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Aznavour: A Legend in the Worlds of Art And Humanity Dies

PARIS (Combined Sources) – Thousands of people gathered in the Armenian capital of Yerevan on Tuesday, October 2, to sign a condolence book and pay their last respects to Charles Aznavour, who died on Monday, October 1.

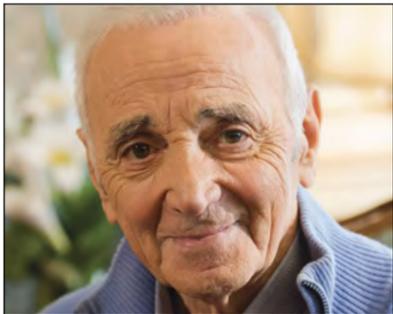
His death at the age of 94 was announced by the French Culture Ministry.

October 1 was declared a day of mourning in Armenia, Prime Minister of Armenia Nikol Pashinyan announced on his Facebook page.

Aznavour, who sold more than 100 million records in 80 countries and was sometimes called the “French Frank Sinatra,” died at one of his homes, in the southeast of France.

For Armenians, he was more than a legendary singer; he was the quintessential hyphenate, successful as a Frenchman and Armenian, never forgetting either.

Born Shahnour Varinag Aznavourian in Paris in 1924, Aznavour began his career peddling his music to French artists of the 1940s and 1950s such as Edith Piaf,



Charles Aznavour

Maurice Chevalier, and Charles Trenet.

The Eiffel Tower was illuminated in honor of Aznavour. *Le Parisien* posted a video on its Facebook account showing the tower. Charles Aznavour’s music can be heard playing in the area.

Candles were lit at Yerevan’s Charles Aznavour Square in memory of the legendary French-Armenian crooner.

see AZNAVOUR, page 4



Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan at the Metropolitan Museum of Art

‘Armenia!’ Opens at Metropolitan Museum of Art to Great Acclaim

NEW YORK – Look in any direction and you’ll see richly illuminated manuscripts, opulent gilded reliquaries, rare textiles, exquisitely carved khatchkars, precious liturgical woodwork, rare printed books – and the artistic pièce de résistance: a sixteen-foot painted map showing the locations of the Armenian churches of historic Armenia before the Genocide.

By Florence Avakian

These are some of the sacred objects that grace eight rooms at the world famous Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York. More than 140 exquisite pieces of devotional art make up the monumental exhibition titled “Armenia!” which explores the remarkable artistic, cultural, and spiritual achievement of the Armenian people over 14 centuries.

On Thursday morning, September 20, a crowded preview for the media took place before the official opening on September 22. This extraordinary exhibit will be on view for the public until January 13, 2019.

Introducing this special event were president and CEO of the Museum Daniel Weiss, as well as a representative of the Hagop Kevorkian Fund which has had a 50-year association with the Metropolitan.

see METROPOLITAN, page 16

Armenian, Azeri Leaders Positive on First Talks

DUSHANBE, Tajikistan (RFE/RL) – Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan and Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev seem to have been satisfied with their first conversation on the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict that took place in Tajikistan’s capital Dushanbe on Friday, September 28.

The two men spoke with each other during a summit of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), a loose grouping of a dozen former Soviet republics.

Pashinyan said later on Friday that they agreed to stop ceasefire violations in the

conflict zone which have again been on the rise lately. “In essence, we can say that there is an agreement to take measures to prevent violations of the ceasefire regime along the entire Armenia-Azerbaijan and Karabakh-Azerbaijan lines of contact,” he said in a video message on Facebook.

For that purpose, Pashinyan went on, he and Aliyev agreed in principle to open a direct Armenian-Azerbaijani “communication line.” He cautioned, though, that the two sides need to work out practical

see TALKS, page 20

ADL Supreme Council Meets with Prime Minister in New York

NEW YORK – The meeting of the Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan and the members of the Supreme Council of the Ramkavar Azatakan party (ADL) took place in New York on September 26.

The delegation included Vartan Nazerian, chairperson of the Supreme Council, members, Dr. Arshavir Gundjian, writer and publicist Hagop Vartivarian and Kevork Marashlian.

During the meeting, the participants discussed the political changes that have taken place in Armenia recently, as well as the recent reforms in the country.

In the conversation with Pashinyan, the ADL delegates talked about the implementation of a more comprehensive policy by the party in the motherland.

Priorities concerning Armenia-Diaspora stronger cooperation were also discussed.



From left, Hagop Vartivarian, Dr. Arshavir Gundjian, Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan, Vartan Nazerian and Kevork Marashlian

NEWS IN BRIEF

Site in Armenia to Be Granted Enhanced UNESCO Status

PARIS (PanARMENIAN.Net) – Monastery of Geghard and the Upper Azat Valley will be granted an Enhanced Protection status by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), according to a decision adopted by the organization.

Enhanced protection is a mechanism established by the 1999 Second Protocol to the 1954 Hague Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict. It aims to ensure full and effective protection of specifically designated cultural property during international or non-international armed conflicts.

The monastery of Geghard contains a number of chapels and tombs, most of them cut into the rock, which illustrate the very peak of Armenian medieval architecture.

The complex of medieval buildings, which is already on World Heritage List, is set into a landscape of great natural beauty, surrounded by towering cliffs at the entrance to the Azat Valley.

Any cultural property is eligible for enhanced protection, provided that it complies with the three conditions: the cultural property must be of the greatest importance for humanity; the cultural property must be protected by adequate domestic legal and administrative measures recognizing its exceptional cultural and historic value and ensuring the highest level of protection and must not be used for military purposes or to shield military sites.

Trump Names Candidate for Armenia Ambassadorship

WASHINGTON – President Donald J. Trump recently announced he will nominate Lynne M. Tracy to be the ambassador of the US to Armenia.

Tracy is a career member of the Senior Foreign Service, class of Minister-Counselor, and currently serves as senior advisor for Russia Affairs at the US Department of State. Previously, she served as deputy chief of mission at the U.S. Embassy in Moscow, Russia, deputy assistant secretary for Central Asia in the Bureau of South and Central Asian Affairs at the Department of State, deputy chief of mission at the US Embassy in Ashgabat, Turkmenistan, and principal officer at the US Embassy Branch Office in Astana, Kazakhstan.

Tracy served as the principal officer at the US Consulate in Peshawar, Pakistan, where she was awarded the Secretary’s Award for Heroism.

She is the recipient of the State Department’s Distinguished Honor Award.

Tracy earned her BA from the University of Georgia and JD from the University of Akron.

The current US ambassador to Armenia is Richard M. Mills Jr., who has served since 2015.

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Commerce Mission

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ARMENIA

News From Armenia

Artsakh Soldier Killed

STEPANAKERT (Armenpress) – A private in the Artsakh Defense Army Gevorg Haroyan (born in 1997) was wounded under unknown conditions at one of the military units located in the southeastern direction at about 10:50 a.m. on October 1, Artsakh's Defense Ministry reported.

The soldier was taken to a hospital, where he succumbed to gunshot wounds at about 3 p.m.

An investigation is underway.

Robot, Louis Pouzin to Speak at La Francophonie Forum

YEREVAN (Armenpress) – TUMO center will host the La Francophonie Economic Forum on October 10. Deputy minister for economic development and investments Mane Adamyan said they expect 360 participants at the event.

The forum will last for two-days. Adamyan said that participants will take part in business tours October 9. Adamyan says they plan to establish a network of IT ministers of Francophone countries at the forum.

She said that Louis Pouzin, the inventor of data-gram and designer of an early communications network, will be a keynote speaker at the forum. Sophia, the social humanoid robot and the most-perfect of its kind AI robot, will also be a speaker.

Yerevan is hosting the XVII International Organisation of La Francophonie summit October 7-12.

Turkish Teen, Jailed in Armenia, Is Sent Back

YEREVAN (news.am) – Armenian officials sent back a minor Turkish citizen to his homeland on September 26.

Earlier it was reported that Yerevan had announced that the criminal case against this Turkish citizen—who had illegally crossed the Armenian border—has been dropped.

Umut Ali Özmen, 16, a resident of Turkey's Kars Province, had crossed the Armenian-Turkish border on July 24. A criminal case was filed into this incident, and on charges of illegally crossing the Armenian state border.

Russian Creditor Takes Over Troubled Copper Mine in Teghut

YEREVAN (RFE/RL) – A Russian commercial bank has gained control over Armenia's second largest copper and molybdenum mine after its owner's failure to repay hundreds of millions of dollars in outstanding debts.

The VTB bank lent Vallex Group, a private mining company, the bulk of \$380 million which the latter claims to have spent on building mining and ore-processing facilities at the Teghut deposit in the northern Lori province. Mining operations began in 2014.

Vallex was no longer able to repay the debt after shutting down the mine in January this year. Most of the 1,200 or so people working at Teghut were laid off as a result.

Sahak Karapetian, a senior Vallex executive who managed the Teghut operation until recently, said on October 1 that the Russian bank has taken over the mine in payment for the debt.

"It can be said that Teghut has ceased to be a part of the Vallex group of companies," said Karapetian. He indicated that his company will challenge the takeover in court.

Karapetian admitted that Vallex now also risks losing ownership of an aging copper smelter located in the nearby town of Alaverdi. The company used the Alaverdi plant as collateral when it secured the loan from VTB.

Environmentalists opposed the Teghut project from the outset. They argued that it will lead to the destruction of hundreds of hectares of rich forest.

Vallex pledged to plant a new and bigger forest in adjacent areas. It also promised to create many jobs, build new schools and upgrade other infrastructure in local communities.

'Counterrevolutionary' Bill Sparks Protests In Armenia; Pashinyan Offers Resignation

YEREVAN (RFE/RL) – Responding to an appeal from Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan, thousands of people began gathering in Yerevan late on Tuesday, October 2, after the Armenian parliament hastily passed a bill that could seriously complicate his plans to force snap general elections.

Deputies representing not only Serzh Sargsyan's Republican Party (HHK) but also the Prosperous Armenia (BHK) and Dashnaksutyun parties backed the bill despite Pashinyan's warnings not to "again create a revolutionary situation in the country."

"Those forces that participated in the drafting of that bill and were going to vote for it are exposing themselves as counterrevolutionary forces," Pashinyan said after meeting with the HHK's parliamentary leaders. "All those who will vote for or back this bill will declare a political war against the people."

Pashinyan urged supporters to rally outside the parliament building when the parliament majority ignored the warning. They were quick to gather there and block the entrances to the National Assembly. The premier was due to address the crowd later in the evening.

Eduard Sharmazanov, the HHK spokesman and a deputy parliament speaker, insisted that the bill is not aimed at preventing the conduct of snap parliamentary elections. He said it is only meant to protect lawmakers against outside "pressures."

"The National Assembly is an independent body and its members are free to vote in accordance with their conscience," Sharmazanov told reporters. He accused Pashinyan of interfering in the work of the legislature.

Under the Armenian constitution, fresh elections can be held only if the prime minister resigns and the parliament fails to replace him or her within two weeks.

Some observers suggested earlier

that in case of Pashinyan's tactical resignation his supporters will blockade the parliament to prevent it from electing another premier during the two-week period. The controversial bill effectively extended that period indefinitely.

to negotiate with leaders of the parliamentary forces.

Under the Armenian constitution, snap elections can be called only if the prime minister resigns and the parliament fails to replace him or her by someone else within two weeks.



Supporters of Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan protest outside the parliament building in Yerevan, October 2.

Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan pledged late on Tuesday to tender his resignation in an effort to force the conduct of snap parliamentary elections "in late November or early December."

Rallying tens of thousands of supporters in Yerevan, he also announced the sacking of six government ministers representing the Prosperous Armenia (BHK) and Dashnaksutyun parties accused by him of hampering the polls.

Pashinyan organized the emergency rally immediately after lawmakers from the BHK and Dashnaksutyun joined the former ruling Republican Party (HHK) in passing a bill that would make it harder for him to have the current Armenian parliament dissolved.

Pashinyan condemned the bill as a "conspiracy against the Armenian people" when he addressed the protesters blocking the entrances to the parliament building in central Yerevan. "We will have pre-term elections in late November or early December," he declared before entering the building

In his speech, he said that he will step down shortly after President Armen Sarkissian certifies the dismissal of the six ministers affiliated with the BHK and Dashnaksutyun. "If it turns out that the people stand for pre-term elections then together with the people we will not allow the parliament to elect a new prime minister," he said, adding that he will continue to perform his duties in the interim.

The premier again insisted that the current National Assembly "does not represent the Armenian people" and that he won a popular mandate to seek its dissolution in the September 23 municipal elections in Yerevan. His My Step bloc won over 80 percent of the vote.

Dashnaksutyun said, meanwhile, that it itself is recalling its members, Agriculture Minister Artur Khachatrian and Economic Development Minister Artsvik Minasian, from Pashinyan's cabinet.

There was no immediate reaction to the latest developments from the BHK, the second largest parliamentary force led by businessman Gagik Tsarukyan.

Former Government Officials, Relatives To Hand Back Diplomatic Passports

YEREVAN (RFE/RL) – Dozens of relatives of former Presidents Serzh Sargsyan and Robert Kocharyan are reportedly among more than 350 individuals whose diplomatic passports have been revoked since the recent change of Armenia's government.

An Armenian law on diplomatic service allows not only Foreign Ministry officials but also the president of the republic, government members, lawmakers, Constitutional Court judges and their family members to hold diplomatic passports during their tenure. It obligates those officials and their relatives to hand back the passports after leaving office.

This requirement seems to have been routinely violated. According to the Foreign Ministry, 254 Armenian diplomatic passports have been invalidated for this reason in the last few months. More

than a hundred other persons have surrendered such passports entitling their holders to visa-free travel to European Union member states and other countries.

Armenian media reports have said that individuals stripped of their diplomatic passports include Kocharyan's and Sargsyan's children, grandchildren, sons-in-law or daughters-in-law as well as their other relatives and even press secretaries. The latter could not be reached for comment on Friday.

Foreign Ministry spokesman Tigran Balayan did not deny the veracity of the reported list which also includes the names of other retired senior officials, notably former Foreign Minister Vartan Oskanian and former Defense Minister Vigen Sargsian. "I won't comment on the list," Balayan told RFE/RL's Armenian service.

A spokesman for Levon Ter-

Petrosian, another former president who ruled Armenia from 1991-1998, insisted that both he and his family have had no diplomatic passports for the past two decades.

"President Ter-Petrosian and [his wife] Lyudmila Ter-Petrosian received diplomatic passports during his presidency," said Arman Musinian. "Two months after his resignation in 1998 then Foreign Minister Vartan Oskanian demanded their surrender in a letter, which is what President Ter-Petrosian and Mrs. Ter-Petrosian did."

Hraparak daily reported earlier this week that also losing his diplomatic passport was Henrikh Mkhitaryan, Armenia's leading footballer currently playing for the English club Arsenal. Mkhitaryan's mother, Marina Tashchian, told other media outlets afterwards that he handed back his passport this summer.



ARMENIA

Artak Zakaryan: Without the Official Position of Artsakh, No Problem Can Be Settled or Agreed

YEREVAN – Hay Dzayn newspaper recently conducted an interview with former Deputy Minister of Defense Artak Zakaryan on the topic of Artsakh. The interview was conducted by journalist Gohar Avetisyan and translated into English by Lusine Melkonyan.

September 2 marks the 27th anniversary of the proclamation of the Artsakh Republic independence. What do you think is the historical and political significance of the day?

During the Artsakh movement history September 2 was an important event, which became the cornerstone for Artsakh's right to self-determination. In 1991, both legal and political grounds were created for the proclamation of the Nagorno-Karabakh Republic as an independent state. The entire political process of the Artsakh conflict settlement was conditioned by the significance of September 2. The proclamation of the Republic gave an opportunity to be guided by the principle of self-determination in the international arena. Under the UN Charter, as well as the provisions



Artak Zakaryan

11 Charged With Vote Buying in Yerevan

YEREVAN (RFE/RL) – Eleven persons, including a senior local government official, have been charged with buying votes for the Republican Party of Armenia (HHK) in last year's municipal elections in Yerevan, it emerged on Tuesday, September 18.

The criminal case stems from irregularities that were reported by the opposition Yelk alliance on eve of the May 2017 elections won by the HHK and its top candidate, Yerevan's incumbent Mayor Taron Markarian.

Yelk representatives found incriminating documents in a trash bin outside an HHK campaign office in the city's Arabkir district. Most purportedly detailed vote-buying operations by government loyalists, including sums of money and guidelines on how to buy votes.

Armenia's Special Investigative Service (SIS) claimed to have conducted an inquiry. It closed the criminal case in August 2017, citing a lack of evidence.

The SIS launched a fresh probe shortly after one of Yelk's leaders, Nikol Pashinyan, swept to power in a wave of mass protests that brought down Armenia's HHK-led government in May.

According to a senior official from the law-enforcement agency, Davit Kostandyan, SIS investigators have found compelling evidence of vote buying in favor of the HHK. Kostandyan said that the illegal operation was led by Hrayr Antonyan, the head of a department at Yerevan's municipal administration, and Stepan Sahakyan, the executive director of a supermarket chain owned by an HHK-linked businessman.

The SIS official claimed that Arabkir residents were paid 10,000 drams (\$21) each for pledging to vote for the HHK and Mayor Markarian. He did not specify how many votes were bought in this fashion, saying only that Antonyan and Sahakyan claim to have spent 48 million drams and 15 million drams respectively on vote bribes.

Neither man could be reached for comment on Tuesday. Kostandyan said they and the nine other suspects have pleaded guilty to the accusations. Markarian, who resigned as Yerevan mayor under government pressure in July, has not yet been questioned by the SIS, added the official.

Another document found by Yelk in 2017 contained the names of police officers who pledged to earn the HHK a particular number of votes. The document was allegedly faxed from a telephone number belonging to the Armenian police.

Kostandyan said that all of those policemen have been questioned by SIS investigators. But he declined to elaborate.

of the Helsinki Final Act, Artsakh gained a full opportunity to fight for its unrecognized independent statehood.

Being unrecognized, of course, many problems in Artsakh are not solved just like in the case of internationally recognized states, starting from international security guarantees to economic interactions. But it's just a matter of time.

In one of your interviews you mentioned that the recognition of Nagorno-Karabakh as an independent state is the key to the conflict

settlement and as long as Artsakh is not recognized, the security guarantees of the Armenian people are not guaranteed either. Today, is this key applicable and what do we have to do in this direction?

Yes, the international recognition of Artsakh is one of the cornerstones without which the conflict cannot be resolved. Otherwise, we will have a deepening conflict, which can endanger regional security and sustainable development. It is no coincidence that the right to self-deter-

mination under the Minsk Group co-chairs is viewed as one of the three indivisible principles. Consequently, international recognition of the right to self-determination is a decisive factor in the final settlement of the issue.

Unlike the previous leaders of Armenia, current Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan said he did not consider himself competent to hold talks instead of Artsakh, since he was neither from Artsakh nor participated in the Artsakh liberation war. How effective do you think this approach is?

In any sense, it does not matter to be from Artsakh or participate in the Artsakh war when it comes to political responsibility. Today's authorities, of course, bear political responsibility for the settlement of the Nagorno-Karabakh problem and have certain work to do in both the foreign and internal life.

During German chancellor Angela Merkel's visit, the latter hinted that Germany can also play a role in the Artsakh conflict resolution. What can you say about this statement, or in general, how do you assess the desire of any other country, besides the co-chair countries, to take part in the peace process?

Germany is a member of the Minsk Group but is not included in the co-chairmanship. The Federal Republic of Germany, as one of the leading EU countries, can play a role in the issue of recognition of the right to self-determination, and as I have already said, the right to self-determination is one of the most important principles of democracy. If democracy continues to be relevant in the world, therefore, democracy-loving states cannot ignore Artsakh's right to self-determination. If Germany is willing to make its best efforts to recognize Artsakh's right to self-determination, we can only welcome it.

Will Yerevan's First Truly Democratic Election in 2800 Years Yield Results?

By Raffi Elliott

At 8 a.m. on on Sunday morning, polling stations across the Armenian capital opened their doors. A steady stream of enthusiastic voters walked through them to cast their ballots in the first significant election following the events of last spring's Velvet Revolution. By the end of the day, almost four hundred thousand Yerevantsis voted in what many consider the first free and fair election since Independence. The Civil Contract party's nominee, Hayk Marutyan, was elected Mayor with an astounding 81 percent of the vote. His victory has been interpreted by many as a vote of confidence for the newly-elected Prime Minister, Nikol Pashinyan. Coming in at a distant second, the Prosperous Armenia Party (PAP), with just under 7 percent of the vote, and fellow liberal party, Luys, at 5 percent. None of the other parties managed to pass the threshold necessary to gain seats in the Council of Elders.

The election was triggered by the July 9 resignation of Taron Margaryan, Yerevan's controversial Mayor after seven years in office.

Twelve parties and coalitions registered with the Central Election Commission before the official campaign kick off on the 10th of September. The roster included, amongst others, the ARF, the Prosperous Armenia party, Raffi Hovhannisyan Heritage party and Yerkir Tsirani, a party formed by former Heritage-member, and firebrand politician, Zaruhi Postandjyan. Most notably, Pashinyan's Civil Contract party chose to run a separate campaign from its liberal parliamentary allies, the Luys party. The Republicans also refused to field a candidate for this election.

Civil Contract chose as its candidate, Hayk Marutyan, a well-known comedian and actor who had been sympathetic to opposition causes over the last several years. Critics of the nomination, however, painted Marutyan as a politi-

cal neophyte with virtually no prior legislative experience. The fact that he had participated in opposition protests may have armed him with political 'street cred', but not necessarily the managerial expertise necessary to run a city of over a million inhabitants. This inexperience got the candidate into some hot water when he publicly described his campaign as a struggle between "the forces of light and forces of darkness". This comparison received some sharp rebukes from opposing candidates, and a scandal was only averted when he publicly retracted these comments.

Virtually every party's campaign platforms included promises to overhaul transportation, protect public spaces, better manage subsidized housing and preserve historic buildings.

Yerevan's status as Armenia's political, economic and cultural capital almost guaranteed that the election would serve as a litmus test for the new post-Velvet government.

By all accounts, Election Day went so smoothly that it bordered on the mundane. With the Republican Party sitting this one out, gone were the *taghi lav tgheke* (The 'good neighbourhood boys' hired thugs that ensure the expected vote count), the black cars parked around polling stations, and the bribes. The Central Election Commission received only 129 complaints, (compared to 1618 recorded last year), most of which were minor. The most controversial of these involved a pizza delivery to a polling station.

The vote, which was open to all registered residents of Yerevan, regardless of citizenship, offered the opportunity for thousands of repatriated Armenians to cast their ballots for the first time since living in the Homeland. Many of them did; expressing their enthusiasm on social media.

With all the ballots counted, Civil Contract will receive 56 seats in the Council of Elders, while Prosperous Armenia and Luys will obtain 5 and four seats respectively. 33 seats are needed to form a majority.

Uncharacteristically for an Armenian election, no party challenged the validity of the

vote, no candidate declared a boycott, and no disgruntled oppositionists called for street protests. In a surprising show of solidarity, Gagik Tsarukyan, Armenia's richest man and head of the PAP, conceded defeat. The ARF, which was shut out of the council, hailed the vote as democratic, while the Luys candidate was quick to offer his congratulations in person to Marutyan.

Recent claims by former President Robert Kocharyan that a 'silent majority' of Armenia's population supported him over Pashinyan were put to the test and decisively invalidated. Marutyan, who largely centered his campaign around his closeness to Pashinyan, secured the largest share of the vote in Yerevan's electoral history.

Republican commentators have not swayed from their opinion that the Velvet Revolution represents the views of a vocal minority. According to them, enthusiasm for the new government didn't quite materialize itself in the polls, citing the relatively low voter turnout. Detractors have rebuffed these assertions, pointing to the fact that this year's turnout, 43 percent was 3 percent higher than the previous years.

With a stunning victory at the ballot box confirming the vote of confidence Pashinyan received on the streets, Armenia is beginning to transition away from direct action and towards establishment politics.

Now armed with the legislative power to make the changes they previously called for from the streets, the time has come to tackle a legacy of mismanagement and corruption left over from the Margaryan days. More than a symbolic victory for Pashinyan, this election must yield tangible results for Yerevantsis, who are in desperate need of good governance, sustainable urban development, transportation systems reform, and clean air. As the people of Yerevan prepare to celebrate their city's 2800th anniversary in just a few days, its new leaders must think of the city's upcoming 1000 years. Hopefully, they're up for the task.



INTERNATIONAL

Aznavour:

A Legend in the Worlds of Art and Humanity Dies

AZNAVOUR, from page 1

"This is truly a painful day for the history of our people and our country," Pashinyan said, describing Aznavour as "a man who created not only national, but universal values, which for many years will accompany mankind toward love and solidarity, and will guide peo-

ple for the righteous." killed at least 25,000 people in what was then Soviet Armenia, Aznavour founded the charitable organization Aznavour for Armenia along with his longtime friend, impresario Levon Sayan.

In 2009, the Armenian government appointed him ambassador to Switzerland and its delegate to the United Nations agencies in Geneva.

In August 2017, Aznavour was awarded the 2,618th star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame.

He was also made UNESCO's ambassador and permanent delegate of Armenia in 1995.

Aznavour wrote a song in 1975 in memory of the Armenian Genocide, *Ils Sont Tombé*.

He also donated profits from another song, *Pour Toi Armenie*, (For you Armenia) to help

rebuild the country after its 1988 earthquake in the town of Spitak.

Prime Minister of Armenia Nikol Pashinyan was to participate in the funeral of Aznavour.

"I will depart for the French capital to participate in Charles Aznavour's funeral ceremony Thursday evening and most probably will return on Saturday," Pashinyan announced.

A Love of Performing

At an age when most performers have long retired from the footlights and the brutal, peri-



With former President Serzh Sargsyan at the opening of the house museum in his honor

entourage, as a songwriter and secretary but, he insisted, not a lover. ("I never had a love affair with her," he said in 2015. "That's what saved us.") He accompanied her to New York in 1948 and stayed for a year. "I lived on West 44th Street, ate in Hector's Cafeteria and plugged my songs," he recalled, "with no success."

Back in Europe, he spent years singing in working-class cafes in France and Belgium, without much success. One critic wrote dismissively of his "odd looks and unappealing voice." Then, in 1956, he was an unexpected hit on a tour that took him to Lisbon and North Africa. The director of the Moulin Rouge in Paris heard him at a casino in Marrakesh and immediately signed him. When he was back in Paris, offers poured in.

In *Yesterday When I Was Young*, an autobiography published in 1979 – it shares its title with the English-language version of one of his best-known compositions – Aznavour recalled a Brussels promoter who had ignored him for years and was now offering him a contract. He offered 4,000 francs. Mr. Aznavour asked for 8,000. The promoter refused.

The next year, he offered 16,000.

"Not enough," replied Aznavour, now a major star. "I want more than you pay Piaf." Piaf was then making 30,000 francs. Again the promoter refused. The next year, he gave in. "How much more than Piaf do you want?" he asked.

"One franc," Mr. Aznavour said. "After that I was able to tell my friends I was better paid than Piaf."

In 1958, the French government lifted a long-standing ban on allowing some of Aznavour's

happy up there, and you can see that," he said. Aznavour had had his first No. 1 hit in 1956 with *Sur Ma Vie* (In My Life), which was followed by one of his biggest hits, *Je M'voyais Déjà* (It Will Be My Day).

Aznavour grew up on Paris's Left Bank, born to a mother who was an actress and a father who was a singer and also worked as a cook and restaurant manager.

His father immigrated from Georgia and his mother from the Ottoman Empire, fleeing the Armenian Genocide.

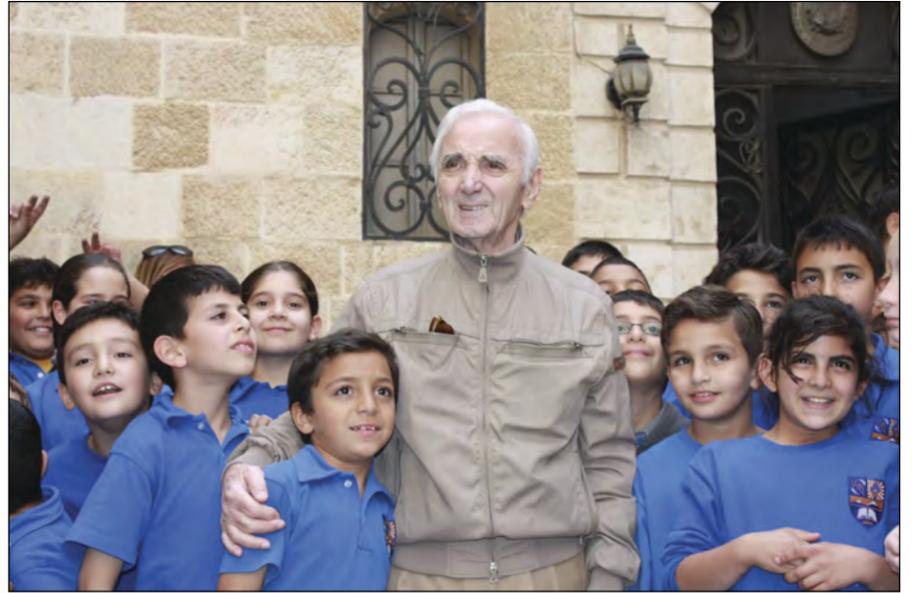
His role in Francois Truffaut's 1960 film "Shoot The Piano Player" brought him international fame.

After the devastating 1988 earthquake that

patetic life of an international star, Aznavour continued to range the world, singing his songs of love found and love lost to capacity audiences who knew most of his repertoire by heart. In his 60s, even then a veteran of a half century in music, he laughed off talk of retirement.

"We live long, we Armenians," he said. "I'm going to reach 100, and I'll be working until I'm 90."

His accomplishments were prodigious. He wrote, by his own estimate, more than 1,000 songs, for himself and others, and sang them in French, Armenian, English, German, Italian, Spanish and Yiddish. By some estimates, he sold close to 200 million records. He appeared in more than 60 films, beginning with bit parts



Aznavour with Armenian children in Jerusalem

as a child.

Charles's parents instilled a love of music and theater in him and in 1933, when he was 9, enrolled him in acting school. He was soon part of a troupe of touring child actors. At 11, in Paris, he played the youthful Henry IV in a play starring the celebrated French actress and singer Yvonne Printemps.

But his earliest inspirations were singers, notably the French stars Charles Trenet, Édith Piaf and Maurice Chevalier. "Trenet for his writing, Piaf for her pathos and Chevalier for his professionalism," he told the *New York Times* in 1992, "and all three for their tremendous presence on stage."

Also high in his pantheon were Carlos Gardel, the Argentine tango singer, and Al Jolson. "Gardel and Jolson were far apart," he said, "but they had the same pathos." He learned his idiomatic English from Frank Sinatra's records, but he considered Mel Tormé and Fred Astaire his favorite American singers.

Aznavour's career spanned the history of the chanson realiste, the unvarnished tales of unrequited love, loneliness and anomie that found their apotheosis in the anguished voice of Piaf. He wrote songs for her and for Gilbert Bécaud, Léo Ferré, Yves Montand and others. When Piaf rejected one of his songs, *I Hate Sundays*, he gave it to Juliette Gréco, then the darling of the Left Bank philosophers and their acolytes. When Piaf changed her mind, she was enraged to find that she'd lost the song and, according to François Lévy, one of her biographers, confronted Mr. Aznavour, shouting, "What, you gave it to that existentialist?"

He spent nearly eight years in Piaf's



With Archbishop Khajag Barsamian in New York



INTERNATIONAL

more explicit songs – like *Après l'Amour*, which recounts the aftermath of an episode of love-making – on the radio. “I was the first to write about social issues like homosexuality,” Aznavour told the *Times* in 2006, referring to his 1972 song *What Makes a Man?* “I find real subjects and translate them into song.”

He returned to New York in 1963 and rented Carnegie Hall, where he performed to a packed house. (Among those in the audience was Bob Dylan, who later said it was one of the greatest live performances he had ever witnessed.) A triumphant world tour followed.

Thereafter, the United States became a sec-

In 2006, at the age of 82, le Petit Charles, as the French called him (he was 5 feet 3 inches tall), began what some – although not Aznavour himself – called his farewell tour. After several months in Cuba that year, recording an album of his songs with the

Right: Charles Aznavour in Armenia after the December 1988 earthquake



Aznavour and his wife, Ulla, in 1975



With close friend Liza Minelli

ond home. Aznavour performed all over the country, often with Liza Minelli. He became a fixture in Las Vegas for a time and there married Ulla Thorsell, a former model, in 1967. She was his third wife.

Aznavour had six children.

Armenian Heritage

As a child, Aznavour watched his father go broke feeding penniless Armenian refugees in his restaurant. As his fame grew, he became a spokesman and fund-raiser for the Armenian cause. He organized help worldwide after an earthquake killed 45,000 people in Armenia in 1988. And when the country broke away from the crumbling Soviet Union in 1991, it made him an unofficial ambassador. He displayed the Corps Diplomatique plaque on his car as proudly as he wore the French Legion of Honor ribbon in his lapel.

President Emmanuel Macron of France said in a statement on Monday: “Profoundly French, viscerally attached to his Armenian roots, famous in the entire world, Charles Aznavour accompanied the joys and sorrows of three generations. His masterpieces, his timbre, his unique influence will long survive him.”



Sharing a laugh with actor George Clooney in Armenia at events marking the Armenian Genocide

pianist Chucho Valdés, he moved on to a 10-city swing through the United States and Canada, beginning at Radio City Music Hall. It was just the English-language part of the tour, he said, with England, Australia, New Zealand and South Africa to follow.

He continued performing almost to the end. He had broken his arm in May, but at his death he had concert dates booked in France and Switzerland for November and December.

Sheltering Jews During World War II

In 2017 he and his sister were awarded the Raoul Wallenberg Award for sheltering Jews during World War II. During the German occupation of France during World War II, Aznavour and his family hid Jews and “a number of people who were persecuted by the Nazis, while Charles and his sister Aida were involved in rescue activities,” according to a statement issued in 2017 by the President of Israel, Reuven Rivlin. In that year, he and Aida received the Raoul Wallenberg Award for their wartime activities. “The Aznavours were closely linked to the Missak Manouchian Resistance Group and in this context they have offered shelter to Armenians, Jews and others at their own Paris flat, risking their own lives.”

Messages of Condolence

Notable artists, politicians and friends from around the world issues messages of condolence.

Italian singer Andrea Bocelli expressed condolences on the death of Charles Aznavour.

Singer Celine Dion wrote, “Today we say good-bye to Mr. Charles Aznavour, a child of Armenia, who became the most famous Ambassador of love songs à la Française. As an Artist, the stage was his home until very recently. His romantic ballads were part of so many generations that the entire world is now mourning him. Monsieur Charles, you will always remain For me Formidable. Love and condolences to the family.”

French President Emmanuel Macron wrote, “Deeply French, viscerally attached to his Armenian roots, recognized throughout the world, Charles Aznavour has accompanied the joys and sorrows of three generations. His masterpieces, his timbre, his unique shine

will continue to have a long life.”

Paris Mayor Anne Hidalgo noted, “It is very painful to hear the news about Charles Aznavour’s passing, a Parisian who has become a true symbol of French songs and Armenia’s passionate ambassador world-

the youngest of us all and despite a career that spanned almost a century, you were always ready to perform in concert, anywhere, anytime. My fondness and respect for you will never diminish and your passion for this job will always lead by example for me,” Bocelli said on Facebook.

Spanish singer Julio Iglesias posted a photo of him together with Aznavour in their younger years on Instagram and wrote: “My dear mentor, we are left with eternity to sing together, rest in peace.”

Former French President François Hollande wrote on Twitter, “In all the cities of the world from Yerevan to Paris he used to sing about love and freedom. A bit ago Charles Aznavour left us, but for us he will always remain on the stage.”

Former President of France Nicolas Sarkozy posted a video of Aznavour performing a song at the Armenian Genocide Memorial in Yerevan, and wrote: “The Great Charles passed. His death both surprised and angered me, because I imagined him to be unbreakable and immortal. He leaves us his words, melodies and voice: those of an absolute genius, of a poet of the French song.”

Liza Minelli, a close friend, wrote, “Charles was my mentor, my friend, my love... I will miss him forever... Love, Liza,” on Facebook, posting a photo of her with Aznavour.

Spanish tenor Plácido Domingo wrote “Légende! Rest In Peace my dear Charles! Your existence has given us so much joy and your beautiful artistry will be missed and never forgotten. May God bless your soul and keep you. Au revoir Charles.”

wide. I extend condolences to his family and friends.”

“Charles, you have always amazed us with your art and brilliant irony. Just a few days ago on my birthday you told me: “60 years old, you are so young Andrea! I was once 60 too... but that was 30, actually 34 years ago. I hope to see you soon!”

Bocelli added, “The truth is that you were



Flowers left at a plaque honoring Charles Aznavour in Yerevan



Receiving an award in Israel for helping Jews during World War II



INTERNATIONAL

International News

Komitas Lecture at the Sorbonne

PARIS (Armenpress) — Sorbonne University of Paris hosted the international seminar “Komitas: Crossroads of Classic and Modern,” on September 28. The event took place at Sorbonne’s Grand Salon, the very same hall where nearly a century ago Komitas himself had delivered a lecture.

The seminar is part of the Komitas International Festival which was launched in Yerevan, sponsored by the Culture Ministry. It began September 26, the birthday of Komitas, and will run through October 8.

The seminar was jointly organized by the Komitas Museum-Institute, the Embassy of France in Armenia and the Paris Academy. The academic discussions were followed by a concert of Voix de Stras.

Wife of Injured Man Fears Losing Home

DUBLIN, Ireland (Irish Independent) — The wife of a man left with devastating brain injuries when a scrambler bike landed on his head in a park fears she could be made homeless.

Anzhela Kotsinian (43) has been keeping vigil at Ilabek Avetian’s bedside since the accident in Dublin’s Darndale Park in June.

But as she prays for her husband, who is in a vegetative state in hospital, she also fears for her own future.

The accommodation where the couple had stayed since arriving in Dublin will not be available to her for much longer.

The public have raised more than €36,000 via a Go Fund Me appeal to help Anzhela, from Armenia, stay in Ireland to continue visiting Ilabek at Beaumont Hospital in Dublin.

She said: “I know about the homeless situation in Ireland and how hard it is to find a home. But I need help to be able to stay here and to visit Ilabek.

“I want to stay in Ireland, to be with my husband — that’s all that matters to me. Nobody can say what will happen with Ilabek because his situation isn’t improving,” she said.

Anzhela and Ilabek (39) had only moved to Dublin a little over a month before the bike tragedy.

They were sunbathing and Ilabek was resting his head on her legs when the bike landed on his head as it drove over a hill in the park.

A police spokesman said an investigation is ongoing.

US Indicts Turkish-Man Arrested For 2013 Congress Trip

WASHINGTON (RFE/RL) — US authorities have unsealed an indictment against a Turkish-American businessman charged with lying to congressional investigators regarding a trip by US lawmakers to Azerbaijan five years ago.

The indictment, which was handed down in April, was released on September 24, about three weeks after the businessman, Kemal Oksuz, was arrested in Armenia on a US warrant.

Oksuz, a Houston-based businessman who used to run two organizations — Turquoise Council of Americans and Eurasians and the Assembly of the Friends of Azerbaijan — was charged by the grand jury with lying on congressional disclosure forms regarding the 2013 all-expenses-paid visit to Azerbaijan made by 10 members and 32 staffers of Congress.

According to the five-count indictment, the trip was funded with the help by Azerbaijan’s state-run SOCAR oil company, which provided \$750,000 toward the effort.

Armenian police announced last month that Oksuz had been detained in the country, and they later released a video of his police interrogation. In the video, Oksuz said that SOCAR covered the travel expenses of the US officials and gave them expensive gifts in 2013.

“That may have been corruption, I don’t know,” he said.

It was not immediately clear when Oksuz fled to Armenia, or why; Armenia has long had strained with both Azerbaijan and Turkey.

As of September 26, Oksuz remained in police custody in Armenia.

The Visit

By Muriel Mirak-Weissbach

Special to the Mirror-Spectator

BERLIN — One might have thought the Queen were coming, what with all the media coverage, the background reports and the talk shows, the editorials and interviews. For well over a week before Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan landed in Berlin for a three-day state visit, the event dominated the political debate.

Would he or wouldn’t he? Should we or shouldn’t we? Erdogan had made himself a black sheep in Germany, after having accused Chancellor Angela Merkel of reviving Nazi methods, when his bid to bring his political campaign to Turks in Germany was blocked; or, when he damned Berlin for harboring terrorists, because opposition figures from his country sought and found political asylum here. Would he continue the tirades while on an official visit? Or would he behave, and try to rebuild bridges, perhaps in hopes of organizing support for his ailing national economy?

And how should we respond? the Germans asked themselves and their political leaders. Should we shake hands with this autocratic tyrant who has jailed thousands of political opponents (including German citizens), who in Orwellian news-speak he has qualified as coup plotters, terrorists and traitors? Better perhaps to sacrifice diplomatic niceties and take a principled stand against this would-be dictator than grant him the status of legitimacy?

Such was (in brief and with a touch of exaggeration) the tenor of the debate that unfolded on the German political stage in September. Erdogan was coming for a three-day visit and nobody knew quite what would happen, or what to do.

Dialogue or Diatribe?

High on the agenda were two meetings with Chancellor Angela Merkel, which were supposed to contribute to overcoming the crisis in bilateral relations.

During the joint press conference following their first meeting, Merkel said that between her and Erdogan there remained “far-reaching differences” with respect to the rule of law and to freedom of the press. Specifically she addressed the issue of German citizens who have been jailed for political reasons; although some have been freed, she said she had demanded that “the other cases could be solved as quickly as possible.” Among those who have been released are Peter Steudner, Deniz Yücel and Mesale Tolu, and according to Foreign Ministry reports, there are five German citizens still in prison.

In addition to those in custody, there is a long list of individuals that Erdogan presented to the Germans, with the demand that they be extradited to Turkey. Prior to his arrival in Berlin, the press spoke of a list of 69 names, and after his visit there were reports of 163 names he had presented. High on the list is Can Dündar, former editor of Cumhuriyet, currently in exile in Germany. Merkel said that as far as this case is concerned, “there are differing opinions between the President and myself.” Erdogan, pointing to an extradition treaty between the two countries, according to which lawfully convicted persons should be handed over. Dündar has been declared guilty of espionage relative to weapons deliveries, and has been sentenced to a lengthy prison term. Erdogan argued that, if Berlin were to request the extradition of such a person who had been lawfully convicted, then Ankara would hand that person over. Dündar was, in his view, an “agent who published state secrets.”

Dündar, as a journalist, had been accredited to the press conference, but he declined to attend, since he had learned that, if he did, Erdogan would cancel the press conference.

From President to President

On Friday, September 28, Erdogan was the guest of honor at a state banquet at the residence of President Frank-Walter Steinmeier, Schloss Bellevue in Berlin. It was red-carpet treatment, as prescribed by protocol for visits by heads of state. Some commentators suggested the tactic was to flatter Erdogan, perhaps stroking his ego, as a way of preparing the terrain to address the uncomfortable issues openly.

Steinmeier did just that in his speech. “We hope that two years after the trauma of the coup attempt, Turkey finds its way back to equilibrium,” he stated. “We have the wish that reconciliation between the sharp social conflicts will succeed on the basis of human rights and the principles of the rule of law.” In rather blunt terms, Steinmeier said, “I am concerned, as President of this country, about German citizens who are imprisoned in Turkey on political grounds, and I am concerned also about Turkish journalists, trade unionists, jurists, intellectuals and politicians who are still in custody.” Steinmeier spoke of a “disturbing number of people from Turkey who are seeking refuge from growing pressure on civil society.” There are in fact large numbers of Turkish citizens, including diplomats and

military personnel, who have sought asylum in Germany. In closing, he said, “I hope, Mr. President, that you understand that we cannot just carry on as usual.”

Erdogan opened his remarks with positive words, praising the partnership and alliance with Germany. The guests at the gala banquet reportedly tried to follow his speech word for word, with the aid of a written translation provided to each. Erdogan recalled Germany’s “valuable contributions” to his country’s development, for example, the first telephone lines laid in 1881, and he was full of praise for Germany’s treatment of Syrian refugees as well as economic cooperation. “There is no problem,” he stated, “that could stand in the way of the German-Turkish friendship or our common interests.” He called for German investments in the Turkish economy, which he characterized as a “stable market economy.”

He also called for overcoming “differences of opinion in reciprocal respect.” He was not going to let Steinmeier’s criticism pass without comment. According to an account in FOCUS online, towards the end of his speech, he suddenly accelerated his tempo, which presented a challenge for the interpreter at Steinmeier’s table. Departing from his prepared remarks, Erdogan said he hadn’t thought that this would come up at such a friendly dinner party; he “actually would have preferred not to talk about this on this occasion,” but he was “forced to talk about it” after Steinmeier had brought up the issue.

He demanded respect for the Turkish juridical system, which he declared was independent, and for their extradition demands. For him, those journalists and intellectuals in prison were terrorists. In the case of Can Dündar, Erdogan said he was “being introduced everywhere here on a silver platter.” Germany, he charged, was protecting terrorists; “and they simply run around here, in the thousands, undisturbed.” So, “shouldn’t we talk about it?” In conclusion, he returned to his prepared text, with warm words for the German-Turkish friendship, etc.

According to FOCUS, “some guests were irritated, while others concentrated on the tomato salad which was served them on gold rimmed white porcelain plates.” Steinmeier was not flustered; in his words of greeting to his guest of honor he had in fact said, “It is good to talk to each other. And, yes, it is even good to argue.”

On the last day of his visit, Erdogan had a working breakfast with Merkel, during which they discussed bilateral relations, the internal Turkish situation and the common fight against terrorism. At the center of attention was the situation in Syria and cooperation on refugee policy.

Religious Dialogue in Silence

Erdogan then travelled to Cologne, where he presided over the official opening of a new mosque, the largest in Germany. It is a mosque of DITIB (Turkish-Islamic Institution for Religion), the largest Muslim organization in Europe and one that is tightly controlled by Ankara. It presides over 900 mosques in Germany and is under the direction of the state religion authority, Diyanet. This event was politically sensitive for many reasons. There had been a plan for a large demonstration in front of the mosque, with thousands of Erdogan supporters, but it had to be cancelled due to security concerns.

For the inauguration of the mosque, Erdogan spoke in front of 1000 invited guests, congratulating those who built the mosque for having “made such a beautiful gift to Germany.” “Here there is no discrimination, no division,” he said. Then, shifting tone, he again raised accusations against Germany, that terrorists were being tolerated; he named the Kurdish PKK, which is classified and treated as a terrorist organization, but also the Gülen movement, which is not.

There were others reasons for controversy in Cologne. DITIB is known to be the long arm of the Turkish establishment. Law enforcement officials in Germany conducted investigations into systematic spying conducted by mosque members on persons associated with the Gülen movement. The idea was that information on the identity of such persons would be communicated to Turkey, where juridical steps could be taken. Recently there have been proposals that DITIB be subjected to official observation on the part of the Verfassungsschutz, the Office for the Protection of the Constitution.

Prior to the visit, there was debate in talk shows and the press regarding the most appropriate manner to inaugurate such a new mosque. One question that was repeatedly raised: which president should inaugurate a mosque in Germany? Steinmeier or Erdogan? It was certainly expected that some high level German political representatives would be invited to attend and also to speak at the event, but that was not the case. Curiously, DITIB had issued a press release officially announcing that the State Prime Minister Armin Laschet would accompany Erdogan for the ceremony. This was however patently false and was duly denied by Laschet’s office. The mayor of the city Henriette Reker was kept in the dark as to her role, and when it became clear that she was not invited to speak, she announced she would stay away. Thus it ended up as a Turkish event, with Turkish participants and all in the Turkish language.

In the original plans, and in the architect Paul Böhm’s design, the new mosque was to be a meeting place for Christians and Muslims, and inter-religious dialogue.

see ERDOGAN, page 20

Community News

Lorig Charkoudian Wins House Democratic Primary in Maryland

TAKOMA PARK, Md. – Lorig Charkoudian, originally from Newton, Mass., won the Democratic Primary for the Maryland House of Delegates, to represent District 20, which includes Takoma Park and Silver Spring.

Charkoudian has dedicated more than two decades to public service in Maryland. This work has taken her into schools, farms, neighborhoods, courts, prisons, small businesses, hospitals, government agencies and the Maryland State House.

She has developed programs to reduce prison recidivism, written legislation for food security and public health, worked with the courts to increase access to justice for low income people, developed programs to build community wealth, provided violence prevention services, and marched in the streets for social justice.

Her vision statement, “Join us to build a More Just and Inclusive Maryland,” has inspired dozens of volunteers to work on the campaign and over 9,000 residents to vote for her.

Charkoudian has been the driving force in the growth of Crossroads Farmers Market and the development of the Takoma Park Silver Spring Commercial Kitchen where local entrepreneurs, many of them immigrants, share the kitchen’s facilities as they develop their food-based businesses.

She credits her appreciation for the power of food as an economic engine and community builder to her Armenian upbringing. “I grew up eating the churtmah, merjumeq, dolma, taboule, and babaganoush that my grandmothers and mother made from vegetables grown in their gardens. This food fed our community and our souls, and was good for our bodies and the environment.”

Currently, Charkoudian is the executive director of Community Mediation Maryland, a non-profit organization that provides training and resources for individuals to mediate disputes within their own communities.

She has a PhD in economics from Johns Hopkins University.

Charkoudian, mother of Aline (age 15) and Raffi (age 12) who were heavily involved in her campaign, was raised in a political family. Her mother, Bethel Bilezikian Charkoudian, was active in the Civil Rights Movement in the early



Lorig Charkoudian and her two children

1960s and currently serves on the Newton Parks and Recreation Commission, representing the commission as she also serves on the Newton Farm Commission. Her father, Levon Charkoudian, was commissioner of the Massachusetts Department of Community Affairs under Governor Sargent.

Charkoudian’s family has always had a strong presence and active involvement in the Armenian Community. Two of her grandparents were survivors of the Armenian Genocide. Her aunt, Arppie Charkoudian, was the International President of the Armenian Relief Society (ARS). Lorig Charkoudian herself attended the AGBU Armenian Elementary School in Watertown.

Charkoudian looks forward to the November 2018 election when she will likely be the first Armenian American to be elected to the Maryland House of Delegates.

More information about Lorig’s campaign and policy platform can be found at <https://lorigd20.com>



Catholicos of All Armenians Karekin II and Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan leave St. Vartan Cathedral.

Primate Welcomes Armenia’s Prime Minister And Catholicos to Cathedral

NEW YORK – It was an afternoon of great anticipation on Wednesday, September 26, as New York’s St. Vartan Armenian Cathedral awaited the arrival of Armenia’s Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan.

As he mounted the steps to the cathedral plaza with his entourage trailing him, including Armenia’s Ambassador to the US Grigor Hovhannissian and Secret Service agents, Pashinyan was greeted with cheers from the small crowd of Diocesan staffers and local friends who had turned out for the prime minister’s impromptu visit.

Greeting him at the entry to the cathedral was the visiting Catholicos of All Armenians Karekin II, accompanied by Diocesan Primate the Very Rev. Daniel Findikyan. Also on hand were the former Primate Archbishop Khajag Barsamian, Diocesan Legate in Washington D.C. Archbishop Vicken Aykazian, Diocesan Vicar General Very Rev. Simeon Odabashian, and Diocesan Director of Ministries Very Rev. Mesrop Parsamyan.

The prime minister, reflecting his reputation as a “man of the people,” was casually garbed in a sweater and jeans, and warmly smiled as he looked up at the carving of St. Vartan above the large bronze doors before entering the sanctuary.

see VISIT, page 8



From left, Archbishop Khajag Barsamian, Primate Very Rev. Daniel Findikyan, Catholicos of All Armenians Karekin II, Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan, Archbishop Vicken Aykazian and Very Rev. Mesrop Parsamyan

Tech Trailblazer Richard Bezjian To Chair COAF Armenia Board

YEREVAN/NEW YORK – Children of Armenia Fund (COAF) announced this week the appointment of Richard Bezjian, founder of Energize Global Services (EGS), as chairman of its Armenia Board of Directors.

Bezjian is a Yerevan-based software developer and businessman. He has been at the forefront of modernizations in graphic design, integrated software solutions, e-commerce and secure banking solutions. His leadership in diverse sectors and disciplines will allow for Bezjian to build upon the momentum of a remarkable year for COAF.

Bezjian received degrees in electrical engineering and computer design from Northeastern University in Boston. His career spans three decades of innovation, beginning with his first company Graphics Software, Inc., to the establishment of Boomerang’s R&D Center in Armenia in 1990. Recognizing a potential for growth in 2007, Bezjian moved his wife, Roubina, and three children to Armenia and founded EGS. This new endeavor set the standard for technological innovations in a newly developing entrepreneurial space, in an emerging region. As of 2018, EGS has grown to a company of 300+ engineering consultants, making it one of the largest and



Richard Bezjian

longest-thriving tech companies of the region. EGS provides services in financial technologies, e-commerce, payments, mobile banking and many other domains.

“Richard Bezjian’s leadership and outstanding credentials will be key to our next phase of advancement,” said COAF Founder and Chairman Dr. Garo Armen. “I look forward to working with Richard closely to take COAF and our innovative COAF SMART initiative to new heights for the benefit of the young generation and broader rural villages,” he continued, “strengthening the communities of rural Armenia catalyzes the growth of Armenia’s economy and ensures a peaceful and prosperous future for our country.”

“The innovative approach, the enormous efforts and funding by COAF and COAF SMART in the development of communities in Armenia is immense,” noted Bezjian following his appointment. “This is a trendsetting movement, that many countries will one day adopt. I am honored to be the chairman of the board. For me, it is an opportunity to do good, for young kids, families, the country and the world.”



COMMUNITY NEWS

Dr. Ümit Kurt to speak on 'Proactive Local Perpetrators: Mehmet Yasin (Sani Kutlug) and Ali Cenani'

FRESNO – Kazan Visiting Professor in Armenian Studies Dr. Ümit Kurt will give his second public lecture on "Proactive Local Perpetrators: Mehmet Yasin (Sani Kutlug) and Ali Cenani" on Tuesday, October 16, at 7:30 p.m., in the University Business Center, Alice Peters Auditorium, Room 191 on the Fresno State campus.

Kurt was appointed the 15th Henry S. Khanzadian Kazan Visiting Professor in Armenian Studies for the Fall 2018 semester.

While there is an extensive body of literature addressing the Armenian Genocide, sig-

nificant gaps persist. The events and processes of the genocide have been unearthed and examined, but genocide is not a phenomenon set in motion by a force of nature; on the contrary, the systematic destruction of Ottoman Armenians was designed and executed by a cadre of individuals, most of whom are little-known today.

In his presentation, Kurt will recover the stories of two such actors, Mehmet Yasin and Ali Cenani, in a particular town, Aintab (modern-day Gaziantep) and in the surrounding district, where both were actively involved in the destruction of Armenians. In

this destruction, they were supported by the citizenry of the town, who – whether or not they approved of the actions these two operatives – did not criticize them and profited from their activities.

Biographies of a genocide's local leaders – the simple, objective features of their backgrounds and careers and their relationship with their communities – can illustrate the social processes, institutional cultures and power relations that contributed to the violence. This lecture hopes to do this by highlighting the human element: the actors, their motives, and their actions, which ultimately

bore responsibility for the catastrophic loss of life.

The lecture will focus on the life stories of these two leading players – on their backgrounds, deeds and involvement in the 1915 Armenian deportation and genocide, as well as their careers in post-genocide Turkey.

Kurt received his PhD from Clark University in 2016 and is currently a Polonsky Fellow at the Van Leer Jerusalem Institute.

He is the author of several monographs and numerous scholarly articles.

The lecture is free and open to the public.

Primate Welcomes Catholicos, Prime Minister to Diocese

NEW YORK – Primate Very Rev. Daniel Findikyan made the following speech at the Diocese:

"It is a profound pleasure and privilege for me today, to welcome both the Prime Minister of the Republic of Armenia and the Catholicos of All Armenians to St. Vartan Armenian Cathedral. Half a century ago, this cathedral was consecrated as a 'national home' for our people—and it is a blessing to have the leaders of our church and homeland here in this magnificent house of God.

"This sanctuary has welcomed the entire first generation of the Republic of Armenia's leaders:

Presidents, Prime Ministers, Foreign Ministers, diplomats; artists, scholars, clergymen. It is our pride and joy to add your name to that roster, Mr. Prime Minister. St. Vartan Cathedral is your home—because it is the home of every Armenian soul that enters the orbit of this great city.

"This year we celebrated 50 years since Catholicos Vasken the First consecrated St. Vartan Cathedral. But the dream of a cathedral in America goes back much further. When the Armenian immigrants first planted roots in the United States, their first order of business was to build churches. And they built this place in the

same spirit—the same faith that has sustained us throughout history, throughout the world, to this very moment.

"They built this cathedral as the place where

our people would pray – and where God would listen. And as I stand here now, and look around me, I feel that God has indeed heard our prayers. He has granted us peace and prosperity in the wake of the Genocide. He has restored our homeland to governance by our own people. He has steered us towards a greater recognition of justice and dignity for all our countrymen.

"Those were the promises inherent in Armenia's history-making turn to our Lord Jesus Christ, all those many centuries ago. It is surely the testimony of the beautiful exhibit at the Metropolitan Museum of Art. Every item is an exquisite reminder of the creativity and imagination of our forebears. But more than that: all of them together are a profound reminder of the faith that has animated the Armenian soul for centuries on end.

"St. Vartan Cathedral is no different: the building itself and every precious thing in it – all are gifts from our people, manifesting their love and commitment to our risen Lord and the Armenian



From left, Archbishop Khajag Barsamian, Primate Very Rev. Daniel Findikyan, Catholicos of All Armenians Karekin II, Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan, Archbishop Vicken Aykazian and Very Rev. Mesrop Parsamyan

Primate Welcomes Armenia's Prime Minister and Catholicos to Cathedral

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The Diocesan Primate guided him around the cathedral, and welcomed him and the Vehapar. Speaking in Armenian with obvious emotion, he said in his formal remarks: "St. Vartan Cathedral is your home, because it is the home of every Armenian soul that enters the orbit of this great city."

"When the Armenian immigrants first planted roots in the United States, their first order of business was to build churches. They built this place in the same spirit," Findikyan said.

He went on: "As I stand here now, I feel that God has indeed listened to our prayers. He has granted us peace and security in the wake of the Genocide. He has restored our homeland to governance by our own people. He has steered us towards a greater recognition of justice and dignity for all our countrymen."

The Primate concluded with gratitude: "Vehapar Der, Prime Minister Pashinyan, we pray for our Republic, we pray for our people, we pray for you, that God may guide you so that you may guide our people through this season of change

in our national life, and lead our Republic to a bright new day for every Armenian."

Catholicos Karekin II, who had accompanied the Prime Minister during the grand opening of the monumental exhibit on Armenia at New York's Metropolitan Museum of Art, had also been present at the United Nations General Assembly on Tuesday night, where the prime minister gave an address outlining the foreign policy challenges facing the Armenian republic.

The catholicos thanked Pashinyan for visiting the cathedral, and uttered an affecting prayer for the success and prosperity of Armenia, before leading the attendees in reciting the Hayr Mer.

Pashinyan offered brief remarks in Armenian, expressing thanks to the Catholicos and Primate, and appreciation for the welcome he was accorded. He noted that the Armenian people had expectations from the republic's leaders to promote greater prosperity and justice; and he affirmed that his government intended to work to meet those expectations for all of Armenia's citizens.

OBITUARY

Nancy Elaine Hintlian Lifelong Member of Holy Trinity Church

WALTHAM, Mass. – Nancy Elaine Hintlian of Waltham, died on September 16.

She was the daughter of the late Anne and Aram Hintlian. She was the sister of Cynthia Kazanjian and her husband Dick Kazanjian, the late Gregory Hintlian and his wife Nancy Hintlian, and Aram Hintlian and his wife Becky Hintlian; aunt to Ricky Kazanjian, Andrea and Neil Krikorian, Jeff and Adrienne Hintlian, Elissa and Scott Robertson, Ali Hintlian, and Tori Hintlian; great-aunt to Vaughan Krikorian, Cole Krikorian, Elle Robertson, and Aurora Hintlian and mother to her rescued dog, Lilo Hintlian.

She was a lifelong devoted and dedicated member and supporter of Holy Trinity Armenian Church and an active trustee of the church.

Funeral services were held at Holy Trinity Armenian Church, Cambridge, on Friday, September 21. Cemetery services were private.

Arrangements were made by the Aram Bedrosian Funeral Home, Watertown.



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COMMUNITY NEWS

27th Anniversary of Armenia Independence Celebrated at St. Mary Armenian Church

WASHINGTON – On Sunday, September 23, after the divine liturgy and thanksgiving prayer for the independence of Armenia, the Parish Council of St. Mary Armenian Church and Knights and Daughters of Vartan jointly celebrated the 27th Anniversary of the Independence of Armenia.

Present were Diocesan Legate Archbishop Vicken Aykazian, Rev. Hovsep Karapetyan, newly appointed Armenian Consul Arsen Mikayelyan, and embassy secretaries Lucine Shirinyan and Dickran Tumanyan.

The celebration event started with the American and Armenian anthems, the latter played on piano by the a dedicated youngster Andre Alexanian. After the opening prayer by Karapetyan, talented youngster Hovsep Seferian recited one of his own works about Armenia.

Eric Ashbahian, representing the Parish Council, welcomed the audience and

Mikayelyan.

Mikayelyan, the keynote speaker, was presented by Malvina Brown, vice matron of Daughters of Vartan. Mikayelyan was born in 1982, in Gyumri. He has master's degree in political science from Yerevan State University as well as a degree from the Armenian Diplomatic Academy. He completed an Advanced Certificate Program at Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy in Medford, Mass., through a grant from Aso Tavitian Foundation.

His experience includes working at the Public Diplomacy Department and at the Office of the Secretary General of the Armenian Foreign Ministry. From 2012 to 2015, he was posted to the Armenian Embassy in Romania.

In 2014 received the Armenian Defense Ministry Medal of Vazgen Sargsyan for "meritorious services towards military." He is married and has three children.



Rev. Fr. Hovsep Karapetyan, Diocesan Legate Archbishop Vicken Aikazian and Armenian Embassy newly appointed Consul Arsen Mikayelyan in the center surrounded by members of Knights and Daughters of Vartan



Consul Arsen Mikeyelyan

Mikayelyan started his speech by telling the story of his great-grandfather who had immigrated to the United States in the 1890s from Western Armenia, but went back to his hometown in 1912. During the Genocide he lost many family members; while some remaining family members emigrated to Armenia he returned to America and formed a family.

Mikayelyan encouraged the audience to continue their dedicated life here in Washington because he has seen today with pride youngsters prepared with high culture. He then invited her daughter, 14-year-old Garina, who sang *Dzizdermak*.

Afterwards Andre Alexanian played on the piano *Yerevan-Erebouni* and *Pari Arakil*, and Anais Chubukian rounded off the cultural program by playing two pieces on the violin.

Archbishop Vicken Aykazian closed the celebration by remembering the very day Armenia declared its independence, the scenery in the center of Athens, where he was at that moment,

the placement of the Tricolor among the flags of the independent countries of the world. He emphasized the need to help Armenia prosper



Andre Alexanian on the piano

because it is giving to us, Armenians of the Diaspora, the reason to continue living as Armenians.

The program ended with a reception hosted by the Daughters of Vartan.

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COMMUNITY NEWS

LA Community Pays Tribute to Archbishop Vatche Hovsepian

By Taleen Babayan

Special to the Mirror-Spectator

BEVERLY HILLS – An abundance of legacy and love flowed through the fitting setting of the old-world glamour Beverly Hills Hotel in a celebration banquet honoring Archbishop Vatche Hovsepian, former primate of the Western Diocese, and the First Ladies of the Auxiliary on Sunday, September 23, in an event hosted by the Ladies Auxiliary of the Western Diocese under the auspices of Archbishop Hovnan Derderian.

The theme of the afternoon, “A Legacy of Love,” recalled the strong foundation built by Hovsepian during his decades-long tenure, from 1971 until 2003, and the integral role of the Ladies Auxiliary that in unison bolstered the Western Diocese during its early life, gathering financial and spiritual support while heightening its reputation.

The cocktail hour and silent auction, proceeds of which benefited the Archbishop Vatche Hovsepian Summer Camp, featured vintage photos and articles of the activities of the Western Diocese and the Ladies Auxiliary, from the first cotillion in 1972 to the Christmas reception to many other outreach activities, which cemented the presence of the Western Diocese as a leader of religious and cultural activities in the greater Los Angeles Armenian



Archbishop Vatche Hovsepian with guests [Shahe Melelian (Arka Photography)]

impressive Diocesan Headquarters in Burbank today – he worked alongside the dedicated Ladies Auxiliary (the original 12 consisting of members of various churches, including

his pastoral journey. Accompanying him to his studies in Echmiadzin when he was a student, Hovsepian was present during many other milestones in Fr. Movsesian’s life, from ordaining him, to officiating his wedding, to baptizing his children to officiating the marriage of his children.

“Archbishop Hovsepian is the Armenian Church leader you are proud to have as your bishop,” said Movsesian. “He is a true father and whatever person and priest I am today, it is because I was inspired by Vatche Srpazan’s love

in spirit, represented by their family members. She praised them for their decades of loving service, including former Chairs Doris Sarkisian and Lily Balian, while recognizing the “current, dynamic” Primate of the Western Diocese who presides over the Ladies Auxiliary.

Active members of the Western Diocese, Bob Simonian and Bob Barsam shared their thoughts on Archbishop Hovsepian’s legacy and their work together, touching upon his talents, ability to bring the community together and his love of the Armenian Church, his fami-



Cindy Norian [Shahe Melelian - Arka Photography]



Bob Simonian [Shahe Melelian - Arka Photography]

community, the traditions of which continue on to the present day.

A venerable figure in the Armenian Church hierarchy throughout his lifetime of service, Hovsepian has served Armenian communities across the globe, particularly in North America. Accessible and modest, Hovsepian commanded the respect of his flock, dedicating his life to the betterment and preservation of the Armenian Church and becoming a centerpiece to the Armenian community’s life in California for almost 50 years.

As he strengthened the Western Diocese – which consisted of a small rented office on Crenshaw Boulevard when he assumed the role of archbishop in 1971 to the acquisition of the

Margaret Dadourian, Hadji Haiganoush Dulgarian, Rose Ketchoyan, Sue Chortanian, Norma Sulukciyan, Mary Vartanian, Dorothy Manookian, Isabelle Davidian, Gloria Meghriyan, Hadji Perooz Frankian, Azadouhie Keotahian and Babe Simonian). Over time, the Ladies Auxiliary expanded to include many more, including a total of 40 members who continue to serve the Diocese today.

“What we are today, we can thank no one but Vatche Srpazan who took on this Diocese when it had nothing except those offices on Crenshaw Boulevard I remember going to as a kid,” said Rev. Vazken Movsesian, who developed a close relationship with Hovsepian, his “spiritual father,” from the very beginning of



Rev. Fr. Vazken Movsesian [Shahe Melelian (Arka Photography)]

for his church and for his people.”

Chair of the Ladies Auxiliary Cindy Norian placed the city of Los Angeles into historical context when Hovsepian arrived in the early 1970s, “a young man with lots of energy and a modern vision.” She noted that there was a modest community of Armenian-Americans, but it was about to explode with the arrival of hundreds of thousands from the Middle East, where their communities were experiencing conflict and instability.

Norian cited memorable events and accomplishments with Archbishop Hovsepian, including the pontifical visit of Vasken I in 1987, where 4,000 people gathered at the Los Angeles Convention Center and a Liturgical Mass was held at the Hollywood Bowl, amassing aid for the 1988 earthquake in Armenia, and the many Christmas receptions and Debutante Balls.

“Vatche Srpazan was proud of what his ladies could do,” said Norian. “He would say that the ladies arrived with bags and produced banquets.”

Norian recognized the original members of the Ladies Auxiliary, some of whom were there

ly and friends, and his two home countries of the US and Armenia.

“Upon his arrival in Los Angeles, his perpetual love for the Armenian Church elevated the stature of the Western Diocese to a justifiable respectable institution,” said Simonian. “He had nothing to build from, no budget, no secretary, a rented office on Crenshaw, and a few dependable people.”

From those humble beginnings, the Diocese went on to purchase a property on North Vine Street in Hollywood to acquiring the property in Burbank, which is now home to the Diocesan Headquarters. Simonian noted that under Hovsepian’s leadership, the Armenian Churches and Schools more than doubled, an endowment was established, stewardship and programming increased, as did the role of the Western Diocese in religious and ecumenical circles.

“Our stature and stability of the Western Diocese was ensured by Vatche Srpazan,” said Simonian, who noted that Hovsepian re-established the camp program, setting new standards and establishing order. “Today the camp

continued on next page



Vartan Hovsepian [Shahe Melelian (Arka Photography)]



COMMUNITY NEWS

from previous page

is dedicated in his honor and the children who now attend will one day become the backbone and leaders of the Western Diocese.”

Bob Barsam painted a portrait of Hovsepian both inside and outside of his canonical activities as someone who loved sports and outdoor activities while “working



Bob Barsam [Shahe Melelian (Arka Photography)]

under his capable leadership in the expansion of the Western Diocese.”

“He has a keen interest in identifying individuals from the community for the benefit of the Diocese,” said Barsam. “I want to express my gratitude to you Srpazan for being part of the growth and advancement of the Western Diocese.”

Following a musical performance by Karin Mushegain, Hovsepian’s nephew, Vartan Hovsepian, along with his three children, Vanna, Vatche and Zaven, presented a short recitation in Armenian. Hovsepian elaborated on the afternoon’s theme, highlighting that there are two types of legacies, one that is created and one that is continued, pointing out that his uncle did both, “creating a

vibrant and loving atmosphere for our community and also continuing the legacy of his parents, who need to be remembered because they laid the foundation.”

He noted that love is described by sacrifice and that his uncle is the embodiment of sacrificing “for the Armenian Church and for our family.”

“His sacrifices were born out of love and as a family we appreciate all he has done for us because his guidance, dedication and love have enriched all of our lives,” said Hovsepian. “He always taught us to serve a call greater than ourselves.”

In his remarks, Derderian recalled his first meeting with Archbishop Hovsepian while at a meeting in Holy Echmiadzin with the late Catholicos of All Armenians Vasken I, recalling it as a “historic day.”

“He was strong, outgoing and mesmerizing,” said Archbishop Derderian, who noted that Archbishop Hovsepian was present during his ordination as Bishop in 1990 in Etchmiadzin.

“God Bless you and your unwavering determination for all of your accomplishments and my heartfelt gratitude,” concluded Archbishop Derderian as he invited Archbishop Hovsepian to share his thoughts.

Recognizing his family members in attendance, Hovsepian elaborated on the significance of being close to the Armenian Church “because God is the source of our energy and we get our strength from God.”

His forthright remarks traced his first days in the “wilderness” of Los Angeles and the office on Crenshaw, where he remained for two years while galvanizing the community and taking a “giant step forward with the Grace of God and dedicated people” to purchase the Vine Street property in Hollywood, establishing a respectable Diocese. He continuously guided the Armenian faithful in the West, as it grew from 50,000 to half a million, and created a legacy that bridged together a strong community with a permanent Diocesan Headquarters, doing it all “with love.”

“I couldn’t have done it alone,” said Hovsepian. “We did it all together.”



Archbishop Vatche Hovsepian with his family members [Shahe Melelian (Arka Photography)]



Archbishop Vatche Hovsepian with members of the Ladies Auxiliary [Shahe Melelian (Arka Photography)]

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COMMUNITY NEWS

Bohigian Navigates World of Commerce and Lands in OPIC

By Aram Arkun

Mirror-Spectator Staff

WASHINGTON – David Steele Bohigian is a man on a mission, constantly traveling to countries around the globe to promote American values and business investment, along with the free market economic system. On September 18, he briefed members of the Armenian community and various organizations and agencies dealing with US-Armenia trade issues on his recent visit to Armenia as second in command of the Overseas Private Investment Corporation (OPIC) of the United States. The next day he offered a follow-up interview to the *Mirror-Spectator* at the art deco style OPIC headquarters in Washington.

The briefing and the reception which followed was hosted by the Embassy of the Republic of Armenia. Ambassador Grigor Hovhannisian introduced Bohigian and a number of the prominent guests present. Hovhannisian provided the context for the evening when he said, “Since the early days of the Trump administration we are contemplating a shift in paradigm in the type of relationship we are building with the United States, which was previously aid-centered. We are transitioning into a partnership, a trade-centered development... It is important for us to intellectually understand what a small landlocked country like Armenia with limited resources can offer the US, what kind of partnership Armenia can offer the US. The asymmetry is tremendous. This is not a simple type of partnership. The United States is not a country by Armenian standards, it is a continent, it is a universe, so Armenia needs to find its niche and US investors need to find an area of focus, and that is where I think OPIC and some of your colleagues can come in handy.”

Bohigian started by defining OPIC’s objective as to “help advance development goals and US foreign policy in countries around the world.” He said that he thinks of OPIC as the successor of the Marshall Plan which after



David Bohigian (photo: Aram Arkun)

World War II helped rebuild the economies of Europe. OPIC provides political risk insurance and project finance and supports private equity firms. It operates under the policy guidance of the Secretary of State. Everything that it does provides a profit to the United States government, including over \$250 million last year alone.

Bohigian, with his colleagues Carol Danko and John Didiuk (both present at the talk), and others, briefly visited Armenia, Georgia, Azerbaijan and Uzbekistan from August 13 to 17. This trip was, Bohigian said, “part of our outreach to the region to support democracy and support capitalism as opposed to state-owned enterprises.”

At present, OPIC is supporting 32 projects in the three countries of the Caucasus at a total value of over \$167.8 million. Of this, the lion’s share goes to Georgia, in which OPIC currently has \$138 million invested in 21 projects. It currently has \$11 million invested in Azerbaijan and the same amount in Armenia. However, while Armenia has received \$88 million in total in the past few decades (including an \$18-million loan for the Armenia Marriott Hotel), Azerbaijan received, as of 2015, around \$230



Amb. Grigor Hovhannisian, left, and OPIC Executive Vice President David Bohigian at the Armenian embassy in Washington (photo: Aram Arkun)

million through OPIC. Georgia has received \$618 million in toto, and Uzbekistan \$231 million.

In Armenia, the OPIC delegation met with Deputy Prime Minister Tigran Avinyan, Minister of Economic Development and Investments Artsvik Minasyan and members of the American Chamber of Commerce. They saw the Innovative Technology Solution Center (a public-private partnership between USAID and IBM) at Yerevan State University. They visited some first-time homebuyers who benefited from the First Mortgage Company. OPIC financing allowed First Mortgage to be able to extend the length of its loans and reduce the interest rate, making home ownership more affordable. Finally, they inaugurated the Gazelle Fund in Armenia. This is a venture capital private equity firm which previously was active in Georgia helping to support small and medium size enterprises of all sorts, including dry cleaners, bakeries, hotels and schools. Bohigian said that it would follow a similar approach in Armenia.

This was Bohigian’s second trip to Armenia. In 2008 he went as an official of the US Department of Commerce. Bohigian related his first impression of his present trip: “When you are in Republic Square, I will tell you, there is no better energy anywhere in the world today. I have traveled to 50 countries in the world, I have been to Times Square more times than I can count, but the energy in Republic Square, the sense of optimism, is truly palpable. We want to be able to support that freedom, that energy, that democracy with the youth. It was midnight on a Monday night and it was more crowded than you will find in Dupont Circle, and more energy than you will find in Times Square. It was really wonderful.”

He hopes that Americans, including members of the Armenian-American community, will invest more capital in Armenia, after the recent political changes there. He said, “We think that the Velvet Revolution has given us an opportunity to work more closely to really support what I think of as a fulcrum of freedom. We want to support the Armenian people in their pro-democratic and pro-capitalist reforms so they are able to develop their own economy as the ambassador was saying, with the private sector.” This support will not be through aid but through economic partnership and relations.

He noted later that evening that “When we talked about priorities with the ministries and the prime minister’s office there, the longer the meeting went on, the more priorities and the more ideas we had, which is a wonderful problem to have.”

There are two important conditions that Bohigian told government officials in Armenia had to be realized in order to get more investments there: more legislative anti-corruption measures insuring transparency in the marketplace and more political certainty, meaning getting past the parliamentary elections, which Bohigian hoped would be early next year. This would allow an elected government to be able to put its own platform into place.

During the question session of the presentation, Bohigian avoided making any direct com-

parisons between Armenia and the other countries he visited. OPIC International Project Finance Director John Didiuk reported that their recent trip led to project leads, including on hotels outside the capital and lending projects, where OPIC would make a loan or lending to an Armenian bank which would in turn use that money to make loans to small and medium size enterprises in Armenia.

Bohigian told the audience that this is the most opportune time to promote Armenia economically due to all the attention it has been getting after the revolution. He said, “I think if you want to create a wave of investment, the

messenger sent to inform neighboring villages of the birth of a son that broke its leg. This was considered good luck, Bohigian wryly related, maybe because it was not the baby that was hurt.

Bohigian’s grandfather left at the age of five with his mother to Pennsylvania, then eventually settled in St. Louis, where he became a dry cleaner. Bohigian’s father George became an ophthalmologist, and as such has been to the Republic of Armenia a number of times as part of the Armenian Eyecare Project. Dr. Bohigian speaks some Armenian and he and his sister attend the Armenian church in Belleville regularly. David confessed that he himself has been unsuccessful at learning Armenian.

Bohigian said that growing up, he was interested in two things: student government and being an entrepreneur. He said, “I think that from a young age, those two strains have been an important part of my career, and journalism was a way to make sure that I can communicate those ideas.” Indeed, he ended up with a journalism degree from Washington and Lee University and afterwards earned a law degree from Washington University in St. Louis in 1995. Bohigian said, “Law was a way to sharpen those tools and thinking, but I really didn’t expect to become a lawyer and wasn’t a lawyer.”

After law school, he came to Washington to work for Speaker Newt Gingrich in his first 100 days. Bohigian exclaimed, “that was an amazing time in US policy!” Then he moved to a venture capital firm. He said, “Throughout my career, I have gone back and forth from helping to grow businesses to policy roles.”

After he sold a venture capital firm he founded, VenCatalyst, to the Pasadena-based Idea Lab in 2000, he moved to Los Angeles, New York and then London. In London he was



From left, OPIC Executive Vice President David Bohigian meets with Armenian Deputy Prime Minister Tigran Avinyan and US Ambassador to Armenia Richard Mills, Jr. (photo: courtesy OPIC)

eyes of the world are on Armenia now, whether that is the New York Times travel section, or the Wall Street Journal talking about the political revolution. So if you can capitalize on that attention in a positive way, then you will be able to catalyze investment on a scale that no government is going to do in the 21st century. When we look at the needs around the world, there are no combination of governments that can meet those. It is going to be the private sector. That is how I think a 21st century Marshall Plan happens: a country like Armenia attracts investment, which in turn has a virtuous cycle creating more entrepreneurship and more investment.”

In an interview the day after the briefing at the Armenian Embassy, Bohigian expanded on some points and spoke about his own background. His grandfather was born in 1910 in the village of Darman, 200 miles east of Ankara, in the Kghi district of Erzerum. Bohigian recalled a break-a-leg story about his grandfather, with the twist that it was the horse of the

asked by the George W. Bush administration in 2002 to join the Commerce Department, where he held a number of positions, including Director of Policy and Strategic Planning, covering, as he said, everything from economics to the census to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, which itself handles everything from salmon to weather.

He moved into a trade role as Assistant Secretary of Commerce for Market Access and Compliance, where he worked to ensure that there is a level playing field for US businesses when they compete overseas. It was in this role that he visited Armenia, and 50 other countries around the world, to talk about economic reforms.

He left Commerce in 2009 to start an energy efficiency fund, E2 Capital Partners, to help retrofit buildings with energy efficient equipment, which Bohigian called “a good way to do well and to do good.” He moved from there into the world’s largest hedge fund, Bridgewater

continued on next page



COMMUNITY NEWS

A Memorable and Inspirational Evening

PASADENA, Calif. – On September 15, the Armenian Cilicia Evangelical Church of Pasadena held a grand banquet at its Derian Hall to honor the 45-year-long service of Armen Aroyan for the church and the Armenian community at large.

The program started with the Derian Hall jam-packed with 240 people who represented all the Armenian churches, as well as all the cultural, social and educational organizations of Southern California. Some of the distinguished guests were the following: Vatche Barsoumian, the director of the “Lark” musical group, and his wife, Arpi; Jacque Hagopian, the 102-year-old poet, who was born in Egypt; Dr. Nazareth Darakjian, the president of the Armenian Missionary Association of America and his wife, Dr. Ani; Mike Youssefian, the founder of the Sahag-Mesrob Armenian Christian School, and his wife, Arpi; Dr. Garbis Der Yeghiayan, president of Mashdots College, and his wife, Angela; Martin Eskijian, the director of the Eskijian Museum, and his wife, Effie; Jack Lousararian, the former director of the Armenian Evangelical Welfare Services, and his wife, Arsha; Rev. Bedrj Djambazian, the current minister to the Union of Armenian Evangelical churches of North America; Rev. Joseph Matossian, the former minister to the Union of Armenian Evangelical churches of North America and the current minister of the Bible Brotherhood Church.

After the singing of the American and

Armenian national anthems, the newly appointed pastor of the Cilicia Church, Rev. Serop Megerditchian, offered the opening prayer.

This banquet was distinguished by having two emcees, the bilingual sisters, Arda and Doris Melkonian, who presented an overview of Aroyan’s ability as choral director and tour organizer, and ran the whole program smoothly and with precision.

A slide presentation by Roupen Berberian, a distant relative of the honoree, traced his life from birth to the present.

After dinner, Maral Parseghian sang *When You Walk with God*, which is a fitting illustration of Aroyan’s religious experience. She was accompanied on the piano by Esther Assilian and the young violinist Saren Daghlian.

“Down Memory Lane” was an interesting film presentation, prepared by Alice Terian, who undertook the task of editing many video/song segments covering a span of 40 years. The movie showed Aroyan ably conducting choirs and orchestras of various sizes since 1974. The most impressive ones



From left, Ara Assilian, Rev. George Terian, Armen Aroyan and Rev. Serop Megerditchian

were the following:

A Christmas Musicale titled, “Night of Miracles,” performed by the Armenian Evangelical Choir of Pasadena on December 14, 1974; “The Last Words of Christ” performed by the same choir and orchestra on March 28, 1980; The Pasadena Men’s Chorus performing at the Cilicia Church and the Pasadena Public Library and a Christmas Cantata titled, “The Child of Promise,” performed at the Cilicia Church in December 2015.

The climax of the program was when Aroyan enthusiastically directed a choir from his wheel-

chair. The 20-member choir electrified the whole banquet hall with their religious and national songs, and received a thunderous applause.

Testimonials were given by Hrant Agbabian, the architect who designed the Armenian Genocide Memorial in Montebello and his wife, Alidz, who recounted the uplifting experience they had when they visited Cilicia during a tour organized by Aroyan.

Mike Youssefian spoke in Armenian and challenged those who did not know their mother tongue to attend special Armenian language classes at the Sahag-Mesrob Christian School where their tuition charges would be waived. The entire audience broke into laughter. Youssefian said that multi-talented men like the honoree are rare in the Armenian Diaspora.

The former pastor of the Cilicia Church, Rev. Kevork George Terian, heaped praises on Aroyan for directing the church choir during his 18-year-long pastoral ministry. Terian also extolled Aroyan’s virtues of humility, patience and perseverance. By referring to his “pilgrimage tours” of historical Armenia and Cilicia, Terian emphasized Armen’s peculiar contribution to the Diaspora Armenians by connecting them to their roots and by transforming their haunted memories into vivid realities.

Rev. Joe Matossian emphasized Aroyan’s persistence and said, “Armen would make 500 phone calls, if necessary, to accomplish whatever task that was entrusted to him.”

Andranig Karaminssian praised his humility, gently spirit and his soft-spoken manner.

Ruth Kalousdian, the leading soprano of the Cilicia Church choir, commended Aroyan for his ability to recognize and recruit talented singers. She said that as a young teenage girl she was stage shy, but Armen encouraged her to take voice lessons that refined her skills.

Nishan Yeghiayan, the custodian of the Cilicia church and the unofficial “poet laureate” of the congregation, recited a poem that he had written in Armenian portraying the honoree as a good man and a staunch Armenian nationalist.

Angele Bedirian thanked Armen for his service to the youth whom he incorporated into his choir and provided a wholesome environment for their socialization.

Ara Assilian, the moderator of the Cilicia Church, presented to him a special and artistically-designed plaque.

Rev. Berdj Djambazian, the minister to the Union of Armenian Evangelical Churches of North America, thanked him for his ministry through music and song that impacted many lives and enriched the spiritual experience of many people.

The inspiring program was concluded by Djambazian’s benediction and the singing of *Park Yev Badiv* by the expanded choir.

Esther Assilian was the piano accompanist for the entire evening.

It is common knowledge that after the Genocide, the Turks changed the names of all Armenian villages and towns. Aroyan was able to locate and identify hundreds of these villages and with his camera photographed the ruined churches and schools.

Aroyan’s unique contribution to Armenian historical studies was recognized and highly appreciated by the National Association of Armenian Studies and Research (NAASR) and by Dr. Richard Hovanesian, the most prominent contemporary Armenian historian.

In the summer of 2017, when Aroyan told this writer that he wanted to guide a group of 16 people through historic Armenia and Cilicia, I advised him to cancel the arduous trip out of my concern for his declining health. I was amazed by Armen’s prompt response, “I cannot withdraw from life. I will continue to do what I love as long as I am alive.”

In His Service with Song and Music is the title of an illustrated book, consisting of 125 pages, that was distributed to the attendees as a memorial of Armen Aroyan’s musical legacy.

To see a video of the event, click on <https://youtu.be/M1uwpOkFCm4>

– Rev. Kevork George Terian
Pastor Emeritus of the Armenian Cilicia
Evangelical Church

Bohigian Navigates World of Commerce, Lands in OPIC

from previous page

Associates based in Connecticut and then in 2013 started his own firm, Pluribus Ventures, which was doing impact investing as well as advising financial services firms.

At the end of November 2016, he was appointed to President Donald Trump’s Commerce Department transition team. In February 2017 he became a special adviser to the US Treasury Department, and in early August 2017, was confirmed by the Senate in his OPIC post.

When asked the day after his event whether he might eventually go directly into politics, Bohigian replied: “This is the best of all my other jobs combined. Honestly, to be able to work on economic policy on behalf of the US government, I think is in alignment with my values, abilities and skills. I think what is important about the executive branch is that you can focus where you can most have value. If you are in the judicial branch, you see the cases that come before you. If you are in the legislative branch, you see the legislation that comes before you. Here, I feel like the Overseas Private Investment Corporation has a chance to shape foreign policy, in the way we can be forward leaning and be able to help direct investment to the places that need it most to advance foreign policy and development goals. That is why I love this job in the executive branch.”

He said that his work focuses primarily on catalyzing private sector capital to create prosperity in low and middle income countries. For example, in the northern triangle of Guatemala, El Salvador and Honduras, OPIC tries to improve economic conditions to reduce emigration to the US.

Bohigian partially sidestepped questions both at the event at the embassy and later at his office as to the problems that Russia might create in Armenia for OPIC and US efforts to encourage economic and political change and realignment due to strong Russian control of many sectors of Armenia’s economy and its predominant military and political presence in the region. He commented that the Marshall Plan after World War II showed the success of the American approach compared to Soviet attempts to dominate Eastern Europe behind the Iron Curtain. He added that the people of Armenia have chosen democracy for themselves and their economy has grown, so that its “entrepreneurs are committed citizens, who are pushing not just democratic reforms but also eco-

omic reforms that I think lead to pro-growth opportunity societies in a way that is very difficult to counter from any sort of state-directed investment program or political program.”

At the briefing, Bohigian answered a ques-

tion about the future of OPIC. He said at this time last year, OPIC was going to be eliminated, as it was seen as aid, but the Trump administration has made a 180-degree turn on this position and now is backing the expansion of the development finance approach. It supported legislation, the Build Act, to effectively double its size and give it new authorities. This bill passed the House of Representatives but must now get through the Senate. One of its foreign

policy goals is to counter Chinese attempts to restructure global trade routes.

When asked the next day how the fate of this legislation would affect future OPIC projects in Armenia, Bohigian said that as current legisla-



David Bohigian, left, visits with Armenian homeowners supported by the First Mortgage Company (photo: courtesy OPIC)

tion allows OPIC to operate in 90 countries with a \$23-billion portfolio, which can be expanded by 6 billion dollars, “we are not slowing down. We will continue to invest. We hope to expand our operations in places that are supporting additional investment. We hope Armenia is one of those places.” If the new legislation passes the portfolio could be expanded up to \$60 billion and new authorities would be given, such as the ability to invest equity.

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Arts & Living

Two-Day Conference On Committee of Union and Progress At Fresno State

FRESNO – The Armenian Studies Program will hold an international conference on “The Committee of Union and Progress: Founders, Ideology, and Structure” on Friday, October 12, and Saturday, October 13. The conference will be held in the University Business Center (5245 N. Backer Ave.), A. Peters Auditorium, Room 191 on the Fresno State campus.

The conference focuses on the Committee of Union and Progress, whose members were the political leaders of Ottoman Turkey throughout most of the period from 1908 to 1915. They had become the virtual political dictators of Ottoman Turkey on the eve of World War I and the Armenian Genocide. The decision-making processes and ideology of the CUP were to have drastic consequences for the Armenians in particular. The conference participants will analyze various aspects of the CUP and also its relationships with the Armenians.



Dr. Raymond Kevorkian

The Thomas A. Kouymjian Family Foundation, the Leon S. Peters Foundation, and the M. Victoria Kazan Fund for Armenian Studies are supporters of the Conference.



Dr. Hans Lukas Kieser

Armenian Studies Program Coordinator Prof. Barlow Der Mugrdchian and Dr. Ümit Kurt (Van Leer Institute, Jerusalem) are co-organizers of the Conference.

Prof. Barlow Der Mugrdchian will open the Conference at 7 p.m. on Friday, October 12 in the University Business Center, Alice Peters Auditorium. A keynote address will be given by Dr. Raymond Kevorkian (Paris) on “The Young Turk Regime: Ideology in Command.”

The first session will then open with two panelists: Hans-Lukas Kieser (University of Sydney, Australia) “Talaat Pasha and Ziya Gökalp”; Dugu Coskuntuna (Princeton University) “Homeland and Nation Revisited: A Discourse Analysis of the Memoirs of the Young Turks.”

The conference will reconvene at 10 a.m. on Saturday, October 13, with one session, chaired by Dr. Sergio La Porta, Berberian Professor of Armenian Studies at Fresno State. The Saturday session will take place in the Conley Art Building, Room 101 (next to the Peters Business Building).



Dr. Ümit Kurt

Session I will feature presentations by Yektan Türkyılmaz (Berlin) “Evaluating the Determinants of the Variations in the

CUP and ARF Relationships across the Provinces”; Dikran Kaligian (Boston University) “When Revolutionaries Must Govern: The Vicissitudes of ARF-CUP Relations”; and Ümit Kurt (Van Leer Institute) “The Structure of the CUP in Aintab.”

All sessions are free and open to the public. For more information visit www.fresnostate.edu/armenianstudies.



Archbishop Hovnan Derderian, left, with Josefina Vergara and Isabel Bayrakdarian

Bayrakdarian’s Heavenly Voice Pays Tribute to Armenian Republic, Yerevan Anniversaries

BURBANK, Calif. – The signature sounds of Armenian music composed over the course of centuries reverberated through the ornate edifice of the St. Leon Cathedral as award-winning operatic soprano Isabel Bayrakdarian sang rich cultural songs and sacred hymns in an emotionally moving and sophisticated performance in honor of the 100th anniversary of Armenia’s First Republic and the 2,800th anniversary of Yerevan Erebuni on Sunday, September 23.

By Taleen Babayan

Special to the Mirror-Spectator

Trademark songs by Komitas, Sayat Nova and Aram Khachaturian were brought to the forefront by the Grammy nominated and world renowned Bayrakdarian, who performed with the University of California, Santa Barbara (UCSB) String Quartet, featuring Josefina Vergara, violin, Jessica Guideri, violin, Jonathan Moerschel, viola, Jennifer Kloetzel, cello, in an event sponsored by the Western Diocese of the Armenian Church of North America’s Zvartnots Cultural Committee, and under the auspices of Archbishop Hovnan Derderian, Primate.

The carefully curated religious and cultural selections reflected a deeply layered history of Armenian music from different time periods and genres, including medieval sacred music, the 17th-century troubadour songs of Sayat Nova, the 19th century folk songs of Komitas Vartabed and the 20th-century classical gusto of Khachaturian. Each tasteful piece was presented with a spiritual soul that fulfilled the Armenian spirit of the standing-room-only audience. Wide in range – from the celebratory *Kamancha* by Sayat-Nova to the liturgical *Soorp Asdvadz* – the concert highlighted the beautiful complexities of Armenian music.

“I believe an artist’s identity plays a vital role in the orientation of their creative compass,” commented Bayrakdarian, associate professor of voice at UCSB. “For me, this direction is largely guided by the Armenian music that has nourished and sustained my soul from a young age.”



Isabel Bayrakdarian and the UCSB String Quartet (left to right: Josefina Vergara, Isabel Bayrakdarian, Jonathan Moerschel, Jennifer Kloetzel, Jessica Guideri) (Photo Credit: Onig Ghiulezian)

Haig Hovsepiyan Named Winner of 2018 Edward Hosharian \$5,000 Scholarship

MONTEBELLO, Calif. – The Edward Hosharian Foundation (EHF) announced in September that its 2018 Scholarship in the amount of \$5,000 has been awarded to classical violin student Haig Hovsepiyan from Belmont, Mass., a son of Armenian immigrants from Armenia and Romania.

Hovsepiyan began his violin studies at age 4, joined the New England Conservatory Prep when he was 15, and is now a sophomore at the prestigious Cleveland Institute of Music where he is pursuing a bachelor’s degree in classical violin performance. He is also an avid saxophone player and jazz enthusiast.

As a soloist and in ensembles, Hovsepiyan has performed at various prestigious venues on the East Coast such as Carnegie Hall, Jordan Hall and Symphony Hall in Boston. He has also made several appearances in productions by NPR’s “From the Top.” At a very young age he also took pride in performing for community and charitable events raising funds for local charities and for schools destroyed by the earthquake in Armenia.

Over the last few years Hovsepiyan has won a series of concerto competitions, received



Haig Hovsepiyan

the Max Reger Ambassador Award and earned the title of laureate at the Renaissance International Competition in Gyumri, Armenia. Following his win at the 2017 Boston Symphony Orchestra Concerto Competition, he made his debut with the Boston Pops in June of this year.

EHF is pleased to announce that applications are now being accepted for its 2019 Scholarship in the amount of \$5,000. Application packets are available online @edwardhosharian.org. The Scholarship was established in honor of composer/conductor Edward’s memory to preserve, promote and enhance Armenian classical and ethnic music by awarding scholarships to assist deserving college-level music students in pursuit of their educational goals. An applicant must be a full-time student of Armenian descent (sophomore level or above) attending an accredited college or university in the United States, majoring in music performance or composition and in need of financial assistance. Deadline for submission is February 1, 2019.

The EHF concert committee is excited to announce that plans are underway for yet another eagerly awaited concert. Conductor Greg Hosharian will take up the baton once again to lead the Armenian Pops Orchestra in a symphonic concert to take place on Sunday, March 31, 2019, at the Ambassador Auditorium in Pasadena. This will be the fourth in a string of successful APO concerts since 2010. All proceeds will benefit the foundation scholarship.

To apply to the scholarship, visit edwardhosharian.org. The deadline is February 1, 2019.

see BAYRAKDARIAN, page 15



ARTS & LIVING

Bayrakdarian's Heavenly Voice Pays Tribute to Armenian Republic, Yerevan Anniversaries

BAYRAKDARIAN, from page 14

Along with musical pleasures, Bayrakdarian also created a space for reflection as the Armenian people celebrate the milestone anniversaries of the First Republic and the ancient city of Yerevan/Erebuni. Culling from various poignant points in the Armenian musical tradition, she presented an all-encompassing performance, underscoring the important role of religious hymns.

"Armenian sacred music holds a very special place in my heart," said Bayrakdarian, who has performed in opera houses and concert halls around the world and is the winner of four consecutive Juno Awards for Best Classical Album in her native Canada. "I truly feel a connection with God and the Divine through the expression of these ancient prayers and melodies that have survived many centuries and continue to hold mysteries of the past and whispers of the future."

Through the compositions of Khatchaturian, to whom Bayrakdarian refers as "one of the musical titans of the 20th century," inflections of Eastern and Central European as well as Middle Eastern influences came through in the pieces *Daughter of the Fields* and *Feast Songs*, punctuated by *Yerevan*, which Bayrakdarian



Members of the Zvartnots Cultural Committee with Isabel Bayrakdarian and Archbishop Hovnan Derderian (Photo Credit: Onig Ghiulezian)

said is an "unabashed celebration of the name-sake capital."

Invoking the diverse themes of spirituality, love and nationalism through his music,

Bayrakdarian presented the works of Komitas, including *Dear Maral/Akh Maral Jan* and *The Three Songs of Nature*. The ordained priest and ethnomusicologist not only notated and devel-

oped the medieval hymns of the Armenian Church, he also traveled throughout the Armenian heartland in the 19th century, collecting and notating thousands of melodies from scores of villages, whose residents only had an oral tradition of passing on their music. In a fitting tribute to his yearning for the homeland, Bayrakdarian sang as an encore *Groong*, which she referred to as Armenia's "unofficial anthem."

Welcoming remarks were made by Dr. Simon K. Simonian, chairman of the Zvartnots Cultural Committee, who remarked that the Armenian Church has always led the Armenian people, most significantly when it remained stateless for 600 years, "gathering the children of our nation, guarding and preserving our cultural relics and traditional customs and transferring them from one generation to the next."

Highlighting the integral role of the Armenian Church, he said that the "national institution" has always "actively participated throughout history in every major battle waged for the liberation of the homeland, from the battle of Avarayr to Sardarabad and to the liberation of Artsakh."

Reflecting on Yerevan's 2,800th anniversary, he noted that the city is even older than Rome and to this day remains a proud and picturesque capital, "waiting with wide-open arms for its children to come home."

Derderian expressed gratitude to Bayrakdarian and the UCSB quartet for an "exceptional concert" that created "a new movement in our spirituality."

"Through the love of art and music tonight, we were taken into eternity," concluded Derderian. "I am sure tonight will remain forever etched in our minds."

Jazz Piano Sensation Tigran Hamasyan in Concert at Fresno State

FRESNO — Jazz pianist Tigran Hamasyan will perform in concert on Friday, October 19 at 8 p.m. in the Concert Hall on the Fresno State campus. The concert, part of the Philip Lorenz Memorial Keyboard Concert Series, is co-sponsored by the Armenian Studies Program of Fresno State and the Thomas A. Kooyumjian Family Foundation.

The award-winning Hamasyan fuses potent jazz improvisation with the rich folkloric heritage of Armenia. Nonesuch Records released Hamasyan's third album "For Gyumri," in February of 2018. A companion to last year's "An Ancient Observer," "For Gyumri" includes five additional songs. Hamasyan says of the pair of albums: "These songs are musical observations about the world we live in now, and the weight of history we carry with us."

"He's the hottest pianist in jazz, and he likes to mix things up, whether it's bebop, thrash metal, or dubstep. But his heart is in the folk music of his native land, Armenia" (The Guardian, London). The legendary Herbie Hancock extolled, "A-may-zing! Now, Tigran, you are my teacher!"

Tickets may be purchased online at the following website: <http://www.keyboardconcerts.com/special-events.aspx>.



Tigran Hamasyan

Nor Serund Youth Folk Ensemble from Yerevan Embarks on 6-City US Tour

BOSTON — Nor Serund Youth Folk Ensemble from Yerevan is embarking on a tour of the East Coast, sponsored by the Amaras Art Alliance of Massachusetts. The tour aims to present young Armenian talented musicians to the East Coast communities. Concerts are planned for Haverhill, Mass. on October 12, Providence, RI on October 13, Cambridge, Mass. on October 14, Worcester, Mass. on October 19, Bayside, NY on October 20 and Trumbull, CT on October 21.

Accompanying the traditional Armenian folk instruments of kanon, dhol, duduk, shvi and tar are two vocalists singing favorite Armenian songs.

During their tour, the group will have the opportunity to visit local Armenian schools, the Armenian Heritage Park in Boston, the Armenian Nursing and Rehabilitation Home in Jamaica Plain as well as other locations in the Boston area. While in New York, the ensemble will be the guests of St. Illuminator's Armenian Cathedral and will have a tour of New York City.

The Amaras Art Alliance is a cultural non-profit organization with a mission to create opportunities for people to get involved in culture, observe and enjoy the traditions and customs of our diverse communities and help keep our society vibrant.

For more information about the Nor Serund US tour or to purchase tickets for the Cambridge concert, visit www.amarasonline.com.



Nor Serund Armenian Folk Youth Ensemble in front of Komitas Statue in Yerevan

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METRO LOS ANGELES CHAPTER

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SOLD OUT



'Armenia!' Opens at Metropolitan Museum of Art to Great Acclaim

METROPOLITAN, from page 1

Dr. Helen Evans, the Mary and Michael Jaharis Curator for Byzantine Art at the Met, who was the curator and organizer of this exhibition, stated that the Met's exhibition presents "the importance of the medieval art of a people on the border between East and West. Armenians forged a lasting national identity from their early 4th century conversion to Christianity, making them the first Christian nation in the world."



Stone carvings at the Metropolitan Museum of Art

"Armenian art should be considered a significant aspect of world art," she declared with special emphasis. Dr. Evans explained she had spent

the past four years seeking out items of rare quality throughout the Armenian world, and assembling them as an exhibit. Represented are treasures from the Republic of Armenia itself, as well as Jerusalem, Anatolia, Iran, and locales in Europe.

The Eastern Diocese of the Armenian Church of America, working closely with Evans, has contributed one of the items in its treasury to the exhibition: a rare 17th-century Armenian printed bible.

The Very Rev. Daniel Findikyan, Primate of the Eastern Diocese, stated that the exhibition "breathes the faith of the Armenian people. Stressing that the items on display represent a high point of Christian artistic expression, he stated that the exhibit is "inspired by the spiritual wealth of the Armenian people, including our past tragic circum-

stances, but also our highest spiritual aspirations."

The Primate then uttered a moving prayer, and



The reception at the Metropolitan Museum of Art

with Very Rev. Mesrop Parsamyan, Director of Ministries at the Diocese, led the large crowd in the singing of the *Hayr Mer*.

Opening Night at the Met

On Monday evening, September 24, close to 800 invited guests attended a special showing of the exhibit with a reception that followed.

Karekin II, the Supreme Patriarch and Catholicos of All Armenians, traveled from Holy Echmiadzin to preside over the opening.

He was joined on the occasion by the new prime minister of Armenia, Nikol Pashinyan. In a special reception prior to the grand opening, the dignitaries gathered with officials of the museum. Among the attendees were Diocesan Primate Very Rev. Daniel Findikyan, former Primate and current Envoy of Holy Echmiadzin to the Vatican Archbishop Khajag Barsamian, Diocesan Legate Ecumenical Director Archbishop Vicken Aykazian, and a number of philanthropists and art connoisseurs.

At the ceremony Catholicos Karekin II offered



One of the manuscripts at the Metropolitan Museum of Art

gracious remarks and concluded by presenting Dr. Evans with the distinguished "St. Sahag-St. Mesrob Medal" for her efforts in the arts and culture.

At the opening event, a huge crowd grew throughout the evening, milling about and socializing among the displayed objects. It was a remarkable juxtaposition of the modern and medieval Armenian worlds.

For Tony-winning actress Andrea Martin, it was such an effort to get near the beautiful displays that she said she would return at a quieter time, and "probably several more times."

Former US Ambassador to Armenia John Evans called it a "great day for Armenians." He paid tribute to Helen Evans for the "well-selected items," adding that "it was appropriate to have it in this great museum because of this historic year for Armenia."

Carnegie Foundation President Dr. Vartan Gregorian stated that the Met exhibit "unified Armenians through their culture."

And COAF Executive Director Garo Armen was "thrilled that we Armenians have achieved this. This year has been symbolic for the emergence of new Armenian spirit and Armenia, not only for the past, but also for the future."

Roger Wieck, one of the Morgan Library's leading curators who was instrumental in having a major exhibition of Armenian illuminated manuscripts at the Morgan a number of years back, enthusiastically called the exhibit, "important, dazzling, exquisite, glorious. It is a triumph!"

Morgan Library librarian and researcher Sylvie Merian said her "heart was filled with excitement. It's wonderful that the manuscripts that I have studied for decades are being shared here with non-Armenians."

Recipe Corner

by Christine Vartanian Datian



Asparagus and Spinach Soup

INGREDIENTS

1 pound asparagus, washed, trimmed, cut into 2-inch pieces
 3-4 tablespoons unsalted butter or olive oil (to taste)
 2 cups chopped leeks, white part only (from 3 medium leeks)
 1 medium onion, finely diced (or 4-5 shallots)
 1 large Yukon Gold or Russet potato, peeled and diced
 2 carrots, peeled and chopped
 2 stalks celery (plus tops), chopped
 2 cloves garlic, minced
 6 oz. fresh baby spinach (one small bag)
 8 cups low sodium chicken or vegetable broth
 1 cup light cream or half and half (to taste)
 1 tablespoon lemon juice
 Salt and black or white pepper
 Pinch of thyme, curry powder, dill or paprika
 Olive oil

Toppings: chives, green onions, mint, parsley, lemon zest, yogurt, Parmigiano-Reggiano cheese, chopped hard boiled eggs or croutons

PREPARATION

In a large pot, sauté leeks, onions, potato, carrots, celery and garlic in butter (or olive oil) until onions are tender; add the asparagus and cook a few minutes longer. Add the broth, lemon juice, and spices and bring to a full boil.

Reduce heat, cover, and simmer for 35-45 minutes or until vegetables are soft. Check seasonings, add spinach, and cook a few minutes longer, stirring occasionally.

If desired, puree soup using an emulsion blender to a creamy consistency or use a regular blender or food processor and puree soup in batches, and add soup back to pot. Add cream or half and half and heat through for 10 minutes. Drizzle with olive oil, if desired. Garnish with toppings and serve.

Note: Before serving, 2 cups of cooked shrimp or flaked crabmeat or 1/4 cup sherry, dry vermouth, or white wine may be added. If serving cold, cool soup slightly, stir in cream or buttermilk, cover, and chill for 4 hours or overnight.

Serves 6.

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





ARTS & LIVING

CALENDAR

FLORIDA

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

CALIFORNIA

OCTOBER 14 – Pianist and composer Tigran Hamasyan, Sunday, at 5 p.m., Royce Hall,, UCLA 10745 Dickson Court, Los Angeles. Hamasyan, considered one of the most remarkable and distinctive jazz-meets-rock pianists of his generation, fuses potent improvisation with the rich folkloric music of his native Armenia. Featuring works from his latest album, For Gyumri, the solo concert will benefit the Children of Armenia Fund. Tickets: Single tickets: \$29–\$59. Online: cap.ucla.edu. UCLA Central Ticket Office: 310-825-2101, Monday through Friday from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Royce Hall box office: open 90 minutes prior to the event start time.

NOVEMBER 17 – Join the Armenian EyeCare Project for its Annual Gala at the beautiful Balboa Bay Resort in Newport Beach, CA. The fun-filled evening will begin at 6:30pm with a cocktail hour and silent auction followed by a delicious Mediterranean-inspired meal, live music and dance entertainment, and an exciting live auction. Tickets are \$500 per person and for those 35 and under, \$250 per person. To RSVP or for more information, please call 949-933-4069, email leslie@eyecareproject.com or visit eyecareproject.com/gala

MASSACHUSETTS

OCTOBER 7 – "CROWS OF THE DESERT: A Hero's Journey through the Armenian Genocide," Film by Marta Houske. Sunday, 4.30 p.m. A documentary based on the Memoirs of Levon Yotnakhparian, a brave man's struggle to not only stay alive, but to help save his fellow Armenian survivors from near extinction in the 20th Century's first genocide. Screening of the film (62 min) followed by a Q&A (45 min). This film contains depictions of carnage and difficult situations. Parental discretion advised. General Admission \$15. Students with valid ID and Seniors (over 65) \$10 Group of 4 \$12 per (use promo code: CROWS4) Group of 10 \$10 per (use promo code: CROWS10) Group of 20 \$8 per (use promo code: CROWS20). Mosesian Center for the Arts, Watertown, Arsenal Center.

OCTOBER 12-13 – St. James 71st Annual Bazaar. Delicious Armenian Food and Pastries. Silent Auction, Attic Treasures, Booths and Vendors. Raffles, Children's Activities, and more. Details to follow. St. James Armenian Church, 465 Mt. Auburn St., Watertown. For more information contact 617.923.8860 or info@stthagop.com or visit www.stjameswatertown.org.

OCTOBER 14 – Nor Serund youth folk ensemble from Armenia, Sunday, 4 p.m., at Longy school of Music, 27 Garden St., Cambridge. Hosted by Hovaness Badalian Music Fund. visit www.amarasonline.com or call 617-331-0426 for more info.

OCTOBER 19 – The Armenian Museum of America will embark on a bus trip to The Metropolitan Museum of Art on Friday to see their new exhibition "Armenia!," which explores the arts and culture of Armenians from the 4th-17th centuries. Two illuminated manuscripts from the Armenian Museum's collection will be among the incredible objects on display. Tickets are \$175 and for members only. The bus will leave Watertown at 7 am, and tickets include round-trip transportation to The Met on a coach bus with WiFi and restrooms, admission to The Met, an Armenian continental breakfast on the bus, and a guided interpretative tour from Christina Maranci, PhD, Professor of Armenian Art and Architecture. The group will leave The Met at 6 p.m., and an evening snack will be provided on the bus before arriving back in Watertown around 10 pm. For more information or to purchase tickets, visit www.armeniamuseum.org or call 617.926.2562, ext. 4.

OCTOBER 20 – Hye Kef 5: Onnik Dinkjian Performs at



On Sunday, October 7, the documentary "Crows of the Desert: A Hero's Journey through the Armenian Genocide," will be shown at the Mosesian Center for the Arts, Arsenal Center, Watertown, at 4.30 p.m. The film is based on the memoirs of Levon Yotnakhparian.

DoubleTree by Hilton in Andover, MA, with Ara Dinkjian and local ensemble, for Armenian Friends of America, 7 pm to midnight. All proceeds benefit the Armenian churches of the Merrimack Valley. For tickets: John Arzigian – 603-560-3826; Lucy Sirmaian – 978-683-9121; Peter Gulezian – 978-375-1616; Sharke Der Apkarian – 978-808-0598; Kathy Geyer 978-475-8309.

OCTOBER 21 – 5th Annual Trinity Tailgate, New England Patriots vs. Chicago Bears, sponsored by the Trinity Men's Union of Holy Trinity Armenian Church of Greater Boston, 12:15 p.m., Sunday, Charles and Nevert Talanian Cultural Hall, 145 Brattle Street, Cambridge. All are invited to a tailgate party to watch the game, 1 p.m. kick-off, on a 12 foot high-definition screen. Lots of food, beverages and snacks. For further information, call the Holy Trinity Church Office, 617.354.0632 or email office@htaac.org.

OCTOBER 28 – 57th Anniversary Celebration of Holy Trinity Armenian Church of Greater Boston Honoring "Parishioners of the Year" Nancy D. Kasarjian and Carol Krikorian upon their Retirement, following Church Services, Charles and Nevert Talanian Cultural Hall, 145 Brattle Street, Cambridge MA. Sunday. Donation for catered reception: \$30 per person. RSVP requested by October 19 by calling the Holy Trinity Church Office, 617-354.0632, emailing office@htaac.org or www.htaac.org/calendar/event/588/

NOVEMBER 3 – Thanks-for-Giving Luncheon at the Belmont Country Club in Belmont, hosted by the Armenian Women's Welfare Association (AWWA). An afternoon of socializing with old and new friends, exciting raffle prizes from various artisans in Armenia, Super Market prizes and other fun events. AWWA sponsors the Armenian Nursing and Rehabilitation Center and the Hanganak Clinic Elderly Project in Stepanakert, Nagorno-Karabagh. Saturday, 12-4 p.m. Limited number of tickets. Complimentary Valet Parking available. Please call Karen, Martha or Lalig at 617-319-2651 for tickets or information.

NOVEMBER 4 – Celebrating the Life and Work of Diana Der Hovanessian, Organized by the Armenian Cultural Foundation and co-sponsored by Amaras Art Alliance, Armenian General Benevolent Union - New England affiliate, Armenian International Women's Association, Armenian Museum of America, The Friends of the Longfellow House, Hamazkaine Armenian Educational and Cultural Society - Boston, National Association for Armenian Studies and Research, New England Poetry Club, and Tekeyan Cultural Association of the United States and Canada. Sunday, 3 p.m. Armenian Cultural Foundation (441 Mystic Street, Arlington). Admission free and open to the public.

NOVEMBER 14 – Najarian Lecture on Human Rights at Historic Faneuil Hall, Boston. Wednesday. Doors open at 6.45. Program at 7.30 p.m. "INCARCERATION Untangling the web of injustice." Speakers: Secretary Andrea J. Cabral, former Massachusetts Secretary of Public Safety, Author, Enforcing and Defending Chapter 209A Restraining Orders in Massachusetts; Marc A. Levin, Esq, Vice President of Criminal Justice, Texas Public Policy Foundation and Right on Crime; Founder,

Foundation's Criminal Justice Program Moderator: Sheriff Peter J. Koutoujian. 30th Sheriff of Middlesex County. President, Massachusetts Sheriffs' Association. Founding Member, Law Enforcement Leaders to Reduce Crime & Incarceration. Reception follows at the Bostonian Hotel. An endowed public program of Armenian Heritage Park on the Greenway. Advance Registration is appreciated. hello@ArmenianHeritagePark.org

NOVEMBER 30 and DECEMBER 1 – Trinity Christmas Bazaar, Friday, 12 noon-9 p.m., Saturday, 10 a.m.-7 p.m.; Holy Trinity Armenian Church, 145 Brattle Street, Cambridge MA. Save the date; details to follow. For further information, contact the Church office, 617.354.0632 or email office@htaac.org.

DECEMBER 9 – Christmas Holiday Concert – Erevan Choral Society and Orchestra, 7 p.m., Church Sanctuary, Holy Trinity Armenian Church of Greater Boston, 145 Brattle St., Cambridge. Save the date; details to follow. For further information, call the Church office, 617.354.0632 or email office@htaac.org.

DECEMBER 2 – Acapella Christmas Concert by Boston Jazz Voices to Benefit the Armenia Tree Project. 5 p.m. at the Jenks Center, 109 Skillings Road, Winchester. Free parking. Event will feature an acapella performance, refreshments, raffle, and silent auction. Tickets are \$30 each and a family four-pack of tickets is available for \$100. Tickets available via Eventbrite at www.armenia-tree.org/acappella

DECEMBER 16 – Candlelit Labyrinth Peace Walk, Armenian Heritage Park on The Greenway, Boston, Sunday, 4:30-5:30 p.m., Walk the Candlelit Labyrinth. Tie a Ribbon on the Wishing Tree. Hot Chocolate & Desserts, hosted by The Bostonian Hotel. RSVP appreciated hello@ArmenianHeritagePark.org

SEPTEMBER 18, 2019 – SAVE THE DATE! InterContinental Hotel, Boston. Extraordinary Benefit for Armenian Heritage Park's Endowed Fund for Care.

NEW YORK

SEPTEMBER 22 - January 13, 2019 – ARMENIA! at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York. Armenia! is the "first major exhibition to explore the importance of Armenians and their remarkable achievements in a global context..." <https://www.metmuseum.org/exhibitions/listings/2018/armenia>

OCTOBER 13 – Concert: "Armenian Songs From My Heart." On the occasion of the 60th Anniversary of the Consecration of Holy Martyrs, Ruthann Turekian (soprano) dedicates this concert to Dn. Onnik Dokmecian, Dn. Edward Karnikian and Mary Selvinazian, for their support of her musical pursuits and to her late mother, Margare Bedrossian Turekian. Concert includes works by Gomidas, Alemshah, Hekimian, Suni, Khachaturian and others. Concert in Holy Martyrs Church sanctuary to start at 7:30pm (doors open at 6:45pm). Tickets \$40 (advanced purchase), \$45 at the door. For tickets, please call (718) 225-0235. Reception to follow concert in Kalustyan Hall.

RHODE ISLAND

OCTOBER 13 – The Cultural committee of Sts. Sahag & Mesrob Armenian Church proudly presents "Nor Serund" (New Generation) Folk youth group from Armenia. Saturday. Adults \$25. Children under 16 Free. 7 p.m. Egavian Cultural Center. 70 Jefferson Street, Providence. For tickets call: Janna Guegamian 401 861-3573, Mariam Saribekyan, 401 714-6327, or Church office 401 272-7712. Reception to follow in the Hanoian Church Hall.

NOVEMBER 3-4 – Sts. Sahag and Mesrob Armenian Church, 88th Annual Food Fair and Bazaar. 70 Jefferson St., Providence. Saturday, 11:30 a.m.- 10 p.m.- Sunday, Noon – 6 p.m. Daily Raffle & Silent Auction, Kids Games, Kids Movies, Arts & Crafts, Balloon man. Shish Kebab, Losh Kebab, Kufta, Kheyma, Yalanchi, Armenian Pastries, Lahmajoon & many other delicious food available. All are welcome. Handicap accessible. Cash, Check, Visa and Mastercard Accepted. For further information, call church office 401-272-7712.

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

COMMENTARY

New Dynamics Injected into Armenia's Political Scene

By Edmond Y. Azadian

The formation of a new political party – Sasna Tsrer – was hailed by an editor in a recent column titled “Farewell to Arms.”

Although the title is most fitting to the issue, it is not related in any way to the book of the same name by writer Ernest Hemingway. It rather refers to the new party's immediate past when its members resorted to violence, overrunning a police station and killing three police officers in 2016.

Following the success of the Velvet Revolution this spring, the group announced its decision to renounce violence and enter Armenia's new political scene as a party.

Although the group's initial salvo does not sound any less militant than the guns which they parted with recently.

The constitutional congress of the new party took place on September 29. It was announced that the party would be directed by a secretariat composed of seven members: Garegin Chugaszyan, Alek Yenikomshian, Gevorg Safaryan, Vahagn Avagyan, Arek Kyureghyan, Ruzan Yeghnukyan and Varuzhan Avetisyan as coordinator. They are all extremely intelligent people, fiercely dedicated to the cause.

The name of the party is derived from the Armenian national epic, *The Daredevils of Sasoun*. Most of the above-named political activists were in jail at one point because of the raid on the police station in 2016. They had resorted to that violent act

the revolutionary forces.

“Dissolve the current National Assembly by the will of the people. Create a transitional judicial body that will act as a jury and operate based on legal rule. Organize snap elections.”

These proposals are very much in contrast with the vision which Pashinyan has adopted in his Velvet Revolutionary statement moving to achieve all change in an atmosphere of brotherly love.

During the time before the overthrow of the government, Pashinyan and Sefilyan supported each other's political stands, sometimes even cooperating, but they never were in a coalition together.

The foreign policy of Sasna Tsrer is more ambitious than that of any existing political party as it aims for the “liberation of Armenia from Russian colonial rule,” withdrawing from Russian-led organizations, including the Eurasian Economic Union and the Collective Security Treaty Organization.”

As Pashinyan continues to reassure Russia that there will not be any sharp turns in Armenian foreign policy and that Russia will remain Armenia's strategic ally, he will be in a collision course with this group down the road. The Sasna Tsrer platform is replete with revenge; it is out for blood.

Sefilyan believes that Armenia's territory must include also the exclave of Nakhichevan, now under Azeri rule, and historic Western Armenia, currently occupied by Turkey. These visions are certainly shared by all Armenians who at the same time believe that diplomacy is the art of the possible.

Political analyst Mikayel Zolyan defines the Sasna Tsrer party as one that tries to “fit into the framework of populist parties on the rise in Europe, sometimes representing a mix of leftist and nationalist ideas but on the whole in the right wing.”

Sefilyan stated recently “Russia can't be our strategic ally. We can't be allies. Armenians have to understand that,” he said. He has further advocated that Armenia must line up with the United States and Europe, although his partners in an earlier statement have excluded the possibility of joining NATO.

While freely advocating severing relations with Russia, they have not addressed Russia's reaction in the wake of that policy. Indeed, an OpEd column in Tass, the Russian state news agency, warned that if Sasna Tsrer joins the cabinet, “that could be interpreted as a move against Russia, which would be followed by an immediate response from Moscow.”

It looks like Sefilyan has entered politics reluctantly as he has stated in an interview that “I never wanted to be a politician. I don't enjoy politics. But at some point, I realized that the country needs people like me to go into politics.”

Sefilyan has impeccable credentials as a war hero. His contribution was significant in liberating Karabakh from Azeri rule. In the public perception such heroes deserve to be in leading political roles. But history has proven time and again that revolutionary heroes become the worst statesmen, eventually succumbing to their dictatorial instincts.

The leader of the Velvet Revolution is facing tremendous challenges in the coming months, as his revolution has not yet achieved its final goal. The remnants of the old regime are still entrenched in the parliament. He has

just begun the laborious process of negotiating with his parliamentary foes with a carrot and stick policy. He has maintained his option of resorting to popular appeal should negotiations stall or fail. The old regime does not seem to be well disposed to giving up its position easily, as it sees the hand-writing on the wall; the snap elections will not allow a comeback for members of the Republican Party, or Gagik Tsarukyan's Prosperous Armenia Party for that matter, as demonstrated by the mayoral election results in Yerevan.

The emergence of a new party on the political scene will complicate the prime minister's task rather than facilitate it. He needs to play his balancing act skillfully as the Sasna Tsrer party is not on the same footing as the Republican Party. It has enjoyed public support in the past and its leaders are still counting on that support to occupy their niche in Armenia's evolving political spectrum.

Pashinyan has his job cut out for him.



because they had demanded the release of Jirayr Sefilyan, a Karabakh war hero who was jailed after being accused of hatching a plot to overthrow the government. They have all since been released by Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan, with their bonds guaranteed by 13 members of the current parliament.

Sefilyan, taking the podium at the founding convention, announced that finally the day had arrived for the birth “of our dreamt-about national organization.” And then Varuzhan Avetisyan recited the manifesto of the new party, which was read as an imperial edict.

It demanded several radical actions, including a national referendum, and a subsequent action outlining the scope of the former regime as a criminal organization and starting criminal prosecution against all its members, with their subsequent arrests.

More specific items included:

“Based on the mandate given by the referendum or public support, form a new government with emergency powers from

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COMMENTARY



My Turn

By Harut Sassounian

Armenia Needs Both Charity & Investments, Not Only Investments

Throughout the years, since Armenia's independence in 1991, I have had the unique opportunity of spending hundreds of hours with the country's three previous presidents, discussing privately with them Armenia's many problems. I offered them my professional assessments and frequently my criticisms of the way they were running the country. Although the presidents were not pleased that I was pointing out their shortcomings and mistakes, they understood that my intent was not to disparage them, but to help them improve the living conditions of the population.

Ever since the earthquake of 1988, I have been doing charitable work in Armenia and Artsakh, initially as president of the United Armenian Fund (UAF), subsequently the Armenia Artsakh Fund (AAF), and as vice chairman of Kirk Kerkorian's Lincy Foundation, delivering over \$800 million of humanitarian aid to Armenia and Artsakh by the UAF and AAF, and managing \$242 million of infrastructure projects funded by Lincy. Despite all the corruption prevailing in Armenia during those years, I fought hard to protect the humanitarian supplies and funds, persistently bringing to the attention of the Presidents the abuses by high-ranking officials, and demanding that they be disciplined or fired.

During my 58 trips to Armenia and Artsakh, I saw firsthand the miserable conditions of most people in our homeland, deprived of money, food, medicines, clothing and other basic needs. Seeing the presidents' neglect of the people's

deprivations, I frequently and forcefully brought their dismal situation to the attention of the country's leadership.

I was particularly upset when I heard government officials speaking about Armenia needing investments, not charity. I found such remarks to be callous of the people's suffering. After each such pronouncement, I confronted these officials explaining the negative effect of their statements.

Consequently, I was surprised when Armenia's new prime minister, Nikol Pashinyan, a man of the people, during his remarks in New York on September 23, 2018, announced that in the context of Armenia-Diaspora relations, work must be encouraged, not charity: "Armenians can assist Armenia only with one option: carry out economic activity in Armenia, establish any business, and work. Today, Armenia's understanding is the following: It is a country where it is possible to carry out economic activity, establish a business, earn profits, get rich and enrich. Our message to all of you is the following: get rich and enrich. We want Armenia to be known as such a country. Not charitable, but developmental projects must be implemented in Armenia..."

To be fair to the prime minister, in his speech, he also spoke about many other topics which I agree with wholeheartedly. He has tremendous support both in Armenia and around the world. He has practically eliminated corruption in Armenian society and has represented the voice of the people who had remained voiceless for more than a quarter of a century since independence. However, just as I have told the previous presidents, I would like to provide the following explanations to the new prime minister:

1) I fully support the prime minister's initiative that Armenia needs economic investments in order to create jobs and expand exports. By creating jobs, not only the people will have the income to pay for their daily expenses, but the government will also have the tax revenues to support the country's and population's multiple needs.

2) However, the prime minister's urging that "work must be encouraged, not charity," would deprive hundreds of thousands of poor people of their basic necessities. Investments take time to trickle down to the people and produce results. In the meantime, if charitable efforts are discouraged, many poor people will not survive!

3) Not all Diaspora Armenians can invest in the Armenian

Republic. There are dozens of charitable organizations which by law cannot get involved in economic activities, as they can only do charity. Since the earthquake and Armenia's independence, Armenian and international charities have provided a large amount of aid to Armenia and Artsakh. If it were not for this humanitarian assistance, the standard of living would have been even lower, jeopardizing the survival of many Armenians. By discouraging charity, we are simply asking charitable organizations not to help the needy people of Armenia.

4) Armenian governments so far have been unable to meet the many needs of their population due to lack of money. Diaspora's charitable organizations have provided the aid that the government could not. If there were no charitable assistance in Armenia ever since independence, the people's many needs would not have been taken care of and Armenia would have been a poorer country.

5) Even if the Diaspora would start investing in Armenia today, that does not mean that the influx of new funds would take care of all the needs of the people overnight. Certainly, a large number of people would eventually be employed, but many others, such as the elderly, would still be left with hardly any income from their negligible pensions. Those who are unaware of the extent of appalling poverty in Armenia should read the Guardian newspaper's Sept. 29, 2018 article by Nick Danziger, titled: "It's better to die: the struggle to survive poverty in Armenia."

6) There is the mistaken notion that if there were many investments in Armenia, there would be no need for charity. In almost all countries, even in the most advanced ones, there are hundreds of charitable organizations that tend to the needs of the poor people. In the United States alone, billions of dollars are provided annually to needy individuals and families by charitable organizations. If the Americans require charity, Armenians would certainly need charitable assistance for a long time to come!

Paradoxically, Prime Minister Pashinyan's wife, Anna Hakopyan, recently launched her own charitable organization "My Step Foundation" to support educational, health-care, social and cultural projects. She is doing what's absolutely necessary because the people of Armenia desperately need help.

Ecumenical Days of Remembrance in Berlin

By Muriel Mirak-Weissbach

Special to the Mirror-Spectator

BERLIN – At a time when political issues are straining relations among European nations, it is all the more important to reflect on what unites them. In this spirit, the European Commission dedicated the European Year of Cultural Heritage 2018 to the theme of Sharing Heritage. Among the numerous events taking place during this thematic year, under the patronage of German Federal President Frank-Walter Steinmeier, were two initiatives in Berlin earlier this month, linked to the Day of the Open Monument, which commemorated victims of the Ottoman genocide. Dr. Tessa Hofmann, of the Promotional Society for Ecumenical Monuments for Genocide Victims in the Ottoman Empire (FÖGG), organized a tour on September 8 of the Altars of Remembrance which honor the Armenians, the Greeks from Asia Minor, Pontos and Eastern Thrace, as well as the Aramaeans, Assyrians and Chaldeans (<https://mirrorspectator.com/2018/03/01/ecumenical-altars-remembrance-berlin/>). On the following day, she hosted a special day of remembrance for the Greek Orthodox victims of the genocide 1912-1922.

In the presence of diplomatic representatives of the Greek and Armenian embassies, religious leaders of the Greek and Armenian churches, as well as members of the Berlin Greek community, Hofmann recalled that "the concluding chapter of this crime occurred exactly 96 years ago, with the takeover of the undefended Ionian port and capital city Smyrna; there on September 9, units of the so-called liberation armed forces marched in and four days later, after the wind had shifted to a position advantageous to them, set fire to the Christian quarters of the city, beginning with the Armenian quarter Hajnoz." The nationalist commander Nurettin then ordered males between 18 and 45 deported inland for forced labor, most of whom perished. The remaining Christians, stripped of their citizenship, had to leave. Nurettin was also responsible for implementing the order on January 21, 1921, for 21,000 Greeks to be deported, as well as for the lynching of Archbishop Chrysostomos Kalafatis in Smyrna, and the liberal intellectual Ali Kemal. Nurettin, whom she classified as a "war criminal," was not only never prosecuted after Turkey was established in 1923, but occupied a high level military position as well as a seat in parliament. "The example shows," she said, "that the new state integrated war criminals and genocidalists without self-critical reflection as long as they maintained loyalty to the new power holders."

The date of the event almost coincided also with the ethnic cleansing of Christians from Istanbul on September 6-7, 1955, known as Septembriana, when mobs plundered and burned the Greek Orthodox and Armenian neighborhoods, destroying their churches and cemeteries, torturing Greek priests, raping women and mutilating men. Catholic Uniate Georgians were not spared. Hofmann drew the lesson from Septembriana, that even urban, pluralistic societies may be fragile, and religious or ethnic hatred can rapidly lead to violence. With a view to the current situation in Germany, whose status as a country of immigration is being tested by the refugee crisis, she introduced the keynote speaker, Michael Asderis, author of a book on the history of Istanbul as seen through family history.

The Fate of the Undesired Citizens

Michael Asderis spoke about the "Romyi," the Greeks living in the Ottoman Empire, so-called because they were the successors to the "Romans," those who lived in the Roman/Byzantine Empire. The surviving Romyi from Constantinople had lost about 25 percent of their community to emigration after the First World War, and faced an uncertain future. At the Lausanne conference in 1922, Ismet İnönü, leader of the Turkish delegation, had declared Romyi and Armenians to be undesired citizens, and would have expelled them if he could have. In the conference it was decided to let those who had resided within the pre-war city remain. These so-called établis were however restricted in their movements; deprived of their elite, most of whom had emigrated, they were traumatized and at the mercy of the new political leadership.

For years they lived in precarious circumstances; from 1932 on they were excluded from employment as musicians, photographers, drivers, waiters, or in the service sector or construction. In 1941-42 they were corralled into the work battalions for non-Turks of draft age and subjected to discriminatory estate taxes on non-Muslims. Then, in the night of September 6/7, 1955, mob violence raged, leading to deaths, rapes, property confiscation and destruction. In 1964, Greek citizens were deprived of their property and expelled, not only the well-to-do, but also the poorer social classes. Asderis quoted a contemporary French historian who described their plight:

"Hide and live in fear – that is the fate of many in Istanbul, Greeks or Armenians, who work in a trade that the law forbids them as minorities to engage in. It is common for them to conceal their identity even when they want to rent an apartment."

Yet, Asderis went on, during the periods of discrimination,

there were also moments of great hopefulness. With a peace treaty between Greece and Turkey in 1930, the établis increased in number, because those living in the city at the time, were allowed to stay, and some who had left could return as well. Even Greek culture revived, with musicians and theatre groups performing; but then came the work battalions and severe taxation.

With the emergence of the Democratic Party in 1950, hopes were raised again, as liberal reforms allowed more social and economic freedom for the Romyi. Again, cultural life was reawakened, with theatre as well as Greek language publications. Foundations were again allowed to function, and they restarted work in clinics and nursing homes. Romyi doctors cared for the needy, and in this period of growth all social classes benefited. But then again this wave of optimism was cut short by the 1955 pogrom. As a leading Romyi journalist Andreas Lambrakis put it, "It is apparently the fate of the Romyi, that every ten or fifteen years we are overtaken by a terrible, destructive blow." Despite this, he said, the Romyi pledged to remain and to rebuild.

Tragically, however, they did not, could not. They were expelled if they held Greek citizenship, and their relatives with Turkish passports followed. One hundred thousand left, numerous committed suicide, more suffered psychological traumas. Asderis said that of the Romyi who had once made up half the city's population, today only 1,500 are left. What Greek one hears is from tourists, he reported; it is as if this population never existed.

In the Roman Empire, Asderis said, "there was a special punishment for famous persons, the damnatio memoriae, whereby commemoration was condemned. Everything that recalled this person was to be erased. It seems as though this judgment has been declared on the society I come from." And to illustrate the present situation, he noted two incidents: a Greek photographer visiting Istanbul was burgled, all his cameras and pictures stolen. He took it as an omen and fled. Then, on the 50th anniversary of the pogrom, an exhibit with photos was held, until nationalists broke in and ravaged the show.

The fate of the Romyi was shared by other Christian communities in the Ottoman Empire, and it is thanks to people like Dr. Tessa Hofmann and her association, who organize such moving commemorations, that the undesired citizens are not the forgotten citizens. At the Berlin event, the leading representatives of the communities laid wreaths and flowers at the monuments. That it was an ecumenical act is visible in the photograph showing the Greek Orthodox parish priest Father Emmanuel Sfiatkos and the Berlin parish priest of the Armenians, Rev. Gnel Gabrielyan.



Armenian, Azeri Leaders Positive on First Talks

TALKS, from page 1
modalities of such a channel.

Aliyev's top foreign policy aide, Hikmet Hajiyev, in an interview with the Trend news agency, said the conversation showed that Azerbaijan and Armenia, rather than Karabakh's ethnic Armenian representatives, remain the main negotiating parties in the conflict. He noted in that regard that the Armenian and Azerbaijani foreign ministers met in New York on September 26.

Since taking office in May, Pashinyan has repeatedly called on Azerbaijan to talk directly to Karabakh Armenian leaders. He has said that he has no mandate to "negotiate on behalf of the Karabakh people."

Baku has denounced those statements, ruling out any direct talks with the Karabakh Armenians.

Neither Pashinyan nor the Aliyev aide mentioned the possibility of holding an Armenian-Azerbaijani summit in the weeks or months ahead.

Pashinyan and Aliyev were first introduced to each other by Russian President Vladimir Putin when they attended in June the opening ceremony of the 2018 football World Cup hosted by Russia. They have held no formal negotiations yet.

The US, Russian and French mediators co-chairing the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) Minsk Group issued on Thursday a joint statement on the New York talks between the Armenian and Azerbaijani foreign ministers. They said the ministers "confirmed the importance of taking measures to intensify the negotiation process and to take additional steps to reduce tensions."

Foreign Minister Zohrab Mnatsakanyan and his Azerbaijani counterpart Elmar Mammadyarov most recently met in New York on Wednesday, September 26. The Armenian Foreign Ministry described as "useful" the talks held in the presence of the US, Russian and French mediators co-chairing the OSCE Minsk Group.

The co-chairs said on Thursday that Mammadyarov and Mnatsakanyan "confirmed

the importance of taking measures to intensify the negotiation process and to take additional steps to reduce tensions." "The Ministers agreed to meet again before the end of the year," they said in a joint statement.

The co-chairs said they also "cautioned the Ministers about the dangers of escalation" and urged the conflicting sides to "avoid inflammatory rhetoric." "The Co-Chairs underscored that a comprehensive settlement will require compromises on all sides," added their statement.

The Armenian Foreign Ministry spokesman, Tigran Balayan, indicated earlier this week that there are no plans yet to organize a meeting of Pashinyan and Aliyev. "That meeting must not be an end in itself," he said. "It needs to have substance."

Pashinyan told reporters at the opening of Kamar business center that Aliyev left an expression of a "normal" person.

According to him, they spoke like "civilized" people. "He left an impression of an educated person," Pashinyan said.

"Of course, there is no certainty that the authorities of Azerbaijan will remain committed to the agreements reached in Dushanbe. But even in such conditions, agreements are very important," he said.

"Tomorrow we will officially inform the OSCE Minsk Group co-chairing countries that an agreement has been reached to establish a permanent link between the heads of Armenia and Azerbaijan in order to control the situation more quickly."

Pashinyan said earlier that he and Aliyev have agreed to instruct the Defense Ministers in both countries to take measures to reduce the tension on the border and the Nagorno Karabakh contact line.

"The settlement of the conflict requires favorable atmosphere. When we have shooting on daily basis it is illogic to talk about settlement. I am happy about the reached arrangement and hope they will be maintained," Pashinyan said.

(Armenpress and PanArmenian.net contributed to this report.)

The Visit

ERDOGAN, from page 6

Erdogan's Mission

No one should have been surprised by the turn of events in Berlin or in Cologne. Erdogan had in fact made clear what his mission was and how he planned to carry it out. In an OpEd that appeared on September 27, in the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, a paper of record, the Turkish President outlined his "Expectations from Germany." Stressing the need to turn a page and set aside misunderstandings, frictions etc., in bilateral relations, he underlined "common interests" in fighting terrorism, dealing with the refugee issue, maintaining free markets, etc. The leading challenge he identified is how to deal with the refugee flows; Turkey has taken in 3.9 million persons fleeing from various war zones, and has recently worked out a deal with Russia to prevent a new crisis around Idlib in Syria. His expectation is that Europeans take more responsibility. In the fight against terrorism, for Erdogan this boils down to identifying not only IS, the PKK and others as such, but also the Gülen organization, the so-called Fetö, which he has identified as behind the failed coup attempt. Erdogan spelled out quite explicitly in this OpEd what he later would bring up in his meetings with Merkel and Steinmeier.

No one should have been caught off guard by the demands he made publicly during the visit. Probably no one among the top politicians he met was surprised. The problem was how to deal with it. Criticism has been loud, not only of his performance but also of the fact that he was granted such a high-profile appearance. Responsible commentators have asserted that no matter how problematic relations with Erdogan may be, Realpolitik is probably the only viable approach. As Rainer Hermann, a regional expert with years of experience in Turkey, wrote about the visit from this standpoint: Turkey needs Germany now more than ever as an economic partner and Germany needs a stable Turkey in a war-torn region as well as a partner in dealing with the demands of refugee flows. "Whoever wants to stabilize Turkey has to talk to Erdogan," he concludes. "Boycotting him leads nowhere." Thus the visit and the friendly reception served as the prelude to open talks, in which highly controversial, conflictual matters are not avoided, but frankly debated. Hermann's view is that no matter how difficult it may be to alter Turkish policy, it may not be impossible.

All well and good, one might say, at least as long as one remains within the conceptual confines of Realpolitik. From an utterly different standpoint, the drama of Turkish-German relations might be cast in another light. Should they be evaluated solely in terms of bilateral realities? Is the case of the "difficult guest" Erdogan an exception? Or is he a type, a leading example of a more general phenomenon? One does not have to look far on the map of Europe to find other capitals with similar personalities at the helm, whether Warsaw or Budapest, or Rome. (Not to mention Washington, D.C.) Is it not the case that what is presented as the "Erdogan problem" is merely the local, Turkish expression of a broader problem, where political leadership has degenerated to an abysmal level, in tandem with the degradation of the overall political culture? Perhaps that is the issue that we need to address.

(Sources: combined German press and online, *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, FOCUS online, *Spiegel* online)

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at the Paramus Campus,
Technology Education Center - TEC-128
(Park in Lot B - Section G)
Refreshments will be served.
RSVP to Nvair Beylerian at nbeylerian@bergen.edu
or www.bergen.edu/pjr/events

 The traditional village dances were as characteristic of Armenian culture as the language, food, songs, and other ancient customs. Susan Lind-Sinianian, Textile Curator at the Armenian Museum of America in Watertown, MA will introduce and teach line dances that she has collected over the last forty years from immigrants and survivors of a lost generation from western Armenia. Come join us in the footsteps of our ancestors to learn and celebrate this heritage. Wear comfortable footwear. Appropriate for all ages.



Bergen Community College Office of Multicultural Affairs
peace, justice & reconciliation
TEKEYAN CULTURAL ASSOCIATION
AIWA
ARMENIAN INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S ASSOCIATION, INC.