

THE ARMENIAN Mirror-Spectator

Volume LXXXVIII, NO. 39, Issue 4534

\$ 2.00

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

Serzh Sargsyan Becomes New Prime Minister amidst Protests

YEREVAN (Combined Sources) – Former President Serzh Sargsyan sought to justify his decision to hold on to power on Tuesday, April 17, as lawmakers elected him Armenia's new prime minister amid continuing opposition demonstrations in Yerevan.

Sargsyan denounced the ongoing protests but at the same time downplayed their significance moments after the Armenian parliament voted by 76 to 17 to appoint him to what will now be the country's top government post.

"The people cannot be unruly," he said on the parliament floor. "If they were, there would be millions of people in the streets. You know full well how many people are taking part in these demonstrations."

The main organizer of those rallies, Nikol Pashinian, pledged to continue his campaign which he said is turning into a popular "velvet revolution" against Sargsyan. Reacting to the parliament vote, Pashinian told RFE/RL's Armenian service (Azatutyun.am) that he will keep trying to "paralyze the state government system" with peaceful acts of "civil disobedience."



Protests in Yerevan

Pashinian and other critics say that Sargsyan's extended rule would deal a severe blow to democracy and the rule of law.

Sargsyan claimed that his premiership will not amount to a third term in office because he will wield fewer powers than he did in his previous capacity as president of

the republic. "People have still not realized that there is no one-man rule anymore," he complained at a special session of the National Assembly overshadowed by tight security measures taken in and outside the parliament building.

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Peace of Art Unveils New Billboards Commemorating the Armenian Genocide

BOSTON – Peace of Art has created a new billboard in commemoration of the Armenian Genocide, continues its annual Genocide awareness campaign, by honoring the memory of the innocent victims of all genocides.

Since April 10, 2018, digital billboards have been displayed in different cities and towns in Massachusetts, calling on the international community to recognize the first genocide of the 20th century, the Armenian Genocide.

The image on the billboard is an empty bird's nest surrounded by barbed wire with the remains of a few feathers. This image symbolizes their violent expulsion from the nest. It refers to what happened to the Armenians living in Turkey. They were removed from their historic homeland through forced deportations and massacres, by the order of the Ottoman Empire.

Artist Daniel Varoujan Hejinian, president of Peace of Art, said, "The billboards remind us that the Armenian Genocide seized 1.5 million lives, while 393,700 Armenians were expelled from their homes and became refugees. Being an emigrant child, I felt the pain of the emigration deeply, and it is most regrettable that genocide continues to be a tool used by governments against their own citizens. Because of the ongoing war in Syria, thousands of citizens including Armenians, have lost their lives and have been forced to leave their cradle, and enter the unknown route of migration with a hopeless dream to return."

Since 1996, Hejinian has been displaying the Armenian Genocide Commemorative Billboards. In 2003, Peace of Art Inc., began to sponsor the Armenian Genocide Commemorative Billboards. In 2015, Peace of Art Inc., launched its Armenian Genocide Centennial awareness billboard campaign, "100 Billboards for 100 Years of Genocide," in the U.S. and Canada to commemorate not only the victims of the Armenian Genocide but also the victims of all Genocides worldwide. This year's billboards will remain on display until April 30, 2018.

The Billboards Locations are Lynn, on Route 1 along the Lynnway and Methuen.

For more information on the organization visit www.peaceofart.org.

Kurt Focuses on Aintab Armenians' Battle for Survival

By Alin K. Gregorian

Mirror-Spectator Staff

WATERTOWN – Historian Dr. Ümit Kurt presented a lecture on Thursday, April 12, on the battle for Aintab, which highlighted the intertwined histories and divergent paths of the Armenians and Turks in that city, now known as Gaziantep.

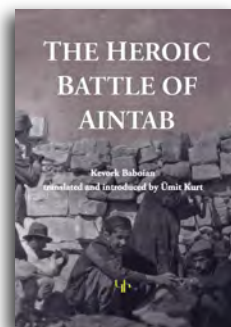
Even on a micro level, the subject is one particularly close to Kurt, currently a researcher at Jerusalem's Van Leer Institute, as he is a native of Gaziantep.

The lecture, co-sponsored by the Tekeyan Culture Association and the Armenian Museum of America and held at the latter's Adele and Haig Der Manuelian galleries, engrossed the 60 or so attendees, many of whom were Armenians whose families had hailed from Aintab.

Jennifer Liston Munson, executive director of the Armenian Museum of America, welcomed the guests and noted that the museum was doing a lot of new and exciting work, refreshing the galleries downstairs and rethinking the entire flow of how the museum works and revisiting objects in the collection. She introduced Aram Arkun, executive director of the Tekeyan Cultural Association of the US and Canada.

Arkun spoke briefly about the tragic events after the Armenian Genocide when

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NEWS IN BRIEF



COMMEMORATING THE
ARMENIAN GENOCIDE
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Ankara Prosecutor Seeks to Strip Paylan Immunity

ANKARA (PanARMENIAN.Net) – The Ankara Chief Prosecutor's office has prepared proceedings against eight deputies from the pro-Kurdish Peoples' Democratic Party (HDP), including Turkish-Armenian lawmaker Garo Paylan, on the grounds of "insulting the Turkish nation, the Turkish state, its army and police forces," "acting against the law on political parties," "making terror propaganda," and "insulting the president," *Hurriyet Daily News* reported on April 12.

The summary of proceedings said HDP deputies Osman Baydemir, Alican Önlü, Feleknaş Uca, Sibel Yigitalp, Nadir Yıldırım, Dilek Öcalan, Mizgin İrgat, and Paylan had "praised" the imprisoned leader of the outlawed Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK), Abdullah Öcalan, in their speeches and publicly expressed condolences to the killed PKK militants, state-run Anadolu Agency reported on April 10.

The summary of proceedings, asking for the removal of the parliamentary immunities of the eight deputies, has been sent to the Justice Ministry, the agency said.

According to the Prosecutor's office, Paylan should be prosecuted for "humiliating" remarks he made in Canada in May 2017 "towards the Turkish nation, the Republic of Turkey and insulting the President." Paylan has been vocal about the plight of Armenians in Turkey and human rights there.

When in Canada in May 2017, the lawmaker held a series of meetings in Ottawa and Montreal with Members of Parliament and various current and former Canadian officials. He provided an overview of the current political climate in Turkey, the aftermath of the constitutional referendum and the ongoing uncertainty and concern regarding the rights and freedoms of the minorities living in Turkey. He stressed the importance of acknowledging history, specifically in regards to the Armenian Genocide, stating, "unpunished crimes lead to new crimes."

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St. Vartan's Photo Exhibit

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ARMENIA

News From Armenia

EU Funds Embezzled by Bogus NGOs

YEREVAN (Armenpress) – The preliminary investigation of the criminal case on embezzlement of grants provided by the European Union (EU) delegation to Armenia to a number of NGOs has been completed in the general department of investigations of the Investigative Committee.

Nineteen people were charged with a large-scale embezzlement scheme. Based on the investigation sufficient proofs were obtained that embezzlement was conducted from 18 grant programs funded by the EU Delegation, and the total money embezzled 907,281,869 drams (\$1.8 million).

An investigation showed that during the period between 2009 and 2016, a group of people developed grant programs with an initial agreement, acquired already registered NGOs through which the programs had been submitted to the grant programs assessment competition announced by the EU Delegation to Armenia. The submitted programs were approved with the support of an employee of the EU Delegation, and the funds for the implementation of programs were provided.

The persons formed false accounting, financial-economic and program documents, in particular, fake labor, service contracts, documents for purchase of goods, fake documents for trips based on which they stole large sums of money.

71 Schools Lack Running Water, MP Says

YEREVAN (Panorama) – Mane Tandilyan, a member of parliament who is in the Yelk opposition faction, voiced her concerns over the current and ever-growing problems faced by Armenia at Tuesday, April 17 special sitting of the National Assembly.

The MP noted that the citizens that left Armenia are trying to find a job abroad, while the majority of migrants are from the country's rural regions, adding the border villages are mainly populated by pensioners.

Tandilyan stressed many people lack access to healthcare in the country due to the high costs of medical services. She also added that Armenia is lagging behind its EAEU partners in the Doing Business rankings.

Tandilyan added some 71 schools across Armenia lack running water, 141 schools have no sewers, while 292 schools have no telephone connection.

Physics Conference to Be Held in Artsakh

STEPANAKERT (Panorama.am) – Artsakh Republic President Bako Sahakyan received this week members of an initiative group from the international conference on contemporary physics problems to be held in Artsakh.

As the information department at the President's Office reported, a set of issues concerning the organization of the event were discussed during the meeting.

Sahakyan praised holding such events in the republic suggesting that they would help develop natural sciences in the country.

OSCE to Conduct Monitoring in Artsakh

STEPANAKERT (news.am) – The Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) Mission was scheduled to conduct a planned monitoring of the ceasefire regime on the border of Artsakh and Azerbaijan, in the north-east direction of the Hadrut region on Wednesday, April 18, in accordance with the arrangement reached with the authorities of the Republic of Artsakh (Nagorno Karabakh Republic).

From the positions of the Defense Army of the Republic of Artsakh, the monitoring will be conducted by Personal Representative of the OSCE Chairperson-in-Office Ambassador Andrzej Kasprzyk and his Field Assistants Ognjen Jovic (Bosnia and Herzegovina) and Mihail Olaru (Moldova).

The authorities of Artsakh have expressed their readiness to assist in conducting the monitoring.

Serzh Sargsyan Becomes New Prime Minister amidst Protests

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Predictably, Sargsyan's candidacy was backed by the deputies from his ruling Republican Party (HHK), its junior coalition partner, Dashnaksutyun, as well as more than a dozen lawmakers representing businessman Gagik Tsarukian's nominally opposition alliance. Tsarukian himself did not attend the session.

The vote was boycotted by Pashinian and three other deputies from the opposition Yelk alliance. The five other Yelk parliamentarians attended the session and voted against Sarkisian.

In his opening speech in the parliament, Sargsyan said he can continue to govern the country because he leads a party that won last year's parliamentary elections. This will be in line with the newly introduced parliamentary system of government, he said.

"I am here, first and foremost as head of the ruling party, to say in favor of my candidacy that I have sufficient influence and possibilities ... to ensure the harmonious work in the executive and legislative branches of the political force making up the parliamentary majority," he said.

Sarkisian, who completed his final presidential term on April 9, indicated that he would be wrong to keep running the country from behind the scenes, as HHK chairman. That would mean dodging responsibility for government policies, he claimed.



Prime Minister Serzh Sargsyan

"For me, as chairman of the Republican Party, running away from personal responsibility is unacceptable," he said. "I have never done and will not do that. This is the primary reason why I am now standing at this podium."

Sargsyan publicly stated in 2014 that he "will not aspire" to the post of prime minister if Armenia becomes a parliamentary republic as a result of his controversial constitutional changes. Pashinian and other opposition leaders now accuse him of breaking that pledge to cling to power.

Sargsyan dismissed the opposition claims on Tuesday, citing a "de facto absence of my ambitions" to serve as premier and again saying that his 2014 statement was taken out of context.

Sargsyan, 63, also defended his decade-long track record during a question-and-answer session that followed his 20-minute speech. He

brushed aside opposition claims that that the economic situation in Armenia has deteriorated during his presidency. He listed a raft of official economic data showing sizable increases in GDP per capita, individual bank deposits and the number of cars since 2007.

The new premier did acknowledge, though, widespread discontent with

Square in the evening. He said he hopes to hold there "the biggest rally in Armenia's history."

The 42-year-old leader of the opposition Civil Contract party continued to defy police warnings to end his "illegal gatherings" or face their violent dispersal by security forces. The police said the use of force could start "at any



Protest leader Nikol Pashinian and supporters

the state of affairs in the country. "I am sure that many, many people in Armenia, at least 60 percent or maybe even more, are unhappy with everything," he said. "But being unhappy does not mean revolting and rejecting everything."

"In any family children may well be unhappy with their parents or vice versa. But that doesn't mean a conflict," he added.

Opposition lawmakers scoffed at these arguments. "If everything is so good, then why is everything so bad?" asked Yelk's Edmon Marukian.

Marukian accused Sargsyan of having lost touch with reality and building a "fake parliamentary system." "There are two worlds: your world and the world in which we live," he told the ex-president.

Sargsyan rejected the opposition criticism when he again took the floor both before and after the parliament vote. He accused his political opponents of "selectively" using economic figures to "denigrate" his legacy.

Senior HHK lawmakers likewise defended their leader. The ruling party's parliamentary leader, Vahram Baghdasarian, alleged an opposition "race" to disparage the country's leadership.

Dashnaksutyun's Armen Rustamian said, for his part, that his party and the HHK have already laid the groundwork for a "just Armenia." Sargsyan's election as prime minister has "opened a new page for the dignified future of our country," he said.

Protests Continue

Pashinian, the main organizer of the daily protests, declared the start of a "velvet revolution" in Armenia as protesters walked past several key state buildings and blocked entrances to them.

"I am officially declaring that there is a revolutionary situation in the country," he said early in the afternoon.

Pashinian urged Armenians to converge on Yerevan's central Republic

necessary moment."

Pashinian demonstratively ripped up one such written warning that was delivered to him by a senior police officer early in the morning. He then told about 100 supporters to walk from the city's France Square, the focal point of the protests, to other parts of downtown Yerevan. The crowd grew much bigger in the following hours.

Also in the morning, police detained a separate group of protesters who tried to block traffic elsewhere in the city center. Pashinian spoke afterwards of around 30 detentions. The police did not confirm this number.

Meanwhile, dozens of other opposition supporters gathered at a street intersection in the city's western Ajapnyak district. They briefly scuffled with police after blocking it. Some of them then sat on the ground to keep traffic blocked.

The parliament met at noon to elect Armenia's new prime minister amid unusually tight security in and around its building. Hundreds of riot police and interior troops were deployed on nearby streets, including Marshal Bagramian Avenue, one of Yerevan's main arteries which was the scene of clashes between police and Pashinian-led demonstrators on Monday. The security forces stood there behind several rows of razor wire.

Protests in Armenia have continued for the fifth straight day shutting Yerevan's downtown. As many as 46 people, including six police officers, were reported injured during a clash on April 16.

At least 80 mostly young people were detained on Tuesday during continuing anti-government protests in Yerevan.

The Pashinian's wife told RFE/RL's Armenian service (Azatutyun.am) that their teenage son Ashot was also taken into custody but set free about three hours later. A police spokesperson denied this, however.

The detainees included about two dozen student activists who were demonstrating jointly early in the morning. They were taken to a police station in the city's northern Nor Nork district and were kept there as of late afternoon. Two of them, Vahan Kostanian and Davit Petrosian, are well-known activists.

(RFE/RL, Arka and news.am contributed to this report.)



INTERNATIONAL

Macron's Bid to Look Strong on Syria Could Weaken Him in France

By Pauline Bock

PARIS (*The Guardian*) – The president has often been compared to Blair, but these strikes have been met with scepticism in France. He will be hoping Syria isn't his Iraq

On Syria, as with most topics, Emmanuel Macron is certain he has made the right call. In a TV interview on Sunday night, the French president described Saturday's strikes in Syria, led by the US, Britain and France, as "a military success." The operation, which targeted chemical weapons facilities in Damascus and near Homs in retaliation for the suspected use of poison gas on civilians in Douma on 7 April, was Macron's first major international military decision. "It is the international community that intervened," he said.

The use of chemical weapons by the Assad regime, Macron had said prior to the strikes, was "the French red line." In June last year, the French president told the *Guardian*: "If chemical weapons are used on the ground and we know how to find out their provenance, France will launch strikes to destroy the chemical weapons stocks." And he admitted: "When you fix red lines, if you don't know how to make sure they are respected, you're choosing to be weak."

To Macron, after the Douma attack, weakness was not an option: "We had reached a point where these strikes were necessary to give back the international community some credibility," he said on Sunday, adding that failing to

enforce red lines had led Russia, which backs Bashar al-Assad in Syria, to think of the international community as "nice" and "weak." Just like Barack Obama before him, Macron had set his own rule and now had to respect it.

In France, the strikes have been met with scepticism from left and right. In op-eds in *Le Monde*, experts warned about the "outdated" and "purely reactive" logic of the strikes that complicate a game in which Assad probably "feels bolstered." Although Macron received the full support of his party, *La République en Marche*, and thus of many in the Socialist party, the hard-left leader Jean-Luc Mélenchon has called the strikes "an irresponsible escalation" and regretted that Macron acted "without a UN mandate, a European agreement or a French parliamentary vote." For *Le Pen*, Macron has "violated international law."

As commander-in-chief of the army, the French president was within his rights in ordering the strikes (the constitution stipulates that the government has to notify parliament of such military decisions within three days). Yet Macron's choice to look strong abroad could weaken him at home. Having met resistance to his reforms of the public sector, he isn't doing so well domestically: his opinion ratings have fallen to 40 percent, his lowest score since his election last May. Foreign affairs is usually his forte – it is nationally acknowledged that this young, modern president has done wonders for France's image abroad, leading the fight against climate change and standing up to

Donald Trump. The French are used to Macron doing the right thing, at least internationally; now they aren't so sure.

It's important he doesn't look "weak" to the Russians, but what if the French don't like him looking "strong"? The country doesn't tend to welcome military interventions abroad. In 2003, when Jacques Chirac's government refused to follow the US and the UK to Iraq, the decision was hailed as a good one domestically. Some 77 percent of the French were against a war against Saddam Hussein's regime. In a TV address, Chirac declared that "war is a sign of failure." To this day, Iraq remains the mistake the French are proud not to have partaken in.

Macron's bottom-up language is upside down to most French people

The contrast with 2003 is striking because it is symbolic, too. Macron did not just bypass the French parliament, he also acted without a mandate from the United Nations. It was at the UN that Chirac's prime minister, Dominique de Villepin, gave a famous speech in 2003, sending a strong message to the international community and making his mark in the history of foreign affairs. (It has even been immortalized in a French graphic novel, *Quai d'Orsay*, which was adapted for the cinema in 2013.)

Macron has been compared to Tony Blair countless times – for his youthfulness, his sweeping victory, for uniting left and right, for his liberal policies. Let's hope that intervention in Syria doesn't present another opportunity for a darker comparison.

Latest Turkey-EU Talks End with No Progress

By Semih Idiz

VARNA, Bulgaria (*Al Monitor*) – The latest high-level attempt to normalize Turkish-EU ties has failed. President Recep Tayyip Erdogan's much publicized meeting with European Council President Donald Tusk and EU Commission President Jean-Claude Juncker, in the Bulgarian seaside resort of Varna on March 26, did not produce any results on issues that have been clouding ties.

There was no indication that fresh life would be breathed into Turkey's bid for EU membership. All Turkey obtained was an assurance that its dormant bid remained on the table and that dialogue between Turkey and the EU would continue, even though there is little chance that stalled negotiations will resume anytime soon.

Bulgarian President Boyko Borissov, who hosted the summit because his country holds the EU's term presidency, had already set the tone before the leaders gathered in Varna when he told reporters that this would be a difficult meeting.

With such statements, expectations that any breakthrough could be achieved at Varna were minimal.

Otherwise, and in a repeat of the last meeting between the three leaders in May 2017, this summit turned out once more to be an occasion where the sides merely listed their grievances and demands from each other

Turkey's long list of grievances includes what it says is the support that followers of the outlawed Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK) and the so-called Fethullah Gulen Terror Organization (FETO), a term Ankara uses to refer to Gulen followers, enjoy in Europe. Turkey has accused

FETO of masterminding the coup attempt against Erdogan in July 2016.

Ankara also wants more EU money to cope with the 3.5 million Syrian refugees in Turkey. It complains that only 1.8 billion euros (\$2.2 billion) of the promised 3 billion euros (\$3.7 billion) agreed on in 2016 has arrived, and even that belatedly and begrudgingly.

Ankara also wants the EU to honor its promise of visa liberalization for Turks, as well as a major revamping of the 1995 Turkey-EU Customs Union agreement.

The EU refuses to grant visa-free travel for Turks until Ankara narrows the scope of its definition of terrorism.

The Cyprus problem has also re-emerged to haunt Turkish-EU ties. The latest standoff follows the decision by the Greek Cypriot government to resume exploration for hydrocarbons around the island. However, Ankara refuses to accept Cyprus' sovereignty over the whole island.

Turkey has prevented the exploration by sending naval vessels to the region. It argues that this unilateral exploration by the Greek Cypriot administration encroaches on Turkey's rights in the eastern Mediterranean, as well as the rights of the Turkish Cypriot government in the north of the island.

The EU, however, has thrown its weight behind EU member Cyprus again and issued strong condemnation of Turkey only days before the Varna summit.

Meanwhile, criticism of Turkey's Operation Olive Branch in Afrin, by German Chancellor Angela Merkel and EU foreign policy chief Federica Mogherini also angered Ankara.

During the joint press conference following the talks, Erdogan reiterated Ankara's expectations on all these points, showing little inclination to submit to EU

demands on any of them.

He also underlined that it would be a serious mistake for the EU to exclude Turkey from its expansion policy.

Trying to strike a positive note, Erdogan said they had taken the first step at Varna for restoring mutual confidence. He did not clarify what this assessment was based on.

Erdogan nevertheless acknowledged that concrete steps had yet to be taken for this to come about.

The EU demands include the improvement of Turkey's democratic standards and the enactment of reforms on freedoms and the rule of law, which have been eroded under the state of emergency declared following the failed coup in 2016.

The EU also wants Turkey to climb down on its dispute with Cyprus in the Mediterranean Sea and with Greece over territorial rights in the Aegean Sea as well as release two Greek soldiers who were arrested after crossing the Greek border into Turkey and who are currently facing spying charges.

Kemal Kirisci from the Turkish Industry and Business Association pointed out that Turkey and the EU are also more dependent on each other than many are aware.

"Half of Turkish exports go to EU countries," Kirisci wrote in an article for *The Brookings Institution*. He added that "Turkey is the EU's 5th-largest trading partner after the United States, China, Switzerland, and Russia, and ahead of Norway, Japan, and South Korea."

But even Kirisci does not expect a breakthrough in ties under current conditions.

"Ultimately, the greatest challenge to reviving healthy EU-Turkish relations remains the dire state of Turkish democracy and rule of law," he wrote.

International News

Saudi Arabia Ready to Send Troops to Syria

RIYADH (*Armenpress*) – Saudi Arabia's Foreign Minister Adel al-Jubeir has announced that the Kingdom is ready to send troops to Syria to fight against terrorism if there is such a proposal from the US Administration, *Al-Ekhabariya* TV informed.

"We have been negotiating with the USA since the beginning of the year over sending armed forces to Syria. Those proposals and idea are not new", the minister said.

He reminded that those negotiations were conducted with Obama's administration.

Armenia May Receive Turkmen Gas in Swap Deal Involving Iran

ASHGABAT (*PanARMENIAN.Net*) – Armenia might come to receive Turkmen gas in a swap deal that Iran and Turkmenistan are currently negotiating, the *Financial Tribune* reports.

Turkmenistan is exploring options on gas swap deals with Iran to export its fuel to markets further afield, Iranian President Hassan Rouhani reportedly said during a recent visit to Ashgabat.

Speaking to reporters after his encounter with Turkmen President Gurbanguly Berdimukhamedov, the Iranian leader expressed satisfaction with their exchange, *CNBC* reported.

Official Iranian media limited their reports to vague details about agreements on economic cooperation, but Russia's *RIA-Novosti* news agency noted that discussions had dwelled on energy issues.

Prior talks of such arrangements suggest Armenia and Azerbaijan would be the most likely recipients of Turkmen gas.

Because of economic challenges, Turkmenistan has been seeking to find more buyers for its natural gas riches other than China.

Hamidreza Araqi, managing director of National Iranian Gas Company, has suggested that a gas swap deal could be considered.

US Pastor Denies Coup Allegations in Turkey

ISTANBUL (*Reuters*) – A US pastor denied allegations of links to a group accused of orchestrating a failed military coup in Turkey as he went on trial on Monday, April 16, in a case that has compounded strains in US-Turkish relations, *Reuters* reports.

Andrew Brunson, a Christian pastor from North Carolina who has lived in Turkey for more than two decades, was indicted on charges of helping the group that Ankara holds responsible for the failed 2016 coup against President Tayyip Erdogan. He faces up to 35 years in prison.

"I've never done something against Turkey. I love Turkey. I've been praying for Turkey for 25 years. I want truth to come out," Brunson told the court in the western Turkish town of Aliaga, north of the Aegean city of Izmir.

Brunson has been the pastor of Izmir Resurrection Church, serving a small Protestant congregation in Turkey's third largest city.

"I do not accept the charges mentioned in the indictment. I was never involved in any illegal activities," said Brunson, wearing a white shirt and black suit and making his defense in Turkish. His wife was in the courtroom, as were North Carolina Senator Thom Tillis and the US envoy for religious freedom, Sam Brownback.

At the end of the hearing, the court ruled Brunson should remain in jail as the trial continues, the pastor's lawyer told reporters. He said the next hearing will be on May 7.

Brunson's trial is one of several legal cases roiling US-Turkish relations. The two countries are also at odds over US support for a Kurdish militia in northern Syria that Turkey considers a terrorist organization.

Washington has called for Brunson's release while Erdogan suggested last year his fate could be linked to that of US-based Muslim cleric Fethullah Gulen, whose extradition Ankara has repeatedly sought to face charges over the coup attempt.

Community News

LA Genocide Committee Announces April 24 March for Justice

LOS ANGELES – The Armenian Genocide Committee (AGC), a broad-based, unified, coalition of the major ecclesiastical, political, social, youth, and cultural organizations of the Armenian community of Southern California, has announced that on April 24, 2018 beginning at 12 noon, the March for Justice will take place from Pan Pacific Park to the Turkish Consulate in Los Angeles.

“We call on all segments of the community to join us as we commemorate the 103rd anniversary of the Armenian Genocide and as we continue to voice our collective demands for justice for this immense crime against humanity,” said AGC Chairman Karo Khanjian.

Continuing an over four-decade tradition of bringing the demands of the Armenian community directly to the offices of the Turkish Consul General in Los Angeles, the AGC has been working diligently for the past year to plan the Rally for Justice which will take place immediately upon the conclusion of the March for Justice in front of the Turkish Consulate located at Wilshire Blvd. and Crescent Heights. “We are thrilled to announce that we have brought together prominent Federal and State officials, as well as cultural icons, to provide participants in the March and Rally for Justice with a deeply meaningful program which pays homage to our martyred Saints through artistic performances and moving and inspirational addresses,” said Mehran Khatchaturian, of the Public Relations sub-committee of the AGC.

In 2015, which marked the Centennial Commemoration of the Armenian Genocide, over 166,000 Angelenos took part with the Armenian community in the March for Justice, making it one of the largest protest marches ever recorded in the history of the City of Los Angeles. At this year’s March for Justice, it is anticipated that tens of thousands will once again gather 103 years after the traumatic events as the Armenian community reasserts its demands for international recognition for the crime of genocide committed against the Armenian people. The March for Justice will also raise awareness that the Armenian Cause does not end with recognition, but, in addition, reparations and restitution under international law remain central to the struggle, as the Armenian people call for the right to return to their ancestral homeland.

Armenian youth have played a vital role in the organization of the 2018 March for Justice bringing on the participation of numerous undergraduate and graduate university Armenian student associations and the student bodies of every Armenian private school and numerous public schools in the greater Los Angeles area.

“The Armenian struggle is a movement we can call our own and only see MARCH, page 5



Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer (D-NY) at the 2017 Armenian Genocide Commemoration at Times Square in New York City

Armenian Assembly Members Meet with Senate Democratic Leader Schumer

WASHINGTON – In the lead up to the April 24th commemoration of the Armenian Genocide, Armenian Assembly of America Board of Trustees Co-Chair Van Krikorian met with Senate Democratic Leader Charles “Chuck” Schumer (D-NY), along with Assembly Executive Director Bryan Ardouny and Grassroots and Development Associate Mariam Khaloyan. They highlighted the importance of US affirmation of the Armenian Genocide, as well as the need to redouble efforts to protect Christian, Kurdish, and other groups at risk in the Middle East.

“Senator Schumer has been a leading light for applying the lessons of the Armenian Genocide and a strong US-Armenia and Artsakh relationship,” Assembly Co-Chair Krikorian stated. “Over the decades, Turkey, and more recently Azerbaijan, have used surreptitious influence to prevent US affirmation of the Armenian Genocide. Senator Schumer has been an inspiring champion against such efforts and for US interests including the integrity of the US record since he began serving as a congressman in 1981.”

During the 2015 Centennial Commemoration of the Armenian Genocide, he stated: “I stand with you in making sure the deniers are not given any place under the sun.” And in announcing he was again co-sponsoring an Armenian Genocide Resolution last year, Senator Schumer made clear that: “All countries should recognize the horrific genocide that occurred 102 years ago to the Armenian people.” He continued: “It is my sacred duty to speak out against the terrors of the past and for those who cannot speak of it themselves and that’s why I am a proud co-sponsor of this Senate resolution. I stand with the worldwide Armenian community in labeling the atrocities against the Armenian people as genocide.”

In addition to his efforts in Washington, Schumer has also attended and offered remarks each and every year at the annual Armenian Genocide commemoration sponsored by the Knights and Daughters of Vartan at Times Square in New York City.



Armenian Assembly Grassroots and Development Associate Mariam Khaloyan, Armenian Assembly Co-Chair Van Krikorian, Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer (D-NY), and Armenian Assembly Executive Director Bryan Ardouny

LA County Board Of Supervisors Commemorates Armenian Genocide

LOS ANGELES – On April 10, the 103rd anniversary of the Armenian Genocide was commemorated at the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors meeting in the Board Hearing Room at the Kenneth Hahn Hall of Administration.

Supervisors Kathryn Barger and Hilda L. Solis held a special presentation recognizing the Day of Remembrance for the Armenian Genocide.

“Presentations such as these serve as a somber recognition of the past and provide a platform for discussion. I’m so proud that while serving in the state senate, congress and even in the administration that we were steadfast in supporting the Armenian Genocide,” stated Supervisor Solis. “It is our responsibility to shed light on it, to study it, and to encourage discourse. In this way those who come after us, could learn from atrocities and hopefully not have history repeat itself again.”

In addition to the remarks by the supervisors, the presentation featured a duduk performance and special remarks by Archbishop Hovnan Derderian, Primate of the Western Diocese of the Armenian Church of North America, Very Reverend Father Muron Aznikian of the Western Prelacy of the Armenian Apostolic Church of America, Father Armenag Bedrossian of Our Lady Queen of Martyrs Armenian Catholic Church in Los Angeles, and Consul Armella Shakaryan of Consulate General of Armenia in Los Angeles were also invited to deliver remarks in honor of the 1.5 million that perished during the genocide.

Glendale Mayor Zareh Sinanyan, Councilmembers Vartan Gharpetian and Ara Najarian, as well as other representatives of Armenian community organizations including the ANCA-WR were in attendance.

The LA County Board of Supervisors has recognized the month of April as Armenian History Month and are also honoring community leaders for their contributions to the Armenian community.

‘Women of 1915’ to Premiere In Armenia during Aurora Prize Ceremonies

YEREVAN – Armenoid Productions announced that the Armenia premiere of Bared Maronian’s award-winning documentary, “Women of 1915” will be held at the upcoming 2018 Aurora Prize for Awakening Humanity ceremonies on April 24 in Yerevan. The documentary will also be screened in Brussels and Paris during April.

“I’m honored that the Aurora Prize committee has selected to screen the Women of 1915 as part of its awards ceremonies since the documentary devotes a good portion to the life and career of Aurora Mardigian, who inspired the very name of the annual \$1 million award honoring those who stand up against adversity,” said Maronian.

The film will be shown in Brussels, Belgium on April 27 and in Paris, France on April 29.

April 27 - Belgium Premiere - screening of the documentary in French subtitles, is sponsored by the Armenian National Committee of Belgium and will be held at the Haydoun at 7:30 PM

“Women of 1915” is the first documentary ever to unveil the role of the Armenian women of the era who lived through the horrors of the first Genocide of the 20th century. The documentary highlights the integral role of the Armenian women in their respective communities, the heroic, humanitarian women advocates who came to their aid from around the world, and many who died at war-ravaged Ottoman Empire to empower the surviving Armenian women as pillars of war-torn, post-Genocide societies.



COMMUNITY NEWS

Annual Gala to Celebrate HMADS' 50 Years of Inspiring the Future, Honoring Heritage

By Natalie Gabrelian

BAY SIDE, N.Y. – In 1967, the Hye Bardez Committee, appointed by the visionary Parish Council of the Armenian Church of the Holy Martyrs, opened the doors of the Hye Bardez Nursery to eight pre-kindergartners, providing preschool education with a special emphasis on Armenian language, history and culture. With great nourishment, this young seedling sprouted, growing ever larger with each grade planted, until it flourished into the first Armenian day school in New York – Holy Martyrs Armenian Day School (HMADS).

For 50 years, this N-6 elementary school of Oakland Gardens has combined the best elements of American education with an emphasis on Armenian language and culture. Under the leadership, guidance and unwavering devotion of its five principals – the late Sara Anoushian Dadourian, Mae Bedrossian Kazandjian, Principal Emeritus Zariné Kalayjian Boghosian, Sophie Djanece Kerbeykian, and its first alumna principal Seta Tavitian Megherian ('89) – the school has earned a well-deserved reputation for academic excellence and for inspiring a love of Armenian heritage in the “Fruits of Our Roots,” her over 275 alumni and students, past and present. Today, HMADS stands as

the only Armenian day school in New York and proudly celebrates 50 golden years as a pillar of the community.

On this milestone anniversary, we fondly remember and are indebted to the notable pillars of support whose dynamic leadership and generosity help lay the foundation, and for more than 50 years has inspired others to join in their vision to create and foster an outstanding Armenian elementary school. It is through the undying support of those who have carried the eternal flame that HMADS has maintained its high academic standards, inspiring future generations while honoring our centuries-old heritage.

For nearly 25 years, the Friends of HMADS fundraising group, founded by then School Board co-chair Nurhan Adarian, has remained true to these words. The dedicated efforts of this volunteer group ensure that HMADS is relieved of any financial concerns, enabling greater focus on the educational, cultural, and emotional enrichment of our youth.

On Saturday, June 2, join Friends of HMADS in celebration of 50 years of success at the annual gala dinner dance at the elegant North Hills Country Club in Manhasset, NY. Cocktail hour starts at 7:30 p.m. followed by dinner at 9 p.m., then dance the night away to the international sounds of Hratch Bogharian from California.

Re-affirming their unwavering commitment



Members of the 50th anniversary celebration of HMADS

to the school and once again joining the distinguished group of benefactors who carried the torch before them are 2018 gala booklet chairs Hratch and Negdar Arukian. As long-time supporters of the school, proud parents of two HMADS alumni (including a current

School Board member), and dedicated volunteers of various school committees, namely Friends of HMADS, they continue to give their all to ensure “The Legacy Continues.” Before raising a glass to the 50 golden years of HMADS, join the Arukians on this promise with a gift to the gala dinner dance booklet. Then together let us toast to the next century of success!

For ticket reservations or more information on supporting the gala booklet, contact Negdar Arukian, Maro Jamgotchian or the School Office.

(Natalie Gabrelian, Class of '88, is a member of the School Board and Friends of HMADS Committee.)

LA Genocide Committee Announces April 24 March for Justice

MARCH, from page 4
through us and our will may we shape our destiny. Together, let us prove that our united call for justice will not cease until our demands are met. The March for Justice is an integral part of this world-wide effort and we encourage everyone to join us on April 24 for this historic event,” concluded Van Der Megerdichian, of the youth coordination sub-committee of the AGC. Mihran Toumajan, a member of the AGC committee, concluded by stating: “Be a part of history, join us on April 24, as the March for Justice once again leads a global effort to obtain recognition and secure legal remedies for the Armenian Genocide. We encourage everyone to join us on April 24.”

For more information about the March for Justice, please visit www.march4justice.com.

- Armenian Genocide Committee:
Western Diocese of the Armenian Church of North America
Western Prelacy of the Armenian Apostolic Church
Armenian Catholic Church of North America
Armenian Evangelical Union of North America
Armenian Revolutionary Federation
Armenian Democratic Liberal Party
Social Democrat Hunchakian Party
Armenian General Benevolent Union – Western District
Armenian Relief Society – Western USA
Homenetmen Western U.S. Region
Armenian Youth Federation
All-Armenian Student Association
Armenian Assembly of America
Armenian National Committee of America – Western Region
Armenian Council of America
Armenian Bar Association
Organization of Istanbul Armenians
United Armenian Council of Los Angeles
Committee for Armenian Students in Public Schools (CASPS)
National Armenian Law Students Association
Open Wounds

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COMMUNITY NEWS

Erebuni School at St. James Celebrates 30th Anniversary

WATERTOWN – St. James Erebuni School in Watertown announces that it is celebrating its 30th anniversary with a formal gala affair on May 12 at 6.30 p.m. The event will take place at the Charles Mosesian Cultural Center at St. James Armenian Church and will honor the school founders, alumni, teachers, parents and community representatives. Festivities include a cocktail hour with Armenian appetizers, followed by a dinner reception and entertainment by singer Zaruhi Babayan from Armenia. The gala celebration is open to all members of the Armenian community.

For 30 years, the Erebuni Armenian School has created an environment for children of Armenian heritage to learn the language, history and culture. The school's commitment to educating the whole child has led to new enrichment programs, arts programs, chess and music. Very soon, Lego-Robotics will be added in the list. The school's mission is to preserve the heritage of the Armenian people, language, culture, traditions and religion. The school's Principal, Arminé Manukyan, says: "the Armenian Diaspora is growing and becoming more diverse, and it is imperative that our children carry on their heritage as our physical ties to the homeland become more distant. The Erebuni School immerses the students in the culture and the language, and their parents'

involvement, many of whom from Armenia, has always been a critical part of the education."

Founded by the Armenian Society of Boston (Iranahye Miutyun) in 1988, when all the schools at that time were Western Armenian, the Erebuni School met a growing need for a school that would focus on the Eastern Armenian language. For many years, all the teachers and the school administrators were volunteers. The school now has a professional staff, and its student population has grown close to 200. In 2015, Erebuni joined forces with St. James Armenian Church and it became St. James Erebuni School. This brought both Eastern and Western dialects together into one Armenian school.

The school philosophy embraces both project-based and textbook learning in the language classroom to enhance the learning of all students. Growing parent engagement



Students at the Erebuni School

includes the parent-teacher organization (PTO) and class liaison. Each class has a parent who is dedicated to helping teachers and classroom parents with in-class activities and school events.

Manukyan adds, "Our talented and caring group of teachers want nothing but the best for our students and families. They make our school such a great place for our students and their families. I believe that learning should be fun, in fact it's incredibly important. It all starts with the most important person in the classroom, the teacher. The learning they plan, the environment they create, the friendships they help foster, it's all incredible. We are so thankful for our teachers. Each one of them bring

unique sets of skills which, in whole, benefits our school.

"Our school is not only standing but flourishing, which is a truly a testament to teachers' and parents' hard work and commitment. And this gala is our token to honor them. This is one day when teachers take center stage and are recognized for their countless years of dedication and hard work to make sure every Armenian child reaches his or her full potential, making the Armenian school a caring and warm environment that remind the students of their own family."

Everyone in the community is invited to join the celebration.

For tickets, go to stjameserebunischool.org.

Armenian Immigration Project Discussion With Mark Arslan on April 27

FRESNO – Mark Arslan, with family roots in Fresno, has created a unique and history-rich research tool that allows local American-Armenians discover their family roots. Arslan who has developed "The Armenian Immigration Project," will present his program to the Fresno community on Friday, April 27, 6-9 p.m.

Arslan will demonstrate and discuss his project at the free event beginning at 6 p.m. at the Armenian Museum of Fresno housed at the University of California Center, located on 550 E. Shaw Ave.

This free searchable web database with more than 100,000 entries features multiple types of American primary sources (ship manifests, censuses, births, marriages, deaths, military, naturalization, passports, and newspaper missing persons advertisements).

Records of individuals and their friends and family are linked together (sometimes with photos and other images) to show relationships.

"I was amazed how quickly Mark was able to track the footsteps of my mother's great-uncle Levon Lulejian, who migrated from Kharpert to Fresno in 1920!" said Varoujan Der Simonian, director of the Museum. According to the records, Lulejian, a trained chemist, was born in 1892. He became the recording secretary of General Antranik, and the publisher-editor of Meshag newspaper in Fresno.

RSVPs are encouraged. To RSVP, go to www.armof.org and register on line to save a seat. Admission is free.



Mark Arslan

OBITUARY

Dr. Jack Danielian

Longtime Psychoanalyst

NEW YORK – Dr. Jack Danielian passed away on March 28, 2018, at the age of 83.

A native of Methuen, Mass., he graduated

with a BA from Harvard College in 1956 and he received his PhD in psychology from Columbia University in 1964.

Jack was the first psychoanalyst to be accepted into training at the American Institute for Psychoanalysis and became dean of the institute in 2009. During a lifetime of practicing psychotherapy, he trained and supervised many other therapists and published two books and countless articles. He spent years studying and helping to alleviate the multi-generational effects of trauma among the descendants of genocide victims, culminating in his groundbreaking article, "A Century of Silence: Terror and the Armenian Genocide."

He leaves his wife of 49 years, Hasmig Danielian, son Garin Danielian and daughter Ani Danielian Huang, granddaughter Zoe Danielian and grandsons Zaven and Nishan Huang.

He was interviewed at length in 2010 by Marni Pilafian for this newspaper (<https://mirrorspectator.com/2010/10/25/hidden-anxiety-and-the-conspiracy-of-silence-suffered-by-the-families-of-armenian-genocide-survivors-an-interview-with-armenian-psychologist-dr-jack-danielian/>).



The teaching staff, from left: Mayda Yetimian, Olga Movsisyan, Armine Sargsyan, Emma Karoyan, Anna Kupelian, Lilit Petrosyan, Naira Arsenyan, Nelli Harutyunyan, Armine Manukyan, Hripsime Mkrtyan, Hasmik Konjoyan, Rita Meneshian, Annie Kalaydjian, Alina Khudaverdyan, Elen Gevorgyan. (Missing: Elen Tonoyan, Luiza Sargsyan & Natalya Stepanyan)

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COMMUNITY NEWS

ATP Hosts Kentucky Derby Fundraiser

By Jason Sohigian

WALTHAM, Mass. – The Armenia Tree Project (ATP) is taking a novel approach to fundraising with a Kentucky Derby Watch Party and Casino Night planned for Saturday, May 5.

“ATP is in a unique position as the only Armenian environmental organization in the diaspora,” says Executive Director Jeanmarie



ATP is hosting a Kentucky Derby Watch Party at the historic Gore Place in Waltham on May 5.

Papelian. “As a progressive organization in this unique space, it attracts support from across a broad spectrum and is known to take an unconventional approach. That is why we are so excited about this event, which has never been done before in the Armenian community. And it is open to everyone, including non-Armenians and anyone who wants to support environmental causes.”

The Kentucky Derby Watch Party will be held at the historic Gore Place in Waltham. Gore Place is a historic country house located on a 45 acre estate. The mansion was built in 1806 as a summer home for Massachusetts lawyer and politician Christopher Gore. The Gores entertained notables including the Marquis de Lafayette, Daniel Webster, and

James Monroe, and the property was designated a National Historic Landmark in 1970. The Carriage House was built on the grounds around 1793. Around the time when the Gores built their first home on the property, they had this building constructed to house horse-drawn carriages and wagons. The newly restored Carriage House is a historic setting for events, with a rustic feel and authentic horse stalls.

The Kentucky Derby is the first leg of racing’s Triple Crown that is held annually in Louisville, Ky. It’s a Grade I stakes race for three-year-old Thoroughbreds at a distance of 1.25 miles at Churchill Downs. The race will be livestreamed at the ATP event on May 5.

The race known as “the most exciting two minutes in sports” is also called the “Run for the Roses” for the blanket of roses draped over the winner. In addition to the race itself, a number of traditions play a large role in the Derby atmosphere. The mint julep, an iced drink consisting of bourbon, mint, and sugar syrup, is the traditional beverage of the race, and it will be served at the ATP event.

Another tradition is for Derby goers to show up at the racetrack to party with abandon. Kentucky Derby parties are held across the United States. Women appear in fine outfits lavishly accessorized with large, elaborate hats, and men dress in outlandish outfits including seersucker suits and stylish fedoras.

This event will include a blend of food, drinks, gaming, and fashion. The Kentucky Derby Watch Party planning committee is John Aftandilian, Kristin Asadourian, Berge Ayvazian, Karen Gilbert, Kelly Higgins, Gohar Diana Hovsepian, Marie Mabardi, Linda Ostayan, Susan Piligian and Daniele Sarkisian.

The evening will include casino games and watching the famed horse race via livestream. All of the proceeds from the gaming will benefit ATP’s tree planting and environmental education programs in Armenia. Sponsorship opportunities are available, and tickets to the benefit event are \$150 per person. For more information and to access ATP’s Kentucky Derby web page, visit www.ArmeniaTree.org/KentuckyDerby

Yale Armenian Club Students Organize Panel on Artsakh

NEW HAVEN, Conn. – On April 3, the Permanent Representative of the Republic of Artsakh (Nagorno Karabakh Republic) to the United States Robert Avetisyan addressed the discussion entitled “Nagorno Karabakh and Azerbaijan: the Prospects of Breakthrough in the Negotiation Process” held in the Yale University. The discussion was initiated by the Yale Armenian Network of the university.

Former US Ambassador to the Republic of Armenia John Evans and former US Co-Chairperson of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe Minsk Group Carey Cavanaugh also participated in the event.

The discussion was moderated by the University’s Senior Research Fellow, co-director of the Russian Studies Program and former Adviser to the US President (2004-2007) Thomas Graham.

In his speech, Avetisyan briefed on the position of the Republic of Artsakh on the settlement of the conflict between Azerbaijan and Karabakh and touched upon the current situation in the negotiation process, noting the need to create conditions for its intensification.

In this context, Avetisyan emphasized that for ensuring progress in the peaceful settlement of the conflict the trilateral format of the negotiations should be restored, with the full-fledged participation of Artsakh at all its stages.

(Public Radio of Armenia contributed to this report.)



From left to right: Narek Alexanian, Artin Kasumyan, Gor Mkrтчian, John Evans, Carey Cavanaugh, Thomas Graham, Robert Avetisyan, Lucine Musaelian, Nune Garipian, and Arthur Kasumyan.



From left, John Evans, Carey Cavanaugh (Former U.S. Co-Chair to the OSCE Minsk Group), Thomas Graham and Robert Avetisyan

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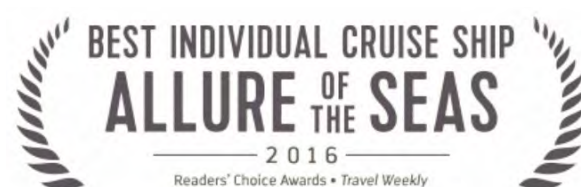


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COMMEMORATING THE ARMENIAN GENOCIDE

Recognition vs. Justice For Armenian Genocide



By Philippe Raffi Kalfayan

IN THE FIRST PLACE, the author wishes to pay tribute to the historians of the Armenian Genocide, from the pioneers to those who work today on the Ottoman archives. The latter have been accessible for about 10 years, and their contents are undermining the official Turkish

version of the events of 1915-1923.

Typical of all mass state crimes, documentation and truth emerge at a later point. Historians therefore still have much work to do in analyzing the documents. However, room should have been made for lawyers, because the more time passes, the fewer solutions the law offers for a judicial response to the events. It is worth remembering that "historical truth" is not "judicial truth" and vice versa.

The author submits that the recognition of the Armenian Genocide by Turkey will become possible when its domestic politics will enable it (Armenia's first president, Levon Ter-Petrosian, was arguing that the recognition matter is not ours but Turkey's). As long as Turkey is ruled by a nationalist and religious discriminatory ideology, which is at the very foundation of its republic, neither resolution nor declaration from a third country will be able to put an end to the official policy of genocide denial. The Armenian side is no less nationalistic, the official doctrine of the government, espoused by the Armenian lobbies in the diaspora, is based on the sole process of political recognition of the genocide at the international level. President Armen Sarkisian, who was just sworn in, said that recognition of the genocide is not an end in itself. The author agrees with this assertion, but formulated as such, it is insufficient, and in this respect contrary to the need of justice expressed by each Armenian.

In 2015 I wrote about the political stalemate that constituted both the "Pan-Armenian" Declaration of January 29, 2015 and the dogmatic fight around the use of the word genocide, but, above all, about the fact that the compensation due for the massive and serious violations of human rights and humanitarian law by the Ottoman Empire does not depend upon the criminal characterization of the crimes committed.

This article reviews some of the misconceptions about the Armenian Genocide, analyses the difference between recognition and justice, and reviews options in the light of the fight against impunity for historical crimes and of international law.

Misconceptions about Armenian Genocide

The militant and stereotyped speeches concerning the genocide of Armenians reveal a large number of inaccuracies, which also reflect the narrow understanding of the problem, and thus of the absence of a clear collective strategy.

Here are some of the statements in their broad strokes: The genocide of Armenians is the first of the 20th century. It would be imprescriptible. It has 1.5 million victims. The genocide of the Jews has been recognized while that of the Armenians has not. The recognition of the genocide is necessary to ask for redress.

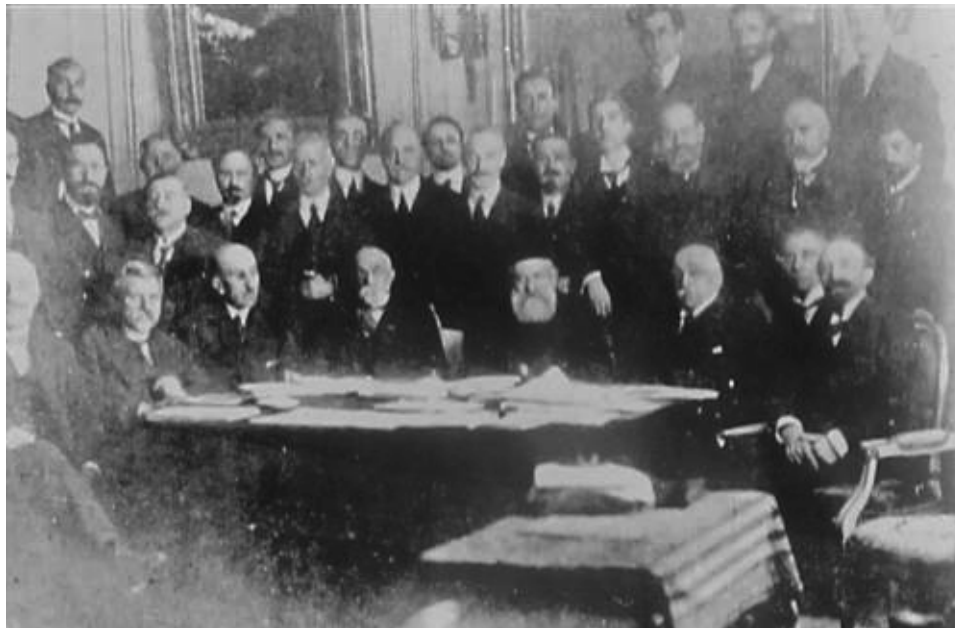
Set out in this way, these statements call for the following observations:

The genocide of Namas and Hereros, tribes in Namibia, by Imperial Germany from 1904 to 1908, preceded that of the Armenians. Germany has acknowl-

edged its responsibility and is in the process of repairing those wrongs.

The non-applicability of statute of limitations to international crimes (the author has published a scientific book on this subject, *la France et l'Imprescriptibilité Des Crimes Internationaux*) is a procedural provision relating to criminal law. It is the subject of an International Convention (1968) which is not universal. Only 55 nations have ratified it. The United States, France, China, Turkey and Western Europe have not. In addition, its retroactivity is disputed. If the International Criminal Court has adopted the principle, the non-applicability of statute of limitations applies only to the most serious crimes for which it has jurisdiction and which occurred after the entry into force of the Rome Statute (July 2002).

Armenian sources are erratic about the precise number of victims (between 1.1 and 1.5 million). The figures for the genocide of European Jews are no less erratic (between 4.5 and 6 million). This macabre count is actually secondary because the gravity of those crimes does not rest on the number of victims, but rather on the massive, barbaric, systematic and premeditated features against the target group. However, since the opening of the Ottoman archives, it is now possible to demonstrate accurately the number of Armenians deported, massa-



Armenian National Congress Delegation (Ovenk)

cred or disappeared, contradicting in the best way the indecent and equally vague statistics of the official Turkish propaganda (from 300,000 to 500,000 victims).

Genocide and the Bad Track of Criminal Law

Neither the Armenian Genocide nor the genocide of Jews is, according to present judicial practice and legal principles, eligible to qualify for the legal definition of genocide. Genocide is a crime – the ultimate form of a crime against humanity. It comes under criminal law. The Convention for the Prevention and Repression of this Crime is now universal, dating back to 1948, and domestic laws have since incorporated genocide into their penal codes.

However, the non-retroactivity of criminal law is a universal principle, on the one hand, and international criminal liability exists only for individuals and not for states, on the other. It should be recalled that the Nuremberg's International Military Tribunal (IMT) ruled against the war criminals of the Nazi regime and not against the German state. It condemned them for crimes against peace and war crimes, and for some of them, for crimes against humanity, but in connection with those central offenses.

Jurists and magistrates of the IMT did not know how to solve the problem of non-retroactivity of the new crime defined by the London Agreement in August 1945

and in the Court's Statute. Therefore, the count of crimes against humanity was not the main one. Moreover, nowhere was the legal concept or the word genocide mentioned.

In 1919-1920, during the trials of the leaders and members of the Committee for Union and Progress Committee (CUP), there was no modern legal definition of the crimes committed. (See Judgment at Istanbul,



Defendants in the dock at the Nuremberg trials. The main target of the prosecution was Hermann Göring (at the left edge on the first row of benches), considered to be the most important surviving official in the Third Reich after Hitler's death. (Wikipedia Photo)

Dadrian/Akçam's book.) Both the indictment and the verdict describe a mass crime planned and organized by the CUP through deportations and massacres. The Ottoman courts have even set the definition of what contemporary international criminal law established as the Joint Criminal Enterprise (ICTY – Former Yugoslavia ad hoc Tribunal's definition).

Criminal justice was served. One could even detect a correlation between the death sentence of Mustapha Kemal in absentia on May 27, 1920 and his will to come into power by force, which allowed him later to obtain the amnesty of convicts or detainees in Lausanne (1923).

Some question and compare the res judicata of judgments of international courts over those of domestic courts (this is the argument of the Dutch government which refuses the recognition motion of the Armenian Genocide). From a strict legal standpoint, there is no such rule of primacy of international jurisdictions over local ones. One may even argue that the decision of the Ottoman courts has a higher authority, since they were sovereign while the international tribunals of Nuremberg (1945-1946) and Tokyo (1946-1948) are often referred as "victors' justice," due to the fact that Allied Powers were acting at the same time as prosecutors and judges.

The ICC's statutory principle of complementary comes to reinforce

that argument: it must be reminded that the ICC relies upon the capacity of Rome Treaty member countries' domestic courts to try international crimes. The ICC intervenes only upon the request of national authorities, in absence of relevant domestic judicial capabilities, and in case of conflict of interest, when local authorities refuse to try them.

On the other hand, even though Jews and Armenians are mostly mentioned as victims, the Nuremberg Tribunal, like the Ottoman Military Courts, were not exclusive. The first tried all the Nazi crimes and not only the Jewish Holocaust; the latter referred to crimes against Christian minorities, not just those against Armenians.

So far as the mass atrocities committed against Armenians in 1915-1923 are concerned, the debate has focused for many years exclusively on the legal categorization of the crimes, whether as "genocide" or as "crimes against humanity." As regards the international criminal law, this discussion is irrelevant: there are no more criminals, survivors and witnesses alive.

Instead, the law of state responsibility for internationally wrongful acts is pertinent. According to it, any internationally wrongful act whatever its characterization under international criminal law entails an obligation to make reparation and this obligation is viewed today as

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE



COMMEMORATING THE ARMENIAN GENOCIDE

FROM PREVIOUS PAGE

due to the victims in case of mass atrocities. From that perspective, the still ongoing debate over the “G” word (whether the mass atrocities committed against the Armenians in 1915-1923 amount to a genocide, or whether it is permissible under international law to prosecute any person denying the existence of the Armenian Genocide) cannot hinder the process of reparation which is indisputably due to the victims for the mass crimes suffered (massacres, rapes, forced disappearances, confiscation and appropriation of properties, etc.). Actually, as early as 1919, a calculation of the damages suffered was made by the Special Committee of the First Subcommittee of the Paris Peace Conference’s Commission on Reparations of Damage, on the basis of data submitted by the Armenian National Delegation.

Reparation Is Justice

This principle was notably included in the Resolution adopted in December 2005 by the UN General Assembly on Basic Principles and Guidelines on the Right to a Remedy and Reparation for Victims of Gross Violations of International Human Rights Law and Serious Violations of International Humanitarian Law, according to which, in particular:

“Adequate, effective and prompt reparation is intended to promote justice by redressing gross violations of international human rights law or serious violations of international humanitarian law. Reparation should be proportional to the gravity of the violations and the harm suffered. In accordance with its domestic laws and international legal obligations, a State shall provide reparation to victims for acts or omissions which can be attributed to the State and constitute gross violations of international



Talaat, Enver & Jemal were charged with war crimes by the Turkish court martial on June 10, 1919

of ruling out its repetition anywhere in the world.” That assertion conforms to the current prestige diplomacy of Armenia but falls short of Armenian demands on one hand and is an unrealistic picture of international politics.

It is readily evident that despite a whole range of international laws and bodies to enforce them, massive and large scale crimes are committed and the so-called “international community” is unable to prevent them, to wit: Saudi Arabia and the US-led coalition’s in Yemen; Israel’s in Occupied Palestine; Turkey’s against Kurds in Syria.

The West condemns the actions and is ready to risk a global regional war in order to punish Syria for an alleged chemical attack having caused death of 40 people, but is an accomplice to the starvation deaths of one million people besieged in Yemen by Saudi Arabia.

One must also acknowledge that the US and France, where the Armenian lobbies are working hard to make condemn the Armenian Genocide, have themselves committed genocide and crimes against humanity and never recognized it, despite undisputed heavy crimes: Native Indian Tribes’ genocide in US and French colonial mass crimes in North Africa and Indochina. Those

crimes were intentional and are documented.

The existence and boundaries of modern states are the result of past acts and omissions that would have been illegal today in the light of present international law and of most constitutions and laws.

“Historical injustices” concern populations that have been killed excluded and discriminated against by others, who, through privileges and eliminations, have been enriched.

Injustice Is Denial of Justice

Where justice is not possible, the minimal requirement for forgiveness is to be told the full, honest and unvarnished truth. Armenians have been persuaded of being the unique victims of state denial. But reality shows a different picture. Despite the late December 2015 agreement with South Korea where it admitted its responsibility, Japan aggressively denies that the sexual slavery of Korean and other Asian “Comfort Women” was a state crime. France denies officially that they committed crimes against humanity (torture and arbitrary killings) in Algeria. The US denies war crimes committed in Iraq. Russia denies crimes against humanity committed in Chechnya. And what to say about the collective responsibility of super powers, which fight each other indirectly in Syria at the expense of a humanitarian disaster for millions of people?

Therefore, to believe, as Armenia seems to, that the reinforcement of conventional prevention of international crimes, based on the experience of Armenian Genocide, is sufficient, is illusory and in any case incompatible with Armenian demand for justice.

As reported in a previous article, the League of Nations

(SDN), the precursor to the United Nations, and which was an even bigger failure than its successor, remained powerless and totally passive vis-à-vis Turkey to satisfy the claims filed in the 1920s by survivors of the genocide to get their citizenship, assets and properties back.

In the case of large-scale crimes, the issue of reparations due to victims comes up against contexts such as peace-building, reconciliation programs, and has often been sacrificed for strategic and political reasons.

However, since the 1970s and until 2010, we have witnessed the gradual and parallel emergence of several converging phenomena: the end of military dictatorships in Europe (Greece, Spain, Portugal, Turkey), in Latin America, the end of communism and the break-up of the Soviet bloc, the end of apartheid, on the one hand, and the development of differentiated mechanisms and procedures, on the other hand, to face or even condemn the crimes associated with these periods. Many Western states have also acknowledged their historical wrongs, including the US, Canada, Australia, New Zealand and France.

From this movement came new international law instruments respectful of victims’ rights: some new articulated principles became conventional norms, others soft-law rules. Ad hoc international tribunals have been established. A permanent International Criminal Court (ICC) was born. The right to remedy and the right to reparation are two of those accepted principles.

In 2012, the ICC made a decision in the case Thomas Lubanga Diylo establishing the principles and procedures to be applied to reparations. The International Law



Hideki Tojo, Japan’s prime minister during World War II, was tried for war crimes and convicted. He was hanged in 1948.

human rights law or serious violations of international humanitarian law.”

Reparation in international law is inclusive of several defined concepts: restitution, compensation, satisfaction and guarantees of non-repetition. For remote past crimes, satisfaction is the most common form of reparation in the practice of courts and states, and most in conformity with the need of the peoples who are waiting for justice. One exception, though, deserves a mention: indigenous peoples are recognized the right to restitution of their ancestral lands, due to the specifics of their belief, culture and traditions.

The outcome of all research as far as the reparation of past and historical mass atrocities, which leave a very deep psychological imprint on descendants of the victims or survivors, shows that, as far as this category of crimes is concerned, the recognition of guilt and the duty of memory by the perpetrators are required to reach reconciliation. This one is possible with four conditions: the establishment of facts, a judicial recorded narrative, a sincere political will and reparation measures, mostly symbolic and moral. Such provisions, when implemented, are the best guarantees against the non-repetition of similar wrongful acts.

International Recognition Falls Short of Effective Justice

Recent history has at least clarified that healing the past by external pressure on the governments has only limited success.

The new Armenian president added that “the international recognition and condemnation of this horrendous crime against humanity is an important step for the purpose



The International Criminal Court

Commission codified the state responsibility for internationally wrongful acts in 2001. The responsible state is under an obligation to make full reparation for the injury caused by those acts. Injury includes any damage, whether material or moral.

Justice for the Armenian Nation, considering the impossibility to base claims on the genocide convention, would consist primarily of the introduction of liability claims based not on a criminal logic of genocide but on civil proceedings based on the existence of damages and harms resulting from wrongs committed by Turkey from 1915 to 1923. Such an action would be without prejudice to the political characterization of the acts committed as genocide and should be understood as a parallel process. Temporal aspects of the reparation, with regard to both rules and procedures are critical. The proceedings may be legal, arbitral or it may consist in the establishment of a joint claims commission. Absent the consent of Turkey and the engagement of Armenia into this process, the road to justice would be long and have many obstacles ahead.

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



COMMEMORATING THE ARMENIAN GENOCIDE

Kabateck Still Pursuing Legal Remedies For Historical Injustices while Advocating Economic Boycott of Turkey

By Aram Arkun

Mirror-Spectator Staff

BRIAN KABATECK is a Southern California attorney specializing in consumer fraud who frequently appears on television and other news media. He has played an important role in lawsuits against insurance companies withholding money from heirs of victims of the Armenian Genocide and is still involved in one such current lawsuit.

Half-Armenian, and growing up on stories of the Genocide, Kabateck did not hesitate to become involved in these cases from the late 1990s. He was co-lead counsel in the first successful lawsuit against the insurance companies, *Martin Marootian et al. v. New York Life Insurance Company*, which was filed in 1999 and settled in 2004 for 20 million dollars, and achieved a similar settlement in *Kyurkjian v. AXA*, a French insurance company in 2005.

Kabateck declared that the documents he obtained in the AXA case, including historical materials, records and names of policy holders, have been given to the library at Loyola Law School in Los Angeles, along with the results of the work of the administrative boards created. Some of the insurance money from the Armenian Genocide cases went to create the Center for the Study of Law and Genocide (<https://www.lls.edu/academics/centers/centerforthestudy-oflawandgenocide/#>) at Loyola, which focuses on remedies for victims of genocide. According to Professor Stanley Goldman, the director of the Center, the files will be eventually transferred to the University of Southern California, whose Shoah Foundation Center for Advanced Genocide Research already has the papers donated by Kabateck's co-lead counsel Vartkes Yeghiayan on the Marootian case.

Unfortunately, a third case, against *Victoria Versicherung AG*, a German insurance company, and two other German companies, ended on appeal with a defeat in 2013 which created an impasse for future Armenian Genocide insurance suits. The California legislature had passed a statute establishing California as a forum for Armenian Genocide insurance cases and extending the limitation period for these cases. This statute, often called the Poochigian bill after its main proponent, was deemed unconstitutional by the US Supreme Court in agreement with an en banc Ninth Circuit Court decision, as it supposedly interfered with federal foreign policy, which at present does not recognize the Armenian Genocide.

Kabateck commented, "I am still upset and angry that the Ninth Circuit [Court of Appeals] took away the right to sue for insurance claims, which the California legislature, I thought, validly enacted, and that we have been unable to continue to pursue those cases." He continued, "I think [this] is a shame because there are a lot of insurance companies out there that got away scot-free without having to pay for the consequences." He added that the Obama administration weighed in against the Armenian position through the Solicitor General of the United States and declared that the administration wanted the Poochigian statute invalidated.

Kabateck explained that a new statute is necessary to

allow suing the insurance companies today but it would have to be reworded in a suitable fashion. He declared that this situation was a source of incredible frustration for him personally.

He explained that "even in my office, I have a plaque with a handwritten note from Hillary Clinton thanking

Yeghiayan and Mark Geragos in *Varoujan Deirmenjian et al. v. Deutsche Bank, Dresdner Bank et al.* the 2006 class action suit against several German banks on behalf of Armenian Genocide victim's heirs for bank deposits and other assets held by the banks. This suit was dismissed in 2010 by a California federal district court as time-barred, and the dismissal was upheld by the U.S. Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals in 2013.

However, Kabateck still has hopes for a case for Armenian properties seized by the Republic of Turkey. In 2010, he, along with attorneys Geragos, Berj Boyajian and Ara Jabagchourian, filed on behalf of Garbis Davoyan of Los Angeles and Hrayr Turabian of New York City, and many other Armenians. This class action suit is the first against the Republic of Turkey (as successor to Ottoman Turkey) and targets the Central Bank of Turkey and the Ziraat Bank. It was consolidated with a similar case, *Bakalian v. Republic of Turkey*, in 2011, and dismissed in 2013 by Judge Dolly M. Gee in a California federal district court, basically as a political and not judicial issue.

It then went on appeal and was argued in the summer of 2016 in Circuit Court. However, the judge, Harry Pregerson, died before the case was ruled on, so it had to be reset and there is no new hearing date yet.

Under these circumstances, Kabateck said, "we have to go back and have an argument on the case." The approach is primarily that of a stolen properties case involving events that occurred during the Armenian Genocide.

While civil lawsuits concerning the Genocide in the US are encountering obstacles, Kabateck encouraged promoting legislation for economic embargos of Turkey or divestiture of various state and other American institutions, such as is being pursued right now in California. Kabateck said, "This is why I am encouraged by the legislation that is now impending... the chances are good of it being passed."

He said that he has been in touch with its proponents, such as California Sen. Anthony Portantino, and finds that in general politicians in Sacramento are sensitive to Armenian issues such as the Genocide. He added, "I think it has a good chance of being held legal constitutionally because it is not so much setting foreign policy as the state making the decision."

Kabateck suggested that any Armenian or person concerned with issues of justice in California should contact their Assembly member or Senator to show their support, along with of course the organized Armenian groups in California. This could be a model for other states. Under the present circumstances, he declared, "One more thing we all could do is to boycott and not support businesses or entities that are Turkish or support Turkey, such as Turkish Airlines."

As far as the accusations of corruption exchanged among the main lawyers who had spearheaded the first Armenian insurance cases, Kabateck merely exclaimed that "It is just a very sad chapter in the whole story. A lot of the money went to do good things. A lot of money went to the families [of heirs]. We brought attention for a short period of time at least to the issues."

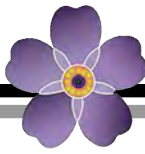


"I am still upset and angry that the Ninth Circuit [Court of Appeals] took away the right to sue for insurance claims, which the California legislature, I thought, validly enacted, and that we have been unable to continue to pursue those cases." ... "I think [this] is a shame because there are a lot of insurance companies out there that got away scot-free without having to pay for the consequences."

—BRIAN KABATECK

me for all I have done for her campaign. Underneath it I have a couple of emails that we found in the Hillary email release where she is communicating with the foreign minister of Turkey about our case." Kabateck said, "Before my legal career is over, I would still like to find a way to make this right."

Kabateck was also involved as co-counsel with Vartkes



COMMEMORATING THE ARMENIAN GENOCIDE

And Those, Who Were Considered Dead, Became Alive... Three Stories in Photos

By Hayk Demoyan

There many heartbreaking stories related to the Armenian Genocide. Unfortunate men, women and children lost their lovely ones during the horrible years of the inhumane bloody bacchanalia launched by Young Turkish criminals. Among those stories, told and untold, printed and handwritten, can also be found amazing ones, narrating the emotional episode and very moment when family members after long years after the Genocide find their loved ones in Armenia, Syria, America and elsewhere. Many Armenian families were separated due to the Genocide and the Sovietization of Armenia, and they became dispersed worldwide. Changes in world politics kept them apart but also created opportunities to visit one other. After being separated at a young age, some families or family members found the way to visit relatives in Soviet Armenia, or those who remained in Turkey (mostly women kidnapped or victims of forced marriages). Such stories are the exception, but they show the full scope of the enormous human tragedy which happened over a hundred years ago.

Who knows how many mothers and their children passed away unaware of the children who managed to survive them, how many brothers and sisters lost their ties and spent their whole lives apart, without having a



Yeranouhi Keklikian and Aram Keklikian, photo taken in Ghamishli (Kevork Apelian, *Tsgeans nahadakutiun*, Beirut 2005).



Leyla Top meets her brother Yervant Merdoian, Armenian Genocide Museum-Institute Collection

chance to meet again?

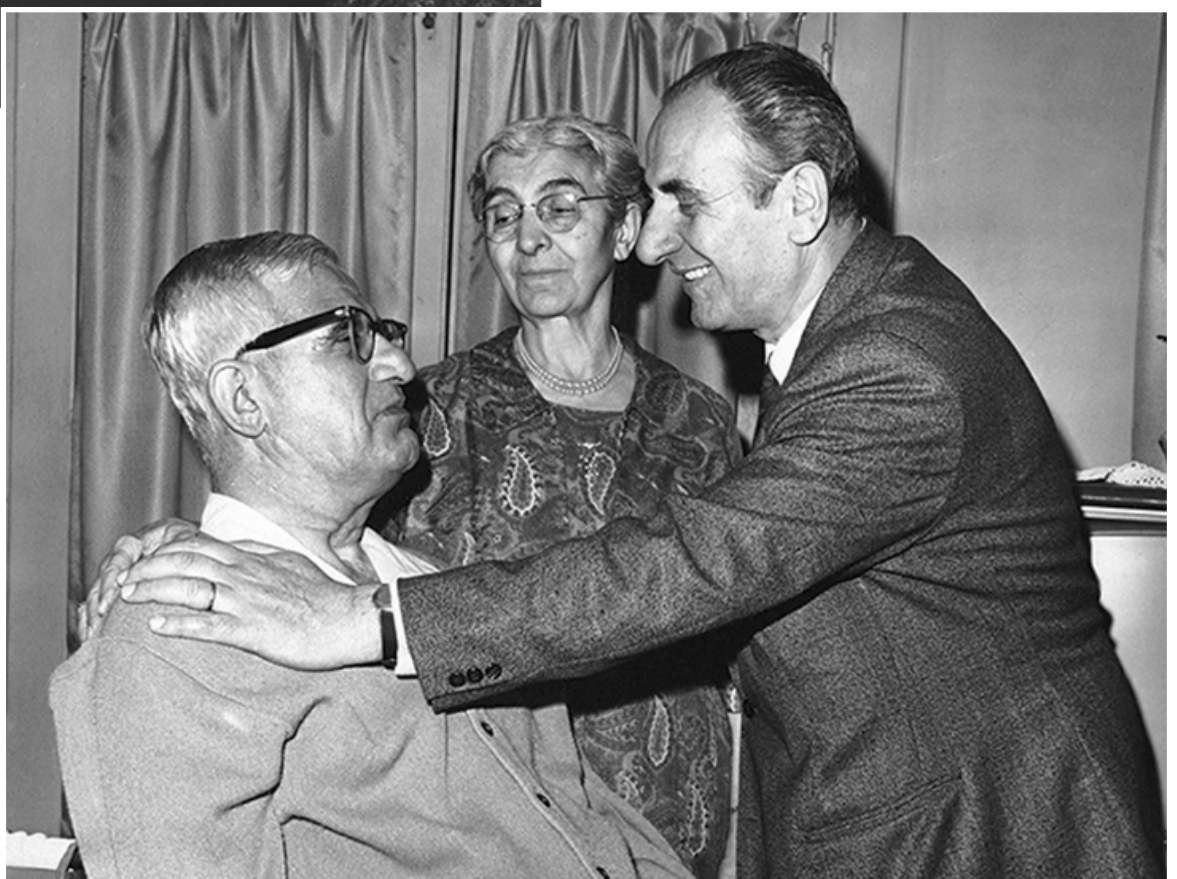
One miraculous story tells the tragic experience of Yeranouhi Keklikian from Hajin, who lost her husband, Hovhannes Keklikian, and two young boys. In an attempt to suppress her tragedy and loss, she decided to start a new life and remembered her loved ones while creating a new family. It was on August 22, 1954, when her daughter was in a maternity house to give birth to twins, when her son-in-law passed a letter to her written from her Hajin compatriots. The latter informed her that her son, Aram, was alive. He had been adopted by the head of the Arab El-Trbo *ashiret* and became his heir. Aram, who adopted the new name Salman El-Trbo, was married and had children. Mother and son met after 40 years of separation in Gamishli, North Syria. The memorable and highly emotional moment of that meeting was captured in the photo of mother and her 48-year-old son.

Another photo depicts the dramatic meeting of a sister and brother separated for 45 years after the Genocide of 1915. Leyla Top from Ankara, Turkey met with her brother Yervant Merodian, of Lexington, Mass. They were separated for 45 years after the whole population of the Armenian village where the Merodian family was living was killed. Yervant Merodian thought his sister was among the victims, but she survived, and later on married

a Turk. This meeting between sister and brother took place in Boston, in 1960.

A third story again is one of separation and unexpected rediscovery of family ties. Apart for 50 years, survivors of the Barsamian family reunited in Pasadena. Onnig Barsamian, standing, had remained in Turkey to become a professional accordion player. His four siblings, including Noubar Barsamian, seated, and Seranoush, standing, all settled in the United States. Pasadena, California, 1971.

(Hayk Demoyan is the Director of the Armenian Genocide Museum-Institute in Yerevan, Armenia, a post he has held since 2006. He is currently a visiting scholar at Harvard University's Davis Center for Russian and Eurasian Studies.)



Meeting of the Barsamian brothers in Pasadena (Courtesy of Souren Gozmanian, Farmington Hills, Michigan, Project SAVE Armenian Photograph Archives, photographer unknown).



COMMEMORATING THE ARMENIAN GENOCIDE

The Background to the Recognition of the Armenian Genocide by the South Carolina House and Senate



By **Dr. Agop Y. Bedikian**

Special to the Mirror-Spectator

MARCH 2018 was the 19th anniversary of recognition of the Armenian Genocide by South Carolina. The bill to recognize it was introduced by representatives Terry E. Haskins and Jeff E. Smith. It was recognized by the South Carolina House on March 4, 1999 and by the State Senate on March 17, 1999. Through H. 3678 Concurrent Resolution, the State of South Carolina declared recognition of April 24, 1999 as "South Carolina day of remembrance of the Armenian genocide of 1915-1923" so as to honor the memory of the 1.5 million people of Armenian ancestry who lost their lives during the genocide. The total population of South Carolina at the time was about 4 million, of which about 0.1 percent were Armenians. With so few Armenians living in the state, how did South Carolina recognize the Armenian Genocide? Rep. Terry E. Haskins played a key role in this effort. It is long overdue for Armenians recognize his effort in this process and honor his accomplishment. Here is the background as related to this historic achievement.

I met Rep. Haskins in 1996, when he came to the University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center in Houston, Texas for consultation regarding management of his advanced cancer. His skin cancer (malignant melanoma) was located at the right shoulder. It was excised in 1973. After appropriate surgery, he remained free of disease until January 1995, when he felt a lump at his right axilla. A biopsy from the lump showed melanoma metastatic to a lymph node. He had appropriate lymphadenectomy which rendered him free of disease. He received melanoma vaccine therapy to prevent tumor recurrence.

However, in January 1996 he was found to have systemic metastases. He came to the MD Anderson cancer center to see me in April 1996 after it was determined that the interferon therapy he was receiving had not worked. Radiologic evaluation showed metastases to the lung, lymph nodes and skin. He was hospitalized and started on concurrent biochemotherapy, including cisplatin, vinblastine, dacarbazine, interferon and interleukin-2. He received this therapy for 3 months and achieved complete remission.

Unfortunately, his disease came back in October 1998. He was started on sequential biochemotherapy this time; i.e. administration of combination chemotherapy followed by biotherapy with interferon plus interleukin-2. He achieved complete response to therapy for the second time. Then, he went to the John Wayne Cancer Clinic in Santa Monica, Calif. for investigative new melanoma vaccine treatment. After receiving melanoma vaccine for 6 months, he was found to have new brain metastasis.

He returned to the MD Anderson cancer center. Radiologic restaging confirmed multiple metastases in the cerebral cortex. While the brain metastases were being treated with stereotactic radiosurgery with the gamma knife, new lesions showed up in the cerebellum. In addition, MRI of the brain indicated involvement of meninges. Examination of cerebrospinal fluid confirmed development of meningeal carcinomatosis. The patient went to Duke University for intrathecal chemotherapy. The treatment failed to control his central nervous metastases. He developed right facial paralysis and lost the function of his left upper extremity. In addition, he developed multiple new systemic metastases. He expired on October 24, 2000.

During one of the biochemotherapy treatments in the fall of 1998, Terry developed the well-known, dreaded adverse effect of interleukin-2, i.e. severe drop of blood pressure. When uncontrolled, it causes multi-organ failure involving the kidney, heart, lung, liver and central nervous system. For that reason, in the MD Anderson Cancer Center, interleukin-2 is administered in specially designated rooms under the supervision of trained nurses who constantly monitor the blood pressure, urine output and patient's organ functions. Normally a trained nurse is assigned for every 2 to 3 patients receiving interleukin-2 on the week-days.

Terry developed severe hypotension with shock and multi-organ failure on the last day of interleukin-2 treatment on Friday afternoon. In view of this serious development and the expected decreased medical and nursing personnel during the week-end, I decided to spend the night in the hospital taking care of him. I informed his nurse of my decision so that she could concentrate on her other patients. Throughout the night, I administered a dopamine drip to maintain adequate perfusion of the vital organs and adjusted the rate of administration of IV fluid based on the urine output and the status of cardiopulmonary functions. The patient was very unstable and could not be transferred to the intensive care unit located in an adjacent building.

On Saturday afternoon, he started recovering from the shock: his blood pressure normalized, urine output increased and the lungs cleared. He started responding appropriately to questions. By the evening, when he was fully awake, he noticed I was to his bed side. He asked me what I was doing in the hospital when I had no week-end duty. I told him he had a rough night; I spent the night with him to help him recover from the severe interleukin-2 related hypotension. He thanked me for doing so.

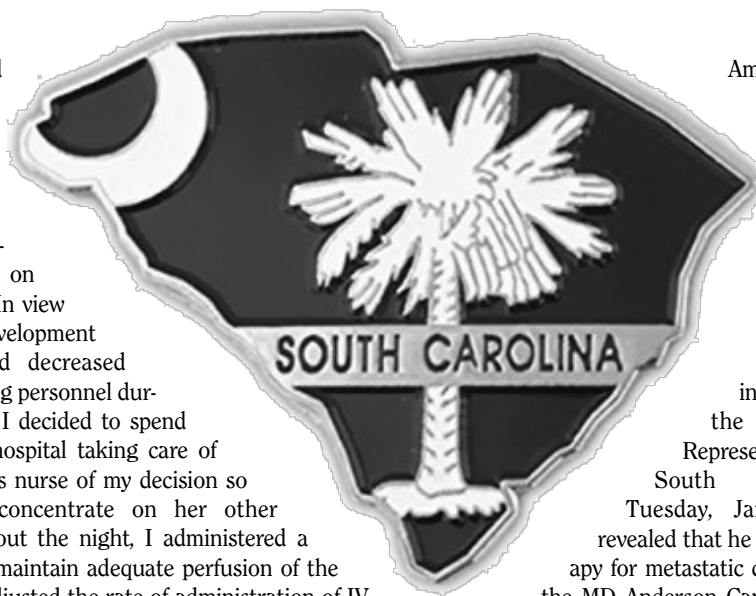
Then, he started to ask personal questions including about my education, ethnic background and relatives in Lebanon. Although I felt uneasy, I did not mind continuing the conversation because I wanted to evaluate the extent of recovery of his mentation from the adverse effect of the severe hypotension. He persisted in his desire to know more about me and family. Since it was my day off, I asked him how far I should go. He told me as far as I could.

In the past, I have had similar intimate conversation with two doctors not involved in my training. Both times, the outcome had a life-changing impact on the realization of my aspiration to become cancer specialist. After the loss of my father to throat cancer, I was determined to sacrifice anything to achieve that goal. During the first instance, I was called in by Dr. John Vavra, who was the head of the Washington University-supervised internal medical service at the City Hospital in St. Louis, Missouri. He told me he was very impressed by my hard work, dedication and compassion toward my patients and offered me residency training at the Washington University Medical Center even though I was on the St. Louis University-supervised internship program at the City Hospital.

In the second instance, Dr. James R. Nugent, whom I treated in the Emergency Room for post ictal cyanosis and confusion, wrote a testimonial about the quality care he received to Dr. Copeland, Chief of Surgery at MD Anderson Cancer Center, requesting from him to find out as to what happened to my fellowship application to that institution. Based on that testimonial, Dr. Emil Freireich offered me a fellowship position without an interview.

With these experiences in my mind, without hesitation I told Terry that I was an Armenian born in Lebanon. My parents were Armenian Genocide survivors. They were among the orphans collected by missionaries from American Near East Relief foundation from Syrian Desert after forced deportation from their town close to Konya in western Turkey. While the official justification given by the Turkish government was that Armenians living close to Turkish-Russian border in the Caucasus were collaborating with the Russians my parents were from a town more than 550 miles from the said border.

I brought to his attention the fact that the American government officially does not recognize the Armenian Genocide as genocide on Turkey's part because of geopolitics and economics. This is so despite the fact that the massacres of the Armenians residing in the Ottoman Empire were witnessed and documented by Americans and the presence of these archival documents in the library of Congress. Terry wanted to get familiar with



American documents related to the Armenian Genocide. I provided him with several books on the subject based on American sources.

In February 1999, I learnt that during the regular session of the House of Representatives of the State of South Carolina, beginning Tuesday, January 12, 1999, he revealed that he had been receiving therapy for metastatic cancer under my care at the MD Anderson Cancer Center. In April he told me that he worked closely with Rep. Jeff E. Smith to have the Armenian Genocide recognition bill passed by both the South Carolina House and Senate. In mid-1999, I was presented with a framed copy of H. 3678, the Concurrent Resolution that was introduced by Reps. Terry E. Haskins and Jeff E. Smith.

In this official declaration, it states that "the members of the General Assembly recognize April 24, 1999, as South Carolina Day of Remembrance of the Armenian Genocide of 1915-1923 so as to honor the memory of the one and one-half million people of Armenian ancestry who lost their lives during that terrible time and to honor the memory of the victims of genocide throughout the world." This achievement was due to the persistent effort of Rep. Terry Haskins, who despite his pain and suffering related to the cancer and its treatment, selflessly, and for no personal benefit, championed the fight for the recognition of Armenian Genocide. It is important that Armenians recognize his effort and honor his accomplishment.

Rep. Terry E. Haskins

Terry Edward Haskins was born on January 31, 1955 in Pontiac, Michigan. In 1972, he entered Bob Jones University in Greenville, South Carolina, from which he received a Bachelor of Arts in Speech and a Master of Arts in public speaking. He graduated in 1981 from the University of South Carolina School of Law began his legal practice. Two years later, he was elected to the Greenville City Council. In 1986, he was elected to the state legislature and held that seat until his death on October 24, 2000. In 1995, Haskins was elected speaker pro-tempore of the House. By 1999, he was influential in achieving the compromise by which the legislature was able to remove the Confederate battle flag from flying over the state capitol and also was able to end video poker in South Carolina. He supported affirmative action, the election of African-American judges, and admission of women to The Citadel.



Rep. Terry E. Haskins

(Agop Y. Bedikian was born in Beirut, Lebanon. He is a graduate of the Hovagimian-Manougian Secondary School for boys. He studied medicine at the American University of Beirut. In 1975, he completed his residency in Internal medicine at the Washington University Medical Center in St. Louis, Mo. and moved to Houston. After completing a fellowship in Medical Oncology at the MD Anderson Cancer Center, he joined the medical staff. His activities included conducting clinical trials with new anticancer drugs, treating patient and teaching fellows, pharmacists and nurses. At present, he is Emeritus Professor of Medicine and Medical Oncology at MD Anderson Cancer Center.)



COMMEMORATING THE ARMENIAN GENOCIDE

Home

By Peter Balakian

Driving Route 20 to Syracuse past pastures of cows and falling silos

you feel the desert stillness near the refineries at the Syrian border.

Walking in fog on Mecox Bay, the long lines of squawking birds on shore.

you're walking along Flinders Street Station, the flaring yellow stone and walls of windows where your uncle landed after he fled a Turkish prison.

You walked all day along the Yarra, crossing the sculptural bridges with their twisting steel,

the hollow sound of the didgeridoo like the flutes of Anatolia.

One road is paved with coins, another with razor blades and ripped condoms.

Walking the boardwalk in January past Atlantic City Hall, the rusted Deco ticket sign, the waves black into white, you smell the grilled cevapi in the Bascarsija of Sarajevo,

and that street took you to the Jewish cemetery where the weeds grew over the slabs and a mausoleum stood intact.

There was a trail of carnelian you followed in the Muslim quarter of Jerusalem

and picking up those stones now, you're walking in the salt marsh on the potato fields,

the day undercut by the flatness of the sky, the wide view of the Atlantic, the cold spray.

Your uncle stashed silk and linen, lace and silver in a suitcase on a ship that docked not far from here; the ship moved in and out of port for years, and your uncle kept coming

and going, from Melbourne to London to Kolkata and back, never returning to the Armenian village near the Black Sea.

The topaz ring you passed on in a silver shop in Aleppo appeared on Lexington off 65th; the shop owner, a young guy from Ivory Coast, shrugged when you told him you had seen it

before; the shuffled dust of that street fills your throat and you remember how a slew of coins poured out of your pocket like a slinky near the ruined castle now a disco in

Thessaloniki where a young girl was stabbed under the strobe lights—lights that lit the

sky that was the iridescent eye of a peacock in Larnaca at noon, when you walked into the

church where Lazarus had come home to die and you forgot that Lazarus died

because the story was in one of your uncle's books that were wrapped in newspaper in a suitcase and stashed under the seat of an old Ford, and when he got to the border

he left the car and walked the rest of the way, and when you pass the apartment on 116th and Broadway—where your father grew up (though it's a dorm now) — that suitcase is buried in a closet under clothes, and when you walk past the security guard

at the big glass entrance door, you're walking through wet grass, clouds clumped on a hillside, a subway station sliding into water.

Reprinted with permission from Peter Balakian's Ozone Journal (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2015), winner of the 2016 Pulitzer Prize. Balakian is the Donald M. and Constance H. Rebar Professor of the Humanities at Colgate University. He is the author of seven books of poems and four prose works, and a frequent contributor to the Armenian Mirror-Spectator.

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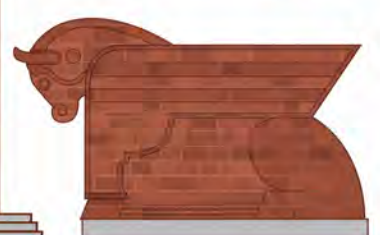
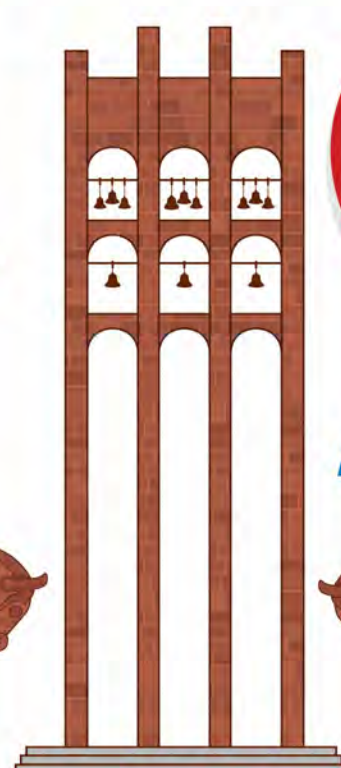
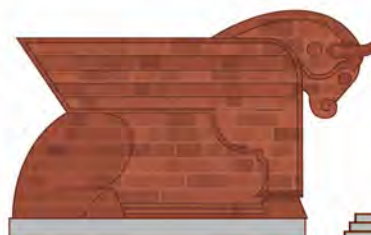
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COMMEMORATING THE ARMENIAN GENOCIDE

Return to the White City – Akshehir

By Agop Y. Bedikian MD &
Margaret A. Bedikian

I WAS BORN IN BEIRUT, LEBANON, the fifth of six children, to an Armenian family. My parents left their birthplace, Akshehir (literally, “white city” in Turkish) in Turkey during the First World War at a very young age and took refuge in Lebanon.

My father worked as a contractor building houses. After finishing preparatory school, my two older brothers joined him in his trade in order to support the family of eight. I was the first in the family to have the opportunity to attend high school and then university. My parents encouraged us to get an education even though they themselves had no formal schooling. My original plan was to study engineering so that I could work with my father and brothers. However, during my sophomore year, my father, who had smoked from a very young age, developed hoarseness of voice, a cough and hemoptysis. I took him to the American University Medical Center where an otolaryngologist told us he had a locally-advanced, unresectable cancer in his throat. Radiotherapy was administered for palliation. Unfortunately, a few months later, the doctors found that the cancer had spread to his liver, which led to his death a short two months later.

Through this difficult process, I found out how little the doctors could do to help patients with advanced cancer. I changed my major to medicine to become a cancer specialist and graduated in June 1971. I did my internal medicine internship and residency in St. Louis, Missouri and my oncology fellowship at M.D. Anderson Cancer Center in Houston, Texas where I eventually joined the medical staff and worked as a teacher, clinician and researcher. Over the course of my work there, I conducted protocol-based clinical trials to evaluate safety and efficacy of new anticancer agents and multidrug combinations.

As a part of my work with M.D. Anderson Cancer Center, I traveled to make presentations at medical conferences around the globe. In the spring of 1997, one such international medical congress gave me the opportunity to go to Antalya in Turkey and visit to my parents' birthplace in Turkey.

On April 21, 1997, I boarded the plane to go to Antalya, to attend the 12th National Cancer Congress organized by the Turkish Association for Cancer Research. I was scheduled to make a presentation on the management of metastatic melanoma. I had mixed feelings about this trip. I was very excited because I had plans to take a side trip to visit Akshehir, my parents' birthplace. But at the same time, I was apprehensive because I was going there just a few days before April 24. Contrary to what many historians have determined, the Turkish government's official narrative of the events has remained quite different for decades: according to the Turkish version of events, millions, including the Armenians living in Ottoman Empire, perished as a result of the war that engulfed the region in 1915. As long as I can remember, every year as we approach April 24, the emotions get fired up on both sides. In making my trip to Turkey so close to the genocide commemoration date, I had no intention of broaching this touchy subject. It simply was not the reason for my trip nor a discussion I had wished to enter into knowing the contention that remains to this day around the events of 1915.

The Congress opened on April 23 as scheduled. I made my presentation on the 24th and afterwards, I was surrounded by many colleagues, including the organizers of the Congress who were eager to ask questions. Having heard that I was an Armenian attending the Congress, a reporter approached for an interview. I



The reception hall of the Armenian school that is located adjacent to the church. It is converted to a school dedicated to Kemal Ataturk. The reception hall walls depict the history of Akshehir as related to the first Turkish president, who was stationed in this town during the liberation of Western Turkey from 1921 to 1923.

responded to his questions and mentioned that I had come from Houston, Texas, and that I was excited to visit Akshehir, located just a few miles from Antalya, where my parents were born.

He asked my opinion about the Armenian Genocide. I told him that as a cancer specialist, I had devoted my life to saving lives of patients with cancer, and that I had come to share my experience with my Turkish colleagues for the benefit of their patients. I calmly explained that that was my purpose of attending the Congress, not to enter into a contentious debate. He interrupted me saying that I should not believe the lies the Armenians in the diaspora have disseminated, and repeatedly interjected that there is no way that the Turks had committed genocide.

I briefly responded that there should be a logical explanation as to why the numbers of the Armenian population in Turkey decreased from 2 million before 1915 to the less than 60,000 currently officially reported. The following day, I left town in a taxi on my way to the White City with this conversation on my mind. Although in my response to the reporter, I stuck to logic and facts, the reality was, I had a much more personal connection and truth when it comes to the Armenian Genocide, a narrative I knew was not going to change the mind of a demanding reporter at a medical conference.

It was a slow drive up the mountain through narrow streets that snaked in between the pine trees in a thick forest. As we gained altitude, I noticed the streets getting wet and slippery from the small brooks trickling in between the pine trees. I could see the mountain peaks covered with snow. After we reached the other flank of the mountain, I saw the blue-green lake my parents had described so many times. As we traveled, the flicker of light in-between the trees was hypnotizing.

I immediately connected to the visual impression my parents had on their young minds as they left their birthplace at the ages of just 6 and 9 years old to escape the coming horrors. On many occasions when they sat down with their relatives in Beirut, they talked about the staggering beauty of Akshehir, which at the time made me wonder if they were exaggerating because they were homesick. From the hill top, now I could see the beautiful image of the city at the edge of the pristine aquamarine lake surrounded by mountains and hilltops covered by snow. I started to imagine the agony my relatives felt when they were hastily uprooted from this paradise-like environment and driven to the barren deserts of Anatolia and Syria.

When my mother was terminally ill in Beirut, she asked me what I wanted her to bequeath to me. Because the Lebanese Civil War made it impossible for me to be with her in person, I asked her to write down her life story so that I could know my roots. She granted my request and dictated one last letter which was transcribed by her granddaughter. Although I have translated the letter, in any of the quotes included below, I have not altered her words in anyway.

My Mother's Story

She began, “My son, in response to my last letter, you indicated that you do not want me to leave anything of monetary value after I die. As painful as it is, on my death bed I decided to use my last breath to tell you our life story...”

In the first part of the letter, she recapped the centuries of Armenian history that had led to our family settling in Akshehir. She described a happy and pampered early childhood with a caring nanny.

“My grandfather was Haji Daniel Papazian. He had two brothers and three sons including my father Mesrob and his brothers Bedros and Hagop. My father and his brothers were tailors by trade. They brought linen and clothing material from Istanbul and sewed the ethnic traditional dresses that the villagers wear such as shalvar and salta in Akshehir. They visited the nearby villages and sold the dresses and finished goods. If farmers did not have cash, in return as payment they received wool, barley and wheat, which they sold then in Istanbul. They became well-to-do traders. They bought properties, leased them to the farmers and shared the profit. They bought motels (khans) in the big towns between Akshehir and Istanbul to rest during travel, built shops to sell goods and become rich.”

Life was good. But soon, things began to change. Initially, there was no interference from the Turkish government in the lives of the Armenians in Akshehir as they were over 700 miles from the eastern frontier and were not involved in nationalistic activities. But as the methodical removal of Armenians that began in the East progressed, those policies made their way to my parents' town.

“First, my uncle Hagop was displaced with his 15-year-old daughter and 10-year-old son. A few days later, my aunt was separated from her two sons without saying goodbye. And then it was our turn. We went to the railway station with my parents and sister-in-law, Shahnar. My two brothers Ardashes and Vahan brought clothing and tents and joined us. We travelled by train eastward until we crossed through the pass of Bozante mountain chain and reached Islahiye. There we met my maternal grandmother.

“Then, the local military administrators separated the men and women with trades and sent them to Damascus. The rest of us continued our journey eastward on horse-driven carts, passed through Ghanle Getchide [Bloody Pass] and came to Intelli where we stayed for two months together with the displaced people who came from the north.

“One day, early in the morning, soldiers carrying rifles and bayonets attacked us. Those who owned carts escaped immediately. Those with no means of transportation, including the women and children, were killed. Passing in between the dead, we made our way to Akderun where we set the tent and slept. In the morning, the area was covered with snow.

“Then a typhoid fever epidemic got spread. Many people became very sick, suffered from fever, abdominal pain,



COMMEMORATING THE ARMENIAN GENOCIDE

confusion and disorientation. After suffering for 21 days they either recovered or died. We left the place as soon as we could and moved to Meskene close to Euphrates River. While we were there my father received a letter from my uncle in which he wrote, 'Mesrob we have come to Miadin City in Der Zor, I opened a store here and am trading, come and join me.'

"Then we heard about massacres in Ras El-Ain, Intilli's and Der Zor. A few days later we were surrounded by the military. We were ordered to vacate the tents. We remained surrounded, without food and water for several days. While the military was waiting for orders deciding our fate, notice came that the war was over. We were set free to go to our tents."

The family lost contact with her uncles for two years; it turned out they were alive and forced to transport ammunition for the Turks and Germans fighting in Iraq. Her mother and relatives who stayed with us moved to Aleppo, Syria where the women sewed military uniforms and linens. Then they moved to Damascus where her mother worked odd jobs to make it through the rest of the war. After the war was over they moved to Beirut from where they boarded a ship to return to Aksenhir through Izmir.

The letter continues, describing frequent moves from one city to the next, all over this region of the world, uniting with and being separated from various relatives constantly. Interspersed in the letter are the incredible sad stories of friends or villagers that she describes matter-of-factly.

"We found out that my paternal aunt and her two daughters had stayed in Aksenhir. The husband of her older daughter was conscribed to the army. He had sent his two boys and two girls to the orphanage in Konya. The younger daughter had married Garabed Kojakafayan, who was engineer with American citizenship. They had three children. They stayed in Aksenhir. "Unfortunately, one day the local Turks took him to the

on the island, the orphans, including my aunt's children, were taken to Marseille, France. Then we heard that the Armenian men who were exiled by the Fourth Brigade had mostly perished and the few who survived were taken to Syria.

"In 1921, while in Corfu, we received a letter informing us that my brothers were in Syria. With their financial help and new passports, we went to Perie near Athens from where we set sail to Beirut."

With no work available in Beirut, the family moved to Damascus for a few years, where my mother attended an Armenian Catholic School. However, war soon caught up to the family, as the French and the Druze, an indigenous Arab population, started warring in Syria. The family was forced to return to Beirut via train and living in a tent set in a shanty quarter. My mother lost her father to pneumonia and her mother worked mending clothes.

While my mother and her family were continually being uprooted and moved, separated and reunited, and living a life of uncertainty, at the same time, my father's family was enduring much of the same. Unfortunately, because of my father's premature death from cancer, I didn't have the opportunity to ask him to do the same as my mother and write down his history. So I asked my mother to include my father's story in her letter to me. She did.

My Father's Story

"Your father, who was nine-years-old when he left Aksenhir, told us that in the city called Ziyarat, located three hours walking distance to Der Zor, he lost his father who was a dressmaker. He was left with his two sisters to take care of. Earlier, one of his sisters and a brother had died during the forced marches in the Deir Zor desert. He had no information about his remaining 2 brothers.

"He had earned his living and supported his two sisters by taking care of the horses of gendarmes as they moved from town to town pushing the Armenians southward towards the Syrian desert. The gendarmes provided him

with food and water in return for his services. One day the gendarmes told him that they have received orders to separate the families of the military from the refugees, move them to Rakka while pushing the refugees to Der Zor for extermination. He immediately took his sisters to Rakka as the military was going to provide them with food and shelter. Unfortunately, five days after arriving in Rakka, his sisters died of

starvation. He was left alone in the tent without food and water."

At this point, my father was the lucky beneficiary of some unexpected kindness. A Bedouin took my father under his wing and fed him to bring him back to health. He employed my father as a shepherd. And even more importantly, he taught my father verses from the *Koran* for his protection: in case he should get caught, he was to recite those verses in order to be spared without harm. After four years of working for him, my father, along with a group of other male Armenian orphans, began a treacherous journey to Aleppo. On this trek, he again was met with unexpected kindness.

"After five hours of walking, my feet swelled up and it was impossible to walk," he told my mother. "When we reached the place called Nahar Deheb [golden river], I could not walk any more. I got separated from the others and I sat on a piece of rock to rest. As it was getting dark, an Arab widowed Bedouin woman approached me on horseback. Noticing I was in poor condition and unable to walk, she helped me mount the horse and took me to her house. She put my feet in warm water daily until the swelling came down and I was able to walk again."

In gratitude, my father began working for this woman. He took care of her herd of sheep, sold milk and yogurt to the local shops and bought food and clothes on her behalf in return. He gained her trust, staying in her town.

Purely coincidentally, while in town doing chores, my

father happened to notice a neighbor from back home in Aksenhir and introduced himself. That neighbor began spreading the word about my father which fortuitously led to his reunion with a few remaining members of his family. He learned that American missionaries were collecting Armenian orphans. Together with his friends, he registered with them. With their assistance, he was taken as an apprentice by a carpenter and taught the trade.

After years and years of upheaval, pain, and so much loss for both of my parents, it was at this point that fate would step in and his path would cross my mother's. They decided to get married and settle in Beirut, eventually having me and my five siblings to create our family of eight. As a contractor and carpenter, he employed Syrian farmers who came to work in Beirut each summer. As token of gratitude, these farmers brought samples of their prize product, tobacco leaves as a gift. He started to chain smoke at a very young age. He smoked until he died of throat cancer at the age of 65.

As we approached the lake that day in Turkey in 1997, I noticed Aksenhir was no longer a village: it had transformed into a thriving metropolis. My driver started asking for direction so we could locate the Armenian churches. Before World War I, there were two Armenian churches in Aksenhir, St. Peter & Paul Church and the St. Trinity Church. They served the spiritual and cultural needs of 4,950 Armenian parishioners living in the area. We met the local administrators of the city and municipality who took us to the only structure remnant of one of the churches. From the outside, it was not recognizable as a church. The crosses had been removed from the dome and the façade of the church. He showed us the inside of the remaining structure, indicating that it is used as a cultural hall. The altar had been demolished, the frescoes on the inside of the cathedral had been painted and all crosses had been destroyed from the window panels. The ancillary building belonging to the church had been converted to an elementary school. At the entrance hall the walls were covered by pictures of the first president of the Republic of Turkey who had used Aksenhir as a military base prior to cleansing the western Turkey from the Greek, Armenian and other Christian communities and proclaiming the new Turkish republic.

Frantically, we tried to find my grandfather's mansion – we had heard it had been transformed into a school. Unfortunately, we were told the structure was demolished after it was destroyed by a fire. We looked for the Armenian cemetery; it was no longer in existence. We asked if any Armenian families are living in the area. We were told they were not aware of a single one.

As I walked down the main street, I looked for old shops with inscriptions of ownership; I could not find a single one suggesting potential prior Armenian ownership. With no local Armenian population, there was no attempt to preserve the Armenian culture. It was a devastating experience.

Then we visited the mausoleum of Nasreddin Hoja, a well-known humorist and the town's most famous citizen. For those of you who are not familiar with Nasreddin Hoja, many funny anecdotes and jokes are attributed to him. As we stopped at his mausoleum, I thought of many of his jokes my father used to tell us when we were young to make us laugh. One quick example that I remember from memory, having heard and laughed at it often while growing up:

A vizier was invited to Hoja's house for dinner in winter. The hostess cooked a turkey and placed it on the table before the guest arrived. While waiting impatiently for the arrival of the Vizier, Hoja paces in the house. He frequently visits the dining room to smell the cooked turkey. Finally, unable to resist the temptation he pulled off a drumstick and ate it. When he arrived, the Vizier was invited to sit at the head of the table. The Vizier and hostess noticed that the turkey had a drumstick missing. Astonished, they look at Hoja waiting for an explanation. Hoja turns to the Vizier and says, "This part of the town, it was exceptionally cold this year. It was so cold that the turkey was standing on one leg at a time to avoid freezing off both legs. Unfortunately he lost a leg in the process."

Although such an innocent and silly story, I remembered how much we laughed about this tale among the many that described Hoja's shenanigans. However, this time, it felt different. The true memory was how funny we used to think it was. As I reflected on it at the end of my visit to the White City, the story had lost its humor.

Many people view the Armenian Genocide through a lens with conclusions based on historical research, facts, and numbers. Rereading my mom's letter about my parents' long and arduous journeys from Aksenhir to Beirut, one thing is clear: the Genocide has affected and shaped my life in a way that could never be captured in numbers or in a debate with a pushy reporter at a Medical Conference. For me, it is a much more personal story.



The current entrance of the Armenian church. The old door and windows were replaced when the church was converted to a cultural hall. The author is on the left with the visitor tag, the middle two men are representatives of the mayor (*muhtar*) of the town, and the author's driver is on the right.

lake and drowned him. The three children were left with a 29-year-old widow with no help. When we returned to Aksenhir, their house was empty without the basic necessity. My father sold 2 pieces of property and bought food, clothing and bedding for them."

During this time, Turkey was fighting a war with Greece – a war that affected the Armenians once again. My mother and her family were once again driven from their home and set off on a series of moves.

"Mustafa Kemal's army occupied Istanbul, Izmir and Konya and with his Fourth Army brigade he was based in Aksenhir. The army started hanging the people loyal to the Greek king. Young Greek and Armenian men were torched on Nasreddin Hoja Square to terrorize the Christian population. They collected the wealthy Armenian men and sent them to exile. There were no males over 10-years-old left in the city. Two years later, they told us that the exiled men would not be returning. The women were told that they could stay in town and live in their property if they changed their faith to Islam.

"About 1,000 families, including ours, refused to change their faith, left their hometown and went to Mersin. There we joined the Greeks who were leaving western Turkey to go to Greece. The ship took us to the Greek island of Corfu, where we were fed with bread and sweat potatoes. There we met the Armenian orphans, including my paternal aunt's children, who were transferred from Konya's orphanage. After five months of stay



COMMEMORATING THE ARMENIAN GENOCIDE

Civil and Criminal Legal Perspectives on the Destruction of Culture and Genocide at the Armenian Museum of America

By Aram Arkun

Mirror-Spectator Staff

THE EFFECTS of the Armenian Genocide on successive generations are comprehensive, yet too often only the destruction of human life is considered and not the accompanying cultural effects. Two legal experts, Karnig Kerkonian and Nicholas Koumjian, discussed this cultural dimension from the perspective of jurisprudence on March 20 at the Armenian Museum of America in Watertown in a colloquium called “Reclaiming the Forgotten Survivors of Genocide: Legal Perspectives on the Fate and Future of National Artifacts, Collective Identity and Cultural Markers.”

Kerkonian currently leads the international practice group at Kerkonian Dajani LLC, focusing on international transactions, foreign sovereign immunities litigation and commercial sanctions regime matters. He holds an A.B. magna cum laude in Government from Harvard University and two law degrees – a J.D. from the University of Chicago and a post-doctoral Diploma in International Law from Cambridge University. Kerkonian joined Mayer Brown LLP in Chicago working on federal litigation and appeals and, in 2003, began his own practice.

Koumjian is the international co-prosecutor in the Extraordinary Chambers in the Courts of Cambodia. From 2007 to 2013, he was trial counsel and Senior Appeals Counsel for the prosecution of Charles Taylor, former President of Liberia for crimes in Sierra Leone. He previously served as the chief prosecutor for the UN-staffed and funded Serious Crimes Unit in East Timor and worked as a trial lawyer at the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia (ICTY), the State Court of Bosnia and Herzegovina and the International Criminal Court (ICC).

After an introduction from Jennifer Liston Munson, new executive director of the Armenian Museum of America, Kerkonian delivered a talk on what he called “The Dignity Discourse,” to the accompaniment of PowerPoint illustrations. His focus was on the civil context of jurisprudence. He attempted to provide some lessons from the work of the European Court of Human Rights.

Kerkonian declared that Armenians after the Genocide are living in a post-traumatic period which affects their perception and even clouds their view of their own identity. The purpose of genocide is in part this, he pointed out: to erase the people but also to erase the nation in the minds of the people who remain. Territory is only the beginning of what survivors have lost, Kerkonian said, and placed his focus on cultural markers, which are shared features such as language and cultural values. There are opportunities for mitigation, to save and give rebirth through civil litigation, which Kerkonian called, “litigating for human dignity.”

The European Convention on Human Rights provides one good place to start, he said. Article 8 Paragraph 1 proclaims, “Everyone has the right to respect for his private and family life, his home and his correspondence.” Kerkonian provided resumes of several recent cases in the European Court of Human Rights which on the surface have no connection with Armenians and their genocide, but which turned out to point a way toward protecting Armenian rights, traditions and the reputation of their ancestors.

In *Putistin v. Ukraine* (2013), a recent newspaper article about a soccer match in Kiev 75 years ago suggested that Putistin’s father collaborated with the Gestapo. The court accepted that this affected the son’s “private life” and identity.

In *Aksu v. Turkey* (2012), Aksu argued that a book neg-

atively stereotyping the gypsies of Turkey (*Ali Rafet Özkan, Türkiye Çingeneleeri*) had a negative impact on his own identity and dignity. The court agreed that the negative stereotyping of an ethnic group could impact the group’s sense of identity and its members’ feelings of self-worth and self-confidence, and thus affect the “private life” of the latter.

In *Jelsavar v. Slovenia* (2014), the court ruled that an attack on the reputation of an ancestor coming in the form of a work of literary fiction could violate a person’s rights under Article 8 Paragraph 1 of the Convention.

Even in a case which ostensibly Armenians lost, *Perinçek v. Switzerland*, in which Amal Clooney represented Armenia as an interested third party, the court accepted that the law criminalizing Genocide denial and thus interfering with Perinçek’s statements was intended to protect the identity, and thus the dignity, of present-day Armenians. The court thus accepted that this group identity can be handled within the ambit of Article 8 Paragraph 1.

In other words, Kerkonian found that Article 8 Paragraph 1 can give Armenians a way to protect their rights and traditions and the reputation of their ancestors from the destructive and insulting approach of Turkey today, whether it be derogatory statements of Turkish politicians or destruction of physical sites of Armenian culture.

He cited a few cases of the European Court of Human Rights giving some guidance on how Armenians could approach their case. For example, in *Broniowski v. Poland* (2004) the court accepted creating a type of class action suit called a pilot procedure through Rule 61 in case of systematic violations by a state – in this case, for approximately 80,000 people deprived of their possessions due to a border change. Kerkonian found that this Rule 61 approach or tool was used in a number of cases pertinent to Armenians.

Manushasge Puto v. Albania allowed lumping 20 cases of Albanian lands confiscated under the communist regime the compensation for which was not enforced. The same procedure was used to get payment for old monies and bank deposits, as in *Suliagic v. Bosnia and Herzegovina* (2009), with 1,350 similar cases before the court, or for cases of restitution or compensation of nationalized properties, as in *Atanasiu v. Romania* (2010). The court dealt with enforcement delays in *Burdov v. Russia* (2009), in which the Russian state failed to execute judgment debts.

Kerkonian found that one of the most interesting cases the Court accepted in this realm with Rule 61 is *Kuric v. Slovenia* (2012), in which a group of nationals of the former Yugoslavia lost their status as permanent residents following Slovenia’s declaration of independence in 1991. They became “erased” people with no status of citizenship in any country.

All of the above cases deal with elements of the indignities faced by Armenians, “erased” in citizenship status, deprived of titles and deeds to their lands, monies and bank deposits, with nationalized properties, and facing delayed enforcement.

Armenians, as descendants of survivors of the Armenian Genocide, should therefore, Kerkonian said, start looking at their identity based on their cultural markers because there is significant value both in the historical and the legal sense therein. He concluded that “There are real avenues that I think a creative approach would allow us to build on in order to reclaim, in order to create and in order to protect the dignity of not only of our ancestors, but as importantly, our self-worth, our dignity as Armenians and for our progeny. I think that there is a bold vision that we need to be reconsidering, in terms of not looking at it from the standpoint of victimization but from the standpoint of mitigation, as in the standpoint of looking for opportunities to make sure that what those eyes [of the Armenian survivors] have seen, are things that our children and our progeny will be able to see too.”

Koumjian then began his talk and explained that it would concentrate on the criminal aspects of the destruction of culture, which can be crimes against humanity. There is international recognition through various legal categories that such acts can be criminalized. For example, in a recent case from Mali at the International Criminal Court, Koumjian said, the accused pled guilty to the destruction of a series of mausoleums and a mosque, which was deemed as important parts of the local culture, and was sentenced to nine years in prison on a plea bargain.

Genocide is the more complicated of these legal categories. The term, invented by Raphael Lemkin, started to

be used around World War II, and was further defined as part of international law in the Genocide Convention of 1948. It combines five different kinds of acts, with a mental element.

Koumjian examined a number of aspects of that definition and provided illustrations. For example, to qualify as genocide, the intent to destroy a permanent racial, ethnic or national group must exist. In the case of the Muslim Rohingya of Myanmar, there is debate over whether they form a religious, ethnic, or national group, but under the accepted UN definition it does not matter, since they do form a permanent group and are identified as such by other Burmese.

Furthermore, the intent does not have to be to kill every member of the group in the world, but to destroy the group in whole or in part. In Srebrenica, eight to nine thousand men and boys, 13 to 65 years old, were killed during three days in the summer of 1995 but the elderly men and very young children and women were put on buses and transported out of the area. Both the Yugoslav tribunal and the International Court of Justice ruled it as genocide because of the intent to destroy the Bosnian Muslims within that municipality, which was deemed a substantial part of the total Bosnian Muslim population. Similarly, Koumjian pointed out, the fact that less substantial killings of Armenians took place in places like Istanbul in 1915 did not mean that what took place was not genocide.

Koumjian spoke about the situation in Cambodia, where the Khmer Rouge targeted ethnic Khmer as a political and economic group, which does not fit the UN definition of genocide. However, Koumjian said, they also did target two other smaller groups, the Vietnamese, who were the “hereditary enemy” there, and the Cham Muslims, who resisted the Khmer Rouge attempt to prohibit the practice of religion.

The number of Vietnamese killed was quite small, Koumjian said, because at the beginning of the regime they forced most to leave the country. The Khmer Rouge said then that they gave the Vietnamese the opportunity to leave, and anyone who did not leave after two years would be killed, even those only half-blooded Vietnamese. Oddly, if a Vietnamese woman was married to Khmer man, they would kill their children, but not vice versa, because they believed nationality was obtained through the mother.

The situation of the Muslim Cham is relevant to the Armenian case, where many Armenians converted to save their lives, and children were taken from the group to be raised as Muslims in Kurdish or Turkish homes. After a short period of time the children began to lose their identity.

The prosecution argued to the judge in the Cambodian case that if you tell someone that they only will live if they convert, and a religious group only exists if you practice this religion, then you are destroying the group through such actions and committing genocide. Cham Muslim leaders and those who refused to convert were targeted, though some Cham were allowed to survive and scatter into other areas.

In other words, a group can be destroyed in ways other than physical killing. Another example is when ISIS tells Christians in Syria or Yazidis that they must convert or die, this shows the intent to destroy a group. The use of rape as a weapon of war by states or organizations like ISIS is also recognized in criminal tribunals as a genocidal tool intending to prevent the cohesion of a group.

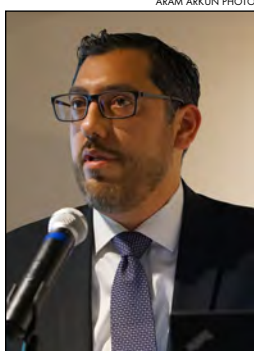
Koumjian noted that the examples he was discussing are very relevant for the prosecution of current genocidal processes, not only with ISIS, but also for Myanmar’s Rohingya.

He cited the William Saroyan line, “Whatever happens anywhere in the world to anyone in the world is everybody’s business,” to indicate that there are crimes in the world of such significance that they are everybody’s business – it is everyone’s business to prevent them from happening. Koumjian declared, “I think that Armenians as a victim group, a group that has experienced genocide, have a particular obligation and responsibility to speak out against genocide and other crimes against humanity occurring anywhere in the world.”

After a question-and-answer session, Kerkonian donated to the Armenian Museum of America the transcript of the first and only commemoration of the Armenian Genocide held in Chicago in the courtroom of Judge Samuel Der-Yeghiayan, the first foreign-born Armenian judge on the US judiciary, in 2015. Born in Aleppo, he just retired several weeks ago, and Kerkonian knew him well.



Nicholas Koumjian



Karnig Kerkonian



COMMEMORATING THE ARMENIAN GENOCIDE

Reclaiming a Stolen Legacy

By Edmond Y. Azadian

HOW MANY NATIONS have to recognize the Armenian Genocide so that we can move ahead to the compensation phase?

In 103 years, more than 20 countries have recognized it. Do we need to wait until all 193 members of the United Nations extend recognition to move ahead? We do not think there is a magic figure and the game of recognition is not a measure to consolidate Armenian rights for compensation.

Only recognition by the Turkish state would be enough to unlock this century-old puzzle. To force Turkey to recognize the genocide, some key countries have to head the way, namely the US and Israel.

That path, of course, is problematic and fraught with many political hurdles. Those two countries and for that matter, any other country, must be compelled by a political incentive to decide to recognize the Armenian Genocide.

We must also qualify the nature of any recognition that comes our way. We have been expecting successive US administrations to recognize the genocide. Until today, all legislative drives have been behind commemorative resolutions which do not have any legal value, except putting the Turks on the hot seat. Similarly, the recognition by some 20-odd countries have commemorative value, unlike the ones passed in France and Germany.

The French resolution is sustained by a law. We almost were at the stage to complement the law recognizing the Genocide with a law punishing its denial but despite former French President Sarkozy's tearful assurances and because of his political opportunism, political machinations played their role and France's Constitutional Court reversed the resolution of the parliament making genocide denial punishable.

Le Loi Gaysot, making the denial of the Holocaust punishable by law in France, is defined exactly as the law punishing genocide denialism. However, now, while denial of the Holocaust is punishable, the denial of the Armenian Genocide becomes an issue of freedom of speech for French citizens. The same political interests overturned the conviction of genocide denier Dogu Perinçek in Geneva.

Europe and the West sermonize the rest of the world about the separation of powers but they always find a legal fig leaf to trespass the same legal parameters. The creation of the state of Kosovo and the legal charade in dismantling the former Yugoslavia are cases in point as is letting the bodyguards of Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan off the hook for their attacks on peaceful protestors in Washington.

Germany's recognition of the Armenian Genocide was through an act of the parliament which went one step further than highlighting Turkish culpability, by recognizing Germany's part in the genocide by inaction at the time, if not all-out collusion.

Genocide is defined in the Article II of the UN Convention on the Prevention and the Punishment of the Crime of Genocide (1948). The Ottoman Turkish government has perpetrated all five crimes defined in that article. And contrary to some attenuating claims that it was a crime committed in the panic of war, we come across document after document, mostly unearthed by Turkish historian Dr. Taner Akçam, that it was premeditated and pre-planned. Talaat Pasha's *Black Book* provides evidence enough for premeditation.

Sultan Abdul Hamid II always practiced population exchanges between the villayets to preserve Muslim majorities because every time the Eastern Question, or the Armenian Question, emerged at political forums, European forces would demand reforms in the Christian-majority

regions. That had been a perennial Ottoman policy. The Young Turks (or members of Ittihad ve Terraqi, Committee for Union and Progress with the acronym CUP) had a more refined solution, as Talaat Pasha would later boast that "what Sultan Abdul Hamid could not achieve in 40 years, I was able to achieve in a few months, with the annihilation of the entire population of Anatolia."

Because as the Turkish historian Ügur Umit Üngör states in his book, *The Making of Modern Turkey*, the Ittihadists had developed an ideology which they executed taking advantage of the war situation. An ideology takes a long time to develop and it is not possible to have it as an after-thought. The ideology called for ethnic cleansing, in today's lingo, to create a unitary state.

Üngör writes, "The Young Turk regime subjected East Anatolia, an ethnically heterogeneous space, to various forms of nationalist population policies aimed at ethnically homogenizing the region. ... It begins with the Young Turk seizure of power in the 1913 coup d'état and ends with the Young Turk rule in 1950."

It is significant that the historian extends the Young Turk rule to 1950, because as Akçam has traced in his book, *A Shameful Act*, Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, the founder of the Republic of Turkey, enlisted all the government officials who had blood on their hands in his gov-

other. On the contrary, they go hand-in-hand. Recognition is the basis for compensation.

We do not have a national policy defining what we mean by compensation. Different people have different perspectives on compensation. At one end of the spectrum there are people who have been alienated from their identity and they don't care one way or another if and what the Turks compensate. Those are the second victims of the genocide, with the first, of course, being the martyrs who perished in Der Zor.

Then the other groups of Armenians who will be satisfied with an apology from the Turks. The next level demands monetary compensation. And the traditional political parties demand territorial restitution.

There is an erosion in the strength of this last demand, either led by Turks or based on common sense. People have begun asking why we need land while we can hardly manage what constitutes the Republic of Armenia. Additionally, who will go and populate those historic territories, as our numbers have dwindled over the years?

In theory, our demands must include all the above levels of compensation. If a burglar has stolen an item, he is the last one with the authority to ask the owner of that item what he or she intends to do with the item, if returned.



ernment, creating a façade of modernism. Those officials not only executed a genocide, they were also instrumental in the formation of Atatürk's Republican Party and its policies. They were the ones who orchestrated the mass murders of Kurds in Dersim and the organizers of Varlık Vergisi of 1942 to expropriate all remaining ethnic minorities – Armenians, Greeks and Jews.

The Kemalists were Nazi sympathizers and collaborators. The most prominent proof of that collaboration is that they managed to bring Talaat's remains from Berlin to Turkey and then give him a state funeral in Istanbul. They also had their army ready to cross the border into Armenia if Hitler had won the war.

Today, we have a battle of the archives. Erdogan and his ilk have been challenging Armenians to open up their archives to prove their innocence. In the first place, those Turkish archives are available in a limited fashion and as Üngör testifies, they are sanitized by the removal of all incriminating documents.

Fortunately, no self-respecting historian will fall into the Turkish trap by relying on doctored archives, except for some people like Yusuf Halaçoğlu, Justin McCarthy, Stanford Shaw, etc.

There is no demarcation between genocide recognition and vindication. We are reminded sometimes that the recognition phase has been satisfied and we need to move to the compensation phase. One does not contradict the

It is true that practically we do not have a significant number of Armenians to populate our historic ancestral lands. We should not feel guilty for that shortfall, because the guilt and onus lay with the Turks who decimated our nation. The Kurds had almost the same population during the Ottoman era. Today, they count anywhere between 20 to 25 million within the borders of the Republic of Turkey. Had the Armenian population been left unhampered in its historic lands, it would have multiplied at the same rate or somewhat slower scale, but they would number enough to populate the lands of their forefathers.

There were 2,000 to 2,500 churches, monasteries, fortresses and a tremendous amount of material and cultural wealth. Those are part of our national inheritance.

We cannot bring to life that entire generation which produced that wealth. But that apology should attempt to cover some of the tangles lost.

All the rest are part of our national identity. Any element missing will compromise that identity. This may all seem unrealistic especially in the current political climate. But national groups do not only live in the present. They also have a future. That future can only be shaped by them. To propel a national group to its future, that group has to motorize its move through ideals.

All the elements of our demands constitute that ideal. We may achieve that ideal in 20 years, a 100 year or never. But at least, on the way, we will enjoy a dignified life.



COMMEMORATING THE ARMENIAN GENOCIDE

Capturing Genocide On Film

By Alin K. Gregorian

Mirror-Spectator Staff

THERE are a tremendous number of books, primarily works of non-fiction, as well as a growing body of fiction, on the Armenian Genocide and its many aspects – legacy, history, reparation, survivors and the dead. The authors try to reach audiences that are interested in the subject but more often than not, they reach people with a direct interest in the subject, such as survivors, descendants, or Turks just finding out about the subject.

A field that is growing is that of films about the Armenian Genocide. There have been a handful of films produced in North America, again both feature as well as documentaries.

The first major film on the Genocide was “Ararat,” released in 2002, written and directed by Canadian-Armenian writer/director Atom Egoyan and produced by Egoyan and Robert Lantos. The film, starring Charles Aznavour, Arsinée Khanjian, David Alpay, Christopher Plummer and Simon Abkarian, is about a young man stuck at customs after returning from Turkey where he is participating in the shooting of a movie about the Armenian Genocide. Much of the movie is about the film’s production, which focused on Arshile Gorky and his endless variations of his portrait with his mother.

The device of a film-within-a-film led to some controversy within the Armenian community with some suggesting that it could lead to a viewer construing that the Armenian Genocide was open to interpretation. The film won several Genie Awards in Canada, including for best motion picture, actor and actress.

Egoyan, who was nominated for an Academy Award for his screenplay for “The Sweet Hereafter” and has enjoyed much critical acclaim around the world for his unusual, non-linear and intellectual films, is proud of his film and its power on exposing the truth when the denialist narrative was much stronger.

In a recent interview he said, “The year after ‘Ararat’ won for Best Canadian Film at the Canadian Academy of Film Awards, our government recognized the Armenian Genocide, in small part because of the special screening of the film held for the Canadian Parliament. As you’re aware, the film has been distributed in over 40 countries, and has won numerous awards, including the Freedom of Expression Awards from the National Board of Review in the United States, and Best Film and Best Actress from the Durban Film Festival in South Africa. I think ‘Ararat’ would be better understood now, after we have had three more traditional historical epics about the Genocide released. These include ‘The Lark Farm,’ ‘The Cut’ and ‘The Promise.’”

He continued, “The world is definitely a different place in terms of Genocide recognition.”

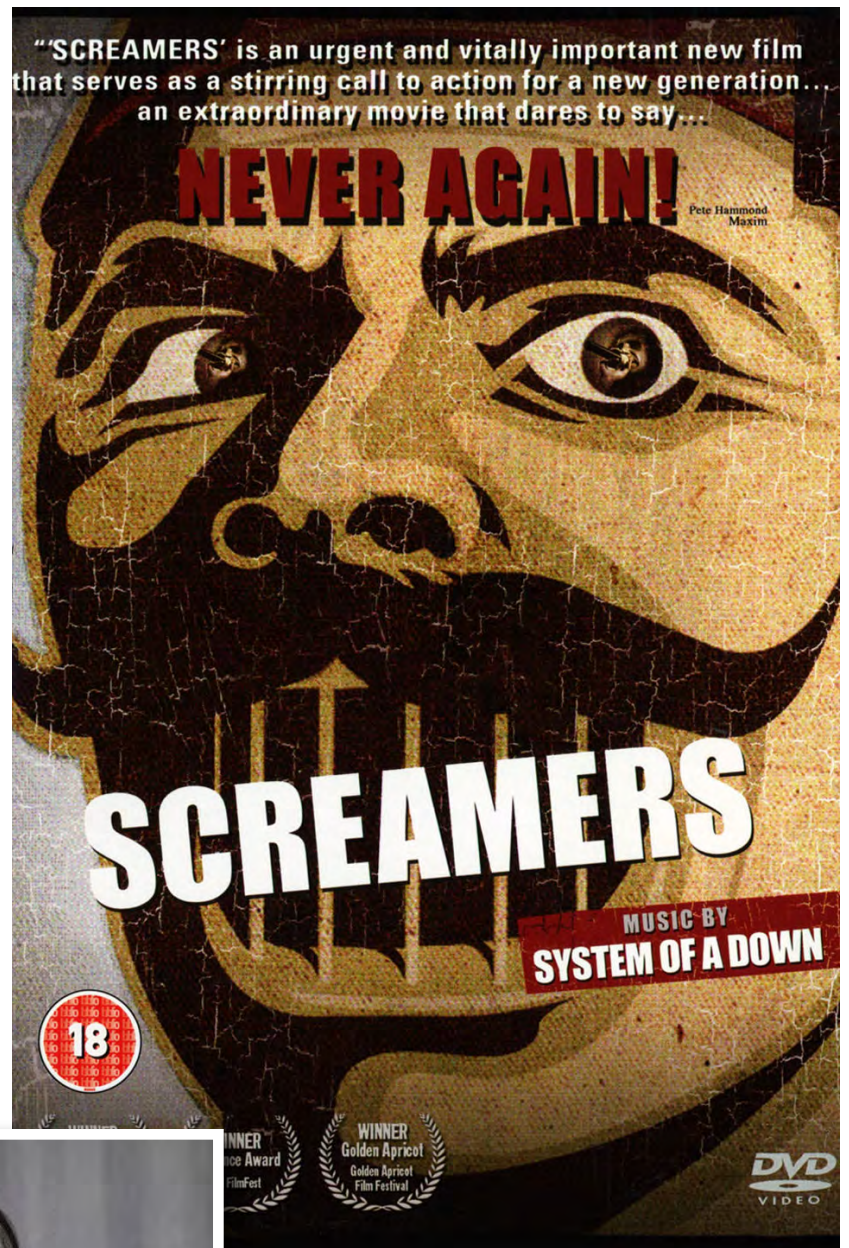
He added that the device of the film-within-a-film has been incorporated in some of the other movies, and with his work paving the way, the reaction has been different for those that came afterwards.

Added Egoyan, “I definitely think people would have felt more comfortable with this device after they had seen these three other films. My intention with ‘Ararat’ was to make a film that dealt with the effects of denial over four generations. Gorky was just one figure, representing a Genocide survivor. Aznavour’s character (the film director) played the child of a survivor. Arsinée Khanjian [his wife] was the grandchild, and her son Raffi the great-grandchild. Throw in Raffi’s terrorist/freedom fighter father and a customs officer played by Christopher Plummer and you get a film that was way too complex for some viewers.

“On the other hand, ‘Ararat’ is now being taught in many universities and several academic papers have been written about the work. In recent retrospectives of my work, it always stirs debate. It’s not my easiest film, but I consider it my most important. A few months ago, we had a 15th-anniversary screening at The Pomegranate Film

Festival here in Toronto to a packed audience and people seemed to respond even more strongly than they did at the time. I think most Armenian viewers had no idea what to make of it in 2002, but the film is my sincere attempt to deal with the transmission of trauma over generations. This makes it an unusual film, but I consider it an honest and sincere attempt at telling my feelings about my history. I am fiercely proud of this work.”

A film that made a lot of noise in 2017 was “The Promise,” funded by the late Kirk Kerkorian. The film had been on his mind for years and before his death, he enlisted the help of Dr. Eric Esrailian, a friend of his who by day is co-chief of the Division of Digestive Diseases at the David Geffen School of Medicine at UCLA, to make sure that his vision happened. Thus, bankrolled with \$90 million, “The Promise” got a cast of Hollywood A-list stars, including Oscar Isaac and Academy Award winner Christian Bale, and was produced by Esrailian, Mike Medavoy and



Filmmaker Carla Garapedian

William Horberg. The film was written and directed by Terry George, who won an Academy Award for “Hotel Rwanda.” As it gained momentum on social media with Armenian viewers eager to see it, it suffered by it too. It was notable for an overwhelming number of negative reviews on IMDB database, before anyone outside of a small group at the Toronto International Film Festival had seen and was clearly the work of saboteurs.

There was good reason to make the film, Esrailian said, especially in terms of making history visually available. “We have volumes of detailed text books, and the facts are irrefutable. However, in this day and age, using visual media to educate and enlighten is extremely important. We hope we have contributed to the tools that will be used for this purpose.”

Carla Garapedian, a producer on the film, and a filmmaker, director, writer and broadcaster, agreed that movies and documentaries offer a different way to bring the issue to the masses. “Movies help audiences identify with the reality of genocide – which is, at its root, the systematic murder of individuals. We have to see this personal side of genocide, I think, for it to hit home. We need to see how it affects families, friends, lovers. In ‘The Promise,’ we also saw the perpetrators and their ideology. We saw the journalist’s attempts to cover the story, and even friendly Turks who tried to do the right thing.

Movies can capture the detail and complexity of mass murder, which is hard to imagine. Movies can take you into that horrific world, and let you experience it for two hours.”

The movie did not make much money at the box office.

“From the beginning, Mr. Kerkorian’s plan and that of our team was clear. Of course, it would be nice to have more box office sales that could ultimately result in philanthropy, but the mission was to build a visual museum through the film that would live forever and that could be used to educate and enlighten people for generations to come. We wanted to build a movement around the film that could be used by educators and human rights activists but would also be dedicated to the Armenian people and for others suffering in the world today. How much is it worth to finally pull back the curtain on atrocities against your people after over a century of orchestrated and systematic denial? Mr. Kerkorian thought it was priceless. Long after these people that live in an alternate universe are gone, the film will still be watched and the movement will continue,” said Esrailian.

He added, “Mr. Kerkorian knew for decades going into the project that there is an extremely limited appetite in the marketplace given the subject matter, the time period, the way that only certain films have life now in theaters, and the long-standing denial and political pressure. These factors were only reinforced during the entire process of trying to make the film, distribute it, and market it. However, given the quality of the film, the people involved, and the influencers and the Armenian nation promoting the film and its mission, we feel that awareness was increased, and we hope that more people will continue to learn about the Armenian Genocide.”

Esrailian gave Egoyan a lot of credit for his film. “Atom Egoyan is amazing, and he made a beautiful and memorable film with his team. It was also truly artistic. He outlined many challenges and predicted the difficulties that we would face both from the denialists and the lack of appetite, fear from studios and distributors, and potential apathy in the marketplace. Seeing his tears and hearing his words after he saw ‘The Promise’ in Toronto are two things that I will never forget.”

“The Promise” is about a love triangle set in the early stages of the Armenian Genocide. A French-Armenian girl is torn between an American and an Armenian and in the meantime, the clear sense of menace for the Armenians keeps building. Mindless thugs chase Armenians and loot homes and kill anyone in their paths. Still, the violence was not graphic. According to Garapedian, that was a decision George made.

Said Garapedian, “We spent a lot of time working to get



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the details accurate for Ottoman Turkey in that period. Generally, I'm a proponent for showing more violence – but I think Terry George's belief that a PG-rating was important to get, was also valid. Had we shown more violence, a lot of people would have switched off. There's a healthy debate about this, I think. I've heard both sides of the argument – and for the non-Armenians, less violence is better, it would seem."

An interesting aspect to the film was that during the promotional tour, the leads, including Bale and Isaac as well as Terry George, would often speak about the Armenian Genocide in clear, concise terms to reach a mass audience.

"These are incredible people and they were attracted to the script, the subject matter, and the overall mission. It is an honor to be part of this close group," Esrailian said.

Garapedian agreed. The actors were very committed to the cause of genocide recognition. Eric Esrailian was a key motivator, from the beginning; the director, Terry George, and the other producers were equally committed. The actors did not all know about the genocide. They asked a lot of questions. One of my jobs was to give them the answers – through books, documents, and photos. The actors also saw testimonies from survivors. I've been a part of the USC Shoah Foundation project to digitize J. Michael Hagopian's testimonies. The actors saw some of these interviews. I was impressed with our cast, to say the least. They felt they were part of something important – and I think they were.

Added Garapedian, "We were in an unusual situation where our financier did not require making a return on his investment. Whatever profits that came from the film would later be put into charitable missions. That's the greatness of Kirk Kerkorian – he made such a difference, not only for this movie, but for the whole Armenian diaspora. We owe him a lot. The real question is, did the movie have an impact? While I think it's fair to look at the box office figures, it's hard for the number-crunchers to measure the effect this movie has had on the nearly 12 million people who are estimated to have viewed it (so far). That's not counting the life it will have on cable (which is just starting this month) and its educational life. So this is the biggest movie we've had on the genocide; it's the

denial. The historical issues in 'The Promise' are laid out, relating the real issues to the way they were dramatized in the movie. You see the challenges of trying to show these horrific events on film. It was my job to advise on the historical aspects – in the sets, props, script. So showing the railway carriage where 100 Armenians were transported to their deaths – that was in the documentary. 'Intent to Destroy' shows the historical context of 'The Promise,' while standing alone as a documentary about the history of genocide denial. The director, Joe Berlinger, deserves a lot of credit for working through the issues and asking tough questions," Garapedian said.

Esrailian was thrilled with "Intent to Destroy." "We love the film, and we are very proud of the role it will play in the bigger mission. From the beginning, we planned to make both films together so that we could address specific details and the educational components that would

Neeson, Colin Firth, Reese Witherspoon and other stars like Ryan Reynolds, Rosario Dawson and Kevin Bacon. And the best news is that Christopher Plummer finally won HIS Oscar after he appeared in "Ararat" and I got to work with him again on my most recent film 'Remember' (also about the residual effects of historical trauma, this time the Holocaust). I'll be hopefully shooting a new film in the fall, but I'm keeping very busy with opera these days"

Noted Garapedian, "In 'Intent to Destroy,' Atom Egoyan talks about the making of 'Ararat' and the Turkish government making their presence known during that production. While making 'The Promise' we had some pressure put on actors by the Turkish government, to not appear in the movie. But the real pressure was on the film reviewers in the United States, who were routinely sent letters denying the genocide. It's hard to believe that still

goes on, but it does. And if you know nothing about the issues, as a reviewer, you might be influenced by a long denier letter. Even I was surprised, although I shouldn't have been. You may have also read about the "bots" which bombarded the internet hours after the first public screening. That says something for the new generation of denial that we are living in now."

Garapedian is also known for another documentary on the Armenian Genocide, "Screamers" in 1995, which made a lot of noise. In the documentary, Garapedian followed System of a Down, one of the most successful American heavy metal bands all of whose members are Armenian. The band's lead singer, Serj

Tankian, is an outspoken proponent for the recognition of the Armenian Genocide and at all their shows, the band has tables which have information about the Armenian Genocide as well as other atrocities ongoing around the world. The film was very well received.

Garapedian explained, "They speak to different audiences. Heavy metal music definitely falls into the young person's camp. Documentaries also speak to a different audience than a big feature film like 'The Promise.' Screamers had a particular voice in the pre-2007 debate about genocide recognition. We can say, though, after 'The Promise,' that the issue of genocide recognition now has many more allies, many more advocates, many more believers. We've come a long way, although it has only been ten years since 'Screamers.' I was at the official commemoration ceremony in Armenia, in 2015. I was very proud to see a Rwandan genocide survivor have a prominent role in that ceremony. Her presence in such an important state ceremony, I believe, would not have happened ten years earlier. But it did happen in 2015 – why? I think it is because Armenians understood the necessity to see our genocide as one of a series of genocides. That year, 2015, the Pope and Kim Kardashian also raised awareness. That helped us reach what I would call 'critical mass' – where suddenly, it seemed as if the genocide issue exploded."

Currently Garapedian said she is working on another film on the Armenian Genocide. "I'm working on one now – a crime drama based on a true story. Watch this space."

Garapedian said that she hopes – and is sure – that the film will continue to be seen by future generation. "I think it will age well because it was well made, is based on a true story that many people did not know about before the movie – and has very moving performances. It is an epic story, and for that reason, I think it will age well. The younger generation, now, likes epic stories, too – but epics more in the style of Marvel comics and super-heroes. I suspect, with the changes we are seeing in the world now, there will be a pendulum swing back to movies like 'The Promise.'"

Concluded Esrailian, "The release of 'The Promise' and 'Intent To Destroy' were time zero for the bigger mission – to never forget and to never allow these atrocities to be committed again. The news from around the world shows us that the work is just beginning. We have an incredible network of caring people like your readers, educators, human rights activists, philanthropists, and influencers. Who want to get involved and give back in their own way. The work is just beginning."



Atom Egoyan

be clumsy or inappropriate to work into a major Hollywood film. In addition, the documentary details the depths of the denial and the orchestrated attacks. Nevertheless, both films nearly scratch the surface. As difficult as it was to make the films and overcome obstacle after obstacle over these many years, it is nothing compared to what our ancestors went through," he said.

"The Promise" was not just emotional for those in the diaspora. "Seeing the reaction of Armenians in our homeland was truly moving. Many people said that they felt like their ancestors finally had a voice. Witnessing the fruits of the time and energy put into the performances by such talented artists in Armenia was inspirational," Esrailian said.

He and George went to Armenia, where they showed it and met with the country's leadership.

Other than those in the film, one person who was very vocal about the need for the recognition of the Armenian Genocide was singer Chris Cornell, who penned an eponymous song for the film's soundtrack. The song was nominated for a Grammy and was Cornell's last release before his untimely death. His death left many devastated, including those involved with "The Promise."

"It has been devastating on so many levels. Of course, the most pain has been felt by his

family. Millions of fans around the world are also mourning him and will continue to do so. He is truly a hero for many Armenians because of his beautiful song, his dedication to helping others, and the awareness he brought to a subject that is so personal to so many of us. We will never forget him," Esrailian said. e

The song as well as the film have been parlayed to help shed light on other injustices. In fact, the Los Angeles Committee of Human Rights Watch had their most successful fundraising dinner to date, raising more than every year prior to a program honoring the film and the song in November.

As for Egoyan, he is still charting his own original path. "I've made many other films after 'Ararat,' including films starring Oscar-winning stars like Julianne Moore, Liam



From left, Oscar Isaac, Eric Esrailian, Chris Cornell and Serj Tankian

one that has the highest production values – including stars and crew."

Garapedian added that the movie was for a wider audience, not necessarily Armenians. "I was on a flight last year, and saw someone watching the movie. He was not Armenian – he was just a guy on a plane, avidly watching a historic movie. He was gripped. It was 'The Promise.' Would he have known about the genocide otherwise? I wonder. ... We made a cultural impact, that is for sure."

"The Promise" led to "Intent to Destroy," a documentary co-produced by Garapedian, which showed the making of the film, intertwined with the story of the Armenian Genocide.

"I was very glad to be a part of it. I'm a little biased, of course, because I was in it and worked on it. I do think, though, it does an excellent job of showing the history of



COMMEMORATING THE ARMENIAN GENOCIDE

The Role of Property Seizure in the Armenian Genocide and Its Aftermath

By Ümit Kurt

WHAT HAPPENED ON APRIL 24 is one of the most significant radical moments in the process of extreme violence and mass annihilation in the great tragedy that befell the Armenians. It was on this day that the extermination of Armenians began in Dörtüol, Adana, Marash and Zeytun, lasting until March 1915, then Konya, Anatolia, before stopping in Syria. On that same day, first in Istanbul and later in all of the provinces of Anatolia, the arrest of Armenian intellectuals began, which continued into June/July of 1915, leading to the murder of many around Çankiri, Ayas and Ankara.

Only a day later, British Imperial troops began to bombard Çanakkale from land and sea. The wrath of the Committee of Union and Progress (CUP), leaders of the Ottoman Empire, feeling pressed and their existence threatened, fell first upon the Armenian community and afterwards on all non-Muslim Ottoman subjects. The seizure of Armenian property was not just a byproduct of the genocidal policies of the CUP, but an integral part of the murder process; reinforcing and accelerating the intended destruction. The expropriation and plunder of deported Armenians' movable and immovable properties was an essential component of the destruction process.

As Martin Dean argues in *Robbing the Jews: The Confiscation of Jewish Property in the Holocaust, 1933-1945*, ethnic cleansing and genocide usually have a “powerful materialist component: seizure of property, looting of the victims, and their economic displacement are intertwined with other motives for racial and interethnic violence and intensify their devastating effects.” In the same vein, the radicalization of CUP policies against the Armenian population from 1914 onward was closely linked to a full-scale assault on their property.

Thus, the institutionalization of the elimination of the Christian-Armenian presence was basically realized, along with many other things, through the Law of Abandoned Properties. These laws are structural components of the Armenian Genocide and were the basis of the legal system in the Republic. It is for this reason that we say that the Republic has adopted this Genocide as its structural foundation. Thus, a fresh look at the relationship between the Republic as a legal system and the Armenian Genocide must be taken.

The Law of Abandoned Properties is perceived as “normal and ordinary” in Turkey. Its existence has never been questioned in connection to the Genocide, which explains why the Armenian Genocide was ignored throughout the history of the Republic.

Turkey was founded on the transformation of a presence – Christian in general, Armenian in particular – into an absence. This picture also shows us a significant aspect of genocide, as Lemkin pointed out. Genocide is not only a process of destruction but also that of construction. By the time genocide perpetrators are destroying one group, they are also constructing another group or identity. Confiscation is an indispensable and one of the most effective mechanisms for perpetrators to realize the aforementioned process of destruction and construction.

Raphael Lemkin can be considered the founding father of genocide literature. He introduced the concept of genocide for the first time in 1944 in his book entitled *Ax's Rule in Occupied Europe*. The book consists of a compi-

lation of 334 laws, decrees, and regulations connected with the administration of 17 different regions and states under Nazi occupation between March 13, 1938 and November 13, 1942.

As such, Lemkin did not introduce the concept of genocide together with barbaric practices like torture, oppression, burning, destruction, and mass killing observed in all genocides, but through a book quoting and analyzing legal texts. Could this be a coincidence? Given its importance, it is necessary to stress this one more time; the year that Lemkin completed the writing of his book (1943), he already knew of all the crimes perpetrated by Nazi Germany. However, he did not present the concept of genocide in a framework elucidated by these crimes. On the contrary, he introduced it through some laws and decrees that were published on how to administer occupied territories and that perhaps, in the logic of war, might be considered “normal.”

We cannot say that this situation accords well with our

ruption. As such, the widespread participation of the local population as beneficiaries served to spread complicity and legitimacy to the CUP's actions.

It should be emphasized that corruption was fairly rife among bureaucrats and officers of the Abandoned Properties Commissions and Liquidation Commissions, who were the responsible actors for administering and confiscating properties under the supervision and for the advantage of the state – as was the case during the “Aryanization” of Jewish property. A number of leading members of the Central Committee of the Union and Progress Party, as well as CUP-oriented governors and mutasarrıfs, seized a great deal of property, especially those belonging to affluent Armenians in many vilayets [provinces]. According to one argument, CUP leaders also utilized Armenian property and wealth to meet the deportation expenses.

After the establishment of the Turkish Republic in 1926, the Turkish Grand National Assembly passed a law.

This law was promulgated and enforced on June 27, 1926. According to this law, Turkish government officers, politicians, and bureaucrats who were executed as a result of their roles in the Armenian deportations or who were murdered by Dashnaks, were declared “national heroes,” and the so-called “abandoned properties” of Armenians were given to their families. And in 1928, the Turkish Republic introduced a new regulation that granted muhacirs or Muslim refugees who were using Armenian properties the right to have the title deeds of those properties, which included houses, land, agricultural land and shops.

As such, a variety of actors and institutions seized the opportunity. Economic motivation was always present

and enabled CUP central actors to carry out their ultra-nationalist ideological policies against Armenians. The process of genocide and deportation directed at the Armenians was, in fact, put into practice by local notables and provincial elites. These local actors prospered through their new acquisitions, transforming them into the new wealthy social stratum. In this respect, the Union and Progress Party's genocide and deportation decree on May 27, 1915 had a social basis through the practice of effective power, control, and support mechanism(s) at the local level.

The distribution of a great amount of the “abandoned property” provided a useful incentive that reinforced hatred for local Armenians. And as Lemkin noted, the participation of local people is a necessary condition to ensure the effectiveness of genocidal policies. Planned extermination of all members of a given category of people is impossible without the involvement of their neighbors – those who know who's who in a community. Therefore, the entire process of confiscation can be evaluated and construed as both an ideological principle and economic motivation. These two aspects cannot be separated from each other. In some instances, ideology played a more significant role than economic motivation, and in other instances economic interests came into prominence.

The essence of all the laws and regulations issued was the erasure of all traces of the Armenians from Anatolian soil. Perhaps the physical annihilation of the Armenians was necessary to achieve this goal, but it was not sufficient in and of itself. The use of the legal system was as important as, if not even more important than their physical annihilation.

The law, in particular the Law of Abandoned Properties, became the most important tool of the Ottoman Empire. Economic interests blinded people from the plight of their fellows who were made to disappear.



Houses of deported Armenians in Aintab, Cilicia, pillaged and ruined by the Turks

present way of understanding genocide. The general perception is that genocide is the collapse of a normally functioning legal system; it is the product of the deviation of a system from the “normal” path. According to this point of view, genocide means that institutions of “civilization” are not working and are replaced by barbarism.

Lemkin, however, seems to be saying the complete opposite; that genocide is hidden in ordinary legal texts. By doing this, it is as if he is telling us not to look for the traces of genocide as barbaric manifestations that can be defined as inhuman, but to follow their trail in legal texts. Genocide as a phenomenon that fits into the legal system – this is an interesting definition.

A series of laws and decrees, known as the Law of Abandoned Properties (Emvali Metruke Kanunları) were issued during the Ottoman and Turkish Republican periods. They were concerned with the belongings left behind by the Ottoman Armenians who were deported in 1915. Most of the properties were distributed to Muslim refugees from the Balkans and Caucasia at the time. Central and local politicians and bureaucrats of the Union and Progress Party also took advantage of the properties, as well as hundreds of local employees, as the process of administering and selling the properties usually involved considerable administrative efforts.

Economic discrimination and plunder contributed directly to the CUP's process of destruction in a variety of ways. At the direct level of implementation, the prospect of booty helped to motivate local collaborators in the massacres and the deportations orchestrated by the CUP security forces. Similar to the policy of Nazi leaders with regards to the “Aryanization” of Jewish property during the Holocaust, the CUP aimed to have complete control over the confiscation and expropriation of Armenian properties for the economic interests of the state, but could not prevent cor-

Arts & Living

New Album of Kirazian *Badarak* Released

SAN DIEGO, Calif. — A milestone recording of excerpts from George Kirazian's version of the Divine Liturgy of the Armenian Apostolic Church has been released on iTunes, Amazon and CD Baby.

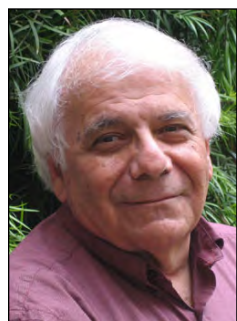
The recording was made in Yerevan, Armenia in September, 2017, by the award-winning Paros Chamber Choir, conducted by Raffi Mikaelian. In July, selections were performed live by Paros at the Komitas Institute in Yerevan.

Although most of the choir's members have a disability and sing from a seated position, their voices rise far above any such limitations. With Mikaelian at the helm, the group has developed into a world-class chamber choir.

Composer George Kirazian, also a published author and 40-year veteran instructor of literature and music, is based in San Diego and has been a leader in the Armenian-American community for decades. His version of the Divine Liturgy (*Badarak*) is the result of 12 years' work and a lifetime's dedication to Armenian sacred music. His long-held goal for his version of the *Badarak* was to have it recorded in the homeland by Armenian vocalists. This recording makes that vision a reality.

Kirazian's compositions of art songs, classical instrumental pieces and sacred choral music, have been performed across the US and abroad. His version of the *Badarak* was also recorded in full on double-CD by the Pacific Camerata in 2008.

"The Divine Liturgy (Holy *Badarak*), in one sense, is a divine dialogue," Kirazian writes, "and its subject is the Eternal Glory of God. In the various versions that have been sung for generations, the praise of the Choir is a humble vocal offering that is heartfelt and deeply moving to all who hear it. Each Sunday, in Armenian Churches throughout the world, our Divine liturgy enables the entire congregation to grow spiritually, to move closer to the Light."



Composer George Kirazian

It is Kirazian's hope that Armenian church choirs around the world will sing and be blessed by this version of the *Badarak*, which features melodies that are both modern and inspired by Armenian sacred music tradition.

The Paros Chamber Choir was founded in 1993 and performs a wide repertoire of music,

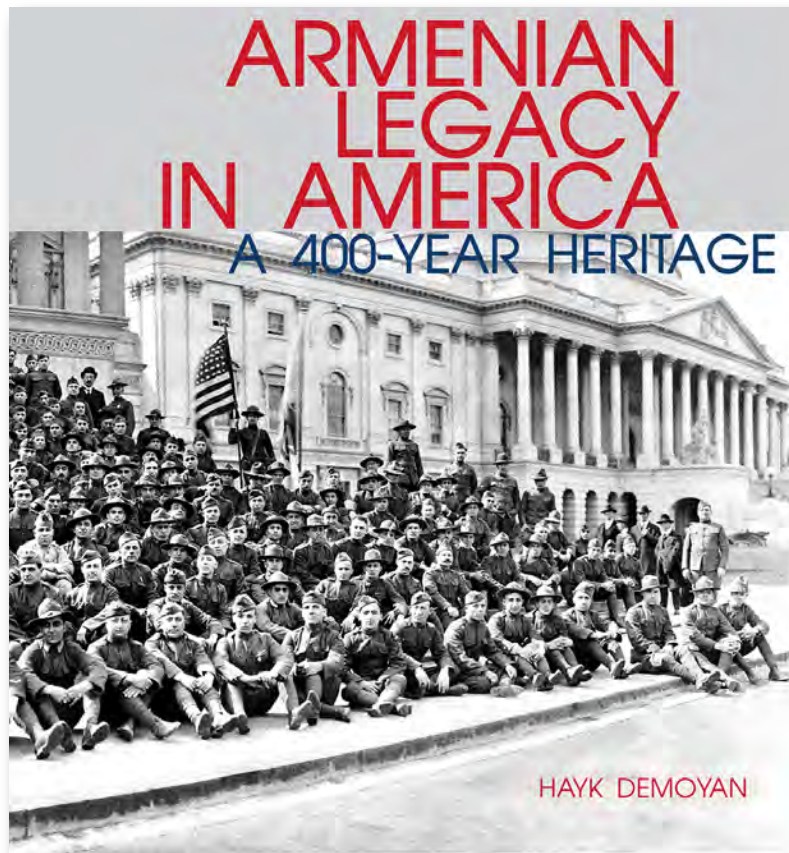
including songs by accomplished Armenian, Russian and American composers. Since its inception, the group has been honored in several international competitions and has truly become a beacon (Paros in Armenian) for The Armenian Nation. Most of the Paros Chamber Choir's members have physical disabilities and sing from a seated position, but their voices rise far above any such limitations.

Mikaelian is an award-winning conductor in Armenia, born in Kuwait and raised in Lebanon. He is a graduate of the Yerevan State Conservatory in choral conducting.

Under his baton, the Paros Chamber Choir has won numerous medals and awards worldwide. Mikaelian has conducted all three major orchestras in Armenia, as well as orchestras in Ireland and Russia, and has worked with artists such as Plácido Domingo, Jeffrey Douma, Davit Karapetyan and musicians of the San Diego Symphony Orchestra.

Proceeds from the sale of this album will be donated to the Paros Chamber Choir, to support their musical outreach.

To download the new album, Excerpts from the Divine Liturgy of the Armenian Apostolic Church, a version by George Kirazian, visit <https://store.cdbaby.com/cd/paroschamberchoir> or <https://paroschamberchoir.hearnow.com>.



Celebrating 400th Anniversary of Armenian-American Heritage

ARLINGTON, Mass. — This year marks a historic period in the history of Armenians in America: the 400th anniversary of the arrival of the first Armenian, "Martin the Armenian" to America. The Armenian Cultural Foundation (ACF) in collaboration with the Amaras Art Alliance and National Association for Armenian Studies and Research (NAASR) will be marking this historic occasion on Sunday, May 6 at 3 p.m.

The program will include an exhibit and illustrated talk by Dr. Hayk Demoyan, director of the Armenian Genocide-Museum Institute of Yerevan on the occasion of the release of his latest major project, *Armenian Legacy in America: A 400-Year Heritage (1618-2018)*, preceded by those of Drs. Robert Mirak and Barbara J. Merguerian, ACF president and trustee, respectively, and Dr. Noubar Afeyan, a co-founding member of Aurora Humanitarian Initiative.

Born in Leninakan (now Gyumri) in Armenia in 1975, Demoyan is a graduate of Yerevan State University (1998). He received his doctorate in historical sciences from the Armenian National Academy of Sciences in 2012, and has been on the faculty of History Department of Yerevan State University (2002-2005). He has been the director of the Armenian Genocide Museum-Institute (AGMI) in Yerevan since 2006. Demoyan is the author of 12 books, among them *Western Media Coverage of the Nagorno-Karabakh Conflict in 1988-1990* (in English, Yerevan, 2008), *Foreign Policy of Turkey and Karabakh Conflict* (in Russian, Yerevan, 2013), *Armenian Genocide: Front Page Coverage in the World Media* (Yerevan, 2014), in Armenian, English, Russian and French, *Armenian Sport and Gymnastics in the Ottoman Empire* (Yerevan, 2009, 2015) as well as 40 academic articles and papers.

Demoyan chairs the Scientific Council of AGMI, has served as the chief editor of the institute's *International Journal of Armenian Genocide Studies* since 2014, and served as the secretary of the State Commission on Coordination of the



Dr. Hayk Demoyan

events dedicated to the commemoration of the 100th anniversary of the Armenian Genocide in Armenia (2011-2015). At present, Dr. Demoyan is a US Fulbright visiting scholar at the Davis Center for Russian and Eurasian Studies of Harvard University researching on the identity transformation processes in the South Caucasus since the collapse of the Soviet Union.

Dr. Robert Mirak, president of ACF, is the author of *Torn between Two Lands: Armenians in America. 1890 to World War I* (Cambridge, 1983), co-author of *Collections of the Armenian Cultural Foundation I: Letters & Autographs*, (Arlington, 2007), and several articles and book reviews, including "The Armenians," in see HERITAGE, page 25

Photo Exhibit Marks Memorable Anniversary of St. Vartan Cathedral

NEW YORK — The storied history of midtown Manhattan's St. Vartan Cathedral will be told through never-before-seen photographs in a special exhibition in honor of the 50th anniversary of St. Vartan Cathedral, taking place during the weekend of May 5 at the Eastern Diocese.

The striking images, which date back to the early stages of the cathedral's conception in the 1940s, traces the evolution of the first Armenian Cathedral in the Western Hemisphere, from its construction, to its symbolic consecration to the many religious and political leaders who have entered through its sanctuary doors, including Aram Khatchaturian, Rev. Jesse Jackson and Mayor Michael Bloomberg.

The exhibition, designed by the New York-based Johanna Goldfeld, depicts the cathedral in artistic terms, while providing key information and historical notes. The vision of the committee, which includes Sandra Shahinian Leitner, Melanie Dadourian and Shoghag Hovanessian, was to portray the influence of the cathedral's presence not only among Armenians, but also of greater New York and the community at large.

Built through the efforts of Armenian Genocide survivors, the cathedral was officially consecrated in 1968 after decades of tireless fundraising. Modeled after the 7th century St. Hripsime Church in Armenia, the cathedral bears



Vasken I, Catholicos of All Armenians, of Blessed Memory, consecrates the St. Vartan Cathedral in 1968

the name of St. Vartan Mamigonian, who died defending Armenian Christianity during the fifth-century Battle of Avarayr.

"From their early days in this country, the genocide survivors knew that an Armenian house of worship would be their home; their place of peace; and the emblem of centuries of faith that held them together as a community of believers," said Shahinian Leitner.

The cathedral, designed by the accomplished prize-winning architect Walker O. Cain, soon became known in the city for its unique striking beauty.

Architect Samuel G. White, whose grandfather founded the prestigious McKim, Mead & White architecture firm, remembers conversations he had with his father during the cathedral's construction. Cain was a family friend who would eventually take over McKim, Mead & White.

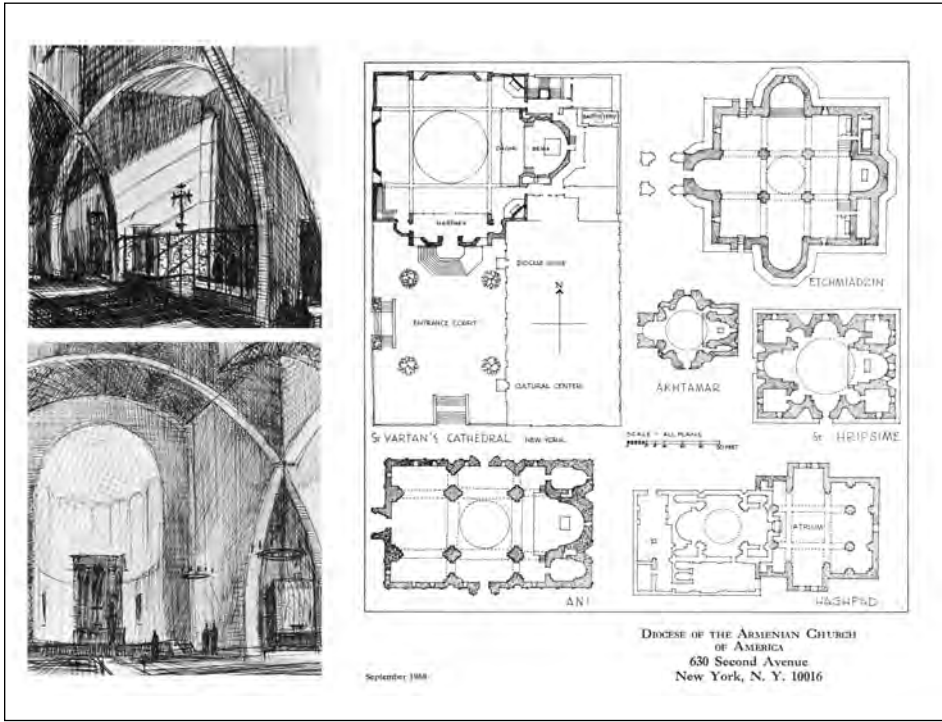
"My father told me that Walker advocated the design of the cathedral to respect the geometric underpinnings of Armenian Church architecture, but that it could have a more contemporary aesthetic," said White, principal of Platt Byard Dovell White Architects.

Noting Cain's logical mind, White said he was able to convey to the lay leadership that the cathedral "shouldn't be a replica, but have a much more contemporary interior."

"He was a product of the days of modern architecture as truth rather than as a style,"



ARTS & LIVING



SVC Artists Conception: Conceptual Drawings of St. Vartan Cathedra

Photo Exhibit Marks Memorable Anniversary of St. Vartan Cathedral

CATHEDRAL, from page 23 said White, who was a summer intern in Cain's office in 1966 and 1967. "He was interested in the purity of line in the cathedral."

A number of the photos in the exhibition depict the cathedral's construction, one of which caught White's eye.

"It was wonderful to see the raw structure, especially of the intersecting steel arches representing the crossing, onto which they clad stone."

The visual journey of the photo exhibition will also evoke nostalgia for those who attended religious and cultural events at the cathedral, including the beloved One World Festival. A special image will be shown of Mayor John Lindsay, one of many New York City mayors who have made historic visits to the cathedral, welcoming guests to the inaugural festival in 1973.

While denoting a comforting presence for people of all denominations from across the globe, the cathedral also served as a site of unity during moments of crises and momentous occasions, including the Artsakh movement and Armenia's earthquake in 1988, as well as the Armenian Genocide centennial services in 2015, shown through solemn images.

"We find strength in St. Vartan Cathedral in the boisterous, cacophonous City of New York, in this great nation we now call home," said Shahinian Leitner.

As an integral part of the religious community, the cathedral has been a welcoming site for New York's ecumenical community, offering prayer services in the sanctuary and hosting inter-faith meetings. Joining together for worship and humanitarian efforts, religious leaders, including Rabbi Arthur Schneier, Founder and President of the Appeal of Conscience Foundation, have positively connected with St. Vartan Cathedral.

"The cathedral has been the heartbeat of the Armenian faithful, a source of spiritual link to

the Catholicos and the people of Armenia," said Schneier, senior rabbi of the historic Park East Synagogue. "It has also been a center for bringing together religious leaders of all faiths."

Schneier reflected on working with the late Archbishop Torkom Manoogian and continuing his relationship with the Armenian Church



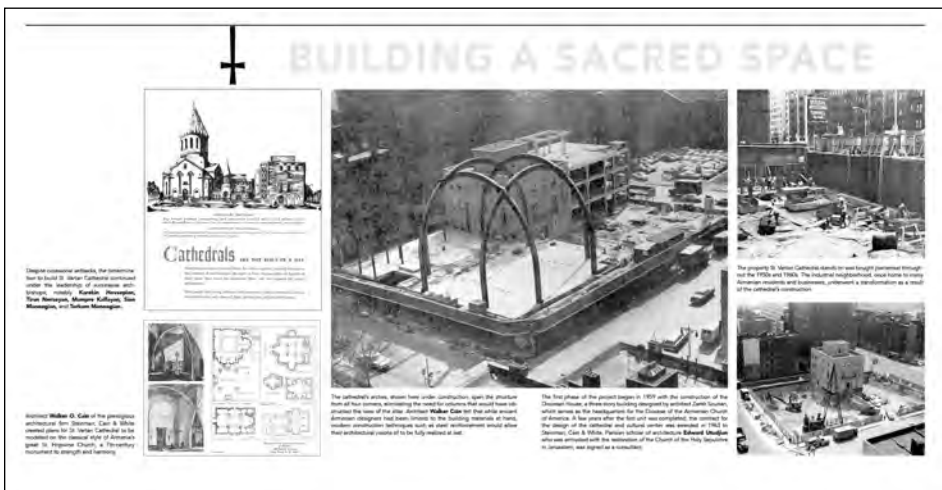
Abp. Barsamian blessing the doors with special guest Mayor Michael Bloomberg in 2009.

alongside Archbishop Khajag Barsamian. He noted the many significant events they hosted together that encouraged "international religious leaders to strengthen religious freedom, mutual understanding and inter-religious cooperation."

The 60 mindfully-selected images will reveal different aspects of the cathedral's history and also give viewers an interactive opportunity to share their thoughts on the cathedral's future.

"I am grateful to the creative committee behind the artistic exhibition who are sharing St. Vartan Cathedral's story through beautiful photographs," said Archbishop Khajag Barsamian, Primate of the Diocese of the Armenian Church of America. "We look forward to welcoming our faithful to take a closer look at the cathedral's many milestones."

-Taleen Babayan



One of the walls of the photo exhibition, featuring a quote by His Holiness Vasken I on the day he consecrated the cathedral

Recipe Corner

by Christine Vartanian Datian

Eggplant Tomato Mezze

INGREDIENTS:

- 1 large eggplant, coarsely chopped or diced
- 1 large tomato, seeded and diced
- 1 large red or yellow onion, finely chopped
- 1 medium red or green bell pepper, seeded and diced
- 1 medium zucchini, diced
- 3-4 cloves garlic, roughly chopped
- 2 stalks celery (plus greens), chopped
- 1 (8 ounce) can low sodium tomato sauce
- 1/4 cup Kalamata or black olives, chopped
- 1/4 cup golden raisins
- 1 small bunch flat-leaf parsley, minced
- Crushed red pepper flakes, sea or Kosher salt, black pepper, paprika, Aleppo pepper (to taste)
- Juice of 2 lemons
- 2 tablespoons tomato paste
- 2 tablespoons brown sugar
- 2 tablespoon red or white wine vinegar
- Olive oil, toasted pine nuts

PREPARATION:


In a large pan or skillet, sauté the onions and garlic in a few tablespoons of olive oil until onions are lightly browned. Add the eggplant, tomato, bell pepper, zucchini, celery and tomato sauce, toss to combine, and continue to cook on medium heat until eggplant has softened and ingredients are bubbly, about 10-12 minutes. Add more olive oil, if desired, and olives, raisins, parsley, spices, lemon juice, tomato paste, and brown sugar, and toss. Add the wine vinegar and cook 8-10 minutes longer on medium heat. Check seasonings and remove from heat when vegetables are tender and soft to let cool.

Cover and chill overnight for best results. Add more lemon juice or olive oil, if desired, when serving. Garnish with fresh basil and mint, toasted pine nuts, Armenian or Greek yogurt, and wedges of lemon. Serve with a crusty bread, Armenian lavash, pita bread, hummus, and assorted cheeses or crackers. Serves 6-8.

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

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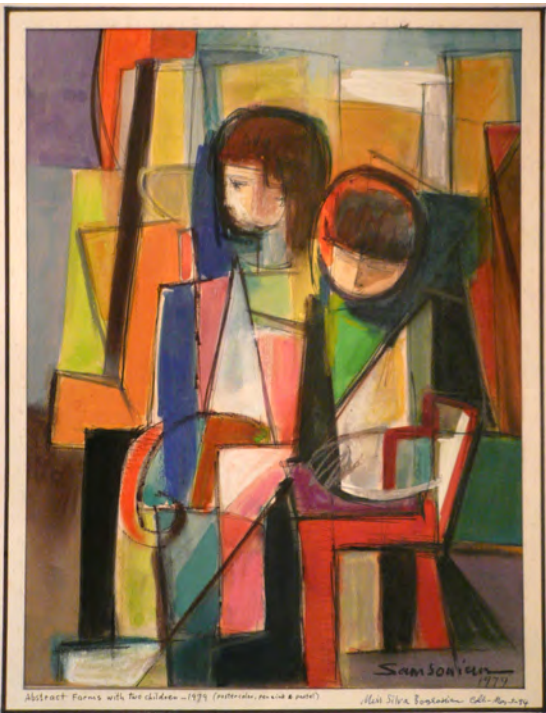
ARTS & LIVING

Gallery Z Hosts Exhibit on Armenian Artists

PROVIDENCE, R.I. – Gallery Z is hosting an exhibit titled “Armenian Artists” through Sunday, May 6. An opening reception took place on Thursday, April 19 and included a live musical performance by David Ayiryan, on the *kamancha*, an ancient bowed string instrument.

Armenia has long fostered a tradition of fine art painting and world-renowned artists. Amongst the more than 400 artists of all backgrounds represented by Gallery Z are a notable number of the world’s talented Armenian artists, both present and past.

Simon Samsonian (1915-2003) is April’s featured artist. A giant among Armenian artists and orphaned by the 1915 deportation and massacre of the Armenians in Turkey, he spent his childhood in orphanages in Greece and Egypt. Having also lost his family name, he was given the name Samsonian by the orphanage, having been brought there from Samsoun.



“Abstract Forms with Two Children” By Simon Samsonian

After an established career in the receptive art environment of Cairo, Egypt, and having traveled to museums in Europe, Samsonian settled in New York in 1968. The France Amerique labeled his work “symbolic cubism” (1972). Bold lines, rich colors, flat expanses and planes depict landscapes, cityscapes, still lifes and portraits in a distinctive contemporary style. Samsonian’s works are in museums in the U.S., Armenia, Egypt, France and Austria.

Additional artists whose works have been chosen for display include Kevork Mourad (b. 1970), Aghassi (b. 1964), Rafael Atoyan (1931-2014), Lara B. (b. 1977), Emma Gregorian (b.1943), Alexander Grigoryan and three generations of Elibekians (Areg Elibekian b.1970, Robert Elibekian (b.1941), Vagharshag

Elibekian (1910-1994).

Kevork Mourad, a world-renowned artist of Armenian origin from Aleppo, Syria, has an MFA from the Yerevan Institute of Fine Arts in Armenia. Many of his multi-layered and emotionally derived paintings draw the viewer into figurative and abstract paintings alluding to the history and devastation suffered by the Armenian people. Also renowned for his drawing to live acoustic music performances during which his drawings are projected onto a wall screen as they metamorphose, Kevork is a visual artist member of Yo-Yo Ma’s Silk Road Ensemble. He has works in museums in Paris and Dubai. He lives and works in New York.

Aghassi (Boghos Taslakian), born in Lebanon in 1964, began painting and sculpting at age 11, and started formal studies in painting at the Art Academy of Armenia and later at Academia di Belle Art di Venezia in Italy in 1986. Until 1996, he exhibited mainly in Armenia and Italy, and returned to Lebanon in 1996, continuing to exhibit. Darkly colored solo portraits and figures interacting, often playfully, intrigue the viewer.

Rafael Atoyan (1931-2014) was born in Leninakan (Gyumri), Armenia. He graduated from the Terlemejian College of Fine Arts in 1948 and from the Yerevan Institute of Fine Arts in 1953. He received the Meritorious Artist of Armenia award in 1982 and the First Prize in State Exhibitions in 1982 and 1983. Between 1960 and 1996, Atoyan participated in group exhibitions in Armenia, the Soviet Union, and Europe. He moved to Fresno, California, after the 1988 Armenian earthquake. His paintings depict peaceful scenes of people set in their landscapes, along with portraits, still lifes, street and country scenes capturing old Soviet Armenia and

later, Fresno, a thriving community where many Armenian-Americans settled in the bountiful valley of central California.

Lara B, born and raised in Beirut, Lebanon, attended the Toros Roslin Art Academy of Beirut and graduated from the Lebanese University of Fine Arts with honors in 2001. Her paintings won first prize at Beirut’s National University of Fine Arts. Within two years after moving to the US in 2002, her art work was in group exhibits in New York, San Francisco and Providence, and solo shows in Providence and Oakland. Deeply colored and richly layered and textured paintings, often with shimmering gold accents, depict the introspective female portrait and form. She resides and paints in California.

Emma Gregorian of Gyumri, Armenia, attended the Panos Tenemesian School of Art in Yerevan and is a graduate of the Yerevan Fine Arts and Theatrical institute (1969). She became a member of the Union of fine Artists in Armenia in 1971. Her color-drenched paintings have been exhibited worldwide in both group and solo in a series of shows. She lives in Queens, NY.

Alexander Grigoryan (1927-2008), was a



“Untitled,” Rafael Atoyan

highly celebrated artist in his culture. Born in Armenia, he received the foremost honor in Armenian Art. He painted portraits of William Saroyan and Alec Manouagian, while also being recognized for his sculptures, pencil portraits and poetry.

The tradition of painting has been passed down through the generations within the Elibekian family. The elder Vagharshag, (1910-1994), born in Tbilisi, Georgia, directed Tbilisi’s Armenian Theatre. His paintings capture scenes of traditional Georgian customs, architecture, and lifestyles, including Tbilisi’s folklore, in delightful village scenes. Vagharshag’s son, Robert, born in 1941, also in Tbilisi, later moved to Yerevan, graduating from Yerevan’s Institute of Drama & Fine Arts in 1969. He created set designs and costumes for ballets, operas, films and plays, which is reflected in close-ups of beautiful women in a distinctive flowing style. Robert’s son, Areg, born in Yerevan, in 1970, graduated from Yerevan’s Institute of Drama & Fine Arts in 1992. Areg’s evocative cityscapes of Paris depict the bourgeoisie and café society who frequent its bistros, sidewalk cafés, parks, and riverfronts. Each of the Elibekians has work in permanent collections of prestigious museums worldwide.

Gallery Z, located at 259 Atwells Ave., hosts a reception for the current exhibit every third Thursday of the month. All receptions are free and open to the public.

An Armenian art website (www.armenianartgalleryz.com), created by Gallery Director Berge Zorian, is a reference for these and many other Armenian artists that the gallery represents.

Celebrating 400th Anniversary of Armenian-American Heritage

HERITAGE, from page 23

The Harvard Encyclopedia of American Ethnic Groups (Cambridge, 1980).

A former director of the Armenian Information Center and founding member of Armenian International Women’s Association (AIWA), Dr. Barbara Merguerian, is the past editor of the *Armenian Mirror-Spectator*. She has edited and co-edited a number of books among them: *Armenian Women in a Changing World* (1997) and *Voices of Armenian Women* (2000), and has written numerous articles.

Co-founding member of Aurora Humanitarian Initiative, Dr. Noubar Afeyan, is founder and CEO of Flagship Pioneering, a unique enterprise that systematically makes breakthroughs in life-sciences which improve human health and sustainability. During his 30 year career as inventor, entrepreneur and CEO, Afeyan co-founded and helped build over 40 successful start-ups. He is currently a Lecturer at Harvard Business School and was a Senior Lecturer at MIT where he taught courses on technology-entrepreneurship and innovation since 2000. Afeyan is a recipient of a Technology Pioneer 2012 award from the World Economic Forum (WEF).

In 619 pages and 2,200 color illustrations, artifacts, documents, and rare images, published for the first time, *Armenian Legacy in America: 400-Year Heritage* traces the origin, evolution and contributions of Armenians to their adopted homeland since the arrival of “Martin the Armenian” the first recorded Armenian immigrant in the Jamestown settlement in Colony of (colonial) Virginia, the first permanent English settlement in 1618 to the present. Originally from the Armenian neighborhood of New Julfa, established by Shah Abbas in his capital, Isfahan, Iran (then Persia), Martin travelled from London on a ship captained by John Smith a well-known English explorer, soldier, author, and later colonial governor of Virginia. He is known to have introduced the cultivation of “silkworm” into the New World. Probably the first naturalized citizen in America, Virginia records show that he gave testimony in a trial in Jamestown in 1619 where he also worked as a tobaccoist.

According to the author, as immigrants and hardworking and loyal citizens, the Armenians left “their mark in the American cultural mosaic doctors, engineers, artists, . . . successful businessmen and intellectuals make strong pillars of the bridge uniting USA and Armenia.” In his introduction to the book, Dr. Afeyan, the sponsor of this magnificent book project, rightly states that not having forgotten the crucial helping hand the American leaders and people extended to the survivors of the Armenian Genocide of 1915, a century ago, as the descendants of survivors, it is “our duty as Americans of Armenian heritage to remember those who made contributions to this humanitarian intervention and use their efforts as a lasting inspiration for the future.” The book has been published through the support of the Noubar and Anna Afeyan Foundation on behalf of the Aurora Humanitarian Initiative.

The audience will have a chance to meet the author and obtain autographed copies of the book.

For more information and further details contact the ACF during office hours or by email: armeniancultural.fdn@gmail.com.

Tekeyan Cultural Association - Los Angeles and Glendale/Pasadena Chapters
present

Two concert performances by Alan Hovhanness

Komitas

UCLA VEM STRING QUARTET

MOVSES POGOSSIAN, Artistic Director

XENIA DEVIATKINA-LOH, Violin – JI EUN HWANG, Violin
MORGAN O'SHAUGHNESSEY, Viola – NIALL FERGUSON, Cello

Aram Khachaturian

SUNDAY, APRIL 8, 2018 at 5:00PM

UCLA VEM String Quartet
with
Danielle Segen, Mezzo-Soprano

DANIELLE SEGEN
Mezzo-Soprano

GARRETT SCHOONOVER
Baritone

Edward Mirzoyan

SUNDAY, MAY 6, 2018 at 5:00PM

UCLA VEM String Quartet
with
Danielle Segen, Mezzo-Soprano
Garrett Schoonover, Baritone

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Free Admission Refreshments All are welcome For more information, contact: (626) 398-1142



ARTS & LIVING

C A L E N D A R

CONNECTICUT

APRIL 21 — Connecticut Commemoration of the 103rd anniversary of the Armenian Genocide. Saturday April 21, 2018. House Chamber at the State Capitol. 210 Capitol Avenue, Hartford, CT at 11:00 a.m. Speaker: Taner Akcam, PH. D. Professor of History, Clark University. Topic: Armenian Genocide: Killing Orders and Denialism. Reception to follow the commemoration. Please arrive at 10:30 a.m. to allow time to clear security and be seated by 11:00 a.m.

MASSACHUSETTS

APRIL 21 — Boston Armenian Genocide Commemoration, "United Against Genocide" organized by the Boston Armenian Genocide Committee, Saturday April 21st from 3-5 pm at the Armenian Heritage Park. Buses will be provided from St. James, Watertown and Holy Trinity, Cambridge. For more information, email bostonagcc@gmail.com.

APRIL 21 — Annual Procession and Raising of the Armenian Flag at Lowell City Hall in commemoration of the 103rd anniversary of the Armenian Genocide. Procession to be led by the Lowell Armenian-American Veterans Honor Guard. Participants should meet at the corner of Merrimack and John Sts. in Lowell at 9:30 a.m. Sponsored by the Armenian National Committee, Merrimack Valley (ANCMV) with the participation of all area Armenian Churches and Organizations.

April 22 — Sunday, free Buses from Watertown, 9:30 a.m. from the Armenian Cultural and Education Center, 47 Nichols Ave, and Worcester 10 a.m., Rt-146 & Mass pike Park & Ride to Times Square, New York City for the 103rd Armenian Genocide Commemoration. Organized by Knights of Vartan @ Times Square, New York City 2-4 p.m. Bus rides complements of Knights and Daughters of Vartan Lodge #1.

APRIL 26 — The Peabody City Hall will host an Armenian Genocide Commemoration and Flagraising with Fr. Vasken Kouzouian of Holy Trinity Armenian Church. 10 a.m. 24 Lowell St., Peabody.

APRIL 28 — Trinity Talent Showcase, 7 p.m., doors open; 7:30 p.m., Showcase begins; Holy Trinity Armenian Church of Greater Boston, 145 Brattle St., Cambridge MA. All invited to an evening of entertainment featuring talent from the Holy Trinity Church community; Robert Clarke, magician and juggler; and music by the Black Sea Combo. Cabaret Table Seating: \$20 per person/\$100 for table of 6 max. (RSVP deadline April 15); Auditorium seating: \$10 in advance; \$15 at the door. For further information or to reserve online, log onto <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/trinity-talent-showcase-tickets-43801836472>, or call the Holy Trinity Church Office, 617.354.0632.

MAY 5 — Saturday, Kentucky Derby Watch Party, Fun and festivities to support Armenia Tree Project, At the elegant/historic Gore Place in Waltham. 5:00 pm. Tickets available via www.ArmeniaTree.org/KentuckyDerby

MAY 5 — ANNUAL MEETING & LUNCHEON, Armenian International Women's Association (AIWA). Meeting, 9:30 a.m.; Luncheon, 12 noon. Speaker: Patti Fletcher, author of *Disrupters: Success Strategies from Women Who Break the Mold*. Alumnae Hall, Wellesley College, Wellesley, MA. Info & Reservations: 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 by Dr. Hayk Demoyan in an illustrated talk. Other speakers include Robert Mirak, Barbara J. Merguerian and Nubar Afeyan. Sunday, 3 p.m. Admission free and open to the public. Book sale and

reception to follow. Organized by Armenian Cultural Foundation, co-sponsored by the Amaras Art Alliance, and National Association for Armenian Studies and Research, 441 Mystic Street (Route 3), Arlington. Tel. (781)-646-3090 armeniancultural.fdn@gmail.com

MAY 11 — Welcome His Holiness Karekin II, Supreme Patriarch and Catholicos of All Armenians, to a Celebration of a Life of Service: Rev. Mampre A. Kouzouian on the 60th Anniversary of his ordination to the priesthood. Under the auspices of the Diocese of the Armenian Church of America (Eastern), His Eminence Archbishop Khajag Barsamian, Primate. Holy Trinity Armenian Church of Greater Boston, 145 Brattle Street, Cambridge. Hrashapar Service in Sanctuary, 6 p.m. All are invited to attend. Celebration Banquet, 7:p.m., in the Charles and Nevart Talanian Cultural Hall, by advance paid reservation, RSVP deadline April 30. For an invitation or further information, <http://www.htaac.org/calendar/event/525/> or call the Holy Trinity Church Office, 617.354.0632.

MAY 18-19 —Armenian Memorial Church Annual Fair, Armenian Memorial Church, 32 Bigelow Ave., Watertown, Friday, May 18, 5-8 p.m., Saturday, May 19, 10 a.m.-7 p.m., Armenian kebab meals served, Armenian delicacies, silent auction

MAY 19 — Hai Guin Scholarship Association Annual Luncheon & Fashion Show, Saturday, 11:30 a.m., at Montvale Plaza, Stoneham. Fashions by Soft Surroundings of Chestnut Hill, MA. Tickets: \$60 per person. Please call Lisa at 781-729-6333; Becky at 508-651-8893; or Marilyn at 978-818-9098 for tickets.

MAY 21 — 19th Annual St. James Open Golf Tournament — Oakley Country Club, Watertown. Scramble format. Raffle, Auctions and dinner following the tournament. For more information visit www.stjameswatertown.org or contact the church office at 617.923.8860 info@stthagop.com.

JUNE 1-2 — Armenian Food Festival Sponsored by the Hye Pointe Church Women's Guild, 11:30 a.m. to 6:30 p.m. Armenian Apostolic Church at Hye Pointe, 1280 Boston Post Road, Haverhill. Chicken Kabob, Losh Kabob, and Kheyma Dinners, Armenian Delicacies including Lahmejoon, Cheese Beoreg, Spinach Pie, Tourshi, Cheoreg, Kataif, Paklava, and many more delicious items. For more information call the church at (978) 372-9227.

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 9 — The Friends of Armenian Culture Society will host the 67th annual Armenian Night at the Pops on Saturday, at 8 p.m. at Symphony Hall in Boston. talented violinist Haig Hovsepian. A winner of the 2017 Boston Symphony Orchestra's Concerto Competition and a rising sophomore at the Cleveland Institute of Music, Hovsepian will appear as soloist with the Boston Pops Orchestra under the direction of Keith Lockhart. He will perform the Sibelius *Violin Concerto in D-minor*. The Pops will present Dance to the Movies with Dancing Celebrity Pros, So You Think You Can Dance top finalists, and singing stars from American Idol and The Voice. Tickets \$95, \$70 and \$35, available at: www.FACSBoston.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 7 — Save the date! Armenian Church of Cape Cod second annual Kef Time dinner and dancing at the Cape Club, 125 Falmouth Woods Road, North Falmouth. Leon Janikian Band with DJ and special appearance by Harry Minassian. Details to follow.

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

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. Performances at the Beckett Theatre (on Theatre Row), 410 W. 42nd St., New York, Tuesdays through Sundays; weekend matinees. Discount tickets for seniors, students and groups. For tickets and information: www.telecharge.com or call (212) 239-6200. For discount tickets: www.telecharge-offers.com or call (212) 947-8844. Or contact the theatre: info@panasianrep.org, (212) 868-4030.

APRIL 22 — The 103rd anniversary of the Armenian Genocide will be commemorated in Times Square, New York on Sunday, from 2-4 p.m. in an event sponsored by the Knights & Daughters of Vartan. The program will feature elected officials, academics and artists, including a special appearance by Elie Berberian. For more information visit <http://kofv.org/>.

PENNSYLVANIA

APRIL 24 — Armenian Intercommunal Committee of Philadelphia, presents an April 24th commemorative event. Dr. Hayk Demoyan - Director of the Armenian Genocide Museum-Institute will speak on Tuesday, at 7pm, at Sts. Sahag-Mesrob Armenian Church, Wynnewood, Pa.

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 about the Philadelphia Celebration, please visit www.aimhye.com. Please RSVP by Monday, April 16.

RHODE ISLAND

APRIL 28 — The Armenian Martyrs' Memorial Committee of Rhode Island Presents Cocktails & Conversation with Chris Bohjalian on Saturday, 3-5 p.m. at the Marriott Providence, 10 Orms Street, Providence, RI. Join Chris Bohjalian, NY Times best-selling author of *The Flight Attendant*, in Conversation with RI's own Robin Kall of "Reading with Robin." Tickets: \$40 per person Includes hors d'oeuvres, a cocktail, and a goody bag. Order tickets online at www.ammri.org or call Joyce Yerejian 401-354-8770. R.S.V.P. deadline Friday, April 20 or Esther Kalajian 401-885-9116.

APRIL 29 — The Armenian Martyrs' Memorial Committee will commemorate the 103rd Anniversary of the Armenian Genocide at 12:45pm at North Burial Grounds, Branch Avenue, Providence. Religious services will be held with three local Armenian churches and clergy. Federal, state and local politicians. Keynote speaker will be Chris Bohjalian. His work has been translated into more than thirty languages, and three of his novels have become movies. We invite the entire Armenian community to join us and remember our Holy Martyrs and survivors of the 1915 Genocide. For info- joyce41@cox.net or visit our website www.ammri.org

MAY 18 — Book presentation by Adrienne Alexanian (editor) of her father's memoir Forced into Genocide: Memoirs of an Armenian Soldier in the Ottoman Turkish Army. 7 p.m. Sts. Sahag and Mesrob Armenian Church, 70 Jefferson St., Providence. (401) 272-7712. Book signing during reception to follow. All proceeds to be donated to the church.



COMMENTARY



My Turn

By Harut Sassounian

Turkey is the Biggest Loser in the US, British & French Missile Strikes on Syria

While most commentators have focused on the reasons and consequences of the US, British, and French missile strikes on targets in Syria, very few realize that Turkey is the biggest loser as the result of this attack. Two weeks ago, when President Trump announced that the United States would “very soon,” withdraw its soldiers from Northern Syria, the Turkish government was elated. Turkey’s invasion of Afrin was intended to expand the occupation to Manbij and the entire Northern Syria to dislodge Kurdish fighters from that region. The only obstacle standing in the way of the Turkish troops was the US military which has over 2,000 soldiers in the Manbij area. Repeated Turkish threats to attack the American troops did not scare the US Commanders who stood steadfast in their defense of the local Kurdish population.

Within two weeks, President Trump reversed his position on the immediate withdrawal of US troops from Syria. The latest reports from Washington and Paris state that the Pentagon and French President Emmanuel Macron “convinced” President Trump to keep the US military in Syria

until the Syrian crisis is resolved or other Western and Arab countries replaced the American forces. Turkey’s leaders were also disappointed that due to his dismissal former Secretary of State Rex Tillerson could not keep his promise to President Erdogan that the US forces would withdraw shortly from Northern Syria.

With the American troops staying in Syria, the Turkish ability to attack Kurdish fighters in Northern Syria would be limited. Despite his crazy antics, President Erdogan is not going to target the US military or as he described, “deliver the Americans an Ottoman slap!” Thus, the unsubstantiated accusations of a chemical attack by the Syrian government on civilians in Douma near Damascus was most probably orchestrated by those who wanted to prevent American forces from leaving Northern Syria, to the great chagrin of Turkey! Interestingly, in his remarks shortly before the missile strike, President Trump did not mention a single word as to what evidence he had about the responsibility of the Syrian regime for the chemical attack.

Incidentally, the missile strike on Syria generated conflicting reactions in Turkey. While President Erdogan was unhappy with the stay of the US troops in Syria, he was delighted with the attacks by the United States, Great Britain and France, since Turkey wanted to undermine the Syrian regime and overthrow President Bashar al-Assad. The missile strike, however, did not have such an objective, as President Trump tweeted after the attack, “Mission Accomplished!” Everyone, except Erdogan, agrees that President Assad had the upper hand in the Syrian conflict and his overthrow would worsen the situation in Syria and the region!

The other negative consequence of the Turkish praise of the missile attack on Syria was the souring of relations between Turkey, and Russia and Iran, staunch supporters of President Assad and harsh critics of the strike. In addition,

President Erdogan alienated his domestic political opposition and a large segment of the Turkish public upset by the Western powers’ attack on a fellow Muslim country.

Turkey was also unhappy that President Trump, in his remarks just before the missile strike, mentioned “Saudi Arabia, the United Emirates, Qatar, and Egypt” as “our friends,” disregarding NATO ally Turkey due to its rapprochement with Russia and Iran.

Curiously, in his speech President Trump criticized Russia and Iran stating: “what kind of a nation wants to be associated with a mass murder of innocent men, women and children? The nations of the world can be judged by the friends they keep. No nation can succeed in the long run by promoting rogue states, brutal tyrants and murderous dictators.” It is unfortunate that on the eve of April 24, the anniversary of the Armenian Genocide, President Trump would attack other countries for keeping company with a murderous nation, ignoring the fact that the United States is an ally of Turkey, a country that denies the murder of 1.5 million Armenians, and defends its predecessor criminal Ottoman regime that committed the Armenian Genocide. This reminds us of what Jesus said: “You hypocrite! First remove the beam out of your own eye, and then you can see clearly to remove the speck out of your brother’s eye.”

As I wrote a year ago when President Trump attacked Syria with Tomahawk missiles, he was simply hitting Syria to divert the attention of the American public from his many infidelities, illegalities, and investigations of his covert relations with Russia.

Finally, President Trump, UK Prime Minister Theresa May, and French President Macron violated the constitutions of their respective countries, by going to war against another sovereign state without getting the consent of their legislative bodies.

The Search for Truth in the Rubble of Douma

By Robert Fisk

THIS IS THE STORY of a town called Douma, a ravaged, stinking place of smashed apartment blocks – and of an underground clinic whose images of suffering allowed three of the Western world’s most powerful nations to bomb Syria last week. There’s even a friendly doctor in a green coat who, when I track him down in the very same clinic, cheerfully tells me that the “gas” videotape which horrified the world – despite all the doubters – is perfectly genuine.

War stories, however, have a habit of growing darker. For the same 58-year-old senior Syrian doctor then adds something profoundly uncomfortable: the patients, he says, were overcome not by gas but by oxygen starvation in the rubbish-filled tunnels and basements in which they lived, on a night of wind and heavy shelling that stirred up a dust storm.

As Dr. Assim Rahaibani announces this extraordinary conclusion, it is worth observing that he is by his own admission not an eyewitness himself and, as he speaks good English, he refers twice to the jihadi gunmen of Jaish el-Islam [the Army of Islam] in Douma as “terrorists” – the regime’s word for their enemies, and a term used by many people across Syria. Am I hearing this right? Which version of events are we to believe?

By bad luck, too, the doctors who were on duty that night on April 7 were all in Damascus giving evidence to a chemical weapons enquiry, which will be attempting to provide a definitive answer to that question in the coming weeks.

France, meanwhile, has said it has “proof” chemical weapons were used, and US media have quoted sources saying urine and blood tests showed this too. The World Health Organization (WHO) has said its partners on the ground treated 500 patients “exhibiting signs and symptoms consistent with exposure to toxic chemicals”.

At the same time, inspectors from the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) are currently blocked from coming here to the site of the alleged gas attack themselves, ostensibly because they lacked the correct UN permits.

Before we go any further, readers should be aware that this is not the only story in Douma. There are the many people I talked to amid the ruins of the town who said they had “never believed in” gas stories – which were usually put about, they claimed, by the armed Islamist groups. These particular jihadis survived under a blizzard of shell-fire by living in other’s people’s homes and in vast, wide tunnels with underground roads carved through the living rock by prisoners with pick-axes on three levels beneath the town. I walked through three of them yesterday, vast

corridors of living rock which still contained Russian – yes, Russian – rockets and burned-out cars.

So the story of Douma is thus not just a story of gas – or no gas, as the case may be. It’s about thousands of people who did not opt for evacuation from Douma on buses that left last week, alongside the gunmen with whom they had to live like troglodytes for months in order to survive. I walked across this town quite freely yesterday without soldier, policeman or minder to haunt my footsteps, just two Syrian friends, a camera and a notebook. I sometimes had to clamber across 20-foot-high ramparts, up and down almost sheer walls of earth. Happy to see foreigners among them, happier still that the siege is finally over, they are mostly smiling; those whose faces you can see, of course, because a surprising number of Douma’s women wear full-length black hijab.

I first drove into Douma as part of an escorted convoy of journalists. But once a boring general had announced outside a wrecked council house “I have no information” – that most helpful rubbish-dump of Arab officialdom – I just walked away. Several other reporters, mostly Syrian, did the same. Even a group of Russian journalists – all in military attire – drifted off.

It was a short walk to Dr Rahaibani. From the door of his subterranean clinic – “Point 200,” it is called, in the weird geology of this partly-underground city – is a corridor leading downhill where he showed me his lowly hospital and the few beds where a small girl was crying as nurses treated a cut above her eye.

“I was with my family in the basement of my home three hundred meters from here on the night but all the doctors know what happened. There was a lot of shelling [by government forces] and aircraft were always over Douma at night – but on this night, there was wind and huge dust clouds began to come into the basements and cellars where people lived. People began to arrive here suffering from hypoxia, oxygen loss. Then someone at the door, a “White Helmet”, shouted “Gas!”, and a panic began. People started throwing water over each other. Yes, the video was filmed here, it is genuine, but what you see are people suffering from hypoxia – not gas poisoning.”

Oddly, after chatting to more than 20 people, I couldn’t find one who showed the slightest interest in Douma’s role in bringing about the Western air attacks. Two actually told me they didn’t know about the connection.

But it was a strange world I walked into. Two men, Hussam and Nazir Abu Aishe, said they were unaware how many people had been killed in Douma, although the latter admitted he had a cousin “executed by Jaish el-Islam [the Army of Islam] for allegedly being “close to the regime”. They shrugged when I asked about the 43 people said to have died in the infamous Douma attack.

The White Helmets – the medical first responders already legendary in the West but with some interesting corners to their own story – played a familiar role during

the battles. They are partly funded by the Foreign Office and most of the local offices were staffed by Douma men. I found their wrecked offices not far from Dr Rahaibani’s clinic. A gas mask had been left outside a food container with one eye-piece pierced and a pile of dirty military camouflage uniforms lay inside one room. Planted, I asked myself? I doubt it. The place was heaped with capsules, broken medical equipment and files, bedding and mattresses.

Of course we must hear their side of the story, but it will not happen here: a woman told us that every member of the White Helmets in Douma abandoned their main headquarters and chose to take the government-organised and Russian-protected buses to the rebel province of Idlib with the armed groups when the final truce was agreed.

There were food stalls open and a patrol of Russian military policemen – a now optional extra for every Syrian ceasefire – and no-one had even bothered to storm into the forbidding Islamist prison near Martyr’s Square where victims were supposedly beheaded in the basements. The town’s complement of Syrian interior ministry civilian police – who eerily wear military clothes – are watched over by the Russians who may or may not be watched by the civilians. Again, my earnest questions about gas were met with what seemed genuine perplexity.

How could it be that Douma refugees who had reached camps in Turkey were already describing a gas attack which no-one in Douma today seemed to recall? It did occur to me, once I was walking for more than a mile through these wretched prisoner-groined tunnels, that the citizens of Douma lived so isolated from each other for so long that “news” in our sense of the word simply had no meaning to them. Syria doesn’t cut it as Jeffersonian democracy – as I cynically like to tell my Arab colleagues – and it is indeed a ruthless dictatorship, but that couldn’t cow these people, happy to see foreigners among them, from reacting with a few words of truth. So what were they telling me?

They talked about the Islamists under whom they had lived. They talked about how the armed groups had stolen civilian homes to avoid the Syrian government and Russian bombing. The Jaish el-Islam had burned their offices before they left, but the massive buildings inside the security zones they created had almost all been sandwiched to the ground by air strikes. A Syrian colonel I came across behind one of these buildings asked if I wanted to see how deep the tunnels were. I stopped after well over a mile when he cryptically observed that “this tunnel might reach as far as Britain”. Ah yes, May, I remembered, whose air strikes had been so intimately connected to this place of tunnels and dust. And gas?

(Robert Fisk is a columnist for *The Independent*. This column originally appeared in that newspaper on April 17.)



Kurt Focuses on Aintab Armenians' Battle for Survival

KURT, from page 1

the Armenians returned to Cilicia believing in the promises of the occupying British and French powers, but were massacred or forced to flee by resurgent Turkish Nationalist forces. He then introduced Dr. Kurt as a specialist in particular on the events in Aintab.

Kurt in his lecture declared that in 1914 there were about 36,000-40,000 Armenians in Aintab, as well as very small Jewish and Greek populations, out of the total 80,000 residents. After the Armenian Genocide was launched, the majority of the Armenians were either killed or deported. Of the surviving Armenians, 18,000 returned to Aintab to resettle there.

By January 1922, there were 36 Armenians in Aintab.

French-Turkish War

The Turkish-French war of 1920-1921 took place between the Turkish Kemalist Nationalist forces and French troops in Aintab. The war started on April 1, 1920 and ended with the city's surrender to the French military forces on February 9, 1921. A later agreement (Ankara Agreement) signed between the Grand National Assembly in Ankara and the French government on October 20, 1921 led to the halt of all activities on the Turkish-French fronts. Despite the French victory, it ended with the French withdrawal from Aintab, as well as the resettlement of Aintab Armenians to the French mandates of Aleppo and Beirut starting in March 1921.

Kurt's new book, *The Heroic Battle of Aintab*, is a translation of an Armenian diary by Kevork Baboian, which Kurt translated. It is the first work of its kind in the English language, an eyewitness account of what happened in Aintab in 1920-21.

The publication by Baboian, which he translated, fills in the gap in scholarship about the post-World War I period at the end of the Ottoman Empire and the Armenian Genocide in general and the events of Aintab in particular, Kurt said.

"It's a first-hand comprehensive account of the French and British occupation," he said.

"There are remarkable details about the course of the war," Kurt said.

From December 1918 to October 1919, Armenians appealed to the British forces to protect them upon their return to Aintab. They were afraid to either return to their homes, rightfully, as many of the empty homes had either been destroyed or in cases

of houses of worship, desecrated and covered with graffiti.

The Armenians were given the green light to return to Aintab after the mass roundups yet they could not.

"Armenians feared attacks upon return to Aintab," Kurt said. The British therefore moved their troops from Kilis to Aintab to ensure their safety as well as to be able to move back into their homes and reclaim their properties.

Of course, the arrival of the British in defense of the Armenians inflamed the already sensitive situation there, angering many Turks who "claimed that not a single event endangering the safety of the return Armenians had occurred and the occupation was therefore illegal."

According to Kurt, Baboian was "very active during the Aintab herosamard (heroic battle)." A member of the Hunchag party, he survived the events and eventually ended up in Aleppo and became a civil engineer. He taught at an Armenian high school in Aleppo for eight years and was even an envoy at the Genocide convention in New York. He died in Beirut in 1949.

Aintab Defense

Baboian writes about the "three pillars of the Heroic Battle of Aintab," April 1-30, 1920, Rev. Nerses Tavoukjian, a priest, Adour Levonian, and Avedis Kalemkerian. They headed a group who smelted guns and even a cannon, named "Vrej" or revenge.

The Armenian resistance in Aintab was marked by unity and the participation of women and children. In fact, one of the striking slides he showed was of a group of women at a trench, with one holding a rifle. In fact, he said, women were on machine gun duty and dug ditches. As a result of the Armenian efforts, the death toll for them was much lower than in other cities.

Kurt spoke about the increasingly tense situation in the city as the Armenians were trying to return after 1915, with the help of the French forces.

Tensions increased, which ended up in fighting between the Turks and the Armenians, as well as the Turks and the French occupiers, with the Armenians caught in between. At the same time there were clashes between the disintegrating Committee for Union and Progress (CUP), which had ruled over the Ottoman Empire and the subsequent governing groups, which had sought to overturn the genocidal policies of the CUP.

Of course, Kurt said, little changed in essence, as after every attempt to right the course of the country, the powers that be

harkened back to the Ottoman policies.

One such example was the policy of seizure of "derelict" properties of Armenians who were no longer in Aintab, as they had either been killed or forced across the desert to Aleppo.

In his lecture Kurt stressed that many of the policies in the Ottoman Empire continued in the Republican era, including the forced forfeiture of Armenian properties and their resale for artificially low prices at public auctions.

The seizures and forfeitures of Armenian properties led to the formation of a new bourgeois class in Aintab.

A series of laws and decrees, known as the Abandoned Properties Laws (Emvali Metruke Kanunları), were issued in the Ottoman and Turkish Republican periods concerning the administration of the belongings left behind by the Ottoman Armenians who were deported in 1915. The best-known regulation on the topic is the comprehensive Council of Ministers Decree, dated May 30, 1915. The Directorate of Tribal and Immigrant Settlement of the Interior Ministry (skan-ı A'air ve Muhacirin Müdiriyeti) sent it the following day to relevant provinces organized in 15 articles. It provided the basic principles in accordance with which all deportations and resettlements would be conducted, and began with listing the reasons for the Armenian deportations.

The Temporary Law of Sept. 26, 1915 is also known as the Liquidation Law (Tasfiye Kanunu). Its chief goal was the liquidation of Armenian properties. According to its first article, commissions were to be established to conduct the liquidation. These commissions were to prepare separate reports for each person about the properties, receivable accounts, and debts "abandoned by actual and juridical persons who are being transported to other places."

A lively question-and-answer period follow, with many recalling seeing their own family homes being turned into businesses or expressing their concern for the safety of Kurt himself.

Kurt is a fellow at the Polonsky Academy in the Van Leer Institute in Jerusalem. He received his PhD from Clark University in 2016. He got his MA degree in European Studies from Sabancı University in 2008 and undergraduate degree in Political Science from Middle East Technical University in 2006.

The Heroic Battle of Aintab by Kevork Baboian, translated and introduced by Kurt, is published by Gomidas Press.

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CELEBRATING THE 50TH ANNIVERSARY OF ITS CONSECRATION (1968-2018)

Join us for a weekend of celebrations at the National Home of the Armenian-American community in the presence of **HIS HOLINESS KAREKIN II**, Supreme Patriarch and Catholicos of All Armenians



HIS EMINENCE ARCHBISHOP KHAJAG BARSAMIAN, PRIMATE
Առաջնորդութիւն Յայտն Ամերիկայի Արեւելեան Թեմի
DIOCESE OF THE ARMENIAN CHURCH OF AMERICA (EASTERN)

630 SECOND AVENUE (AT 34TH STREET), NEW YORK CITY
ARMENIANCHURCH.US

SATURDAY, MAY 5

5 PM / EXHIBIT GRAND OPENING

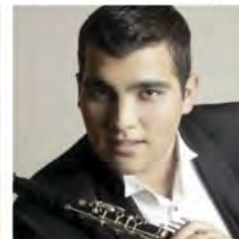
Photos and Artifacts from 50 Years of Life at St. Vartan Cathedral

7 PM / A CONCERT OF SACRED MUSIC

FEATURED ARTISTS



ISABEL BAYRAKDARIAN



NAREK ARUTYUNIAN



SATO MOUGHALIAN



NIKOLAI KACHANOV SINGERS



HOVHANNES MIRZOYAN



HAIG MARDIROSIAN



SAHAR ARZRUNI

TICKETS: \$25

For tickets contact Tamar at (646) 220-9408 / Ani at (516) 521-5396
Shakay at (516) 398-0410 / Margrit at (914) 261-3738

A reception will follow in Haik and Alice Kavookjian Auditorium

JOIN US IN THE CATHEDRAL ON SUNDAY, MAY 6,
AS HIS HOLINESS KAREKIN II CELEBRATES
THE PONTIFICAL DIVINE LITURGY, STARTING AT 10 A.M.