turkish Denialism at NAASR Lecture

BELMONT, Mass. — Dr. Siobhan Nash-Marshall will present and discuss her new book titled *The Sins of the Fathers: Turkish Denialism and the Armenian Genocide* on Thursday, March 22, at 7:30 p.m. at the National Association for Armenian Studies and Research (NAASR) Center, 395 Concord Ave.

In 1915 the government of the Ottoman Empire began systematically to rip Western Armenians off the lands where their ancestors had lived since time immemorial. It ordered that Armenian men be murdered, and the Armenian women, children, and grandparents be deported into areas of Syria declared unfit for human life. Most of the Armenians who managed to survive the death march were slaughtered there. In *The Sins of the Fathers* — the first part in *The Betrayal of Philosophy trilogy* — Nash-Marshall connects the total disregard of fact and people, of lands and history that informed the Armenian Genocide and Turkish denial to what is today informing our world and culture.

Nash-Marshall holds the Mary T. Clark Chair



Dr. Siobhan Nash-Marshall

of Christian Philosophy at Manhattanville College. The author of many academic books and articles on metaphysics and the problem of evil, she also has written books and articles for the general public — *Joan of Arc: A Spiritual Biography* and *What It Takes to be Free: Religion and the Roots of Democracy*.

In recent years, Nash-Marshall has devoted a lot of attention to genocide and genocide negationism. *The Sins of the Fathers* is her first book-length treatment of the topic.

After the breakout of the war in Syria, Nash-Marshall and some friends founded the Christians In Need Foundation (CINF), through which they attempt to help the ancient Christian cultures of the world which are presently in peril.

Heroes of 30 Years Ago and Today Remembered

ARTSAKH, from page 6

the Soviet regime, but found a stronger voice during the tenure of Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev, who endorsed the policies of Glasnost and Perestroika, which called for more openness and political reform. The first rally of the Artsakh movement took place on February 13, 1988 in Stepanakert, the republic's capital and largest city.

Avetisyan remarked that Artsakh, which was placed under Azeri jurisdiction by Soviet leader Josef Stalin in the 1920s, legally appealed to the Soviet Union for unification with Armenia through papers and without picking up arms.

"This started as a legitimate legal movement for unification to transfer from Azerbaijan to Armenia," said Avetisyan. "But what started as a legal process became an armed military one."

Azerbaijan's response to this call for independence was to carry out pogroms targeting Armenians living in Azerbaijan, including in Sumgait, Baku and Kirovabad, from 1988 to 1991, with no international condemnation or response.

The fight for Artsakh's sovereignty coincided with the collapse of the Soviet Union and a national referendum for independence took place on December 10, 1991. The response, said Avetisyan, was "predictable and tragic."

A full-scale war broke out from 1991 through 1994 and the Armenians in Artsakh faced a humanitarian crisis because of blockades and military offenses by Azerbaijan and its supporters, including hired mercenaries, which still didn't lead to an Azeri victory.

"No matter how well you are armed, the motivation is a critical component and we always had advantage in that," said Avetisyan. "You cannot buy that."

A native of Stepanakert, Avetisyan elaborated on the violence he and his family witnessed during the war, seeking refuge in basements for months at a time.

With the creation of the Artsakh Defense Army in 1992 and vigilant determination, a ceasefire was signed in 1994, which ushered in a more peaceful period and rebuilding efforts to reconstruct the war-torn lands. Avetisyan credit-



A guest viewing Davit Haakbyan's photos in the gallery

ed much of the economic restoration and construction efforts to Diasporan organizations that helped "overcome an acute humanitarian crisis."

Avetisyan said he was "proud of our democratic and economic development" elaborating on free and transparent elections in Artsakh and the welcoming of NGOs, diplomats and think tanks to share in dialogue and feedback.

Although Artsakh is detached from the world economy, it is achieving economic success, particularly in agriculture along with the development of its energy sphere, including hydro power stations. Avetisyan also touched on recognition of the republic from multiple US states, including California, Massachusetts and Michigan, among others.

"It is all in our hands," said Avetisyan. "If we are weak, we will be digested. If we are strong, no one will dare to attack Artsakh or Armenia."

"Artsakh is forever Armenian," concluded

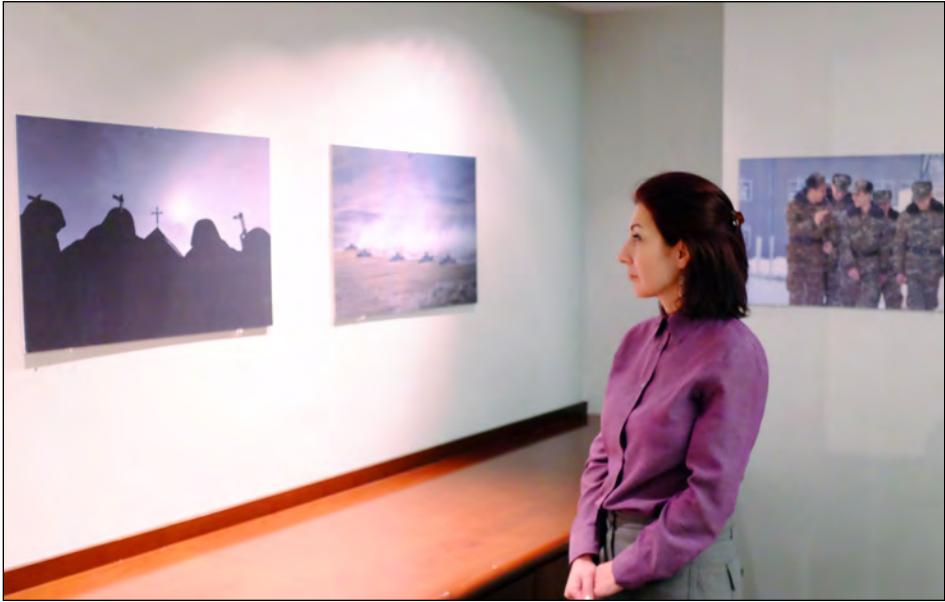
Avetisyan. "We need to stick together and show we're strong in order to make our voices heard."

Reflecting on the event, Hakobyan said guests felt "inspired" and appreciated the opportunity to view the portraits.

"Through these photos I wish to portray our army, which was an important realization of the Artsakh Liberation Movement," said Hakobyan. "I want to show the daily life and the wonderful people who serve in the army and the spirited atmosphere that prevails there."



Artsakh Representative to the US Robert Avetisyan speaking to a guest before his remarks



A guest viewing Davit Haakbyan's photos in the gallery

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COMMUNITY NEWS

Arslan Seraydarian Celebrates Turning 100

Survivor of Armenian Genocide

BROOMALL, Penn. — The family and friends of Arslan Seraydarian celebrated his 100th birthday on Saturday, February 17, at the Restaurant School at Walnut Hill College in Philadelphia.

The evening was filled with historic and heartwarming recollections of a life of perseverance, resilience and faith and with festive Armenian and American music, dance and cuisine. It was a fitting tribute to a survivor of the Armenian Genocide, a decorated World War II veteran, an accomplished professional, and a treasured family member and friend.

A man whose life has epitomized the American dream, Arslan Seraydarian was born in Yozgat, Turkey, on February 16, 1918. He and some of his family members escaped the Armenian Genocide, while many other relatives perished at the hands of the Ottoman Turks.

Arriving in the US in 1923, he was forced to drop out of school in the eighth grade to help support his family during the Great Depression.

Serving in the army in the European theater of World War II from 1939-1945, he endured 10 months of fierce combat in which he and his fellow soldiers were forced to use dead animals for shelter. He fought in the Battle of the Bulge, earning three Bronze Stars and recently the French Legion of Honor medal for helping liberate France.

After the war, Seraydarian was able to complete high school, attend college and eventually earned a master's degree. He enjoyed a long and productive career as an aero-



Arslan Seraydarian, his wife Gladys, his son Donald and his daughter Carol.

space engineer and teacher.

He has been married to his beloved wife, Gladys, for 72 years, and has two children, Donald (Maureen) and Carol;

three grandchildren, Jason, Scott (Cori) and Robert (deceased); and four great-grandchildren, Lily, Ben, Gigi and Bella.

Killing Orders Lays Bare Orders for Armenian Annihilation

AKÇAM, from page 1

Scholars have long established that indeed the killings were ordered by the central government but this new piece of evidence corroborates it beyond proof using original source material from the Ottoman Archives.

"The main argument I bring in the book destroys the classic denialist argument which is that there was no killing orders," he explained in an interview this week from his office at Clark University, where he is a professor of history and holds the Robert Aram, Marianne Kaloosdian and Stephen and Marian Mugar Chair in Armenian Genocide Studies at the Strassler Center for Holocaust and Genocide Studies. They say "the Ottoman government never meant to exterminate the population and that there is no record of it."

Akçam said that he used two sets of documents to show the genocidal intent of the Ottoman government. One was material from the Istanbul Tribunal and the second was from the Aram Andonian collection.

In 2015, Akçam turned his attention to the documents collected by the Very Rev. Krikor Guerguerian, a Catholic priest who was born in 1911 in Turkey and survived the Genocide. In the years after the Genocide, Guerguerian scoured through the archives of the Istanbul and Jerusalem Patriarchates and found a lot of proof regarding the intentions of the Turkish authorities, including those from the Military Tribunals. His archives containing thousands of documents were preserved by his nephew, Edmund.

Regarding the documents related to Military Tribunals, which were held between 1919-1921 in Istanbul, "[Denialists] always said 'Show us the originals, the indictment and verdict,'" Akçam said. In general, these documents were cited in the verdicts and the indictments however, the original telegrams, affidavits, testimonies and the proceedings of the court are lost. Until now, nobody knows where about of these materials.

"Now in my book there are very two important central telegrams from the tribunal," he said, one an open killing order of Bahaettin Shakir the head of Teskilat-i Mahsusa and then the order of Army Commander Mahmut Kamil Pasha.

The second set of documents were known as Naim-Andonian Materials. Aram Andonian, an Istanbul-born French-Armenian journalist wrote a book based on these materials in Armenian,

called *Medz Yegern*, translated into English with the title *The Memoirs of Naim Bey*. Andonian himself was among the Armenians arrested on April 24, 1915. He survived his ordeal, lived for a while in Aleppo where he received the "memoirs" of Naim Efendi which contained hand-written copies of 52 telegrams. Andonian received the originals of 18 of these 52 documents. He eventually moved to France, where he later headed the Armenian General Benevolent Union's Nubarian Library. Naim Efendi's memoir as well as some original telegrams that he gave to Andonian, contained the killing orders of Interior Minister Talat Pasha.

"The Turkish government's argument was that these documents were all fake," Akçam said.

A book published in 1983, produced by the Turkish Historical Society, specifically took on those documents used by Andonian and so convincingly argued that those were fakes, that many Genocide scholars steered clear of them.

According to Akçam, three arguments were used to discredit the documents that Andonian had collected and published as *The Memoirs of Naim Bey*. The first was that a person called Naim Bey did not exist. It followed thus that if such a person did not exist he could not write his memoirs and finally that the telegrams were fakes because there were inconsistencies in the Governor of Aleppo's signatures, dates of documents and the coding system.

His book's English-language edition, Akçam added, tackles the signatures and dates aspect of the question which was not discussed in the Turkish version, with his discovery that indeed, the Governor of Aleppo used at least five different signatures when he occupied different offices.

"Until my book there was no evidence found to prove the existence of Naim Bay," he said. Evidence from the Ottoman archives showed that in fact, "he existed and that the memoir was authentic I showed that the telegram published by Andonian was authentic," Akçam said.

But will this new evidence change minds at the top levels of the Turkish government?

"It is a major blow to Turkish denialist arguments. However, denialism has nothing to do with facts and the truth," he noted while adding "The Turkish government will continue to deny the Genocide. They have to find new ways."

One other idea investigated in the book is that the cover-up for the Genocide started

almost as soon as the orders for the Genocide were issued. Akçam cited the case of Krikor Zohrab, one of the most famous victims of the Armenian Genocide. Zohrab, an influential writer and member of Parliament, was arrested in June 1915 in Istanbul and executed in July of the same year in Urfa by the authorities. "When Zohrab was killed in July an internal doctor report suggest that he died of a heart attack. The priest in Urfa confirmed that Zohrab died from health-related issues," he said.

The assassin of Zohrab, Cerkez Ahmed, himself became a real problem when he started bragging about his deed, and therefore he himself was hanged.

"Denialism is not denial of facts but creating their own facts," Akçam explained.

Akçam found a treasure trove of documents which had been put in the Ottoman archives after 2012.

"Why did they put them in the archive? I think it was human error," he said. Among the documents they put in the archives were those with two- and three-digit codes, which only in 1983 they published a book denying their existence

"I check the archives regularly as a historian and talk with people," he said. "We knew that after 2012 new materials were put there and decided to work on the Guerguerian and Andonian materials.

The perpetrators' documents are crucial to explaining the actions, he said. "The victim testimonies are as important as the perpetrator materials. Until recently scholarship was not used in analyzing the perpetrator materials." Last decade, there is a growing scholarship, young scholars from Turkey or elsewhere are working with these Ottoman materials.

The Guerguerian material has been known and around for decades. However, they were never catalogued. The Armenian Assembly of America has one set of the documents and because they were not catalogued, it was not possible to look through them in a quick period of time. It was only through the help of Guerguerian's nephew that Akçam was able to have the material scanned and catalogued by students.

He plans to put the catalogued Guerguerian documents online once the work is finished by his students.

Killing Orders was originally published in Turkish, but received "total silence" in Turkey. "It is the usual reaction of the government and the denialists." In addition, with the current

atmosphere of media intimidation, there was not much coverage about it besides some progressive Internet news portals.

He added, however, that changes to the Turkish narrative will not be immediate.

"I don't know whether the book will have an immediate impact on politics in the short term," he said.

For many years, the general public in Turkey has gotten more and more informed about the history of the Armenian Genocide. Now, however, "My fear is this development has been reversed now," he noted. "There is no free media, press, almost no freedom of speech and there is an authoritarian regime."

In addition, he noted, the war on the border with Syria is boosting the jingoistic spirit among the population and taking up more of the attention, therefore the issue of the Armenian Genocide has vanished from the public dialogue.

"They are even arresting people calling for peace in social media," he said.

He urged that the Armenian community pay homage to both Guerguerian and Andonian, to recognize them as "pillars of Armenian Genocide research."

"My call to the Armenian community is to recognize and honor these two individuals. They were monumental in the field of Genocide research. I am basically reintroducing the work they did," Akçam said.

He has written several books on the Armenian Genocide, including *The Spirit of the Laws: The Plunder of Wealth in the Armenian Genocide* with Umit Kurt and translated by Aram Arkun, New York and Oxford, 2015; *'Young Turks' Crime Against Humanity: The Armenian Genocide and Ethnic Cleansing in the Ottoman Empire*, Princeton University Press, 2012; *Judgment at Istanbul: The Armenian Genocide Trials*, with Vahakn Dadrian, Berghahn Books, New York 2011, *From Empire to Republic: Turkish Nationalism and the Armenian Genocide*, Zed Books, 2004, and *A Shameful Act: Armenian Genocide and the Question of Turkish Responsibility*, New York: Metropolitan Books, November 2006.

Akçam is planning to tour in support of the book.

The book, which is dedicated to Hrant Dink, the assassinated editor of *Agos*, is available on Amazon.

The *Armenian Mirror-Spectator's* Aram Arkun contributed to the book.



COMMUNITY NEWS

Waiting for Cornea Transplants in Armenia

NEWPORT BEACH, Calif. and YEREVAN – A little over one year ago, the medical community in Armenia began to see a major increase in corneal disease and the number of Armenians requiring transplants to regain their eyesight.

Sadly, the majority of these Armenians – more than 100 on the waiting list for corneal transplants – were blind or their sight was severely impaired because they could not afford the cost of the transplant surgery – \$800.

By American standards, \$800 is a small sum to regain your sight, but accessibility – financially and geographically – of eye care in Armenia is extremely limited and disproportionately affects the poor and those living in remote regions.

Just four towns outside of Yerevan provide secondary and advanced eye care. Most surgeries are available only in the capital. There are more than 300 ophthalmologists in Armenia, yet only one-third of them practice throughout the regions. This is just the opposite of the population distribution in Armenia where one-third of the three million people live in Yerevan and two thirds live in the outlying regions. As well, only a few ophthalmologists in Armenia are surgically trained and none perform corneal transplants. This means patients must travel to Yerevan for the procedure.

To compound the situation, only 30 percent of those who require corneal transplants are eligible for government assistance when a cornea becomes available. Because these people are unable to afford the cost of the transplant or the travel expenses to the capital, they receive no care and remain blind or severely sight-impaired.

The Armenian EyeCare Project is not permitted by the government to provide surgery for those who do not fall within the government's poverty guidelines and as a consequence many are left blind. "We have almost everything needed to provide patients with maximum care," said Dr. Anna Hovakimyan,

who performs the cornea transplants at the Corneal Uveitis Clinic in the Malayan Ophthalmological Center in Yerevan. "We have the knowledge and all the capabilities to help



Dr. Anna Hovakimyan, the former AECP Fellow who performs the cornea transplants at the Malayan Ophthalmological Center in Yerevan.

these people." Yet, while the desire and the ability to help these Armenians are there, patients need donors to sponsor their surgeries.

This is why the Armenian EyeCare Project has established a Corneal Transplant Program, asking donors to sponsor transplants for those who are on the waiting list in Armenia – a cost of \$800 for one procedure.

The organization has been fortunate to partner with two tissue banks – SightLife and the Eye-Bank for Sight Restoration – the latter thanks to Paul Kayaian, an AECP donor who is on the board of directors at the Eye-Bank. The tissue banks have generously agreed to donate corneas on an ongoing basis, which ensures that a lack of corneas will never be the cause

of blindness for those in need of a transplant in Armenia.

Since the EyeCare Project began its Cornea Transplant Program in 2016, more than 70 patients in Armenia have received corneal transplants thanks to donors. Nargiz Keleshyan, 25, had two small children at home while she waited for her transplant. "I have to solve my vision problem as soon as possible because my family needs my support and care," said Keleshyan before her surgery.

The young mother needed a cornea transplant but could not afford one. Fortunately, she received an early Christmas present and a donor sponsored her transplant last December. "I feel a huge difference. My vision is back!" she said excitedly. "I can't thank my donor enough for her good will and generosity."

Many are still on the waiting list for their opportunity for restored vision and a better life.

"My biggest fear is to become blind," said Armine Grigoryan, 37, holding back tears. The young woman from Hrazdan has had vision problems for most of her adult life and has lost nearly all sight in her left eye. She tries to stay positive, using her right eye to perform tasks at work, but recently her right eye has become blurred as well.

Recently, during a consultation with Hovakimyan, Grigoryan received devastating news. If she did not receive a cornea transplant soon she would go blind. "Dr. Hovakimyan recommended a corneal transplant, a procedure I cannot afford. However, she told me about the EyeCare Project program," she added. "To say that I was happy to learn about this organization is an understatement. I was so excited to know that kind people would help me restore my vision. I really hope that with the Project's assistance I will be able to prevent my blindness and continue to live a life full of color."

Grigoryan continues to wait for a sponsor so she can receive the cornea transplant surgery

she so badly needs. To sponsor a cornea transplant for her or other Armenians on the waiting list, mail a check to the EyeCare Project at P.O. Box 5630, Newport Beach, CA 92662 or visit www.eyecareproject.com/product/corneal-transplant-surgery.

The EyeCare Project will send information on the patient sponsored in Armenia once their



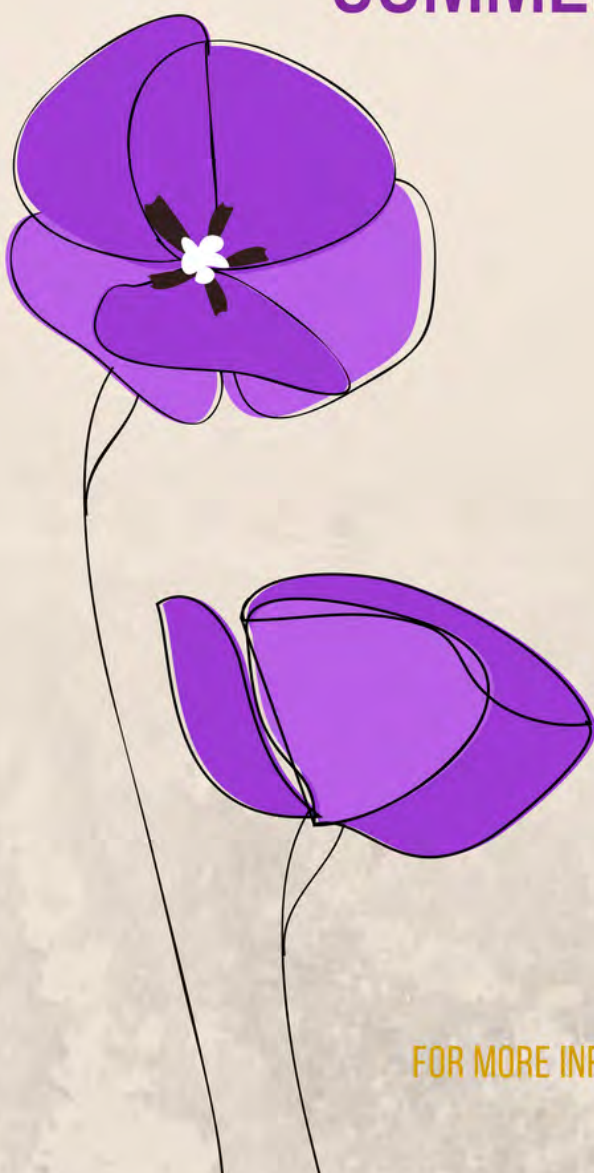
Nargiz Keleshyan, here with her two-year-old daughter, received a cornea transplant last December thanks to a donor.



Armine Grigoryan still awaits cornea transplant surgery.

cornea transplant is complete. And for stories of patients who have already received corneal transplants in Armenia, visit the EyeCare Project's website at www.eyecareproject.com.

103RD ARMENIAN GENOCIDE COMMEMORATIVE WEEKEND



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Couples Night Aim for Fun, Communication and Romance

WATERTOWN – Who said marriage cannot be exciting?

Daily routines can take a toll on marriages. It turns out many others were thinking the same thing, but there was no such thing as Armenian Couples Night.

Some community leaders including clergy and parishioners got together and through brainstorming sessions, created the first ever Armenian Couples Night. This will be an entertaining and inspiring dialogue between two renowned speakers over a buffet dinner on April 13, at the Crowne Plaza in Natick, starting at 6:30 p.m.

The cost is \$100 for a couple. RSVP by April 5 and send checks payable to the Armenian Memorial Church (AMC), c/o Rev. Dr. Avedis Boynerian at 159 White Street, Belmont, MA 02478. Please indicate "Couples" on the memo line of the check.

The highlight of the evening is to socialize with other couples and hear from Doctors Paul and Virginia Friesen about how couples can build stronger marriages through their differences. Together, they have written 10 books on parenting and marriage, and have been keynote speakers at gatherings across the US and abroad. They will speak about the sacred marriage and the power of the vows we have taken when we said "I do." Marriage is a constant work in progress, and any married couple can attest to that. We are thirsty to learn about ways in which we can enrich our lives as a couple and as a family, and still keep their own identities and pursue their personal dreams.

The Crowne Plaza Boston-Natick hotel is also offering a special rate of \$139 per couple for anyone wishing to stay overnight. Call and make reservations at the hotel by March 14.

For more information and to make reservations, please contact Rev. Dr. Avedis Boynerian at badveli@armenianmemorialchurch.com or Yn. LuAnn Sabounjian at Isabounjian@gmail.com.



COMMUNITY NEWS

‘The Last Inhabitant’ Celebrated in Boston

BOSTON – The Boston premiere of the film “The Last Inhabitant” was presented by the Armenian Business Network (ABN) and the Fish Eye Art and Cultural Foundation. The premiere was held on Saturday, February 17, at the St. James Armenian Church’s Charles Mosesian Cultural Hall. About 135 people attended. The event was followed by a private dinner at Annoush’ella in Boston, honoring the film Director Jivan Avetisyan. The event was organized and hosted by George Haroutiounian and actress Naira Zakaryan, with the assistance of a few other volunteers and supporters. The premiere was a fundraiser for Avetisyan’s upcoming film “Gates to Heaven.”



From left, Jack Antounian, George Haroutiounian, Naira Zakaryan and Jivan Avetisyan



Jivan Avetisyan and Nara Zakaryan



From left, Naira Balagyozyan, Jivan Avetisyan, Vladimir Arustamyan, Susana Arustamyan



From left, Ruzanna Krikorian, Naira Balagyozyan, Naira Zakaryan, Jivan Avetisyan, Vladimir Arustamyan, Susana Arustamyan



From left, Raffi Festekjian, Kevork Boyadjian and other supporters at Anoush e'lla.



Guests and audience members at the film premiere

COMMUNITY NEWS



The members of the clergy who participated in the Midwest Lenten Retreat

Clergy Gather for Midwest Lenten Retreat

CHICAGO – This year’s Midwest Lenten Retreat, held at the Cardinal Stritch Retreat House in Mundelein, IL, took place February 12-14 with the participation of 15 clergymen from the Eastern Diocese of the Armenian Church of America.

The retreat gathered pastors of the Chicago, Dallas, Detroit, Charlotte, Cleveland, Evanston, Greenfield, Palos Heights, Racine, Richmond, St. Petersburg, and Twin Cities parishes, along with Diocesan staffer Very Rev. Daniel Findikyan and the retired Fr. Yeprem Kelegian. The retreat was overseen by Diocesan Vicar Fr. Simeon Odabashian.

Their theme was based on the Scriptural injunction, “Come to me, all that are weary and heavily burdened.” Four active discussion segments, focused on “Clergy as Wounded Healers,”

were masterfully led by Fr. Dennis Spies, S.T.L, a priest of the Catholic Diocese of Joliet and Associate Dean of Formation at Mundelein Seminary.

Among his many profitable insights offered, Fr. Spies emphasized that the opposite of addiction is not sobriety, but rather connectedness. The point was valuable in light of the Eastern Diocese’s recent focus on the opioid crisis and addiction in general.

The Intimacy of Communion

The presentation also affirmed that one of the main roles of a priest is to invite people to intimacy in Christ. In the Armenian Church we identify this intimacy with “communion” in its fullest sense: personal, ecclesial, and sacramental.

Each morning and evening the assembled clergy prayed the daily offices of Sunrise, Peace and Rest, concluding each with reflections and periods of silent meditation.

Since the last day of the retreat was February 14, the solemn observance of the Feast of Jesus’ Presentation to the Temple, Odabashian celebrated the holy badarak.

He invited all to reflect on the intimacy which the biblical figure Simeon the Elder experienced holding in his arms the 40-day-old baby Jesus, who is the eternal Word of God and Savior of the universe. Because of that intimacy every believer can say with the elder Simeon: “Lord, let your servant depart in peace, according to your word; for my eyes have seen your salvation, which you have prepared for all peoples” (Lk 2:29,30).


Holy Trinity Armenian Church sponsors

A BOOK PRESENTATION BY ADRIENNE G. ALEXANIAN, EDITOR OF

Forced into Genocide

Memoirs of an Armenian Soldier in the Ottoman Turkish Army

INTRODUCTION BY Sergio La Porta | FOREWORD BY Israel W. Charny | TRANSACTION BOOKS 2017




"Yervant's story is an inescapable part of understanding another kind of suffering: the suffering of survivors."
DR. TANER AKÇAM

"Moving, uplifting, and richly detailed ... a gift to the Armenian community and, indeed, humanity."
DR. VARTAN GREGORIAN

"Yervant Alexanian ... tells us the forgotten story of Armenians who served in the World War I Ottoman Army."
ERIC BOGOSIAN

"Unforgettable.... His story is long overdue."
ANDREW GOLDBERG



FORCED INTO GENOCIDE is the riveting memoir of Yervant Edward Alexanian: an eye-witness to the massacre and dislocation of his family and countrymen in Ottoman Turkey during World War I. Incredibly, Alexanian experienced the Armenian Genocide as a conscript in the Turkish army. His memoir is a one-of-a-kind "insider's account," documenting the Genocide's astonishing cruelty—but also its rare, unexpected acts of humanity.

No comparable account exists in the literature of the Armenian Genocide. This edition, translated from Alexanian's hand-written chronicle, includes rare documents and photos that the author preserved, a scholarly introduction, translator's note, and other supportive matter.

About the author and editor of *Forced into Genocide*:
Born in Sivas, Turkey, **YERVANT ALEXANIAN** survived the Hamidian massacres as an infant to later fight for survival as a conscript in the Ottoman Turkish Army during the Armenian Genocide of 1915. He fled to America in 1920, where he spent his life advocating justice for his people.

ADRIENNE G. ALEXANIAN, Yervant's daughter, has spent years preparing her father's manuscript for publication. She is an educator and a 2010 recipient of the Ellis Island Medal of Honor.

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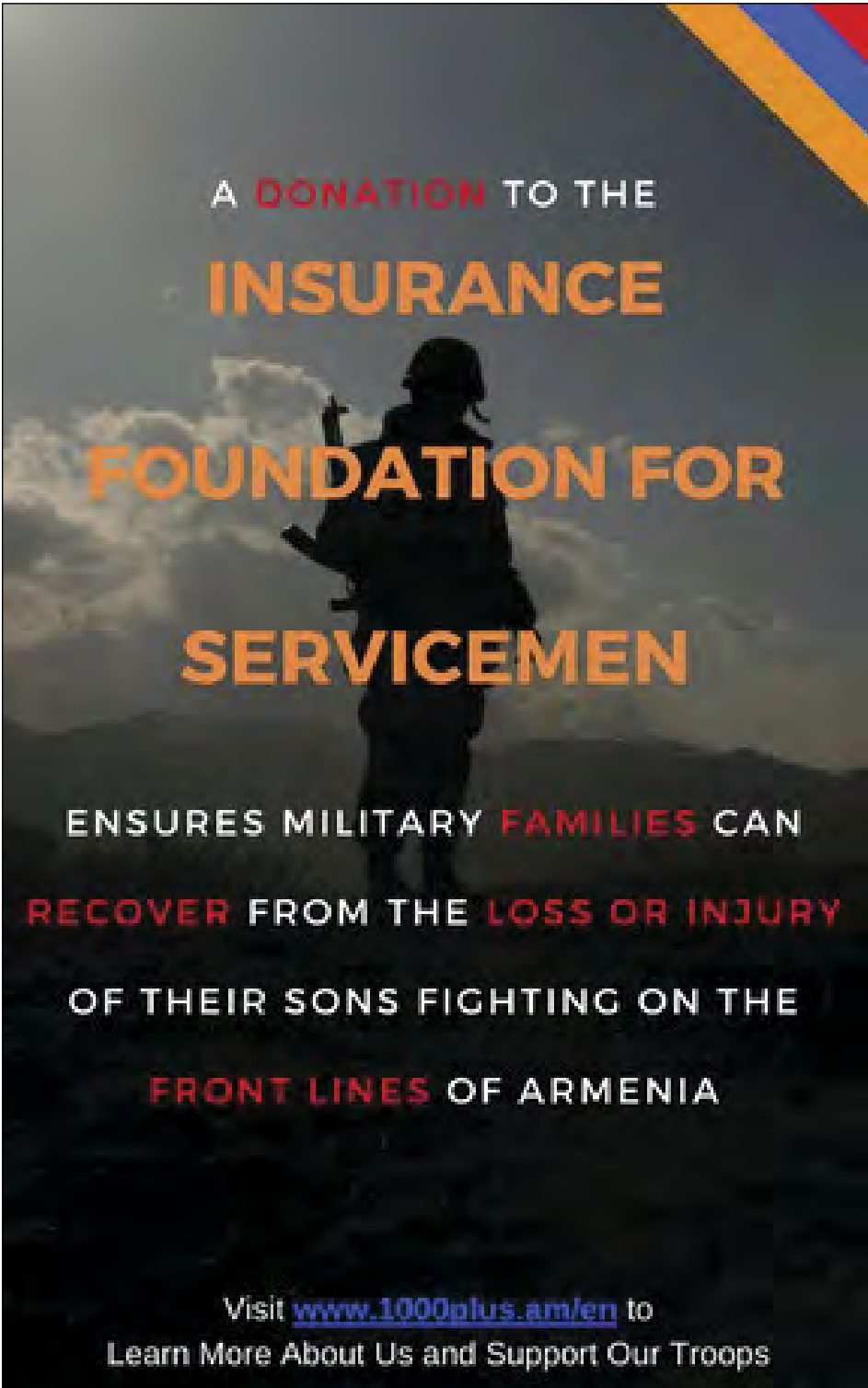
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Illustrated History of the Armenians in America Published by Hayk Demoyan

By Aram Arkun
Mirror-Spectator Staff

WATERTOWN – Dr. Hayk Demoyan, a visiting Fulbright Scholar at Harvard University who is director of the Armenian Genocide Museum-Institute, has completed a new volume titled the *Armenian Legacy in America: A 400-Year Heritage*. This 620-page work, dedicated to the 400th anniversary of the arrival of “Martin the Armenian,” the first Armenian known to have reached America, is in some ways a coffee table book. It presents the history of the Armenian-American community through over 2,200 primarily previously unknown illustrations, comprised of rare documents, photos and artifacts. A handful of these illustrations accompany this present article.

Demoyan became interested in the Armenian-American community when studying American involvement in humanitarian relief during and after the Armenian Genocide. As director of the Armenian Genocide Museum-Institute, he came to Boston and Los Angeles to give some lectures and

Initially Demoyan intended to create a small exhibition with a catalogue with perhaps 50 documents, artifacts and photographs, but during the fieldwork to collect materials over the past two years, Demoyan discovered, he said, that there was much still unknown to historians, and very few people are familiar with the visual materials, artifacts and data he found.

Consequently, he decided to make the project more extensive. Each artifact he discovered or bought (out of his personal funds) is a carrier of information. Demoyan said, “I realize that studying Armenian-American history is like working in a big archaeological field where you can always dig and find new artifacts.”

The structure of the book was already prepared when Demoyan came to the US for his Harvard stay, and after enriching it further he submitted it in December to the press. The book is in five parts.

The first part contains visual data and information on the life of the early Armenians in the United States from 1618 to the beginning of the 1900s. It includes the mapping of America in early Armenian-language maps, the first printing of Armenian books and newspapers, American missionaries

publishing Armenian-language works and religious literature, Armenians in the Civil War and the Mexican-American War, and information on the lives of the early immigrants. The first Armenian-run businesses and many other “the first” stories are covered in this section.

The second part shows all aspects of the life of the community between peace and war, from the beginning of the twentieth century to World War II. Photographers, rug merchants, artists, drama, music, sports, libraries, political life and much more are highlighted.

In the third part, the American as well as the Armenian-American response to genocide are presented, including fundraising efforts, tick-

ets, posters, and orphan care, and even how American presidents and candidates were involved.

The fourth part, on Armenian-American service and contributions, shows how the second and third generation of Armenians served their new American homeland in the US army during wartime, as well as Armenian-American life in the 1950s to 1980s.

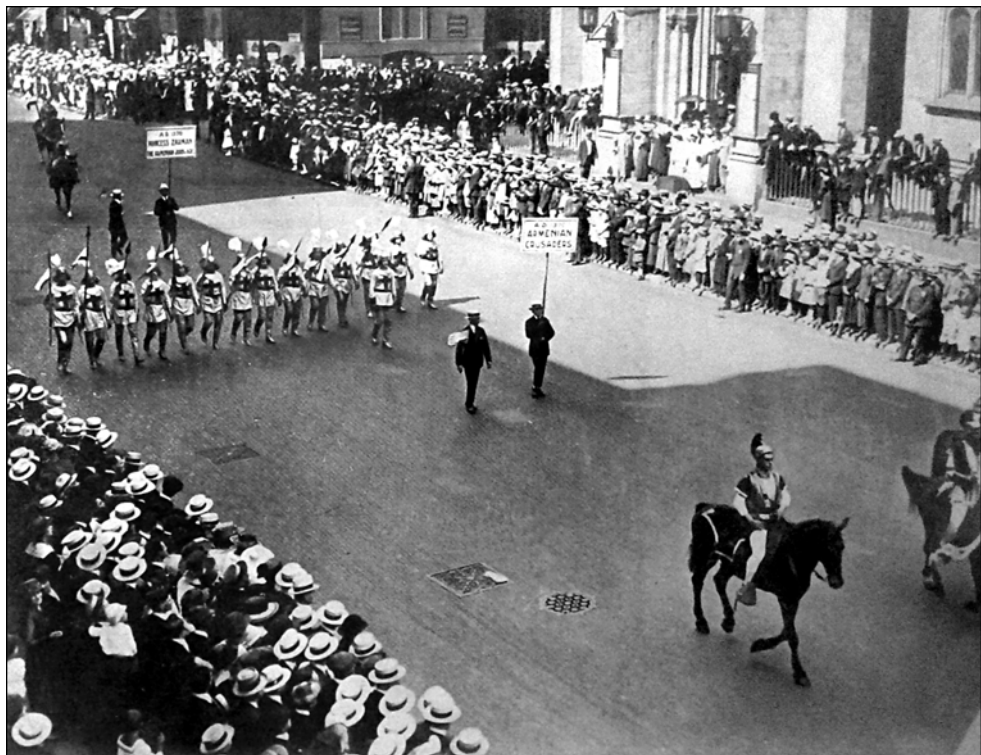
The fifth part, titled *Those Who Give America an Armenian Accent*, includes information on artists, musicians, historians, noted businessmen and women, and many others.

The book’s chronological endpoint is in the early 1990s after the Republic of Armenia declared its independence. The first Armenian president visited the US, Armenia opened its embassy here, and the American University of Armenia opened in Yerevan. This ends the story, and heralds the beginning of relations between two countries.

Among the fascinating bits of information Demoyan presents in his book is the story of Agha Babigian from New Julfa, the first Armenian who came to California. A storm led the Dutch ship on which this merchant was traveling from Singapore to Holland to be diverted off its course to California in 1768. In other words, this year is also the 250th anniversary of the appearance of the first Armenian on the West Coast.



Metal mesh handbag made by the Mandalian company dating from the 1920s and '30s. The company was established by Saghately Mandalian in North Attleboro, Massachusetts (Collection of Hayk Demoyan)

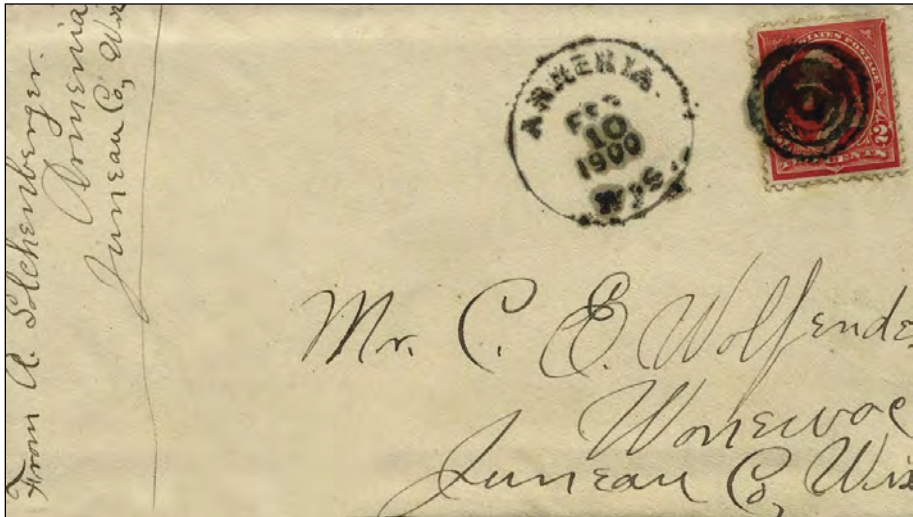


Armenian Crusaders marching in New York July 4 parade, 1918 (printed in Gochnag, 1918)

pointed out the importance of this anniversary of Martin the Armenian, who came to Virginia in 1618. He said this was an opportunity to reexamine the creation of this community and its future, and see if its story can also contribute to understanding the American mosaic. In other words, his work will help the Armenian Americans understand their own history, while also demonstrating to Americans and American studies that Armenians are not an isolated ghetto community but a part of broader American history with their own valuable contributions.



Toy car designed like Dereilian’s rug cleaning company advertisement, circa 1930 (Collection of Hayk Demoyan)



Unique cover from Wisconsin ‘Armenia town’ stamp cancellation dated to 1900 (Collection of Hayk Demoyan)

Armenian-American community. Demoyan will be one of the speakers. Part of his collection will be displayed alongside material from the Ararat-Eskijian Museum. For more information, see <https://www.facebook.com/events/885572288270889/>

On May 6, a similar exhibition and talk will take place at the Armenian Cultural Foundation in Arlington, Mass., cosponsored by the Amaras Art Alliance and National Association for Armenian Studies and Research.

Arts & Living

Knights and Daughters Of Vartan Pay Tribute To Musical Talents of Arzruni, Kalfayan

NEW YORK – The Knights and Daughters of Vartan will host a tribute banquet to honor Sahan Arzruni and Kris Kalfayan for their musical contributions to the Armenian community on Friday, May 18, under the auspices of Archbishop Khajag Barsamian at the Haik and Alice Kavookjian Auditorium.

Organized by the Knights and Daughters of Vartan Mamigonian Lodge and the Ani Otyag, the net proceeds of the banquet will benefit scholarship programs at the American University of Armenia.

Lifelong and active participants in Armenian music in the New York metro area and abroad, both Arzruni and Kalfayan have been immersed in the Armenian musical tradition since childhood. Throughout their decades of dedication, they have enriched the Armenian culture through their deep knowledge and generous contributions of their time and efforts.

“We are honoring Sahan Arzruni and Kris Kalfayan for their service to our community,” said Chairman Hrant Gulian. “It’s important to



Sahan Arzruni



Kris Kalfayan

recognize and pay tribute to their commitment to the Armenian Church and culture.”

Pianist, recitalist and chamber music artist, Arzruni has toured in concert around the world and has been featured in broadcasting specials. Motivated by ethnic awareness in the United States, Arzruni has continuously researched the musical roots of his Armenian heritage, recording anthologies of Armenian piano music and delivering academic papers for venerable universities. He has received the Sts. Sahak and Mesrob Medal in 1996 from Catholicos of All Armenians Karekin II and in 2016 was awarded the Movses Khorenatsi presidential medal for promoting the cultural ties between Armenia and the Diaspora. Arzruni, who holds degrees from the Juilliard School and has pursued

TRIBUTE, from page 14



Sirusho

Singer Sirusho to Perform in Boston for First Time with Sayat Nova Dance Company

BOSTON – Over the past 31 years, Sayat Nova Dance Company of Boston (SNDC) has performed with many talented artists such as Nune Yesayan, Arabo Ispiryan, Alla Levonyan, Hovhannes Shahbazyan, and Ruben Sasunci. On March 23, SNDC will add to this list when it shares the stage with world-renowned Armenian singer and songwriter Sirusho.

This will mark her first appearance in the New England area.

A World Music Awards Nominee, Sirusho is known for combining Armenian traditional instruments with modern compositions. On October 28, 2016, Sirusho released her fifth studio album titled “Armat” (translated as root). As explained on the artists’ website, “Armat” represents a new style in the Armenian music world based on the traditional Armenian cultural values and historical roots. It introduces a mix of genres, highlighting Armenian folk and national music, presented in modern arrangements while reflecting Sirusho’s unique musical style.

In 2012, Sirusho also launched her own line of handcrafted silver jewelry “PreGomesh” which stays true to ancient Armenian designs while remaining in tune with current fashion trends.

This is a very exciting time for Sayat Nova Dance Company dancers who just recently performed with singer Ruben Sasunci from Armenia in November. SNDC member Adelaida Balagoyan has been dancing with the group since 2013 and says, “As a dancer, I have to say that there is no greater feeling than performing live with a singer. Dancing with Ruben Sasunci was so much fun because the energy was so powerful. I can’t even begin to imagine what it’s going to feel like when we’re on stage with Sirusho.” Sayat Nova’s Director Apo Ashjian explains that the group is “feeling very energized and enthusiastic about this production. For the first time ever, the Boston community will get to see a very modern twist to SNDC. While there are some ethnographic elements to the steps, the majority of her choreography is very upbeat and modern. We are very excited about that because it goes to show how versatile we are as a dance company.”

The group has been rehearsing three times a week and when asked what the see SIRUSHO, page 14



Members of the Sayat Nova Dance Company

Hamazkayin Seeks Entries for Tölölyan Prize in Contemporary Literature

WATERTOWN – The Regional Executive of Hamazkayin Armenian Educational and Cultural Society of the Eastern United States is soliciting submissions for the fourth annual Minas and Kohar Tölölyan Prize in Contemporary Literature. As in previous years, two prizes will be awarded to the winners of the Prize: one for a submission in Armenian and one for a submission in the English language.

Named after one of the major Armenian literary critics of the second half of the 20th century and his wife, a devoted and acclaimed teacher of literature, the annually awarded prize will recognize the work produced by talented writers working in North America. The prize is intended to encourage new work in all the major genres of literary production, as they are currently understood in North America. In this expanded understanding, poetry, short stories, novels and drama are all included, but so are works of creative non-fiction, a genre that includes memoirs, as well as personal, descriptive, literary and critical essays. Writers in all these genres may be considered as candidates for the prize, as long as the authors are of Armenian ancestry, or the work has an Armenian theme or revolves around an Armenian topic.

The primary purpose of the prizes is to encourage and offer recognition through the award and through the ensuing publicity for those who wish to write about Armenian subjects and topics. There will also be a modest financial award of \$1,500 for each of the two winners.

Members of the jury are: Dr. Sima Aprahamian (Montreal), Dr. Vartan Matiossian (New York/New Jersey), Gourgen Arzoumanian (California), Yervant Kotchounian (California), and Anoush Agnerian (Montreal). Dr. Khachig Tölölyan is rotating off the jury this year and is being replaced by Agnerian.

The prizes will be announced in October as a part of the events dedicated to the Armenian Cultural month. All submissions must be sent electronically to tololyan_award@hamazkayin-usa.org as a PDF file by April 30. All submissions must be accompanied by the Tölölyan Prize Application form, found online at <http://bit.ly/167vSsM>. The Armenian and English versions of the Rules and Regulations of the Prize can also be found at the above link.

Submissions may consist of works published in 2016 or 2017, as well as recent, yet-unpublished works.

This award has been made possible by Edward and Vergine Misserlian of San Francisco.



Edward and Vergine Misserlian



ARTS & LIVING

Tekeyan Hosts Artist Aghababyan in Glendale

By Anahit Tovmasyan

Special to the Mirror-Spectator

GLENDALÉ – On Friday, February 23, the Tekeyan Cultural Association of Greater Los Angeles presented artist Nikol Aghababyan and his works at the Glendale Central Library.

Parsegh Kartalian, vice chairman of the Tekeyan chapter, presented the opening remarks which were followed by an introduction of the artist by Lilit Keheyanyan.

Aghababyan proceeded to speak about his art and the process of creativity he goes through. For him, color gives flavor to life and without it,



Lilit Keheyanyan and Nikol Aghababyan

Knights and Daughters Of Vartan Pay tribute To Musical Talents of Arzruni, Kalfayan

TRIBUTE, from page 13

doctoral studies at New York University, was appointed a representative of Armenia's Ministry of Culture in the Diaspora.

The director of the Diocese's Gomidas Choir, Kalfayan was exposed to the Armenian Church rituals and music at an early age through his parents. In his childhood years, he sang in the Children's Choruses of the Metropolitan Opera and the New York City Opera. In the service of the Armenian Church, he was the organist of New York's Holy Cross Church and St. Vartan Cathedral, Director of St. Vartan Cathedral Boys Choir and director of the St. Vartan Cathedral Choir. Kalfayan, a graduate of New York's High School of Music and Art and Fordham University, has been serving as Musical Director of the Diocesan Gomidas Choir since 1981. In 2008, His Holiness Karekin II, Supreme Patriarch and Catholicos of all Armenians, awarded Kalfayan with a Pontifical Encyclical and the St. Nersess the Graceful Medal, in recognition of his decades of service to the Armenian Church.

"The Knights of Vartan organization has always been at the forefront of advancing Armenian culture," said Archbishop Barsamian. "I am so pleased that they have chosen as this year's honorees two true artists: Sahar Arzruni and Kris Kalfayan, who have both brought so much light into our community, and have likewise brought the treasures of Armenian music out into the world."

The tribute banquet will take place on May 18, at 7:30 p.m. at Haik and Alice Kavookjian Auditorium, 630 Second Ave.

Singer Sirusho to Perform In Boston for First Time With Sayat Nova Dance Co.

SIRUSHO, from page 13

practices entail, dancer Levon Brunson states "This is different than anything we've done before so our rehearsals are intense but at the same time really fun and full of energy. Each song has its own unique rhythm and sound and we're enjoying being challenged with the choreography and new style of dance. The instructors have given us a job to do and at the end of rehearsal when we look around and everybody is dripping in sweat, that's when we know that we've given it our all. This show is absolutely going to be over the top."

Tickets to the show can be purchased online at www.berklee.edu/events/Sirusho or by calling the Berklee Performance Center box office. To avoid online and phone fees, tickets can be purchased in person at the Berklee Performance Center Box Office, 136 Massachusetts Ave., Boston, between 10 a.m. and 6 p.m. Monday through Saturday.

Follow Sayat Nova Dance Company on Facebook to hear about the chance to purchase "PreGomesh" jewelry right here in Boston.

humanity would be reduced. He explained that for him, vibrant colors bring out the emotions of life.

Aghababyan spoke with authority on the topic of art with a great deal of originality. His works have been exhibited throughout France, Germany, Italy, Russia and other nations. The response to his shows has been positive. In addition, he recently spoke about art at San Jose State University.

The most inspiring part of the program consisted of a slideshow depicting the numerous



A Nikol Aghababyan painting

magnificent works of art by Aghababyan completed in 2016 and 2017. The scenes showed



Parsegh Kartalian greeting the guests on behalf of the Tekeyan Cultural Association

the beautiful seasons of Armenia and the rich landscape. Flowers, meadows, streams, lakes, trees, waterfalls, village life, Mt. Ararat – all were captured on canvas.

Tranquility is another way to describe the paintings. Aghababyan stated that "a painting should bring out the best in people. Yes, there's evil in the world but it has no place in my world of painting." He credits Mardiros Sarian as an influence.

A question-and-answer period followed the slideshow.



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ARTS & LIVING

Dr. Türkyılmaz to Give Lecture on Armenians in Music Production

FRESNO, Calif. — Dr. Yektan Türkyılmaz, Kazan Visiting Professor of Armenian Studies at Fresno State, will give a lecture, “Armenians on Records: Music Production from Homeland to Diasporas,” on Wednesday, March 7, at 7.30 p.m., in the University Business Center, Alice Peters Auditorium, Room 191 on the Fresno State campus.

The presentation is part of the Spring Lecture Series of the Armenian Studies Program.

Türkyılmaz was appointed the 14th Henry S.

Khanzadian Kazan Visiting Professor in Armenian Studies for the Spring 2018 semester.

This lecture will explore the multi-directional journeys of Armenians in the recording history from the Ottoman Empire to the diasporas, particularly to the United States, in the first half of the 20th century, as musicians, producers, and merchants. Drawing on the life stories and examples of commercial records produced in the Ottoman Empire and elsewhere in the diasporas, the presentation will illustrate the chang-

ing styles, content, and language use in music production vis-à-vis place, trauma and audience/cultural dialogue throughout one of the most turbulent periods of Armenian history. The talk will specifically underscore the cultural, political, and identitarian implications of the emergence of the recording technology on Armenian communities.

The lecture will conclude with a commentary and a musical performance by the Armenian-American oriental music expert and oud virtuoso Richard Hagopian. Hagopian began playing the oud at a young

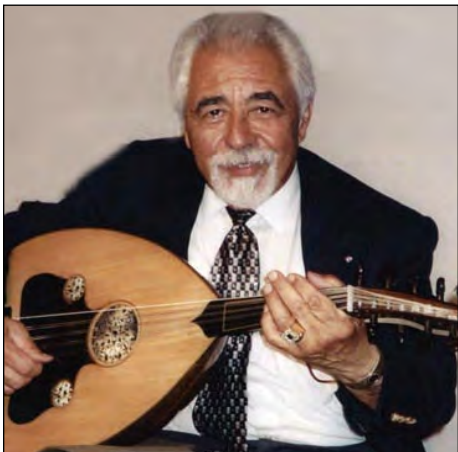


Dr. Yektan Türkyılmaz

age and has received numerous awards throughout his life including the prestigious National Endowment for the Arts National Heritage Fellowship Award, the nation’s highest honor given in the traditional folk arts, in 1989.

Türkyılmaz received his PhD from the Department of Cultural Anthropology at Duke University. He is currently a research fellow at the Forum Transregionale Studien in Berlin, Germany. Meanwhile, he is working on his manuscript based on his dissertation, *Rethinking Genocide: Violence and Victimhood in Eastern Anatolia, 1913-1915*, concerning the conflict in Eastern Anatolia in the early 20th century and the memory politics around it.

The lecture is free and open to the public. Free parking is available.



Richard Hagopian



An old record from Pharos Records

Recipe Corner

by Christine Vartanian Datian

Lentil and Rice Salad with Chopped Greens

INGREDIENTS

- 1 1/2 cup uncooked lentils
- 4 cups water, low-sodium chicken or vegetable broth
- 1 tablespoon unsalted butter
- 2 bay leaves
- 2 tablespoons fresh lemon juice
- 1/2 cup cooked white or brown rice
- 1 medium white or red onion, diced
- 2 medium carrots, diced or shredded
- 2 stalks celery (and top greens), diced
- 1/2 medium red or green bell pepper, seeded and diced
- 2-3 Persian cucumbers, diced or sliced
- 2-3 cloves garlic, crushed
- 1 small bunch flat-leaf parsley, minced
- Sea or Kosher salt, black pepper, paprika, lemon zest, fresh or dried mint and basil to taste
- Olive oil, fresh lemon juice or red wine vinegar
- Chopped tomatoes, green onions, parsley, black or green olives
- Choice of salad mixed greens, spinach, kale and endive
- Slivered almonds, crumbled Feta cheese, lemon wedges

PREPARATION:

In a large saucepan combine the lentils, water or broth, butter, bay leaves, salt, pepper, and lemon juice and bring to a full boil. Reduce heat and simmer, covered, for 30 minutes, or until lentils are tender. Drain and set aside. Remove bay leaves.

In a large bowl, combine the cooked lentils and rice with onions, carrots, celery, bell pepper, cucumbers, garlic and parsley and toss. Add olive oil, lemon juice or wine vinegar, lemon zest, and choice of seasonings and toss. Cover and chill before serving.

Arrange salad on a tray of mixed greens and garnish with tomatoes, green onions, parsley, and olives; top with slivered almonds and Feta cheese, if desired.

Serve with Armenian cheese, pita bread, cracker bread, roasted eggplant and peppers with fresh lemon wedges on the side.

Note: Italian or balsamic salad dressing or any dressing of choice may be used for this salad.

Serves 6.

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

Jennifer Sarkissian Promoted to GM at Industria Works

LOS ANGELES (Billboard) — Jennifer Sarkissian has been promoted to general manager at Industria Works, the Los Angeles-based company that is home to Nacional Records, the Latin Alternative Music Conference, the Supersonico festival and music licensing platform MuuseMe.

Sarkissian has been with the company for 12 years, since starting out as a PR assistant at Nacional. Her job description was loosely defined and her titles changed as her duties grew over the years.

“I was fortunate to be in an environment that encouraged me to grow and learn and nurture my passion for the music and artists we champion,” says Sarkissian, 39, who is originally from Northern California. “It was my intention be involved in as many different aspects of the industry as I was allowed.”

Currently, Sarkissian oversees the LAMC and Supersonico events and takes the lead on Industria Works’ marketing and brand partnerships, while still working on label projects and with the artists

managed by the company, which over the past two years has expanded to become a full-service independent artist development platform.

Sarkissian, whose title was previously VP of



Jennifer Sarkissian

Artist Services, is the company’s first General Manager.

“This distinction formalizes her already essential role as a go-to person on day-to-day matters for all of IW’s business,” COO/CFO Rob Filomena tells Billboard.

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ARTS & LIVING

The Whimsy of Decoupage Artist John Derian

NEW YORK (CBS) — John Derian is on a treasure hunt in New York City.

"You never know — it's like making a new discovery," he said, entering a century-old establishment on the Lower East Side named, aptly enough, The Old Print Shop.

He'll spend hours digging through piles of 18th and 19th century etchings and lithographs.

"There's something about the charm, the way things are rendered," he said.

And what does Derian do with these expensive images? He cuts them up — turning these long-forgotten pictures into 21st century collectibles.

"It's so weird, sometimes I don't really know what to call myself," Derian replied. "I just love sharing all this stuff."

Evident in bowls, plates, paperweights sold in his own shops, and at more than 600 stores around the world.

"It's sort of like reverse painting," he said. "You'll have one image that goes on first, and

clothed in pea pods.

There are more traditional images, of course.

"Horses are popular," he said.

So what doesn't sell as well? "People."

Derian, now 55, grew up in Watertown, Mass., getting lost in old books and movies.

"Did you ever think when you were growing up that this is what you'd be doing?" asked CBS's Erin Moriarty.

"No. I'm the youngest of six. And I was sort of a freak because I was the quiet one that made things. And my dad was, like, 'What do we do with him?'"

"In my mid-20s, my dad had this idea that I could lease a milk truck and deliver milk somehow," Derian said. "Like, he was kind of very clueless to what I did, and who I was."

As a young man, he did study art for a bit ... painted and collected buttons. Lots of buttons. Bunches and bunches of buttons.

And what flickers in Derian's brain could fill rooms — and in fact does. Rooms inside three side-by-side Manhattan stores. The first one



John Derian looking for inspiration at The Old Print Shop in New York City.



John Derian collectibles at his Lower East Side store.

then behind it is another image."

With the same precision that Derian selects his patterns, his hand-picked staff of artisans follows his vision ("We have to draw a little diagram of where it goes on and what piece goes on first," Derian explained), gluing high-quality prints of the original images to various pieces of glassware.

Every piece reflects Derian's unique sense of whimsy.

"I think it's super-funny that it's, like, a bat that has a human face!" he said of one old print now gracing a dish ... and there's the couple

opened in 1995.

Everything here is handmade.

And every object is placed just so. "I will go in there and move something an inch," Derian said. "It is part of my life. I live sort of in those stores, in a way, like my home."

He's not kidding — he lives right above one of his shops, where he turned an old cabinet into the entrance doorway, and replaced a wall with a wooden structure that is 250 years old. "I had this wall in storage for, like, 16 years and when I got the space, it fit it perfectly," he said.

In 2016, Derian collected the images he loves

most and put them in a book, published by Artisan.

And he says, it's just fine if you want to cut it up. "Yes, please, go right ahead and do it!" he said. "I hope that people will keep one book for themselves and maybe get another one to cut up!"

"When you're suggesting that people actually cut out some of these images, what do you do

with 'em?"

"I like the idea of framing them," he said, "and hanging them in a group."

John Derian has discovered the beauty of living in the past. "It's as if someone else planned my life. And I just woke up and I was like, 'Oh, this is my life!' I definitely feel lucky. I don't really know how all this happened."



Instead of a brush, this artist's tool is a pair of scissors.

'Intent to Destroy' to Be Shown in San Diego

SAN DIEGO, Calif. — The documentary film "Intent to Destroy" captures the cinematic and political challenges of producing "The Promise," a historically meaningful, big-budget feature film. It will be shown at San Diego's Edwards Mira Mesa Stadium on Saturday, March 17, at 7:30 p.m. The one-night-only pre-

pressure to appease a strategic ally, "Intent to Destroy" embeds with "The Promise," a historic feature production as a springboard to explore the violent history of the Armenian Genocide and legacy of Turkish suppression and denial over the past century.

By intertwining three separate threads — the modern day production of "The Promise," the history of the Genocide and the century of international repression — "Intent to Destroy" coalesces to provide a comprehensive view on the atrocities of 1915 to 1923 and their resounding aftermath right up to the present day.

St. John Garabed Armenian Church has organized this film night in San Diego as part of a larger, month-long community initiative to commemorate the 103rd anniversary of the Armenian Genocide with a variety of events and presentations.

The screening and tickets sales are made possible thanks to Theatrical On Demand, which allows movie-goers to bring the movies they want to watch to their nearby local theater with no rental cost and no risk.

Tickets are available now by going to <https://gathr.us/s/22696>. Tickets can only be purchased online and will not be available for purchase at the door.



sentation of "Intent to Destroy" is being organized by Very Rev. Pakrad Berjekian and the Parish Council of St. John Garabed Armenian Church of San Diego.

"Intent to Destroy" is directed by Academy Award nominated director Joe Berlinger and features Shohreh Aghdashloo, Taner Akcam, Hagop Asadourian.

Pulling back the curtain on Genocide censorship in Hollywood due to US government

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ARTS & LIVING

CALENDAR

MASSACHUSETTS

MARCH 4 — Hasmik Khalapyan, “Women’s Activism During the Western Armenian Renaissance, 1860-1914” at the NAASR Center, 2:30 p.m. Sunday, 395 Concord Ave., Belmont, MA. Presented by the Armenian International Women’s Association (AIWA) and the National Association for Armenian Studies & Research (NAASR). The program is open to the public. Contact: hq@naasr.org or 617-489-1610.

MARCH 8 — 7:30 p.m.: Hayk Demoyan, “Between Realism and Mythology: Modern Identity and Memory Politics of the Armenian World,” Thursday, at the NAASR Center, 395 Concord Ave., Belmont,. The program is sponsored by the NAASR / Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation Lecture Series on Contemporary Armenian Issues and is open to the public. Contact: hq@naasr.org or 617-489-1610.

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

MARCH 11 — “Jazz and Art for YerazArt” Sunday, 6 p.m., at anoush’ella saj kitchen, 35 W. Newton St., Boston. Reception and open bar, featuring Oriental Trio (Mina Cho on piano, Vasilis Kostas on Laouto and George Lernis on world percussion and drum-set) and art sale to benefit YerazArt programs. Parking available at adjacent BU Dental School Parking (720 Harrison Avenue, Boston MA 02118). Tickets: \$125 per person. To purchase, visit: www.yerazart.org

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: armenianbusinessnetwork@gmail.com

MARCH 16 — Program to combat domestic violence in Armenia, Papken Suni Agoump, 76 Bigelow Ave., Watertown, 7 to 9 p.m. Maro Matosian, executive director of the Women’s Support Center, Armenia. Advance RSVP required Email Lenna.garibian@gmail.com. This fundraising event is sponsored by the Friends of the WSC. Donations to the WSC will be made via the Tufenkian Foundation and are tax-deductible. Learn more at www.womensupportcenter.org.

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 Nevart 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.

MARCH 22 — 7:30 p.m.: Siobhan Nash-Marshall, “The Sins of the Fathers: Turkish Denialism and the Armenian Genocide,” Thursday, at the NAASR Center, 395 Concord Ave., Belmont. The program is open to the public. Contact: hq@naasr.org or 617-489-1610.

MARCH 23 — Sayat Nova Dance Company of Boston (SNDC) is honored to share the stage with world renowned and beloved singer from Armenia Sirusho, appearing live for the first time in Boston, at the prestigious Berklee Performance Center, 136 Mass. Ave., Boston. Start time: 8 pm. Tickets may be purchased online at www.berklee.edu/events/Sirusho or by calling 617-747-2261. To avoid online fees, you may also purchase your tickets in person at the Berklee Box Office, 10 am – 6pm. For more info or questions, email sirusho-boston@gmail.com . You may also follow us on Facebook at www.facebook.com/events/162986714315959/ Reserve your tickets for this memorable cultural evening of Armenian song and dance.

APRIL 8 — Annual Reconfiguration of the Abstract Sculpture, Armenian Heritage Park on The Greenway, Boston, Sunday, 7 am Rain Date: Sunday, April 15

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 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.

APRIL 20-21 — Commemorating the 103rd anniversary of the Armenian Genocide, first at the State House, on Friday, April 20, 9 a.m. to 12.30 p.m., Boston. A free reception will follow. Then on Saturday, April 21, a Commemoration at the Park, 3 to 5 p.m. Further details will follow. For more information, visit bostonagcc@gmail.com.

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 5 — Celebrate Public Art during Artweek on Saturday at the Park, Armenian Heritage Park on The Greenway, Boston, 1 p.m., World Labyrinth Day: Walk As One in peace & harmony with people in cities and towns worldwide including the labyrinth in Gyumri. At 12:45 p.m., introduction to Walking a Labyrinth, 1:30 pm - Reception to View the 2018 Configuration of the Abstract Sculpture. Remarks: Sarah Baker, editor-in-chief, Art New England magazine. Introduced by Lucas Cowan, Public Art Curator, Rose Kennedy Greenway Conservancy. Tea & Desserts, hosted by MEM Tea Imports & Eastern Lamejun Bakers. RSVP appreciated. hello@ArmenianHeritagePark.org

MAY 6 — “Celebrating 400 Hundred Years of Armenian American Heritage: 1618-2018” Exhibition and the launching of “Armenian Legacy in America: A 400-Year Heritage” dedicated to the 400th anniversary of the arrival of the first Armenian to America” by Dr. Hayk Demoyan in an illustrated talk. Other speakers include Drs. Robert Mirak, Barbara J. Merguerian and Nubar Afeyan. Sunday, 3 p.m. Admission free of charge and open to the public. Book sale and reception to follow the event. Organized by Armenian Cultural Foundation and co-sponsored by the Amaras Art Alliance, and National Association for Armenian Studies and Research, 441 Mystic Street (Route 3), Arlington, MA Tel. (781)-646-3090 armeniancultural.fdn@gmail.com

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

JUNE 6 — Tea & Tranquility, Armenian Heritage Park on The Greenway, Boston, Wednesday, 5-6:30 p.m. Meet & Greet! Enjoy Tea & Desserts hosted by MEM Tea Imports and The Bostonian Hotel. Walk the Labyrinth. For first-time walkers introduction to walking a labyrinth at 5:30 p.m. RSVP appreciated. hello@ArmenianHeritagePark.org

JUNE 28 — Under a Strawberry Moon, Armenian Heritage Park on The Greenway, Boston, Thursday, 8:30– 9:30 p.m. Meet & Greet! Moonlit Labyrinth Walk. Enjoy chocolate-dipped strawberries, hosted by Vicki Lee’s and Ice Teas, hosted by MEM Tea Imports. RSVP appreciated. hello@ArmenianHeritagePark.org

JULY 18 — Tea & Tranquility, Armenian Heritage Park on The Greenway, Boston. Wednesday, 5- 6:30 p.m. Meet & Greet! Enjoy Tea & Desserts hosted by MEM Tea Imports and The Bostonian Hotel. Walk the Labyrinth. For first-time walkers introduction to walking a labyrinth at 5:30 p.m. RSVP appreciated. hello@ArmenianHeritagePark.org

AUGUST 15 — Tea & Tranquility, Armenian Heritage Park on The Greenway, Boston, Wednesday, 5-6:30 p.m. Meet & Greet! Enjoy Tea & Desserts hosted by MEM Tea Imports and The Bostonian Hotel. Walk the Labyrinth. For first-time walkers introduction to walking a labyrinth at 5:30 p.m. RSVP appreciated. hello@ArmenianHeritagePark.org

SEPTEMBER 16 — Sunday Afternoon at the Park for Families & Friends. Armenian Heritage Park on The Greenway. 2-4 p.m. Enjoy Boston Hye Guys Ensemble with Ron Sahatjian, clarinet; Joe Kouyoumjian, oud; Art Chingris, percussion. RSVP appreciated. hello@ArmenianHeritagePark.org

MICHIGAN

MARCH 22 — Talk by Adrienne Alexanian on her father’s memoir, Forced into Genocide: Memoir of an Armenian Soldier in the Ottoman Turkish Army. Thursday, 7 p.m. Holocaust Memorial Center Zekelman Fmily Campus. The book presents a unique account of the Armenian Genocide and was translated from the Armenian and edited by Adrienne Alexanian. RSVP by March 20. 248-553-2400x112 or rsvp@holocaustcenter.org. Free with admission or membership. Light refreshments to follow.

NEW YORK

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.

PENNSYLVANIA

APRIL 28 — Join the Armenian Assembly of America for its Philadelphia Celebration at the National Constitution Center on Saturday, starting at 6 p.m. The Armenian Assembly will be honoring longtime members and Life Trustees Peter and Irene Vosbikian. The evening’s entertainment will feature Kevork Artinian Entertainment and his Band. To learn more, visit www.aimhye.com. RSVP by Monday, April 16.

RHODE ISLAND

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,...)

WASHINGTON, DC

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](https://www.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.



COMMENTARY

COMMENTARY

A Centennial Celebration

By Edmond Y. Azadian

May 2018 will be a watershed in Armenian history because it will mark the centennial of the revival of Armenian statehood. During the months leading up to that benchmark, the news media and political groups are positioning themselves to share in or to own the limelight.

There are discussions about the events leading to the formation of the First Republic in 1918. There are also proprietary claims on the leadership who contributed to the birth of the First Republic. Yet, there is little talk about the demise of the republic or the status and historic value of its successor, Soviet Armenia, which shaped the world view of generations of Armenians, for better or worse.

The Armenian government, currently in a coalition with the ARF and eager to carry its own political agenda, is on the path of a pragmatic policy, not too interested in upholding the historic truth. Everything seems to be up for grabs.

We are not certain if Armenia and the diaspora combined are

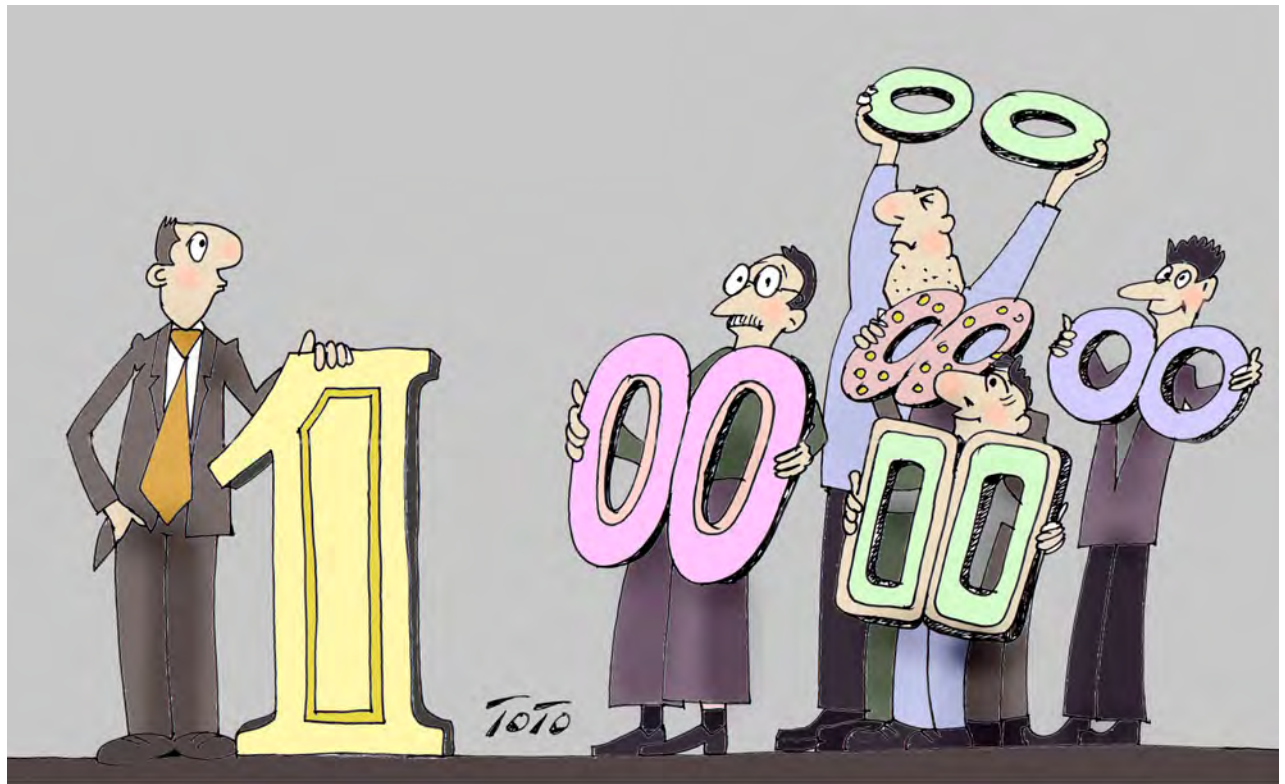
belonged to the entire Armenian people, regardless of political affiliations and today, the celebration must reflect that all-inclusive nature of support extended to the First Republic at the time.

After the fall of the First Republic, Soviet Armenia became more of a bone of contention than a realistic assessment of historic perspective. Its sovereignty was compromised in favor of its security. Seventy years of Soviet rule in Armenia divided the diaspora. A relentless campaign was launched against the government in Yerevan, which certainly was not affected by the controversy. What was affected, however, was the unity of the diaspora, as well as the people-to-people relations between Armenia and the diaspora.

Despite its ideological differences with the Soviet government, the ADL strived to nurture people-to-people relations and when the “iron curtain” fell, at least the two segments of the Armenian world were not as unfamiliar with each other as they would have been had they had been left to their own devices.

Despite Stalin’s purges and the unfortunate losses of life during world War II, Soviet Armenia proved to be a haven of security for the nation living on its ancestral land.

Soviet Armenian leaders, under the banner of communist ide-



celebrating the historic victories at Sardarabad, Ghara Kilisa and Bash Aparan or the inception of the first period of statehood after six centuries of statelessness by Armenians.

Since all the above battles were fought through popular participation and since the ensuing republic was valued by all the surviving Armenians from the Genocide, it would make more sense to celebrate one hundred years of statehood, irrespective of our views of who lost the First Republic, what percentage of sovereignty the Soviet Armenian Republic enjoyed and how post-Soviet independent Armenia is performing.

Battles leading to Armenia’s independence were fought by popular forces, including members of our clergy. The commander of the Sardarabad battle was Movses Silikian, Dro was at Bash Aparan and Piroumian, Ghassapbashian, Antranik and other heroes contributed to the victory. In hindsight, Silikian and Piroumian have been ignored because they did not have their political heirs. Dro’s monument is there, as well as that of Garegin Njdeh, both of whom were valuable heroes but later Nazi collaborators, giving us a black eye internationally.

Aram Manoukian emerging next to the Metro station near the main square in Yerevan, all wrapped up in the tricolor flag, pushing a partisan agenda, diminishes the popular nature of the celebration.

Similarly, the first government was led by majority ARF members who deserve credit. But the first cabinet also included members of the Popular Party (Joghovertagan), composed of a highly intellectual group with a philosophy of evolution, looking to the West rather than embracing revolution, a philosophy very much in vogue at the time.

When the First Republic emerged, it embodied the dreams of all Armenians wounded by the Genocide. Alexander Khadissian’s fundraising trips to Istanbul and Egypt met with popular enthusiasm – Ramgavars, Reformed Hunchaks, which later would join the Popular Party to form the ADL – were at the forefront of generosity. They had also negotiated a deal with the British army in Egypt to purchase an air force for the fledgling republic.

The enumeration of these contributions does not intend to push a partisan agenda but to just emphasize that the republic

ology, carried a deeply nationalistic agenda by erecting the Sardarabad and Genocide monuments. But above all, they promoted Armenian culture and scholarship to the world. The economic, industrial and scientific base which was founded in the country during the Soviet era has been recklessly weakened in the past 26 years but still it continues to sustain its structure.

Now that the Soviet scarecrow is gone, an objective evaluation of that era is due.

What was a trend during the first and second republics has receded during the current third republic. Armenians who had survived the horrors of the Genocide valued the birth of a nation highly. And despite all adversities, they gravitated towards the homeland.

Armenians had an affluent and cultured life in Tbilisi. Even the National Council (Azgayin Khorhurt) which later became the nucleus of the first government in Yerevan was based in Tbilisi. Yerevan was on a primitive social and economic level. But leaders and people moved to that backward hinterland to build a new homeland. Even in Soviet times, Avedik Issahakian, Sarian, Kochar, Ara Sarksyian and many other artists and intellectuals settled in Armenia, drawing behind them waves of expatriates. There was an influx of immigration to Armenia in the 1920s through the 1960s.

Now that we have attained our freedom, a reverse process is in progress and no one can see an end to that trend.

Today’s artists, performers, writers are exporting rabeez culture to the west and mixing it with the worst trends of western culture, and feeding it back to Armenia through movies, social media and personal contacts.

The pioneer spirit which moved the generations living in the first and second republics has disappeared. An unprincipled condescending attitude towards Armenia is dominating the diaspora and eroding self-esteem in Armenia.

There has to be a return to our senses, to our values as well as old-fashioned patriotism.

Unless we all rise to the historic occasion, the centennial celebration may remain a festive occasion just like any other occasion.

May is around the corner. Are we up to the centennial spirit?

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COMMENTARY



My Turn

By Harut Sassounian

Erdogan, a Menace to the World, Should be Stopped Before it's Too Late

Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan has become a major danger to his own nation as well as many others. His actions and statements in recent years should seriously worry his neighbors and the entire world.

The last tyrant ignored by the international community was the genocidal butcher Adolf Hitler who unleashed World War II, invading scores of countries and killing millions of people. Regrettably, Western leaders have tried to appease Erdogan, thereby creating a monster! Strangely, some in the Islamic world treat him with respect, while many Western countries consider Turkey as one of their key allies. To make matters worse, Russia is also trying to win Erdogan over, to distance him from the West and NATO.

A vivid example of Erdogan's unfit mental state is his recent bizarre public statement posted on the Turkish President's website, titled: "Turkey is the Standard-Bearer of the Global Fight for Justice."

No one in their right mind would make such a deceptive statement. Turkey is the last country in the world to be described as "the standard bearer of the global fight for justice." With hundreds of journalists and tens of thousands of professors, lawyers, judges, and public employees in jail, how can Pres. Erdogan make such a false claim? Besides the current injustices perpetrated on the Turkish people, Erdogan also denies massive past injustices such as the genocide against Armenians, Greeks and Assyrians.

Earlier this month, during a speech at the AK Party's Eskisehir Provincial Congress, Pres. Erdogan shamelessly announced: "Turkey is also the standard-bearer of the global fight for justice. Turkey is a safe haven for the oppressed and a nightmare for the oppressors." If Turkey is such a 'safe haven,' why so many Turks are trying to escape from the country and seeking asylum in Europe? Why is the Turkish government issuing arrest warrants for the escapees and pressuring European countries to extradite Turkish journalists, intellectuals and human rights activists?

Appointing himself as a world leader, Erdogan has cast a wide net, meddling in the internal affairs of many countries, near and far: "Turkey is the hope for our Crimean brothers and sisters, the oppressed of Turkestan [Turkic people in Central Asia] and our friends from Caucasia, Sarajevo and Africa." Erdogan goes on to affirm: "If we stumble, Al-Quds [Jerusalem] will fall, Palestine, Rakhine [region in Myanmar] and Somalia will fall."

Several days after Erdogan's pompous speech, Turkish opposition journalist Uzey Bulut wrote a critical commentary in The Washington Times, titled: "Turkey's violence-tinged foreign policy."

Uzey reminded readers that "the Ottoman Empire's occupation of vast lands and Islam's flag of conquest still influence Turkey's foreign policy, including its invasions and ethnic cleansings."

The prominent Turkish commentator specifically cited Erdogan's interventionist policies in Northern Syria (Afrin) and Cyprus. Uzey mentioned that Turkey, having illegally occupied Northern Cyprus since 1974, now threatens what remains of the Republic of Cyprus. Erdogan declared: "Cyprus' courage will only last 'until they see our army, our ships and our planes.'" Turkey has ignored dozens of UN Security Council resolutions asking for the withdrawal of its troops from Northern Cyprus.

Erdogan also warned the European companies that are exploring gas fields in Eastern Mediterranean, in the territorial waters of the Republic of Cyprus. Uzey wrote that earlier this month "Turkish warships blocked a rig belonging to the Italian energy firm ENI from reaching Cypriot waters to start exploring for gas."

Erdogan admitted his expansionist policies drawing parallels between Afrin, Cyprus and the Greek islands of the Aegean which are frequent targets of Turkish threats and demands. Erdogan brazenly declared: "Whatever Afrin is to us, our rights in the Aegean and Cyprus are the same. Do not ever think that the natural gas exploration in the waters of Cyprus and the opportunistic attempts in the Aegean Sea drop off from our radar."

Going to more extremes, Yigit Bulut, one of Erdogan's principal advisers, boastfully threatened Greece over the islet of Imia, which Turks call 'Kardak.' He warned: "Athens will face the wrath of Turkey worse than that in Afrin. We will break the arms and legs of officials of the [Greek] Prime Minister and any minister who dares to step on the Kardak islet in the Aegean. There is not an armed force in this region that could contend against the Turkish armed forces. So, everyone will know their place. All imperialists will accept that the people in this land are Turks and the nation in this land is Islamic ummah [nation] and they will kiss the hand that they cannot bend."

Commentator Uzey reported that Erdogan himself threatened Cyprus with yet another military invasion: "Just as we disrupt the plots [in Syria] through Operation Euphrates Shield and Operation Olive Branch, and soon in Manbij and other regions, we can and we will disrupt the plots of those who engage in miscalculations on our southern border. Our warships and air force are keeping an eye on the area in order to intervene in any way whenever required."

Turkey's neighbors should be aware that Erdogan is intending to recover the Ottoman territories. He openly threatened: "Those who think that we've erased from our hearts the lands from which we withdrew in tears a hundred years ago are wrong."

At the end of his article, Uzey rightly pointed out that the Western countries are mostly responsible for Erdogan's out of control behavior: "The global inaction in response to Turkish aggression encourages Mr. Erdogan, the president of a so-called 'ally' of the West, to threaten Cyprus with yet another military assault.... What enables him to get away with his intimidating rhetoric and ongoing hostility is the apparent weakness and confusion of the West in the face of violent Turkish supremacism."

LETTERS

Turkey Is a Geopolitical Timebomb

To the Editor:

Members of the European Union have finally realized that Turkey is not merely a country limited to creating problems in its wider geographic area but is also offensive to the interests of the European Union by threatening a plan which is part of Europe's future energy security.

In general, Turkey's stance and behavior seems to be activating reactions in Brussels where Ankara, every day that passes, is regarded as a geopolitical "bomb" ready to blow with repercussions which do not only affect South-Eastern Europe but its entirety.

Recent pronouncements by Erdogan and his ministers have indicated that the Sultan will not hesitate to use 'pirate' methods in order to achieve his objectives.

Last Sunday, President Erdogan publicly encouraged his citizens to "be ready for general mobilization" as there may be facing a "hot summer." This had an immediate effect on young and middle-aged male Turks who ran to their computers to check where they may be required to report as members of the Turkish Armed Forces and, as a result, precipitated a total crash of the computer system at the Turkish Ministry of Defense!

The same evening, Prime Minister Benali Yildirim, during the launch of a German-made submarine at a Turkish naval base, declared that "we can neutralize any attempt against our interests in the Aegean Sea, so our neighbors should not think they can take advantage of us!"

In recent weeks, Turkey has become highly aggressive on a number of fronts. Invading the town of Afrin in its southern border with Syria to elim-

inate Kurdish fighting units, Erdogan boasted they had killed some 1932 Kurds at a loss of a mere 32 Turkish soldiers. The truth of the matter, however, seems to be that in Afrin, Turkish forces are totally stuck and are losing ground.

On the Cyprus front, Turkish naval ships blocked Italian oil giant ENI's drilling boat in Lot 3 of the Cyprus Economic Zone announcing that such drilling will not take place until and unless Turkish Cyprus is considered part of the negotiations to benefit from the expected wealth to be derived from development of oil and natural gas deposits in the area.

Finally, daily air skirmishes between Turkish jets invading Greek air space and Greek jets defending it together with the most recently avoided incident of a Turkish frigate bumping into a Greek Coast Guard boat in Greek waters, thankfully without any human losses, have all been indications that Erdogan wishes to become a dominant force in the region.

On top of everything else, Ankara's diplomatic relations becoming warmer with Russia and Iran while relations with the European Union and the United States and Israel have substantially deteriorated, lead to an imbalance of power in the region which may have disastrous effects.

Ankara has announced that during March, Turkey will begin exploratory drilling in the Eastern Mediterranean area. For this reason, she has purchased "Deep Sea Metro 2," a drilling platform now in Constantinople and under additional repair work so it can become a serious contender in the race for the area's oil and gas deposits. Initially this search will take place in

the waters between Turkish Cyprus and Turkey herself but it is not clear how further south this search will reach thus affecting the current division of lots by Cyprus to Italian, French and American oil companies which have been successful in their bids to attain the drilling rights of these lots.

Of course, no one should also overlook the role of neighboring countries like Egypt or Israel who are also destined to benefit very handsomely from the financial successes of these drilling contracts and who are regarding Turkey's movements with great negativity.

Once again, President Erdogan is moving to realize his dream of the Ottoman Empire being rejuvenated. To energize his followers, he makes statements such as "our enemies have not yet felt the slap of the Ottoman Empire!"

Facing parliamentary elections later this year and presidential elections in 2019, he is already appealing to the illiterate, lower-income classes of Turkey's interior by recently joining forces with the extreme right wing Grey Wolves' Party and asking his followers questions such as 'we used to be a people owning 18,000,000 square kilometers and now we only have 780,000. Whatever happened to us?'

The dogs of war are beginning to smell blood and aggressive incidents on many fronts, as created and executed by Erdogan, internally or externally, do not bode well for neither the region or Turkey's neighbors. The forthcoming weeks should be observed with great interest

Miran P. Sarkissian
Athens, Greece

Nagorno-Karabakh: 30 Years on, Time for EU to Raise its Game

By Diogo Pinto

FEBRUARY 20, 2018 marks 30 years since the People's Deputies of Nagorno-Karabakh Autonomous Oblast (NKAO) approved the formal petition requesting the transfer of jurisdiction from Azerbaijan to Armenian Soviet Socialist Republic (SSR).

After the 1917 Russian Revolution, Nagorno-Karabakh was a self-governed territory with all specific attributes of de facto statehood. However, in 1921, Stalin intervened to reverse a decision confirming Nagorno-Karabakh as part of Soviet Armenia, putting the region under the jurisdiction of Soviet Azerbaijan.

For the next 70 years, the people of Nagorno-Karabakh would repeatedly appeal to Moscow to re-establish the oblast as part of Armenia, only to be ignored.

In 1985, Gorbachev's rise to power would inaugurate a new Soviet era. His policies of glasnost and perestroika provided the political space for the people of Nagorno-Karabakh to begin their path towards self-determination after decades of mistreatment.

However, the Azerbaijani SSR not only denied the petition made on February 20, 1988, but also launched large-scale pogroms and ethnic cleansing against Armenians living in Azerbaijan, first in Sumgait and later in Kirovabad, Baku, and other cities. Hundreds of innocent people were killed in their homes, and many were tortured and forced into exile.

Within weeks, the European Parliament (EP) adopted the first ten resolutions on Nagorno-Karabakh. In July 1988's Resolution on the situation in Soviet Armenia, the EP referred to the "deteriorating political situation, which has led to anti-Armenian pogroms in Sumgait and serious acts of violence in Baku."

It also supported "the demand for reunification with the Socialist Republic of Armenia" and called upon the Soviet Union "to ensure the safety of the 500,000 Armenians currently living in Soviet Azerbaijan."

In response to lawful and peaceful pleas by lawmakers and people within Nagorno-Karabakh, Soviet authorities sent in troops, declared a state of emergency, imposed a curfew, and banned foreign journalists.

What started as a peaceful movement to exercise the right to self-determination supported by European parliamentarians, was met with violence and ethnic cleansing, and turned into an all-out war in December 1991.

see KARABAKH, page 20



AIWA Denounces Gender-Based Violence

The Armenian International Women’s Association (AIWA) decries the recent physical assaults upon two women who are members of the Yerevan City Council. On February 13, city councilor Marina Khachatryan, along with her colleague Sona Aghekyan, were attacked by fellow councilmen during the first session of the Yerevan City Council. The attack came just as the two women were trying to bring samples of sewage (in glass jars) from the Nubarashen district in Yerevan to underscore the negligence of the mayor and the city government in failing to address the longstanding problem of leaking sewage from the nearby prison. This has become an enormous health hazard for everyone living in the vicinity.

This outrageous behavior comes just shortly after Armenia passed legislation criminalizing domestic violence. This incident, along with prior cases of attacks on women protesters in various public settings, further exposes how public forums and political spaces in the country have frequently become unsafe places for women in Armenia. They reveal a systemic attempt to exclude women from public discourse and political decision-making.

This assault on elected female councilors was especially

egregious, as the violence was committed by colleagues on the city council. Such violence against female activists must stop, as it corrodes the fragile democratic institutions in the country and intimidates women from entering politics. Violence as an instrument of political discourse is illegal and unethical. It is also profoundly unproductive, as it can silence free speech, innovation and initiative, thereby degrading governance and polarizing society.

It has been demonstrated that the empowerment of women is a necessary precondition for democratic progress, economic growth and sustainable security arrangements in conflict regions. Patronizing, intimidating and harming women – whether in the home or in a public space – is a direct assault on Armenia’s prospects for a successful future. To sustain the moral fabric of the country, it is essential that everyone – especially elected officials – respect the dignity of all women.

This recent display of violence further erodes public trust in Armenia’s institutions and threatens the development of a still-young democracy struggling in an increasingly authoritarian region. The brave women council members who were bringing

much-needed attention to a major public health and environmental crisis in a large Yerevan community should be praised and honored. Those who attacked them should be held accountable for their actions. Regardless of how offended they were by the jars of sewage, they had no right to resort to physical violence. We understand that a criminal investigation has been launched, and this process should be watched closely by the public.

Most important, we all need to work together to change the cultural norms that promote and reward this kind of assault. Everyone – especially men and boys – need to explore how we can all become part of the solution to stop gender-based violence, whether it occurs in war, at home, on the streets, or at work. Fortunately, there are men around the world now changing the public discourse to include ideas about positive masculinity that would promote a safer and stronger world for everyone. A healthy society requires that we all respect human dignity, and this incident in Yerevan offers one more opportunity to raise our voices in calling for systemic change to create a culture that would never foster or condone this kind of violent behavior.

For more information visit www.aiwainternational.org.

Nagorno-Karabakh: 30 Years on, Time for EU to Raise its Game

KARABAKH, from page 19

The EP continued paying attention to Nagorno-Karabakh and, in January 1992, adopted a new Resolution on aid to Nagorno-Karabakh, noting that “Azerbaijan launched a huge and unprecedented offensive against Armenians living in Nagorno-Karabakh” and, once again, “recognizes Nagorno-Karabakh’s right to self-determination.”

In May 1994, after the loss of 30,000 lives, the three sides signed a ceasefire agreement. The war was over, the conflict became frozen, and the EU turned their attention to other matters.

Two years ago, full-scale war resumed for four days, demonstrating the fragility of the ceasefire. Meetings among Foreign Affairs ministers and even Presidential Summits between Armenia and Azerbaijan have resumed ever since, giving hope that some progress will be made... but the incessant provocations from the Azerbaijani side, combined with its military build-up and war rhetoric, turn staunch optimists into sceptics, making a definite solution urgent.

The Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) Minsk Group spearheads the efforts of the international

community to find a peaceful solution to the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, while the EU pursues a policy of “neutrality,” stating its full support for the “Minsk process,” but shying away from direct contact with either the population or the authorities of Nagorno-Karabakh.

There is, however, a large margin of manoeuvre for the EU to pursue a strategy of “engagement without recognition” with Nagorno-Karabakh and its people.

After years of succumbing to propaganda by Azerbaijan, EU officials should finally visit the territory, assess the situation on the ground, and collect intelligence first-hand.

Led by the EU Special Representative for the South Caucasus and the Crisis in Georgia, engagement would be non-political, and allow for the EU experience to bear fruits in Nagorno-Karabakh, too.

This would not interfere with the OSCE Minsk Group mandate, nor could it objectively be seen as an implicit recognition of the authorities in Stepanakert.

With its experience in conflict prevention and resolution, its financial resources, and the lever-

age it holds over the parties, the EU is well-placed to provide substantial support towards lasting peace and stability in the region, fully in line with its own security strategy in the Eastern neighborhood.

30 years on, the time has come for the EU to

raise its game in Nagorno-Karabakh. Would it be less simple than it seems reading these lines? Maybe... Would it be worth trying? Definitely!

(Diogo Pinto is the director of European Friends of Armenia. This column was originally published on www.euractiv.com)

Israel Suspends Plan to Tax Jerusalem Church Properties

HOLY SEPLUCHRE, from page 1

resurrected, and the decision closed one of Jerusalem’s most visited holy sites just ahead of the busy Easter season.

Barkat said his decision affected only commercial properties, such as hotels, restaurants and offices, and not houses of worship. He said other cities followed similar practices worldwide.

“As the mayor of the city of Jerusalem, my goal and role is to make sure people pay their taxes,” he said in an interview earlier Tuesday. “We have no negative or bad intentions here.”

The churches accused Barkat of acting in bad faith and undermining a longstanding status quo. They say their non-church properties still serve religious purposes by providing services to pilgrims and local flocks.

In Tuesday’s announcement, Netanyahu said Cabinet Minister Tzachi Hanegbi would head the new negotiating committee, which will include representatives from the city, and the finance, foreign and interior ministries.

“The team will negotiate with the representatives of the churches to resolve the issue,” it said.

In addition to suspending tax collection, Netanyahu’s office said that proposed legislation governing the sale of church lands in Jerusalem was also being suspended.

Cardinal Edwin O’Brien, Grand Master of the

Order of the Holy Sepulchre of Jerusalem, called the recent proposals “alarming.”

“Betraying international treaties and centuries of practice, all Christian properties, except churches themselves, are being taxed tens of billions of dollars. This includes hundreds of agencies, including Christian schools, hospitals, homes for the needy, health care facilities, and pilgrimage centers such as the Notre Dame Center in Jerusalem,” he said.

“Many church assets are being frozen, fines threatened, and hundreds of thousands of dollars seized from Christian churches in an effort that will severely curtail Christian freedom of practice.”

The cardinal called for prayer in the wake of these “unprecedented discrimination against Christians.”

A statement released by Christian leaders on Sunday said the proposals “breach existing agreements and international obligations which guarantee the rights and the privileges of the Churches, in what seems as an attempt to weaken the Christian presence in Jerusalem.”

“The greatest victims in this are those impoverished families who will go without food and housing, as well as the children who will be unable to attend school,” the statement said.

(The Catholic News Agency contributed to this report.)



Wallenberg Foundation Decries Israeli Vote not To Recognize Armenian Genocide

WALLENBERG, from page 1

Eduardo Eurnekian and founder Baruch Tenenbaum.

“With all due respect, we are not able to understand, let alone justify this stance,” they said. “Israel is the national home of the Jewish people, who suffered an indescribable plight during the Shoah [Holocaust].

Twenty-five-years earlier, the Armenian people endured another unspeakable tragedy, which, in light of the world’s silence, many believe has encouraged the Nazis to perpetrate their atrocities against the Jews during World War II.”

The foundation believes that of all the nations in the world, the Jewish state should have “the intellectual honesty and the spiritual generosity to recognizing the horrific tragedy of the Armenian people. Alas, the Israeli government

and its Knesset have lost this opportunity time and again. There is no political reality that could provide a reasonable excuse for that.”

Eurnekian and Tenenbaum observed a “deep connection” between Jews and Armenians. The NGO, which works to recognize Righteous among the Nations, notes that 24 Armenians have officially received that title so far, which is a large number in relation to the size of the population.

“Mr. Edelstein, we know your personal support for the recognition of the Armenian Genocide, as is the case of your predecessor, President Reuven Rivlin,” the letter concluded. “We feel that the Knesset would be praised around the world for taking a bold ethical stance, regardless of any short-term political considerations. We regret that this has not happened yet.”