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Volunteers and presenters, including Artsakh President Bako Sahakyan and Primate Parkev Martirosyan, at the annual telethon

Hayastan All-Armenian Fund's Annual Telethon Raises \$11,109,633

LOS ANGELES – In an annual telethon broadcast from Los Angeles, Hayastan All-Armenian Fund raised more than \$11 million that will mostly be spent on its ongoing infrastructure projects in Nagorno-Karabakh (Artsakh).

The Thanksgiving Day telethon featured prominent members of the Armenian community in the United States and Karabakh Armenian leaders. It was broadcast by Armenian and US-Armenian TV channels.

Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan of Armenia made a live televised appeal to Armenians around the world when he visited the fund's headquarters in Yerevan early on Friday, November 23. He urged them to donate more funds to the charity, stressing

the importance of its projects implemented in Armenia and Karabakh.

"The money [to be raised in this telethon] will be spent on the improvement of the important infrastructures and development projects in the Republic of Artsakh [(Nagorno-Karabakh Republic/NKR), and the Republic of Armenia," the acting PM also noted, in particular, live on air, and addressing the followers of Telethon 2018. "We need an exceptional nationwide consolidation. (...). Now there is that opportunity today, and there is no doubt that we will use that opportunity to create a truly united, free, and joyful Armenia."

In a statement issued shortly afterwards, Armenia Fund said the sum collected by it this time includes \$2.5 million donated by a "benefactor" who did not want to be identified. Two other wealthy donors, Armenian-American businessmen Antranig Baghdassarian and Albert Boyajian, contributed \$1 million each.

Armenian President Armen Sarkissian, who is also the chairman of the Board of Trustees of the Fund, visited the office of

the fund on November 22. In May, Sarkissian had promised to donate his one year's salary to the fund. He signed a document on donating half of his annual salary, which is 5,753,496 drams (\$11,870).

In addition, Pashinyan donated to the fund 1 million drams (approx. \$2,060) from the Prime Minister's fund, and 500,000 (approx. \$1,030) from his personal funds.

Most of the latest donations will be channeled into two projects in Karabakh launched by Armenia Fund last year. One of them is aimed at expanding local irrigation networks while the other seeks to support greater use of solar energy by Karabakh households.

Armenia Fund has implemented over \$350 million worth of projects in Karabakh and Armenia since being set up in 1992. The fund's current Board of Trustees is headed by Sarkissian and comprises Pashinyan, other senior Armenian state officials, Catholicos Karekin II as well as prominent members of Armenian communities around the world.

see TELETHON, page 20

Four Religious Leaders Call for Aid to Mideast Christians

By Florence Avakian

NEW YORK – The Very Rev. Fr. Daniel Findikyan, Primate of the Eastern Diocese of the Armenian Church of America, joined his fellow church hierarchs Archbishop Demetrios (of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America), Archbishop Dionysius John Kawak (Syriac Orthodox Archdiocese for the Eastern US) and Cardinal Timothy M. Dolan (Roman Catholic Archdiocese of New York) in the letter pleading for support in the "upholding of religious freedom and the preservation of pluralism and diversity" for Christians and other religious minorities in the Middle East.

"Thousands of Christians and people of other religions in the Middle East face persecution daily," said the four religious leaders in a letter to US President Donald J. Trump, dated November 16.

see LETTER, page 4

Government May Close Diaspora Ministry

YEREVAN (RFE/RL) – The government is considering closing Armenia's Diaspora Ministry or downgrading its status, Diaspora Minister Mkhitar Hayrapetyan said on Friday, November 23.

The ministry was set up in 2008 by then President Serzh Sargsyan. It is tasked with maintaining and strengthening the country's cultural, educational and other ties with the worldwide Armenian Diaspora.

see CLOSING, page 3



LA TIMES PHOTO

Ethnic Tensions at Glendale High School Lead to New Measures

GLENDALE – An altercation on the Herbert Hoover High School campus in Glendale in October incited decades-old racial and cultural strife among Armenians and other ethnic groups, reflecting the larger issue of racism across the country.

By Taleen Babayan

Special to the Mirror-Spectator

The consequences surpassed those involved in the fight, forcing the Board of Education to cancel the infamous "Battle for the Victory Bell" amid reports of threats, noting the safety of students as their priority. The cancellation of the annual football game, held between rivals Glendale High School and Hoover High School, upset parents and students alike who staged a walk-out amid frustrations with the Glendale Unified School District due to a lack of answers and clarity about the brawl that occurred among ethnically diverse students on October 3, 2018 – a fight that quickly went viral.

see GLENDALE, page 12

NEWS IN BRIEF

No Armenians injured In Aleppo gas attack

ALEPPO (Panorama) – No Armenians suffered as a result of an attack at a distance of 3 kilometers from the Armenian Consulate General in Aleppo on Sunday, November 25, the Armenian Ministry of Foreign Affairs said in a Twitter post.

More than 100 people were taken to hospitals in Aleppo, Syria's largest city, after a suspected poison gas attack over the weekend, according to Syrian state media and a British-based human rights group.

Around 100 people were injured in toxic gas attack on the government-controlled city of Aleppo Saturday, according to Syrian state media and a British-based human rights group.

Russia has carried out air strikes against Syrian rebels it accuses of launching a chemical attack on the government-held city of Aleppo, the BBC reports.

Argentina Armenians Organize Protest Against Erdogan

BUENOS AIRES (Panorama.am) – Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan has left for Argentina to take part in the G20 summit.

Armenians of Argentina organized a protest action against Erdogan's visit to Buenos Aires, Ermenihaber informs. Protesters reminded that human rights were violated in Turkey. They emphasized that a number of human rights activists and politicians in Turkey are now in prison.

They also reminded that former Turkish Co-Chairman of the pro-Kurdish Democratic People's Party Selahattin Demirtas is still in jail in Turkey.

Within the framework of the summit, Erdogan will discuss the situation in Syria and Iraq with the presidents of Russia, the United States, France and a number of other countries.

Aivazovsky Painting Sells for £609,000

LONDON (Panorama.am) – "Venice at Sunset" by artist Hovhannes (Ivan) Aivazovsky was sold for £609,000 (\$780,000) at Christie's auction of the Russian Art held on November 26, TASS reports.

"Venice at Sunset" was estimated to be worth £400,000-600,000 (\$522,800-\$784,200) at the auction. Aivazovsky painted it in 1873 and it eventually became part of John Kluge's private collection.

The auction, which brought together 250 participants from 29 countries, collected a total of £7.15 million. All proceeds will be donated to Columbia University of New York.

Aivazovsky (1817-1900), was a Russian painter of Armenian descent, most famous for his seascapes.

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ARMENIA

News From Armenia

Russia and Armenia Cooperate on Nuclear Issues

YEREVAN (Armenpress) — Armenian-Russian cooperation in atomic energy is a component of Armenian-Russian relations and now there is an issue on the agenda to set a working group that will examine the opportunities for cooperation in this direction after the exploitation of the Armenian Nuclear Power Plant is over, Russian Ambassador to Armenia Sergey Kopirkin told the reporters.

“There are a number of interesting and promising projects in this term at Rosatom that can be of interest for Armenia and will be in line with specifications of Armenia’s energy consumption,” he said.

The Russian ambassador said that cooperation in this sphere is under strict control of the Armenian and Russian leaders.

Speaking about the Armenian Nuclear Power Plant, Sergey Kopirkin emphasized that it has immeasurable importance for Armenia’s social-economic development, ensuring the operation of industrial facilities and also it has a great role for making electricity tariff acceptable for the public.

Zebra in Yerevan Zoo Was Poisoned, Director Concludes

YEREVAN (Armenpress) — Yerevan Zoo director Ruben Khachatryan claims the poisoning of a zebra that had died earlier was done intentionally and he has doubts on who the suspected perpetrator is. However, he declined to give out names because an investigation is underway.

“Unfortunately the doubts that the zebra was poisoned were confirmed,” he said at a news conference on November 19.

“An autopsy was performed by authorized bodies and it revealed that the zebra’s blood contained a quantity of arsenic. This is an inadmissible occurrence — certain people are capable to doing something like this for personal issues,” he said, adding that police are investigating the incident.

Asked if employees of the zoo are suspected in poisoning the animal, he said: “I can’t say if the employees are involved or not, but the fact that it was done intentionally is certain.”

The zebra died November 13.

The zoo initially contacted police November 10, claiming they have reasons to believe that the zebra has been deliberately poisoned. A large quantity of arsenic was detected in the animal’s blood and urine. Veterinarians attempted to save the animal however, it died.

Sarkissian’s Yerevan My Love Fund to Aid Handicapped Youth

YEREVAN (Aysor) — President Armen Sarkissian’s Yerevan, My Love Fund is launching two programs in December 2018. The beneficiaries of the first program are young people who were wounded or became handicapped during their service.

The fund believes that such young people, in addition to with restoration of physical health, must be reintegrated into the society and get skills to be able to find jobs in future.

Speaking to Aysor.am, director of the Fund Arshak Karapetyan said that the first program includes photo and video classes.

“Our specialists are currently working with them, assessing their needs and abilities after which the group of selected young people will participate in the classes,” Karapetyan said.

The classes will be held by the president’s staff photographer Davit Hakobyan and actor Vardan Petrosyan.

Karapetyan said they want to effectively work to ensure work for the young people in future.

Other training programs will be carried out.

“As to finding jobs for them, we are having initial discussions with stakeholders who may employ them in future. Everything will depend on the result of classes,” Karapetyan said.

Armenian President Visits Germany

YEREVAN (Armenpress) — The official meeting ceremony of President of Armenia Armen Sarkissian and Nouneh Sarkissian took place on November 27 at the Presidential Palace of Germany, Bellevue Palace.

German President Frank-Walter Steinmeier and Elke Bűdenbender met Armen Sarkissian and Nouneh Sarkissian at the gates of the Palace.

Armenian and German state anthems were performed by the military orchestra.

Afterwards, Steinmeier and Armen Sarkissian had a private conversation, followed by an expanded-format meeting with the participation of the delegations.

The German President welcomed Armen Sarkissian and saluted his first official visit to Germany. He also talked about the recent changes in Armenia and saluted their peaceful manner.

Sarkissian noted in his speech that he is glad to be in Germany on an official visit. “I am glad to be hosted in friendly Germany in the sidelines of my first official visit. Germany is Armenia’s friend and a key economic partner, as well as an important supporter of Armenia-EU agenda. Germany is interesting for us also as a model of parliamentary model of government and for us the German

experience in parliamentary democracy is very important and can serve as an example”, Armen Sarkissian said.

Highly appreciating Germany for the financial-technical and economic assistance of Germany provided to

accepted by Frank-Walter Steinmeier.

Sarkissian also participated in the working discussions organized by the Munich Conference on International Security.

Present at the meeting was the President of the Munich Conference



President Armen Sarkissian and German President Frank-Walter Steinmeier

Armenia, as well as the support to implementing democratic and legal reforms, Sarkissian highlighted the expansion of cooperation in science, education and culture. Particularly, the cooperation in the sphere of high technologies and IT were assessed as promising.

President Sarkissian invited his German counterpart to pay an official visit to Armenia, which was

Wolfgang Ischinger, representatives of the foreign relations and defense agencies, members of the Bundestag and European Parliament, well-known security experts, heads of research institutions.

Discussed were issues pertinent to the global security, rapid changes taking place in the world, existing challenges and threats and avenues to thwart them.

Tensions Mount Between Armenia, Belarus

YEREVAN (RFE/RL) — A diplomatic row between Armenia and Belarus intensified over the previous weekend after Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan condemned Belarusian President Alexander Lukashenko for questioning Yerevan’s role in the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO) at a meeting with an Azerbaijani official.

Pashinyan also hit out at Kazakhstan’s President Nursultan Nazarbayev who has openly backed Lukashenko’s efforts to install a new, Belarusian secretary general of the Russian-led defense alliance.

The previous CSTO head, Yuri Khachaturov of Armenia, was forced to resign earlier this month after being controversially charged by Armenian law-enforcement authorities in connection with a 2008 crackdown on opposition protesters in Yerevan.

Khachaturov was appointed as secretary general in 2017 after Russia, Belarus, Armenia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan agreed that their representatives will take turns to run the CSTO. His three-year tenure was due to expire in 2020.

The Armenian government is seeking to install another Armenian secretary general who would serve until 2020. Lukashenko and Nazarbayev objected to that, however, at a November 8 summit of the CSTO held in the Kazakh capital Astana. They demanded that a representative of Belarus be named as new head of the CSTO.

The CSTO leaders said they will again try to reach consensus on the issue at another summit slated for December 6.

Lukashenko made a point of publicly reaffirming his position at a

November 12 meeting with a senior diplomat from Azerbaijan, Armenia’s arch-foe which is not a member of the CSTO.

Lukashenko’s comments raised eyebrows in Yerevan. Local politicians and commentators believe he deliberately made them at a meeting with Azerbaijan’s ambassador in Minsk in order to add insult to injury.

“It would be the same situation if I invited the ambassador of a foreign country not affiliated with the CSTO and brief them on a [CSTO] meeting held in closed session,” Pashinyan told reporters late on Friday, November 16.

“If the meeting is held behind the closed doors it means that it’s a confidential discussion among allies. And I’m surprised that a person who has been head of state for 30 or I don’t know how many years can do such a thing,” he said.

“I will certainly demand explanations from the president of Belarus and not only Belarus,” he added, referring to Kazakhstan’s Nazarbayev.

Official Minsk scoffed at the criticism on November 17. A spokesman for the Belarusian Foreign Ministry said Pashinyan seems to regard himself as an “international prosecutor empowered to punish and pardon” foreign leaders.

“Apparently Mr. Pashinyan has not yet realized that the rules of so-called street politics are not acceptable in international politics,” the spokesman said in a scathing reference to the fact that the Armenian premier came to power in May in a wave of street protests organized by him.

Pashinyan also said that he discussed the matter with Russian

President Vladimir Putin in a phone call earlier on November 16.

At the Astana summit, Putin reportedly proposed a compromise solution that would see the CSTO’s acting secretary general, Russia’s Valery Semerikov, retain his position until 2020.

Moscow reacted angrily when the Armenian authorities moved to arrest Khachaturov as well as former President Robert Kocharian in July. Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov denounced the criminal proceedings as politically motivated. And a Kremlin official said the criminal case against the then CSTO secretary general has dealt a “colossal blow to the image of the whole organization.”

Lukashenko already sparked a bitter diplomatic row with Yerevan in early 2017 after ordering his law-enforcement agencies to arrest and hand over to Azerbaijan a Russian-Israeli blogger who had repeatedly visited Nagorno-Karabakh without Azerbaijan’s permission.

The Armenian Foreign Ministry condemned the move and implicitly branded Belarus a “dictatorship.” Senior Armenian lawmakers launched even more scathing attacks on Lukashenko at the time.

The autocratic Belarusian leader, in power since 1994, makes no his secret of his warm rapport with Azerbaijan’s President Ilham Aliyev. The latter began an official visit to Minsk on Monday.

Belarus has been a major supplier of weapons to Azerbaijan. Those include Belarusian-made Polonez missiles that have a firing range of 200 kilometers. The Azerbaijani military apparently acquired them early this year.



ARMENIA

TUMO Studios Launches Online Shop

YEREVAN – TUMO Studios announces the launch of its online shop of more than 70 items designed and made in Armenia at <https://www.tumostudios.am/>.

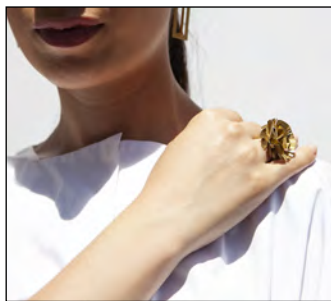
TUMO Studios is a free of charge, nonprofit educational program for university age students and young professionals. The program focuses on the creation of analog products – beautiful things you can touch, wear, taste and smell. It aims to cultivate a new generation of designers and craftspeople who raise the quality of locally produced goods and make them competitive globally.

TUMO Studios connects local students and young professionals with international designers through ateliers (educational workshops), where they combine traditional know-how and contemporary design to create innovative products in fashion, jewelry, embroidery, pottery, printing, product design and the culinary arts.

A purchase from TUMO Studios is a contribution to the future of Armenian design and craftsmanship. With all proceeds from the online shop going towards running and expanding the program, patrons help pave the way for more students to develop design skills and explore their creative potential.

Since its inception, TUMO Studios has brought more than 40 design professionals to Armenia to work with hundreds of local students and crafts professionals in workshop settings. We have had workshops led by leading professionals from France, Denmark, Japan, United States, Lebanon, Corsica, Italy, Brazil, United Kingdom, Russia, India and Spain. The products available through the online shop were designed by students in these ateliers.

Place orders at <https://www.tumostudios.am/>.



Pashinyan on Campaign Swing Attacks Former Regime, New Nationalist Party

YEREVAN (RFE/RL) – Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan pledged to “grab by the throat,” “throw to the ground” and jail loyalists of the former ruling Republican Party of Armenia (HHK) who would try to pressure voters ahead of next month’s parliamentary elections.

Pashinyan stepped up his verbal attacks on the party led by his predecessor Serzh Sargsyan as he toured the northern Lori province on the second day of campaigning for the December 9 polls.

“Where are the Republican village mayors who bully their villagers in connection with the elections or anything else?” he said at a campaign rally held in the town of Spitak. “I say to those village mayors: be aware that I personally will visit you, grab you by the throat and throw you out of your offices.”

“Are there people in this country who dare to bully citizens? I will force all of you to lie on the ground. Who are they? Which Republicans? Which oligarchs? Which burly men? I will force all of you to lie on the ground and you won’t get off the ground for years.”

Pashinyan went on to order the Armenian

police to deal with HHK-linked “criminal elements” in a similar fashion. “Who do you think you are?” he said, appealing to those elements. “Tell me your names. You must not come out of your holes. You must not walk in the country’s streets. Your place is in prison and you all – criminals, plunderers and scoundrels – will end up in prison.”

Pashinyan did not name any village chiefs or other individuals allegedly trying to earn the HHK voters with illicit methods. Sargsyan’s party, which was forced out of power more than six months ago, has been the main target of his harsh verbal attacks on his critics launched on the campaign trail.

The HHK condemned Pashinyan’s “hate speech” and “threats against elected officials” in a statement released by its campaign headquarters later on Tuesday, November 27.

“Such behavior is unprecedented for our political culture, especially on the part of ... the prime minister bearing responsible for our security and well-being,” said the statement.

The HHK urged Armenia’s Central Election Commission, human rights ombudsman and

foreign election observers to pay “attention” to Pashinyan’s pre-election rhetoric.

The HHK won the last parliamentary elections held in April 2017. But it is now fighting to remain represented in the National Assembly.

Pashinyan reacted furiously after HHK figures and other critics condemned one of his close associates, Sasun Mikaelyan, for saying on Monday that the success of this spring’s Velvet Revolution was more important than the Armenian victory in the 1991-1994 war with Azerbaijan. He accused his political opponents of deliberately misinterpreting Mikaelyan’s statement which he portrayed as a slip of the tongue.

Pashinyan also took on the Sasna Tsrer party. He issued a stern warning to a newly formed nationalist party whose members stormed a police base in Yerevan more than two years ago.

Pashinyan said on Monday, November 26, that the Sasna Tsrer party and its supporters will “feel the taste of asphalt” if they attempt to destabilize the political situation in Armenia before or after the December 9 parliamentary elections.

Sasna Tsrer is a rebranded version of Founding Parliament, a radical movement that challenged the former Armenian government. It is one of 11 political forces running in the elections.

Sasna Tsrer’s list of election candidates is topped by Varuzhan Avetisyan, the leader of an armed group that seized the police base in Yerevan’s Erebuni district in July 2016. The three dozen gunmen demanded that then President Serzh Sargsyan free Founding Parliament’s jailed leader, Zhirayr Sefilian, and step down.

They laid down their weapons after a two-week standoff with security forces which left three police officers dead.

Despite standing trial on serious charges, Avetisyan and the vast majority of the other arrested gunmen were set free shortly after Pashinyan came to power in May in a wave of anti-Sargsyan protests.

Sefilian was also released from prison follow-

ing regime change. The Lebanese-born activist, who received Armenian citizenship only this month, is not eligible to run for the parliament. But he is participating in the election campaign of his and his allies’ party strongly opposed to any Armenian concessions to Azerbaijan in the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict.

Avetisyan has stated during the campaign that the National Assembly to be elected on December 9 will have to be dissolved within two years because Armenia is now in a post-revolutionary “transitional period.”

Pashinyan, whose My Step alliance is expected to win the upcoming polls, reacted furiously to those statements when he campaigned in Armenia’s northwestern Shirak province on Monday.

“Have you have decided that you have a right to determine the length of the parliament’s and sometimes even people’s life?” he appealed to the Sasna Tsrer leadership during a campaign rally. “I’m telling you: make no mistake, this is not Serzh Sargsyan’s weak and spineless government.”

“Let nobody interpret our smiles and courtesy as weakness. There have been several such cases, and those who thought so felt the taste of asphalt,” Pashinyan said, alluding to high-profile detentions of some members of Sargsyan’s entourage and their bodyguards.

The prime minister added that the new parliament will fully serve its five-year term set by the Armenian constitution.

Sasna Tsrer condemned the premier’s remarks in a statement issued on Tuesday. “Pashinyan made unfounded statements, using threats and phrases having an offensive subtext,” it said.

Avetisyan defended his statements. He said they do not mean that Sasna Tsrer is now demanding the holding of fresh elections by 2020.

“It is first and foremost a prediction,” Avetisyan told RFE/RL’s Armenian service. “Many other politicians and political forces have made the same forecast.”

Government May Close Diaspora Ministry

CLOSING, from page 1

Hayrapetyan said the future of his ministry is now under review in line with Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan’s plans to downsize the entire government. (See related editorial, page 18.)

“We are continuing to discuss [its future] right now,” he told RFE/RL’s Armenian service (Azatutyun.am). “There are two options: the closure of the ministry or its reinforcement. I personally have proposed the latter option: an agency with greater functions and levers.”

The 28-year-old minister admitted that the ministry employing about 90 people has until now played a largely “symbolic” role. The government must set much more “ambitious”

objectives for it, he said without elaborating.

In Hayrapetyan’s words, if the government does not accept his ideas it will likely decide to incorporate the Diaspora Ministry into another ministry or downsize it and lower its status.

Hayrapetyan is the youngest member of Pashinyan’s cabinet formed after the latter swept to power in May in a wave of mass protests. He is running as a candidate of the premier’s My Step alliance in parliamentary elections scheduled for December 9.

Also Friday, Hayrapetyan revealed that more than 450 families have repatriated to Armenia in the seven months from May.



INTERNATIONAL

International News

EU to Provide 850,000 Euros for December Elections

YEREVAN (Public Radio of Armenia) — The European Union (EU) and Armenia will sign three new grant contracts. The new projects will be geared towards enhanced civic engagement and oversight, which are indispensable elements of a democratic electoral process.

The signature of the contracts were by Piotr Switalski, the EU Ambassador to Armenia on November 21

The projects include: International Observation Mission for the Parliamentary Elections in the Republic of Armenia; Building Capacities for Observation and Promoting the Integrity of Parliamentary Elections in Armenia and Electoral Preparation and Monitoring by Civil Society Organisations in Armenia.

This support runs in parallel with the European Union's substantive contribution to the Election Basket Fund that aims at strengthening the election administration system in preparation to early parliamentary elections on 9 December 2018.

Support to elections takes the form of civic engagement and awareness raising among voters, electoral administration staff and other key stakeholders and funding of a media support and a media monitoring initiative as well as three different election observation missions.

Freestyle Wrestlers to Participate in Iran Tournament

YEREVAN (Panorama.am) — Eight teams, among them nine sportsmen from Armenia were scheduled to participate in an international freestyle wrestling tournament which kicked off in Urmia, Iran, on November 28.

This is a good training and experience for the Armenian athletes, as they will perform at the Armenian Championship which will start in Yerevan on December 24.

Derby First English City To Recognize Armenian Genocide

DERBY, England — Thanks to the efforts of Russell Pollard, a photojournalist and a campaigner for the recognition of genocides, Derby has become the first English city to recognize the Armenian Genocide. The City Council unanimously recognized the Armenian Genocide on November 21.

Pollard is an active member of Holocaust Memorial Day (HMD) group that focuses on genocide awareness. He has shown great interest in Armenian issues since the 100th anniversary of the Armenian Genocide.

The first UK city to recognize the Armenian Genocide was Edinburgh, Scotland.

Derby has a population of 250,000.

Pollard writes, "In 2015 I joined a small committee of volunteers that commemorates which, nationally, traditionally focuses on Genocides from the Holocaust during the Second World War and after. I asked if I could speak about the Armenian Genocide; I was warmly welcomed and I was given the opportunity to make a speech to an audience of over 200 Derby citizens as part of the main event. The Turkish Government had picked up our intentions and wrote to the Mayor of Derby, the day before, 'encouraging' us to remove any references to 'Genocide.' We politely informed them that we would not be changing anything."

The Derby City Council has 51 elected Councillors. They have the power to make formal resolutions on behalf of the people of the City.

"The HMD committee started discussions with the council to support a recognition motion earlier this year. Initially it fell on deaf ears — sometimes with these matters it is about timing — so we waited. A breakthrough was made just a few months ago, and I drafted a motion; it was confirmed that it would be tabled," he continued.

'Ex Occidente Lux!' Armenia and the West

By Muriel Mirak-Weissbach

Special to the Mirror-Spectator

BOCHUM, Germany — "Since the early Middle Ages, since the invasion of the Seljuk Turks in the 11th century, the Armenians have been fighting for the restoration of their independence in their own land — with unshakeable hope. In this they have traditionally expected aid from the Christian West. Germany has had an important role in this context."

Thus reads the text of an invitation issued for an event held recently in Bochum, a city in the Ruhr region. The timing could not have been more opportune; since last May, friends of Armenia abroad have been following the developments associated with the Velvet Revolution with keen interest. Where is the country going? What are the models — if any — that the new leadership looks to for inspiration? And for support? What will the response of friendly nations and trade partners be to the new course charted by Armenia?

Hosting the evening were Heide Rieck, author and spokeswoman of the Bochum Literati, and historian Azat Ordukhanyan, director of the Armenian Academic Society 1860, the oldest Armenian organization in Germany. Engaging in a wide-ranging dialogue, they reached back into history to review the relations between Armenia and the West, asking what expectations Armenians had from European powers, and how the latter responded. Thus the title, "Ex Occidente Lux! Armenia's Visions of Liberty with Regard to Germany."

The Prophecy of Nerses

Rieck, who has been active in promoting Armenian-German cultural exchange, is also co-author of a new translation of Paruyr Sevak's poetry. She posed questions to Ordukhanyan, who illustrated his remarks with examples from various epochs of Armenian history. Tracing the notion back to the fourth century, that the "light" — lux — would arrive from the Occident, he cited an ancient document reporting on a prophecy articulated by Catholicos Nerses the Great, which foretold the future of his people for the subsequent centuries. What was the prophecy, Rieck asked. "The fall of the Arshakouni dynasty is imminent and the end of the house of the Patriarch Partev, also the separation of the Armenian Church from the universal Christian Church as well as the total decay of the country as a consequence of the internal strife among the princes. The successive entry of foreign rule over Armenia was also prophesied and

finally salvation through Rome (i.e. through the West) and with it the inauguration of a Golden Age, an age of enduring peace."

If the idea was that salvation would come from Rome, it is no wonder that there were sympathies among Armenians for the Crusades launched by the Western Christian leaders, military campaigns against Islam and for the liberation of Jerusalem. Friedrich I, Barbarossa, was one example, Ordukhanyan noted; and there are testimonies from the 13th century documenting the expectations Armenians placed in the campaigns of the Frankish kings as well as the "Alamank," short for "Alamanen," as the Germans were called.

Though the hoped-for liberators from Europe failed to satisfy these expectations, there were several cases of Armenian nobility who launched initiatives inspired by that perspective. Ordukhanyan reported on examples related to Germany that paved the way, in a certain sense, to what would become known as "the Armenian Question."

A Savior from Europe?

At the turn of the 18th century, one Israel Ori, a nobleman from southern Armenia, had a plan for mobilizing help from the West. The basic idea, Ordukhanyan explained, was that he would depict the suffering and need of his people, who, because they remained true to their Christian faith, were being persecuted by the Persians and Turks. Ori was confident that once liberated, the Armenians would return to the Roman Catholic Church. Any Western prince who would raise an army and appear on Armenian soil, he argued, would be hailed by the people, and immediately offered the crown. Ori acted as if he had been commissioned by Armenian nobility to seek out such a European savior, and his backers based their expectations on the authority of ancient documents and legends. Ori predicted that this enterprise would bring fame to the House of the Palatinate, above all other royalty in Europe.

The Elector Palatine Johann Wilhelm did in fact receive a request from Armenia, in 1699, to lead an army to the land, free the Armenian Christians and in return receive the crown. At the time, the historical conditions were not ripe for the plan to be set in motion, Ordukhanyan said, but sources from all

concerned parties document the existence of the initiative, and reveal the fascination that such dreams of power exerted on German princes at the time.

Ori did not implement his project, but Hovsep (Joseph) Emin (1726 -1809), a prominent personality in the Armenian national liberation movement, travelled through several European countries from 1751, seeking support for a campaign to free Armenia from the Persians and Ottomans — all reminis-



Azat Ordukhanyan

cent of the Ori adventure.

Ordukhanyan related other tales of fantastic projects entertained by Armenian figures who would become prominent in Germany. Among them is the Aretin family, the name being a common abbreviation for Harutyun. The founder was the son of the Armenian Prince Bagdasar of Sünik in southeastern Armenia. In what reads like a wild adventure story, in 1706 (or 1710) when he was 4 years old, he was sent on a ship from Constantinople to Venice, by the French ambassador, and handed over, along with letters and riches, to Prince Max Emmanuel II of Bavaria from the Wittelsbach family, and his wife, the Polish princess Therese Kunigunde. The Wittelsbachs, living in exile, raised him there until 1714 when they all returned to Munich. Whether or not there were any repercussions on events in Armenia, here were the Armenian roots of the Aretin family, whose members were to occupy prominent positions in political, social and scientific life of the region.

To round out the evening's presentation of such colorful escapades, Ordukhanyan and Rieck delivered a reading, in Armenian and German, of a poem by Sevak, "I am going crazy." A lively discussion followed, with questions about the political climate in Armenia at present, and the perspectives for Armenians to shape their own future, according to the needs and desires of a sovereign people, and in harmony with friendly nations, both East and West.

Four Religious Leaders Call for Aid to Mideast Christians

LETTER, from page 1

Writing as "leaders of the Christian faith" representing American communities with strong historic ties to the Holy Land and countries in the Middle East, the signatories decried the ongoing "genocide and forced migration of millions ... on the grounds of their religious and/or ethnic identities."

In addition to brutality against individual human beings, the churchmen noted that "churches are being desecrated and destroyed."

"The continuing persecution has resulted in the sharp decline of Christian presence from twenty percent in the 20th century to a mere four percent today. In Lebanon, Syria, The West Bank and Gaza, Iraq, Egypt, the Nineveh region, and other more remote places in the Middle East, Christian communities flourished with strong historical and religious roots. Mr. President, if we do not take action now, the entire population of Christians and other minorities may soon cease to exist."

Dolan, Demetrios, Kawak, and Finidkian asked President Trump to address the violence and extremism that lie at the root of Christian persecution, while affirming that the problem does not call for "a battle against Islam."

They called for increased assistance to the resulting refugees fleeing persecution, in concert with international diplomatic approaches to conflict resolution.

The four church leaders concluded their letter with a prayer "for lasting, sustainable peace in the Middle East that will promote pluralism, diversity, and religious freedom for all. And we pray for you and your thoughtful consideration of our deep concerns and painful insights."



INTERNATIONAL

Turkey Wipes Out the Christian Culture of Occupied Cyprus

By Uzay Bulut

A sixth-century mosaic of Saint Mark, stolen from a church after Turkey's military invaded Cyprus in 1974, was recently recovered in a Monaco apartment and returned to Cypriot officials. The ancient masterpiece was described by Arthur Brand, the Dutch investigator who located it, as "one of the last and most beautiful examples of art from the early Byzantine era."

Many other cultural Cypriot relics, from churches and other sites, were stolen from Cyprus by Turkish invaders and smuggled abroad. Some were recovered and returned in the past. In 1989, mosaics stolen from the Church of Panagia Kanakaria, discovered in the United States, were returned to Cyprus.

In the summer of 1974, Turkey mounted two major military campaigns against Cyprus and occupied the northern part of the island (which Turkey now calls the "Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus," recognized only by Turkey). Since the Turkish invasion, much information has emerged not only about the atrocities committed against the Cypriots, but also of the destruction of historic, cultural and religious monuments.

According to a 2012 report, "The Loss of a Civilization: Destruction of cultural heritage in occupied Cyprus":

"Turkey has been committing two major international crimes against Cyprus. It has invaded and divided a small, weak but modern and independent European state (since May 1, 2004 the Republic of Cyprus has been a member of the EU); Turkey has also changed the demographic character of the island and has devoted itself to the systematic destruction and obliteration of the cultural heritage of the areas under its military control..."

"This is one of the most tragic aspects of the Cyprus problem and is also clear proof of the determination of Ankara to 'Turkify' the occupied area and to maintain a permanent presence in Cyprus.

"The occupying power and its puppet regime, from 1974 until today, have been working methodically to erase everything that is Greek and/or Christian from occupied Cyprus..."

A 2015 United States Library of Congress report confirmed the report:

"Foreign archaeological teams that were engaged in excavations in Cyprus were forced to discontinue their work



After Turkey invaded and occupied northern Cyprus, ancient mosaics were stolen from the Church of Panagia Kanakaria (pictured), which is located in the Turkish-occupied zone. The mosaics were later discovered in the United States and returned to Cyprus in 1989. (Image source: Julian Nitzsche/Wikimedia Commons)

after the 1974 events. Their valuable findings have been looted and the teams have not been able to return and resume their excavations.

"According to some estimates, through illegal excavations in the northern part of Cyprus, more than 60,000 Cypriot artifacts have been stolen and exported abroad to be sold in auction houses or by art dealers. The example of an ancient site dating from Neolithic times at the Cape of St. Andreas illustrates this point. The site, which had already been excavated under the aegis of the Department of Archaeology prior to 1974, was later damaged by the Turkish armed forces during the installation and hoisting of the flags of Turkey and the 'TRNC [Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus].'"

In 2016, a report by the Cypriot Ministry of Foreign Affairs noted that:

"More than 550 Greek Orthodox churches, chapels and monasteries located in towns and villages of the occupied areas, have been pillaged, deliberately vandalized and, in some cases, demolished. Many Christian places of worship have been converted into mosques, depots of the Turkish army, stockyards and hay barns. This fact clearly proves that the religious heritage in the occupied areas has been the target of the occupation regime as part of its policy to eradicate the cultural character of the area. Moreover, important cultural monuments and places of worship continue to be completely inaccessible because they are located within the

'military zones' of the Turkish occupation army..."

"The destruction is not limited to the monuments belonging to the Church of Cyprus, but also extends to religious monuments belonging to the Orthodox Patriarchate of Jerusalem and to the Armenian, Maronite and Catholic Churches of Cyprus, as for example the Armenian Monastery Sourp Magar in Halefka and the Maronite Monastery of Prophet Elias in Skylloura."

A 2017 article for Artnet, detailing atrocities committed by the Islamic State (ISIS) against relics in museums, mosques, churches and archaeological sites in Syria and Iraq, says that "UNESCO considers the intentional destruction of cultural heritage a war crime."

Meanwhile, Turkey – which has been committing the intentional destruction of occupied Cyprus's cultural heritage for more than four decades – remains a member of NATO and a candidate for membership in the European Union. This is a situation that the West must force Turkey to address – and not only when an individual piece of looted art, such as the mosaic of Saint Mark, happens to be rescued.

(Uzay Bulut, a Turkish journalist, is a Distinguished Senior Fellow at Gatestone Institute. She is currently based in Washington D.C. <https://www.gatestoneinstitute.org/13341/turkey-cyprus-christian-culture>)

Memorial unveiled for 'Martyr' Kiwi WWI soldiers who fought against Armenian Genocide

By Tony Wright

WELLINGTON, N.Z. (Newshub) – It's estimated 1.5 million people died in the Armenian Genocide during World War I, as did 300,000 Assyrians.

On Sunday, November 25, New Zealand's Assyrian community unveiled a memorial at Makara Cemetery in Wellington dedicated to the Kiwis who fought and died trying to rescue them.

Robert Nichol was a house painter from Lower Hutt, and one of New Zealand's most respected and decorated soldiers of World War I.

His memory was honored on Sunday by the descendants of those he died trying to save.

"Captain Nicol [was] shot down and he died, sacrificing his life for thousands of Assyrian refugees," Assyrian-Kiwi Ashoor Valda said.

A captain aged just 23, Nichol volunteered for a specialist brigade known as Dunsterforce – a forerunner to today's SAS.

Dunsterforce was sent to modern day Iran to seize vital oil fields for the British in 1918 - but ended up trying to stop the 20th Century's first great crime against humanity.

"The Assyrian Genocide was a very specific part of a general process in the Ottoman

Empire to 'Turkify' the Empire," historian James Robins explained.

"In other words, to get rid of its non-Turkish Christian minorities – so that included the Armenians, it included the Assyrians, and it included ethnic Greeks as well."

Robins is writing a book on New Zealand's many links to the Genocide, and is dedicating a chapter to Nichol.

"He was fighting alongside another New Zealander called Alexander Nimmo, who was from Mosgiel in Otago, and he was fighting to defend the rear guard of this refugee column of around 60,000 Armenians and Assyrians who were fleeing annihilation," said Robins.

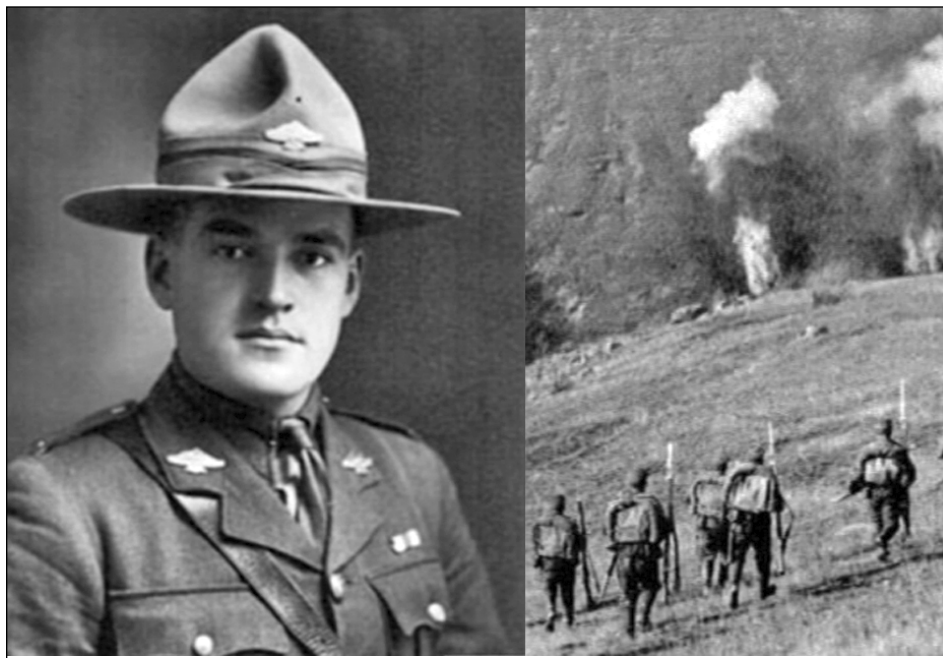
Outnumbered 100 to one, the Kiwis fought bravely; Nimmo survived, but Nichol was shot and killed – his body never recovered.

"What he did was brave and courageous in the sense that it was for a humanitarian purpose," Robins said.

"And it's important to realize that he volunteered for this mission - he didn't have to go into that valley to defend those refugees."

Jacinda Ardern's Government has never officially acknowledged the Armenian genocide – over genuine fears Turkey would ban Kiwis from visiting Gallipoli if it did – but it was a very different political story a century ago, under William Massey.

"The New Zealand government under



Robert Nichol, left, and New Zealand soldiers fighting during World War I

Massey during the war, and in the immediate aftermath of the war, used it as a justification for pursuing the war effort," Robins said.

"They said, 'We'll look at these poor Christians in the Ottoman Empire who're being exterminated - this is precisely why we

need to fight this war."

So 100 years on, those crimes against humanity are ignored by the New Zealand Government but the sacrifice Robert Nichol made trying to stop them is remembered by the people he was trying to save.

Community News

Program to Commemorate 1988 Earthquake And Humanitarian Response

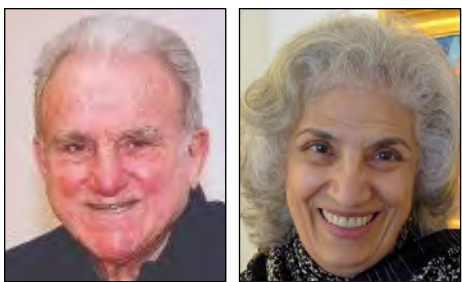
BELMONT, Mass. — A special program in commemoration of the 30th anniversary of the 1988 Armenian earthquake will take place on Thursday, December 13, at 7:30 p.m. in Nahigian Hall, First Armenian Church, 380 Concord Ave., Belmont.

The program, “The 1988 Armenian Earthquake and the Transformation of Diasporan/Homeland Relations,” will be moderated by retired *Boston Globe* reporter Stephen Kurkjian, and will include John A. Simourian, Michele Simourian, Dr. Hayk Demoyan (on video), Dr. Carolann Najarian, and Elaine Kasparian.

The event is sponsored by the National Association for Armenian Studies and Research (NAASR)/ Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation Lecture Series on Contemporary Armenian Issues and the First Armenian Church.

The devastating earthquake that struck Soviet Armenia on December 7, 1988, caused massive devastation and death especially in the cities of Spitak, Leninakan (now Gyumri), and Kirovakan (now Vanadzor). As many as 50,000 people were killed and well over 100,000 were injured. The earthquake prompted a massive international humanitarian response which included historic contributions from the worldwide Armenian Diaspora.

In a recent article published in the AMAA News and in the *Armenian Mirror-Spectator*, multiple Pulitzer Prize winner Stephen Kurkjian told the story of how Watertown native John Simourian led an effort to bring



Stephen Kurkjian, Dr. Carolann Najarian

dialysis equipment to Armenia, relating also the work of Dr. Carolann Najarian, the Armenian Milk Fund, and other individuals and organizations who rapidly mobilized to save lives. The rescue effort, Kurkjian makes clear, had a transformative effect on the relationship between the Armenian diaspora and the then Soviet republic, creating bonds and relationships that continue to flourish today.

This event is free and open to the public. A reception with refreshments will take place after the program.

For more information about this program, contact NAASR at hq@naasr.org.



John and Michele Simourian



Mayor Georges Kepenekian Presenting Medal to Richard Hovannisian

Richard Hovannisian Receives City of Lyon Medal

LOS ANGELES — Prof. Richard Hovannisian of the University of California Los Angeles (UCLA) and Chapman University received the Medal of the City of Lyon in a ceremony in the historic Hotel de Ville (City Hall) on November 8. Mayor Georges (Kevork) Kepenekian, an acquaintance of Hovannisian for more than 40 years, extended the city's greetings and laudatory remarks. Congratulatory messages were also offered by Armenia's ambassador to France, Hasmik Tolmajyan, and the primary conference sponsor, Association for the Development of Armenian Culture of the Lyon Region, in cooperation with the Fondation Bullukian and Covcas Center.

The award ceremony and reception, which were preceded by the laying of a wreath at Lyon's Armenian Genocide Memorial, also served as the opening of a two-day conference marking the end of World War I and the establishment of the Republic of Armenia in 1918. The sessions with an overflow audience at Lyon's Municipal Library on November 9 focused on France and the Near East, including

see MEDAL, page 7



From left, Souren Panossian (translator), Richard Hovannisian, Hilda Tchoboian, Ashot Melkonyan

Combined Federal Campaign Supports Fresno's Armenian Community School

By Marusya Airumian

FRESNO — The Combined Federal Campaign (CFC) is one of the world's largest and most successful annual workplace charity campaigns, raising money each year across the country and overseas.

The CFC has raised more than \$8 billion for charitable organizations over its 57 year history.

The Armenian Community School in Fresno is the only Armenian charity participating in this charity fundraising campaign.

Any federal civilian, postal, and military employee or retiree can donate to the “Armenian Community School” by choosing CFC #23531, regardless of one's geographic location.

Donations go to support an excellent academic education and a strong Armenian language and culture program for Armenian-American children that keeps Armenian culture alive.

Even those who are not federal employees can spread the news and help raise money for the Charlie Keyan Armenian Community School by telling people to choose CFC Charity #23531 — “Armenian Community School.”

The 2018 campaign season started in October and will take donations until January 11, 2019.

For more information about the Charlie Keyan Armenian Community School, visit their website at www.ckacs.org.

For more information about the Combined Federal Campaign, see the CFC website at <http://www.cfctoday.org/>.



Young Entrepreneur Named to Forbes 30 Under 30 List

NEW YORK (Armradio) — New York-based Hripsime Rema Matevosyan has been included in Forbes' 30 Under 30 — Manufacturing & Industry 2019 list.

Hripsime Rema Matevosyan, 27, cofounded Swiftera, a high-altitude imaging company that uses a floating camera to go above what drones can reach but below the level of satellites.

Her company has raised seed funding from Draper Associates and is selling its geospatial data to architects, municipalities and others.

Matevosyan graduated from the Yerevan State University and completed her master's degree at the Moscow Institute of Physics and Technology.



COMMUNITY NEWS

SOAR Holds Fundraiser with Artist Michael Aram

NEWTON, Mass. — The Boston Chapter of the Society for Orphaned Armenian Relief (SOAR) hosted a fall fundraising event on Saturday, November 17, at Bloomingdale's in Chestnut Hill. This was an exciting opportunity

heritage. Mr. Aram is well known in the Armenian community for his Noah's Ark Sculpture given as a gift from Armenia to the Vatican where it is permanently housed.

At the brunch, Boston SOAR President Talin Bekelian shared the news that renovations at the Kharberd Orphanage in Armenia have been completed with funds previously raised by the Boston Chapter. (Coincidentally, Kharberd was the home of Aram's grandfather.) Brunch was provided by Bloomingdale's and dessert pastries were meticulously prepared and donated by KaterArt. After brunch, Michael escorted the attendees to the first floor to browse through the section of the store where his wares are displayed. Aram answered questions and offered insightful interpretations, and signed pieces of his works.

All funds raised from this event will be used for future Boston SOAR sponsored projects in Armenia. To learn more about SOAR, visit: <http://soar-us.org>



From left to right: Bob Colloca, Lisa Menasian Colloca, Talin Bekelian, Michael Aram, Lisa Aboyan, Adelina Keshishian, and Cheryl Ourfalian Smith

to meet world renowned artist and designer Michael Aram in an intimate setting where he spoke briefly about his work and inspiration. An award-winning artist and designer who has supported SOAR previously, Aram is best known for his metal craftsmanship and whose works reflect both nature and his Armenian



King Is Homecoming Queen

RENO, Nev. — Madelyn King, daughter of Janet Demirjian Schmid and Conway King, and granddaughter of Richard and Dorothy Demirjian, was named Homecoming Queen for the University of Nevada, Reno, on October 13. Nominees had to belong to a club on campus and the top 10 candidates for Homecoming were selected by the Homecoming Committee. King was selected and took part in the Homecoming Pageant on October 8. Candidates were asked to perform as well as answer questions. The top four were selected that night and the King and Queen, Mackenzie Nelson and Madelyn King, were announced and crowned at the homecoming football game on October 13.

Richard Hovannisian Receives City of Lyon Medal

MEDAL, from page 6

the Armenian Legion, and on the Resurgence of an Armenian State in the Caucasus. Participants included head of the conference organizing committee Hilda Tchoboian and Professors Taline Ter Minassian, Raymond Kevorkian, Gerard Dedeyan, Susan Pattie, Claude Mutafian, Yves Ternon, Vahe Tachjian, Fabrice Balanche, Ashot Melkonyan, Artashes Taroumian, Aram Mardirossian and Hovannisian.

The sessions on November 10, held at the Catholic University of Lyon, concentrated on development of the independent Armenian state and the post-war Paris Peace Conference. Speakers included Gerard Guerguerian, Armen Asryan, Khachatur Stepanyan, Stephan Astourian, Ashot Melkonyan, Richard Hovannisian, Joseph Yacoub, Ozcan Yilmaz, and Ara Papian. Present also was Hovhannes Gevorgyan, Artsakh's permanent representative in France.

Hospitality and receptions were offered by the Fondation Bullukian, Bahadourian Restaurant under the direction of French-Armenian chef Alain Alexanian, and Hilda and Robert Tchoboian. And, during a conference dinner at Lyon's Sourp Hagop Church on November 9, Hovannisian was surprised with an elaborate birthday cake.

The combination of national and international themes, together with the detailed planning and the participation of scholars from Armenia, England, France, Germany, Switzerland, and the United States, contributed to the quality of the colloquium.



Richard Hovannisian with City of Lyon Medal



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COMMUNITY NEWS

This I Believe: The Trials and Tribulations of Armenian School Principals

By Shahé Mankerian

I don't wait for the iPhone alarm. It's 4:53 a.m., and I'm in the kitchen with the percolating coffee, facing the computer no longer in sleep mode. The mailbox shows a dozen or so work-related emails. I'm not obligated to answer them; the workday hasn't officially started. Yet, in an act of penance, I'm checking and answering emails written by my triad of terrors and triumphs—students, teachers, and parents.

Who said being a principal is not a rewarding profession? I believe the job provides moments of success fueled with unfiltered exhilaration and unmedicated rush. It ignites that unkempt force that blasts boredom into smithereens. The prerequisite of the profession is an MA in Multitasking and a recommended PhD in the following areas: Listening, Counseling, Nursing, Scheduling and/or a degree in a number of other action verbs. Celebrations are aplenty; for example, when Armenian takes precedence over English on the playground, or when the PTO raises enough funds for new library books, or when teachers remember the principal on Boss's Day. Gratifications are boundless—that unexpected complimentary email, or that revitalizing thankful text, or the phone call that sends the receiver over the moon.

If you have aspirations of becoming an Armenian school principal, read this paragraph at your discretion. Being a workaholic is not a compliment; it is the undisclosed requirement of the job. It is the 11th Commandment: Thou shalt not enjoy weekends, national holidays, and summer breaks. Those are for the feeble-minded. The chosen few will forgo family functions—baptisms, Thanksgiving dinners, funerals. Others will sacrifice their children's birthdays and wedding anniversaries—simply put, their families. It helps if a principal is blessed with a saint for a spouse. "Sleep" is underrated. Family vacations are overrated. Losing sleep over the school budget, WASC accreditation, assimilation of a culture, shortage of qualified teachers (particularly in science and math) are the acceptable norm. Remember, the stale brew in the coffee mug or the whistling teapot will be your soulmate; take good care of it. It will save you during difficult times like those board meetings that last longer than triathlons.

I digress. I believe being a principal could become a lonely existence. If not careful, mundane administrative mandates could isolate the headmaster into that seductive quicksand, the Office. Behind closed doors, directives are spoken through memos and evaluations are spewed through computer screens. Bilingual speechwriting requirements for every other gobbledygook event, coupled with other senseless chores, choke the superhuman principal



Backrow, from left, John Kossakian from Cabayan Elementary School, Arpi Avanesian from the AGBU Manoogian-Demirdjian School, Sossi Shanlian from Ferrahian High School, Curtis Shamlin from Charlie Keyan Armenian Community School, Sanan Shirinian from mAri Guiragos Minassian Armenian School and Lina Arslanian from Merdinian School. Front row, from left, Sister Lucia from Armenian Sisters' Academy, Maral Boyadjian from Sahag-Mesrob Armenian Christian School, Grace Andonian from Krouzian-Zekarian-Vasbouragan Armenian School, Shahe Mankerian from St. Gregory Hovsepian School.

like the kryptonite. Never mind the fact that the children become marginalized because of managerial duties. The lucky ones, the veterans, know how to discern the good from the abyss of helicopter parents, the twilight zone of hypersensitive teachers, and the vortex of students suffering from entitlement. Every leader knows the secret dictum: Only a handful suffer from neediness yet cause great distress. Therefore, going home bruised and broken like Jake LaMotta from the Raging Bull is a temporary setback, a tarnished badge of honor for every principal.

That is why, I believe, the principals of Armenian schools in California deserved the short, 24-hour getaway at the Serra Retreat Center in Malibu. It was time to recharge, reconnect, and return to the core values of being leaders. It was time to hear from experts like Dr. Lisa Manuelian, Nora Chitilian, MS, LMFT, and Dr. Manuella Abrahamaian about the common challenges and victories of serving the community. It was time to distance ourselves from the duality of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde and connect

with everything that is good and noble. Sanan Shirinian, the Principal of Ari Guiragos Minassian School in Santa Ana, wrote, "There is something oddly comforting hearing about the nearly identical challenges we all face. It has me feeling somewhat hopeful that there is a new dawn approaching and our schools will come out stronger for it." In times of introspection, we were able to draw strength from one another and delve within the core of our passion, the children.

Do I love being the principal of an Armenian school? Love is an understatement. I believe every Armenian school principal has responded

to a calling, to serve unconditionally and passionately the children of our community. Like undulating vessels on the vast sea of diaspora, we are at the helm of carrying the children to the uncharted shores of the 21st century. We want them to possess the scholarly advantage over their counterparts and maintain their cultural leverage over a wonderfully diverse planet. Never mind the discouraging few, we are grateful for all the sacrificial steps our parents and teachers have taken to nurture this sacred journey. We are energized by the silent majority. We hear you loud and clear through your sporadic emails, text messages, and phone calls.

RI Set to Launch First Transit Master Plan

PROVIDENCE – Rhode Island is starting to look into the future of transit.

The state is launching its first Transit Master Plan to discuss how public transportation can best serve citizens in the future.

"A strong transit system is critical to the quality of life in Rhode Island. Public transit gets people where they need to go and helps them travel smarter, benefiting our environment by reducing reliance on single-occupancy vehicles. Transit is also essential in supporting continued economic growth throughout the state," said Rhode Island Public Transit Authority CEO Scott Avedisian.

The plan is a joint effort by RIPTA, the Rhode Island Department of Transportation (RIDOT) and the Division of Statewide Planning.

The Master Plan

According to RIPTA, "Transit Forward RI," the Transit Master Plan project will create a vision for the future of transit in Rhode Island and will look at different types of transportation including bus, rail, ferry and more.

Presently, Rhode Island is spending billions to repair its roads and bridges under the RhodeWork program. RI consistently ranks as having the worst transportation infrastruc-

ture in America. Other transportation initiatives have included the seasonal Providence to Newport ferry.

The Transit Master Plan will identify both near and long-term investments to achieve a collective vision for transit in Rhode Island, as well as a strategy for implementation.

The first opportunity to engage with the project will be next month, and all members of the public are encouraged to attend one of three open houses to share their thoughts.

Project staff will be available at the open houses. They will share work done to date in evaluating the market for transit in Rhode Island and how well Rhode Island's current transit network performs today. Public input will be solicited on project goals, gaps in today's network, and opportunities for enhancement.

The full schedule of open houses is as follows:

Tuesday, December 11, 11 a.m. to 12:30 p.m., Providence Chamber of Commerce, 30 Exchange Terrace, Providence, and Tuesday, December 11, 5:30 to 7 p.m., Museum of Work & Culture, 42 South Main St., Woonsocket, and Wednesday, December 12, 5:30 to 7 p.m., Gateway Transportation Center, 23 America's Cup Ave., Newport.

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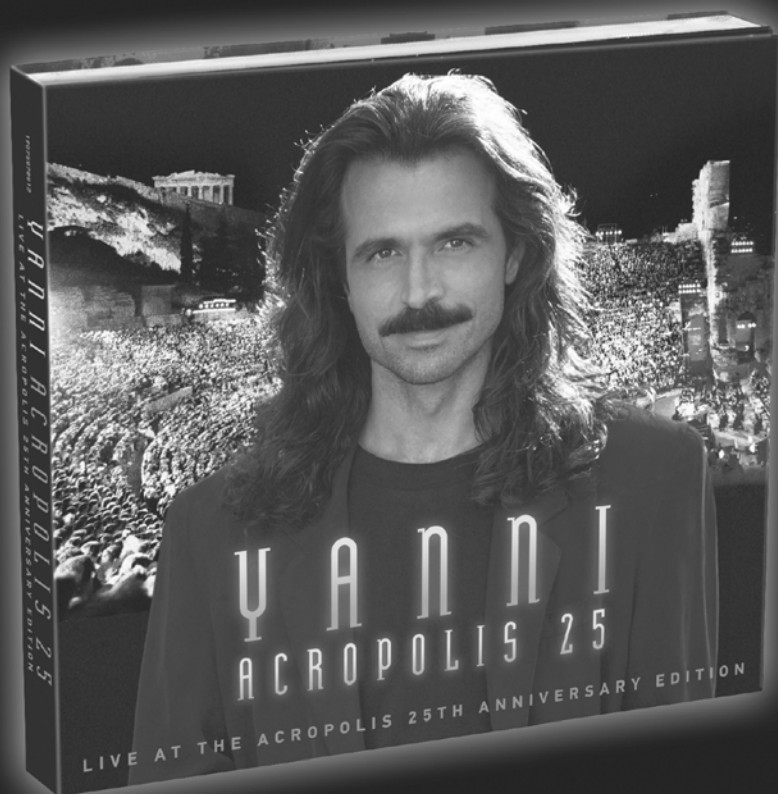
COMMUNITY NEWS

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Realtor Robert Nahigian Teaches at Several Industry Events Across US

NEWTON, Mass. — During fall of 2018 Rob Nahigian of Auburndale Realty Co. was invited and spoke at a number of regional commercial real estate events throughout the US as an industry subject matter expert and commercial industry thought-leader.

The Ohio Association of Realtors engaged Nahigian to deliver a webinar on Commercial Transactions and Leases. The webinar attracted practitioners throughout Ohio and was conducted on August 28 and 30.

He then was invited to deliver “Build-to-Suit Development” and “Commercial Lease Analysis: When to Hold and When to Fold” on September 7, for the New Orleans Metropolitan Association of Realtors (NOMAR) Commercial division.

On September 14, Nahigian delivered the Society of Industrial and Office Realtors (SIOR) national designation program “Art of Negotiating Commercial Real Estate” in Dallas at the Sheraton Dallas. The course revealed new models in negotiating skills that have elevated the success of professional negotiators. As an SIOR national faculty member since 1986, Nahigian incorporated his professional

The event was held at the Board offices in Pittsfield and drew more than 100 people for the day.

On September 27, 2018 R&R Realty engaged Nahigian to speak at its annual corporate education day in W. Des Moines, Iowa. Rob delivered “From Shanghai to Your Shelf: Logistics and Supply Chain in the 21st Century”. The program was delivered to its premier brokers by R&R at its corporate headquarters. Rob discussed the 5 intermodals, the changes with the Suez and Panama Canals, the advantages and disadvantages of east coast ports, rail, air and trucking systems, 3PLs and logistic hubs. Most importantly he shared the mathematical regression models that internal real estate departments engage to develop an industrial real estate decision on site and facility options in the marketplace.

The Cape Cod & Islands Association of Realtors engaged Nahigian to speak at its Fall education event on October 17 on continuing education. The event was held at the Board’s conference facility in W. Yarmouth.

MA NAIOP asked Rob to speak on business



Robert Nahigian teaching a class

experience as a “for hire” negotiator that dissected two negotiating traits that can tip the playing field.

On September 18, the S. Shore Association of Realtors invited him to review the NAR Code of Ethics, Comparative Market Analysis and Investment Basics to its members seeking continuing education for their licenses. The program was held in Pembroke and the Board’s location and attracted over 150 real estate practitioners.

Nahigian taught his Boston University on-line class starting in September 4 and October. There were 22 attendees internationally on the topic of Commercial Real Estate Leases and Transactions. The online course is an eight week program that includes brokers, developers and lenders from India to California. The course dives into commercial lease clauses and investment issues from the perspective of the landlord, tenant and lender as well as the leasing process and financing/investment implications.

On September 21, the Berkshire Board of Realtors asked Nahigian to speak at on Investment Basics and Advanced Industrial Real Estate for continuing education purposes.

transactions and negotiating at its regional event on October 19 at AllSteel, 200 State Street, Boston. Approximately 25 real estate brokers, architects, lawyers, engineers, contractors and developers were in attendance.

Rob was then invited as a national speaker on November 5, 2018 at the NAR National Convention at the Commercial Division in Boston. Nahigian spoke on negotiating basics at the NAR Commercial Learning Theater. Over 6,000 people attended the NAR national convention.

On November 9, Nahigian was invited to speak at the SIOR Northeast Regional Event in New York City. More than 5 SIOR chapters were part of this collaboration from the East Coast. Approximately 150 attendees were part of this two-day program. The main event was held at the Bank of America Global headquarters near Bryant Park.

Finally, Nahigian taught Synergistic Sales Skills on November 14 in Atlanta for the SIOR National Designation class on Synergistic Sales Skills. Approximately 21 real estate brokers were in attendance to fulfill their SIOR designation requirements.

Read News in Armenian at:





COMMUNITY NEWS

Arpie Otyag Celebrates Anniversary with Lecturer Dr. Lilit Garibyan and *Ghapama*

By Lucy Joulfayan-Yeghyayan

WATERTOWN – The Knights of Vartan Ararat Otyag Number 1 of Boston and the Daughters of Vartan (DOV) Arpie Otyag Number 9 of Boston held their monthly meeting on November 12. A few highlights marked



From left, Cathy Minassian, Lucy Joulfayan-Yeghyayan, Armine Manoukian, Anahid Mardiros, Knarik Arkun, Liana Zakaryan, Sona Antonyan, Jean Martinian, Arminé Manukyan, Nora Aroyan, Carine Avakian, Helen Kalantari, Vera Peterson, Anahit Kibarian, Vartus Varadian and Sossy Yogurtian

the pre-meeting traditional dinner which was held at Charles Mosesian Cultural and Youth Center – Keljik Hall of St. James Armenian Apostolic Church.

Dr. Knarik Arkun, Dirouhi of Arpie Otyag Number 9, welcomed the audience and presented the program after the official opening by the Ararat Otyag Number 1 Sbarabed Argishti Chaparian, and a prayer by Fr. Stephan Baljian.

Arpie Otyag members prepared and served the Thanksgiving dinner from scratch. However, one addition to the traditional Thanksgiving menu was meant to introduce a complementary Armenian element to the traditional American meal. *Ghapama*, or stuffed pumpkin, is one of our oldest traditional, national dishes and a pride of the Armenian cuisine. Historically, it has been celebrated as a centerpiece during the Armenian New Year, weddings and other holiday occasions. Our folk culture has included it in its popular art forms. We have songs and dance about *ghapama*, and it is present in drawings and literature.

For centuries, every part of our ethnic cuisine in the ancestral homeland and beyond has maintained *ghapama* as one of its delicacies. The fame of this dish traveled with the diaspora communities to their new villages, towns and cities. Many believed that *ghapama* is the trademark of their village or town because they had discovered new spices and vegetable types in their new hometowns which they added to the original ingredients of the dish, thus creating the several versions/recipes that we enjoy in our times. Traditionally, regardless of the recipe/filling, whether in the homeland or the diaspora, our ancestors baked *ghapama* in the Armenian “tonir” or oven.

Including *ghapama* on the combined Thanksgiving and the DOV anniversary dinner menu is symbolic. It was meant to help revive interest in our ethnic, cultural cuisine and traditions. Understanding the challenges in preserving the Armenian cultural heritage and eventually, ensuring its continuation in the diaspora, the DOV Arpie Otyag Number 9 will likely include more activities that would help revive and preserve several of the forgotten, and endangered elements in the Armenian cultural heritage, in the future. Preserving our identity in our constantly developing lifestyles is an ever-growing challenge. Our ethnic or ethnographic elements need more attention in order to survive the threats of extinction.

Guest speaker Dr. Lilit Garibyan’s presentation was the highlight of the evening. Arkun declared that Garibyan is a good role model for Armenians. She is a successful professional who simultaneously manages to perpetuate her Armenian heritage through her young family. She also gives back to her community and to

Armenia.

Garibyan is a board-certified dermatologist and a fellow in American Academy of Dermatology with her PhD and MD from Harvard University. She is currently an Assistant Professor at Harvard Medical School in the Department of Dermatology at Massachusetts General Hospital (MGH). Garibyan is also a physician-scientist at the Wellman Center for Photomedicine at MGH

DAVID MEDZORIAN PHOTO

ing novel treatments for dermatologic diseases and beyond. At MGH, she is leading efforts to establish a problem-based innovation model led by clinicians interested in solving clinical problems through the MAGIC WAND Initiative. She is the co-founder of the Magic Wand Initiative at MGH, and the co-chair of the Virtual Magic Wand program. She is also the chair of Education Committee and Director of Innovation and External Affairs at AID (Advancing Innovation in Dermatology), which is a nonprofit organization focused on creating and promoting innovation in dermatology. Her discoveries and inventions have led to several MGH patent applications, new funding from Department of Defense and a new startup company. She has also been actively involved in teaching and mentoring Harvard medical students, residents and fellows.

Garibyan immigrated to the United States from Yerevan when she was 12 years old. It was always her dream to one day go back and give back to her homeland by helping the people of Armenia. In 2013, she took on the responsibility of leading the way to create a medical laser clinic in Yerevan for adult and pediatric patients. Disfiguring vascular anomalies and scars are public health issues in Armenia, and patients have no access to effective medical laser therapy. The mission of her work was to establish sustainable, medical laser clinics in Armenia for effective treatment of scars and vascular anomalies. Her team also wanted to train and educate Armenian physicians to become proficient in medical and laser management of these conditions, to allow this mission to be sustainable.

Since inception, her team has taken three laser devices to Yerevan which are not housed



Dr. Lilit Garibyan

in local hospitals where patients are receiving treatments. Hundreds of patients in Armenia have benefited from the laser treatments they have received for their life altering skin diseases. Dr. Garibyan is currently in the process of creating a nonprofit organization to allow her to raise money from donors for this project.

One of the notable guests was the distinguished former Dirouhi Jean Martinian who was invited to cut the anniversary cake, followed by a group photo which concluded the happy occasions’ commemoration. Joining the dinner were new Asbeds and Sbarabeds from Arakadz Otyag 35 of North Andover, MA and Arax Otyag 11 from Rhode Island.

The Original *Ghapama* Recipe

By Lucy Joulfayan-Yeghyayan

As you realize this recipe does not include any measurements, the purpose is to introduce the original recipe. In the older days, people in the villages did not use numbered measuring cups nor spoons, but with reasoning, and “measurements by the eye” they produced the best and most delicious meals for their families. Every cook in a family knows the eating habits and preferences of the family members. Let that knowledge guide you.

Ghapama is one of our oldest traditional, national dishes and a pride of the Armenian cuisine. Historically, it has been celebrated as



Ghapama with Lucy Joulfayan-Yeghyayan

a centerpiece during the Armenian New Year’s Eve, weddings and other feast related occasions, our folk culture has included it in the popular art forms, we have songs and dance about the *ghapama*, and it is present in drawings and literature. For centuries, every part of our ethnic cuisine in the ancestral homeland and beyond (meaning, in the several diaspora communities, historically, several diaspora communities were formed, throughout the centuries: post Genocide, and even before it, since the forced relocation by the invading Tatars and Turks in the Caucasus, earlier by Shah Abbas, before it Cilicia, before it Ani, and a long list before that...) has maintained *ghapama* as one of its delicacies, the widespread fame of this dish traveled with the diaspora communities to their new villages, towns and cities, many of whom believed that the *ghapama* is the trademark of their own village or town because they had discovered new spices and vegetable types in their new hometowns which they added to the original ingredients of the dish, thus creating the several versions/recipes that we enjoy in our times. Traditionally, regardless of the recipe/filling, whether in the homeland or the diaspora, our ancestors baked *ghapama* in the Armenian “tonir” or oven.

Ghapama is offered as a main dish when prepared with meat and or other vegetarian recipes, also as a part of the desert table delicacies. The contents/ingredients may vary, and so may the spices, but what matters is for the tradition to live on especially that (as we mentioned above) this dish was served during the feasts including weddings. For example, in Marash, in Western Armenia, it was traditional to serve the groom and his family a *ghapama* dish baked with meat and grains.



INGREDIENTS

Pumpkin any size, (preferably thick walled and ripe, orange color)
Long grain white Rice. Basmati and or Jasmin work very well (if available)
Dried fruits: Apple, raisin, apricot, prune, peach, walnut, figs, pears, Persimmon, (any combination of dried fruits works), but the traditional recipe needs apricot, prunes, raisins, walnuts and apples.
Honey (be generous)
Butter
Cinnamon
Nutmeg (Optional)
Oil spray (for the skin/ spray the whole pumpkin)

DIRECTIONS

Wash the pumpkin and then cut an opening on the top part, scrape the seeds out, apply a generous coat of butter and honey (and, though a generous sprinkle of cinnamon is optional, we recommend it based on our experience).

In a pot, combine the rice, dried fruits, butter and water, and cook the mixture partway, during which re-apply another coat of honey to the hollow pumpkin and let it sit for almost an hour.

Fill the cooked rice mixture in the pumpkin adding butter and honey when the pumpkin is half full, then repeat this step after the pumpkin is completely full and cover it.

Spray oil on the outside of the pumpkin and place it in the preheated oven, on 375 degrees for almost 1 ½ - 2 hours, Or, 1 ¼ - 1 ½ hours on 400 degrees.

With your finger, gently poke the pumpkin to check if it is ready to serve, when the skin feels tender and easily poked, or if a fork inserts easily, then it is ready to serve.

DAVID MEDZORIAN PHOTO



COMMUNITY NEWS

Epic Life of Captain Jim Chankalian Remembered by Tekeyan Metro LA Chapter

ALTADENA, Calif. — The Tekeyan Cultural Association Metro Los Angeles Chapter hosted a program titled “Captain Jim Chankalian: Leader of the Armenian-American Volunteer Soldiers” on Sunday, November 18, 2018 at the Tekeyan Center in Altadena. Boston-based scholar Aram Arkun, executive director of the Tekeyan Cultural Association of the United States and Canada and assistant editor of the Armenian Mirror-Spectator, served as the keynote speaker. Arkun eloquently presented the fascinating life of Captain Jim Chankalian, who was a part of the Armenian Legion that successfully defeated the Turkish and German forces at the Battle of Arara in Palestine in September 1918 and occupied Cilicia, as well as a volunteer fighter under the Russians in Van during World War I. Arkun is the grandson of Armenian Legionnaire Roupén Chakerian of Zeitoun, who fought in Cilicia, as well as served under General Antranig in the Caucasus.

The AGBU-AYA Scouts of the Pasadena-Glendale chapter opened the bilingual program with the flag ceremony dedicated to the 100th anniversary of this heroic victory at the Battle of Arara that opened the way for the allied armies to march up the coast through Syria and reach Cilicia. The 4,000 members of the Armenian Legion (including 1,200 valiant American-Armenian soldiers, with Chankalian as one of their leaders) risked their lives, with many sacrifices, to avenge the Armenian Genocide and create an independent Armenian state.

The master of ceremonies, Aleksan Giragosian, the vice chairman of the Tekeyan Metro Los Angeles chapter, then introduced Kana Hovhannisyan, second secretary of the Republic of Armenia’s Consulate General in Los Angeles, who spoke



Master of ceremonies and Vice Chairman of the Tekeyan Metro Los Angeles chapter Aleksan Giragosian

poignantly about Chankalian and the Armenian Legion.

Arkun meticulously detailed Chankalian’s life, based on family documents and photos, contemporary Armenian press reports, memoirs and articles. After his birth in Dikranagerd in 1879 and arrival in New Jersey, from a very young age Chankalian was a very active and martially-inclined youth. He was encouraged to maintain his Armenian heritage by his older



Keynote speaker Aram Arkun



Captain James Chankalian

brother and father. Chankalian entered the United States Army during the Spanish-American War and trained in Florida, but the war ended before he actually saw combat duty. Upon return to New Jersey, he took a role of leadership in local Armenian military training clubs prior to World War I.

Chankalian’s military prowess as leader of the Armenian-



Kana Hovhannisyan, Second Secretary of the Republic of Armenia’s Consulate General in Los Angeles



From left, Hampig Nazerian, Aram Arkun and Dr. Zaven Arslanian, grandchildren of members of the Armenian Legion

Americans in the Armenian Legion and his life of sacrifice resonated with the audience. Arkun explained how Chankalian was initially a member of the Reformed Hunchag party and later on became a member of the Armenian Democratic Liberal party (ADL). Chankalian took Armenian-American volunteers to the Caucasus in 1915 to help the Russian armies against the Ottoman Turks. He served in Van as a militia leader alongside Armenag Yegharian, meeting General Antranig and other noted fedayi leaders. A few years later he collaborated with General Antranig in a failed attempt to bring independence to Cilicia under Armenian rule.

Arkun explained fascinating details about Chankalian’s service and devotion to the Armenian cause, carried out even at the expense of his own family. Arkun presented a somber letter written by Chankalian explaining why he must leave his sons in New Jersey to enter military battle overseas to defend the Armenian people. Late in life, Chankalian wrote to the administration of President Franklin D. Roosevelt offering his services during World War II, but was respectfully declined.

Arkun noted numerous instances where Chankalian participated in fundraising efforts for the benefit of Soviet Armenia. He explained details of his service as the first president of the Central Committee of the Armenian General Benevolent Union (AGBU) in the United States (1945-1946). Chankalian also served the Armenian Church in numerous leadership positions, among them as a member of the original committee which led to the building of the Diocesan Center and St. Vartan Cathedral in New York City and as a delegate to the election of a new spiritual head of the Armenian Church at Holy Echmiadzin in 1945. Arkun noted that the *New York Times* covered the death of Chankalian, who was buried in Fairview, New Jersey in 1947.

Participating in the program was Dr. Zaven Arslanian, the maternal grandson of Sergeant Caspar Menag of Chnkoosh and

Lawrence, Mass., who served in the Armenian Legion. Arslanian spoke of the love and respect he held for his grandfather, Menag, who fought at the Battle of Arara and in Cilicia, and was also a devout member of the Tekeyan Cultural Association and a friend of Chankalian.

Heartfelt remarks were made by Archbishop Vatche Hovsepien, who explained that upon arriving in the United States and becoming the pastor in Union City, NJ, he first learned of the reverence held for Chankalian, who had already passed away by that time. He explained the great respect and admiration he personally held for Chankalian and emphasized the tremendous respect the Armenians originally from Dikranagerd who fled to New Jersey had for Chankalian as well.

The master of ceremonies, Aleksan Giragosian, recognized the sons and grandsons of Armenian Legionnaires in attendance. In particular, Hampig Nazerian, the grandson of Hampartsoum Nazerian of Hadjin, who fought at the Battle of Arara and was later buried in front of the monument to the martyrs of the Battle of Arara at Holy Savior Cemetery in Jerusalem, was noted. Giragosian also recognized Hratch Manoukian, who was unable to attend,



Dr. Zaven Arslanian, grandson of Sergeant Caspar Menag of the Armenian Legion



Archbishop Vatche Hovsepien

as the son of Armenian Legionnaire Nazaret Manoukian. Nazaret Manoukian was a military policeman born in Adana and similarly to Chankalian, arrived in the United States at young age, only to return to fight at the Battle of Arara. During his talk, Arkun displayed images of these individuals as well as of Caspar Menag.

The young dancers of the Patille Dance Studio of Pasadena, under the direction of Patille and Cynthia Albarian, performed a number of dances in honor of the Armenian Legion with great energy and grace.

Arkun captured the essence of Captain Jim Chankalian and why he made many personal sacrifices, even to the detriment of his family, in order to serve the Armenian people, by means of the Armenian Legion, ADL, Armenian Church, AGBU and the United States Army. Chankalian’s tombstone in New Jersey rightfully describes his life of sacrifice with the words “Patriot, Humanitarian, Soldier.”



Young dancers from the Patille Dance Studio of Pasadena



COMMUNITY NEWS

Ethnic Tensions at Glendale High School Lead to New Measures

GLENDALÉ, from page 1

"We are looking into ties to integrate a transition program," said Board of Education President Greg Krikorian, regarding the influx of immigrants into the school district. He noted that the incident became a bigger issue than it should have because proper measures were not taken at the outset.

"Our district made the mistake of not getting in front of it," said Krikorian, who assured that the Board of Education will continue to come up with solutions as they meet with parents in the school district, which he describes as "civil and calm" conversations.

While Hoover High School and the Glendale Unified School District led a thorough investigation, details of the fight remain murky, the only constant being the agreement that the incident stemmed from a misunderstanding among different cultural groups on campus. The Glendale Unified School District stated that the initial cause was a verbal argument between two students, one of whom was offended when the other used profanity in front of a girl. Rumors, however, began swirling that the fight originated when a student spat on another with special needs, misinformation that the Glendale Unified School District said was "repeatedly proven false by site administrators and later by the district."

In light of the incident and all of the surrounding controversy, the Board of Education has taken the stance of "communication, not confrontation" with an effort to find "common ground and common purpose" within the larger Glendale community.

"Fear, prejudice, faulty assumptions and stereotyping have fueled animosity between various segments of our community," said Krikorian, asserting that disciplinary action took place and multiple student suspensions occurred.

For Board of Education member Shant Sahakian, the conflict harked back to his days as a student at Hoover High School and the tension he witnessed there as an Armenian-American with a diverse group of friends, including Armenians and Latinos.

"It is incumbent on us as Armenian-Americans leaders to extend our hands to the broader community," said Sahakian, who also serves as Glendale's Arts and Culture Commissioner. "People in leadership can create opportunities for relationship building and we have a responsibility to build those bridges."

A lifelong resident of Glendale, Sahakian identifies as both an American and an immigrant, giving him further perspective into last month's incident.

"We need an open and honest dialogue on racism in our schools and community so we can learn from this and move forward together," said Sahakian, who said that the fight brought to the forefront past issues, including the violence between the Armenian and Latino gangs and the subsequent murder of Raul Aguirre in front of the school in the year 2000, an event he refers to as "traumatizing" for both the Armenians and Latinos. "This incident brings back painful memories without closure for our entire community."

Aguirre, a model student who was a senior at Hoover High School, was not involved in any gang activity and was merely trying to break up the fight. That tragic brawl, too, began with ethnic slurs and taunting.

"We have to work to break down racial barriers and heal a divided community," said Sahakian.

The Glendale Unified School District concluded its investigation in November and took the proper measures for disciplinary action and resolution recommendations, although Sahakian says the work of resolving disparities among groups is ongoing.

"The incident stemmed between students who felt equally justified in their actions," said Sahakian, who noted that because of the changing cycle of students every four years, integration remains a challenge.

"Our student population, staff and leadership cycle and change over the years," said Sahakian. "We have to serve our constituents' evolving needs to maintain a strong school district."

He concedes there are "gaps" and it's an "ongoing process" to identify and solve those issues. "The work is ongoing and mutually dependent upon our community and our schools."

He remarks that it's important to move quickly to dispel rumors and the circulation of misinformation, pointing out the importance of conveying accurate facts to the community in a timely manner.

As the next step, the Board of Education has set up mediations, workshops and additional security on campus. Restorative circles

parents and students at a Board of Education meeting in Glendale on Monday, November 5, providing a forum for those in the community to speak their minds.

Safety, Bullying Are Concerns

Contesting the Glendale Unified School District's statement and investigation, Hoover High School senior and football player Jaiden Forster stated that the fight stemmed from members of the football team defending a special-needs student they allege was being bullied by an Armenian student.

parents of Hoover High School students as rumors continued to grow.

"These constant changing facts make us all lose trust," said Tribble. "All of us have a sickening fear of tragedies from the past repeating themselves at our schools and these mistakes must be fixed now."

Laury Kelly, whose daughter is a senior at Hoover High School, of which she is an alumna, said she has experience working with immigrant communities and as a parent is frustrated and angry.

"Which rumors are we supposed to believe

LA TIMES PHOTO



Students outside Hoover High School on October 5. (Los Angeles Times photo)

with a facilitator to encourage dialogue have also been organized so students can learn about one another and move forward in a more positive direction. The Board of Education notes that this is an important way to hold one another accountable.

"We believe in restoring and supporting our students," said Sahakian. "The future of



"WE NEED AN OPEN AND HONEST DIALOGUE ON RACISM IN OUR SCHOOLS AND COMMUNITY SO WE CAN LEARN FROM THIS AND MOVE FORWARD TOGETHER,"

—SHANT SAHAKIAN

our community depends on every student receiving a high-quality education in a safe environment."

While students are ready to close the chapter, the greater community, which remembers the pinnacle of gang violence among Armenians and Latinos in Glendale and the surrounding areas, are not as ready end the discussion.

Those feelings were shared by disgruntled

"I witnessed the bullying so the district and its members will not continue to tell the community of Glendale that it never happened because I watched it," said Forster, who confronted the student because of his actions. "He started to yell because he did not understand English so I communicated with his friend, who acted as the interpreter."

The administration stepped in and the conflict was resolved, according to Forster. He insisted that he was not part of the fight on October 3, which started before he arrived.

"The cause of the brawl was much more than bullying," concluded Forster. "It was racially motivated."

Senior Guillermo Corrales, another member of the football team, noted his unhappiness at his season ending early due to the conflict and the "failure" of the District to understand and interpret the events leading up to the fight.

"We saw something that we felt we had to stand up for and we stood for it proudly," said Corrales. "It hurts me that I know if I stand up for something that I don't feel is right, that I'll be the one who gets punished the most."

Parents expressed disappointment at the Board of Education's silence after the incident and for the cancellation of the "Battle for the Victory Bell," requesting that the historic game be rescheduled.

"As a parent of a Hoover High senior who is the football team captain, I watched all of them work so hard for three years in anticipation of their final homecoming game and to watch it being taken away from them has been devastating," said Teresa Alvarez.

A Glendale resident for almost two decades, parent Kipp Tribble said he is fearful for the safety of his two daughters and took the Board of Education to task.

"There is a bubble of intolerance that has been in our Glendale schools for years," said Tribble. "The answer that it was a misunderstanding between kids points to an effort to dismiss an ugly topic."

Tribble remarked that after the fight, social media was filled with threats of gun violence at Hoover High School.

"This is not a misunderstanding, this is hate speech," said Tribble, who expressed his dissatisfaction that no meeting was offered to

and which aren't we supposed to believe?" asked Kelly. "Hoover is a microcosm of our society as a whole and racism, sexism and bigotry exists so we cannot just sweep this under the rug."

Hoover High School PTA President Ibet Acevedo remarked that the community's school, students and families can work together in an effective manner, while stressing the importance of inclusivity.

"I'm huge advocate for parent involvement, communications, fairness, helping where there is a need, building on relationships, building bridges, acknowledging when there is a problem and moving forward with solution-based options," said Acevedo. "As a PTA we are ready to do that and holding the District accountable for their continued partnership, clear communication and transparency."

Repeated attempts to contact Armenian students and parents for this article were not successful.

The Board of Education listened to parents and students and responded in an appropriate manner, acknowledging that racism played a role and that work has to be done moving forward.

"Everybody ran to their corners after this incident," said Sahakian in his statement. "Armenians ran to defend Armenians, Latinos ran to defend Latinos and African Armenians ran to defend African-Americans and everyone stopped listening to each other."

Sahakian said that while the Board of Education can't take care of the racial issues across the country, as educational leaders, it is their job to resolve these issues on an ongoing basis in the Glendale Unified School District and the importance of working together as a community.

"This is an issue much bigger than our individual homes, individual communities and individual schools," said Sahakian. "We need to all come together to break down those barriers."

"I have a very vivid memory that was very difficult to handle as a student at Hoover when we lost a student in front of our campus," said Sahakian. "And we all need to make sure that never happens again in this community and that is a collective responsibility."



ARTS & LIVING

Arts & Living

‘American Mirror’ Wins Awards at Pomegranate Film Festival in Toronto

TORONTO – The film “American Mirror - Intimations of Immortality,” directed by Arthur Balder and produced by David Shara, garnered out of six nominations the Best Cinematography and Best Innovative Film prizes during the award ceremony and closing night of the 13th Pomegranate Film Festival of Toronto. The jury recognized the ‘extraordinary cohesive work’ as also ‘the rare qualities of a documentary film that pushes formally the boundaries of the genre into uncharted territory’.

Optimum Diamonds’ Honey Shara, who attended in representation of producer David Shara, praised the qualities of the artist portrayed in the film, Armenian-born and NYC-based Tigran Tsitoghdzian, and expressed thankfulness for the great work during the last three years accomplished in coordination with Da Vinci Films and the director, Arthur Balder, and for Susan Sarandon’s commitment to and participation in the project. The world-famous actress, who is now involved in a shooting in England, wasn’t able to attend



Honey Shara and Tigran Tsitoghdzian

the event. “American Mirror” garnered Best Cinematography, Best Composer, Best Innovative Film and Parajanov-Vartanov Award at DOC LA Los Angeles Documentary Film Festival past October 21 after a star-studded world premiere attended, among others, by Hollywood star Emilio Rivera.

“American Mirror - Intimations of Immortality” aims to expand the perception of time as the director introduces “a documentary on the unconscious.” From this perspective these characters – an artist, muses painted by him, New York society as a catalyst – transcend the banal pace of the world surrounding them, joining in a kind of shared visionary creative process, as if engulfed in each other’s dream.

Balder lays out the dream-like narratives of both the artist and his haunting muses – mainly Susan Sarandon and Florence Faivre – whom Tigran paints, or dreams of painting. Most reality-engaged scenes are the epitome of the everyday metropolis-world from which Tigran’s innermost self wishes to stray. In fact, all that follows the opening sequence of the awakening could be interpreted as just a dream within a dream, being the feverish thought-process of the still-unredeemed artist. The director draws us in with an intriguing story that actually embeds a meditation on something far deeper: the internal frictions of unconscious, never-resolved conflicts which are the true motor of creative impulsiveness.

Balder recognizes the potent influence of
see AWARD, page 14



Nona Gabrielyan and Vera Maier (r.)

Armenian Artist Hosts Student Exhibition

By Muriel Mirak-Weissbach

Special to the Mirror-Spectator

WIESBADEN, Germany – Nona Gabrielyan is the proud representative of an Armenian family that has produced four generations of artists (so far). This is not only in Armenia; in Germany, where she has lived with her artist husband Van Soghomonyan for the last quarter of a century, she has also been midwife to a generation of German artists. On November 24, she presided over the vernissage of an exhibition of works by a group of her students. Held at the Haus der Heimat (Homeland House) in Wiesbaden, the show entitled “Exhibition 1 + 9” features the creations of 9 of her students together with some of her own. It is the third such show of works done by several of the 55 aspiring artists who have taken lessons from her over the past twenty years in her Wiesbaden atelier.

As she explained in her welcoming remarks to a large group of guests at the festive inauguration, “Some of the students have become independent, others still
see EXHIBITION, page 14



Nona Gabrielyan (4th from right) and her students

Glendale Artist Releases Book ‘Written’ with Just Her Eyes

By Lila Seidman

GLENDAL (Los Angeles Times) – For months, although unable to talk or walk, Seeroon Yeretizian refused to use a machine that allowed her to communicate by tracking her eye movements as they selected individual letters to form words.

Faced with no other means to communicate, Yeretizian, a former painter who was diagnosed with ALS, also known as Lou Gehrig’s disease, in 2012 at the age of 60, began the painstaking process of learning how to use the device that required her to position herself and breathe just so.

At first, she used the machine – which can read out typed words – to simply communicate basic needs like what she wanted for dinner or when she had an itch that needed to be scratched.

Then friends and relatives began to hear more expressive sentences being read out by the machine.

Poetry peppered what was once pure functionality.

“It got to a point where you couldn’t pull her away from the machine,” her close confidante, Harry Mesrobian, said.

“Her brain was impregnated with all these seeds that needed to be taken care of in her gar-



Seeroon Yeretizian

den so they’d bloom out and reach the skies,” he added.

It’s taken three years for the book to come to fruition, and “there’s been many highs and lows, many yellings and cryings,” along the way, Mesrobian said, as texts were painstakingly edited, and sometimes lost, on the eye-tracking device.

A book of poetry she wrote before her diagnosis was released in 2012.

She has just released a new book, *Evolution Is My Revolution*, which features Yeretizian’s musings and vivid dreams as she adjusts to a physically-limited life, “written” through her device. In the introduction to the book, Yeretizian writes that in 2013, after she lost the ability to hold a pencil or even use a finger to type, her creativity came from “my super-awake” brain.

“In the years since, I have become a totally different creature,” she writes, urging those who are close-minded not to read the book.

see YERETZIAN, page 16



ARTS & LIVING

Armenian Artist Hosts Student Exhibition

EXHIBITION from page 13

come to classes because they think they still have something to learn. The art world is big and multifaceted, larger than our actual world. Everyone can find a place there. One needs only talent, courage and of course basic training. And I have tried to provide this for them."

For Gabrielyan, there are no language or cultural borders separating one national art form from another. "Art is a universal language, especially painting and music! Everyone can understand it, without translation," she said.

In her work in Wiesbaden, she has not only functioned as an art teacher, but also as a mediator of cultural dialogue, learning more about Germany through her students, and introducing them to her homeland. "All the young women whose works are exhibited here are not only my students but also my friends, for me and my whole family. Formerly I knew Germany through its literature and art history. Now I love Germany through my students and friends. And they, through me, have been able to know and love my country Armenia. Some of them visited, with their husbands."

In fact, as she explained, in 2016 they organized a photo and graphics exhibition, which flanked a solo exhibit of hers at the Museum of Modern Art in Yerevan. "And it was very successful, I must say," she noted. On the second floor of the showroom in Wiesbaden, there were photo montages hanging on the walls, with pictures of the trips made with her students, to Tuscany, France and Armenia.

At the opening ceremony, Vera Maier of the Haus der Heimat welcomed guests, noting that her association is a place where artists from all over the world come to paint. In attendance were local officials, including from the Hesse Ministry for Social Affairs and Integration, and the Hesse Association of German Refugees (after World War II). As Gabrielyan had said, not only art but also music is a universal language. To illustrate this were several offerings by soprano Irina Sokolovsky, former soloist at Odessa opera, now at the Mainz opera. The exhibition will continue until December 19, and at the closing, Gabrielyan, who is also an author, will read from two of her works in German and Russian.



Renate Beil in front of her paintings, one of which depicts the monastery in Tatev

Recipe Corner

by Christine Vartanian Dalian



Creamy Crab Mushroom Bisque

INGREDIENTS

1 1/2 pounds fresh lump crabmeat, sorted (or cooked scallops, chopped, or cooked shrimp, lobster or salmon, chopped)
4 tablespoons unsalted butter (to taste)
1 cup onions, finely chopped
3 cloves garlic, minced
2-3 green onions, chopped
12-14 ounces fresh mushrooms, chopped
2 ribs celery and tops, chopped
1/2 medium red or yellow bell pepper, chopped
4 tablespoons flour
2-3 cups low-sodium chicken or vegetable broth
2 medium potatoes, peeled and grated
1 tablespoon tomato paste
1 tablespoon Worcestershire sauce
1 tablespoon lemon juice and 1/2 teaspoon lemon zest
Kosher salt, black pepper or white pepper
Dash of nutmeg, dash of paprika
4 cups milk (or heavy cream)
1/2 cup dry sherry or white wine, or a little more
Garnish with choice of croutons, crumbled blue cheese, gorgonzola or grated Parmesan cheese, or fresh sautéed mushrooms.

PREPARATION

1. Melt half the butter in a heavy pan or skillet over medium heat. Add the onions, garlic, green onions, mushrooms, celery, and bell pepper, and sauté until onions are softened and translucent and mushrooms are golden brown. Remove the vegetables from the heat and set aside.

2. Melt the remaining butter in a large saucepan or pot. Stir the flour into the butter until smooth; continue cooking for 2-3 minutes, stirring constantly. Gradually add the broth and whisk together until well blended. Continue cooking until thickened, stirring, about 5-8 minutes.

3. Add the reserved sautéed vegetables, potatoes, tomato paste, and Worcestershire sauce, and cook on medium heat until bubbly, about 10 minutes. Add salt, pepper, nutmeg, and paprika, and stir.

Puree part of the liquid at this point: remove 1-2 cups of the bisque, and set aside to cool. Then pour into a blender or food processor and puree for 30 to 45 seconds, and return to the saucepan.

Warm milk or cream in another saucepan over medium heat. Add milk or cream, the crabmeat, lemon juice, and zest, stir, and simmer for 12 minutes.

Before serving, add the sherry or wine. Ladle hot bisque into bowls and serve with choice of garnish.

Serves 6.

Note: Replace green onions with finely chopped shallots. If desired, garnish bisque with thinly sliced green onion tops, cilantro, or parsley. Or add a spoonful of yogurt or sour cream and swirl it.

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



'American Mirror' Wins Awards at Pomegranate Film Festival in Toronto

AWARD, from page 13

the author of such an iconic movie as "The color of the Pomegranates," in saying: "What Parajanov does in that movie sets the basis of an approach that presided my idea since the beginning: instead of talking, reciting or repeating merely the literary merits of a poet, Parajanov tries to reproduce vividly the poetical impressions and images provoked in him by the reading of the poet's writings. So a cinematic approach to Tigran's art should be cinematic, in my opinion, letting the particular powers of filmmaking give us glimpses of what is behind the painting instead of clear, objective answers, so behind and around their making: that is introspection, surrealism. It is impossible to fathom those deep-sea waters of the unconscious without allowing a space to poetics in filmmaking. Donald Kuspit, as a sort of 'Deus ex machina' appears in a dream of the artist unveiling the hidden meaning of art, while the relationship between the artist and the Muse talks about the impossibility of perfection outside the frame of the canvas."

The director, honored with two consecutive awards by the Association of Latin Entertainment Critics of New York for his previous works as a filmmaker ("Little Spain," "Reality of the Imaginary"), as well as the Lady Of the Victory of the Critics Circle of Mexico as a further Latin-American recognition, along with that of the Hispanic Organization of Latin Actors of New York as Excellence in Documentary Filmmaking, has worked hand in hand with American producer David Shara, both taking care of an audiovisual artistic work that in the producer's words "from the set-out was poised to defy the boundaries between documentary and fiction." The complete original soundtrack has been authored by New-Zealand-born, LA-based composer Mark Petrie.



ARTS & LIVING



Sevan Nisanyan

'It Is Agonizing to Witness What's Happening in Turkey'

ATHENS (*Ahval*) – Turkish-Armenian author and linguist Sevan Nisanyan, living in exile on the Greek island of Samos since July 2017, published his book *Halim ile Selim* (Halim and Selim) in Turkish this month.

A one-time supporter of Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan, Nisanyan was sentenced in 2014 to 17 years in prison on nine separate counts – including 13 months for insulting

By Eylem Yilmaz

the Prophet Mohammed and more than eight years for violating zoning laws. But three years later, Nisanyan announced on Twitter that he had escaped and surfaced in Greece, where he was granted asylum.

Nisanyan, well known for his etymological Turkish dictionary and many travel guides became a very controversial figure in Turkey after he published his book entitled *The Wrong Republic*, which questioned taboos about the Turkish Republic and its founder, Mustafa Kemal Atatürk. Outraged Turkish secularists criticized him for attacking Atatürk and not understanding the principles and accomplishments of the republic.

His new book, *Halim and Selim*, appears to follow suit, except this time it might draw the wrath of pious Turks rather than secularists. The new book discusses the existence of god(s), atheism, the religious foundations of morality, the relationship between reason and belief, and the future of religion in the contemporary world.

We interviewed Nisanyan about his new book, his etymological dictionary, Turkish politics and the Turkish Republic. The interview was published originally on November 25.

Q: An updated version of your Turkish dictionary has republished. Some on social media have criticized you for writing a Turkish dictionary as an Armenian. What kind of reactions did you get? Are you surprised by the negative comments?

A: Many people have been using the Nisanyan Dictionary for many years with recognition and respect. These people, in particular, appreciated the new version of the dictionary. Unfortunately, there are some ignorant and biased people on social media, and it is almost impossible to reach them. All we can say is that this dictionary is not something that appeals to them. That said, this dictionary is the largest of its kind for Turkish. Regarding both the scope and content. In that sense, I'm at ease.

There were various criticisms of the first editions of the dictionary, some of them justified. But at the end of the day, this is a massive undertaking that I have to do and with limited resources. But I agree that the older versions had some weaknesses, mainly about ancient Turkish and Turkology. I tried to fix that in this new edition.

Q: The first etymology dictionary of the Turkish language was written by an Armenian, Bedros Kerestecian. Later Agop Dilacar, another Armenian researcher published a Turkish-language dictionary and now you. Why do you think Armenians are interested in the Turkish language?

A: Many Armenians since the beginning of the 19th century

worked on Turkish lexicography. But it is very understandable since the primary language Armenians used in Anatolia was Turkish. Hence, the Turkish language does not only belong to the Turks. It is the Armenians' language as well. There are many Armenian literary works written in Turkish, it is very natural for Armenians to be interested in the Turkish language.

Another possibility is perhaps that Armenians can be more objective while doing their research, away from some nationalist prejudices. In that sense, maybe we have a small advantage.

Q: What does this say about Armenian and Turkish intellectuals?

A: Unfortunately, cultural life in Turkey has been a held captive by a political and ideological obsession. There is no doubt that a person who can save himself. Of course, there are exceptions. There are some objective minded people. It is too few for a country of 80 million though.

I have never considered myself only Armenian. I am a person who can carry many national identities simultaneously. I spent most of my life in Turkey, I communicated with Turks, lived in Turkish surroundings. Hence, I don't necessarily identify as an Armenian only.

Q: Your new book *Halim and Selim* discusses issues that are considered taboo in Turkey – about gods and religions. What do you think about secularism and religion in Turkey?

A: I tried to create a calm and rational platform for discussion. I strived to create a broad conversation about religion, regarding metaphysical, logical, cultural and social aspects of it. Both sides in this argument, both the pious and secularists have a tendency to shout, scream and try to silence the other. I tried to steer clear from that. I'm not a traditional Turkish secularist. I'm trying to approach the problem from a different angle. I also am not a religious person either.

And I definitely don't have an Islamic religious sensitivity. I want to repeat something I said about the dictionary. I'm trying to keep a distance from the subject and stay objective. I believe doing so serves the country, because very few people do this. Indeed very few in Turkey have an objective perspective. I can't judge whether or not I am succeeding, but I am trying to do it.

What can I say about secularism and religiosity; unfortunately, I think it is an absurd, ludicrous fight. I find it disturbing and disheartening. I find it a bit worrying that people drown in this sea of anger and hatred. It is polarizing.

Q: If you compare the attitude towards religion of the Ottoman Empire and the Turkish Republic, what differences do you see?

A: Turkey had its biggest test of religious fanaticism in its history between 1840 and 1870 ... The Ottoman Empire overtook some very radical transformation efforts during its last 60-70 years. They tried to gather Ottoman citizens around a non-religious, Turkish identity and failed miserably. All these efforts caused carnage, slaughter and purges. Turkey, founded on the remains of the Ottoman Empire, naturally has naturally been reactionary towards traditional Islam. The Turkish Republic tried to suppress, destroy and prohibit religious Islam while creating secularism that required an almost equal amount of devotion. The result was polarization.

For 60 to 70 years, political expressions of Islamic belief were banned, condemned and anathematized. We see the results today. It caused a massive reaction. The situation we're in right now is a disaster. Turkey, under the leadership of our current government today has started an effort to return to the ignorance of medieval times. It is agonizing to witness. Turkey is better than this. Maybe it's not the best country in the world, but it doesn't have to be so broken either.

Q: What do you think is the main issue?

A: Ignorance. I don't mean only the religious groups, the 'white Turks' that consider themselves superior are equally ignorant. This mutual ignorance, however, leads to an ignorant squabble. This is a fact. Apart from that, it is tough to manage a country where ignorance is pervasive. Turkey is not an easy country to govern. Hence, the leaders of Turkey prefer to use brute force to control the land. It is a vicious circle.

Q: How do you react to discussions about the republic and reintroducing the oath of loyalty to the republic in elementary schools?

A: The republic has always been discussed, the same problems, the same issues, the same topics. It was the same thing in the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s. I haven't heard anything new this year. It is the same things all over. It is a frustrating debate. As for the weekly student pledges, it is idolizing a totalitarian regime. They're trying to replace one type of idolatry with another, it is ridiculous.

The discussion on this issue aims to disguise another debate. I think the regime has two poles and two owners. There are the supporters of the old order, the Kemalists and then there are the populists disguised as Islamists. These two have appeared to be at peace with each other since the July 2016 coup attempt, but as far as I can understand, now they're showing some teeth towards each other. What can I say? Best of luck to both.

Q: Why do you think they are showing hostility towards each other right now?

A: There's a power struggle. Maybe President Erdogan is feeling weak due to an impending economic crisis. Therefore, they are checking each other out.

They're making calculations to see if they can hit each other at their weakest. That's what I see.

Q: Why would President Erdogan feel weak?

A: Any other government in a democracy would have a hard time staying in power after events like the Gezi Park protests or the corruption allegations of December 2013. Erdogan's government looked like it was about to crumble, but he recovered. He may have compromised and agreed to do certain things to stay in power. The most apparent proof of such a reconciliation

is the abandonment of the Kurdish peace talks. Another was the release of the arrested secularists accused of plotting against the Turkish government.

A third proof is the green-lighting of a massive purge, perhaps demanded by the Turkish military.

These were the moves that Erdogan had to move away from his former political positions. In this sense, it was a defeat for Erdogan. But Erdogan is a powerful politician; he indeed is an exceptional political leader who, at least for now, was able to turn this defeat into political victory. It is intriguing.

Q: But Erdogan is ruling Turkey with executive orders and many journalists, lawmakers, academicians are in prison. He even defies the Constitutional Court, does he not?

A: No doubt the situation in Turkey right now is deplorable. It looks very authoritarian. There is no rule of law, freedom of speech, free press. It is heartbreaking. When I said exceptional, I meant as a strategist, as an ideologist. Otherwise, I am aware of the damage he is doing to the country. I don't approve of Erdogan's policies. Recognizing his abilities is one thing, supporting them is another. Until 2013, I thought Erdogan was on a more right track than the others. Since 2013, Turkey has turned into a disaster scene. We're in a terrible situation. I meant, I recognize that he is skilled, because he's a smart, brilliant politician.

Q: The Atatürk period was a single party era. Do you think we have a single party system now? How do you compare the two presidencies?

A: They're very similar. Both regarding structure and personality the two periods are very similar. The paths they chose and the evolution of their governances are almost identical as well. Three major Turkish leaders in the last 120 years; Sultan



Abdülhamit, Mustafa Kemal and Recep Tayyip Erdogan have many similarities regarding the quality of the regime.

There are quiet periods in Turkish history where an illusion of democracy, freedom, pluralism starts blooming. Then a strong leader appears and puts a halt to it. That usually is the only option of that leader. In all three cases, we see this very clearly. It looks like that is the only way this country can be governed. As a matter of fact, none of these leaders exhibits any trace of a political belief or ideological coherence. All three are purely pragmatic politicians. They did what their power enabled them to do. Their rhetoric is very similar as well.

Q: In the early years of President Erdogan's rule there was hope for Turkey joining the European Union. Why do you think Turkey is still struggling to join the EU?

A: For a period of time Turkey there was the hope of joining the European Union. It was an impossible hope. But that hope brought a lot of positive things to Turkey. But quickly, from 2006 onwards, both parties realized that it was just a dream. Turkey will not join the EU, and the EU cannot afford Turkey joining the union. Politically it is impossible. If there were a referendum on it, not even 5 percent of the EU population would vote to accept Turkey into the union. Hence Turkey was forced to give up on its dream.

Currently Turkey, I believe, is looking for a new foreign policy strategy. Maybe the government already has a foreign policy strategy, I don't know. But honestly, I don't think that Turkey's foreign policy is that bad. Under these conditions, I think the government is performing just fine.

Q: Today Turkish foreign policy is moving towards Eurasia. And some criticize Turkey's Syria policy. What is your take on that?

A: Let me ask you: Let's say you're running the country. Turkey's traditional foreign policy partners have been in Europe and America. Europe is failing. Europe has almost no say on world affairs. Its economy is in serious trouble. Conflicts



ARTS & LIVING

Ekmekcioglu's and Suciyan's Books Chosen for Der Mugrdechian SAS Outstanding Book Award

FRESNO — The Society for Armenian Studies announced that Dr. Lerna Ekmekcioglu's *Recovering Armenia: The Limits of Belonging in Post-Genocide Turkey* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 2016) and Dr. Talin Suciyan's *The Armenians in Modern Turkey: Post-Genocide Society, Politics and History* (London: I.B.Tauris, 2015) have been chosen as the recipients of the Der Mugrdechian SAS Outstanding Book Award for 2015-2017. An honorable mention has been awarded to Tara Andrews' *Matt'eos Urhayec'i and His Chronicle: History as Apocalypse in a Crossroads* (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2017).

Established in 2015, the Der Mugrdechian SAS Outstanding Book Award accepts nominations for works that advance knowledge and scholarship on Armenian society, culture, and history from ancient times to the present. Starting in 2018, Prof. Barlow Der Mugrdechian, director of the Armenian Studies Program at California State University and past president of SAS, has offered to sponsor the award for the coming five years. According to the selection committee, both *Recovering Armenia* and *The Armenians in Modern Turkey* demonstrated substantive knowledge and overall high level of scholarship. The Book Award covered works published in the period of May 1, 2015 to April 30, 2017. Ekmekcioglu and Suciyan will each receive a \$500 monetary award from SAS and receive a certificate of recognition.

After the Armenian Genocide and the establishment of the Republic of Turkey, the Armenians who remained were left again to reconstruct their life within a country that still considered them traitors. In *Recovering Armenia*, Ekmekcioglu investigates how Armenians recovered their identity within these drastically changing political conditions. Reading Armenian texts and images produced in Istanbul from the close of World War I through the early 1930s, she gives voice to the

community's most prominent public figures, notably Hayganush Mark, a renowned activist, feminist, and editor of the influential journal *Hay Gin*. These public figures articulated an Armenianness sustained through gendered differences, and women came to play a central role preserving traditions, memory and the mother tongue within the home. While women were being celebrated for their traditional roles, a

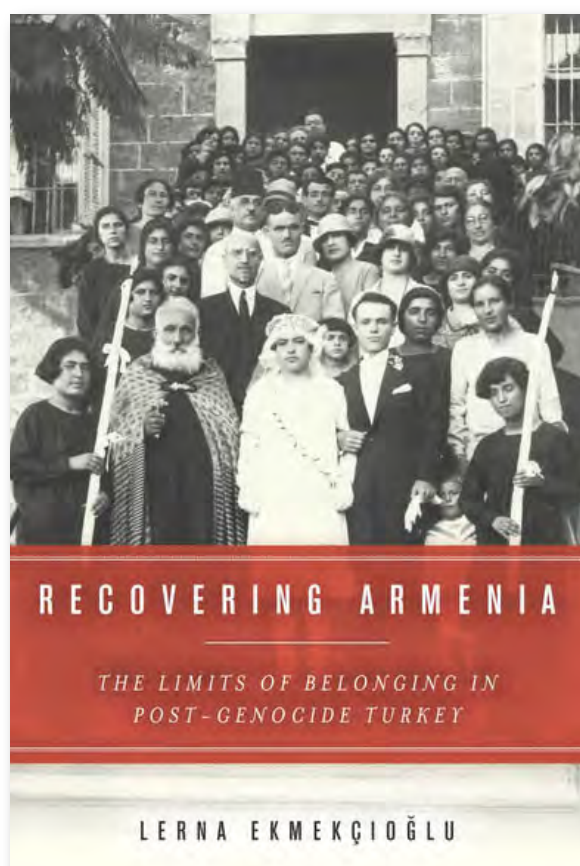
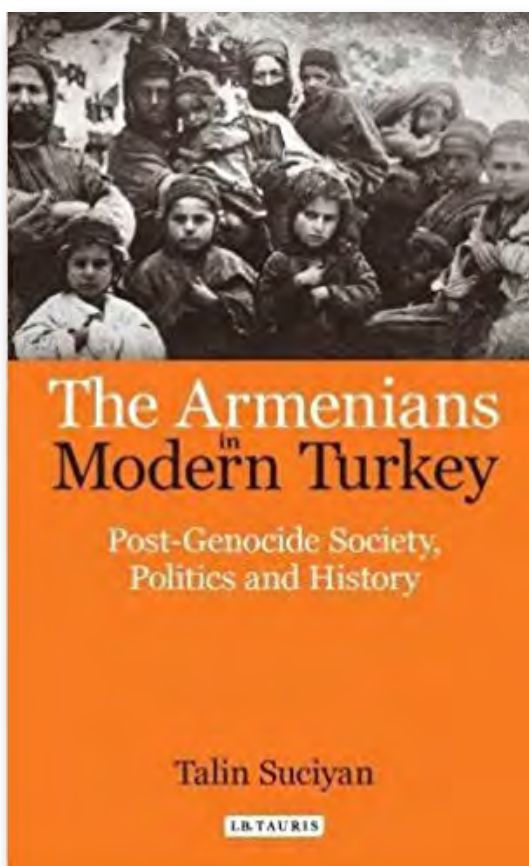
Ekmekcioglu is McMillan-Stewart Associate Professor of History at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT). Born and raised in Istanbul, she studied at Bogazici University in the Department of Sociology, and then completed her MA and PhD in History and Middle East and Islamic Studies at New York University between 2004 and 2010. In spring 2016 she was the Dumanian Visiting Professor at the

denial, how did Armenians remaining in Turkey record their own history? In *The Armenians in Modern Turkey*, Suciyan explores the life experienced by these Armenian communities as Turkey's modernization project of the twentieth century gathered pace. Suciyan achieves this through analysis of remarkable new primary material. The first history of its kind, *The Armenians in Modern Turkey* is a fresh contribution to the history of modern Turkey and the Armenian experience there. The book just appeared in Turkish as *Modern Türkiye'de Ermeniler: Soykırımsonrası Toplum Siyaset ve Tarih* (Istanbul: Aras Publications, 2018).

Suciyan is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Turkish Studies at the Ludwig-Maximilian University of Munich (Germany). Born and raised in Istanbul, she is a graduate of the University of Istanbul. She completed her MA in social studies in the Global Studies Program offered jointly by Albert-Ludwig University (Freiburg, Germany), University of Kwazulu (Durban, South Africa), and Jawaharlal Nehru University (New Delhi, India), and her PhD in the Institute of Near and Middle Eastern Studies at Ludwig-Maximilian University in 2014. She has authored several documentaries, including "Searching for Zabel Yesayan" (2008), co-directed with Lara Aharonian.

Thanking the Society of Armenian Studies and the

selection committee, Suciyan commented: "This award is an acknowledgment of the relevance and importance of bringing the survivors' experiences into present. With the SAS award, this book accomplishes what it aimed for: breaking the denialist paradigm, proving that Turkey's history cannot be written without putting the experiences of Armenian survivors at the center of historiography, and bridging the gap between Armenian and Turkish Studies."



strong feminist movement found opportunity for leadership within the community. The book explores this paradox: how someone could be an Armenian and a feminist in post-genocide Turkey when, through its various laws and regulations, the key path for Armenians to maintain their identity was through traditionally-gendered roles. The book will be published in Turkish as *Ermeniligin Yeniden İnsanı: Soykırım Sonrası Türkiye'de Aidiyetin Sınırları* (Istanbul, Aras Publishing).

University of Chicago. She is also the co-editor with Melissa Bilal of *Bir Adalet Feryadı: Osmanlı'dan Cumhuriyet'e Be? Ermeni Feminist Yazar (1862-1933)* [A Cry for Justice: Five Armenian Feminist Writers from the Ottoman Empire to the Turkish Republic (1862-1933)] (Istanbul: Aras Publishing, 2006).

Thousands of Armenians lived and worked in the Turkish state after the Armenian Genocide alongside those who had persecuted their communities. Living in the context of pervasive

Glendale Artist Releases Book 'Written' with Just Her Eyes

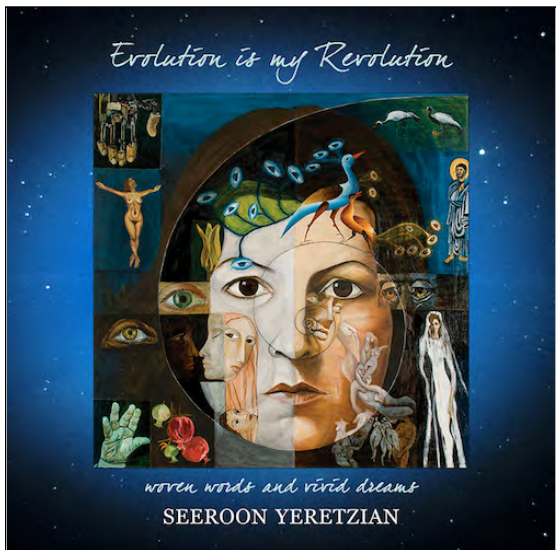
YERETZIAN, from page 13

As her physical body declined, her imagination became hyperactive. "In her sleep, she's not in that state," her son, Arno, said. "She'd like to dream as much as possible."

The surreal, symbolic and philosophic texts are somewhat of a break from the work that made Yeretizian a well-known figure in the local Armenian community: In 2013, she published a compilation of Armenian ornate initials, drawing on a medieval practice of using intricate lettering in books.

According to Yeretizian's son, it's common for Armenian families to have a poster they made featuring the initials hanging somewhere in their house.

In 2014, the city awarded Yeretizian its Lifetime Achievement Award for the arts. The following year, her work was cited as the inspiration for the Armenian American Rose Float Association's float design.



Casa Armena Welcomes Guests from Yerevan

MILAN, Italy — On November 17, members of the Armenian community in Milan delighted in the music offered them by two young sopranos visiting from Yerevan. Lusine Arakelyan and Amalia Baloyan sang arias from Italian composers Verdi and Bellini, as well as works, by Komitas, B. Kachean, Dolukhanyan, A. Babajanyan, and others. They were accompanied by pianist Marina Vardanyan. In the photo, from left to right: Amalia Baloyan, Marina Mavian, president of the Casa Armena, and Lusine Arakelyan.

—Muriel Mirak-Weissbach





ARTS & LIVING

CALENDAR

FLORIDA

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

MASSACHUSETTS

NOVEMBER 30 and DECEMBER 1 — Friday and Saturday, Trinity Christmas Bazaar, Friday, 12-9 pm, Saturday, 10 a.m.-7 p.m., Holy Trinity Armenian Church of Greater Boston, 145 Brattle St., Cambridge. Featuring delicious Armenian dinners, a la carte menu and take-out meals; booths and vendors – perfect for Christmas shopping; Armenian gourmet foods, delicacies and pastries; raffles, and more. Activities for Children, Peter Adamian Hall: Friday, 7-9 p.m., All Aboard “The Polar Express” Pajama Party, for children ages 5 and older; Saturday, 11 a.m., Children’s Entertainment, and 3-5 p.m., “The Star” movie, for all ages. Saturday, Visit with Santa, 1-2 pm, Charles and Nevart Talanian Cultural Hall. For further information, contact the Church office at 617.354.0632, or log onto www.htaac.org/calendar/event/580/.

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 3 — “How to Read Armenian (Art),” a lecture by Christina Maranci, Arthur H. Dadian and Ara Oztemel Chair of Armenian Art and Architectural History, Tufts University. 4.30 to 6 p.m. Center for Middle Eastern Studies, 38 Kirkland St., Cambridge. This event is supported by the Hrant Dink Memorial CMES Fund. Part of the CMES Armenian Studies Lecture Series.

DECEMBER 3 — Monday, St James Armenian Church Men’s Club Dinner Meeting. Speaker: Gregory Vartanian, Esq., a Boston-based immigration attorney. He will provide an overview of US immigration laws and regulations. He will also discuss cases of Armenians and non-Armenians in various parts of the world seeking asylum

and those just wanting to immigrate to the US. He will also present his opinions on issues with the US immigration system, the Presidential proclamation affecting Muslim countries, and how to interpret what you hear and read in the news. Social hour and mezza at 6:15 p.m. and dinner at 7 p.m. Mezza and Losh Kebab & Kheyma Dinner \$16/person. Ladies invited. St. James Armenian Church, Charles Mosesian Cultural and Youth Center - Keljik Hall, 465 Mt. Auburn St., Watertown.

DECEMBER 9 — Christmas Holiday Concert – Erevan Choral Society and Orchestra, Sunday, 7 p.m., Church Sanctuary, Holy Trinity Armenian Church of Greater Boston, 145 Brattle St., Cambridge. Remembering the Very Rev. Oshagan Minassian on the 10th Anniversary of his passing, and Commemorating the 30th Anniversary of the earthquake in Armenia and the 2,800th Anniversary of Yerevan. Under the direction of Composer Konstantin Petrossian, Music Director and Conductor, with Guest Soloists Anahit Zakaryan, soprano, and Michael Calmés, tenor, the program will consist of a variety of traditional Armenian and Western sacred and holiday music. The public is warmly invited to attend this complimentary concert. Reception to follow featuring an Exhibit, “To Armenia” by Winslow Martin, an Arlington-based documentary photographer. For further information, call the Church office, 617.354.0632 or log onto www.htaac.org/calendar/event/582/.

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. Luscious Pastries, hosted by Jana Grill & Bakery, and Hot Chocolate. RSVP appreciated hello@ArmenianHeritagePark.org

DECEMBER 16 — St. James Annual Name Day Banquet - Celebrating the 87th Anniversary of the Parish and Honoring Rev. Arakel Aljalian on the 25th Anniversary of his Ordination to the Priesthood. V. Rev. Fr. Daniel Findikyan, Primate, Presiding. 10 a.m. Divine Liturgy. Name Day Banquet to follow. \$45 per person. \$15 for children 12 and under. Advance Reservations Required – purchase tickets online at www.stjameswatertown.org. 465 Mt. Auburn Street, Watertown 617.923.8860 info@sthagop.com.

APRIL 25, 2019 — Holy Trinity Armenian Church of Greater Boston Presents The Dr. Michael and Joyce Kolligian Distinguished Speaker Series: Anthony Ray Hinton, Author of The Sun Does Shine: How I Found Life and Freedom on Death Row, “Surviving Criminal Justice in America.” Charles and Nevart Talanian Cultural Hall, 145 Brattle Street, Cambridge MA 02138. Reception and book signing to follow talk. Open and free to the public. For further information, contact the Holy Trinity Church

office, 617.354.0632, email office@htaac.org, or log onto www.htaac.org/calendar/event/622/.

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

NEW JERSEY

DECEMBER 8 — Tekeyan Cultural Association of Greater New York Mher Megerdchian Theatrical Group will present a Christmas gala with Sarina Cross. Save the date. Details to come.

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>

RHODE ISLAND

DECEMBER 1 — St. Sahag & Mesrob Armenian Church ACYOA ANNUAL HOLIDAY KEF. Evagian Hall, 70 Jefferson St., Providence, RI Featuring Mal Barsamian, Jason Naroian, Brian Ansbikian, David Ansbikian. 8:30 p.m. – 1 a.m. Mezze Available, coffee/dessert. For reservations, contact church office 401-272-7712. Adults \$25 and Students \$20. All are welcome.

DECEMBER 8 — The Cultural Committee of the Sts. Sahag & Mesrob Armenian Church presents “O Holy Night” Christmas Concert Featuring the Chorale of St. Michael Ukrainian Orthodox Church , Woonsocket, RI, Armenian Chorale of Rhode Island, Soloists, 7 p.m. In Church Sanctuary, 70 Jefferson St., Providence, RI. Donation free. Refreshments.

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.

Sevan Nisanyan: ‘It Is Agonizing to Witness What’s Happening in Turkey

NISANYAN, from page 15
among themselves are at a hazardous level at this point. Britain is leaving the union. What America is trying to do in the Middle East is unclear. They’re doing a lot of weird things; they are apparently losing their control over Iraq and Syria and the Middle East in general. What would you do if you were the president of Turkey in this case? When you look Turkey’s foreign policy from this point of view, despite some mistakes, not everything the government is doing is wrong. It would be unfair to say that. After all, if you can have a summit in Istanbul with the presidents of France, Germany and Russia, and not invite the United States, you are doing something right.

Q: I would like to ask you about the detained journalists and activists. Osman Kavala, a political activist, has been jailed for more than a year now. What is your stance on this?

A: Many intellectuals have been detained in recent years. They have been jailed, persecuted and silenced. The journalist Ahmet

Altan is a very respectable person. He truly is a dignified, intelligent, rational and righteous person. I want to emphasize righteous.

Another person jail is Osman Kavala. Osman Kavala has been a close friend of mine for years. He is an extremely valuable person, righteous as well. Both of these people were imprisoned on false accusations. A country where these people are in prison cannot be considered a civilized country. This proves that there is no rule of law in this country. I don’t know who wants these people in prison, but it may not be the first name you think of.

Q: Are you saying that it might not be Erdogan?

A: I’m just saying what we see might not be the whole picture. We argued for years that we have a form of dictatorship in Turkey. We noted that there are some people who are ideological, and corrupt. We argued that Turkey should take the scalpel and cut out the tumor. And we hoped that the government would do that. Hence, we

supported Tayyip Erdogan. Unfortunately, time has proven us wrong. Tayyip Erdogan’s efforts in turned out to be inadequate. And the former groups returned to power, and they are more powerfully than before. That’s what is happening.

Q: You supported the 2010 Constitutional change. Now, when you look back, would you still support it?

A: Without a doubt. We didn’t know the results would be like this. Nobody could have known. Turkey needed that constitutional change. Because it was the constitution of a corrupt regime. Thousands of people were jailed and executed under that constitution. These people robbed public banks.

A government promises to change course, of course you support it. It was unclear if they had the power and will to change course. After all, they couldn’t or didn’t, or they never intended to. I don’t know. But yes, I believe supporting the government was the right thing to do in 2010, and I stand by my decision.

Q: I’d like to get your view on the

local elections. You have criticized the HDP’s performance during the presidential elections. How can a party whose co-chairs are in prison compete in elections?

A: First of all, I didn’t criticize the HDP. That’s not true. I expected that they would get more votes, yes. But it is apparent that this was not a fair election. We are talking about a party with many of its deputies, co-chairs and members are behind bars. We’re talking about cities that have been destroyed and bombed. Of course, they couldn’t perform. Criticism is the wrong word there. I didn’t criticize them. I just said I’m sorry that they didn’t perform better ... I think our only choice is to hope that this will pass as well.

Q: Do you think the pro-minority HDP or other civil society organizations could be a precursor for a new movement in Turkey?

A: I do not think that the conditions in Turkey right now are conducive for a serious democratic movement to flourish. I believe we’ll have to wait for a while.



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COMMENTARY

Gauging Armenia-Diaspora Relations

By Edmond Y. Azadian

As the My Step alliance of Nikol Pashinyan races towards its anticipated landslide electoral victory, the destiny of his Diaspora Ministry faces uncertainty, because Pashinyan has set as one of his priorities the downsizing of the government.

The 28-year-old Diaspora Minister Mkhitar Hayrapetyan has offered some projections on the fate of his own ministry, stating that the government “will likely decide to incorporate the Diaspora Ministry into another ministry or downsize it and lower its status.”

Hopefully, any change will come as an outcome of a thorough study rather than rash guesswork. After independence, the Diaspora Ministry was created by former President Serzh Sargsyan haphazardly, without setting any goal or adopting a program, most of the time becoming a medal-issuing venture, with noisy trips to well-established communities rather than tending to the needs of the newly formed or expanding communities in Ukraine, Northern Europe, or the Iberian Peninsula.

Continuing his comments, the young minister concluded his remarks: “My idea is that if the ministry is going to have some symbolic functions, such as planning at working or meeting certain expectations, it does not have to be in the format of a ministry.”

There is some truth in the above statement and the Soviet era experience in dealing with the Diaspora may serve as a reliable guide in charting the future course of Armenia-Diaspora relations. Soviet Armenia had set up an NGO named Committee for Cultural Relations with the Diaspora, which operated in foreign lands under the diplomatic radar. The leadership in Armenia, wearing the communist hat, nurtured the diaspora with quality culture, education, science and entertainment. The country had a lot to offer, since it had created the golden era of Armenian culture during the later Soviet period. There was an unspoken code of conduct among Armenia’s leaders to contribute to diasporan life meaningfully. Of course, in the upper hierarchy of Soviet authorities, the survival of the diaspora was not a priority. The propagation of Soviet ideology was the main goal. But the truly patriotic leaders in Armenia catered to the needs and priorities of the diaspora, reporting to higher-ups in Moscow how effectively the ideological warfare was being conducted. But now that the ideological masquerade is over, Armenia and the diaspora can engage in a new mode of cooperation.

With the destruction of the Iron Curtain, the profusion in communication and transportation has shrunk the globe, bringing Armenia and the Diaspora even closer, yet they still remain a world apart.

The diaspora is a tremendous resource for Armenia, yet it continues to remain as an untapped treasure. Successive administrations have not been able to tap that resource for a variety of reasons, one being the lingering negative portrayals and suspicion from the Soviet era and the other being the misreading of diasporan realities.

During the Soviet era, Armenia had prospered in almost all realms of life without developing a political system for very obvious reasons. On the other hand, the diaspora comes equipped with a full century’s worth of political parties, yet, in turn, they lacked the terrain and society on which to test their ideologies and give full meaning to their existence. In Armenia they met with such a hostile reception that they have not yet recovered from the shock.

Armenia, itself, has failed miserably in developing Western-style democratic institutions of its own which function through ideologically-driven political parties. Up to now, political parties there are formed around powerful individuals and their pocketbooks, only to wither away with the moving tides. It is a system of governance which cannot be defined in any other term than a primitive form of political system.

This writer had the opportunity to meet recently with Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan, when he received the ADL delegation at his office. The main topics of the discussion were the relations between Armenia and the diaspora and exploring the means to make those relations effective in helping the homeland. The most prominent idea promoted by our group was mutual recognition

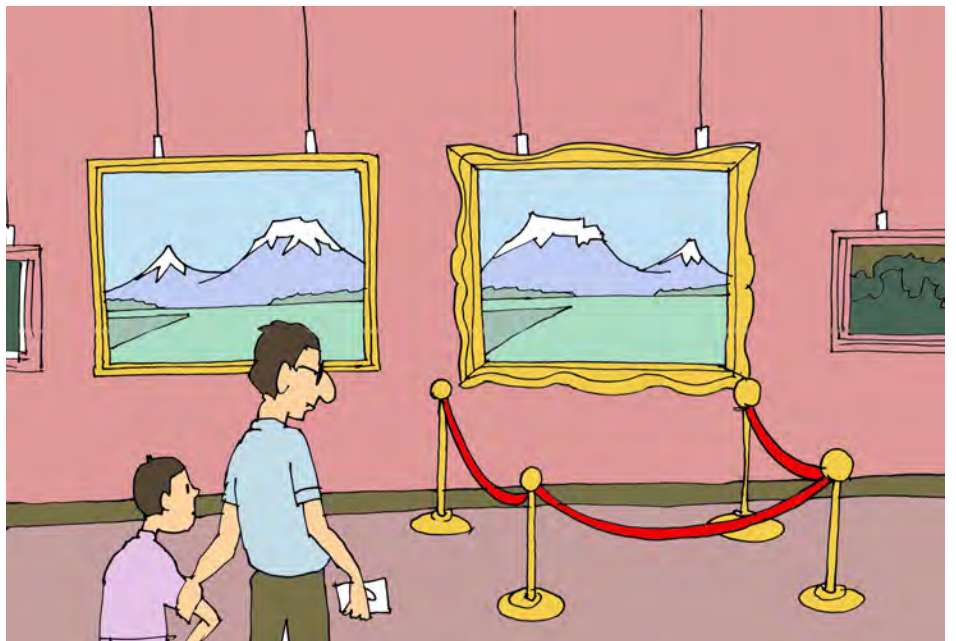
and a scientific analysis by the Armenian government to objectively assess the diaspora, develop a database to determine who’s who in the diaspora, to find Armenians in the higher echelons of foreign governments and media, to identify real investors, to trace scientists, artists, writers, journalists and prominent Armenians in all walks of life and update the database regularly. That kind of serious approach to the diaspora will help the government able to set its own agenda and priorities and focus on the people and organizations which can help Armenia rather than adopting a passive approach which has been the norm thus far, allowing individuals to claim most important contributors to the homeland.

That determination must come from Armenia itself, based on serious and objective studies. In the past, the minister depended on the claims of diasporan individuals and considered most patriotic Armenians who even lined up at the doorsteps of the ministry, begging to receive medals, which were dispensed generously.

Following independence, which was marked by a fateful flood of emigration, a new diaspora is being formed with its new agenda and priorities. An anthropological study is in order to determine how the old and new diasporas should integrate, how to approach each group, what to offer them and what to expect from them.

One of the immediate test cases is the recent Armenia Fund telethon, which took place during Thanksgiving in Los Angeles. The results were approximately one million dollars less than the previous year. The naysayers were not vindicated because there were no alarming vacillations nor were the predictions of the “revolutionaries” justified that with the wave of the Velvet Revolution the results could hit \$40 million. Remarkably, breast beating and flag waving Armenians in Glendale and Marseilles were not on the list of top donors.

Armenia Fund is an important, even essential tool, which organically binds Armenia and the diaspora together, but it needs a complete overhaul as there is a lot of deadwood which contributes nothing except embarrassment.



Bako Sahakyan’s sheer presence was a powerful message that we still have a bleeding Karabakh which needs the global support of Armenians.

The traditional diaspora is the result of decades or even centuries of exile from the ancestral homeland. With all its ills, that alienation has helped Diaspora Armenians to develop the instinct of self-preservation, a preservation of identity. However, the traditional diaspora is doomed to extinction, with no party claiming ownership of its well-developed language and sophisticated literature and culture.

The new diaspora, which is in the process of formation, while still retaining its umbilical cord with the homeland, is in a more perilous situation because it has not been tested by other cultures like the traditional diaspora has been and therefore has never felt the need for self-preservation. It is, thus, more vulnerable in a new society and more prone to assimilation.

Reviewing and analyzing the experience of the Soviet-era Cultural Relations Committee and decade of the Diaspora Ministry must help government planners to take a realistic approach and form a department under the Foreign Ministry, to avoid the conflicts and confusion which have characterized and hampered the Diaspora Ministry thus far.

As Pashinyan rises to power, his job will be cut out for him, with simmering war on the border, pressures of international relations coupled with the promise of a fairer and more prosperous Armenia, but Diaspora relations must not be placed on the back burner because it would mean the waste of an immense treasure which properly used, can propel Armenia toward the goals that the Velvet Revolution hopes to attain.



COMMENTARY



My Turn

By Harut Sassounian

Should Armenia Grant Citizenship To Foreign Investors?

The Acting Prime Minister of Armenia Nikol Pashinyan has made attracting overseas investors the priority of his new government.

So far, it is too early to determine if foreign investors are interested in doing business in Armenia. The common explanation for the lack of new investors is that they are waiting for the results of Parliamentary elections scheduled for December 9, 2018. It is expected that the Acting Prime Minister's political party will win the majority of the Parliamentary seats. Government officials believe that this will encourage foreigners to start investing in Armenia.

However, there is an additional way that Armenia can attract new foreign investors relatively quickly by offering them citizenship. Many countries around the world have offered such citizenship opportunities to foreigners, including the United States, Europe and third world countries.

Earlier this year, the hetq.am website published an article on Arton Capital, a company that specializes in "citizenship by investment" programs around the world. A delegation from the company visited Armenia last year at the invitation of the International Center for Migration Policy Development. Arton Capital's website stated after the visit: "the concept of citizenship by investment was embraced by [Armenia's] high level officials at the Ministry of Economic Development and Investments, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Presidential Administration, the Central Bank, the Police, the State

Migration Service and the Center for Strategic Initiatives."

Armand Arton, a Bulgarian-Armenian, is the president of Arton Capital, and Emil Shahmooradian is the company's Vice President of Business Development. Arton Capital has offices in a dozen countries. On his company's website, Armand Arton stated: "as a proud Armenian, I am honored to offer my years of professional experience and acute know-how to help the country meet its foreign direct investment goals. In support of its philanthropic commitment, Arton Capital has pledged to donate the consulting fees awarded by the contract to help refugees in Armenia. More than 20,000 Syrians, many of whom are ethnically Armenian, have found refuge in Armenia since the Syrian war began in 2011."

Countries offering such a program require from foreigners different levels of investment to qualify for citizenship. Arton Capital recommends that Armenia require the small amount of \$50,000 as a minimum investment for a foreigner to become a citizen. Other countries demand much more from foreign investors with the most attractive countries asking as much as \$10 million of investment for citizenship. The Company estimates that Armenia would receive \$138 million of additional revenue in the next six years, if it implements the suggested investment for the citizenship program.

According to hetq.am, Arton Capital recommended that "Armenia offer potential investors two options: a \$50,000 direct contribution to a state-owned fund or a \$100,000 investment in a fund run by an asset management company chosen by the government, which would offer the possibility of some return. It further suggests that Armenia sets two types of fees. The first would be a non-refundable processing fee of up to \$10,000; the second fee, the amount of which is not specified, would cover background checks into applicants' records and sources of income."

Arton Capital's trip report on Armenia "highlights the country's positives, such as its strong ties to global economic hubs and its geographic and cultural proximity to strategic markets. Armenia offers investors access to Russia and almost all the post-Soviet states, which means around 250 million potential consumers, including in Central Asia – plus almost

82 million more in neighboring Iran, with which the country has friendly relations. And if the country achieves visa-free access to the Schengen zone, which it might in five to seven years, it could justly claim to have recreated its historic role as a stop on the Silk Road linking east and west. As a whole, investors looking for long-term value can be sold on the advantages of Armenia. With [visa-free access] to 60+ countries and its special relationship with Russia together with its geographical proximity with Iran, obtaining an Armenian citizenship will be seen not only as a means to secure one's future and security, but also as a strategic move for one's business development and positioning."

Significantly, hetq.am cautioned in its article that some foreigners interested in investing in other countries for the sake of acquiring citizenship can bring all sorts of illegal activities, such as tax evasion, money laundering, corruption and organized crime.

Armenian government officials have to balance the benefits of the investment for citizenship program with its drawbacks. Foreign applicants have to be thoroughly vetted before being granted Armenian citizenship in return for their investments.

Update on Armenian-American Candidates in US Elections

In addition to the list of Armenian-American candidates in the US midterm elections that I reported in an earlier article, we should add:

- Dick Harpootlian (Democrat) was elected to the South Carolina State Senate on November 6, 2018. He won 52.3 percent of the votes against his Republican rival Benjamin Dunn's 47.6 percent.

- Anthony Brindisi (Democrat) was elected a Member of Congress from upstate New York on Nov. 6, 2018, according to the final count of the vote. Brindisi's great grandparents were born in Mardin, southeastern Turkey and fled during the Armenian Genocide to Aleppo, Syria, where his grandfather was born. As of January 2019, there will be three Armenian-Americans in the US House of Representatives: Brindisi, Eshoo, and Speier.

Gorky to Receive First Italian Retrospective During 2019 Venice Biennale

VENICE (Panorama.am) – With the opening of the 2019 Venice Biennale less than six months away, many participating nations have picked artists for their pavilions, and details about the central show, curated by Ralph Rugoff, are trickling out.

Now there is news of another contribution to the glorious bounty of art that will overtake the Most Serene Republic when the Biennale opens in May: a retrospective for the painter Arshile Gorky, the Armenian-American's first in Italy, to be staged at the Ca' Pesaro museum of modern art, a sumptuous baroque palace along the Grand Canal, ARTnews reports.

Titled "Arshile Gorky: 1904-1948" (the years that bracketed Gorky's painfully short life, which he ended by suicide), the exhibition will chart the full span of his career, from early experiments in an array of modes informed by historical painters to his astonishing late work, which was a sturdy, ingenious bridge between Surrealism and Abstract-Expressionism. The show will sport some 80 works, from Tate in London, the National Gallery of Art in Washington, D.C., the Centre Pompidou in Paris, and elsewhere, and is being presented in cooperation with the Arshile Gorky Foundation, which is represented by Hauser & Wirth gallery.

Handling curatorial duties for the show, which runs from May 8 through September 22, 2019, are Gabriella Belli, the director of the Fondazione Musei Civici di Venezia (which includes Ca' Pesaro) and Edith Devaney, the curator of the Royal Academy of Arts in London, where she organized the landmark exhibition "Abstract Expressionism" in 2016.

Asked about the thrust of their plan, Devaney noted that no less a figure than Alfred H. Barr, Jr., the founding director of the Museum of Modern Art in New York, once derided the artist's work up until 1943 as derivative, overly indebted to greats of the past. But "what we can see from our perspective now, and what this retrospective survey seeks to demonstrate," she said, "is that Gorky's artistic voice can be detected from the very start – even when he appears to be immersed in an interrogation of the work of others."

Gorky, Devaney said, was "synthesizing a new approach to painting," and his interest in mining the work of his predecessors and peers in order to do so can be seen even in some of his later works.

We, As a People, Are Better Than That

By Sona Hamalian

WHAT is wrong with us?

We Armenians love to talk about how deep the roots of our nation go, yet we often display a glaring lack of farsightedness, as an inextricable attribute of the wisdom of an ancient people. We pride ourselves on what we consider the inherent nobility of our nation, as expressed through values such as hospitality, inclusiveness, and generosity of spirit, yet we often act in utter disregard of these values, driven by greed and the petty exigencies of the ego. And we love screaming at the top of our lungs that nothing can suppress our creative spirit, even in times of extreme collective hardship, yet far too often we ignore, ostracize, or downright destroy our most accomplished, most visionary artists.

Case in point: in the past few weeks, a nasty smear campaign was unleashed in Yerevan, accompanied by threats both obvious and implied, with the express purpose of ruining just such an artist.

The story might sound banal, even boring: a certain government official is seeking to have the director of a major cultural institution removed from his post, and has come up with a bunch of fabrications to get the ball rolling – with no due process whatsoever, and relying strictly on innuendo and threats.

This is the type of clique intrigue that can take place on any given day, anywhere in the world, whether in governance, public institutions, or commerce. In fact, it's so prevalent that we might have become rather desensitized to it. What's unique to the case I refer to is that the government official in question is Lilit Makunts, the Minister of Culture of the Republic of Armenia – yes, the same republic which pulled off a bloodless revolution only months ago, and whose new government has inspired not just our homeland, but the entire Armenian community of the world, with an exhilarating prospect for genuine pluralism, transparency, accountability, and, above all, fairness. What's equally unique to this case is that the artist whom the Minister is targeting happens to be one of the most accomplished and dedicated Armenian artists alive, and one who almost single-handedly has brought about the rebirth of a cherished national treasure. That artist

is Constantine Orbelian, the artistic and general director of the Yerevan Opera House.

Minister Makunts launched her smear campaign with a shocking post on the Ministry's FaceBook site. She was accusing the executive personnel of the Yerevan Opera House of holding political-agitation meetings at the theater, and warned that talking about or discussing politics of any kind is strictly forbidden by law, that it's a prosecutable offense. In the post she warns not only the Opera House staff, but, the staff of any theater or state organization. Is Makunts the Minister of Culture of Armenia or the Minister of Propaganda of a long lost Soviet Republic?

I find the minister's unsubstantiated accusations and threats to be disturbing on many levels, and not just concerning Maestro Orbelian and his colleagues. Her overarching message couldn't be clearer. In a flagrant nod to Stalinism, she was telling everyone to keep quiet, to refrain from voicing political opinions. She was, in effect, issuing a warning against democratic processes and thought. Such behavior, so profoundly unbecoming of a government official of our post-Velvet-Revolution space, should make any concerned Armenian wonder: is free speech already cancelled? Is free thought here under fire? How on Earth can a discussion about politics or politicians be deemed political "agitation?" And who in a democracy, after all, gets to decide what is allowed and what isn't?

I don't know what degree of small-mindedness and just plain ignorance it would take for someone – a Minister of Culture no less – to engage in the type of Byzantine machination that has shown its ugly face in Yerevan in the past few weeks. What I do know is that the Cultural community is deeply disappointed in her.

This would spell a dangerous setback for democracy in Armenia. It would mean we're not exactly an open, fair, and pluralistic society. It would also mean we don't really care that a globally-renowned artist such as Orbelian has helped the Yerevan Opera House burgeon like never before, by empowering it to stage extraordinary productions in Armenia and abroad; and that he has helped fund these efforts with his own personal resources, again and again, because nothing excites him more than having the Yerevan Opera House shine on the world stage, as a hub for artistic excellence. And it would mean, by extension, that we Armenians, you and I, don't care much about the continued vibrancy of our cultural institutions, since, apparently, anyone in a position of power can, on a whim, have someone removed from a post, and do so with the tacit consent of her government, and by echoing a totalitarian past which our homeland fought so very hard to overcome.

What, then, is wrong with us? I hope nothing. It is my sincere wish, and no doubt the wish of hundreds of thousands of Armenians across the globe who revere Maestro Orbelian's talent and work, that the campaign against him as well as our freedom of speech and thought, will duly be exposed for what it is, and that we, as a people, will have plenty of reason to say that we're better than that.



Patriarch Bartholomew Visits St. Lazarus Armenian Monastery

VENICE – The Ecumenical Patriarch of Constantinople Bartholomew I, visited the Mekhitarist Abbey of St. Lazarus of the Armenians, in Venice, on November 15. This marked the first visit by the head of the Greek Church to the Monastery of St. Lazarus in three centuries, since Fr. Abbot Mekhitar of Sebaste founded it in 1717.

Accompanied by the Metropolitan of the Orthodox Archdiocese of Italy and Malta Gennadios and the Archimandrite Evangelos Yfantidis, the patriarch was welcomed by the Pontifical Delegate for the Mekhitarist Congregation, Archbishop Levon Zekian, and the fathers of the congregation, in the presence of a group of fellow collaborators

and members of the local Armenian community during his visit.

Received at the entrance of the monastery, the patriarch was accompanied by the Fathers in the church of St. Lazarus for a moment of prayer, with the Armenian chants of *Aysor Astvazutun* and *Hrashapar* and the Greek song *Phos hilaron*. Then, a vocal group directed by Justine Rapaccioli sang the Armenian *Sanctus (Surb Surb)*, after which the patriarch gave his blessings.

Afterwards, in the main hall of the Library, Zekian addressed a greeting speech to the Patriarch, in which he briefly evoked the historical presence of the Armenian community of Constantinople and its relations with the



Patriarch Bartholomew, Ecumenical Patriarch of Constantinople



The courtyard of St. Lazarus Monastery

Orthodox Church. Then, the Patriarch expressed fraternity and gratitude words for the hospitality “in this very important center of Armenian spirituality and culture,” which he designated as “truly an oasis of peace and prayer.” His Holiness then affirmed that, in a world marked by the growth of religious fundamentalism, “it is necessary for the Christian family to return to speak in one voice,” not in a sort of opposition to anyone, but “in the way of proclaiming the God’s word.” Recalling the importance of the manuscripts collection of the San Lazzaro Library, he also expressed his personal appreciation to the Mekhitarist Congregation, for

his “custody of the greatest cultural heritage of the Armenian Nation.”

The speeches were followed by the exchange of gifts and the signing of the visitors Golden Book by the patriarch. Zekian then accompanied Patriarch Bartholomew and Metropolitan Gennadios in the halls of the Museum and Library. In the manuscript hall, the fathers showed for the occasion the precious Gospel Book of Queen Mlkhe, dated 862.

All this ended with a fraternal agape in the refectory of the Monastery. The Patriarch commented: “I spent an unforgettable day with you. I will take a great remembrance to Constantinople!”



YEREVAN — President Armen Sarkissian hosted on November 25 Supreme Patriarch and Catholicos of All Armenians Karekin II. The President and the catholicos discussed issues pertinent to the future of our country, State-Church relations, and national-ecclesiastic life. They spoke also about Armenian-Diasporan relations and stressed the importance of strengthening them which will allow to face united the existing challenges.

All-Armenian Fund’s Telethon Raises \$11,109,633

TELETHON, from page 1

In recent years the fund has partly financed, among other things, the construction of a second highway connecting Nagorno-Karabakh to Armenia. The 116-kilometer-long road was inaugurated last year.

Armenia Fund’s activities were overshadowed in July by the arrest and ensuing resignation of its then executive director, Ara Vardanyan. Although Vardanyan admitted

using Armenia Fund’s money for online gambling and other “personal purposes” he avoided prosecution after reportedly compensating the charity.

Pashinyan’s government has since pledged to help ensure greater transparency in the fund’s activities.

The Hayastan All-Armenian Fund received \$12.5 million and \$15.5 million in donations during similar fundraisers held in 2017 and 2016, respectively.

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