

In Stunning Turn of Events, Sargsyan Resigns

US, PACE Issue Supportive Yet Cautious Statements

YEREVAN (RFE/RL and Public Radio of Armenia) – US Ambassador Richard Mills on Tuesday, April 24, praised the Armenian police and anti-government protesters led by Nikol Pashinyan for avoiding bloodshed during their 11-day standoff that led to the resignation of Prime Minister Serzh Sargsyan on Monday, April 23.

“This is a day to commend,” Mills told RFE/RL’s Armenian service (Azatutyun.am). “The protesters, the demonstrators, the Armenian people came out in a peaceful and orderly way under the



Jubilant crowds greeted the news of the resignation of the prime minister.



Nikol Pashinyan and Serzh Sargsyan meet on Sunday.

leadership of Mr. Pashinyan.”

He noted the “professionalism” of Armenian security forces shown during the sustained protests against Sargsyan, while urging the authorities to investigate instances of violence against some protesters and journalists.

“This is a great moment for the

Armenian people and the spirit of democracy in this country,” stressed the envoy.

Mills also commended Sargsyan, saying that the former president acted like a “real leader” and listened to “the voice of the Armenian people” when he stepped down on Monday.

see ARMENIA, page 2

The Hidden Lives of Islamized Armenians Living in Plain Sight In Turkey

By Alin K. Gregorian
Mirror-Spectator Staff

WATERTOWN – For more than an hour and a half on Friday, April 20, speaker Raffi Bedrosyan rattled off stories and statistics about “hidden” Armenians in Turkey today, accompanied by slides, keeping the audience at St. James Armenian Church’s Keljik Hall entranced.

Bedrosyan spoke at a program sponsored jointly by the Tekeyan Cultural Association and St. James Armenian Church. He had come to Boston to be the keynote speaker at the Massachusetts State House annual Armenian Genocide commemoration, which had taken place earlier in the day. (See related story on page 1.)

see BEDROSYAN, page 12

Mass. State House, Heritage Park, Commemorate Armenian Genocide

By Alin K. Gregorian and Aram Arkun
Mirror-Spectator Staff

BOSTON – The annual Massachusetts State House commemoration took place on April 20, featuring keynote speaker Raffi Bedrosyan from Toronto, and an

increased role for state Rep. David Muradian (R-Grafton). It also marked the absence of Representatives James Miceli and Speaker Robert DeLeo, who were both unwell. (Miceli later passed away. See his obituary on page 6.)

Gov. Charlie Baker was not in the chamber during the event but joined those commemorating the 103rd anniversary of the Armenian Genocide at the luncheon held after the events.

After entering the House Chamber in a solemn procession led by the sergeant at arms, several members of the clergy were led by the Homenetmen Scouts holding the Armenian and American flags.

The invocation was offered by Rev. Stephan Baljian of St. Gregory Armenian Church of North Andover.

see STATE HOUSE, page 8



Middlesex County Sheriff Peter Koutoujian and Rep. David Muradian flank Genocide survivor Starrie Alemian.

Spirit and Power On Display in Times Square

By Taleen Babayan
Special to the Mirror-Spectator

NEW YORK – The towering tenor voice of Elie Berberian reverberated among the thousands gathered in Times Square, echoing the unveiled pain and fighting spirit of Armenians throughout centuries as the 103rd anniversary of the Armenian Genocide took place on Sunday, April 22.

As the colorful flags of the Armenia and Artsakh Republics waved among the city’s

see TIMES SQUARE, page 10



ANAHIDKAPRIELIAN.COM

Congressman Frank Pallone (D-N.J.) speaking in Times Square



NEWS IN BRIEF

Macron Issues Message In Honor of April 24

WASHINGTON – French President Emmanuel Macron addressed on April 24 a message to Armenian President Armen Sarkisian.

He said, in part, “We stand by You to remember the April 24, 1915 in Constantinople and the killing of 600 Armenian intellectuals, which marked the start of the first genocide of the 20th century. We will never forget the murdered men, women and children, who died of hunger, cold and agony on their way to exile.

“France, which deplored the Armenian massacres in the Ottoman Empire with the voices of Georges Clemenceau, Anatole France and Jean Jaurès, hosted great number of survivors. ... In September 2015 the French navy managed to save 4,000 refugees from Musa Dagh.

“The memory of the genocide and the meaning of its lessons refers to each of us. On this 103rd anniversary of the Armenian Genocide I address my warmest thoughts to You and Your people.”

Macron was in Washington for a state visit with President Donald Trump.

Paylan Bill on Genocide Recognition

ANKARA (Public Radio of Armenia) – Member of Parliament Garo Paylan, vice co-chair of the HDP Party, submitted a bill of law on April 21 to the Grand National Assembly on “Recognition of the Armenian Genocide, Removal of the Names of Genocide Perpetrators from Public Space and Amendment to the Turkish Citizenship Law.”

The bill says that “According to a census conducted in 1914, approximately two million Armenians lived in the Ottoman Empire. At the night of April 24, 1915, around 250 Armenian intellectuals, including MPs and writers were arrested in Istanbul.”

“After these people were sent into exile in Ayas and Cankiri, the vast majority of them were killed. Among the ones sent into exile and killed were Dr. Nazaret Dagavaryan (MP of Ottoman Empire), Armen Doryan (poet and journalist), Shavarsh Krisyan (editor of the sports magazine *Marmnamarz*), Levon Larents (poet), Rupen Sevag (poet), Yenovk Sahen (theater artist), Siamanto [Atom Yarcanyan] (poet), Hagop Terziyan (pharmacist and writer), Taniel Varujan (poet), Krikor Yesayan (teacher and translator), Rupen Zartaryan (writer and poet), Diran Kelekian (writer and Professor of Turkish language) and Krikor Zohrab (MP of Ottoman Empire and writer),” the draft reads.

The bill notes that Ottoman Turkey tried to describe the genocide as a “natural war measure,” adding that the denial has led to hate crimes against minorities throughout the history of the Turkish Republic.

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ARMENIA

News From Armenia

Trump Issues Statement On Meds Yeghern

WASHINGTON — President Donald Trump issued the following statement on April 24:

Today we commemorate the Meds Yeghern, one of the worst mass atrocities of the 20th century, when one and a half million Armenians were deported, massacred, or marched to their deaths in the final years of the Ottoman Empire. We recall the horrific events of 1915 and grieve for the lives lost and the many who suffered.

We also take this moment to recognize the courage of those individuals who sought to end the violence, and those who contributed to aiding survivors and rebuilding communities, including the U.S. Ambassador to the Ottoman Empire, Henry Morgenthau, who sought to end the violence and later raised funds through the Near East Relief to help the Armenian people. We note with deep respect the resilience of the Armenian people, so many of whom built new lives in the United States and have made countless contributions to our country.

As we honor the memory of those who suffered, we also reflect on our commitment to ensure that such atrocities are not repeated. We underscore the importance of acknowledging and reckoning with painful elements of the past as a necessary step towards creating a more tolerant future.

On this solemn day, we stand with the Armenian people throughout the world in honoring the memory of those lost and commit to work together to build a better future.

‘Women of 1915’ to Premiere in Armenia

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 Mardigianian, who inspired the very name of the annual \$1 million award honoring those who stand up against adversity,” said Maronian.

“Women of 1915” is the first documentary to unveil the role of Armenian women who lived through the horrors of the Genocide.

Caucus Urges President To Recognize Genocide

WASHINGTON — On April 24, a bipartisan letter signed by 102 Members was sent to President Donald Trump urging him to affirm the Armenian Genocide. Congressional Caucus on Armenian Issues Co-Chairs Representatives Frank Pallone, Jr. (D-NJ), David Trott (R-MI), Jackie Speier (D-CA), and David Valadao (R-CA), along with Vice-Chairs Adam Schiff (D-CA) and Gus Bilirakis (R-FL), spearheaded the letter asking the White House to honor the United States’ historic leadership in defending human rights and affirm the Armenian Genocide.

The letter to President Trump states: “In the spirit of honoring the victims and redoubling our commitment to prevent genocide, we ask you to appropriately mark April 24th as a day of American remembrance of the Armenian Genocide.”

The Members of Congress point out the record in American history in helping save the survivors of this crime, and how U.S. Ambassador to the Ottoman Empire Henry Morgenthau helped to chronicle the Genocide in 1915. The letter also references the United States’ historical account on affirming the Armenian Genocide. “In leading an honest and accurate American remembrance of this known case of genocide, you will stand with President Reagan, who recognized the Armenian Genocide in 1981, and the Eisenhower Administration, which did the same in a 1951 submission to the International Court of Justice. The House of Representatives has also commemorated the Armenian Genocide, through H.J.Res.148 in 1975 and H.J.Res.247 in 1984.”



Nikol Pashinyan and his supporters address the crowd.

In Stunning Turn of Events, Serzh Sargsyan Resigns

ARMENIA, from page 1

A statement by the US State Department thanked the former premier for helping to strengthen US-Armenian relations during his ten-year rule. It expressed hope that his successor will be chosen in a transparent and constitutional manner. The statement also called on Armenia’s leading political groups to “avoid an escalation of the situation and any violent actions.”

Karen Karapetyan, who took over as Armenia’s acting prime minister, is due

prime minister, leader of the country,” he declared.

“The movement in the streets is against my tenure. I am fulfilling your demand. I wish our country peace, harmony and common sense,” he said.

A huge impromptu street party broke out on Mashtots, the main avenue of Yerevan, after Sargsyan announced his resignation.

The announcement sparked jubilant scenes in the streets of Yerevan filled with hundreds of thousands of people demanding his resignation. The sound

Meeting Between Leaders

Sargsyan publicly rejected the demands for his resignation as recently as on Sunday morning. At a televised meeting with Pashinyan, he accused the opposition leader of blackmailing “the legitimate authorities of the state.” “A faction that got 7-8 percent of the vote [in the April 2017 parliamentary elections] cannot speak on behalf of the people,” he said, referring to the opposition Yelk bloc, of which Pashinyan is a leader.

Pashinyan was detained more than an hour after that tense meeting while holding a fresh demonstration in Yerevan. The arrest only added to popular anger with Sargsyan, with tens of thousands of people flocking to Republic Square on Sunday night.

The protests resumed in Yerevan and other Armenian cities the following morning. Pashinyan was set free in the afternoon shortly after Karapetyan visited him in custody.

Sargsyan, 63, is a native of Nagorno-Karabakh who was one of the disputed region’s top military commanders during the 1991-1994 war with Azerbaijan. He was appointed as Armenia’s defense minister in 1993 and went on to hold other key security positions in Yerevan.

He was first elected president in a hotly disputed 2008 ballot marred by opposition allegations of fraud and a deadly post-election government crackdown on protesters in Yerevan. His reelection in 2013 was also denounced as fraudulent by Armenia’s leading opposition groups.

In 2014, Sargsyan initiated a controversial constitutional reform that turned Armenia into a parliamentary republic. He stated at the time that he “will not aspire” to the post of prime minister after completing his second presidential term on April 9, 2018.

Sargsyan downplayed that pledged last month when he signaled his plans to become prime minister and thus remain the country’s most powerful man. He cited the increased risk of renewed war in Karabakh and other security challenges facing Armenia.

Pashinyan Takes Center Stage

Pashinyan, 42, began his nonstop protests in Yerevan after a two-week walking tour of Armenia’s northern and central regions. His movement has proved particularly popular with young Armenians, who have taken to the streets in unprecedentedly large numbers.

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Nikol Pashinyan after being released from custody

to start crisis talks with Pashinyan on Wednesday. The opposition leader has publicly voiced a number of political demands, including the holding of snap general elections.

“We look forward to working with Mr. Karapetyan, the acting prime minister, in the days ahead,” said Mills. All sides should resume their dialogue to “agree on the steps forward,” he added.

After initially announcing the meeting, late on Tuesday Karapetyan scuttled the meeting, complaining that Pashinyan was dictating the terms of the meeting.

Armenia’s Prime Minister stepped down on Monday after 10 days of street protests against his attempt to extend his decade-long rule.

“[Opposition leader] Nikol Pashinyan was right,” he said in a written address to the nation. “I was mistaken. There are several solutions to the existing situation but I will not opt for any of them. They are not to my liking.”

“I am resigning from the post of

of car horns and fireworks reverberated across the Armenian capital.

Jubilant crowds converged on the city’s central Republic Square. Some of them sang, danced and clapped their hands.

“I have grown so used to [Sargsyan’s] lies that I just can’t believe he has resigned,” one woman told RFE/RL’s Armenian service (Azatutyun.am). “Everyone is euphoric now but the hardest part starts now.”

“We have achieved our goal and everything will be alright from now on,” said another, younger woman.

It was not immediately clear whether Sargsyan’s exit will be followed by fresh parliamentary elections.

Armenia’s First Deputy Prime Minister Karen Karapetyan is serving as premier at least in the interim.

In the immediate wake of the resignation, the entire cabinet submitted its resignation to President Armen Sarkisian.



ARMENIA

Armenia Marks Genocide Anniversary

YEREVAN (RFE/RL) —Armenia marked on Tuesday the 103rd anniversary of the 1915 genocide of Armenians in Ottoman Turkey, with tens of thousands of people silently walking to the Tsitsernakabert memorial and laying flowers there throughout the day.

As always, the annual procession began with a prayer service held by Catholicos Karekin II by the eternal fire of the hilltop memorial overlooking central Yerevan. The ceremony was attended by President Armen Sarkisian, acting Prime Minister Karen Karapetyan and other senior state officials.

The genocide anniversary commemorations came the day after Prime Minister Serzh Sargsyan stepped down amid massive nationwide protests against his attempt to extend his decade-long rule. He did not visit Tsitsernakabert.

Karapetyan mentioned the dramatic events in Armenia in a written address to the nation released on the occasion. “The Genocide changed the fate of our people and made us suffer many trials and tribulations in the following decades,” he said. “However, we turned out to be stronger than the murderers and were strong enough to return to life, create an independent State and be the master of our destiny.

“Today, we are facing another difficult



Dignitaries, including Acting Prime Minister Karen Karapetyan, President Armen Sarkisian and Catholicos of All Armenians Karekin II at the Armenian Genocide memorial.

period in our modern history,” Karapetyan went on. “Yesterday, I called on all political forces to refrain from politicizing this day. I am grateful that my appeal was accepted, and today we can show to the world that despite many challenges and unresolved internal issues, we are united around the common cause.”

“We reaffirm our determination to build a solid statehood, a free and civilized society, and nothing can distract us from our way to

building the country of our dreams,” concluded the statement.

President Armen Sarkisian’s office publicized, meanwhile, a message which he received from President Emmanuel Macron of France, one of two dozen nations that have officially recognize the slaughter of some 1.5 million Armenians as genocide. Macron said France, which has an influential Armenian community, stands with Armenia in remembering the victims of the genocide.

Opposition lawmaker from the Yelk bloc, head of the Civil Contract party Nikol Pashinyan led a massive crowd to the Armenian Genocide memorial in Tsitsernakabert.

The member of parliament had earlier said that the crowd will march towards Tsitsernakabert and focus on the commemoration if nothing extraordinary happens.

Also, Pashinyan is set to give a press conference later on Tuesday.

from previous page

Hours after forcing the prime minister to resign, Pashinyan said he will meet with Armenia’s new and acting premier, Karen Karapetyan, on Wednesday for talks on a “transfer of power to the people.”

Pashinyan said they will discuss, among other things, the holding of fresh parliamentary elections in the “shortest possible logical period of time.”

The leader of the protest movement made the announcement as tens of thousands of people rallied in Yerevan’s Republic Square to celebrate the resignation of the man who has ruled Armenia for the last ten years. “The first phase of our popular velvet revolution is over,” he declared.

Karapetyan took over as Armenia’s top government official at an emergency meeting held following Sargsyan’s resignation. “Ongoing political development must not affect our normal work in any way,” he told ministers. “I am calling on our fellow citizens and political forces to show utmost vigilance and respect for the law and rights of other citizens.”

In remarks publicized by the government’s press office, Karapetyan made no mention of the elections demanded by Pashinyan.

It is unclear whether Sargsyan will also resign as chairman of the ruling Republican Party of Armenia (HHK), which holds the majority of seats in the parliament. Karapetyan is the party’s first deputy chairman.

In his speech, Pashinyan warned Sargsyan against trying to maintain his hold on power from

behind the scenes. “I hope that the HHK leadership will explicitly and unconditionally recognize the victory of the popular velvet revolution,” he said.

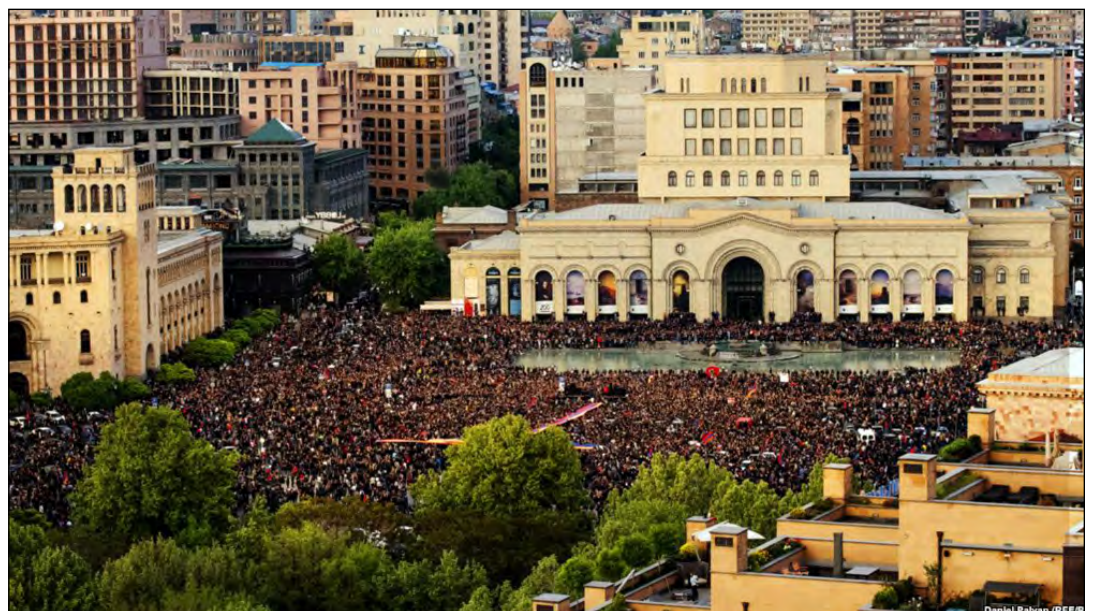
The Armenian constitution gives parliamentary parties seven days to propose candidates for prime minister. The HHK’s parliamentary leader, Vahram Baghdasarian, told RFE/RL’s Armenian service (Azatutyun.am) that his party expects to nominate the next premier as well.

Baghdasarian declined to speculate about possible candidacies. He said the party leadership will make a decision after Karapetyan’s talks with Pashinyan and other political leaders.

For its part, the HHK’s junior coalition partner, the Armenian Revolutionary Federation (Dashnaktsutyun), expressed hope that Armenia’s leading political groups will agree on an “agenda that would include a timetable and a roadmap for rapid reforms necessary for the country.”

Meanwhile, other opposition parties hailed Sargsyan’s exit. Former President Levon Ter-Petrosian’s Armenian National Congress (HAK) said it paves the way for the “establishment of democracy in the country.” The HAK too called for a “smooth transfer of power.”

Pashinyan also reached out to those Armenians who might feel threatened by Sargsyan’s ouster. “I want to appeal to entrepreneurs who are worried about this political process and ... may be packing up to leave the



A massive demonstration in Republic Square

country or remove capital from Armenia,” he said. “Please do not do that because there will be no vendettas, no hatred, no revenge.” He vowed to strive for an “atmosphere of national unity.”

Pashinyan was also anxious to deny any “geopolitical” implications of the unfolding regime change in Yerevan. In that context, he described as “very important” the Russian Foreign Ministry spokeswoman’s reaction to the dramatic events in Armenia.

“Armenia, Russia is always with you!” the spokeswoman, Maria Zakharova, wrote on Facebook.

“I hope there will be similar reactions from other key representatives of the international community,” said Pashinyan.

On April 24, Prime Minister of the Republic of Armenia Karen Karapetyan met with Artsakh Republic President Bako Sahakyan.

A range of issues related to the cooperation between the two Armenian states were on the agenda.

The current internal political situation in Armenia was touched upon during the meeting. The sides highlighted the necessity of maintaining stability in the country and ensuring its nor-

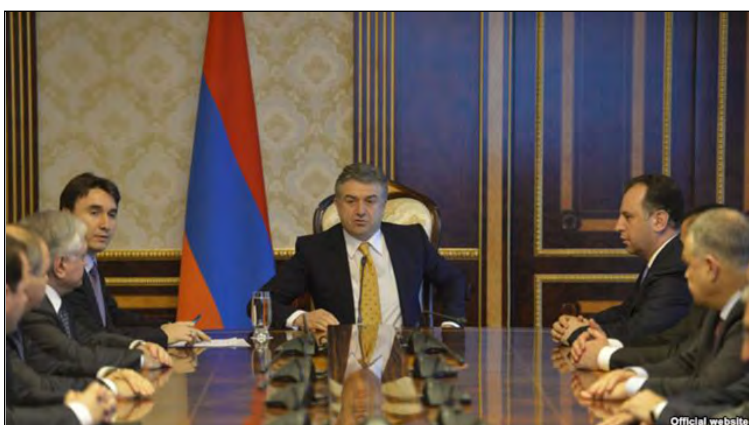
mal functioning.

The Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE) co-rapporteurs for the monitoring of Armenia, Giuseppe Galati (Italy, EPP/CD) and Yuliya Lovochkina (Ukraine, SOC), on April 24 reacted to the developments.

“We welcome the courageous decision of Prime Minister Sargsyan to resign from his post in order to defuse the mounting tensions in the country. We hope that this will lead to a new and constructive dialogue between all political forces in the country with the aim of finding a lasting solution to the current situation, in line with the relevant Constitutional provisions,” said the co-rapporteurs.

In the meanwhile they stressed that all who were detained while peacefully demonstrating should be released and the right to peaceful assembly should be fully respected. At the same time, they expressed concern at reports from the Ombudsman of increased hate speech and even incitement to violence against individuals on social media, and called for the fundamental rights of all citizens to be respected.

The co-rapporteurs announced that they will continue to follow developments in Yerevan closely.



Acting Prime Minister Karen Karapetyan at an emergency cabinet meeting



INTERNATIONAL

International News

Cathedral of Ani to Be Restored

KARS, Turkey (Hurriyet Daily News) – The Cathedral of Ani is listed as a UNESCO World Heritage Site and was converted into a mosque after the conquest of Ani by the Seljuk Sultan Alparslan in 1604. Restorations will begin this month for the cathedral, which is among 23 artifacts that have survived in the ancient ruins.

Ani, which has been dubbed as the “World City,” “City of 1,001 Churches,” “Cradle of Civilizations,” and “City of 40 Gates,” is one of the earliest settlements, dating back to 3,000 B.C.

Armenian Bagratid King Smbat II laid the foundations for the cathedral in 990 A.D. and after his death, its construction was completed in 1001 A.D. by Queen Katranide, the wife of King Gagik I, Smbat’s brother and successor. It was later converted into a mosque by the Seljuk Sultan Alparslan.

The architect of the cathedral was Trdat, who also worked on the restoration of the Hagia Sophia after it had collapsed in an earthquake in the same century. The cathedral has drawn attention, illuminated with a high and narrow window and with its three gates decorated with statue niches.

Built with red tuff stone, the cathedral’s dome is built on a foundation with steps leading up to it. Its bell tower and partially collapsed wall in the northern side has attracted the interest of local and foreign tourists.

Dutch Rep. Attends Commemoration

YEREVAN (Public Radio of Armenia) – For the first time ever, a member of the Dutch government is attending the commemoration of the Armenian genocide of 1915 and 1916 in Yerevan, NL Times reports.

State Secretary Menno Snel of Finance was at the ceremony in the Armenian capital, at the insistence of the Tweede Kamer, the lower house of Dutch parliament. In the presence of the other foreign guests, he laid flowers at the monument for the victims.

In February the Tweede Kamer reconfirmed its recognition of the Armenian genocide.

The official statement released by the government says that in Yerevan Snel paid “respect to all victims and survivors of all murders of minorities” on behalf of the cabinet.

Erdogan ‘Shares’ Historic Pain

ISTANBUL (Daily Sabah) – President Recep Tayyip Erdogan said on April 24 that it was Turkey’s responsibility to share the historical pain of Armenian citizens and urged the Armenian community not to allow others to ignite hatred over past events.

In a message sent to the Armenian Patriarchate of Constantinople, Erdogan offered his condolences to the grandchildren of the Ottoman Armenians “who lost their lives during the war.”

“It is Turkey’s conscientious and ethical responsibility to share the historical pain of our Armenian citizens. We will continue to share your pain and try to resolve your problems in the future,” the statement said.

Erdogan also called on the Armenian community not to allow those who are trying to ignite hatred and hostility by distorting “our shared past.”

Primate of Germany Re-Elected and Confirmed

ECHMIADZIN – On April 19, Karekin II, Supreme Patriarch and Catholicos of All Armenians, conveyed his blessings and congratulations to Very Rev. Serovbe Isakhanyan, on the occasion of his re-election as Primate of the Armenian Diocese of Germany.

The election was held in Koln, Germany on April 15, during the Diocesan Assembly meeting.

Confirming the re-election of Isakhanyan, the Catholicos of All Armenians congratulated him and wished him strength.

Alek Minassian Charged with Murder in Toronto Van Attack

TORONTO (BBC News, CNN, Telegraph) – Alek Minassian, a 25-year-old driver charged with killing 10 people and injuring 14 more by ploughing a rental van into pedestrians in Toronto on Monday, April 23, appeared in court in the city.

Alek Minassian, a resident of the Richmond Hill suburb of Toronto, was charged with 10 counts of first-degree murder and 13 counts of attempted murder. Minassian wore a white jumpsuit, with a shaved head and his hands behind his back. He showed little emo-

Stacys! All hail the Supreme Gentleman Elliot Rodger!”

The term “incel” refers to a now-banned group on the message site Reddit where young men discussed their lack of sexual activity and attractiveness to women – often blaming women for the problem. “Chads and Stacys” refers to attractive men and women who are perceived as better than or unavailable to “incels,” which is short for “involuntary celibate.”

The Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) confirmed that Minassian was a member for two months in late 2017. He did not complete his recruit training and requested to be voluntarily released from the CAF after 16 days of the training.

Minassian had previously attended a school for students with special needs in north Toronto, former classmates said. A former classmate said Minassian often succumbed to peer pressure – such as running down a hallway shirtless when dared by other students. The classmate, who didn’t want to be identified, said they bonded during special-needs classes at Wyndham Ridge Public School and Thornlea Secondary School.

The classmate said Minassian was very self-deprecating. “If you put him down or disrespected him or insulted him, he would agree with you,” the classmate said.

Minassian also had severe anxiety when interacting with females and would freeze, unable to respond, the classmate said. “He was genuinely terrified with interacting verbally or physically at all, except for his mother,” the classmate said.

He would be seen walking around Thornlea Secondary School with his head down and hands clasped tightly together making meowing noises, Shereen Chami told Reuters.

But she said Minassian had not been violent. “He wasn’t a social person, but from what I remember he was absolutely harmless,” she told Reuters.

Another former student, Ari Bluff, told CBC that Minassian did not seem to have many friends. “I remember seeing

him probably just walking down the halls, usually by himself, or in the cafeteria by himself,” he said.

Minassian went on to attend Seneca College in the North York area of Toronto, where the van incident took place, CBC reported. Reporter James Moore, with Newtalk 1010, told the BBC he had heard reports that Minassian was regarded as being “quite brilliant.”

So far, the name of only one of those who died has emerged. She has been identified as Anne-Marie D’Amico, who worked for the US investment company Invesco, CBC reports. The company’s Canadian headquarters are on Yonge Street. A South Korean foreign ministry official told AFP news agency that two of its citizens were among the dead. The 15 injured remain in hospitals throughout Toronto.

Police said the suspect in the van mounted the curb on Yonge Street between Finch Avenue and Sheppard Avenue at about 13:30 local time (17:30 GMT) on Monday and drove into pedestrians along a 1 km (0.6-mile) stretch. Reza Hashemi, who owns a video shop on Yonge Street, told the BBC he heard screaming on the other side of the road. He said the van was repeatedly mounting the pavement and running into people.

One witness told City News that the driver was “hitting anything that comes in the way.” “People, fire hydrants, there’s mail boxes being run over,” said the unnamed man, who said he was driving behind the van during the incident. As the van continued, the man said he sounded his horn to try to warn pedestrians. “I witnessed at least six, seven people being hit and flying in the air, like killed, on the street,” he said.

Panna Patel, 42, who witnessed the attack said it “was like he was playing a video game, trying to kill as many people as possible.” “He was looking people directly in the eye, making eye contact, it was so scary. He wasn’t remorseful at all.”

Pictures from the scene showed bodies covered in orange sheets along the van’s route. Debris and items of clothing were scattered across the pavements and road. The van was brought to a halt by police several streets away and was quickly surrounded. The suspect pointed an object at the officer and claimed to have a gun.

“I don’t care. Get down,” the officer said, before arresting Minassian without firing a shot. The arrest was filmed by two bystanders and the officer was praised for not opening fire. Trudeau praised the police response, saying officers “faced danger without a moment of hesitation.”



Alek Minassian (photo: Linked In)

tion. He was read the charges and ordered to have no contact with surviving victims. He will return to court on May 10.

A man believed to be his father sat in the front row of the court and wept. Asked by reporters after the hearing if he had anything to say, the man, identified as Vahe Minassian, replied “sorry.”

The younger Minassian’s court appearance came shortly after Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau addressed reporters in the city, calling the incident a “senseless attack and a horrific tragedy.”

The suspect was arrested several blocks from the scene of Monday’s attack, after a tense standoff with a police officer.

Minassian’s Background and Possible Motives

Police say Minassian was not previously known to authorities. Public safety minister Ralph Goodale said there “would appear to be no national security connections” and Canadian broadcaster CBC cited government officials as saying Minassian was not associated with any known terror groups.

Facebook has deleted Minassian’s account, but a copy of a post has emerged published by the suspect shortly before the attack on Monday. The post, which Facebook confirmed as real to the BBC, praises Elliott Rodger, a 22 year old from California who killed six people with his car in 2014. It reads: “The Incel Rebellion has already begun! We will overthrow all the Chads and



The damaged van used has been sealed off by police (photo: Reuters)

Community News

Armenian Couples Get Lessons on Happier Marriages

By Yeretzgeen Joanna Baghsarian

NATICK, Mass. — Friday, April 13, was a lucky night for couples who filled the banquet room of the Boston-Natick Crowne Plaza to capacity for a program focusing on building strong marriages.

The electrifying sound of camaraderie, laughter and joy greeted guests. This, combined with the soft, melodic Armenian and Christian selections of John Baboian's Ovation guitar, blended in perfect harmony and spilled out into the long corridor.

I attended with my husband, Rev. Gomidas Baghsarian. We crossed the threshold and entered into another dimension. From a personal perspective, this writer was keenly aware of her surroundings. People from all walks of life and political persuasion were engaged in animated conversation. Friends and clergy from across Armenian religious life embraced with ecumenical warmth. Spring tulips — gifted by Dr. and Mrs. Seth Bilazarian — dotted the center of each table. This splash of color on white linen reminded me that renewal — in more ways than one — was waiting to happen.

Visionaries Rev. Dr. Avedis Boynerian, pastor of the Armenian Memorial Church in Watertown, his wife Dr. Arpi Boynerian, and Yeretzgeen LuAnn Sabounjian of the Holy Translators Metro West Armenian Apostolic Church organized the event and with a team of clergy, community leaders and parishioners, successfully implemented the first ever "Armenian Couples Night."

Rev. Boynerian opened the program with "I love you" — three words that set the tone for the evening. He then invited Rev. Antranig Baljian from St. Stephen's Armenian Apostolic Church of Watertown to bless the meal and the speakers.

Married couples came from near and far to listen to guest speakers Drs. Paul and Virginia Friesen deliver the message of togetherness and faithfulness. The Friesens have written several books and have travelled throughout the world sharing this knowledge. They equip and encourage couples to live out healthy relationships. For many couples, the differences divide rather than unite. They taught ways to enrich our lives as a couple and as a family yet keep our identities as we pursue our personal dreams. Guests were challenged on how to change their hearts and embrace their differences from two very diverse educators whose temperaments are wired differently. And they accomplished this with class, humor and Godly wisdom.

At the end, Rev. Boynerian invited the eight clergy representing the Armenian Apostolic, Protestant and Catholic denominations to come forward and lead everyone in the Lord's Prayer. This was the moment of Christian unity that will be remembered by everyone present. Rev. Vasken Kouzouian, pastor of the Holy Trinity Armenian Church of Greater Boston, sealed the evening with a heartfelt prayer for everyone to depart in peace with God's Agape Love and blessings.



From left, Yn. Luann Sabounjian, Dr. Virginia Friesen, Dr. Paul Friesen, Rev. Dr. Avedis Boynerian, Yn. Dr. Arpi Boynerian



Prof. Richard Hovhannisian, Carl Bardakian, Mihran Toumajan and Armond Aghakhanian, with State Senator Anthony Portantino at front right.

California State Legislature Passes Genocide Resolutions, Armenians Participate in Advocacy

SACRAMENTO, Calif. — On Monday, April 23, at the State Capitol in Sacramento, both houses of the California state legislature passed resolutions recognizing the Armenian Genocide and urged Washington to follow California's lead. This was part of the annual Capitol Advocacy Day events organized by the leadership of the California Armenian Legislative Caucus.

This year's Advocacy Day initiatives included strong, bipartisan statements in reaffirmation of the Armenian Genocide by California Senate President Pro Tempore Emeritus Kevin De Leon, State Senators Scott Wilk, Anthony Portantino, and Scott Wiener, State Assemblymembers Adrin Nazarian, Laura Friedman, and Dante Acosta, as well as from Fiona Ma, a member of the California State Board of Equalization.

Armenian Assembly of America representatives led by the Assembly's Southern California Regional Council member, Helen Haig, and Western Region Director, Mihran Toumajan, participated in the Sacramento events, as did



Dn. Mihran Toumajan, Dn. Carl Bardakian, Der Yeghishe Ksachikyan, Der Hovel Ohanyan, Der Datev Harutyunian, Der Mesrop Ash, Grigor Ohanyan, Prof. Richard Hovhannisian, Kim Bardakian

Armenian Democratic Liberal Party representative Carl Bardakian and representatives of the Western Diocese of the Armenian Church (and four of its parishes from northern California), the Armenian National Committee of America-Western Region, and the Southern California Armenian Democrats.

Professor Emeritus of UCLA, Richard Hovhannisian, was the guest of honor at this year's Capitol Advocacy Day. He was recognized for the wealth of his academic and scholarly achievements, as well as for his quiet yet successful efforts in the late 1990s at preventing the establishment of a Turkish-government-funded Chair in Turkish Studies at UCLA, a chair for which the Turkish government exacted preconditions upon UCLA over the shaping of a subjective, pro-Turkish curricula to be taught under such a program.

Upon the conclusion of a lunch provided by the California Armenian see SACRAMENTO, page 20

Patti Fletcher to Speak At AIWA Annual Meeting And Luncheon

WELLESLEY, Mass. — The Annual Meeting and Luncheon of the Armenian International Women's Association (AIWA) will be held on Saturday, May 5, at Alumnae Hall, Wellesley College.

Dr. Patti Fletcher, author of the recently published book *Disrupters: Success Strategies from Women Who Break the Mold*, will be the luncheon speaker.

The granddaughter of an Armenian Genocide survivor, a seasoned tech executive, award-winning marketing influencer, board member, angel investor, and speaker, Fletcher is currently executive-in-residence at the Babson College WINLab.

Fletcher points out that over the last 18 months the world has witnessed that, when women struggle, they come together



Dr. Patti Fletcher

er to create a force for change.

"They become a force that disrupts the status quo, whether it's equal pay and treatment of women in Hollywood and Silicon Valley, or women having the right to drive in Saudi Arabia," she notes.

"Disrupting is about challenging the status quo," she points out. "It's the idea that nothing will stop you from doing your part and creating a new world that we want to live in."

Participating in the Luncheon program will be Lisa Hughes, of the Program for Leadership Development at Harvard Business School.

Beginning with a brief coffee reception at 9:30 a.m., the AIWA business meeting will convene at 10 a.m. with reports by the Los Angeles, San Francisco, New Jersey and Chicago Affiliates. Also on the agenda is discussion of the various AIWA activities, including the Women's Support Center and Women's Entrepreneurship programs in Armenia, scholarships, publications, and representation at the United Nations in New York City. The Annual Meeting will provide a forum for possible new initiatives, as well as planning for AIWA's 8th International Conference.

AIWA members and friends are invited to attend the Annual Meeting free of charge. Reservations for the Luncheon are available at \$60 (\$50 for members) and at \$35 for students (\$25 for student members). All Luncheon attendees will receive a copy of Dr. Fletcher's book, *Disrupters*. Parking is free and convenient at the Visitor's Parking Lot across from Alumnae Hall.

For further information and reservations, contact AIWA at www.aiwainternational.org.



OBITUARIES

Nerses ‘Krik’ Krikorian

Legendary Scientist at Lab that Developed Atomic Bomb

LOS ALAMOS, N.M. (AP) —Scientist Nerses “Krik” Krikorian, who was born a refugee and later became a legend in the once-secret New Mexico city where the atomic bomb was developed, has died. He was 97.

Officials at Los Alamos National Laboratory confirmed that Krikorian died Wednesday, April 18, at his home in Los Alamos, the mountain town he had called home for more than 70 years.

Krikorian was born on a Turkish roadside in 1921 as his parents were trying to flee the aftermath of the Armenian Genocide by Ottoman Turks. With nothing but the clothes on their backs, the family moved around for the next four years and eventually found their way to the United States.

Krikorian spoke little English when they first arrived but went on to graduate with honors

from college with a chemistry degree and landed a job working in a lab that made highly enriched uranium. It wasn’t until later that Krikorian learned that work was part of the top-secret Manhattan Project.

He later went to work directly for Los Alamos lab. He said in an interview for a lab profile that he had never been west of Detroit and made the long drive to New Mexico in a 1936 Chevy convertible. He met his wife in Los Alamos.

In a career that spanned more than four decades, he worked with uranium and later with Project Rover in the 1950s to develop a nuclear-thermal rocket for space applications. He held six patents and published numerous assessments before becoming head of security for an intelligence unit. He also won accolades for his work.

In a memo to employees this week, lab



This undated photo provided by the Los Alamos National Laboratory shows Nerses “Krik” Krikorian. Krikorian, who escaped the Armenian genocide as a boy and later became a legend in the once-secret New Mexico city where the atomic bomb was developed. (Los Alamos National Laboratory)

Director Terry Wallace described Krikorian as “a giant” in the world of national security science and in the Los Alamos community.

“He contributed enormously to the mission of the laboratory, and I can say with confidence it’s a better place because of him,” Wallace said. “As we celebrate our 75 years as a laboratory, few people have been more impactful on our history than Krik. He leaves an enduring legacy that will continue far into the future.”

The *Los Alamos Monitor* reported that Krikorian also helped found the United Church of Los Alamos and J. Oppenheimer Memorial Committee and helped with the creation of the original charter for Los Alamos County.

The newspaper reported that he was known for his dedication to making what started out as a place for a secret laboratory into a real, working community.

“Things have worked out far beyond what I ever imagined. I think of my parents and wonder, ‘How did they ever do it?’ To be born on a roadside in Turkey to this,” Krikorian said in

2017 *Monitor* article about his life. “My parents instilled in me the importance of doing the right thing and giving back to your fellow man. I hope I’ve done that.”

Krikorian’s story also is part of an oral history project featuring those who worked at the lab in the early days.

His daughter Deb Krikorian said her father’s dedication was a natural outcome of his constant quest for knowledge and his pragmatic outlook on life.

Asked where Krikorian’s thirst for knowledge came from, she said, “Curiosity.”

“He was curious about everything. He loved to just sit down and read. Even when he couldn’t read, he was listening to books on tape and things like that,” she said.

Krikorian had an extensive art collection, loved local theater and often acted in local productions. He also loved to fish.

A memorial service is being planned. A burial was held Wednesday, April 25, at Santa Fe National Cemetery.

State Rep. James Miceli Dies

Longtime Supporter of Commemoration of Armenian Genocide

WILMINGTON, Mass. (Combined Sources) — Democratic State Rep. James R. Miceli, the second-longest serving member of the Massachusetts Legislature, collapsed during opening Little League ceremonies in his hometown of Wilmington Saturday, April 21, and died at a local hospital, officials said.

Miceli, 83, was standing by the third base line at Wilmington Little League Park at about 10 a.m. when he apparently suffered a heart attack, said Wilmington Fire Lieutenant Bob Woods.

Emergency crews performed CPR on Miceli for about 15 minutes before he was taken to Winchester Hospital, where he was pronounced dead, Woods said.

Miceli was a regular presence at the Armenian Genocide commemorations at the State House. He always spoke proudly of his mother’s Armenian heritage. He was not pre-

“My condolences to his wife Jean, his children, [and] his grandchildren,” said DeLeo, a Winthrop Democrat.

Republican Governor Charlie Baker also paid tribute to Miceli on Twitter.

“We did not always agree, but he was always a gentleman, and a hugely aggressive advocate for his district and his beliefs,” Baker wrote.

Miceli was vice chairman of the House Committee on Global Warming and Climate Change, and served on four other committees, including the Joint Committee on Ways and Means, according to his biography published on the Legislature’s website.

In 2013, he made headlines by adding an amendment to the state budget that would have reinstated the death penalty in Massachusetts.

The measure, which was introduced before the Boston Marathon bombings, was defeated.

Gus Bickford, chairman of the Massachusetts Democratic party, called Miceli “truly one of a kind” who will “be missed by those who knew and served with him.”

Bickford credited Miceli for “working passionately on behalf of the families of his district, and helping to shape Wilmington and Tewksbury into the strong communities they are today.”

Senate President Harriette Chandler also released a statement on Miceli’s death. “Rep. Miceli was a gentleman, a fierce advocate for his constituents, and a tireless public servant who gave everything he had for the betterment of Massachusetts and his communities. His presence and voice will be missed.”

Miceli grew up in Boston’s North End and graduated from Boston English High School in 1953. He earned a bachelor’s degree in business from Northeastern University in 1958 and met his beloved wife, Jean Mattson, while both were students at Northeastern.

Miceli began his career in the insurance industry at State Mutual Insurance Company in 1958, moving to Liberty Mutual Insurance Company a year later. In 1972, he joined the Walter G. Leavitt Agency in Stoneham and opened his agency in Wilmington in 1975. Rep. Miceli retired from his insurance business in 2000 and focused on his work in the legislature for nearly two more decades.

Miceli’s political career commenced in 1963 with his appointment to the Wilmington Planning Board. He was elected to the Board of Selectmen in 1966, and he served four terms, two as Chairman, until 1978. His first term in the House of Representatives began in late 1977.

He was dedicated to his family, and he took great pride in the accomplishments of his children, Hope, James Jr. and Christina, and his cherished grandchildren, Andrew Jr., James III, Katherine, Q Jane, Alexander and Christopher.

The wake was on Thursday, April 26 and the Funeral was on Friday, April 27, from St. Thomas of Villanova Church, 126 Middlesex Avenue, Wilmington, MA. Interment followed in Wildwood Cemetery, Wilmington, MA.



sent at this year’s program because of ill health.

Miceli had represented Wilmington and Tewksbury in the State House since 1977, and a neighbor said he was a beloved figure in both towns.

“I can’t say enough good things about Jim,” said Joanne Neale, 71, who has lived across the street from Miceli for over 40 years.

“This is a great loss to the community, as a neighbor — just in general it’s a great loss,” she said in a phone interview. “He helped so many times in so many ways.”

Miceli had coped with several medical issues, including a February collapse during a political caucus.

On Saturday, he arrived at the ball field using a walker. He did not take part in the league’s Opening Day parade but was scheduled to speak during the ceremonies, Woods said.

As news of his death spread Saturday, Miceli was remembered as a dedicated public servant.

“Representative Miceli was a tireless advocate for his district and loved the communities which he served so ably,” House Speaker Robert DeLeo tweeted Saturday afternoon.

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COMMUNITY NEWS

60 Years of Dedicated Service by Fr. Kouzouian Celebrated

CAMBRIDGE, Mass. — Karekin II, Supreme Patriarch and Catholicos of All Armenians, is lending his presence to celebrate the 60th anniversary of the ordination to the priesthood of Rev. Mampre A. Kouzouian and to recognize his years of service to the Armenian Church and people.

Under the auspices of Archbishop Khajag Barsamian, Primate of the Diocese of the Armenian Church of America (Eastern), a Celebration of a Life of Service will be held on Friday, May 11, at Holy Trinity Armenian Church of Greater Boston, 145 Brattle St.

At Kouzouian's request, funds raised will support two causes, "close to my heart:" the children at the Muratsan Chemotherapy Clinic of Yerevan State Medical University, a pediatric oncology clinic that treats children from all over Armenia, as well as homeless individuals and families in the Vagharshapat region surrounding Holy Echmiadzin.

The Catholicos will be visiting the United States to preside over the 50th anniversary celebration of St. Vartan Armenian Cathedral in New York City on Saturday, May 5; and a Pontifical Divine Liturgy on Sunday, May 6. For information on St. Vartan Cathedral's 50th Anniversary Celebration, visit www.armenianchurch.us.

A Calling

As the youngest son of Oskian and Ovsanna Kouzouian, Alexan was surrounded by a grandmother, mother, father, sister and brother who were steadfast in their faith and who attended church every Sunday. Alexan embraced his calling at the age of 16, entering the Armenian Theological Seminary in Antelias, Lebanon. After graduating from the seminary in 1954, he spent the following two years as principal of a local Armenian school in Basrah, Iraq. In 1956, he arrived in New York City to further his theological education at the General Theological Seminary. While a seminarian, he served as choir director at St. Gregory the Illuminator Church. He reflects that as his individual history comes to life through the singing of the Divine Liturgy, so does the spiritual history of Armenia.

On February 16, 1958, the Primate, Archbishop Mampre Calfayan, ordained Alexan Kouzouian a priest. In keeping with the traditions of the church, during the ordination, Alexan was given a new name, one of historical and biblical significance chosen by the archbishop. As a tribute and honor for the young priest, the Primate gave him his own name. Father Mampre's first pastoral assignment was St. Mary's Armenian Church in Irvington, NJ, where he served from 1958 to 1970.

His early years as a priest were also distinguished by his active involvement in the civil rights movement. Considered to be a forerunner among church leaders in this movement, Father Mampre, along with the Primate, Archbishop Torkom Manoogian, traveled to Washington, DC, in the early 1960s and marched in solidarity against poverty and racism as a member of the National Council of Churches Governing Board.

In 1970, Archbishop Torkom Manoogian appointed Father Mampre the Canon Sacrist of Saint Vartan Armenian Cathedral and Director of the Ecumenical Relations of the Diocese of the Armenian Church (Eastern). He was also assigned as pastor of St. Gregory the Illuminator Church, known as the "Cathedral parish."

Kouzouian assumed the pastorate of Holy Trinity Armenian Church of Greater Boston in 1977, serving until his retirement in December 2001. In reflecting over his years at Holy Trinity, he said, "The church is a part of a world that is rapidly changing. While the foundation of the church is unchanged, the application of what we do changes. Social, moral, and ethical issues need our attention. People want to know where the church stands on such issues. We must provide answers and give guidance, as well as explore the ways we can remain faithful in a rapidly changing world to an unchanging Christ."

Holy Trinity Tenure

During his pastorate at Holy Trinity Armenian Church, Father Mampre spearheaded numerous projects and developments that greatly improved the church complex, as well as addressed the many future needs of the community. Among these were: appreciably increasing Holy Trinity's Trust Fund, one of his greatest priorities and successes, which helped to secure the future needs of the church for generations to come; overseeing the installation in 1978 of the beautiful bronze doors through which all enter the Sanctuary; establishing a Stewardship Program in 1981 that has secured a healthy, annual income for the church; overseeing the production and installation of the beautiful stained-glass windows in the Sanctuary that were reproductions of 13th to 18th century manuscript illuminations from Biblical and Armenian Church history, resulting in the beautiful images still enjoyed today; commissioning, on the occasion of the 85th Anniversary of the Armenian Genocide, the crafting and erection of a traditional Armenian khatchkar, located on the church's Garabed Baghdasar and Haiganoosh Hagopian Hollisian Plaza, as a visible witness to the outside world of Armenian martyrs; securing the much-needed renovations, in 1988, of the Charles and Nevart Talanian Cultural Hall; establishing a Cultural Committee that observed October as "Celebrate Armenian Cultural Heritage" month, turning the Holy Trinity parish into a center of Armenian culture as a gift to its parishioners and the community; and together with Speaker of the House

George Keverian, establishing the annual Genocide Commemoration at the Massachusetts State House that continues today.

In addition to overseeing the physical needs of the church complex, under Kouzouian's leadership, the parish hosted a Diocesan Assembly in 1988, and welcomed countless dignitaries and Church leaders, including two Catholicos and a future Catholicos, United States senators, governors and academics and speakers.

During his years serving the Holy Trinity Church community, he baptized 500 children, married 324 couples, laid to rest 830 parishioners, and visited countless parishioners and blessed hundreds of homes.

The Ministry Continues in Retirement

On the occasion of his 40th anniversary, Kouzouian said, "I set out to be a priest in the image of Christ, to express the will of our Heavenly Father, to serve people, to give hope to people, to encourage people, and to be His ambassador. I don't



think I've deviated from this. If anything has changed, my feelings of service have grown. I believe in more service to the Christian community and to my parishioners. Reaching out and serving people is a joy."

Since retiring at the end of 2001, he served as pastor of Sts. Vartanantz Armenian Church in Chelmsford from 2001 to 2007, and has continued to live out his calling by serving as visiting pastor to several parishes around the Diocese: St. David Armenian Church, Boca Raton, Fla.; St. Haroutiun Armenian Church, Orlando, Fla.; St. Mark Armenian Church, Springfield, Mass.; St. Sahag Armenian Church, St. Paul, Minn.; St. Sarkis Armenian Church, Charlotte, NC; and St. Sarkis Armenian Church, Niagara Falls, NY. This new ministry continues to find him traveling to a parish nearly every weekend.

He takes great pleasure in ministering to these communities, being able to spend time with the families in worship and fellowship, conducting liturgical services, sacraments and visitations to the faithful. During these parish visits, Father Mampre has continued to fulfill his passion for ministering to those faithful most in need of his pastoral outreach, namely the elderly, sick and lonely.

In May 2017, Kouzouian was invited by Catholicos Karekin II, to visit the Mother See and share his lifetime of pastoral ministry experience, by teaching the seminarians at the Gevorkian Seminary of Holy Echmiadzin. This was his 16th visit to the Motherland. It was during this visit, that Kouzouian discovered the two causes that have become "close to his heart" in Armenia.

Honors, Recognitions and Memberships

Throughout his 60 years of service to the church, Father Mampre has traveled extensively on behalf of the Diocese, and has received great honor and recognitions including: the Ecumenical Pectoral Cross in 1962, in recognition of his service to the National Council of Churches; the Pectoral Cross in 1968, awarded by Vasken I, of blessed memory, in recognition of outstanding service to the Armenian Church for arranging the official visit of His Holiness to the United Nations; medals and gifts in the 1970s from His Holiness

Pope Paul VI on each of three visits Father Mampre made to the Vatican; his third Pectoral Cross in 1974 bestowed by His Holiness Pimen, Patriarch of All Russia; a Floral Phelonian - Dzaghgial Pilon in 1976, bestowed by Archbishop Torkom Manoogian; the title of Avak Kahana - Arch Priest in 1983, bestowed by His Holiness; and a Doctoral Pectoral Cross - the Vartabedagan lunchakach in 1986, bestowed by Catholicos Vasken I Baljian.

In the late 1960s, Kouzouian served as a Governing Board member of the National Council of Churches of Christ and as a Governing Board member of the New York Council of Churches. From 1968 to 1993, he was a member of the Unity Committee of the Diocese of the Armenian Church of America (Eastern). In the 1970s, he co-founded the Council of Oriental Orthodox Churches in New York. In 1972, he visited the Soviet Union as a Governing Board Member of the delegation to the National Council of Churches with 20 church leaders from the United States. From 1972 to 1987, Father Mampre was a member of the Diocesan Council serving as chairman for four years.

In the 1990s and 2000s, he served as a member of the Board of Directors of the Fund for Armenian Relief.

Family

In December 1957, Kouzouian married Nuvart Vartanesian, who became his most devoted partner in his ministry and in his life. They had three children: Susan Kouzouian Derderian Esq., Joyce Arpi Kouzouian, and Father Vasken A. Kouzouian and his wife, Yeretzgin Arpi; and two grandchildren, Oscar Derderian III and Alina Kouzouian.

Susan Kouzouian Derderian is a criminal defense and probate law attorney; Joyce Kouzouian is a service coordinator for the Department of Mental Health for the State of Massachusetts; Father Vasken Kouzouian has been Pastor of Holy Trinity Armenian Church since 2002; and Yeretzgin Arpi serves as Youth Director and Sunday School Superintendent of Holy Trinity Church. Fr. Vasken and Yn. Arpi together directed the Diocesan Department of Youth Ministry prior to coming to Holy Trinity Church. Oscar Kouzouian is a product specialist for Zoominfo Software Company and Alina Kouzouian is a sophomore at Arlington High School.

The children and grandchildren of Father Mampre and Yeretzgin Nuvart continue to carry out the legacy of their parents with their commitment, devotion and dedication to Holy Trinity and the Armenian Church.

After 49 years of marriage, in February 2007, Yeretzgin Nuvart passed away. Those who know Father Mampre will attest to the devastating impact this had on his life. However, his devotion to his children, grandchildren and most especially, his ministry to the Armenian Church and her people, remain unwavering.

On May 11, the traditional *Hrashapar* Service is at 6 p.m. in the Sanctuary to welcome the Catholicos. Area clergy have been invited to participate. Doors to the Sanctuary will open at 5:30 p.m. All are invited to attend.

The Celebration Banquet follows in the Charles and Nevart Talanian Cultural Hall at 7:15 p.m. Advance Reservations are required with an RSVP deadline of April 30.

To receive an invitation to attend the banquet, contact the Holy Trinity Church Office by emailing office@htaac.org.



COMMUNITY NEWS

Mass. State House, Heritage Park, Commemorate Armenian Genocide

STATE HOUSE, from page 1

There was a global flavor to the occasion, as representatives of several human rights groups were present, as was an official from the French consulate in Boston.

Commendations presented to the editors of the two English-language Armenian newspapers in the state, Alin K. Gregorian of the *Armenian Mirror-Spectator* and Rupen Janbazian of the *Armenian Weekly*.

The keynote speaker, Bedrosyan, spoke about the hidden Armenian in Turkey and the fate of all of those who have to conceal who they are or who have been denied the knowledge that they are Armenian. (See related story on page 1 and the full text of his speech on page 19.)

A new element this year was the awarding of the Honorable Speaker George Keverian Public Service Scholarship. The late Speaker Keverian had started the annual commemoration of the Armenian Genocide at the State House 33 years ago.

The fund was set up by his brother, Dr. Jack Keverian, “to preserve the memory of Speaker George Keverian by supporting the work of individuals who strive to create positive change.”

Two young students received the scholarships, Emilee Guzman of Everett High School, the late speaker’s alma mater, and Rachel



Keynote speaker Raffi Bedrosyan with Rep. David Muradian in the background

Minassian, a member of the Armenian Students Association.

Guzman was present for the program and gave a warm hug to presenter Kenneth Keverian, nephew of George Keverian and son of Jack Keverian.

Guzman, who is graduating from Everett High School, is going to Salem State University and plans to study nursing. She has excelled in academics as well as extracurricular, including sports and various clubs, and

was named homecoming queen in 2017.

Minassian is a junior at Providence College pursuing a political science with a minor in Spanish. She is involved in the Armenian community, including in the Armenian Youth Federation. She plans to go to law school and aspires to be the first female US Senator from Rhode Island.

Also present was the indomitable Armenian Genocide survivor, Asdghig “Starrie” Alemian of Weymouth. At age 108, Alemian stayed throughout the program, during which she received a proclamation from Governor Baker. At the reception after the program, Baker went to Alemian and spoke at length to the diminutive dynamo.

Musical guest was Knarik Nerkararyan, an operatic soprano.

Students from St. Stephen’s Armenian Elementary School sang the Armenian and American national anthems.

Closing prayers and benediction were offered by Rev. Vart Gyozeian of the Hye Pointe Armenian Church of Haverhill.

Heritage Park Gathering

The program of the following day, Saturday, April 21, at the Armenian Heritage Park in the North End of Boston was intended for a younger audience. Held outdoors in wonderful weather, as spring finally made its appearance in Boston, it included both speakers and musi-



State Rep. Jonathan Hecht presents Mirror-Spectator editor Alin K. Gregorian with a proclamation.



Dr. Jack Keverian



Students from St. Stephen’s Armenian Elementary School sit during the program



Members of the Keverian family and friends, flank Emilee Guzman, in front, the recipient of a scholarship.



COMMUNITY NEWS



Singer R-Mean performs at the Armenian Heritage Park

cal performances.

Michael Demirchian and Saro Sakaian, the young co-chairmen of the Massachusetts Armenian Genocide Committee, and heads of the separate committee organizing the park event, served as the masters of ceremony. They delivered introductions in a tag-team manner, with one continuing the words of the other.



Young demonstrators

Though parts of the event were bilingual, in Armenian and English, the majority of the talks were in English.

The Homenetmen scouts led an initial procession and the Zangakner Performing Arts Ensemble sang the American and Armenian national anthems, after which the Armenian

clergyman present led the crowd in a prayer and readings from the Gospels.

Muradian was the first main speaker. A native of central Massachusetts who graduated Worcester State University with a B.A. in communications, he serves on several committees in the legislature and is a member of the Knights of Vartan. Muradian first announced that Rep. James Micelli of Wilmington, the only other Armenian representative in the Massachusetts Assembly, had passed away. He declared that we owe it to our ancestors to stand up as part of our duty to educate others, honor those whom we have lost, and fight for what is right.

He spoke of visiting Armenia and the Armenian Quarter of Jerusalem, and remarking how Armenians come together, no matter where they are, because they share a transcendent bond as Armenians.

Zangakner Performing Arts Ensemble then performed three songs, starting with Der Voghormia in memory of those who perished in the Armenian Genocide. Zangakner was established in 2010 by artistic director Hasmik Konjoyan with the mission to bring the world of music to Armenian children in the Greater Boston Area. Zangakner has given many public performances and in 2014 released a CD, "Timeless Favorites."

The next speaker was Anna Astvatsaturian Turcotte, who came to the US as an Armenian refugee from Baku, Azerbaijan in 1992. After graduating from the University of North Dakota as well as the University of Maine School of Law, she has gone on to become an author, lecturer, lawyer, business woman and a human rights activist.

Turcotte told her grandfather's story of escaping the Armenian Genocide to Baku only to be subject to attacks in 1918. Turcotte was herself subject to massacres of Armenians before she escaped, while her family's graves were destroyed, along with all Armenian cemeteries of Azerbaijan. She thus sees the Genocide, Sumgait and other attacks in Artsakh as parts of a wave of genocidal hatred and violence.

Genocidal ideology, anti-Armenianism and xenophobia continues, she said, to brew in Azerbaijan today. Lack of justice, lack of information and commemoration, unity, collaboration with other communities, will lead to another massacre. Armenians must keep demanding justice for the victims of the Armenian Genocide and their descendants, for the families of Baku Armenians spread across the world now, the future of Artsakh and for

Bedford chapter and his school's Armenian club, performed Adanayi Voghp and Giligia.

Rupen Janbazian, Toronto-born graduate of the University of Toronto, editor of the *Armenian Weekly*, spoke primarily in Armenian, according to Sakaian, "in order to symbolize the need to preserve" this language.

Janbazian spoke on the consequences of the Genocide. The Armenian people were scattered over the globe and now face the threat of assimilation, he pointed out. He encouraged



Members of Zangakner perform at the Armenian Heritage Park

Armenians to preserve their culture and traditions and remain informed of current events concerning Armenians. He said in passing that fundamental change was necessary in the Republic of Armenia.

Janbazian stressed the need to attain jus-



Demonstrators at the Armenian Heritage Park

the new generation of Armenians.

Datev Gevorkian, a local 16-year-old oud player, member of the Armenian Youth Federation

tice and compensation for the Genocide and read a poem from Paruyr Sevak. The US and other countries disrespect the memory of our ancestors when they remain silent, and thus Armenians must continue in unity in their demands for real justice, not mere recognition.

The rap artist R-Mean came from Los Angeles to perform one piece, Open Wounds. R-Mean was born in Los Angeles with the name Armin Hariri and raised in Amsterdam. He later moved to California to pursue his passion of music while also obtaining his Doctorate of Pharmacy from Loma Linda University.

Open Wounds is dedicated to those affected by the Armenian Genocide and sparked the Open Wounds 1915 movement to spread awareness about humanitarian causes through the power of hip-hop music, urban fashion, and social media. In his performance, R-Mean also briefly mentioned the protests in Armenia for just leadership in his song.

The afternoon closed with a call by the two masters of ceremony to remain united against genocide and thanks for all who contributed to the success of the event.

As always, the Knights of Vartan Ararat Lodge No. 1 underwrote the cost of buses from Watertown to both of the commemorations.



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All photos by Kenneth Martin



COMMUNITY NEWS

Spirit and Power on Display in Times Square

TIMES SQUARE, from page 1

skyscrapers, elected officials, artists and educators took to the stage to reaffirm their commitment to Armenian Genocide recognition around the world and their continued stance of solidarity with their fellow Armenians in the homeland.

"The size of this crowd, your energy and your spirit show that deniers of Armenian Genocide will never be able to kill the truth," said Sen. Chuck Schumer (D-N.Y.), who speaks dutifully at the commemoration every year.

A co-signer of Senate Resolution 136 in support of U.S. recognition of the Armenian Genocide, Schumer said "it's time for President Trump to publicly and officially acknowledge the Armenian Genocide as every good Democrat, Republican and Independent should do, because it is the American thing to do."

Schumer highlighted the leadership and strength of Armenian community leaders who "kept the Armenian spirit alive." He honored the memory of Sam Azadian, a Genocide survivor and the founder of the Times Square Armenian Genocide Commemoration, who taught him about the "Armenian history and culture and encouraged me to be a strong advocate for human rights."

"Sam, I will never forget your words or the efforts to get the Armenian Genocide recognized," vowed Schumer.

The current Senate Minority Leader, Schumer said many wondered if the Armenian nation could recover from the massacres of 1.5 million, but a century later, he remarked that 1.5 million Armenians live in America alone, conveying the remarkable vigor of the people.

"The Armenian nation has endured and prevailed and the Armenian Empire lives on," concluded Schumer. *"Getze Hayasdan!"*

Sponsor of Senate Resolution 136, Sen. Bob Menendez (D-N.J.), spoke out against the suppression of truth and the importance of stand-



Times Square was packed with supporters during the Armenian Genocide Commemoration

ing up to the revisionists of history.

"The intentional and highly organized systematic extermination of a people has one word and one word only, and that is genocide," said Menendez. "The Turkish lobby and all the money in the world cannot deny the truth of the Armenian Genocide."

Menendez reaffirmed his commitment to passing legislation for the United States to recognize the Armenian Genocide while also scrutinizing nominees selected to serve in the post of US Ambassador to Turkey.

Denouncing Turkey's attempts to halt freedom of speech in the country, Menendez called for the government to face historical truths. "Portraying the extermination of one and a half million Armenians as nothing more than a con-

sequence of World War I is a distortion of history and a callous reaction to human suffering," he said.

Calling attention to the documentation of the Armenian Genocide by eyewitnesses, Menendez said U.S. Ambassador to Turkey Henry Morgenthau observed the atrocities of the Young Turk Government in 1915 and said they "signed a death warrant to a whole race and made no attempt to conceal it."

Reflecting on Morgenthau's words, Menendez urged politicians today to take the same position and "have an honest accounting of human rights abuses and ethnic cleaning because we cannot turn our backs on the victims of the Armenian Genocide."

Co-founder of the Congressional Caucus on

Armenian Issues, Rep. Frank Pallone (D-N.J.), applauded the "persistent and vigilant" efforts of the Armenian-American community.

"I'm so pleased to see the young people here today, the next generation who will further the Armenian cause," said Pallone. He highlighted current issues facing Armenia, from the ongoing Azeri-Artsakh conflict to the exodus of Armenians from Aleppo, Syria, once an important Diasporan center.

"We want to work together to strengthen ties between the U.S. and Armenia," said Pallone. "We'll continue until the US recognizes the Armenian Genocide."

A member of the Congressional Caucus on Armenian Issues, Rep. Carolyn Maloney (D-N.Y.) applauded the Armenian community on its rich legacy as the first Christian nation in the world.

"I'm proud to stand with you as we remember the inhumanity of the Armenian Genocide," said Maloney, who has co-sponsored Armenian Genocide recognition legislation. "We have to teach our children that genocide doesn't go unpunished and I will not stop fighting for the recognition you rightfully deserve."

Los Angeles-based attorney Mark Geragos encouraged exercising First Amendment rights in New York, "while your brethren in Armenia are doing the same."

Geragos reminded the audience that President Reagan recognized the Armenian Genocide during his presidential term in 1981, and since then the Turkish lobby has spent millions of dollars so the U.S. not to acknowledge it again.

"We're going forward with our mission," said Geragos, who successfully pursued a class action suit against New York Life Insurance for unpaid insurance policies to survivors of the Armenian Genocide. "Now it's about restitution, not recognition."

Representing the educational non-profit organization Facing History and Ourselves, senior

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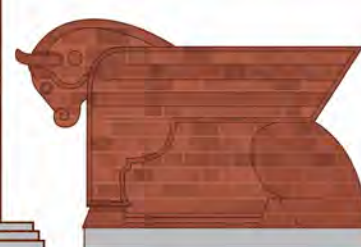
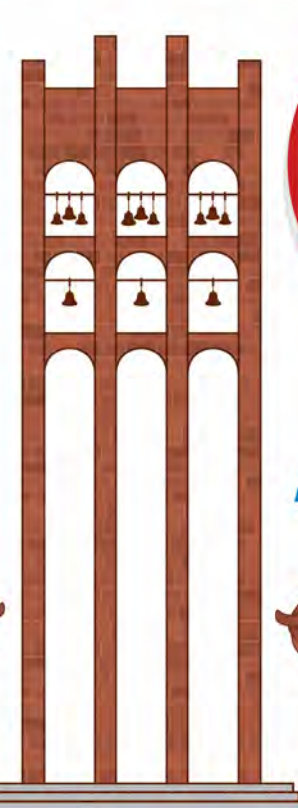
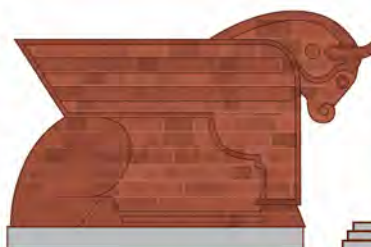
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COMMUNITY NEWS



Rep. Carolyn Mahoney (D-N.Y.) (Anahid Kaprielian photo)

program associate David Schwartz said the core mission of Facing History & Ourselves is to empower teachers and students to learn history in more critical terms, offering ample resources to instructors about how students should study the Armenian Genocide and the subsequent topics of genocide prevention, justice, international law and human rights.

Taking center stage was singer Berberian, who moved the thousands through his rendition of Gomidas' *Horovel*, his uplifting new single, *Hayer Jan* and the patriotic *Kedashen*, alongside members of his band, pianist Paul Malakhanian and duduk player Vagho.

Grand Commander and Matron of the Knights and Daughters of Vartan, Dr. Gary Zamanigian and Diana Tookmanian, respectively, stressed the importance of genocide commemoration in order to "pass on the Christian faith and tragic history and to make our voices heard until justice is served." The Knights and

Daughters of Vartan have sponsored the Times Square Armenian Genocide Commemoration since 1985. This year the event was chaired under the tutelage of chairmen Hirant Gulian, Tigran Sahakyan and Ari Minnetyan.

In his powerful invocation, Archbishop Oshagan Choloyan, Prelate of the Eastern Prelacy of the Armenian Apostolic Church of America, marked the day as one of "solemn remembrance as we raise our voices for truth, justice, recognition and reparations."

He spoke of the destruction of the Armenians by the Ottoman Empire, a failed attempt to exterminate a people.

"The world thought this was the end of Armenians and of Armenia," said Choloyan. "But a nation that does not want to die will not die."

He praised the strong faith of Armenians who "picked up the remnants of a scattered nation, creating a resurrection of the spirit that

survived the genocide."

In his benediction, Very Rev. Mesrop Parsamyan, director of ministries at the Diocese of the Armenian Church of America (Eastern), said the Armenians remain "strong and defiant in the face of denial," and gave thanks to the opportunities America provided for survivors.

He remembered the Armenian Genocide victims as "holy saints, who teach us the power of faith and the indestructible quality of the spirit."

Parsamyan encouraged the descendants of survivors to carry on the torch and follow the example of the faithful martyrs.

Bryan Ardouny, executive director of the Armenian Assembly of America, spoke of recognizing the past and also remaining aware of the current issues that face Armenia and Artsakh.

"April is not just a historical event where the very existence of the Armenian people was threatened 103 years ago," said Ardouny. "It was only two years ago this month that Azerbaijan launched a brutal attack against Artsakh and Armenia, killing innocent civilians."

He encouraged unification among Armenians to "pay tribute to the martyrs and renew our commitment to their legacy and the hope of a bright future for all Armenians."

International jazz singer Marine Hakobyan performed *Karabakh Horovel* and *God Bless America* during the program.

The results of the Knights and Daughters of Vartan annual Armenian Genocide Essay Contest were announced: first-place, Gregory Chameessian, Tappan Zee High School, New York; second-place, Zhanna Astvatsatryan, Hambardzum Galstyan School, Yerevan, Armenia; third-place Haykanoush Kirakosyan, Yerevan Brusov State University, Yerevan, Armenia.

Gregory Chameessian appeared on stage to receive his prize while an excerpt of his essay was read.

Four special "Knights & Daughters of Vartan" medals were distributed during the

commemoration to Artsakh War Hero Major Sargis Stepanyan, Elie Berberian, Marine Hakobyan and Maria Sahakyan.

Also recognized was Don Boyajian, who is running for Congress from the state of New York, and Armenian Genocide survivor Arslan



Elie Berberian singing "Horovel" by Gomidas in Times Square (Anahid Kaprielian photo)

Seraydarian, 100, of Pennsylvania.

Armen McOmber, Esq. and Prof. Nvair Beylerian, seamlessly guided the program.

Astghikner Junior Ensemble of St. Gregory the Illuminator Mission Parish in Brooklyn sang the Armenian and American anthems and *Hayr Mer*, under the leadership of Maria Sahakyan.

Other clergy in attendance included Bishop Anoushavan Tanielian, Vicar General of the Eastern Prelacy of the Armenian Apostolic Church of America and Nurhan Becidiyan, of the Roman Catholic Armenian Eparchy of America and Canada.



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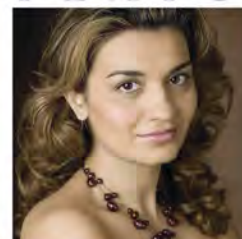
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COMMUNITY NEWS

The Hidden Lives of Islamized Armenians Living in Plain Sight in Turkey

BEDROSYAN, from page 1

Bedrosyan started on the subject by saying, “My late friend, Hrant Dink, kept telling me they kept talking about the dead and the gone, but it’s time to speak of the living.”

Bedrosyan said regretfully that of his three close friends in Turkey, two, Hrant Dink and Tahir Elci, were killed, while a third, Osman Kavala, is in prison. Elci was a prominent Kurdish human rights attorney whom the Turkish military killed in 2015 while he was speaking about Kurdish rights at a press conference. Kavala is a proponent of Genocide recognition and Kurdish rights.

Bedrosyan said that the Armenian population globally comprises four sources: Armenia, Artsakh, the diaspora and Turkey. In the latter, he estimates, there are about 2 million Armenians who either know and keep quiet about their identity or who are still unaware they are at least part Armenian.

Tracing back the story, he showed slides of “lucky” orphans who survived the Armenian Genocide and were forcibly Turkified and Islamized in the many state-run orphanages.

“They were given Turkish names, circumcised, and Turkified,” he explained. “Thousands of boys that were physically fit were trained in military schools and became soldiers. Some were taken to the front to fight against the Armenian Republic” in 1918, in a particularly ironic and cruel gesture.

The girls did not make it into orphanages often; they sometimes endured an even crueler fate: being sold as slaves. While the slave markets in the Ottoman Empire had been abolished and closed down in 1908, by 1915 the practice restarted. Armenian girls sold for the price of a lamb; however, girls from wealthier families were

1915 and now which showed the number of the Armenian Churches there. Before 1915 there were 3,000 churches and 1,000 schools throughout the empire, with more than 300 churches alone in the vicinity of Lake Van.

“All were converted or destroyed,” he said, either turned to mosques in the best-case scenarios, or barracks, stables and in one case even, a house of prostitution.

The largest church of all was Surp Giragos in Diyarbakir/Dikranagerd. Not long after its construction before the Genocide, the massive church’s bell tower was shot off by a cannon as it was taller than the tallest minaret in the town. After the Armenian population of Dikranagerd disappeared, the church continued its steep slide into a decline.

The church had continued to fall into decline and in 2011, during a brief period of freedom by the government, Bedrosyan and a few others banded together to restore the decrepit church back to its former glory. Millions of dollars were raised and in October 2011, the church opened with massive service and concert, during which Bedrosyan played. More than 4,000 came, Bedrosyan said, with many among them hidden Armenians. Until February 2016 the church held services twice a year at Easter and Christmas, with the participation of an ever-growing number of Armenians from Turkey visiting. However, with the increased agitation by Kurds against their mistreatment by the government, the armed forces trained their weapons on Diyarbakir, reducing much of the region into rubble, with the church another casualty.

Now, the church which was so lovingly restored and provided happy celebrations to so many has reverted back to ruins. While Bedrosyan said the structure is still sound, the

Among those was one man named Selim who was very interested in finding out about his Armenian heritage was so immersed in his identity that the following year he greeted the



Raffi Bedrosyan (Aram Arkun photo)

Rebirth group as a tour guide.

Another two visitors converted to Christianity and faced a lot of difficulties because of this decision. One, a woman, was married to a devout Muslim man and worried about her marriage but said she felt she had to do that to satisfy the deathbed wish of her father.

All these cases, Bedrosyan said, raise interesting questions: “Who is an Armenian? Do you have to be Christian to be an Armenian?”

He also showed videos from Armenian TV covering the group’s visits to Armenia.

During an enthusiastic question-and-answer after the talk, Bedrosyan spoke about the online registry briefly put out by the government. Because of the extreme interest of people, the site collapsed. However, it created a lot of difficulty, including for some hard-core Armenian haters who found out to their dismay and subsequent depression that they were Armenian.

Bedrosyan said that based on official Turkish calculations that there were at least 200,000 Armenian orphans left after 1915, with at least another 100,000 people who converted to Islam to save themselves from death, there are more than 2 million people with Armenian ethnicity in Turkey today.

Starting in the past couple of years, after the repression by the government began in Turkey, instead of trips to Armenian, Project Rebirth uses its funds to help the hidden Armenians.

These hidden Armenians are different from Hamshens, who live in the northeast of Turkey. They are treated as if a separate ethnic group, though of course, they are Armenians who were converted to Islam and isolated to form an insular community, some as early as after the destruction of Ani. In fact, he said, the Hamshens do not realize that the language they speak is Armenian as the official line is that they speak a dialect of central Asian Turkish.

Bedrosyan said with an amused expression that he was debating with one Hamshen man, in Armenian, that the language the latter was speaking was not Armenian. Others were shocked many years back when the trial of Levon Ekmekjian, who was the sole survivor of an ASALA attack at the Ankara airport in 1981, was broadcast live and he acted as his own attorney and spoke in Armenian. Many Hamshen were shocked, thinking Ekmekjian was one of them.

Bedrosyan was introduced by Aram Arkun, the executive director of the Tekeyan Cultural Association. Arkun, whose father hailed from Turkey, added some anecdotes of his own about Turkification.

Bedrosyan is a civil engineer and concert pianist, living in Toronto, Canada. He has donated concert and CD proceedings to infrastructure projects in Armenia and Karabakh, in which he has also participated as an engineer. He helped organize the reconstruction of the Surp Giragos Diyarbakir/Dikranagerd Church and the first Armenian reclaim of church properties in Anatolia after 1915. He gave the first piano concert in the Surp Giragos Church since 1915.

He hails from Istanbul and has called Toronto home for more than 40 years.



Raffi Bedrosyan speaks and shows a slide.

worth more as the buyer also got the girl’s property as often they were the sole survivors of their families.

Among the most famous of the Armenian girls adopted was Sabiha Gokcen, the daughter of Mustafa Kemal Ataturk, the founder of the modern Turkish Republic. Gokcen is a historic character in her own right, including for being the first female military pilot in Turkey, and her name graces the Ankara airport. Hrant Dink, the assassinated journalist, was the one who exposed the story about her heritage. Bedrosyan said Dink might as well have signed his own death certificate when he exposed Gokcen’s Armenian heritage.

“Hrant Dink was persecuted, prosecuted and finally assassinated” as a result of the story, Bedrosyan said.

Dink’s lawyer, Fetiye Cetin, also had Armenian roots. She wrote about it in her groundbreaking book, *My Grandmother*. Her grandmother, a kerkchiefed and pious Muslim woman to all appearances, had told her the truth about being Armenian when Fetiye was 25. She also told her granddaughter about a surviving sister whom the lawyer eventually traced to New Jersey, unfortunately after the sister’s death.

Lost Churches

One of the striking elements of Bedrosyan’s talk was the simple diagrams and heartbreaking photos that illustrated his words. A particular one was a map of the Ottoman Empire before

interior of the church has been gutted, with the pews upended and put in front of the windows and strewn garbage and the smell of urine everywhere.

Hidden Armenians and Project Rebirth

Finding out you are Armenian in Turkey is not always easy. It is a country where the word “Armenian” is still hurled as an insult and where a Muslim Turkish heritage is needed to for civil service jobs. Still, many hidden Armenians have embraced their heritage.

It is precisely this group that Bedrosyan has taken under his wing. He started Project Rebirth, which helps Armenians who either recently or earlier found out they are Armenian on one or both sides, to explore what their ethnicity means.

“These people still show courage at the risk of losing their jobs, with some even risking losing their families,” Bedrosyan said. Among them are doctors, engineers, lawyers and teachers.

He showed many slides of the groups he has taken to Armenia with the support of the Diaspora Ministry in Armenia for the past several years, with several opting to get Christened in Echmiadzin.

(The Istanbul Patriarchate forbade any more conversions in Echmiadzin, suggesting that it, not Echmiadzin, had control over its subjects.)

He praised the reception the group got in Armenia not only from everyday folks but from the government and the church.

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Arts & Living

NASSR's 64th Annual Assembly to Feature Talk by Dr. Lisa Gulesserian of Harvard

BELMONT, Mass. — The National Association for Armenian Studies and Research (NAASR) invites the public to attend its 64th Annual Assembly of Members on Saturday, May 19, at First Armenian Church, Nahigian Hall, 380 Concord Ave., convening at 12 noon, with luncheon beginning at 12:15 pm. This location is across the street from NAASR headquarters because site work will have begun the last week of April in preparation for demolition of NAASR's aging building to make way for an all-new state-of-the-art headquarters, research center, and global hub for Armenian Studies. The Assembly will afford a clear view of ongoing activities.

After lunch, the featured speaker will be Dr. Lisa Gulesserian, lecturer on Armenian, Department of Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations, Harvard University. Her talk is titled "What Happens After This Story?": Postmemory in Micheline Aharonian Marcom's *Three Apples Fell from Heaven*."

Gulesserian teaches elementary Western Armenian and Armenian culture courses at Harvard. Her research interests include contemporary Armenian-American novelists, memory, and literary translation. She earned her PhD in English from the University of Texas at Austin, with a dissertation titled "Because if the dead cannot live, neither do we": Postmemory and Passionate Remembering in Micheline Aharonian Marcom's *Armenian Genocide Trilogy*." An amended version of her analysis of Marcom's trilogy will be published in a forthcoming issue of *Review of Contemporary Fiction*.

Following the luncheon and lecture, the Assembly will convene with presentations on NAASR's ongoing activities to advance Armenian Studies, research, and publication. NAASR Board Chairman Yervant Chekijian will chair the Assembly and Stepan Piligian will serve as secretary. The chairman will report on the progress of the Building on Our Legacy Campaign and encourages the community to come hear about the beautiful opportunities to create a lasting tribute to family members in NAASR's new three-story building, which will incorporate many beautiful Armenian features into the design.

At the Assembly, the Board of Directors will also present reports on organizational, informational, academic, and financial matters and hold an election of Directors, where NAASR members with current dues paid are eligible to vote. In addition, the Assembly's special committees on Nominations, Constitution and Rules, New Business and Resolutions, and Auditing will present their reports.

NAASR relocated its operations the week of April 16 to temporary quarters at the AGBU Center in Watertown, where the staff will work for approximately one year while construction is ongoing. NAASR will continue its active programming locally and nationally during that time, will offer specially selected books for sale online through its website (www.naasr.org), and will continue to issue scholar grants. NAASR staff, scholars, and the public will not have access, however, to NAASR's rare book Mardigian Library nor the full bookstore inventory, as they are in storage during construction. NAASR's mailing address remains the same at 395 Concord Avenue, Belmont, MA 02478.

To make reservations, email hq@naasr.org.



An architect's rendering of the new headquarters



A presumed bullet hole in the Houghton Library Syriac manuscript (photo of Houghton Library MS Syriac 139 courtesy of Dr. Sylvie Merian)

Slash and Burn

Merian Explains How Two Manuscripts Survived the Hamidian Massacres

MEDFORD, Mass. — On the evening of April 18, the Darakjian-Jafarian Chair in Armenian History, the Department of History, the Armenian Club, the executive administrative dean and the Armenian Club, all part of Tufts University, together with the National Association for Armenian Studies and Research (NAASR), sponsored a commemoration of the Armenian Genocide at Goddard Chapel at Tufts with Dr. Sylvie L. Merian delivering an illustrated talk dramatically titled "Slash and Burn: How Two Manuscripts Survived a Violent Past."

Prof. Ina Baghdiantz McCabe, holder of the Darakjian-Jafarian Chair, thanked the donors supporting the commemoration, including Joyce Barsam, and dedicated the event to Merian's great-grandfather, Hagop Babigian, a lawyer and member of the Ottoman Parliament. Babigian, sent to Cilicia to investigate the 1909 massacres of Armenians, wrote a report but mysteriously died before able to present it. Foul play was suspected.

Baghdiantz McCabe introduced Merian, who received her PhD in Armenian Studies from Columbia University's Department of Middle East Languages and Cultures, where the two studied together with Prof. Nina Garsoïan. Merian has published and lectured internationally on Armenian codicology, bookbinding, silverwork, manuscript illumination, and the history of the book.

She is one of the few specialists writing on Armenian manuscripts, bindings and books in this continent. Merian is currently Reader Services Librarian at the Morgan Library and Museum in New York City and at present is preparing entries for the catalogue of the upcoming Metropolitan Museum of Art Armenian exhibition. Baghdiantz McCabe provided some background to the work of Raphael Lemkin, who coined the term genocide.

Merian expressed her gratitude to the organizers and sponsors of the evening, as well as the Houghton Library of Harvard University for the Katherine F. Pantzer Jr. Fellowship in Descriptive Bibliography and the help of its staff for her research. She recognized in the audience Nancy Keeler, who along with her late sister Ester Seferian

see MANUSCRIPTS, page 15



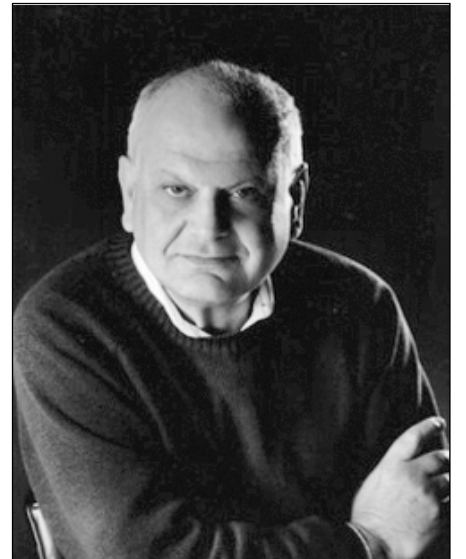
Professor Ina Baghdiantz McCabe (photo: Aram Arkun)

Avedis Baghsarian To Exhibit His Pioneering Art and Design to Benefit Armenia's Students

By Florence Avakian

NEW YORK — A special exhibition of the unique and renowned sculptures, paintings, photography and designs of internationally acclaimed artist Avedis Baghsarian will take place from May 17 to 19 at the G Hall of the St. Vartan Armenian Cathedral, with the opening reception on May 17 from 7 to 10 p.m. More than 100 art works will be on display.

The event is sponsored by the Ministry of Culture of Armenia, the Permanent Mission of Armenia to the United Nations, and the Fund for Armenian Relief (FAR). The show will be



Avedis Baghsarian

celebrating the 100th anniversary of the Republic of Armenia.

The benefit exhibition has been curated by the Advisor to Armenia's Minister of Culture Vicki Shoghag Hovanessian, with FAR Board of Directors member Sandra Shahinian serving as advisor. One hundred percent of the proceeds will go to the FAR Avedis and Arsho Baghsarian Scholarship Fund to educate students in Armenia.

The students that will benefit from this fund will be focusing on journalism and the fashion industry, with the condition that they must stay and help Armenia with their expertise for three years.

He greets a visitor with sparkling hazel eyes and a smile that lights up any room. The elegant Manhattan apartment of he and his wife Arsho (née Simonyan), share, an internationally celebrated footwear designer and a Hall of Fame recipient in the fashion industry, is filled with his unique nature sculptures, architectural designs and color-filled modernistic paintings.

One of the most eye-catching is his graphically inventive designs of the letters of the Armenian and English alphabets. Due to the usual lack of space in most Manhattan apartments, the vast number of his large scale artworks, is housed in a Manhattan warehouse.

Home in Jerusalem

Avedis Baghsarian was born in Jerusalem 84 years ago in Jerusalem. His father, Arakel, a grocery store owner in the Old City, was born in Jerusalem who went to St. James Armenian Church every morning at 5 a.m. before going to work. His mother, Dzaghig (née Lurchigian), born in from Kessab, Syria, lost her immediate family during the Genocide, except for her sister who disappeared during the carnage.

see BAGHSARIAN, page 16



ARTS & LIVING

Merian Explains How Two Manuscripts Survived the Hamidian Massacres

MANUSCRIPTS, from page 14 shared information about one of the manuscripts she was going to speak about.

Merian delivered a very accessible talk accompanied with illustrations in which she explained all the academic terms used. She started by explaining that a manuscript is a handwritten book produced without a printing press by a highly trained scribe, often with decorations by an artist. It can be on paper or parchment, which is made from specially prepared animal skin, stronger than paper but more sensitive to changes in temperature and humidity. Most Armenian manuscripts at their conclusion, she said, contain colophons (*hishadagaran* in Armenian), inscriptions usually written by the scribe which include where and when the manuscript was completed, the names of everyone who helped produce it, the name of the sponsors who commissioned and paid for the work, historical information and detailed information



Dr. Sylvie L. Merian (photo: Aram Arkun)

about the scribe's own family.

Merian declared that she came to do research at Harvard's Houghton Library and on April 10, 2009 requested Armenian manuscript number 12 from its collection. This was a synaxarion, or *haysmavurk* in Armenian, which basically is a book of commemoration of saints in order of their dates. It was very thick – about six inches at the spine, made of parchment and in a huge box. The manuscript was very damaged, with the leaves at the start and end missing, including the final colophon. Its date of origin is unclear but may be either from 1418 or the 17th century.

Merian became more and more agitated as she examined this manuscript. It had slits and marks of being hacked with a sword or axe with a lot of force while open. The slashes went through 46 sheets of parchment. Merian said that for her, it was like disrespectfully staring at a mutilated body. There even was a page with stains which looked like blood.

She realized there must be an important story

behind this manuscript and found out that it was donated in 1965 by Paul O. Boghossian, Jr., Mrs. A. Holopigian, Mrs. Peter R. Keeler, and Mrs. Ralph Seferian. She did some detective work and found the obituary of Ralph Seferian. Eerily it was dated April 10, 1999, exactly 10 years before Merian saw the manuscript. She tracked down surviving family members and met with Nancy Boghossian Keeler, who explained that her family was from Kharpert, where massacres of Armenians took place in the period of Sultan Abdulhamid II, led by Kurdish brigands. Not only did the Kurds kill people, but they also attacked the Armenian cultural heritage. Armenian holy books were symbolic of the despised enemy.

While there are no details on what the Boghossians themselves experienced in 1895, evidently some of them survived to emigrate to the US, while others who survived the Armenian Genocide came later after World War I. This damaged manuscript was found after the massacres in or near Kharpert in the gutter, explaining its water damage. The person who found it brought it to Vosgan Boghossian, the family patriarch, who bought it from him. Boghossian's son Sarkis took it to Leipzig, Germany to show to scholars there, and when he immigrated to the US in 1903, brought it with him. Sarkis returned to Kharpert prior to 1915 to help his family but never returned to the US. He was presumed killed, and the manuscript was passed down in the family, which eventually donated it to Houghton Library.

The second manuscript Merian spoke about was a Syriac lectionary, or collection of scripture readings for specific days, from the 11th to 12th centuries (Houghton manuscript Syriac number 139). Christians like the Assyrians suffered in 1895 as well as Armenians. This manuscript, like the Armenian one, was made of parchment and had no covers. It was extremely damaged, with a crater approximately 7 1/2 by 11 inches wide and 1 1/2 inches deep, burnt areas and cut out designs or medallions.

Merian was puzzled and then noticed a small hole at the back of the manuscript. She suspected that was where a bullet entered, which upon exiting formed the crater. A colleague familiar with forensics and guns agreed that this might be the case. There is no information on the incident, but a note included with the manuscript stated that it was burned during the 1895-96 massacres. It was sold to the Semitic Museum of Harvard University by Rev. James L. Barton in 1900. Barton was a missionary who had been given the manuscript by another missionary, Rev. Alpheus N. Andrus of Mardin on behalf of a native seller.

Mardin was primarily a Syriac town, mostly undisturbed during the 1895 massacres allegedly due to a powerful Kurdish tribe on friendly terms with the American missionaries. This manuscript will be on display at Houghton Library's "Passports" exhibition starting April 30.

Merian spoke of similar incidents of cultural destruction in earlier and current time periods.

The Gospels of 1266 made for King Hetum of Cilician Armenia by Toros Roslin (Matenadaran Manuscript 5458) fell victim to Timurlane's invasions. Books were bombed during the English bombardment of Copenhagen in 1807 and a volume ironically titled *Defensor Pacis* [Defender of Peace] was hit as collateral damage. It was a first printed edition from 1522 in Basel.

In recent times, the sixth-century Buddha statues of Bamiyan were destroyed in 2001 by the Taliban as idols, and the Der Zor (Deir ez-Zor) Holy Martyrs Armenian Church with its Genocide Memorial was bombed on September 21, 2014 by ISIS.

Merian concluded by reiterating that Raphael Lemkin, who coined the term genocide, included the deliberate aim of eliminating a people's cultural legacy as a component. The destruction of a people's artifacts, Merian said, is a further attempt at annihilation and a way to try to destroy their soul. However, some artifacts do survive and in the Armenian case are keys to the stubborn survival of the Armenian people.

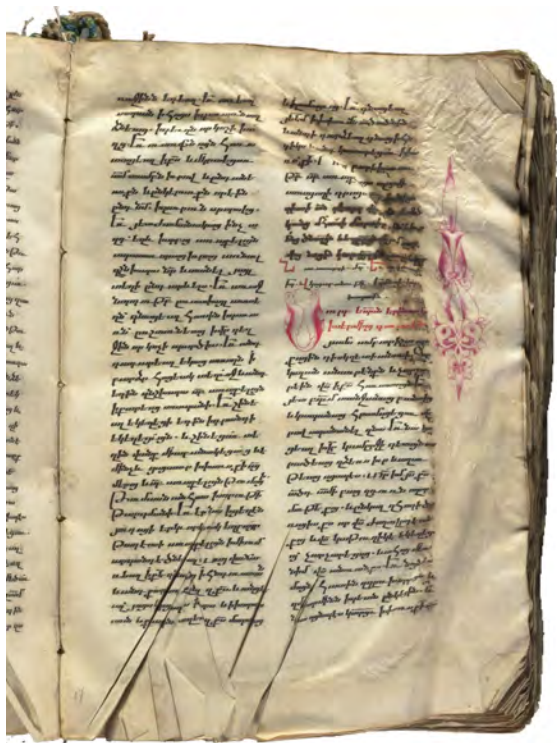
At the end of the lecture, Baghdiantz McCabe invited all Tufts



The crater in the Houghton Library Syriac manuscript (photo courtesy Harvard University, Houghton Library, MS Syriac 139)

Armenian students and alumni to the front for a moment of silence, after which those who wished could place carnations on the plaque outside the

chapel dedicated to the victims of the Armenian Genocide. A reception in the Coolidge Room of neighboring Ballou Hall in Tufts allowed for fur-



Houghton Library Armenian manuscript with slashes (photo courtesy Harvard University, Houghton Library, MS Arm 12)

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Tekeyan Cultural Association
P.O.Box 1074
Englewood Cliffs,
NJ 07632-1074
USA

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hvartivarian@aol.com

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ARTS & LIVING

Avedis Baghsarian to Exhibit His Pioneering Art and Design to Benefit Armenia's Students

BAGHSARIAN, from page 14

It was not until 20 years later that the two sisters found each other. Working as a nanny in a Greek family, her sister had a birthmark on her upper arm which was recognized and became the catalyst in bringing them together.

His father's family had lived in Jerusalem since the 1600s, but during the 1948 Israeli-Palestinian war, the family lost everything. His father became one of the founders of the famed Sts. Tarkmanchatz School in the Armenian Quarter which until today has continued its high academic excellence. His childhood was happy. The "love and affection" of his parents



A work by Avedis Baghsarian

left an indelible mark on him throughout his life. A sister, Anna, today lives in Amman, Jordan.

Though he and his wife of 51 years Arsho have no children, the concept of "one big family" has always extended from his parents and sister, to his uncle, aunts, nephews and nieces. "We are all very close," he said with pride. "One big family," he repeated.

Seventy years later, he recalls with pride that the Jerusalem community was always a "united group," and today he still connects with his playmates from Jerusalem. "We were one big family," he again repeated. "When the Turks came during the Genocide, they never said are you Tashnag or Ramgavar. They just killed Armenians," he said to emphasize his point.

Joy for Life

Baghsarian's enthusiasm and joy was infectious as he related his life's work. And what a legacy it is. He was 10 years old when his father asked a photographer to show him the ropes, becoming an apprentice photographer. "It was a challenge," he related. "Life is a learning process. 'Everything I do, I do completely, and that is the lesson I want to teach young kids.'"

In 1955, at age 22, he emigrated to the US, settling in Manhattan, going to night school and working for Augusta Burns. A year later he was drafted into the US army, serving for two years as a combat photographer. Under the GI bill, he attended the School of Visual Arts and the Parsons School of Design, studying photography, industrial and graphic design.

The year 1970 became a momentous year for him. Influenced by his renowned photography teachers, Phillip Halsman, Ralph Hattersley and Melvin Skolsky, he followed in their footsteps, and opened his own photographic studio in Manhattan, specializing in fashion and commercial assignments.

Baghsarian became a pioneer in the application of abstract forms and designs on photographic film, using special techniques. His name was well known to the fashion and movie starlet A-listers of the 1970's and 1980's. Jessica Lange, Celia Ward, Grace Jones, Pat Cleveland were just a few of the A-listers who sought him out. Avedis Baghsarian was the man to see for a photograph that would put one on the front page of any magazine.

"My works morphed from one to the other. Design, in fact everything starts with the magic of photography. It's frozen in time. You can't duplicate that split second. The technology apparatus used in today's photographic equipment is so advanced that it does not require much talent to capture a pleasing image. However, to create a photograph that is an emo-

tional, spiritual or intellectual experience is indeed an art, and the creator of those emotions in an image should also be called an artist."

Though an eminent and sought-after photographer, Baghsarian in 1992, nonetheless reverted back to his design education, and produced a large collection of functional, unique and patented designs of vases, candle holders, salt and pepper shakers. The revolutionary collection in 1994 was awarded the coveted "International Design Magazine Award".

Many of his designs can be interchanged. Candleholders can become vases, or oil lamps. These accessories were avidly sought after by such prestigious stores as Bergdorf Goodman, Barney's, and 28 museum outlets, including New York's Guggenheim, San Francisco's MOMA, Chicago's Museum of Contemporary Arts, San Diego's Museum of Arts, as well as museums in Jerusalem, and Kobi, Japan.

With the unfolding of the 9/11 tragedy in New York, Baghsarian took part in the design competition for the memorial. "It was a way of releasing my anger." On 9/11's first anniversary, Citibank gave the artist the rare honor of a solo exhibition of his miniature skyline hanging sculptures, "Manhattan as I Remember it."

"Migrating Birds," "Butterfly," "Dragonfly," "Spider" became the names of his large scale nature sculptures which can be seen on the landscapes of East Hampton, and Southampton, NY, where he designed both the architecture and furniture of his two summer homes, which he recently sold.

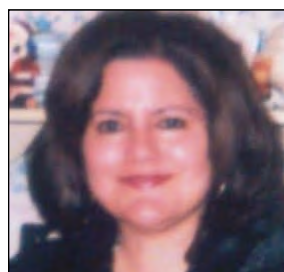
For Baghsarian, birds represent "freedom, no boundaries. Nature is peace, especially for people who live in a city. I used to sit by the pond in front of our summer house and meditate. I loved the colors, the wildlife, the flowers, the silence."

He has written and published 12 books of photography, including *In Bloom* and *Reflection*, as well as the graphic designs of both the Armenian, and English alphabets.

Reflecting, he recalled that "Manhattan, the epicenter of skyscrapers became an overwhelming canvas. I looked at the reflections in an intensive emotional way, many soft and hard sounds like Beethoven's Ninth Symphony. I also saw positive and negative, harmony and disorder in the city I call home. The more I noticed the ricochets of the buildings, the more I asked myself, is it real or imaginary. My new discovery of the reflections was like finding a hidden staircase of an old house."

In his book, *In Bloom*, he eloquently ruminates on nature's true beauty. "After 30 years of photographing beautiful girls in the fashion and beauty industry, I decided to turn my camera to photographing the fine lines, fabulous colors and the simple curves of nature's best gift to mankind – flowers."

Laying bare his soul, Baghsarian reflected that "time is running out, and I want to keep creating. Every day I surprise myself that at my



Recipe Corner

by Christine Vartanian Datian

Broccoli Salad with Walnuts, Grapes and Feta

INGREDIENTS:

1 large head broccoli, cleaned, cut into bite-sized pieces
1 cup walnuts halves or slivered almonds
1 cup red seedless grapes
1 red apple, peel on, cored and diced
1/2 cup golden raisins
1/2 cup shredded carrots
1/2 cup celery (and tops), chopped
1/2 cup green onions (scallions), sliced or chopped
1/4 cup green olives, chopped
1/4 cup dried cranberries
1/4 cup red onions, minced
2 tablespoons brown sugar
10 grape tomatoes, cut in half
Juice and zest of one large lemon
1 cup Italian or creamy salad dressing (to taste)
6-8 oz. feta or hard blue cheese, crumbled
Kosher salt and black pepper (to taste)

PREPARATION:

in a large glass bowl, combine all ingredients except the cheese, salt and pepper, and toss with dressing. Cover and chill for up to 8 hours, tossing occasionally.

To serve, toss with cheese, salt and pepper, and garnish with more walnuts or almonds, if desired.

Serve salad on a bed of fresh spinach, endive, arugula or lettuce with sliced avocados and tomatoes or fresh sliced fruit on the side.

Serve with extra dressing.

*This salad is best if made the night before serving, so that flavors can blend.

Serves 4-6.

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

age I am still able to learn something new. Exposing one's inner soul drives you, and you have no control.

"Art is a burst of energy. The only way for you, is to release it. If I don't create something each time, I'm not complete. It's like going without food, sleep, clothing, but when it overtakes me, I cannot be interrupted because I can never get back to where I was. "You participate in the design process according to your technique, your modus operandi. When you are involved, the excitement takes over. When the work is completed, there is major depression," he confessed.

And it was love of art that brought Baghsarian and his wife together after meeting at a CARS dance at the Hotel Pierre in 1965. Their very first date was to the Museum of Modern Art (MOMA) in New York. The secret to their happy life has been "trust, and never to restrict each other in our own professional

adventures. Quoting the legendary poet Khalil Gibran, they said, "We drink from the same fountain, but use separate cups."

For Baghsarian, being Armenian means having "a history of a proud culture and heritage. All the fantastic buildings in Turkey were built by Armenians. We are the best craftsmen. Give Armenia a 100 years of peace, and one will see the marvels they can create."

Baghsarian is especially eager for the youth to see the exhibition, in order to give them "a purpose, an inspiration, a passion so they can pursue their own passion, and keep on trying until they succeed. And they should never forget that I Am Possible," he declared with obvious emotion.

The Avedis Baghsarian exhibition will be on view on May 18 and 19 from 4 to 8 p.m. The opening reception will take place on May 17 from 7 to 10 p.m. at the St. Vartan Cathedral, G-Hall, 630 Second Ave.

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

Two concert performances by

UCLA VEM STRING QUARTET

Komitas

MOVSES POGOSSIAN, Artistic Director
XENIA DEVIATKINA-LOH, Violin – JI EUN HWANG, Violin
MORGAN O'SHAUGHNESSEY, Viola – NIAL FERGUSON, Cello

Aram Khachaturian

SUNDAY, APRIL 8, 2018 at 5:00PM

UCLA VEM String Quartet
with
Danielle Segen, Mezzo-Soprano

TCA BESHGETURIAN CENTER
1901 N. Allen Ave., Altadena, CA 91001

Romanos Melikian
Geghouni Chitchyan

Free Admission Refreshments All are welcome

Edward Mirzoian

SUNDAY, MAY 6, 2018 at 5:00PM

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

GLENDAL CENTRAL LIBRARY
222 E. Harvard Street, Glendale, CA 91205

Dikran Tchouhadjian

For more information, contact: (626) 398-1142



ARTS & LIVING

CALENDAR

FLORIDA

JANUARY 20-27, 2019 — Armenian Heritage Cruise XXII 2019. Western Caribbean Cruise aboard the Royal Caribbean’s Allure of the Sea. Traveling to Nassau, Cozumel, Roatan, Costa Maya. Cabin Rates, starting from \$949/person based on double occupancy, including port charges and ACAA registration fee. Government rates of \$137.45 are additional. Armenian entrainment, Armenian cultural presentations, Armenian Festival Day, Tavlou and Belote Tournaments and much more. Call Travel Group International at 1-561-447-08750 or 1-866-447-0750 ext. 108, contact person Janie.

MASSACHUSETTS

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 – Holy Week in Jerusalem – An Inspirational Pilgrimage presented through a multimedia travelogue by Ara and Milka Jeknavorian. Dinner and Program. Donation \$15 – adults, students – \$5. Sponsored by the Sts. Vartanantz Adult Education Committee. Sts. Vartanantz Armenian Church, 180 Old Westford Rd. Chelmsford. 7:00 p.m. Reservations required. Please con-

tact Milka Jeknavorian at 978-251-4845, hyelady@gmail.com.

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@sthagop.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

SEPTEMBER 30 — Save the Date! Armenian Fund USA and Ardzagang Armenian TV are proud to present Artash Asatryan and band, guest singer Grisha Asatryan, from Armenia! The concert is dedicated to Armenia’s and Artsakh’s independence celebration.

NEW JERSEY

Don’t miss the performance by the son and grandson of the legendry singer Aram Asatryan. Proceeds to benefit Fruitful Artsakh Project. 4 p.m. Bergen PAC, 30 N. Van Brunt St., Englewood.

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.

PENNSYLVANIA

APRIL 28 — Join the Armenian Assembly of America for its Philadelphia Celebration at the National Constitution Center on Saturday, starting at 6 p.m. The Armenian Assembly will be honoring longtime members and Life Trustees Peter and Irene Vosbikian. The evening’s entertainment will feature Kevork Artinian Entertainment and his Band. To learn more 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 Yeremian 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 103nd 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- joycey41@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.

MAY 19 — Knights of Vartan Arax Lodge 100th anniversary Armenian Radio Hour of Rhode Island 70th anniversary celebration fundraising dinner/dance. Sponsored by the Knights of Vartan Arax lodge May 19, 2018 at the Egavian Cultural Center of Sts. Sahag and Mesrob Armenian church, 70 Jefferson Street, Providence. Music by Joe Zeytoonian Ensemble. Dinner at 6:30 pm, dance beginning 8:30 pm. Admission for dinner and dance \$30, dance only \$20. Dinner reservation is required, please call Ann Ayrassian 401-529-5210. Sponsors are appreciated. Please contact Leonard Arzoomanian 508-958-7391 arzo0623@webbrightservices.net All proceeds will be donated to the Armenian Radio Hour. Deadline for dinner reservation, and donations to be listed in the program book, is May 13.

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



COMMENTARY

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Mirror Spectator



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What Next After Armenia's Velvet Revolution?

By Edmond Y. Azadian

It is a time of hesitation and meditation. All "color" revolutions in the past decade have brought confusion and turmoil in their wake. Can Armenia's velvet revolution prove to be any different and better because it was executed bloodlessly?

This is the major question at this juncture as we ponder Armenia's future.

Color revolutions bypassed Armenia in the past several years as a breeze, but this one hit as tsunami and overthrew the administration that was running the country for the past decades.

Understandably, there is euphoria in the country because the youth rose against the regime to bring about change. And in this euphoria, any opinion other than praising the youth and its achievement is tantamount to blasphemy. But since Armenia's future is in the balance, all factors have to be counted and all potential consequences be considered.

Comparatively, it is always easy to bring down a system or structure than build a replacement.

Almost two weeks ago, Nikol Pashinyan, the head of the parliamentary group Yelk, hit the road to tour the country with a single mind and single motto: "Reject Serzhik." As the latter was in the process of anointing himself as the prime minister, under the new constitution establishing parliamentary rule. He was also about to reappoint almost all the old faces to the ministerial posts, giving a signal that nothing was to change for the fore-



seeable future in the running of the country. That signal was enough to fuel Pashinyan's mission and rally the youth around him.

By the time he concluded his walkathon and arrived in Yerevan, Liberty Square was bustling with unprecedented numbers of young people. That is where he began his fiery speeches to dismantle the system. He was the only voice heard on the podium and the only person making decisions.

Unlike the old traditions of the opposition rallies where multiple voices harangued the authorities, he sidestepped other opposition figures like Edmond Maroukian of Lousavor Hayastan and Zarouhi Postanjanian of Tsirani Party who were equally vocal opponents of Serzh Sargsyan's rule.

This was Pashinyan's doing and he was determined to bring the battle to its final conclusion.

The reason no bloodshed was witnessed was that both camps were painfully and instinctively aware of the fact that Armenia was under blockade and at war with its mortal enemies. Serzh Sargsyan, still the reverberations of March 1, 2008 killings on his mind, refrained from engaging his policies of force other than keeping order. That may have been to his detriment, but for the good of the people in the conflict.

On the other hand, Pashinyan constantly stressed to the crowd that the battle had to be conducted exclusively through peaceful, non-violent methods. All temptations for conflict were contained by both sides, which encouraged people to come out and join the marches.

The movement climaxed on April 22, when Serzh Sargsyan and Nikol Pashinyan confronted each other at the Marriott Hotel to exchange ultimatums.

The prime minister challenged Pashinyan's claim to be representative of the majority of the people. Pashinyan replied he was meeting his opponent only to discuss the terms of his surrender. He also added that Sargsyan was out of touch with reality, which Sargsyan acknowledged in his parting salvoes, his resignation letter, stating that Pashinyan was right.

Following the resignation, the entire cabinet submitted its res-

ignation, in keeping with the new constitution's terms.

President Armen Sarkisian accepted the resignation and asked all parties to help build a new Armenia.

As of this writing, one major unfinished piece of business is left: On May 25, acting Prime Minister Karen Karapetyan will meet with Pashinyan at the Marriott Hotel to make a peaceful transfer of power to the representative of the people. Pashinyan considers himself to be that "representative," because during his last rally, he asked the crowd to confer upon him that title and he received it with acclamation.

It remains to be seen if that transfer will be made without any problems or legal issues will come to delay it.

Pashinyan has been broadcasting his policies and his agenda for everyone to be aware. After the transfer of power, he is planning to appoint a transition cabinet and within a "reasonably early date" to organize new parliamentary elections.

In the meantime, he is requesting the ruling Republican Party to immediately recognize the "new order" established by the "people's representatives."

Another item on the agenda is to free all political prisoners immediately.

His other agenda items are so idealistic that they seem to have been written in paradise. But the proof of the pudding is in the eating.

For example, he urges that there be no vendetta against anyone. But the atmosphere is so changed and Pashinyan's message of anger all along has been so powerful that it will be too good to be true. It is rumored that already, one grocery chain, SAS, is being boycotted because it belongs to a hated oligarch.

Also, there will be no persecution against the businesspeople who are packing up to move out of the country and transferring their capital abroad.

No one is allowed to assume that there was any collusion between the leaders of the velvet revolution and any outside forces, never mind that all the tactics of the revolution were derived from the textbook application of other color revolutions.

Pashinyan has assured everyone that this was a purely Armenian revolution and it will bring peace, brotherhood, freedom and friendship to all its citizens.

Without any bias, we have to revisit the case of all revolutions, be they French, Russian, Chinese, Cuban, you name it. The charismatic leaders have proven to be extremely effective in inflaming the imagination of the masses through catchy slogans, and after the revolutions, they have

turned to be most inept rulers; and to compensate their failure, they have resorted to violence or established dictatorships.

Since this velvet revolution was bloodless, let us take Pashinyan's word that we are heading towards a peaceful Armenia.

Proof of the exclusion of a vendetta may be demonstrated by reassigning some of the ministers from the previous administration in the ruling group of the Fourth Republic.

The velvet revolution resonated in the diaspora and the corridors of world powers.

In the diaspora, the political parties sympathized with the people's movement but they had a cautious approach to its potential outcome. The ARF, which was in the coalition with the ruling Republican Party, made an about face to greet the prime minister's ouster. Mostly, the diasporan voice was the voice of the recent immigrants from Armenia.

It is the least to say that all parties and groups are relieved to see the collapse of a very unpopular regime in the homeland.

The international community was certainly interested in the developments in Armenia. For the West, any turmoil in Russia's backyard is a welcome occasion; that is why no reaction is heard yet in view of the prime minister's resignation. On the other hand, Russian Foreign Ministry Spokesperson Maria Zakharova has telegraphed that Russia is always with Armenia.

A similar message has been received from Valery Peskov, President Putin's spokesperson. The grapevine news is that Putin has signaled both camps to get over the crisis as quickly as possible.

Turkey and Azerbaijan have advanced their elections to consolidate power at home, in preparation for a new campaign against Armenia.

Armenia needed fresh air and fortunately, the younger generation is delivering that new vision. Let us hope that inexperience does not interfere in the march to the creation of a new Armenia.

The Armenian world, and the world beyond, will be wondering what is next after this velvet revolution.



COMMENTARY



My Turn

By Harut Sassounian

Czech Republic Sells Weapons to Azerbaijan Illegally via Israel

While the Azerbaijani army was showcasing its weapons on a promotional video during exercises on Sept. 18-22, 2017, observers noticed Czech-made military hardware, including DANA howitzer artillery pieces (11-mile range) and Rm-70 rocket launchers (12-mile range).

Initially, it was not known how these weapons arrived in Baku, given the fact that the Czech Republic had not issued any permits to its manufacturers to sell such hardware to Azerbaijan. Under the laws of the Czech Republic, the Ministries of Foreign Affairs, Defense, and Interior have to approve requests for weapon sales proposed by the Ministry of Industry and Trade.

Also, the European Union (EU) and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) had recommended that their member states not supply arms to Azerbaijan and Armenia due to the Artsakh conflict.

In addition, weapon sales to Azerbaijan would violate United Nations Security Council Resolution 853, adopted on July 29, 1993, which urged member states “to refrain from the supply of any weapons and munitions which might lead to the intensification of the [Karabakh] conflict

or the continued occupation of territory.” Already several countries had violated this Security Council resolution, including Israel, Turkey, Russia, Ukraine, and Pakistan.

In response, Jan Pejsek, the Czech Defense Ministry spokesman stated that the “Ministry had not approved any military exports to Azerbaijan.” Meanwhile, Irena Valentova, spokeswoman for the Czech Foreign Ministry, told the Prague Daily Monitor that “no permits were issued for export of military materiel to Azerbaijan, while some licenses for the export of modernized self-propelled gun howitzers Dana-M1 and rocket launchers RM-70 were rejected in 2016-2017 and the EU partner countries were notified of the rejection.”

In 2016, “Azerbaijan purchased non-lethal weapons worth over one million euros from the Czech Republic, which is three times less than three years ago,” the Hospodarske Noviny reported.

In the past, when Azerbaijan had tried to import weapons from the Czech Republic, it was refused a permit for such military shipments.

The *Prague Daily Monitor* reported that the “Czech authorities and secret services are investigating how Czech arms ... reached the Caucasus.”

In the meantime, the *Slovak Spectator* revealed on April 17, 2018 that “Bratislava [capital of Slovakia] airport is used as a transit point for smuggling Czech rocket launchers and howitzers to Azerbaijan.... The weapons are reportedly produced by the Czechoslovak Group Holding, owned by Czech Jaroslav Strnad, according to Czech Television.... An employee of the Slovak arms factory MSM spoke up and described how the old weapons are rebuilt in the Trenčin-based company and are then transported via Israel to Azerbaijan, the TASR newswire reported.”

The MSM employee further described to the reporters of

the Czech Television, as quoted by TASR, according to the Slovak Spectator: “The whole process starts with bringing the old DANA howitzer that is disassembled directly in the company.... The new facilities, including navigation, camera and communication systems were sent from Israel, the employee added. He also revealed that they signed a contract for distributing 18 howitzers and 15 rocket launchers this year, and the same amount next year, as reported by TASR.... The company confirmed the delivery of DANA-M1 and RM-70 systems to Israel.”

The Slovak Spectator “even recorded one such transport on camera” confirming the delivery of the weapons to Israel and from there smuggled to Azerbaijan. “The transport of one rocket launcher started on December 27, 2017, and was carried by a truck from Trenčin to the Bratislava airport, where it was moved to the plane owned by Azerbaijani airlines, Silk Way. It then flew to Tel Aviv in Israel, where the company Elbit, which was described as the end customer, is located. The data then revealed that the plane continued to Baku in Azerbaijan. Nothing is unloaded in Israel; there is only a stop to make sure the papers are correct,” the employee of MSM told the Czech Television. “The plane flies directly from the Israeli airport to Azerbaijan,” the *Slovak Spectator* wrote.

I suggest that Armenian officials immediately file protests with the governments of the Czech Republic, Slovakia and Israel for circumventing their export provisions and violating the bans recommended by the EU, OSCE and the UN Security Council regarding the sale of weapons to Azerbaijan.

If such complaints are not filed, these three countries and several others will be encouraged to ship more lethal weapons to Azerbaijan which will be used to kill and injure Armenian soldiers and civilians.

Bedrosyan: Remember the Hidden Armenians

The following is the text of Raffi Bedrosyan’s speech at the Massachusetts State House Commemoration on April 20. Bedrosyan was the keynote speaker at the event.

I AM TRULY HONORED and humbled to be here with you this morning. I will tell you a story of one hundred years in fifteen minutes, a story about the living victims of genocide, a story of Armenian orphans left behind in Turkey after their parents perished in 1915. It is the story of these orphans, who were forcibly Islamized, Turkified and Kurdified, and yet, secretly kept their Armenian roots, and passed this secret on to the next generations, despite all attempts of assimilation.

There were thousands of Armenian orphans taken to Turkish state orphanages, were given Turkish names, forcibly converted to Islam and Turkified, and beaten up if they were ever heard speaking any Armenian. There were thousands of physically fit Armenian boys sent to military schools to become soldiers in the Turkish army. There were thousands of Armenian girls sold as slaves. Slave markets, abolished in Turkey in 1908, were re-opened in 1915 and these Armenian girls were sold for the price of a lamb. But girls from wealthy families fetched higher prices because whoever took them would also end up owning the properties and assets of the girls’ perished family. And there were thousands of Armenian children snatched from their parents along the deportation routes as they passed through numerous villages and towns toward the Syrian Desert. All these orphans became slaves, servants, maids, sons and daughters, wives or mistresses in Moslem Turkish and Kurdish homes. But it turns out they secretly kept their Armenian identity, and they passed it on to the next generation, often at their deathbed.

Almost hundred years after the genocide, the grandchildren of these orphans have shown the courage to reveal their Armenian identities openly, and expressed their wish to return to their Armenian roots, language and culture. There is widespread hatred and discrimination against Armenians in Turkey, and the hidden Armenians’ decision to reveal their original identities is quite dangerous, with the risk of losing their homes, jobs, friends, or even their lives as they face a hostile state, neighbors, employers, and even hostile members of their own family who wish to remain Moslem Turks and Kurds.

The main trigger for the hidden Armenians’ critical decision to return to their roots was the 2011 reconstruction of an Armenian church in Diyarbakir province in southeastern Turkey. Surp Giragos is the largest Armenian church in the Middle East, which was taken over by the Turkish state and used as military headquarters in 1915 while the Armenian population of the city was driven out and massacred. Its bell tower was bombarded by cannon fire for being higher than the minarets of Turkish mosques in the region. Beside the Armenian orphans that were left behind after the genocide, there were also 4000 Armenian churches and school buildings left behind in Turkey. If not

burnt and demolished outright, these churches and schools were converted to Turkish mosques, government buildings, community centres, banks, banquet halls, even a whorehouse. After the war ended, the Diyarbakir Church was used as a state warehouse for a while and eventually abandoned, left in ruins with a collapsed roof. In 2010, a few Armenian individuals took the initiative to reconstruct this church, getting approvals from the local and central government in Turkey and organizing fundraisers from Armenian communities worldwide. This was the first and only reconstruction of an Armenian church in Turkey. At the opening of the church, along with local and foreign dignitaries including the US Ambassador to Turkey, the vast majority of the attendees were people appearing as Turks and Kurds, but in reality, hidden Armenians. Like a magnet, the church attracted hidden Armenians not only from Diyarbakir, but also from other regions of Turkey, who came together, supporting one another, exchanging stories, organizing monthly breakfast meetings. I initiated cultural events in the church by giving a piano concert, which was followed by other concerts, exhibitions and conferences. Armenian language classes were organized for the hidden Armenians and as a reward to the graduates of the language course, I planned a trip for them to Armenia. In cooperation with the Armenian Ministry of Diaspora, the hidden Armenians toured cultural and historic sites in Armenia, helping them return to their roots. This trip was followed by other trips for hidden Armenians from other regions of Turkey. Each trip encouraged more and more hidden Armenians to come out and return to their original roots. For the 100th anniversary of the Armenian Genocide, I gave another concert at Surp Giragos Church, attended by a thousand hidden Armenians, and the commemoration of genocide became rather a celebration of rebirth for the survivors, and we decided to officially name these initiatives as Project Rebirth, providing a wide network of connections and support.

Unfortunately, all these initiatives came to an end in late 2015, when the Turkish state decided to respond harshly by military means to the Kurdish minority demands for local autonomy. The war between the Turkish army and Kurdish militants resulted in thousands of people killed, thousands of buildings burnt down and half a million people left homeless. The hidden Armenians and Surp Giragos Church in Diyarbakir were caught in the crossfires. The church was expropriated by the Turkish government and it again became military headquarters for the Turkish army, just like one hundred years ago, history repeating itself. Our church foundation immediately appealed the expropriation legislation and was successful in reversing the legislation. However, the church and the surrounding region are declared a military zone and the church is still closed to public. The unsuccessful coup d’etat in 2016 brought fur-

ther repressions and gross human rights violations against civilians, resulting in hundreds of thousands losing their jobs, their homes, or arrested without any charges. Our hidden Armenians are now back into survival mode and Project Rebirth, instead of organizing Armenian language classes or trips to Armenia, is helping them with legal, social and relocation assistance.

The hidden Armenians have survived for a hundred years and this last crisis shall also pass. But I ask you to consider the following:

If a man is murdered, and the perpetrator takes over the murdered man’s orphaned children by force, takes over the murdered man’s property and possessions, this would be recognized as a crime in any society, developed or not. If the perpetrator covers up and denies the crime, or threatens anyone who dares speak up about the crime, this would also be recognized as a further crime. You wouldn’t think: ‘Well, I am doing business with this man even though he is a murderer, so I better keep quiet’. Instead, you would take steps to bring the perpetrator to justice. But if an entire people, an entire nation is murdered, if the orphaned children of an entire people are taken by force and assimilated, if the properties and assets of an entire people are taken over by the perpetrator, isn’t this a crime? If the perpetrator denies the crime or threatens anyone who dares speak up against the crime, is this acceptable? Genocide denied is genocide continued. Armenians worldwide, hidden Armenians in Turkey still suffer the consequences of the genocide. Genocide denied is also genocide repeated. If the Armenian Genocide was recognized and the perpetrators brought to justice, the Jewish Holocaust could have been prevented. Hitler wouldn’t have stated: ‘After all, who remembers the Armenians’, before ordering the destruction of Jews in Poland. Some of his generals got their training in genocidal policies in Turkey, as Germany was an ally of Ottoman Turkey during the First World War. But Germany did recognize the Armenian Genocide, and even acknowledged its own responsibility two years ago. Many states in Europe, Latin and South America have also recognized the Armenian Genocide. I know I am preaching to the converted here. The State of Massachusetts was one of the earliest states in America recognizing the Armenian Genocide. 47 other states have also done so. I ask you, whether Democrat or Republican, to call upon your federal colleagues in the House and Senate, to call upon your President, to recognize the Armenian Genocide. I ask you to urge them to be on the side of truth and justice, instead of being on the side of genocide perpetrators and deniers. This is not an issue contrary to national interests or strategic partnerships. This is an issue of human rights, human conscience and human decency. It is the right thing to do. Thank you and God bless you all.



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California State Legislature Passes Genocide Resolutions, Armenians Participate in Advocacy

SACRAMENTO, from page 5

Legislative Caucus to legislators and participants, formal resolutions reaffirming the Armenian Genocide took place on the floor of the California State Senate and California State Assembly respectively, both of which passed overwhelmingly and without opposition. The State Senate resolution, SR 107, was introduced by State Senator Anthony Portantino (D-25), whose senate district includes Glendale, Burbank, Pasadena, and the bulk of the San Gabriel Valley. SR 107 continues the State Senate’s strong condemnation of Genocide denial and formally asks the Turkish Government to return seized private and church property to its rightful owners.

The State Assembly resolution, AJR 37, was introduced by CA State Assemblymember Laura Friedman (D-43), whose assembly district includes Glendale, Burbank, and parts of Hollywood.

The Armenian Caucus provided legislators


with the book *There Is Only the Earth* by Scout Tufankjian.

The Armenian Assembly of America also organized a number of private meetings with state officials on the sidelines of Capitol Advocacy Day, including sessions with Senators Portantino, Wilk (R-21), Wiener (D-11), and Nancy Skinner (D-9), in addition to meetings with Assemblymembers Jim Patterson (R-23) and Chris Holden (D-41).

“For the second year in a row, the Armenian Assembly of America is pleased to have participated in the Capitol Advocacy Day events at the State Capitol. On this solemn occasion of reflection on the horrors of the Armenian Genocide, the Assembly expressed its profound gratitude to all state legislators who spoke unequivocally on their respective floors in favor of official US recognition of the Armenian Genocide by Congress and the current Administration,” stated Western Region Director Toumajan.




Sen. Anthony Portantino, center, surrounded by other California legislators and Armenians.



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Under the direction of Kris Kalfayan
Louise Yardumian, *guest organist*

Following services, the public is welcome to a Fellowship Reception in Haik and Alice Kavookjian Auditorium (Suggested donation: \$10 at door)