

Pashinyan Urges End to Anti-Government Protests in Artsakh

STEPANAKERT (RFE/RL) – Armenia's Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan on Monday, June 4, called for an end to anti-government protests in Nagorno-Karabakh (Artsakh) sparked by a violent dispute between security officers and other local residents.

Pashinyan made what he described as a "brotherly request" as about 200 people demonstrated in Stepanakert for a fourth day to demand the resignation of the heads of Artsakh's two main law-enforcement agencies blamed for the violence.

The starting incident was a brawl that broke out outside a Stepanakert car wash on Friday, June 1, with two groups of men bitterly arguing and pushing and punching each other for as-yet unclear reasons. Several of them turned out to be officers of Karabakh's National Security Service (NSS). There are indications that at least one other civilian participant in the fight was injured seriously.

The incident triggered a demonstration



Protestors in Stepanakert

by angry Stepanakert residents who say that it is symptomatic of what they see as impunity enjoyed by members of security

forces and their relatives. They blocked the town's main avenue, demanding the resignation of the NSS and police chiefs. The street section has since been the scene of daily anti-government rallies.

Karabakh law-enforcement authorities arrested several individuals, including two NSS officers, in the immediate aftermath of the incident. Karabakh's political leadership pledged to ensure an objective criminal investigation.

These assurances failed to satisfy the protesters, however. Their representatives twice met with Bako Sahakyan, the Karabakh president, over the weekend. Sahakyan is said to have told them late on Sunday that he is ready, in principle, to sack senior law-enforcement officials but will refrain from doing that now.

"The people will not leave until their demands are met," one of the protest leaders said after the demonstrators decided to keep the Stepanakert street closed to traffic on Monday morning.

Meanwhile, Artsakh's parliament set up a multi-party "investigative commission" at an emergency session held later in the day. The ad hoc commission is tasked with monitoring the probe of the brawl and other abuses allegedly committed by law-enforcement officials.

Pashinyan appealed to the protesters late on Monday, saying that "any violence is unacceptable regardless of who resorts to it" and calling for "concrete conclusions" to

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Mirror Partners with Artsakh TV First Broadcast: The Revival of Talish Village

STEPANAKERT/WATERTOWN – *The Armenian Mirror-Spectator* is the first diasporan media outlet to rebroadcast free Artsakh's TV reports. In accordance with an agreement between the *Mirror* and official Artsakh TV, we are starting to post our Artsakh colleagues' video reports with English subtitles. Some reports may be abridged.

The first news item from Artsakh is about the revival of Talish village of the Mardakert district of the Artsakh Republic (Republic of Mountainous Karabakh). see BROADCAST, page 2

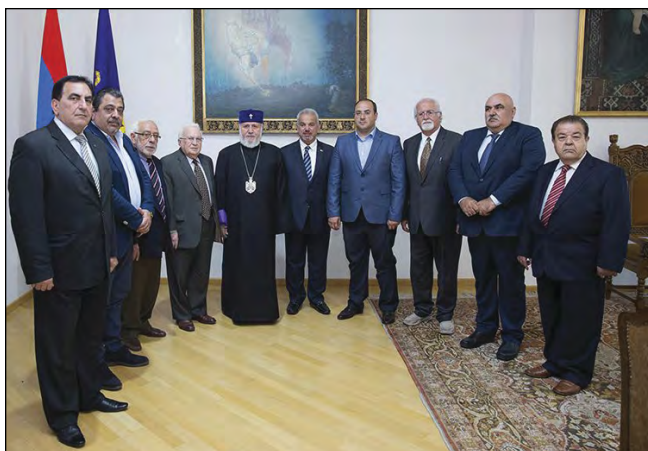
Catholicos Karekin II Receives ADL Delegation

ECHMIADZIN, Armenia – On May 27 Catholicos of All Armenians Karekin II received a delegation of the leaders of the Armenian Democratic Liberal Party (ADL) Central Committee and Supreme Council.

The Catholicos conveyed his blessings and good wishes for the forthcoming festivities [concerning the successful defense of the Armenian people and the creation of an independent Armenian republic in 1918] to the ADL representatives and stressed that all state and social structures, and community establishments, including the ADL, must work to strengthen the brave spirit of the nation and in unison work to strengthen the country and its people. He commended the important services carried out by the ADL for the Armenian people, including the support in a difficult period in the not-so-distant past for Echmiadzin.

The ADL representatives explained to the Catholicos their achievements and plans for the future. They proclaimed their

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The ADL delegation with the Catholicos: from left, Seyran Gharibyan (Armenia), Khoren Kalinian (Egypt), Hagop Avedikian (Armenia), Edmond Y. Azadian (US), Catholicos of All Armenians Karekin II, Vartan Nazerian (US), Karen Kakoyan (Armenia), Vartkes Kourouyan (US), Harout Yerganyan (Lebanon) and Bedros Topjian (Lebanon)

NEWS IN BRIEF

Pashinyan Meets with Catholicos, Supreme Spiritual Council

YEREVAN (Armenpress) – Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan visited the Mother See of Holy Echmiadzin where he met with the participants of the annual meeting of the Supreme Spiritual Council and the Bishops' Assembly.

Karekin II, Supreme Patriarch and Catholicos of All Armenians, congratulated the prime minister on his birthday and wished him success. Touching upon the recent domestic political events in Armenia, Karekin II highlighted their peaceful resolution and stated that as a result of it the country's and people's reputation has increased among the international community. He expressed confidence that it is possible to create a powerful, progressive country by the joint work of the leadership, the church and the people.

Pashinyan thanked the catholicos for the warm sentiments. "The political changes in Armenia took place under the slogan of love and solidarity. Our task is to do for that atmosphere to become permanent in Armenia and among the Armenian people", the PM said, highlighting the need to form a creative environment.

Diaspora Minister Suspends Predecessor's Summer Projects

YEREVAN (Armenpress) – The Ari Tun, My Armenia festival and Diaspora Summer School programs will be suspended, minister of Diaspora Mkhitar Hayrapetyan said. The projects will kick off later than the scheduled date, and will be revised and enriched, in terms of context.

The three programs were introduced during former minister Hranush Hakobyan's tenure.

He said that the programs are already in progress and the budgets of the three projects have been approved.

"And we had to either cancel them or postpone. We reached the best solution, we temporarily postponed the projects. They will be realized, but not from June 17. We will prepare for them properly," he said.

The minister said that the tenders have already been held and everything is approved, but certain services have high prices.

The Diaspora Summer School is a summer school for Diaspora-Armenians to visit Armenian in the summer and participate in different training courses, such as Armenian language training, training for teachers etc.

My Armenia Festival is an annual cultural event bringing together artists from the Diaspora.

Ari Tun aims at the preservation of Armenian identity among Diaspora-Armenians through visits and different programs during summer in Armenia.

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Music, Photos By Arlette

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ARMENIA

News From Armenia

Serena Williams Pondering Visit to Armenia with Family

YEREVAN (Armenpress) – American tennis player Serena Williams has talked about her plans to visit Armenia at some point, the homeland of her husband Alexis Ohanian.

“My husband is Armenian. I am learning a lot about Armenians, I am an honorary Armenian. I love how proud they are. I am planning to go over there, do not know if this year or next year. It is going to be fun!” Williams said this week according to the Italian news outlet Ubitennis.

Williams and Ohanian, cofounder of Reddit, welcomed their daughter, Alexis Ohanian Jr., in 2017.

New Japan Ambassador Meets President

YEREVAN (Armenpress) – New Ambassador of Japan to Armenia Jun Yamada on June 5 presented his credentials to President Armen Sarkissian.

The president congratulated the ambassador on his appointment. Sarkissian said Armenia attaches great importance to the friendly, partnering relations with Japan and the effective and mutually beneficial partnership in multiple fields.

Yamada thanked the President for congratulations and conveyed the warm greetings and wishes of his country's leadership to the Armenian president. Ambassador Yamada assured that he will do everything to develop the ties between the two countries.

OSCE Minsk Co-Chairs to Visit

YEREVAN (Armenpress) – The Co-Chairs of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) Minsk Group (Igor Popov of the Russian Federation, Stephane Visconti of France, and Andrew Schofer of the United States of America) will visit Armenia on June 13, a spokesman for the Armenian Ministry of Foreign Affairs Tigran Balayan told reporters on June 5.

Balayan said no agreements have been reached on meetings between Armenian and Azeri officials.

Germany Grants Largest Number of EU Visas to Armenian Applicants

BERLIN (PanARMENIAN.Net) – Germany is the European country most likely to grant Schengen visas to Armenian citizens, while Italy is the most likely to reject, reveal data compiled by SchengenVisaInfo.com specifically for PanArmenian.net.

Germany issued the biggest number of uniform Schengen visas to Armenian citizens in 2017, although Greece received and handled the highest number of visa applications in the reporting period.

Overall, Germany, Greece, Italy, Lithuania, France, Poland and the Czech Republic issued the biggest number of visas to Armenians last year.

A total of 15,183 Armenians applied for a uniform Schengen visa with the consulate of Greece, with 13,544 of them granted Schengen entries and fewer than 2,000 rejected, the platform cited statistics provided by the Migration and Home Affairs Office of the European Commission.

On the other hand, the number of uniform visa applications submitted to the German consulate totaled 14,942, out of which 13,773 were approved.

Italy grasped a higher number of applications for this type of visa too, yet, the scale of rejections was bigger. According to statistics, 11,662 visa applications were process by Italy, 9,450 of which received a favorable response, while 2,212 were denied, the highest among seven countries.

In the overall number of visas issued by Germany, Multiple Entry Visas sought for by Armenian citizens accounted for 39.2 percent. Accordingly, 30.1 percent of visas issued by Lithuania were MEVs, followed by Italy (28.3 percent), Poland (20 percent), France (18.5), Greece (17.2 percent) and the Czech Republic (15.9 percent).

Third Annual Aurora Programs Kick off in Yerevan on June 8

YEREVAN – For the third year, a series of weekend events June 8-10 will put a spotlight on the mission of the Aurora Humanitarian Initiative.

“The Aurora Weekend of events is intended to offer maximum opportunity for special guests and global humanitarians to interact and to share their knowledge and experience. In addition, we hope to introduce them to Armenia, its history and heritage, and the roots of our commitment to the humanitarian work we all do together,” explained Arman Jilavian, CEO of the Aurora Humanitarian Initiative.

In addition to the prize ceremony, there will be various opportunities to hear members of the Selection Committee or other guests at public events around Yerevan. On Friday, June 8, Ambassador Samantha Power and John Prendergast, founding director of the Enough Project, will speak about how to make impact on difficult humanitarian issues. “Making Change When Change Is Hard” will be held at the American University of Armenia. On the same day Lord Ara Darzi will have open lecture at Yerevan State Medical University.

On Saturday, June 9, from 10.30 a.m. to 4 p.m., the third iteration of the Aurora Dialogues Yerevan will take place at the Matenadaran. Former office holders, humanitarian leaders and prominent business executives meet to discuss the pressing humanitarian issues of the day. There will also be a discussion on the findings of the 2018 Aurora Humanitarian Index, an annual survey examining public perceptions of major humanitarian issues across multiple geographic areas.

The weekend's final event, the pre-

sentation of the Aurora Prize, celebrates the strength of the human spirit that compels action in the face of adversity, and is offered on behalf of the survivors of the Armenian Genocide, and in gratitude to their saviors. This gratitude is manifested in all Aurora initiatives, intended to support those who defend human values and human life.

Unlike the prize ceremonies of 2016 and 2017, the 2018 ceremony is divided in three parts. The first part is a program at the TUMO Center on Saturday, June 9, at 6 p.m. This program, titled “honoring Humanitarians,” will introduce the three Aurora Humanitarians – U Kyaw Hla Aung of Myanmar, Sunitha Krishnan, of India and Father Tomás González Castillo from Mexico. Master of ceremonies David Ignatius will return to lead this and the other segments of the trilogy.

The second part is a sunrise ceremony which will take place about 30 minutes outside Yerevan, as close to Mount Ararat as is possible, within Armenia's borders. The timing and the location are both symbolic since Aurora means dawn and is dedicated to awakening humanity. The presentation of the 2018 Aurora Laureate will be made there, at dawn, in the presence of a relatively small community of invited humanitarians.

A special ceremony dedicated to the inscription of the 2018 Aurora Prize Laureate's name in “The

Chronicles of Aurora” will also take place on June 10, at the Matenadaran, home to one of the world's richest depositories of medieval manuscripts and books. “The Chronicles of Aurora,” the hand-written tome containing depictions of the Aurora



David Ignatius

Humanitarian Initiative activities, will have new stories about the Aurora Humanitarians and the Laureate added each year.

“Aurora 2018: A Tribute to the 2018 Laureate” is the concluding portion which will take place on June 10 in an evening ceremony at the Spendiaryan National Academic Opera and Ballet Theatre. There, the co-founders of the Aurora Humanitarian Initiative and guests will gather to celebrate the power of humanity and exceptional courage and impact of the 2018 Aurora

Top Judge Resigns

YEREVAN (RFE/RL) – One of Armenia's most powerful judges who has long been accused by lawyers of restricting judicial independence in the country stepped down on Tuesday, June 5.

Arman Mkrtumyan has headed the Court of Cassation, the highest body of criminal and civil justice, for the last 10 years. He joined the court as a senior judge in 1998.

In a statement announcing his resignation, Mkrtumyan, 57, cited the need to let “experienced young people” play a greater role in Armenia's judicial system. He made no mention of the recent change of government that followed weeks of nationwide mass protests led by Nikol Pashinyan.

Shortly after being elected as the country's prime minister on May 8, Pashinyan said that Armenian courts will no longer be acting on government

orders. He urged judges to strictly adhere to laws and ignore possible pressure from state institutions or non-state actors.

Despite having undergone frequent structural changes over the past two decades, the domestic judiciary is still regarded by many Armenians as corrupt and not independent.

The Court of Cassation and Mkrtumyan in particular have long been the main source of complaints from Armenian trial attorneys. The latter have accused him of severely limiting the independence of lower courts.

Mkrtumyan came under fire in 2011 after engineering the controversial sacking of a Yerevan judge who granted bail to a criminal suspect contrary to prosecutors' wishes.

The judge, Samvel Mnatsakanyan, was dismissed by then President Serzh

Sarkisian upon the recommendation of the Justice Council, a state body overseeing Armenian courts. The council was headed by Mkrtumyan at the time.

Mnatsakanyan claimed after his sacking that many Armenian judges are primarily concerned with not upsetting the Court of Cassation, rather than enforcing laws.

In June 2013, about 200 Armenian lawyers went on a two-day strike to protest what they called arbitrary decisions made by the high court. They specifically denounced the court's refusal to consider the vast majority of appeals lodged by them in criminal or civil cases.

Later in 2013, the then human rights ombudsman, Karen Andreasian, released an extensive report that accused judges of routinely taking bribes in return for corresponding rulings.

Mirror Partners with Artsakh TV

BROADCAST, from page 1

Situated right next to the contact line with the Azerbaijani forces, Talish was subject to aggression during the Four Day War of April of 2016. Today, with a single family, the Ohanians, living in Talish, the village shows signs of resilience and revival.

The other report from Artsakh tells the story of blogger Alexander Lapshin, who was arrested in Belarus upon Azerbaijan's request and later extradited to Baku. The reason for his arrest and later imprisonment was his travel to Artsakh. Later on, Lapshin was released thanks to Israel's mediation. Lapshin is a citizen of Israel, Russia and Ukraine.

To see the videos, visit <https://mirrorspectator.com/2018/05/31/mirror-partners-with-artsakh-tv-first-rebroadcast-the-revival-of-talish/>



A member of the Ohanian Family in Talish

Catholicos Karekin II Receives ADL Delegation

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loyalty to the Catholicos of All Armenians, and the readiness to stand strong with the Armenian Church in the future just as they did in the past.

The Catholicos responded with an expression of satisfaction that the political party would continue in its role of dedication to the Armenian Church and to Echmiadzin.



ARMENIA

Intense Particle Showers from Thunderclouds Could Lead to New Studies

MT. ARAGATS, Armenia —The Yerevan Physics Institute's Cosmic Ray Division (CRD) research station, near the south peak of Mt. Aragats at 10,500 ft. elevation, observed intense radiation from thunderclouds in the beginning of May. Each burst lasted from milliseconds to a few minutes with new bursts occurring for many hours. Gamma rays reached energies of up to 50 million electron-Volts. This radiation was generated in charged layers within thunderclouds.

The CRD has been studying the phenomena of Thunderstorm Ground Enhancements (TGEs), a process in which radiation is generated in thunderstorm atmospheres. Though Mt. Aragats experiences frequent and severe thunderstorms, the energy and duration of these radiation bursts surprised even CRD's physicists who have been conducting research in this field for 10 years. Each radiation burst terminated when lightning flashes occurred, then new bursts of radiation would begin. CRD scientist, Dr. Bagrat Mailyan, published a seminal paper describing the energy spectrum of these radiation bursts in 2012.

Extensive data on the radiation, meteorological parameters, electric and magnetic field measurements, etc. has been logged. The capability to log this data was due to the dedicated effort of the scientists, engineers, and support personnel who kept the equipment atop Mt. Aragats running throughout severe mountain storms during the winter months. Winter snow often reaches the 2nd floor windows of the buildings at CRD's Aragats research station.

CRD's head, Prof. Ashot Chilingarian, indicated that a number of research reports will be forthcoming based on the recent observations, allowing scientists to gain a new understanding of this enigmatic phenomenon. This research could require new aircraft safety procedures. Since this radiation



Aragats Research Station is perched near the south summit of Mt. Aragats, about 3200 meters above sea level. Some 100 kilometers south, over the border with Turkey, lies Mount Ararat, the reputed resting place of the biblical Noah's Ark.

can generate carbon-14 isotopes in the atmosphere, it could provide new calibration procedures for carbon dating of archaeological samples, which relies on a presumed known level of carbon-14 in the earth's atmosphere.

President, Wife Visit Orran Center to Celebrate Children's Day

YEREVAN — On the occasion of Children's Day on June 1, President Armen Sarkissian and Nune Sarkissian visited Orran benevolent organization and attended the festive event organized for children. The president congratulated the kids on the occasion of the holiday as well as expressed thanks to the founders and staff of Orran for their works. The president and his

wife, Nune Sarkissian made hamburgers for the children, listened to their performances, and together with them cut the cake. Along with the pupils of Orran, children from the ethnic minority families living in Armenia also took part in the celebration.

"Children's Day isn't only June 1st, but for 365 days on," Sarkissian said.



President Armen Sarkissian and his wife, Nune, serve hamburgers to the kids.



President Armen Sarkissian and his wife, Nune interact with the kids.

Sarkissian joked that his culinary masterpiece in the kitchen is a simple omelet, a fact which his wife can vouch for.

After coming together at the festive table, children began to munch on the burgers.

9 year old Lili Mkrtchyan said the burgers were delicious and she wants the President to

visit them again.

Orran was founded by Armine and Raffi Hovannisian in 2000. Its mission is to help at-risk children.

Currently the Yerevan center of Orran houses 115 children, while the center in Vanadzor houses 125 children.

Armenian Mayor Suspended over Street Violence

MASIS, Armenia (RFE/RL) — The mayor of an Armenian town and his deputy were suspended on Tuesday, June 5, pending an investigation into their alleged role in a violent attack on opposition supporters who demonstrated in Yerevan in April.

Mayor Davit Hambardzumian of Masis, who is affiliated with the former Republican Party (HHK), was detained and charged last week with organizing the assault carried out by several dozen masked men one day before HHK leader Serzh Sargsyan resigned as Armenia's prime minister. He denies the accusations.

A Yerevan court refused on Saturday to allow law-enforcement authorities to keep Hambardzumian and four other suspects,

among them Masis's Deputy Mayor Karen Ohanian, in pre-trial detention. They all were set free in the courtroom.

Armenia's Office of the Prosecutor-General has yet to say whether it will appeal against the court's decision condemned by civic groups.

Instead, the law-enforcement agency announced on Tuesday that a prosecutor overseeing the criminal investigation into the April 22 incident has decided to suspend Hambardzumian and Ohanian in line with an article of the Armenian Criminal Code. A spokeswoman for the office, Arevik Khachatryan, said the two men could obstruct the probe if they continued to perform their local government duties.

The Armenian Ministry for Territorial Administration and the municipality of Masis, a small town about 10 kilometers south of Yerevan, have already been notified about the suspension, Khachatryan said.

The violence occurred in Yerevan's southern Erebuni district just hours after Nikol Pashinyan was detained by security forces. Hundreds of supporters demonstrating there were attacked by several dozen thugs wearing medical masks and wielding sticks and even electric shock guns.

Similar attacks were also reported in other parts of the Armenian capital. Pashinyan's political team blamed the HHK for them. The former ruling party has denied any involvement in the violence.



Mayor Davit Hambardzumian of Masis



INTERNATIONAL

International News

World Football Legends To Take Part in Friendly Match July 8 in Armenia

YEREVAN (PanARMENIAN.Net) — World-famous football stars will arrive in Armenia to play in “the match of the legends” between the teams of Latin America and Europe on July 8, owner of FC Pyunik Artur Soghomonyan has revealed, according to Panorama.am.

According to him, a number of A-list football stars have already confirmed their participation including Cafu, Rivaldo, Hernán Crespo, Gabriel Batistuta, Dida, Iván Zamorano, Aldair, Júlio César, Serginho from Latin America, as well as Paolo Maldini, Youri Djorkaeff, Hristo Stoichkov, Kakha Kaladze, Demetrio Albertini, Ludovic Giuly, Ryan Giggs from Europe.

A fan zone of the World Cup 2018 will be created in Yerevan on July 6-8, with the match of football legends set to be held on July 8 at the Republican stadium.

“July 8 was not chosen by chance. This is the first day of rest, when no matches will be played — on the eve of the semifinals, the teams will be given two days to prepare” Soghomonyan said.

“Therefore, we think that the event in Yerevan will attract the attention of not only Armenian football fans, but also fans from around the world.

“The squads are not complete yet, we are still negotiating with many others.”

All proceeds from ticket sales will go to charity.

German Ambassador Considers Partnership with Armenia

YEREVAN (Armenpress) — Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan received Ambassador of Germany to Armenia Bernhard Matthias Kiesler.

PM Pashinyan attached importance to the development of the Armenian-German partnership and stated that the Armenian government is interested in taking steps to give new impetus to expanding and strengthening the bilateral political and economic ties. “We welcome the projects implemented in Armenia by Germany in the infrastructure development and other spheres. We are ready to jointly increase the cooperation of our countries to a new level which will contribute to boosting commercial ties, attracting and effectively implementing investments,” Pashinyan said.

During the meeting a number of issues relating to increase of trade turnover volumes between the two countries, the geopolitical situation in the region, holding snap parliamentary elections in Armenia, the reforms of the Electoral Code, as well as issues of bilateral interest were discussed.

FM: Armenia Treading Carefully between Iran, US

YEREVAN (Armenpress) — Armenia is following the developments around the Iran nuclear deal with concern, Armenia’s Foreign Minister Zohrab Mnatsakanyan said in an interview with RFE/RL.

“Certainly, we follow these developments with concern, because the issue related to very important partners of ours. Relations with Iran are of vital importance for us and during these 27 years, I am not referring to the entire history of relations between our two peoples, but at least during these 27 years we have established, formed relations, where the vital significance of our relations has appeared and is put very clearly. At the same time we have a very clear and deep agenda with our other colleague — the US. We have always been very delicate in this issue and we have made efforts to make our policy explicable,” Mnatsakanyan said.

“Certainly, the latest developments are very concerning, we must continue, again being very sensitive to these realities, make our concerns explicable, our stances based on this and maintain ourselves in the field to not have more harms for us. This relates to our colleagues, to all colleagues who are involved in this direct process, including Iran and the US,” he said.

Netanyahu Pushes Back on Genocide Bill

TEL AVIV (Ynetnews) — Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu on Sunday, June 3, postponed the planned until after the Turkish elections planned for June 24, at the recommendation of the Israeli Foreign Ministry.

The Israeli Foreign Ministry explained that the discussion could help Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan get reelected.

The Ministerial Committee for Legislation was supposed to vote on two bills to recognize the Armenian genocide on Sunday, one proposed by Knesset Member Itzik Shmuli (Zionist Union) and another by MK Amir Ohana (Likud), but the votes were postponed at Netanyahu’s request.

Shmuli said in response to the Foreign Ministry’s statement Sunday

morning, “That’s a false and ridiculous explanation. If foreign ministries in the world had acted in such a cowardly and utilitarian manner when recognizing the Jewish Holocaust, where would we be today? The Jewish state’s prime minister shouldn’t have to dance to Erdogan’s tune and play an active role in denying that people were massacred in concentration camp and marches of death, but should do what he should have done a long time ago.”

Knesset Speaker Yuli Edelstein said in response to the Foreign Ministry statement, “For the sake of all of us, we should put an end to this issue and it shouldn’t be linked to the relations with Turkey. It’s our moral duty.”

Edelstein rejected the ministry’s recommendation, saying that “the

Foreign Ministry’s response hasn’t changed for the past 30 years. There was no element of surprise here, but it’s something I have been trying to explain for years. In most countries, the the genocide that took place a little over 100 years ago wasn’t recognized by governments, but by parliaments.”

He added that “there are about 30 parliaments around the world, including the French congress and parliament, that have recognized the genocide. I believe the Knesset, the Israeli parliament, must make a similar move. The government always has diplomatic considerations, considerations in the area of bilateral relations with different countries. The Knesset must make the right, moral and obvious decision.”

Naming Chaldean as Cardinal Is Gift to Struggling Church

By Doreen Abi Raad

Catholic News Service

BEIRUT (CNS) — Pope Francis’ naming of Chaldean Patriarch Louis Raphael I Sako as cardinal on June 5 is a gift to the Chaldean Catholic Church, which has been struggling in the face of terrorism, said an Iraqi archbishop.

Chaldean Archbishop Yousif Thomas Mirkis of Kirkuk and Sulaimaniyah called Cardinal-designate Sako a “courageous voice.”

“He’s transparent in his way to guide our Church and with his presence. He’s a very special man, spiritually,” Archbishop Mirkis told Catholic News Service, adding that under Patriarch Sako’s leadership there has been a particular focus on new vocations.

“The Catholic Church is a global Church. We are Catholic and this nomination is a sign of our catholicity” as Chaldeans, Archbishop Mirkis added.

Cardinal-designate Sako, 69, is one of 14 new cardinals who will be elevated in a consistory at the Vatican June 29. Pope Francis made the announcement May 20, and Archbishop Mirkis told CNS the following day: “This is a gift from the

pope to our Church, all the Chaldean Church, which has been struggling against fanaticism and terrorism all these years and (is) especially meaningful since we gave many martyrs.”

Cardinal-designate Sako’s appointment follows the announcement earlier in May that the Vatican has formally opened the cause for canonization of Chaldean Father Ragheed Aziz Ganni and three deacons who were gunned down in Mosul, Iraq, in 2007. Chaldeans are the indigenous people of Iraq, whose roots trace back thousands of years.

Speaking to Catholic News Service from the patriarchate in Baghdad May 23, Cardinal-designate Sako said he did not expect to be made a cardinal, but he saw it as “a big support for persecuted Christians and minorities and also for all the culture of dialogue, of peace, the respect of life and human rights.”

“Through me, (Pope Francis) is giving a message to everyone to be at a level of tolerance, forgiveness, reconciliation, and finishing with wars, conflicts, because there is no future with that. The only future is to sit together, to dialogue, (in order) to realize peace and stability,” he said.

The cardinal-designate, who is a member of the Middle East Council of Churches and a strong advocate for ecumenism, said “it is the moment

now” for Christians in the Middle East to be united. “We are a small flock, not only in Iraq, but in Syria and other countries.”

“We have to be united. When we are one — one position, one speech and one clear vision — then we can survive and we can also witness our Christian values. Otherwise, we are just, excuse me to say, ‘small groceries’ here and there, and very weak,” Patriarch Sako said.

Before the American-led invasion of 2003, there were more than 1.5 million Christians in Iraq. More than half of that Christian population has migrated due to discrimination, threats, abductions and especially the expulsion of some 120,000 Christians from their homes in the Ninevah Plain by Islamic State in 2014.

Cardinal-designate Sako has worked tirelessly for peace, coexistence and national reconciliation in Iraq and the Middle East, as well as for unity among Churches. Lamenting the exodus of Christians from Iraq, he repeatedly has appealed to the central government and local authorities to guarantee them a peaceful future in their homeland.

In January, the cardinal designate was nominated for the 2018 Nobel Peace Prize. His nomination, submitted by the French Catholic association L’Oeuvre d’Orient, was later accepted by the Norwegian Nobel Committee.

Cardinal-designate Sako was born in Zakho, Iraq, July 4, 1948. He studied in Mosul and was ordained a priest there in 1974. He holds two doctorates: one in Eastern patristics at the Pontifical Oriental Institute in Rome, the second in history from the Sorbonne in Paris.

After studying abroad, the cardinal-designate returned to Iraq in 1986, where he served as pastor for 11 years in Mosul. During the U.S.-led embargo of Iraq, he and several physicians and pharmacists opened a dispensary for the poor. Between 1997 and 2002 he served as rector of the Patriarchal Seminary in Baghdad before returning to his diocese of origin to serve as a parish priest. In 2003, eight months after the U.S.-led invasion of Iraq, he was appointed archbishop of Kirkuk.

He was elected to lead the Chaldean Church in early 2013, and Pope Benedict XVI formally recognized the election soon after.



Pope Francis greets Chaldean Catholic Patriarch Louis Sako of Baghdad, Iraq, during a meeting with Chaldean Catholics at the Church of St. Simon the Tanner in Tbilisi, Georgia, in this Sept. 30, 2016, file photo. Patriarch Sako was one of 14 new cardinals named by the pope May 20. (Paul Haring/CNS)



INTERNATIONAL

US and Turkey Agree on Kurds' Withdrawal From Syrian Town

By Carlotta Gall

ISTANBUL (*New York Times*) – The United States and Turkey agreed Monday, June 4, on a plan to withdraw Kurdish fighters from the northern Syrian city of Manbij as a step toward resolving one of the tensest disputes to erupt recently between the countries.

Secretary of State Mike Pompeo and Turkey's foreign minister, Mevlut Cavusoglu, "endorsed a road map" to "ensure security and stability in Manbij," according to a State Department statement issued after the two officials met in Washington on Monday.

Neither side released details of the plan, but Turkish and American officials confirmed that it called for the withdrawal of Kurdish forces from the city. The agreement hands a significant gain to President Recep Tayyip Erdogan of Turkey just weeks ahead of presidential elections.

Turkish officials said the road map calls for the Kurdish militia in Manbij – the People's Protection Units – as well as Kurdish commanders and political leaders to withdraw from the town and be replaced by local leaders. They also said that the plan called for Turkish and American forces to jointly oversee stabilization operations in the area.

American officials would not confirm details of the plan, but two officials said that it called for the eventual withdrawal of the Kurdish militia in Manbij. The officials, who spoke on the condition of anonymity, did not confirm that there was a plan for the two countries to jointly oversee the city.

Manbij emerged as a potential flash point between the United States and Turkey, which are NATO allies, after Mr. Erdogan sent Turkish forces to seize control of the Kurdish enclave of Afrin in January. Mr. Erdogan

vowed to continue on to Manbij and oust the Kurdish militias there. But those Kurdish militias are allied with American Special Forces, which said they would resist any attack.

Turkey regards the Kurdish militia as an affiliate of the Kurdistan Workers' Party, which has been designated a terrorist group by both Turkey and the United States. Turkey has said that American support for the militia amounts to arming a group that has been fighting an insurgency in Turkey for 30 years.

But the Pentagon considers the militia its most reliable fighting partner in the region. The Kurdish fighters form the command component of American-backed Syrian Democratic Forces, which is fighting the Islamic State.

The Pentagon is loath to abandon the Kurdish fighters once the war against the Islamic State is over. It says Turkish operations against the Syrian Kurds are undermining the fight against the Islamist extremists.

Despite the fierce rhetoric from Ankara, the United States and Turkey have been in discussions over Manbij for months. But an agreement has been elusive, delayed by multiple other disputes between the countries.

The United States Congress is considering delaying Turkey's purchase of F-35 fighter jets, partly in retaliation for Turkey's purchase of a Russian S-400 surface-to-air defense system, Turkish analysts and media have said.

Turkey has demanded the extradition of a United States-based Islamic preacher, Fethullah Gulen, whom it accuses of instigating a failed coup in 2016. American officials have said Turkey has not provided enough credible evidence.

In a widespread crackdown against tens of thousands accused of being followers of Mr.

Gulen, Turkey has also detained half a dozen Americans, including an American pastor, Andrew Brunson, and two American consulate employees.

Turkey has several times announced that it has reached an agreement on Manbij, including with the former Secretary of State Rex W. Tillerson just days before he was removed from his post in March. The United States has repeatedly said no deal has been reached.

Even on Monday, the two sides appeared out of sync. The State Department statement was vague, giving no details of the plan, and several American officials, asked to confirm information from Turkey, said the announcement had taken them by surprise.

Cavusoglu said there was "a clear schedule" for the plan. "We are talking about a couple of months, not six months," he told Turkish journalists. "It needs to be less than six months."

Turkey's government spokesman, Bekir Bozdag, also said Monday that a schedule had been set for the People's Protection Units leave the region. "It is not open ended," he told Turkey's semiofficial news agency Anadolu.

The two American officials, however, said that the agreement was based on conditions on the ground and that no timetable had been set.

Turkish officials and political analysts outlined a three-month road map last week calling for Kurdish commanders to withdraw from Manbij within 30 days of the agreement being signed. That road map also said that American and Turkish forces would undertake joint patrols to oversee security in the city, and vet local Syrian commanders and officials to take over local security and governance in the following months.

American officials did not confirm these details and Turkish officials did not say

Monday whether those elements had been agreed to.

According to that road map, the American-led forces fighting the Islamic State, known as the Syrian Democratic Forces, who are predominantly Arab, will remain in Manbij. But the Kurdish commanders would be withdrawn and local Arab commanders will replace them. Local leaders would be selected to run the local council, which has been dominated for the last few years by the Kurdish Democratic Union Party, a group closely affiliated with the Kurdistan Workers' Party.

Mehmet Akarca, head of Turkey's General Directorate for Press and Information and an adviser to President Erdogan, said that Turkey would establish a base on the outskirts of Manbij, which lies close to the Turkish border, and maintain observer status alongside American forces. Turkey would not conduct any further military operations like the operation into Afrin, he said.

"The main thing is we do not want a terrorist presence just across our border," he said. "They are right across the border, on the tip of our noses."

"The deal is done. They will withdraw in coming days," he said. "This is the right way to go, for America to deal with Turkey in a peaceful way."

The deal will allow Mr. Erdogan to claim a significant victory in removing a Kurdish political and military presence that he has labeled a terrorist threat and would open up the Arab city of Manbij for Syrian refugees to return from Turkey.

The city is protected from Syrian government strikes by American air power, but many Arabs have been reluctant to live under the Kurdish-run administration, which among other things enforced military conscription.

The change of leadership could be fraught and could cause the displacement of civilians, however.

United States officials expressed concerns for Kurdish civilians in Manbij who may come under pressure to leave with the Kurdish forces, or could suffer from retaliation of returning Arabs, as happened in Afrin.

Much still remains to be worked out but joint patrols could probably start soon, Amanda Sloat, a senior fellow at Brookings and former foreign policy official in the Obama administration, said in emailed comments. "Decisions on vetting and personnel changes in security/governance structures will undoubtedly take longer – that is where implementation challenges could arise."

(Helene Cooper and Thomas Gibbons-Neff contributed reporting from Washington.)

New Russian Ambassador Visits Armenian Foreign Minister

YEREVAN – On June 4, Zohrab Mnatsakanyan, Foreign Minister of Armenia, received Sergey Kopirkin, newly appointed Ambassador of Russia, on the occasion of handing over the copies of his credentials.

Congratulating the ambassador on his appointment, Mnatsakanyan expressed hope that during his tenure Kopirkin will contribute to the further deepening and expansion of the Armenian-Russian allied relations.

The newly appointed ambassador of Russia thanked Mnatsakanyan for his warm reception and good wishes and in his turn congratulated the foreign minister on his new post. The ambassador noted that he starts his mission in a friendly country, which at the same time increases the responsibility by taking into account the high level and inclusiveness of relations between the two countries.

Kopirkin assured Mnatsakanyan that he will do his utmost not only to ensure the continuity, but also to further develop and deepen traditional friendly relations and strategic partnership between Armenia and Russia in both bilateral and multilateral formats.

The two discussed a number of issues on the Armenian-Russian agenda, touched upon the timetable of high-ranking mutual visits in context of May 14 meeting between Prime Minister of Armenia Nikol Pashinyan and President of Russia Vladimir Putin.

They highlighted the importance of effective cooperation between the Foreign Ministries of the two countries, exchanged views on the coordination of activities within the international platforms.

During the meeting the recent domestic political developments, as well as a number of regional and international issues were discussed.

The Foreign Minister of Armenia highly praised Russia's efforts undertaken jointly with the other Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) Minsk Group Co-Chair countries – France and the United States – aimed at the peaceful settlement of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, by highlighting the importance of environment conducive to peace.



Zohrab Mnatsakanyan, Foreign Minister of Armenia, right, with Ambassador Sergey Kopirkin

Turkish Military Reportedly Advances 26 km into Iraqi Territory

ISTANBUL (PanARMENIAN.Net) – The Turkish Armed Forces advanced at least 26 kilometers (km) into Iraqi territory this past weekend, as they continue their military operations against the outlawed Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK), Al-Masdar News reports.

"Our soldiers advanced between 26 to 27 kilometers in northern Iraq, and there is not much left to liberate in Qandil," Turkish state-owned Anadolu Agency reported, citing Interior Minister Suleyman Soyulu.

At the same time, two Turkish soldiers were reportedly killed and another was injured when the PKK carried out an ambush in the Qandil region.

The Iraqi government has repeatedly called on the Turkish military to withdraw from their territory; however, Ankara has ignored Baghdad's demands and expanded their operations inside the country.

Community News

Hye M'rtsoom Weekend Welcomes 250 ACYOA Juniors

By Kathryn Ashbahian

WATERTOWN — ACYOA Juniors gathered over Memorial Day weekend at St. James Church of Watertown, MA, for the 43rd annual Hye M'rtsoom program. The parish hosted 251 participants from 17 parishes across the Eastern Diocese of the Armenian Church of America, for a weekend of worship, sports, and fellowship.

The new Diocesan Primate, the Very Rev. Fr. Daniel Findikyan, spent time among the teens gathered in Watertown, shuttling between the Juniors event and the ACYOA Seniors Assembly taking place concurrently in New York.

Parish pastor the Rev. Arakel and Yn. Natasha Aljalian worked alongside parish youth minister Maria Derderian and community members to ensure the success of the weekend. Events were held at the Watertown church's Charles Mosesian Cultural and Youth Center, with participants housed among local families.

The Very Rev. Mesrop Parsamyan, Diocesan Director of Ministries, and Kathryn Ashbahian, of the Diocese's Department of Youth and



Young athletes relaxing between games

Young Adult Ministries, visited throughout the weekend.

During a Saturday morning service, the participants gathered in the chapel and heard an inspiring message by Diocesan Primate Fr. Daniel Findikyan.

Sports and Service

Findikyan introduced himself to the group of young people ages 13 to 18, and explained his role and responsibilities as Primate, sharing his excitement for the future of the church, and encouraging the youth to introduce themselves to him so that they would recognize him at future events.

Participants also created "Hye-lights" of themselves, which included a selfie and a description of the activities they like to do to make them a light in the world.

Halfway through the sports, participants gathered in the kitchen to make hundreds of sandwiches for Pine Street Inn, a Boston shelter that serves the area's homeless population.

Once the sports concluded for the day, participants headed home for dinner with their host families and then returned to St. James for an evening dance and activities.

see SPORTS, page 8



Very Rev. Daniel Findikyan and former Primate Archbishop Khajag Barsamian with award recipients

ACYOA Gathers at St. Vartan Cathedral for 2018 Assembly And Sports Weekend

NEW YORK — Youth and clergy from across the Eastern Diocese gathered in New York City over Memorial Day weekend (May 24-28) for the 72nd annual ACYOA General Assembly and Sports Weekend.

By Arsen Yelegen

Newly elected Primate of the Eastern Diocese of the Armenian Church of America, the Very Rev. Daniel Findikyan, presided over the gathering.

Events took place in and around the Diocesan Center, to honor the 50th anniversary year of the St. Vartan Armenian Cathedral. The weekend was hosted by a Regional Host Committee, chaired by Liana Kurkjian of White Plains, NY.

ACYOA's General Assembly was held Friday, May 25, in Haik and Alice Kavookjian Auditorium. It was chaired by Daniel Zalinov of St. Sarkis Church of Charlotte, NC, and vice-chaired by Michael Demirchian of the Hye Pointe Church of Bradford, MA.

Assembly and Awards

The assembly began with a morning service in the cathedral sanctuary. Following the service, the 2018 General Assembly and Sports Weekend Regional Host Committee welcomed the delegates and clergy. Reports of the Central Council report and the Diocesan Department of Youth and Young Adult Ministries were presented. The report by the 2017 General Assembly and Sports Weekend Host Committee was presented as well.

Findikyan addressed the General Assembly for the first time as the new Primate, welcoming the participants to the weekend. After presenting a piece of literature from "The Teaching of St. Gregory," the Primate opened the floor for a Q&A session with the delegates.

Members of the Central Council presented the annual ACYOA awards during the Primate's luncheon on Friday afternoon. The "Chapter 'A' Award" was presented to the Hye Pointe Church.

The "Rev. Fr. Haroutiun and Yn. Patricia Dagley Award" was presented to Yn. LuAnn Sabounjian of the Holy Translators Church of Framingham, MA, for her dedication and continued service to the youth of the Armenian Church.

The "Very Rev. Fr. Haigazoun Melkonian Award" was presented to the former Primate of the Eastern Diocese of the Armenian Church of America, Archbishop Khajag Barsamian, for his exemplary service, devotion, and leadership on behalf of the youth of the Armenian Church for the past 28 years.

The "Sam Nersesian Award" — given to individuals who display Christian values of love, patience, humility, and understanding — was presented to Sandra Hovsepian of Holy Trinity Church of Cambridge, Mass.

The "Gregory Arpajian Leadership Award" was presented to Jonathan Pelaez of St. Mary Church of Livingston, NJ, for his leadership and service to the Armenian Church and community.

Sporting Events

Following the Primate's luncheon, delegates broke into small groups for a "Diving Deep" discussion session about the 1968 Williams Bay Manifesto, led by the ACYOA Central Council.

Elections were held to fill three vacancies on the ACYOA Central Council, one of which was left by outgoing member Danielle Malconian. Nora Knadjian and Arsen Yelegen were both re-elected for a second term. Nicholas Tashjian of St. Leon Church of Fair Lawn, NJ, was newly elected to the Central Council.

Following General Assembly on Friday evening, delegates and observers socialized at a reception.

see GAMES, page 7

Rev. Kouzouian's 60th Anniversary Raises More than \$221,000 to Benefit Homeless in Armenia and Muratsan Chemotherapy Clinic

By Seta A. Buchter

CAMBRIDGE, Mass. — On Friday, May 11, under the auspices of the Diocese of the Armenian Church of America (Eastern), clergy, family, guests, parishioners and friends came together to celebrate the 60th anniversary of the ordination to the priesthood of Rev. Mampre A. Kouzouian in the Charles and Nevart Talanian Cultural Hall of Holy Trinity Armenian Church of Greater Boston. Among the 260 guests were four archbishops: Archbishop Nathan Hovhannissian, representing Karekin II, Supreme Patriarch and Catholicos of All Armenians; Archbishop Vatche Hovsepian, former Primate, Diocese of the Armenian Church of America (Western), who was Fr. Mampre's presenter at his ordination and best man at his wedding; Archbishop Khajag Barsamian, former Primate, Diocese of the Armenian Church of America (Eastern); and Archbishop Vicken Aykazian, Diocesan Legate and Ecumenical Director; as well as clergy from the Diocese of the Armenian Church of America (Eastern) and the Greater Boston area.

At Fr. Mampre's request, funds raised from gifts on this occasion were earmarked to support two causes, the children at the Muratsan Chemotherapy Clinic of Yerevan State Medical University, a pediatric oncology clinic that



Archbishop Nathan Hovhannissian bestowing on Rev. Mampre A. Kouzouian the Vartabedagan Lanchakhach sent from Catholicos Karekin II

treats children from all over Armenia, as well as homeless individuals and families in the Vagharshapat region surrounding Holy Echmiadzin. Of the \$221,000 raised, \$25,000 was designated to underwrite most of the banquet costs. On May 30, a check in the amount of \$182,975.67 was sent to the Diocese for forwarding to Catholicos Karekin II, for distribution for the intended purposes. As additional gifts are received, they will be forwarded to the Diocese for Holy Echmiadzin.

James M. Kalustian served as master of ceremonies during the Banquet and with humor and anecdotes, introduced a Program that celebrated Kouzouian's dedicated years of service and commitment to the Armenian Church and her people. Daniel K. Dorian, Jr., Parish Council chair, in his celebratory toast, spoke of his own family's long association with the honoree, dating back to St. Mary's Armenian Church in Irvington NJ, which was Kouzouian's first pastoral assignment, to Holy Trinity Armenian Church, which was his last. On behalf of the Holy Trinity Parish, Dorian, along with Parish Council Vice Chair Gregory A. Kolligian, Jr., presented him with a framed picture of Holy Trinity's Sanctuary dome.

All present raised their glasses to toast

see KOUZOUIAN, page 8



COMMUNITY NEWS

New Primate Findikyan Presides Over Ascension Day Badarak in Trumbull

By Deacon Allan Y. Jendian

TRUMBULL, Conn. — On Thursday, May 16, a special mass was celebrated at the Diocesan parish named for the Holy Ascension, as the Armenian Church celebrated the Feast of the Ascension (Hampartzoum).

The Badarak celebrated by Fr. Mesrob Hovsepyan of St. Gregory the Enlightener of White Plains, NY, was presided by the new Primate of the Eastern Diocese of the Armenian Church, the Very Rev. Daniel Findikyan.

Holy Ascension parish priest, Fr. Untzag Nalbandian, hosted the occasion. Priests participating were: the Very Rev. Simeon Odabashian, Diocesan Vicar; the Very Rev. Mesrob Parsamyan, Diocesan Ministries Director; Fr. Karekin Kasparian, Pastor Emeritus, St. Gregory the Enlightener of White Plains, NJ; Fr. Diran Bohajian, St. Leon of Fair Lawn, NJ; Fr. Daniel Karadjian, St. Stepanos of Elberon, NJ; Fr. Gomidas Zohrabian, St. George of Hartford, Conn.; Fr. Kapriel Mouradjian, Holy Resurrection of New Britain, CT; Fr. Arakel Vardazarian, St. Mary of Livingston, NJ; Fr. Abraham Malkhasyan, Holy Martyrs of Bayside, NY; Deacon Thomas Dabakian, Holy Ascension of Trumbull, CT; and Deacon Arman Galstyan, Seminarian, St. Nersess.

Parish's 90th Anniversary of Establishment

The Armenian Church of the Holy Ascension of Trumbull is the only Armenian Church in America consecrated in the name of our Lord's Ascension. The parish has a rich history dating back to the naming of an interim Board of Trustees in 1928 and the purchase of the Methodist Church on Barnum Avenue in Bridgeport. The church was consecrated in the name of Soorp Hampartzoum (Holy Ascension) by the new Primate Bishop Ghevont Tourian on Sunday, June 14, 1931, two weeks after his arrival to the U.S., and the assumption of his post. He was assisted by Abp. Tirayre Der Hovannesian, the former Primate; Fr. Hovsep Dz. Vrt. Garabedian and Fr. Untzag Kazanjian in the consecration service.

This year the parish also celebrates its 40th anniversary of the move to Trumbull, with purchase of the Berean Baptist Church on Huntington Turnpike in 1948. It celebrated its first badarak on February 24, 1978. The consecration of the sanctuary by Abp. Torkom Manoogian was held on May 27, 1984, with the participation of Fr. Levon Arakelian and Fr. Untzag Nalbandian, the former and new parish priest, respectively.

Nalbandian, ordained to the priesthood in 1978, is the 11th priest serving Holy Ascension parish, assigned in January of 1984. During his tenure he has enhanced the sanctuary with the addition of side altars, a baptismal font, and

commissioned the paintings of 20 religious icons. The Agahigian-Shirinian Hall and the Hairabedian-Mardigian Library and Conference Room were dedicated. The Church grounds were beautified with a Khachkar Monument, in memory of the Martyrs and Survivors of the

1915 Armenian Genocide, and an Armenian Alphabet Khachkar Monument and replaced the Protestant style steeple with an Armenian motif belfry. He and his wife, Setta, have served the Holy Ascension parish and its parishioners with love and dedication for 34 years.



Seated, from left, Fr. Karekin Kasparian, Celebrant Fr. Mesrob Hovsepyan, Fr. Mesrob Dz. Vrt. Parsamyan, Primate Daniel Findikyan, Vicar Fr. Simeon Apegha Odabashian, and Host Archpriest Fr. Untzag Nalbandian; Standing, from left, Deacon Thomas Dabakian, Fr. Diran Bohajian, Fr. Kapriel Mouradjian, Fr. Daniel Karadjian, Fr. Arakel Vardazarian, Fr. Abraham Malkhasyan, Fr. Gomidas Zohrabian and Seminarian Deacon Arman Galstyan.

ACYOA Gathers at St. Vartan Cathedral For 2018 Assembly, Sports Weekend

GAMES, from page 6

On Saturday, sports competitions for basketball and volleyball were held at John Jay College. That evening, the participants gathered at the Royalton Park Avenue in Manhattan to enjoy music, dancing, and catching up with old friends.

On Sunday morning, the Very Rev. Mamigon Kiledjian, cathedral dean, celebrated the Divine Liturgy in St. Vartan Cathedral. Fr. Findikyan gave the sermon at the conclusion of the Divine Liturgy, and he formally installed the new ACYOA Central Council.

Later on Sunday, the sports finals took place. On Sunday evening, participants gathered again in Kavookjian Auditorium for the sports competition awards ceremony. Following the ceremony, participants, ACYOA alumni, family, and friends enjoyed a night of music and dancing featuring the Yerakouyn Band. The weekend concluded on Monday morning.

2018-2019 ACYOA Central Council

Chair: Nora Knadjian (St. Gregory the Illuminator Church, Chicago, IL)

Vice Chair: Sona Dagley (Armenian Church of the Holy Translators, Framingham, MA)

Secretary: Mallory Maslar (St. Hagop Church, Pinellas Park, FL)

Treasurer: Ronnie Malconian (Holy Trinity Armenian Church, Cambridge, MA)

Programming: Melissa Mardoian (Sts. Joachim and Anne Church, Palos Heights, IL)

Public Relations: Arsen Yelegen (St. Gregory the Enlightener Church, White Plains, NY)

Chapter Relations: Nicholas Tashjian (St. Leon Armenian Church, Fair Lawn, NJ)

Sports Winners

Overall: St. Leon, Fair Lawn, NJ

Co-ed Volleyball 1st Place: Holy Trinity, Cambridge, MA

Co-ed Volleyball 2nd Place: St. Mary, Washington, DC

Women's Basketball 1st Place: St. Leon, Fair Lawn, NJ

Women's Basketball 2nd Place: Regional Team

Men's Basketball 1st Place: St. Garabed, Hollywood, CA

Men's Basketball 2nd Place: St. Vartan, New York, NY

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COMMUNITY NEWS

Hye M'rtsoom Weekend Welcomes 250 ACYOA Juniors

SPORTS, from page 6

On Sunday, May 29, Fr. Arakel Aljalian celebrated the Divine Liturgy and Parsamyan delivered a sermon on the weekend's theme, "Be the Hye-Light." He shared a bit of his own experience growing up as a youth who loved sports, and he emphasized the beauty in Sports Weekend bringing teens from all across the country together for fellowship and fun.

On Sunday evening, participants gathered at St. James Church for dinner and an awards ceremony and enjoyed dancing to Armenian and American music.

Monday morning, everyone gathered for a farewell breakfast before heading back to their parish communities.

ACYOA Central Council Awards

The "Archbishop Tiran Nersoyan Service Award" was given to Sevan Hacobian of Holy Translators Church (Framingham, MA) as an ACYOA Junior who has served the Armenian Church with the same humility and compassion as the late founder of the ACYOA.

The "Archbishop Tiran Nersoyan Leadership Award" was given to Madeleine Kachikian of St. Leon Church (Fair Lawn, NJ) as an ACYOA Junior who has taken on leadership roles within her ACYOA chapter and has approached those roles with Christian love, understanding, and patience.

The "Archbishop Tiran Nersoyan Vision Award" was given to Diana Margaryan of Holy Trinity Church (Cambridge, MA) as an ACYOA Junior who has established programs that incor-



Primate Very Rev. Daniel Findikyan speaks with teens.

porate the five circles of the cross (education, worship, service, witness and fellowship) and who has made a lasting impression on her ACYOA chapter.

The "ACYOA Junior Chapter 'A' Award" was given to the chapter of Sts. Vartanantz Church (Chelmsford, MA) for its work as an ACYOA Junior organization that has done its best to create an atmosphere conducive to Christian love, education, and service.

INDIVIDUAL SPORTS AWARDS

Beginner Tavloo:

- 1st Place: David Manoukian - Holy Trinity, Cambridge, MA
2nd Place: Shahe DerTorossian - St. James, Watertown, MA



Yn. Arpi Kouzuian

Beginner Chess:

- 1st Place: Vahan Hovanessian - St. Sahag and St. Mesrob, Wynnwood, PA
2nd Place: Benjamin Bejoian - Holy Translators, Framingham, MA

Advanced Tavloo:

- 1st Place: Chris Kapikian - St. Sahag and St. Mesrob, Wynnwood, PA
2nd Place: Marianna Lilla - St. James, Watertown, MA

Advanced Chess:

- 1st Place: Haik Safaryan - Holy Trinity, Cheltenham, PA
2nd Place: Chris Gigian - St. James, Watertown, MA

Girls Ping-Pong:

- 1st Place: Sophia Naroian - Holy Translators, Framingham, MA
2nd Place: Nicole Yaghdjian - Holy Martyrs, Bayside, NY

Boys Ping-Pong:

- 1st Place: Michael Nargizian - St. Leon, Fair Lawn, NJ
2nd Place: Andre Balian - St. Leon, Fair Lawn, NJ

TEAM SPORTS AWARDS

Girls Basketball:

- 1st Place: St. Leon - Fair Lawn, NJ
2nd Place: St. Sahag and St. Mesrob, Wynnwood, PA

Boys Basketball:

- 1st Place: Holy Martyrs, Bayside, NY
2nd Place: St. Leon A, Fair Lawn, NJ

Volleyball:

- 1st Place: Holy Martyrs A, Bayside, NY
2nd Place: Holy Translators, Framingham, MA

Sportsmanship Awards:

- Boys: Jay Wiebe - Holy Martyrs, Bayside, NY
Girls: Maddie Kachikian - St. Leon, Fair Lawn, NJ

Overall Champion:

- Holy Martyrs, Bayside, NY

OBITUARY

Russ Regan

Music Executive Who Signed Elton John and Neil Diamond, Dies at 89

LOS ANGELES (*Variety*) — Russ Regan, a music industry veteran who worked with Elton John, Neil Diamond, Olivia Newton John and Smokey Robinson, died at his home in Palm Springs on Sunday, May 27. He was 89.

Among his accolades: Regan is the rare executive to have seen No. 1 hits in four successive decades.

And equally impactful: Regan brought *That's Life*, to Frank Sinatra, which would turn into a 1966 smash.

Born Harold Rustigan, Regan held positions at Motown, Uni Records (Strawberry Alarm Clock's *Incense and Peppermints*), 20th Century Records (Ambrosia, Barry White) and Polygram Records during a career that spanned the 1960s to 1990s.

His start in music was at Motown where he was part of the record promotion team and worked songs like *Please Mr. Postman*, by The Marvelettes, as well as classics by the Supremes, Smokey Robinson & the Miracles, Stevie Wonder, the Temptations and Marvin Gaye.

Credits at Uni also included a hit by Hugh



Masakela (1968's *Grazing In The Grass*), helping develop the Beach Boys, and championing Diamond, who said in a statement: "Russ Regan was there for me from the beginning at Uni Records and he knew a hit record when he heard it; *Sweet Caroline*, *Cracklin' Rosie*, *I Am... I Said* and *Holly Holy* are just a few of the hits Russ released during my time

there. Russ was always on the artist's side and would come into the studio while I was recording and his face would light up when he knew he heard a hit song. He made me and a new guy that he signed after me, Elton John, worldwide superstars. ... Russ was a great guy all around. This is a sad loss for the music industry and the end of an era. My deepest condolences to his family and friends."

Added Bernie Taupin: "He was larger than life; a big-hearted maverick, whose belief in us was a key component to our success in America."

Crediting Regan with a key career decision, Newton John said: "he encouraged me to move to America, which began my career. He was a very good man!"



Russ Regan with Elton John, left, and Neil Diamond, right

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COMMUNITY NEWS

Rev. Kouzouian's 60th Anniversary Raises Funds for Homeless in Armenia, Chemotherapy Clinic

KOUZOUIAN, from page 6

Kouzouian – “the epitome of a true clergyman, a priest who loves his Church and her people with his whole being; a true servant of the

Lord; and a friend to all.” The Invocation was offered by Hovhannisian.

The Program consisted of musical selections by Sammy Andonian, cellist; Joyce Arpie



First row, left to right: The Very Rev. Fr. Mesrop Parsamyan, Archbishop Vicken Aykazian, Archbishop Nathan Hovhannisian, Archbishop Vatche Hovsepian, Archbishop Khajag Barsamian, Rev. Mampre A. Kouzouian, Very Rev. Simeon Odabashian; Back row, left to right: Rev. Arakel Aljalian, Rev. Krikor Sabounjian, Rev. Aved Terzian, Rev. Mardiros Chevia, Rev. Sevak Gabrielyan, Rev. Vasken A. Kouzouian, Fr. Athanasios Nenes (representing Metropolitan Methodios), Rev. Avedis Boynerian, Rev. Khachatur Kesablyan, Rev. Fr. Vart Gyozyalyan



Attendees watch a video by Shoghgat of Fr. Mampre at the Muratsan Chemotherapy Clinic of Yerevan State Medical University.

Kouzouian; and Yeghishe Manucharyan and Victoria Avetisyan; and a Poem, “Armenia,” by Paruyr Sevak, recited by Adelaida Balagyozyan, Anna Margaryan and Amalia Petrosyan.

Nubar Kupelian, a classmate of Kouzouian at the Seminary of Antilias, offered the first tribute of the evening, followed by remarks by Rev. Vasken A. Kouzouian, pastor of Holy Trinity Church and son of the honoree. In his remarks,

the younger Kouzouian stated that “this evening, we honor our longest serving pastor here at Holy Trinity, and a priest who gave his life, in every way imaginable, for the good of the people placed in his care and for the glory of God. Over the years of his service to the Armenian Church and people, he has been ‘a Rock of Faith,’ a steady presence and a constant shoulder for many of our lives.”

Vasken Kouzouian spoke of the many accomplishments of his father during the latter’s 60 years of devoted service, while being “the rock” of his greatest ministry, raising a family, along with his late wife, Yn. Nuvart Kouzouian, who journeyed every step of the way with her husband.

Hovsepian spoke of Kouzouian’s dedication to his parishioners, the Diocese and the entire Armenian Church stressing his deep involvement in the Ecumenical movement.

Kouzouian, in his remarks, thanked Karekin II, Supreme Patriarch and Catholicos of All



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



First row, left to right: Oscar Derderian III, Rev. Mampre A. Kouzouian, Alina Kouzouian; Second row, left to right: Susan K. Derderian, Esq., Yn. Arpi Kouzouian; Third row, left to right: Joyce Arpie Kouzouian, Rev. Vasken A. Kouzouian

Armenians, who had planned to personally attend the celebration but found it necessary to remain in Armenia, for the love and blessings he sent. He also thanked all those present.

Barsamian spoke affectionately about Kouzouian’s service, wisdom, dedication and leadership to the Diocese and the worldwide Armenian Church.

Hovhannisian read a message from Karekin II and placed around Fr. Mampre’s neck the Vartabedagan Khatch/cross that the Catholicos had sent in appreciation of Fr. Mampre’s 60 years of service.

The Very Rev. Simeon Odabashian, Diocesan Vicar, read the letter from the Primate, the Very Rev. Daniel Findikyan, who stated that “Der Mampre Kouzouian is one of our visible examples of those foundational values and virtues, upon which the coming generation can build with confidence and conviction, for the advancement of our people, and for the glory of God.”

The Very Rev. Mesrop Parsamyan, Diocesan Director of Ministries, read the letter of Berj Setrakian, President of the AGBU.

The evening came to a close with the Benediction offered by Aykazian.

Donations are still being accepted for the homeless and the cancer-stricken children at the Muratsan Chemotherapy Clinic and may be made by contacting the Holy Trinity Church Office at office@htaac.org.



COMMUNITY NEWS

Armenia Art Fair Rises to The Fore

YEREVAN (*Harper's Bazaar Arabia*) – A revolution, the centenary of the founding of the first Armenian Republic and the inauguration of the debut Armenia Art Fair – May 2018 was a historic month for Armenia. Having taken place at Yerevan Expo between May 11 and 14, Armenia Art Fair served as a market and exhibition space to present modern and contemporary art from the Caucasus, Middle East, Black Sea Region, UK and Europe to a predominantly local audience.

“Our goal with the fair is to transform Armenia into one of the main regional hub for the arts, making local artists international, and international artists local,” explains Nina Festekjian, who co-founded the fair with Zara Ouzounian-Halpin. The fair’s curator Eva Khachatryan adds, “The first international art fair in Armenia will give an impetus for the Armenian art scene to demonstrate the financial potential for this market.”

Produced by a team of women, communicating in three languages – translating for each other when one did not understand what the other was saying – the fair’s success was due in part to being greatly championed by the worldwide Armenian diaspora, in a joint effort with those in Armenia to create the foundations of a contemporary art scene in the country.

Amongst the 19 exhibitors, half were from Armenia, with booths comprising galleries, curators and dealers, resulting in a diverse array of works on display in Yerevan. The combination of established galleries with emerging and unaffiliated curators meant that those who would not normally have the opportunity to exhibit at an art fair were represented in Armenia. Of the most noteworthy displays was the presence of Lebanon-based Art Residence Aley, a residency program that provides Syrian refugee artists with the space and materials to make art. During the fair, three artists, Farah Azrak, Adel Dauood and Hasko Hasko, were present to educate visitors about their work. Many other artists were also at the fair including Dutch mirror-artist Philippine Vinke – represented by Dubai-based online gallery Du Arte – and Belarusian painter Oleg Kostyuchenko, whose painting “Flashback” (2016, oil on canvas, 180x120cm) – where a lady swings on a tire in front of a hanging carcass of meat – was used in the fair’s promotional material.

Amongst the Armenian exhibitors, Vahram



Nata Solokowska’s booth at Armenia Art Fair (All images courtesy Nata Solokowska)

Galstyan’s *Instinct & Intelligence* (2016, clay, wood, knauf, fabric, coloured liquid, 100x450x80cm), presented by Karoyan Gallery, captured much attention in its composition of a long white table dripped in plaster, in which floating clay heads rested in electric blue liquid. Another noteworthy work came in the form of a daring performance – considering recent Armenian politics – titled *Presidential Suite*. Spearheaded by Samvel Saghatelian, the artist and a handful of fellow actors roamed around the exhibition space, covering their faces with the masks of Armenian political figures, including the recently rejected Prime Minister Serzh Sargysyan and Nikol Pashinyan, who had been elected just three days before the fair’s opening.

A notable 700 guests and 2,000 visitors attended the fair, with 10 works sold to private buyers – a great success for a country with little next to no pre-established art market. In addition to its main function as a selling place for art, Armenia Art Fair also

provided a platform for emerging artists to exhibit their work. On the lower level of Yerevan Expo, Open Space consisted of a cluster of exhibitions of art fabricated in the last 30 years by millennial artists. Curated by Eva Khachatryan, the central display comprised experimental films screened on 1990s style box televisions. An emphasis on young talent was also highlighted in collaboration between Armenia Art Fair and Hayp Pop Up Gallery through an exhibition titled *The Leather Show*. Taking place in a run-down building adjacent to the fair, the display presented the work of Narek Barseghyan, who was influenced both by 1990s pop culture and the post-Soviet millennial experience in Armenia. The resulting work appeared in the form of large-scale canvases populated with blue and pink characters in white t-shirts, black jackets and a mixture of Armenian, Russian and English text.

Armenia Art Fair succeeded where many fairs fail: in providing an arena not only for established artists, but also in paving the way for emerging ones. There were even a number panel talks offering an educational thread. “I think art reflects the situation in the country,” explains Belarusian curator Nata Sokolowska, shining light on the timing of the fair. “The fact that the revolution in Armenia coincided with the first art festival is not an accident. Armenia is ready for changes in all directions and for further development.” So, after the success of its debut, what’s on the agenda for the second edition of Armenia Art Fair? Co-founder Zara Ouzounian-Halpin explains, “I hope that next year we can showcase more young, interesting art from the region.”

Armenia Art Fair took place at Yerevan Expo from May 11-14. To see more of the exhibit, visit Armeniaartfair.com



Art Residence Aley’s booth at Armenia Art Fair (All images courtesy Nata Solokowska)

Lorig Charkoudian Running For State House in Maryland

SILVER SPRING, Md. – Lorig Charkoudian and Jheanelle Wilkins are running for Maryland State Delegate.

On Saturday, June 9, 2:30-4:30 p.m., a fundraiser will be held at El Golfo Restaurant, 8739 Flower Ave., to support both in District 20 of the state. The main speaker will be Takoma Park Mayor Kate Stewart.

Wilkins is a Maryland State Delegate, representing District 20. She serves on the influential Ways and Means Committee where she plays a lead role in the state’s education, revenue, and election law legislative areas. Jheanelle is a life-long community advocate, dedicated to policy change that makes a difference in people’s lives. Jheanelle has sponsored and championed successful legislation to curb racial profiling, improve maternal health, increase equity in our schools, advance gun safety, protect our environment, and reform the state’s justice system. She also serves on the bipartisan House Opioid Workgroup, which drives state policy on ending the opioid crisis.

Charkoudian has worked on dozens of legislative initiatives in Annapolis, championing important issues including Support for Small Businesses. She wrote and helped pass the Maryland Intrastate Small Business Exemption so everyday people can invest in and grow local businesses. She helped write and pass the Maryland Farms and Families Act. She

worked with the Public Safety and Policing Workgroup to incorporate police complaint mediation into reform legislation. Youth Justice – Lorig championed the bill that established the Commission on the School to Prison Pipeline and Restorative Practices, and currently serves on the Commission. She helped incorporate criminal misdemeanor diversion mediation into the Justice Reinvestment Act and worked with Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services to develop re-entry mediation. She has also been an active leader and campaigner to improve schools, expand business development, improve public health, and create food security.



Lorig Charkoudian and Jheanelle Wilkins



COMMUNITY NEWS

TCA Supports Berdzor's Vahan Tekeyan School

By Kevork Keushkerian

LOS ANGELES and BERDZOR – Tekeyan Cultural Association's Central Board of Directors of United States and Canada have sponsored four schools across the Republic of Armenia since the year 2000. They are in Yerevan, Garbi, Gyumri and Stepanavan. In 2011, a fifth school located in the city of Berdzor Republic of Artsakh, was added to the list.

Every year, a member of the Central Board of Directors visits those schools and oversees the distribution of funds to all teachers and staff members. In 2007, I was designated to visit and oversee the distribution of funds to the Vahan Tekeyan schools in Gyumri and Stepanavan. My wife, Silva, accompanied me and witnessed the incredible ceremony in which donations were given to those intended. That was an example of true accountability at work. Also, donors received a thank you note, along with the name of the teacher they had sponsored.

This year, once again, I was fortunate to visit the Vahan Tekeyan School in Berdzor and oversee the distribution of funds. My wife, Silva, accompanied me again and we participated in another wonderful ceremony. Afterwards, we were given a tour of the school grounds by the very hospitable staff. We were then invited to participate in a luncheon in Principal Anahit



A teacher receives a donation from Kevork Kushkerian.

Kosakyan's office.

Vahan Tekeyan Middle School in Berdzor, Artsakh has 240 students, 32 teachers and 17 staff members. The school is housed in a three-story building, which is not in good structural condition. Mrs. Kosakyan proudly mentioned that a few of her former students have come back, after receiving their university degrees, to teach at their Alma Mater.

Luckily, different sponsors from Montreal, Canada and Paris, France have undertaken the task of renovating a few of the classrooms and naming them after people who are dear to their hearts and/or

modern-day heroes of Armenian descent. This is a very noble cause for the safety and wellbeing of our children.

One of the classrooms was renovated by the proceeds of the Saro Armen Manoukian fund of Montreal's Tekeyan Cultural Association. It was named "Armenian Language and Literature Classroom." Saro Armen is the late son of Arto Manoukian, who serves on the Central Board of Directors of Tekeyan Cultural Association.

Another classroom was renovated by Avedis and Arshalouys Jihanian of Montreal's Tekeyan Cultural Association. It was named "Hrant Dink History Classroom."

The funds to renovate the next two classrooms came from the Arshag Chobanian Institute of Paris, France. The first one was named "Sarkis Hatzbanian Patriotic Classroom." And the other one was named "Military Science Classroom." The latter was just renovated last year.

It's heartwarming to see such an interest in renovating the classrooms in Berdzor's Vahan Tekeyan School. As a veteran educator, I can't stress enough the need for children to be in a safe and healthy environment. These young stu-

dents will be our leaders one day and we need to invest in them and provide them with an environment conducive to learning.

Luckily, says Gayane Mouradian of Armenia's Tekeyan Cultural Association, there are more people lined up to renovate more classrooms. The next item on the to do list must be providing the school with running water, so that students don't have to go outside for a drink of water.

I would like to thank Maro Bedrosian, the treasurer of Tekeyan Cultural Association's Board of Directors, who spearheaded this program and called it "Sponsor a Teacher in Armenia." Since then, "Sponsor a Teacher in



From left, Silva Keushkerian, Principal Kosakyan and the author, Kevork Keushkerian



A former student who now teaches computer science, at left.

Cambridge-Yerevan Sister City Association (CYSCA) Holds Annual Meeting, Panel Discussion with Tavitian Scholars

CAMBRIDGE, Mass. – The 32nd annual meeting of the Cambridge-Yerevan Sister City Association (CYSCA) was held on May 23 at Holy Trinity Armenian Apostolic Church in Cambridge. It began with a business meeting during which CYSCA President Alisa Stepanian gave opening remarks. Jack Medzorian gave a report on this year's activities of the Armenia School Aid Project (ASAP). Since its founding in 1994, CYSCA has given money to more than 200 schools in the regions of Armenia. In March 2018, \$3,500 was personally disbursed to six schools in the Berd region including primary, high school and college level for various needs of those schools.

CYSCA participated in the 2018 Cambridge Science Festival for the ninth consecutive year. This year, CYSCA organized a panel discussion on 3D printing, including Dr. Hrayr Azizbekyan, a 3-D printing expert from Yerevan, along with five local experts from FormLabs, Einstein's Workshop, Microsoft, NVBOTS, and a 3D visionary. Opening remarks were made by Dr. Jack Keverian, who presented an overview of the evolution of 3D printing, and Berge Ayvazian of Wireless 20/20 moderated the panel discussion. Panelists shared examples of their work and talked about the future of 3-D printing. During Dr. Azizbekyan's stay in Boston, CYSCA organized visits to various companies doing 3D printing at which there were discussions on potential collaborative programs.

In October 2017, CYSCA hosted a group of young media literacy professionals from Armenia, through a program called Open

World. Open World is run out of the US Library of Congress and is the only federal legislative exchange program working with all the post-Soviet republics and Russia. These young professionals met with their local counterparts including Media Literacy NOW, Wheelock College, Emerson College, Cambridge public schools, WGBH, Swampscott High School and Lesley University, among others. They participated in a panel discussion at the National Association for Armenian Studies and Research (NAASR) at which they shared details of their Boston trip and lessons learned that they plan to implement in Armenia. The 2017 annual meeting minutes and financial report were reviewed and approved. Finally, the 2018-2019 CYSCA Board slate was presented and approved. They include Nathan Allukian, Roxanne Etmekjian, Isabelle Hamel, Nancy Kalajian, Philip Ketchian, Eva Medzorian, Jack Medzorian, Ashot Papoyan, Alisa Stepanian and Scott Yerganian.

After the business meeting, guest speakers from Tufts Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy, the Tavitian scholars, shared details of their various jobs in Armenia. The cost of this six-month program for outstanding young professionals from Armenia has been financed by benefactor Asso Tavitian for the past 19 years at the Fletcher School. The panelists included: Asanet Aloyan, Chief Tax Inspector, State Revenue Committee of the Republic of Armenia (Tax Administration); Arevik Petrosyan, Methodologist and UNAIDS Project Assistant, Ministry of Healthcare of the

Republic of Armenia, National Center for AIDS Prevention; Lilit Petrosyan, public law expert, Ministry of Justice, Center for Legislation Development and Legal Research; Narek Melkumyan, Assistant to Deputy Mayor, Municipality of Yerevan; and Viktor Yengibaryan, President of European Movement of Armenia, External Relations Adviser to the Parliamentary Fraction, National Assembly of

the Republic of Armenia. Varied topics discussed included rule of law, the Constitution, taxes, corruption, Nagorno-Karabakh and life in the villages. There was a brief discussion of HIV and AIDS in Armenia and its impact on individuals and families. There are support programs to bring awareness of this issue, especially to those living in Armenian villages, and progress is ongoing.



From left, Arevik Petrosyan, Narek Melkumyan, Nancy Kalajian (moderator), Lilit Petrosyan, Viktor Yengibaryan, Asanet Aloyan



COMMUNITY NEWS

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Arts & Living

BOOK REVIEW

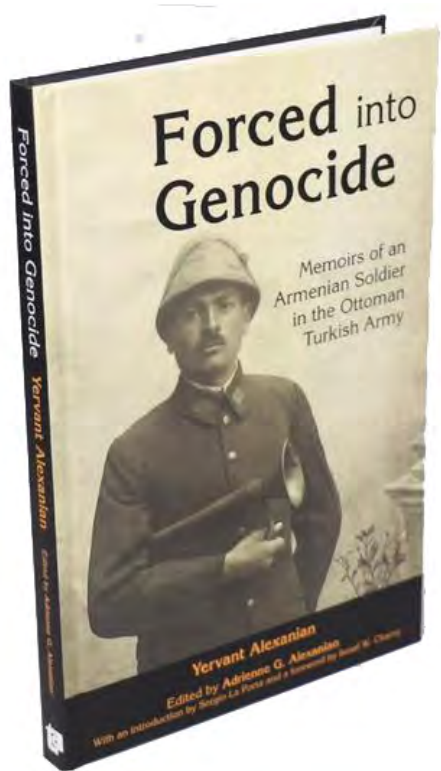
Emotion and Facts Intertwine For a Potent Mix In Memoir

By Esayi Garbisian

During her very first book-reading presentation of *Forced into Genocide: Memoirs of an Armenian Soldier in the Ottoman Turkish Army* by Yervant Alexanian, the editor of the book and the daughter of the author, Adrienne Alexanian reached a paragraph where she realized that she would be unable to read it and maintain her composure at the same time. She requested the event organizer to read that paragraph which begins as follows:

“Every year on Mother’s Day my memory goes back to July 3, 1915, the day when my mother kissed my eyes and said ‘goodbye my son, take good care of yourself.’ She was taking the road to forced deportation and starvation and I had to go back to the barracks to perform my military service for the regime that was sending my mother to her forced death with her eyes wide open....”

The intensity of Adrienne Alexanian’s emotions becomes comprehensible and justified as we read through this riveting memoir of Yervant Alexanian, who had chosen to keep the manuscript, written in Armenian, as a secret from his wife and daughter. We also realize once again why so many survivors of the genocide had kept the details of the unimaginably horrible experiences they had encountered as secrets to save their families and children from intense



Forced into Genocide: Memoirs of an Armenian Soldier in the Ottoman Turkish Army by Yervant Alexanian

trauma that those revelations would have caused.

Who, with innate human feelings, would not be affected by Yervant Alexanian’s following depiction, which further explains the previous quotation? “The worst day of my life was July 3, 1915, when I watched fifty-one members of my family disappear over the hill. I remember as if it were yesterday – after spending the night on the banks of the Halys River, the grisly caravan that included my family was woken and driven up the Kartashlar Yokush Hill [Karde ler Yoku u – The Brothers Hill]. They were scaling

see BOOKS, page 16



Arlette Kotchounian with a picture she took of Serge Gainsbourg and Ray Charles

Arlette Kotchounian

Singer, Songwriter and Jazz Photographer

YEREVAN – French singer-songwriter and photographer Arlette Kotchounian, 76, was not always called by her name. At the beginning of her career, she was also called Arlette Avedian and Ann Grégory. In 1963, she began two-year career as a singer, recording her first single *The People Say/You Laugh at Me*. She composed songs for Eddy Louis, Martine Clemenceau and other singers, but most importantly, Ann Grégory wrote and composed the English version of *The Sun Died*, which became one of the best songs in the repertoire of legendary Ray Charles. Their friendship lasted for years, they worked together on the album “Would You Believe,” and in 1976 Arlette gave birth to their child, Vincent Kotchounian, based in Los Angeles.

Ray Charles’ biographer Michael Lydon, in the book *Ray Charles: Man and Music* (Routledge, 2004), mentioned Arlette’s name six times. “A classic Left Bank bohemian, small, dark and a heavy smoker, Kotchounian had translated the lyrics of a starkly beautiful song, *The Sun Died*, that a singer friend had recorded. She brought the record with her and pushed her way into meeting Ray at his hotel. Ray liked the song, was intrigued by Arlette...” (page 272).

My meeting last month with Arlette Kotchounian took place in one of most adorable cultural oases of Yerevan, the Mirzoyan Library, through our mutual friend, Gayane Georgyan, who is active in public and cultural activities of our city...

Arlette, welcome to Armenia! Please first tell us about your roots, your family story...

It is a long story! My both parents escaped the Genocide. My grandparents were killed at the beginning, one of my grandmothers died on the way of exile. My mother, Manouchag Avedissian, was from a village near Bursa. Three of her brothers, Mardiros, Zaven and Takvor, were also survivors, and my mother was a baby, who was adopted by a Moslem family in Mosul. She was raised there up to 19 years old, then she discovered she is an Armenian, so she looked for her family. One brother was in Greece, so she put an advertisement to find him. They found each other and my mother went to Greece. The other brother was in Paris, so then she went to Paris and never returned to Mosul. My uncle, Takvor Avedissian, came to Armenia in 1947, but later my mother helped him to move to Los Angeles to reunite the other family members. My mother met my father, Simon Kotchounian, in Paris. Originally he was from Alexandrette, but he moved to France and became a soldier in the French army in Indochina.

Does your family speak Armenian?

No. Since my mother was raised as Moslem, she spoke Arabic, French and English, very little Armenian with my father. It was very confusing, because I think they were talking Turkish. My brother Serge attended the Mekhitarian Armenian College in Sèvres, so he speaks and writes in Armenian. As for me, I understand a little and speak a little, but I had no opportunity to speak, so next time I will come and stay longer (laughing).

How did you enter the musical world?

see KOTCHOUNIAN, page 15

Milwaukee Ballet’s ‘Swan Lake’ Is One Gorgeous Dance After Another

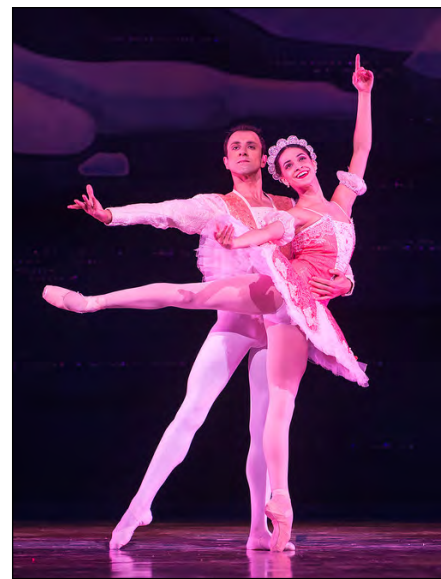
Elaine Schmidt

Special to the Journal Sentinel

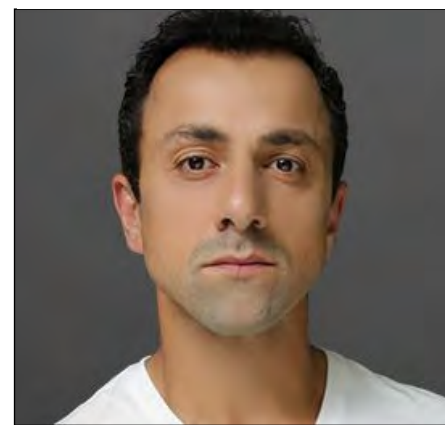
MILWAUKEE (*Milwaukee Sentinel*) – And now for something completely gorgeous: The Milwaukee Ballet opened a production of “Swan Lake” on May 31 at the Marcus Center.

Choreographed by artistic director Michael Pink, after Marius Petipa and Lev Ivanov’s legendary 1895 production, with the Milwaukee Ballet Orchestra and conductor Pasquale Laurino playing the famous Tchaikovsky score, the production is a feast of beauty, grace, emotional depth and exquisite classical dance – lots and lots of classical dance.

The ballet’s story, which tells of young lovers Odette and Siegfried, who are doomed by the ruthless greed of Odile, is less a



Luz San Miguel and Davit Hovhannissyan in Michael Pink’s “Romeo and Juliet” (Photo: Rick Brodzeller)



Davit Hovhannissyan

detailed narrative than a through-line for scene after scene of heartbreakingly beautiful solos and pas de deux, and stage-filling ensemble numbers.

Dancing those roles on Thursday (also scheduled to appear on Friday and Saturday evenings) were Luz San Miguel as Odette, Marize Fumero as Odile, and Davit Hovhannissyan as Siegfried.

San Miguel’s delicate, emotionally intense Odette, and the relationship between her character and Hovhannissyan’s Siegfried gave the production its heart.

Fumero’s haughty, conniving, intense character and her heartless toying with Siegfried and the audience gave the production its sizzle.

see SWAN LAKE, page 15



How the ‘non-Bengalis’ Made Kolkata Calcutta

By Sandip Roy

KOLKATA, India (*GQ India*) – Room No 17 was always the Shashi Kapoor suite. There are far fancier hotels than the Fairlawn Hotel in Kolkata with its potted plants and cane chairs, but that’s where Shashi Kapoor stayed whenever he came to the city. In Room 17. That’s where he first fell in love with Jennifer Kendal. That’s where they had their honeymoon in 1958.

Now Shashi Kapoor and Jennifer are both gone. And the Fairlawn Hotel has been sold. With it, another scrap of Kolkata’s cosmopolitan history fades. This hotel was once run by Armenians who had fled their country to escape genocide. Violet Smith inherited it from her mother and lived on the premises, holding court there in full make-up until she died at 93 a few years ago. This is part of Kolkata’s vanishing Armenian story.

Growing up here, I always took it for granted that this was a Bengali city. Satyajit Ray. Rabindranath Tagore. Swami Vivekananda. Their very names made the city puff up with Bengali pride. Bengalis alone among Indians notoriously divide the world into Bengali vs non-Bengali.

Now, as I read about the old Fairlawn Hotel, I realise how much the “non-Bengalis” made Kolkata Calcutta. Pieces of that story linger on in street names and buildings. The Armenian Church. The Scottish Church College. The Greek Orthodox Church. The Parsi Fire Temple. The Sea Ip Chinese church. The Jewish Girls School (where no Jewish girls study any more).

Once the Portuguese outnumbered the English here. The Eurasians outnumbered the Portuguese. There were Malays and Burmese, Marwari traders and Chinese tanners. They changed Kolkata as much as Kolkata changed them. At my Jesuit school, the priests, in their white cassocks, spoke with thick Belgian accents. Close to the school was a leafy cemetery with the graves of the English who came to run India. I had no idea that not too far away was another cemetery just for the Scottish, now run-down, hemmed in by auto body shops, shaded by silk-cotton trees.

The cemetery is being slowly cleaned up now. As I wandered among the graves – some 1,800 of them, the ground still littered with broken crosses and headstones – I could glimpse a disappearing history of the city, of the doctors, jute merchants, engineers and missionaries, from cities like Dundee and Glasgow and Stranraer, who helped build it. They too made their fortunes here and went back as Scottish nabobs grown wealthy on Indian riches. But they also came with their own distinct baggage of history.

When I walked into the Scottish Church College, the principal proudly told me that Subhas Bose aka Netaji was a star student there. He was admitted when no other college would enrol him after he was expelled from Presidency College, for leading a group that assaulted an English professor who’d made racist remarks. The Scottish Church took him in. They were part of the Empire and yet at odds with it. London and Edinburgh had never had an easy relationship.

The trade winds of the Empire brought them all here at one time. The Armenian Holy Church is the oldest church in the city. Arathoon Stephen built the Grand Hotel, now the Oberoi Grand. The oldest Christian grave in the city belongs to an Armenian – Rezabeebeh Sookias – dating all the way back to 1630. Now, barely 100 Armenians remain. There’s nothing Armenian about Armenian Street with its congested wholesale market and warehouses.

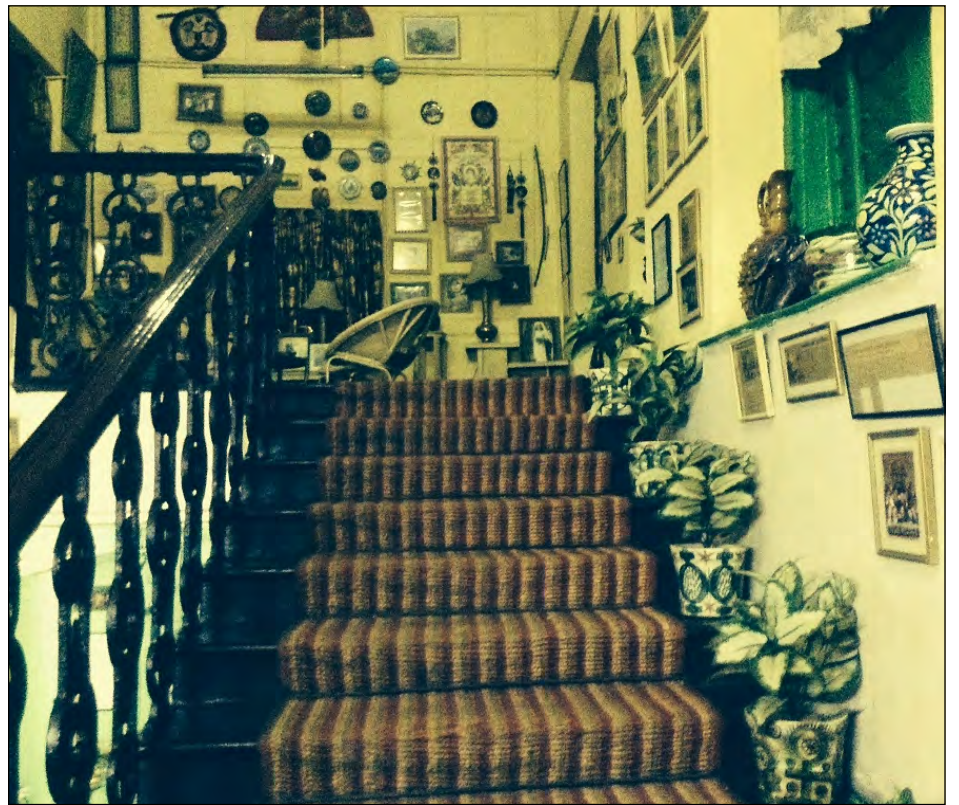
Like much else in Kolkata, this is a story of attrition. The Parsee club was once so active, they used to have “heats” for the children to qualify for the final round of the elocution contests. Now they struggle to get enough children to even hold elocution contests. But the 110-year-old Parsi Amateur Dramatic Club still carries on. I found their harmonium and dilruba and props proudly displayed at an exhibit on Parsi history. A lady standing next to it said her husband’s great-grandfather was a man named JF Madan. At one time, they owned almost 150

movie theatres across the country. She remembered a family member was once trying to park on the crowded Madan Street. An angry local shouted, “Hey, is this your grandfather’s street?” He replied, “It is, sort of, actually.”

That was then. Once, there were at least three synagogues, two schools, a burial board, a ward in a hospital with a kosher kitchen and a sports club for the Jews of Kolkata. Now there are not enough Jews to have a service. The gates to the brick-red Maghen David synagogue are blocked by vendors selling plastic combs and bangles. When I went there with Flower Silliman, one of the last handful of elderly Jews left in the city, she scolded them. They made way with a shrug. They knew it was their street now.

Perhaps that’s inevitable. The city belongs to those who live in its present, not those who are nostalgic for its past. But the past that shaped it cannot be denied. It remains in a cheese samosa at the Jewish bakery or the roast pork sold early in the morning on the streets of the Chinese bazaar. And the Shashi Kapoor suite. That too will remain, for now, a reminder of the city’s cosmopolitan history. True, it’s saved as a tourist attraction – but in a world eager to raze down the old to build the new, that still counts for something.

(Sandip Roy is the Kolkata-based writer of *Don’t Let Him Know*.)



An interior shot of the Fairlawn Hotel

Recipe Corner

by Christine Vartanian Datian

Middle Eastern Green Beans with Lamb



INGREDIENTS

3 (16 oz.) cans no salt added green beans, washed and drained (any style)
1 large onion, diced
1 medium carrot, peeled and diced
1 medium green or red bell pepper, seeded and diced
2-3 cloves garlic, minced
1 (16 oz.) can crushed or stewed tomatoes
1 cup garbanzo or white beans, washed and drained
1/2 lb. ground lamb
2 tablespoons tomato paste
2 tablespoons fresh lemon juice
2 tablespoons chopped black or green olives
1 tablespoon crushed dried mint
1 teaspoon cumin
Salt, black pepper, crushed red pepper flakes, basil and oregano (to taste)
Chopped parsley, mint and yogurt as garnish
2-3 tablespoons olive oil (to taste)
Fresh lemon wedges

PREPARATION

In a large pan, sauté the lamb, onions, carrots, bell pepper and garlic in olive oil until the lamb is browned. Drain all fat.

Add the tomatoes, beans, tomato paste, lemon juice, olives, and spices, stir a few times, and bring to a low boil.

Cover and cook for 20 to 25 minutes on medium low, stirring occasionally, until vegetables are tender.

Top with chopped parsley and mint and serve with Armenian rice, bulgur or lentil pilaf.

Serve yogurt and lemon wedges on the side.

Serves 4-6.

(Fresh green beans may be substituted for canned green beans in this recipe. One-half pound beef or lamb stew meat, cubed, may be substituted for the ground lamb in this recipe.)



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



ARTS & LIVING

Arlette Kotchounian: Singer, Songwriters and Jazz Photographer

KOUTCHOUNIAN, from page 13

That is a long story also. A friend of my brother, Eddy Louis, was a jazz musician. He introduced me to jazz, I started to write some lyrics, and there was a possibility to have auditions with some record companies. Then I started to write songs, also singing myself and making some recordings. Later I started to work with another girl, Martine Clémenceau, and we became successful together. In 1973 we did the Eurovision contest with the song *Sans Toi* (Without You) with my lyrics and with the music of an Armenian composer, Paul Kulak or Kulaksizian...

The one who wrote the music for the Fort Boyard TV game?

Exactly! Then I wanted to do something else, each time it changes with time. Then I met Ray Charles, we recorded songs, for which I had written the lyrics, for instance, *The Sun Died*. I did write some songs with music and Ray recorded one, but mainly I was a lyricist.

So can we call you also a poet?

I would not go that far (laughing). I use different media – writing lyrics, songs, doing photography: I like to try different things.

You met and collaborated with many eminent jazz figures – Miles Davies, Keith Jarrett....

I just took their photos. As songwriter I have collaborated only with Ray Charles.

As a person from the jazz world what do you think about national dispositions of jazz?

I think jazz is just international, universal. It started in America, but there are national ways



Arlette Kotchounian with Artsvi Bakhchinian

of using it. Jazz is just taking a tune and improvising; anybody can do it. Here we visited the Malkhas jazz club, he plays beautifully, I also know Tigran Hamasyan... so these musicians surely have an Armenian way of jazz interpretation.

Are you in touch with the Armenian community in Paris?

I have connections with some intellectuals. Psychoanalyst Hélène Piralian, journalist Jeanine Altounian. I am friends with composer Vincent Baguian (Pambaguian). I always go for 24 of April commemoration; that is the main thing I do. I am not very close to the community, but whenever there is something important I am there.

The first time I heard about your son Vincent Kotchounian was in one of Charles Aznavour's interviews, where he mentioned Ray Charles. I hope during your next visit he will accompany you.

Me too. I will adore Vincent come to me. Next time we will come together!

He bears your family name – Kotchounian...

And also his father's name.

Does he have any Armenian interests?

Yes, he knows few Armenian words. With his father he spoke English and with me French, but he knows he is Armenian. Recently he asked me about the story of the family because

my mother's story is so exceptional and said: "Why did you never tell me about this?" I answered: "Yes, I did, but you did not want to hear before!"

You are visiting Armenia for the first time. Why did you come?

This winter I was invited to Sorbonne University by a friend of mine who teaches there. He introduced me to different teachers, who were involved in a project on Sergey Paradjianov. I expressed a desire to participate in that project and travel to Armenia with them in April. I wanted to be here on April 24, but as my birthday is on April 27, I decided to do not go in that period so that I would not be alone on my birthday. Then this revolution took place, and I was thinking: "Oh my God, if I come I will be in the middle of it!" And then I looked again and I had this time-off for 10 days and decided to come. But when I called my friend Vincent Bagian telling him I am traveling to Armenia, he decided to come too. And then I discovered my cousin Seta Djololian from Paris is also here in a part of a bicycle donation project. Then I discovered that another cousin from Los Angeles is here too. So we were three cousins sitting in Stepanakert and working on our family tree! So since the beginning I have not been alone one minute!

Do you know any Armenian songs?

The only Armenian song I know is a melody that Vincent Baguian wrote lyrics in French and it concerns Armenia (Arlette sings the melody of popular Armenian song *Hovive sarum tkhrets* - The Shepherd Forlorn in the Mountains). I found a country which is beautiful! Here I met and befriended Gayane Georgyan, the chief of the Victoria Foundation, through her I discovered Dadvinak Monastery, and we spent two days in that very amazing place. I discovered some of Yerevan, some of Armenia: I wish I had more time for visiting places here. It is very strange that I have never come here before. I adore hearing the music of the Armenian language even though it is not exactly the Armenian that my parents used to speak. I hope I will come back as we have a project for a film around my music and Ray Charles, as well as organizing my photo exhibition in Yerevan...

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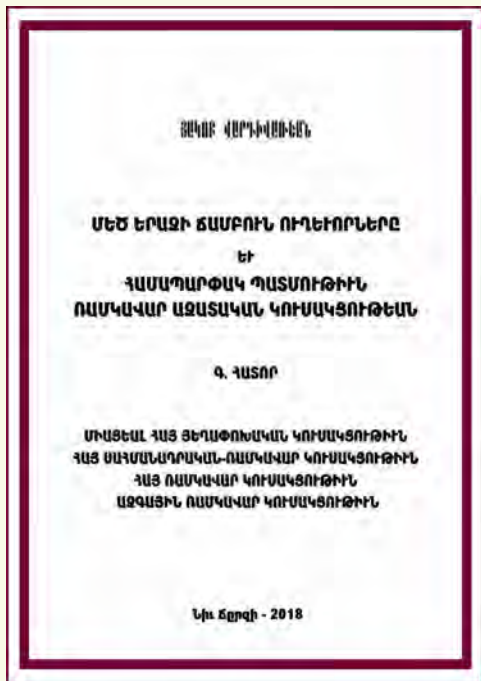
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Milwaukee Ballet's 'Swan Lake' Is One Gorgeous Dance After Another

SWAN LAKE, from page 13

Hovhannisyan, as a pure-hearted, tragic Siegfried, was the focus of Odile's treachery and, in the end, the force that triumphed over evil.

The three dancers each gave powerful, articulate performances, creating two radically different couple pairings, both physically and emotionally.

The story of "Swan Lake" could probably be told by the just the three principal characters, but that would rob audiences of rich scenes full of the captivating grace of dancing swans, the elegance of dancing courtiers, and the robust and sometimes playful dancing of hunting ladies, huntsmen and villagers.

The ensemble work in this production of "Swan Lake" is spectacular. Large ensembles bring precision, energy and dramatic focus to the stage, while artfully danced solos and pas de deux by various characters, as well as believable inter-

play between ensemble members, create vivid characters.

The production elements of this "Swan Lake" are also essential to its success, from Jose Varona's ornately detailed costumes in rainbows of pastels and saturated colors, and elaborate, detailed sets, and the subtle-to-dramatic effects of David Grill's lighting.

Milwaukee Ballet's "Swan Lake" continues through Sunday at the Marcus Center, 929 N. Water St. For ticket info, visit www.milwaukeeballet.org.



Marize Fumero and Davit Hovhannisyan. Photo Mark Frohna

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ARTS & LIVING

Emotion and Facts Intertwine for a Potent Mix In Memoir

BOOKS, from page 13

the Armenian Golgotha. I stood there and watched my mother and my entire extended family climb over that hill never to be seen again. In total, I lost fifty-one members of my family that day.”

Yervant Alexanian witnesses many massacres of the Armenians during his military service in the Ottoman Turkish army. One of those happening in Smyrna, while he was stationed there, bewilders him. The Armenians running away from the crazed genocidal killers jump into the harbor and swim toward the battleships of the Allied Forces – the troops of which



Adrienne Alexanian

had been witnessing the killings on the shore – thinking that the Christians on board would save them. Instead, many of the battleships turn on their hot-water hoses mercilessly to keep the helpless Armenians away from the ships; and, let the poor souls drown. Conversely, only a Japanese battleship throws down a rope ladder into the water to rescue a few surviving Armenians.

But before all that, in the initial chapters of the book, Yervant Alexanian depicts the daily lives of his family, the compatriot Armenians and their interactions with the Turks in his community. Alexanian is determined to complete his studies, but he must work at the same time to support himself and his mother, as his father had died at a young age. He works at numerous

jobs consecutively. He is a very bright student, as well as a productive employee.

Alexanian’s detailed description of his community conveys a clear picture of how people would live an industrious and vibrant life in Sivas in 1912, 1913, and 1914. The Armenian Aramian and the French Jesuit schools invigorate their students with educational and extracurricular activities such as interschool essay competitions, sports and outdoor activities, as well as scouting, which is later emulated by the Turkish Sultaniye School that forms its Izji [izcilik – scouting] group. The three groups compete in horseracing and wrestling. In 1913, they hold “Olympic games” among the three scouting groups; at the conclusion, they all stand at attention and sing the Turkish National Anthem.

Alexanian recalls, “Armenians were very much involved not only with athletic competitions and scouting movements, but also with the celebrations in Sivas. Before 1914, Armenians were very much part of the fabric of Sivas; and nobody would have believed that they could be annihilated so quickly, so unceremoniously. Nobody would anticipate what was to befall us, even those who had survived the many pogroms and massacres, such as the Hamidian massacres [of 1894 – 1896], that preceded the Genocide of 1915.”

In June 1915, Alexanian is enlisted into the Ottoman Army, amid the turmoil of the government imposed harassments, arrests, and murders of the Armenian population in Sivas, even prior to the deportations. Thanks to his good fate and intelligence, Alexanian stays alive in the army. First, the kaymakam (governor) Halil İkrü Bey – who is known as a conscientious man that protects the rights of the Armenians; and, who also knows Alexanian well as a customer to his boss – makes sure that he is placed in the army’s workshop for tailors. Alexanian gives a vivid depiction of the working conditions and life in the workshop, all the workers of which comprised of newly inducted Armenian soldiers. From this point on, while serving in the Ottoman Turkish Army, Alexanian accounts, under the chapter titled “Deportation and Genocide,” his personal experiences with dates and names during one of the greatest crimes in the history of mankind.

However, the reader will be surprised to discover that Alexanian skillfully keeps the balance between the hell-on-earth and normal human interactions, occasionally with a touch of clever humor. For example, Alexanian mentions that he had been reading and writing let-

ters for many of the illiterate Turkish soldiers; a simpleton among them asks him, as Alexanian explains: “not only to read him the letter but also block my ears so I would not hear what I was reading.”

Referring to the oppressive life and slave-like treatment by the Turkish officers of the soldiers of Armenian descent in the Ottoman Army barracks in Sivas, Alexanian recalls, “Sure, we had been spared the deportations, but death hung like a Damoclean Sword over us every minute of our lives.” His assessment becomes a reality at the conclusion of the first two years in service: twenty of the Armenian soldiers, including Alexanian, all of whom had been working for the Ottoman Army for a loaf of bread and a handful of bulgur every twenty-four hours, are ordered to form two lines against a wall in the courtyard. As the best craftsmen, they had been producing uniforms and boots for the Turkish troops. Alexanian gives their names one by one. The commander orders to take Alexanian and Armenak Aslanian out of the group of twenty, and to send the rest to an unknown location. Alexanian thinks he had been spared because he was the only one who could play the bugle. Three days later, when he is out for an errand, he sees the blood-stained clothes of his executed eighteen soldier friends on sale at the market.

A few intentional repetitions in different chapters help the reader to place the events in relative order and context, without referring back to previous chapters. Moreover, each repetition elevates the topic to a higher level as if taking the reader along on an upwardly spiraling road. At the apex of each climb, Alexanian wants to make us realize the enormity of this great calamity – the culmination of atrocities episode by episode, human being by human being, name by name....

Throughout the book, Alexanian reiterates that he is repulsed by unwarranted violence committed against innocent Armenians. When he mentions his three encounters with Enver Pasha, the Minister of War, Alexanian says, “I met him first when he went through Sivas on his way to the Russian Front.... While at the front, he was wounded. He was carried away to safety from the battlefield by an Armenian lieutenant named Hovannes Aginian. As a reward, this man’s entire family was deported and perished.”

As for the annihilation of his extended family, Alexanian asserts: “... none of these innocent victims were a member of any political party or were involved in any political activity. Their daily lives were spent working, taking care of their families, and doing their best to eke out

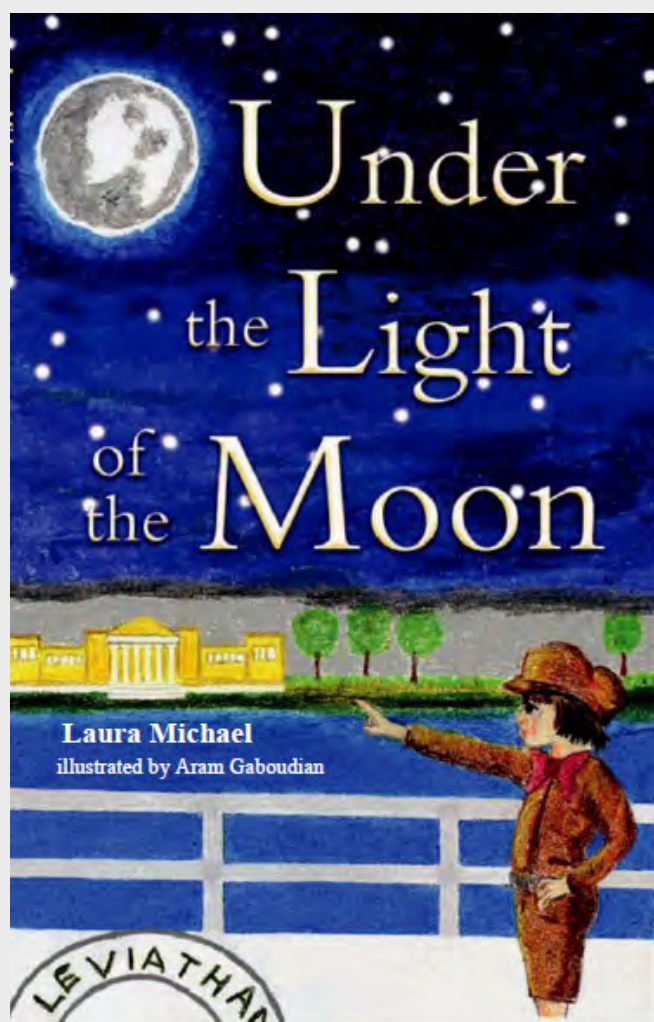
an existence. Their joys were limited by their occasional family gatherings, weddings, baptisms, and other such occasions. Their only crime was being Armenian.”

This book, in addition to being a captivating read for any reader, provides a unique perspective as a substantial contribution to the scholarly study of the subject. It is further enriched by Dr. Sergio La Porta’s superb “Introduction” that places the book in a broader historical context.

On a personal note, my father’s maternal uncle was also conscripted into the Ottoman Turkish Army. He was sent to fight in the Battle of Gallipoli that was also known as the Dardanelles Campaign (Çanakkale Savaşı, 1915). After fighting for the Ottoman Army and surviving that war, he was sent into a military labor camp for Armenians and other minorities called the “Amele Taburu;” then, my father’s family never heard from him again.... Since my mid-twenties, when this was revealed to me, I had been wondering and trying to visualize what kind of a torturous life he had to endure before his brutal murder while serving in the Ottoman Turkish Army. Finally, Yervant Alexanian, as a primary source, has given me the answer with his memoirs.

The scholars on this subject and the intellectually curious readers alike should feel a deep sense of gratitude for Adrienne Alexanian, who must have toiled arduously for the translation and editing of this inherited unique treasure. In fact, renowned figures such as Dr. Israel W. Charny, Dr. Taner Akçam, Dr. Vartan Gregorian, The Honorable Frank Pallone, Eric Bogosian, and Andrew Goldberg have fervently extolled this seminal work. Recently, the University of Southern California SHOAH Foundation has also added this title to its prestigious I Witness website under two subpages – the Armenian page and the “Resources” list page. It is the first and only Armenian memoir to appear there alongside the highly-acclaimed Holocaust memoir of Ann Frank.

Adrienne Alexanian’s unwavering efforts in presenting this book to a wider group of readers throughout the United States will undoubtedly contribute to the education of genocide here and abroad so that genocides are recognized and effectively prevented worldwide. Clearly with that purpose in mind, she has not been accepting any honorariums and she has been donating the entire income of the book sales to the organizations hosting her presentations. Overall, Adrienne Alexanian merits high praise for her exemplary achievement and her conscientious contribution to humanity.



Mascot Books Publishes Children’s Book Under the Light of the Moon

HERNDON, Va. — Mascot Books announces the release of a children’s book, titled *Under the Light of the Moon*, by Laura Michael.

The book focuses on the efforts of the Near East Relief (NER) to help survivors of the Armenian Genocide, but told in a way to make the story appropriate for young readers.

Based on the real experiences of the orphans of the Armenian Genocide, including the author’s great-grandparents, *Under the Light of the Moon* is a story of hope and survival during a dark time in world history.



Laura Michael

The book is set in 1924, the end of the Armenian Genocide in Turkey, and ten-year-old Lucine has found safety at an orphanage in Greece. She doesn’t know if her parents have survived and wonders if she’ll ever see them again, and she isn’t alone: there are hundreds of thousands of orphans just like Lucine struggling to survive, their stories making headlines worldwide. In response, the United States NER, which provides food, clothing, shelter and safety for these children.

Jackie Coogan, one of America’s most famous child actors at the time, uses his celebrity power to support NER, but soon realizes that there are some things in life that are out of our control. Lucine appreciates the help of these kind strangers, but there’s still something missing: more than anything, she wishes to be reunited with her family. As time passes, her future becomes more and more uncertain.

The true events of young Jackie’s volunteer work remind us that anyone—no matter how young or old – can make a difference in the world.

Michael is an Armenian-American activist, educator and writer who was born and raised in Rhode Island. She received a bachelor’s degree in Spanish from the University of Rhode Island and a master’s degree in education from New York University. Laura has taught at the elementary, middle school, and college levels in Massachusetts and New York and currently lives in Los Angeles where she is an administrator for a local school district. Laura is also on the ANCA-WR Education Committee and works to help schools implement genocide and human rights curriculums. Her most memorable trip was when she found her great-grandparents’ former homes in historic Armenia, which is now part of eastern Turkey.

For more information, visit lauramichael.net. The book is available on Amazon and Barnes & Noble, among other vendors.

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

JUNE 10 — St. James Armenian Festival. Delicious Armenian Food! Live Music! Raffle! Children's Activities! Moon Bounce, Balloons, Face Painting, Caricatures and More! Rain or Shine - On Church Grounds. Sunday. 465 Mt. Auburn Street, Watertown MA info@stthagop.com. www.stjameswatertown.org/festival

JUNE 16 — Book presentation by Adrienne Alexanian (editor) of her father's memoir *Forced into Genocide: Memoirs of an Armenian soldier in the Ottoman Turkish Army* Worcester Library — Saxe Room — 2 - 3:30 pm 3 Salem Square — Worcester MA — (508) 799-1655 ext. 3 Book signing will follow the presentation — proceeds will be donated to charity

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

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

JUNE 28 — Under a Strawberry Moon, Armenian



On Saturday, June 16, the Cultural Committee of Sts. Sahag and Mesrob Armenian Church in Providence will present a tribute concert honoring Canadian-Armenian bass-baritone Garo Nishanian (pictured above) for his 40-year career. Invited performers will include Janette Khalarian, singer, Mari Panosian, on piano, David Griego, on flute and the Nazeli Dance Group The program will take place at 7 p.m. at the Egavian Cultural Center, 70 Jefferson St., Providence, RI. There will be a reception after the program. Admission is \$20 per person.

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

RHODE ISLAND

JUNE 16 — The Cultural Committee of Sts. Sahag & Mesrob Armenian Church Presents A Tribute Concert Honoring Garo Nishanian (Bass – Baritone, Canada), for his 40 years of contribution to the Arts and Culture. Invited Performers: Janette Khalarian, singer, Mari Panosian, piano, David Griego, flute, Nazeli Dance Group Saturday, 7 p.m. Egavian Cultural Center 70 Jefferson Street, Providence, RI. Wine & refreshments will be served. Admission \$20

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.

New Book by George Bournoutian on Armenia and Imperial Decline

NEW YORK — George Bournoutian's new study, *Armenia and Imperial Decline: The Yerevan Province, 1900-1914* (London, Routledge: 2018), deals with the region, which, for the most part, formed the first Armenian Republic, Soviet Armenia and the present-day Armenian Republic.

There is no doubt that compared to Tiflis and Baku the inhabitants of the Yerevan Province were overwhelmingly peasants. They did not play a major role in the political, intellectual or economic life of the South Caucasus. However, the following questions remain to be answered: How did the Yerevan Province and the Armenian Republic manage to administer day-to-day life between November 1917 and December 1920? How, despite epidemics, lack of food, enemy attacks, and inundated with over 300,000

refugees, was the government able to function? Was the Armenian Republic, in its less than 1,000 days of existence, suddenly able to create the educational institutions, the courts and prisons, the postal-telegraph and transportation systems, the army, the medical and veterinary centers, the police, and the agricultural, irrigation and administrative structure which maintained it? Moreover, how could Soviet Armenia, in the early years of its existence, have functioned without a pre-existing infrastructure?

The present study, seeks, for the first time, to examine the demography and the social and economic conditions in the Yerevan Province during the first decade of the twentieth century, before the great changes that occurred during World War I and the seven decades of Soviet rule. It seeks to prove con-

clusively that the Armenians of the Yerevan Province not only benefitted from living under the umbrella of imperial security, but, as junior and senior officials, they also acquired important administrative and professional skills. The social and economic changes of the last decade of Russian rule enabled the local Armenians to advance and, following the collapse of the Russian Empire, to occupy posts previously held by Russians. Thus, despite the absence of their most talented individuals and the lack of experienced political leaders, as well as the loss of half their territory to Turkish attacks in 1918, the local Armenian administration, in the face of terrible conditions and great odds, provided the foundation which allowed the Armenian Republic to maintain its independence until December of 1920. In fact, some of the sur-



George Bournoutian

vivors would assist in the modernization and nation building of Soviet Armenia.



COMMENTARY

COMMENTARY

What Is Next for Armenia?

By Edmond Y. Azadian

People in Armenia continue to savor the fruits of the Velvet Revolution. They are virtually in ecstasy, after witnessing Nikol Pashinyan taking over the office of prime minister from Serzh Sargsyan on May 8.

Pashinyan's ascendance to power was a cause for celebration, as was Sargsyan's peaceful resignation.

No one is sure how long the honeymoon will last, however. Expectations are high and there is a sense of optimism in the air.

After overthrowing a hated regime, people are in the mood to continue the revolution by asking regional leaders (*marzbeds*) to resign and are also demonstrating at the Yerevan City Hall, demanding the resignation of Mayor Taron Markarian.

Demonstrations against and harassment of the president of Yerevan State University, Aram Simonyan, have sent him to the hospital. The leader of the Velvet Revolution has yet to control the demonstrators who may convert the peaceful revolution into a witch hunt, if it is not stopped now in its tracks.

The revolutionary mood seems to be contagious, as people in Artsakh have been demonstrating against the arbitrary beatings of ordinary citizens by plain clothes police officers.

Behavioral science cannot be measured by mathematical rules, although its practitioners believe in the predictability of social developments.

Once popular masses are unleashed, the momentum may carry it out of hand.

Artsakh is at war and any destabilizing act may play into the

ing fair taxes and exercising the rule of law. A test case has been the investigation of the oligarch Samuel Alexanyan (Lefik Samo). His Alex Holdings company has a monopoly over sugar and cooking oil imports as well as some other basic commodities. Alexanyan himself belongs to the Republican Party and thus far he has been one of the untouchables, as a member of parliament as well as ruling party member. If strict transparency is observed and Alexanyan gets a fair shake, that will be an indication that those oligarchs can continue their businesses and are discouraged from moving out their capital. Already, substantial amounts of capital have left the country in advance of the impending revolution and the uncertainty associated with it.

In the current atmosphere of intense hatred toward the previous regime, any legitimate investigation in the assets and dealings of major oligarchs may easily morph into a witch hunt, which Pashinyan has to avoid.

Since Henrik Ibsen's play, "An Enemy of the People," was published in 1882, the art of vilifying individuals and heroes has been refined and perfected to make more efficient the manufacture and dissemination of fake news. Social media today can make or break an individual or institution. Ironically, it works both ways. That same social media was instrumental in helping Pashinyan deliver his message to the people and guide his actions. If he can maintain that control, then the Velvet Revolution can achieve its objectives without going awry. If not, his revolution may be hurt by the same tools.

During Pashinyan's campaign, the issues of foreign policy and security were hardly mentioned, because there were so many immediate priorities for the citizens – the low standard of living, lawlessness, depopulation of the country, desperation and isolation.

Now that hope has been restored, the new administration has to face those issues as well.

As the potential of war lurks on the borders, very careful changes were made in the top brass of the military. But above all, the condition of the new draftees became a top priority to enhance the morale in the army.

As far as foreign relations are concerned, Pashinyan took the right stop by paying his first official visit to Russia, attending the sitting of the Eurasian Economic Union (EEU), where he was received warmly by Belarus' President Alexander Lukashenko. Russian President Vladimir Putin received him with a humorous remark, asking him whether he arrived in Sochi from Yerevan on foot, a reference to Pashinyan's march from Gyumri to

Yerevan on foot. Kazakhstan President Nursultan Nazarbayev's reception was cool, perhaps to remind Pashinyan that nothing was forgotten and nothing was forgiven, because in the past, Pashinyan's parliamentary faction, Yelk, had proposed that Armenia resign from the EEU, although at this time he has vowed to work within existing realities.

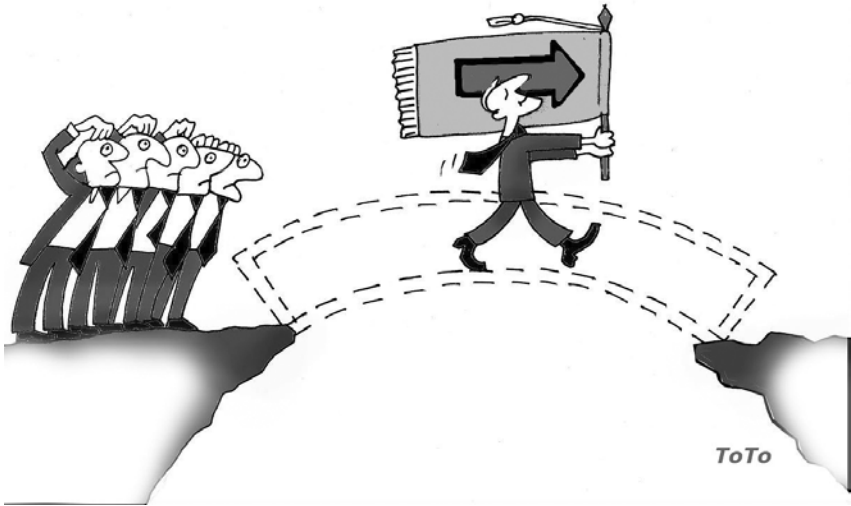
The prime minister's visit to Georgia later proved to be momentous, as far as Georgian-Armenians were concerned, but Pashinyan's statement about Armenian-Georgian relations echoed exactly what the former administration had defined: that there are no problems between the two countries that cannot be resolved. That means there are outstanding problems to be addressed, beginning with the collusion of Tbilisi administration with Turkey and Azerbaijan and continuing with the confiscation of Armenian churches in Georgia and ending with the discriminatory policies towards Armenians in Javakhk.

As far as Armenia's enemies are concerned, President Ilham Aliyev of Azerbaijan responded with a new salvo of threats to the new regime, by advancing Azerbaijan's army positions in Nakhijevan and threatening to hit Armenia's heart in Yerevan, from army fortifications in Nakhijevan.

Turkey's Prime Minister Binali Yildirim stated that his country can negotiate with Armenia if the latter resigns from pursuing the Genocide issue, territorial claims and settles the Artsakh problem with Azerbaijan. Typical Turkish demagoguery; if those issues are removed from the negotiating table, what other contentious issue is left to discuss.

With the success of the Velvet Revolution, Armenian people are euphoric. But no one is allowed to forget that the country has yet to resolve its differences with its neighbors.

This time around, people are untied and they can take a united stand against foreign threats. Before, mothers were worried and they refused to send their children to the army "to fight for Serjik." Today, unity is a tangible asset in the hands of Pashinyan and his government and can face any challenge as long as the revolution continues to be cloaked in velvet.



hands of the enemy. That is why Pashinyan was alarmed and sent a message to the demonstrators in Stepanakert to calm down.

Pashinyan's message in Armenia was powerful, to the extent of being magical enough to raise the entire population to rebellion. It remains to be seen if he can contain that revolutionary fervor to good ends since people are brimming with bitterness and rancor against the previous regime. His calls for brotherly love do not seem to have affected his followers on social media, where they post lewd remarks about the leaders of the previous regime. If left unchecked, that path may lead to serious polarization in Armenian society, which the country can ill afford.

He has promised that there will be no vendettas and he has taken some wise steps to prove that. For example, the police chief, Valery Osipyan was considered evil incarnate as far as demonstrators were concerned. In fact, Osipyan often verbally chewed out Pashinyan during his protests. However, the new prime minister took a chance on reappointing him to his former position, while making many staffing changes in the defense structures.

Osipyan himself, being a man of law and order, proved that he can serve professionally under the new leaders.

Pashinyan has also been treading cautiously in the case of political prisoners. He freed people who had been incarcerated on solely political grounds. But in the case of the Sasna Tsrer members, where crimes were committed in taking over a police station and resulting in deaths, he deferred to the rule of law, stating the he was not in a position to break open the prison gates and to let out all the inmates. He relegated their cases to the courts.

The public is so frenzied that at this time, everything is viewed through a black-and-white filter. No one dares to step into a gray area. And in this atmosphere of polarization, the new government appointed by Pashinyan has to make judicious moves and choices.

The test for tolerance and fair play will come when the government begins to investigate the wealth of the oligarchs, pay-

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COMMENTARY



My Turn

By Harut Sassounian

Azeri-American Adil Baguirov Receives \$250,000 to Lobby for Azerbaijan

In my last week's article on secret funding for Azerbaijan's lobbying in the United States, I referred to the payment made to "an influential oil and gas consultant with close ties to President Aliyev who presents himself as an immigration success story and lives in Dayton Ohio — even as he also lobbies the US government on his homeland's behalf."

Jonny Wrate, in his article, "Baku's Man in America," on the Organized Crime and Corruption Reporting Project website (OCCRP.org), provided extensive details of Adil Baguirov's activities and the large payment he had received from Azeri sources to lobby on behalf of Azerbaijan in the United States.

Wrate reported that Baguirov, "a vocal member of the Azerbaijani diaspora, received the \$253,150 transfer just months after a non-profit organization he runs, the Houston-based US Azeris Network, helped host a conference in Baku, Azerbaijan's capital, that was attended by 10 members of Congress. The junket was widely criticized, and investigated by the House Ethics Committee, for being secretly funded by Azerbaijan's state oil company... The precise origins of the money Baguirov received are unknown, hidden behind secretive shell companies. But there is ample evidence that the authoritarian country's ruling elite is behind it."

Baguirov, who "also helped organize other US-Azeri con-

ferences in Washington, repeatedly testified before the House [of Representatives] in favor of US military aid to Azerbaijan, served as the coordinator of the Congressional Azerbaijan Caucus, and worked prominently in a Houston-based company that claims to have organized a trip by the country's president, Ilham Aliyev, to the White House," wrote Wrate.

Baguirov and his family have extensive ties with President Ilham Aliyev, who awarded him a medal for his services in the US on behalf of Azerbaijan. However, Baguirov had not registered as a lobbyist, as required by US law, under the Foreign Agents Registration Act (FARA). When contacted by OCCRP reporters, Baguirov said that the payment he had received was none of their business.

Baguirov moved to the United States at the age of 16. He graduated from the University of Southern California in international relations and business administration. Subsequently, he received a PhD in political science in Moscow. Interestingly, Baguirov "was elected to Dayton's school board, a position he held until 2017, when he resigned more than a month before the end of his term after local activist David Esrati discovered that he appeared to have lied about his residential address."

Wrate revealed that Turbillion LLC, a consulting company Baguirov runs, received a payment of \$253,150 from Hilux Services, a shell firm that is part of the Azerbaijani Laundromat. Turbillion is registered in Wyoming, "a state popular with those looking to create secretive companies due to its tax-free incentives and provision of anonymity." Another Wyoming company controlled by Baguirov, which has the same mailing address as Turbillion, is called "Nobel Brothers Pictures LLC," which is "allegedly producing a Hollywood movie about the history of the Azerbaijani oil industry."

Six months before Baguirov received the payment of \$253,150, his Houston-based non-profit US Azeris Network (USAN) "helped organize a two-day conference in Baku called "US-Azerbaijan Relations: Vision for Future." Wrate revealed that two other conferences were organized by USAN in Washington.

"The Baku meeting in 2013 was attended by 11 members

of [US] Congress, 10 of whom were paid for, and over 30 of their staff — and that, according to a confidential report by the Office of Congressional Ethics (OCE) obtained by the Washington Post, they were lavished with silk scarves, crystal tea sets and Azerbaijani rugs valued at \$2,500 to \$10,000," Wrate reported.

In addition, Baguirov worked for Cong. Curt Weldon (R-PA) as Special Advisor on Russia and the former Soviet Union. Weldon lost his seat in 2006 "after the Justice Department investigated him for allegedly steering to his daughter's lobbying firm almost \$1 million in consulting contracts from two Russian companies and a Serbian foundation," according to Wrate. Weldon founded the Congressional Azerbaijan Caucus in 2004 together with fellow Congressman Solomon Ortiz (D-TX) who subsequently worked for Azerbaijan as a lobbyist. Baguirov "served as the Caucus' coordinator and allegedly traveled with Congressional delegations to the former Soviet Union in 2003 and 2004."

Furthermore, Wrate revealed that "between 2008 and 2016, Baguirov was also invited almost annually to recommend foreign economic and military aid budgets for Azerbaijan and Armenia to the House Appropriations Subcommittee on State, Foreign Operations and Related Matters. In some years, other representatives of USAN and the Karabakh Foundation — another of Baguirov's non-profit organizations — also testified." In his congressional testimonies, Baguirov urged the US Congress to reduce the aid for Armenia to zero, while requesting that Azerbaijan receive \$26 million from USAID and \$3.9 million in military aid.

Baguirov was also the Executive Vice President of International Affairs for Worldwide Strategic Energy, Inc., a Houston-based company that offered its "strong business and political ties" to help prospective clients capitalize on hydrocarbon development opportunities in "politically complicated countries," including Azerbaijan.

The US Justice Department should be asked to investigate Baguirov's unregistered lobbying activities in the United States on behalf of Azerbaijan to see if any illegalities have been committed.

Armenia's First Republic: A Nation's Last Resort for Survival

By Vicken Cheterian

There are many states that have borders drawn in straight lines. These are borders drawn by foreigners: diplomats, colonial powers, imperialist rulers from afar, and became independent states by accidents of history. Yet, many of them have difficulties in developing a nation out of the inhabitants of the state that

history produced. We witness some of them today succumb to suicidal internal wars that kills a nation before it becomes one.

The declaration of independence of the Republic of Armenia, on May 28, 1918, was anything but such an act. This was not a state striving to develop a nation within itself, but the last, desperate act of a nation threatened in its existence. Unlike the received ideas, the Armenian national movement in its vast majority both in the Ottoman and in Romanov

Empires was a reformist movement and not a separatist one. The story of this nation is larger than the story of the state itself that I want to narrate here.

The history of the First Armenian Republic (1918-1920) is not well known. During the Cold War it had polarized Armenian communities between those who idealized the Republic and the idea of independence, and between those who opposed it, demonized it, as a result of the revisionism of Soviet authorities. While the collapse of the Soviet Union and its ideology did a lot to overcome the polarization it had created, we have still accumulated much unease what concerns the First Republic. We notice similar complex relationship between the current Georgian political discourse heavily influenced by neoliberal ideology and the republic led by the Georgian Mensheviks, the current Azerbaijani dynastic rule and the first Azerbaijani republic under the Musavat party (there are even two Musavats in Azerbaijan today, one a major opposition party, the other a "fake" pro-regime one), or in the case of Russia where during the centennial of the Russian Revolution the conservative authorities of the Putin administration were ill-at-ease with the message of the Russian Revolution. The polarization of the past and the indifference of today shed a shroud over an important part of history and mystifies the place of Armenians in the 19th century history, and dehistoricizes concepts such as reform, revolution, independence, nation and state.

Since the 14th century, the highest political institution among the Armenians has been the church. This was the case in the Ottoman Empire since the conquest of Constantinople by Mehmet II, when the Armenian Patriarchate in Constantinople was established and Archbishop Hovagim was recognized as "milletbashi" in 1461 according to tradition. Armenian communities in Iran were equally seen represented by the Church, and Peter the Great recognized Archbishop Minas Tigranian as Prelate of All Armenians of Russia in 1716.

When one looks at the political preoccupations of the Armenians at the start of the 19th century, the major struggle was one of sectarian conflict between the Armenian Apostolic Church, and the separation of Catholics and the

establishment of a separate "millet" in 1831 with Hagop Chukhurian at its head, followed by the establishment of a Protestant Millet in 1847. While those struggles reveal the crisis within the Ottoman system, the growing influence of Western missionaries, and the religious-sectarian identification, it also reveals high level of political activism among the Armenians. This will be evident when Ottoman Sultan Abdulmejid I launched reforms known as Tanzimat in 1839, with the idea of modernizing the empire and creating Ottoman citizenship from what were religious communities, its impact will be palpable on the Armenians. This led to a profound power struggle within the Armenian community (or millet) over the control of the community institutions concerning education, taxation, and representation. This struggle led to the elaboration of the Armenian National Assembly and its Constitution in 1860, confirmed by Sultan Abdulaziz in 1863.

The fact that the Armenian community achieved its own internal constitution 16 years before the Ottoman Empire reflects the social composition of the community, with important urban presence, access to higher education, printing, mass media, and role in Ottoman industry, commerce and finance. It is no surprise that Armenians will play key political role not in modernizing the governance of their own community, but play a leading role within the Tanzimat and the Ottoman Constitutional movement, an excellent example being the jurist Krikor Odian who played important role in both the Armenian and Ottoman constitutions. Even the Armenian Apostolic Church joined this drive for reforms, notably under Mgrdich Khirmian.

The Armenian political mobilization in 19th century and early 20th century Ottoman Empire was largely part of the Tanzimat and aimed at political reform to establish Ottoman citizenship, equality between religiously defined communities, and rule of law. Until very late, the vast majority of politically active Armenians did not consider the establishment of an independent Armenia as an option, but considered themselves as part of an overall Ottoman political change. Even when the modern Armenian political parties were established

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LETTERS

Diocesan Center Should Not Be Sold

To the Editor:

It was with a very troubled heart that I learned in Deacon Hirant Gulian's letter to the new Primate of the Diocese of the Armenian Church (Eastern), Very Rev. Fr. Daniel Findikyan, and Diocesan Council Chairman James Kalustian (June 2, 2018 edition of the *Mirror-Spectator*), that the Diocesan Council is strongly considering selling the Diocesan Center in New York City.

On April 27, 1968, I was the ACYOA representative who gave the welcoming address in Armenian to Catholicos Vasken I at the youth rally in Kavookjian Auditorium. I was fortunate to know many of the wonderful men and women who built the Diocesan Center and St. Vartan Cathedral. They not only had deep faith, but common business sense.

I have learned that the Diocesan Delegates were blindsided by the abovementioned proposal at the Diocesan Assembly in May. For Mr. Kalustian, the chairman, to make such a faux pas and announce the proposed sale on the eve of the 50th anniversary celebration of the consecration of St. Vartan Cathedral at the Diocesan Assembly in New York was shockingly insensitive.

Possibly, the Diocesan Center would not be at the stage of being held together by a band aid as the chairman has publicly stated, if the chairman had been more focused on not letting the situation get to this point by taking action as the situation began to deteriorate. The actions of the chairman and former Supreme Spiritual Council member, who allowed the Diocesan Center to get to this point after years as a member of the Diocesan Council, are similar to the actions of owners of professional sports teams who run their stadiums into the ground so they can find a convenient excuse to relocate to a new city, benefitting the team owners more than the people they serve. Possibly, the longtime Diocesan Council member and chairman, who rules without fear of term limits, should have exhausted more time on the physical condition of the Diocesan Center.

It must be remembered that the Diocesan Center, as well as St. Vartan Cathedral, were built on the backs of genocide survivors. Deacon Hirant, I wholeheartedly concur with you that "those leaders who do not listen to the people will have to resign and go home."

Rebecca Bakalian Hachikian
Los Angeles



Pashinyan Urges End to Anti-Government Protests in Artsakh

PROTESTS, from page 1
be drawn from the June 1 incident. In a live Facebook broadcast, he praised Sahakyan for meeting representatives of the protesters and reaching “concrete agreements” with them. He hinted that the Karabakh leader agreed to make personnel changes in the local security apparatus after the ongoing criminal inquiry is over.

The protests should therefore end, said the Armenian premier. “In a conversation with me, the president of Artsakh reaffirmed his determination to implement those agreements and it is imperative to enable him to do that,” he added.

Pashinyan’s appeal followed serious concerns voiced by some politicians and public figures in Armenia. They warned that a destabilization of the political situation in Karabakh could tempt Azerbaijan to attack Karabakh Armenian positions along “the line of contact” around the disputed territory.

“What happened in Armenia is inadmissible, to put it mildly, for Karabakh,” former President Levon Ter-Petrosian said in a weekend statement. “I mean mass protests and pressures on the Nagorno-Karabakh Republic’s authorities. They could have disastrous consequences for a country which is in a state of war.”



Protestors in Stepanakert



Artsakh President Bako Sahakyan meets with activists.

Ter-Petrosian alluded to the recent mass protests in Armenia that brought Pashinyan to power. He said Pashinyan must publicly call for an end to the Stepanakert protests.

The Artsakh’s leader’s spokesman, Davit Babayan, sought to allay such fears earlier on

Monday. “The situation is not critical. This is a form of dialogue,” Babayan said.

Babayan also warned against attempts to “politicize” the June 1 incident and urged the protest leaders to drop their “ultimatums” issued to the authorities in Stepanakert.

Armenia’s First Republic: A Nation’s Last Resort for Survival

SURVIVAL, from page 19
with the Social-Democrat Hunchagyan (Geneva 1887) and later Armenian Revolutionary Federation Tashnagtsutyun (Tbilisi 1890) demanded reforms rather than independence (Hunchags did call for independence, but they were marginalized by more influential Tashnagtsutyun). There are material reasons for this stand: unlike the Balkan provinces of the Ottoman Empire and its Greek, Serbian, Rumanian and Bulgarian populations, Armenians were divided between the Ottoman Empire with over 2 million Armenians, and another 2 million in the Russian Empire from which 1.7 million lived in Transcaucasia. Therefore, the Russian Empire that encouraged Balkan independence, had no interest to do the same for the Armenians. Moreover, the Armenian population of the Ottoman Empire was divided about half in historic Armenian provinces, and the other half living in major Ottoman cities such as Constantinople, Izmir, etc. The Armenian bourgeoisie residing in the west of the empire had no interest to see the emergence of an independent Armenia, but great interest to see reforms in the empire that guaranteed its political rights and security.

With the 1908 “Young Turk” Revolution the Armenians ceased to be a millet, a religious community, but became a nation. The privileged interlocutor of the leaders of Committee of Union and Progress (CUP) was no more the Armenian patriarchate, but the Armenian political parties namely the Tashnagtsutyun. Contacts between the CUP and Tashnagtsutyun continued as late as 1913, two sides that knew each other well. The extermination of Ottoman Armenians during the First World War was not, therefore, to prohibit the emergence of an independent Armenia, but the elimination of advanced social group that was at the forefront of political reforms in the empire, when the Ottoman leaders themselves had given up reform, rule of law and equality.

Even after the Russian Revolution of 1917 and the formation of the provisional government, the Armenian political leaders did not opt for “independence”. They wanted to stay with Russia as the only guarantee against the Ottoman armies who were continuing their genocidal crime against their own Armenians, Assyrians and Greek subjects. Even when the Bolshevik Revolution took place, and Lenin called to disband the Russian

Army and withdraw the soldiers from the front-lines, Armenians chose to remain with their neighbors Georgians and Azerbaijanis in what became the short-lived Transcaucasian Federation. Only after Georgian declaration of independence followed by Azerbaijan, did Armenia declare its independence on May 28, 1918, to hastily organize the last defence of Yerevan in front of advancing Turkish armies.

The declaration of independence of Armenia was a desperate act of a deeply wounded nation that needed its own statehood to defend its existence. It’s a little known page of world history where larger-than-life drama played with a world war, deportations, massacres, revolutions, and a heroic birth of a nation that deserves much more attention.

(This column originally appeared in *Agos* weekly newspaper on May 29.)

15th-Century Armenian Church Bells Consecrated In Odessa Oblast

ODESSA, Ukraine (PanARMENIAN.Net) — The bells of the Armenian Church of the Assumption of the Holy Mother of God, built in the 15th century, have been consecrated in Bilhorod-Dnistrovskiy, a city in Ukraine’s Odessa Oblast.

The consecration was conducted by the Primate of the Ukrainian Diocese of the Armenian Apostolic Church, Bishop Marcos Hovhannisyan, AnalitikaUA.net reports.

On that day, Mayor Alla Ginak, Consul General of Armenia in Odessa Hayk Ghulyan, Deputy Chairman of the Union of Armenians of Ukraine Levon Ghulyan, philanthropist Feliks Petrosyan, as well as other guests from different regions of Ukraine and Romania visited the church.

The 15th century church is one of the oldest Armenian churches in Eastern Europe. The building was transferred to the Armenian community in accordance with the decision of the Odessa Regional Council in December 2012. Restorative works, sponsored by Feliks Petrosyan, began shortly afterwards.

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