

## Three HALO Trust Workers Killed in Artsakh

STEPANAKERT – Three local employees of the HALO Trust, an organization tasked with demining land in Artsakh, were killed by an explosion of an anti-tank landmine in Ghazanchi on March 29.

Two others were seriously injured.

Those killed were Pavel Akopov, Samson Avanesian and Marat Petrossian. They were in a vehicle conducting minefield survey duties at the time.

Doctors continue fighting for the lives of Aram Mkrtchyan and Garik Ghahriyan, the two survivors of the blast. Both underwent serious surgeries.

Artsakh's Healthcare Minister Karine Atayan personally visited the hospital to see the victims and the doctors.

According to a statement from HALO, "We are working closely with the local police and authorities and have called in external investigators to report on the full facts of the incident."

James Cowan, HALO's CEO said: "Every day around the world, more than 8,000 HALO staff go to work in places where no one else can tread and this tragic incident throws into stark relief the dangers that they face and the importance of our work. Our colleagues were killed while working to make the land safe for the people of Nagorno Karabakh."



A HALO Trust worker in Artsakh

Andrew Moore, HALO's former regional director in charge of Artskh said on Monday, "We are conducting an investigation see HALO, page 3

## Sahakyan Declares Azerbaijani Refugees Can Live Peacefully in Artsakh Republic

By Aram Arkun  
Mirror-Spectator Staff

WASHINGTON – President Bako Sahakyan of the Republic of Artsakh came to the American capital for his first official visit on March 12 at the

### EXCLUSIVE

head of a governmental delegation for a week of political talks and meetings. When asked what motivated this particular visit, the president responded that Artsakh has enjoyed friendly relations with the United States for many years and he himself has visited the United States on numerous other occasions. However, these trips were primarily connected with the work of the Hayastan All-Armenian Fund. "This time," he said, "we had the opportunity, and we took advantage of it, to meet with political circles. I am very happy that such meetings took place." For the first time in see BAKO, page 9

## Tatosian Appointed Honorary Consul for Armenia in Chicago

CHICAGO – On Thursday, March 22, Chicago-area Armenians, members of the city's consular corps and associates celebrated the establishment of the city's first honorary consulate of the Republic of Armenia, serving the

States of Illinois, Missouri, Iowa, Wisconsin, and Minnesota.

Following the earlier consecration of the Consular Office at 120 West Kinzie St., nearly 500 guests gathered at the Union League Club of Chicago for the official proclamation of Oscar S. Tatosian as the Republic of Armenia's honorary consul in Chicago.



Mayor Rahm Emanuel Speaks while from left, Archbishop Khajag Barsamian, Armenia's Ambassador to the US Grigor Hovhannissian and Oscar Tatosian listen.

The evening's program included the invocation and remarks by Archbishop Khajag Barsamian, Primate, Diocese of the Armenian Church in America, Grigor Hovhannissian, Ambassador of the Republic of Armenia to the United States, and a formal welcome by Mayor Rahm Emanuel of Chicago.

see CONSUL, page 20

## Bravo for Nazo as He Reaches For the Stars in Film and Music

LOS ANGELES – Nazo Bravo is a true child of Los Angeles, in the sense that he is both Armenian and in show business.

Bravo, né Aslanian, was born in the city to parents who are from Yerevan. He is also working hard to advance his career in music and movies.

By Alin K. Gregorian  
Mirror-Spectator Staff

This month he has a film coming out, "Dead on Arrival," which has been picked up by Sony.

Emmy-nominated Billy Flynn stars in an ensemble cast as Sam Collins, a pharmaceutical sales representative who visits a small town in Louisiana to close the business deal of a lifetime. He finds himself in a dark world of sex, corruption and murder as he is poisoned with no antidote to save his life. Desperate for answers, with less than 24 hours to live, Sam turns to a local girl Jesse. Their path leads to a voodoo priestess who only confirms Sam's doomed fate. On the run, see NAZO, page 11



## NEWS IN BRIEF

### Sargsyan Privatizes Official Residence

YEREVAN (RFE/RL) – In a move condemned by the opposition, the Armenian government has granted the outgoing President Serzh Sargsyan ownership of a mansion in Yerevan where he and his predecessors have lived while in office.

The government formally approved the free privatization of the property and specified its address on March 29. A senior official from the presidential staff, Varuzh Grigorian, confirmed on Monday, April 2, that it is the very house where Sargsyan has lived in with his family since becoming president 10 years ago.

The house is part of a secluded government compound just outside the city center which has also been home to other high-ranking state officials.

Sargsyan's decision not to leave the heavily guarded mansion after completing his second term on April 9 is widely seen as a further indication that he will become prime minister and thus stay in power.

### Prof. Ani Aprahamian Named Director of Physics Institute

YEREVAN (Mediamax) – Prof. Ani Aprahamian of the Physics Department of the University of Notre Dame has been appointed director of the A.I. Alkhanyan National Science Laboratory (Yerevan Physics Institute).

The Ministry of Education and Science reported that the unanimous decision on this appointment was made at the session of institute's Board of Trustees.

During the introduction, Chair of the Board of Trustees Nerses Yeritsyan noted that Aprahamian is a world-famous physicist, member of several scientific organizations and associations in the US and Europe (American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS), American Physical Society (APS), Sigma Xi, and New York Academy of Sciences).

Aprahamian is the co-chair of a committee with the National Academy of Science on a US Electron Ion Collider Facility, US Liaison for the International Union of Pure and Applied Physics (IUPAP) Commission on Nuclear Science, as well as member of the IUPAP Working Group on Astro-Particle Physics, the Board of Directors for South Dakota Science and Technology Authority (Sanford Underground Laboratory), and many other science commissions on nuclear physics.

In November 2017, President Serzh Sargsyan received the foreign members of the National Academy of Sciences of Armenia, Yuri Oganessian as well as Aprahamian.

Oganessian is a member of the Board of Trustees of the Foundation for Armenian Science and Technology.

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## ARMENIA

## News From Armenia

## Defense Minister Honors Victims of Azeri War

YEREVAN – Defense Minister Vigen Sargsyan, Chief of the General Staff of the Armenian Armed Forces, Colonel-General Movses Hakobyan, the highest leadership of the Armenian Forces, visited the Yerablur Pantheon on April 2 to pay tribute to the servicemen killed in the four-day war in April 2016.

Speaking to reporters, Sargsyan said “army-building is a non-stop process like state-building.”

“People who think they have done everything for the current stage should pave the way for the continuation of the process with new ideas. I think the history of our army-building is exceptional. It is a history of formation of a victorious army. No matter how tragic and painful the April events were in terms of loss of our compatriots, no army in the world has yet created a different way of protecting the country,” he said.

“I think we have realized that protection of the country is the everyday duty of the whole country, the government and society, and I believe it is the key to all the programs and goals we have to call to life in the future in order to be able to protect our country and state, our civilization as a “Nation-army,” to defend the huge heritage we have created as a nation throughout millennia,” Sargsyan said.

“We have worked and will keep working consistently to improve our combat readiness, to keep the standing of our army on the level we came out of the Karabakh war. We must always be ready to solve issues that might emerge under the conditions of the complex geopolitical realities of the 21st century,” the minister added.

## Explosion at Burger King in Yerevan

YEREVAN (RFE/RL) – Eight people have been injured by the explosion of a pressurized canister at a Burger King restaurant, police said.

Police said the explosion occurred late on April 2 in the kitchen of the restaurant in Yerevan’s downtown area. They said three Armenians, three Russians, and two Iranians were hospitalized with injuries.

An 8-year-old Armenian girl sustained serious, life-threatening injuries, while the others were less seriously injured, police said.

Russian state-run news agency TASS said three 15-year-old Russian teenagers were among the injured. Russian news agency Interfax said the Russians injured were in “moderately severe condition.”

The cause of the explosion wasn’t immediately clear, but police have ruled out foul play.

Interfax quoted an Armenian police official as saying the canister that exploded was a pressurized beer-dispensing tank, and there was no evidence the explosion was “premeditated.”

## European Firms to Build Large Solar Plant

YEREVAN (RFE/RL) – A consortium of Dutch and Spanish companies has won an international tender for the construction of Armenia’s first large solar power plant which is expected to cost around \$50 million.

The 55-megawatt plant will be built in Mets Masrik, a village close to the eastern coast of Lake Sevan, as part of the Armenian government’s efforts to reduce the domestic energy sector’s dependence on natural gas mostly imported from Russia.

The World Bank pledged in 2015 to finance most of the project in the form of a grant allocated to the government. The resulting tender attracted bids from two dozen energy companies from around the world.

The Armenian Energy Ministry announced on March 30 that the consortium consisting of the Dutch-based company Fotowatio Renewable Ventures and Spain’s FSL Solar won the bid. It will be cheaper than power supplied by scores of small hydroelectric plants scattered around the mountainous country, the ministry said in a statement.

Work on the Mets Masrik plant may start already this year, in which case it will be completed by the end of 2020.

# Harout Chitilian Named as New Aurora CEO

YEREVAN – The co-founders of the Aurora Humanitarian Initiative announced on April 3 that Harout Chitilian, a citizen of Canada, will come on board on July 1, as Aurora’s next CEO, succeeding Arman Jilavian, who has held the position since the incep-

Initiative is not just a new presence in the Armenian world and within the humanitarian community, but it is a new kind of enterprise, an NGO created with a new spirit and a new vision. Aurora was established three years ago, as the outcome of our very ambitious

Council of Montreal, is an engineer by training and that comes through as he speaks about Aurora. “Not only is Aurora innovative and ambitious, but I am drawn to it because it is very systematically planned and creatively developed. When I was in government, that was the approach I used in almost every action. I am very impressed by what Aurora has accomplished in such a short time,” he said.

“I am excited by the prospect and view this as an amazing opportunity for both the Co-Founders and myself to collaborate and bring the Aurora mission to another level – to make it sustainable, successful, and on the forefront of expressing gratitude and addressing the critical situation of today’s people in need.”

Chitilian speaks five languages – Armenian, French, English, Arabic and Spanish. In addition to his experience in Canada, he has worked in Latin America, China, Scandinavia, Western Europe and the United States.

“Heading Aurora is both a privilege and an immense responsibility,” said Arman Jilavian who has held the position since 2015. “I look forward to working with Harout to ensure that Aurora’s mission around the world continues to resonate with all those who are dedicated to doing our part by embracing our common humanity and giving back. This is our Gratitude in Action, and it’s an ongoing commitment. I will remain engaged with the work of RVVZ and IDeA Foundations and contribute in any way I can. We invite all those who share this commitment to join in Aurora’s work.”



Harout Chitilian

tion of the unique global undertaking.

“Aurora was born of Armenia but is now a global project. Since its inception, Aurora has welcomed those who think globally to join this ambitious endeavor and, in that spirit, we welcome Harout Chitilian to this position. He comes at a time when Aurora will be growing again, executing a number of educational and outreach programs, in addition to the primary humanitarian direction,” added Ruben Vardanyan, co-founder of Aurora, who with his wife, Veronika Zonabend, carries out a number of charitable, educational and development projects in Armenia and around the world.

“As we welcome Aurora’s next CEO, it is worth remembering and reminding that the Aurora Humanitarian

goals – to express gratitude to the memory of those who helped save Armenians a century ago, and to do so by aiding those who are committed to saving those in danger today,” explained Vartan Gregorian, co-founder of the Aurora Humanitarian Initiative.

Noubar Afeyan, co-founder of the Aurora, continued. “The Aurora Initiative requires from us the ability to envision expansively and act for maximal impact to address some of today’s critical global needs. With roots planted in Armenians’ historic experience of Genocide, Aurora is about remembering and giving back in gratitude to those who came to our aid many decades ago.”

Chitilian, 37, who previously held the position of vice president of the executive committee and chairman of City

## Yerevan’s Malatia Art School renamed for Konstantin Orbelyan

By Ani Gasbaryan

YEREVAN – Of Yerevan’s 25 music and art schools, the Malatia Art School was the only one not named after a famed artist. That changed on February 13, 2018, when the Yerevan Council of Elders approved a proposal to rename the venerable institution after the late Konstantin Orbelyan. A world-renowned pianist, composer and conductor of the State Pops Orchestra of Armenia, Orbelyan held the titles of People’s Artist of USSR and People’s Artist of the Republic of Armenia. He passed away in 2014.

Although the newly renamed Konstantin Orbelyan Art School will be officially inaugurated in June, with a grand opening ceremony and recital at the Komitas Chamber Music Hall, it is already operating under its new name, as proudly indicated by a banner placed near the entrance of the campus. On March 26, the renamed school held its maiden public event, in celebration of World Theater Day. Featuring Honored Artist Evelina Shahiryan and her daughter, Naira Shahiryan, both actresses, the event included a theatrical presentation which carried classical and modern themes, as well as a spirited dhol performance. The event concluded with a candid conversation with the actresses.

The Malatia Art School was founded in 1972 as a music school. However, in 1999, it was transformed into a full-fledged art school, complete with dance, fine-arts, and theater departments, in response to growing popular demand for a significantly expanded

curriculum. Today, rechristened Konstantin Orbelyan Art School, the beloved institution has around 300 students and 53 staff members.

Arina Manukyan has been working at the school since 1990, and has served as its vice principal since 1997. Full of vigor and as ever passionate about artistic excellence, she is widely regarded as the heart and soul of the school. Manukyan says the idea of

but was very excited about the initiative.”

Tatevik Hambardzumyan, the school’s principal, believes the renaming of the campus is important not only in terms of paying tribute to a legendary musician, but since it’s essential to have a suitable name in which the school can take pride.

“The name ‘Malatia’ didn’t really match the spirit and stature of an art school,” Manukyan says. “We have so many talented, wonderful students who distinguish themselves by winning local and international competitions. Whether at such events or on a daily basis, we felt embarrassed by our school’s old name, which many people associate with the Malatia Market in Yerevan. Today, therefore, it is an honor for

us to carry the name of the great composer, conductor, and musician Konstantin Orbelyan.”

Commenting on the renaming of the school, Orbelyan says, “My late uncle, Konstantin Orbelyan, is celebrated as one of the giants of contemporary Armenian music. He was also an outstanding mentor, and helped cultivate the talents of generations of musicians. So it’s with enormous delight and a sense of profound gratitude that I welcome the renaming of the school after my uncle. His legacy will live on in not just an array of beautiful recordings and the memories of audiences, but the name of a marvelous art school that stands as one of Yerevan’s cultural gems.”

In September of this year, the school will also unveil Konstantin Orbelyan’s bust on the grounds of the campus.



Yerevan’s Malatia Art School renamed for Konstantin Orbelyan

renaming the campus after Konstantin Orbelyan came to her following the death of the famous musician. In fact, on the very day that Orbelyan’s funeral was held, she approached his nephew, Constantine Orbelyan, the general and artistic director of the Yerevan Opera House, to discuss her proposal of renaming the school.

As Manukyan recalls, the younger Orbelyan absolutely loved the idea and promised to visit the school within days. “To be honest, I was afraid that the maestro wouldn’t come and he would forget about our proposal,” she says. “But a few days later, he called and came in. At that time, our school wasn’t renovated yet. It just didn’t look good. And I thought he would probably regret that he had agreed to the name change. However, not only did he reaffirm his approval,





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into the accident and this includes an external investigator. We don't want to prejudge the outcome of this so we can't say as yet what happened. What I can say is that the team that had the accident was conducting survey of areas to be cleared in the future – not mine clearance."

He added that all work in Artsakh is currently suspended pending the outcome of the investigation.

Moore said the two survivors are in a hospital in Stepanakert and are in stable condition. "We are closely monitoring their progress and ensuring they get the best care. We have a HALO consulting physician equivalent (a UK-based doctor) in Stepanakert advising on treatment," he said.

Since 2000, HALO has been the only agency clearing the minefields and cluster munition strikes in Artsakh. According to its website: "Mine clearance in Karabakh has not only greatly decreased the casualty rate but it has also allowed roads, schools, and housing to be built, water pipes to be laid, fields to be cultivated, livestock to be safely grazed, and people to go about their daily business without fear. The benefits of the clearance are tangible and the cleared land can be safely used in perpetuity."

## HALO Trust in Artsakh

Between 2000 and 2016, The HALO Trust in Artsakh has destroyed 180,858 small arms ammunition, 48,572 units of "other explosive items," 12,423 cluster bombs, 8,733 anti-personnel landmines, and 2,584 anti-tank landmines. HALO has cleared 88 percent of the territory's minefields, with the goal to clear all landmines in Artsakh by 2020.

The organization held a very successful fundraiser in Winchester, Mass., in June 2017, during which they raised more than \$200,000 for demining operations in Artsakh. (<https://mirrorspectator.com/2017/06/22/soiree-raises-220000-for-clearing-landmines-in-karabakh/>)

The goal of the gathering was to make sure that by the year 2020, Artsakh, one of the most heavily mined parts of the world, would be free of all mines.

US Caucus on Armenian Issues Co-

Chairs Representatives Frank Pallone, Jr. Jackie Speier, and David Valadao, House Intelligence Committee Ranking Member and Armenian Caucus Co-Vice Chair Rep. Adam Schiff, and Rep. Brad Sherman issued statements and paid tribute, reported the Armenian Assembly of America.

Pallone said: "While there is always a danger associated with removing unexploded ordnances, I am deeply saddened to hear the news of this terrible accident and offer my condolences to the families of these individuals. I hope investigators in Artsakh are able to quickly get to the bottom of what happened, and I hope these awful circumstances help to shed an international light on the vital work organizations like HALO Trust do around the world. I will continue to work with my colleagues in Congress to ensure demining activities are able to continue unimpeded and as safely as possible."

Pallone visited Artsakh for the first time 20 years ago as part of an Armenian Assembly of America-sponsored delegation. The Congressman has returned to Artsakh a few times since his initial visit, where he learned firsthand about mine clearance in the region.

"I was deeply saddened to hear of the deaths of three HALO Trust workers, and injuries to two of their colleagues, while working to clear the Artsakh region of landmines. My heart goes out to the victims and their families and colleagues, all of whom are in my prayers. The people of Artsakh continue to suffer the devastating effects of war with the highest per capita incidence of landmine accidents in the world – a third of which involve children. The courage and sacrifice of these ultimate Samaritans should serve as a reminder to us all that we have much more to do to make this region safe, and I pledge to continue my support of the HALO Trust and the Artsakh region in honor of their memory," Speier added.

Valadao stated: "My heart goes out to those killed and injured by the explosion in Nagorno-Karabakh. These individuals have dedicated their work to ensuring the safety of others and their sacrifice will never be forgotten. This tragedy serves as a stark reminder of the ever present danger in the region. We must continue our work to restore

these communities so they may live without fear of mine-related accidents."

Last September, Valadao traveled to Artsakh as part of a Congressional Delegation, where he met with the HALO Trust staff to learn more about mine clearance along the borders. Earlier that month, Valadao spearheaded a bipartisan amendment along with House Foreign Affairs Committee Chairman Rep. Ed Royce (R-CA), Pallone, Speier and Schiff, to ensure continued funding for de-mining projects in Artsakh. This amendment was adopted as part of consideration of H.R. 3354, which consolidated numerous Fiscal Year 2018 appropriations bills.

Schiff stated: "I'm deeply saddened by the death of three employees of the HALO Trust who were performing demining work in Nagorno Karabakh. I am proud of the support the United States has provided in removing minefields from civilian areas in Artsakh, and this tragedy shows once again why that work is both so dangerous and yet such an important humanitarian undertaking."

"I extend my deepest condolences to the victims' families and the entire HALO Trust community. Today's events highlight the need for robust support of demining efforts in Artsakh, so that these deadly explosives do not take additional lives. We thank the victims for their contributions to this important cause," Sherman said.

Armenpress reported that HALO Trust Artsakh Program Manager Michael Newton told *Hayastani Hanrapetutyun* newspaper that the tragic incident in Artsakh once again proves the difficulties people face while demining territories and making the land safe for the population.

"We are closely cooperating with the law enforcement agencies and the government of Artsakh. We also invited external investigators expecting to receive more complete information. Experts of the staff of our organization risk their lives in different parts of the world in carrying out difficult work. The tragic incident which took place in Artsakh once again proves the difficulties people face while making the land safer for the population. All parties of the conflict should realize this and not allow new war escalations and tragedies at the border," Newton said.

—Alin K. Gregorian

## International News

### Artsakh Delegation Visits France

YEREVAN (Armenpress) – The delegation led by the Speaker of the National Assembly of Artsakh Ashot Ghoulyan paid a working visit to France on April 3 which kicked off at the municipality of Bourg-lès-Valence city of Drôme region.

The delegation was received by Bourg-lès-Valence Mayor Marlene Mourier. Thanking for the reception, Ashot Ghoulyan noted that the cooperation between the cities of Artsakh and France is constant and Bourg-lès-Valence is a successful example of cooperation in the humanitarian sphere.

Marlene Mourier highlighted direct interactions and emphasized that they are trying to strengthen the cooperation by the implementation of concrete projects. They have organized a fair of goods produced in Artsakh and particularly in Shushi in Bourg-lès-Valence.

Afterwards, the members of the delegation met with Valence Mayor Nicolas Daragon. The French Mayor greeted the guests, expressing readiness to deepen cooperation in the format of sister cities. Ghoulyan thanked them for the reception and emphasized the friendly relations with the cities of France are highly valued in Artsakh.

### Armenian President Appoints New Ambassador to Israel

YEREVAN (Armenpress) – President Serzh Sargsyan has appointed Armen Smbatyan to serve as Ambassador to Israel (stationed in Yerevan), the president's office reported.

Prior to this appointment Smbatyan served as advisor to the president.

Armen Melkonyan, who served as Armenia's Ambassador to Israel until now, has been relieved from office.

Smbatyan has previously served as Armenia's Ambassador to Russia from 2002 until 2010.

### Number of Tourists Visiting Armenia Triples In 10 Years

YEREVEAN (PanARMENIAN.Net) – The number of tourist coming to Armenia has nearly tripled in the past 10 years, chairwoman of the state tourism committee Zarmine Zeytuntsyan said on March 31.

According to her, 1.5 million tourists visited the country in 2017, up from 510,000 a decade earlier.

Domestic tourism has also nearly tripled to amount to more than 1 million visits compared to 360,000 registered in 2007-2008.

Weighing in on the upcoming Summit of the Francophonie, Zeytuntsyan said 5,000 international arrivals are expected in October alone.

### Women's Weightlifting Coach Fired after Doping Scandal

YEREVAN (Armenpress) – Artashes Nersisyan, head coach of the Armenian women's weightlifting team, and weightlifter Sona Poghosyan's personal coach Arman Ghazaryan have been fired, the Armenian National Olympic Committee ruled at a session on April 3.

The issue has even escalated to a degree where the committee is discussing whether to ban Nersisyan and Ghazaryan from sports.

Back in 2013 the NOC decided to tighten controls against athletes using performance-enhancement drugs. But since 2013, none of the doping tests came back positively until a recent case.

The National Olympic Committee and the ministry of sports and youth affairs haven't yet issued official statements.

Poghosyan, a participant of the 31st Summer Olympics, tested positive for performance enhancing substances, the International Weightlifting Federation said. She was temporarily banned from international tournaments.

## Athens Hosts International Conference Dedicated to 140th Anniversary of Berlin Conference

ATHENS (Hayastan News Center) – On March 26, an international conference dedicated to the 140th anniversary of the Berlin Conference was held in Athens. The conference was organized by the Culture Department of the Embassy of Cyprus and the Center for Armenian-Greek Studies, in partnership with Haiastan NGO Center.

The conference was entitled 140 Years After the Berlin Conference: Origin of the

Macedonian and Cypriot Issues and the Armenian Cause.

Among the speakers were Professor of Athens State University Spiridos Poloumidias; Professor of Athens State University Andreas Antonopolous; writer, researcher and secretary of the Center for Armenian-Greek Studies Hovsep Kasesian; Editor-in-Chief of Moscow's Zham Armenian magazine, Doctor of Culturology and Professor of Moscow

State Pedagogical University Anna Givargizyan; and board member of the Hellenic Lawyers Association Atanasia Fotiadi.

The coordinator of the conference was writer and Dr. Lucas Akelos.

Summing up the issues related to Armenians at the Berlin Conference, Kasesian stated the importance of internationalization of the Armenian Cause and recognition of the rights of Armenians persecuted by the mechanism of the Ottoman state.

Talking about the historical lessons of the Berlin Conference, the "Iron Ladle" of Khrimian Hayrig and the formation of the first stage of the national liberation struggle of the Armenian nation, Givargizyan ended her speech with Khrimian Hayrig's message: "I leave you with a permanent will that Armenians must not be separated from their native land since the land is needed for life and death, maintain the land firmly."

The origin of the Macedonian and Cypriot issues and future developments were also discussed during the conference.



A panel at the Athens conference





## INTERNATIONAL

# Weaving Close Ties between Germany and Armenia

**By Muriel Mirak-Weissbach**

Special to the Mirror-Spectator

BERLIN – “Wisdom is the art of considering things from all sides.” The saying is by Nerses Shnorhali and it was printed in Armenian and in German on the invitation issued by the Armenian Embassy in Berlin to a ceremony on March 23. And it fit the occasion: we were invited to attend an event honoring two outstanding individuals who might be considered practitioners of the “art” in the political and cultural realm.

Ambassador Ashot Smbatyan presided over the ceremony, during which he presented the State Award of the Armenian Republic. The order of merit, which is a high honor, was conferred on Cem Özdemir, Green Party member of the Bundestag (Parliament), and Dr. Raffi Kantian, chairman of the Deutsch-Armenische Gesellschaft (German-Armenian Society). Özdemir



Cem Özdemir and Matthias Gust

was selected “for his extraordinary services in the international recognition of the Genocide against the Armenians,” and Kantian, for his “special services in deepening German-Armenian relations.”

Marc Sinan read the laudatio for Cem Özdemir. Sinan, a composer and guitarist, is a co-founder, with Dresden Symphony conductor Markus Rindt, of the German-Turkish-Armenian Friendship Society. The choice of speaker was most appropriate, for Sinan shares with Özdemir a Turkish background, although, as he developed in his remarks, their biographies also display significant differences.

Sinan began by saying he felt it was “an even greater honor for me ... to present such a valuable prize, like the Armenian State Award, than it is for you, dear Cem Özdemir, to receive it.” The German political figure has earned his admiration, he said, because his biography “is proof that one can make it here in Germany, against all odds. Against everyday racism. Against disparagement.”

The two men come from similar backgrounds. Sinan’s mother arrived in Germany from Turkey in 1963, two years after Özdemir’s parents had come. Both were born in Germany, 11 years apart, and both grew up speaking German, albeit, in their local dialects, Bavarian and Swabian. Sinan was raised in a modest townhouse settlement where the only other immigrant was the child of a Lebanese mother. Sinan explained that it was due to his blond hair and fair complexion that he escaped the discrimination that his “black-haired cousins” had to fight against.

As he was to learn, his heritage was not only Turkish. “Why my grandmother from the Black Sea was an orphan and was ashamed to be the child of Christians lingered with me for many years in my consciousness. It took a lot longer for me to become fully conscious of the dimensions of the fact that she was Armenian and a survivor of the genocide.” His family members were Kemalists, and he “grew up with the awareness that one shouldn’t openly talk about my grandmother’s background and – oh yes – of course that Turkey was threatened by the Kurds, who were equivalent to the PKK.” He described the ideological climate of Kemalism, and noted that it took years for him to overcome it.

Sinan said he could not speculate on whether or not Özdemir had similar experiences, but mooted the possibility that he, too, had altered his worldview in the course of reaching adulthood; certainly he had had to fight discrimination to become “one of the leading political personalities of the German Federal Republic,” a fact that led Sinan to consider him an example.

Most extraordinary in Özdemir’s political biography, and the reason for his being so honored, is of course his tireless and successful campaign for genocide recognition. This, Sinan said, “is a historic achievement and will secure you a place in history books. More important,” he went on, “we descendants of sur-

vivors feel satisfaction along the still long way towards coming to terms with the collective suffering of our ancestors. For this I would like to thank you very personally.”

Sinan then turned to the dark clouds hanging over the event in Berlin – the ongoing military aggression in Afrin. Referencing the pledge “never again,” Sinan stated that “we are in the middle of an ‘again’” and proceeded to delineate the contours of the tragedy engulfing the Kurdish people there. He drew comparisons, even geographically, to the death marches in 1915, and concluded that “the expulsion and killing of at least 150,000 Kurds and other groups in the region, the ongoing abuse and plunder, is a direct continuation of the genocide against the Armenians. The Turkish government speaks openly of ‘cleansing.’”

Sinan focused on the credo of racist, nationalist ideology, citing Michel Foucault on the notion of the superiority of one’s own “race” over the “Other,” and compared the situation today to that of a century ago. To characterize the situation in Turkey, he borrowed an image from theatre: “when someone brings a pistol on stage, it will inevitably be fired. President Erdogan has laid a powerful Colt on the table and the magazine is still full. He has pumped youth full of racism and testosterone. They are bloodthirsty, as the Young Turks were once. It is clearly a matter of the death of the ‘evil race,’ in Foucault’s sense.”

Turning to the situation in Germany, where a racist, right-wing party has entered the Bundestag for the first time since the end of World War II, Sinan praised Özdemir for having openly denounced it as such. Reiterating the notion that we “are in the midst of a war,” he concluded his speech with a warning not to be satisfied with what has been achieved, but to continue the political struggle at home and abroad. “We have to stop the sick killing by Turkey, we cannot allow the coming generations to be infected with racism, nationalism and hatred.”

## Risks and Rewards of Political Controversy

In accepting the award, Özdemir delivered warm and humorous remarks to thank the many people who had been instrumental in organizing the Armenian Genocide resolution. He was especially grateful to Sinan for having brought culture and art into the discussion, as they are indispensable in dealing with and overcoming the catastrophic past. Dr. Raffi Kantian has been a discussion partner for Özdemir over the years; “we have often argued too,” he said, but through such debates he had learned a great deal, especially, that there is no such thing as “the Turks” or “the Armenians” or “the Germans.” One of the first Armenians Özdemir met was Archbishop Karekin Bekjian, Primate of the Armenian Diocese in Germany, who was also present. He thanked the church leader for his courage; years ago, “he invited me to speak at the church, even without knowing what I might say,” Özdemir related, and after the event the Archbishop got into trouble. “I got into a lot of trouble,” Özdemir added, saying he had essentially been put on a watch list.

As Sinan had indicated, the achievement for which Özdemir is best known, and for which he was being honored, is his role in pushing the genocide resolution through the Bundestag. He could not have done it alone, and he acknowledged those individuals who in one way or another supported the effort. Among figures in civil society, he mentioned Dr. Rolf Hosfeld of the Lepsiushaus, Wolfgang Gust and this author, and in the political realm, singled out for special thanks Dr. Norbert Lammert, then-president of the Bundestag, as well as former German President Joachim Gauck, both outstanding for their insistence on naming the Genocide by its proper name. Özdemir cited several colleagues in the Bundestag across the party spectrum, from the leftwing Linke Party to the Christian Democrat Union-Christian Social Union (CDU-CSU), who had supported the resolution.

Then he turned to his family, as Sinan had done before him. His mother and his late father, of Cherkessian background, had taught him to be proud of his heritage, and knew, through their own parents, what catastrophe the “poison of nationalism” could produce. Thanks also went to his wife and two children, who have had to pay a price for his political initiatives. Last but certainly not least, he thanked the BKA, the German Federal Criminal Police, who have done “a great job” in taking care of “people who have different views.”

In concluding, Özdemir reflected on the fact that it was not only Armenians, but also Aramaens, Greeks, in sum, the entire Eastern Christian community who were targeted. And the role of Imperial Germany at the time should not be overlooked; German diplomats in the Ottoman Empire knew what was going on and failed to prevent it. Özdemir ended on an optimistic note, expressing his conviction that just as the Armenian Ambassador was standing there, so one day a Turkish

Ambassador may stand beside him – that, in short, reconciliation will come. He closed with an appeal to preserve the legacy of Hrant Dink, and Easter greetings to all.

## A German-Armenian

If Dr. Raffi Kantian was being honored for having further deepened German-Armenian relations, “we should be clear about the fact that the desire for ‘deeper’ relations between Germans and Armenians, between Germany and Armenia, places demands that are more difficult to meet than might appear at first glance.” Thus began Dr. Christoph Bergner, a Parliamentarian from the CDU-CSU and former Minister-President of Saxony-Anhalt, in his comments. There are developments pointing to improved relations – “Armenia’s desire for European integration and with it the deepest possible partnership with Germany,” as well as “closer bonds to Armenia” in Germany and a “multifaceted pro-Armenian enthusiasm especially in the realm of culture and science,” – and yet, this is “only one side of the coin.” From the political standpoint the challenge has been great; “for a long time,” Bergner said, “Germany’s lack of confrontation with the genocide and reluctance to talk about German responsibility” weighed heavily on relations. Even following the resolution, he continued, challenges remain; these relate to differing foreign and security policy priorities, complex conflicts in the South Caucasus as well as “the questionable and contradictory German relation to the Turkish state.”

In this light, Bergner situated the special talents displayed by Kantian. He “has for decades assumed the task of building German-Armenian bridges with emphasis, prudence, expertise, patience and above all a strong personal motivation.” And the way in which he has gone about this can be explained, Bergner said, only when one considers his personal biography.

Kantian was born of Armenian parents in Istanbul, but his education was shaped by German cultural institutions; he attended the German school there and took a degree in chemistry in Göttingen as a student of the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD). Though Bergner knew Kantian as a scientist, he learned only later that he was also a poet. Kantian’s work with literature in West Armenia served also to improve German-Armenian relations; “he mediated and translated Armenian literature and poetry and made them accessible to the German-speaking world, just as he brought modern German literature closer to an Armenian public.” Since 1995, he has served as the authorized representative for Germany of the Armenian Writers Association.



Cem Özdemir, Bea Ehlers-Kerbekian and Archbishop Karekin Bekjian (left to right).

This approach to his engagement, which goes beyond simply diplomatic “understanding management,” Bergner said, derives from Kantian’s personal identity, as someone who has “become a German-Armenian,” and in whose breast “two hearts beat.” On the many occasions when he has served as interpreter for high-level personalities, like the Catholicos or Armenian political leaders and representatives, Kantian has always demonstrated “a desire to bring the often differing viewpoints closer and to make them mutually comprehensible.”

Thanks to this capability and approach, Bergner went on, Kantian has fulfilled his official functions, making the German-Armenian Society into “center of competence” for German-Armenian issues and, with his editorial activity, he has contributed to expanding public interest in German-Armenian relations. In his publications as well as public conferences and forums, Kantian’s “special contribution,” said Bergner, “consists in his having always seen the German-Armenian relationship and the Armenian question in their historical and regional contexts.” At the same time, his diaspora background “has always contributed to his conceiving the German-Armenian relationship beyond the regional dimension.”

Kantian, the German-Armenian from Istanbul, completed the evening’s program by taking his hosts and guests on an imaginary tour through the old city of Istanbul with its Armenian heritage.



# Community News

## St. Vartan Cathedral Celebrates Easter in Its 50th Year

NEW YORK – Worshipers gathered at St. Vartan Armenian Cathedral on Easter Sunday to take part in the Divine Liturgy and witness the traditional “Release of Doves” ceremony. This year’s Easter celebration was especially notable because 2018 marks the cathedral’s 50th anniversary.

Archbishop Khajag Barsamian, Primate of the Diocese of the Armenian Church of America (Eastern), celebrated the Divine Liturgy and delivered the Easter homily on Sunday, April 1. As many as 1,200 people participated in the day’s events at the cathedral, greeting one another with the joyous words, “Krisdos haryav ee merelotz!”

In his sermon, the Primate described Easter as a “festival of Life,” rooted in a singular event from two thousand years ago, yet resonating freshly in present-day life: “Our Lord said, ‘I am the Resurrection and the Life’ – and he meant that the Resurrection is something present among us at this very moment. It’s as close as Jesus was, standing next to Martha outside the



A little girl impersonating the Easter Bunny and taking communion.



Archbishop Khajag Barsamian blesses the water, bread and salt.

tomb of her brother Lazarus. It’s as close as the person standing next to you right now.”

He continued: “If we open our eyes – and open our hearts – the signs of Resurrection and Life are all around us. When we witness the miracle of life in a newborn child; encounter extraordinary acts of courage or sacrifice; feel the devotion of faith, hope, and love in another human being – these are the signs that the Risen Christ is present among us, and close at hand.”

In a nod to this year’s 50th anniversary of St. Vartan Cathedral’s consecration, he added: “This very house of worship surrounding us – St. Vartan Armenian Cathedral – is such a sign: consecrated 50 years ago this month; but conceived and built by the generation that escaped death in the Armenian Genocide. It is a sign of victory over death—a symbol of the enduring Life that comes from faith in Christ.”

After the Divine Liturgy, the Primate led a procession to the cathedral plaza, where 12  
see EASTER, page 12



Health professionals in a breakout room, led by Dr. Garbis Baydar

## Professionals Reach out to Mentor Students at Fordham Networking Forum

NEW YORK – The classrooms of the Fordham University School of Business were filled to capacity as the eighth annual Mentoring and Networking Forum welcomed over 150 participants on Friday, March 23.

Co-chaired by the Armenian Engineers and Scientists of America (New York-New Jersey) and the Armenian American Health Professionals Organization and sponsored by the Armenian Bar Association, Armenian International Women’s Association (NJ Affiliate) and Armenian Network of America (Greater NY region), the overflowing crowd consisted of professionals and high school and college students,

who were welcomed by Vahan Tanal, P.E., founding member of the AESA-NY-NJ.

“We have expanded from only a handful of students eight years ago into this large crowd,” said Tanal, who co-chaired the event. “Some of you were mentored as students and now serve as mentors.”

Co-Chair Dr. Garbis Baydar of the Armenian Health Professionals Organization welcomed and thanked all the organizers and sponsors while providing inspirational words to the evening’s mentees, encouraging them to “make good use of this evening.”

“Our main intention is to help you achieve your goals,” said Baydar. “You should have dreams and goals and work hard to achieve them because successful people are the ones who work the hardest.”

The forum covered a range of career tracks, including engineering, health, finance, law, real estate, sciences and the arts, with participating mentors who would be available year-round for advice and guidance.

New board member Samuel Armen, a teacher and writer, served as a mentor during the evening and in his remarks noted that events like the forum “are about empowering one another and giving purpose and significance to the lives we lead.”

see AESA, page 6



The Planning Committee of the 8th Annual Mentoring & Networking Forum

## Yerevan Women’s Support Center Director Matosian Discusses Efforts to Combat Domestic Violence

By Aram Arkun

Mirror-Spectator Staff

WATERTOWN – Violence toward women is more prevalent than thought in Armenia, and in the diaspora it is one of the unfortunate legacies inherited from Ottoman (Turkish) Armenia. On March 16, a large number of Boston-area Armenians came together in support of efforts to combat this violence through the Women’s Support Center (WSC) of Yerevan. Maro Matosian, founder and executive director of the WSC, was the main speaker at the event held at the Armenian American Social Club (Papken Suni Agoump).

Matosian, born in Romania, emigrated to the US in 1973, and studied art history. After living in a number of countries, she relocated to Armenia in 1991. There she worked nine years as country director of the Aznavour for Armenia Fund and, starting in 2006, another nine years as country director for the Tufenkian Foundation, while she established the WSC in 2010.

The fundraiser and informational evening was organized by three women in the Boston area, Lenna Garibian, Yelena Bisharyan and Martha Mensoian, under the name Friends of the WSC. Garibian, professionally a brand strategist who works as associate director of C



Maro Matosian

Space, opened the evening. She related that visiting the center over the summer with her sister turned out to be a moving experience which convinced her to support it. She said she was impressed that “The staff has created an environment that is incredibly efficient, structured, well-run. It is clean, but it is also warm, loving and inclusive. It is an amazing place.” The staff there personally take risks in their work and is forced to operate secretly. Nonetheless, Garibian said, they were incredibly optimistic.

Garibian challenged the narrative that domestic violence activism destroys the fabric of society in Armenia. Instead, she stressed that society has to protect those who are most vulnerable. In her eyes, she said, Armenian society was behind the West by at least several decades since women in Armenia were facing conditions similar to those of women in the United States in the 1960s and 1970s. And, she said, despite all the progress in the United States, women here continue to face problems today in striving for their rights.

Garibian introduced Dr. Antranig Kasbarian, a lecturer, activist and Armenian Revolutionary Federation leader who used to be editor of the *Armenian Weekly*. With a doctorate in geography focused on Artsakh from Rutgers University, he joined the Tufenkian Foundation in 2003 and served as executive director until 2015. He continues to work at this foundation as a trustee and development of development. The Tufenkian Foundation was one of the  
see WSC, page 7





# Professionals Reach out to Mentor Students at Fordham Networking Forum

AESA, from page 5

During the three-hour event, professionals remained in their allotted stations as students approached them about their fields and careers, seeking knowledge and asking questions about their work experiences.

"The importance of the annual Mentoring Forum to the Armenian community is indisputable," said mentor, engineer and AESA NY-

work environments. It's through positive and effective events such as the mentoring forum that a clear path of study and support can open up to students.

"I met with many accomplished Armenians and engineering mentors and learned a lot about the profession," said student Sevag Mkhitarian. "I appreciate that the mentors want to help the younger generations, develop con-



Introductions: Vahan Tanal, PE, welcomes everyone to the event

NJ President, Allen Berber. "Giving this opportunity to students to meet directly with professionals does not occur very often, and opens their eyes to what possibilities are out there."

Indeed, studies have shown that young professionals aren't receiving the coaching and mentoring needed for them to thrive in their

nections and initiate their transition from high school or college into finding jobs."

Echoing similar sentiments, student Natalie Vandian said the forum was "very helpful" and gave her the chance to learn more about the business field and ultimately helped her decide to enroll in business classes.

Students were encouraged to speak to experienced leaders in the field to gain more insight and make connections, which was also beneficial to the mentors, such as Lori Takooshian-Dondiego. A professional in the Finance and IT field, Takooshian-Dondiego advised students on how to apply for intern-



Mentors and mentees gather at Fordham University's School of Business

ship positions and after meeting with a finance student offered him a summer internship at her company.

"Not only was each mentee curious to learn from the mentors, but the mentors each were eager to help in any way they could," said Anoush Baghdassarian, a student at Claremont McKenna College who attended the forum for the first time. "It made the event a truly special one and brought the Armenian community of NY and NJ even closer."

Meeting and connecting with professionals in the greater New York City area on a local level helped create the foundations for a long-term mentor and mentee relationship, where both the students and mentors can widen their professional and personal networks. By creating a mentoring culture, the AESA-NY-NJ contributes on a professional level to the Armenian community, which drew the attention of the sponsoring organizations.

"Time and again we have seen the need among attending Mentees, largely left unfilled

by today's academia, become abundantly and capably filled to capacity and beyond by the eager Mentors," said attorney and mentor Denise G. Darmanian of the Armenian Bar Association. "It is an honor and a privilege for the Armenian Bar Association to participate as a co-sponsor in this visionary initiative that opens the doors of higher learning to our Armenian youth."

Host Harold Takooshian, professor of psychology and urban studies at Fordham University, who has been involved in the forums since its founding, remarked on the success of the event, which symbolized a greater meaning.

"There was an attempt to eradicate our ancestors in 1915," said Takooshian. "But take a look at this room today." As a thank you to the organizers and sponsors of the event, Takooshian presented each group with official certificates from Fordham University.

Following the event, mentors and mentees gathered at the Library Bar to socialize and continue their conversations.

## WBAI Radio Broadcasting Program Commemorating Armenian Genocide

NEW YORK – On April 24, WBAI (99.5 FM) will present Anoush Ter Taulian's radio show, "Indigenous Armenians Commemorating the 1915 Armenian Genocide" from 4 to 5 p.m. It can be livestreamed or archived.

Ter Taulian, an Artsakh war veteran, will be interviewing Talin Spenjian on the effects of Turkish denial of the Armenian Genocide, Irene Tatanyan on healing from intergenerational trauma, and Garen Spenjian on the Socially Relevant film festival film "Armenians of the World."

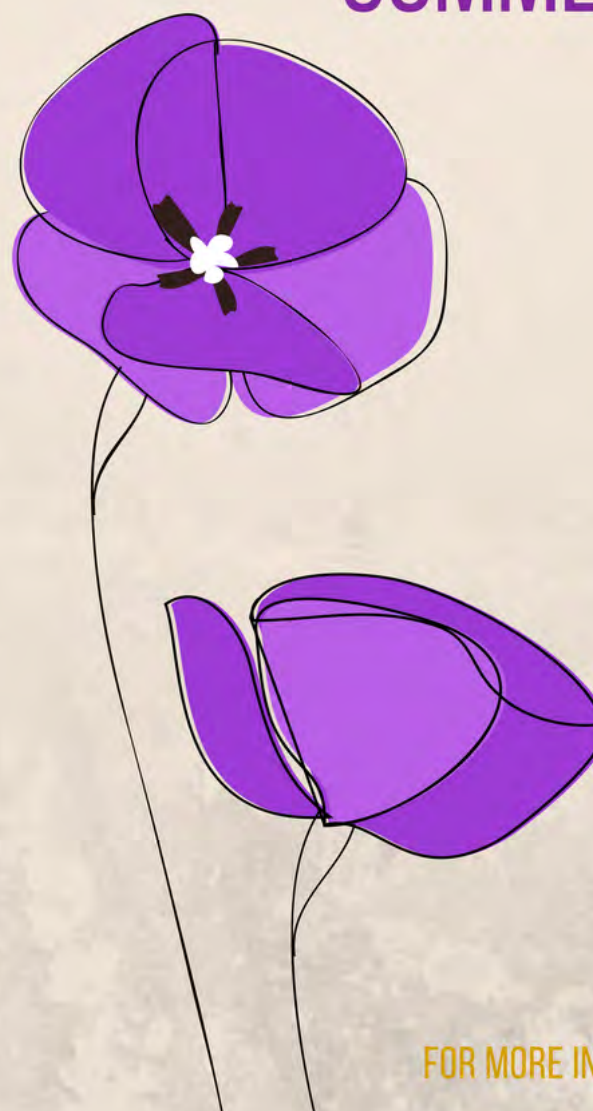
Producer Ter Taulian says "At the University of California Berkeley in the 1970s I interviewed many Armenian Genocide survivors who were witnesses to Armenians being tortured, beheaded, burned alive in churches or forced into death marches into the Syrian desert by the Ottoman Turks. The Armenian student association put up a photo exhibit in the campus library for April 24, the worldwide day of remembrance of the 1915 Armenian Genocide. The Turkish consulate called and threatened to sue, saying the Armenians were presenting lies, so my university caved in and took down the exhibit.

"I went to KPFA to speak out and it is now 45 years I have been able to speak political truth on Pacifica that the Turks deny killing 2 million Armenians and stealing our land. Eastern Turkey is really Occupied Western Armenia. Stolen Armenian wealth helped build modern Turkey, which doesn't want to pay reparations. Our sacred Mt. Ararat, Lake Van and most of our land is under Turkish control.

"I am an Artsakh (Nagorno Karabagh) war veteran, having volunteered in the struggle to liberate Armenian colonized land from Azerbaijan. At WBAI I found support and people who knew where Artsakh was. Sduduzo Kambili, a South African producer, saw how the trumped-up Boer Genocide was similar to the trumped up phony Azeri genocide.

"In an era where many governments want to diminish freedom of the press, at WBAI little-known freedom struggles can still be heard! The public can find out that Azerbaijan which get millions of US taxpayers money, is still not allowing Armenians in Artsakh to live in peace.

# 103<sup>RD</sup> ARMENIAN GENOCIDE COMMEMORATIVE WEEKEND



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## COMMUNITY NEWS

# Yerevan Women's Support Center Director Matosian Discusses Efforts to Combat Domestic Violence

WSC, from page 5  
organizational founders of WSC in 2010 together with the Armenian International Women's Association (AIWA) and the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). Kasbarian also happens to be Matosian's husband.

Kasbarian noted that Armenia is constantly changing. Instead of looking to the government, as in the Soviet period, as the source of all ills or remedies, people are beginning to become involved in social movements for change. Though he said there is no true working class movement, there are small embers. He

authorities are acknowledging that these are social concerns.

He revealed that the WSC started with seed money of about \$50,000 annually, and praised former US Ambassador to Armenia Marie Yovanovitch, who pushed the bureaucrats at USAID to co-fund the project. USAID funding only continued for two years, until Yovanovitch was transferred to the Ukraine.

Kasbarian concluded, "That small experiment [WSC] has turned into probably the best run women's service provider in Armenian today, certainly with regard to domestic violence."

Matosian, after thanking her Boston-area organizers, provided an overview of domestic violence and its aftereffects, and gave a concise history of recent developments in the US beginning with the Anita Hill case in 1991. She pointed out that it is a problem globally and occurs in all social classes. The feminist movement in the US combatted it and its achievements can be applied to Armenia, she explained.

Matosian illustrated her talk with slides and depicted patriarchy in action in Armenia. People there still believe, she said, that women are still considered as less intelligent while men must be the leaders of society. Soap operas are one example of popular culture's understanding of women. Women are depicted in them as weak, cheated, and hysterical and face frequent violence from men. Advertisements in Armenian media replicate such stereotypes.

Armenian politicians on Women's Day, March 8, issue statements stressing procreation, obedience, and beauty as important aspects of women's lives. Nobody mentions women's intellect, creativity, or leadership abilities. On the other hand, Matosian gave examples of violence emerging in various incidents involving politicians, who slap or hit women in public.

Matosian declared that domestic violence is fed by patriarchy, gender stereotypes and cultural violence, and all three exist in Armenia. According to the OSCE and Amnesty International, one in four women in Armenia experience domestic violence, while sixty percent report domestic abuse. Furthermore, other studies show that a majority of Armenians justify such abuse.

To change this situation, the WSC, Matosian said, works to empower women through its safe house, legal assistance, psychological counseling, employment assistance and victim education. It tries to educate communities and in particular journalists, social workers and police officers. Finally, it attempts to engage stakeholders to make systemic changes in Armenia. Just helping individual victims will not change the overall situation, Matosian said.

At this point, Matosian screened a short video about the work of the center prepared in 2015, for the center's fifth anniversary. It included testimony of some survivors of violence who explained how the center helped them, allowing them, and in some cases their children, to fashion happy healthy lives.

Afterwards, Matosian provided further details. The women's safehouse, she said, is in a confidential location and serves 40-50 women and children annually. Women usually stay up to three months. In 2017, 2,024 telephone calls were fielded, and 307 women were helped there. Seventy-three percent enjoy lives free of abuse afterwards. This figure, Matosian explained, was high even for the US, but it was because the women know that if they went back to their abusers they would be killed. In addition, 57 percent of WSC clients were able to find employment.

The center promotes activism, because, as she said in Armenian, the crying baby gets the milk. For example, when maternity leave was being cut in a ministry, women and their babies protested, and 20,000 signatures were collected within a week, so this cut was retracted. Another time, polyclinics were going to stop giving free vaccines and medical care to young children up to seven years old but women activists got this retracted too after protests.

Maro portrayed other positive changes in Armenian society. In 2014, the police created a domestic violence department, meaning that for the first time the Armenian state recognized

through its very title that domestic violence exists in Armenia. The police who initially would state that women are provoking men now are beginning to understand the seriousness of the situation.

A domestic violence law was passed early this year due both to activism "from below," and European Union pressure "from above" as part of its conditions for partnership with Armenia. This law provides for training, shelter, protective orders, and the confidentiality of the victim, but, Matosian pointed out, also has gaps, most important of which is the lack of criminalization of the abuser's acts. Furthermore, insult or "betrayal" of the abuser will diminish any punishment. Mediation is demanded by this law, but the two parties are not equal in power, so this is not helpful. Matosian hopes this law will be improved over time, as took place under similar circumstances in neighboring Georgia.

Interestingly, a Russian foundation backed by the Russian government was funding a campaign in Armenia against the law. During the discussion session, Matosian said that it was part of measures to resist rapprochement of Armenian society with the West. They spread false news such as that children would be taken away from their parents and their organs would be sold, or not allowing children to eat ice cream would be considered abuse.

The Armenian Church, Matosian said, initially opposed the law, but changed its stance when the Armenian government itself changed and started supporting passage of the law.

Matosian declared that other Armenian women's organizations never went public with their cases domestically, but WSC had two prominent successes which had become major public cases and positive examples. Mariam Gevorgyan was a young woman from a poor family who married a rich fellow villager who had moved to St. Petersburg, Russia. When she came to her new home, the husband's family took away her passport, and exposed her to severe abuse and even mutilation, primarily through her mother-in-law. Though kept in isolation, her screams concerned the neighbors so much that she was sent back to Armenia.

Now 20, she wanted justice and went through a one-year court trial, with WSC support. The husband was pardoned on president's day, but her mother-in-law was caught and received three years in prison.

The second big public case was that of Hasmik Khachatryan, who appeared in the WSC fifth anniversary video. Her mother-in-law was a famous fortune teller in favor with the Armenian oligarchy. Consequently, the mother-in-law thought she would easily win the trial against the younger woman, but it received a lot of publicity, including from the international community, as well as protests. Khachatryan went on to have success with a small business baking traditional Armenian sweets, and received recognition in 2017 from the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) of Armenia for her willpower, courage and her achievements.

Matosian said the center now has an annual budget of \$153,000. Seventy-two percent goes directly to services and medical care for women and children, training sessions and printing. Annual revenues are \$145,000 a year.

International grants are not very constant, so it relies primarily on support from the Tufenkian Foundation, AIWA and individual donors. It costs \$1,035 to keep a mother and two children for two months in a shelter. That cost includes food, medical care as well as police security.

Matosian concluded with a call for diasporans to work to keep officials in Armenia accountable for their actions. The lack of full participation of Armenian women, who form the majority of the population now, in the economy weakens the country, she said, whereas if there is gender equality, Armenian society would also become more democratic.

After her presentation, Matosian responded to a wide variety of questions from the audience.

Donors can find out about the WSC at its website (<http://www.womensupportcenter.org>) and donate through the Tufenkian Foundation.



Lenna Garibian



Dr. Antranig Kasbarian

Kasbarian remarked on the evolution of diasporan attitudes toward Armenia. Initially after independence, Armenia was seen, he said, as a "basket case" requiring emergency aid, but over time, more assistance programs work toward long-term rehabilitative and developmental assistance, helping people to help themselves. The diaspora, he said, has a lot more than money to give, and can be proactive in dealing with Armenia.

gave examples of activism in protection of parks, against illegal mining and opposition to price hikes in public transportation which have achieved a degree of success.

The WSC is another example. In less than eight years, it brought women's rights, gender equality and the issue of domestic violence into the public limelight. These used to be considered household private problems, Kasbarian said, but now, even if grudgingly, the public



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## COMMUNITY NEWS

# Retired Calif. Supreme Court Justice Arabian Dies

TARZANA, Calif. (*Metropolitan News-Enterprise*) – Armand Arabian, who served on the California Supreme Court from 1990 to 1996, and before that on the Los Angeles Municipal Court, the Los Angeles Superior Court, and the Court of Appeal, died on March 28, after suffering from ill health following the death of his wife, Nancy Arabian, two years ago. He was 83.

They had been wed for 54 years.

Although Arabian penned 99 majority opinions for the high court, he is best known for a ruling in 1973 as a Superior Court judge. Arabian declined to give the mandatory instruction that the testimony of an alleged rape victim was to be viewed with caution.

The defendant was convicted and appealed on the basis of that refusal. Affirming, the California Supreme Court said, in a 1975 opinion by Chief Justice Donald Wright (since deceased) in *People v. Rincon-Pineda*:

“The trial judge was of the opinion that a once unimpeachable rule of law could not appropriately be applied to circumstances such as those present herein. Because he considered it to be demeaning of the victim in the instant case, the judge refused to deliver to the jury a cautionary instruction which originated in the 17th century and which reflects adversely on the credibility of the complaining witness in a prosecution for sexual assault. The judge’s failure to so instruct the jury is the sole objection before us on this appeal. We have previously held the instruction in issue to be mandatory, and the omission of the instruction was accordingly erroneous. However, upon reviewing the evidence before the jury we conclude that the error was not prejudicial. Moreover, we are of the opinion that as presently worded the instruction is inappropriate regardless of the particular evidence which might be adduced at trial.”

Former Los Angeles County District Attorney Robert H. Philibosian, now of counsel to Sheppard Mullin, said Arabian’s decision not to give the “centuries old so-called cautionary instruction in a rape case was a massive advance for the rights of rape victims,” adding: “He continued to fight and win for rape victims’ rights through his judicial opinions on the Court of Appeal and the California Supreme Court and his scholarly and impassioned arti-

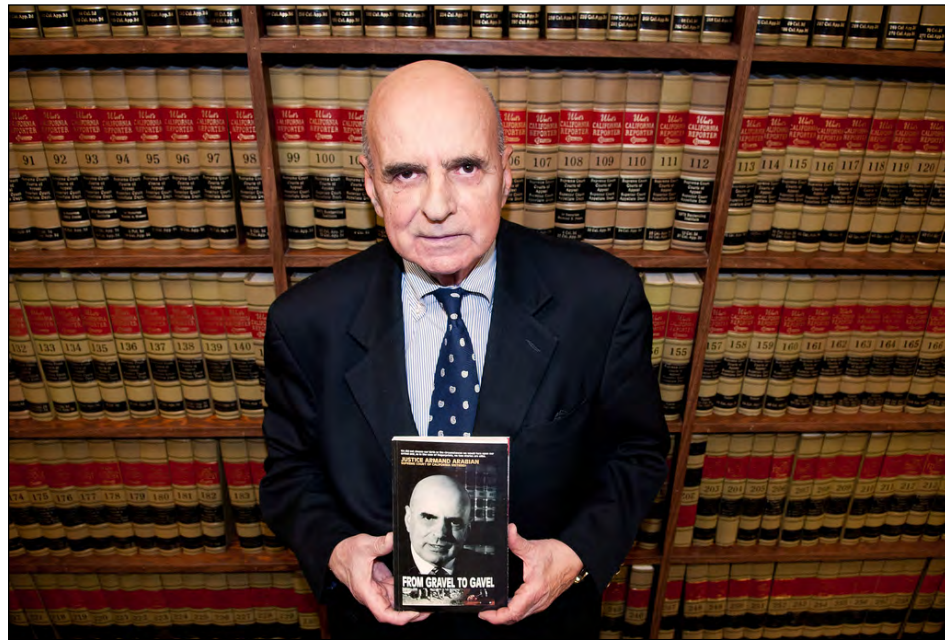
cles in many publications.”

Philibosian termed Arabian “a bold and courageous judge.”

He reflected: “I am shocked and greatly saddened at Armand’s passing. Shocked because he was such a vital and vigorous person and saddened because he was such a loyal friend and mentor to me. His persona was ‘larger than life.’

“Armand was a brilliant legal mind wrapped in a high moral character. His devotion to his family, his friends, his community and the law is legend.

“When former Governor George Deukmejian first ran for the State Assembly, Armand was one of his earliest and most ardent supporters.



That friendship of those two men who would become Governor and Supreme Court Justice has benefited generations of Californians.

“On a more closely personal note, we were neighbors in Tarzana. When Armand was a Superior Court Judge and I was a deputy district attorney in the Van Nuys Courthouse, we would sometimes carpool and converse on myriads of topics. When we were not commuting together I would sometimes see Armand in his white Corvette speeding along ahead of me.

“We send our heartfelt condolences to his

children, Allison and Robert, and our boundless thanks to them and their dear departed mother, Nancy, for sharing Armand with all of us.”

## Chief Justice’s Tribute

Chief Justice Tani Cantil-Sakauye said on March 29: “Associate Justice Armand Arabian made a significant contribution to the courts, having served on the bench at every level during his judicial career spanning more than four decades. During his time on the Supreme Court of California, he authored a substantial number of opinions. He was a vibrant and engaging person.”

Court of Appeal Presiding Justice Norman Epstein of this district’s Div. Four reflected: “I’ll miss Armand Arabian. Affable, astute, and artic-

although on several occasions we interpreted the law through different lenses. He made a lasting impression as a trial court judge, and as an appellate and Supreme Court Justice. He challenged us to think carefully about our positions on the law and the implication of our decisions.

“Armand, may your rest in peace. You made a difference.”

## Braun Comments

Attorney Brent Braun, a longtime friend of Arabian, hailed the jurist as “a giant in the legal world,” noting: “He once wrote a footnote to a parental rights child custody case which later was adopted for codification in our California statutes.”

“Armand will be missed for his legal excellence, wit, blunt and straightforward demeanor, remaining respectful and of course a great sense of humor.”

Retired U.S. District Court Judge Dickran Tevzian said: “I lost a good friend and mentor. The legal profession lost a leader and trailblazer.”

## Alpert’s Reflections

Lee Kanon Alpert, an attorney, mediator and civic leader, remarked: “He truly was the man’s man in the activities he partook in, from jumping out of planes, for the hell of it with the Israeli paratroopers, to his strong and unfiltered approach in public statements as to what he did and did not believe in. Armand loved all people and loved them strongly. He was a man of great courage in his belief’s which included his love of America, Armenia, his actions taken by showing his courage and creating new laws to protect women and their rights, by refusing to go along with the antiquated, denigrating and biased laws and jury instructions of the past involving the rape of women. He was a true advocate for all. One of Armand’s greatest attributes, was his truly letting you know what he believed in and where he stood in policy, politic, people, etc. He also let you know in no uncertain terms where you stood with him!

Arabian was born in New York City to parents who had emigrated from Armenia. He was the eldest of five children.

He received his law degree from Boston University Law School in 1961 and upon passing the California bar exam the following year, moved here and became a Los Angeles County deputy district attorney – one of only 50 at the time.

After a year, Arabian went into private practice as a criminal defense attorney. He was appointed to the Los Angeles Municipal Court in 1972 by Gov. Ronald Reagan, and elevated by Reagan to the Superior Court a year later.

He was elevated to the Court of Appeal in 1983 by Gov. George Deukmejian. It was his second appointment to that court.

In 1979, when Gov. Jerry Brown was out of state, then-Lieutenant Gov. Mike Curb appointed him – an appointment which Brown rescinded upon his return. The California Supreme Court upheld Brown’s power to do so.

Deukmejian appointed him to the California Supreme Court in 1990.

Arabian is survived by his daughter Allison Arabian, an Orange County attorney, and son Robert Armand Arabian, a police commander and attorney, and by four grandchildren, two sisters and a brother.

Services will be private.

## Justice Gilbert’s Homage

Presiding Court of Appeal Justice Arthur Gilbert of this district’s Div. Six offered these words: “Armand Arabian was sui generis. I knew him going back to the 1960s when he was a scrappy, fearless criminal defense attorney, vigorously defending his clients. He had no compunctions telling DAs and judges when he thought they were wrong on the law, or anything else.

“We both belonged to the San Fernando Bar Association and used to trade war stories over a drink at bar meetings. We were even co-counsel on a case. During the trial Armand took over the courtroom. I did, however, manage to ask some questions.

“I was under the impression Armand was an uncompromising liberal. I was set straight when he became a judge. He was a tough on sentencing, but gave all sides a fair trial. In that sense, ‘uncompromising’ fairness is a ‘fair’ appraisal.”

“Armand and I shared impressions, and stories as colleagues on the Court of Appeal,

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## COMMUNITY NEWS

# Sahakyan Declares Azerbaijani Refugees Can Live Peacefully in Artsakh Republic

BAKO, from page 1

history, the Artsakh Republic's delegation was in the US House of Representatives and worked to deepen the already existing relations with the United States.

Sahakyan said that although no meetings took place with the US State Department this time, preparations have been made so that hopefully during a future meeting such meetings can occur.

Sahakyan appreciated the ongoing diplomatic efforts of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) Minsk Group, of which the United States is a member. He said, "We understand that the international community in the person of the Minsk Group is concerned with finding a solution to this complicated issue. However, the Minsk Group's interest is not sufficient. Our profound conviction is that the non-constructive, extremist, bellicose position of one of the parties, Azerbaijan, toward this issue is the obstruction which we are unable to overcome to achieve more serious agreements."

He also said that for the peace process to be successful, Artsakh must be one of the full parties or "sides" in negotiations along with Armenia and Azerbaijan, as was initially agreed upon at the 1994 Budapest OSCE summit, and that Artsakh continues to do whatever is in its power to restore that format.

The situation of refugees in the region is often raised in international circles. Sahakyan said, "At present, it is Azerbaijani refugees that are chiefly talked about. We naturally are in favor of talking not only about Azerbaijani refugees but also about Armenian refugees." Sahakyan declared, concerning Azerbaijanis who used to live in Artsakh and who may wish to regain control of their properties, "We have said on multiple occasions over the course of recent years that Azerbaijani refugees naturally can return to Artsakh, to the Artsakh Republic, if they recognize its jurisdiction."

He said that while no such applications have

occurred so far, "if such applications take place, we will process them in accordance with the delineated norms and laws and present our conclusions and answers."

When asked to describe the highlights of his achievements as president, Sahakyan modestly answered, "I cannot say that I am satisfied with



President Bako Sahakyan, at right, speaking with Mirror journalist Aram Arkun

the work that we did [in recent years], because there is always the necessity of doing more than what you do," and stressed that it is up to the populace to evaluate the activities of its governmental representative.

He spoke of the goals of his government, the first of which is to ensure the safety of its population. Secondly, the destruction caused by war with Azerbaijan requires extra effort for restoration, while the government simultaneously must attempt to establish the precondi-

tions for greater socio-economic development. Education, he said, is particularly important for the latter, while the successes of the artists and athletes living in Artsakh, serve to inspire the people. The most important fields being developed in the economy are agriculture, energy (hydroelectrical in particular thanks to the

done." Participation and aid from abroad was important during the Artsakh liberation movement, and continues to be important for Artsakh today, he said.

Sahakyan expressed hopes that Russian-American relations, now going through a period of increased tensions, would improve, as, he said, these were not only important for Artsakh and Armenians, but for the political and economic well-being of the entire world.

Of course Sahakyan was not always a president, or even a military leader. When he was in his twenties, in the Soviet period (1983-87), Sahakyan worked as part of a team for the preservation of historical and cultural monuments, in which Artsakh is very rich. This work was ultimately controlled from the center of the Soviet Azerbaijani government in Baku, which he said, "created some difficulties for us." Nonetheless, some maintenance and restoration projects were successfully carried out, including at the Gandzasar monastery complex and in Shushi.

Dadivank Monastery could not be accessed then since this complex was under the tight supervision of the Azerbaijanis. Today there are no such obstacles, the president remarked, and large numbers of specialists are working on a variety of projects, including the excavation of the ruins of the Hellenistic city of Tigranakert, which were discovered in 2005.

Sahakyan joined the Artsakh self-defense forces in 1990, and quickly rose in rank to deputy commander of the Committee of Defense Forces (1992) and then rear staff commander of the army (1993). During the period of the fighting for Artsakh's independence, concomitantly Sahakyan managed to study law at Artsakh State University.

Many years later, after the establishment of an armistice, Sahakyan became interior minister of the independent republic from 1999 to 2001, and head of the National Security Service, with the rank of major-general, from 2001 to 2007, after which he was elected to his first term as president.

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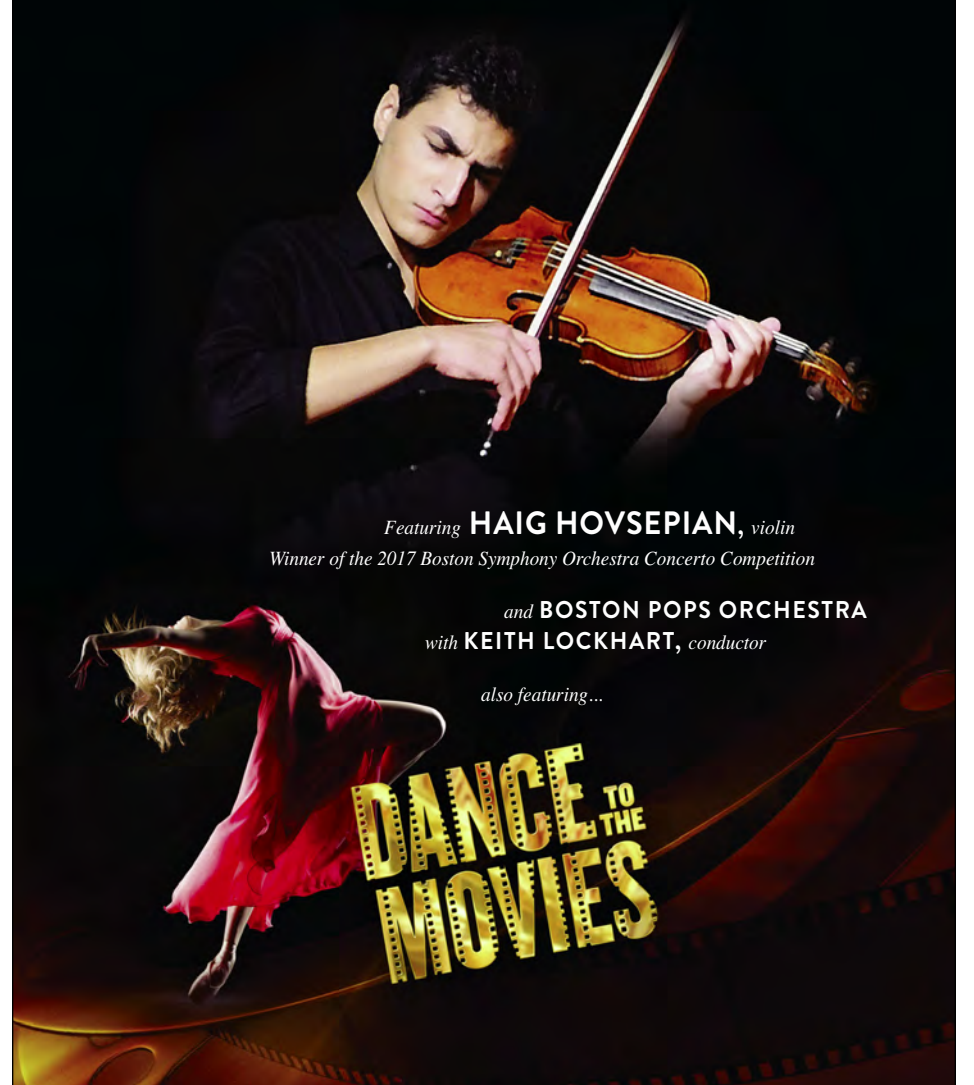
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COMMUNITY NEWS

# Field of Dreams in Suburban Detroit

By Matt Harding

ALPENA, Mich. (*RePlay Magazine*) – One can’t help but wonder if Arzo Amusement Park creator Mike Arzoumanian (known as Mike Arzo) heard voices like Kevin Costner’s character did in the beloved baseball film, “Field of Dreams.” However he found his inspiration, one thing’s clear, Arzo definitely had some sort of calling to build such an expansive attraction in Alpena, Mich. When Arzo opened his facility



Mike Arzoumanian (Arzo)

nearly a decade ago, the amusements novice really hadn’t had the idea to open an “amusement park” at all. (He runs Arzo Electronics, an IT company in the Detroit suburb of Southfield, that he’s helmed for more than 25 years.)

Arzo purchased a six-acre property in the tourist town of Alpena, Mich., with a dilapidated mini-golf course and driving range. He intended to update the driving range, but that was it. “For me, it was just to be a place for taking a break and enjoying the golf range,” Arzo said, noting that he’d been drawn to northern Michigan’s beauty. However, it wasn’t long before Arzo started conjuring up images of a full-blown amusement park for his new property complete with rides, games and centerpieces like a Ferris wheel, carousel and roller coaster. Today, Arzo Amusement Park has over 100 acres! With those ideas came the work -- and lots of it -- which began with restoring the golf range and building a completely new mini-golf course, after scrapping the old one. “I ended up designing something new and everyone loved what I did,” Arzo said. From there, it continued. Arzo purchased more property and put in a go-kart track, using used go-karts they get from Oregon-based J&J Amusements.

At a length of 1,250 feet, Arzo boasts that it’s the longest track in the state of Michigan.

“Everybody got excited to have go karts and mini-golf,” he said. “I have a passion for it.”

Arzo calls his amusement business a small extension of himself that “grew very fast.” He continued to scoop up adjacent property for the park over time, installing various attractions along the way, and he shows no signs of slowing down. The first big thing, other than the go-kart track, was a Ferris wheel. He laughed that it’s been his biggest investment to date, but has brought the lowest return. Still, he said, “That’s the symbol of the amusement park. That’s what makes it an ‘amusement park.’”

Contrary to what you would expect from someone building a business, he added, “I didn’t open Arzo Park to make money.” Interestingly, he runs it as a “free entry” park and employs a pay-per-ride system. And even

though making money wasn’t his dream, the business does do that, too.

“The heart of the money making is always the go-karts,” said Arzo, adding that his bumper cars and mini-golf would be a distant second and third.

He said go-karts make up about 45 percent of revenue while bumper cars and mini-golf equate for about 20 percent of the business together. The remaining 35 percent is divided among the other attractions. Those include some space-themed attractions like a space-ship simulator, along with Gravitron and Orbitron rides.

There is also Arzo’s prized carousel which he bought at a Las Vegas trade show in 2013 for \$280,000. It’s a hand-painted, Venetian-inspired ride crafted in Argentina and for Arzo, it was a dream come true.

Growing up poor in Armenia, he recalled how important it was to him as a child when he was offered a free carousel ride. On the amusement game side, Arzo Park has a mix of old and new titles (over 70 video games and two pins), but hasn’t gone the way of redemption just yet.

Mike Arzo is putting his technical background to use, working to implement a new (and patent-pending) mobile redemption system of his own that would track redemption points and such from a cellphone. While Arzo’s own dreams have fueled his passion, it’s the interest in his business from others that also help to keep things new and exciting at the park, which is open from Memorial Day to Labor Day and employs about 30 people.

“With all the demands and inquiries, people



have pushed us to bring back a drive-in movie theater,” he said, which should be ready to go by next summer. “When I am making you happy, I am happier than you are,” he said.

Also new next season will be soccer fields to go along with a baseball field added last year, Arzo said. The space for the soccer fields will be capable of holding about six professional sized pitches or about 16 small ones. That area of the park will then be called Arzo Sports & Fun Park, while the rides and amusements section will still be called Arzo Amusement Park.

And if you thought there’s nothing else that could possibly be added, Mike Arzo would tell you he’s in the works to prove you wrong. He has plans for a cottage-style resort with a water park. He’s started negotiations to bring restaurants to the site as well. Whatever makes people happy, Arzo’s probably thinking about adding it to his dream park.

More information about the ever-expanding site is available at [www.arzopark.com](http://www.arzopark.com).

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## COMMUNITY NEWS

# Bravo for Nazo as He Reaches for the Stars in Film and Music

NAZO, from page 1

caught in a deadly vertigo with no one to trust, Sam and Jesse find themselves running from police detectives, the Mob and a dirty sheriff who wants him dead.

He has enjoyed a long collaboration with Stephen C. Sepher, the writer, director and co-producer of the movie.

The film is “not a remake” but “inspired” by the Hollywood 1949 noir classic “DOA.” (A remake of “DOA” was released in 1988, starring Dennis Quaid.)

## Start with Passion, Add Hard Work

During a recent interview he said his journey into the artistic world “started with a passion and interest. Next, he said, anyone interested in the field needs to get a dedicated and resourceful and good people “you can trust” around them.

The path is not a certain one.

“If you’re a doctor, it is a definite path” but as an artist, he said, “there is no guarantee you will get where you get.”

And any words of advice for those who want to follow his footsteps?

After passion comes perseverance, he said. “Just keep building,” he said. “What person in their right minds would do it for 10 years without a profit?”

“You have to be passionate and really believe in yourself,” he said.

Bravo is a co-producer for “Dead on Arrival,” which means that he was involved in every aspect of filmmaking, from pre-production and location scouting to post-production, casting and helping with the crew and “all these different steps go smoothly.”

Now he is involved with the marketing of the movie, taking it to many film festivals.

Bravo related that Sepher was scouting locations in rural Louisiana for another movie, about an hour outside New Orleans, in deep swamp lands, and was inspired by the landscape which “lends itself to mystery and mystique” to write the screenplay.

“It’s a whole new set of characters, with an American-Armenian detective and his partner guy from the south and not too familiar with Armenians,” he explained. The dynamic between the two characters offers some light moments in an otherwise serious and moody movie.

In the film, he plays Detective Naroyan. “Whenever I can I will represent our culture in a positive way,” Bravo said. “It is important to make good, entertaining movies with good stories,” he said.

The film will be shown in theaters in New York and Los Angeles and will be widely available on Amazon, PlayStation and cable as well, with streaming and international showings.

He has appeared on “Vigilante Diaries,” “Armenia, My Love” and the gritty, critical favorite TV series “Southland” with Regina King and Ben McKenzie.

Bravo first started trying to go into music.

“Something naturally attracted me to hip hop,” he said. “I was organically drawn to it but I have no training in music, no uncle in the business. I started from zero and I bow my head down along the way and learn.”

He said what many of the artists he admires have in common is sticking to their vision through thick and thin. “It is not easy,” he said.

He tries to merge his twin loves of movies and music whenever possible. He has a song on the soundtrack of “Dead on Arrival,” titled *The Money*, credited to his real name, Nazaret Aslanian.

He has also performed on the soundtracks of “Aram Aram,” the song *Before I Die*, credited to N. Aslanian and on the “Vigilante Diaries,” “Focus,” “Armenian America” (The Anthem) among others as Nazaret Aslanian.

He is working on *Burn Up and Up*, an LA anthem of sorts, which he expects to release soon.

Now, with millions of streams online as a rapper, Bravo has worked with established artists like E-40 and Jonn Hart and performed at venues such as the House of Blues and The Troubadour.

He said artists like the late Tupac, as well as Ice T and Ice Cube, are his inspirations, since they not only excel in rap, but also moved on to film.

Rap is close to his heart. One of his current favorites is Kendrick Lamar, whom he met a couple of years ago. “He is really kind and humble. He gave me a lot of advice,” he recalled.

He also expressed his admiration for Drake, saying “he is at the top of his game,” as well as

as artists. As a filmmaker, there are bigger roles. Telling a story on multiple levels. I really enjoy that.”

Now he is producing another movie for which he is scouting locations in Bulgaria.

## Growing up Armenian in LA



Nazo Bravo

Chris Brown, noting, “despite all the controversy, he is a great performer.”

“In the same way in music that no one gives you anything, I took the same approach” about acting, he said.

While Bravo is interested in the arts and self-expression, he is a realist who knows that making it in show business is very hard.

“In LA I had a pretty Armenian upbringing,” he said.

Bravo has three sisters and his family, he said, “is a typical Armenian family” to whom he is very close.

“Family is very important to me. It is hard for me to imagine doing this without their support,” he said.

He attended Armenian school until eighth grade and thus learned how to read and write Armenian.

Bravo said that his dad grew up in a blue color environment and developed a strong work ethic. “Work hard and shut up,” he recalled his father sharing with him. He held two jobs to support his family. After graduating from the University of California at Irvine, Bravo headed into the corporate world and realized a while later that it was not for him.

He lives many miles away from his family’s birthplace of Armenia but his heart is close to the land of his ancestors. He recalled that three years ago he went for the first time to Armenia, to the house where his father grew up. The fact that everyone spoke Armenian was an interesting change for him. He also performed his music there and was pleasantly surprised at how global the appeal of hip hop was. “It was the same elements regardless of language,” he said. It was a good experience of cross pollinations, he said.

After his publicity tour for “DOA” is over, Bravo said he would like to organize a tour, as well as put out more music.

For more information on the film, visit <http://DOAfilm.com> or to see the official trailer visit <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8jJ-kC-rq0Q>.

To hear his music, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qEdu4FSEo44> for the Power of the Hye music video filmed in Yerevan or

No Lie music video with Armenian speaking rappers Narek Mets Hayq and Red Light (filmed in Armenia) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dPLB0Rkly9k>.



Poster for “Dead on Arrival”

“I decided to make my own films to create opportunity,” he said.

He and frequent collaborator Sepher “share that mentality,” he added.

Sepher got his big break on with the 2015 film “Heist” which stars Robert De Niro. He wrote and co-produced the film, which received critical acclaim.

“Once you produce a film, it’s almost hard to imagine only wanting to be an actor,” Bravo said. “I don’t want to stop producing.”

Bravo added, “We are all storytellers as well

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## COMMUNITY NEWS

# St. Vartan Cathedral Celebrates Easter in Its 50th Year

EASTER, from page 5

doves were released, symbolizing the dispatching of Christ's apostles.

The godmother of this year's doves ceremony was Adrienne Alexanian: lifelong community activist and benefactor who continues a family tradition of church leadership begun by her parents. She recently published her late father Yervant Alexanian's memoir of survival during the 1915 massacres, *Forced into Genocide: Memoirs of Armenian Soldier in the Ottoman Army*.

The connection between survivors like her father and the cathedral remains an enduring source of inspiration for Alexanian. "St. Vartan Cathedral was built by survivors of the Armenian Genocide, and their memory will always live on here," she said. "It was a privilege for me to be godmother of the Release of Doves this Easter, and to sponsor the reception after badarak, in memory of the generation that endured and escaped the Genocide."

At the Easter reception in Haik and Alice Kavookjian Auditorium, Barsamian officiated over a home-blessing service. The faithful received nshkhars (blessed wafers) to take home, and the Antranig Dance Ensemble, in traditional Armenian costume, performed.

The St. Vartan Cathedral Choir sang the Divine Liturgy on Easter Sunday under the direction of Khoren Mekanejian. Kris Kalfayan accompanied on the organ.

The Easter Divine Liturgy and "Release of Doves" ceremony were broadcast live online. The program is archived and available for viewing on the Diocese's live-stream channel. The ceremony was also picked up by New York television and print news media.

Easter was preceded by Holy Week, which commemorates the dramatic events leading to the Resurrection of Jesus Christ.

At St. Vartan Cathedral on Palm Sunday, March 25, the Very Rev. Mamigon Kiledjian, cathedral dean, celebrated the Divine Liturgy and conducted the Turen-Patzek or "Door-Opening" service.

On March 29, Great and Holy Thursday, the Divine Liturgy was celebrated in the morning. In the evening, the "Washing of the Feet" ceremony was held, which reenacts Christ's humble service to his 12 disciples during the Last Supper.

The Order of the Crucifixion of Christ and the Order of the Entombment of the Lord (or Taghoom Service) were held on Great and Holy Friday, March 30. On Easter Eve, Saturday, March 31, students from local Armenian schools read from the Bible before the Divine Liturgy.



Adrienne Alexanian and Archbishop Khajag Barsamian release doves.



The faithful kiss the cross held by Archbishop Khajag Barsamian.



Archbishop Khajag Barsamian and deacons at St. Vartan Cathedral

## Trinity Men's Union Dinner/Meeting Guest Speaker to Address Financial Planning

CAMBRIDGE, Mass. — The Trinity Men's Union of Holy Trinity Armenian Church of Greater Boston will have as its guest speaker Nora Yousif, a certified financial planner, at its dinner/meeting on Monday, April 9, and welcomes the Greater Boston area community to attend.

Yousif is vice president at the Williams Investment Group and will speak about "Smart Money Moves for Smart Guys." She will discuss how to optimize Social Security benefits; review strategies to protect assets by making the most of old insurance policies, and review the estate planning documents. Lastly, she will cover investment pitfalls to avoid.

The dinner/meeting, which will begin with the social hour at 6 p.m., followed by a losh kebab and kheyma dinner at 7 p.m., will be held in the Charles and Nevart Talanian Cultural Hall of Holy Trinity Church, 145 Brattle Street.

Yousif is a third-generation financial advisor who is a renowned speaker on personal finance. She was recently honored as a top "40 Under 40" professional by Boston Business Journal in 2017. Her family team, which includes her 82-year-old grandfather, has been noted in the Boston Globe and Boston Magazine. She has presented on personal finance and investments to more than 50 Boston area organizations. She frequently contributes to TV and radio shows like NBC Boston News television, New England Cable Network, 1030Am Radio, Magic 106.7FM and Boston Herald Radio. She has also been published in Yahoo Finance, USA Today, Forbes and CNBC.com.

She works out of offices in Boston, Wellesley, Burlington and Easton. She has a Bachelor of Science degree in biology and mathematics from Providence College. She holds the series 7 and 66 licenses and is a Certified Financial Planner professional.

Donation for dinner is \$15. Reservations are required by emailing [tmuhtaac@gmail.com](mailto:tmuhtaac@gmail.com).



Nora Yousif



Armenian Students Association  
And Knights Of Vartan  
Presents A Panel On

## RECONCILIATION AFTER OPPRESSION: The Future of The Armenian Struggle

Tuesday, April 17, 2018

7:00 - 9:00 PM

Georgetown University

Car Barn, Room 204

3520 Prospect St NW, Washington, DC 20007

### Panelists:

Professor Gregory Stanton, Ph.D.

Professor Deborah Dwork, Ph.D.

Kate Nahapetian, Armenian Legal Center for Justice and Human Rights







# MIT Workshop on Feminist Armenian Studies Set for April 7

BOSTON – A pioneering all-day workshop at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) on Saturday, April 7, is scheduled to bring together an international cast of scholars to assess the current state of Armenian women's, gender, and sexuality studies.

Dr. Lerna Ekmekcioglu, professor of history at MIT, and her colleague, Dr. Melissa Bilal, visiting professor of Armenian Studies in the Department of Near Eastern Languages and

Civilizations at the University of Chicago, are the organizers of the workshop, which aims to bring into public and scholarly attention the absence of Armenians in Women and Gender Studies and the lack of a feminist perspective in Armenian Studies.

In announcing the workshop, the two scholars explain that their purpose is to “start a conversation around ways of studying gender and sexuality in Armenian communities in the past and in the present, and ways of introducing Armenian experience into feminist history and theory.” Their hope is to “open up a discussion around fresh theoretical and methodological paths that will bring these two fields together.”

In opening the workshop, the two organizers will present their own project, “Feminism in Armenian: An Interpretive Anthology and a Digital Archive,” in which they are collecting and making available the writings of 12

Western Armenian feminists, including Srpuhi Dzusap (1840-1901), Zabel Yesayan (1878-1943), Hayganush Mark (1883-1966) and Zaruhi Kalemkarian (1874-1971). Chair of this session is Anna Aleksanyan (Clark University).

The second session will discuss “Across the Linguistic Divide: Translating a Century of Armenian Feminist Thought,” with panelists Shushan Avagyan (American University of Armenia), Maral Aktokmakyan (University of Michigan), Jennifer Manoukian (UCLA) and Deanna Cachoian-Schanz (University of Pennsylvania). Lisa Gulesserian (Harvard University) will chair this session.

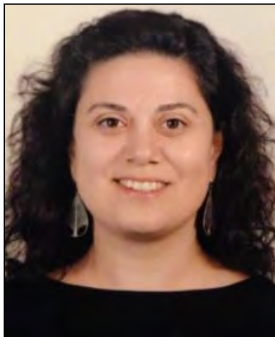
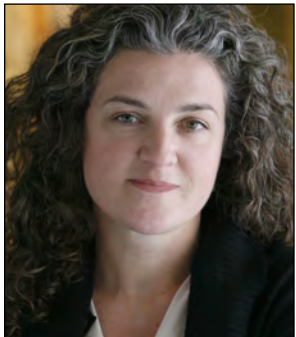
Following lunch, the third workshop session is titled “Unblocking Memory: How to Rewrite Armenian History,” with panelists Isabel Kaprielian-Churchill (Fresno State University), Barbara Merguerian (Armenian International Women's Association), Eliz Sanasarian (University of Southern California), Hourii Berberian (University of California Irvine) and Christina Maranci (Tufts University). Chair of the session is Lerna Ekmekcioglu.

The final session will look at “Voicing out the

Critique: How to Generate Countering Expressions,” with panelists Susan Pattie (University College London), Hourig Attarian (American University of Armenia), Talar Chahinian (California State University Long Beach), and Arpi Hamalian (Concordia University - Montreal). Melissa Bilal will chair this session.

Dr. Mary Papazian, president of San Jose State University, will be the final speaker.

Titled “Feminist Interventions in Armenian Studies//Armenian Interventions in Feminist Studies,” the workshop is open to the public free of charge. It will take place at MIT Building 4, room 237, from 9 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. More information can be found at <http://wgs.mit.edu/armenian-studies> or by contacting [lerna@mit.edu](mailto:lerna@mit.edu) or [melissab@chicago.edu](mailto:melissab@chicago.edu).



Lerna Ekmekcioglu and Melissa Bilal

## Dr. Yektan Türkyılmaz to Speak on ‘(Re)-Evaluating The Decision-Making Processes of Armenian Genocide’

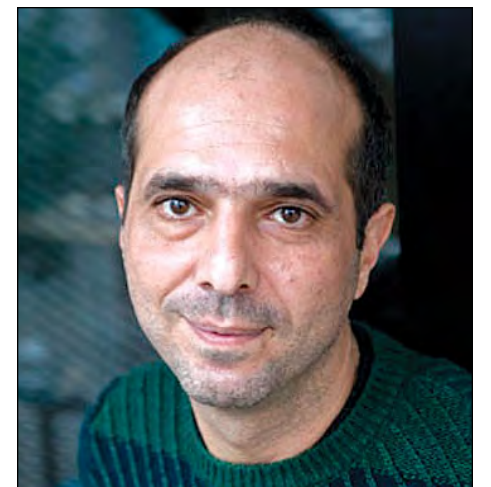
FRESNO – Dr. Yektan Türkyılmaz, Kazan Visiting Professor in Armenian Studies at Fresno State, will give a presentation on “(Re)-Evaluating the Decision-Making Processes of the Armenian Genocide” on Tuesday, April 17, at 7:30 p.m., in the University Business Center, Alice Peters Auditorium, Room 191 on the Fresno State campus. The presentation is the concluding lecture in a three-part series of lectures given by Türkyılmaz in the Spring semester.

For his final lecture, Türkyılmaz will present his most recent work that addresses the deci-



## Baikar Staff and Contributors Meet in Beirut

BEIRUT – *Baikar* weekly's executive editor Hagop Vartivarian's visit to Beirut from the United States was the occasion for local *Baikar* writers, editors, and supporters to meet and discuss various aspects of the publication. This Armenian-language media ideological organ of the Armenian Democratic Liberal Party, published in print editions both in Beirut and Los Angeles, has been bringing together Armenian intellectuals of the diaspora and the Republic of Armenia for almost a year. From left, Sahag Gharibian, Hagop Vartivarian, Barouyr Aghbashian, Haroutioun Isgahadian, Baydzig Kalaydjian, Hampig Mardirossian, and Hamo Moskofian are pictured above.



Dr. Yektan Türkyılmaz

## SELF-DETERMINATION UNDER INTERNATIONAL LAW THE TALE OF TWO CONFLICTS: KOSOVO & NAGORNO KARABAKH

WHO

**VARTAN OSKANIAN**

Former Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Armenia  
Founder of The Civiltas Foundation

MODERATED BY

**Anna Crowe**

Clinical Instructor and Lecturer on Law,  
Human Rights Program at Harvard Law School

WHEN

**April 12th, 2018  
12pm - 1pm**

WHERE

**Pound Hall 102  
HARVARD LAW SCHOOL  
LUNCH WILL BE PROVIDED**



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and Research (NAASR)**

sion-making processes in the Armenian Genocide. He offers an actor-based framework that highlights institutional interests and political agency. At all stages of his research, a key goal of Türkyılmaz's study has also been to historicize the making of major threads and presumptions in narrative construction. Therefore, he traces the imprints and influences of i) denialism, ii) genocide stereotyping (particularly around the Holocaust), and iii) regional and global political circumstances.

Drawing on Armenian, Ottoman, American and British archival and library sources, this lecture will explore how an actor centered, non-teleological approach would change the way we understand the Armenian genocide.

Türkyılmaz received his PhD from the Department of Cultural Anthropology at Duke University. He taught courses at the University of Cyprus, Sabancı, Bilgi and Duke Universities addressing the debates around the notions of collective violence, memory making, and reconciliation. Dr. Türkyılmaz is currently a research fellow at the Forum Transregionale Studien in Berlin, Germany. Meanwhile, he is working on a book manuscript based on his dissertation, *Rethinking Genocide: Violence and Victimhood in Eastern Anatolia, 1913-1915*, which concerns the conflict in Eastern Anatolia in the early 20th century and the memory politics around it.

The lecture is free and open to the public.





# Arts & Living

## Susan Barba's *Fair Sun* Wins Anahid Literary Award

New York City — The Anahid Literary Award has been given to Susan Barba for her book of poems, *Fair Sun*. The prize is given to the best literary work in English by a young writer of Armenian descent, and is awarded by the Columbia Armenian Center and made possible by a gift from an anonymous donor.

Barba was born in New Jersey and educated at Dartmouth College. She earned an MFA from Boston University, and a PhD in comparative literature from Harvard University. Her first book of poems, *Fair Sun*, was published in 2017 by David R. Godine Publishers. She is also a co-editor of *I Want to Live: Poems of Shushanik Kurginian* (2005). Her poems have appeared



Author Susan Barba

in *Poetry*, *The Hudson Review*, *The Yale Review*, *Antioch Review*, *Raritan* and other journals, and her translations from Armenian have appeared in *Words Without Borders* and *Ararat*. She has received fellowships from the MacDowell Colony and Yaddo, and she is a senior editor for New York Review Books.

The award was founded in 1988 by an anonymous donor who wanted to encourage young writers of Armenian descent and who believed in the importance of literature for the wider culture. Previous recipients of the award include Laura Kalpakian, Eric Bogosian, Atom Egoyan, Diana Der Hovanessian, Michael Zadoorian and Lydia Peele among others.

Award committee members, comprised of previous winners, are Peter Balakian, Aris Janigian, Patricia Sarafian Ward, and Micheline Marcom. The Armenian Center at Columbia will announce an evening prize ceremony sometime in the spring of 2019.

## Zorayan Museum to Hold Family Paint Night

BURBANK, Calif. — An evening designed to revitalize and cultivate art will be held on April 27, at 7 to 10 p.m. when the Zorayan Museum Committee of the Western Diocese of the Armenian church hold “Family Paint Night.” Guests of all ages are invited to attend and paint their own masterpiece. Guests will also enjoy wine and appetizers.

The Zorayan Museum Committee, under the auspices of Archbishop Hovnan Derderian, has organized exhibits of famous paintings by Armenian artists, as well as lectures and theatrical plays to promote and preserve Armenian art, history and Culture.

Vania Vartzbedian, member of the Zorayan Museum Committee, stated: “Paint Night is back by popular demand. We were delighted last year with the enthusiastic response and the joy it brought to all who participated as they returned home with their own original paintings.”

Guiding the participants through a step-by-step process is the noted director of Creative Lounge, Armineh Havan, an organization she created to establish a carefree environment for artists to explore and express their art through classes, workshops, or individual exploration. Havan is an art therapist. She has a Master of Fine Arts Degree, which she completed with high honors. Her expressive arts workshops encourage personal growth and healing for individuals and groups of both adults and children and have impacted many locally as well as internationally. She has also conducted workshops for organizations that support women around the world, including the Women’s Resource Center in Yerevan, Armenia.

For reservations and/or information, contact Vania Vartzbedian or the Western Diocese.



An Armenian record produced by the Pharos music label.

## Musical Records The Beat of Armenian Hearts around the World

NEW YORK — The historical, cultural and political influences of Armenian music production were discussed and explored in an enlightening and insightful talk by Dr. Yektan Türkyilmaz at Columbia University on Thursday, March 22.

The lecture, “Armenians on Records: Music Production from Homeland to Diasporas,” traced the recording history of Armenian music from the Ottoman Empire to the Diaspora in the early to mid-part of the 20th century as well as the impact of musicians, producers and merchants on the market.

**By Taleen Babayan**  
Special to the Mirror-Spectator

identity and trauma on the genre during a significant time in Armenian history. Throughout the evening, audience members had the opportunity to listen to centuries-old musical pieces that Türkyilmaz referred to in his talk, further enlivening the topic.

These works came into fruition because of the evolution of music through the invention of the sound recording phonograph by Thomas Edison in 1877, which according to Türkyilmaz was “as influential as the printing press in world history.”

Within a short time, the production and consumption of the phonograph became a global phenomenon, swiftly reaching the “Orient” in the early 20th century and making 78-rounds-per-minute (78RPM) records recorded by local performers available to a wider audience in major cities of the Middle East, the Caucasus and Asia.

Türkyilmaz, who received his PhD from the department of Cultural Anthropology at Duke University, noted that between 1900 and 1910, the Gramophone Company made more than 14,000 recordings in Asia and North Africa, with the highest numbers in Constantinople and Smyrna.

“Sound engineers are foremost ethnographers,” said Türkyilmaz, a Turkish scholar of Kurdish origin. “They would travel to cities where they had no idea about the people, language or music tradition and contact local dealers, who would find musicians to be recorded.”

Honing in on Armenians, Türkyilmaz said the first commercial recording took place in St. Petersburg in 1901 of composer Komitas Vardapet’s *Groong*

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Dr. Yektan Türkyilmaz

## Tekeyan and ALMA Present Dr. Ümit Kurt Lecture on Heroic Battle of Aintab

WATERTOWN — Dr. Ümit Kurt will give a presentation called “A Farewell to Arms: Broken Hopes and Total Departure from the Homeland” concerning *The Heroic Battle of Aintab*, at 7 p.m. on Thursday, April 12. Sponsored by the Tekeyan Cultural Association and the Armenian Museum of America, it will take place in the Adele and Haig Der Manuelian galleries on the third floor of the Armenian Museum.

The Turkish-French war of 1920-1921 took place between the Turkish-Kemalist Nationalist forces and French troops in Aintab, modern-day Gaziantep. The war started on April 1, 1920 and ended with the city’s surrender to the French military forces on February 9, 1921.

Following the diplomatic negotiations between France and the Kemalist government as well as the Kemalist victory against the Greek army in the Western Anatolia, a mutual agreement (Ankara Agreement) signed between the Grand National Assembly in Ankara and the French government on October 20, 1921 led to the halt of all activities on the Turkish-French fronts. The agreement was a result of the French retreat from Aintab, as well as the resettlement of Armenians to the French mandates of Aleppo and Beirut starting March 1921.

There are ample amounts of archival materials, memoirs, diaries and various other sources written in Turkish and Ottoman Turkish on the Turkish-French War. Furthermore, individuals who themselves witnessed or participated in this war wrote down the history of the city within this particular period. Absent from these sources, memoirs and diaries are the narratives of Armenians, who are almost always depicted as ‘the opposite side’, ‘the enemy’ and ‘the traitor’. In Armenian historiography, this war has been described as Aintab Herosamarde [The Heroic Struggle of Aintab].

In this lecture, Kurt will explore how this war was narrated based on an original source written in Armenian by Kevork Baboian, titled *The Heroic Battle of Aintab*. Kurt will present his English translation of this important book with the detailed history of the Armenian struggle for survival in Aintab between 1918-1922. It is a unique and significant work because it is based on detailed eyewitness accounts of real people who were in the city at that time.

Kurt argues that the famous battle of Aintab against the French — which resulted in the gifting of the honorific prefix Gazi (veteran) to the city, renaming it as Gaziantep on February 8, 1921 — seems to have been as much the organized struggle of a group of genocide profiteers seeking to hold onto their loot as it was a fight against an occupying force. This resistance sought to make it impossible for the returning Armenians to stay in their native towns, terrorizing them in the hope of causing them to flee.

Kurt is a dynamic speaker who studied with Prof. Taner Akçam and earned his PhD in history at the Strassler Center for Holocaust and Genocide Studies, Clark



Dr. Ümit Kurt





## ARTS &amp; LIVING

# The Beat of Armenian Hearts around the World

RECORDS, from page 14

(Crane), followed by recordings in Tiflis and Baku in 1902 and Constantinople in 1906. Türkyılmaz played the original recording of *Groong* as silence filled the room, with many audience members hearing the powerful piece of music for the first time.

Türkyılmaz noted that when the first recording sessions began in Constantinople by the Gramophone Company and Disque Pour Zonophone, many of the singers were Armenian, including Agopos Effendi and Peruz Hanim. The musical influences of the period, which was under the oppressive reign of Abdulhamid II, was “kanto,” a genre influenced by Italian operettas and performed in cafes and bars for men.

“There was much demand for the female voice,” said Türkyılmaz, a genocide scholar who is currently working on his book manuscript about the Armenian Genocide. “In this early period a lot of Armenian women musicians were recorded and became very popular in the Ottoman Empire because they had a better accent for the Turkish audience.”

Between the years 1909 and 1914, Armenian music was classified into the categories of liturgical and folk music as well as revolutionary songs and marches.

Türkyılmaz highlighted the 1912 Paris recordings of Komitas Vardapet and opera singer Armenak Shahmouradian which Orfeon, a local Ottoman Company, released on a special series of 10.5” discs.

“Their recordings became widely popular in Constantinople as well as in the Diasporas, particularly in the United States,” said Türkyılmaz. “They successfully compiled over 4,000 folk songs in Ottoman Armenia, in the Caucasus and in Iran.”

As he played *Hayrik* by Komitas, Türkyılmaz noted the composer’s “strong influence in the Armenian music scene” and that the piece was influenced by composer Richard Wagner and the period of German romanticism. Following this recording, Türkyılmaz played *Khorodik Morodik* from the folk genre, which was recorded in 1910 in Constantinople by Mlle. Rosalie.

When discussing the group of revolutionary songs and marches, Türkyılmaz placed this category into historical context, touching upon the major political changes in the Ottoman Empire after the 1908 revolution in Constantinople, along with the revolution within the Armenian community.

Türkyılmaz remarked that revolutionary songs and marches were the most popular and successful music recordings by notable musicians, including Krikor Berberian and Ohannes Effendi, in this period between 1909-1914. As he played *Tsayne Hnchets Erzerumi*, (The Voice of Erzerum Echoes) Türkyılmaz explained that the

song was about the 1880 defense of Erzerum and was “inspired by the early revolutionaries in Ottoman Armenia,” highlighting the infectious melody of the song.

“If you’re a revo-



A recording of “Gamavor E Im Yares” produced by the M.G. Parsekian label of West Hoboken, N.J.

lutionary and you have a cause, you need to get to the masses,” said Türkyılmaz. “With this song you get to the masses right away because of the melody.”

In terms of the business aspect of Armenian music production, Türkyılmaz highlighted the vision of Setrak Mechian, who opened his own record-pressing factory in 1908 in Cairo, Egypt, pressing the records one by one by hand. He became an important figure in the music production business and his company became a success, despite having very little money or capital when establishing his business, making him “one of the pioneers of local labels and pressings,” according to Türkyılmaz.

Elaborating on the influence of Armenian music in the Diaspora, Türkyılmaz noted the vibrant creations in many countries, including France, Syria, Lebanon, Argentina, Iraq and Iran, where Armenians founded record companies such as Baidaphone in 1930s Beirut, Lebanon, and the Sodwa label in 1930s Aleppo, Syria.

Shifting to the United States, Türkyılmaz shared photos of the Ottoman-Armenian music scene in the US in the 20th century, including photos of gatherings in Los Angeles and Fresno, where Armenians gathered to sing and dance to popular folk songs such as *Lorke*. These groups contributed to the ethnic music recordings of

immigrants during this period in the US, at the same time the country geared its marketing towards immigrants, such as the ads of the Universal Talking Machine and Record and Pharos Record Catalog, whose headlines between the years 1916 and 1928 included, “Your fatherland and the phonograph” along with “You can live and enjoy the songs of your homeland and sweet memories.”

Türkyılmaz remarked that the major labels showed interest in ethnic recordings not because they would make a large profit off it but in order to “encourage immigrants to buy phonographs and gramophones.”

Well-known Armenian musicians at this time in the US included Torcom Bezazian and Zabelle Panossian, who were on Columbia’s label in New York in 1917. Independent Armenian labels and producers soon began to form in the 1920s, including New York’s Yeprad Records (named after the Euphrates River) and M.G. Parsekian in the Armenian-populated West Hoboken, NJ enclave.

“The music recording was a marker of tradition and locality,” said Türkyılmaz. “Many people wanted to sing the songs from their villages and it was beautifully amateurish.”

Demonstrating the politics of the recordings and the feelings of immigrants in 1920s America, Türkyılmaz discussed two key songs with opposite climates, *Why Did I Come to America?* and *Alas! I Could Not Reach America*, both recorded in New York.

“The immigrants lived in an environment that marginalized them, but at the same time they

still desired an America that was filled with a thousand regrets and unfulfilled desire,” said Türkyılmaz. “It was less about the preservation of culture and more about creating a community and expressing desires and problems and everyday life of that community.”

Regarding the Armenian Genocide’s influence on music production, Türkyılmaz remarked on the song *Der Zor* by Vahan Boyajian and *Hayoon Vokhbeh* on Margosian Records in New York in the early 1920s, which “remembered Armenian resistance and heroism.”

“The Armenians emerged from the catastrophic genocide, which turned Armenia into a Diaspora without a reference,” said Türkyılmaz, noting the survivors had no social network and no family back home. “It was the end of a homeland and the only thing they could do was to create a new life in the Diaspora.” Soon the Diaspora began to reshape the Armenian musical tradition.

Moving further into the 20th century towards the conclusion of his lecture, Türkyılmaz discussed the records from the Soviet Armenian period, noting the music became more ethnic and nationalistic. Türkyılmaz’s in-depth and all-encompassing talk continued with a question-and-answer session.

Reflecting on the event and the roots of his interest in music production, Türkyılmaz said his fascination with 78 RPM recordings went back to his childhood and his interest in Armenian recordings developed when he began studying the Armenian language in the late 1990s.

During the course of his doctoral studies at Duke University, his interest in Armenian music and recordings “transformed into a scholarly curiosity” and he’s now working on broader projects that address the “emergence and spread of the recording industry with a specific focus on the Armenian experience.”

“Armenian journeys of recording can be compared to the Armenian printing history,” said Türkyılmaz. “It was a surprisingly similar multi-centered, multi-sourced creative global enterprise.”

Welcoming and closing remarks were made by Khatchig Mouradian, visiting Nikit and Eleanora Ordjanian Visiting Professor in the Department of Middle East, South Asian and African Studies at Columbia University, who thanked sponsors of the evening’s program, including the Armenian Center at Columbia University, the Research Institute on Turkey, the National Association for Armenian Studies and Research (NAASR), and Columbia University’s Institute for the Study of Human Rights (ISHR).



Singer Zabelle Panossian, who recorded on the Columbia Records label in New York City in the 1920s.

## Dr. Ümit Kurt Lecture On Battle of Aintab

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University in 2016. He is currently a Polonsky Fellow in the Van Leer Institute in Jerusalem. His research is centered on examining the transfer of Armenian wealth, transformation of space, elite-making process, ordinary perpetrators, collective violence, microhistories, inter-ethnic conflicts, the Armenian Genocide and early modern Turkish nationalism.

He worked as a postdoctoral fellow in 2016-17 in the Center for Middle Eastern Studies at Harvard University.

He is the author of *The Great, Hopeless Turkish Race: Fundamentals of Turkish Nationalism in the Turkish Homeland, 1911-1916* (Istanbul: letisim Publishing House, 2012) and the co-author of *The Spirit of the Laws: The Plunder of Wealth in the Armenian Genocide* (New York and Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2015).

The lecture is free and open to the public and copies of the book will be available for signing. RSVP at <http://www.ow.ly/yhnP30jeRa8>.

The address of the Armenian Museum is 65 Main Street, Watertown.

For more information about the talk, email [tcadirector@aol.com](mailto:tcadirector@aol.com).

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

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*Aram Khachaturian*

**SUNDAY, APRIL 8, 2018 at 5:00PM**

UCLA VEM String Quartet with Danielle Segen, Mezzo-Soprano

TCA BESHGETURIAN CENTER  
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*Geghouni Chitchyan*

**SUNDAY, MAY 6, 2018 at 5:00PM**

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ARTS & LIVING

CALENDAR

CALIFORNIA

**APRIL 12 — In celebration of Legacy of Poetry Month, the Center for Literary Arts of San José** will host Peter Balakian for a night of reading and conversation with San José State University President Mary Papazian. The Hammer Theatre (101 Paseo De San Antonio, 95113) at 7 p.m. Afterwards, there will be a VIP reception and book-signing. <http://www.litart.org/peter-balakian/> For tickets, visit: <https://web.ovationtix.com/trs/pe.c/10199025> Tickets are \$10 for students, \$20 for regular admission, and \$50 for VIP

CONNECTICUT

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

FLORIDA

**APRIL 8 — St. David Armenian Church of Boca Raton will celebrate the 30th Anniversary** of its Consecration on Sunday, with a Celebratory Banquet in the Church Mardigian Hall at 1 p.m., presided by Archbishop Khajag Barsamian. All are invited to this special occasion. Donations for adults \$45, children under 14, \$10 Contact the church office 561 994-2335, or Sonig Kradjian 607 727-8786 and Emma Pilikyan 561 414-1182.

**JANUARY 20-27, 2019 — Armenian Heritage Cruise XXII Western Carribean Cruise aboard Royal Carribean’s** Allure of the Seas. Traveling to Nassau/Cozumel/Roatan/Costa Maya. Cabin rates starting from \$949 per person based on double occupancy, including port charges and ACAA registration fee. Government taxes of \$137.45 are additional. Armenian entertainment, cultural presentations, festival day, tavlou and belote tournaments and much more. Call Travel Group International 561-447-0750 or 866-447-0750 ext. 108. Contact person Jaine.

ILLINOIS

**APRIL 15 — Book presentation by Adrienne Alexanian (editor) on her father’s memoir Forced into Genocide:** Memoirs of an Armenian Soldier in the Ottoman Turkish Army, Sunday, 3 p.m. sharp. The Illinois Holocaust Museum and Education Center 9603 Woods Drive Skokie, Il. 60077—RSVP (847) 967-4800. There are no other books in literature on this aspect of the Genocide. The book also contains rare documents and pictures which will be shown during a power point presentation. Book signing during reception.

MASSACHUSETTS

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

**APRIL 9 — Trinity Men’s Union Dinner and Meeting,** 6 p.m., Social Hour, 7 p.m., Dinner, Charles and Nevart Talanian Cultural Hall, Holy Trinity Armenian Church of Greater Boston, 145 Brattle St., Cambridge MA. Guest Speaker: Nora Yousif, CFP, Vice President – Financial Advisor, Consulting Group, at the Williams Investment Group, who will speak on “Smart Money Moves for Smart Guys.” All are welcome. Donation for Losh Kebab and Kheyima Dinner is \$15 per person. RSVP requested by April 8 to [tmuhtaac@gmail.com](mailto:tmuhtaac@gmail.com) or call David Dorian, 617.501.4300. For further information, visit <http://www.htaac.org/calendar/event/558/>.

**APRIL 10 — Armenian Business Network (ABN) Winter Business Networking event.** Tuesday, 6:30 p.m. The Sheraton Commander, Cambridge. Stephen Demirjian, guest speaker from the Achieve Institute shares methods on creating greater personal and work life success. This event is free of charge. RSVP: [armenianbusinessnetwork@gmail.com](mailto:armenianbusinessnetwork@gmail.com)

**APRIL 11 — A recap on the status of the documentary project “Neighbors in Memory,”** accompanied by a

panel of community members shedding light on the state of Armenian-Turkish relations as they live and witness it. Wednesday, 7 p.m., Capitol Theatre, 204 Mass. Ave., Arlington. Screenings, discussions and refreshments. For more information: [gonca59@gmail.com](mailto:gonca59@gmail.com)

**APRIL 12 — “A Farewell to Arms: Broken Hopes and Total Departure from the Homeland,”** Ümit Kurt’s presentation on Aintab with slides of his translation of Baboian’s The Heroic Battle of Aintab. Presented by the Tekeyan Cultural Association and the Armenian Museum of America (AMA), at AMA, 65 Main St, Watertown, MA, 7 pm, Free admission. For information, email [tcadirector@aol.com](mailto:tcadirector@aol.com). RSVP at <http://www.ow.ly.yhnP30jeRa8>

**APRIL 13 — Strengthening our marriage through our differences. First ever Armenian Couples Night,** with Drs. Paul and Virginia Friesen, renowned speakers and authors of more than 10 books on parenting and marriage. Come hear about how you can build stronger marriages by understanding and having fun celebrating your differences. Buffet Dinner, Crowne Plaza in Natick, starting at 6:30 pm. \$100 for a couple. RSVP and send checks payable to the Armenian Memorial Church(AMC), c/o Rev. Dr. Avedis Boynerian, 159 White Street, Belmont, MA 02478. Indicate “Couples” on the memo line. For more information and to make reservations, contact Rev. Dr. Avedis Boynerian at [badveli@armenianmemorialchurch.com](mailto:badveli@armenianmemorialchurch.com) or Yn. LuAnn Sabounjian at [lsabounjian@gmail.com](mailto:lsabounjian@gmail.com). Organized by community leaders including clergy from area churches and parishioners.

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

**APRIL 15 – Vase Painting, Wine & Unwind, 5 p.m., Charles and Nevart Talanian Cultural Hall,** Holy Trinity Armenian Church of Greater Boston, 145 Brattle St., Cambridge MA. Vase painting led by artist Arevik Tserunyan, entertainment, food and wine. All proceeds to benefit medical outreach for the Karahunge and Shirak regions in Armenia. Donation: \$35; limited seats. To reserve a seat, call/text: Amalia, 617.669.7444; Marianna, 617.966.1339; or Naneh, 857.389.8362. Sponsored by Watertown Armenian Club and Holy Trinity Armenian School.

**APRIL 19 — “3D printing: the wave of the future. Come and learn about efforts being made in Armenia** and the U.S. Sponsored by the Cambridge-Yerevan Sister City Association (CYSCA) with co-sponsorship by the National Association for Armenian Studies and Research (NAASR). 7 p.m. At the Armenian Cultural Foundation, 441 Mystic St., Arlington.

**APRIL 20 — Raffi Bedrosyan of Toronto lecture: “Islamized Hidden Armenians of Turkey - Living Victims of a Genocide,”** organized by the Tekeyan Cultural Association and St. James Armenian Church of Watertown, Friday, 7 p.m., at St. James Charles Mosesian Cultural and Youth Center, Keljik Hall, 465 Mount Auburn St., Watertown. For more information, email [tcadirector@aol.com](mailto:tcadirector@aol.com)

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

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

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

April 22 — Sunday, free Buses from Watertown 9:30 a.m. from the Armenian Cultural and Education Foundation,

47 Nichols Ave and Worcester 10 a.m., Rt-146 & Mass pike Park & Ride to Times Square, New York City for the 103rd Armenian Genocide Commemoration. Organized by Knights of Vartan @ Crossroads of the world in Times Square, New York City 2-4 p.m. Bus rides complements of Knights and Daughters of Vartan Lodge #1.

**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 4 – 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](mailto:info@aiwainternational.org) or 617-926-0171.

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

**May 5 — 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](mailto: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](mailto: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 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.

**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](mailto: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, to celebrate the achievements of one of Boston’s own – the talented violinist Haig Hovsepien. A winner of the 2017

*continued on next page*





ARTS & LIVING



# Recipe Corner

by Christine Vartanian Datian

## Almond Butter Cookies

INGREDIENTS:

- 2 1/2 cups all-purpose flour, sifted
- 1 cup unsalted butter, softened
- 1/2 cup powdered sugar
- 2 egg yolks, 2 egg whites
- 2 tablespoons iced water
- Grated rind of 1 lemon
- 1 teaspoon almond or vanilla extract (or 1/2 teaspoon each)
- 1 teaspoon baking powder
- 1/4 teaspoon sea salt
- Blanched silvered almonds
- Powdered sugar

PREPARATION:

Pre-heat oven to 350 degrees.  
In a medium bowl, cream butter and sugar together; add egg yolks and extract and mix until light and fluffy; gradually add flour, baking powder, lemon rind, salt, and water, and mix thoroughly.  
Form into 1-inch balls (or shape of choice) and dip into egg white.  
Lightly press a few silvered almonds on top of each cookie. Place on a greased cookie sheet and bake until edges are light brown, 10 to 12 minutes.  
Remove cookies to wire racks and cool completely. Sprinkle with powdered sugar to serve.  
Note: Add 1/2 cup finely ground blanched almonds to this recipe, if desired. If using self-rising flour, omit the baking powder.

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

# Armenia Fund USA Restores Tchaikovsky School

NEW YORK – The Armenian musical tradition has always been integral to the Armenian people and when assistance was needed at the renowned Tchaikovsky Music School in Yerevan, Armenia Fund USA, a non-profit focused on education, infrastructure and community in the homeland, responded to the ambitious challenge.

Following a massive two million dollar restoration of the school, which famed composer Aram Khachaturian once referred to as a “foundry of musicians,” it has been transformed into a world-class institution. The school’s accomplished alumni, who now perform around the globe, reflect on the significance of the school in their lives and for the future of Armenia.

Pianist, composer and conductor Karen Hakobyan said the school had an “enormous impact” on his early development and he was “pleased” to see the Tchaikovsky Music School reconstruction project reach its completion. A 2001 graduate, Hakobyan now serves as Armenia Fund’s Cultural Program advisor and maintains his ties with the legendary institution.

“Being an alumnus of Tchaikovsky, I knew exactly how much the school was in need of major reconstruction and could fully appreciate the impact such a project would have on the development of the future generations of students,” said Hakobyan, who is the founder and artistic director of New York’s Pegasus: The Orchestra.

Since the school opened its doors in 1939, it has provided education, training and guidance for generations of students, who became prodigies and virtuosos, greatly impacting the classical music genre.

“The school’s influence on the classical music world reaches far beyond the borders of Armenia,” said Lisa Stepanian, executive director of Armenia Fund USA. “Many past and living Armenian musicians, who are alumni of the school, have enjoyed critical acclaim in esteemed orchestras and prestigious conservatories in Europe and the West.”

Tracing the musical tradition of Armenians to its forbearers, pianist and composer Hayk Arsenyan, who studied at the Tchaikovsky Music School between 1985 and 1993, said he believes “strongly that Armenians have something innate about music, perhaps on a genetic level” and the importance of “investing in something we are strong in and we are definitely strong in music.”

It was in keeping that strong cultural thread alive that Armenia Fund USA spearheaded fundraising initiatives to renovate the physical structure of the Tchaikovsky Music School, which was completed a year and a half ago, modernizing it into a state-of-the-art facility its talented students deserve to study in.

Providing a full academic curriculum to its 600 students aged 6-18, the Tchaikovsky Music School had been suffering from poor infrastructure after decades of neglect following the collapse of the Soviet Union. Through Armenia Fund USA’s efforts, the school became revamped and equipped with new elevators, wheelchair ramps, windows and doors as well as a ventilation and water supply system, in addition to earthquake proof construction. Its renovated recital halls and state-of-the-art auditorium facilitated the hours-long practices of students, who can now learn and perform in a physically safe environment.

“It was a privilege to take my very first steps as a musician and as a human being in an environment where every day was a gift and a joy,” said pianist Sofya Melikyan. “The reconstruction of the school is an initiative of enormous importance because it gives the future generations of talented young Armenians the possibility to grow and to develop their potential in optimal conditions.”

While the multi-year renovations have been beneficial, support of the school needs to continue, according to Stepanian.

“Although the physical structure of the school has been renovated, there is an ongoing need to maintain the school and uphold its standards,” said Stepanian, noting new initiatives in need of funding, including exchange programs in European countries as well as establishing an exchange program with music academies in the United States.

“There have to be sustainable improvements of

buildings as well as instruments and programming because of the importance of music to the Armenian culture.”

One ongoing need is quality instruments students can practice and perform on. Recently, Armenia Fund’s France and US affiliates together donated 10 pianos to the Tchaikovsky Music School.

“Piano lessons form the base of our students’ musical education, no matter which instrument they specialize in,” said Principal Martun Kostandyan. “The pianos we’ve received as gifts from our benefactors will certainly further raise the quality of education at our school.”

In addition to providing instruments, Armenia Fund USA is also focusing on strengthening relationships with master class instructors, guest lecturers and student mentors, an important initiative which alumni benefited from when they themselves were students.

For Arsenyan, he remembers the esteemed musicians from abroad, particularly Europe, who gave master classes to students and coach them in chamber music. He also notes the “incredible orchestras” at the school and the chance to participate in competitions, which “gave us a lot of opportunities to tour and perform in different places worldwide.”

The Tchaikovsky Music School has long been known as the premier music academy in Armenia, where 80 percent of its graduates continue onto the selective Komitas State Conservatory of Yerevan, and where many skilled and talented musicians took their first steps in their musical journeys and careers.

“Looking back I feel so fortunate to have attended one of the best music schools in the former Soviet Union,” said Melikyan. “The Tchaikovsky Music School gave me that very strong background and base, which has helped me throughout my whole life path.”

“Starting my education at Tchaikovsky Music School gave me the opportunity to continue my studies at the conservatory of my choice in New York City at the Juilliard School,” said cellist Lilit Kurdiyan. “The foundation of my musical education I received at Tchaikovsky Music School was crucial for me to becoming a musician.”

While all four musicians found great acclaim internationally, studying at renowned conservatories and becoming award-winning musicians, their bonds to their alma mater remain strong as they seek ways to help the next generation of students.

“It’s my duty to create such opportunities for other students so they can also grow up, graduate and think back to their school experience,” said Arsenyan, who gives master classes at the Tchaikovsky Music School and is a long-time faculty member at New York University’s Tisch School of the Arts. He emphasized the importance of receiving early childhood training and education at the Tchaikovsky Music School for free and the significance of continuing that trend with the current generation of students so they can “get to the West and bring knowledge and opportunities back to the East.

“It’s a cycle,” said Arsenyan. “You need to get to give.”

Kurdiyan will be returning to Yerevan this May to perform with the Armenian National Philharmonic Orchestra in both Yerevan and Artsakh and she looks forward to seeing her former school in a new light and to contribute with master classes in order to “give back in the form of musical advice and share our unique experiences.”

“A lot of my classmates have done so well,” said Kurdiyan. “In my case, the Tchaikovsky Music School’s teachers, students and parents allowed me to pursue my dreams and become a professional musician.”

She also firmly believes that financial support should be given to schools in Armenia because music schools need proper equipment to purchase new and fine quality musical instruments because “those are essential for everyday music making.”

“Growing up in Armenia, which has such a rich cultural and musical tradition, was the perfect environment for a young aspiring musician,” said Hakobyan. “The talented Armenian youth need and deserve music education, which is integral to human education and development.”

–Taleen Babayan

from previous page

Boston Symphony Orchestra’s Concerto Competition and a rising sophomore at the Cleveland Institute of Music, Hovsepiyan 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 where top choreographers bring to life classic movie dances, starring 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, and are available at: [www.FACSBoston.org](http://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](mailto: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](mailto: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](mailto: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](mailto:hello@ArmenianHeritagePark.org)

## NEW JERSEY

**SEPTEMBER 30 – Save the date! Armenia 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 the Armenia’s and Artsakh’s Independence Celebration. Don’t miss the performance by the son and grandson of the legendary Armenian singer Aram Asatryan. Proceeds will benefit Fruitful Artsakh Project. 4 p.m. Location: 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](http://www.telecharge.com) or call (212) 239-6200. For discount tickets: [www.telechargeoffers.com](http://www.telechargeoffers.com) or call (212) 947-8844. Or contact the theatre: [info@panasianrep.org](mailto:info@panasianrep.org), (212) 868-4030.





## COMMENTARY

# Mirror Spectator



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EDITOR  
Alin K. Gregorian

ASSISTANT EDITOR  
Aram Arkun

ART DIRECTOR  
Marc Mgrditchian

**SENIOR EDITORIAL COLUMNIST:**  
Edmond Y. Azadian

**CONTRIBUTORS:**  
Florence Avakian, Dr. Haroutiun Arzoumanian, Philippe Raffi Kalfayan, Philip Ketchian, Kevork Keushkerian, Harut Sassounian, Hagop Vartivarian, Naomi Zeytoonian

**CORRESPONDENTS:**  
**Armenia** - Hagop Avedikian  
**Boston** - Nancy Kalajian  
**New York/New Jersey** - Taleen Babayan  
**Berlin** - Muriel Mirak-Weissbach

**Contributing Photographers:**  
Jirair Hovsepien

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Telephone: 617-924-4420

FAX: 617-924-2887

[www.mirrorspectator.com](http://www.mirrorspectator.com)

E-Mail: [editor@mirrorspectator.com](mailto:editor@mirrorspectator.com)

For advertising: [mirrorads@aol.com](mailto:mirrorads@aol.com)

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**Baikar Association, Inc.**

755 Mt. Auburn St., Watertown, MA 02472-1509

## COMMENTARY

## A Recipe for Peace or Perpetual War?

By Edmond Y. Azadian

Since the fall of the Soviet empire, the pitch of the Cold War rhetoric has never been this intense. All it needed was a spark to blow up the conflagration. The poisoning in the UK of former Russian spy Sergei Skripal and his daughter, Yulia, was that necessary spark to create a diplomatic crisis.

Tensions were already building up and if the poisoning had not happened, there would have been another excuse to launch the crisis.

While Russia still is asking for tangible proof to substantiate British accusations, its voice is stifled in the exchange of the diatribes. For some time now, the US and Europe had been accusing Moscow of meddling in their election processes, as if the practice was not mutual. Europe and the US were never going to tolerate Russia once again to get on its feet and attempt to regain its superpower status.

And Russia, under President Vladimir Putin, was moving in that direction. The gradual building up of the sanctions regime proved to be insufficient to slacken Russia's progress. Therefore, a more dramatic course of action became necessary. Britain began expelling Russian diplomats, followed by some 20 countries in the West, topped by the US's 60 expulsions, in the wake of this most recent poisoning controversy.

Ironically, there is a disconnect between the White House and the State Department. While President Donald Trump congratulates President Putin on his reelection, contrary to the will of his advisors, and while he calls Putin to have "substantive discussions" and promises to meet him in the near future, the US State Department expels 60 Russian diplomats and closes down the consulate in Seattle.

The more things change, the more they stay the same. During President George W. Bush's term, Iraq was destroyed at the behest of Vice President Dick Cheney, during President Obama's administration Libya was invaded under the direction of Hillary Clinton. Today President Trump is seeking to improve relations but a new configuration of war mongers is shaping up to join the world chorus of Moscow-bashing. Indeed, the combination of Mike Pompeo and John Bolton is the most combustible political duo which does not shy away from the specter of a third world war.

After Iraq, Libya and Syria, the next target is Iran, which means war is getting closer to Armenia's borders.

The forces which unleashed the "Arab Spring" knew in advance the outcome of their actions, which certainly was not the democratization of those countries. The goal was to reduce those countries into rubble. Today, Iran is on their radar.

In the current East-West confrontation, Turkey has assumed a very critical role, playing one camp against the other. As a member of NATO, Ankara has broken every rule of that association, but it is still considered a "trusted ally." For a while, there were calls in the media and think tanks to drop Turkey as an ally, and as Ankara got closer to Russia, ironically those calls were muted and even voices were heard that no matter what, Turkey must be kept as an ally. Even Washington signaled its friendly intentions when it dropped the charges against bodyguards of President Erdogan who had in May 2017 beaten US citizens during the Turkish leader's visit to Washington. Those charges were being used against Ankara as a political bargaining chip.

Historically, Russia, Turkey and Iran have been enemies, fighting several imperial wars to occupy each other's territories. But today, they have found common ground in Syria, extending their mutual interests in other areas as well.

As the Cold War winds are blowing globally, Iran, Russia and Turkey are meeting not only to settle the seven-year-old conflict in Syria, but also to reshape the region.

In the shadow of that political rapprochement, there is another military alliance which is shaping up: the ministers of defense of Turkey, Azerbaijan and Georgia have already met to coordinate their military plans. Georgia's former renegade president, Mikheil Saakashvili, had said several years ago, during his regime, that

an enemy of Azerbaijan is an enemy of Georgia. Although supposedly there was a regime change in Tbilisi, it looks like that anti-Armenian policy still holds in Georgia. It would be viewed as a normal cooperation between neighbors, had those countries signed treaties about trade and cultural exchange. But a military treaty with Armenia's mortal enemies is alarming to say the least.

President Putin is flying to Ankara to be followed by Iran's President Hassan Rouhani. Before the summit meeting, Putin will attend the inauguration ceremonies of the Akkuyu nuclear power plant to be built with Russian technology and capital, scheduled to go online by 2023, in celebration of the founding of the modern Republic of Turkey.

There are more plans on board to build other power plants. Most probably, the Turkey Stream, which carries Russian gas to Europe will be on the agenda.

As Erdogan has been rash in revising historic treaties, (such as the Treaty of Lausanne of 1923), he may also try to convince Mr. Putin to finalize the 1921 Treaty of Kars, which had determined the current border between Armenia and Turkey.

The main objective of the summit remains the settlement of the Syrian conflict, based on the principles of Astana laid out in 2016 between the same powers.

The Syrian conflict is too complicated to settle in one conference, as too many forces have been engaged. After the defeat of



ISIS, all conflicting sides had come to the realization that their common enemy was eliminated. But that realization brought forth the conflicting interests of the participants.

Moscow's goal all along has been to keep Bashar al-Assad in power, whereas Turkey, the West and its regional allies (Saudi Arabia and Israel) were pushing for Assad's removal.

The US armed and used the Kurds in Syria and then abandoned them to Turkey to chase them out of Afrin.

Although Turkey claims that it has no territorial intentions in Syria, if the Cyprus precedent is any indication, Ankara will stay put on the Syrian territory citing the Kurdish threat to its borders. There was a tacit understanding between Russia and Turkey. While the Russian and Syrian government forces were pounding rebel positions in Eastern Ghouta, unhampered, Turkey was given a free hand to slaughter the Kurds in Afrin.

Russia controls Syria's air defenses and without the green light from Moscow, Erdogan could not be that bold to settle scores with the Kurds in Syria.

The third party at the conference is Iran, whose military presence in Syria and by extension Hezbollah in Lebanon, is anathema for Israel.

Every time there was a semblance of peace in Syria, Israel bombed or sabotaged any peace process, because it would mean Iran's military presence in neighboring Syria.

Erdogan's anti-Israel rhetoric has also angered Prime Minister Netanyahu over the recent flare up in the Gaza Strip. Israel has used its Armenian Genocide card again to respond to Erdogan's anti-Semitic remarks. Indeed, the minister of internal security, Gilad Erdan, has called Israel's government to recognize the Armenian Genocide.

The Syrian peace process seems to be in the offing. Additionally, forces which had come together to resolve the Syrian conflict have extended their cooperation in other areas of mutual interest while at the same time undermining the political interests of other parties, like the US and Israel, which will not sit back and watch a powerful Syria resurrect itself from the ashes and Iran and Turkey become its beneficiary.

It looks like a recipe for perpetual war.





## COMMENTARY



My Turn

By Harut Sassounian

## Turkey is Most Frequent Violator Of European Convention on Human Rights

Veteran Turkish journalist Sedat Ergin wrote in Hurriyet newspaper that “Turkey is the champion of rights violations at the European Court of Human Rights” (ECHR). The European Court rules on cases when signatories of the European Convention on Human Rights violate its provisions.

Even though Turkey joined the Court in 1986, 27 years after its founding, it had more violations than all other member countries between 1959 and 2016.

The European Court had a total of 3,270 judgments on Turkey. Only in 73 cases, Turkey was found by the Court not to have made any violations. The remaining cases were settled in other ways. Since more than one article was violated in most cases, Turkey’s violations total 4,514.

The 2016 Annual Report of the European Court of Human Rights indicated that:

- The highest number of Turkish violations (832) was in the area of “right to a fair trial.”
- The 2nd highest category (707 violations) was “the right to freedom and security.” This latter category means that “Turkish citizens are frequently arrested using unlawful methods and that those arrests can easily turn into sentences,” according to Ergin.
- The 3rd highest category of violations (653) is the “right

to property protection,” which means that many Turkish citizens are deprived of ownership of their properties.

- The 4th highest category (586) is the violation of “length of proceedings.”
- “Lack of effective investigation” comes in 5th place with 412 violations.
- “Inhuman or degrading treatment” is in 6th place with 314 violations.
- In 7th place is the “right to an effective remedy” (268 violations).
- “Freedom of Expression” comes in 8th place (265 violations).
- In 9th place are 133 violations of the “right to life • deprivation of life.”
- In 10th place are 100 violations of the “right to respect private and family life.”

Regarding Azerbaijan, from 2002 to 2016, the European Court of Human Rights had 122 judgments, of which 118 were found to be violations of the European Convention on Human Rights, far fewer than Turkey, since Baku joined the ECHR much later, in 2002. The remaining 4 cases were settled in other ways. Since some cases had more than one violation, Azerbaijan had a total of 224 rights violations.

- The highest number of violations (44) was the “right to a fair trial.”
- The 2nd highest violation (34) was the “right to liberty and security.”
- The 3rd highest violation (30) was the “protection of property.”
- The 4th highest violation (21) was the “right to free elections.”
- “Lack of effective investigation” was the 5th highest violation (17).

Armenia, on the other hand, which joined the European Convention on Human Rights at the same time as Azerbaijan (2002), had fewer violations. There were 75 judgments by the ECHR against Armenia between 2002 and 2016, of which 68 were violations. The remaining 7 cases were settled in other ways. Since some of cases had more than one violation,

Armenia had a total of 119 violations.

- The highest number of violations (32) was the “right to a fair trial.”
  - The 2nd highest number of violations (27) was the “right to liberty and security.”
  - The 3rd highest number of violations (16) was the “protection of property.”
- Neighboring Georgia had a slightly fewer violations than Armenia. It joined the European Convention on Human Rights in 1999. Between 1999 and 2016 the ECHR had 68 judgments on Georgia, of which 52 were violations. The remaining 16 cases were settled in other ways. Since some of the cases had more than one violation, Georgia had a total of 99 violations.
- The highest number of violations (20) was the “right to liberty and security.”
  - The 2nd highest number of violations (17) was “inhuman or degrading treatment.”
  - There was a tie for the 3rd highest violation (12 each) for “lack of effective investigation” and “right to a fair trial.”

In addition to the above-mentioned violations, Turkey and Azerbaijan have much more serious problems with the ECHR. Turkey decided to suspend the European Convention on Human Rights following the attempted coup of July 2016. However, some parts of the Convention cannot be suspended, such as the right to life, and the ban on torture and the inhumane or degrading treatment or punishment.

Azerbaijan faces another serious problem with the ECHR which had ruled that prominent Azeri opposition politician Ilgar Mammadov should be released from jail. Azerbaijan has refused to comply with ECHR’s decision since 2014. The Committee of Ministers and the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe have adopted several resolutions urging Azerbaijan to release Mammadov. The Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe has initiated an unprecedented judicial review of Azerbaijan’s lack of compliance with the ECHR ruling. Further non-compliance by Azerbaijan could result in its expulsion from the Council of Europe!

# Who Is a Turk? It’s Complicated

By Kaya Genc

ISTANBUL – Earlier this year, Turkey opened its closely guarded population register, a monumental archive of lineages going back to Ottoman times. A website that gives access to all public services in Turkey now includes a genealogy tab. Users can download ancestry documents, with records going as far back as 1882.

Since the appearance of the new service, roots, migration, purity and hybridity have dominated the conversation in WhatsApp groups, offices and tea shops. In just two days, over 5 million Turks went looking for their heritage on the register. Interest was so intense that for a few hours the website collapsed. The government was forced to stop the service for several days.

For a century, the Turkish state imposed a rigid national identity on its citizens, one that excluded ethnicity and underscored “pure” Turkishness. The government’s opening of its records has mesmerized people. As Turks absorb the news of their own ethnic diversity, the century-old idea of racial purity, manufactured and imposed by the state, has begun to crumble.

Some Turks, especially those whose families have lived in the same towns for generations, have found reaffirmation in the proof of their own deep roots. Others are frustrated. One Turkish nationalist learned that his great-grandmother was of Kurdish origin. A writer friend was surprised to discover her great-grandfather’s name was Isaac. One of my neighbors found out she had European roots and decided to apply for dual citizenship.

For a long time, ethnic identity was considered a matter of national security in Turkey. Most Ottoman Armenians lost their lives in forced deportations in 1915, while others converted to Islam to survive. Conversions were kept secret within families; many grandchildren of Christian converts learned of their ancestry as adults. Many Turks discovered they had Armenian family ties just recently.

The genealogy data is offered only for private use, and it reveals how meticulously the Turkish state has been keeping

track of its citizens over the past two centuries. “It turns out my maternal ancestry is from Yerevan,” a user wrote on the website Eksi Sozluk, where thousands of comments have appeared on the issue. “My paternal ancestry meanwhile is Georgian. I am in shock.”

Turkish leftists were disturbed by the interest in genealogy, fearing it could lead to tribalism, even civil war. But the editor of the weekly *Agos* welcomed it. He interviewed an anthropology professor who called the move “revolutionary,” and “a serious sign of normalization” in debunking the imaginary ethnic purity of Turkish nationalism. Indeed, a 2012 study in the journal *Annals of Human Genetics* found that Turkey’s paternal ancestry was 38 percent European, 35 percent Middle Eastern, 18 percent South Asian and 9 percent Central Asian.

Ottomans dealt with the complexities of ethnicity through what they called the *millet* system. For centuries, different rules applied to Muslims, Catholics, Greek Orthodox and Jews. Religious communities could do business freely, and run their own schools, newspapers and hospitals so long as they paid taxes to the sultan. But in the 1830s, modernizers of the

FOR A LONG TIME, ETHNIC IDENTITY WAS CONSIDERED A MATTER OF NATIONAL SECURITY IN TURKEY. MOST OTTOMAN ARMENIANS LOST THEIR LIVES IN FORCED DEPORTATIONS IN 1915, WHILE OTHERS CONVERTED TO ISLAM TO SURVIVE.

Ottoman Empire introduced a westernized concept of citizenship and did away with the millet system. A group of Muslim intellectuals, known as the Young Ottomans, fiercely opposed the reforms.

In the 1870s, the group introduced the concept of Ottomanism, promoting a single imperial citizenship that combined Islamic law with principles inspired by European constitutionalism. They propounded the idea of Muslim nationalism: Sunni Islam would be the sovereign identity, while granting freedoms to other religions. If the Sunni character of the state was lost, the Young Ottomans felt, the empire might disintegrate. Ottomanism was their formula to keep it intact.

As the pace of modernization increased in the early twentieth century, the problem of genealogical complexity snowballed: Secular and westernizing Young Turks and founders of the Turkish republic tweaked Muslim nationalism into a citizenship based on the French idea of *laïcité*, the separation of religious influence from government.

They tried to solve the problem of ethnic complexity, some-

times through force: A population exchange in 1923 resulted in the denaturalization of more than 1.2 million Greeks in Turkey and more than 300,000 Turks in Greece. The tiny number of Greeks and Armenians who continued to live in Turkey were told to forget their roots.

Over the 1940s, following the death of Atatürk, racist clubs in Turkey tweaked this nationalism further and forged a “pure Turkish” national identity. Turks, in their view, came from the plains of Central Asia, Kurds were “mountain Turks” and any other ethnic influences were considered deviant and dangerous. Both leftists and Islamists repudiated this combination of a mono-ethnic nation state and modernity, and the Kemalist state punished both groups. The Marxist poet Nazım Hikmet was sentenced to 28 years in prison; the Islamist thinker and poet Mehmet Akif Ersoy spent a decade in exile in Egypt for questioning Turkish nationalism.

Many nationalists have viewed Recep Tayyip Erdogan’s composite of conservatism and neoliberalism as a threat to Turkish national identity since his Justice and Development Party, known as the A.K.P., came to power in 2002. But Mr. Erdogan’s government was praised by others for allowing historians to openly discuss the history of Ottoman Armenians and for lifting restrictions on Kurdish culture.

Under Mr. Erdogan, national identity based on “pure Turkishness” has been gradually replaced by the Muslim nationalism of the Young Ottomans. Leaders of the A.K.P. believe that erasing religion and ethnicity from Turkey’s national identity would repeat the mistakes of the Ottoman modernizers in the 1830s.

By throwing open the population register, the Turkish government – unwittingly – might have changed our ideas of Turkish nationhood and ended the myth of racial purity for good.

The timing of the new access to the public’s ancestry is indeed part of a political calculation. In the wake of Turkey’s military operation in Afrin in northern Syria and with presidential elections coming in 2019, the government is hoping to further consolidate Muslim nationalism as the central Turkish identity.

It is the A.K.P.’s way of saying Muslim nationalism is different from republican nationalism: the state, in its new embrace of Islam, has the confidence to allow citizens to discover their ethnic roots. Turkish citizens can be proud of their heritage and roots, and even find there a rationale of the Turkish government’s foreign policy moves.

Dust-covered registry archives are meant to remind Turks not only of the broad diversity of their ancestors, but also of the territorial expanse of the Ottoman Empire, a dominion that once spanned three continents.

(Kaya Genc, an essayist and novelist, is the author of *Under the Shadow: Rage and Revolution in Modern Turkey*.

This column originally appeared in the *New York Times* on April 1.)



# Putin-Erdogan-Rouhani Talks on Syria Begin

By Amberin Zaman

ISTANBUL (AI Monitor) – Russian President Vladimir Putin is expected to travel to Turkey Tuesday, April 3, for a two-day visit that will showcase warming ties between the two historical foes.

The Russian leader will join his Turkish counterpart, Recep Tayyip Erdogan, in the southern province of Mersin to inaugurate Turkey's first nuclear power plant, Akkuyu. It is being built by Russia's state Atomic Energy Agency, ROSATOM. A first reactor is slated for completion in 2023, marking the centennial of the modern republic founded by Mustafa Kemal Atatürk.

The pair will then move on to Ankara for bilateral talks. And on Wednesday they will be joined by Iranian President Hassan Rouhani in the Turkish capital Ankara for a further round of negotiations to end the seven-year conflict in Syria based on the so-called Astana model devised in May 2017. It calls for a de-escalation of hostilities, the deployment of peace monitors in designated zones and though it's not formally articulated, the reconsolidation of regime control over them.

So far, the regime has repeatedly violated cease-fire arrangements envisaged by Astana and called for by the United Nations, raining bombs on civilians in eastern Ghouta, one of four de-escalation zones alongside Idlib, Homs and the rebel-controlled southern region bordering Jordan.

Turkey was until 2015 the main sponsor of the opposition's push to unseat Syrian

President Bashar al-Assad, pitting it against the regime's top allies Russia and Iran. Relations with Moscow took a nosedive when Turkey shot down a Russian air force jet over the Syrian-Turkish border in November 2015. Putin's reaction was ferocious and Turkey has since gone out of its way to placate him.

Ankara has remained uncharacteristically silent as hundreds of civilians perished in regime airstrikes on eastern Ghouta. Turkish acquiescence was secured, many say, as part of a deal that saw Russia allowing Turkish troops to launch a massive offensive against Syrian Kurdish militants in the northwestern enclave of Afrin, where it inflicted its own share of civilian casualties.

Russia controls the skies over northwestern Syria and had it not allowed Turkey to use air power against the Syrian Kurdish group known as the People's Protection Units, it's highly questionable whether Turkish-led rebel forces could have captured the city of Afrin on March 18 with such ease. The Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, a London-based watchdog, estimated that at least 245 civilians had died as a result of the Turkish operation. The United Nations reckons that nearly 100,000 civilians were displaced from the city before it fell.

Turkey's Operation Olive Branch, launched on Jan. 20, has further complicated the Astana process because Iran is unhappy about Ankara's expanding military presence in Syria. Wednesday's talks are likely to focus on the rebels' last remaining stronghold Idlib, where thousands of rebels and their families displaced by regime advances elsewhere have sought refuge. The province is now home to

## Tatosian Appointed Honorary Consul For Armenia in Chicago

CONSUL, from page 1

Also attending were Berj Apkarian and Adroushan Armenian, respective honorary consuls from the Fresno and Las Vegas.

Halle M. Butvin, director of Special Projects for the Smithsonian Institution in Washington, DC, inspired those assembled with details on the upcoming Armenian Folklife Festival, which run for 10 days this summer on the National Mall.

The honorary consulate will focus on matters of interest to the Republic of Armenia primarily in trade in the areas of technology, agriculture/wine, tourism, and education.

around 2.5 million people and is scene to clashes between the al-Qaeda-linked Hayat Tahrir al-Sham and the Turkish-backed Syrian Liberation Front, which includes radical Islamist groups like Ahrar al-Sham.

Russia apparently expects Turkey to use its muscle to persuade these groups to give up their fight against the regime. Ankara has every incentive to do so, because the alternative, a Ghouta-style bombing campaign, would send hundreds of thousands more civilians to the Turkish border. With popular resentment brewing against some 3.5 million Syrian refugees already in Turkey and critical municipal elections due to be held in a year, the last thing Erdogan wants is more of them. But whether Turkey can deliver is an entirely different matter.

Meanwhile, Washington has cranked up pressure on Ankara to ditch a multibillion-dollar deal to buy a Russian S-400 defense system on the grounds it would compromise NATO security. The US principal deputy assistant secretary of state for political-military affairs, Tina Kaidanow, met with Turkish officials in Ankara on Friday, warning them of likely sanctions should the deal proceed, sources familiar with the substance of the talks told Al-Monitor on strict condition of anonymity. The Turkish media, quoting

Turkish lawmakers, reported that Washington was threatening to halt delivery of F-35 combat aircraft to Turkey because of its Russian plans, a claim that was later refuted by Turkish Defense Minister Nurettin Canikli. He insisted the purchase of the S-400 system could not affect delivery of the F-35s, saying, "Deliveries will start next year. This is a commercial matter." While it's true that the US Congress can no longer prevent the transfer of the actual planes at this point, it can block licensing for Turkish production of ancillary components for the F-35s, the sources said. There is growing speculation that Ankara may decide to walk away from the deal, as it did from a previous one to buy a Chinese missile system in 2013.

Meanwhile, Russian presidential spokesman Yuri Ushakov declared today that Russia would do its best to complete delivery of the S-400 missile batteries to Turkey by 2020. The issue will come up alongside Syria, energy cooperation and the importation of Turkish tomatoes during talks between Putin and Erdogan on April 3, Ushakov told reporters in Moscow. In September, Turkey and Russia confirmed that Ankara had already made a down payment for the S-400 batteries, though neither side has revealed any figures.

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