

Retired General Grigoryan Arrested for Stockpiling Military Weapons, Goods

Son, Mayor of Echmiadzin, Forced to Resign

YEREVAN (Combined Sources) – Eighty one members of parliament on June 18 voted to support the Prosecutor General's

motion to launch criminal proceedings against an arrested lawmaker, Manvel Grigoryan, the former general, who is suspected of embezzling military supplies and illegal possession of firearms.

Only three members of Parliament voted against prosecution, chairman of the counting

committee Gagik Melikyan said.

Grigoryan, who chairs the Yerkrpah Volunteer Union, a paramilitary organization, was arrested on June 16 by national security service in his hometown of Echmiadzin (Vagharshapat).

The Republican Party member is suspected in embezzling military supplies and illegal possession of firearms.

Agents found huge amounts of military weapons and ammunition and supplies, including donated food, clothing and even include letters written by schoolchildren during the days of the April War of 2016.

The National Security Service (NSS) released on Sunday a video of searches carried out by its officers at Grigoryan's vast villas and other properties.

The donations were made by local communities, public schools and other civilian institutions during the April 2016 war in Karabakh.



Gen. Manvel Grigoryan



Some of the items seized in Manvel Grigoryan's home

see GRIGORYAN, page 2

EU Said to Help New Armenian Government

YEREVAN (RFE/RL) – The European Union (EU) stands ready to help Armenia's new government implement sweeping reforms promised by it, a senior member of the European Parliament said after visiting Yerevan on Monday, June 18.

David McAllister, the chairman of the EU legislature's Committee on Foreign Affairs, headed a multi-partisan delegation of EU lawmakers who met with Prime Minister Pashinyan, other senior Armenian officials and civil society representatives during the visit.

"This is a key moment for Armenia," McAllister said in a statement. "To strengthen its democracy, to deepen its relations with the EU and to make long-lasting peace."

"Armenia's citizens want this, Armenia's leaders have committed to this and the European Union will be there to help every step of the way," he added.

Pashinyan reportedly briefed McAllister and other European Parliament members on his government's stated efforts to combat corruption, break up economic monopolies hampering faster growth and democratize Armenia's political system. "The purpose of our actions is to bring about real changes in the country," he was quoted by his press office as saying.

The Armenian premier said last week that he will visit Brussels to meet top EU officials later this month.

The EU closely monitored the political crisis in Armenia sparked by former President Serzh Sargsyan's attempt to hold on to power after serving out his second presidential term on April 9. It repeatedly urged Armenian political factions to end the standoff through dialogue.

Donald Tusk, president of the European Council, and Jean-Claude Juncker, the

see EU, page 5



Nvair Beylerian (left) with supporters and running mate Richard Medina (right) at the Upper Saddle River Memorial Day Parade.

An Armenian Spirit Leads To a Call to Serve

UPPER SADDLE RIVER, N.J. – The seeds of political activism were planted in Nvair Beylerian at a young age. Waking up one Saturday morning as a 7-year-old, she spotted her Armenian dance costume, resplendent and long-flowing with its traditional embroidery, hanging on her closet door, no doubt placed there by her mother who taught folkloric dances from the highlands of ancient Armenia. That dress was in fact more than a costume – it echoed the cultural footsteps of a people who had been torn apart across the world, reincarnating a New Armenia in these pockets of the Diaspora. Rolling down New York City's 5th Avenue on a Map of Armenia float later that afternoon, young Nvair waved at the large crowds as fellow Diasporans yelled into the microphone, "Recognize the Armenian Genocide!"

That symbolic afternoon, all those decades ago, is her first clear memory of witnessing the power of activism right before her eyes. Those calls for justice continued to ring in her ear as she devoted a life not only to important Armenian causes but to a greater purpose of education and equality – and it was a moment that stayed with her when she recently announced her run for Borough Council of Upper Saddle River, NJ, in an election set to take place in the fall.

see BEYLERIAN, page 13

By Taleen Babayan
Special to the Mirror-Spectator

NEWS IN BRIEF

Mirror Annual Summer Vacation

WATERTOWN – The *Armenian Mirror-Spectator* will close for its annual summer vacation starting July 2.

The last issue before the vacation will be that of June 30. The first issue back will be that of July 21.

You may submit stories, letters or inquires electronically in the meantime.

Russia to Supply Armenia with Jets

YEREVAN (Armenpress) – Russia intends to supply Armenia with Su-30SM fighter jets, Russian Kommersant reported this week.

It was noted that before the power change in Armenia the leadership of the country cancelled the purchase of multifunctional Su-30SM jets until 2024. The contract between the sides had been signed in 2012, but never went into effect. The newspaper informs that Russia plans to implement the contract with the new authorities of Armenia. It's mentioned that Prime Minister of Armenia Nikol Pashinyan has already been inside Su-30SM and called the fighter jet one of the best in the world.

Garo Paylan Says Denial of Armenian Genocide Is Insult

ISTANBUL (Armenpress) – Turkish-Armenian Member of Parliament Garo Paylan (HDP), who is running for another term in the Turkey's parliament representing Diyarbakir in the upcoming elections, has commented about the investigation targeting him under the infamous Article 301.

Speaking to Bianet agency on June 19, Paylan claimed that it is the very same article which led to the murder of journalist Hrant Dink.

Dink, the editor-in-chief of *Agos*, a bilingual Turkish-Armenian newspaper, was gunned down in 2007.

"I am under investigation for 'insulting Turkishness' for speaking about the Armenian Genocide. Actually, it is the denial of the genocide which is an insult. Call it whatever you want, denying the great tragedy of the Armenians is an insult to Turkishness," he said.

"Thousands of our churches, schools, cultural legacy, we've lost everything. We are suggesting – you yourself name the events. We are saying, name the events based on a fair remembrance. However, we always get the same answer: You cannot speak about this. And in such conditions, it turns out you have insulted Turkishness. Turks are perceived in the world as genocide deniers. Whereas I, on the contrary, I am fighting to eliminate this injustice against Turks," he said.

INSIDE

Let's Meet at The Met

Page 14

INDEX

Arts and Living	14
Armenia	2,3
Community News.	6
Editorial	18
International	4,5



ARMENIA

News From Armenia

New Japanese Ambassador Meets Premier

YEREVAN (news.am) – Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan received on Tuesday, June 19, the newly appointed Ambassador of Japan to Armenia Jun Yamada, the official website of the Prime Minister of Armenia reported.

Pashinyan highlighted the activation and future development of Armenian-Japanese relations, adding that there is the potential to raise the level of partnership to a new level.

He thanked the government of Japan for providing Armenia with 200 new vehicles and hoped that the close cooperation of the executives of the two states will foster the attraction of Japanese capital to Armenia.

The ambassador assured the premier that he will make sure to strengthen Armenian-Japanese relations, including in the direction of new investment projects.

The interlocutors assessed promising the deepening of cooperation in the spheres of industry, IT, tourism and other spheres. The sides also highlighted high level mutual visits.

PM Pashinyan thanked the Japanese side for its balanced stance on Nagorno Karabakh conflict, adding that it fosters regional peace and stability.

Yerevan Police Chief Fired

YEREVAN (News.am) – Yerevan Police Chief Sarkis Martirosyan has been dismissed.

The press service of the police confirmed the information on June 19.

The post of the police chief remains vacant.

Ex-Presidents Stripped Of Gyumri Titles

YEREVAN (RFE/RL) – Gyumri's municipal council voted on June 18 to strip former Presidents Serzh Sargsyan and Robert Kocharyan of the titles of honorary citizens of Armenia's second largest city.

The Gyumri municipality had bestowed the title on Kocharyan in 2002 when he was president of the country. It cited his contribution to the reconstruction of the city devastated by a 1988 earthquake.

The reconstruction was mainly financed by Armenian-American philanthropist Kirk Kerkorian. Hundreds of new apartments were built in Gyumri and provided to local families free of charge in the early 2000s.

Sargsyan became an honorary citizen of Gyumri in 2006. He was Armenia's defense minister at the time.

The motion to revoke Sargsyan's and Kocharyan's titles was put by the Gyumri-based Gala political alliance which was in opposition to Armenia's former government. Gala said that neither ex-president deserved to receive such an honor in the first place.

The council backed the motion. Its largest faction is led by Mayor Samvel Balasanyan, who has for years been allied to Sargsyan's Republican Party of Armenia (HHK).

The Gyumri council also stripped Sargsyan's brother Levon of the same title. The latter had received it as the founder of a charity that organized cultural events in the city. A local councilor representing Gala argued that participants were charged with being able to take part in those festivals.

Armenian President Receives British Trade Envoy

YEREVAN (Armenpress) – President of Armenia Armen Sarkissian received on June 7 British Trade Envoy to Georgia and Armenia, Member of Parliament Mark Pritchard and Ambassador of the UK to Armenia Judith Farnworth.

Opportunities for increasing trade and investments between Armenia and the UK, as well as cooperation in a number of spheres were discussed at the meeting.

Retired General Grigoryan Arrested for Stockpiling Military Weapons, Goods

GRIGORYAN, from page 1

"It emerged that Manvel Grigoryan has used the food meant for soldiers participating in the four-day April [2016] war for feeding animals of his private zoo," the NSS charged in a statement. It said Grigoryan also misappropriated several vehicles that were donated to the military two years ago.

The video also featured many weapons, including rocket-propelled grenade launchers, as well as several dozen expensive and retro cars parked in the Arshaluys compound. It was swiftly aired by Armenia's main TV channels and widely shared on social media.

The Prosecutor General requested an extraordinary sitting of the parliament to take place to strip the MP of parliamentary immunity, in order to keep him in pre-trial custody.

Grigoryan has denied any wrongdoing, and in a letter sent to the speaker said he will restore his reputation, and called on his colleagues to strip him of immunity since "he has no desire to obstruct the investigation."

A private zoo and a large car collection were also found during the search of the compound.

Grigoryan denies the accusations of illegal arms possession and embezzlement levelled against him, his lawyers said on Tuesday, June 19.

According to them, Grigoryan has told investigators that he has nothing to do with large quantities of food, medication and other items meant for Armenian soldiers which were confiscated from a vast village compound belonging to him.

"He has testified that he visited that property rarely, let's say two or three times a year," one of the lawyers, Karen Kamalian, said at a news conference. "As regards the place where those goods were discovered, he did not have the keys [to its entrance door]."

Another attorney, Arayik Alvanian, claimed that those items were shipped to and from the property by other senior members of the Yerkrpah Union of Karabakh war veterans without Grigoryan's knowledge. Grigoryan has headed the organization close to the Armenian military for almost two decades.

In an open letter released on Monday, Grigoryan pledged to provide documents proving that the warehouse "catered" for Yerkrpah's legitimate activities, rather than served as a hide-out for embezzled military supplies. Alvanian denied any contradiction between that claim and statements made by him and three other lawyers representing the ex-general.

Seyran Ohanian, another retired general who was Armenia's defense minister during the four-day war, said on Tuesday that he "experienced pain" when watching the televised NSS footage. He insisted that he was not involved in or even aware of the alleged embezzlement of donations to the armed forces.

"Of course I did not know that," Ohanian told RFE/RL's Armenian service (Azatutyun.am). "A special commission was set up then to handle all kinds of assistance which it distributed in corresponding directions."

He put the blame on unnamed "structures" that delivered such aid to various military units or oversaw that process.

A week ago, Ohanian received a summons from tax inspectors investigating suspected financial irregularities committed by Armenian Defense Ministry officials from 2014 to 2017. The State Revenue Committee (SRC) said the former defense minister will be questioned as a witness.

Meanwhile, the recently appointed chief of the Armenian army's General Staff, Major General Artak Davtian, issued a statement on Tuesday implicitly referring to the high-profile case against Grigoryan. "Impunity is now a thing of the past," he declared.

Davtian said the Armenian military will join the country's new government in waging an "uncompromising struggle even against seemingly insignificant abuses."

Parliament Vote

Grigoryan's arrest was met by demonstrations held by supporters in of Echmiadzin, while others demonstrated for the arrest of his son, Karen, the long-time mayor of the city accusing him of corruption and mismanagement and demanding his resignation.

Speakers at the rallies there also

In an apparently related development, security officers also searched the Echmiadzin villa of Manvel Grigoryan. They found and confiscated large quantities of "illegally acquired" weapons and ammunition before detaining the once powerful general, according to the NSS statement.

War Veteran

The NSS raids and arrests came as Karen Grigoryan's opponents stepped up the pressure on the Echmiadzin mayor, blocking the town's main streets in the morning. The embattled mayor organized a counterdemonstration in the town's central square later in the day. Riot police were deployed there to prevent possible clashes between the rival groups of protesters.

The mayor resigned late on Sunday after law-enforcement authorities made



Demonstrations in Echmiadzin

called for an end to what they say an atmosphere of fear created by Manvel Grigoryan, who has long held sway in Echmiadzin and nearby villages. They used the slogans and tactics of a recent nationwide protest movement that toppled Armenia's previous government.

Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan, who swept to power as a result of that movement, denounced this fact on Friday. "It's unacceptable that criminal elements are desecrating symbols of our revolution of love and solidarity and exploiting the revolution in mafia wars," he wrote on Facebook. "We will not allow that."

Pashinyan clearly alluded to reports that the man behind the protests against the Grigoryans is Artur Asatryan, an Echmiadzin native who has long been branded a crime figure by Armenian media.

On Saturday, officers of the NSS raided Asatryan's Echmiadzin compound and other properties owned by the man better known as "Don Pipo." Asatryan and four other men, all of them Russian citizens, were arrested as a result.

In a written statement, the NSS said that Asatryan is suspected of illegally possessing weapons and kidnapping three individuals who had allegedly plotted to assassinate him a few years ago.



Former Echmiadzin mayor Karen Grigoryan

new and far more embarrassing accusations against his father.

Karen has been Echmiadzin's mayor for almost a decade.

Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan defended the arrest in a video address to the nation aired through Facebook on Sunday afternoon. He was the first to announce that Grigoryan is also suspected of large-scale embezzlement.

"Nobody denies that Manvel Grigoryan is a hero of Artsakh (Karabakh)," Pashinyan went on. "But even the heroes have no right to steal aid sent by schoolchildren in Gyumri, Echmiadzin and Yerevan to soldiers fighting on the frontlines and to feed his wild animals with it."

The Republican Party (HHK) reacted to the embarrassing video on Monday with a statement which called the ex-general's alleged corruption "unacceptable and outrageous." "We are shocked and outraged that such things could have possibly been done by anyone, especially a general who had actively participated in the Artsakh war," read an HHK statement.

"While respecting the presumption of innocence, we are declaring that if the accusations levelled against Manvel Grigoryan are proved in a manner defined by the law he must be legally and strictly held accountable," it said.

The HHK spokesman, Eduard Sharmazanov, indicated earlier in the day that the former ruling party no longer regards the high-profile case as politically motivated. "I must declare that the matter lies in a purely legal domain and we must allow investigators to carry out further actions in a manner defined by the law," said Sharmazanov. "If it turns out that all this is true, there can be no justification for it," he added.

The HHK did not clarify whether its lawmakers will vote for allowing law-enforcement authorities to press charges against Manvel Grigoryan, who was reelected to the Armenian parliament on the HHK ticket last year.



ARMENIA

Unseen Armenia: Ushi/Oushi - Surb Sargis

By Hovsep Daghdigian

YEREVAN — We were driving north from Yerevan, towards Aparan. Passing the village of Ushi, my friend Vova asked, “Have you been to Ushi?” “Of course, I’ve passed here many times,” I replied. “So you’ve seen Surb Sargis monastery?” “Surb Sargis? No!” I had not; I was not even aware of its existence. Following a very brief conversation we reversed direction and entered Ushi. I’ve been back two additional times...so far.

Ushi, roughly 17 miles north west of Yerevan, is on the west side of the Kasakh river valley. The road to Ushi is good; travel time from Yerevan is about 40 minutes. Cab fare is affordable, but it’s best to first negotiate an approximate fare with the taxi driver. The Surb Sarkis Monastery complex, dating from the 5th-18th century, is on the western edge of the village. On a small rise next to the monastery are the remnants of a late Bronze Age to early Iron Age settlement, dated to the 2nd to 1st millennium B.C. The monastery is spectacular. A car can get to within 50 yards of the monastery, then it’s a short walk up a few stone stairs.

Surb Sargis

Sargis was a military officer, appointed by Byzantine emperor Constantine the Great, to be the general in charge of Cappadocia near the border of Western Armenia. Sargis was a Christian and probably, though not for certain, Armenian. Constantine was the first

and is rescued. Fleeing from the father, Surb Sargis conjures up a storm to thwart his pursuers. Quite often Surb Sargis is assisted in his noble deeds by storms and the wind.

In the village of Dasht, in Armavir province, there is a hill called Ardar Davit (David the Just). Hovhannes, a villager, said according to local folklore the sword of Sasuntsi Davit is buried under the hill. From the top of the hill there were visible circular depressions in a field. These, according to local folklore, were created by the hoofs of Surb Sargis’ horse. There was always water in them until a Moslem drank from them. In other places as well there are marks attributed to the horse hoofprints.

The Surb Sargis holiday falls between January 18 and February 23, during which a special Surb Sargis *halvah* is served. Recipes are on the web. On the evening before St. Sargis Day young men and women eat salty pastries and refrain from drinking water. Whoever brings them water to quench their thirst in their dreams is prophesized to be their future mate.

Surb Sargis Monastery

A church was built over Surb Sargis’ grave in the 5th century. It is the oldest of 220 churches dedicated to Surb Sargis in Armenia. Other structures continued to be built until the 18th century. From the 12-13th century, the Zarkarian brothers, officers and confidants of Queen Tamar of Georgia, succeeded in driving out Moslem invaders from large parts of Armenia and Georgia. Prince Vachutan was appointed hereditary prince of this region and,



Hall, Surb Sargis monastery

Roman/Byzantine emperor to accept Christianity. Forty-two years after Constantine’s death his nephew, Julian the Apostate, became emperor and began persecuting Christians. Sargis resigned his military commission and sought refuge in Armenia with his son Martiros where he was offered protection by Armenian king Arshak II. But as Julian’s army advanced eastward the Persian King Shapur II, hearing of Sargis’ military skill, offered Sargis a command position in his army. Later, realizing that Sargis and many of his soldiers were Christian, King Shapur tried to force them to abandon their faith and convert to Zoroastrianism. Defying Shapur’s orders, Sargis’ son Martiros, as well as many of his Christian soldiers, were killed. Sargis chose martyrdom rather than renouncing his faith; he was beheaded in the 4th C. His body was buried in Namyan, Mazandaran province, Persia, by some of his soldiers. His remains were brought back to Armenia by Mesrob Mashtots and buried in the village of Ushi.

Legends

Surb Sargis is the patron of young people and young lovers. Legends and traditions abound:

In one legend, a father tries to forcibly marry his daughter but the daughter resists. At the limit of her ability to oppose her father, she calls for help from Surb Sargis. When he arrives she runs to him, jumps on the back of his horse,

with his wife Mama-Khatun, built or renovated many churches and cultural edifices. They built Surb Astvatsatsin church (Holy Mother of God) at the monastery in the early 13th century. Next to the church is its narthex (*gavit*). Later, in 1654, the complex was surrounded by fortified walls. The monastery includes housing for monks, storage areas, a wine press, and other structures to support the monastic community and guests. Ownership of a number of villages provided financial support for the monastery. Earthquakes in 1769 and again in 1827 reduced the complex to ruins. Surb Sargis was an important cultural and spiritual site, which played an important role in Armenian history.

Culture

The first Armenian language book printed on a printing press was the *Urbatagirk* or *Friday Prayer Book* published in Venice by Hakob Meghapart in 1512. The book consisted of 124 pages. Printing an Armenian Bible, however, would require many more pages and would be far more costly.

In the early 1600s wealthy Armenian merchants from Nor Julfa in Persia offered to fund the printing of an Armenian Bible.

In 1630 both Catholicos Movses III Tatevatsi and the clergy of Nor Julfa in Persia sent letters to the Pope asking for permission to do so in Rome, but the Pope refused this and subsequent requests.

Hovhannes Ankiuratsi, a translator for the



Surb Sargis church, building started in 1025; one of 5 original churches at Khtzkonk monastery, 7-13th c; in Western Armenia, 19 km west of Turkish-Armenian border; blown up by Turkish army in 1950s. Of 5 original churches, only Surb Sargis is (barely) standing.

Venetian ambassador in Smyrna, suggested that it would be easier to print the Bible in Holland. Avedis Ghlijents, a wealthy Armenian merchant in Amsterdam, paid the expenses that had accumulated so far, and invited his brother, Vartabed Voskan Yerevantsi, a prior (official) of Surb Sargis in Armenia, to take charge of the printing.

Voskan Yerevantsi arrived in Amsterdam 1664 and with the help of some others, completed the job in 1668. He was also responsible for renovations to Surb Sarkis Monastery. Thus Surb Sargis played an important role in the publication of the first Bible in the Armenian language. Five thousand copies were published.

Excavations

In the 1830s visitors to Surb Sargis could view only ruins of the monastery poking through the surface of the soil that had accumulated over the site. Most intact was the small church containing the relic of Surb Sargis.

three years the project prematurely came to a halt. This was reminiscent of a project I was involved in to help renovate and preserve the Shengavit Archaeological Site in Yerevan, a settlement dating to about 4,000 BC with a small museum sorely in need of refurbishing. When we refused to hand over funds collected from the Diaspora under the auspices of the Cambridge-Yerevan Sister City Association (CYSCA), work on this project had to be halted.

Villagers in Ushi hoped that renovation and preservation of the site would have provided tourism revenue for the village. Plans were in place to widen the road to the monastery thus allowing access by small minibuses. Perhaps amenities could be made available for visitors as well. Intricately carved stones, which were previously excavated, now lie on the ground exposed to the elements. A tall wall near Surb Astvatsatsin is standing, braced up by wooden supports, which undoubtedly will decay and result in the collapse of the wall. This is an



Ushi Surb Sargis monastery: Surb Sargis church, 5th c (left), Surb Astvatsatsin church, 11th c, (right)

Thanks to the patronage of Archbishop Shahan Ajemian, Dean of Yerevan State University’s Department of Theology, a project to excavate and study the site began in 1999 under the auspices of Armenia’s Institute of Archaeology and Anthropology. The project’s lead archaeologist was Dr. Frina Babayan. Repairs to Surb Sargis church and other structures were made and documented.

Some villagers in Ushi told this author that some government officials stipulated that Archbishop Ajemian should fund this project through them or their departments rather than directly. The archbishop refused, apparently lacking confidence that all the funds would be used for their intended purpose. Thus after

immensely impressive and easily accessible site. It allows visitors to visualize life in a medieval Armenian monastery and to look in amazement at wonderful stone carvings. The scenery towards Mt. Ararat is great, even when summer haze obscures the view a bit.

It is hoped that means can be found to resume the excavation, renovation, preservation, and study of Ushi’s Surb Sargis Monastery.

Documentation for this site is on the Internet; search for “Surb Sargis” or “Ushi”. Also Dr. Frina Babayan has published a very informative tri-lingual (Armenian, Russian, English) booklet about the site. It is available from Abril Books in California.



INTERNATIONAL

International News

New Representative to European Court of Human Rights

STRASBOURG (Mediamax) – Artak Asatryan will from now on represent the Republic of Armenia in the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR).

The decision was made at the government session on June 15.

Earlier MP Gevorg Kostanyan left the position of Government Representative of Armenia in ECHR.

Minister of Justice of Armenia Artak Zeynalyan noted that Asatryan's appointment is temporary. According to him, currently relevant draft is being elaborated, by which Government Representative of Armenia will be appointed by Prime Minister of Armenia upon the nomination by Minister of Justice.

In 2016, Asatryan was appointed Deputy Minister of Justice and Deputy Government Representative of Armenia before the ECHR. In 2011-2016 he held the position of head of the Department for State and Legal Affairs of Government Staff of the Republic of Armenia.

Czech Photo Center Hosts 'Armenian Soul' Exhibit

PRAGUE (Public Radio of Armenia) – The Czech Photo Center is showcasing an exhibition of photos by Josef Bosák, called "Piece of Armenian Soul." The show runs until August 12, Prague TV reports.

Bosák visits Armenia and Nagorno-Karabakh every year, and "Piece of Armenian Soul" conveys some of what he has experienced on his travels. The exhibition uses photographs of elderly people as well as young people and children to trace Armenia's troubled history. There are images of people at work, at home, at play, and at a local dilapidated hospital.

"The mountainous Armenian landscape, marked by a troubled history and the suffering of its people through the decisions of politicians and relentless conflicts between Christians and Muslims, has become the author's great focus. Despite all the injustice committed against the local population, Bosák says the native Armenians remain very friendly people with a great sense of hospitality," the description of the exhibition states.

Bosák began taking photographs in 2003. In 2007, he visited Armenia and began to focus on capturing the human form and social journalism.

During a recent visit, he was an eyewitness to political events where the leader of anti-government protests, Nikol Pashinyan, became prime minister.

He visited the Karabakh Hospital numerous times over three years.

Visitors to the Czech Photo Centre's small hall can view the Every Tuesday exhibition until July 1. The photos cover a range of topics from body image to sports to familial relations.

Azeri Citizens Arrest American Soldier in Vilnius

VILNIUS (Armenpress) – An American off-duty, plain-clothed soldier was injured in a fistfight with two intoxicated Azerbaijani citizens in Kaunas, the second-largest city of Lithuania, some 75 km northwest of the capital of Vilnius.

At about 2 a.m. on June 15 in Kaunas's Laisves Alley, a fight broke out between two drunken citizens of Azerbaijan and a US serviceman, in which the American soldier was injured," a statement released by the press service of the Kaunas district police commissariat said, according to Sputnik News.

The local police said the US soldier was sent to a hospital after getting punched in the face by one of the Azerbaijanis. One of the two Azerbaijanis is placed under arrest as an investigation has been launched into the incident.

According to Turkish media, the American soldier was participating in the NATO Saber Strike drills.



Davit Davtyan (Counselor of the Republic of Armenia in Germany; 2nd from left), Florian Stahl (Senior Manager Route Development & Destination Management, Germania, 4th from left), John Mohrmann (Aviation Management, Flughafen Berlin Brandenburg GmbH, 5th from left), Ashot Smbatyan (Ambassador of the Republic of Armenia in Germany, 6th from left), Vrezh Kardumyan (secretary of the Ambassador of the Republic of Armenia in Germany, 7th from left) with the crew.

From Berlin to Yerevan – Direct

By Muriel Mirak-Weissbach

Special to the Mirror-Spectator

BERLIN – The revolutionary developments in the Republic of Armenia have sparked enormous interest in Germany and a new air link between the two capitals promises to fuel that interest even more. Germania, an independent German airline, has proudly announced that its first direct flight from Berlin to Yerevan took place last weekend. Plans are for a weekly flight

and at affordable prices. Until now, visitors from Germany have had to fly with stopovers, for example, in Vienna, Moscow, Prague or Kiev.

"With the Berlin-Yerevan connection, we have found an interesting new destination, and we expect the demand to be great," said Florian Stahl, Senior Manager of Route Development of the airline. "Here we are focusing on the

potential in tourism as well as the interest of travelers to visit friends and relatives."

As a Germania press release explains, there are numerous special attractions in Armenia, which is the oldest Christian nation in the world. "Armenia offers UNESCO world heritage sites," the release continues, "like the ruins of the Zvartnots Cathedral and the cloisters in Haghpat and Sanahin..." It also mentions that from Yerevan one can enjoy the view of "Mount Ararat, which according to the Bible, is where Noah's Ark landed in the Flood."

A Russian Writes to European Friends

By Andrei Kolesnikov

There are several misperceptions about Russia that make relations with Europe worse than they need to be. Acknowledging these illusions is the first step to Russia and Europe being able to understand each other.

Why is it so difficult for Russia and Europe to understand each other?

Personally, I have no illusions: Russian President Vladimir Putin's irrational politics have caused a deep mutual misunderstanding that now risks becoming a perpetual conflict. The elements of the misperception are as follows:

1. Putin's Russia is not the same thing as Russia itself. Putin is a classic autocrat who behaves like any other autocrat in the world. The fact that he belongs to the nation of Tolstoy and Dostoyevsky doesn't change anything; it is simply part of the mythology.

The nature of the support Putin enjoys in Russia is no enigma either: the so-called 80 percent approval rating stems from the answer to the question "Do you

support the activity of the Russian president?" The answer is "yes" because Putin – having now outlasted Leonid Brezhnev, who had been in power for eighteen years when he died – is an eternal leader, a symbol of the country, a flag around which to rally.

2. For the average Russian, it is more rational not to participate in the protest movement and to accept an informal social contract: anticipatory obedience to the state in exchange for some crumbs from the oil and gas pie. The essence of the mass support for Putin is total indifference – and fear of a worse life under a different leader.

3. Sanctions can't change Putin's policy. They can only mobilize his core and periphery supporters. This is the "besieged fortress" phenomenon: when a nation is under attack, it rallies around its commander, developing something akin to Stockholm syndrome for the leader. The average Russian perceives Western sanctions not as sectoral and/or personal, provoked by various and very concrete reasons, but as an attack on Russia and its people.

4. Reform is not possible in Russia. Putin understands perfectly

that he can't touch the political foundations of his system, because if he does, it will collapse.

5. Putin is not a strong leader. In economic and military terms, the West is much stronger. The role of a global spoiler is not equal to that of a real global player.

6. Alexei Navalny is certainly the most prominent opposition politician in Russia. He is not, however, the voice of the entire opposition movement, and he doesn't represent all of Russia. The most vocal protest movement in Russia is not politicized; it is driven by pragmatic issues such as infill construction in local neighborhoods and the expansion of landfills.

Finally, for now, Putin is most concerned about his own security. He needs the same kind of successor that he was for Boris Yeltsin. Putin was chosen primarily to ensure the security of Yeltsin, his family, and his political family. He proved more than capable on this front. So what Putin needs is just that: another Putin.

(The article was originally published in French in La Liberté. It also appeared in the Carnegie Moscow Center newsletter.)



INTERNATIONAL

Pashinyan Visits Russia, Meets with Putin, Medvedev

MOSCOW – Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan and his wife went to Moscow on June 13 for a two-day visit.

First, the prime minister met with Russian President Vladimir Putin in the Kremlin. The leaders of the two strategic partners discussed issues related to the agenda and cooperation of the Armenian-Russian bilateral and multilateral formats.

The sides touched upon the issues of further development and expansion of cooperation in various spheres, including political, economic, military-technical and other spheres.

Pashinyan and Vladimir Putin also discussed other regional issues of mutual interest.



Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan with President Vladimir Putin

“Dear Nikol Vova, we have recently met with you in Sochi. Taking into consideration the strategic nature of our relations and the large volume of cooperation in different areas, I think our meetings are required. I am grateful that you have arrived and we have the opportunity



Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan meets with Russian Premier Medvedev

to speak of bilateral affairs within the international sporting event. I would like to note that Russia is confidently the number one partner in Armenia's trade turnover. Last year the trade turnover between our countries increased by 30 percent, and this year also grows confidently, largely due to the supply of agricultural products to the Russian market. Of course, Armenia's membership in the Eurasian Economic Union also contributes to this, and this is obvious. We hope, that we will continue to move in that direction. I'm glad to meet you today to talk about the entire complex of our relations, welcome,” said Putin.

“Dear Vladimir Vladimirovich, let me congratulate you on the occasion of the Day of Russia. I also congratulate you on the World Cup 2018 because it is a very important and important event at the global scale, and now the focus of the world is focused on Moscow. Thank you for your invitation.”

He continued, “I think that both Armenia and Russia are satisfied with these developments and I hope that these relations will develop more efficiently on the basis of respect for the two peoples, the interests of the two states and sovereignty. This is very important. For me, it is very important that we have and I am confident that in the future we will have the opportunity to meet and discuss the whole range of our agenda.”

Accompanied by his spouse Anna Hakobyan, Pashinyan, attended the 2018 FIFA World Cup opening ceremony at Luzhniki Stadium and watched the tournament's first match between the teams of Russia and Saudi Arabia.

Putin, presidents and heads of governments of a number of countries were in attendance.

Pashinyan also met with Russian Premier Dmitry Medvedev.

The interlocutors discussed a number of issues related to Armenian-Russian economic relations, evoking the programs implemented in the economic sector and the planned activities. Nikol Pashinyan and Dmitry Medvedev stressed the need to step up bilateral trade based on the active and effective efforts of the Armenian-Russian intergovernmental commission on economic cooperation. The interlocutors touched upon the cooperation within the EAEU framework, as well as on the need to expand interactions in the energy, industrial, investment and humanitarian spheres.

“Dear Nikol Vovayevich, I am first of all happy to get acquainted with you. I once again congratulate you on being elected head of government. Armenia is our close ally, a country which together with the Russian Federation participates in integration associations and the CSTO. We are developing, as a matter of fact; I mean the economy and the social sphere. Therefore, coordination, joint work of governments is important for both the Russian Federation and for the Republic of Armenia,” Medvedev said.

“In general, I want to say that our relations are developing steadily and dynamically. This is due to the fact that Armenia's economy has been stating good development figures recently. Our economy is developing, too, thanks to the work done within the framework of the Eurasian Economic Union,” Medvedev said.

Pashinyan concurred with the warm sentiments. Pashinyan and Hakobyan attended a gala concert dedicated to the World Foot Championship in Red Square.

The event was also attended by Putin and several other presidents and heads of government who have arrived in Moscow to attend the opening ceremony of the World Cup.

The next day, the bust of Soviet Union Hero, Marshal of the USSR Armored Troops Hamazasp Babadjanyan was unveiled on June 14 in Moscow's Central Museum of Great Patriotic War, at a ceremony attended by the Armenian premier.

Pashinyan said he was particularly proud to attend such an important event to pay tribute to Babadjanyan at the museum of Russia's and Armenia's shared history – the Central Museum of Great Patriotic War.

“Hamazasp Babadjanyan holds a well-deserved place of its own among the Soviet Union's brave commanders. All the way through the patriotic war, Babadjanyan led the armored troops across the frontline and was able to liberate numerous cities then under the control of the enemy.

From the Battle of Kursk to the Battle of Berlin, the great son of the Armenian people demonstrated dedication and heroism to become one of the best commanders during the Great Patriotic War. Babadjanyan used to wage war in Suvorov's style; he beat the enemy down the subtle way rather than by outnumbering



Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan and his wife, Anna Hakobyan, attend the World Cup opening ceremony.

the latter,” he said.

“I want to emphasize that the name of Marshal Hamazasp Babadjanyan is engraved in the annals of our people's history along with the names of other brave warriors who fought for their homeland, who participated in the battles of Bash-Aparan, Sardarabad the centenary of which was marked last month,” Pashinyan added.

The premier noted that the fact of Marshal Babadjanyan's and Marshal Baghramyan's busts were unveiled in this museum less than a year apart, showing the intertwined histories of the two peoples.



Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan and Anna Hakobyan, with Archbishop Yezras Nersisyan

“The Great Patriotic War was a tough test for the nations of the Soviet Union, including the Armenian people. Every second Armenian soldier, including my grandfather, whose name and last name I bear, did not return from the front. Our duty is to preserve and transmit the story of this indescribable heroism to the

younger generations, as well as to do everything possible to ensure our countries' prosperity. Today's event is also a tribute to the dear veterans of the Great Patriotic War, as well as the symbol of the Armenian-Russian friendship, mutual assistance and understanding,” Nikol Pashinyan stated.

Sculptor Ashot Tadevosyan created the bust.

While in Moscow, Pashinyan and Hakobyan visited the Prelacy of Holy Transformation Church of Russia and New Nakhichevan Diocese of the Armenian Apostolic Church in Moscow within the framework of a working visit to Russia. They were welcomed by Archbishop Yezras Nersisyan, Primate of Russia and New Nakhichevan Diocese of the Armenian Apostolic Church, as well as by numerous representatives of the Armenian community.

Pashinyan called at the Mother Cathedral of the Holy Transformation Church and lit candles. The Prime Minister also toured the Tapan Museum to get acquainted with the Armenian culture and the Armenian Apostolic Church-related exhibits.

Nikol Pashinyan next visited St. Grigor Narekatsi Seminary, which will be operational on the territory of the church complex as early as this September. Up to 200 pupils can study at the Seminary. Prime Minister Pashinyan got acquainted with the conditions and opportunities created in the college. The institution boasts state-of-the-art modern equipment and highly qualified lecturers.

EU Said to Help New Armenian Government

EU, from page 1

European Commission president, sent a congratulatory letter to Nikol Pashinyan, the main organizer of massive anti-Sarkisian protests, two days after he was elected prime minister on May 8.

“We look forward to cooperating with you in your new position to further strengthen the relations between the European Union and Armenia, particularly through the implementation of the EU-Armenia Comprehensive and Enhanced Partnership Agreement [CEPA],” Tusk and Juncker wrote.

The CEPA was signed by the former Armenian government last November. It calls for political and economic reforms in Armenia. It also commits Yerevan to gradually “approximating” Armenian economic laws and regulations to those of the EU.

Pashinyan called for a quick ratification of the CEPA by all EU member states when the Armenian parliament elected him prime minister.

McAllister said the European Parliament will vote on the 350-page agreement on July

4. The CEPA's ratification and implementation will help Armenia attract more EU



Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan (C) poses for a photograph with visiting members of the European Parliament, Yerevan, June 18.

Community News

Armenian Assembly Concludes Board Elections

WASHINGTON – At its trustees meeting in Philadelphia in April 2018 as part of the weekend honoring Peter and Irene Vosbikian, the Armenian Assembly of America reviewed its budget and activities as well as approved the board slate presented, which consisted of the following members: Aram A. Gavor, Bianka Kadian-Dodov, Robert A. Kaloosdian, Alex Karapetian, Carolyn G. Mugar, Lu Ann Ohanian, Toros Sahakian, Joyce Stein, Oscar S. Tatosian and Annie Totah. They will serve a four-year term, effective January 1, 2018 and ending December 31, 2021. Those members not up for re-election served as the Nominating Committee and included Co-Chairmen Anthony Barsamian and Van Krikorian, Assistant Secretary Lisa Kalustian, and Talin Yacoubian.

During the Assembly's Board meeting, which was also held in conjunction with the weekend's sold out Philadelphia Celebration, the board unanimously confirmed the following officers: Anthony Barsamian (MA), Co-Chairman; Van Krikorian (NY), Co-Chairman; Carolyn Mugar (MA), President; Robert A. Kaloosdian (MA), Counselor; Bianka Kadian-



Aram Gavor

Dodov (NY), Treasurer; Oscar Tatosian (IL), Secretary; and Lisa Kalustian (CA), Assistant Secretary; with former Board Member Mark Momjian (PA) to continue to serve as Solicitor.

"We thank the Armenian Assembly of America's Board of Trustees for all of their hard work and dedication for the past two years, and look forward to their vision for the future," Assembly Co-Chairs Barsamian and Krikorian stated. "We would especially like to express our gratitude to outgoing members Hirair Hovnanian, a pillar of the Assembly since its founding days, as well as Edele Hovnanian who served in numerous capacities throughout the years, including as Treasurer and Vice President. We also greatly appreciate the perspective that Raffi Kassarian brought to the Board as well from his vantage point in Armenia," they concluded.



Oscar Tatosian



Children at the FAR Children's Center

FAR Hosts Inspiring Fundraiser for Yerevan's Children's Center

WEEHAWKEN, N.J. – It was a few years back when an abandoned 3-year old child was seen cowering against a wall. His mentally ill mother had cast him to

the streets of Yerevan, never to retrieve him. Miraculously, he was found and brought to the Fund for Armenian Relief (FAR) Children's Center where a devoted and

trained staff has been rehabilitating physically and mentally abused, starved, sexually molested, trafficked, and abandoned children from ages two to eighteen since 2000.

On Thursday afternoon, June 7, at the Chart House in Weehawken, more than 160 dedicated supporters were witness to an inspiring and emotional fundraiser for the Friends of the Fund for Armenian Relief (FFCC) Children's Center in Yerevan, Armenia. Among the guests of honor present were the long-time president, and now vice chairman of the FFCC and former Primate Archbishop Khajag Barsamian, the new Diocesan Primate and President of the FFCC the Very Rev. Daniel Findikyan, and the pastor of Holy Cross Armenian Church, Union City, NJ, the Very Rev. Vazken Karayan.

A visibly emotional Findikyan, the newly elected Primate of the Diocese of the Armenian Church (eastern), related that he was "honored to be present for our abused children" at the Yerevan Center which is at the top of his list when he visits Armenia in the fall.

"I was not planning to attend this event, due to my now over-packed schedule since my election as Primate a month ago, but when I heard the story of this child who had been living with anxiety, fear and terror, and how he slowly learned to trust people, I made sure I would be present," he declared to thunderous applause.

"Jesus was a man of healing, and on one occasion he spoke in violent terms of putting a boulder around the neck of any abuser of children and throwing him into the ocean," he said, his voice becoming rent with emotion. He paid tribute to the work of Archbishop Khajag and the FFCC, and said to all present, "I applaud and pray for you. I have a committed and dedicated example to follow."

The event had begun with the invocation by Barsamian, and welcoming remarks by FFCC Co-Chair Sylva Torosian who paid tribute to the 28 year "dedicated, unwavering leadership, support and guidance of Srpaizan as the founder and spiritual leader of the FFCC through the years." She announced that Barsamian will continue as vice chairman, and wished the "best for the new FAR President Fr. Daniel."

She revealed that this year alone, FAR and the FFCC have served more than
see FAR, page 7

Knights, Daughters To Hold Grand Convocation in Detroit This Summer

By Gloria Korkoian

DEARBORN, Mich. – The Knights and Daughters of Vartan will hold their annual convocation here from July 11 to 15. This will be the 100th convocation for the Knights of Vartan, which was established in 1916, and 78th convocation for the Daughters of Vartan, which was established in 1933.

The convocation meetings will be chaired by Grand Commander Dr. Gary Zamanigian of Bloomfield Hills, and Grand Matron Diana Tookmanian of Pasadena, Calif. Delegates and guests will come from across the US to deliberate and participate in workshops.

When asked to comment on the current work of the Knights of Vartan and the Knights of Vartan Communications Office in Yerevan, Zamanigian stated, "The Knights of Vartan continues to provide assistance to many worthy projects, namely: The Armenian Schools Support Project (ATDF/ASSP) World Bank 19:1 Program that helps numerous schools, students and teachers in Armenia; the Knights of Vartan Funds for Armenian Studies (FAS) which benefits Armenian Scholars; the University of Michigan Dearborn Knights of Vartan Armenian Research Center; the Knights of Vartan Scholarship Program for students in the United States and in Armenia including the American University of Armenia (AUA). We initiated and co-sponsor the Annual New York Times Square Armenian Genocide Commemoration and through Fuller House, we fund the building of homes in Armenia. In addition to our national programs, individual Lodges and Chapters have their projects which aid the people of Armenia and students in America. This year, the Knights of Vartan Communications Office in Yerevan was staffed with a well-trained, multilingual, professional communications liaison. Her name is Gohar Palyan and she has advanced computer and social networking skills, writing and graphic design skills and non-profit development experience. She will be attending and she will be giving a presentation at our Convocation in Dearborn, Michigan July 11-15, 2018."

The keynote speaker on Thursday, July 12 will be Taner Akcam, the well-known Turkish-German historian and sociologist. He was the Knights of Vartan Man of the Year in 2012. His new book, *Killing Orders: Talat Pasha's Telegrams and The Armenian Genocide*, was published in March. He will speak at 10:30 a.m. in the Desoto Room of the Edward Hotel.

This year, the Avak Tivan and Avak Khorhourt have selected two worthy individuals as Persons of the Year and Woman of the Year. They will be honored at the Grand Banquet on Saturday, July 14.

Garo Paylan is a Turkish politician of Armenian descent. He is a Member of the Grand National Assembly of Turkey for the Peoples' Democratic Party (HDP) representing Istanbul. He became one of the first Armenian members of Turkey's parliament in decades. After he was elected, Garo Paylan vowed to fight against Armenian Genocide denial and that the Armenian Genocide be acknowledged in Turkey. In April 2016, during a speech in parliament he made concerning the 101st anniversary of the Armenian Genocide, Paylan counted the names of ethnic Armenian politicians who were deported then killed during the Armenian Genocide.

Dr. Mary A. Papazian, a seasoned leader with nearly 30 years of experience as a university professor, academic and administrative leader, joined San Jose State University as its 30th president on July 1, 2016. Before coming to
see CONVOCATION, page 9



COMMUNITY NEWS

FAR Hosts Inspiring Fundraiser for Yerevan's Children's Center

FAR, from page 6

1,900 beneficiaries, of which 1091 were children, as well as 54 families who became nurturing foster families for previously uncared-for children. She praised the tireless work of Children's Center Director Dr. Mira Antounyan and the professional staff who reunited 157 children with their families.

Keynote speaker FAR Board member Annette Choolfaian said with emphasis, "We stand with the children now and in the future to build strong and good lives. After all, the children are our future." She related how the noble project began in 1999 when a staff member Garo Kapikian related that street children and orphans picked up by police were being kept in cold rooms with bathrooms and eating areas mixed together with intolerable smells.

And so the FAR Children's Center was opened on November 1, 2000. Concepts had to be explored and funds raised. The Friends of FAR's Children's Center under the leadership of Archbishop Khajag and honorary chair Sirvart Hovnanian was formed.

Since then the Center has led in advocating the abolishment of orphanages, the pioneering of the Foster Family concept, and the training by a professional staff of numerous child caregivers in Armenia, including case managers, social workers to work with children at risk. The Children's Center has led in bringing together all 42 non-governmental organizations working for child protection.

In its 18-year history, the center, its vibrant

Director Dr. Mira Antounyan and the staff have aided more than 11,000 children, with "all love, care, understanding and professionalism. UNICEF has also recognized that the Center's services "are the best in quality and most cost-effective in Armenia." She thanked all who have shown their commitment and compassion to the Children's Center and the Friends of FAR

who among other things have provided Easter and Christmas gifts for the children.

An ongoing film showing the noble work done with the children by the Director and staff of the Children's Center by FAR Communications Director Andre Berg was shown throughout the event.

The event concluded with a joyous musical

performance by the Akh'tamar Dance Ensemble which had visited Armenia on the FAR Young Professionals Trip, and had "touched the hearts and minds of everyone they met," and a raffle of more than 40 donated treasures for sale.

Following the Benediction by Findikyan, the attendees renewed their many friendships during this annual gathering.

Archbishop Barsamian voiced his feelings, saying, "I especially appreciate the dedicated commitment done by the FFCC. They have always worked very hard to support this wonderful project. Today it is exceptionally organized. They are one of the greatest supports for the Center."

The FAR Friends of the Children's Center include Honorary Chair Sirvart Hovnanian, Co-Chairs Nadya Garipian and Sylva Torosian, and members Nivart Arslan, Laura Baydar, Sonya Bekarian, Yegsa Bestepe, Annette Choolfaian, Mary Cruikshank, Margrit Hamparsumian, Magda Najarian, Sossie Najarian, Ani Ozgun, Anita Temiz and Alice Yigitkurt.



Members of the Friends of the Children's Center of FAR

Danny Tarkanian Wins Nevada Congressional GOP Primary

LAS VEGAS (*The Hill*) – Danny Tarkanian won his Republican congressional primary on Tuesday, June 12, in the race to replace outgoing Rep. Jacky Rosen (D-Nev.) in November.

Tarkanian, who is fresh off a narrow defeat in the district south of Las Vegas in 2016, overcame eight Republican challengers to win the primary Tuesday. Rosen, a freshman lawmaker, is vacating her seat to run for Senate.

The Nevada businessman was originally running as a GOP primary challenger to incumbent Sen. Dean Heller (R-Nev.) but switched to run for the House seat after being urged by President Trump.

Tarkanian, the son of legendary University of Nevada, Las Vegas basketball coach Jerry Tarkanian, received an endorsement from Trump after announcing that he would run for the 3rd District's open seat.

Danny Tarkanian ran against Rosen last cycle, but lost by only 1 point, while the president won the district by a similar margin in 2016.

This is Tarkanian's third congressional bid since 2012. He's also run for the state Senate, Nevada secretary of state, U.S. Senate and Nevada System of Higher Education Regent.

The 3rd District is slightly more GOP-leaning than its neighboring district currently held by Rep. Ruben Kihuen (D-Nev.), who won't seek another term after sexual misconduct allegations. The Rosen seat covers the area south of Las Vegas and includes Henderson.

Meanwhile, in the Democratic primary on Tuesday, philanthropist Susie Lee defeated six Democratic challengers. She was the overwhelming favorite for the nomination and was backed early by national Democrats.

Lee is an ally of former Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid (D-Nev.), who still remains powerful in the state's political circles. Lee ran last year in Nevada's 4th District, but came in third in the Democratic primary.



Danny Tarkanian



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



OBITUARY

Cano Aret Ozgener, Founder of C.A.O. Cigars

By Gregory Mottola

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (*Cigar Aficionado*) – Cano Aret Ozgener, the founder of C.A.O. International Inc. and its C.A.O. cigar brands, died on June 9 at his home here of pancreatic cancer.

Ozgener, who was 81, had also fought a long battle with non-Hodgkins lymphoma.

Ozgener owned and operated C.A.O. with his son Tim (Murat) and daughter Ayleen from their hometown of Nashville before selling the brand to Henry Wintermans (a division of ST Tobacco) in 2007. After the sale, CAO became part of General Cigar Co. and its parent STI, and was relocated to General's US headquarters in Richmond, Va.

"He was a great father, businessman and philosopher," said Tim during a phone interview with *Cigar Aficionado*. "And he was a fighter. My father was first diagnosed with non-Hodgkins lymphoma in 2002. Thanks to modern medicine, I got nearly 20 more years with him. That's how I look at it – like a gift. He lived much longer than expected and was my best friend."

Born on January 19, 1937, Ozgener was raised in Istanbul, Turkey, by Armenian parents. He studied at a Jesuit French grammar school



before being accepted into the American-run Roberts College in Istanbul, from which he received a bachelor's degree in mechanical engineering in 1960.

As a student in Turkey, Ozgener enjoyed smoking pipes, especially those made from meerschaum, a white, clay-like magnesium sili-

cate. But it wasn't until he came to the US to study mechanical engineering in 1961 as a Columbia University graduate student that he started smoking cigars, which he and his friends would smoke in movie theaters in New York City.

"Of course, they were Cuban cigars, pre-embargo Cubans," recalled Ozgener in a *Cigar Aficionado* interview. "At that point we took the cigars and went to the theater and smoked our cigars while watching the movies. Nobody objected. Things have changed so much since that time."

Graduating from Columbia in 1964 with an engineering degree, Ozgener got a job with DuPont to work in the company's Kinston, North Carolina, plant. It was during this time, at the age of 27, that he came across some flawed Turkish meerschaum pipes. He applied his engineering abilities to improving them.

"I was not happy with the quality of Turkish meerschaum. The tobacconists were not happy with them. So I used to take the meerschaums and change the stems, make modifications and work with the carvers to improve them," Ozgener said. He got into the pipe business full-time in 1977, and in 1993, he entered the cigar market, spending two years creating the first C.A.O. brand with tobacco grower and cigar-

maker Nestor Plasencia and Carlos Toraño. The first C.A.O. cigar, which was made in Honduras, was introduced in 1995.

Ozgener and C.A.O. would add many more cigars, and by 2004, the company made seven brands: Gold, Brazilia, Criollo, Double Maduro (or MX2) and three versions of L'Anniversaire: Maduro, Cameroon and eXtreme. The company also marketed flavored cigars and several specialty lines, including the reincarnated Black and a 65th Anniversary Cigar made to honor Cano Ozgener's 65th birthday. Pipes became a very small percentage of C.A.O., which focused mainly on premium cigars.

As the company was growing, Ozgener had given more responsibilities to his son and daughter, and by the time he was 67 years old, he had survived a bout with non-Hodgkins Lymphoma, which went into remission.

By 2007, C.A.O. was acquired by Henri Wintermans, a division of ST Tobacco Group. At that point, Ozgener had retired. His son remained with the company and signed on as company president before leaving in 2010.

In 2012, Cano and Tim founded OZ Arts Nashville, a nonprofit, performing and visual arts center.

"After we sold C.A.O., he said we should start a nonprofit, contemporary arts center," Tim said. "So we converted our cigar headquarters into a center for performing and visual arts. My Dad believed that art has the power to inspire people and make them want to live."

C.A.O. cigars continue to be sold and manufactured by General Cigar, which is owned by Scandinavian Tobacco Group.

"Cano Ozgener was a creative force and a visionary who left an indelible mark on the premium cigar category," said Regis Broersma, president of Scandinavian Tobacco Group. "We will continue to be inspired by his motto: 'If you can dream it, you can do it.' Our deepest sympathies are with his family and all of those whose lives he touched."

Ozgener is survived by his wife of 54 years, Esen; children Tim Ozgener and Aylin Ozgener; sister Esperanz Minassian; and four grandchildren, Aloe Franke, Sean Franke, Cano Evan Ozgener, and Aidan Ozgener.

A ceremony will be held at OZ Arts Nashville on Sunday, June 24, at 3:14 p.m. OZ Arts is located at 6172 Cockrill Bend Circle.

Mihran 'Mike' Kutnerian

ADL, Tekeyan Member

FRESNO, Calif. – Mihran "Mike" Kutnerian was born in Alexandria, Egypt, to Sarkis and Angel Kutnerian on March 6, 1944. At 19 years old, he moved with his family to Armenia. After also living and working in Russia, he and his family moved to Fresno on August 4, 1977.

In 1982, along with his brother, Vrezh, they began Fresno Catering Service, which continues to be in business after 36 years. Through the years, Mihran began to invest in real estate with Vrezh and their other brother, Hovannes.



He gained all of his earthly success through sheer hard work and determination. He never let failure or fear hold him back. He was truly a self-made man.

As he gained success, he provided opportunities for many who wanted to start their own businesses, many who just arrived in this country without money and without knowing English. He gave them a chance to achieve the American Dream.

Mihran was heavily involved in Armenian political and cultural organizations. He loved his culture and devoted much of his life to the advancement and preservation of all things Armenian. He was a member of the Western District ADL Party and the chairman of Tekeyan Cultural Association, Fresno Chapter. He remained active in these organizations until his passing.

After courageously battling cancer for seven years, of which the last two years were increasingly difficult, Mihran passed away peacefully at home, surrounded by his loved ones. He is survived by his wife Nelly; brothers, Hovannes and wife Nazeli, and Vrezh; children, Sarkis, Flora, and Arman; his eight grandchildren; and his many friends.

His funeral service was held at St. Paul Armenian Church on June 16.

Annie Kalemjian Manoukian

Dedicated Member of Tekeyan Cultural Association

MONTREAL – Annie Kalemjian Manoukian died on June 16 after a long battle with cancer.

She was a staunch and dedicated member of the Tekeyan Cultural Association (TCA) in Montreal.

She leaves her husband, Arto Berdge Manoukian, and their daughter, Lori Manoukian, son Aren Manoukian and his wife, Madeleine Genest; sister Sonia Kalemjian Cimetier and her children Marie-Laure, Patrick and Charles; brother Armand Kalemjian and wife Suzanne Perreault and their children, Alexandre and Caroline.

Funeral services were held on Wednesday, June 20 at St. Gregory the Illuminator Armenian Cathedral, Outremont. Burial followed at the St. Laurent Cemetery.

In lieu of flowers, memorial donations may be made to the Saro Manoukian Fund, which had been created in the memory of her late son.



Telephone (617) 924-7400

Aram Bedrosian Funeral Home, Inc.

Continuous Service By The Bedrosian Family Since 1945

558 MOUNT AUBURN STREET
WATERTOWN, MA 02472

MARION BEDROSIAN
PAUL BEDROSIAN
LARRY BEDROSIAN

Giragosian

F U N E R A L H O M E

James "Jack" Giragosian, CPC
Mark J. Giragosian
Funeral Counselors

576 Mt. Auburn Street, Watertown, MA 02472, TEL: 617-924-0606
www.giragosianfuneralhome.com

DENNIS M. DEVENNEY & SONS

Cemetery Monuments

Specializing in
Armenian Designs and Lettering

701 Moody St. Waltham, MA 02543
(781) 891-9876 www.NEMonuments.com



COMMUNITY NEWS

OBITUARY

Rev. Carnig A. Hallajian, Longtime Pastor

UNION CITY, N.J. — Rev. Carnig A. Hallajian, age 90, died on June 13.

Born in Aleppo, Syria, with the baptismal name Antranig, he received his elementary education at Aleppo's Giligian School. In 1944 he entered the seminary of the St. James Armenian Patriarchate of Jerusalem. Due to the outbreak of the Arab-Israeli war, he returned to Aleppo (1948) where he taught for six years in various Armenian schools. By 1954 he enrolled in a special program for the preparation of priests at the Holy See of Cilicia in Antelias, Lebanon. In 1956 he arrived in the United States at the invitation of Archbishop Mampre Calfayan, Primate of the Eastern Diocese of the Armenian Church of America to continue his education at the General Theological Seminary in New York City.

Beginning in 1958, he began serving the St. Leon Armenian Church of Paterson, NJ as "deacon in charge." In July 1960, Deacon Antranig married Rose Norian and subsequently received his ordination into the holy priesthood. He continued as pastor through the relocation of the parish to Fair Lawn, NJ in 1965 when the new church edifice was constructed on Saddle River Road. From 1972-1977, he served as pastor of the Church of the Holy Martyrs in Bayside, NY. During his pastorate, the parish's kindergarten was transformed into a Day School. In 1977, he accept-



ed assignment as pastor of Holy Cross Armenian Church, Union City, NJ.

In 1984 he lost his wife to cancer. After a two-year leave of absence, he returned to his pastoral duties at the Holy Cross Church, an office that he held until 1994 when he retired. In retirement, he served as a visiting priest to various parishes.

He served as editor of *Haiastanyaitz Yegeghetsi*, the Armenian language journal of the Eastern Diocese. He was a member of the Diocesan Council and on the Board of Directors of St. Nersess Seminary, Armonk, NY.

Seeing the acute need for preparing young men for priesthood following the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, Hallajian spearheaded the recruitment of benefactors to support the renewal of the Vaskenian Theological Seminary at Lake Sevan in Armenia which today enjoys a thriving body of future priests for the young republic. The "Friends of Holy Echmiadzin" is the result of his efforts which focuses on the needs of the Armenian Apostolic Church.

He is survived by his wife of later years, having married Arpena Tavitian in 1999, and his niece and nephews.

Visitation was at St. Leon Armenian Church, on Tuesday, June 19. The funeral was on Wednesday, June 20, with interment at George Washington Memorial Park, Paramus.

Knights, Daughters to Hold Grand Convocation In Detroit This Summer

CONVOCATION, from page 6

SJSU, Dr. Papazian was president of Southern Connecticut State University in New Haven, Connecticut. Previously, Papazian was the provost and senior vice president for Academic Affairs at Lehman College of the City University of New York. She also served as the Dean of the College of Humanities and Social Sciences at Montclair State University in New Jersey, and as Associate Dean of the College of Arts and Science at Oakland University in Rochester, Mich., where she began her academic career as an assistant, associate and tenured professor of English.

The convocation will be hosted by Nareg-Shavarshan Lodge #6 and Zabelle Chapter #12. Nareg-Shavarshan Lodge has been serving the Detroit Metro Armenian community for 100 years. The host committee has planned the social events to incorporate historical, cultural and unique venues. The Motown Tour on Wednesday, July 11 will take guests to the many sites including the Motown Museum and Gomidas Statue in Detroit and the Alex & Marie Manoogian Museum in Southfield.

The Grand Commander and Grand Matron Meet & Greet Reception will take place on Thursday, July 12 at 5:30 p.m. In the evening, Detroit Under the Stars will be held in the Rotunda of the Edward Hotel, which offers a 360-degree view of Detroit, Canada the surrounding areas. It will feature a Strolling Dinner and music by the Detroit All Stars, a combo for a Motown experience. The Daughters of Vartan Luncheon will be held on Friday, July 13. Grand Matron Diana Tookmanian and Grand Officers will be the guests of honor.

Friday evening's event, Knight of Kef at the Henry Ford Museum, features the Armenian All Star Band featuring Richard Hagopian, Hachig Kezerian, Mal Barsamian and Vaughn Masropian. Guests will dine and dance amid the museums' rich collection of artifacts including a 1939 DC-3 airplane and vintage cars for a wonderful kef-filled evening. The Convocation will end with the Grand Banquet on Saturday July 14th. The banquet honors the Grand Commander and Grand Matron and their officers. Members of the Detroit Hamazkayin Arax Dancers will perform traditional Armenian dances.

Visit www.grandconvo.com for detailed information.

Mid-Week Services At Armenian Memorial Church

WATERTOWN — The Armenian Memorial Church in Watertown will be holding mid-week contemporary evening worship services in July starting with Tuesday, July 10 and continuing with services on the following Tuesdays: July 17, July 24 and July 31. The programs will start at 6:30 p.m. with pizza and fellowship, and continue with contemporary songs at 7:15 p.m., a sermon at 7:30 p.m. followed by contemporary songs at 7:45 p.m. The evenings will adjourn at 8 p.m.

All are welcome to these summer services. The Armenian Memorial Church is at 32 Bigelow Ave.

Rev. Dr. Avedis Boynerian will lead the services and present the inspiring messages. On July 10, his sermon will be "A blind beggar receives sight" Luke 18:35-43; on July 17, "A woman persists in her faith," Matthew 15:21-28; on July 24, "A chief tax collector gets saved," (Luke 19:1-10); and on July 31, "A woman anoints Jesus," (Mark 14:1-9).



Sponsor A Teacher

In Armenia and Karabagh

18th Anniversary

Since its inception in 2001, TCA's Sponsor a Teacher program has raised over \$642,900 and reached out to 6,427 teachers and school workers in Armenia & Karabagh.



☐ Yes, I want to sponsor teachers in Armenia and Karabagh to continue helping them to educate the children, our future leaders. I would like to have the teacher's name and address.

☐ \$200 ☐ \$400 ☐ \$600 ☐ Other \$ _____

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip code _____

Tel: _____

Make check payable to: Tekeyan Cultural Association - Memo: Sponsor a Teacher 2014
Mail your check with this form to:

TCA Sponsor a Teacher
5326 Valverde, Houston, TX 77056
Your donation is Tax Deductible.



COMMUNITY NEWS

AMAA Celebrates Centennial in Paris

By Rev. Gilbert Léonian

PARIS – The weekend of June 9 and 10 was memorable for the Armenian Evangelical Community of France. After celebrations in Sydney, Australia and Beirut, Lebanon, the New Jersey-based Armenian Missionary Association of America (AMAA) celebrated its centenary in Issy-les-Moulineaux (Paris). Four important activities were held during these 48 hours.

On Saturday, June 9, AMAA President Dr. Nazareth Darakjian and Executive Director/CEO Zaven Khanjian met with pastors and representatives of the ten churches of the Union of the Armenian Evangelical Churches of France, as well as the six organizations of the French Union La Fontanelle Camp, La Source Camp, Hope for Armenia, Missions Committee, Panpere Quarterly and the Youth Organization.

Each pastor and/or representative, by means of a power point or video, presented the life and ministry of their churches and organizations. During these presentations, the representatives of the Armenian Missionary Association of America (AMAA) were able to witness the rich, vital and diverse life of the French Union.

Meeting with the Armenian Evangelical Fellowship of Europe

After 10 years of inactivity, the Armenian Evangelical Fellowship of Europe met on June 9 at the Armenian Evangelical Church of Issy-les-Moulineaux with the representatives of the AMAA Darakjian and Khanjian and delegates from France, Belgium, Holland, Germany, Greece and Bulgaria. Only the representatives from Turkey was absent. The meeting was chaired by Rev. Gilbert Léonian, President of the Fellowship. After a short Scripture reading and a message, Rev. Léonian read the By-



Dr. Nazareth Darakjian, AMAA president, addressing the guests at the Centennial Banquet in Paris; standing on his left Dr. Ari Topouzkhian.

Laws of the Fellowship and emphasized the need to revive the Fellowship because of the great need to strengthen the ministry of the churches in Europe and to bring them into the Fellowship. Each representative presented the vision, activity and the needs of their countries and expressed a desire to revitalize the brotherly ties and cooperation of the Fellowship.

At the end of the meeting new members of the Board of the Fellowship were elected: Rev. Gilbert Léonian (France), President; Rev. Sarkis Pachian (Belgium) and Rev. Bedros Altunian (Bulgaria), Vice Presidents; Rev. Vicken Cholakian (Greece), Secretary; and a representative of the AMAA as Treasurer. The Fellowship commissioned the Board members to study the needs of each country and make practical proposals to strengthen the ties and to intensify the cooperation so that the message of the Gospel of Jesus Christ reached the Armenians in Europe. The Fellowship also



Group picture following the Centennial Worship Service

decided to meet every other year starting in 2019.

Some 300 people including guests from the United States and pastors and Board members of the Churches of the French Union gathered in the Palace of Arts and Congress Hall of Issy-les-Moulineaux to celebrate these two important anniversaries.

Among the honorary guests were André Santini, Mayor of Issy-les-Moulineaux, Bishop Vahan Hovhannisian, Prelate of the Armenian Apostolic Church of France, Hovhannes Gevorgyan, Representative of the Republic of Artsakh in France, the head officer of the Armenia Embassy, and Etienne Lhermenault, Chairman of the National Council of Evangelicals of France.

In his opening remarks, Rev. Joël Mikaélian reminded the guests that the purpose of this gathering was to think about the meaning of life under the light of the Bible. Darakjian and Khanjian then spoke about the history, the objectives and programs of the AMAA over 100 years in 24 countries of the Diaspora. The purpose of the AMAA, which was founded on June 7, 1918, was to meet the physical and spiritual needs of the survivors of the Genocide in 1915. Since the 1988 earthquake in Armenia, almost half of the AMAA budget has been allocated to the needs of Armenia and Artsakh.

The Mission of the AMAA was presented in a short documentary film titled "A Legacy of Faith, Love and Service" which included tes-



L to R: André Santini, Mayor of Issy-les-Moulineaux and Rev. Joël Mikaélian

timonies and location footage of the scope of the AMAA's work worldwide. The 90-year history and testimony of the Armenian Evangelical Church of Issy-les-Moulineaux was also shown during a lively audio-visual presentation.

The guests enjoyed the songs by soloists



Zaven Khanjian, AMAA Executive Director/CEO, addressing the Centennial Banquet in Paris

Tamar Albarian and Gamil Guzunjian who sang Armenian, French and English songs.

At the end of the banquet, the French Union presented a check in the amount of 10,000 euros to help rebuild the Armenian Evangelical Emmanuel Church of Aleppo, Syria.

All the guests were impressed and amazed at the diversity of the evening's program that was remarkable with both its affection and generosity.

A Thanksgiving Worship Service

On Sunday June 10, a thanksgiving Worship Service was held at the Armenian Evangelical Church of Issy-les-Moulineaux to celebrate the goodness and fidelity of God during the AMAA's 100 years and the 90 years of the Church of Issy-les-Moulineaux.

Rev. Joël Mikaélian, pastor of the church, presided over the Worship Service. The Armenian message was delivered by Rev. Gilbert Léonian and the French message by Rev. Ago Tchoghndjian, Moderator of the French Union. The Regional Choir, the Youth Praise and Worship Team and the Sunday School students led the musical portion of the Service and presented some songs with joy and enthusiasm.

The spouses of the former ministers of the church as well as the spouses of the President and Executive Director of the AMAA were presented with bouquets of flowers, as a token of gratitude for their dedication and service.

At the end of the Worship Service, the pastors of the French Union, Darakjian and Khanjian addressed the audience and shared their gratitude, exhortations and prayers.

The Worship Service concluded with the singing of the "Doxology" in Armenian.

After the traditional group photo, the guests were welcomed in the church gardens for a reception.



Armenian Evangelical Fellowship of Europe



COMMUNITY NEWS



Chicago Street Renamed For Armenian-American World War II Hero

CHICAGO (Lincoln Square Patch) — A street in front of the Bezazian Library in Chicago has been named after American Armenian World War II Hero Lt. Harold A. Bezazian.

A plaque sits in Bezazian Library that reads, “This branch library is a fitting and living memorial to the life of an outstanding young American, born and reared in Uptown Chicago, who loved books and learning, and who had dedicated his life to a writer’s career until he volunteered for military service and gave his life for his country.”

Bezazian was awarded a Purple Heart and Bronze Star for his service in WWII. His father funded the Bezazian Library in memory of his son, who loved reading and learning.

Bezazian family members joined Ald. James Cappleman for the unveiling on June 12 outside the library.

Cappleman spoke about Harold’s “selflessness” as a soldier, and his determination as the son of an Armenian immigrant who came to the U.S. with little money.

Harold graduated from Columbia University with a degree in journalism. He worked as a reporter for the Chicago Times, and joined the army in 1941. He was discharged as overage, but enlisted again after the attack on Pearl Harbor, according to the Columbia University Roll of Honor.

Bezazian said it was better that he re-enlist and go to war than another man who would leave behind a wife and children, said library advocacy group Friends of Bezazian.

Harold was killed in the Philippines by enemy rifle fire while leading his platoon on a rescue mission for soldiers who had become separated from the rest of his unit, his family said. He was 33 years old.

St. Stephen’s Armenian School Marks 15th Anniversary of Annual Armenia Trip

WATERTOWN — This May, fifth grade students from St. Stephen’s Armenian Elementary School (SSAES) traveled to Armenia for two weeks, in what most will remember as the capstone of their Armenian school experience. This year’s trip marks the 15th consecutive year that SSAES has brought graduating students to Armenia to internalize their understanding of Armenian history by experiencing their ancestral homeland, to connect with contemporary Armenian students, and to contribute to the development of modern Armenia. “The fifth grade trip to Armenia has become a significant part of the SSAES experience for our families,” said Houry Boyamian, principal of SSAES. “Students look forward to it from the time they start kindergarten.”

Students look forward to experiencing the cultural and religious sites that many have only seen in pictures: the Babig and Dadig monument in Artsakh, the cathedral of Echmiadzin, the Dadev monastery, the battle site of Sardarabad, the Genocide Memorial at Dzidzernagapert.

“I think that waking up the first morning in Yerevan and seeing Mt. Ararat looming over them was one of the most memorable moments for each of my girls,” shared Heather Krafian, a former SSAES parent and co-founder of the annual SSAES Armenia trip.

“The program cements an emotional bond between the students and their homeland starting on Day 1.” Ardemis Megerdichian, Armenian language and culture teacher for SSAES elementary school, and the faculty leader for the SSAES Armenia trip each of the

mer SSAES parent and Education Committee member who now resides in Armenia, Krafian shepherded the SSAES Armenia trip from an idea in 2002, fraught with parental worries and complicated by knots of international politics and logistics, to an actual program in 2004. “The first year we tried, not enough parents committed. Some were concerned about the security of their children. Others felt the cost was prohibitive.” After Ardahajian relocated, Krista Aftandilian, another former SSAES parent and co-chair of the SSAES Education Committee, began to work alongside Krafian to help parents of each fifth grade class to prepare and fundraise for the trip.

In 2004, Armenia was barely a decade past the energy crisis and open war with Azerbaijan. From its inception, the SSAES Armenia trip has taken students to Artsakh, allowing participants to witness the transformation of both the town and the schools of Shushi. Megerdichian recalled of her first time taking SSAES students to Shushi: “The city was dark and brooding, but at the same time proud and free. The tank which stood at the entrance to the city served as a reminder of those brave heroes who liberated this historic Armenian land.”

Adds Krafian, “The first years there was only one hotel in Shushi, and it was two families to one room. The local school looked nothing like the modern facility our students visit today.” During the last 15 years the impact of SSAES partnership with Armenia Tree Project has also become visible, along the road from Yerevan to Stepankert, for example. In recent years,



SSAES 5th grade students with faculty leader Ardemis Megerdichian (far left)

Songs of the Other

Daniela Tošić, mezzo-soprano Sylvie Zakarian, marimba
with guest Nikola Radan, flute
Music by Gomidas, Hovhanness, Grover, Paliev & Radan



“At the end of the day,
it isn’t where I came from.
Maybe home is somewhere I’m going and never have been before.”
— Warsan Shire

Art credit: Sumbat Der Kiureghian

Friday, June 22, 8 p.m.

Longy School of Music of Bard College, Pickman Hall
27 Garden St, Cambridge

Suggested donation \$20 to benefit Cambridge Defense Fund for Immigrants

Longy
School of Music

CAMBRIDGE
Community Foundation

last 15 years, emphasizes the power of the shared experience on the students, as well: “Each student or parent has the opportunity to go to Armenia or Artsakh separately, but being on Armenian soil with one’s classmates has a totally different flavor.”

However, the program is not simply a tour of Armenian heritage sites. While in Yerevan, SSAES students participate in music, robotics, and other activities with local students at the Tumo Center for Creative Technologies, an afternoon technology and recreation center. The fifth-grade students also partner with the Avedisian School on a project, including a Skype meeting prior to arrival. This year students from both schools worked with the Armenia Tree Project (ATP), a longtime partner of SSAES, on a joint environmental reforestation project which incorporated Aparan, the resting place of General Dro, in commemoration of the 100th Anniversary of the First Republic. At the elementary school in Shushi, Artsakh, the students performed songs, poems, and dances for each other as a symbol of diversity and union in Armenian culture.

The idea of Armenia was not always so tangible for SSAES students. In 2003 Megerdichian, was discussing modern Armenia with eight of her students. “We should go to Armenia!” one of the students declared. Megerdichian recalls answering, half in jest, “We should! We could stay at my house.” Fortunately, a pair of parents were up to the challenge of making a class trip to Armenia a reality. “It took a couple years to get off the ground,” Heather Krafian recalls. Along with co-founder Shari Ardahajian, a for-

SSAES has begun a formal educational partnership with the Avedisian school in Yerevan that extends beyond the annual fifth grade visit.

The impact on SSAES students and parents has been consistently powerful.

“One thing I hear from parents is how impressed they are with our students’ knowledge of Armenian history, which they talk about together when we are visiting sites, traveling on the bus, and sharing meals together,” Megerdichian shared. Another memory of hers, however, captures the flavor of the experiential impact. “We had spent a long time hiking up to Kantsar Monastery. Several students were complaining; all of us were tired. When we finally reached the top, one of the boys grabbed my arm and declared, ‘Digin Ardemis! It is like heaven!’”

For many students, the SSAES Armenia trip sets the precedent for taking the leap to travel to Armenia, not just to vacation, but to engage with modern Armenia. Over time, many find ways to pair their passions with their homeland. For Krafian, this impact has been personal. Last year her daughter Nairi, a pre-veterinary student at Tufts University, founded Oknooshoon, a nonprofit which leverages animal therapy to improve the lives of people in Armenia, and correspondingly educates the people about animals to improve the lives of dogs in Armenia, as well. “For students formulating their Armenian identity in a diaspora, what could be more powerful than reframing their expectations of being Armenian, now that we have an independent country. Our students learn that Armenia is an opportunity, not just a dream.”



COMMUNITY NEWS

Long Beach Memorial Service Honors Former Gov. George Deukmejian

By Chris Haire

LONG BEACH, Calif. (*Long Beach Press-Telegram*) – It was not an elegy, but an ode – to a life well lived.

Gov. George Deukmejian, who died last month, was remembered in a series of affectionate eulogies Saturday, June 9, during a public memorial in Long Beach, his adopted hometown.

Hundreds sat in the wood-paneled Terrace Theater for the “celebration of life,” as Deukmejian’s political colleagues and proteges, as well as his son, lauded the two-term Republican governor – describing him as a self-effacing, but dynamic leader who reshaped California’s judicial system and reined in spending.

But those tasked with summing up Deukmejian’s 89-year life also spoke about a man who cherished moments of calm while away from the political fray; who held to his beliefs but was unafraid to change his mind; and who acted on what was moral, rather than what was politically expedient, even if it meant standing against his political allies.

“He was a good, decent, humble man,” said former Long Beach Mayor Bob Foster, “who viewed himself as ordinary, but who did extraordinary things.”

Deukmejian, born in upstate New York, built a 29-year career in California politics, and was highly regarded by Republicans and Democrats alike for his bipartisanship and integrity. He served as governor from 1983 to 1991. But in Long Beach, he was equally known for his decades-long love affair with the city as for his political accomplishments.

During Saturday’s memorial, Foster and four other speakers led the audience through the



Gov. Deukmejian in the 1980s

highlights of the governor’s political career and the less well-known anecdotes of his personal life:

The time he held firm against the gun lobby to sign a bill banning assault weapons, his actions stoked by the slaughter of children in a Stockton schoolyard.

His penchant for strolling down Belmont Shore’s Second Street in search of his beloved ice cream.

His determination to crack down on crime and appoint tough-willed, conservative justices.

And the moment when the “Iron Duke” momentarily went “soft on crime” – slapping his knee, rather than spanking one of his daughters as his wife, Gloria, had urged after the child misbehaved.

The soft on crime moment came, jokingly, from George Deukmejian, Jr., who offered a glimpse into his father’s personal side that the public rarely saw, someone who easily blended in as the average, lawn-mowing American family man.

“His face was familiar, but he was often misidentified,” his son said, recounting the time a museum tour guide discussed how unpronounceable she found the name Deukmejian – with the governor standing in front of her.

There was also the time Deukmejian video recorded his son, one year old at the time, sitting under a Christmas tree – with an electrical cord in his mouth (though the filming suddenly halted when Deukmejian realized the child aimed to bite the live wire).



At the Deukmejian service

Or the time that same troublesome son performed a splash-happy cannon ball into the pool as the governor snoozed on a raft.

“People say my dad never cursed,” Deukmejian, Jr. said, reminiscing about how his bratty behavior often derailed his dad’s frequent longing for peace and quiet. “But he called me the offspring of a female house pet.”

The audience erupted, laughing and applauding.

The other speakers were:

- Marv Baxter, a retired California Supreme Court justice who recalled that Deukmejian set his sights on the governor’s job “because the attorney general doesn’t appoint judges – the governor does;”

- Ken Khachigan, Deukmejian’s senior campaign strategist and a family friend, who portrayed how revered the governor became in the Armenian community;

- Steve Merksamer, the governor’s chief of staff from 1983 to 1987, who detailed the tough choices his boss and mentor made as the state’s chief executive.

The trio, as well as Foster, rattled off Deukmejian’s political accomplishments: appointing more than 1,000 justices, boosting the assault-weapons ban, balancing the state budget without raising taxes and persuading the University of California Board of Regents to divest from companies in then-racially segregated South Africa. Nelson Mandela himself acknowledged that California’s policy shifts helped bring an end to apartheid.

“He was a wonderful man,” Baxter said. “And a great governor.”

Merksamer, who once worked in the state Attorney General’s Office, remembered meeting with Deukmejian during his campaign to become California’s chief prosecutor in 1978. Deukmejian wanted to meet with Merksamer and another colleague to learn more about the Attorney General’s Office and how it operated.

“He didn’t ask for contributions, didn’t talk about himself at all,” Merksamer said. “He just wanted to know how the system could be made better. And he picked up the check, too.”

The speakers spoke kindly of Gloria, who at one point received a standing ovation, for her ability to endure the scrutiny of the public eye as the state’s first lady and raise her and Deukmejian’s children largely out of the limelight.

The couple’s son described her as someone who mourned for her husband, but didn’t wear her heart on her sleeve – and being strong for her family.

“Clearly, she’s running the family now,” he said.

And Foster said of Deukmejian: “He married well.”

But the eulogies were not the only moments that provided insight into the governor’s personality.

The Long Beach Symphony Players performed a medley of George Gershwin compositions from *An American in Paris*. The up-tempo, brass-band tunes were some of Deukmejian’s favorites, said Donna Lucas, a former

Deukmejian staffer who emceed the memorial.

And there were two videos – “a life in pictures” montages – one for career highlights, and the other of the family man.

The former had pictures of Deukmejian with President Ronald Reagan and Bob Hope, soundbites and videos from speeches, and him dancing with Gloria at his inaugural ball.

The latter montage had photos of Deukmejian with Santa Claus, at his children’s weddings and spending time at home.

The final photo showed Deukmejian’s back as he sat on a bench, on the pier, looking out at the ocean.

It looked as if the governor, so used to the clamor of Sacramento, was at last enjoying a little of that peace and quiet he so coveted.

After the image faded away, the Rev. Michael Fincher, of St. Gregory’s Episcopal Church, stepped behind the lectern to give the benediction and end the memorial.

“We celebrate a man who selflessly gave of himself,” the reverend said, “for the benefit of others.”

And with that, the crowd, in unison, said “amen.”

A DONATION TO THE

INSURANCE

FOUNDATION FOR

SERVICEMEN

ENSURES MILITARY FAMILIES CAN

RECOVER FROM THE LOSS OR INJURY

OF THEIR SONS FIGHTING ON THE

FRONT LINES OF ARMENIA

Visit www.1000plus.am/en to

Learn More About Us and Support Our Troops

Read News in Armenian at:

haydzayn.am



COMMUNITY NEWS

An Armenian Life Leads to a Call to Serve

BEYLERIAN, from page 1

A Bergen County native, Beylerian accepted a bid to run for local politics following the devastating Parkland, Fla., shooting last April, when a student opened gunfire on his fellow classmates, killing 17 in cold blood. She was in awe as she watched the victimized students rise from tragedy and create a platform for change.

"I was so inspired by the young people who pulled themselves together, organized and engaged an entire generation, and then some, in their message," said Beylerian. "They were speaking truth to power."

She attributes being politically aware to her Armenian upbringing, as an intern stuffing envelopes for local congressmen to pursue geno-

songs; she has written, recorded and released three popular albums of children's music from her imprint HYEfamily (HYEfamily.com). In addition, she has been a dedicated volunteer in many local and national organizations, including the University of Southern California (USC) Shoah Foundation and the Near East Foundation.

"We are just vessels for Armenian culture," said Beylerian. "We are here to preserve and pass onto the next generation, spreading that knowledge and sharing that history."

That passion to serve and educate crosses into her work as a professor at Bergen Community College teaching Western Civilization and witnessing the growth of each student. She makes it a point to combat political apathy by engaging her students, making sure they understand civics because "every American child deserves to know how their government works."

Her work at Bergen Community College goes hand in hand with her run for public office since the college is partially publicly funded and as part of the larger community college system, "gives educational access to those who might not have it otherwise."

The achievements of her students, as she teaches them not only about textbook material but also of their surrounding society and environment, is a source of fulfillment for her as she sees their progress



Nvair with her family (from left, Tamar, Zareh, Lucine and Nvair)

cide recognition, experiences that remained with her as she launched a career in television production and education. Despite life taking her in different directions as she raised her now college-aged daughters, Lucine and Tamar, with her attorney husband, Zareh, she remained on the political pulse on a local and national level. Motivated by the surrounding political climate, she decided to get involved more deeply.

"I wanted to be part of the solution and not just sit back and criticize," said Beylerian, who notes that all politics is local and the importance of "thinking globally and acting locally."

Her recent foray into politics occurred two years ago when she participated in the overturn of District 5 for Representative Josh Gottheimer (D-NJ). Impressed with her work and her record, the Democratic County Committee approached her to run when a position opened up for the Upper Saddle River Borough Council. Seeing an opportunity to create the change she was seeking, Beylerian accepted and is now running on the platform of transparency, safety of the borough's water and calls for the community to be involved in decision-making, alongside her running mate Richard Medina. Above all, she wants to make choices that will positively impact citizens over the next few years, making the individuals in her borough and their needs a priority.

"Politicians need to be more selfless and more representative of their constituents interests, not for their own gain," said Beylerian. "They should spread knowledge and educate people."

Spreading knowledge is what she has done her whole life, both personally and professionally. Like her mother, she too teaches Armenian dance, Armenian Church hymns and Armenian



Nvair as a youngster at Camp Haiastan

throughout each semester.

"Seeing the light bulb go on, that's what drives me," said Beylerian, who is co-director of the Center for Peace, Justice & Reconciliation at Bergen Community College, where she develops programming to promote genocide studies, Armenian history and culture alongside other underrepresented groups.

Assuming the role of a public servant comes naturally for Beylerian, who traces her years in Armenian school, church and youth organizations as helping pave the way for a life in public office, learning important skills "directly from the Armenian community."

"We are taught to public speak by reciting on stage while our Armenian values of respect, courtesy are instilled in our home," she said. "Working within Armenian organizations, we learn to deal with different personalities and to be politically astute."

As a longtime supporter herself of political and cultural organizations, Beylerian is well aware that Armenians have the ability to endorse humanitarian efforts and fruitful campaigns for politicians, but should begin to look inward.

"We should set a new standard to be a decision maker for ourselves and start backing our own," she said. "But to make that a



Nvair recording her recent album "We Sing Armenian Church Songs" with local Armenian-American youth.

reality takes funding."

She's blazing a trail that encourages the presence of more women in politics, particularly Armenian women, and hopes others will join this course she's navigating. Generous as always with her insights, she says her goal is to "gain institutional knowledge that will support other Armenians in the future."

A firm believer in the political process, Beylerian, who hasn't ruled out running for high-

family, as the granddaughter of Armenian Genocide survivors. Her grandfather arrived in the United States as an orphan, and while he embraced his Armenian culture in his adopted home, he was equally grateful to live in the country that provided him with a safe haven — so much so that he would put extra money in his federal taxes as a show of gratitude, because he was "so proud to be an American."

As a mother, wife, professor, community activist and musician, Beylerian has her hands full but sees life as a series of cycles where priorities shift over time, which resulted in this opportune moment of running for public office.

"I couldn't have done this when my husband was serving in Iraq and when I had two school-age children at home and an elderly mother," said Beylerian. "But now I can."

Through it all, her connection to her Armenian heritage remains paramount, as does her desire to promote and unite the Armenian people, a notion that was instilled in her all those years ago on that Map of Armenia float rolling down 5th Avenue.

"I hope through this journey other 'ians' or individuals with Armenian heritage will run for their local councils and rise up the ranks," said Beylerian. "It takes only one snowflake to start a snowball rolling."

To learn more about Nvair Beylerian's campaign or to donate, visit www.USRForward.com/Beylerian or follow her at www.Facebook.com/USRForward.



Representative Josh Gottheimer (D-NJ) with Nvair Beylerian

er office one day, urges citizens to vote for candidates they believe in, regardless of their political leanings.

"Just go vote," she said. "It's a precious gift." This was a gift that was cherished by her own

Speier Leads Bipartisan Calls for Aid to Armenia for Fostering Democracy

WASHINGTON — Rep. Jackie Speier (D-CA) and a bipartisan group of 24 Members of the House of Representatives wrote Secretary of State Mike Pompeo and USAID Administrator Mark Green to urge support Armenia's renewed efforts to build democratic institutions and processes.

The request follows the April resignation of longtime Armenian leader Serzh Sargsyan in the wake of mass protests, and the subsequent acceptance of the prime ministership by

reformist leader Nikol Pashinyan. The signers included many representatives belonging to the Caucus on Armenian Issues, as well as leaders on the House Foreign Affairs Committee.

"The peaceful and lawful actions of Armenia's citizens have created an incredible opportunity to build democracy in Armenia and advance the rights of all Armenians," said Speier. "The United States must lend our expertise and resources to assist them in their effort. Helping Armenians can remind our

allies and adversaries that democracy will always be on the march."

In the letter, the representatives called on Secretary Pompeo and Administrator Green to provide Armenia with various forms of democracy assistance. It also called for economic support to help build democratic practices in Armenia and improve the economy by addressing corruption. Specifically, the letter called for:

Increasing funds available for democracy

assistance to Armenia through the Department of State's Office of the Coordinator to Europe and Eurasia.

Tripling funding for democracy assistance and civil society available to the National Endowment for Democracy and its grantees.

Assisting Armenian efforts to fight corruption, promote transparency, and improve the economy through rule of law programs, economic support, and a new Millennium Challenge compact.

Arts & Living

Scholar Presents Metropolitan Museum Exhibition On Armenia at Zohrab Center

By Florence Avakian

NEW YORK — “Armenian art is not something isolated. It is woven into a global network, and needs to be understood for what makes it specifically Armenian,” declared Dr. Helen Evans, to an enthusiastic crowd of close to 100 on Thursday, June 7, at the Armenian Diocesan Krikor and Clara Zohrab Information Center. “It is also part of the world’s art of global significance.”

The “Armenia!” exhibition will open on September 22, the 27th anniversary of Armenia’s independence, and run through January 13, 2019, at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York City. It has been organized by Dr. Helen C. Evans, the Mary and Michael Jaharis Curator for Byzantine Art at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, and acclaimed scholar of Armenian art.

The Very Rev. Daniel Findikyan, newly elected Primate of the Armenian Diocese (Eastern), and longtime director of the Zohrab Information Center, introduced Evans, and pointed out that the scholar had previously curated the Morgan Library and Museum’s 1994 exhibition, *Treasures in Heaven: Armenian Illuminated Manuscripts*. As the Nikit and Eleanor Ordjanian Visiting Professor of Armenian Studies, he said, Evans has taught art courses at Columbia University, and has published numerous articles on Armenian subjects.

She has been especially instrumental in displaying major works of Armenian art at the Metropolitan, including treasures on permanent view in the medieval galleries. She was also responsible for bringing to the Metropolitan the



A Reliquary that is part of the Met exhibit

huge 1,000-pound, 12th-century khachkar (cross stone) from the Lori province for which she traveled to Armenia with Metropolitan Museum Conservator Jack Soultanian, on one of her many trips there. It remains on renewed loan at the Metropolitan.

Using color slides to accompany her remarks, she said that this must-see exhibition at the Metropolitan is “an opportunity to show Armenian art as an identifier of a significant people, and an important element of the world’s art.”

Included in this exhibition, the first of this monumental scale at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, are 140 opulent gilded reliquaries, richly illuminated manuscripts, rare textiles, liturgical furnishings made of precious materials, *khachkars* (cross stones), church models, and printed books which show Armenia’s distinctive

see METROPOLITAN, page 16



From left, Rosalyn Minassian, Rita Allen Balian and Armine Hovhannissian

New Paths Hosts Book Club Meeting

BELMONT, Mass. — In early spring New Paths - Bridging Armenian Women (NP) launched its first successful book club meeting at the Phinix Grill with Rita Allen Balian, president of Rita B. Allen Associates, a national career management firm. Balian, a regular blogger for Huffington Post, is also the author of *Personal Branding & Marketing Yourself*. The book is designed for any profession, any industry and any discipline, is a great resource for individuals who are looking to develop and build their “personal brand” in today’s competitive environment.

With more than 20 attendees, each individual shared their experiences and what a rare opportunity to ask questions on a specific chapter to the author of the book!

Balian summed up the evening by saying: “I enjoyed meeting the talented women of NP and engaging in powerful conversations, with such a range of professionals from varying industries including law, finance, government, healthcare, science, business, fashion, and the arts. I’m so impressed with the depth of expertise we have in our NP group! Thank you Armine Hovhannissian, Rosalyn see CLUB, page 17



The audience listens to Rita Allen Balian.

I Am Raising My Daughter to Speak Three Languages. A Stranger Demanded I ‘Speak English’ to Her

By Esmeralda Bermudez

LOS ANGELES (*Los Angeles Times*) — I felt her staring at me on the playground as I called out to my daughter.

She must be someone’s grandmother, I thought. She must be curious, as people often are.

Then she took one step toward me — pink fingernails, dark blond hair — and opened her mouth, e-nun-ci-a-ting each word.

“Speak English,” she commanded. “You’re confusing the poor girl.”

My stomach dropped. I rose from the grass and braced myself to respond. And I did.

But not before an old, familiar feeling washed over me, a mix of fear and shame I used to carry like a knapsack in grade school. I was 7 years old, just two years older than



The author, Esmeralda Bermudez, a staff writer for the *Los Angeles Times*

my daughter is now.

You wetback. Dirty beaner. Go back to Tijuana. You sound like Ricky Ricardo.

So many days at Lake Marie Elementary School ended the same way for me: angry and broken, waiting by the rosebushes for my mom’s beat-up blue Datsun, wearing my knockoff sneakers and cheap, ruffled dresses from the swap meet. I thought I would never catch up.

Thirty years later, I have a career, a house, a husband, two cars, two kids and a dog.

I became a US citizen, watched “The Sound of Music,” read Truman Capote, danced the hokey pokey, shook hands with two presidents and lived alone for five years in Oregon. I’ve looked up and memorized and practiced out loud every bizarre American idiom I’ve ever heard — cut the mustard, bite the bullet, burn the midnight oil.

I did all this, but, according to this stranger, I haven’t done enough — because I still speak Spanish.

I was in kindergarten when I left El Salvador.

My mom came first, after the civil war erupted and my grandfather was shot dead in his home. My aunt was killed and my father was exiled and my uncle disappeared — and the bodies of so many others, one by one, turned up on the cobblestone paths at sunrise.

She sent for me as soon as my visa was approved.

I arrived one summer night to a brown stucco house facing an alley in South

see LANGUAGE, page 15



ARTS & LIVING

I Am Raising My Daughter to Speak Three Languages

LANGUAGE, from page 14

Whittier. I was giddy to see so many faces that had left me in El Salvador — uncles, aunts, cousins I thought were gone from my life. My family gathered on the porch to welcome me and to hear me count to 10 in English.

I picked up the language fast and soon became their interpreter. They would take me to job interviews, doctor's appointments, government offices and the DMV.

I was a superhero, dashing back and forth between two worlds. I knew then Spanish would always be a part of me.

When I grew up and got married, my husband felt the same way about his first language — Armenian.

We would have long discussions about passing on our native tongues to our children.

But how do you raise a trilingual child? A child who can weave in and out of three different languages, writing systems and cultures?

When I got pregnant in 2012, I made it my mission to find out.

I scoured the internet, consulted with pediatricians and attended panel discussions with child psychologists. All the while I kept thinking how laughable my hunt would seem to so many of the world's polyglots.

Experts all told me the same thing:

Your newborn's mind will be wide open. She will tune herself to any language she's exposed to by those who care for her. She will know when to switch based on the sounds she picks up from each individual voice.

The key, I was told, was for each parent to stick to one language.

I committed to speaking only Spanish to our daughter. My husband committed to Armenian.

The evening we brought our newborn home was one of the most awkward nights in our marriage.

We settled into our king-size bed to caress our baby and cuddle. David spoke softly to her. I did, too.

But we couldn't understand each other's words. It felt lonely. And it would feel that way, off and on, for years.

Still, we knew if we held fast, our efforts would pay off for our child. Her world would be infinitely bigger.

Those first couple of years, English was an

ocean tide, lapping ever closer to our home's front door.

Our relatives would come over and speak English to our daughter. They bought her books in English and flipped the channels to English-language cartoons. Her cousins, on both sides, were being raised almost exclusively in English.



Los Angeles Times reporter Esmeralda Bermudez at home in the garden with her husband David and 5-year-old daughter on June 7, 2018. (Brian van der Brug / Los Angeles Times)

David and I became cops, constantly demanding that our relatives switch back to Spanish and Armenian.

It made me think about a story I wrote during that time — about how hard it was for professional Latinos to keep their kids speaking Spanish.

Some parents left the task to abuelita. Some didn't think their Spanish was good enough or said they weren't around enough Spanish speakers. Others worried that if they pushed Spanish too much, their kids would fall behind in English.

Several of my close friends made choices that left them with a mix of doubt, guilt and resignation.

Occasionally, David would waver and think maybe it's rude to speak Armenian in places where people don't understand. Sometimes, he would shift to English with our daughter.

I would tell him not to do that. "Teach her to

speak it proudly, no matter where she is."

Before the age of 2, our little girl with big brown eyes and enormous cheeks began to do just that.

Mama, *lechita!* Papa, *katik! Besito, pachik, perro, shunik.*

Her words were gems that came from her mouth in sets of two — one for mama, one for

It was about Dohmerrish, her imaginary friend, a redheaded, freckle-faced French boy.

"He's going to live with us," she said. "I need to learn French so I can talk to him."

OK, we said, and enrolled her in French lessons.

Back at the La Mirada playground, I looked at the woman. She knew nothing about me and my daughter.

"You don't need to worry about my child," I told her. She speaks English, Armenian and Spanish and is learning a fourth language.

"How many languages do you speak?" I asked.

"I speak Eenglish," she told me, hand on hip. "That's what matters."

Then she asked how well my daughter could know any of her languages — to which I replied, smiling, "You would be surprised."

That evening, with a mix of emotions, I described the encounter on Twitter.

What came next stunned me.

This was a few days before communicating in my first language became a national flashpoint — before a New York lawyer heard a group speaking Spanish and threatened to call Immigration and Customs Enforcement, before a Border Patrol agent near the border in Montana heard two US citizens speaking Spanish and detained them.

Within hours my first tweet went viral. It was retweeted nearly 80,000 times, ultimately reaching millions.

Thousands of people across the world chimed in with their views on language, on America, on identity and culture.

Nkululeko Sizwe from South Africa: In Johannesburg ... most young Africans speak 3 or more languages. I speak 6/7 (and I was raised in Namibia).

Natasha Carlyon from Atlanta: Unfortunately, people told my mom to stop speaking to me in Korean, and she listened. She regrets the decision. I'm now trying to learn Korean.

Annu Jalais from India: Good for you. My 4

papa.

In time, she began to string them together into sentences, moving effortlessly between both languages.

She would make up poems about *el sol* in Spanish and sing her favorite Armenian song, *Im Poqrík Navak*, at the top of her lungs in the kitchen. She would translate for me at Armenian bakeries, and when her grandmothers were together, she would translate between them.

One day, when our daughter was almost 4, a neighbor noticed her shiny gold sneakers.

"Those are so cool," she said to our girl, who



Los Angeles Times reporter Esmeralda Bermudez is raising her daughter to be trilingual. The 5-year-old girl, second from right, sang songs and recited poems in Armenian at her Armenian school's end-of-the-year celebration. (Brian van der Brug / Los Angeles Times)

answered in English, "Yes, my mom got them at the mall."

My jaw dropped. This was the first time I'd heard her speak English. Where the heck did that come from?

Soon she started preschool, and English was all she spoke there and during playtime with cousins.

Language became something she couldn't get enough of. She excavated words like some kids excavate faux dinosaur bones.

"Mama, did you know there's lots of ways to say grass in Spanish? *Grama, zacate, césped, pasto, monte.*"

Mama, have you heard the word *gargantüés* before? It means big. Like really big.

"Mama, how do you say caterpillar in Spanish? What about in Armenian? What about in Russian?"

"I don't know," I'd tell her. "Let's look it up." About a year ago, we were at the dinner table with our daughter and her 2-year-old brother when she made an announcement.

yr old also speaks 4 languages & it is only monolinguals (the French, Americans, British) who keep telling me "all" these languages will confuse him.

Charlie Kelly from Pittsburgh: The more languages the better! forever wishing i was multilingual.

John Wallace from Texas: Those who scold others about which language they speak in a free country have a strange definition of "freedom."

Please adopt me!! I promise I'll clean my room and even ... help with dusting.

Bravo, mama.

Your daughter is my hero!

The comments kept coming for days, 20, 30 at a time.

"This is crazy," I kept telling David as my phone buzzed and buzzed.

In this sea of voices, just about all of them positive, that one woman's voice faded out. I could hardly remember what she looked like. All I knew was that my kids would be just fine.

ԼՈՅՍ ՏԵՍԱԴ

ՅԱԿՈՐ ԿԱՐԴԻԿԱՌԵԱՆԻ
ՊԱՏԱՐԺԷՐ ԵՐԿԸ

ՆՈՐԻՐՈՒԱԾ՝

ՈԱՄԿԱԿԱՐ ԱԶԱՏԱԿԱՆ ԿՈՒՍԱԿՆՈՒԹԵԱՆ
ՊԱՏՈՒԹԵԱՆ



Գ. ՀԱՏՈՐ - 932 ԷՉ

-ԵՐԿԱԽԻՆԱԿ-
ԼԱԹԱԿԱԶՍ

Մտանալու համար դիմել՝

Tekeyan Cultural Association

P.O.Box 1074

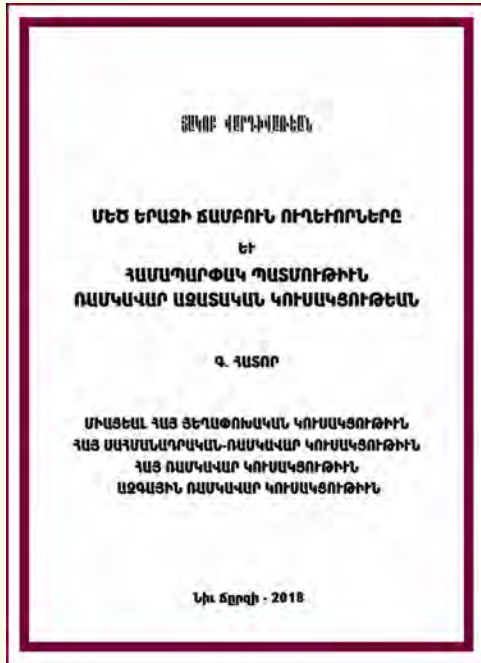
Englewood Cliffs,

NJ 07632-1074

USA

Կամ՝

hvirtivarian@aol.com





ARTS & LIVING

Scholar Presents Metropolitan Museum Exhibition on Armenia at Zohrab Center

METROPOLITAN, from page 14
imagery in their homeland, and from other major Armenian locations from the Kingdom of Cilicia on the Mediterranean to New Julfa in Safavid Persia.

“The way we are presenting art is showing how Armenians with their conversion to Christianity, created a visual identity that is incredibly compelling and goes through a variety of styles in the millennium we are cover-

enthusiasm and passion. “This has been an idea in progress for me ever since I did my PhD dissertation on the manuscripts of Cilicia at New York University’s Institute of Fine Arts,” she revealed with an ear-to-ear smile.

Following a brief question-and-answer period, animated discussion with Dr. Evans, and between attendees continued for a considerable amount of time during the reception.



One of the textiles on display



Alexander Romance

ing. At the same time, it always has the element that ties Armenians together.”

The time period includes opening with the conversion of Armenia to Christianity – the beginning of the 4th century, and will conclude with the end of the Middle Ages, when Armenian books become readily available in the Middle East. “We wanted a narrative,” she said.

The show will focus on four artists, showing several works by each of them “so people will think of them as we think of Michelangelo in Italy.” They include T’oros Roslin, Sargis Pidzak, Toros Taronatsi, and Hakob of Julfa working in the Armenian homeland, the Kingdom of Cilicia, and New Julfa.

The locations show Armenians as they moved around the globe on the trade routes which happened before the Christian era, and after the time frame we will be showing, she revealed. It starts in Greater Armenia (the conversion site) which is the Republic of Armenia today, and out to the West (kingdom of Cilicia), then to Crimea and Italy, and back to Greater Armenia in the Middle Ages where Armenians were devastated in many ways by different invaders.

“Armenians controlled vast amounts of Mongol trade routes which are seen in the reliquaries donated by people with vast wealth,” Evans related. “There were Armenian merchants all over Europe. They controlled the internal and external textile trade of India. Most spectacular are the sculpture reliquaries, and manuscripts, protected in New Julfa in the 17th century, with their elaborate bindings.”

Armenians were not converted to Christianity from the religions of the classical world. “What made Armenians respond to Christianity when it was not yet a done deal, she asked. For them, Christ is Christ, the Virgin is the Virgin. In the early church, apostolic lines were incredibly important. Armenians had their own direct connection to an apostle. It was a complex weaving together.”

The other early church to convert was Ethiopia, she stated. “Armenia controlled the trade routes coming out of China and Central Asia which came through Armenia to reach Constantinople and the West. Both nations converted very early, before the Roman Empire became officially Christian.”

“I want at the end of the show for non-Armenians to be very impressed by Armenian art, and for Armenians to be proud of the show,” Dr. Evan declared with her usual

More than half of the works in the Armenia exhibition to be displayed are on loan from

Armenia, including Echmiadzin, the Matenadaran Institute, and the History Museum. Treasures have been sent from the See of Cilicia, the Armenian Patriarchate of Jerusalem, and the Armenian Mekhitarist Congregation in Venice. Selected works from the Calouste Gulbenkian Museum in Portugal, as well as the Armenian Diocese (eastern), the Armenian Museum in Boston, and the Alex and Marie Manoogian Museum in Southfield, Michigan have also been lent.

The “Armenia!” exhibition has been made possible by The Hagop Kevorkian Fund, with additional support provided by the Armenian

General Benevolent Union, The Giorgi Family Foundation, the Karagheusian Foundation, The Nazar and Artemis Nazarian Family, the Ruddock Foundation for the Arts, The Strauch Kulhanjian Family and The Paros Foundation, Aso O. Tavitian, and the National Endowment for the Arts.

Educational programs accompanying the exhibition will include an international symposium, lectures, concerts, a website, a blog and group tours of the exhibition. A richly illustrated catalog will be published by the Metropolitan Museum of Art and distributed by Yale University Press.

Recipe Corner

by Christine Vartanian Datian

Summer Peach Cobbler with Walnuts and Raisins



INGREDIENTS

8 firm, large ripe peaches, washed, peeled and sliced
3/4 cup granulated sugar
3/4 cup flour
4 tablespoons unsalted butter
1 medium egg
1 tablespoon fresh lemon juice
1 teaspoon vanilla extract
1 teaspoon baking powder
1/4 teaspoon sea salt
2-3 tablespoons light brown sugar
1/2 teaspoon each ground cinnamon and nutmeg
1/2 cup each chopped walnuts (or pecans or almonds) and golden raisins (to taste)

PREPARATION

Preheat oven to 350 degrees.
Place sliced peaches in a buttered baking or casserole dish.
In a medium bowl, beat the egg with lemon juice and vanilla; sift sugar, flour, baking powder and salt into the bowl, and stir until dry and crumbly. Sprinkle this mixture over the peaches.
In a separate bowl, combine brown sugar, walnuts, raisins, cinnamon and nutmeg. Sprinkle mixture over the top of the dish and dot with butter.
Bake for 35-40 minutes or until peaches are bubbly around the edge. Serve with whipped cream, ice cream, or sliced fruit or berries on the side.

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





ARTS & LIVING

CALENDAR

FLORIDA

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

MASSACHUSETTS

JUNE 22 — “Songs of the Other,” with Daniela Totic, mezzo-soprano, Sylvie Zakarian, marimba, with guest Nikola Radan on flute. Music by Komitas, Hovhanness, Gbver, Paliev and Radan. Friday, Longy School of Music of Bard College, Pickman Hall, 27 Garden St., Cambridge. Donation \$20 to benefit Cambridge Defense Fund for Immigrants.

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 — Armenian Church of Cape Cod presents Kef

Time - Dinner & Dancing Saturday 6 to 11.30 p.m. at The Cape Club, 125 Falmouth Woods Road, North Falmouth. Chicken Kebab & Losh Kebab dinner Leon Janikian band with special appearance by Harry Minassian & a DJ \$60 per person, children 7-14 \$10. For tickets/tables contact Andrea Barber (617)201-9808

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

AUGUST 23 — Under an August Moon, Armenian Heritage Park on The Greenway, Boston, Thursday, 7:30 - 9:30 pm. Meet & Greet! Berklee All-Star Jazz Trio! Enjoy signature tastings, hosted by anoush’ella say kitchen; creative mocktails, hosted by The Bostonian Hotel; luscious ice teas hosted by MEM Tea Imports. RSVP appreciated. hello@ArmenianHeritagePark.org

SEPTEMBER 16 — Sunday Afternoon at the Park for Families. Armenian Heritage Park on the Greenway, 2-4 p.m. Cindy Fitzgibbon, WCVB TV5, Emcee; Boston Hye Guys-Ron Sahatjian,

clarinet; Joe Kouyoumjian, oud; Art Chingris, percussion; ADD At 2:30pm “Match the Pair”: Game for all ages! Face Painting: For Kids by Kids, Hoodies 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 — Armenia Fund USA and Ardzagang Armenian TV are proud to present Artash Asatryan and Band, guest singer Grisha Asatryan, from Armenia on Sunday, 4 p.m. Don’t miss the performance by the son and grandson of the legendary Armenian singer Aram Asatryan! Proceeds will benefit Fruitful Artsakh Project. Location: Bergen PAC, 30 N Van Brunt St, Englewood, NJ. Tickets: \$50, \$70, \$90. Please call Box Office 201-227-1030 or visit www.bergenPAC.org

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.

Nikol Pashinyan
Receives ‘Peace
Of Art’ Gold
Medal of Honor

YEREVAN — On June 12, Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan received Daniel Varoujan Hejinian, the founder president of the “Peace of Art” organization and the organization’s representative in Armenia Heghine Gevorgyan.

The meeting was also attended by Minister of Culture Lilit Makunts and press secretary Arman Yeghoyan. During the conversation Hejinian mentioned, that the Prime Minister enjoys the love and trust of all Armenians, and this is an exceptional phenomenon in the history, when the Prime Minister was elected by the people in the public square.

At the end of the meeting, Hejinian delivered a speech.

“In 2014 within the framework of the fifth Pan-Armenian Forum, I was given an opportunity to meet with then Deputy of the National Assembly Nikol Pashinyan. Having followed political life in Armenia and being familiar with his activities, after getting acquainted and exchanging business cards I asked him, ‘Mr. Pashinyan, where did you get such a ‘*dukh*’ inspiration?’”

I received the answer to my question four years later. It has once again been proved that revolutions throughout history have been carried out by people and leaders are assigned from above.

His *Dukh* inspiration is conditioned by the people’s love, solidarity, mutual trust and unity, where there is no American-Armenian, no Persian-Armenian or Syrian-Armenian, but there is one united Armenian nation, which like one person performs the instructions of the leader, peacefully, demonstrating non-violent way of struggle.

Founded in 2003 in Boston, Peace of Art, Inc. is a non-profit organization, which uses art as an educational tool to bring awareness to the universal human condition and promote peaceful solutions to conflicts.

Peace of Art, Inc. is not associated with political or religious organizations and it focuses on the global human condition, international recognition of the Armenian

Genocide and raising Armenia’s reputation abroad.

Peace of Art is dedicated to the peace keepers and peace achievers around the world,

and those who have devoted themselves to the betterment of mankind. www.peace-ofart.org.



Rita Allen Balian

New Paths
Hosts Book
Club Meeting

CLUB, from page 14

Minassian, and to the NP book club committee for planning a great night. Thank you to Phinix Grill for their generous hospitality and a Big thank you to the NP members for coming and participating! I look forward to continuing the dialogue and wish them all the best in their journey of defining, building, and enhancing their personal brand!”

The participants enjoyed having their copy of the book autographed by Balian, and each woman received a bookmark designed and donated by local artist and designer of wearable art, Karine Abgaryan.

Abgaryan had donated the hand-painted scarf which was presented to the author.

New Paths provides an online safe platform for women to engage in meaningful discussions and with local events, women can come together to share information and knowledge, provide mentorship opportunities and support to one another. We are creating a great positive impact individually and in our communities as a whole.

Should anyone wish to participate in the book club contact Rosalyn Minassian via New Paths - Bridging Armenian Women Facebook official page. The next book will be announced after Labor Day weekend.



COMMENTARY

COMMENTARY

The Demise and Legacy of Genocide Denier Bernard Lewis

By Edmond Y. Azadian

Historian Bernard Lewis is dead. His ideas, however, are not. Unlike other traditional and respected scholars, his academic work was often tainted by his involvement in politics. In fact, his scholarly works served as a basis for ideologies which continue to plague the modern world. Throughout his life, especially in his later years, he chose to exchange his mantle as a scholar with that of an ideologue, and some of his disciples are engaged currently in ruling the world.

In the year 2012, he described himself in the following way: “For some, I’m the towering genius. For others, I am the devil incarnate.”

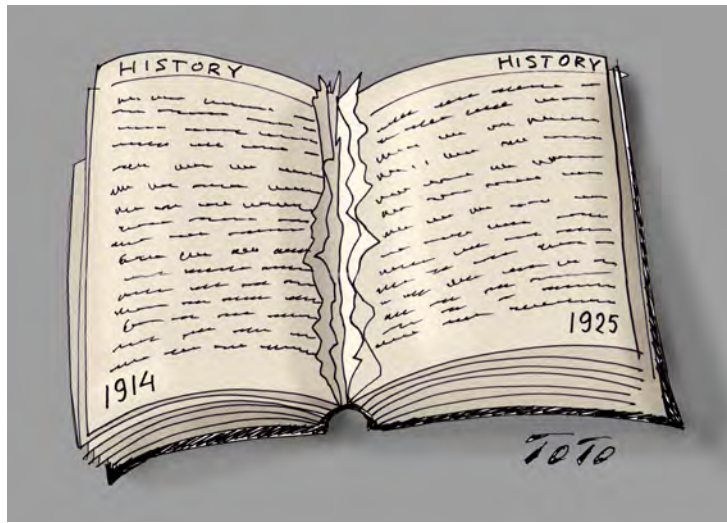
Very few people have enough self-awareness to have an objective view of themselves. And Professor Lewis was no exception. Throughout this essay, we will try to document both dimensions of his personality, a respected scholar and a figurative gun-for-hire.

Scholarship is the pursuit of truth, which guides most historians who are wary of falling into the category of advocacy. Professor Lewis had no such qualms and eagerly used the tremendous power of his academic erudition to bolster his advocacy and worldview, accompanied by the justification of actions propelled by that advocacy.

He knew how to empower ideas; actually, he was a master of formulating ideologies and enlisting the support of power structures to implement those ideologies in political practice.

Words have power, ideas have power, and when placed into the context of ideologies, they become formidable forces to influence the course of history.

All religions, philosophies and social theories are developed to benefit society, to propel it to the next level of prosperity, good governance and social justice. But history has demonstrated that they all degenerate into dictatorships, war mongering and disaster, especially when philosophies become religions or articles of faith and religions become embedded into politics.



The pious image of Christ was lost during the Hundred Year Wars in Europe, the War of the Roses and competing papacies between Rome and Avignon.

Karl Marx was a philosopher and economist who published *The Communist Manifesto* in 1848 and his obsession with the rule of the proletariat promised an economic paradise for the masses. He also was prophetic in defining history, which eventually perfectly suited the destiny of his communist ideal. He indeed wrote, “History repeats itself, first as a tragedy, second as a farce.”

The lives of the working class were primarily a tragedy and he prescribed a remedy to get them out of that situation, which ended up being a farce.

But before that point, Vladimir Illich Lenin took Marx’s idea and ran with it. He founded the Soviet Union, which professed to be the greatest laboratory for social engineering, promising to shape the Soviet citizen, Homo Sovieticus.

After 80 million in casualties in World War II, in concentration camps and pogroms, the Soviet Union eventually collapsed under its own weight.

Bernard Lewis was the prophet of modern times. He had – and continues to have – a host of disciples among the power elite. He especially became the guru and the ideological guide for statesmen who were looking for justifications for their political plans to shape the new world, leaving death and destruction in their wake.

His legacy had a tremendous impact on the history of Islam. He often clashed with Edward Said, the consummate scholar on

Orientalism. Lewis’ works comprise *The Emergence of Modern Turkey* (1961), *Semites and Anti-Semites* (1986), *Race and Slavery in the Middle East*, *The Muslim Discovery of Europe* (1982) and *The End of Modern History in the Middle East*. His most recent book, *What Went Wrong: Western Impact and the Middle Eastern Response*, became a guidebook for US neocons and war-mongers: Paul Wolfowitz, Richard Pearle, Michael Flynn, John Bolton, et al. Even Mike Pompeo, the current US Secretary of State, gave him credit in eulogizing his death at age 103, stating: “As a true scholar and great man, I owe a great deal of my understanding of the Middle East to his work.”

He had a thorough command of Islamic history and he wrote authoritatively and with erudition. Gradually, through his books, he developed the theory of a clash between Islam and the West, which political scientist Samuel Huntington developed into the theory of clashes of civilization.

Bernard Lewis is better known for putting his ideas and theories into action.

In 2003, he was consulted by the Bush administration about Iraq. His advice was to encourage a revolt in the North rather than invading the country. The journalist Lamis Andoni depicted *What Went Wrong* as “practically a manifesto for advocates of US military intervention.”

In simple terms, Lewis advocated that people in the Islamic world deserve to be treated as cannon fodder. And viewing the devastation from Libya to Iraq and from Afghanistan to Syria, one can reasonably conclude that the historian’s views and ideology have been put in effective use.

In the book Lewis mentions two failed attempts, in 1529 and 1683, by the Ottoman Turks to capture Vienna, the capital of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. After the second attempt, the Ottoman advances to the West lost several battles and petered out, “and my heart was with the Turks,” wrote Lewis.

He was an unapologetic Turcophile. Despite assurance of the Turkish government that the Ottoman archives are open to scholars, they have denied access to any bona fide scholar, with the exception of Taner Akçam, even after sanitizing those archives by eliminating incriminating documents. (Akçam got a lot of documents that were in code, and was able to break them.) Because of his Turcophile credentials, Lewis was perhaps the first foreign scholar to research in those archives in 1950. In two successive editions of his book, *The Emergence of Modern Turkey*, Lewis admitted the veracity of the Armenian Genocide. Later on, he had a change of heart to say that what actually happened was a brutal massacre which does not merit the definition of a genocide, “because there are no documents about the Turkish government planning to organize those atrocities.”

We can only speculate what caused him to become a denialist, whether it was pressure or bribes from Turkey or an attempt to preserve the uniqueness of the Jewish Holocaust. His view, at any rate, is not supported by most Jewish scholars.

Lewis’ denialist statements in *Le Monde* landed him in a Paris Court, which convicted him and levied on him the fine of one franc. He reiterated his denialist position when he was interviewed by

a reporter for *Haaretz*, by stating, “What do the Armenians want? On the one hand, they are bragging about their struggle against Ottoman despotism, and on the other hand, they describe their tragedy as a genocide and they compare it with the Jewish Holocaust. I don’t accept that.”

Turning the tables, one could have rightfully retorted if the credibility of the Holocaust is in any way affected by the Warsaw Ghetto uprising of the Jews in 1942, against the Nazis.

Lewis was an influential scholar whose ideas carried – and still carry – weight. He also fostered a number of denialists like Heath Lowry, Alexander Murinson and Stanford Shaw.

On May 19, 1985, the *New York Times* and the *Washington Post* ran an ad in which 69 American scholars called on Congress not to pass a resolution recognizing the Armenian Genocide.

Later on, it was discovered that the initiative had come from the Turkish embassy and the ad was paid for the Assembly of Turkish American Associations. The scholars were recruited by Bernard Lewis and Heath Lowry and the incident came to be known as the “Lewis Affair.”

And here is a coincidence: The “Lewis Affair” took place on May 19, 1985, and Lewis passed away on May 19, 2018. Did the hand of Providence to link these two dates or just sheer coincidence?

Bernard Lewis is dead but his legacy continues to live and to justify many political adventures in the Middle East. It remains a curse to the Islamic peoples of the Middle East and the victims of the Armenian Genocide.

Mirror Spectator



Established 1932
An ADL Publication

EDITOR
Alin K. Gregorian

ASSISTANT EDITOR
Aram Arkun

ART DIRECTOR
Marc Mgrditchian

SENIOR EDITORIAL COLUMNIST:
Edmond Y. Azadian

CONTRIBUTORS:

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

CORRESPONDENTS:

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

Contributing Photographers:
Jirair Hovsepian

The Armenian Mirror-Spectator is published weekly, except two weeks in July and the first week of the year, by:

Baikar Association, Inc.

755 Mt. Auburn St., Watertown, MA 02472-1509
Telephone: 617-924-4420

FAX: 617-924-2887

www.mirrorspectator.com

E-Mail: **editor@mirrorspectator.com**

For advertising: **mirrorads@aol.com**

SUBSCRIPTION RATES:

U.S.A.	\$80 a year
Canada	\$125 a year
Other Countries	\$190 a year

© 2014 The Armenian Mirror-Spectator
Periodical Class Postage Paid at Boston, MA
and additional mailing offices.

ISSN 0004-234X

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to The Armenian Mirror-Spectator, 755 Mount Auburn St., Watertown, MA 02472

Other than the editorial, views and opinions expressed in this newspaper do not necessarily reflect the policies of the publisher.

Copying for other than personal use or internal reference is prohibited without express permission of the copyright owner. Address requests for reprints or back issues to:

Baikar Association, Inc.

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



COMMENTARY



My Turn

By Harut Sassounian

Another Anti-Armenian Writer Exposed For Making Baseless Allegations

It seems that not a week passes without coming across another mysterious writer who undertakes to contribute a puff piece about Azerbaijan and to undermine the reputation of Armenia and Armenians around the world.

The latest such writer is Peter Tase who posted an article titled, “Russia’s Foreign Agents in America: Trump Connection of Armenian Lobbyists,” on June 11, 2018 on the Eurasia Review website.

This extremely biased article resorts to exaggerations and untrue allegations in order to link Armenia and various Armenian individuals to Russia, and even more surprisingly, to President Donald Trump.

To begin with, Tase disparages Iranian-Armenian Gevork Vartanian’s praiseworthy actions during World War II by calling him “one of the most prolific Soviet Armenian spies.” In fact, Vartanian provided a major service to the entire world by thwarting Hitler’s plans to assassinate Stalin, Churchill, and Roosevelt while meeting as allies at the Tehran Conference in 1943. Tase undermines his own credibility by mentioning that CIA director Stansfield Turner and upper echelons of the agency trusted Vartanian. Why would they trust Vartanian if he were such a bad guy. Incredibly, Tase even states that he is suspicious of Vartanian because he spoke Armenian.

Tase then picks on two Russian Armenian journalists – Margarita Simonyan and Gayane Chichakyan – who work for RT (Russia Today) TV. Their only guilt is that they are “good looking” women, and without any evidence Tase accuses them of being “ethnically Armenian, as are many other ‘Russian’ agents of influence.”

Next is the turn of Artur Chilingarov, Vice Speaker of the Russian Duma, whom Tase attacks for being an Armenian. Chilingarov’s fault is that he was sitting at the next table over from Russian President Vladimir Putin at a banquet in Moscow. Chilingarov was honored by the Soviet Union and the Russian Federation for his exploits as a prominent polar explorer – and not for being an Armenian, as Tase claims.

Perhaps the most sinister part of Tase’s article is falsely claiming that Armenian-American reporter Emil Sanamyan is “a foreign agent.” This is a completely untrue allegation. Mr. Sanamyan told me that he is not now, nor has he ever been registered with the US Justice Department as “a foreign agent.” I hope Mr. Sanamyan will sue Peter Tase and his website for damaging his reputation. To show the degree of Tase’s blind hatred for anything Armenian, he accuses Sanamyan of working for “Americans for Artsakh,” an organization “established to bring legitimacy to the war crimes and illegal occupation by the Russian-backed Armenian military that has been ruthlessly perpetrated (long before Ukraine and Georgia, the Russian government has used Armenian soldiers to occupy Azerbaijan’s sovereign territory, arrest development and derail a Pro-Western course of Azerbaijan).” Not a single word is true in that sentence. The Russian government did not use Armenian soldiers. Armenians liberated themselves from Azerbaijan’s oppressive regime which committed mass crimes against Armenians of Artsakh for decades. In fact, Russian soldiers sided with Azerbaijan and killed many innocent inhabitants of Artsakh. Furthermore, “Americans for Artsakh” was a non-profit funded by Armenian-Americans. Sanamyan told me that he worked there as an unpaid employee. In addition, when Sanamyan worked at the Office of the Nagorno Karabakh Republic in Washington, D.C., the organization was not yet registered with the US Justice Department as “a foreign agent.” Also, Tase makes up a fake title by claiming that “Sanamyan was in charge of information warfare and propaganda as Director of the NKR Public Affairs Office.”

There are also several minor errors in Tase’s article which show his lack of knowledge of Armenian issues. For example, Tase writes about Armenia’s independence from “Soviet Russia,” instead of the Soviet Union. The second nonsense is Tase’s comment on a photo of President Serzh Sargsyan with President and Mrs. Trump at the United Nations in New York. Tase attributes the photo to the lobbying effort of the Armenian-American community. However, no lobbying was necessary. If Tase did a little more research, he would have discovered another photo of Azerbaijan’s President Ilham Aliyev with President and Mrs. Trump at the UN, along with photos of many other heads of state. Another intentional misrepresentation by Tase is that Sanamyan’s wife, a graduate of Cass Business School, City University London, was one of the “Major Donors and Sponsors” of the University in 2012. Tase fails to mention that Sanamyan’s wife was listed under the smallest amount category – less than \$1,000 – which does not make her a major donor.

Tase’s next attack on Armenians is their alleged connection to President Trump. This is where Tase makes his most ignorant accusation. The reality is that there are hardly any Armenians who know President Trump; therefore Tase

invents imaginary connections. Tase even dares to misrepresent my 2016 article headlined, “Armenians Should Reach Out to Trump Through Republican Friends in Congress.” If Tase was an honest reporter, he would have quoted from my article which stated: “Armenian-American ties with the President-elect are practically non-existent.”

Tase also misrepresents the statement posted by Aram Hamparian, executive director of the Armenian National Committee of America (ANCA), offering to work with the newly-elected President. There is no indication in that sentence of any link between Armenian-Americans and Trump. Scraping the bottom of the barrel, Tase comes up with a totally unknown name, Andy Surabian, as “another Armenian political operative deep inside the Trump White House.” Surabian is described as “Steve Bannon’s political advisor in the Trump administration and a campaign veteran.” Unfortunately for Tase, neither Bannon nor Surabian work at the White House anymore.

Tase then mentions the name of Keith Nahigian, as “perhaps the most influential and high-ranking Armenian Diaspora member and registered lobbyist associated with the Trump campaign...who was tapped to head Trump’s transition team in 2017.” This is yet another red herring. Nahigian has no connection with the Armenian community. I sent him an email two years ago and I am still waiting for his answer. That’s how close Nahigian is to the Armenian community.

Tase prematurely refers to congressional candidate Danny Tarkanian (R-Nevada) as a member of “the Armenian lobby with access to President Trump.” Should Tarkanian win his House seat in November, we shall be able to determine how close is his connection to the White House?

Incredibly, Tase mentions Kim Kardashian as an Armenian “home-porn-turned-Twitter lobbyist” who has met Trump on numerous occasions – most recently in May 2018,” successfully securing a pardon from President Trump for a (non-Armenian) grandmother serving a life-sentence in prison. Tase would have made a more convincing case if Kardashian had made a request from President Trump on an Armenian issue. There has been no link between Kardashian as “an Armenian lobbyist” and President Trump.

Tase falsely concludes his baseless and shameful article by stating: “These extensive and deep links to the incumbent inexperienced president and his campaign create potential national security implications and deserve scrutiny to ensure that Putin’s ongoing meddling into the US Homeland would crumble and miserably fail.”

I don’t think President Trump needs Armenian-Americans to establish communication with President Putin. Contrary to Tase’s unfounded allegations, President Trump has had a direct link to the Kremlin for a long time and does not need anyone else’s assistance.

Lebanon’s Mountains Are Being Wiped From the Map – but Does Anyone Care?

By Robert Fisk

RARELY are journalists lost for words. But how do you describe the destruction of entire mountains, the slashing down of tens of thousands of pine trees, the very shape of the landscape changed by more than 3,000 quarries which have ripped apart the geography of Lebanon and made a new map of its blessed and ancient land – the Massacre of the Mountains?

Is that good enough for a story which should shock the world if it occurred in Europe or America? I call it the Castration of Lebanon. Its fruits are dirt and crumbled rock and contaminated lakes.

The tops of entire mountainsides – millions of tons of sand and rock – have been ripped away by diggers, excavators and bulldozers to provide concrete for Beirut’s canyons of grotesque high-rise apartments: for its villas and gated city suburbs and the Lebanese Mediterranean coastal hotels.

Greed, corruption, poverty and a shameful, selfish, confessional government are to blame. Even now, as Lebanon’s sectarian parties fight for seats in a new cabinet, their nation is being physically torn apart. All they need to do is pass a law – just one piece of legislation – to stop this anarchy.

“Your Lebanon is a political knot, a national dilemma, a place of conflict and deception,” the nation’s most famous poet, Khalil Gibran, wrote in despair of his country almost a hundred years ago.

“My Lebanon is a place of beauty and dreams of enchanting valleys and splendid mountains....Your Lebanon is empty and

fleeing, whereas my Lebanon will endure forever.”

Not any more.

Come with me to Mayrouba, high on a mountain above Bikfaya, where Elias Saadeh stands on a plateau of mud and broken rock and roads – government highways – which end suddenly in sheer 500-foot chasms of stone, carved and hacked at by giant cranes and stone cutters whose claws have grooved out the inside of these mountains. Ridges, valleys and water-courses have disappeared.

“There is not a building in the ‘new’ Beirut,” Saadeh says cynically, “which does not have part of Mayrouba in its walls and foundations. They call our land here ‘gold sand’ – the best you can buy to build apartment blocks, and it’s the most expensive. But this is crazy.

“More than 120,000 of our pine trees have been cut down. We had thirty water ‘ein’ (wells) – but today we only have two left and they are both polluted.”

The two of us stare out towards mountains we’ve known and looked at for decades – but the mountains are not there. For this is now a lunar landscape whose creeping fog and damp winds prove that image reflects reality. We are looking at a lost land. Why?

“Because the people who did this are not educated,” Elias says. “Because they only see the dollar. These people make \$5,000 a day. They made people rich, but they remained uneducated. They have never learned how to love land.

“They don’t give a s@@t about the nation, about wild life or the environment – nothing! Now we are going towards desertification.”

Saadeh sounds like a modern-day Gibran. The poet’s body lies scarcely a hundred miles to the north, sealed into a cave, his tomb weighted down with chains in case his worshippers try to take his bones. “Splendid mountains” indeed.

Elias Saadeh’s tale is one of courage and political victory – for the moment, at least – because he and nine fellow villagers here in the Kesrouan mountains fought through the presidency and the courts to stop the 500 trucks, night and day, tearing away their forests and mountains. But when I tell you of his work, beware: the rest of this story is one of ugliness and tragedy.

The landscape is being further blighted each day and I was soon to watch the actual destruction of a mountain-top – in

front of my very eyes – outside a small town called Tarshish. No problem, the sand and rock was being taken for “government projects”, I was told.

But like a tiresome detective, I trailed one of the excavators’ trucks, packed with sand, down the mountains of Lebanon – and watched its contents poured into the private construction of a company selling sand to build more apartments in Beirut. Of which, more anon.

The ten members of Saadeh’s “Save Mayrouba” group say they discovered that 16 companies were quarrying 20 per cent of their village’s area. “They didn’t buy the land,” he says. “They bought a lease from the government – even if it was illegal to quarry. So they got permits to ‘clean’ the land!

“They got help from past governments – from ministers of environment, interior, industry and from the local authority. Our fathers and grandfathers tried to stop this before us – but then they didn’t have social media. We had a court order for the quarries to stop but after five days the trucks came back and the local police facilitated them.

“Then we got an audience with Claudine Aoun, the daughter of President Michel Aoun. She went to see her father and we had her help to get meetings with ministers. The problem goes back to 30 years ago when it was small-scale – but then each new minister wiped out the previous minister’s laws.”

Elias Saadeh and his friends took action through the courts and the district judge in Kesrouan stopped the destruction of the mountains around Mayrouba with a court order. Her ‘cease work’ order of 1st March this year is tied with string to the mechanical diggers still standing on the blighted hills – although mud tracks suggest some of the vehicles have been moving in recent days.

Saadeh has been frightened. “I got phone calls at night during our campaign,” he says. “People said: ‘We are going to kill you’. They are very angry. Amazing, isn’t it?

“Lebanon’s fame used to come from its poets – now it’s famous for its quarries. That’s how Lebanon ‘goes forward!’”

Some of the quarry companies were ordered to replant the trees. Twelve lopsided bushes on one broken mountain appear to be the response.

Donald Trump has previously waded into Lebanese politics, making clear his opposition to Iran-backed Hezbollah

see LEBANON, page 20



Holy Land Churches Cry Foul over Israeli Legislation on Lands

JERUSALEM (AFP) – Three major Holy Land churches implored Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu on Monday, June 18, to prevent the advancement of a draft bill they said was aimed at expropriating their lands.

Heads of the Armenian, Greek Orthodox and Catholic churches in Jerusalem also accused the Israeli authorities of failing to keep a commitment made just a few months ago that brought an end to a major crisis between the sides.

In February, the Jerusalem municipality began enforcing tax collection on church property, while separately lawmakers in the parliament worked on advancing a law that would allow expropriation of church property.

The church leaders in protest closed the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, the site in Jerusalem where Jesus is believed to have been crucified and buried, following which Israeli authorities froze both the tax measures and the legislation, committing to a dialogue with the Christians over the issues.

Rachel Azaria, a lawmaker with the centrist coalition party Kulanu, recently renewed work on a slightly revised bill that does not mention churches but would let the state expropriate the rights over lands sold by such bodies in Jerusalem, while offering compensation.

In their Monday letter to Netanyahu, the Christian leaders slammed the “scandalous bill,” accusing its backers of an “unprecedented attack against the Christians of the Land.”

“Certain elements in the government of Israel are still attempting to promote divisive, racist and subversive agendas, thereby undermining the Status Quo and targeting the Christian community on the basis of extraneous and populist considerations,” they said.

The church leaders also said that despite the Israeli commitment to communicate on these issues via a specially



Christian leaders took the rare step of closing the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, built at the site of Jesus's burial in Jerusalem, in protest at Israeli tax measures and a proposed property law.

appointed committee headed by Regional Cooperation Minister Tzachi Hanegbi, “no dialogue whatsoever has taken place with us” since the end of February.

“We view such conduct, from those who promote the bill, as a flagrant violation and undermining of Your Excellency’s commitment and of the basic and fundamental freedom of worship,” the church leaders said.

They urged Netanyahu to swiftly “block the bill whose unilateral promotion will compel the Churches to reciprocate.”

Large swathes of Jerusalem are owned by various churches, which in many cases reached long-term leasing agree-

ments with the state.

Residents living in homes on such lands fear the churches could sell the lands to private developers, who would be free to do as they wish with their property, including raising rents or razing existing structures.

Azaria said her bill did not single out churches, and was aimed at solving the problem of “thousands of Jerusalem residents who could lose their homes due to the demands of developers.”

There was no immediate comment from Netanyahu’s office while Hanegbi refused to comment.

Lebanon’s Mountains Are Being Wiped from the Map – but Does Anyone Care?

LEBANON, from page 19

The Christian church, primarily Maronite, is the biggest landowner in Lebanon although the spoliation of the country has been committed across hundreds of miles, affecting Muslims and Christians alike.

I spent hours driving through Christian villages, their Ottoman stone houses smothered in bougainvillea and roses, past roadside shrines of the Virgin, with the Maronites’ own Saint Charbel an optional extra. But when I reached the heights above, it was the same grim landscape.

Take Tarshish. It stands below a sliced and ravaged mountain that overlooks – or overlooked – the Bekaa Valley. This week, I watched the trucks carrying away its sand and stone.

But like so many of those who witness or participate in this catastrophe, the site manager, Charbel Hayek, was friendly, cheerful, offering coffee and providing a mobile phone map of how the terrifying hole in the mountain behind him would be filled with terraces for new vineyards – to grow the regions’ famous ‘Adyar’ (‘Monasteries’) wine.

But it seemed – like the other ravaged cliffs on the other side of the road – far too deep for repair with just a few earthen steps of vine trees. Hayek, who expressed his own sorrow at the blight of quarrying, showed me an ancient hermit’s stone house – at least this had been preserved – and insisted that the sand and stone being convoyed out of the mountains was to be used for “airport projects in Beirut and government projects”.

He worked for the Saint Antonious monastery at Beit Shebab near Bikfaya, he said. It all seemed simple enough.

But as we left Tarshish, another truck load of sand, partly covered with a tarpaulin, pulled out of the quarry onto the main road and headed west. And for three hours, down gorges and up forested hills – and past other quarries – we followed the big Mercedes lorry. Was it going to the airport? Or a government building project?

Readers will no doubt follow its trail with the same growing bafflement as we experienced. For when the truck, driven by a Syrian refugee, eventually reached the Mediterranean seacoast, it did not turn left towards Beirut but north, and then, just before the town of Jounieh, up into the low hills where it made a three-point

turn on the main road and arrived at the iron gates of a 55-year old private construction company.

I ran inside before the gates were closed and watched the driver upend his truck, the sand from Tarshish spilling to the ground beside tons of other dirt and rocks.

Its manager, Ramez Estephan, was as polite and obliging as Charbel Hayek. He bought the sand for “those who mix the concrete” for any kind of construction. He blamed the government for opaque laws and said he made little money. He was “upset” by the damage to the mountains. “I don’t buy the sand, I sell it...I love nature and I live in the middle of nature.”

This is true. Estephan took me to his luxurious home in the mountains for coffee. A nature reserve is next door with a sign by his own front gate telling visitors: “Do not cut trees or shrubs.”

Yes, he was upset, Estephan repeated “but can I help to stop it?...the people want to work, everybody has their own work.”

The concrete was used for housing. “My sand helped build those houses over there,” he said. “I built these roads.” So much, then, for Hayek’s government projects.

So I visited the Antonious monastery in Beit Shebab. The priest to whom I should speak about Tarshish was away, but I was told I might visit Frederic Cacchia, the monastery’s French wine-maker, several miles away.

Cacchia, a 44-year old from Marseilles with a Lebanese wife, was all charming and offered a taste of the latest Adyar vintage. He had no control over quarries but when I asked if the massive excavations at Tarshish could really be turned into terraced vineyards, he replied with a sigh.

“Not in my opinion,” he said. I returned to Beit Shebab to meet the priest whom I had been told was in charge of Tarshish.

Lebanon Prime Minister Saad Hariri resigned, then unresigned, last November, before leading his party into elections in May

Father Badih El Hajj of the Universite Saint Esprit de Kaslik, a music scholar, was intelligent and again all smiles – coffee provided, as usual – and agreed with me that the destruction of the mountains was “Catastrophique! Catastrophique!”

But then Father Badih said that he was not in fact the priest in charge of the Tarshish area. I would have to speak to Father Maroun in a monastery in the coastal town of Antelias.

And, of course, off I headed to Antelias and there was Father Maroun Audi. But, reader spare me, it seemed that while this Father Maroun managed lands below the heights of Tarshish, the top of the mountain was managed by another monk of the same name! He was Maroun Chidiac.

No matter. What Maroun Audi, who looks after a cow farm for the monastery, avocado and apple trees and makes arak, had to say was astonishing.

“In my opinion, after around 10 or 15 years, we won’t have mountains above sea level more than 1,800 metres in height! I am a monk, but I don’t have the authority to stop everything. What can I do? All I can do is write a letter. That’s the maximum.”

And Father Maroun agreed it was “not necessary” to blast away rocks and sand on top of windblown, cold Tarshish to plant vineyards.

The monk said he had blocked the selling of sand from the area he controlled, about 500 square metres, until the Lebanese Maronite Order could make a decision. He agreed that there were some within the church who had no problem selling sand and rock.

“In the area of Tarshish I control, I want to take out mineral water from the sand, not the sand itself and I am against this politics of selling sand... My superior said two years ago that we must not sell the sand. But maybe another superior will come here after two or three years and will sell sand. I cannot guarantee this.”

There was a big problem in Mayrouba because the church land was owned by another order.

“Around 40 per cent of Lebanese land is owned by the church, and in the church there are many properties for families – which they cannot sell but which we cannot manage. If you go to Tarshish now you will see land of 10,000 square metres – you will say, ‘the church will make a million dollars’ but the church will take \$10,000, \$20,000 only. But others will take most of this.”

I have the impression he has big arguments with his colleagues. “Yes, yes, yes, I ask about

this some days. I ask ‘when will you finish?’ But there is a big Mafia.”

Ask who “the mafia” is, and Father Maroun becomes very vague indeed. “Maybe some lawyer comes to the bishop, and he signs it but nobody knows what will happen after that. You cannot work with this file because it is very, very, very big.”

Incredibly, the destruction of Lebanon’s mountains has attracted little interest in the local press and none outside; the last printed article on Lebanon’s environment in the international media appears to be a story in an American newspaper last year about dog poo in Beirut.

But the small Beirut French-language paper *L’Orient Le Jour* carried a courageous supplement in March which exposed in a detailed analysis and pictures the awesome damage being done to Lebanon.

Reporter Suzanne Baaklini wrote of how the government closed its eyes to quarry owners who are “past masters in the art of getting round the law”, of how a 2007 law on quarrying was passed by the cabinet but never submitted to parliament, how further legislation was inexplicably delayed in 2012 and disappeared when the Beirut cabinet fell the following year.

It seems, Baaklini concluded, that “pressures were exercised in the shadows to keep the ‘quarry’ legislation at the bottom of the pile [in the government].”

Everyone, the quarries, the priests, the villagers share one thing in common: their condemnation of the government. And the only man who can conceivably halt the despoliation of his country is the new prime minister designate Saad Hariri, son of the former premier Rafiq Hariri who was assassinated in 2005.

However, a former MP for Saad’s parliamentary party, Mustafa Alloush, recalled for me how “when Rafiq Hariri [a Sunni Muslim] tried to enforce quarry licences, the Christians claimed he was trying to break Christian power.”

That’s sectarian Lebanon for you. But if Rafiq’s son Saad – a Sunni, too, of course – can enforce laws to stop his nation’s physical destruction, he will become one of Lebanon’s great prime ministers. By then, of course, it may be too late.