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Artsakh President's Spokesman Provides Overview of Recent Developments

GLENDALÉ – Davit K. Babayan, head of the Central Information Department of the Office of the Artsakh Republic President and deputy head of the Artsakh Republic President's Office, and doctor of historical sciences, spoke about recent developments concerning the Artsakh Republic on November 19 during his visit to greater Los Angeles with President Bako Sahakyan of Artsakh.

By Aram Arkun
Mirror-Spectator Staff

Babayan revealed the purpose for his visit, saying: "We are here for the [Hayastan All-Armenian Fund Thanksgiving Day] telethon but we have many other unrelated meetings, as we want to keep close ties with all Armenian communities throughout the world. This telethon is dedicated to irrigation, solar energy and similar issues. This combination of traditional and modern technologies is very important." He later added, "The telethons are very important events. And I think it is incorrect to value them exclusively in terms of the volume of donated money... The annual telethons are much more important from the perspective of cementing ties between the diaspora and the homeland, serving as a unique device for mutual charging with national energy, common destiny, hope and dedication between Artsakh, Armenia and the diaspora."

see ARTSAKH, page 9

Archbishop Khajag Barsamian Appointed Legate to Vatican

By Florence Avakian

ROME – Archbishop Khajag Barsamian, former Primate of the Eastern Diocese for 28 years, has been busy since arriving in Rome on his new assignment from Echmiadzin by Catholicos of All Armenians Karekin II.

Appointed in September 2018 as the Pontifical Legate of the Armenian Church



Archbishop Khajag Barsamian

ence at the Vatican will "definitely be helpful for deepening further" the relationship between the two churches.

Barsamian was warmly welcomed to the Vatican by Armenia's Ambassador to the Holy See Mikayel Minasyan whose working relationship with Archbishop Barsamian on many projects during the Armenian diplomat's assignment in Rome for more than six years, have borne successful results for Armenia.

Also welcoming the former Primate was Armenia's Ambassador to Italy Victoria Bagdassarian, who extended a special invite to the archbishop at a concert organized by the Armenian Embassy in celebration of the 2,800th anniversary of Yerevan at Rome's Opera House.

Following his arrival at the Vatican, Barsamian has had personal meetings with Cardinal Kurt Koch, President of the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity, and with Cardinal Leonardo Sandri, Prefect of the Congregation for the Oriental Churches.

His meetings with Cardinal Pietro Parolin, Secretary of State at the Vatican, were especially significant. The two have known and worked with each other for a long time; they organized Pope Francis' visit to Armenia, as well as the commemoration of the 100th anniversary of the Armenian Genocide at St. Peter's Basilica,

at which time Pope Francis presided.

They also organized the inauguration of St. Gregory of Nareg's statue at the Vatican, discussed the present political situation in Armenia, the condition of the Christian communities in the Middle East, and how to strengthen the Mekhitarist Congregation at St. Lazaro in Venice.

"The differences between churches should not be obstacles for them to cooperate and have dialogue issues relating challenges existing in the world today.

see VATICAN, page 7

Incarceration and Injustice Addressed At Najarian Talk

By Alin K. Gregorian

Mirror-Spectator Staff

BOSTON – The annual K. George and Dr. Carolann S. Najarian Lecture on Human Rights, held at Faneuil Hall, this year addressed a human rights topic in the US, rather than the world, and the human rights were those of the incarcerated.

The program, held on November 14, fea-

SARA JANJIGIAN TRIFIRO PHOTO



From left, Cherise Fanno Burdeen, Middlesex Sheriff Peter Koutoujian and Mark A. Levin

tured two experts on the justice system from Texas, Cherise Fanno Burdeen and Marc A. Levin, who sat on a panel moderated by Middlesex Sheriff Peter Koutoujian.

see INCARCERATION, page 10



Oxford University Armenian Studies Chair Prof. Thomson Dies

LONDON – Prof. Robert W. Thomson (1934-2018), former Calouste Gulbenkian Professor of Armenian Studies at Oxford University (1992-2002), who died recently, is remembered by his colleagues and students for his monumental contributions to Armenian, Syriac, Georgian and Byzantine studies.

Thomson was one of the most prolific scholars of Armenian history and letters and leaves behind an invaluable corpus of studies, translations and commentaries. May his soul rest in peace.

see THOMSON, page 20



NEWS IN BRIEF

The Armenian Mirror-Spectator's Annual Winter Break

WATERTOWN – The last issue of the *Armenian Mirror-Spectator* before its annual winter break will be that of December 22. Publishing will recommence with the issue of January 5, 2019. The *Mirror-Spectator* offices will be closed starting December 24, and reopen on January 2.

Pashinyan Wants to Transform Sevan into Major Resort

YEREVAN (Armenpress) – The political force led by Nikol Pashinyan wants to make Sevan a major resort, acting Prime Minister of Armenia Nikol Pashinyan said in Sevan during the pre-electoral campaign of "My step" block on November 29.

"The lands of Sevan National Park are divided between some officials. Sevan coastal areas are rented with ridiculous money. One of my first tasks has been to examine all the cases and to define adequate money to be paid to the national park. We must make Sevan a high-level resort city," Pashinyan said.

He emphasized that everyone should have equal access to Sevan both for leisure and business.

The acting Pm noted that as a result of the mentioned policy new touristic and non-touristic jobs will be created in Sevan.

Early parliamentary elections will take place on December 9.

Paylan Decries Lack of Free Press in Turkey

ISTANBUL (Armenpress) – Ethnic Armenian lawmaker of the Turkish parliament Garo Paylan criticized the lack of media freedom in Turkey on November 30.

He criticized all pro-governmental newspapers on Twitter. Paylan presented *Sabah*, *Yeni Shafak*, *Milliyet Turkiye* and *Star* newspapers in the parliament and criticized them.

"At present, press in Turkey has two directions: either it must praise the sultan or be free. But the free press has its price and difficulties, such as violence, restrictions in advertisement and arrests," the lawmaker said.

Paylan noted that any force which is not being criticized makes mistakes.

"They [the authorities] want the people not to read newspapers, not to criticize and ask questions, but this first of all harms Erdogan because any force which is not subject to criticism, makes mistakes," he said.

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ARMENIA

News From Armenia

President Visits Spitak

YEREVAN (Armenpress) — President of Armenia Armen Sarkissian paid a working visit to Lori province, on December 4.

His first stop was the Agrohholding Armenia LLC. The company's unique pavilion and products presented at the Armenia Expo 2018 in Yerevan in September attracted the notice of the president. The company is engaged in cattle breeding and dairy production.

Sarkissian got acquainted with the company activities and upcoming programs, tasted the products and talked to the workers. Currently the company's products are consumed mainly in Armenia.

He praised the cooperation with international companies having experience in this field.

While in Spitak, he and his wife, Nune, laid flowers at the cross-stone dedicated to the memory of the 1988 devastating earthquake victims.

Officials Offer Condolences on Death of President Bush

YEREVAN (Armenpress) — President Armen Sarkissian has extended condolences to the Bush family on the passing of 41st President of the United States George H. W. Bush, Sarkissian's Office said.

"It is impossible to not appreciate his great contribution in establishing mutual understanding and dialogue between peoples," Sarkissian said in the message. "He made great efforts to make our anxious world a better and safer place, and his wisdom and political boldness became the guarantee of his success in this work."

"I have bright memories from our private meetings in Texas, London and other places. Memories about him are bright also in Armenia," Sarkissian said.

George H. W. Bush, the 41st President of the United States, died on November 30 aged 94.

Earlier, Armenia's caretaker Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan had also offered his condolences.

Court of Appeal Relaunches Investigation Into Kocharyan's Case

YEREVAN (Panorama.am) — Judge Ruben Mkhitarian, presiding over the Criminal Court of Appeals, launched the investigation on November 26 into Armenia's second president, Robert Kocharyan's appeal to eliminate the court's decision on detention on the grounds of his immunity.

Kocharyan's lawyer Hayk Alumyan told reporters that Robert Kocharyan was present at the session.

On November 15, the Cassation Court dismissed the August 13 decision of the Court of Appeal on the elimination of Robert Kocharyan's detention and sent the case to the same court for a new trial.

Armenian, Bulgarian Defense Ministries Meet

YEREVAN (Armenpress) — The Armenian and Bulgarian defense ministries held bilateral cooperation consultations November 29-30 at the Armenian Defense Ministry headquarters in Yerevan, chaired by Levon Aivazyan, director of the Defense Policy Department at the Armenian defense ministry, and Daniella Grigorova, director of the Regional Initiatives Department at the Bulgarian defense ministry's defense policy directorate.

Issues concerning global and regional security were discussed.

The stances of the defense ministries of the two countries regarding international development of security and defense issues were presented.

The Armenian-Bulgarian bilateral defense cooperation programs were also discussed, as well as the prospects of cooperation in multilateral formats in NATO and the EU.

The 2019 bilateral cooperation program between the Armenian and Bulgarian defense ministries was signed. The deal includes nine actions in peacekeeping, military medicine, military police, personnel training, military-technical and other sectors.

Veteran Lawmaker Accused of Bribery

YEREVAN (RFE/RL) — Law-enforcement authorities on Monday, December 3, moved to arrest on corruption charges a member of Armenia's outgoing parliament representing former President Serzh Sarkisian's Republican Party (HHK).

Armenia's Office of the Prosecutor-General said that the lawmaker, Aram Harutyunyan, received \$14 million in bribes when he served as minister of environment protection from 2007-2014. It said a businesswoman, Silva

she spoke to RFE/RL's Armenian service (Azatutyun.am) in late October. She said that the mining licenses were subsequently revoked and that she never got her money back.

The former minister has not yet publicly commented on the allegations.

A statement by the prosecutors said four other individuals, presumably close to Harutyunyan, have already been charged in the corruption case. Two of them are currently on the run, it said without giving any names.



Aram Harutyunyan

Hambardzumian, paid the money in 2008 in return for obtaining a dozen mining licenses from Harutyunyan's ministry.

Hambardzumian likewise claimed to have bribed Harutyunyan through several intermediaries close to him when

The statement added that investigators hope the parliament will allow them to charge and arrest Harutyunyan.

The National Assembly is scheduled to discuss the prosecutors' motion on Tuesday. With many of its members

currently campaigning for reelection in the December 9 polls, it is not clear whether the 101-seat parliament will make a quorum. Besides, its largest faction is controlled by the HHK.

The HHK's deputy chairman, Armen Ashotyan, denounced the criminal proceedings as politically motivated "selective justice" and a pre-election "dirty play" by Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan. Ashotyan said that they were deliberately timed to coincide with the election campaign. The authorities could have easily waited until the outgoing parliament's tenure expires on December 24, he said.

Ashotyan went on to claim that Pashinyan is thereby trying to reverse a drop in his approval ratings. "Nikol Pashinyan's approval rating is falling because the HHK is opening people's eyes," he said in a live Facebook transmission. "The HHK is reminding you, dear compatriots, of promises not kept by Pashinyan. This is what has made Pashinyan jittery."

Pashinyan denied, however, any connection between the parliamentary race and the criminal case against the HHK parliamentarian. He said that investigators needed more than three months to obtain from an unspecified foreign government documentary evidence of cash transfers made to Harutyunyan's offshore bank accounts.

Speaking at a campaign rally, the premier said he therefore hopes that the parliament will give the green light to Harutyunyan's prosecution. But he also stressed that their failure to do so would only briefly delay his arrest.

Armenian Military Jet Crashes During Training Mission, Killing Two

GYUMRI (Armenpress/RFE/RL) — An Armenian military aircraft crashed during a training mission on Tuesday, December 4, killing its two pilots.

Armenia's Defense Ministry said the Su-25 jet disappeared from radar screens 14 minutes after taking off from the airbase in the city of Gyumri.

The ministry spokesman, Artsrun Hovannisian, said two pilots on board, Lieutenant-Colonel Armen Babayan and Major Movses Manukyan, died in the crash.

There was no word on possible causes of the deadly accident. Armenia's Investigative Committee reportedly

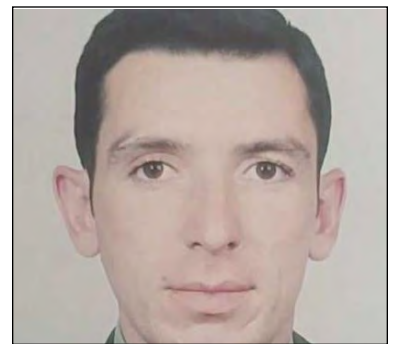
launched an inquiry.

Soviet-designed Su-25s are the principal type of military aircraft making up Armenia's small Air Force. None of them are known to have been crashed in the past.

Advisor to the Chairman of the Investigative Committee of Armenia Sona Truzyan wrote on her Facebook page, "According to the preliminary information, the military SU-25 aircraft conducting a routine training flight crashed on December 4 at about 10:20 am in the vicinity of Karaberd village located in the region of Maralik town of Shirak Province. As a result of the

crash, First Class Pilot, Lieutenant Colonel Armen Slavik Babayan and 3rd Class Pilot, Major Movses Gevorg Manukyan have been killed."

She added that an investigative



Major Movses Manukyan, above, and Lieutenant-Colonel Armen Babayan

Pashinyan Denies Trying to Stifle Dissent

YEREVAN (RFE/RL) — Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan insisted on December 4 that he did not mean any crackdowns on dissent when he ordered Armenian security services to "deal with" his bitter opponents.

Speaking during an election campaign rally at the weekend, Pashinyan decried "false" opposition claims about a government "conspiracy against Karabakh" and a suspension of Russian arms supplies to Armenia. They may amount to high treason, he said, adding that the country's national security and military intelligence services must take action.

The remarks were denounced by top representatives of the Republican Party (HHK) and its former coalition partner, the Armenian Revolutionary Federation (Dashnaktsutyun). A Dashnaktsutyun leader accused Pashinyan of trying to stifle dissent ahead of Sunday's parliamentary elections.

The prime minister dismissed such statements as he campaigned in the Armavir and Aragatsotn provinces.

"What I'm saying is that if people claim that the [Pashinyan-led] revolu-

tion was part of a plan to hatch a conspiracy against Artsakh (Karabakh) or surrender Artsakh then they allege high treason," he said.

"It's a matter of national security," he said. "Those people must be summoned and told: 'Give us your information.' If there is such a thing then those conspirators must be identified and held accountable. But if it turns out that they simply make false statements, the public must at least know that they are provocateurs and liars. That's all."

Pashinyan spoke on Saturday of treacherous warmongers" and "some forces attempting to take subversive actions in our army's rear." They might be "agents of foreign influence," he said without naming anyone.

In his latest campaign speeches, Pashinyan turned on "corrupt" judges and other state officials. "In Armenia's judicial system there are numerous corrupt, thieving judges," he said. "We will hold those judges accountable one by one."

"Nobody in Armenia, no former, current or future official will digest what they have stolen," he pledged.

group headed to the scene immediately, led by Deputy Chairman of the Investigative Committee, Artak Krkyasharyan.

"The black box has been discovered during the examination of the scene. More information will be provided on the process of the investigation," Truzyan wrote.

Speaker of the Parliament Ara Babloyan sent a letter of condolences to the families of pilots.

"At this moment of loss I extend my deepest condolences to the families of the killed pilots, share their grief and wish tenacity," the Speaker said in the letter.



ARMENIA

Armenia's Tourism Committee Targets New Markets Aimed at Raising Country's Recognition

YEREVAN (Armenpress) – In recent years, Armenia's Tsaghkadzor resort has hosted 50,000 tourists on average during the winter season.

Tsaghkadzor Mayor Artur Harutyunyan told Armenpress on November 29 that there is an increase in the visits of tourists in recent years. Although no major snowfalls were reported last year, this didn't hinder tourists to visit the town. The mayor said Tsaghkadzor is always in demand regardless of the weather. The main visitors are the residents of Armenia, as well as the representatives of the diplomatic course in Armenia. However, there are also many foreigners, mainly Russians that visit the town. Every year many Russian tourists visit the town. There are also visits from the European countries, including Germany, France and post-Soviet states.

Harutyunyan stated that in addition to an increase in tourism, the number of hotels and guesthouses have also increased. He said previously there were nearly 30 hotels and guesthouses, but now their number is about 50.

"The increase of number of tourists is very important for the town residents from social perspective. First of all, the residents build guesthouses, in addition, new restaurants, stores are opened in the town due to the demand, and all these in their turn contribute to creation of jobs," Harutyunyan said. The mayor added the municipality regularly carries out renovation works in the town, restores the parks, streets and etc.

As for the price policy, the mayor said the prices become more flexible by the increase of number of new hotels and guesthouses.

"Of course, there is a great demand in December, in connection with the New Year holidays. Many make bookings in late November or early December. There is such an impression that prices are high in the town, but in recent years a flexible pricing policy is being carried out in connection with the increase in number of hotels. For instance, there are discounts after January 10, there are also 50% discounts or people can stay in a hotel two days



Snowboarding in Tsaghkadzor

with the money paid for a day. The hotels as well understand that the expensive offers are not competitive", Artur Harutyunyan said.

President of the Tourism Committee Hripsime Grigoryan said that Tsaghkadzor is the main tourism town during the winter season, but there are also opportunities to create alternatives. In particular, currently activities are being carried out in Ashotsk to build a skiing base. She said having an alternative to Tsaghkadzor will lead to a change in the pricing policy.

"In addition, preparatory works are being conducted in different parts of Armenia for having investments in the field of winter tourism. Here we witness different services

provided by the private sector, but of course, it is desirable that infrastructures develop," she said.

Talking about tourists visiting Armenia in winter, the Tourism Committee President said tourists arrive from different countries, Russia, Iran, Lebanon, the Philippines and Western Europe. Grigoryan noted that actions are being taken on the direction of Arab countries. Currently the issue of conducting charter flights from the United Arab Emirates to Yerevan is being discussed.

On November 25 Armenia was presented in Dubai. The goal was to promote Armenia in Dubai as an attractive and new tourism destination ahead of the winter season.

Aznavour's Son Recalls How His Father Mobilized World after 1988 Spitak Quake

MOSCOW (Panorama.am) – Moscow's Maxim Gorky Art Academic Theater hosted on Wednesday, 28, a commemorative event dedicated to the 1988 devastating Armenian earthquake, also known as the Spitak earthquake.

Anna Hakobyan, the spouse of Armenia's Acting Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan, National Hero of Armenia Nikolai Ryzhkov, Primate of the Russian and New Nakhichevan Diocese of the Armenian Apostolic Church Archbishop Yezras Nersisyan and others attended the event organized by the Armenian Embassy in Russia in cooperation with the Aurora Humanitarian Initiative and Aznavour Foundation.

Addressing the meeting, Armenian Ambassador to Russia Vardan Toghanyan said the event commemorates the 30th anniversary of the catastrophic Spitak earthquake that claimed some 25,000 lives, the embassy announced on Facebook.

"Armenia shall never forget the support of those people and nations that were not indifferent to Armenians in their darkest moments. Starting from the Armenian Genocide in the Ottoman Empire to the Spitak earthquake, our history is full of amazing examples of humanity," the envoy said, expressing gratitude to the whole world.

The Aurora Humanitarian Initiative co-founder, Philanthropist Ruben Vardanyan and Charles Aznavour's son Nicolas, who co-founded the Aznavour Foundation, also delivered remarks at the event.

"This event is entitled to become a global symbol of inspiration and support for social transformation. If we want to change our society, if we are resolute to create the best

legendary singer's great assistance to Armenia after the Spitak earthquake. He recalled how his father mobilized the world after the tragedy.

"My father was among the first to react to the 1988 tragedy and take action immediately. That very night, he wrote the song *Pour toi Armenie* (For You Armenia) together with Georges Garvarentz, mobilizing artists from



From left, Nicolas Aznavour, Armenian Ambassador to Russia Vardan Toghanyan and Ruben Vardanyan

conditions for the future generations, we should show the world the real value of empathy and generosity that motivate the modern heroes. This is the mission of Aurora," Vardanyan said.

Nicolas, for his part, shared the story of the

France, United States, Italy and later from the entire international community," he said.

"The existence of individuals able to consolidate people around them and empathize with them is a crucial factor to promote human development," he added.

Concert Held To Benefit City Of Smiles

YEREVAN (Armenpress) – Anna Hakobyan, the wife of Armenia's acting prime minister, Nikol Pashinyan, and chairwoman of the board of trustees of City of Smiles Charity Foundation, attended a charity concert at the Opera and Ballet National Academic Theatre which has been organized by the State Dance Ensemble of Armenia and the City of Smile Fund, on December 4.

All proceeds of the concert will be provided for the treatment of children and young people suffering cancer.

The concert was attended by wife of President of Armenia Nune Sarkissian, acting culture minister Lilit Makunts, acting healthcare minister Arsen Torosyan, as well as other figures and more than 30 children suffering cancer and their parents.

Mrs. Hakobyan attached importance to holding charity concerts on voluntary basis and stated that this initiative belongs to the State Dance Ensemble and the National Center of Oncology named after V.A. Fanarjian. "The Foundation welcomed this initiative and assisted in holding the concert. The Yolyan Hematology Center, the culture ministry, as well as multiple organizations and companies assisted the concert program. Nearly 20 million AMD entries are expected thanks to this concert which will be provided for the treatment of children and young people suffering cancer. But we do not measure the efficiency of the concert only from financial perspective. The more such individual initiatives, the more the people will unite to react to this challenge - the cancer, which is a great evil, but in fact it can be overcome", Anna Hakobyan said, and thanked the organizers, as well as the sponsors, supporters and participants for making the idea of the concert a reality.



INTERNATIONAL

International News

Lebanon Ambassador Visits Yerevan Mayor

YEREVAN (Armenpress) – Mayor of Yerevan Hayk Marutyan received Ambassador of Lebanon to Armenia Maya Dagher, on November 29.

Welcoming the guest, the Yerevan mayor said the cooperation of the two sister cities – Yerevan and Beirut – has its unique place in the Armenian-Lebanese friendly relations. The Mayor expressed confidence that these relations will continue deepening and developing with concrete directions.

Dagher congratulated the mayor on holding the celebrations of Yerevan's 2,800th anniversary of the city and welcomed the recent youth movement in the capital. She said the Lebanese young people frequently visit Yerevan by investing in the city's economy.

Marutyan assured the ambassador that the situation in the city will contribute to the foreign, in particular, Lebanese investors and businesspeople to work in comfortable conditions.

Tumanyan Statue to Be Erected in Rome

ROME (Armenpress) – A statue of renowned Armenian poet Hovhannes Tumanyan will be erected in the Villa Borghese gardens, a public park in Rome, Deputy Minister of Diaspora Tigran Galstyan told reporters on December 4.

"Tumanyan is a renowned writer representing the Armenian culture, and soon the 150th anniversary of his birth will be marked," he said.

He said that the ministry is yet to make financial estimates, and only then it will announce a tender to select a sculptor.

"It is desirable for the sculptor to be Armenian and to represent our cultural potential. I am sure that we have good sculptors," he said.

Armenian Genocide Issue Included in Australian Debate

CANBERRA, Australia – A motion honoring the 70th anniversary of the adoption of the United Nations Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of Genocide (UN Genocide Convention) will be debated by Australia's House of Representatives on Monday, December 3.

The private member's motion, which will be moved by Member for Goldstein Tim Wilson – who is of Armenian ancestry – calls on the House of Representatives to acknowledge "the need for eternal vigilance of all countries, including Australia, to act to acknowledge past genocides as essential to stopping future genocides".

The motion honors the author of the UN Genocide Convention, Dr. Raphael Lemkin, noting that the Armenian Genocide and Jewish Holocaust were motivating factors for his coining of a legal term for race-based mass killings. The motion states: "[The House] honors the primary initiator and author of the United Nations Genocide Convention, Dr. Raphael Lemkin, a lawyer of Polish-Jewish descent, who coined the word 'genocide', informed by his study of the systematic extermination of the Armenians during World War I and the Jews during World War II."

The motion also acknowledges Australia's significant role in the UN's adoption of the motion 70 years ago, on December 9, 1948. As is typical with private members' motions, this bill will be debated by a selection of government and non-government Members of Parliament without going to a vote.

The majority's view will reflect the will of Australia's House of Representatives, explained ANC-AU Executive Director, Haig Kayserian.

"Australia was instrumental in the adoption of the UN Genocide Convention and ratified it in 1949, yet it still needs to get on the right side of history by recognizing the Armenian Genocide and continue what is a proud tradition of standing up for such important human rights issues," said Kayserian.

This is the second motion to be debated in 2018, after the House of Representatives unanimously debated in favor of a bill recognizing Australia's first major international humanitarian relief effort to aid survivors of the Genocide of Armenians, Greeks and Assyrians on June 25, 2018.

CSTO Summit Cancelled 'at Armenia's Request'

MOSCOW (RFE/RL) – An upcoming summit of the Russian-led Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO) has been cancelled at Armenia's request, the Kremlin said on Tuesday, December 4, contradicting a statement made by Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan.

The leaders of Russia, Armenia and four other ex-Soviet states making up the military alliance were due to meet in Saint Petersburg on Thursday in another attempt to appoint a new CSTO secretary general.

The previous CSTO head, Yuri Khachaturov of Armenia, was dismissed last month after being charged by Armenian law-enforcement authorities in connection with a 2008 crackdown on opposition protesters in Yerevan.

Khachaturov's three-year tenure was due to expire in 2020. The Armenian government attempted to install another Armenian secretary general who would serve until 2020.

The presidents of Belarus and Kazakhstan objected to that at a November 8 summit 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 when they meet in Saint Petersburg.

Pashinyan said on Sunday that in a recent phone call Russian President Vladimir Putin proposed to postpone the summit because of lingering differences between Russia's ex-Soviet allies. "I agreed to that because I think it's better to solve that issue through working procedures," the Armenian prime minister told reporters.

A senior aide to Putin said on Tuesday, however, that it was Yerevan that initiated the summit's cancellation because of parliamentary elections that will be held in Armenia on Sunday.

Russian news agencies quoted the official, Yuri Ushakov, as saying: "At their last meeting in Astana the [CSTO] leaders agreed on that [Saint Petersburg summit] but then decided not to hold the CSTO session [on December 6] given, in particular, a request from the Armenian side which cited the pre-election campaign."

This means, Ushakov went on, that the CSTO's acting secretary general, Russia's Valery Semerikov, will continue to perform his duties for the time being.

Reacting to Ushakov's remarks, Pashinyan's spokesman Arman Yeghoyan insisted that the Armenian side never proposed the summit cancellation. Speaking to RFE/RL's Armenian service, Yeghoyan reaffirmed

Pashinyan's December 2 statement on the issue.

Meanwhile, Pashinyan's most vocal election challenger, the Republican Party (HHK) of former President Serzh Sargsyan, seized upon the Kremlin's claims to attack the premier.

"Yet another lie by Nikol Pashinyan has been quickly exposed," the HHK's deputy chairman, Armen Ashotian, wrote on Facebook. He accused the premier of sacrificing "Armenia's dignity and state interests."

HHK representatives have strongly criticized Pashinyan's handling of the CSTO issue during the parliamentary race. They claim that Armenia has lost the hard-won leadership position within the CSTO because of what they call reckless and politically motivated charges brought against Khachaturov.

Pashinyan has brushed aside the criticism. He has also downplayed the significance of the CSTO post, saying that it has given Armenia few tangible benefits.

Moscow reacted angrily when the Armenian authorities charged Khachaturov as well as former President Robert Kocharyan in July. A Kremlin official said the criminal case against the then CSTO secretary general dealt a "colossal blow to the image of the whole organization."

Armenia Center of Attention at 2018 Philoxenia International Tourism Exhibition

SALONIKA, Greek – Armenia, participating for the first time in the 2018 "Philoxenia" International Tourism Exhibition which took place in Thessaloniki from November 9 to 11, 2018 was the center of attention for hundreds of visitors during the entire duration of the event.

The country's exhibition booth was replenished with flags, videos showing the country's tourist highlights and products such as ARARAT brandy and KARAS wines. Visitors received information about the country, hotel accommodations, religious sights of interest to visitors from Greece, gastronomy and Armenian wines which are becoming better known in the world on a daily basis.

The three-day exhibition attracted hundreds of Greek and non-Greek visitors among whom were the Consuls of Bulgaria, Cyprus, Luxemburg, Slovakia, Jordan, Peru, Morocco and Finland while the exhibition booth was also visited by Mr. A. Tzitzikostas, Macedonian Regional Representative and



The dancers are the MASSIS group of Armenian boys and girls from the Armenian community of Salonika.

Thessaloniki Mayor, John Boutaris, who showed special interest in the Armenian wines exhibited.

The highlight of Armenia's exhibit was the Massis Armenian Dance Group from the local community with twelve

dancers dressed in traditional Artsakh costumes who performed several dances with Armenian music over the exhibition hall's speaker system. These dancers then took a victory walk around the hall with Armenian flags while the music was reverberating in all the exhibition halls.

The net result of Armenia's first ever participation in this tourist exhibition as organized and reported by the Hellenic-Armenian Chamber of Commerce and Industry (HACCI) and its President, Sarkis Dagazian and its senior executive director, Miran P. Sarkissian, was that a large number of visitors from many countries and Greece were exposed to the richness Armenia has to offer year-round to her visitors and the absolute hospitality of the Armenian people. A future increase in tourists visiting Armenia in 2019 will be the proof of the country's very successful first participation in FILOXENIA 2018.

Armenia's participation was organized by the Hellenic-Armenian Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Greece in cooperation with the Armenian Tourism Development Foundation as well as the State Tourism Committee of the Ministry of Economic Development and Investments of Armenia. The event was held under the auspices of the Embassy of Armenia to the Hellenic Republic.



From left, Sarkis Dagazian, President of the Hellenic-Armenian Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Mayor John Boutaris of Salonika and Miran P. Sarkissian, Senior Executive Director of the Chamber.



INTERNATIONAL

A Good Time to Come to Berlin

By Muriel Mirak-Weissbach

Special to the Mirror-Spectator

BERLIN – The visit of Armenian President Armen Sarkissian to Germany at the end of November may not have received the same international media attention as the G20 summit meeting and escalating political crises in various parts of the world, but it deserves serious consideration, as it signaled a positive step forward in relations with Germany at a time of momentous developments inside Armenia as well as growing challenges in Europe. Issues of mutual concern were discussed, important past achievements were commemorated, steps were taken to deepen relations and concrete joint projects were officially signed.

“Allow me to explain why Armenia is important today. I will concentrate on three points: precise timing, the right place and the right model.” This is how Sarkissian presented the case in a lecture on November 28 at a leading think-tank. Speaking on “Armenia in 2018 and the Region” at the Bertelsmann Foundation, he said in the current period, when “everything is changing with the speed of light,” technology is going through a rapid process of evolution. And the process does not always unfold in a classical manner; this is true not only in the economy but also in politics, he said, as exemplified by the revolution in Armenia. The country has entered the 21st century, not only technologically but also politically, so “the time is right.”

Moving to the geographical factor, the “right place,” Sarkissian stressed the unique position Armenia occupies; it is a member of the



President Armen Sarkissian with Chancellor Angela Merkel

also involved with developments in the Republic of Armenia, that makes it “a small country but a global nation, which is significant in the 21st century.” Sarkissian made the important point that Armenians wherever they live “should first be good citizens of the country they reside in” because “one cannot help one’s own country if you live in a ghetto.” Only in this way can one develop relations with one’s historical homeland.

Technologies for the Future

At Bertelsmann and throughout his tour, the Armenian president placed special emphasis on the value of the human resources in his country. A young country, with a young population and a young spirit, Armenia is looking to the future. “Keen on new technologies, education, science, especially mathematics and physics, today the country has the most advanced information technology sector in the region,” he said in his lecture at the think-tank. This is where fruitful collaboration can occur.

At the start of his visit, when he and his wife Nouneh Sarkissian were officially welcomed by German President Frank-Walter Steinmeier and his wife Elke Büdenbender, the Armenian president praised the economic and technical assis-

This became concrete during a visit to the Fraunhofer Institute for Productive Systems and Design Technology, a vanguard institution with over 70 scientific and research centers in several countries. One landmark project involves cooperation between Fraunhofer and the Mesrop Mashtots Institute of Advanced Manuscripts – Matenadaran, in a program on digitalization and restoration of ancient and medieval manuscripts. The joint project, which began in 2016, led to the digitalization and restoration of the Narek prayer book from the 13-14th century. (See <https://mirrorspectator.com/2018/05/31piecing-together-the-words-of-a-saint/>)

Director Eckart Uhlmann guided his guests through the institute, and they discussed future collaboration in the information and high tech sectors, automated systems and robotics. Sarkissian welcomed the expansion of Fraunhofer’s activities in Armenia, announcing that preliminary agreement had been reached on a new form of cooperation, concerning not only Matenadaran but also industrial cooperation.

In Berlin Sarkissian was also received by President of the Bundestag Dr. Wolfgang Schäuble. Honored to represent his country “in this historic building,” Sarkissian expressed interest in Germany’s experience of parliamentary democracy. Referring to recent developments at home, where great changes had come about peacefully, he said the task Armenia faces now is “to translate the existing positive energy into positive results” and expressed optimism in the future. Although this meeting focused on political concerns, including ratification of the Comprehensive and Enhanced Partnership Agreement (CEPA) signed by Armenia and the EU, they discussed expanding cooperation in science, culture and education.

Cultural Dialogue

On November 29, Sarkissian signed two important agreements for cooperation in the fields of culture and medicine. In Magdeburg, the capital of the federal state of Saxony-Anhalt, the Armenian president and his wife were welcomed by Minister-President Reiner Haseloff, who commended the warm ties with Armenia. This refers in particular to the activities of the Mesrop center at the Martin Luther University in Halle, which recently celebrated its twentieth anniversary. (See <https://mirrorspectator.com/2018/11/08two-decades-of-armenian-studies-in-germany/>)

Haseloff announced that a further agreement was being signed by the two that very day, which would further enhance cooperation in culture and science. Sarkissian, who has visited Germany many times, and had been in Magdeburg in the 1980s as a Soviet scientist, said, “Germany has made a major contribution to world culture, and every time you visit here, you take a small piece of this great heritage with you.” Applauding the friendship between Saxony-Anhalt and Armenia, he said, “The source of our friendship and dialogue are history and culture, I hope science as well in the future.” He expressed his deep appreciation for the Mesrop center, as “our small, but very

important presence in Germany.”

The two political figures were joined by several state ministers to discuss the existing partnership, which includes student exchange programs. Sarkissian proposed expanding these further to include scientific fields, like information technologies, math and physics. A new agreement was signed at the Otto von Guericke University, where Rector Jens Strackeljan welcomed the guests. This agreement involves cooperation between the Yerevan State Medical University (YSMU) and the School of Medicine at the Otto von Guericke University.

Gratitude for Emergency Aid

There were several anniversaries commemorated during Sarkissian’s visit, in addition to the Mesrop center’s twentieth, and one of them was a somber, tragic event – the earthquake that devastated Spitak and outlying areas on December 7, 30 years ago. Some 50,000 persons were stricken, and half that number perished. Among the first to respond was the German Red Cross (DRK), which began the first flight with 14 aid workers, search dogs and blood for transfusions in the night on December 9-10. By the end of January they had sent 29 planes with assistance for survivors. It was the first time the Red Cross had carried out a rescue operation behind the Iron Curtain. For immediate assistance and later reconstruction, the organization spent the equivalent of 61 million Euro.

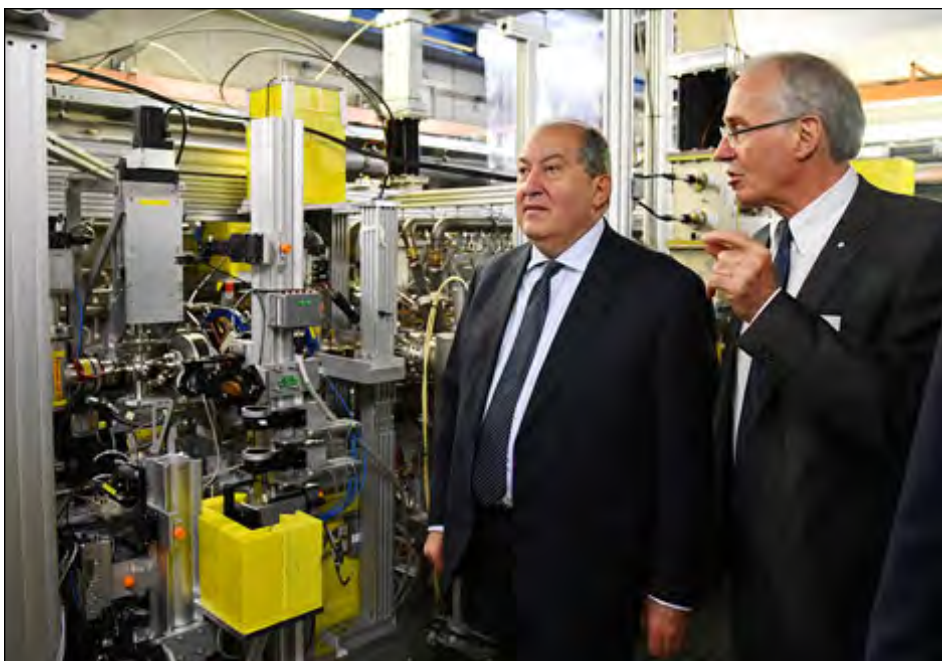
To express gratitude for the crucial humanitarian intervention, Sarkissian made a visit to the organization’s headquarters in Berlin on November 27, where he honored 10 DRK workers, presenting them awards. Deputy Secretary General of the DRK Johannes Richter received the Mkhitar Heratsi medal and DRK representative Zigrig Hetmannschperger and Carl-Heinz Scheiden were awarded Medals of Gratitude. Gerda Hasselfeldt, President of the German Red Cross, remarked, “Considering the dimensions of the damage, the Soviet government, for the first time since the end of World War II and regardless of the Cold War, called worldwide for humanitarian assistance. For all those involved,” she said, “especially for those who supported this immense Red Cross operation, highly motivated, for weeks in bitter cold and living in tents, this deployment will never be forgotten.”

Speaking to staff members, Sarkissian said the earthquake had been “very sad and tragic. But in these 30 years there have also been very humane, touching stories, stories about human love, care, attention and lack of indifference.” He said his country and its people would never forget what Germany had done to help, specifying that every Armenian literally is grateful. Recently, during a visit to Gyumri, he said he experienced gratitude “not only in elderly people but in young people who didn’t see the earthquake” but had heard about it from their parents. “So I am here to convey the words of gratitude on my personal behalf and on behalf of the entire Armenian nation.” He asked Hasselfeldt to communicate his message to the thousands of Red Cross workers engaged in helping those in need.

At the end of the event, Hasselfeldt presented Mrs. Sarkissian a check for a contribution of 10,000 Euro, for the “Berlin” clinic for mothers and children in Gyumri. The clinic was set up and opened in 1993, thanks to donations by the Berlin population and business community. To date, 17,000 people have benefited from the medical treatment offered there. The funds are earmarked for renovating the clinic. Thanking her for the gift, Sarkissian announced he would match the donation with another 10,000 Euro, for the same purpose.

Celebrating with Music

The Sarkissians concluded the official visit to the German capital with a magnificent concert in celebration of the 115th birthday of Aram Khachaturian. The Armenian National Philharmonic Orchestra, under the direction of Eduard Topchyan performed Khachaturian’s Suite from the ballet “Spartacus” and the Concerto for Violin and Orchestra with soloist violinist Sergei Khachatryan, followed by the Symphony No. 5 in D minor, Opus 47 by Shostakovich. After enthusiastic applause, they performed a waltz by Khachaturian as an encore.



President Armen Sarkissian tours a high-tech facility.

Eurasian Economic Union (EEU), and it also has an agreement with the European Union. As a result, Armenia can function as a “bridge between West and East.” By the same token, it can serve as an important link between North and South, as it enjoys good relations with Georgia and Russia as well as Iran and other countries of the Persian Gulf.

The third factor he developed involves the role of the diaspora. Although Armenia is a small country with a population of three million, there are Armenian communities throughout the world, “well-organized, advanced and successful,” amounting to 12-15 million Armenians in total. As these communities are

tance given by Germany and expressed the desire that cooperation in education, science and culture would be expanded, including exchange programs for students and scientists.

In his meeting with Chancellor Angela Merkel, who visited Armenia last summer, frontier technologies played a central role. Merkel, who is a physicist by training, said she had been particularly impressed with the TUMO Center for Creative Technologies, adding that Germany was exploring the potential for cooperation here. Sarkissian welcomed the suggestion, again stressing Armenia’s expertise in information technologies. “Our country may become a platform for different startups,” he said.

Community News

Senate Foreign Relations Committee Delays Vote on US Ambassador To Baku

WASHINGTON – The US Senate Foreign Relations Committee has postponed a vote on President Donald Trump's nomination of Earle Litzenger to serve as Ambassador to Azerbaijan amid growing concerns across Capitol Hill over a recent call by National Security Advisor John Bolton for US arms sales to the increasingly reckless and aggressive Aliyev regime.

Litzenger was the only one of 19 ambassadorial nominations to be postponed, very likely until next year, when the panel will hold its next business meeting, the Armenian National Committee of America (ANCA) reports.

"We welcome this opportunity for more careful Congressional oversight of our country's increasingly challenging bilateral ties with Azerbaijan's aggressive and abusive Aliyev regime, particularly in light of National Security Advisor John Bolton's controversial suggestion that the U.S. start selling arms to Baku," said ANCA Executive Director Aram Hamparian.

"We join with our Senate friends in seeking greater clarity on this point, and, more generally, regarding the Administration's policy on Aliyev's worsening pattern of aggression against Artsakh and Armenia, incitement of hatred against all Armenians, unapologetic blacklisting of U.S. legislators, obstruction of the Royce-Engel peace proposals, threats to shoot down civilian aircraft, the destruction of the Julfa cemetery and other Christian heritage sites, and – of course – his severe crackdown against domestic dissidents and ethnic-religious minorities."

During the October 4 confirmation hearing, Senate Foreign Relations Committee Ranking Democrat Bob Menendez (D-NJ) grilled Litzenger about Aliyev's "bellicose rhetoric and sporadic outbursts of violence," securing from the nominee a commitment that he would urge the Azerbaijani government to step back from any threatening behavior that disrupts the line of contact.

Asked by Menendez whether US security assistance to Azerbaijan should be curtailed based on human rights abuses, Litzenger responded that the State Department will be "very careful to ensure that nothing that we do or provide [in terms of US security assistance] to Azerbaijan undermines the effort to reach a peaceful settlement of the Nagorno Karabakh conflict." He went on to note that US security assistance to Azerbaijan will continue to include training in human rights, a point of heightened concern since the Safarov scandal.



Earle Litzenger



Diocesan Primate the Very Rev. Daniel Findikyan (Photo Credit: Albin Lohr-Jones)

Cathedral Prayer Service Reveals Living Spirit Behind The Met Museum Exhibit

NEW YORK – It was altogether appropriate that, a few days after Thanksgiving, New York's St. Vartan Armenian Cathedral should ring with "spiritual gratitude" for the monumental "Armenia!" exhibit at the world famous Metropolitan Museum of Art.

By Florence Avakian

The special "Evening Hour" (or Vespers) service on Tuesday, November 27, was a collaboration between the Met and the Eastern Diocese of the Armenian Church of America, and attracted museum members, locals from the cathedral's Midtown neighborhood, as well as faithful from the Armenian community.

The service was conceived as a glimpse into the religious environment that gave rise to the artworks on display at the Met exhibit.

It began with a majestic procession of more than a dozen priests and deacons, led by Diocesan Primate the Very Rev. Daniel Findikyan, to the joyous chant Oorakh Ler ("Rejoice, O holy church") sung by the Cathedral Choir led by Khoren Mekanejian.

Among the guests attending were Bishop Anoushavan Tanielian and Dr. Helen Evans, who brought her students from Columbia University.

As the principal organizer and curator of the Met Museum exhibition, Dr. Evans traveled to many centers of Armenian art around the world to collect the items on display.

The "Song of the Hours" service, a treasury of mystical and moving psalms, prayers, rituals, and meditations – composed largely by renowned fathers of the Armenian Church – were chanted mainly in modern English during the service.

But as deacons with their censers filled the atmosphere with the aroma of incense, it was easy to imagine oneself worshipping in one of the medieval masterpieces of Armenian Church architecture – like the 7th-century St. Hripsime Church in Armenia, which inspired the design of St. Vartan Cathedral.

As explained in a beautifully prepared service booklet for the occasion, in earlier times the daily onset of darkness made people vulnerable to danger. In response, Armenian Christians would "pray at the setting of the sun, giving thanks to God for having led them peacefully through the day," and asking for His guidance and protection through the coming night.

see PRAYER, page 11



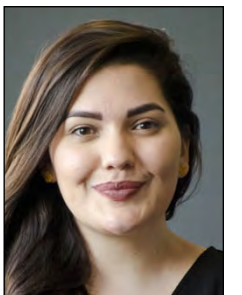
A procession by members of the clergy at St. Vartan Cathedral (Photo Credit: Albin Lohr-Jones)

SAS Recognizes 'Best Conference Paper Award' Recipients

FRESNO – The Society for Armenian Studies announced recently the recipients of its 2017 "Best Conference Paper Award." Recognized are co-winners Erin Piñon for her paper "Get My Good Side': Triumphant Images of Defeat in Early Modern Armenia," Earnestine Qiu for her paper "Is White Divine? A Reevaluation of the 'Armeno-Crimean' Lives of the Desert Fathers (Jerusalem, Armenian Patriarchate, MS 285)," and Jesse Siragan Arlen for his paper "In Creation of Readerly Taste: Paratextuality in the 'Publishing Mission' of Mkhitar of Sebastia."

The SAS Executive Council will award each of the winning recipients a monetary prize and one year of SAS membership. Each year SAS selects the "Best Conference Paper" presented by a graduate student at a conference in a calendar year. A committee appointed by the Executive Council judges the papers.

Piñon first became interested in Armenian art history as an undergraduate at Tufts University (Boston), which offers one of the few programs worldwide specializing in Armenian art. She continued her graduate studies at Southern Methodist University (Dallas). She lived in Yerevan as a US Fulbright Student Researcher for the 2016-2017 academic year and a visiting professor at the American University of Armenia. She has worked at several museums as a research assistant, including the Dallas Museum of Art and the Armenian Museum of America in Watertown. She is currently a PhD student in the Department of Art and Archeology at Princeton University.



Erin Piñon

Piñon delivered her paper at the Sixteenth Century Studies Conference (Milwaukee, October 26-29, 2017). Her paper analyzed the visual representation of the battle of Avarayr in the work of artist Karapet Berkretsi from the school of Vaspurakan in the last decades of the 15th century. His work presents an idealized, manipulated sequence of events, which does not leave Armenian heroism and spiritual victory to chance, but instead uses vision to make it a statistical probability. Piñon argued that the work by this artist "is a clever construction of innovative iconography that could have only been birthed from early modern Vaspurakan."

The Vaspurakan School expanded the iconographical schema of Armenian illumination to include secular scenes. It was both a reflection on the past and the flexibility of the scriptorium that afforded artists the opportunity to execute such scenes, extending and revising their history in order to ensure a national narrative (of a stateless nation) refocused on the living memory of Armenian bravery, rather than defeat. After receiving the prize, she noted that "the sophisticated objects penned, painted, and performed in early modern Vaspurakan (and beyond) are understudied pieces of Armenian visual and material culture and complex deposits of memory and devotion."

Qiu received her BA in linguistics and art history from Rutgers University. She spent two years in social work before returning to the humanities and has since interned at the Morgan Library and Museum, the International Center of Medieval Art, and the Metropolitan Museum of Art. She currently is in the graduate program at the Department of Art and Art History of Tufts University. Her interests lie in Byzantine architecture and monasticism. "I am

see SAS, page 7

COMMUNITY NEWS

SAS Recognizes ‘Best Conference Paper Award’ Recipients

SAS, from page 6 honored and thrilled to have received this award,” she stated. “It is an exciting time for Armenian studies and I look forward to continuing my research.”

Qiu delivered her paper at the Byzantine Studies Conference (October 4-6, 2017, San Antonio, Texas). Her paper dealt with an illustrated Armenian version of the Lives of the Desert Fathers, dated to 1430 and now held in the collection of the Armenian Patriarchate of Jerusalem with the



Earnestine Qiu

shelf mark 285. The manuscript was produced in the trade center of Genoese Kaffa (present-day Feodosia), a critical commercial port on the Black Sea. This paper explores the political and theological context of the manuscript. In particular the author sought to strike a new line of interpretation based on the colophon, in which the author and scribe, Thaddeus Avraments’, offers precious insight into his working practices, his intentions for the images and the texts, and the welfare of the monastery in which he lived and for which the manuscript was made.

Jesse Siragan Arlen holds a BA degree in Linguistics from UCLA and two MA degrees in historical theology from Wheaton College and Early Christian studies from University of Notre Dame. He is currently a PhD student at the Near Eastern Languages and Cultures Department of UCLA. His research pertains to medieval litera-

ture and intellectual history, with a particular focus on asceticism, mysticism, and education. He is also a published writer of prose and poetry in Western Armenian. “I am honored and grateful to the SAS selection committee for choosing my paper for this award,” he noted. “I know there are many worthy graduate students conducting research in Armenian Studies.”

Arlen delivered his paper at the conference “Confessionalization and Reform: The Mkhitarist Enterprise from Constantinople to Venice, Trieste and Vienna,” held at UCLA (December 16-17, 2017). He focused on the understanding of Mkhitar of Sebastia’s publishing mission by examining the relationship between him and his readers. He showed how Mkhitar marshalled various paratextual means to influence the reception of his books. Through the use of introductory poems, illus-

trations and engaging games, Mkhitar worked on the perceptions of his readers, even before they came to the actual text of the volume itself. This had at least three functional goals: first, ensuring that their intellectual study remained ancillary and subservient to their higher, spiritual mission; second, communicating to them their role both as Armenian Catholic monks and also as those who have inherited and will continue Mesrob Mashtots’ and his circle’s fifth-century mission; third, imposing a certain posture of deference towards the authority of Mkhitar. All three of these effects fostered the production of a taste that aligned with Mkhitar’s mission.



Jesse Siragan Arlen

The Society of Armenian Studies is an international body, composed of scholars and students, whose aims are to promote the study of Armenian culture and society, including history, language, literature, and social, political, and economic questions; to facilitate the exchange of scholarly information pertaining to Armenian studies around the world; and to sponsor panels and conferences on Armenian studies.

For membership information or more information on the Society for Armenian Studies, visit the SAS website at societyforarmenianstudies.com.

Archbishop Khajag Barsamian Appointed Legate to Vatican

VATICAN, from page 1

“Since the days of Catholicos Vasken I, relations between the Mother See of Echmiadzin and the Vatican, and between the Armenian and Roman Catholic churches in general, have been growing stronger and deeper with a spirit of closeness and collaboration emerging between our hierarchy and clergy.”

“My objective in my new role in part,” he continued, “is to expand existing projects, programs and activities in order to draw the two churches together in a spirit of mutual respect and collaborative mission.”

Archbishop Barsamian also relayed that in the past several years, many Armenian immigrants have emigrated from the Middle East, Turkey, Armenia and Russia to various nations in Europe. He said that he has communicated with the parish councils and Armenian ambassadors of the countries under his jurisdiction as the Pontifical Legate of the Western Europe and planned pastoral visits to these communities.

He related that the ecumenical spirit has been part of the Armenian Church for many centuries, and noted that the 12th-century Armenian Catholicos St. Nersess the Graceful had been a champion of ecumenism.

“Today, in our world and society we also face many challenges, but there are also great possibilities,” he stressed. “As always, but especially in recent years, the cooperation among different Christian denominations is essential.”

He offered words of praise about Pope Francis, describing him as “very pastoral, a true believer, honest, humble, simple, warm. He knows and appreciates Armenians closely, and is a close friend of Armenian Primate of Argentina Archbishop Kissag Mouradian who was my classmate at the seminary of the Armenian Patriarchate in Jerusalem.”

Archbishop Barsamian related that as a symbol of his closeness to the 80,000-strong Armenian community in Argentina, Pope Francis placed an Armenian “khatchkar” in the Roman Catholic Cathedral in Buenos Aires.

Barsamian added, “During the past years I have developed close relationship with the Catholic leadership in US and also in Vatican. I am committed to continue those relationships for the good of both churches and for the good of the world. I am grateful to Vehapar for giving me the possibility to continue my ministry in this new role.”



Merry Christmas & Happy New Year

From the Armenian Mirror-Spectator
www.mirrorspectator.com

The Armenian Mirror-Spectator is the first English-language Armenian weekly published in the US, and for more than 85 years, it has served the community. Readers can learn of the most important developments in Armenia, as well as international politics, art and culture throughout the world in a convenient and concise format.

With your encouragement, we are continuing to work to increase what we can offer you through our newspaper. We have expanded our coverage in the greater Los Angeles area, with three correspondents and seek new correspondents elsewhere. Our website has been redesigned, with greater capabilities. This year we entered into an agreement with Artsakh Public TV and now periodically subtitle in English and condense some of their video broadcasts. We also have a video correspondent in Washington, DC. Send us your email if you wish to regularly receive links to articles and videos.

Meanwhile, we continue with our annual tradition of publishing your Christmas and New Year’s wishes, and greetings to relatives and friends in the final issue of the year. In case you wish to give gift subscriptions of the *Mirror-Spectator* for Christmas, for your convenience, we are placing a gift subscription form in the newspaper as well as one below.

Sincerely,


Alin K. Gregorian
Editor


Aram Arkun
Assistant Editor

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OBITUARIES

Rev. Fr. Diran Avak Kahana Papazian

Dedicated Priest, Family Man

SOUTHFIELD, Mich. — Rev. Fr. Diran Avak Kahana Papazian died on November 21, 2018 at Manoogian Manor, at the age of 98.

The Service of Burial and Last Anointing took place on Wednesday, December 5 with the celebration of Badarak (Divine Liturgy). Following Badarak, the clergy and family proceeded to Woodlawn Cemetery for the interment. A hokejosh was held at St. John Armenian Church.

Born on February 12, 1920, to Aghasi and Teskhouhi Papazian in the waning days of the Ottoman Empire in what was then the city of Constantinople with the baptismal name Garabed, Der Diran lost his mother and father at a young age and was placed in an orphanage for a short time. His younger brother Khatchig had died three years earlier when he was one and a half years old. Garabed was baptized by the Patriarch of Constantinople at the age of 6. Soon after, he began his schooling at the Armenian Cathedral School in Istanbul where he learned Armenian (both *kurapar*, classical, and *ashkhara*-

ological studies, thereby fulfilling his long-held dream. He first attended the Philadelphia Divinity School, but later transferred to the Episcopal Theological Seminary in Massachusetts, where he graduated with a Bachelor's of Divinity degree. He then enrolled at the Harvard Divinity School in Cambridge, MA, where he earned Master's degrees in Sacred Theology and Philosophy in 1956.

In 1957, he moved to Detroit, where he married the late Yeretzgin Rosalie Papazian, an active church worker and teacher in the public schools. On February 23, 1958, he was ordained as a priest at St. John's Episcopal Church of Detroit by Archbishop Mampre Calfayan, then-Primate. He served at St. John's Armenian Church in Detroit for 15 years. Over the sixty years of his priesthood, he would marry, baptize, and preside over the funerals for four generations of his parishioners.

In the early years of his pastorate, Fr. Diran also served as visiting pastor to the newly established midwestern parishes of Illinois. He also helped the mission parish of Cleveland in its efforts to build a church, and St. James in Evanston, IL, as well. He also temporarily served as pastor of St. James Church in Watertown, MA.

During his tenure as pastor of St. John's, in addition to his involvement with the building of the current church edifice and cultural hall, Fr. Diran also was involved in the two historic pontifical visits of His Holiness Vasken I, Supreme Patriarch and Catholicos of All Armenians, and the visits of many other ecclesiastical dignitaries. In 1961, Fr. Diran organized a group for a pilgrimage to Holy Etchmiadzin, where His Holiness Vasken I presented him with a jewel-studded hand-cross, which had been specifically made for this occasion per His Holiness' order

In January 1966, His Holiness Vasken I conferred upon Fr. Diran with a special Pontifical Encyclical, the religious distinction to wear a Pectoral Cross. Simultaneously, Archbishop Sion Manoogian, then-Primate of the Armenian Church Diocese, gave Fr. Diran the honor of wearing a Floral Cape.

In 1972-1985, Fr. Diran was assigned as pastor at St. Gregory of Narek Armenian Church in Cleveland, OH, where he had previously served as visiting pastor and an organizer for the building committee. While serving the Cleveland parish, he also acted as a visiting pastor of the mission church of St. Petersburg, FL.

In 1983, on the 25th anniversary of his ordination to the priesthood, Fr. Diran was honored with the honorary ecclesiastical title of Archpriest with a special Pontifical Contag issued by His Holiness Vasken I.

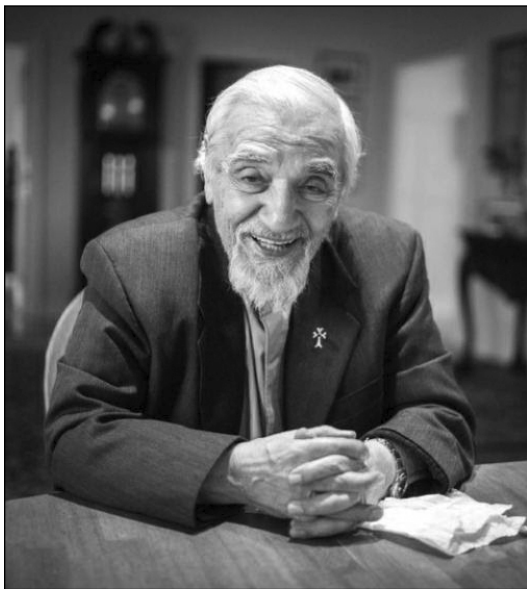
Fr. Diran's next assignment was serving two parishes simultaneously in the New York metropolitan area: Holy Cross Armenian Church of Union City, NJ, and Holy Cross Armenian Church of New York, NY. He served these parishes from 1985 to 1988.

On January 1, 1989, he was invited by the parish of Sts. Joachim and Anne Armenian Church of Palos Heights, IL, to be its pastor. He served the parish until his retirement in January 1995, and made his permanent residence in Southfield, Mich. During his retirement years, he served as Pastor Emeritus at St. John's Armenian Church in Southfield, MI. He also as a visiting pastor to Florida mission parishes along the state's Gulf coast.

Fr. Diran's wife, the late Yn. Rosalie Papazian, preceded him in death by 13 years. He leaves behind his two adult children, Garo and Elise Papazian, his granddaughter Nicole and grandson Nishan Papazian, his brother-in-law Dr. Dennis and his wife Dr. Mary Papazian, as well as numerous nieces and nephews, cousins, friends, parishioners and admirers.

To send a message, visit Rev. Fr. Diran's obituary at www.ekfh.net.

Arrangements were made by the Edward Korkoian Funeral Home and assisted by the Simon Javizian Funeral Directors Wessels and Wilk Funeral Home.



par, colloquial), Turkish and Hebrew. Over the course of his life, he would add Greek, English, Arabic, French, and Aramaic. In December 1934, at the age of 14, he left Istanbul to attend the Theological Seminary of the Armenian Patriarchate of Jerusalem, graduating from the seminary in 1940.

After 1940, Fr. Diran found himself in Ramallah, Palestine, not being able to return to Turkey because of the outbreak of World War II. He began working at the British Consulate as a translator, hoping to come to the U.S. to continue his education. The chaos of war made it difficult for him to obtain a passport, and thus his travels to the United States were put on hold. Finally, in 1949 Fr. Diran moved to Lebanon, where he began to work for the Patriarchate of Cilicia. In 1950, he was admitted to the Theological Seminary of the Great House of Cilicia in Antelias, Lebanon, where he continued his studies. While studying in Lebanon, he authored his prize-winning lyrics for the official anthem of the Church Schools in the Middle East, which is still in use today. As world events by then had settled down, he now was able to apply successfully for a British passport.

At the invitation of Archbishop Tiran Nersoyan, then-Primate of the Diocese of the Armenian Church, Eastern, Garabed arrived in the United States in 1951 to pursue further the-

Shahan Armand Adrian

BAYSIDE, N.Y. — The Armenian Church of the Holy Martyrs announced the passing of Shahan Armand Adrian of Middletown, NY.

He is survived by daughters: Laurel, Elyse, Heather and Ivy; one brother; seven grandchildren and Veronica Adrian.

The funeral was on Tuesday, December 4 at the Armenian Church of the Holy Martyrs, followed by a graveside service at the Cedar Grove Cemetery in Flushing.

Yeghishe Hajakian

Longtime Member of Tekeyan

TENAFLY, N.J. — Longtime member of the Tekeyan Cultural Association and an active member of the community Yeghishe Hajakian died on November 28.

He was born on February 4, 1940, in Beirut, Lebanon. He had two brothers, both deceased, and two sisters, one of whom lives in Kuwait and the other in Qatar.

He also is survived by many nieces and nephews.

He attended the AGBU Hovagimian Manougian Secondary School and graduated from Haigazian University in Beirut.

He left Beirut after college to teach English at Aramco in Saudi Arabia and shortly thereafter, met and married his wife, Maro Garoyan, in 1967. He had big dreams for his family in America and they arrived in New Jersey in 1969 with their baby daughter, Nina. He quickly found employment as an English teacher in a public high school for one year and then pursued his dream of becoming an entrepreneur.

He owned his own successful business until he changed careers and joined Prudential Financial in 1992 where he worked until his passing.

He was involved in a number of Armenian organizations, including the AGBU, Knights of Vartan and the Tekeyan Cultural Association, with the active participation in the Mher Megerdichian Theatrical Group.

He loved to write and contributed frequently to the Armenian press.

The funeral was held on December 1 at St. Thomas Armenian Church. Tekeyan Central Board Secretary Hagop Vartivarian spoke at the memorial meal after the service.

In lieu of flowers, memorial donations can be sent to the Tekeyan Cultural Association or St. Thomas Armenian Church.



Rosaline Marie Darakjian Arzoumanian

Born in Marseilles

PASADENA, Calif. — Rosaline Marie Darakjian Arzoumanian, 93, died on November 26, 2018.

She was born Rosaline Marie Darakjian in Marseilles, France on October 11, 1925.

She was a loving wife, mother and grandmother.

She leaves her son, Sarkis (Susan) Arzoumanian; daughter, Margaret (David) Mgrublian; grandchildren, Kathryn, Madlyn, Adam and Andrew. Husband, Aram Arzoumanian, predeceased her in 2005.

Services were held Friday, December 7, at St. Gregory Armenian Apostolic Church in Pasadena.



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COMMUNITY NEWS

Artsakh President's Spokesman Provides Overview of Recent Developments

ARTSAKH, from page 1

One of the most dramatic developments this year is the change in regime in Armenia. Babayan said that Artsakh and the Republic of Armenia are “integrated – one common homeland but two different states.” The will of the people is the most important thing, and consequently in Artsakh, during the Velvet Revolution, he said, “We were just watching what was going on in Armenia, but with special interest. Artsakh could never interfere. We wished first of all that any change taking place would occur in a peaceful way, without bloodshed or tragedy. Thank God that this happened.”

Domestic change in Armenia can affect the Azerbaijani-Armenian relationship. Babayan related that “the Armenian government continues to see the situation as before, but now insists that Artsakh should participate in the negotiations and the full-fledged format of the Budapest Summit [of 1994] should be put into place.” This insistence is a change from the previous Armenian government, which stated the same thing in a less assertive manner.

On the other hand, Babayan said, “Azerbaijan has not changed its destructive policy toward the Artsakh state.” Domestically, he said, it remains totalitarian despite recent protests in Ganja at which two policemen were killed, which indicate the level of frustrations of the Azerbaijani populace with the Aliyev regime.

As far as changes in relations between Armenia and Artsakh itself, Babayan said that normally, any change in government requires time for new personnel to establish close contacts. Yet, despite the rapid changes in Armenia, Babayan pointed out that Acting Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan has already visited Artsakh five or six times while in office this year and contacts have been reinforced personally at the highest levels between the two states. Moreover, Pashinyan's son is serving in the Artsakh Army, which itself is an eloquent demonstration of commitment to the relationship.

When asked whether there is any attempt to promote a type of Velvet Revolution in Artsakh, Babayan declared, “In order for some change to happen, we need an objective basis of reality. If there is no objective basis, it is very difficult to export revolution. This means that external forces could have made attempts to somehow shackle the situation, but the new Armenian government said that it will not interfere in Artsakh politics.”

One year and three months ago, in July 2017, Artsakh's National Assembly elected the current president and due to a constitutional referendum the same year, the president will be elected directly by the people henceforth. Babayan said that there is no legal basis for further changing this government. Sahakyan was, and still is, supported by three political parties, the Free Fatherland, Artsakh Democratic Party, and the Armenian Revolutionary Federation, he said.

Furthermore, President Sahakyan has declared he is not planning to run again for the presidency in 2020. Babayan stated that the people of Artsakh are very sensitive to violations of law and would not accept anyone's attempts to usurp power.

A handful of people in the opposition were planning to accuse Sahakyan of this in order to distract the populace from their own problems, said Babayan. Instead, he said, now they have to run on their own vision and character.

When asked whether there were any changes in approaches to international politics in Armenia or Artsakh recently, Babayan declared, “We have seen that irrespective of who is in power in Armenia, there is one very important geopolitical imperative, derived from our political history. We must, I would underline, have and maintain good relations with Russia, the United States and Europe....We must pursue a balanced geopolitics in order to somehow secure our independence and safety.” This is because of the hostile attitude of both Azerbaijan and Turkey, he said. Most recently, Turkey sent terrorist groups to fight against Artsakh in the April 2016 war, he said, while it continues to blockade Armenia.

The statements of some individuals in the Armenian media recently about expelling the Russian troops which guard Armenia's international borders, Babayan said, “cannot be taken seriously. If the Turkish army invades Armenia, the US will not have the time to do anything and Yerevan will just be taken by the Turks. We do not have the right to risk such adventures.” This is why, he said, the current (acting) prime minister always underlines that Russia is one of the strategic allies of Armenia, just as the US is, and why we maintain a balanced approach.

Babayan said that the diaspora helps Armenia and Artsakh to maintain good relations with these three important actors, and added, “It is not a zero sum game. Good relations with Russia, for example, are not directed against the US, and vice versa.”

He made an interesting point concerning the connection of economic systems of the great powers and their smaller allies or collaborators, when asked whether the connections between Armenia and the Russian oligarchic economic system might prevent changes in Armenia and Artsakh's domestic economies, declaring, “I don't think their economy dominates geopolitics.” He pointed out as a counterexample that Kosovo receives billions of dollars of Western investments while being a very corrupt and oligarchic state politically.

One recent American foreign policy change troubles Artsakh and Armenia greatly. Babayan said, “We are very much concerned about the US blockade of Iran. Iran is a country where



“WE HAVE SEEN THAT IRRESPECTIVE OF WHO IS IN POWER IN ARMENIA, THERE IS ONE VERY IMPORTANT GEOPOLITICAL IMPERATIVE, DERIVED FROM OUR POLITICAL HISTORY. WE MUST, I WOULD UNDERLINE, HAVE AND MAINTAIN GOOD RELATIONS WITH RUSSIA, THE UNITED STATES AND EUROPE....WE MUST PURSUE A BALANCED GEOPOLITICS IN ORDER TO SOMEHOW SECURE OUR INDEPENDENCE AND SAFETY.”

— DAVIT K. BABAYAN

we have a strong Armenian diasporan community. It is also a neighboring country. Iran plays to some extent a stabilizing role in the southern Caucasus because it does not side with any of the conflict parties. It also is one of the factors which stops Turkish aggressiveness in the region. This is why we have to seriously consider the possible consequences to changes in US-Iranian relations. We hope that relations between these two countries will somehow get better. The consequences for Armenia will be very, very negative in case of war or other clashes.”

The border with Iran remained closed to Artsakh, Babayan said, because Iran wants to keep neutrality in this conflict and opening the border would be considered a sign of interference. Artsakh thus cannot directly trade with Iran but it does import commodities from Iran on an individual level through a sort of shuttle business. Babayan hoped that there may be some exemptions to the blockade for Armenia, similar to what Turkey has received.

The process of mediation in the Karabakh conflict continues through the Minsk Group of the Organization of Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), cochaired by Russia, the US and France. In addition, periodically additional mediation efforts take place by various configurations of countries and international organizations.

According to a report by Amnesty International of July, in 2017, Armenia and Azerbaijan agreed in principle to increase the number of conflict observers of the personal representative of the OSCE chairperson-in-office from 6 to 13, but this has not occurred yet. Babayan explained that it was because Azerbaijan wants to deploy the additional staff in Baku and not along the borders or contact lines to ease tensions, contrary to the desire of the Armenian sides.

On September 28, Pashinyan and President Ilham Aliyev of Azerbaijan met for the first time publicly in Dushanbe, Tajikistan, and agreed to open a direct line of communications between the two as part of an attempt to reduce tensions on the frontlines between Karabakh and Armenia, and Azerbaijan.

Babayan acknowledged this verbal agreement as a positive one for the time being. He said, “From the quantitative point of view, the number of incidents or violations of the ceasefire have decreased, but the quality and intentions of Azerbaijan have not changed.” It continues to issue statements that it will liberate Artsakh, and even that Yerevan is the capital of Western Azerbaijan, while protesting aggressively when the Artsakh president visits the US or France. Babayan concluded, “That is

why we always have to be ready to rebuff any possible attack. As a totalitarian and terrorist state, Azerbaijan can violate the ceasefire regime at any inconvenient moment.”

He also stated that the intentions of Armenia's prime minister were sincere in reducing the tension, whereas in Aliyev's case, “I don't think there was outside pressure, but rather some calculations. The true calculations or basis of his action will be evident after Azerbaijan starts violating the ceasefire agreement again.”

While the direct line of communications between Armenia and Azerbaijan has been established, Stepanakert's proposal to restore a so-called hot line communication between commanders of units located along the borders, which operated effectively for several years after the end of the war in 1994,

has not been accepted by Baku so far, according to Babayan.

Domestic Changes in Artsakh

Babayan revealed that the population of Artsakh has increased by 12,000 people when compared to 2008. This only includes a small number of Armenians from Syria, approximately 100, who are scattered in different parts of Artsakh. Babayan said, “They are very hardworking people, and some Syrian Armenian farmers have actually changed agriculture in Artsakh. They are cultivating new crops and also introduced a ‘new’ way of farm management and work that is actually the traditional Armenian way. Agriculture in Artsakh and Armenia were influenced by Soviet methods. When the Armenians came to Syria from historical Armenia [after the Genocide], they brought their traditional ways of agriculture with them, which they preserved and now brought to Artsakh.”

The arrival of Armenians from various parts of the world, Babayan said, makes monoethnic Artsakh multicultural. He said, “Our compatriots from many corners of the world bring different visions and different ways of solving problems.”

He noted other indicators of change in Kashatagh, which only relatively recently had been turned again into a majority Armenian region. Kashatagh now leads the country in terms of grain harvests, and at its traditional agricultural fair held every year on the second Sunday of October, Babayan said, “Kashatagh occupies first place in terms of quality and quantity.”

Babayan then said that he would like to mention an indicator which on the surface might strike some as strange, but which he finds quite meaningful. He said: “When you go to Berdzor and other places there, you can see cemeteries, which is something tragic. But when people bury members of their families and their ancestors in this soil, it means that their roots are literally going deeper and deeper. They don't bring the dead to their places of origin. This means that they consider this to be their homes and it is a substantial evolution and important thing. Any time I see these cemeteries, I have this kind of feeling that from the point of view of the state building process, it is a great sign.”

Nonetheless, Babayan said, keeping people in Karabakh is a long-term project. He said, “First of all, we need security. We have to develop more agriculture and infrastructure, a health care network, and much more, including modern assets like high tech. Without our diaspora, this will be impossible.”

The value of high tech and the internet, Babayan said, is that it allows people to stay in their own country while working for global markets. To encourage this, he said, “We train kids. We make them technologically oriented from a young age. We established the Tumo [Center for Creative Technologies] in Artsakh. Then we attract high-tech companies, creating favorable tax environments for them and giving them economic privileges.”

When asked whether the state controls the economy in Artsakh, Babayan replied, “The state has a strong influence in the economy, but I would say that it is a strong social economy, not a state economy.” The reason, he said, is that there are many socially vulnerable strata, including veterans of the Artsakh war, relatives of perished soldiers and others, and the poor. Nonetheless, he said, it is a market economy. He said, “there are possible threats of monopoly creation but the state tries to struggle against this. Economic integration is also close with Armenia.”

Babayan gave the example of Karabakh Telecom, the local operator of communications and mobile phones, which is the only company wanting to participate in this field. The problem is that Artsakh is a small market and not a recognized state.

While many economic advances are being made, work on demining and repairing the damages from the Karabakh battles of the 1990s also continues, sometimes with heavy costs and consequences. In March 2018, three staff members of the humanitarian landmine clearing organization HALO Trust were killed and two injured due to the accidental detonation of an anti-tank landmine in Artsakh. Babayan praised the HALO Trust and all the dedicated people who risk their own lives to save those of tens of thousands. He said that several meetings were held with the HALO representative and Artsakh's government will do everything possible for the families of those killed. He explained that as they were not servicemen in the army, their families are not at present legally entitled to assistance from the state, so it has to be addressed at present on a case-by-case basis. However, Babayan said, “The process has started to make appropriate changes for the future.”



COMMUNITY NEWS

Incarceration and Injustice Addressed at Najarian Talk

INCARCERATION, from page 1

Fanno Burdeen is the chief executive officer of the Pretrial Justice Institute and Levin is the vice president of criminal justice at the Texas Public Policy Foundation and Right on Crime.

The two, along with Koutoujian, spoke about pretrial detention for those arrested and its systematic ties to issues of race and class.

Opening the program was Dr. Carolann Najarian, who recited several striking statistics: the US, she said, with 5 percent of the world's population, accounts for 25 percent of the world's incarcerated population. In fact, she said, the country has the highest rate of incarceration in the developed world. Within the US, Oklahoma is the state with the highest rate of pretrial detention and Massachusetts the lowest. Panelist Levin noted later in the program that as well as Massachusetts is doing, Canada's numbers are half that of the state.

Pretrial Detention

Koutoujian explained that lest the audience think that the panel is asking for lenience in sentencing, the discussion was about pretrial detention, meaning those that have been charged with a crime and are legally considered innocent of that crime, in the period before the adjudication of the case.

This talk addressed issues that are usually "put on the backburner" and affect people who are often disregarded because of their status, he noted.

"No one should be set aside in our society for their status," he stressed.

"There is no partisanship to it. It protects our communities, protects human dignity and saves money also," Koutoujian said.

Usually bail is set as a condition to return to face the charges after an arrest. Fanno Burdeen explained, "Bail is the contract between the court and someone, says these are the conditions you must abide by to be released and then come back to court. Money bond is one of those elements. One of the things Mark and I have partnered on is that the majority of the people who will come to court and not get rearrested do not need to be in jail for months awaiting a trial, during which time if they had a job they would lose it," have their housing destabilized and affect their families.

Said Fanno Burdeen, "Employment, stable housing and good connections with families [are] the very three things we disrupt" with pretrial detention.

"The most important thing in pretrial justice is constitutional rights: the presumption of innocence, equal protection and due process," Levin added.

Comprehensive criminal justice reforms passed last year, Koutoujian noted. "However significant gaps in our system remain. Gaps into which people, disproportionately men of color, fall into and never climb back out of," he said.

The numbers are stark reminders of what is going on in society today, he said, in terms of race.

"Pretrial services have long been a secondary consideration even in the criminal justice community," he said. However, nearly 500,000 are held every day as part of pretrial detention.

More starkly, he said, according to the Pretrial Justice Institute which Fanno Burdeen leads, 65 percent of the US jail population is "awaiting a court charge."

The two panelists agreed that money is the root of the problem for those remanded before trial.

Bail, set anywhere from \$100 to \$1 million, is often a reason for people to stay in jail as they cannot afford to pay it.

Texas Leading in Reforms

At the moment, Texas is "a state whose reforms in the last decades have earned it national recognition," he said. The state, he added, "Stepped it up way more than most other states."

In 2005, the president of a think tank, Texas Public Policy Foundation, asked Levin to take part in a study to see why the state of Texas was building so many prisons and still running out of room, "spending a fortune and not getting a commensurate public safety return on that investment" on that.

He started looking into what could be done



From left, Cherise Fanno Burdeen, Middlesex Sheriff Peter Koutoujian and Mark A. Levin

differently.

The turning point was in 2007, when another agency projected that yet another 17,000 prison beds would be needed by 2012. He said he and his group convinced then-governor Rick Perry to instead consider measures that would reduce the prison population in the first place rather than just build prisons. "We aware able to craft a justice reinvestment plan, \$241 million to expand those facilities," and even closed eight prisoners in addition to not building any new ones.

"In 2010 I had the idea for Right on Crime," as interest increased across the country, Levin said. Newt Gingrich and Jeb Bush are supporters of this conservative approach to prison reform.

"The goal of our effort is to redefine what it means to be a conservative on criminal justice, take it back to constitutional rights and limited government," he said.

In addition to political conservatives, many of the leaders in this effort have been religious leaders, believing in "redemption," Levin said.

The panelists agreed that major opposition to reform comes from professional bond holders who make money on the backs of the poor or those who do not have enough money to pay for bail.

"I am having to go to a commercial bondsman and they will post on my behalf and I will give the bondsman 10 percent even if I am innocent," Levin said.

Interestingly, the panel said that the only other country that has commercial bail in addition to the US is the Philippines.

The idea of making release based on financial status is an incorrect path, they argued. "The most significant finding is that most people released return on their own recognizance. And a lot of people should be dealt with police diversion. How much money you have has nothing to do with whether you will commit another offense," Levin said.

"Most people would have trouble coming up with \$400 in cash. For the vast majority of people it is," she said. "We're paying \$150 a day [to house incarcerated people] because you can't pay \$400."

"It is stunning when you see some of these operations. Stunning to see how much money they are making off the backs of people who are too poor to get out of jail," Koutoujian said.

There are no bail bondsmen in Massachusetts, the panel said.

"The number one thing we need to correct is making sure you don't make a decision on the ability to pay but rather on public safety," Levin said. There is a "very small category" of people who should be denied bail for a variety of reasons.

Violent people can be flagged. "There is a small segment of people that we can deny bail."

"If you have someone that you determine is dangerous, they can be held without bail," Koutoujian said.

Addressing Roots of Arrests

Drugs, mental health issues and homelessness are all contributing factors to arrests. Those, Levin said, should be addressed by means other than stays in jail before trial.

"We have prosecutors who say if they [those charged] get treatment for their issue, then we are not going to prosecute the case," Levin said.

In addition, Levin said that research supported by the Arnold Foundation shows that when those arrested are detained for even short periods before trial, they will have higher rates of engaging in new criminal activity.

Fanno Burdeen added, that for those with mental illness or drug abuse problems, jail is "a very harsh environment. The smells, the noise, the sounds, just the environment of the jail are very damaging to people with mental illness."

In pretrial, you don't get programming, they don't get eared good time, and you do a year just sitting in a jail and your case comes up"

and you are asked to plead guilty, Koutoujian said. "You come out worse."

Half the people arrested in Middlesex have mental health or addiction problems, Koutoujian said.

The average length of pretrial stay is two months, but it can even last up to a year, or even years, pending trial, Fanno Burdeen said.

"Unlike some of the more complicated criminal justice reforms we try to negotiate with policymakers is the fix for these issues is relatively common sense and relatively simple," she said.

Levin praised the recent federal criminal justice reform, titled The First Step, and signed by President Trump.

Another new development that Najarian spoke about was a new collaboration between the Heritage Foundation and the Berklee School of Music to address inequity in criminal justice. Two students, Karen Yamaguchi and Brett Fairchild, sophomores at Berklee, performed an original song, *Wake Up*, about injustice in the justice system.

He also made a case for the program.

"This series and the Armenian Heritage Park Foundation assisting to putting it on, holds a very special place in my heart," Koutoujian said, adding, "to Carolann and George, thank you, thank you, thank you, thank you, for making our world a better place. This series is very important for me because it is an opportunity for me to talk about larger, weighty issues affecting our society."

The lecture program is endowed by George K. and Carolann S. Najarian, M.D. in honor of Dr. Najarian's father, Avedis Albert Abrahamian.

A reception followed at the Bostonian Hotel.

For more information or to see a video of the lecture visit humanrightslecture.org.

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COMMUNITY NEWS

Group Addresses Care of Loved Ones with Alzheimer's in Armenia

SAN CLEMENTE, Calif. and YEREVAN – Alzheimer's Care Armenia (ACA), in partnership with Silverado, a specializing in the care of people living with dementia, sponsored a Armenia Alzheimer's Disease Conference in Yerevan on Friday, October 28, to help educate

ceived the Armenia Alzheimer's Disease 2018 Conference in partnership with Armenian leaders in dementia care, to help build the knowledge and awareness necessary to meet this rising challenge.

During the conference, a range of experts

of Neurology Department at Yerevan State Medical University and Victor Mazmanian, Dementia Caregiving Expert and Silverado Senior Director of Faith Outreach as well as other treatment and care professionals. Conference partners included Homeland Development Initiative Foundation (HDIF-USA), Impact Hub Yerevan and Meaningfulworld.

A leadership brainstorm session at Yerevan Impact Hub included attendees with a loved one with a dementia and served as an insightful venue for people to start talking about this "stigma" in Armenia which is slowly being overcome. Mahakian and Victor Mazmanian were on the talk show the "Daily View" with host Hamlet Ghoushchyan as well as the Ararat news program, met with the Ministry of Health, and held meetings with the Ministry of Health, Yerevan State Medical University and other

elderly people. By 2050, almost one-third of Armenia's population will be over the age of 60. The prevalence of Alzheimer's disease and other dementias is on the rise. Little attention has been given to Alzheimer's disease and other dementias in Armenia, until now.

ACA now seeks to solidify a healthcare outreach in Armenia for the disease. A Memory Club pilot program is currently being developed and will be offered at Orran in Vanadzor. In partnership with Orran Benevolent NGO and Homeland Development Initiative Foundation (HDIF), this will be a 10-week cognitive training class for older adults that will focus on improving cognitive skills. This class begins in March 2019. In addition, other multi-level programs, trainings and services are currently being developed which will improve diagnostic and treatment options for the person with dementia as well as their families.



(L-R) Dr. Mikhayil Agajanov, Founder of Alzheimer's Disease Association Armenia; Artashes Gevorkyan, Ph.D; Dr. Jane L. Mahakian, Founder, Alzheimer's Care Armenia; Victor Mazmanian, Senior Director of Faith Outreach, Silverado; Lilit Abrahamyan, Program Coordinator; and Ofelia Kamavosyan, Journalist.

and communicate the challenges of Alzheimer's and other forms of dementia.

More than 300 professionals gathered at Yerevan State Medical University to discuss the current status and future of dementia care in Armenia. ACA Founder Dr. Jane Mahakian con-

shared their insight into how the unique challenges faced by those affected by dementia in Armenia can be overcome, including Prof. Mikhayil Aghajanyan, MD, Chairman of Biochemistry, Yerevan State University; Prof. Hovhannes M. Manvelyan, MD, Ph.D. Chairman



One of the speakers at the program

Cathedral Prayer Service Reveals Living Spirit Behind the Met Museum Exhibit

PRAYER, from page 6

Providential and Sublime

In his inspiring welcoming message, the Primate paid tribute to this year's 50th anniversary of St. Vartan Cathedral, and noted the spiritual connection of the church to the many artifacts displayed in the "Armenia!" exhibit.

"Perhaps it is providential that this sensational, once-in-a-lifetime exhibit should coincide with our golden anniversary year. That alone would justify our decision to conduct a solemn Vespers service, to thank God, and to thank everyone whose efforts brought so many priceless treasures of Armenian artistry to this city—where they have inspired thousands of people who otherwise might have no notion of the art created by the Armenian people," he said with emphasis.

Findikyan referred to the exhibition's 140 items of explicitly religious character, including illuminated manuscripts, early printed Bibles, sophisticated carved doors to a medieval monasteries, liturgical vestments, altar coverings, and bejeweled repositories. He called all of these works "expressions of the abiding faith of the Armenian people – the first nation in the world to formally embrace Christianity."

The prayers and chants "transmitted to a community of faithful far removed from the place of their original compilation, are nonetheless in continuity with our ancestor's faith and

most sacred convictions," Findikyan said in conclusion, as he thanked Dr. Helen Evans for her "exquisite and meticulous" work in curating the exhibition.

Following the Lord's Prayer sung in Armenian, and recited in English, the crowd of some 200 people attended a reception in the Diocesan Center's Haik and Alice Kavookjian Auditorium.

Bishop Anoushavan Tanielian called the prayer service "the crowning of the 'Armenia!' exhibition, where the entire focus was on Armenian culture and art."

For Evans, the service was "exceptionally beautiful. It was wonderful to have the Armenian Church community do this for the Met Museum, and for our students from Columbia University."

And for Nazli Onder, born in Diarbekir of Armenian, Kurdish, and Turkish background, the evening vespers service was "impressive and deep." A doctoral student at Leeds University in England, where she concentrates on the Armenian diaspora, said that the occasion marked her first visit to America's magnificent cathedral of St. Vartan.



Dr. Helen Evans with the Very Rev. Daniel Findikyan (Photo Credit: Albin Lohr-Jones)



Diocesan Primate the Very Rev. Daniel Findikyan with Bishop Anoushavan Tanielian of the Prelacy of the Armenian Church of America (Photo Credit: Albin Lohr-Jones)

medical, government and business leaders. Mahakian also met with several families who have a loved one with Alzheimer's disease in Armenia.

Alzheimer's disease and other dementias are prevalent and on the rise in Armenia, but the lack of knowledge regarding diagnosis, care and treatment creates many challenges for those living with the disease and their loved ones. Armenia has a rapidly growing population of

The 2nd annual Alzheimer's Disease conference for family caregivers is currently being planned for Fall 2019.

ACA was founded in 2017 with the purpose of raising awareness and offering solutions for the care and treatment of people with Alzheimer's disease. It has no political or religious affiliations.

For information or sponsorship opportunities, visit www.alzherimerscarearmenia.org.

St. James Armenian Church Men's Club Dinner Meeting to Feature ATP's Jeanmarie Papelian

WATERTOWN – On Monday, January 7, 2019 there will be a St. James Armenian Church Men's Club dinner meeting at the St. James Charles Mosesian Cultural and Youth Center. The speaker will be Jeanmarie Papelian, executive director of the Armenian Tree Project (ATP). She will present ATP's strategy to use trees to transform a village in Armenia.

ATP was established 25 years ago, when Armenia was facing the challenges of newfound independence. It was a time of change and hope. The act of planting a tree was an expression of hope and an investment in the future. Today there's a renewed opportunity to create an Armenia where doing things is possible. ATP is working to help create an Armenia that is clean and green, with a respect for people and planet. ATP is proud to stand out as the only non-profit organization dedicated to using trees as a means of improving the standard of living for the Armenian people and protecting the environment.

ATP Makes All This Happen:

- 250,000 trees planted annually
- 1,200+ planting sites across Armenia and Artsakh
- 4 state-of-the-art tree nurseries
- 80 full-time and 150 seasonal workers
- 250 schools in Armenia and 100 schools in diaspora using ATP's environmental education curriculum
- 2 centers for environmental education, research and summer programs

This St James Men's Club dinner meeting will begin with a social hour and mezza at 6:15 p.m. and dinner at 7 p.m. Mezza and Losh Kebab & Kheyima Dinner \$16/person. Ladies are invited.



Jeanmarie Papelian

Arts & Living

Director of Zohrab Center Presents New Research to American Anthropological Association

NEW YORK — On Friday, November 16, Dr. Christopher Sheklian, director of the Krikor and Clara Zohrab Information Center of the Eastern Diocese of the Armenian church of America, presented his newest research at the 117th annual meeting of the American Anthropological Association (AAA), in San Jose, Calif.

Sheklian, whose research focuses on Armenian Apostolic Christianity and its role in Armenian cultural life, is trained as an anthropologist, receiving his doctorate from the Department of Anthropology at the University of Chicago in 2017.

At the conference Sheklian delivered a paper titled “Christian Environmentalism and the Temporality of Creation(ism).” This paper is the beginning of a new research project,



Dr. Christopher Sheklian, director of the Eastern Diocese's Zohrab Information Center, delivering a paper at the annual conference of the American Anthropological Association.

which looks at different Christian responses to contemporary environmental challenges. In addition to relying on the extensive theological writings of the Eastern Orthodox Church, Sheklian has begun fieldwork with Christian environmental groups based in New York. He also draws on the theology of the Armenian Apostolic Church, and plans to articulate an Armenian Christian environmental theology as he continues this project.

The annual meeting of the American Anthropological Association is the largest academic gathering of anthropologists in the world, convening for almost a week every year. During that week, hundreds of panel presentations offer a view of the current state of the academic discipline of anthropology.

In addition to his membership in the American Anthropological Association, Sheklian is also a member of the Society for Armenian Studies. At the same time that the AAA met in San Jose, the Society for Armenian Studies convened in San Antonio as part of the larger annual meeting of the Middle East Studies Association.

During that meeting, the Society for Armenian Studies announced the winners of the best books and dissertations in Armenian Studies for the years 2015-2017. Sheklian's dissertation, “Theology and the Community: The Armenian Minority, Tradition, and Secularism in Turkey” was awarded the second place “Honorable Mention” for best dissertation.

As director of the Zohrab Information Center, Sheklian maintains active participation in the academic discipline of Armenian Studies and its related fields.



Jennifer Liston Munson next to the introductory panel with quotation on Armenia from former US ambassador Michael Gfoeller, during noon press meeting November 15 (photo: Aram Arkun)

Armenian Museum of America Inaugurates New Gallery with Reception

WATERTOWN — The Armenian Museum of America inaugurated its redesigned main floor introductory gallery, called “Armenia: Art, Culture, Eternity,” during an evening reception on November 15. President Michele Kolligian and Executive Director Jennifer Liston Munson presented their vision for the museum and thanked all those who participated in the renovation work. Despite the snowstorm, the building was packed.

By Aram Arkun
Mirror-Spectator Staff

Watertown Town Councilor Lisa Feltner was among the guests.

Berj Chekijian, director of finance and building operations of the museum and formerly its executive director, introduced Kolligian, who spoke briefly of the history of the museum and its founding visionaries, led by the late museum board chairman Haig Der Manuelian.

The collection, started in 1971, was moved 30 years ago from the First Armenian Church in Belmont, Mass. to the present location, and, Kolligian said, a new phase in the life of the museum began eight years ago. Vice President Robert P. Khederian of the museum's board had met Estrellita Karsh, widow of the famous photographer Yousuf Karsh. She was willing to donate photographic prints from original negatives of her husband's work to the museum, but insisted on changes in the approach used for displays. To this end, she introduced Kolligian and others to Keith Crippen, director of design of the Museum of Fine Arts (MFA) in Boston, and to Jennifer Liston Munson.



Family histories display with Araxie Krikorian's post-Genocide orphan dress (photo: Aram Arkun)

Crippen recognized the possibilities in the former bank building, Kolligian related, and he and Munson began designing. Simultaneously, almost \$1 million was raised by the Armenian Museum's board, with Khederian playing an important role in this. The Karsh gallery opened in September 2011. Kolligian said, “We were completely changed from what we were before, and it was a very proud moment, and that was the beginning.”

Initially Munson became part of the museum on a part-time but significant basis, designing the Simourian Family Galleries and the Adel and Haig Der Manuelian Contemporary Galleries. At the beginning of this year, she became the executive director of the museum.

Kolligian soon called Munson to the podium. Munson explained that the main goal of her work was to bring joy into the building together with Armenian culture. She said, “I think you might have noticed that the party starts at the street now,” referring to the ability to see vivid images and glimpses of the gallery from outside the museum. Munson continued: “We are beginning a new phase of sharing and connecting with the public and with ourselves, and it is pretty exciting.”

see OPENING, page 13

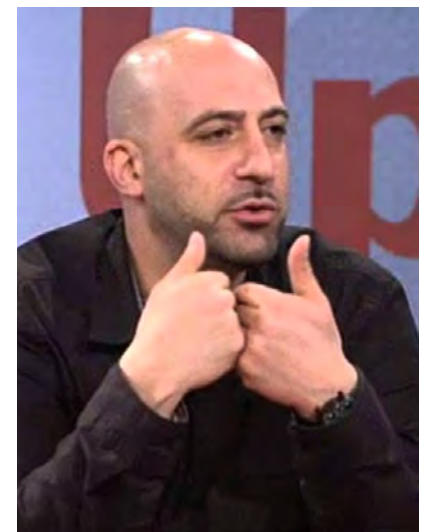
Assadourian Goes From Hard Time to Stage Presence

By Taleen Babayan
Special to the Mirror-Spectator

ORADELL, N.J. — Joe Assadourian is a hugger. He doesn't offer a half-hearted greeting, but a tight embrace, holding on for a few seconds as if enveloping a long-lost friend. He hugs and talks to everyone, removing any barriers with strangers at first glance, bringing his street charm into an eclectic suburban coffee shop here in Northern New Jersey.

Perhaps it's that genuine nature and heart-on-his-sleeve persona that made him popular on stage as he assumed 18 characters in his one-man show “The Bullpen,” which he wrote and performed in over the course of two years at the off-Broadway venue The Playroom Theater. The show, which earned accolades and was dubbed as “wildly funny” by the *New York Times*, is currently in the process of being filmed for a comedy special on cable television with producer Larry Meistrich (who was behind the Academy Award winning “Sling Blade”) at the helm.

“The Bullpen,” which focuses on a man's arrest and arraignment as he awaits trial for a crime he claims he did not commit, incorporates a multitude of true-to-life characters surrounding the confined space inside the bullpen and the courtroom, is based on Assadourian's personal



Joe Assadourian (*New York Times*)

experiences during his own arrest and subsequent trial in 2001. The play, which was nominated for the Outer Critics Circle Award for Outstanding Solo Performance, hit the stage in July 2014, a few months after his release, and extended its run numerous times.

While “The Bullpen” was billed as a “jail show” by the media, Joe counters that claim, clarifying that it is about people. He gives heart to fully fleshed characters on stage, particularly the accused man who is convicted of a crime and how he is judged both by a jury and fellow prisoners.

“I got a PhD in people,” said Joe. “I have been around a lot of different kinds of people and I absorbed them if they were interesting.”

A natural born performer, Joe inadvertently prepared for his career early on, growing up in industrial Paterson, New Jersey. see ASSADOURIAN, page 15



ARTS & LIVING

Armenian Museum of America Inaugurates New Gallery with Reception

OPENING, from page 12

She thanked Kolligian, the museum's trustees, curators Gary and Susan Lind-Sinanian, Berj Chekijian, and many others, and noted that she has hired new staff. Aside from her mentor Crippen, Munson acknowledged the presence of Virginia Durruty, formerly her colleague at the MFA, as architectural consultant.

Munson said that her goal was "to articulate the key themes of Armenian culture through objects in our collection." She said that future gallery renovations will include the topic of the Armenian Genocide, but, "in order to tell this story of unspeakable loss it is my feeling that we first need to show what was lost."

She concluded with a quotation from former US Ambassador Michael Gfoeller, whose claims even the proudest Armenian could not surpass: "Armenia is not merely a small country in the Caucasus...it is one of the wellsprings of world civilization, on the same level as Mesopotamia, Egypt, Greece, and Italy. Whoever bakes or eats bread, makes or drinks wine, uses metal tools or jewelry, or wears clothing and shoes, is tied by invisible bonds of cultural inheritance to Armenia. In this sense we are all Armenians."

Munson said the quote sums up the essence of what the newly renovated gallery and the museum is about.

Guests were then invited upstairs to listen to cellist Kate Kayaian, mingle and enjoy Armenian foods.

Earlier that day, Munson gave a more detailed explanation about the changes in the museum to several press representatives. She started with the physical structure, pointing out that the former bank building, started in 1969 and completed in 1970, is an example of the architectural style called brutalism. (Boston City Hall is the most famous example of this style.) The museum moved into this building in



Michele Kolligian addressing the guests (photo: Aram Arkun)

1990.

The building was thought of as "dark and very ugly," Munson said, and because it had not been renovated for a very long time, "kind of sleepy." Consultant Durruty was particularly interested in ways of adapting brutalism, and so a new approach was taken to open up the building. As Munson put it, "you experience from the outside the inside, and from the inside the outside." In other words, it became more accessible. Interior walls blocking windows were replaced by self-standing walls and the dark film on the windows was replaced with light and clear film with an ultraviolet filter. A glowing light panel was set on a timer for 4 p.m. to 2 a.m.



Chalk mold, c. 1895 (photo: Aram Arkun)



Part of the Armenians in America section, with Armenian-language map of the world as background (photo: Aram Arkun)



Objects of remembrance (photo: Aram Arkun)

tion, Kütahya ceramics, metal work, Armenian international trade, genocide, and the continuum (post-Genocide Armenian life).

The device used to present these themes was a series of floating platforms. Table cases on the platforms reference the black color of obsidian in Armenia. Munson said that she and Durruty worked to integrate architecture and graphics with the objects, just as she used to do at the Boston Museum of Fine Arts. Each item was given its own custom mount and desiccants were placed underneath in the cases for preservation purposes, unlike earlier iterations of the museum displays.

The highlights of the museum collection include Armenian manuscripts, specialized collections of textiles and over 200 rugs, coins, Kütahya ceramics, reliquaries, a deep collection of metalwork and various personal objects of witness of Armenian survivors of the Armenian Genocide.

One example of an object of witness is a chalk mold. It is displayed separately as a symbol of survival and remembrance, Munson said. It

turned powdered limestone into sticks of chalk and was owned by Krikor Ouzoumian. His life was spared during the 19th century Hamidian massacres when he offered to make chalk for the troops. He expanded his factory, creating a secret room with supplies where his family survived 1915.

Though ultimately he died, his wife leveraged the chalk production to exempt the family from deportation, and when they later came to the US, they only brought this single object with them. It was separated, with one half held by a brother and the other by a sister, but rejoined when donated.

Many items have been taken out of storage and displayed for the first time in the new installation. Furthermore, a family history case has been set up whose contents will be rotated every few months to highlight new items. At present, it showcases a white Greek orphanage dress there which belonged to Araxie Krikorian, with a photo of her wearing the dress while in the orphanage (though dated to 1915, the orphanage was only set up in 1923).

Establishing the aesthetic and logic, or, as Munson said, "this way of talking about things," has been the first major step in changing the museum. A model of the museum has been created for planning. It comes apart like a dollhouse, to allow thinking to be holistic.

Among what is coming in the future, aside from building repairs and further redesigned areas, including an articulate section on the Armenian Genocide upstairs, are audio guides and interactive displays. A khachkar or cross stone will be on display soon. The Smithsonian had commissioned a new one for its Folklife Festival this year which it sold at a very reasonable cost to the Armenian Museum. The museum will have a more visible external presence too, with the Watertown Planning Board having agreed to allow banners to be placed on the poles outside.

Grants are being sought for expanding in-depth research on the museum holdings and increasing the range of educational and artistic activities.

Munson thought that scenes from Sergei Parajanov film, "The Color of Pomegranates," set amidst the ruins of Armenian architecture, offered a model, she said, to "use the existing architecture with its full open pattern almost as a metaphor for Armenian church architecture and for Armenian history...and animate it with the objects inside."

The newly renovated gallery starts near the museum entrance with the Gfoeller quote mentioned above. A map places Armenia in the world today for visitors. A major decision was made to not try to tell the whole history of Armenia. Instead, Munson said, she would "try to introduce the important themes of Armenian culture through the objects in our collection." Instead of replicating the most important pieces of Armenian art, she would use collection items that represent the important themes. She determined that these included antiquity, the language and the invention of an alphabet, the early adoption of Christianity, the textile tradi-



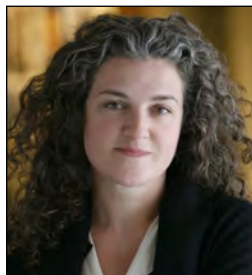
ARTS & LIVING

Historians in Action: How and Why We Reclaim An Armenian Feminist Past

CAMBRIDGE, Mass. — On Sunday, December 9 at 7 p.m., Zoravik (“in solidarity”), a Boston-based Armenian activist collective that promotes new avenues for political and grassroots organizing and project-based engagement for progressives, will feature a program on Armenian feminism. The program will take place at the Harvard Science Cetner, 110 Oxford St., Cambridge, Room 110. It will feature Prof. Lerna Ekmekcioglu and Prof. Melissa Bilal.

Said the two scholars, “As Armenian women academics born in Istanbul we have long been involved in the feminist movement across continents. In this conversation with Zoravik and friends, we will share our research and personal experiences relating to Armenian women’s past and present struggle against all forms of injustice. Our latest project, ‘Feminism in Armenian: An Interpretive Anthology and Digital Archive,’ aims to end the ever-present invisibility of activist women in Armenian historiography and collective memory.”

Ekmekcioglu is McMillan-Stewart Associate Professor of History at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology where she is also affiliated with the Women and Gender Studies Program. Ekmekcioglu majored in Sociology at Bogaziçi University, Istanbul and received her PhD at New York University’s joint program of History and Middle Eastern & Islamic Studies.



Prof. Lerna Ekmekcioglu

She held a one year Manoogian post-doctoral fellowship at the University of Michigan’s Armenian Studies Program. Together with Melissa Bilal, Ekmekcioglu is the co-editor of the 2006 book in

Turkish titled *A Cry for Justice: Five Armenian Feminist Writers from the Ottoman Empire to the Turkish Republic (1862–1933)*. Her first monograph, *Recovering Armenia: The Limits of Belonging in Post-Genocide Turkey*, came out from Stanford University Press in 2016. Currently she is collaborating with Bilal for a book and digital humanities project titled *Feminism in Armenian: An Interpretive Anthology and Digital Archive*, which focuses on the life and works of 12 pioneering women intellectuals from 1860s to 1960s.

Bilal is visiting assistant professor in the College of Humanities and Social Sciences at the American University of Armenia. Previously, she was Dumanian Visiting Professor of Armenian Studies at the University of Chicago, Visiting Scholar of History at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Ordjanian Visiting Faculty of Armenian Studies at Columbia University,



Prof. Melissa Bilal

Visiting Lecturer of History at Bogaziçi University, and Postdoctoral Research Fellow at Orient-Institut Istanbul. Receiving her PhD in Ethnomusicology from the University of Chicago

Department of Music, she held a two-year Mellon Postdoctoral Teaching Fellowship in Music at Columbia University. Bilal earned her BA and MA degrees in Sociology at Bogaziçi University. Together with Ekmekcioglu, she co-edited the 2006 volume *A Cry for Justice: Five Armenian Feminist Writers from the Ottoman Empire to the Turkish Republic (1862–1933)* in Turkish and is now co-working on *Feminism in Armenian: An Interpretive Anthology and Digital Archive*, a book and digital humanities project

Recipe Corner

Guest Recipe

by Christine Vartanian Datian



Savory Armenian Chorag

Guest Recipe by the late Anne Marootian, adapted by Robyn Kalajian



Many years ago, a unique, delicious Armenian chorag recipe was handed down to Robyn Dabbakian-Kalajian’s family from a dear old family friend who, in Robyn’s humble opinion, was one of the best Armenian cooks in New Jersey – the late Anne Marootian. Unlike many chorag recipes which tend to be sweet, this one is on the savory side with the addition of freshly ground mahlab, anise seed, fennel seed, and ginger. It might sound like an unusual mix of flavors, but the results are quite delicious.



INGREDIENTS

1/2 lb. unsalted butter
1 cup whole milk
1 egg
1 package dry yeast
1/4 cup sugar
1/2 teaspoon salt
1 tablespoon each of freshly ground mahlab, fennel seed, anise seed
1/2 teaspoon ground ginger
2 tablespoons active baking powder*
5 to 5 1/2 cups all-purpose flour

Egg wash: 1 or 2 eggs, beaten (the number of eggs depends on how many chorags you’re making)

*Before you begin, test the baking powder to make sure it is “active.” To do this, simply sprinkle some baking powder into a small amount of tap water. If it is active, the baking powder will fizz and foam.

Garnish: Toasted sesame seeds, optional.

PREPARATION

1. Melt butter in a saucepan. Add milk and heat to a gentle simmer (do NOT boil). Cool.
2. Beat egg and add to cooled milk.
3. In a small bowl, dissolve yeast in 1/4 cup warm water (about 105-110° F). You can check the temperature with a food thermometer or by putting a drop on your wrist. If it feels comfortable to your wrist, the temperature is good to go. Set aside.
4. Mix sugar, salt, spices, and baking powder together. Set aside.
5. Place 5 cups of flour into a large mixing bowl. Combine the blended spice mixture into the flour.
6. Add the milk-egg mixture to the dry ingredients. Stir in the dissolved yeast and mix well.
7. Place dough on a lightly floured work surface and knead dough until it is smooth and elastic, about 10 minutes. (This can also be done in an electric stand mixer using a dough hook, but only mix for about 2 minutes.) If the dough seems a bit sticky, add some of the extra 1/2 cup flour that was not used earlier.
8. Place dough in a large, clean bowl, cover with plastic wrap, then cover with a towel. Allow to rise for 2 hours.
9. Break off about a golf ball-size piece of dough (roughly 2 ounces for each chorag). Roll it into a long, thin rope, about 15 inches in length. Break off about one-third (5 inches) of the dough. Shape the longer piece of dough into a horseshoe (U) shape. Place the shorter piece of dough in the center of the “U,” and begin braiding the 3 strips of dough. (Here’s the link to TheArmenianKitchen.com video on ‘How to Braid Chorag’: <https://youtu.be/ggehjkweSBs>)
10. Place the braided dough on an ungreased baking sheet. Continue to shape dough until tray is full. (Do not place chorags too close to each other. Give them room to expand while they bake.)
11. Cover the unbaked chorags with plastic wrap and let the shaped dough rise on the tray for one more hour before baking.
12. Remove the plastic wrap and brush tops with the egg wash. Sprinkle chorag tops with toasted sesame seeds, if desired.
13. Bake at 375° F. on the bottom oven rack until the bottom of the chorag is golden (about 15 minutes). Then transfer the tray to the top rack until the top of the chorag is golden (about another 5 minutes). Cool chorag completely on wire racks.
14. Continue this procedure until all dough is shaped and baked.
15. Store completely cooled chorag in a container with a tight-fitting lid. If you plan to freeze them, layer the chorags in a plastic storage container with parchment paper or plastic wrap placed between the layers to prevent them from sticking to each other. Alternately, chorags can be frozen in freezer bags.

Note: This recipe can easily be doubled. Chorag can be thawed in the microwave by simply wrapping each chorag in a slightly dampened paper towel, and microwaving for about 20-30 seconds on low power, or until defrosted.

“Mahlab is the dried “heart” of the cherry pit. It can be purchased in most Middle Eastern stores. If you cannot find it, you can omit it from this recipe; the taste will be slightly different, but still delicious. This recipe can easily be doubled.” – Robyn Kalajian

Recipe courtesy of Robyn Kalajian at TheArmenianKitchen.com.

focusing on 12 Ottoman-born Armenian feminist writers and activists. Bilal’s most recent publications include the article “Lullabies and the Memory of Pain: Armenian Women’s Remembrance of the Past in Turkey,” *Dialectical Anthropology* (Forthcoming 2018) and the CD

project Voice Signatures: Recordings of Russian Armenian POWs in German Camps, 1916-1918 (Berlin Staatliche Museen, Preussischer Kulturbesitz, Forthcoming 2018).

Formed in the wake of the Velvet Revolution, Zoravik seeks to mobilize the political, cultural,

and social institutions of the diaspora to support and encourage transformative efforts in Armenian communities worldwide.

For more information, visit www.facebook.com/zoravik or email zoravik@gmail.com.



ARTS & LIVING

Assadourian Goes From Hard Time to Stage Presence

ASSADOURIAN, from page 12

Jersey, where he was surrounded by individuals of all races. He always made it a point to observe and listen to the many dialects around him, particularly the Middle Eastern, African-American and Spanish populations he was immersed in. He emerged as a class clown, inciting laughter among his classmates, but facing a reprimand by his teachers and parents.

"I used to get in trouble for the way I was in school," said Joe who is now 40 years old. "But sometimes you can't stop the energy that comes out because if there is some funny s***t going on, let's laugh at it."

As a teenager, Assadourian and his family moved to suburban Paramus, New Jersey, where he couldn't shake off being entertainer, but didn't take the craft seriously because he "didn't know what to do or how to go about it."

"A lot of people want to go into the industry," said Assadourian. "Sure I thought about it but never took steps toward it." His dreams, instead, revolved around becoming a baseball player.

Instead of developing his inherent charisma and talent, he started his own business in Fort Lee, NJ, after graduating from high school. He worked at the Palisades Grill during the day and at night crossed the bridge to go clubbing, a poster child of the New York City nightlife scene in the early aughts at venues such as the infamous Limelight.

When asked how it felt to create art during a challenging time in his life as a prisoner, his lighthearted and self-deprecating attitude kicks into gear.

"Is that the first mention of that today?" he asks with a smile. "You were holding onto that, weren't you?"

He pauses for a moment.

"If I go there and do nothing, then the time was taken from me," said Joe. "If I go there and better myself, then that's my time that I'm taking back."

A fateful night in downtown New York in 2001 changed the course of his life, putting a halt to his self-indulgent ways. After an altercation that became violent, Assadourian was charged with attempted murder, to which he plead not guilty; he was convicted of assault in the first degree, spending the next 12 years – and the chunk of his 20s and 30s – behind bars at the Otisville Correctional Facility in upstate New York. He reflects on the conviction as a turning point in his

life.

"I didn't get locked up," said Assadourian with certainty. "I got rescued."

If prison saved him from a potential life of crime, then the theatre workshop he enrolled in by writer and director Richard Hoehler at Otisville, gave his life its purpose. During his time in the penitentiary, Assadourian shifted



Joe Assadourian (Photo credit Ben Mann)

his focus and began reading books while his street smarts kept him out of trouble as fellow inmates became entangled with gangs, like the notorious Bloods and the Crips. Partnering up with a fellow prisoner who became his friend, Joe started writing a play, though he had never seen one. The duo received back-to-back PEN Prison Writing Awards in 2002 for "Heaven" and in 2003 for "Joey Shakespeare," a play that also became part of the New York Now reading series at The Public Theater, followed by a presentation by The Collective Theatre in Miami.

Assadourian felt ready to put pen to paper on his own and bring to life all the authentic characters who had seeped into his subconscious and whom he observed with a keen eye throughout his life, and particularly in prison, notating each detail carefully on a daily basis.

"Back then I used to walk around with a notebook in my pocket," said Joe. "When I

going and make it part of the show because that is real acting," said Joe. "It's inorganic to be on a film set because you're always waiting around on set and that's less exciting than performing in the now in theater." Assadourian understands why film stars return to the theater every year because it helps them sharpen their acting skills in front of a live audience, whereas filming becomes redundant and "even if it's not stale coming out of my mouth, it's stale in my head."

Following the conclusion of "The Bullpen" at The Playroom Theater, Assadourian went on to star in the Amazon series "The Grind," as well as assuming a role in the Showtime series "Billions," and receiving his Screen Actors Guild membership. He remains committed to "The Bullpen," and in addition to filming it for an upcoming comedy special, he continues to perform the show in exclusive appearances across the country, particularly at educational institutions, including Princeton, Rutgers and Baruch College. Writing is a steadfast portion of his daily life as he works on penning a television show.

"My mind won't shut the f**k up," said Assadourian. "Experience is everything."

That experience is rooted in growing up in an Armenian household, shaping him as a person and as an artist.

"There's a deep pride in me that I am Armenian," said Assadourian. "I feel we have an obligation to ourselves and ancestors and while some people are letting it go, I can't and I won't."

Acknowledging the parameters of any tight-knit ethnic community, he encourages Armenians to search for and excel at whatever it is he or she is passionate about.

"Do what you could possibly be great at, and I think we could all possibly be great at something, because it shouldn't be work," said Joe. "I'm fortunate I get to do what I do because if I went to work for someone else on a daily basis, I know I would be disappointed in myself."

His craft and writing is inspired by "everyday people" and the likes of performers such as Eddie Murphy "who is great at every aspect, timing, delivery, mimicry and material."

He hasn't traveled to Armenia but yearns to journey there, saying it's his "home."

"Money is nothing, you can print that s**t" said Assadourian. "But land is priceless and nobody can give up that territory so that is on us to preserve."

His grandparents were survivors of the Armenian Genocide and he is well-aware of their stories of survival. He recounts his grandfather's determination to escape the massacres as a 15-year-old, gripping desperately onto a moving train, only to fall off and lose his hand. He eventually found refuge in Lebanon where he married his wife, also a genocide survivor, as they started a new life together.

As if feeling that suffering in his blood, Assadourian says that "pain builds you up over time" and serves as a drive to create.

"You get nothing from happiness except instant gratification," said Assadourian. "These days kids are soft and they don't know how to handle the smallest challenge."

He draws a parallel to his grandparents, who at a young age had a completely different reality where they had to deal with gutting loss while also rebuilding their lives with virtually nothing. Parents to 11 boys, Assadourian's father being one of them, they created a new Armenian family in Antelias, Lebanon, as his grandfather owned and operated a shoe store in the Armenian enclave of Bourdj Hammoud.

During the Lebanese civil war in the 1970s, Joe Assadourian's parents immigrated to New Jersey, where he and his four siblings were born. His family history isn't lost on him and perhaps he buried himself in humor to contrast the hardships of his ancestors.

"Ever since I was a kid, whether I knew it or not, I was performing so I have been training for this my whole life," said Joe. "And to get paid to do what I love is the best thing in the world."

He imparts words of wisdom as he looks forward to his own new beginnings.

"Confidence is more than half the battle," said Joe. "You can have all the talent in the world but if you ain't got no confidence, your talent won't reach the ears or eyes of the audience."

True to Hollywood form, Assadourian has rewritten the ending to his own story.

For more information about the actor, see <http://www.joeassadourian.com/>

SCHOLARSHIPS AVAILABLE

Students of Armenian Descent

Having Completed One Year of College by June, 2019

Applications and other information may be obtained from

ARMENIAN STUDENTS' ASSOCIATION
Scholarship Committee
333 Atlantic Avenue • Warwick, RI 02888
Tel. 401 461-6114 • Fax 401 461-6112

e-mail: headasa@aol.com

Deadline for returning completed Applications: March 15, 2019

Read News in Armenian at:



write anything, I pull out this book and see if there is anything applicable to what I'm working on."

"The Bullpen" was the creation of Joe's rich imagination and his stark reality as he seamlessly slips in and out of the 18 characters during the 65-minute non-stop performance, from a Latino to a Jamaican to an African-American, among many other vivid personalities, who were "inspired" by Assadourian's time in prison.

"Don't write the characters, become the characters," he said. "That's my motto because the audience is really smart."

Although he wrote "The Bullpen" in two days, the editing and rewriting process, he says, "never stops." Even during the show's run, he continued to polish the script and change around a line or two in order to keep the material fresh. Released from prison a few days shy of his 36th birthday, he hit the ground running with rehearsals while securing a manager and agent; however nothing prepared him for his first live performance. On opening night of "The Bullpen," Assadourian had trouble breathing before he stepped onto the stage.

"It was scary because I've never been in front of a crowd before and the first time I did it was in New York," said Joe. "It felt like I was in freezing cold water that had gone into my lungs." He remarked that all of his stage fright slipped away as soon as he delivered his first line, heeding the advice of one of his producers, who told him to remember that if the audience was any better, they would be the ones performing on stage.

The original run, which was supposed to last a month, ran on for almost two years, where day in and day out, Assadourian performed up to seven times a week. Although it was nerve wracking to perform in front of the public, he said he always appreciated the audience feedback, their energy, and the chance to connect with them after the show. Aside from the audience, critics also positively-reviewed "The Bullpen," with the *New York Times* noting that it is an "extremely funny look at a particularly dreadful situation."

After an initial successful run, he returned to the prison where he wrote the play, performing two shows for the inmates.

"I went there to do that for the guys," said Assadourian, who returned a little over a year after his release. "You don't want to leave there and be the same or worse so I really hope I inspired them."

He also appreciated thinking on his feet and incorporating unscripted moments – like falling hard when he approached the stage – into the show and feeding off the laughter of the inmates.

"On stage if you make a mistake you have to keep



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

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@stthagog.com.

JANUARY 7, 2019 — St. James Men’s Club Dinner Meeting - social hour and mezza at 6:15 PM and dinner at 7:00 PM, St James Armenian Church Charles Mosesian Cultural and Youth Center - Keljik Hall, 465 Mt. Auburn Street, Watertown, MA. The speaker will be Jeanmarie Papelian, Executive Director of the Armenian Tree Project. She will present ATP’s strategy to use trees to transform a village in Armenia. ATP is working to help create an Armenia that is clean and green, with a respect for people and planet. ATP is proud to stand out as the only non-profit organization dedicated to using trees as a means of improving the standard of living for the Armenian people and protecting the environment. Mezza and a Losh Kebab & Kheyima Dinner \$16/person. Ladies invited. For additional information call the St James Church office at 617-923-8860 or call Hapet Berberian at 781-367-6598

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

DECEMBER 16 — “Gorky’s Dream Garden,” 2018 Sneak Peek, a musical theater opera of love, courage and modern at. Sunday, 12.45 p.m. With live performances by stars from Broadway, Opera and Modern Dance Theater, plus a community “Procession of Light.” A Multimedia glimpse into the Broadway/Yerevan Bound Show created by award-winning composer Michelle Ekizian. RSVP Required (914) 428-2595. Pre-program Lunch, 12.15 Adults \$20, Students and children free. St. Gregory the Enlightener Armenian Church, 1131 North St., White Plains. Presented by the Cultural Committee.

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 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.

Akçam Launches Guerguerian Collection Digital Genocide Archive at Clark University

WORCESTER, Mass. — After the 1915 Armenian Genocide, Krikor Guerguerian, a priest and genocide survivor, traveled the world collecting evidence to document the atrocities. Taner Akçam, the Robert Aram and Marianne Kaloosdian and Stephen and Marian Mugar Professor in Armenian Genocide Studies at Clark University’s Strassler Center for Holocaust and Genocide Studies, recently collaborated with Turkish experts and graduate students on a digital repository that makes Guerguerian’s vast collection of incriminating documents available to scholars worldwide.

The newly launched Krikor Guerguerian Archive (<https://wordpress.clarku.edu/guerguerianarchive/>) comprises thousands of original Ottoman documents and Guerguerian’s extensive, unpublished writings. It includes the long-missing handwritten memoirs of Naim Bey, an Ottoman bureaucrat stationed in Aleppo who actively participated in the deportation and massacres of Armenians; documents from the Jerusalem Armenian Patriarchate containing first-hand information about the Armenian genocide; and critical papers from the Istanbul perpetrator trials held from 1919 to 1922 that were long assumed vanished.

Among the most noteworthy materials are ciphered telegrams that the Ottoman Interior Minister Talat Pasha, army commanders, and the chief of the government’s paramilitary sent to governors throughout the Empire. Some of these telegrams, written on government letterhead stamped with the official Ottoman seal, clearly outline the Ottoman government’s planning and execution of the genocide. These “killing orders,” considered the “smoking gun” of the Armenian Genocide,



Prof. Taner Akçam with students

formed the basis of Akçam’s groundbreaking book Killing Orders: Talat Pasha’s Telegrams and the Armenian Genocide, released earlier this year.

Akçam was granted access to the unpublished collection in 2015 by Dr. Edmund Guerguerian, nephew of Fr. Guerguerian, and he has worked diligently to ensure that other scholars of the Armenian Genocide have access to these important documents. He engaged his doctoral candidates Ani Ohanian, Anna Aleksanyan and Burçin Gerçek, and former students Ümit Kurt, PhD ’16 and Emre Can Daglıoğlu in an effort to create and launch the digital archive. The group collaborated with others in Paris and Istanbul to trans-

late materials into English.

“Access to these materials has the potential to change scholarly and political discourse as well as to destroy Turkish denial,” wrote Akçam. “It is my duty to make this evidence accessible for the world to see.”

Professor Akçam, whom the *New York Times* referred to as “the Sherlock Holmes of the Armenian Genocide,” was one of the first Turkish intellectuals to acknowledge and openly discuss the Armenian Genocide. His book, *The Young Turks’ Crime Against Humanity: The Armenian Genocide and Ethnic Cleansing in the Ottoman Empire*, was co-winner of the Middle East Studies

Association’s Albert Hourani Book Award and one of ForeignAffairs.com’s “Best Books on the Middle East.”

Among his many honors, Akçam received the 2018 Outstanding Upstander Award from the World Without Genocide organization; the Hrant Dink Spirit of Freedom and Justice Medal from the Organization of Istanbul Armenians and the Hrant Dink Freedom Award from the Armenian Bar Association (both in 2015); and the Heroes of Justice and Truth award at the Armenian Genocide Centennial commemoration in May 2015.

Funding for the creation of the Krikor Guerguerian Archive was provided by the Caloust Gulbenkian Foundation, the Jirair Nishanian Foundation, the Armenian General Benevolent Union, the Knights and Daughters of Vartan, and the Dadourian Foundation. Original materials included in the Guerguerian Archive were donated to the National Association for Armenian Studies and Research (NAASR) in Belmont, Mass., where they will become part of NAASR’s Mardigian Library. Researchers will be able to access original materials included in the digital archive following the opening of the NAASR headquarters’ building in the fall of 2019.

For more information about the online archive call 508-793-8897.

The Strassler Center for Holocaust and Genocide Studies at Clark University is home to a unique doctoral program dedicated to research and scholarship about the Armenian Genocide. The Robert Aram and Marianne Kaloosdian and Stephen and Marian Mugar Chair is the first-ever endowed professorship in modern Armenian history and Armenian Genocide studies.

COMMENTARY

COMMENTARY

Thirty Years of Misery

By Edmond Y. Azadian

It is as if history and fate have been conspiring together to hit Armenia with a disaster every time it reaches a level of recovery. In the aftermath of the genocide, when Armenia was incorporated in the newly-formed Soviet Union and began its frenzy of reconstruction, the earthquake of 1925 in Leninakan (Gyumri) brought to a halt its process of recovery.

Similarly, after surviving the Stalinist terror and the devastation of World War II, as Armenia began a full process of industrialization and cultural recovery, the earthquake of 1988, once again in Gyumri, devastated two thirds of the country.

As if that were not enough, the tragedy was doubled and even tripled with concurrent political and historic events. Indeed, while Armenia lay in ruins and “brotherly” cooperation with other Soviet Republics had begun the painful process of reconstruction, the Soviet Union collapsed before making good on its pledge to help Armenia recover. Next, the war with Azerbaijan ensued.

The earthquake hit on December 7, 1988 at 11.41 a.m. and it affected 40 percent of Armenia’s territory, in a 50-mile radius, with a 6.8 magnitude. It resulted in 25,000 deaths and 50,000 injured, although Western sources at that time placed the number of the dead at 50,000.

The epicenter of the earthquake was near the town of Spitak, with a population of 30,000, which was completely wiped out within 30 seconds. The city of Gyumri (Leninakan at the time) lost 17,000 of its population. A total of 21 cities and towns were affected as well as 342 villages, with 58 of them completely razed to the ground. The destruction left 500,000 homeless.

USSR Premier Mikhail Gorbachev, who was on a state visit in the US, directly flew back to Moscow and headed to Armenia.

He pledged to complete the recovery project within two years at a cost of \$10 billion. And indeed, 40,000 earthquake specialists and construction workers converged on Armenia’s disaster zone. The reconstruction was not completed yet when the Soviet Union collapsed and the simmering violence between Armenia and Azerbaijan blew up into a full-scale war hampering rescue and reconstruction efforts, because of the blockade imposed by Azerbaijan. Against all odds, Armenia managed to win the war and on May 9, 1994, a ceasefire agreement was signed.

The war and the collapse of the Soviet empire left the reconstruction projects in the earthquake zone unfinished. To this day, thousands of people are still living in substandard shanty houses, known as domiks. A full generation has been born and raised under those destitute conditions, affecting their genetic makeup for coming generations, similar to the impact of the trauma of the Genocide. The misery has been continuing for the last 30 years and it is feared that it may extend well into the future.

Many deadlines for completion of the reconstruction have come and gone. The year 2003 was designated as the deadline for the full recovery of the earthquake zone. That deadline was extended to the year 2013 and yet, five years have passed and there are still people who live in wretched conditions.

The statistics are unreliable. On thing is certain that people are suffering and desperation is moving many to commit suicide.

The earthquake had destroyed 20,612 homes. To this date 15,040 homes have been built and 5,144 have been issued vouchers to buy new homes; out of that figure the US Agency for International Development has provided 4,500 vouchers. A total of 113 countries have contributed to the recovery effort. The Aznavour Foundation, Kirk Kerkorian, the AGBU and many other charitable organizations and individuals have extended their support. Local initiatives have also joined the effort, such as Gyumri Without Domiks, Shirak Center, SOS Gyumri and others. As of today, there are still 2,800 domiks in existence and out of that figure, 2,285 are occupied by families living without running water, heat or any sanitary facilities.

When so many factors compounded the tragedy, that certainly has led to some confusion and abuse. We have heard of government ministers running away with a million dollars of earthquake recovery money and also many pieces of medical equip-

ment which have not made it to their destinations and had been sold in different Soviet republics. Even the recipients of aid have sold their houses to buy food and basic necessities or to pay for airfare to leave the country.

Although the reconstruction of the Shirak region is the main challenge, it cannot be met without considering the complementary components of the recovery project, namely to create work places and to build up the economy. The earthquake not only has destroyed peoples’ homes, but it has also destroyed the entire infrastructure of its economy.

Gyumri was known as a manufacturing city, before the quake. The majority of its skilled work force fled the country to work in Russia or Central Asian republics to survive.

Before the earthquake, Gyumri was a bustling city renowned for its unique cultural traditions and specific humor. Its pre-earthquake population was 238,000, compared to today’s 117,700.

As most of the investments are concentrated in Yerevan, the earthquake disaster zone and other regions remain neglected. Gyumri does not even show up on the map of many tourists. There is a sense of apathy towards the region. It is as if it is a forgotten world. The officials of previous government and their cronies have benefitted from the aid of foreign governments and diasporan individuals and charitable organizations and used those funds to generate for themselves an obscene level of affluence, in stark contradiction to the misery of the earthquake zone.

That insensitivity toward the general welfare of the population contributed to the downfall of the old regime. The new government, which will be formed on the heels of the Velvet Revolution, has spoken of the need to face the challenge.

President Armen Sarkissian has been visiting Gyumri regularly and he has been diverting some funds to that region from his foundation, Yerevan, My Love. He has been pro-



moting the creation of work places, tourism and development projects.

“Gyumri is a city with a unique history,” says Sarkissian. “It has preserved its typical culture and legacy. Thirty years have elapsed, yet the pain is there and the wound has not healed yet.”

He has also blamed the families who throw lavish wedding parties abroad when they can spend their money in cities such as Gyumri to stir the economy.

“It is not patriotic when people take off for other countries for wedding parties, when Gyumri starves for business opportunities and spending,” added the president.

Nikol Pashinyan, who is gearing up to take the top position at the helm of the government, after the December 9 election, unlike Armen Sarkissian, is not appealing to the emotions of people. He and his team seem to have made up their minds to contribute meaningfully towards the reconstruction of the disaster zone, where people need jobs to have a future and hope.

“Today it is very important to come up with some investment programs in the region. Discussions are in progress and some plans are already on the drawing board. We have been targeting those projects to create jobs in the earthquake zone,” he said.

People who have been suffering in domiks have heard many promises and have been disappointed by many missed deadlines. Hopefully, the new administration will draw the line and move forward with determination. Thirty years of misery is too much for our brethren living under such unlivable circumstances. The international community has brought its share of support. It is incumbent on the Armenian people in the homeland and around the world to put an end to this misery and shame.

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EDITOR
Alin K. Gregorian

ASSISTANT EDITOR
Aram Arkun

ART DIRECTOR
Marc Mgrditchian

SENIOR EDITORIAL COLUMNIST:
Edmond Y. Azadian

CONTRIBUTORS:

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

CORRESPONDENTS:

Armenia - Hagop Avedikian
Boston - Nancy Kalajian
Los Angeles - Taleen Babayan
Berlin - Muriel Mirak-Weissbach

Contributing Photographers:
Jirair Hovsepian

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FAX: 617-924-2887

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

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Baika Association, Inc.

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Setback for Human Rights: the ‘New Munich’ of International Relations



By Philippe Raffi Kalfayan

On December 10, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights will turn 70 but it has a mixed history. We are witnessing an unprecedented setback in the protection of human rights; a truly collective retreat against dictators, autocrats, and populist or nationalist leaders of all stripes. The recent G20 meeting in Argentina has presented the world with a cynical image of the richest countries' club and heads of states hobnobbing with the Saudi butcher, a pariah whose presence speaks volumes. Conducting ongoing diplomatic relations is not the issue here, rather the manifestation that economic and financial interests take precedence over humanity, by denying the principles and values that founded the post-WWII era of international relations. The great nations' turning their back on humanity and peace principles is the “new Munich” of international relations.

The historic Munich deal was a Franco-British agreement with Nazi Germany and the fascist Italy of Mussolini. France and England preferred to capitulate to Hitler's expansionist territorial demands in Czechoslovakia, thinking they could buy peace in Europe. It was a dramatic and costly mistake.

The planet is back on the edge of an abyss. The threats of widespread conflict in different regions are real and the lessons of the 20th century and its two world wars, and the “never again” slogan are already forgotten.

Two differences are worth being noted with last world war. The first is that many countries hold nuclear weapons, and some of these countries do not have a democratic and shared decision-making systems. The second is the fact that economic and social disparities have reached such a level all over the world that tensions are extreme within states themselves. Popular uprisings may go off at any time and destabilize the system of government and representation. Social networks facilitate such processes. France has experienced this phenomenon recently; Armenia knew it last April-May.

Self-Interest at the Expense of Humanity

It is in this context that President Trump has shattered the post-1945 multilateralism, and seeks instead to assert the unilateral role of the United States as a world policeman out of sheer national egotism, while the US had a fundamental role in the economic globalization and cultural standardization processes. What is the price to pay for this shift in strategy? It is the revival of an unfettered arms race in many countries and in parallel the abandonment of disarmament or of certain weapons' limitation treaties; that of a new cold war with the Russian bloc, the Chinese bloc and even with the European bloc. This new Real Politik translated into the abandonment of the principles and values of both the United Nations Charter and those of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

Rights and freedoms have, however, been the battle cry of the United States all over the world. When the latter turn their backs on human rights and on the international legal order, all other autocratic states take advantage of the situation to undertake and justify unlawful actions on the international scene (China, the Russian Federation, Israel, Turkey, and Saudi Arabia).

It is worth reminding that the first Bill of Rights was that of the State of Virginia in July 1776, even before the French Declaration of the Rights of Man and Citizen in August 1789. Let us also recall the role of President Roosevelt in his desire to create a new international order through the United Nations system, and of his wife, Eleanor, in the drafting of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

Spirit of the Charter Versus Current Atrocities

The United Nations Charter, adopted in San Francisco on June 26, 1945, set as objectives in its preamble “to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war, which twice in our lifetime [20th century] has brought untold sorrow to mankind, and...to reaffirm faith in fundamental human rights, in the dignity and worth of the human person, in the equal rights of men and women and of nations large and small, and...to establish conditions under which justice and respect for the obligations arising from treaties and other sources of international law can be maintained, and...to promote social progress and better standards of life in larger freedom.”

To reach this goal, the use of force has been banned from international relations, except in self-defense. Saudi aggression, with the help of its allies, against Yemen has made this country the scene of the greatest humanitarian disaster currently; Syria has become the geopolitical battleground of the great powers. We must not forget also the humanitarian and political chaos that resulted from the unlawful aggression of the United States against Iraq in 2003 and from the authorized aggression of France and of its allies against Libya in 2011. They are causes of migrants wandering the world.

Civilian populations are the main victims, especially the most vulnerable, namely women and children. The acts committed are crimes against humanity according to the current norms. Witness the massive massacres and deportations of the Rohingya minority in Burma; widespread sexual abuses in endless wars between armed groups in Central Africa; the beleaguered and hungry Palestinian population in the Gaza open-air prison and the Palestinian people still waiting for the implemen-

tation of UN resolutions. Finally, one must not forget the 200 million migrants and about 40 million “modern” slaves.

The so-called UN policy of prevention of these crimes or the concept of “responsibility to protect” (RTP) will remain wishful thinking as long as impunity prevails, not only for the present crimes, but also for the crimes of the past.

Who Protects Universal Values?

International law clearly imposes obligations on states: the most serious international crimes (state aggression, genocide, heavy war crimes, torture, slavery, racial discrimination) fall under the peremptory norms of international law to which States can neither derogate (jus cogens) nor ignore (erga omnes obligations). The failure of states to respect those standards or obligations may engage their international legal responsibility.

The International Court of Justice (ICJ), which deals with interstate disputes, remains very cautious about the scope of these standards and obligations. The decisions rendered have even avoided evoking their implementation. Apart from bilateral disputes, only the General Assembly or the United Nations Security Council could refer to the ICJ for violations of international law norms binding on all countries.

The United Nations' decision-making system in that perspective is completely paralyzed by the five major nuclear powers, which have arrogated to themselves a permanent seat on the Security Council with a right to veto. The objectives of the Charter being no longer respected, it is obvious that decisions are blocked by one or the other of the five superpowers when its interest is threatened. The equality of nations under the principles of the Charter is nothing but a chimera. The double standard is the de facto norm. Besides, some powerful states refuse the authority of the ICJ.

This two-tiered regime also exists in international criminal law: it is easier to bring the criminals and torturers of weaker nations to the International Criminal Court (ICC) than those of the powerful ones. The latter have such political and economic influence that third-party states do not dare enforce their duty to engage the responsibility of the leaders of those countries that commit wrongful acts (The Belgian legislator urgently adopted in 2003 measures seriously limiting the universal jurisdiction of the Belgian courts, to avoid examining the complaints filed against Ariel Sharon for the massacres of Palestinians in Lebanon in 1982 and against George Bush Sr. for alleged war crimes in Iraq in 1991; in 2006 the Attorney General of Germany refused to consider a complaint against G. W. Bush's government team for acts of torture committed in Iraq and Guantanamo during the illegal war of 2003). The violation of the principle of equality of nations has become so blatant that it can seriously be said that the United Nations system is inoperative. Ian Brownlie, a contemporary jurist observes that: “international law clearly exists for decision-makers such as prosperous states or transnational networks with resources.”

Let us take an emblematic example of the “double standards” practiced by the United States: on the one hand they persist in targeting Iran, imposing unilaterally drastic economic and financial sanctions that will reduce the Iranian population to poverty and may trigger a health crisis, while Iran does not present any proven threat to any neighboring country; moreover it complies with its international commitments under the Nuclear Agreement, and finally is subjected to such sanctions by a country that has supported and armed Iraq to invade it. That war claimed the lives of half a million Iranians between 1980 and 1988. In parallel, the United States supports Israel's policy of colonizing the Palestinian territories, in total violation of the resolutions adopted by the United Nations since 1948 and in spite of the war crimes and crimes against humanity committed by that State in the occupied territories. One can only insist on the exemplarity that the first economic and military power in the world should instead display.

Is the Era of Human Rights Over?

This is what another author, David Kennedy, believes: “I am not the first to notice that human rights are a late twentieth century project and that is now, in some sense, over.” Human rights law, which is a branch of international law, has undergone a virtuous evolution between 1945 and the beginning of the 2000s. A particular reinforced collective interest of states has arisen with the end of the cold war.

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), adopted in March 1948, is also a direct consequence of the Second World War. Its preamble considers “recognition of the inherent dignity and of the equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family is the foundation of freedom, justice and peace in the world... disregard and contempt for human rights have resulted in barbarous acts which have outraged the conscience of mankind, and the advent of a world in which human beings shall enjoy freedom of speech and belief and freedom from fear and want has been proclaimed as the highest aspiration of the common people... .”

This founding text is of a declaratory nature, but was followed in 1966, 20 years later, by the adoption of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, an international treaty that binds its signatories and members (171 in all). It took another 10 years, March 1976, for its enforcement. Despite the cold war and a reservation on the universalism of human rights, the USSR signed this treaty in 1968. China did it in 1998.

Under the presidency of Eleanor Roosevelt, the drafting committee included representatives from China, Haiti, Australia, Chile, France, the United States, USSR, United Kingdom, and

Canada. Despite this regional diversity of authors, the corpus of human rights is considered a Western draft and suspected as such to be a tool of influence over the rest of the world, replacing the imperialist and colonialist episodes that preceded it. The grievances are numerous and the challenge of the human rights system goes beyond the anti-Western ideological argument. It calls into question the primacy of rights and puts forward communitarian demands or societal differences, especially on issues relating to the death penalty; women's rights, abortion, surrogacy, etc.; traditional family rights versus LGBT rights. In other words its universalism is challenged, some countries claiming national peculiarities, some others cultural and religious practices or security policies (anti-terrorism).

The European Court, which is charged with the enforcement and interpretation of the European Convention on Human Rights, has established an even higher and more progressive standard of human rights within the Council of Europe system. Meanwhile, today its judicial authority is challenged by some member countries (see my article <https://mirrorspectator.com/2017/11/30/armenian-case-european-judiciary-beyond-statements/>) such as Turkey, Russia, Great Britain, and Italy, in the name of their judicial sovereignty and societal policies.

Between 1899 and 2001, although human rights and humanity “fundamental considerations” have contributed to “humanize” the international law, but Theodore Meron considers “that one must not exaggerate the influence of human rights on international law in areas such as state territory or settlement of disputes.” Obviously, international law is primarily founded on the basis of the Treaty of Westphalia (1648), which established a law to the service of States and for the regulation of their relations. The major foundation of the Treaty is national sovereignty. The universal principles don't govern states. While the use of force and external aggression are clearly prohibited, violations of human rights within the territories remain domestic affairs. At a time of retreat to nationalism and popular revolts against social inequalities, there is an increased risk of violations of human rights. However, absent a better international legal order, it is safer to safeguard the current framework. Brownlie concludes: “Whatever its shortcomings, international law also exists as a promise of justice and thus an encouragement for political transformation.”

Is ‘Sovereign Humanity’ a Utopia?

“Sovereign humanity” (Olivier de Frouville) is a dream that seems far from being realized. The subjects of law are individuals, not states. The Westphalian model, an interstate and subjectivist model, and the lack of coercive power of the international community for the enforcement of international judicial decisions are contrary to this vision. The preamble of the Rome Statute creating the ICC participates in building the model of sovereign humanity when it recalls that “during this century millions of children, women and men have been victims of unimaginable atrocities that deeply shock the conscience of humanity,” recognizes that “such grave crimes threaten the peace, security and well-being of the world”, and affirms that “the most serious crimes of concern to the international community as a whole must not go unpunished and that their effective prosecution must be ensured by taking measures at the national level and by enhancing international cooperation”. Finally the State parties are determined “to put an end to impunity for the perpetrators of these crimes and thus to contribute to the prevention of such crimes”. However, once again, some powerful states escape this justice, because they did not accept the jurisdiction of the Court.

Human Rights' Immediate Challenges

The question of the impunity of states and the fact that the international legal order's existence relies upon the good will of the World Powers remain major challenges. The Charter of United Nations remains an ideal (Pierre-Marie Dupuy) and the “international community” is still looking for its definition. New threats have emerged for human rights and peace in the world: the eruption and influence of new technologies in domestic and external political arenas, environmental global issues, and the resurgence of religious obscurantism. One of the immediate issues is to put into perspective the foundations of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights – the principles of freedom, equality and human dignity – with the development of new technologies, which includes both new communication and information technologies and biotechnologies.

Human rights prospered between 1945 and 2001, even during the Cold War between the Western bloc and the Eastern bloc, despite the antagonisms of liberalism and communism. It is because the two blocs were above all attached to the ideology of progress. No one can doubt that the Chinese bloc is also on the same page. That is why United States should reconsider its unilateralist stance and its strategy of confrontation with the European, Russian and Chinese blocs for the good of humanity and the future of planet Earth. That one is unique is not extensible and must be protected. There is no alternative. The vision of the future must be imagined in common, and states will have to agree giving up some of their sovereignty to protect common environment, restore international order, combat obscurantism and reaffirm human rights.

[Philippe Raffi Kalfayan is a Lawyer, Lecturer in International Law and a former Secretary General of FIDH (International Federation of Human Rights). He is a regular columnist for the Mirror-Spectator.]



COMMENTARY



My Turn

By Harut Sassounian

Sen. Menendez Delays Senate Confirmation of US Ambassador To Azerbaijan

President Donald Trump nominated on September 4, 2018 career Foreign Service Officer Earle Litzenberger to serve as US Ambassador to Azerbaijan replacing Ambassador Robert Cekuta who left Baku nine months ago.

A month before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee's October 4, 2018 hearing on Litzenberger's confirmation, the Armenian National Committee of America (ANCA) issued a press release urging the Armenian American community, friends of Armenia, and human rights activists to call on their Senators to scrutinize Litzenberger's nomination.

Aram Hamparian, executive Director of ANCA, explained that "there's never been a more urgent need for clarity regarding the nature and scope of American relations with the Aliyev regime. This confirmation process provides a much-needed opportunity for substantive Congressional oversight of an increasingly troubled US-Azerbaijan bilateral relationship, characterized by escalating aggression against Armenians, a worsening crackdown on dissent, and a well-funded campaign to manipulate the American political process."

Litzenberger has served as Senior Fellow at the German Marshall Fund; Deputy Chief of Mission to the United States Mission to NATO; NATO Deputy Senior Civilian Representative to Afghanistan; Deputy Chief of Mission at the United States Embassy in Belgrade, Serbia; and Deputy Chief of Mission at the United States Embassy in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan. Litzenberger earned a B.A. from Middlebury

College and M.S. from the United States Army War College. He speaks French, Russian, Serbian, and Bulgarian.

During the October 4, 2018 Senate Foreign Relations Committee hearing, Litzenberger came under intense scrutiny. The ANCA reported that Sen. Bob Menendez (D-NJ) referred to Azeri President Ilham Aliyev's "bellicose rhetoric and sporadic outbursts of violence," when pressing Litzenberger about Azerbaijan's violent strategies. Litzenberger responded that he would urge the Azerbaijani government to step back from behaviors that would disrupt the line of contact in the Artsakh conflict. He also stated that the US is working along three lines – the non-use of force, respect for territorial integrity, and the right to self-determination.

In addition, Litzenberger referred to the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) Minsk Group, which condemns "any violence and any threat of the use of violence along the line of contact" without specifically citing Azerbaijan's attacks.

During the hearing, Menendez inquired whether providing weapons to Azerbaijan should be curtailed based on its human rights violations. Litzenberger responded that the State Department will be careful to ensure its decisions do not undermine efforts to reach a peaceful settlement of the Artsakh conflict. He also mentioned an increased focus on Azerbaijani training in human rights.

Following the hearing, both Menendez and Sen. Ed Markey (D-MA) submitted written questions to Litzenberger. At the request of Menendez, the Senate Foreign Relations Committee postponed consideration of Litzenberger's nomination to an unspecified date. Both Senators may have additional written questions to the nominee as a result of their concerns at National Security Advisor John Bolton's offer to sell weapons to Armenia and Azerbaijan during his late October trip to the Caucasus.

Litzenberger was the only one of 19 ambassadorial nominations to be postponed, very likely until next year, when the Committee will hold its next business meeting.

Hamparian welcomed Litzenberger's delay giving the Senators the "opportunity for more careful Congressional oversight of our country's increasingly challenging bilateral ties with Azerbaijan's aggressive and abusive Aliyev regime,

particularly in light of National Security Advisor John Bolton's controversial suggestion that the US start selling arms to Baku."

Hamparian went on to assert: "We join with our Senate friends in seeking greater clarity on this point, and, more generally, regarding the Administration's policy on Aliyev's worsening pattern of aggression against Artsakh and Armenia, incitement of hatred against all Armenians, unapologetic blacklisting of US legislators, obstruction of the Royce-Engel peace proposals, threats to shoot down civilian aircraft, the destruction of the Djulfa cemetery and other Christian heritage sites, and – of course – his severe crackdown against domestic dissidents and ethnic-religious minorities."

Azerbaijan's Turan news Agency reported the news about the delay of the confirmation of the US Ambassador to Baku. Surprisingly, Turan speculated that President Trump may make a recess appointment taking advantage of the absence of Senate sessions in December, which would mean that the President could appoint Litzenberger as Ambassador to Azerbaijan without Senate confirmation.

Readers may recall that President Obama made such a recess appointment in the case of Matt Bryza dispatching him as Ambassador to Azerbaijan, after Sen. Menendez twice blocked his confirmation. Bryza could only serve in Baku for 12 months before being forced to return to Washington, after the Senate Foreign Relations Committee refused to confirm his nomination.

In the case of Matt Bryza, the Armenian-American community had a good reason to object to his nominations as he had a serious bias against Armenia and favored Azerbaijan and Turkey. However, Litzenberger does not seem to have such biases and there is nothing personal against him. Delaying his nomination is simply a means to ensure that he would defend human rights in Azerbaijan and would urge the Aliyev regime to be less bellicose in the Artsakh conflict. Litzenberger's delay would also send a message to John Bolton that the Senate does not welcome his offer to sell weapons to Azerbaijan.

The delay of the Ambassador's Senate confirmation would serve the additional aim of upsetting the Aliyev regime by prolonging the lengthy absence of a US Ambassador to Baku, causing an irritation in Azerbaijan-United States relations.

Bones of Contention With the Metropolitan Exhibit

By Prof. Claude Mutafian

A DISTINGUISHED art historian and well-known specialist of Byzantium, Helen Evans has been working at the Metropolitan Museum of Art for many years. Among the exhibitions she has organized are "The Glory of Byzantium (843-1261)" in 1997 and "Byzantium: Faith and Power (1261-1557)" in 2004. Such topics involved necessarily neighboring Armenia. Ms. Evans' early interest for Armenian art led to the present widely publicized exhibition which is simply called "Armenia!"

The curious exclamation mark may reflect some kind of admiration. More important is, unfortunately, the absence of any indication of time period in this title, in contrast to the two above-mentioned Byzantine exhibitions.

At first glance, this title could suggest that the exhibition covers the three millennia of Armenian history, or at least, if one decides to exclude Urartu, that it covers the period from 500 B.C. to the present. This is not the case: the exhibition begins at the dawn of the fourth century with the Christianization of Armenia, and ignores totally one millennium of pagan Armenia. As an example, the absence of the name of the most famous of all Armenian kings, Tigranes the Great (1st Century B.C.), in an exhibition called "Armenia!" looks strange, if not unacceptable. Another title would have been more accurate, together with an introductory panel explaining that Armenia had existed long before, and that the Christianization merely opened a new artistic era. This was the case of the exhibition called "Armenia

Sacra" in Paris (Musée du Louvre, 2007).

The quality of the various items displayed in "Armenia!" is amazing, with a collection of incredibly rich loans. Some of them had been systematically refused in former Armenian exhibitions, such as a manuscript of the greatest Armenian miniaturist, T'oros Roslin (13th C.), lent by the Armenian Patriarchate of Jerusalem. Another example is the fabulous wooden door of the Surb Karapet monastery, now held in a private collection, meaning that this is probably a unique opportunity to admire it.

Many other similar examples can be given. But an exhibition is not merely a collection of masterpieces, it has to be also a pedagogical tool, to lead the visitor into a world essentially unknown and help him discover it. Unfortunately, this is not the case for "Armenia!". First of all, the absence of any map, from the very beginning to the very end, is astonishing. Does everyone know what and where Armenia is? Even for those who do know, where are Cilicia, Vaspurakan, Sevan, Siwnik', Ani, Van and so on? These provinces and cities remain purely abstract names.

Last but not least, in the final section, dedicated to the trade routes, not a single itinerary is explicitly shown. As for the catalogue, it includes, at the very beginning (p. 24-25), a single map, which stretches across a double page from Eastern America to Japan: Armenia is so tiny that the names of dozens of cities and monasteries are illegible, the provinces being totally omitted!

This huge gap could have been compensated, at least partly, by some appropriate historical explanations, but such information is absent from the exhibition as well as from the catalogue. In fact, a glance at the list of the contributors to this catalogue shows that it involves exclusively art historians, and that there is practically not a single historian despite the fact that the evolution of art cannot be dissociated from its historic framework.

As a first consequence of this absence of historical control, precision is often lacking and mistakes are frequent. Let us quote some of them in the catalogue:

- After 387, Armenia was not "made a vassal state of Iran" (p. 209); it was divided between Byzantium and Persia

- The dates attributed to the historian Movses Khorenatsi are still controversial, ranging from the 5th and the 8th or even 9th century; the very precise dates "(410-490)" cited on p. 29 therefore make no sense.

- The annexing of Kars took place in 1065, not in 1054 (p. 34)

- The mother of Queen Melisende was not from "Edessa" (p. 35), her name was Morfia and she was the daughter of the Armenian prince Gabriel of Melitene

- The first husband of Zabel was not "deposed" (p. 35, 130) but put to death.

- King Levon V was not "buried" in Saint-Denis (p. 36) – where his tomb stone was transferred in the 19th century – but in the Celestins' convent.

- The denomination "Armenia Maritima" (p. 88) for the Crimean coast is a myth.

- This southern coast of Crimea was in the hands of the Genovese, not the "Venetians and Genovese" (p. 164).

- The foundation of the Armenian Patriarchate in 1461 by sultan Mehmed II and the bishop of Bursa (p. 172, 253) is purely mythic.

- The patriarch of Jerusalem was not at all restricted "on a local level" (p. 233).

The exhibition captions and the catalogue notices are full of interesting details concerning the description of the objects, but they generally omit completely the historical context. An example is the section dealing with Armenians in Italy (p. 164): when, why, how did they settle there? No answer. Even worse for Jerusalem (p. 218), where the foundation of the Patriarchate is totally ignored, and the famous mosaics quoted without any reproduction – the only picture being the interior of the cathedral. As for the 1691 extraordinary map of K'eomiwrchean, why do neither the caption nor the article (p. 301) mention its amazing story? It was considered lost until its discovery by chance in Bologna three centuries later! In addition, usually a catalogue quotes, for each object, former exhibitions where it has been displayed: no such information appears here.

Throughout the exhibition and its catalogue, a widespread mistake is the use of the name "Kingdom of Cilicia." In fact, such a kingdom never existed. In Cilicia there was a "Kingdom of Armenia," so called by the Armenians as well as by all their neighbors (Arabs, Greeks, Franks,...). If one wants to be geographically more precise, "Cilician Armenia" is a convenient term. A few rooms away from "Armenia!", the same museum has a permanent showcase containing silver coins from that kingdom, where one can explicitly read "King of Armenia." Why didn't the exhibition display some of these coins?

As for the birth of this last Kingdom of Armenia far away from the motherland, there is a more serious problem. One reads that at some moment "Armenians moved into Cilicia" (p. 34), without any explanation. Were they tourists? The reason given elsewhere, "the Byzantine defeat at the battle of Manzikert" (p. 134), is absurd because that battle took place in 1071 between the Byzantines and the Seljuk Turks, it did not involve the Armenians. The real reason is to be found somewhat earlier, when these same Seljuk Turks captured Ani in 1064. Why is this event carefully ignored? It is stated elsewhere, without any explanation, that the monuments of Ani "stand even now in ruins" (p. 31) and that these ruins are "on the modern closed border between the Turkish and Armenian Republics" (p. 66). On which side? Why is this border "closed"? While it is correctly recalled that the Kingdom of Cilician Armenia was destroyed in 1375 by the Mamluks (p. 164), why aren't the Turks mentioned for the capture of Ani in 1064? In any case, the word "Turks" is absent from the index of the catalogue: is this by chance?

These questions lead us to some more political considerations. The exhibition begins with the Christianization of Armenia – which, as we have noticed, would make sense if it

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Dutch Church Holds 800-hour Service to Save Family from Deportation

By Simon Cullen

THE HAGUE (CNN) – A church in the Netherlands is holding an around-the-clock service that has lasted more than 800 hours, to shield a family from deportation.

Under Dutch law, police officers are not permitted to enter a church while a religious service is taking place. So, for more than a month, hundreds of pastors and volunteers from across the country have been meeting to maintain the 24/7 service in support of an Armenian family whose asylum claim has been rejected.

Theo Hetteema, chairman of the General Council of Protestant Ministers in the Netherlands, told CNN the service will continue “as long as it’s necessary.”

“We want to love God and our neighbor. And we thought that this was a clear opportunity to put the love for our neighbor into reality,” he said.

The Tamrazyan family, including three children Hayarpi, Warduhi and Seyran, fled Armenia and have been living in the Netherlands since April 2010 while their claim for political asylum was being decided. But their case was rejected, and they’ve now been told to leave the country.

Hayarpi Tamrazyan, now aged 21, says she is “incredibly happy and grateful to all volunteers.”

Since the service started, Hayarpi has been posting regular updates on Twitter, thanking people for taking part in the service.

The initial plan to thwart the deportation order was hatched in secret. Axel Wicke from the Bethal church and community center in

The Hague, where the service is taking place, says only a handful of people knew about the idea beforehand so that the family – who are staying in church accommodation – wasn’t put in danger.

“Back then there was no rota,” he told CNN. “After the welcome service, I took over with a couple of parish members.”

“I had copied and pasted the liturgies of the last 10 years into one huge document and we just sang and prayed through that, until other pastors were found and took over.”

He says while the police are not waiting outside the church, the building is being monitored “more closely than usual”.

The Tamrazyan family’s only hope now is for government intervention.

Children’s Pardon

Under Dutch law, there is a provision for a so-called children’s pardon for those who have been living in the Netherlands for more than five years. However, Martine Goeman, who is a legal adviser at Defense for Children in the Netherlands, says most applications are declined.

She says there are about 400 children who are in a similar situation to the Tamrazyans, although it’s hard to get exact numbers from the government.

“There is a lot of scientific research done which shows that after 5 years, a child cannot be deported without significant damage to their development” she told CNN by phone.

She described the 24/7 service at Bethel church as “quite powerful” adding that it points to a groundswell in community support for children in similar situations.

“It’s not only the church – it’s also the broader community,” she said.

“The Minister for Migration could solve (the situation) in one day – by using his discretionary powers. There is a solution.”

In a statement to CNN, a spokesman for Dutch migration minister Mark Harbers declined to comment on the Tamrazyans’ case.

He said the minister can intervene in cases involving “very specific, exceptional and urgent circumstances”.

However, he added: “Factors such as a long period of residence in the Netherlands and enrollment in education in the Netherlands are not sufficiently exceptional circumstances.”

Theo Hetteema says there are “behind-the-scenes” talks ongoing with the government about the case, which he declined to discuss in public for fear of jeopardizing the process.

Until then, the service continues.

Reverend Joost Roselaers, who’s one of the pastors taking part in leading the service, says taking care of refugees is a very clear part of his Christian faith.

“How long it will take? Well, only God knows. Let’s hope before Christmas,” he said. “It would be a very nice time for the Government to change its mind. But we will go on and on until it’s clear that this family can stay.”



Bones of Contention With The Metropolitan Exhibit

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were explicit. It ends with the 18th century, allowing the omission of any reference to the tragic fate of Armenians from the 19th century on, and particularly to the genocide of 1915.

Like the silence about the fate of Ani, several other indices are somewhat puzzling.

- The “monastery of the Holy Apostles in Mush” is mentioned on p. 97 without specifying that it was destroyed by the Turks during the 20th century.

- Among the jewels of this exhibition, as already mentioned, is the carved door of the Surb Karapet monastery, probably also in Mush (p. 109). How did this door survive the destruction of the whole monument? Why isn’t there a single word about that? Maybe because any explanation would necessarily include the word “genocide”?

- The only explicit mention of depravations concerns the cemetery of khachkars of Julfa, in Nakhichevan. It is stated that they “were deliberately destroyed in the 1990s, in an attempt to eliminate any trace of Armenian presence from the region” (p. 91). The date is, however, wrong. The destruction was achieved in 2005, but why isn’t the name of Azerbaijan, the perpetrator of the crime, mentioned?

- This province of Nakhichevan had many monasteries, which were photographed before their complete destruction by Azerbaijan. There is not here a single trace of any of them, neither in the exhibition nor in the catalogue. Is it in order to avoid mentioning the state which was responsible of these destructions?

- The monuments of Lori, Siwnik’, or Vaspurakan are largely mentioned, but those of Artsakh-Karabagh, which are not less important, are practically absent, in particular the famous monastery of Gandzasar: briefly mentioned only once (p. 178), it did not deserve any picture nor commentary. Is this in order to not contradict the grotesque claims of Azerbaijan?

It is obvious that Turks and Azeris were, as always, aware of this exhibition from the very beginning. Did they make pressure on the authorities in order to avoid the mention of anything that could recall their criminal policy

towards Armenians? Or is it possible that friendly relations of the US with these countries may have resulted in an automatic self-censorship by the museum authorities themselves?

Finally, the incredible absence of any map whatsoever could be similarly explained. Maps are potentially dangerous: they suppose borders, presence of populations, and may lead one to ask why the Armenians, so numerous and active in such or such area, have totally disappeared. The answer has to come from Ankara and Baku.

A last observation: one does not breathe in this exhibition, because the space allocated to it is too small. What a contrast with the “Delacroix” exhibition upstairs, where the vast rooms and the intelligent display let one admire properly the works of the artist! Couldn’t the huge Metropolitan Museum have provided a larger space for such a collection of Armenian masterpieces? Has the answer anything to do with the former “political” remarks?

“Armenia!” is included in the price of the general museum entrance ticket, so that a large number of people pass through it. I paid attention to these visitors: it was obvious that they were fascinated by the beauty of what they saw, but it was also obvious that they did not understand anything of the context. What a waste! Armenia has still to wait...

As a conclusion, “Armenia!” which should have been more properly called “Art of Christian Armenia until the 18th Century,” is a fabulous display, but as an Armenian exhibition it is a failure, unworthy of an institution as prestigious as the Metropolitan Museum of Art.

(Born in 1942 in Clamart, France, Claude Mutfian is an associate professor of mathematics and senior lecturer from the Paris 13 University in Villetaneuse. Following the publication of several books on algebra, Mutfian devoted himself to Armenian history since 1980, particularly to the relations of Armenia with its various neighbors over time. Ph.D. in history from Paris 1 Pantheon-Sorbonne University, Mutfian is the author of several books on the history of Armenia.)

Oxford Armenian Studies Chair Prof. Thomson Dies

THOMSON, from page 1

Robert William Thomson was born on March 24, 1934 in London.

When an Armenian Studies Professorship was established in the Faculty of Arts and Sciences at the Harvard University in 1969, Thomson was appointed to the chair which was subsequently named in honor of Armenian saint and scholar Mesrob Mashtots. Thomson held this position until 1992, when he accepted the Gulbenkian Chair in Armenian Studies at Oxford University in England.

During the period of 1984–1989, he was the Director of the Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection.

Thomson translated into English several Old Armenian, Syriac and Greek texts as well as having written two textbooks on the Armenian language, *An Introduction to Classical Armenian* (Caravan Books, 1975) and *A Textbook of Modern Western Armenian* (with Kevork B. Bardakjian) (Caravan Books, 1977).

His other books include *The Lives of Saint Gregory: The Armenian, Greek, Arabic, and Syriac Versions of the History attributed to Agathangelos*, translated with Introduction and Commentary, Caravan Books, Ann Arbor MI, 2010 and *Saint Basil of Caesarea and Armenian Cosmology. A Study of the Armenian Version of Saint Basil’s Hexaemeron and its Influence on Medieval Armenian Views about the Cosmos* [CSCO 646, Subsidia 130], Leuven 2012.

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