

A Full Revolution

Pashinyan Becomes Prime Minister

YEREVAN (Armenpress and RFE/RL) – The Armenian parliament voted to elect opposition leader Nikol Pashinyan prime minister on Tuesday, May 8, nearly one month after he launched sustained anti-government protests that led to resignation of Armenia's longtime leader, Serzh Sargsyan. (See related story, page 4.)

Pashinyan was backed by 59 of the 105 members of the National Assembly. They included 13 lawmakers representing Sargsyan's Republican Party of Armenia (HHK). Forty-two other HHK deputies voted against him.

The HHK's parliamentary leader, Vahram Baghdasarian, made clear just before the vote that his party still has serious doubts about Pashinyan's ability to govern Armenia but will nonetheless help him become prime minister in order to restore "political stability" in the country.

"Mr. Pashinyan, you will be elected prime minister ... God willing, you will dispel the lingering concerns of the HHK faction," said Baghdasarian.



Pashinyan and his inner circle after he was elected (Armenpress photo)

"I will serve the people of Armenia and the Republic of Armenia," Pashinyan declared immediately after the vote which sparked jubilant scenes in Yerevan's Republic Square where tens of thousands of his supporters gathered to celebrate his

widely anticipated rise to power.

Addressing the parliament before the vote, Pashinyan pledged to implement "very serious reforms" that would democratize Armenia, strengthen the rule of law
see PASHINYAN, page 3



Gov. Charles Baker, left, with host Raffi Festekjian

Boston Armenians Thank Governor Baker, Recognize Dr. Diran Apelian's Achievements

By Aram Arkun
Mirror-Spectator Staff

WINCHESTER, Mass. – Armenians in the Boston area gathered at the home of Raffi and Nina Festekjian on May 1 to thank Gov. Charles Baker for his support of the Armenian community at the annual Armenian Genocide commemoration at the Massachusetts State House, concerning Armenia, and on many other issues.
see BAKER, page 20

Boston Renaissance Discusses Events in Armenia

By Aram Arkun
Mirror-Spectator Staff

BELMONT, Mass. – The Armenian Renaissance movement Boston chapter organized a discussion on the dramatic developments in Armenia on April 30, a day prior to a first attempt at parliamentary elections of a new prime minister. Five speakers, four living in the Boston area and one from Armenia via Skype, provided their insights into the situation.

Martin Haroutunian, the representative of the Boston chapter of the Renaissance movement, which was formed about two years ago, welcomed the audience. Haroutunian explained that Armenian Renaissance is a diasporan grassroots movement supporting the Founding Parliament in Armenia and the current movements in Armenia such as My Step and the Revolution of Love and Solidarity, and advocating the release of all political prisoners in Armenia. The Boston chapter is part of a
see RENAISSANCE, page 10

Diocesan Assembly Elects First American-Born Primate

WEST HARRISON, N. Y. – The 116th Assembly of the Eastern Diocese of the Armenian Church of America on May 4 elected Very Rev.

Daniel Findikyan as its new Primate. The election took place at the Renaissance Westchester Hotel near White Plains.

After Archbishop Khajag Barsamian unexpectedly withdrew his candidacy a little over a week ago, and second candidate, Very Rev.

By Aram Arkun
Mirror-Spectator Staff

Mamigon Kiledjian did the same afterwards, leaving only Very Rev. Oshagan Gulgulian as a candidate for the position of Primate, two new candidates, Archbishop

Vicken Aykazian and Findikyan, were proposed. The assembled clergy endorsed all three candidates equally.

None of the three candidates were able to achieve a majority in the first round of voting,
see PRIMATE, page 20



NEWS IN BRIEF

Russian Base in Armenia Necessary for Bilateral Relations – President Sarkissian

YEREVAN (Armenpress) – Armenia is interested in the preservation of the Russian military base in the country, President Armen Sarkissian said in an interview with Echo of Moscow radio station.

According to him, the presence of the Russian base in Armenia is necessary for Armenia and the Armenian-Russian relations. The President underlined that the base is necessary for the preservation of the border between Armenia and Turkey. "The Armenian army is very identical to the Russian army. Russia supplies Armenia with technical equipment. Armenia and Russia are members of the same security organization," Sarkissian said.

According to the President, the future prime minister must seriously engage in efforts to ensure the security of the borders.

Speaking about Pashinyan, Sarkissian emphasized that his meetings with the latter were very constructive. "He is young and talented. He feels and manages the emotions, thoughts and desires of young and non-young people in a genius way. But this is one feature, but time will show what kind of prime minister he will be," Sarkissian said.

Former Prime Minister Resigns, Congratulates Pashinyan

YEREVAN (Public Radio of Armenia) – Acting Prime Minister Karen Karapetyan applied to President of the Republic of Armenia Armen Sarkissian with the request to terminate his duties as Acting First Deputy Prime Minister of the Republic of Armenia. Karapetyan also asked to consider as terminated the fulfillment of his duties of Acting Prime Minister of the Republic of Armenia.

In an earlier Facebook post Karapetyan thanked everyone for criticism, for inspiring words and support.

He expressed gratitude to the "descent and patriotic" government team, all professional, "daring and effective" young people that entered the state governance system during his tenure.

"I congratulate the new Prime Minister. I sincerely wish him and all future Prime Ministers success, good results and tenure void of crises," Karapetyan said.

"Aware of the hard and responsible work of the Prime Minister, which requires lack of careless days and nights, I offer our compatriots, journalists, social network users and political forces to criticize the Prime Minister without referring to their private life and family, but give advice and encourage him," Karapetyan noted.

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ARMENIA

News From Armenia

Georgia Sends Congratulations

TBILISI (Public Radio of Armenia) — Georgia's Prime Minister Giorgi Kvirikashvili has congratulated Armenia's newly-elected Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan.

"Congratulations to the newly elected Prime Minister of Armenia Nikol Pashinyan. I wish you all the best in your future endeavors. Georgia firmly supports and stands by brotherly Armenia. I believe strong ties and friendship between our countries will further deepen," Kvirikashvili said in a Twitter post.

Aurora Cofounders Congratulate Premier

YEREVAN — Aurora Prize co-founders Ruben Vardanyan and Noubar Afeyan have congratulated Nikol Pashinyan on his election as Prime Minister of Armenia.

In a statement released on their website, the two wrote, "We congratulate Nikol Pashinyan on his election to the position of Prime Minister of the Republic of Armenia and share the sense of urgency and determination demonstrated by the Armenian people throughout the process that culminated with this election.

"Together with many Armenians within and outside Armenia, we stand ready to support and propel Armenia's just and peaceful development. With this turning point, we have an opportunity to bring together the skills and enthusiasm of Armenians across the globe who are able to contribute to accelerating Armenia's and Artsakh's growth and prosperity."

The statement noted that it was with those consideration that they initially started the organization Armenia2020 almost two decades ago.

"Since then, through our many joint socio-economic development initiatives — the National Competitiveness Foundation, the IDEa Foundation, the Tatev Gateway complex, UWC Dilijan, the Aurora Humanitarian Initiative, Foundation for Armenian Science and Technology — we are learning how to rebuild Armenia towards its historic greatness and beyond, one initiative at a time."

They continued, "Today, the young Republic of Armenia has a new leadership, entrusted with the mandate of its citizens to build a healthy and prosperous country, rich with humanitarian values, and committed to justice, freedom and equal opportunity for all."

Jailed Oppositionist Freed

YEREVAN (RFE/RL) — An Armenian opposition activist was released from custody on Monday, May 7, pending a verdict in his trial on charges of aiding gunmen that seized a police station in Yerevan in 2016 to demand then President Serzh Sargsyan's resignation.

The activist, Andrias Ghukasian, was one of the organizers of demonstrations held in support of the armed members of a fringe opposition group. The charges levelled against him stem from one of those rallies organized on July 29, 2016 in Yerevan's Sari Tagh neighborhood close to the besieged police base.

Riot police used tear gas and stun grenades to disperse the protesters after they refused to march back to the city center. Several organizers of the protest were arrested and charged with provoking "mass disturbances." All of them except Ghukasian were subsequently released from custody.

The 47-year-old also stands accused of planning to have the protesters break through a police cordon, join the gunmen and thus prolong their standoff with security forces, which left three police officers dead. He denies the accusations as politically motivated.

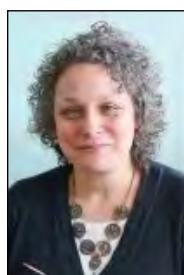
Ghukasian offered to post bail shortly after he went on trial in August last year. The judge in the case turned down the request as "unfounded," prompting strong criticism from the defendant and his lawyer.

Ghukasian was freed in the courtroom this time around in return for a written pledge not to leave Yerevan until the judge, Vartan Grigorian, hands down a verdict in the case. A trial prosecutor objected to his release.

New Dean of General Education And Director of EPIC Announced

YEREVAN — AUA is pleased to announce the appointment of Sharistan Melkonian as AUA's first Dean of General Education.

Born in Massachusetts, Sharistan Melkonian has lived in Los Angeles, New York, and Boston, where she was actively involved with a number of organizations, including St. Stephen's Armenian Elementary School, the Armenian National Committee of America, Youth Policy Action Center, and Campaign for Youth. She spent eight years as Legislative Director for YouthBuild USA,



Sharistan Melkonian

a national non-profit organization providing education, counseling and job training to unemployed youth. Before joining the American University of Armenia (AUA), Melkonian led the Armenian Volunteer Corps, Armenia's premier volunteer placement organization.

"I am tremendously excited to work side by side with such dedicated and inspiring faculty to lead the university's general education efforts, especially at this moment in Armenia's development. The University's general education program is a cornerstone of its liberal arts undergraduate education. Students both hone their skills as specialists in their chosen fields of study as well as grow into conscientious leaders and problem solvers with a broad foundation of knowledge and skills and a commitment to lifelong learning," said Melkonian.

With AUA since 2011, Melkonian joined the university as director of assessment and accreditation and was part of the development team for the launch of AUA's undergraduate program. She is currently in charge of accreditation, assessment, and institutional research. Melkonian successfully co-leads collaborative university efforts to earn reaffirmation of accreditation for nine years, through a US Department of Education recognized regional accreditation agency. She is also a member of the University's Strategic Planning Steering Committee.

"On behalf of the university, I can state that we are confident that not only will she enthusiastically embrace this role, but she will be a strong champion for the program and its liberal arts agenda," said AUA Provost Dr. Randall Rhodes.

Melkonian is in charge of faculty professional development related to teaching and learning. She has presented at several international conferences in the United States, Europe and Armenia on teaching, learning, and assessment. She served on the inaugural Accreditation Committee of the National Center for Professional Education Quality Assurance Foundation, Armenia's national accreditation agency.

Melkonian is currently earning a doctorate in higher education management at the University of Pennsylvania. She also holds a BA in communications from Worcester State University, and an MA in comparative and international education with a concentration in economics and education from Teachers College, Columbia University. She assumed her position as dean of general education on February 21, 2018.

In addition to Melkonian, Dr. Michael

Kouchakdjian has joined AUA as its new Director of Entrepreneurship and Product Innovation Center (EPIC).

"Michael is the ideal person to lead EPIC. Over the years he has considerable start-up and venture experience in both Armenia and the US. He has an impressive track record of successfully executing the most challenging of projects," noted AUA President Dr. Armen Der Kiureghian.

Kouchakdjian is a professor in AUA's College of Business and Economics teaching management and entrepreneurship.

"Dr. Michael Kouchakdjian, while teaching in the CBE, will be assuming the position of director of EPIC. Priorities will be to ensure synergies between the Center and all Colleges, engage experts in the public and private sectors in mentoring student teams, increase the number of external commercial projects coming into EPIC, and increase grant activities to support and grow current initiatives," wrote the provost in an email message to the AUA community.



Dr. Michael Kouchakdjian

In the US, Kouchakdjian's career was in the biotechnology industry: first, at Antigenics, Inc., one of the first immuno-oncology biotech startups in the world, where his roles included business and corporate development, alliance management, as well as mergers and acquisitions; then, as founder and president of Blue Stream Laboratories, Inc. in Cambridge, Massachusetts, which he exited in 2016 following acquisition by a multinational pharmaceutical services company.

This isn't the first time Kouchakdjian is working in Armenia. He first came to AUA in 1992, one year after its founding. From 1993 to 1997, he was director of administration, establishing and overseeing the day-to-day operations of the newly established university under President Mihran Agababian. Simultaneously, Kouchakdjian was director of AUA's Center for Business Research and Development (CBRD) where he directed over three-dozen research and consulting projects throughout Armenia. At the time, CBRD was distinctive for being the first and only source of "western"-style business research and consulting services in Armenia.

"I see EPIC as a conduit for AUA's supporters and, more broadly, the diaspora and beyond, to channel knowledge, expertise, and finance to our most ambitious student entrepreneurs. I believe the start-up venture ecosystem in Armenia is approaching critical mass. With EPIC serving as a platform with its best-in-class facilities and equipment, unmatched technical and business expertise, and top-flight students, AUA will be at the forefront," said Kouchakdjian.

In the mid 1990s, Kouchakdjian was responsible for the construction and startup of the AUA Business Center on Alex Manoogian Street, one of the first foreign development projects of that scale in Armenia. The AUA Center has provided a critical revenue stream for the university for almost 20 years.

While at AUA in the early period, Kouchakdjian established the first Entrepreneurship and New Venture program at AUA as well as the first

Start-Up/Business Plan competition in Armenia, which gave a number of Armenia's first startups the opportunity to be born soon after independence.

Kouchakdjian earned his MBA from the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA) Anderson School of Management in 1992 and his PhD in biochemistry and molecular biophysics from Columbia in 1990. He assumed his position as director of EPIC on March 15.

Pashinyan Aide Reassures Armenian Tycoons

YEREVAN (RFE/RL) — A close associate of Nikol Pashinyan has insisted that wealthy businesspeople linked to the outgoing Armenian government will not risk losing their assets after the opposition leader's widely anticipated appointment as the country's prime minister.

Ararat Mirzoyan said that the new Armenian leadership will only strive to break up economic monopolies, boost competition and separate business from government.

"There is going to be no property redistribution because that would mean building the state from scratch, which would be fraught with very unpredictable consequences," Mirzoyan said. "The fact is that there are people who own particular businesses. We are not going to wrest anything from these people. These people will continue [to own their assets.]"

"But the rules of the game will change," he stressed in a weekend interview. "Nobody will have a monopoly in any sector."

Mirzoyan specifically referred to wealthy individuals who have been linked to former President Serzh Sargsyan's Republican Party (HHK) and have long relied on government connections in doing business. "Everyone [in the HHK] can rest assured that nothing threatens their businesses and their, their family members' and friends' physical safety," he said.

"Let the business owners serenely take care of their businesses. They will not need to hold parliament seats or any state positions in order to secure their businesses," added Mirzoyan.

Pashinyan likewise reiterated on Monday that he will not wage "vendettas" against the HHK leadership or tycoons close if the Armenian parliament elects him prime minister on Tuesday. "The page of political and economic persecutions in Armenia has been turned," he told reporters.

"The new rules of the game will be the rule of law," Pashinyan said when asked about policy changes that will affect the business community. He would not say whether he will order high-profile inquiries into lucrative firms that have long been suspected of tax evasion.

Some Armenian tycoons have already publicly voiced strong support for Pashinyan's opposition movement. They include tobacco magnates Mikael Vartanian and his brother Karen. The Vartanian family is one of the richest in the country.

Another tycoon, Gagik Tsarukyan, has struck an alliance Pashinyan. Tsarukyan's Prosperous Armenia Party boasts the second largest faction in the parliament.



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and radically improve the domestic business environment.

“All people are equal before the law, period!” he said. “There will be no privileged people in Armenia, period! Elections will not be rigged and vote bribes will not be handed out anymore, period! There will be no artificial economic monopolies, period! Human rights will be protected, government will not be a means for making money, and corruption will be rooted out, period!”

Pashinyan made clear at the same time that he will not wage “vendettas” against members of the HHK and the previous governments and will preclude any “redistribution” of economic assets and properties.

Also, he again ruled out major changes in Armenian foreign policy. In particular, he reiterated that Armenia will remain part of the Russian-led Eurasian Economic Union and the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO). “We regard military cooperation with Russia as an important factor of ensuring Armenia’s security,” he said, adding he will also strive to deepen Armenia’s ties with the European Union and the United States.

Pashinyan further reaffirmed his plans to



PM Nikol Pashinyan and President Armen Sarkissian

Minister is elected in the second elections and again the action plan isn’t approved, the parliament is dissolved and snap elections take place.

There are 4 factions in the Armenian parlia-

ment. By assuming the post of the PM I announce that I serve the Armenian people, the citizens of Armenia, the Republic of Artsakh and the Republic of Armenia. Long live free-

law-enforcement authorities in July 2009 and was subsequently tried and sentenced to seven years in prison on charges stemming from the unrest. Like other Ter-Petrosian allies, he was released from jail in May 2011 under a general amnesty declared by the Sargsyan administration.

A year later Pashinyan was elected to the National Assembly on the ticket of Ter-Petrosian’s Armenian National Congress (HAK). He subsequently fell out with the ex-president and set up his own party, Civil Contract.

Civil Contract and two other opposition parties, Bright Armenia and Republic, set up an alliance called Yelk (Exit) ahead of Armenia’s last parliamentary elections held in April 2017. Yelk won 9 parliament seats.

Both Bright Armenia and Republic refused to support Pashinyan when he embarked on his campaign aimed at preventing Sargsyan from becoming prime minister and thus extending his decade-long rule. They said that he will fail to attract large crowds.

Pashinyan began the unexpectedly successful campaign in Armenia second largest city of Gyumri on March 31. He returned to Yerevan on foot on April 13 after walking more than 200 kilometers through the country’s northern and central regions in an effort to drum up popular support for his cause.

Congratulations from Putin

Russian President Vladimir Putin on Tuesday swiftly congratulated Pashinyan on becoming Armenia’s prime minister and said he expects Russian-Armenian ties to grow even closer.

“I expect that your work as the head of government will contribute to further strengthening the friendly, allied relations between our countries, our partnership as part of the Commonwealth of Independent States, the Eurasian Economic Union and the Collective Security Treaty Organization,” Putin said in a congratulatory message to Pashinyan cited by the Kremlin.

Russia has closely watched the political turmoil in Armenia.

Putin telephoned Armenia’s President Armen Sarkissian and acting Prime Minister Karen Karapetyan in the immediate aftermath of Serzh Sargsyan’s resignation. He and other Russian officials have been careful not to publicly take sides in the Armenian standoff.

“We hope that in any case the allied, warm and constructive Russian-Armenian relations will remain a constant for both the foreign policy of our country and the foreign policy of Yerevan,” Putin’s press secretary, Dmitry Peskov, said late last week.

Pashinyan has repeatedly stated that he will not pull Armenia out of the Eurasian Economic Union (EEU) and the CSTO. He told visiting Russian parliamentarians on April 29 that Russian-Armenian ties will only deepen as a



Crowds in Republic Square in Yerevan

push for fresh parliamentary elections. But he gave no possible dates for the conduct of such polls. It remains to be seen whether the HHK, which continues to control the majority of seats in the parliament, will agree to them.

The idea of fresh elections is also supported by businessman Gagik Tsarukyan’s alliance and the Armenian Revolutionary Federation. Both political groups have backed the Pashinyan-led street protests against Sargsyan’s attempt to extend his rule, which began in Yerevan on April 13 and intensified dramatically in the following weeks.

Sargsyan, who served as Armenia’s president from 2008 to 2018, stepped down as prime minister on April 23.

Pashinyan declined to shed light on the composition of his cabinet when he spoke to reporters moments after being elected prime minister. He said his ministers will be chosen “as a result of discussions” with his allies and other political groups.

As required by the Constitution, a new government must be formed within 15 days after electing a Prime Minister.

An elected Prime Minister must nominate deputy Prime Ministers and ministers of his Cabinet to the President within five days after taking office. After the formation of the government, the Prime Minister must present his Cabinet’s action plan for parliamentary debates within 20 days. Lawmakers have seven days for debating the action plan.

In the event of the parliament’s rejection of the action plan, the elected PM resigns and new elections of PM take place. If a new Prime

ment. The Republican Party (HHK) faction, the ruling party of Armenia, has 58 seats in the 105-seat unicameral parliament of Armenia – known as the National Assembly. The ARF faction – (Armenian Revolutionary Federation aka Dashnaksutyun), has 7 seats. The Tsarukyan faction has 31 seats, and the Yelk faction has 9 seats.

Meeting the President

Pashinyan had his first meeting as Prime Minister with Armenian President Armen Sarkissian on May 8 in the President’s Office.

“I would like to wish you that you form the government as soon as possible and engage in the solution of all the issues which face our state, government, entire people and this country – the Republic of Armenia. My best wishes to you and good luck,” Sarkissian said, congratulating Pashinyan at the meeting, the President’s Office said.

Celebrating in the Streets

Pashinyan, who will turn 43 on June 1, received a hero’s welcome when he headed to Republic Square, the main venue of the protests, later in the afternoon. “You won today,” he told the jubilant crowd chanting “Nikol!” and “Victory!”

“The victory is not my being elected prime minister,” he added. “The victory is the fact that it’s you who have decided who must be prime minister of Armenia.”

“From now on the people must take care that all officials honestly serve the people, otherwise, they will take their step as they did in

dom, long live the Republic of Armenia, long live we and our children who already live in free and happy Armenia”, the PM said.

The rally, which also featured speeches by two prominent artists supporting the protest movement, was followed by a live concert.

Pashinyan, is a former journalist who edited the newspaper Haykakan Zhamanak, from 1999 to 2012. He also has a long history of political activism. He first ran for the parliament in 2007 as the top candidate of an opposition group that challenged then President Robert Kocharyan. The group called Impeachment failed to win any parliament seats.

Pashinyan went on to play a major role in a broad-based opposition movement launched by former President Levon Ter-Petrosian, the main opposition candidate in a hotly disputed presidential election held in February 2008. The vote marred by reports of serious fraud formalized the handover of power from Kocharyan to Serzh Sargsyan.

Pashinyan went into hiding following the deadly suppression on March 1-2, 2008 of post-election protests in Yerevan. He surrendered to



Serj Tankian, left, with Nikol Pashinyan on May 7

result of regime change in Yerevan.

Pashinyan had previously harshly criticized Armenia’s membership in both Russian-led blocs. “We now have new political realities and must reckon with them,” responded Pashinyan. A “drastic” change in Armenia foreign policy would only hurt the country, he said.

Pashinyan reaffirmed his commitment to “strategic allied relations with Russia” when he again addressed fellow lawmakers just before Tuesday’s parliament vote.



ARMENIA



A sea of Armenians (Aram Arkun photo)

Armenia Assembled and Rejoiced at Pashinyan’s Election as Prime Minister

By Aram Arkun
Mirror-Spectator Staff

YEREVAN – Well-behaved crowds of over 100,000 people in Yerevan’s central square were hopeful in the morning and early afternoon of May 8 while they awaited the results of the parliamentary election. Many wore shirts or hats with slogans or pictures supporting Nikol Pashinyan’s candidacy for the office of prime minister. Occasional drizzles of rain did not mar the occasion nor dampen spirits, though only a few had umbrellas. There were people of all ages, ranging from infants

with their parents to the elderly. The crowds would break into chants or yell encouragement as Pashinyan addressed them prior to the vote. Later, the speakers at the parliamentary session prior to the actual vote was broadcast, and again the crowds voiced their approval of speakers on Pashinyan’s side. When leaders of the Republicans spoke, the masses screamed their disapproval, often turning their backs on their images on the large screens and displaying their middle fingers in anger (see brief video (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VemKG48QXWk&feature=youtu.be>)). The tricolor was ever-present, on shirts, hats, scarfs, cars, and even as long banners which people held overhead. In addition,

flags of a few political parties, and even a few countries like France, were being waved in support of the popular movement. People held up banners from a few different villages and cities, as well as from places as far afield as Poland and Belgium. In breaks between speakers, lively patriotic or traditional music was played, as well as songs directly connected to Pashinyan’s campaign. Many swayed or even danced to the music. The crowds stayed there for the most part from late morning till late afternoon, when heavy rain led many to seek cover. The central part of the city next to the square was blocked to traffic, while cars throughout the city honked their horns in jubilation for hours. It was like a mass street party after the parliamentary election of Pashinyan.



Pashinyan supporters in Yerevan sit in the trunk of a car. (Edmond Y. Azadian photo)



A small car with a big message and many passengers (Aram Arkun photo)



A party mood in the streets (Aram Arkun photo)



Walking to Republic Square (Aram Arkun photo)



INTERNATIONAL

Towards Transnational Remembrance And Reconciliation

By Muriel Mirak-Weissbach

Special to the Mirror-Spectator

FRANKFURT, Germany – Armenians who gathered in Frankfurt's historic Paulskirche this year for the traditional commemoration of the 1915 genocide were among the first to join in prayer with the new Primate of the Armenian Church in Germany, Archimandrite Seroppe Isakhanyan. He was elected as the successor to Archbishop Karekin Bekjian on April 15, and confirmed by Catholicos Karekin II on April 19. Another novelty was the presence of two representatives of the Armenian youth community. And a very special guest was Hrachuhi Bassenz, world famous opera singer.

Following a piece by Komitas, *Shushiki*, performed on the piano by Diana Sahakyan, Serge Derhagyan opened the solemn ceremony on a stern note; he spoke of criminals who today continue to deny the genocide occurred, and characterized the ongoing expulsion of Kurds as a continuation of the tragedy the Armenians suffered a century ago. As the cases of Hrant Dink and persecuted German-Turkish author Dogan Akhanli show, he said, the perpetrators are still active. To be sure, Germany has recognized the genocide officially, in 2016, but the clauses of that act of Parliament await implementation. Concretely he called for a genocide monument to be erected in Berlin and for study of the Armenian Genocide to become part of the school curriculum.

Mayor Uwe Becker said, with reference to the 2016 landmark resolution, that it proved one cannot rewrite history. One must learn from history, he said, with a view to the ongoing plight of the people of Afrin, and urged Europe not to remain idle.

Bassenz presented *Garuna* and *Hov Areq* by Komitas, after which Ambassador Ashot Smbatyan spoke. Denial of the genocide, he said, is something that is damaging also to the Turkish people, in the sense that it hin-

ders them from dealing truthfully with their own history. Raising the question of whether or not we have witnessed cultural progress over the past decades, he pointed to the continuing violence, expulsions and killing taking place in Syria; the crimes of the past are being repeated.

The commemorative speech was delivered by Prof. Volkhard Knigge, director of the Büchenwald Memorial Foundation. Prof. Knigge developed the transnational dimension of remembrance culture, drawing comparisons between the Armenian Genocide and the Holocaust. In Büchenwald, he said,



Prof. Volkhard Knigge

they have succeeded in identifying 35,000 names of victims and among them have found 30 Armenians – who had previously been misidentified as Turks. Citing the oft-quoted remark by Hitler, in his plans to exterminate the Jewish population, to the effect that no one remembered the Armenians, he traced a line of continuity from the genocide to the Holocaust. There were some survivors of Büchenwald, he said, who, upon liberation from that concentration camp, swore a solemn oath to the effect: “We want to build a new world of peace and humanity.”

As for the German role in the genocide, Knigge distinguished between those diplomats like Ambassador von Wangenheim who opposed the massacres and those like Chancellor Bethmann-Hollweg, who accepted them as part of the price for the wartime alliance with the Young Turk regime. If military officers like Fritz Bronsart von

Schellendorf and Hans Humann actively supported the genocide policy, there were Germans like Johannes Lepsius and Armin Wegner who mounted a resistance.

To present his concept of transnational remembrance, Prof. Knigge took the example of Stephen Hill, a British Jew who survived Büchenwald. Hill worked with others on the Declaration of Human Rights and called for a “transnational suffering remembrance,” whereby one derives self-consciousness from one's own past of suffering, transposing it to a transnational level. In this connection he recalled the mass demonstrations of Turkish citizens in honor of Hrant Dink.

At the conclusion of the main address, Hrachuhi Bassenz sang *Antuni* by Komitas, and she was followed by two young Armenians. Vardan Lulukjan focused on the task of the younger generation to keep the memory of the past alive, and to address contemporary crimes, like those perpetrated against Christians in Syria as well as Rohingya Muslims in Myanmar or Yazidis in Iraq. Berta Arapoglu focused on the implementation of the genocide resolution, listing 5 concrete demands: genocide instruction in schools, banning speeches by denialists, genocide monuments in major cities, fighting injustice and supporting democracy in Turkey.

Diana Sahakyan performed *Tsirintsar* by Komitas, after which Archimandrite Isakhanyan gave a moving speech, before concluding with solemn prayers. As a Christian, he said, he believes in a God of reconciliation, forgiveness and righteousness. Turks are not to be our enemies eternally, we will be able to forgive not only as Christians but as human beings. Forgiveness, he said, is a step towards healing sickness, the sickness of hatred which was expressed in the assassination of Hrant Dink. This must

International News

Council of Europe Congratulates Pashinyan

OSLO, Norway (Public Radio of Armenia) – Council of Europe Secretary General Thorbjørn Jagland made the following statement: “On behalf of the Council of Europe, I congratulate Nikol Pashinyan on his election as Prime Minister of Armenia.

“Today's decision by the Armenian Parliament shows that the constitutional reform, which is being carried out with the help of our organization, has started to be implemented. This process should continue, in line with the wishes of the Armenian people.

“The Council of Europe is ready to provide any further assistance to the Armenian authorities in this very important process based on human rights, democracy and the rule of law.”

EU Issues Statement on Pashinyan

BRUSSELS, Belgium – The High Representative/Vice-President Federica Mogherini and Commissioner Johannes Hahn of the European Union issued a Joint statement on the election of Nikol Pashinyan as Prime Minister of Armenia:

“The Armenian Parliament has elected Nikol Pashinyan as the new Prime Minister of Armenia in accordance with the Constitution. The European Union looks forward to working with him and his government on the implementation of the EU-Armenia Comprehensive and Enhanced Partnership Agreement signed last November, with a view to further consolidating democracy, the rule of law and respect of human rights, and to creating a prosperous and resilient country for the benefit of all citizens of Armenia.

“To achieve these important goals, a comprehensive dialogue among all political stakeholders in Armenia, including civil society, remains crucial.”

5 Armenians Elected to Lebanese Parliament

BEIRUT (Armenpress) – Five ethnic Armenians have been elected MPs of the parliament of Lebanon, according to the preliminary results of the May 6 elections.

“Hakob Bagratuni, Hakob Terzyan and Alexander Matosyan from the ARF (Dashnaksutyun), Jean Taluzyan from the Lebanese Forces party and Pola Yakubyan nominated by the civilian movement circles, have been elected lawmakers of the Lebanese parliament”, editor-in-chief of Lebanon's Aztag Daily Shahan Gantaharian told ARMENPRESS.

The candidates nominated by the Ramgavar (Armenian Democratic Liberty Party) and the Hunchakian party have not been elected. (The Central Committee and Supreme Council of the ADL/Ramgavar Party did not endorse those members who participated as Ramgavar candidates.)

The ARF nominated 4, the Ramgavar – 3 and the Hunchakian – 1 candidates for the parliamentary elections.

Qatari and Chinese Businesses Interested in Armenia Energy Field

YEREVAN (Armenpress) – Acting Minister of Energy Ashot Manukyan received Qatari and Chinese businessmen Saif-Ur-Rehman Khan, executive director of Redco International and Song Dongsheng, President of PowerChina International Group, on May 7.

Manukyan stated that there is already a productive cooperation with Chinese companies. He spoke about Armenia's 2036 energy development strategy and touched upon the projects in renewable energy field with investment attractiveness. He said the primary goal of these projects is to increase the energy production capacities directed for export.

Song Dongsheng spoke about his company's priorities, as well as discussed the cooperation opportunities with Armenia in the energy field.

Erdogan Speech in Turkey Backfires, Leading To Widespread ‘Enough’ Hashtag

ISTANBUL (Reuters) – More than half a million Turks piled onto social media to call time on President Tayyip Erdogan on May 8, making the word “tamam,” which translates into “enough,” a trending topic worldwide after he promised to step down if the people wanted it.

“If one day our nation says ‘enough,’ then we will step aside,” he said in a speech in parliament. The most popular – and divisive – politician in recent Turkish history, Erdogan has ruled for 15 years, overseeing a period of sharp economic growth and a widespread crackdown against his opponents.

Last month, he declared snap elections for June 24, bringing the polls forward by more than a year. Soon after the speech, the #Tamam hashtag swept across Turkish-language Twitter, then became a global trending topic.

“We want democracy so we say #enough to Erdogan. Please leave your seat. You did insane things to our country and people. Enough,” said one user.

“You will not step aside quietly. You will give account for the things you did.

Enough!” said another.

Erdogan's rivals in the presidential polls also jumped in, with the “tamam” tweets from three of his main opponents together garnering more than 10,000 retweets.

“Time is up. Enough!” tweeted Muharrem Ince, the candidate of the main opposition, the Republican People's Party (CHP).

Meral Aksener, leader of the Good Party, and Felicity Party Leader Temel Karamollaoglu also joined in the fray on social media.

More than 480,000 tweets with the word “tamam” were posted by the late afternoon.

Social media has become the primary platform for opposition against the government in Turkey, where traditional media is saturated with coverage of Erdogan and his ministers. Erdogan's speeches, usually two or three a day, are all broadcast live on major channels, while opposition parties get little to no coverage.

Rights groups and Turkey's Western allies have criticized Ankara for its dete-

riorating record on civil rights and have voiced concerns that the NATO member has been sliding further into authoritarianism under Erdogan.

Thousands from all walks of life have been jailed for alleged ties to a movement that resulted in a 2016 coup attempt.

The government says the measures are necessary due to the security threats it faces.

After the June vote, Turkey will switch to the powerful, executive presidential system narrowly approved in a referendum last year.

Lawmaker Bulent Tezcan of the CHP last week announced an alliance in a bid to weaken the ruling party's 16-year dominance in parliament. His secular party is joining forces with the newly-founded nationalist Good Party, the Islamic-leaning Felicity Party and the center-right Democrat Party.

The parties have nominated their own presidential candidates to run against Erdogan, but will run as an alliance for the parliamentary election, which is scheduled for the same day.

Community News

Peter and Irene Vosbikian Legacy Honored at Sold Out Celebration In Philadelphia

WASHINGTON – Philadelphia Community members, former interns and friends representing a diverse cross section of the community attended the Armenian Assembly of America's sold out Philadelphia Celebration honoring Life Trustees Peter and Irene Vosbikian, who were awarded with the Global Humanitarian Award.

The Celebration took place on Saturday, April 28, at the National Constitution Center overlooking Independence Hall and the Liberty Bell, the birthplace of our nation's democracy. Guests traveled from across the country, for the event.

Host Committee Chairman and Assembly Board Member Alex Karapetian welcomed guests and thanked the Host Committee - composed of fellow Board Member Bianka Kadian Dodov and the Philadelphia trifecta: Celeste Ayjian, Jake Der Hagopian, and Silva Santerian - as well as the Assembly staff, sponsors, and donors for helping to make it an unforgettable evening.

Karapetian shared his experience during the Assembly's summer internship in Washington, DC and applauded the intern alumni in attendance. The Honorary Host Committee, which was mostly composed of former alumni, includes Ani Acopian ('14), Adam Azarian ('09), Alexander Azarian ('14), Michael Azarian ('05), Cissy Der Hagopian ('79), Mark Hoplamazian ('83), Edele Hovnanian ('80), Leslie Azarian Karapetian ('02), Julia Mirak Kew ('87), Raffi Manoukian ('97), Mark Momjian ('79 & '80), Melineh Momjian ('85), Paul Sookiasian ('05), Erika Hajatian Torosian ('05), and Linda Yepoyan ('81). Former Assembly Board Chairman Michael Haratunian and former Assembly Board Member Harry S. Cherken, Jr. were also part of the Honorary Host Committee, alongside their



Armenian Assembly Board Member and Host Committee Chairman Alex Karapetian

former Board colleagues Edele Hovnanian and Mark Momjian.

During his speech, Karapetian stated: "Tonight, we are not only celebrating the 41st anniversary of the Assembly's summer internship program but we are also honoring two of its most devoted stewards and staunch pillars of the Philly community, Peter and Irene Vosbikian, with the Global Humanitarian Award. Congratulations to both of you and thank you for all that you have done and continue to do for the Assembly."

Karapetian also encouraged everyone to participate in the Assembly's upcoming National Advocacy Conference in Washington, DC, which will take place on September 23-25, 2018. "We cannot sit on the sidelines and expect others to act on our behalf. If you want see VOSBIKIAN, page 9



Maj. Sargis Stepanyan visiting a wounded soldier in Armenia

Armenian Army Hero Saves Lives Off and On The Battlefield

NEW YORK – When Maj. Sargis Stepanyan realized a fellow soldier was trapped among landmines during a special operations forces mission in Nagorno-Karabakh (Artsakh), he did what the best military commanders on the battlefield do – he risked his own life trying to save him.

By Taleen Babayan

Special to the Mirror-Spectator

That rescue attempt would ultimately cost him his two legs and right arm, but helped him fulfill a greater calling through the Armenian Wounded Heroes Fund (AWHF) and its life-saving mission.

Hailed as a war hero since that fateful day in 2014, Stepanyan has continued to devote his life to the Armenian Armed Forces and has discovered a new purpose of raising awareness for the medical emergencies soldiers face on the front line in Nagorno-Karabakh, as well as providing counsel to other wounded soldiers, inspiring them.

In his first-ever trip to the United States, Stepanyan spent time in the New York metro area as well as in Las Vegas and Los Angeles to garner support for the AWHF's US Military-Grade Kits that have allowed soldiers to become their own medics on the field in the crucial moments after they're hit.

During his time in New York, Stepanyan was recognized by the Knights of Vartan in a special award ceremony at the Times Square Armenian Genocide Commemoration on Sunday, April 22. He also participated in awareness events that week at St. Illuminator's Cathedral in New York City; St. Vartanantz Armenian Church in Ridgefield, NJ; an Armenian Genocide Flag Raising Ceremony in Fort Lee, NJ; Hovnanian Armenian School in New Milford, NJ and the home of James and Maral Sahagian in Mahwah, NJ before heading west.

Saving More Lives, Buoying Spirits

His story is not only inspirational but also connects the diaspora to the ongoing conflict in Armenia and Nagorno-Karabakh and the sacrifices being made to protect the historic land. When the landmine detonated on Stepanyan, he was rushed to the hospital in Stepanakert, which didn't have enough blood stored to sustain his severely injured body. Fellow soldiers with his blood type donated their blood through the dangerous method of direct transfusion. During the aftermath of the explosion, his heart stopped three times.

"It must have been God's will for me to remain on this earth," said Stepanyan, see HERO, page 7

Women's Empowerment In Action in Armenia and The Diaspora

WASHINGTON – Challenges and successes in advancing equal rights for Armenian women drew an attentive audience at a recent reception on "Empowering Armenian Women" at the Cosmos Club in Washington, D.C., sponsored by the National Association for Armenian Studies and Research (NAASR) on April 26, 2018, and hosted by Judith Saryan of Cambridge, Mass. and Arlene Saryan of Washington, DC.

Sarah Ignatius, executive director of NAASR, welcomed the many women leaders in the room, as well as the men, and explained that the Cosmos Club was the perfect setting with its tradition of thoughtful discourse and the fact that it had been a male-only club until 1988, thereby illustrating the power of advocacy for equal treatment. She explained how NAASR's programming not only looks at Armenia's past but focuses on contemporary Armenian topics, expanding its reach to college and university students as well as the general public, with support from the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation. She also described



Anna Kalshyan

NAASR's plans to transform its headquarters into a global center for Armenian Studies, with construction starting this month, and encouraged people to consider becoming part of it through their support.

Maro Matosian, the executive director of the Women's Support Center (WSC) had been slated to speak as a key presenter but had flown back to Yerevan the previous weekend to participate in the demonstrations, thereby embodying through her actions women's empowerment in Armenia. Standing in her stead was Antranig Kasbarian, executive director of the Tufenkian Foundation, who for many years has worked with Matosian to advance women's rights and civil society. Kasbarian explained how WSC, under Matosian's leadership, serves victims of domestic violence and their families and has become a model organization actively training social workers, therapists, police officers, and victims of domestic violence to make productive decisions about their own lives. WSC also promotes gender equality through its larger advocacy work, which complements the domestic violence work. He presented WSC in the context of the growing social justice activism in

see EMPOWERMENT, page 9



COMMUNITY NEWS

Armenian Army Hero Saves Lives Off and On The Battlefield

HERO, from page 6

35, who was born and raised in Yerevan before joining the Armenian Armed Forces and subsequently its Special Operations Forces.

Doctors credit his survival to his tremendous athletic shape, thanks to his years of training as a soldier and paratrooper. Once stabilized, he

was transferred to a hospital in Yerevan by helicopter and during the flight Stepanyan began to feel better, perhaps because he was accustomed to being elevated high in the air during his military training and operations.

Arriving in Yerevan, Stepanyan knew it would be hard on his parents to see their son in his condition, so he made it a priority to help ease their agony and distress.

"My parents were very upset when they saw me," said Stepanyan. "I knew I had to make them feel comfortable otherwise it was going to be very difficult for all of us."



AGBU Manoogian-Demirdjian Armenian School students arm wrestle with Maj. Sargis Stepanyan in Los Angeles on Thursday, April 26.



Fort Lee Mayor Mark Sokolich presenting Maj. Sargis Stepanyan with a plaque during the city's flag raising ceremony in honor of the Armenian Genocide on Saturday, April 21.

Stepanyan worked hard to maintain his mental and physical strength to recover from his injuries. He persevered, his competitive nature kicking in, to recover as quickly as possible to leave the hospital bed and resume daily life to the best of his ability.

At the behest of Karekin II, Catholicos of all Armenians, Stepanyan traveled to Calcutta, India for his prosthetic surgery, under the care of the Armenian Humanitarian College of Calcutta, which operates under the auspices of the Mother See of Holy Echmiadzin. At first he had difficulty adjusting to his prosthetics as

they were heavy and foreign to his body but he says he was "determined for normalcy."

Stepanyan soon looked for a sport in which he could compete and "one that I could win." He chose arm wrestling and selected a coach with the mindset of "training towards victory."

As he prepared for the European Para-Arm Wrestling World Cup competitions, he met Razmig Arzumanyan, one of the founders of the Armenian Wounded Heroes Fund (AWHF), with whom he forged a close relationship. AWHF is committed to the overall betterment of Armenia's heroes and it sponsored Stepanyan's participation in the competition. Most recently Stepanyan became the world champion, winning two gold and one silver medal last November in Poland.

Founded in response to the April 2016 war in Artsakh, AWHF's mission is to supply troops with first-aid kits on the front line in order to prevent the three leading causes of combat deaths, which include lacerated lungs, airway obstruction and hemorrhaging. Delivering every dollar donated, the organization has already sent thousands of kits to the front line in its short history and trained soldiers on how to use the devices and supplies. The organization's current goal is to cover the eastern front of Artsakh, working in tandem with Armenia's Ministry of Defense.

Stepanyan's presence in the diaspora, particularly in New York City, illuminated the significance of the Armenian Armed Forces, who risk their lives every day to protect the homeland. According to Stepanyan, it is their duty to do so and it is a duty they fulfill with pride.

"We are an intelligent nation," said Stepanyan. "I want our country to become stronger and have an even stronger Army."

In Stepanyan's eyes, it is through that powerful army that Armenia will flourish and not be subject to other catastrophic attacks on its people.

"I feel great pain for the one and a half million Armenians who were massacred during the genocide," said Stepanyan. "But by strengthening the country's army, that kind of tragedy will never occur again."

He sees the potential in the younger generation of Armenians, both in the homeland and in the diaspora, where he had a chance to engage with the youth, particularly at the Hovnanian Armenian School.

"I was very impressed with the curiosity of the students," said Stepanyan. "They asked mature questions and I in turn encouraged them to never forget the Armenian language and the Armenian nation."

Through his ongoing work with the Armenian Armed Forces and the AWHF, he hopes to bring continued awareness to important causes and to improve the quality of life for amputees and disabled soldiers by building a gym and recreational center.

"I want the gym to be free of charge and accessible to the disabled, where the wounded can train and also work," he said. "It gives them a new life and shows the world that the Armenian people are a strong people."

As for the future of the country that he, his parents and grandparents have physically fought for, he says he wants to "witness the return of Artsakh to Armenia and for more Armenian children to be born on the Armenian soil."



Tekeyan Cultural Association, Inc.

Dr. Nubar Berberian Annual Awards

Dr. Nubar Berberian, intellectual, journalist, activist and editor of many ADL daily newspapers for more than 50 years passed away at the age of 94 in November 23, 2016. In his Will, Dr. Berberian directed his Trust Fund managers to appropriate awards every year to college students of Armenian descent worldwide who major in either International Law or Political Science.

ELIGIBILITY AND REQUIREMENTS

- 1) Eligible recipients are college students of Armenian descent who major in either International Law or Political Science.
- 2) Applicant must be enrolled in a full-time graduate program in a fully accredited college or university in the world.
- 3) Applicant must provide all of the information requested on the application form.
- 4) Applicant must submit a copy of his or her most recent college transcript.
- 5) Applicant is to include a small head and shoulders self-portrait.
- 6) Application could be received by requesting from Tcadirector@Aol.com.
- 7) Applicants should submit applications electronically (via email) to: Tcadirector@Aol.com, The Paper submissions will be accepted by the deadline at:

Tekeyan Cultural Association, Inc.
Dr. Nubar Berberian Trust Fund
755 Mt. Auburn Street
Watertown, MA 02472
USA

but electronic application is preferred.

- 8) The deadline of receiving the applications is **August 30, 2018**.
- 9) The administrators and managers of the fund will vote the qualified winners in **October, 2018** based on the merits of each applicant.
- 10) The winner or winners will receive their awards in **November, 2018**. Applicants who were not selected will be notified in writing and invited to apply next year again, if they are eligible.
- 11) Winning applicants are not eligible to apply again.
- 12) This announcement is published in Armenian, English, French and Spanish.

Watertown, MA, April 23, 2018



OBITUARIES

Bob Colombosian

Family Popularized Yogurt in North America

ANDOVER, Mass. (*Boston Globe*) – Robert “Bob” Colombosian, 92, a longtime resident of Andover, died at home with his family by his side on April 30, 2018.

Born on December 8, 1925, Bob was the son of Sarkis and Rose (Krikorian) Colombosian, who were the founders of Colombo & Sons Creamery, incorporated in 1929 as the first yogurt dairy in America. He graduated from Punchard High School, Andover class of 1944 and attended Bryant & Stratton College of Boston.

He was also a proud World War II Army veteran.

He married Alice (Amboian) of Detroit, Mich. in 1947 and they celebrated 61 years together until her passing in 2008. Their wedding present from his parents was a milk route, where they delivered milk door-to-door around Merrimack Valley under the name “Wild Rose

unteer for 15 years at Lawrence General Hospital, retiring on his 90th birthday.

He also believed in giving back to the community and was a generous contributor to a scholarship fund at Bentley University and to several Armenian organizations. He had served as a Parish Council Member of the Holy Cross Armenian Apostolic Church of Lawrence, and was a member of the Sts. Vartanatz Armenian Church, Chelmsford.

Bob was also a renowned race car driver and member of the Sports Car Club of America from 1957-1967 where he was New England champion for many years. He drove modified sports cars and competed at raceways throughout the Northeast and eastern Canada as well as at Sebring Raceway in Fla. and at Watkins Glen, N.Y. After his racing career ended, he was frequently seen driving around his beloved Andover in his red mini cooper.



Robert “Bob” Colombosian (Photo: Ann Hermes/The Eagle-Tribune)

Creamery.”

He was a true entrepreneur with a creative spirit who started and cultivated many businesses such as Colombo Yogurt, Inc., Autolab Imports in Woburn, Grumpy’s Restaurant in Boston, Colombo Frozen Yogurt Shoppe at Faneuil Hall and Sweet Scoops in Salem, Mass.

He was central to the development of Colombo Frozen Yogurt “The Cultured Cow.” In 2003, he was coaxed out of retirement by General Mills, the owner of Colombo yogurt, and became an integral part of their television advertising campaign. In 2004 accompanied by his wife, Alice, he appeared in the commercials commemorating the 75th anniversary of Colombo Yogurt. That same year he received a proclamation by Governor Mitt Romney, was recognized by Mayor Thomas Menino at Boston City Hall and received a key to the Town of Andover for his contributions to the local community.

Post-retirement Bob remained active as a vol-

True to his historical roots, he also spent his last few years making yogurt on his kitchen stove using an original family recipe from Armenia and would deliver home-made yogurt and string cheese to his many friends.

He is survived by his daughters Karen Colombosian of Charlestown, Linda Colombosian of Newburyport, Nancy (Mike) Czlonka of Hinsdale, IL and Robin Colombosian of North Andover. He was predeceased by his wife Alice and daughter Valerie. He also leaves three grandsons, Myles and Robert Couyoumjian and Michael Czlonka, sisters Ann Hallahan (Bill) of Sutton, NH and Mary Webb of Newbury, N.H., and was predeceased by his loving Brother John “Beep” Colombosian of Andover. In addition he leaves several nieces, nephews, brother and sisters-in-law, and countless extended family and friends.

Funeral services were on Monday, May 7, in the Armenian Church at High Pointe, Haverhill.

George Kapriel Omartian

Active in Local Armenian Community

WATERTOWN – George Kapriel Omartian, 82, died on April 29, 2018 in Watertown.

He is survived by his wife of 40 years, Zoya Agavelyan Omartian, who was by his side during his convalescence and at his passing. Additionally he leaves his sister, Sara Omartian of Springfield. He was preceded in death by his parents, Dertad K. and Gulkhatir Omartian, his brother, David, his sister, Areknaz, and just last month, by his cousin, George Gabriel Omartian.

In addition, he leaves his nieces and Goddaughters, Lisa Omartian of Springfield and Lauren Omartian of Watertown.

He was born on April 6, 1936 in Springfield and attended Springfield Public Schools. In 1958, he graduated from the University of Notre Dame with a Bachelor of Science degree. He was active in the Boston-area Armenian community and attended church services in Belmont, Cambridge and Watertown.



A wake and funeral were held on May 4, at St. Mark Armenian Church, Springfield. Interment followed at Oak Grove Cemetery.

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COMMUNITY NEWS

Peter and Irene Vosbikian Legacy Honored at Sold Out Celebration In Philadelphia

VOSBIKIAN, from page 6

to see change, you need to be an advocate. Every single person who is here tonight is already an advocate...It's because of you that the Assembly can continue to grow and make positive change for Armenia on the Hill," he said.

The guests of honor, Peter and Irene Vosbikian, invited everyone as well to join the Armenian Assembly at its National Advocacy Conference in September.

"When I served as chairman of the Assembly 16 years ago, Turkey's lobbying efforts in the U.S. were in their infancy. Today, they are spending millions to whitewash their tarnished past," Peter Vosbikian said. Noting that the Armenian Assembly serves as the voice for Armenians, urged everyone to come to Washington, D.C. "Let's walk up the Hill together!" he concluded.

Assembly Co-Chairs Anthony Barsamian and Van Krikorian praised Peter and Irene Vosbikian for their passion, tireless support, and vigilant commitment to the Armenian-American community.

"Peter and Irene are the perfect example of activism and leadership, as well as a role model for the global Armenian community, which is



Peter and Irene Vosbikian with Armenian Assembly Board Members, Host Committee, Archbishop Oshagan Choloyan, and Archbishop Vicken Aykazian

Armenian Apostolic Church of America Archbishop Oshagan Choloyan gave the Invocation for the evening, and Diocesan

at Holy Trinity Armenian Apostolic Church in Cheltenham, Hieromonk Fr. Raphael Stontsitsky at St. Mark's Armenian Catholic Church in Wynnewood, and Sisters Emma Moussayan and Narine Simonian of Armenian Sisters Academy in Radnor.

The celebration featured the vibrant and eclectic culture of Philadelphia, known for its rich history. As guests were entering the National Constitution Center, they were greeted with Philadelphia-native impersonators, Rocky Balboa and Benjamin Franklin. Those in attendance were also surprised with a live performance of the Aqua String Band, consisting of the traditional Mummars known for their elaborate costumes. The evening concluded

with special musical guest Kevork Artinian and His Band, who reside, and are well known, in the Philadelphia region.

"We would also like to extend our appreciation for the Host Committee, under the enthusiastic leadership of Alex Karapetian, for their hard work and dedication planning this event alongside the Armenian Assembly's staff," Co-Chairs Barsamian and Krikorian stated. "We are now planning a third major advocacy conference to take place in Washington, D.C. this September around Armenian Independence day to bring the Armenian American community and leadership in large numbers to meet with Washington policymakers to make a bigger difference together."



Armenian Assembly Co-Chair Anthony Barsamian, Armenian Assembly President Carolyn Mugar, Peter and Irene Vosbikian, and Armenian Assembly Co-Chair Van Krikorian

why they are so deserving of the Armenian Assembly's Global Humanitarian Award. Their commitment to advocacy and philanthropy is what sets them apart, and their ongoing efforts are admirable and inspiring. We are proud to have them part of our organization," Assembly Co-Chairs Barsamian and Krikorian said.

Prelate of the Eastern Prelacy of the

Legate of the Armenian Apostolic Church of America Archbishop Vicken Aykazian provided the Benediction. Also in attendance were clergy from the Philadelphia region, including Rev. Fr. Nerses Manoogian of St. Gregory the Illuminator Armenian Apostolic Church in Philadelphia, Very Rev. Oshagan Gulgulian of Sts. Sahag and Mesrob Armenian Apostolic Church in Wynnewood, Rev. Hakob Gevorgyan



Peter and Irene Vosbikian's grandchildren

Women's Empowerment in Action in Armenia and The Diaspora

EMPOWERMENT, from page 6

Armenia and the increasing tendency of the diaspora to engage in rehabilitative and developmental assistance to Armenia.

Anna Kalashyan of the World Bank provided a global framework for the challenges and opportunities faced by developing countries when addressing the empowerment of women and human rights. She discussed how other countries have worked on these challenges and how Armenia can learn from them. Kalashyan joined the World Bank Group in 2016. She conducts research and analysis on the legal and regulatory framework affecting women's ability to get jobs and start businesses, with a focus on providing incentives to work. She also supports research for other units at the World Bank, including the Education Global Practice. Previously, she worked at the Open Society Foundation and UN Women.

Kalashyan and Kasbarian both shared their thoughts about laws and policies needed to strengthen the role of women in the workplace and the role of men in changing power relations. Many of the challenges in Armenia

stem from deep-rooted structural inequities; however, Armenia has demonstrated progress particularly regarding the recent passage of legislation to criminalize domestic violence. Seven years ago, the press in Armenia barely covered this issue. Now there are thirty to forty articles in the media every week on domestic violence.

The audience, composed of women and men from the age of 12 to 97, was clearly engaged in the topic and raised numerous questions during the Q & A. "We need more programs like this one," said one audience member. "We have very few events in Washington D.C. about contemporary topics."

To learn more about NAASR, visit www.naasr.org. Matosian's presentation regarding domestic violence in Armenia at a previous panel discussion on "Armenian Women: Leadership, Empowerment, and Human Rights," on April 11, hosted by the Tufts Armenian Club at Tufts University and organized by the NAASR/Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation Series on Contemporary Armenian Issues, is available on the website.



From left, Sara Ignatius, Anna Kalashyan and Antranig Kasparian



COMMUNITY NEWS

Boston Renaissance Discusses Events in Armenia

RENAISSANCE, from page 1

network of chapters all around the globe.

He introduced the moderator, Berge Ayvazian, co-chair of the Board of Trustees of the First Armenian Church. Ayvazian said that the evening's event was designed to disseminate information so people become aware of what is going on right now in Armenia and promote dialogue. The talks were primarily in English, but the discussion also at times took place in English.

Writer and photojournalist Roubina Margossian, the first speaker, joined via Skype from Yerevan and described the present situation in Armenia. Margossian, born and raised in Lebanon, was a correspondent for Kuwait TV from Lebanon and in Armenia previously served as the English-language editor at CivilNet. At present, she is the managing editor at EVN Report.

As someone who has attended nearly all the rallies and has been out on the street every day, Margossian said that the atmosphere was almost "post-apocalyptic," when in the early days of the protests people slept in the streets, with heaters. The situation began changing so quickly, she said, that news agencies were not able to keep up and provide analyses. Attitudes in the general population have changed, especially toward girls and women, she continued. All the past opposition movements in Armenia have left their traces on this one.

Detentions stopped after a while and the last week has been relatively calm, with few detentions. Ayvazian and Haroutunian asked Margossian a number of questions. She said that the maximum capacity of the public square 150,000 people, but since the movement is a network movement, there are similar demonstrations in other cities of Yerevan so there is no accurate total figure for the demonstrators. According to the leaders of the movement, this

disseminated by opponents of the movement.

The second speaker was scholar and writer Dr. Jirair Libaridian, who was advisor and then senior advisor to the president of the Republic of Armenia from 1991 to 1997 and First Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs from 1993 to 1994. Before his thoughts on the current developments, he interjected that though the public square's capacity might be 150,000 people, this was at any one given time, but people were constantly streaming in and out, meaning that the total must be much higher there.

Libaridian was impressed by the decentralized nature of the movement, where streets were being blocked in various parts of the street by small numbers of people. The demonstrators were able to peacefully and calmly act, and argue with logic with the police.

Libaridian made four primary points. First, although the movement is political, the struggle is not just between political forces. Libaridian said that the core issue is that oligarchs have found it cheaper to become politicians themselves instead of buying off politicians. The consequences for oligarchs to give up their power are graver than that of ordinary politicians, if the people attempt to pursue justice against them.

His second point was that the Republican Party is behaving almost the same way as the Communist Party of Armenia in 1988. Popular pressure forced the Communist parliament to elect Levon Ter-Petrosian as president of the presidium. The Republican Party made the same mistake as the Communists 30 years later by underestimating a popular movement as just another opposition movement.

Velvet Revolution Update

The third point was that as has happened in Armenian history before, the sides in a domestic conflict appeal to foreign patrons or powers.

The Republicans tried to get the Russian government to save them by making them think that Russian influence was being threatened. Also, the government begins to start talking about Turkish and Azerbaijani threats, so that the non-resolution of the Karabakh conflict is used as a scare tactic to quiet the populace.

Libaridian stated that this has happened before. He then made the controversial claim that two years ago in April 2016, it was the Armenian government which "started action on the border and then said that the Azerbaijanis are attacking." The situation today, he said, was similar, when the government starts talking about Azerbaijan and Turkey. Armenian Defense Minister Vigen Sargsyan has been talking about the threat to Armenia recently, though nothing unusual has been happening on the border. The Azerbaijanis, he said, are afraid the Armenian government may use incidents in order to scare and blame the demonstrators.

Libaridian's final point was that there is no guarantee as to what will happen next. On the one

hand, he said, there will be huge popular pressure on the parliament until Pashinyan is elected prime minister. However, even if he is elected, he still has to present a cabinet and programs to be approved by the same parliament, and eventually he will need to change the electoral code to ensure free parliamentary elections. Libaridian cautioned that revolutions are

not simple processes. It is not clear as to what happens to the people who run them. They may end up radicalized or even authoritarian, sometimes to ensure the success of the movement. Despite his words of caution, he concluded that

ment." He found that what was happening there was the culmination of an organic process which matured over years.

Kotchikian said that the sense of activism in Armenia started back in 2007, often concerning



Berge Ayvazian

Pashinyan "is the candidate of the people and we will support him."

The next speaker, Dr. Asbed Kotchikian, professor of political science and international relations at Bentley University and academic coordinator for the Armenian Higher Education Initiative, said he has spent much time in

environmental issues, like the Save Teghut initiative, as in the Soviet period. He rattled off the names of a set of movements which followed: the Mashtots Park movement in 2012, the protests against the mashrutka or bus price hikes in 2013, Electric Yerevan protests in 2015 against electricity price hikes, and the Sasna

Tsrer hostage crisis of 2016.

Kotchikian observed that Pashinyan did not have a plan in Electric Yerevan or Sasna Tsrer. The demonstrators at the time feared that he would hijack these demonstrations for his own political goals and denied him access. However, Pashinyan learned from these actions to not be centralized and stay in one place. Pashinyan also learned from Raffi Hovannisian's errors in the 2013 presidential campaign, where, Kotchikian said, he suddenly "just disappeared," sorely disappointing people

who were following him.

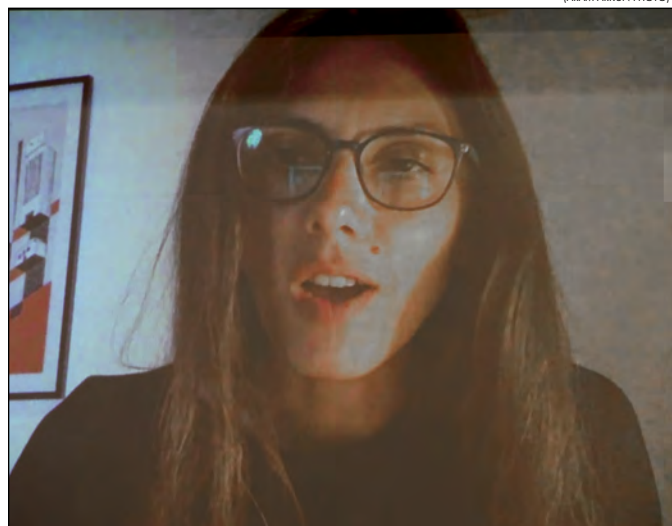
Kotchikian thinks that Pashinyan's actions over the past few weeks were planned. He started walking and others joined him in increasing numbers, due to growing discontent and political frustration.

An important point to understand, he pointed out, was that this movement is governed by youth. Real change in any country comes from

continued on next page



Martin Haroutunian



Roubina Margossian projected on the big screen via Skype

is not a "color revolution," but is "color-blind," she said.

Opposition leader Nikol Pashinyan has turned practically into a figure of a savior, Margossian declared. One of the specific characters of this movement is that the leaders are in touch directly with the people showing up at the protests through social media. This counters various rumors and deliberate "fake news"



Jirair Libaridian

Armenia over the last 10 years. Kotchikian spoke about the process that led to the current situation, citing the work of the American academic Gene Sharp, author of *From Dictatorship to Democracy* (1994), a work translated into more than 30 languages. Kotchikian saw similarities in the present situation in Armenia with various movements described by Sharp, and described the situation as "a textbook democratic revolutionary move-



Asbed Kotchikian



COMMUNITY NEWS

Two Students to Graduate from St. Nersess on May 19



Dn. Arman Galstyan

ARMONK, N.Y. — Since its establishment, St. Nersess has graduated outstanding young men and women who are serving the Armenian Church faithfully as priests and lay leaders for the Dioceses of North America. This year, two students will graduate from the seminary on May 19.

Deacon Arman Galstyan, who is originally from Yerevan, Armenia, and has lived in both Canada and New York, will be graduating from the St. Nersess the Great Program for Late Vocations. This summer he will continue his parish internship at St. Leon Armenian Church in Fair Lawn, NJ. “It is my hope and dream to carry the torch of light, love, and knowledge that St. Nersess has given me and bring it to our parishes, and to every family and person I will come across throughout my ministry,” commented Galstyan.

Deacon Michael Sabounjian, who is from Framingham, Mass., and is the son of the Rev. Krikor and his wife, Yeretzguin LuAnn Sabounjian, will be graduating from the Armenian Church Studies Program at St. Nersess Seminary. He will be receiving his Master of Divinity at St. Vladimir’s Orthodox Theological Seminary earlier in the day. In the fall, he will continue his studies at the seminary of the Mother See of Holy Echmiadzin for 10 months.

“I am able to appreciate the depth of beauty and wisdom found within the Armenian Orthodox Theological Tradition in a new light because of my St. Nersess education. And though I can confidently say that my theological education has not come to a close, I am equally confident



Dn. Michael Sabounjian

that St. Nersess has equipped me with the tools to continue as a life-long learner of the riches of the Armenian Church,” Sabounjian said.

“We are proud of our graduates’ accomplishments and look forward to the fruits of their education and training in service to the Armenian Church,” remarked Fr. Mardiros Chevian, dean of St. Nersess. The public is invited to attend the graduation ceremony honoring the two seminarian graduates.

The ceremony begins at 4:30 p.m. in the St. Hagop Chapel on the campus of St. Nersess Seminary, followed by a reception. To RSVP, email info@stnersess.edu.

St. Nersess is located at 486 Bedford Road, Armonk, NY 10504.

Boston Renaissance Discusses Events in Armenia

from previous page

within, and it is due to this new generation in Armenia. Kotchikian said that the best in people came out, with protectiveness and even love for one another. For example, ad hoc committees distributed food and blankets to the participants.

The fear of a foreign hand in this movement, mentioned by Libaridian, is a common element appearing in many revolutions, but Kotchikian felt “that is an insult” to the people involved. The participants have specifically declared, he said, that this is an internal, domestic movement, and Pashinyan gave speeches attempting to clarify that this is not a “color revolution.”

Viktor Yengibaryan, a representative of the Yelk Alliance, was the next speaker. One of fifteen fellows this semester at the Tavitian Scholars Program of the Fletcher School at Tufts University, he currently works as an advisor to a member of parliament of Armenia and is the chairman of the Yerevan council of the Bright Armenia Party, one of the three political parties composing the Yelk Alliance.

Before entering into the substance of his presentation, he expressed his strong disagreement with Libaridian’s analysis of the April War of 2016, finding it a “great offense to every Armenian” to state that Armenia and not Azerbaijan started the war.

Yengibaryan then made a series of observations. Like Kotchikian before him, he pointed out that the present movement was primarily led by the youth, people under 30, who now are demanding their own rights. While the Yelk Alliance has nine members in parliament, Yengibaryan said, it did not have the staff or power to make any serious impact on decision making there until now. Secondly, oligarch Gagik Tsarukyan’s party, Prosperous Armenia, is only formally an opposition like Yelk, but actually is allied

with the ruling Republican Party.

Yengibaryan declared that he might be in the opposition, but that he and his comrades would not do anything to harm Armenia. On the contrary, he said, he is proud to be a citizen of the Republic of Armenia, which he knows has a very bright future. He is even prouder now with the unified movement of all Armenians in favor of democracy, not just in Armenia but throughout the diaspora. As a Christian nation, he said, Armenians had to oppose dictatorship.

He said that it is necessary to be objective and recognize the achievements of Armenia, such as its diplomacy in joining both the Eurasian Economic Union and in a fashion the European Union. Yengibaryan concluded that it

is important not to confuse the government with the state, especially when one is outside of Armenia.

Yengibaryan praised Pashinyan as a great patriot and a great leader who will strengthen Armenia’s relations throughout the world, without bribery or fraud and with a government chosen by free elections. He cited Pashinyan’s declaration on the occasion of April 24 that we are no longer a nation of victims, but a nation of victors, as an important step for Armenians.

Yengibaryan ended his talk optimistically by pointing to something great which the Armenian people already achieved. He said, “We defeated the greatest enemy of our nation, hopelessness...Whenever the fear is gone, whenever there is hope, everything will be good.”

Dr. Anna Ohanyan, the Richard B. Finnegan Distinguished Professor of Political Science and International Relations at Stonehill College, was the final speaker. She said that she prefers to call what took place a movement, not a revolution, because of two reasons. What took place was much bigger than a revolution, as it is civil disobedience, decentralized, on a mass scale, within an existing constitutional order. She said, “The beauty of the movement is that people really came out to defend the institution, no matter how flawed...there was a referendum, there was a constitution...It demonstrates the maturity of the people. As civil disobedience, it has been spectacular. It has been a textbook application of nonviolent civil disobedience.” She said that she was impressed that the people were so disci-



Anna Ohanyan

plined in keeping it nonviolent.

She also pointed out a technical advantage to not calling it a revolution, because using this word immediately leads Western and Russian media to try to give it a geopolitical coloring.

Ohanyan’s second important point was that this instance of transition provides the people with an opportunity regardless of what happens tomorrow. She said, “It already created a great political opening for Armenians to seize on this and start a process of democratic consolidation.” In the cases of successful transitions, other movements were incremental.

Therefore, Ohanyan suggested that even if Pashinyan did not win the election on May 1 as prime minister, and parliamentary snap elections later were held under the control of the Republican Party, people should still go out and cast their ballot, and the results could be quite favorable in maintaining the momentum.

Her last point concerned the Nagorno Karabakh conflict. The authoritarian President Aliyev certainly would not like to see a democratic society next door, so there may be an indirect coordination between the authoritarian powers of Armenia and its neighbors. As far as Russia is concerned, Ohanyan said that the government of Armenia, unable to control its oligarchs and its domestic politics, has become a liability for Russia.

A period of often impassioned questions and statements from the audience and responses from the panelists followed the talk. Among other things, Libaridian argued, contrary to Ohanyan, that the movement was actually revolutionary in some elements because even though it was nonviolent, it was challenging the system and its goal was to replace the parliament, which was not truly representative. Kotchikian remarked that the ruling party worked by the existing laws, while the movement had popular support outside of the existing institutions and is an agent of change.

In answer to a question, Yengibaryan declared there can be no planning during a revolution, but the Yelk Alliance’s parliamentary platform can give some idea of what Pashinyan and the movement will attempt to achieve.

St. Stephen’s Armenian Elementary School Offers ‘Taste of Spring’

WATERTOWN – Each spring the Parent-Teacher Organization of St. Stephen’s Armenian Elementary School (SSAES) holds a fund-raising event to benefit the school. For the second consecutive year, the event was held at Stonehurst, the Robert Paine Estate, in Waltham. The outpouring of support expressed for the school is a testament to the vital role it holds in the Armenian community of Greater Boston.

The attendees on April 12 enjoyed the music of the Ken Field Jazz Trio, food catered by Anoush’Ella Saj Kitchen and wines from all over the world. Guest Artist GP Vahan attracted a great deal of attention with his live painting that was subsequently auctioned at the end of the event.

School board member, Ara Balikian Esq. thanked the members of the “Taste of Spring” Committee headed by Seza Seraderian and Nanik Yacubian, the Parent Teacher Organization, the School Board, the principal, the staff and the faculty for their collective efforts. Then, he invited the community at large to follow their lead in supporting the school, reminding everyone that SSAES is the only Armenian day school in New England. He then conducted a very lively auction.

Exhilarated by the success of the evening, parents and friends of the school danced late into the night to the sounds of DJ Argishti.



School Board member, Ara Balikian Esq. addresses the attendees.



From left, Nina Festekjian, Seza Seraderian, Nicole Hajjar



From left, Tamara Tokadjian, Barbara Mnatzakanian, Nanik Yacubian, event co-chair, Principal Houry Boyamian, PTO Chair Taline Kebabdjian, Talin Abidian and Seza Seraderian, event co-chair



From left, Seza Seraderian, Karen Behbahani, and Dr. Talin Farra holding the *Improper Bostonian* magazine



From left, SSAES Alumni, Nayiri Krafian, Ani Moushigian, Araxi Krafian and Dr. Alina Bahlavouni with Principal Houry Boyamian

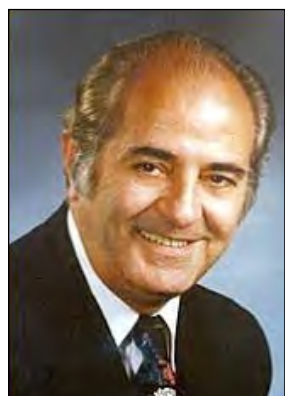


From left, Dr. Haig Inguilizian, Hratch Iskenderian, Levon Barsoumian, School Board Chair and Artist GP Vahan.

Arts & Living

Armenian Night at Pops To Feature BSO Concerto Competition Winner, Mark Independence Anniversary

BOSTON – The Friends of Armenian Culture Society will present the 67th annual Armenian Night at the Pops at Symphony Hall on Saturday, June 9 at 8 p.m. The evening will feature Belmont native violinist Haig Hovsepian as soloist with the Boston Pops Orchestra, performing the Sibelius *Violin Concerto* under the direction of Keith Lockhart. Also on the program will be Edgar Hovhannisyanyan's *Sardarapat* in a newly-arranged orchestration by conductor-composer Ruben Asatryan, to mark the 100th anniversary of the founding of the First Republic of Armenia.



Edgar Hovhannisyanyan

Hovsepian is a rising sophomore at the Cleveland Institute of Music. He started his violin studies at age 4 with Narine Dolukhanian, then Mark Lakirovich and

Anna Korsunsky. After joining the New England Conservatory (NEC) Prep Department in 2013 he studied with Jason Horowitz, Kyoko Horowitz, Sam Ou, Daniel Getz, Lynn Chang, and Angelo Xiang Yu, and performed in Master classes with Tony Woodcock (former NEC president) and David Coucheron (Concertmaster of Atlanta Symphony). He was the recipient of the Alice and Violet Ohanasyan/Friends of the Armenian Culture Society scholarship at NEC.

At age 11, Hovsepian received his first award at the MMTA competition, followed by a Gold Medal at the "Classival" International Competition (Canada), second prize at the "Young Promise" International Competition (MA) and the "Armenian Youth Talent Competition" (NY).

In 2015 and 2016, he won a series of concerto competitions including the NEC, the Concord Orchestra, Brockton Symphony, Waltham Philharmonic, and Belmont High School Orchestra. He also appeared as a soloist with the Nashua Chamber Orchestra. During the 2016-2017 academic year he received the Max Reger Ambassador Award, earned the title of laureate at the Renaissance International Competition (Gyumri, Armenia), and became a winner of the Boston Symphony Orchestra Concerto Competition.

In addition to the Armenian segment, the Boston Pops will present "Dance to the Movies," where top choreographers bring to life classic movie dances of yesterday, starring the Boston Pops, Dancing Celebrity Pros, "So You Think You Can Dance" top finalists, and singing stars from "American Idol" and "The Voice." The concert will include new interpretations of memorable moments from movies like "Grease," "Chicago," "Singin' In the Rain" and "Moulin Rouge." Lesley Ann Warren, legendary film and television actress, will join the cast of dancers.

Tickets for this concert are available from www.FACSBoston.org.



Passports on display at Harvard's Houghton Library through August 18.

Harvard Passports Exhibition Highlights Armenian Materials

CAMBRIDGE, Mass. – A new exhibition called "Passports: Lives in Transit" is on display at Harvard University's Houghton Library from April 30 to August 18.

By Aram Arkun
Mirror-Spectator Staff

It provides an unusual way of thinking about the urgent issue of massive global migration in a historical perspective. It uses passports, visa applications and other documents associated with travelers, emigres and refugees to symbolize what the organizers

fear is "the ruins of a modern dream now in terminal crisis – the dream of a globalized world." The exhibition includes a section showcasing the Armenian Genocide as an exemplar of 20th century exile and escape.

The exhibition materials are drawn from the collections of Houghton Library, Widener Library, Harvard University Archive, Radcliffe Institute's Schlesinger Library, Harvard Business School's Baker Library, and Harvard-Yenching Library, and are connected with the United States, either as a final refuge or destination, or as a place to flee. Its highlights include the passport from 1857 of George Francis Train, who claimed to be the inspiration for Jules Verne's character Phileas Fogg in *Eighty Days around the World*, Leon Trotsky's exile papers, physicist Gertrude Neumark Rothschild's passports, African-American activist (and wife of W. E. B. Du Bois) Shirley Graham Du Bois's passports and letters, and Timothy Leary's fake passport photos.

A display case, bearing the title "Seeking Asylum," uses the Armenian case to focus on the World War I period and in particular the first major genocide of the 20th century. Hundreds of thousands of Armenians were displaced and had to seek asylum throughout the world, including in the United States. The case includes a 1922 telegram from US President Warren G. Harding to Dr. James L. Barton concerning relief work in the Near East.

see EXHIBIT, page 14

Music of Boyadjian to Be Performed by Pianist Beriyeve at Menotomy Concert Series

ARLINGTON, Mass. – The final concert in the Menotomy Concert Series 2017-2018 season will take place on May 18 at Arlington Town Hall.

The concert will feature pianist Yelena Beriyeve. In a first for the Menotomy Concert Series, Beriyeve will perform short piano works of composers who are not only still living, but will all be in attendance at the concert. Some of the pieces were composed especially for her and most will be world-premieres. Composers whose music will be performed include, Hayg Boyadjian, Michele Caniato, Seth Hamlin, Xue Jiang, Betsy Schramm and Pasquale Tassone. Furthermore, Hamlin, Schramm and Tassone are Arlington residents. The concert will take place on Friday, May 18, at 7:30 p.m. at Arlington Town Hall.

Beriyeve is making her second appearance as a soloist in the series. Hailed as "the paragon of the concert pianist" by the *LA Examiner* and "a standout performer" by the *Boston Musical Intelligencer*, Georgian-born American pianist Yelena Beriyeve continues to hold esteem as one of the finest artists of her generation.

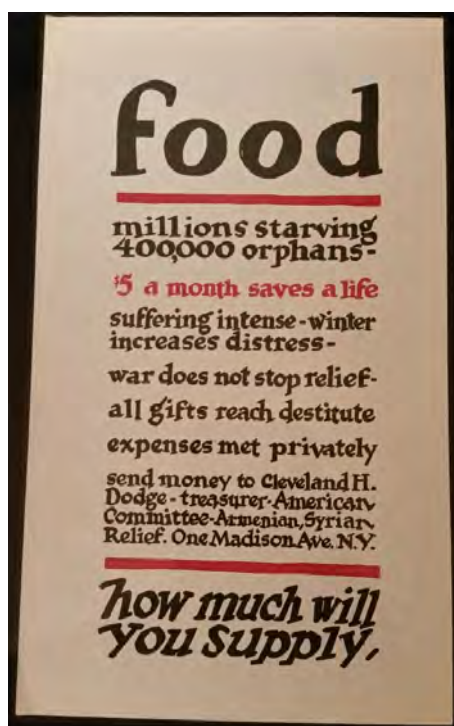
Beriyeve made her solo debut at the age of 5 with the Tbilisi State Symphony Orchestra. Since then, she has performed extensively as a recitalist, chamber musician, and orchestral soloist in the Republic of Georgia, Armenia, Russia, Ukraine, Venezuela, Canada, Mexico, and the United States. While pursuing her master's degree at the New England Conservatory, she was no stranger to Jordan Hall where audiences could hear and watch her perform works by Mozart, Beethoven, Mendelssohn, Schubert, Chopin, Barber, Bartok, Berg, Stravinsky, and others.

Beriyeve has been featured as a guest artist at the prestigious Great Romantics Festival of Canada in collaboration with Celebrity Concert Series at the McMaster University, on Sundays with Liz Walker at WBZ TV Channel 4, as well as in a piano duo with Alexander Korsantia on Boston's WGBH radio.

She has also been featured as a guest artist at a Georgian International Festival "From Easter to Ascension" that takes place in Tbilisi every year. Over the past two years, she performed Rachmaninov's 1st, 2nd and 3rd Piano Concertos with orchestras in Mexico, as well as Arizona. Most recently, Beriyeve has been appointed by the Clark University of Worcester as a director of Chamber Ensembles as well as Distinguished Artist in Piano.

The Menotomy Concert Series had its first season during 2006-2007 when it coincided with the festivities celebrating the bicentennial of the Town of Arlington. The town was founded with its original name, Menotomy, in 1807.

Further information is available at www.migidamusica.org



Poster for orphan aid (Houghton Library, US 102.12 (5))



Yelena Beriyeve



ARTS & LIVING

Harvard Passports Exhibition Highlights Armenian Materials

EXHIBIT, from page 13

It has a bilingual passport originally printed by the Republic of Armenia but modified by Soviet authorities to indicate that the issuer is the Armenian Soviet Socialist Republic. The holder, Ohaness Orberian [Vorperian] of Bitlis, also known as Hovhannes Hairabedian, traveled with it from Yerevan to Constantinople and then to the United States. The organizers of the



From right, Rodrigo Del Rio, Lucas Mertehikian, and Anne-Marie Eze (photo: Aram Arkun)

exhibition would be interested to know if any readers might be aware of the subsequent details of the life of Hairabedian/Orberian in the US. They have found that, according to a notice in the newspaper Hairenik, accessed through the Armenian Immigration Project, in 1919 Misak Baghdasarian of Manchester, New Hampshire was seeking him.

There is further information on a Hovhanes Hanabedian [Hairabedian], possibly the same person, coming to Manchester, New Hampshire in 1922, and on the same individual studying at the University of New Hampshire in Durham in 1924.

Another interesting item on display is the temporary passport of 18-year-old Suschan Mertehikian [Shushan Mardigian] of Sivas (Sepasdia) and her son Mardiros, aged 16 months and born in Lebanon in 1922, issued by the High Commission of the French Republic in Syria and Lebanon. Suschan had met her husband Ardashes in Lebanon while he was serving in the French army. He had joined the French Foreign Legion but had already moved to Buenos Aires, Argentina, where he awaited the rest of his family. In 1924 they joined Mardiros. Mardiros passed away in Buenos Aires in 1913.

This passport is on loan from one of the organizers of the exhibition, Lucas Mertehikian, who explained how it helped to inspire him. Around a year and a half ago, he was listening in a course to lectures on the end of world unity, with the problems of immigration bans in the US, the Syrian refugee crisis, and Brexit. Mertehikian made a presentation on a novel dealing with passports for the class, and immediately remembered this passport.

He explained that Suschan Mertehikian is his great-grandmother, and that the document was only recently discovered by his father after the death of Mardiros in 2013. Lucas had never met Suschan, unlike his grandfather, because she died before Lucas was born. And by the time Lucas was born, the family had been largely assimilated into Argentine culture, with the grandparents of Armenian ancestry speaking Spanish and not Armenian to one another.

Lucas said, "This was the first time that I saw anything related to their history of traveling and displacement. This is something that we don't really talk about in my family. My grandfather would not talk about it." Evidently his family possessed little else connected with this past, and Lucas said, "For me, it is very difficult

to connect and that is why I very much like the passport. It allows me to at least start conceiving of the level of fragility and the vulnerability to which they were subject when they were traveling like this."

In addition, Mertehikian said, it raises the question of where home lies for people like his grandfather. He was born in Lebanon but did not feel Lebanese. He fled the aftermath of the genocide thanks to the French authorities but did not feel French in any way. He lived for most of his life in Argentina and became largely Spanish speaking but did not fully feel Argentine.

When asked about the unusual transliteration of the Armenian surname Mardigian, Lucas replied, "My last name is spelled in one hundred different ways. My grandparents are buried next to one another and my grandmother's last name is not the same as my grandfather's, since they were spelled differently in the doc-

uments."

The last item in the exhibition case is a poster issued around 1918 by the predecessor of the Near East Foundation, the American Committee for Armenian and Syrian Relief, requesting donations for assistance to starving orphans.

In a separate case, a medieval *Gospel* lectionary in Syriac is displayed which is disfigured by what appears to be a bullet hole on one side and a crater on the other. It most likely was desecrated during the Hamidian massacres of 1895-96 near the city of Mardin (today in southeastern Turkey), and bears witness to earlier attacks on Armenians and Assyrians in the Ottoman Empire. (For more information, see the article "Slash and Burn" in the April 28

today without making people think it is a completely new issue. Furthermore, the US has a longstanding tradition of receiving people who are seeking asylum."

When they did a survey of the collections of the various Harvard libraries they found a richness of items, which researchers at Harvard usually overlook, in their search for letters, journals, books, manuscripts and other legal documents. Mertehikian said, "We had to leave out many interesting things. For example, there is a collection of passports belonging to American nurses who went to the front right before the end of the First World War and after. We chose the 20th century as the focus, after beginning briefly with the 19th century."

There are also contributions to the exhibition from fellow Romance Languages and Literatures doctoral student Anthony Otey Hernandez and architectural designer Haydee Casellas. Everyone involved in this exhibition has some personal connection with the issues being raised therein.

Mertehikian, born in Argentina, is of Italian and Armenian descent, and his Armenian grandfather was born in Lebanon. Del Rio, like Mertehikian, came to the US from South America for graduate studies. Born in Chile, he has traveled to various parts of Latin America. Hernandez, born and raised in the Bronx, is of Costa Rican and Greek-Chilean descent. He prepared a case in honor of his mother who passed away in 2017. Casellas is a Puerto Rican designer based in Boston.

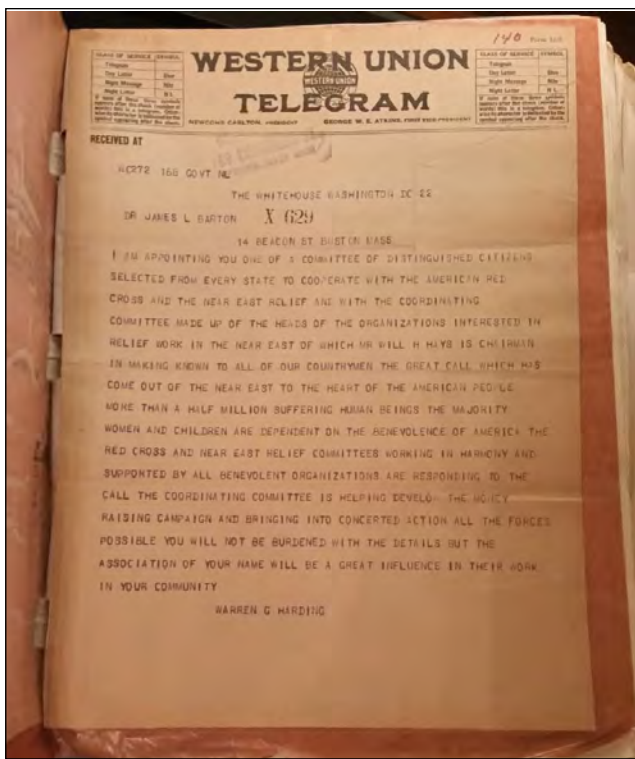
The process of preparing the entire exhibition took place under the guidance of Anne-Marie Eze, Houghton Library's director of

scholarly and public programs. According to the information presented for the exhibition, Eze is British of Nigerian and Jamaican parentage, spent her formative years in Italy, moved to the US to further her career, is married to a German, and is a Brexit refusenik.

The exhibition includes a multimedia art installation by Mertehikian and Del Rio created from used passports, including some issued by no longer existing countries, bought on e-commerce sites.



Suschan and Mardiros Mertehikian passport (loaned by exhibition curator Lucas Mertehikian)



US President Warren Harding telegram to Dr. James L. Barton, 1922 (Houghton Library, American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions Archives, 1810-1961, ABC 16.9.1 (v.2))

issue of the *Mirror-Spectator*.)

The passports exhibition is guest curated by Lucas Mertehikian and Rodrigo del Rio, friends and fellow doctoral students in Harvard's Department of Romance Languages and Literatures. Del Rio was also enrolled in the same class as Mertehikian which sparked their interest in passports, and while the two were taking a later class at Harvard with Professor Jeffrey Schnapp, founder of metaLAB, they came to the decision to do this project. Mertehikian specializes in Latin American studies and his academic work is not directly connected with the exhibition.

Mertehikian declared, "I thought that we could address some of the contemporary issues on forced travel or migration by looking at the history of the passport. Rodrigo and I kept thinking of how one could render this situation

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ARTS & LIVING

Zaven Ovian Stars in Production at Underlings Theatre in Chelsea

CHELSEA, Mass. — The Underlings Theatre Co. presents the world premiere of “The Tour,” by Canadian playwright Alice Abracen.

Directed by Lelaina Vogel, “The Tour” follows a Canadian pilgrim and a local tour guide as they visit ancient ruins on the Iraqi-Syrian border one week before ISIS is expected to march through and destroy them. But each character has a secret they are keeping from the other.

This incisive, strikingly contemporary two-person play ranges in tone from farce and physical comedy to political intrigue and sacrifice. It explores important questions about privilege, as well as the place we save for history in our day-to-day lives, as The Pilgrim and The Guide debate on what it means to have a voice in times of strife, and what it means to use that voice on behalf of another.

Appearing in the role of The Guide is Zaven Ovian. A graduate of the Boston Conservatory, Ovian has performed in productions across New England, including “Shakespeare in Love,” “Big Fish” (SpeakEasy Stage), “The Winter’s Tale” (Seven Stages Shakespeare), “The Tale of the Allergist’s Wife,” “Water by the Spoonful” (Lyric Stage), “Barnum!” (Moonbox Productions), “Billy Elliot” (Ocean State Theatre), “In the Heights,” “The Heresy of Love” and “Threepenny Opera”



Zaven Ovian

(Boston Conservatory).

The Underlings Theatre Company specializes in classical and classically-inspired productions entered around diversity, inclusivity and gender equity, approaching old texts with contemporary context in mind to give them the same immediacy and intimacy that they had for their first audiences.

“The Tour” runs through May 12 at the Chelsea Theatre Works Black Box Theatre, located at 189 Winnisimmet Street, Chelsea, MA.

Tickets for The Tour are available at underlings.ticketleap.com/the-tour/ and at the door. General admission is \$20. For more information about the production, visit underlingstheatre.com.

Recipe Corner

by Christine Vartanian Datian

Cream of Cauliflower and Leek Soup



INGREDIENTS

1 large head cauliflower, washed, cut into florets or roughly chopped
6 cups low-sodium chicken or vegetable broth
2 cups whole milk or half and half or heavy cream (to taste)
1 cup chopped leeks, white and light green parts only, washed well.
2 medium carrots, peeled and diced
2 medium stalks celery (and tops), diced
1 large baking potato, boiled and mashed (remove skin)
3-4 cloves garlic, minced
1 chicken bouillon cube
1 teaspoon ground cumin
Kosher salt, black pepper, garlic powder, tarragon, and paprika to taste
2-3 tablespoons flour
3-4 tablespoons butter
Dash of red pepper (to taste)
Olive oil
Dried or fresh parsley, minced
Sour cream

PREPARATION

In a large pot, steam cauliflower until done. Drain well. Cut away excess stock. Coarsely mash or put in blender. Drain again and set aside.

In the same pot, sauté leeks, carrots, celery, and garlic in 3-4 tablespoons of olive oil for a few minutes until onions are translucent. Toss flour over this mixture and stir.

Add milk (or cream), broth and butter and cook over medium heat for 8-10 minutes, until bubbling, stirring. Add the mashed cauliflower and potato, stir, and bring to light boil.

Add seasonings (to taste), bouillon cube, and more milk (or cream), if desired. Cook on medium heat for 10-12 minutes, stirring occasionally. Watch not to over boil.

At this point, using a hand blender, blend soup until medium smooth and stir again.

Add more salt or pepper, if desired, and serve.

Garnish with parsley, pepper and sour cream, and drizzle with olive oil, if desired.

*Can be stored in refrigerator in glass for up to one week. Makes half gallon.

Serves 6-8.

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



Holy Trinity Talent Shines in Show

By Aram Arkun

Mirror-Spectator Staff

CAMBRIDGE, Mass. — The Charles and Nevart Talanian Cultural Hall of Holy Trinity Armenian Church was transformed by its Armenian Church Youth Organization (ACYOA) Junior and Senior members, together with parent volunteers, into an elegant setting for a talent show on the evening of April 28. Members of all ages of the Trinity community performed on musical instruments, sang, recited Armenian poetry and danced



Van Teager playing bass accompanied by father Dan Teager

in order to raise money for the youth and adult ministry programs of the parish.

Headlining the show was Boston magician and juggler Robert Clarke, whose feats of legerdemain and humor mesmerized the crowd in the non-literal sense of the word. Musical director Dan Teager not only guided the talent show from the audition process to its final performance

behind the scenes, but also served as an adroit master of ceremonies, with quips, praise and encouragement ready for all circumstances. He and his Black Sea Combo, part of the 15-piece Black Sea Salsa world music group, provided additional music for the evening outside of the talent show performances.

Performers in addition to ACYOA members included the Manti Crew, a group of Holy Trinity adult volunteers under the direction of Becky Hintlian, who injected some Armenian humor and manti-connected dance moves to turn the Village People’s *Macho Man* into *Manti Man*.

Yn. Arpi Kouzouian, Holy Trinity Youth Director, thanked all the performers and volunteers at the end of the evening for their contributions to making the evening a success.



Manti Crew of Holy Trinity singing Macho Manti Man



Boston magician and juggler Robert Clarke with a volunteer from the audience



ARTS & LIVING

Armenian Museum Of America Inaugurates Exhibition of Odabashian's Art, Commemorates Armenian Genocide

WATERTOWN - On Tuesday, April 24 the Armenian Museum of America held a joint commemoration of the Armenian Genocide and opening of a new exhibition. At 6 p.m. the Museum opened to welcome visitors into the first-floor gallery, where the exhibition halls were lit by candle light. With the historic changes currently occurring in Armenia, visitors were encouraged to reflect on the past, present, and future of the country and their shared heritage.

"We really wanted to invite the Armenian and non-Armenian community into the galleries to observe this important day, open our new show, and to let people know about the new gallery we are renovating that will tell the powerful story of Armenian history through the unique objects in our collection," said Jennifer Liston Munson, the museum's executive director.

At 7 p.m., the conversation continued in the third-floor contemporary galleries with the opening of "Skins," an exhibition featuring the work of Marsha Nouritza Odabashian.

Born to Armenian parents in Boston, Odabashian shared her childhood bedroom with her grandmother - somehow absorbing her experience of the Genocide by occupying that space as they slept. The intuitive rawness



Martha Nouritza Odabashian speaks at Skins exhibition opening, with Jennifer Liston Munson behind her

of Odabashian's work seeks to connect with that buried pain by materializing an unspoken history. By applying traditional Armenian onion skin dyes to textured paper, she reveals the hidden bruises and marks that lie within. Her surface drawings trace a more deliberate narrative connecting personal experience to historical record. The finished pieces serve as visual recovery rooted in the creative desire to challenge the darker impulses of human nature and history.

In addition to Odabashian's works on paper, low relief sculpture from the Reliquaries series is hung in the gallery. This series was inspired by the stone carvings on the 10th century Armenian cathedral of Aght'amar and the magical drawings of Armenian illuminated manuscripts. Reliquaries is dedicated to the memory of Genocide victims and survivors, and evokes both the fragility and monumentality of memory.

Visitors explored the works on display, then were treated to an engaging talk by the artist. A lively question and answer session followed, which demonstrated that there is much for visitors to connect to within the works.

Skins is on display until June 3. For more information, see <https://www.armenianmuseum.org/skins>.





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ARTS & LIVING

C A L E N D A R

FLORIDA

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

MASSACHUSETTS

MAY 14 — Trinity Men's Union Dinner and 9th Annual Tavloo Tournament, 6:15 p.m., Social Hour and Dinner, Charles and Nevart Talanian Cultural Hall, Holy Trinity Armenian Church of Greater Boston, 145 Brattle St., Cambridge. Open to all. Donation for Losh Kebab and Kheyma dinner is \$15 per person. RSVP requested by May 13 to the Holy Trinity Church Office, 617.354.0632, or email tmuhtaac@gmail.com. Tavloo Tournament to follow dinner; entry fee, \$5. All levels welcome. To sign up, please contact David Dorian at tmuhtaac@gmail.com or call 617.501.4300.

May 18 — Holy Week in Jerusalem — An Inspirational Pilgrimage presented through a multimedia travelogue by Ara and Milka Jeknavorian. Dinner and Program. Donation \$15 — adults, students — \$5. Sponsored by the Sts. Vartanantz Adult Education Committee. Sts. Vartanantz Armenian Church, 180 Old Westford Rd. Chelmsford. 7:00 p.m. Reservations required. Please contact Milka Jeknavorian at 978-251-4845, hylady@gmail.com.

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

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

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

MAY 31 — Annual Spring Dinner and Drawing sponsored by the Friends of Holy Trinity 1000 Club, 6:30 p.m., Charles and Nevart Talanian Cultural Hall, Holy Trinity Armenian Church of Greater Boston, 145 Brattle St., Cambridge. Open to all. You don't have to be a member of the 1000 Club to join us for a delicious losh kebab and pilaf dinner, \$9.99 per person; tickets on sale at the door. Regular monthly raffle drawing at 8 p.m., plus 5 \$25 door prizes. "One-time" numbers will be sold on the night of dinner; special offer: purchase five "one-time" numbers for \$20, save \$5. For further info, contact the Holy Trinity Church office, 617.354.0632, or log onto www.htaac.org/calendar/event/560/

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

JUNE 9 — The Friends of Armenian Culture Society will host the 67th annual Armenian Night at the Pops on Saturday, at 8 p.m. at Symphony Hall in Boston. Talented violinist Haig Hovsepian, a winner of the 2017 Boston Symphony Orchestra's Concerto Competition and a rising sophomore at the Cleveland Institute of Music, will appear as soloist with the Boston Pops Orchestra under the direction of Keith Lockhart. He will perform the *Sibelius Violin Concerto in D-minor*. The Pops will present Dance to the Movies with Dancing Celebrity Pros, So You Think You Can Dance top finalists, and singing stars from American Idol and The Voice. Tickets \$95, \$70 and \$35, available at: www.FACSBoston.org



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JUNE 10 — St. James Armenian Church Festival Annual Picnic! Join us for a fun-filled festival! Delicious Armenain food, live Armenian music, children's activities with moon bounce, face painting, and more! Rain or shine. St. James Armenian Church, 465 Moutn Auburn St, Watertown. For more info, visit www.stjameswatertown.org or call 617-923-8860.

JUNE 18 — The Gregory Hintlian Memorial Golf Tournament, sponsored by Holy Trinity Armenian Church of Greater Boston at the Marlborough Country Club, Marlborough; 9:30 a.m., registration; 11 a.m., "Shot Gun." Join us for a day of golf - player's fee: \$175 (includes hospitality, lunch, dinner, green & cart fees, prizes and gifts) — or just dinner and a social evening (\$50 per person). Limited to 128 players. Tournament and tee sponsorships available. RSVP deadline, June 11. To register or for further information, log onto www.htaac.org/calendar/event/562/ call the Holy Trinity Church Office, 617.354.0632, or email office@htaac.org.

JUNE 20 — Tea & Tranquility, Armenian Heritage Park on The Greenway, Boston, Wednesday, 5-6:30 p.m. Meet & Greet! Enjoy Tea & Desserts hosted by MEM Tea Imports and The Bostonian Hotel. Walk the Labyrinth. For first-time walkers introduction to walking a labyrinth at 5:30 p.m. RSVP appreciated. hello@ArmenianHeritagePark.org

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

JULY 7 — Save the date! Armenian Church of Cape Cod second annual Kef Time dinner and dancing at the Cape Club, 125 Falmouth Woods Road, North Falmouth. Leon Janikian Band with DJ and special appearance by Harry Minassian. Details to follow.

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

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

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

NOVEMBER 14 — Najarian Lecture on Human Rights at Historic Faneuil Hall, Boston Wednesday. Doors open at 6:45pm, Program at 7:30pm. Reception follows at The Bostonian Hotel An endowed public program of Armenian Heritage Park on The Greenway. Details forthcoming.

NEW JERSEY

SEPTEMBER 30 — Save the Date! Armenian Fund USA and Ardzagang Armenian TV are proud to present Artash Asatryan and band, guest singer Grisha Asatryan, from Armenia! The concert is dedicated to Armenia's and Artsakh's independence celebration. Don't miss the performance by the son and grandson of the legendry singer Aram Asatryan. Proceeds to benefit Fruitful Artsakh Project. 4 p.m. Bergen PAC, 30 N. Van Brunt St., Englewood.

NEW YORK

APRIL 21 - MAY 13 — Off-Broadway production by Pan Asian Repertory Theatre of Joyce Van Dyke's play, DAYBREAK: the lyrical story of two Armenian women friends, survivors from 1915, who are transported with their families into the 21st century future. Performances at the Beckett Theatre (on Theatre Row), 410 W. 42nd St., New York, Tuesdays through Sundays; weekend matinees. Discount tickets for seniors, students and groups. For tickets and information: www.telecharge.com or call (212) 239-6200. For discount tickets: www.telecharge-offers.com or call (212) 947-8844. Or contact the theatre: info@panasianrep.org, (212) 868-4030.

RHODE ISLAND

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

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

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



COMMENTARY

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COMMENTARY

A Reluctant Revolution Dawns over Armenia

By Edmond Y. Azadian

It is very refreshing to be in Armenia these days, to breathe the fresh air of the spring and feel the happiness and euphoria which are palpable everywhere. There is a carnival atmosphere. Even the cab drivers who serve as volunteer political commentators for their passengers have changed their tune only to praise the brotherly love and mutual respect which are on display.

They swear that people have never celebrated any precedent occasion like this one, neither the declaration of independence nor the liberation of Shushi has been celebrated with this level of jubilation.

People who know Nikol Pashinyan are happy and even those who do not know him, are happier with the turn of events. They have all flooded Yerevan from the villages and provinces with flags, honking their car horns, to contribute to the cacophony which is a pastoral symphony for the general public.

May 8 will remain in Armenian history as the beginning of a new political revolution which began in the streets to gain its legislative validation in the national parliament. The parliamentary session was carried out very smoothly. Some lingering doubts about political maneuvering and machinations in the dark were soon dissipated.

The votes were already counted in the streets during the political bargaining which was taking place out in the open. The head of the Republican faction of the parliament, Vahram Baghdassarian, announced that the party had decided to cast 11 votes for Pashinyan, which brought the figures in parliament for him to 59 votes, with 42 against. The number required for his win was 53.

Ironically, even the 42 negative votes may be taken as a symbol that the takeover of the government was not a total surrender.

It was a textbook case of regime change which can make every citizen of Armenia very proud that political civility is in our culture, especially in view of the recent takeovers of governments in the region in the post-Soviet era. The Maydan Revolution in Ukraine divided the country after President Viktor Yanukovich escaped Kiev in the dark of the night in 2014. The mob invaded his residence to make an ugly show of his golden bathroom in the media.

Georgia experienced two revolutions; during the first one, the republic's first elected president, Zviad Gamsakhurdia, took temporary refuge in Armenia to save his skin, before seeking a safe

Clinton, National Security Advisor Susan Rice and United Nations Ambassador Samantha Power who forced their "humanitarian" commission of the mission on a reluctant president who wished to avoid a new senseless adventure.

In view of all the above atrocious political acts, Armenia can teach a lesson of political civility to countries suffering from political uncertainty.

Before the votes were counted in the parliament, a few members took the podium. The most important message was given by Vahram Baghdassarian, who was ceding power to Pashinyan on behalf of the Republican Party. His main point was that the current revolution has reduced the values in the society to the narrow choice of black or white, and that a hatred is being generated in the news media and on social platforms.

Pashinyan replied that his goal is to end all hatreds in Armenia and then thanked all the parties who voted for him to become the new prime minister. He was subdued and humbled and did not demonstrate his characteristic exuberance.

Now the political games begin. The constitution allows only 15 days for the new prime minister to form his government and submit it to the president for his approval. If the new cabinet is not approved, there will be a second chance. If again it is not approved, then the parliament must be dissolved.

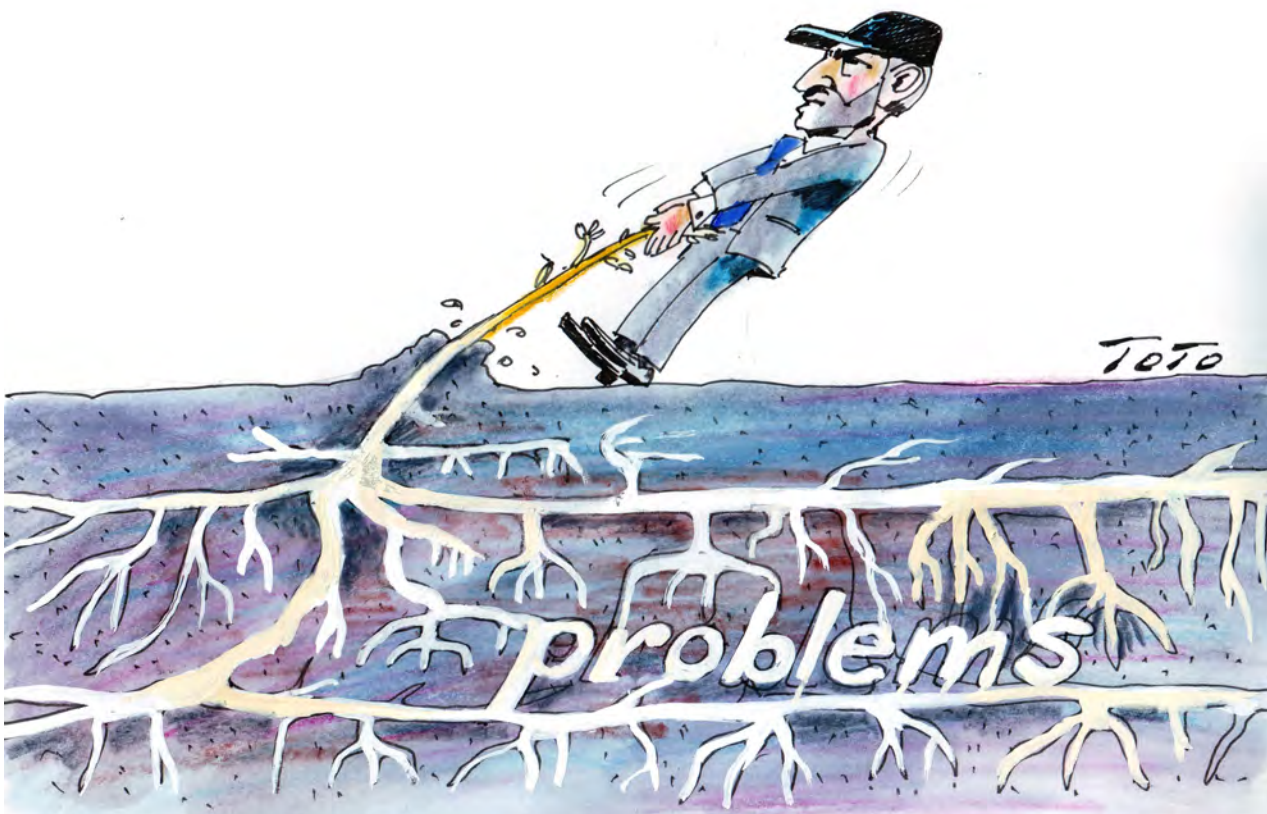
In his acceptance speech, Pashinyan alluded to holding a snap election after a "reasonable span of time."

Given Armenia's current political atmosphere, Pashinyan can win by a landslide. However, time is against him. At this point, Pashinyan's cabinet will serve as a minority government. The purse strings are still in the hands of the Republican Party which has 55 members in the parliament. Gagik Tsarukyan's Prosperous Armenia Party, which voted in Pashinyan's favor, holds sway over 31 candidates. The ARF (Dashnaktsutyun) has seven members. It was part of the coalition government but defected to Pashinyan's camp when victory seemed imminent for the "Velvet Revolution." The new prime minister will certainly evaluate the political value of that mid-stream defection.

Elections at this time favor only Pashinyan's bloc, called Yelk, which has only nine votes in the parliament. The Republican Party will lose miserably after the central election committee is reformed and depoliticized.

The ARF members in the parliament were a gift courtesy of the Republican Party, which cannot be repeated in fair elections.

With Pashinyan's victory, the revolution now begins rather than ends. The challenges lie ahead. The existing problems will not disappear overnight but he has won huge capital in the form of national unity. In those conditions of political adulation, he



haven elsewhere. And later, the Rose Revolution of Mikheil Saakashvili overnight reduced incumbent President Eduard Shevardnadze to a political cadaver.

Of course, the worst scenarios took place Iraq and Libya. In the first case, the loss of a million-plus civilians after regime change must weight on the consciences of former Vice President Dick Cheney and his disciple, President George W. Bush. No one is taking responsibility over the continuing bloodbath in Iraq in the last 15 years.

Libyan leader Muammar Gaddafi suffered the torturous fate of Edward II of England (1284-1327), namely a sadistic and protracted public execution, courtesy of Secretary of State Hillary

can pass through any reform.

Among the problems facing the country, the following must be highlighted:

- The national debt ceiling, which stands at \$7.5 billion.
- Reform of the economy, which has direct bearing on emigration and the fair distribution of wealth. The latter will lead to bringing into the realm of the law the illegal amassing of wealth, which will impact the oligarch caste. Ironically, some major oligarchs were in Pashinyan's camp and yet touching their wealth will pose a serious dilemma.
- Dealing with the diaspora. The first question is whether the

continued on next page



COMMENTARY



My Turn

By Harut Sassounian

How Not to Run a Government, And Get Dethroned by the People

The recent events in Armenia surprised and impressed both Armenians and non-Armenians worldwide because a leader thought to be irreplaceable by his supporters was replaced by a newcomer without any violence or bloodshed. Furthermore, what is taking place in Armenia is much more than unseating a particular leader. A regime entrenched for two decades was overthrown almost overnight!

To understand what took place in the last few weeks in Armenia we need to go back to 1991, the date of Armenia's independence from the Soviet Union. Since then, Armenia has had three presidents, none of whom cared about the people and ruled the nation democratically. Power was concentrated in their hands as well as the military leadership and oligarchic clans.

While a handful of autocrats sat at the top of the pyramid of power, the overwhelming majority of the people were deprived of the basic necessities of survival, such as food, clothing, medicine, and of course, money. In the past quarter of a century, over a million Armenians left the homeland and resettled wherever they could find a job and feed their families. Many of those who could not leave, barely survived on funds sent by relatives and friends overseas.

Under these pitiful circumstances, the anger and resentment of the population against the authorities, particularly the head of state, kept on rising. In addition to abject poverty, people suffered because of corruption, fraudulent elections, unfair courts, unemployment, censorship and periodic police brutality. While those who had the means to get a visa and purchase airline tickets emigrated from Armenia, the rest were forced to keep their mouth shut and put up with the difficult conditions.

Every now and then there were public protests either challenging fraudulent elections or unbearable living conditions, but the police were able to quell the unrest by beating and arresting the demonstrators. The most violent incident took place in March 2008 when 10 people were shot and killed for challenging the election of President Serzh Sargsyan.

While President Sargsyan and his predecessor, President Robert Kocharyan, remained oblivious to the deplorable conditions of the public, their dissatisfaction, resentment and anger against the authorities kept growing. These heads of

state, surrounded by aides who kept heaping praise on them and reassuring them that everything was marvelous in the country, remained unaware of the public's miserable situation.

Over the past 27 years, during hundreds of hours I spent privately in meetings with the three successive presidents of Armenia, I brought to their attention the various problems existing in the country, from corrupt aides and government ministers to unfair court judgments based on bribery, fraudulent elections, etc. These presidents told me that they were hearing about these issues for the first time. Very few people had the courage to bring them to their attention.

I dared to tell President Kocharyan to his face that Armenia's population hated him. He disagreed with me, but I insisted, challenging him to stand one night in a street corner disguised in a hat and overcoat and ask passers by what they thought of the President. I warned him that he would hear very abusive comments.

I also recall telling President Sargsyan on the eve of his first election not to ignore the common people and not to appear on TV at weddings of wealthy oligarchs and the ribbon-cutting of their businesses. I suggested that he make a surprise visit once a month to the home of a poor family without his aides and bodyguards, and inquire about the family's employment, income, and health; to show that he cared about the poor people who were the majority of the country. Unfortunately, he did not once make such a visit.

I also told President Sargsyan that he should appoint an independent group of advisers from wise and experienced individuals who were not government employees. They would be able to give him their honest advice without any fear of getting fired. Regrettably, this suggestion was also ignored!

To make matters worse, the public never forgot or forgave President Sargsyan for the killing by the police of 10 protesters in 2008, and with each fraudulent election and continuing economic misery, their frustration increased. When the constitution was being modified in 2015, President Sargsyan reassured the people that he had no intention of staying in power in 2018 when his second term of presidency would be over. Most people did not believe him and suspected that he would remain in office, switching from the ceremonial president's chair to become the all-powerful prime minister, under the new constitution. During a private meeting in 2016, I remember asking President Sargsyan if he planned to go home at the end of his term, as he had promised. I was alarmed when he said that he would make a decision based on the results of the 2017 parliamentary elections.

Meanwhile, the overwhelming majority of the people, despite their suspicions, were counting the days and hours for the end of President Sargsyan's term in office. When the Republican Party's majority in Parliament elected him to become the new Prime Minister last month, the citizens could no longer control their anger. Tens of thousands of people came out in the streets, led by opposition Parliament member

Nikol Pashinyan to vent their frustration.

Fortunately, the massive outpouring of anger was kept in check by Pashinyan's constant exhortation not to commit any violence and to respect the Police forces. A series of blunders by Prime Minister Sargsyan and his Republican Party members in Parliament followed, when Sargsyan met with Pashinyan and walked out after three minutes. In a few hours, despite his Parliamentary immunity, Pashinyan was arrested and kept in an undisclosed location by the Police, turning him into a greater hero. Due to escalating protests, Pashinyan was released from incarceration, and unexpectedly, Prime Minister Sargsyan announced his resignation, confessing: "I was wrong, Nikol was right."

On May 1, the parliament met to elect a new prime minister. After a lengthy deliberation, the Republican Party majority almost unanimously voted against Pashinyan's candidacy. On May 2, the crowds blocked all major streets, highways, and paralyzed the trains, subways and the road to and from the Yerevan airport. The following day, the Republican Party officially announced that it will not block Pashinyan's planned election on May 8 as Prime Minister. At the time of writing this column on May 7, barring any surprising developments, Pashinyan is expected to be elected prime minister by the Parliament.

Pashinyan's election probably would not resolve Armenia's multiple problems. In the following 15 days, he will select his Cabinet of Ministers and present his government's agenda to the parliament for approval. There will be then a lengthy debate on amending the election laws, followed by new Parliamentary elections in several months. Despite the transformation in leadership, Armenia will continue to suffer from blockades by Turkey and Azerbaijan and the military conflict involving Artsakh.

We have to wait and see whom Pashinyan will appoint to key ministerial posts as Foreign and Defense Ministers. What kind of compromises will be made between Pashinyan's minority members and the Republican Party's majority in the Parliament while changing the election laws? Only then new parliamentary elections will be held. Assuming the new elections will be fair and properly supervised by the new government, it remains to be seen if Pashinyan's party and his supporting parties will gain the majority in Parliament. The good news is that all of these developments have been taking place in line with the constitution, under pressure from the newly-awakened Armenian public-at-large.

Finally, the most important issue now is that the thousands of newly-empowered young people, who came out to the streets demanding a more democratic state with a great degree of enthusiasm and emotion, should not be disappointed. Armenia cannot afford to lose its youth which are the future of the country.

Everyone in Armenia and the Diaspora should do everything in their power to ensure stability, peace and prosperity in Armenia under its new leadership.

Reluctant Revolution Dawns over Armenia

from previous page

Ministry of Diaspora will remain. Will all her enthusiasm, former Diaspora Minister Hranush Hakobyan dealt mostly with organized communities in the diaspora, soliciting accolades and dispensing medals. Relations with the diaspora need a more studied approach. A state has to resurrect and reinvigorate its overseas potential. Except for some personal initiatives, nothing was done on a higher level to, for example, awaken dormant Armenians in Turkey. Armenian schools in Javakhk are suffering from a shortage of teachers and textbooks and only lip service has been paid to help them so far.

A major community of 3-4 million remains disorganized in Russia. An extraordinary situation has been created in the breakaway region of Abkhazia, today an unrecognized republic. In fact, there are more ethnic Armenians in Abkhazia (30 percent) than ethnic Abkhaz people, but the country is ruled by the latter.

Pashinyan's knowledge of the greater diaspora has proven to be no better. His speeches and comments demonstrate that what he considers to be the diaspora is mostly Glendale, with its large expat population.

Foreign policy is another challenge which needs immediate attention. President Vladimir Putin's early congratulatory message and Pashinyan's reassuring statements regarding Armenian-Russian relations are not sufficient and need more concrete actions. Russian news outlets are not comfortable with this takeover and certainly discontent is also simmering on the establishment level domestically.

Now that Pashinyan has successfully crafted the Velvet Revolution, he needs that revolution over his internal life.

In today's euphoric mood, anything less than a standing ovation for him is considered sacrilege. But, the truth has to be told if the revolution can maintain its arc. Under the slogans of love and respect, there is a rampant hatred towards any detractor. Social media is flooded with observances and below-the belt retorts and innuendoes. If that current does not stop immediately, it will certainly boomerang and hurt the revolutionaries. The tone of this current was set by Pashinyan himself, who was once Levon Ter-Petrosian's lieutenant. His performance as the editor of Haykakan Zhamanak was less than stellar. If he does not wish to be on the receiving end of this trend, speedy action is necessary.

Today, Nikol needs to take care of his inner revolution to complete and complement his Velvet Revolution in Armenian society.

AMAA President Offers Remarks at Times Square

(The Executive Director of the Armenian Missionary Association of America Zaven Khanjian, delivered the following speech at the Times Square commemoration of the Armenian Genocide in New York on April 22.)

It has been three years since we commemorated the Centennial of the Armenian Genocide.

It was a solemn occasion, a distinct anniversary. An occasion to relive the anguish and yet rejoice the miracle of survival. An anniversary that stirred both sorrow and pride in our collective soul.

It was an occasion to reckon that over many decades since we made the transition from lamenting the agony of the loss to an era we jumpstarted our quest for justice, a lot had been accomplished.

Our collective efforts had raised our national struggle to an unprecedented plateau of universal awareness, respect and recognition.

We rightfully asked - what next?

As we stand today, humanity has surrendered three more years to the whirlpool of history in which we have not gained much on the road of reparations, restitution and recognition from the heirs of the perpetrators. Moreover, sympathy and recognition, in the so-called civilized world have only come with impunity lacking any legal muscle. The perpetrator continues to lie in a deep self-imposed coma of denial. Adding insult to injury, the "civilized" world, with total acquiescence, turns a blind eye to the continuing crimes committed by the perpetrator, be it invading a sovereign neighbor, destroying its own democratic institutions and even beating peaceful demonstrators as far as on US soil. All the above have not caused an eyebrow to rise in the West or the East.

In the face of all these challenges, we can only depend on ourselves. The realization of our quest for justice remains solely on our selfless and sacrificial devotion and commitment to the application of Khrimian Hayrig's "iron ladle."

Over the span of time and under the effect of various conditions and circumstances, which influence our national path, our priorities, focus and agenda, should justifiably remain flexible and malleable. I gladly sense that our collective psyche has moved to shatter the chains of remaining hostage to the fetters of the Genocide. Consequently, until that promised dawn when our collective national soul is able to bring the iron ladle home without any impediment or procrastination we have to continue to focus on

A strong, democratic and innovatively developed Homeland

A strong, secure and independent Artsakh

A thriving, healthy and prosperous Diaspora

The litmus test of a strong and democratic homeland lies in a free and proud citizenry with fresh dreams and aspirations, indelible integrity, upholding the highest moral values and unblemished reputation, unafraid to advocate social justice, freedom of conscience. Citizenry, who cling to the homeland, exercise voluntarism, sustain society, respect human rights and sacrifice for the homeland. Much lies in the passing of the test.

I have faith in our people. I have faith in our youth.

With the hope of such a strong and truly democratic Homeland and a new Diaspora, where a generation of alert, accomplished, creative youth with a strong sense of belonging and responsibility is taking shape, we will perpetuate the faith and culture. We shall overcome evil with hard work and creativity, song and dance, hope and prayer, smile and joy, all for the Glory of God who said in Romans 12:19 'It is mine to avenge; I will repay'.

God is faithful; He will deliver the iron ladle.



Boston Armenians Thank Governor Baker, Recognize Dr. Diran Apelian's Achievements

BAKER, from page 1

Robert Avakian, a longtime friend of the governor and member of the latter's finance committee, spoke about the governor's achievements. Baker in turn praised the Armenian community, declaring that it is truly appreciated in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. This, he said, is why the president of Armenia was given the red carpet treatment by the state

Hajjar recognized the achievements of Dr. Diran Apelian, Alcoa-Howmet Professor of Mechanical Engineering, founding director of the Metal Processing Institute and director of the Advanced Casting Research Center of Worcester Polytechnic Institute (WPI), for his leadership both as a researcher and an educator. State Rep. David K. Mouradian, Jr. of the Ninth Worcester District presented a citation



From left, Robert Avakian, Jean-Jacques Hajjar, Seta Apelian, Rep. David Mouradian, Prof. Diran Apelian, Governor Charlie Baker, Prof. Winston Wole Soboyejo (photo: Aram Arkun)

when he visited several years ago. He said that the overwhelmingly bipartisan nature of the government in Massachusetts, working to find common ground, was one of the secrets to the prosperity of the state, along with its pragmatic problem-solving nature, investment in education and research, and public-private partnerships.

Host committee member Dr. Jean-Jacques

celebrating Apelian's induction into the National Academy of Inventors from the Massachusetts House of Representatives. Apelian was joined by his wife Seta and Prof. Winston Wole Soboyejo, Bernard M. Gordon Dean of Engineering at WPI.

The ongoing "Velvet Revolution" in Armenia was one of the topics discussed during the evening.

Diocese Elects First American-Born Primate

PRIMATE, from page 1

so the candidate with the lowest number of votes dropped out. In the subsequent round, Findikyan received the majority of votes. He remains Primate-elect until confirmed by Catholicos of All Armenians Karekin II.

Findikyan will be the first American-born Primate of the Diocese. A native of Fort Worth, Texas, he is director of the Krikor and Clara Zohrab Information Center of the Diocese, and Professor of Liturgical Studies at St. Nersess Armenian Seminary in Armonk, NY.

He earned his doctorate from the Pontifical Oriental Institute in Rome, and has a Master's of Arts degree from the City University of New York in Musicology (1990), and the Master of Divinity (1989) from St. Vladimir Orthodox Theological Seminary and St. Nersess Armenian Seminary. He has authored numerous academic works. He was ordained a celibate priest in 1997 and served as dean of St. Nersess Seminary from 2000 to 2012.

According to a release from the Diocese, in his first address as Primate-elect, Findikyan told the delegates he was “enormously humbled and honored that you have chosen me to be your next Primate.”

He thanked Aykazian, calling him “a father to me for decades,” as well as Gulgolian – who served as Findikyan’s sponsor at his elevation to the rank of vartabed.

Finally he thanked Barsamian, who ordained him 21 years ago. "You have a large family of spiritual children, and I am honored to be one of those children," he said.

Barsamian in turn congratulated the Primate-elect, expressing his confidence in him.

Air Rights to St. Vartan

At the assembly, a potentially extremely significant proposal concerning the Diocesan complex in New York City was presented on May 3. According to Diocesan Council Chairman James Kalustian, “An exciting initiative has been rekindled and well received, concerning monetizing the value of the air rights of the cathedral complex, while maintaining the integrity of the cathedral, the plaza and the sightlines of the complex.”

Acting Defense Minister Quits

YEREVAN (Public Radio of Armenia) – Acting Defense Minister Vigen Sargsyan issued a statement announcing his resignation and congratulating everyone on the occasion of the Victory in the Great Patriotic War, the liberation of Shushi and the anniversary of formation of the Armed Forces.

"The Minister is a politician, whose work can be effective only in a team of fellow-thinkers. It's a matter of neither professionalism nor the willingness to serve the people: one can and must be useful to society irrespective of position and post," Sargsyan said. He pledged to continue his service in a different capacity.

"I'm confident that I'm transferring a stronger, more efficient and more efficient army to my successor, transferring an army with a substantially extended budget, expanded infrastructures and improved statistics," Sargsyan added.

"It's a pity that many programs, especially those in the field of servicemen's social security, are in the stage of implementation. I will give a detailed account of the unfinished projects to the next minister, pointing to their financial sources and legal arrangements. I am ready to assist him and all future ministers in bringing our country to a higher level of security," Sargsyan stated.

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