

Hrant Dink Assassination Anniversary Marked

ISTANBUL (Armenpress) – Armenian lawmaker of the Turkish Parliament Garo Paylan urged the Parliament on January 18 to deal with the investigation of the murder case of Istanbul-Armenian intellectual Hrant Dink, gazeteduvar reported.

“After being murdered Hrant Dink became a symbol of seeking equality, pluralism, democracy and justice in Turkey. 12 years have passed since his murder, but this case is still not disclosed”, Paylan said in the Parliament.

Presenting the details of Dink’s murder, the lawmaker said the state has also its share of guilt.

“Hrant Dink has been targeted by nationalists after publishing an article in 2004 about Atatürk’s daughter and first female fighter pilot Sabiha Gökçen which revealed that Gökçen had an Armenian origin. That time the Turkish General Staff issued a statement on this article, Dink also received warning from the Istanbul Governor’s Office,” Paylan said.

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Demonstrations on January 19 in Istanbul

Rediscovering Armenian Heritage in Turkey after Hrant Dink

BERLIN – “The question of whether after such a complete elimination, after the almost total expulsion and forced expatriation of survivors in the successor state, the Republic of Turkey, an existence as an Armenian, subjectively and objectively, is at all possible, has been my concern as a human rights activist for decades.” This is how Tessa Hofmann, genocide researcher and chairwoman of the Arbeitsgruppe Anerkennung e.V.

By Muriel Mirak-Weissbach
Special to the Mirror-Spectator

(AGA: Working Group for Recognition; Against Genocide, for Understanding among Peoples), opened a commemorative event in Berlin on January 19, the 12th anniversary of the murder of Hrant Dink. This question was the theme addressed by the keynote speaker, Miran Gültekin, originally from Dersim and now living in Istanbul.

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Armenian, Azeri FM's Meet Again

PARIS (RFE/RL) – The foreign ministers of Armenia and Azerbaijan acknowledged the need for “concrete measures to prepare the populations for peace” when they held fresh talks in Paris on Wednesday, January 16, according to international mediators.

Zohrab Mnatsakanyan and Elmar Mammadyarov met in the presence of the US, Russian and French mediators co-heading the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) Minsk Group for the fourth time in six months.

The press services of both ministers described the meeting, which lasted for more than four hours, as “useful.” They said the two sides will hold more “results-oriented” negotiations on resolving the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict.

“The Ministers discussed a wide range of issues related to the settlement of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict and agreed upon the necessity of taking concrete measures to prepare the populations for peace,” read a separate statement released by the Minsk Group co-chairs.

“During the meetings, the Co-Chairs reviewed with the Ministers key principles and parameters for the current phase of the negotiation process,” said the statement.

They also discussed a possible meeting

between Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan and Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev, it said, adding that such a summit could “give a strong impulse to the dynamic of negotiations.”

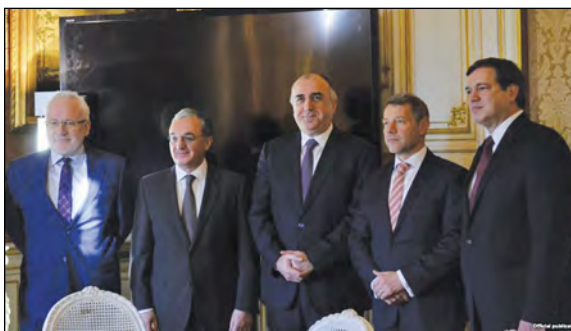
Aliyev and Pashinyan spoke to each other for the first time on the sidelines of a summit of former Soviet republics held in Tajikistan in September. There has been a significant decrease in ceasefire violations around Karabakh and along the Armenian-Azerbaijani border since then.

The two leaders talked again during another ex-Soviet summit that took place in Russia in early December. Aliyev said afterwards that the year 2019 will see a “new impetus” to the Karabakh peace process.

In virtually identical statements released after the Paris talks, the Armenian and Azerbaijani foreign ministries confirmed that Mammadyarov and Mnatsakanyan discussed ways of preparing their populations for a peaceful settlement as well as achieving “security and sustainable regional

development.” But they gave no details.

The mediators said in this regard that they “underlined the importance of possi-



The Armenian and Azerbaijani foreign ministers and the co-chairs of the OSCE Minsk Group pose for a photograph in Paris, January 16, 2019.

ble mutually beneficial initiatives designed to fulfill the economic potential of the region.” They did not elaborate on those initiatives, saying instead that they plan to meet with Pashinyan and Aliyev “in the near future.”

Despite the continuing positive tone of statements made by Yerevan and Baku it remains unclear whether the conflicting parties narrowed their differences on how to end the protracted conflict.

Trump Congratulates Pashinyan, Urges Karabakh Peace

WASHINGTON (RFE/RL) – US President Donald Trump stressed the importance of resolving the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict when he congratulated Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan on winning Armenia’s recent parliamentary elections.

“Congratulations on your appointment as Prime Minister of Armenia and your coalition’s success in the December 9, 2018 parliamentary elections,” Trump said in a letter made public by Pashinyan’s press office on January 19.

“The United States supports a prosperous, democratic Armenia at peace with its neighbors,” he wrote. “Together, we can make progress on deepening trade between our countries, strengthening global security, and combating corruption.”

“A peaceful solution to the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict will help these efforts,” added Trump.

Visiting Yerevan in October, Trump’s national security adviser, John Bolton, said Washington expects Pashinyan to take “decisive steps” towards a Karabakh settlement after his widely anticipated victory in the snap elections. Pashinyan should have a “very strong mandate” to reach a compromise peace deal with Azerbaijan, Bolton said after talks with the Armenian leader.

Pashinyan’s My Step bloc won as much as 70 percent of the vote in the elections. The US Embassy in Armenia was quick to praise the conduct of the vote, echoing its positive assessment by European observers.

Crime against Armenians in Baku Genocide, Group Says

YEREVAN (Armenpress) – The crime against Armenians in Baku in January 1990 was a genocide, Larisa Alaverdyan, chair of the Against the Violation of Law NGO, told reporters on January 18, adding that during that time people were tortured only for their ethnic identity.

“Nearly 500 people have been killed; let us not even talk about what others have suffered. There was a UN Convention adopted on December 9, 1948 which is called the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide. It has five points relating to the types of crimes for which persons can be held accountable,” she said.

She noted that Armenia should initiate a document to acknowledge these events as genocide, that is what they really were.

“We do not have a document in Armenia that will call the 1988 Armenian massacres in Sumgait as a genocide,” Alaverdyan said.

She said her organization will apply to the Parliament with the request to adopt a resolution which will name the things accordingly.

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ARMENIA

News From Armenia

Kocharyan Detention Extended

YEREVAN (Armenpress) — The Yerevan court on January 18 approved the motion to extend the pre-trial detention of the second president of Armenia, Robert Kocharyan, for two months, an official of the Prosecutor General's Office Vahagn Muradyan told reporters.

“Robert Kocharyan’s pre-trial detention will be extended for two months, and the motion of the defending side on using bail has been rejected,” Muradyan said.

Kocharyan’s attorneys submitted motion to release him from custody on bail on December 26, 2018.

Kocharyan was charged on July 26, 2018, over the 2008 March 1 case for breaching the constitutional order of the Republic of Armenia.

Three My Step City Council Members Suspended

YEREVAN (Armenpress) — Three members of the Yerevan City Council representing the My Step party bloc have been suspended, Chairman of the Central Electoral Commission (CEC) Tigran Mukuchyan said during a session on January 22.

“We have received several proclamations from the Mayor of Yerevan by which the powers of City Council members from My Step party bloc Sasha Katvalyan, Vahagn Grigoryan and Arman Iskandaryan have been suspended,” the CEC Chairman said.

The mandates of these members are given to the next candidates of the bloc’s electoral list who are the following: Arman Antonyan, Anahit Asatryan and Tigran Galstyan.

No further details were made public.

Gas Prices not to Increase, Pashinyan Says

YEREVAN (Armenpress) — Prime Minister of Armenia Nikol Pashinyan announced that the authorities of Armenia have agreed with Gazprom Armenia on preserving domestic gas prices, Pashinyan said in an interview with Ria Novosti on January 22.

“Gazprom sells gas not to Armenia, but Gazprom Armenia, that’s why our role is [that of an] intermediary. But we have agreed with Gazprom Armenia that gas prices will not change inside the country,” Pashinyan said.

Pashinyan emphasized that it’s very important for the government of Armenia to agree on a long-term gas tariff. “At the moment discussions are underway at the Eurasian Economic Union on creating a single gas and energy market, therefore, we have numerous issues to discuss,” Pashinyan said.

Gazprom raised the prices for gas supplied to Armenia from \$150 to \$165 starting January 1. After that Pashinyan announced that gas prices will remain unchanged for consumers.

‘General’ Arrested Again

YEREVAN (Armenpress) — Former lawmaker Manvel Grigoryan has been placed under arrest and held a Yerevan prison.

Earlier the Court of Appeals had issued a new arrest warrant for former lawmaker Grigoryan, the prosecution said. The court has accepted the Prosecutor General’s complaint against an earlier decision of a lower court to free Grigoryan on bail.

Vahagn Muradyan, head of the department of special cases at the General Prosecution, said the general was to be arrested on January 22.

Grigoryan, a former Member of Parliament, was stripped of immunity by parliament in June 2018 and placed under arrest in suspicion of illegal possession of firearms and grand theft.

Law enforcement agencies found a private zoo, a car collection, huge amounts of weapons and ammunition. He was released from custody on a 25,000,000-dram bail on December 21, 2018. His release sparked outrage in his hometown of Echmiadzin.

Swedish Parliament Will Not Delay Signing Armenia-EU Agreement, Ambassador Says

YEREVAN (Armenpress) — The parliament of Sweden will not delay the signing of the Comprehensive and Enhanced Partnership Agreement between Armenia and the European Union (EU), Ambassador of Sweden

Agreement between Armenia and the EU, Mirzoyan said he hoped that the Swedish parliament will ratify the document in a maximally short period.

The Speaker also referred to Nagorno Karabakh conflict settle-

only hampers the negotiation process but also creates new problems,” Ararat Mirzoyan said.

Speaking about the developments in Armenia, Mirzoyan said, “Our devotion to democratic values, protection of human rights and freedoms cannot be questioned,” he said, hoping for international assistance.

The Speaker of the Armenian parliament also thanked the Swedish for adopting a resolution recognizing the Armenian Genocide.

Congratulating Mirzoyan on being elected Speaker of the National Assembly, Tidestrom expressed confidence that the Armenian-Swedish cooperation will expand in various spheres.

The Ambassador emphasized that the revolution that took place in spring 2018 in Armenia is perceived in Sweden as key factor for democracy.

Tidestrom said Sweden values the expansion and strengthening of the cooperation with Armenia in various spheres and is ready to support the implementation of new initiatives.

He stressed that the parliament of his country will not delay the signing of the Comprehensive and Enhanced Partnership Agreement between Armenia and the EU.

The two sides highlighted the role of the Swedish-Armenian community for the deepening of the Armenian-Swedish relations.



Parliament speaker Ararat Mirzoyan, center, with the Swedish delegation

to Armenia. Ulrik Tidestrom said on January 23 at a meeting with President of the National Assembly of Armenia Ararat Mirzoyan.

Mirzoyan praised the cooperation between the two countries, particularly highlighting the interactions between the legislatures, mutual visits and exchange of experience.

Speaking about the Comprehensive and Enhanced Partnership

ment process, noting that the position of the Armenian authorities is clear on this issue – the settlement is possible through exclusively peaceful means in the sidelines of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) Minsk Group Co-chairs’ format. “It’s difficult to negotiate with someone who regularly makes militaristic announcements and provokes hatred. It not

Latvian, Estonian Leaders Send Pashinyan Congratulatory Notes

YEREVAN (Armenpress) — The prime ministers of Estonia and Latvia, Jüri Ratas and Maris Kucinskis, respectively, have sent congratulatory messages to Nikol Pashinyan on being appointed Prime Minister of Armenia.

Ratas’ message runs as follows, “Please, accept my sincere congratulations on the occasion of being appointed Prime Minister of Armenia. I wish you success in the responsible task of ensuring the progress of the reforms in order to make Armenia a maximally democratic and prosperous country. As a country that has passed through a transitional period, Estonia highly assesses the opportunity to develop close relations with Armenia in terms of sharing the existing positive experience.

The existing good cooperation between our countries, particularly in the spheres of IT and culture, is a firm ground for deepening bilateral relations. I am confident that during your tenure we will expand bilateral interactions in other spheres and will strengthen those already existing.

I hope Armenia will continue developing relations with the EU, particularly in the sidelines of the Comprehensive and Enhanced Partnership Agreement and the Eastern Partnership. With the expectation for a close cooperation I hope that soon we will have the opportunity to exchange views personally.”

Kucinskis said in his message, “I extend to you my warmest congratulations on behalf of the Government of the Republic of Latvia on being re-appointed prime minister of Armenia. It’s a pleasure to see the development of cooperation between Latvia and Armenia. I am confident that our relations will continue to strengthen for the benefit of the welfare and prosperity of our peoples.”

Ex-Minister Denies Corruption Charges

YEREVAN (RFE/RL) — Former Environment Minister Aram Harutiunyan denied through a lawyer on Friday, January 18, corruption accusations brought against him by an Armenian law-enforcement body.

The lawyer, Karen Hakobyan, said that Harutiunyan has not fled Armenia but refused to shed more light on his whereabouts after a Yerevan court issued an arrest warrant for him. Nor did Hakobyan say whether his client will surrender to the Special Investigative Service (SIS) following the court’s decision.

The SIS formally charged Harutiunyan on Thursday with receiving \$14 million in bribes while in office in 2008. It reiterated prosecutors’ recent allegations that an Armenian businesswoman, Silva Hambardzumyan, paid the bribes in return for obtaining a dozen mining licenses from the Ministry of Environment Protection.

Hambardzumyan made the same claims when she spoke to RFE/RL’s Armenian service (Azatutyun.am) in late October.

Hakobyan dismissed the charges as “nonsensical.” “Those licenses were never of any use to anyone,” he said, adding that nobody would have paid millions of dollars for the right to search for, rather than mine, metals in several potential deposits in Armenia.

“I think that the investigation will continue and these accusations will be

refuted,” the lawyer told journalists.

Hakobyan also said that the former minister was not allowed to travel abroad recently, before being indicted by the SIS. “Mr. Harutiunyan wanted to leave the country for the purpose of his wife’s medical treatment but his departure was illegally blocked at the



Environment Minister Aram Harutiunyan speaks at a news briefing in Yerevan,

border checkpoint [of Yerevan’s Zvartnots airport,]” he said.

Harutiunyan served as environment minister from 2007-2014 and was elected to the Armenian parliament in 2017 on then President Serzh Sargsyan’s Republican Party’s ticket. The prosecutors attempted to arrest him in early December. The outgoing parliament, in which the Republicans had the largest group, declined to lift Harutiunyan’s immunity from prosecution.

Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan clearly referred to Harutiunyan when he stated in late October that law-enforcement authorities have all but solved the largest ever known case of bribery in Armenia’s history.



ARMENIA

Pashinyan Engages in Intense Political and Economic Discussions at Davos Forum

DAVOS, Switzerland (Armenpress) — Prime Minister of Armenia Nikol Pashinyan is participating in the World Economic Forum in Davos this week. He participated in many activities and meetings.

On January 22, he and president of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev held an informal meeting lasting more than an hour about the current stage of the Karabakh conflict.

He did not indicate how well the meeting had gone, but he posted it on his Facebook page.

Pashinyan also held short meetings with President of Brazil Jair Bolsonaro, Prime Minister of Luxembourg Xavier Bettel and Prime Minister of Egypt Mostafa Madbouly in the sidelines of the Davos World Economic Forum.

Pashinyan and the Brazilian President referred to a number of issues on bilateral agenda. They praised the friendly relations between the two countries and discussed expanding them.

Issues related to the relations between Armenia and Luxembourg were discussed during the meeting with Bettel. Pashinyan and Bettel highlighted the development of economic partnership and expansion of trade and economic relations. In that context, the sides underlined the necessity of activation of relations between the Governments of the two countries and implementation of concrete measures.

During the meeting with Madbouly, trade was again on the agenda. Pashinyan and Madbouly emphasized the necessity of holding business forums during which the opportunities of implementation of joint investment projects will be discussed. They also discussed negotiations between the EAEU and Egypt on signing FTA. Mostafa Madbouly noted that he expects the support of the Armenian Government in that process.

Along the sidelines of the forum Pashinyan gave interviews to a number of leading international news outlets. The Government's Facebook page informs that Chinese CCGTV, French *Le Figaro* and Swiss RTS were among them.

Nikol Pashinyan also attended the Media Leaders Briefing during which he answered the questions of *Business Insider*, the *New York*



Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan meets with Christina Ahmadjian, a member of the Board at the Mitsubishi Heavy Industries

of the EAEU member states. The priority for us will be the elimination of those obstacles, in order we reach a real common economic zone.”

In addition, Pashinyan met Apple CEO Tim Cook. An advisor to the prime minister, Arsen Gasparyan, posted a photo of the meeting on his Facebook page.

He also met with Christina Ahmadjian, a member of the Board at the Mitsubishi Heavy Industries and then JICA (Japan International Cooperation Agency) President Shinichi Kitaoka.



Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan meets with Apple CEO Tim Cook, center



Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan, left, with President Ilham Aliyev of Azerbaijan

Times, German DPA, Russian Ria Novosti and Egyptian *Daily News*.

In the interview with Ria Novosti, Referring to the priorities of Armenia as the chairing country of the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU), Pashinyan said, “Unfortunately, we have over 60 obstacles in the Eurasian Economic Union that hamper the normal process of integration procedures. This is due to the domestic regulations

During the meeting with Ahmadjian, Pashinyan said the Armenian government is interested in cooperating with the Mitsubishi Heavy Industries and its possible activities in Armenia. He added that the government's goal is to turn the recent political revolution in Armenia into an economic one, and for that purpose major and real changes are expected in the economic sector. Pashinyan said Armenia has great potential for techno-

logical development, and the company's activity can be prospective in this regard.

Ahmadjian attached importance to the ongoing processes in Armenia in terms of attracting new investment programs and expressed readiness to assist the Armenian government for establishing ties and cooperation with various Japanese companies. She said she plans to visit Armenia in the future aimed at further cooperation.

Pashinyan and the JICA President discussed the process and directions of the agency's ongoing programs in Armenia, as well as the opportunities to deepen the cooperation.

PM Pashinyan said the Armenian side is interested in expanding the partnership with the JICA and is ready to take actions to implement new mutually beneficial programs and outline new cooperation directions.

Shinichi Kitaoka said all the ongoing programs will continue. He noted that the JICA expert group will soon visit Armenia.

The officials also attached importance to deepening the commercial relations with Japan

taking into account the existing great development potential.

Pashinyan also met with eBay Vice President Cathy Foster. Pashinyan added that the World



Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan shares a laugh with Brazilian President Jair Bolsonaro, center

Forum on High Technologies will take place in Armenia in October 2019 and invited eBay to participate in the event.

Foster expressed her readiness to visit Armenia to discuss the means of implementing investment programs in the country.



INTERNATIONAL

International News

Members of Armenian Mafia Arrested in France

PARIS (news.am) — On January 18, some 200 officers from the French Gendarmerie, with on-the-field support of Europol, targeted suspects across France believed to be part of a Eurasian mafia group composed mainly of Armenian individuals involved in large-scale poly-criminal activities, including cigarette smuggling, extortion and money laundering.

More than 27 house searches were carried out in Rennes, Gap, St. Etienne, Nancy, Strasbourg, Haguenau, Reims, Chalon-Sur-Saone, Paris, Nantes, Limoges and Brest, Europol said in a statement.

As a result, 21 suspects were arrested, including an individual believed to be a high-ranking member of this mafia group. Some €23 000 in cash were seized at the premises, alongside over 2 000 packs of cigarettes, 23 kg of raw tobacco and 6 weapons.

The sting follows a lengthy investigation supported by the Spanish and the German authorities looking into the activities of this criminal network. The suspects used a special modus operandi where cars were used as a mean of payment for further criminal actions.

UK Ratifies Armenia-EU Partnership Pact

LONDON (Armenpress) — The United Kingdom has ratified the Armenia-European Union Comprehensive and Enhanced Partnership Agreement (CEPA) on January 18, UK Ambassador to Armenia Judith Farnworth said on Twitter on January 21.

“Delighted to confirm UK ratification of EU-Armenia Comprehensive and Enhanced Partnership Agreement”, the Ambassador said.

Armenia and the European Union signed the CEPA in Brussels on November 24, 2017. The Agreement has been ratified by 10 countries – Armenia, Bulgaria, Denmark, Estonia, UK, Lithuania, Latvia, Luxembourg, Malta and Poland.

Belarus Ambassador Meets Lukashenko

MINSK, Belarus (Armenpress) — Armenia’s new Ambassador to Belarus Armen Ghevondyan presented his credentials to President Alexander Lukashenko on January 21.

“Armenia has been and remains a reliable partner for Belarus, with whom we are tied with multi-purpose cooperation, including in the Eurasian Economic Union and the Collective Security Treaty Organization,” President of Belarus Alexander Lukashenko said at the ceremony.

Lukashenko emphasized the goal of enhancing commercial cooperation, which is a part of the relations with Armenia, and also readiness to participate in any project that would interest Armenian partners, including in Armenian territory.

Kazakh Official Praises Close Ties with Armenia

ASTANA, Kazakhstan (Armenpress) — The State of the Republic of Kazakhstan Gulshara Abdykalikova met with Armenian Ambassador to Kazakhstan Gagik Ghalachyan, on January 22, Kazinform reports.

Abdykalikova noted that Kazakhstan and Armenia enjoy close historic and cultural ties. Productive cooperation is being carried out within the Eurasian Economic Union, the Collective Security Treaty Organization, the Commonwealth of Independent States and other bodies.

Abdykalikova congratulated the ambassador on the recent parliamentary elections in Armenia and expressed confidence that the activities of the new staff of Armenia’s Parliament will positively affect the further strengthening of the bilateral cooperation.

He said cooperation between the two countries within the EAEU boosts the development of economic ties. In 10 months of 2018 trade turnover between Kazakhstan and Armenia totaled \$10.4 million, demonstrating a 19.5-percent increase.



Activists Gather for a demonstration: “Justice for Hrant Dink! Justice for 1.5 Million Genocide victims!” At right, by microphone, Ali Ertem.

Justice for 1.5 Million plus 1

By Muriel Mirak-Weissbach

Special to the Mirror-Spectator

FRANKFURT — On January 19, Germans, Turks, Armenians, Kurds, Greeks and others gathered in several German cities to render homage to the memory of Hrant Dink, on the 12th anniversary of his death. In Frankfurt, a demonstration took place at a central location near the historic St. Catherine’s Church. Members of the Soykırım Karsitları Derneği (SKD), the Society against Genocide, organized the vigil which gathered a hundred people. Under the slogan, “Justice for 1.5 million victims of genocide, justice for Hrant Dink,” the demonstrators carried photos of the murdered AGOS journalist as well as other activists currently jailed in Turkey. Candles and flowers lay on the ground among the photos and texts.

After greetings by SKD founder Ali Ertem, members of the group read out statements in German and in Turkish, explaining why they had gathered and what they were protesting. The group has held such demonstrations every year since his murder, alongside thousands of activists, in Istanbul, and worldwide. They were commemorating a very special person.

Why Hrant Dink Was Killed

The Armenian citizen of Turkey, father of three children, was an intellectual, the SKD representative said, who was “a voice for the voiceless” whose life

was extinguished in accordance with the genocidal tradition of Turkey. His murder “is the continuation of the 1915 genocide,” and thus the slogan, “1.5 million + 1.” The reason he was assassinated, she continued, lies in the fact that he named the genocide by name, breaking a taboo in Turkey.

At the same time Hrant Dink fought for an honest dialogue and reconciliation, in the context of a democratic society he hoped would come into being, and guarantee equal rights for minorities, for people of different religions and nationalities. Although he received death threats repeatedly, he was denied protection by the Turkish state, which led the European Court of Human Rights to rule in 2010 that Turkey was thus co-responsible for his death.

The SKD has been following the legal proceedings these 12 years, in which proxies have been put on trial while those responsible for the order to kill have remained concealed. The conclusion drawn is that Turkish intelligence services, gendarmerie and police are among the complicit. The consequences of such actions, said the SKD representative, are that Kurds and other minorities today are being victimized, and anti-Semitism is also on the rise.

What Is to Be Done

In closing, the speaker read out the

concrete demands the SKD has been making and will continue to make. First, a full investigation must be conducted to shed light on the background leading to Hrant Dink’s murder and who was responsible. This is the demand for justice for Hrant Dink and the 1.5 million genocide victims. Secondly, the immediate recognition of the genocide against the Armenians, Assyrian-Arameans, Ponto-Greeks and Yezidis – as well as the Dersim genocide. Thirdly, Erdogan must halt all massacres and human rights violations against Kurds and other groups, and free their imprisoned representatives. Finally, while the SKD welcomes the June 2016 resolution of the German Bundestag (Parliament) which recognized the Armenian genocide, it demands that the German federal government implement the conclusions of that act, by including study of the genocide in school curricula and introducing a national holiday in commemoration.

The demonstration in Frankfurt may have been modest in size, but appearances are deceptive. It is ideas that matter, and the people committed to translating them into reality. The SKD was the group that initiated the political campaign that eventually led to the historic resolution passed in the German parliament. (See Armenian Mirror-Spectator, December 20, 2018, The Turks in Germany Who Defeated Denial, www.mirror-spectator.com/2018/12/20/the-turks-in-germany-who-defeated-denial/)



Photographs and candles



INTERNATIONAL

Rediscovering Armenian Heritage In Turkey after Hrant Dink

GERMANY, from page 1

The event took place in the Democracy and Human Rights House in Berlin, and was attended by Armenians and Germans, members of the Dersim Cultural Community, the Berlin Armenian community, and representatives from the Armenian Embassy, among others.

What Is an Armenian?

But before Gültekin developed the theme, drawing on his personal experience as a Turkish citizen of Armenian descent, Hofmann suggested it would be important first to ask what Armenian identity really is. It is not an easy question to answer, since longstanding discrimination and persecution often lead to cultural, linguistic and religious assimilation, “what we sociologists call multiple or fluid identities,” she said.

To illustrate the concept, Hofmann drew on



Miran P. Gültekin

the book by Avedis Hadjian, *Secret Nation: The Hidden Armenians in Turkey*, which appeared last year. The lengthy study is based on interviews the author conducted with people who had at least one Armenian ancestor, who related their experiences in the period between 2011 and 2014.

First, the number of such people, “hidden” or “crypto-Armenians,” is not really known. If Jakob Künzler spoke of 132,000 Cristian orphans in 1919 and Johannes Lepsius estimated the Islamized Armenians that year amounted to 200,000, American archive records refer to 95,000 in 1921 throughout Anatolia. Author Hadjian reckons there were hundreds of thousands of Armenians forced to convert from 1915 on, with the aim of “de-

Armenianizing” them. For generations they bore the stigma of being “converts,” “heathens” or “the uncircumcised.” For generations, they preserved the memory of the wrongdoings perpetrated, confiscation, theft, plundering and worse. Attempts later to regain stolen land and property were unsuccessful, defeating hopes of reorganizing as a community.

The interviews document a process of accommodation to the local majority populations, whether Arab or Kurd, Turkish or Zaza-Sunnite. And the resulting multiple identity could appear in one extended family, with ethnic Armenians alongside Syrian orthodox, or Sunni Muslims, some speaking Turkish, others speaking an Iranian dialect, and so forth.

The question of religion is key, given the role it has played in Armenian history, blending with ethnicity to constitute identity. Most Islamized Armenians, Hofmann reported, in Diyarbakir and elsewhere, do not seek a return to Christianity, and the obstacles placed in the path of those who do are immense. The population of “hidden” Armenians is also politically diverse. Hofmann’s own view is that under such conditions “the descendants of Armenian genocide survivors in Turkey are far from constituting a nation or a reserve that can be retrieved to re-Armenianize Western Armenia, as some nationalists speculate.” Instead, they provide the “sad proof” of Raphael Lemkin’s definition of genocide, whereby the survivors are robbed of the possibility of belonging to the group that has been eliminated.

To Be an Armenian

Gültekin’s presentation was aptly titled, “Can One Be an Armenian in Turkey Today?” He estimates that there are 60,000 Armenians living in Turkey, mainly in the capital. From its founding, Turkey has denied and persecuted ethnic and religious diversity, targeting in particular non-Muslims. And even if there are no concrete attacks, “one cannot say that we are free to develop.”

In a historical review, he detailed what Armenian life looked like before 1915, with large communities, 20,000 in Dersim for example, who often constituted the majority population, as in his native Mazgirt; and they had their own schools and churches. In the genocide, Armenians could perhaps survive if they converted or went into hiding, especially concealing their identity. He gave his own family history as an example: “In Dersim everyone knew that we were Armenian, but none of us



From left, Tessa Hofmann, Miran P. Gültekin and Asa Tetik (translator)

went to church. We had Turkish names and were Muslims...Alevites. This is a confession of Islam but not really accepted as such in Turkey and is mistrusted.” His father had given the children Turkish names and after his parents migrated to Germany, the rest of the family moved to Istanbul and took up residence in an Armenian neighborhood; but they still did not go to church or attend an Armenian school.

“Armenian identity is very closely associated with religion,” he confirmed, and “the idea that someone who is not a Christian cannot be an Armenian is very widespread.” Thus, there was no real access to the community, “it was impossible for Islamized Armenians to speak up with a loud voice and say they were Armenians.”

From Assassination to Rediscovery

All that changed dramatically with Hrant Dink’s murder, which ushered in a new era. “The 19th of January is the day on which, for me and other Armenians who had been forced to live as Muslims for years, this new era began.” He said they felt as though a family member had been killed; “the bullet hit precisely that place that we had been trying to hide and cover up in silence.” The habit of not talking about events was broken. “I went to the funeral and took part in the demonstrations,” he said. “Then I decided to change my name and went to the court. I changed my religion and became a Christian. I went to the Patriarchate of the Armenian Apostolic Church in Istanbul and was baptized.” The fact that his family stood by him was crucial, and his wife, son, brother and even a 70-year-old uncle also were baptized.

The process was anything but easy. Many told him he had made a mistake. He became the target of threats and insults. Most shocking was the fact that he didn’t feel accepted in the Armenian – with the exception of the editorial board at *Agos* newspaper. Gültekin studied Armenian, travelled to Armenia and took language courses there, and over the years gradually has gradually become accepted as an Armenian, but still has never been able to assume leading positions in Armenian institutions.

Gültekin was convinced that it was not only a matter of identity but also a political question of his basic democratic rights. In fighting for one’s identity, it is not merely a matter of deciding to be an Armenian rather than a Kurd. Rather, it is cultural values that are fundamental. “We did not feel we belonged to Muslim culture,” he said; “there was a sense of emptiness.” In his attempt to reawaken an identity that had lain dormant, he started to talk about it. “I began to talk about what no one wanted to discuss. I told everyone. Journalists came from all over the world. Directors came. I told them all my life story.”

Out of this effort, he and his family and friends set up an association, which became a source of inspiration. Others followed their example, they had themselves baptized, went to church, celebrated Easter and so on. In Dersim they started Armenian language cours-

es. In this process, many residents discovered their Armenian heritage, and it was often a traumatic experience.

“Imagine,” he said, “a child who has grown up in an environment where ‘Armenian’ is an insult, and then learns that his parents are Armenian. That is hard to accept. There are still people who cannot accept this. Their parents have become Armenians again, and go to church and the son goes to the mosque. Imagine such a situation, not only with respect to the religion but to the culture.”

The most important development was that their stories became known to a broader public, as books and documentaries appeared, the result of the work of hundreds of journalists who visited Dersim. This all happened, he said, at a time when Turkey “was still relatively democratic.”

Associations were formed, people began to commemorate the genocide, in Diyarbakir a church was reopened, Armenians let their identities be known. But in Dersim the situation is different. “Everyone there knows by now that we are Armenians,” he said, “But it is impossible to live there as an Armenian. There are neither churches nor can one speak Armenian in public.” Although they can purchase land, and attend Armenian schools that already exist, they cannot build new ones. So Istanbul remains the center of active Armenian life.

Gültekin stressed the subjective problems experienced by the community; in the current political climate, Armenians are under extreme emotional stress and often fear that persecutions could begin again at any time. Younger people want to emigrate and many researchers have abandoned their work due to the hostile atmosphere. Nonetheless Gültekin expressed his confidence in a better future and the hope that the next generations will have a happier life.

One crucial problem he described concerns the church. He said that many Armenians who have started to search for their relatives and their lost identities, have experienced difficulties when they try to get baptized. They are not always welcomed by the church representatives. As he put it, “anyone who has at least officially lived as a Muslim for many years cannot in their view enter the church.” For this reason often Armenians travel to Armenia or to Europe to be baptized.

In an exchange following the presentation, one Armenian asked what must have been on the minds of many others: “If even after a hundred years, repression and persecution continue, in an attempt to eliminate the Armenians, why don’t they simply leave Turkey?” Fundamentally, Gültekin replied, it is a fact that the Armenians, whether “hidden” or not, have their homeland there; that is where their ancestors lived and where their dead are buried. And they don’t want to give it up.

(Full texts of both speeches can be found at: <http://www.agos-online.org/event/detail.php?locale=de&eventId=170>.)

Hrant Dink Assassination Anniversary Marked

DINK, from page 1

He noted that the Turkish officials and media also contributed to the intensification of nationalist moods against Dink.

The Parliament of Turkey, however, rejected Paylan’s demand and proposal to investigate and contribute to disclosing the case.

A commemorative event dedicated to the 12th anniversary of the murder Dink took place on January 19 in front of the offices of *Agos* periodical, where he was killed in 2007.

Commemorative events were also organized in other Turkish cities, as well as in Germany, the US and Belgium.

The Turkish Journalists Association (TJA) Chair Turgay Olcayto has said, “Hrant Dink was a value for the society because of his belief in democracy and human-focused works” in a statement commemorating the 12th anniversary of the murder of the journalist.

Olcayto said, “In the 12th anniversary of Dink’s departure as a result of a treacherous attack, we commemorate him with love and yearning,” and added, “Hrant Dink, who made efforts for years for togetherness and friendship of Turkish and Armenian peoples, was a value for the society because of his belief in democracy and human-focused works.”

Posts and comments on their page included:

“We want the judicial process to conclude as soon as possible”

“Frankly, I wonder if the circles which made Hrant a target for hitmen by spreading hate speech feel the slightest pang of conscience.”

“For 12 years, there is no hope in the lawsuits in terms of justice being served. We want and expect the ongoing trials, which were postponed to March, to conclude as soon as possible.

“Hrant Dink was our colleague, friend and a proficient, human-focused journalist who defended peace in every platform. We have never forgotten him. The pain is in our hearts all the time. We hope that media targeting journalists, artists and intellectuals will not be allowed to do this hereafter. Rest in peace, good person.”

Community News

Trump Signs Elie Wiesel Genocide And Atrocities Prevention Act Into Law

WASHINGTON — President Donald Trump signed the Elie Wiesel Genocide and Atrocities Prevention Act, a groundbreaking genocide prevention law on January 15, overwhelmingly adopted by the Senate and House, which codifies earlier measures, including those implemented by the Obama Administration, and puts in place a set of clear policies and processes to prevent new atrocities.

“The ANCA welcomes the President’s signature on the Elie Wiesel Genocide and Atrocities Prevention Act, and thanks all the legislators who spearheaded and supported this landmark bipartisan genocide prevention measure,” said ANCA Executive Director Aram Hamparian. “As Armenian Americans — descendants of the survivors of the Armenian Genocide — we are particularly gratified to see a measure signed into law that speaks to transitional justice, criminal accountability, and the moral imperative to apply the lessons of past genocides in seeking to prevent new atrocities.”

The genocide prevention measure was spearheaded by Senators Ben Cardin (D-MD), Todd Young (R-IN), and Thom Tillis (R-NC) in the Senate and by Representatives Ann Wagner (R-MO) and Joe Crowley (D-NY) in the House during the previous Congress and received broad bipartisan support. It enjoyed broad-based support from genocide and atrocities prevention organizations with the Friends Committee on National Legislation at the forefront along with over 70 grassroots groups, including the ANCA and In Defense of Christians.

The law states that U.S. must regard the prevention of genocide and other atrocity crimes as a core national security interest and moral responsibility. To that end, it calls for the creation of a task force to strengthen State Department efforts and assist other agency efforts at atrocity prevention and response. The law also calls for the training of Foreign Service Officers “on recognizing patterns of escalation and early warning signs of potential atrocities, and methods of preventing and responding to atrocities, including conflict assessment methods, peacebuilding, mediation for prevention, early action and response, and appropriate transitional justice measures to address atrocities.”

As part of the new provision, the President is required to transmit a report to Senate and House Committees on Foreign Affairs and Appropriations, offering a review of countries and regions at risk of atrocity crimes, the most likely pathways to violence, specific risk factors, potential perpetrators, and at-risk target groups.

The law also calls on the State Department and the U.S. Agency for International Development to support programs and activities to prevent or respond to emerging or unforeseen foreign challenges and complex crises overseas, including potential atrocity crimes.



Prof. Daniel Altshuler

Visiting Academics Offer a Philosophical Approach in Armenia

YEREVAN — What is philosophy and why does it matter?

When asked, a group of philosophers and linguists who have volunteered their time for a free, world-class intensive summer session in Yerevan for the past three

By Alin K. Gregorian
Mirror-Spectator Staff

years replied in an email: “We think that philosophy, like poetry, mathematics, etc., is intrinsically valuable. In fact, we think it is among the most valuable of human pursuits. If we don’t try to answer questions like ‘Can we be free when we are always subject to laws of nature,’ or ‘What is the difference between right and wrong?’ and ‘Why are we here,’ well, then, why are we here?”

But they admit that the benefits of the field extends beyond the world of ideas.

“The study of philosophy is also intrinsically valuable because it dramatically improves one’s critical thinking skills. Many studies have shown that university students who major in philosophy and then enter the workforce after graduating have higher mid-career salaries than students from almost any other major. And for students who want to continue their educations beyond their undergraduate degrees, philosophy majors outperform just about every other kind of major” when it comes to standardized tests, they add.

The Yerevan Academy for Linguistics and Philosophy (YALP) is a summer program in linguistics and philosophy sponsored by the volunteer faculty from around the world, and hosted by the College of Humanities and Social Studies at the American University of Armenia (AUA).

The purpose of YALP is to provide an opportunity for students to develop their knowledge and skills, possibly with a view toward applying to doctoral programs in philosophy or linguistics (including programs in the US and Europe).

In 2018, there were 66 students from 20 countries, including Russia, Scotland, the US, Iran, Turkey, the UK, Switzerland, Poland and Finland. There were also many students from the AUA that participated. At the end of the program, Arevik Anapioşyan, the deputy minister of education and science of Armenia, participated in the closing ceremony.

Founding YALP

YALP was started by four people: Professors Daniel Altshuler (Hampshire College), Arshak Balayan (American University of Armenia), Ned Markosian (University of Massachusetts, Amherst) and Susanna Melkonian-Altshuler (a doctoral student at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst). Professors Maria Baghramian from the University College Dublin and Paul Boghossian from New York University, have supported the initiative since its founding.

For Melkonian-Altshuler, starting YALP and volunteering every year simply make sense.

“I’m Armenian. I know that there are ways in which I can help my country and doing so makes me very happy. I also know that given Armenia’s past as a Soviet nation, Armenians tend to be strong at math and logic which makes them perfectly eligible for the sort of philosophy and linguistics that we do,” she said.

The program is going to be bigger this summer, she said.

“I think this upcoming summer will be special: the number of YALP participants grows from year to year and although we founded the school only two years

see YALP, page 7

Homebuilder Hovnanian, Facing Years-Old Debt, Could Get Stock Delisted

By Keith Larsen

NEW YORK (*The Real Deal*) — Hovnanian Enterprises, one of the country’s largest homebuilders, took on loads of debt to acquire companies and land more than a decade ago only to see the housing market collapse in 2008 and property values tumble.

Today, the New Jersey-based firm, which includes K. Hovnanian, faces the risk of being delisted from the New York Stock Exchange as it continues to struggle with that debt.

The company said it will seek shareholder approval at its annual meeting on March 19 to conduct a reverse stock split in order keep it on the exchange.

Hovnanian’s stock needs to stay above \$1 in order to meet the NYSE’s listing requirements. The stock closed at 75 cents on Monday, January 14.

The homebuilder’s troubles pertain to long-standing issues from the financial crisis. From the late 1990s until around 2006 it was in a buying mode and its debt piled up, according to the *Wall Street Journal*. The company’s troubles are also piling up, now that some experts predict



Hovnanian Enterprises’ CEO Ara Hovnanian
(Credit: Fox)

housing sales to continue to slow in 2019.

Because of that debt, Hovnanian was unable to make large acquisitions at a time when homebuilders were buying up land at distressed prices. When sales rebounded and demand for starter homes rose significantly, it couldn’t capitalize.

The company had a total of more than \$1.1 billion in senior outstanding debt as of October 31, 2018, according to its filing with the Securities and Exchange Commission. Its total revenue was \$1.9 billion at the end of October.

One bright spot today: Hovnanian saw an uptick in home deliveries, which ticked up 2.4 percent to 1,829 in the fourth quarter, from 1,787 a year ago, according to its earnings release.

Hovnanian’s financial issues got more complicated in 2017, when the company borrowed money from hedge fund Solus Alternative Asset Management to pay off some of its other debts, as it neared payment deadlines. Solus then sold a number of credit default swap contracts on that debt, including to Blackstone Group subsidiary GSO Capital Partners.

With Hovnanian in need of a refinancing, GSO stepped in as a potential new lender, but with one major condition: GSO needed Hovnanian to default on some of its debt so it could reap millions in profits from its credit default swap contracts with Solus.

This triggered Solus’ lawsuit in which it accused GSO of engaging in illegal market manipulation. The lawsuit was settled in May without Hovnanian needing to default.



COMMUNITY NEWS

Visiting Academics Offer a Philosophical Approach in Armenia

YALP, from page 6

ago and although we don't have funding, we are expanding in various ways: more and more renowned linguists and philosophers express both interest in participating in YALP as teachers and visiting Armenia. They spend their own money for doing this. The interest from our students increases too: we get more and better applicants every year, some of them are not only from Armenia and the region but also from

ther, at the Ph.D. level (either in Armenia or elsewhere), and they will have mentors from YALP who will be able to help them in that pursuit."

Visitors from the Diaspora

The idea for the program dates back to 2013, when Markosian and Baghramian traveled to Yerevan, both for the first time. They were invited to visit Yerevan State University (YSU) by

the region.

The trio reached out to Balayan and eventually the program was born.

Boghossian, from NYU, was department chair for 10 years, from 1994 to 2004, a period during which the Department of Philosophy underwent a big expansion. He is currently Silver Professor of Philosophy at NYU and director of its Global Institute for Advanced Study. He was elected to the American Academy of Arts and Sciences in 2012.

The child of Armenian Genocide survivors who had escaped to British Mandate Palestine in 1921, he was born in Haifa and left Israel at age 15 for Canada and eventually got his doctorate at Princeton. He taught for several years at the University of Michigan at Ann Arbor before moving to New York University in 1992.

When asked why Boghossian donated his time to YALP, he said, "I guess my parents did a good job of instilling in me a sense of obligation to help the Armenian nation in whatever way was within my power."

In addition to lecturing at YALP, Boghossian said he serves on the Educational Policy Committee of the Board of Trustees of the AUA. "I was approached to take this on by the Board's chair, the former Provost of the University of California, Larry Pitts, a distinguished neurosurgeon. I remember thinking: If this man, who has no antecedent emotional connection to Armenia is giving of his time, how can I possibly say no?"

Another motivation, Boghossian added, was the hope to "meet some talented young thinkers whom we could trust to move Armenia to a brighter future. I am always inspired by the energy, enthusiasm and hunger for understanding of the students at YALP."

He singled out Balayan, the only Armenia-based faculty member, for his efforts. "I first met him when I visited Armenia in 2004 to give a series of lectures at Yerevan State University,

dents at AUA would have a chance to meet and receive instruction from world-class scholars as well as meet international students.

Baghramian also praised Balayan for his efforts. "His initial invitation to Yerevan, which came when we were both spending some time in Harvard, was the spur for my involvement with the project of bringing analytic philosophy to Armenia. His energy, enthusiasm and dedication fills me with hope for the future of Armenia and it is that sense of hope and purpose that I bring back with me," Baghramian said.

The Dublin-based Baghramian's father was born in Armenia. As a 7-year-old, he, together with his parents and younger sister, had to escape to Iran in 1922. He and his family never overcame the sense of loss of caused by this forced uprooting. She added, therefore, "I grew up with an emotional attachment to the idea of homeland that never was. Once the distant dream of Armenia became a reality, I felt I need to contribute to its development in ways that are within my powers and capabilities."

She expressed her pride with YALP's growth. "The Summer Institute has been going from strength to strength and we have a truly impressive line-up of linguists and philosophers for YALP 2019. I am very excited about working with new colleagues and also spending time with the faculty from the previous years. But above else, I also look forward to teaching and talking to the students who are the main reason for these trips," she said.

Baghramian left Iran in the 1970s to pursue her studies and received a PhD in philosophy of logic from Trinity College Dublin. She is currently professor of American Philosophy and the head of the School of Philosophy at University College Dublin. She is also a member of the Royal Irish Academy.

She has published regularly both books and articles related to intractable disagreements



The students outside the AUA

Europe and the US. We are talking here about non-Armenian Europeans and Americans," she added.

Melkonian-Altshuler was born in Yerevan and when she was 6, in 1993, her family immigrated to Germany. She is in the process of transferring to a different PhD program in the US, one with a strong focus on the philosophy of mind and the philosophy of language.

Her husband, Daniel Altshuler, is an enthusiastic founding member of the group.

"I think it's important to expose students interested in linguistics to Generative Grammar – a kind of theoretical approach to linguistics that is currently not offered in Armenia. The approach uses the scientific method to studying the core properties of language, which has been incredibly fruitful in the last 50-plus years. Armenian is understudied in theoretical linguistics, so not only do I have the chance to teach students, but also encourage them to research Armenian from this perspective. Armenian may offer important insight that has so far been overlooked in the linguistics community," he said.

Some of the relationships continue beyond the summer, Altshuler said. "As one example, Mariam Asatryan has developed a fascinating project on Armenian tenses, beginning at YALP. Last semester, she came to visit UMass, Amherst, in the US to continue working on her project. My colleagues and I learned a lot from her visit," he noted.

Altshuler himself was born into a Jewish family in Russia. The family fled to the US as refugees in 1989. He received his doctorate in linguistics at Rutgers University and has been teaching at Hampshire College in Western Massachusetts full time since 2015.

Another nearby participant in YALP is Markosian, who teaches at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst.

Markosian said he volunteers his time to YALP because "I believe it is a worthy and extremely important cause. From my perspective, as a philosopher, it is clear that there are many brilliant students in Armenia who deserve to have more opportunities than they would otherwise have to pursue their interests in philosophy beyond the undergraduate level."

He added, "We will all have a wonderful time teaching and learning philosophy and linguistics, the cause of furthering analytic philosophy in Armenia will be advanced (and similarly for linguistics), and a tremendously talented group of students (mainly from Armenia, but also a few from other places) will have a chance to explore an academic discipline (either philosophy or linguistics) in ways that would otherwise not be available to them. In some cases, those students will decide to pursue their studies fur-

Arshak Balayan, then a lecturer at YSU, to give a series of lectures to philosophy students at YSU and AUA.

The two visiting scholars returned in 2015 for more lectures and after spending more time with students, were convinced that the demand was there for a more formal program.

They approached Paul Boghossian of New York University to participate in what they were calling the "Autumn School of Philosophy." He agreed, and was joined by several other scholars from around the world, many non-Armenians.

Another concern for the scholars was that philosophy and linguistics majors in Armenia were unaware that often in the US students who are admitted to a PhD program are fully funded for their entire graduate careers. On the other hand, Armenian students are not well-positioned to apply for PhD programs in places like the US, even if they decide to give it a try.

On a parallel track with Baghramian, Markosian had been championing teaching students in Armenia, especially after 2015; one of his graduate students was Susanna Melkonian-Altshuler. He talked about the idea of a summer school in Armenia with Susanna and her husband, Daniel. They thought that, given the close connections between analytic philosophy and linguistics, it would be a good idea to create a summer school in linguistics and philosophy, to take place in Yerevan, with the goal of providing opportunities to the talented students from



Prof. Paul Boghossian



Prof. Julian Schlöeder (Linguistics, University of Amsterdam)



Prof. Ned Markosian

as a Fulbright Senior Specialist. He was at the time a junior lecturer there. He has been a tireless force for bringing analytic philosophers to Armenia, to introduce this critical style of thought in contrast with the dogmatic Marxism/Leninism that had dominated Armenian philosophy for the preceding 70 years. In important ways, YALP is the direct outgrowth of his tireless efforts over the years."

Balayan studied philosophy at Yerevan State University. He said, "The Philosophy department at YSU follows continental traditions, but I was interested in analytic philosophy from my first years at YSU. I taught philosophy at Yerevan State University from 2009 to 2016. I have taught philosophy at the American University of Armenia since 2013. My main interests are in philosophy of science and ethics."

He expressed his pride in YALP.

"This is one of the best ways to use my time. I take development of philosophy in Armenia to be my main professional goal. Development of linguistics and especially of philosophy can and will have a profound and lasting impact on other social sciences and eventually on society," Balayan added.

"I very much hope to have another successful summer school of linguistics and philosophy. We already have a large community of YALP participants. Hopefully we will manage to use YALP 2019 for strengthening and expanding that interdisciplinary and international community," he noted.

Balayan said he was also happy that his stu-

and relativism as well as on contemporary American Philosophy.

Markosian noted that at UMass Amherst, he often has a number of Armenian-American undergraduate students. "It is nice, when speaking informally with some of those students, to be able to tell them stories of my visits to Armenia. Many of them have not yet had a chance to visit Armenia, and they often become wicked psyched to go after hearing about the wonderful times I have had there, and the wonderful people I have met," Markosian said. "Besides that, it is always helpful to teach a group of students that's different from one's regular student population. I learn as much from the students in Yerevan as they learn from me."

Markosian's family descends from survivors of the Genocide. Born in New Jersey, he went to Oberlin College in Ohio, and received his PhD from UMass-Amherst in 1990.

Applying to YALP

For students interested in applying to YALP this summer, the deadline for applications is April 10. They can fill out the application at <https://www.dropbox.com/s/srq7kpx2tz1fzaw/ApplicationFormYALP%202019.docx?dl=0>

The completed application should be sent to 2019YALP@gmail.com

The program is free. Students are responsible for their lodgings and transportation. YALP is actively seeking contributions to help defray as much of the cost as possible for the students.



COMMUNITY NEWS

Dr. Tara Andrews Receives Sona Aronian Armenian Studies Book Prize from NAASR

BELMONT, Mass. — The National Association for Armenian Studies and Research (NAASR) announced recently that Dr. Tara Andrews of the University of Vienna has been awarded the 2018 Dr. Sona Aronian Book Prizes for Excellence in Armenian Studies.

NAASR's Aronian Book Prizes were established in 2014 by the late Dr. Aronian and Dr. Geoffrey Gibbs, to be awarded annually to an outstanding scholarly works in the English lan-

guage in the field of Armenian Studies and translations from Armenian into English. The 2018 award was for a book published in 2017.

Andrews was given the prize for her monograph *Matt'ēos Urhayec'i and His Chronicle: History as Apocalypse in a Crossroads of Cultures*, published by Brill as part of their "The Medieval Mediterranean" series. The book is the first ever in-depth study of the history written by Matteos, also known as Matthew of Edessa (also called Urfa or Urha), around the turn of the twelfth century and an eyewitness to the First Crusade and the establishment of the Latin East.

In announcing the Aronian Award, NAASR Director of Academic Affairs Marc A. Mamigonian remarked that "we are very glad to bring greater attention to Dr. Andrews' important contribution," and that "it is especially meaningful for NAASR as we have long been aware of the great value of Matthew's Chronicle to scholars." NAASR was the co-publisher (with University Press of America) of the first English-language translation, by Dr. Ara Dostourian, of the *Chronicle*, published in 1993 as *Armenia and the Crusades: The Chronicle of Matthew of Edessa* and republished by NAASR with revisions in 2014. "It is exciting to see this important historical source being explored in such a rewarding manner," noted Mamigonian.

Andrews, via email, commented that "it is gratifying, not only to have the recognition of the significance of *Matthew's Chronicle*, but also to have the attention drawn to his time and place. I hope, through this book and through ongoing work, to bring to light the

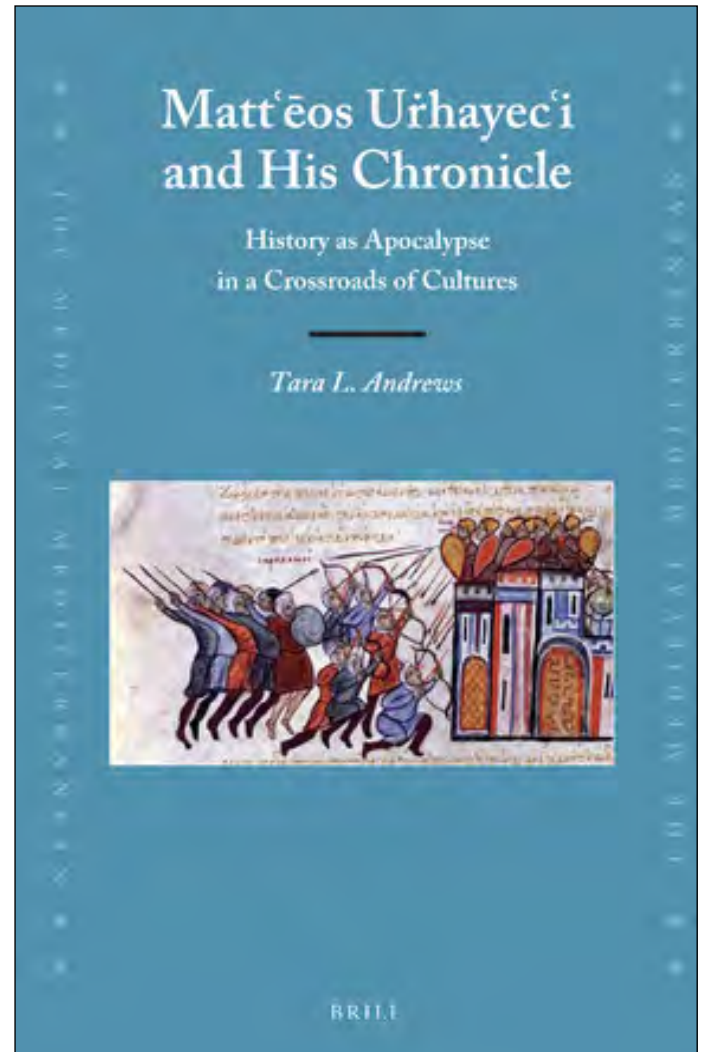
sometimes-underrated influence that the Armenians had (and continue to have!) on the world around them, even while maintaining their distinct culture and identity through a time of tumultuous change."

Andrews became professor of digital humanities at the Institute for History at the University of Vienna in 2016. With a Bachelor of Science in Humanities and Engineering from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (1999), and the degrees of Master (2005) and Doctor (2009) of Philosophy in Byzantine and Armenian studies from the University of Oxford, her dual scientific training as well as her professional experience in the software industry has provided valuable and rare perspectives on the use of digital and computational methods in humanities domains. Andrews' fields of expertise include the history and historiography of the Christian Near East in the tenth to twelfth centuries, the application of computational and statistical methods for reconstruction of the copying history of ancient and medieval manu-

scripts (stemmatology), and reflection on the implications of employing digital media and computational methods in humanities contexts.



Tara Andrews



Matteos Urhayeci cover

OBITUARY

Paylag Aharonian Tekeyan, ADL, AGBU Activist

GLENDAL, Calif. — Paylag Aharonian, born January 2, 1928 in Beirut, Lebanon, passed away on January 15 in southern California after a short illness. His parents, Minas and Ardemis Aharonian, were natives of Kharpert. At a very early age, the family moved from Beirut to Tripoli. Paylag graduated the Nubarian Elementary School, and went to Catholic middle school. In 1943 he left to Cyprus to continue his education at the Armenian General Benevolent Union (AGBU)'s Melkonian

many years. He also served as secretary of the AGBU chapter of Tripoli and remained active in the ADL. He taught from 1947 to 1966 in Tripoli's Armenian National School.

In 1966 he and his family moved to Beirut, where he taught at the local Vahan Tekeyan School. From 1966 to 1979 he served as executive secretary of the AGBU AYA Antranig-Sevan Chapter and played a fundamental role in the creation of the Zabel Movsesian Center for AYA in Sin-e-Fil. He served various executive roles in the Mihran Damadian Chapter of the ADL in Beirut in this period.

During the Lebanese civil war from 1976 to 1979, he was a member of the United Body of the Lebanese Armenians and played a role in helping Armenian victims. Finally, the difficult situation in Lebanon led to he and his family emigrating to the United States in 1980.

In Los Angeles he served as the executive secretary of the Tekeyan Cultural Association (TCA)'s Beshgeturian Center Construction Committee from 1980-81, and then served as the publication manager of the newspaper *Nor Or* until 1997. He was active in the ADL Western Region, being elected in 1981 as a member of the District Committee for two years, and helping to set up the ADL Kersam Aharonian and Hampartoum Karayan chapters. He also participated in the establishment of the Pasadena-Glendale TCA chapter.

The funeral service took place on January 19 at Burbank's St. Leon Armenian Cathedral, and the burial followed at Glendale's Forest Lawn Cemetery. Survivors include son Ara Aharonian and wife Diane, daughter Arpy Ghanimian and husband Chahe, grandchildren Tamar Ganimian, Rita and Andre Saroukhanian and children, Zohrab and Karine Ganimian, Dr. Shiraz Ganimian, Alex Aharonian; and the entire Aharonian, Hovsepian, Bilemjian, Keshishian, Ghanimian, Depanian, Darian and Yousoufian families and friends.



Educational Institute. While there he also became a talented soccer player.

In 1947 he returned to Tripoli with the goal of repatriating to Soviet Armenia. Unable to accomplish this, he started teaching in the Armenian National Khrimian School for the AGBU in Tripoli.

In 1949 he entered the ranks of the Armenian Democratic Liberal Party (ADL) and in 1951 married Mari Hovsepian, daughter of Tripoli's Armenian priest. They had two children, Ara-Karekin and Arpy. He continued to play soccer in various local Arab teams as well as Armenian ones.

In 1953, he became chairman of the Tripoli chapter of the AGBU Armenian Youth Association (AYA) and ran this organization for

Giragosian

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COMMUNITY NEWS

Primate Makes New Year Visits to Youth and Elders

NEW YORK — In his role as leader of the Eastern Diocese, the Very. Rev. Fr. Daniel Findikyan began the Diocesan Primate's annual New Year's visits to regional Armenian institu-

tions. On Friday, January 11, he traveled to the Hovnanian School in New Milford, NJ, and the Armenian Nursing and Rehabilitation Center in Emerson, NJ. On January 17, he visited the Holy

Martyrs Armenian Day School (HMADS) in Bayside, NY.

As part of each visit, the Diocesan Primate officiated over the Home Blessing service, traditionally performed at the start of the New Year. Students at both the Hovnanian School and HMADS sang, recited poems, and spent time talking with and learning from the Primate.

At the Armenian Nursing and Rehabilitation

Center, residents spoke with the Primate and received his blessing. The Primate met with members of the staff of both institutions and discussed their recent accomplishments.

Accompanying Findikyan on his various visits were Fr. Diran Bohajian, Fr. Daniel Karadjian, Fr. Abraham Malkhasyan, Fr. Arakel Vardazaryan, Dn. Arman Galstyan, and Dn. Eric Vozzy.



Presenting a book to a young student at the Hovnanian School



The Very. Rev. Fr. Daniel Findikyan, Primate of the Diocese of the Armenian Church of America, Eastern, gives books to a young student from the Holy Martyrs Armenian Day School in Bayside, NY.

New Prelate Honored with Gala in New York

By Florence Avakian

NEW YORK — More than 375 admirers of the new Prelate of the Eastern Prelacy, Archbishop Anoushavan Tanielian, gathered on Sunday, December 2 at the Terrance on the Park ballroom. The attendees had come in from several East coast states as well as from Chicago, Detroit, Canada, Paris and Lebanon.

The Prelate, elevated from Bishop to Archbishop in an encyclical by Catholicos Aram I of the Great House of Cilicia, had celebrated the Holy Badarak at the St. Illuminator's Cathedral in New York that morning to an overflowing assemblage.

At the banquet hall, following a sumptuous reception, the attendees filed into an elegant ballroom decorated with white and lilac flowers gracing the tables, the colors symbolizing the clerical rank of the Prelate.

Tanielian voiced the invocation, after which Susan Chitjian Erickson, Secretary of the Executive Council and Chairperson of the Banquet Committee, warmly welcomed the guests and led a celebratory toast to the honoree.

What was especially impressive about this event was that there was no head table. The more than a dozen priests present each sat at separate tables with the people, a directive of the Prelate, symbolizing his closeness to the people.

The Very Rev. Mesrop Parsamyan, representing the Eastern Diocesan Primate, the Very Rev. Daniel Findikyan who was traveling out of state, read the Primate's inspiring message.

Calling Danielian "a fellow churchman and longtime friend, the Diocesan Primate expressed his respect and admiration for the many honors and achievements of the Prelate. "Your devotion to the Christian mission of the Armenian Church is plainly evident in the personal integrity and humility which are the abiding characteristics of your ministry."

Recounting the recent elections of both the Eastern Primate and Eastern Prelate, Findikyan said he "sensed the hand of God" behind these simultaneous developments.

"I pray that it signals that the Divine Physician is ready to heal the body of our church, restore its ability to breathe freely with

both lungs, beckoning us forward with the promise of a new sunrise, heralding a new day, so that our entire people may be revived by the unifying grace of the Holy Spirit", the Primate said. This prophetic message garnered a huge ovation.

Dr. Ara Chalian, speaking on behalf of the Armenian Revolutionary Federation (ARF), recounted the endearing and inspiring qualities of "young Anoushavan, the people's hoviv" who like Nersess Shnorhali "went on a journey of introspection". Where are we today, and where will we go, he asked.

"Our church, our organizations and our families will not survive on their own. It is our responsibility," he said with special emphasis.

Chairman of the Executive Council Jack Mardoian, Esq., paid tribute to the "new spirit" in the Prelacy even though the work is the same. "I see a joy that cannot be replicated, a love that Srpazan shows for all Prelacy communities, a spirituality and a mission for all of us to go forward together."

And to the delight of the audience, soloists Vagharshak Ohanyan and Anahit Zakaryan sang several songs, with Archbishop Yeghise Tourian's Yete Zis Danis being a special favorite. Also sharing her musical talent was violinist Svetlana Mkrtchyan.

In an emotionally delivered spontaneous message, Tanielian, symbolizing his work focus of "Love in Action", stated "wherever there is love, there is paradise discovered. We are not starting anything new. What is new is our approach, our understanding."

"I will approach my mission with a new dynamism of the successful work of my predecessors with faith and prayers," declared the Prelate with emphasis.

"I want to bring the fire of love into our daily life, and especially focus on the youth, work for our people's sustenance of a healthy mind and body, and rediscover our identity as Americans, Armenians and Christians," he declared to a standing ovation lasting several minutes. The singing of Cilicia by all present ended the joyous and celebratory occasion.

Artsakh Representative Robert Avedissian, stated that "in this crucial period for the Armenian people, we are blessed to have someone like Srpazan who spares no effort to make Armenia, Artsakh, our community and our church strong and proud."



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COMMUNITY NEWS

Semonian Family, Knights' Ararat Lodge Partner with Rotary International to Bring Water to Remote Village in Armenia

BILLERICA, Mass. — A little effort going a very long way is being seen in the tiny Armenian village of Arpunq, thanks in part to the financial generosity of the late Ararat Asbed Robert “Bob” Semonian from Ararat Lodge No. 1. A \$10,000 donation from a trust established by Bob Semonian, who passed away in 2016, is being used to help bring pristine running water to a remote village near the southern shores of Lake Sevan, replacing on old, inoperative Soviet era asbestos pipe.

Arpunq has some 120 homes with a population of about 660 people. The project was spearheaded by Asbed John Peterson of Ararat Lodge No. 1 and Clayton Carlisle, both members of the Billerica, Massachusetts Rotary Club. They both addressed the members of Ararat Lodge No. 1 and Arpie Otyag No. 9 at their January 14 dinner in Watertown. It is the Billerica Rotary Club that requested and received a Global Grant from Rotary International for the project, whose total cost is \$52,000.

Asbed John Peterson, of the Billerica Rotary Club approached Asbed Leon Semonian, co-trustee of his brother Bob's estate, along with Paul Semonian, Bob's nephew, for assistance. They agreed to donate \$10,000 of the \$17,000 local contribution required by Rotary International, which triggered the Rotary's matching contribution to complete funding for the project.

The pipeline is the only source of water for the village, running some two and a half miles both above and below ground. It feeds water faucets that are located outside of the modest homes. There is no indoor plumbing in Arpunq, which means that all toilet facilities are also outdoors in the form of outhouses. Other uses for the grant money include roofing of the local school, family bedding at a cost of \$50 per bed, and bee hives for a number of families.

At the January Knights and Daughters dinner, Asbed Leon Semonian was honored for his generosity by Lodge and Otyag members as well as Asbed and Middlesex County Sheriff Peter Koutoujian and David Muradian, Republican of the Massachusetts State House of Representatives.

Koutoujian thanked Leon and Paul Semonian for their generosity and then presented Leon with a proclamation from his department, acknowledging their philanthropy.

Muradian also presented a proclamation citing the generosity of the Semonians on behalf of the people of Massachusetts. Leon Semonian then took a moment to thank those who had honored him, saying that his late brother Bob would have been very proud of what was being done in Armenia with his Trust funds and pleased to have played a small role in making it happen.

— Asbed David Medzorian, Ararat Lodge No. 1
All photos by David Medzorian



From left, Sheriff Peter Koutoujian, Leon Semonian and state Rep. David Muradian



From left, Asbed Argishti Chaparian, Asbed John Peterson, state Rep. David Muradian, Leon Semonian and Sheriff Peter Koutoujian



From left, Asbed John Peterson, Asbed Leon Semonian, Sheriff Peter Koutoujian and state Rep. David Muradian



Asbed Leon Semonian and state Rep. David Muradian share a light moment.





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COMMUNITY NEWS

AUA Celebrates a Milestone: 100 Pillars of AUA Campaign Completed

LOS ANGELES and YEREVAN — A glass wall shines under the Yerevan sun in the lobby of the Paramaz Avedisian Building, one of the newest and most striking additions to the American University of Armenia's campus. As students walk to and from classes past this honorary wall every day in an environment abuzz with academic activity, they recognize the commitment of the 100 individuals and organizations from around the world who have dedicated themselves as donors to the only US-accredited, independent institution of higher learning in the Caucasus.

The names of the 100 Pillars of AUA, a milestone campaign that recently came to a successful close, were etched one by one on the glass wall dedicated to these collective group of visionaries who remain actively engaged with AUA and its students. These donors possess a strong belief that they are investing in the future of Armenia through every single one of the 2,000 students at the University and the many more to come with their own hopes and dreams, who will enter through AUA's doors, marking the beginning of their journey toward impacting their home country.

It was only three short years ago when the decision was made by the senior leadership of AUA to gather a foundation of supporters, aptly named "pillars," who would buttress the financial future of AUA in order to allow current and future generations to benefit from the academic institution with the goal of one day contributing towards the development of the homeland.

President and co-founder of AUA, Dr. Armen Der Kiureghian, was present at this meeting and understood the importance of identifying a core group of University supporters.

"We thought they would literally be Pillars in the sense that they would care deeply for the University and shoulder some of the urgent financial needs," said Der Kiureghian. He noted that the aim was to have Pillars' donations be unrestricted so the University could direct the funds to where it was most needed. Ultimately, the contributions would ease the immediate financial needs of AUA and focus more on long-term goals, such as bolstering the endowment, establishing competitive programming, hiring renowned faculty, enriching the library resources, promoting continued education for staff on campus, and building modern and technologically advanced facilities for the University's community and the general public.

The plan worked — AUA's endowment more than tripled during this period ensuring the university's financial health, without compromising its high-quality of education. In fact, the school thrived under the guidance of the 100 Pillars of AUA campaign.

Through the unrestricted funds scholarships increased — allowing nearly half of AUA's students to be rewarded some level of financial aid — as did support for faculty and staff development. It also fostered the growth of practical and relevant programs, including the launching of three new degrees: MS Strategic Management, BS in Engineering Science and BS in Data Science.

"The Pillars' association with AUA enhances the momentum and integrity of the institution and gives us a stronger sense of responsibility to serve the homeland," said Der Kiureghian.

Serving the homeland is the mission of AUA's founders and the university's donors. As the leading academic institution in Armenia, AUA is always at the helm of progress and advancement. Its leaders also understand the significance of educating not only those in the nation's capital, but throughout the country, particularly in the villages. The University has

seen an influx of qualified and talented female students from the rural areas, many of whom are studying computer science on scholarships, like Alisa Martirosyan, a freshman majoring in computer science. As a child, Martirosyan often played with a Rubik's cube and her interest in the combination puzzle could have easily waned as she followed a routine lifestyle in her hometown. She was emboldened, however, when she was accepted into AUA and received aid to complete her college education, committing herself to becoming a biomedical engineer, which she calls a "powerful" program. At AUA she has already acquired "a lot of knowledge as the school teaches us to think and solve problems not only in the field but in life."

"Studying at AUA significantly changed my personality," said Martirosyan. "During my studies at the university, I have become more goal-directed and persistent in reaching my personal goals and those of Armenia's."

Fellow computer science major Liana Harutyunyan remarked that AUA helped develop the "core foundation" of her college education and allowed her to become a more "self-sufficient individual."

"The experience that AUA provided me with enabled me to adapt to any condition and environment," said Harutyunyan, a freshman. "AUA contributed greatly to the development of my professional proficiency and I plan to share that in a way that will benefit my society."

This is exactly why donors see AUA as the gateway to strengthening Armenia through its people. The 100 Pillars, who come from around the globe with diverse backgrounds, all understand that the academic institution is the most qualified to lead the next generation towards



AUA graduates seek to better their lives, the lives of their families and the livelihood of Armenia.

success that will reverberate throughout all regions of the country through education and knowledge.

"We need to empower the young men and women in the country to receive the best education possible so that they can progress and lead the country in the right direction," said Pillar Isabelle Dokouzian. "I believe that AUA does a remarkable job in preparing the future leaders of Armenia."

Linda Kay Abdulian, the president and CEO of the National Raisin Company, another one of AUA's Pillars, based in Fowler, Calif., acknowledges that "an investment in education pays the best dividends."

Providing a high caliber education has always been a priority for AUA and that is achieved not only through motivated students, but through leading professors in their respective fields who are opening students up to a larger landscape, particularly in the technology field. Pillar Dr. Michael Kouchakdjian, who also serves as a



AUA students pose enthusiastically in the front of the 100 Pillars of AUA Honorary Wall

professor of business and management at AUA, spearheads the Entrepreneurship and Product Innovation Center (EPIC), a cutting-edge facility on AUA's campus which serves as an incubator for students who are developing their start-up ventures. Since its founding three years ago, many of EPIC's students have become champions in competitions around the world. In an atmosphere of entrepreneurship and collaboration, students have the ability to tap into their potential in the first-class facilities and workspaces, programs and events.

Los Angeles-based Pillar Sara Chitjian saw the potential of EPIC and its novel approach, and generously established an endowment to secure the operations of the Center.

"I feel Armenians have the ability to create something very unique because they have that type of brain," said Chitjian. "When someone asks who made a great invention, I want the response to be that an Armenian made it."

Over the years, Kouchakdjian has seen the evolution of AUA and has been a participant in its growth since the time of its founding. Along with his wife Hasmik, as Pillars, they have both upheld the University and its student body.

"I witness how the funds raised by the Pillars program expands the reach and capacity of the faculty to engage and address the challenges of Armenia through research and policy recommendations," said Kouchakdjian. "AUA has perhaps the greatest concentration of individuals and expertise in Armenia for providing guidance in the design and implementation of forthcoming policy, reforms, and opportunities in the new Armenia."

This "New Armenia" materialized in April 2018, when thousands of citizens took to the streets during the Velvet Revolution to call for a new and more transparent government that would have the best interests of its citizens at heart. Many of the demonstrators were themselves AUA students and alumni, ready to have their voices heard and become a part of the direly needed change in their birthplace. It was this desire to have a hand in shaping Armenia's future that AUA's students stepped up — including Sergey Sarukhanyan, who is a recipient of the Edward and Eleonore Aslanian Endowed Scholarship, who remarks that his scholarship gift played a "significant role" in his life.

"My goal is to serve the communities in which we practice and live," said Sarukhanyan. "The skills and knowledge gained at AUA will help me represent people who cannot afford legal representation as I plan to become a fully-fledged member of the society and the Armenian community."

Sarukhanyan will be following in the footsteps of accomplished alumni before him, a number of whom are serving in the post-Velvet Revolution government, including Secretary of the Armenian Security Council, Armen Grigoryan (PSIA '11), Deputy Minister of Education and Science Arevik Anapioosyan (PSIA '08) and Deputy Governor of the Syunik District Hermine Hambardzumyan (PSIA '03). Four members of the newly elected parliament are AUA graduates.

"AUA professors triggered our critical minds and encouraged reflective thinking, giving us knowledge and skills to finally bring the needed changes to our country," said Anapioosyan. "I can only envisage that Armenia from now on is on the road towards democracy and I cannot be more proud that we have moved from imitating reforms to actually performing them."

"We became Pillars so our children can be proud of their homeland when generations of students graduate from such a prestigious institution," said Kurken and Armine Ayanakian, who are advocates of AUA's Western style, multilingual education. "Every student that graduates from an educational facility with such a philosophy will form the backbone of the nation."

In addition to the recognition and the fulfillment of contributing to Armenia from the ground up, Pillars receive regular impact reports from AUA to see the positive changes that occur through their donations and are also invited to exclusive opportunities, such as the Pillar Tour with award-winning professor Dr. Gregory Areshian, who guides participants into unique areas throughout Armenia. During the three-day tour, Pillars have the chance to experience the historic regions of Ararat, Aragatsotn and Vayots Dzor, the site where Areshian and his team found the world's oldest leather shoe and winery — dating back over 6,000 years — while serving as co-director of the National Geographic Society-funded project. Select AUA students are invited along to work during the Pillar Tours, which Areshian encourages so the "pillars have the opportunity to see our most important product of AUA, which is our students."

Though the 100 Pillars of AUA campaign has successfully concluded, the work is not yet finished for the students nor the university. Looking forward, AUA will continue to remain communicative with its core group of donors while creating more visionary plans.

"This elite group of donors have remained steadfast Pillars and the University will always depend on their support, engagement and advice in order to uphold AUA's mission," said Der Kiureghian. "Symbolically, the university is supported on their shoulders."

"Contributions from the 100 Pillars Campaign gives AUA the freedom to pursue its strategic priorities and explore new directions that could be very important for the advancement of the University," said Dr. Varduhi Petrosyan, Dean of the Gerald and Patricia Turpanjian School of Public Health. "And advancement of AUA usually means advancement of its alumni, who strengthen Armenia and make leap development a possibility."

As AUA continues to grow, the University is preparing for its next chapter and broadening its horizons.

"With the new developments in Armenia, we need new developments at the university," said Der Kiureghian. "We have the foundation through our Pillars and now we want to continue to grow and advance."

-Taleen Babayan



COMMUNITY NEWS

Merдинian School Welcomes Arayik Harutyunyan, Minister of Education and Science of Armenia

By Louisa Janbazian

SHERMAN OAKS, Calif. – On Wednesday, January 16, Arayik Harutyunyan, Minister of Education and Science of the Republic of Armenia, visited the Merдинian School,



Arayik Harutyunyan addresses the students.

accompanied by John Shirajian, president of Armenian Engineers and Scientists of America (AES), Jirayr Abrahamyan, president of the Alumni Association of the Polytechnic Institute of Armenia, and Dr. Vardan Gevorgyan.

The students greeted Harutyunyan in the Aram and Anahis D. Boolghoorjian Hall of the School singing the song Dukhov, whose name those supporting the Velvet Revolution in Armenia had adopted.

After Principal Lina Arslanian’s welcoming words and Armenian language teacher Aline Shirajian’s introduction about the background of the School, Rev. Serop Megerditchian, Merдинian Board member and Pastor of the Armenian Cilicia Evangelical Church of Pasadena, greeted the minister and the guests and talked about the significance of the educational work and the mission of the Armenian Evangelicals world-wide – in the Diaspora and in Armenia, highlighting Armenian Missionary Association of America’s (AMAA) Khoren and Shooshanig Avedisian School in Yerevan.

Harutyunyan addressed the students and answered questions directed to him by some of the students regarding the education and the school system in Armenia, and concluded his remarks emphasizing the importance of the Armenian schools in the Diaspora. The students presented a few patriotic songs dedicated to Yerevan, which was greatly appreciated by the Minister. The program ended with a prayer by Megerditchian. A reception followed the program in the faculty lounge, where Faculty and Board members continued their conversations with the guests in an intimate atmosphere.



Rev. Serop Megerditchian escorts Arayik Harutyunyan, RA Minister of Education and Science

New England Knights of Vartan Join Together to Welcome New Members

NEW BRITAIN, Conn. – Instead of “With a Little Help From My Friends”, it was “With a Little Help From My Brothers” as some 30 Knights of Vartan members representing four New England lodges spent the afternoon of January 19 in New Britain, Connecticut, to attend and for some, participate in the degree ceremonies that brought three young Asbeds into the organization.

Hosted by Gamsaragan Lodge No. 27 from Hartford, the ceremony brought together members from Hartford, as well as Ararat Lodge No. 1 in Boston, Arshavir Lodge No. 2 in Worcester and Avakasz Lodge Lodge No. 35 in North Andover, Mass. The ceremony was held at the Masonic Temple in New Britain and presided over by former Grand District Representative Thomas Dabakian. A number of out of state lodge members also participated in the ceremony, including Rev. Stephen Baljian, Pastor of St. Gregory’s Armenian Apostolic Church of Merrimack Valley. Rev. Stephen Baljian is the son of NS Der Antranig Baljian of Ararat Lodge No. 1 and Pastor of St. Stephen’s Armenian Apostolic Church in Watertown.

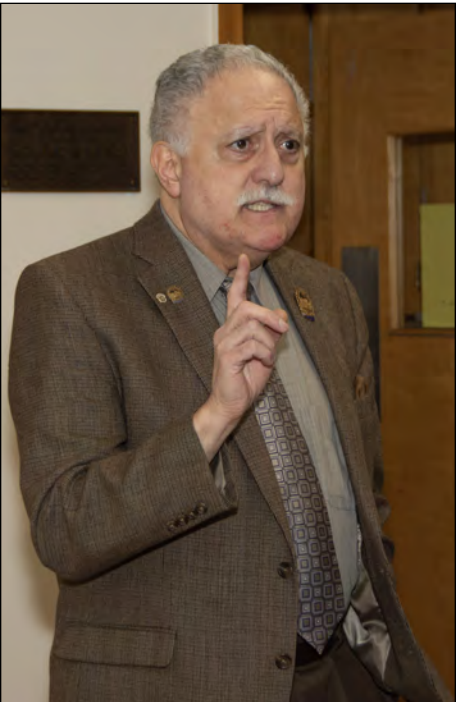
Prior to the Degree Ceremonies, the Knights were treated to lunch prepared by Gamsaragan Asbed John Kasparian.

Installed as new Asbeds in the Knights of Vartan were Krikor Norsigian and Rodolfo Valentini of Gamsaragan Lodge No. 27 and Andrew Kibarian of Ararat Lodge No. 1.

– David Medzorian, Ararat Lodge No. 1



The Knights of Vartan members, new and long term, who participated in the Connecticut gathering. Photos by Asbed David Medzorian, Ararat Lodge No. 1 & Asbed Mark Harutunian of Gamsaragan Lodge No. 27



Grand District Representative Thomas Dabakian

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Arts & Living

DJ Art Laboe, 93, Spins Oldies to Link Inmates and Family

By Russell Contreras

PALM SPRINGS, Calif. (AP) – It's approaching 9 p.m. and Art Laboe adjusts the microphone as Sister Sledge's *We Are Family* ends.

"And now it's time for you to call up for those goodnight dedications," Laboe announces.

"Hello?" a young girl says. "I want to dedicate this to my dad that's in Lancaster (prison) and I miss tonight ... I just want to say, Dad, I love you no matter where you go..." She dissolves into tears.

The 93-year-old DJ based in Palm Springs, credits one group of listeners for keeping him on the air after 75 years: family members who want to send messages to loved ones in prison.

Every Sunday on his syndicated show "The Art Laboe Connection Show," his baritone voice calls on family members to speak directly to inmates in California, Arizona or Nevada. Sometimes, Laboe reads parts of letters written by inmates.

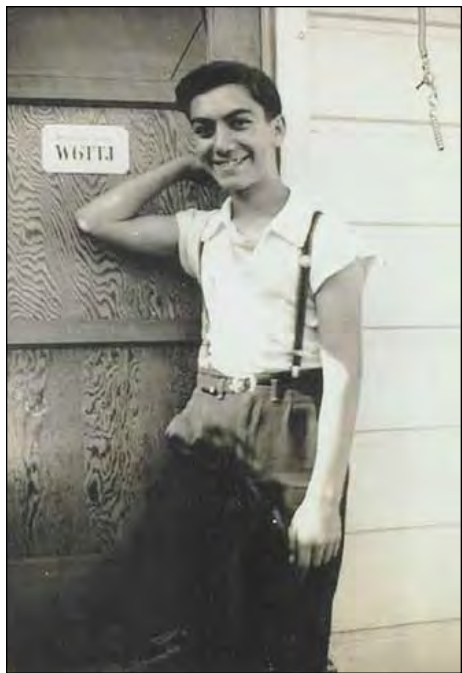
It's a role Laboe says he feels honored to play.

"I don't judge," Laboe said in an interview with the Associated Press at his Palm Springs studio. "I like people."

He often tells a story about a woman who came by the studio so her toddler could tell her father, who was serving time for a violent crime, "Daddy, I love you."

"It was the first time he had heard his baby's voice," Laboe said. "And this tough, hard-nosed guy burst into tears."

Born Arthur Egnoian in Salt Lake City to an Armenian-American family, Laboe grew up during the Great Depression in a Mormon household run by a single mom. His sister sent him his



Art Laboe as a 14-year-old

first radio when he was 8 years old. The voices and stories that came from it enveloped him.

"And I haven't let go since," Laboe said.

He moved to California, attended Stanford University and served in the US Navy during World War II. Eventually, he landed a job as a radio announcer at KSAN in San Francisco and adopted the name Art Laboe after a boss suggested he take the last name of a secretary to sound more American.

But it was when Laboe worked as a DJ for KXLA in Los Angeles where he gained fame. Laboe was one of the first DJs to play R&B and rock 'n' roll in California and is credited by scholars for helping integrate dance halls among Latinos, blacks, Asian Americans and whites who were drawn to his multicultural musical line up.

By 1956, Laboe's afternoon show became the city's top radio program.

see LABOE, PAGE 16



Elizabeth Romhild

Danish, Armenian and Thai Artist Elizabeth Romhild Draws on World Culture

YEREVAN/BANGKOK – I have known artist Elizabeth Romhild since 2003, when she visited Armenia for the first time with her mother and brother. Since that

By Artsvi Bakhchinyan

Special to the Mirror-Spectator

year I followed the creative activity of this talented artist with unique style. My friendship continues with this warm-hearted, charming lady, who made a very generous contribution to my life by sponsoring the

publication of my voluminous study, *The Armenians in World Cinema*, published in 2004 in the Armenian language. I dedicated this study to her.

Elizabeth Romhild (née Davidian) has lived and worked in Bangkok, Thailand, since 1988. At the age of 26, she began painting realistic portraits, later moving on to seascapes and landscapes, figures of women, and animalistic images. Her artwork is part of private collections in several countries around the world, including in Denmark, Germany, Switzerland, Holland, Italy, Thailand, Indonesia, Singapore, Hong Kong, Australia, and the United States.

According to the artist's official web page: "Romhild's artwork has traveled through many phases on a continuous road of self development and discovery. Gradually her art became bolder and more simplified in her portrayals of the female subject both in the two-dimensional form of her painting and the three-dimensional forms of her bronze sculptures. Throughout her long artistic career, Romhild has continued to defy her boundaries with an ever expanding range of work that reflects her quest to deeper self discovery."

Dear Elizabeth, you have lived in Thailand for many years. Your paintings and sculptures are extremely colorful and exotic. Is this the influence of the country of your residence?

I believe my surrounding influences my art style. But I also feel the choice of color I use is more emotional or temperament-related, which gives the work character.

For one period, you used to draw mostly female figures. And recently we see often animals in your paintings. What attracts you more in objects for painting and sculpting?

A few years back, I was fascinated by the wild life in the African savannah, exploring the animal characters, as I would with humans. Later exploring further led into a rawer and darker side, inspired by African masks and warrior face paints.

Are you a part of a Thai artistic community?

I have a few Thai artist friends, but I do not belong to any artistic community here. Thai artists tend to be either very political or traditional in their art style. In any case I prefer working alone.

How we can define you – an artist of Armenian-Danish origin residing in Thailand?

Yes, I always call myself a Danish-Armenian artist living in Bangkok.

Please tell us about your ancestors - both Armenian and Danish.

My father Zaven Davidian, was an Armenian from Julfa, Isfahan, and met my Danish mother in Denmark while he was working with a Danish engineering company called Kampsax. He built the Trans-Iranian Railways, designing most of the important bridges. My mother is Danish-born, Gerda Davidian (Erritzoe). After

see ROMHILD, page 14

From the Forgotten Pages of History: The Life and Times Of Mari Beylerian

By Arpine Haroyan

A century ago there were Armenian women who were raising their voices and speaking boldly about issues ranging from marriage to public service. A century ago, there were strong, fearless Armenian women, who were establishing their own magazines and journals and providing a space for young women. A century ago, there were Armenian women fighting for their rights and women's education.

But a century later, they are mostly forgotten...

Mari Beylerian, a writer, feminist and public figure, is one of the least known intellectuals from Western Armenia. A victim of the 1915 Armenian Genocide, she was a role model and an educator for thousands of Armenian women from different parts of the world. She was mainly known for her women's magazine *Ardemis*. Considered to be the first women's periodical in the Armenian world, *Ardemis* covered topics on Armenian women's liberation and more.

Who Was She?

There is scarce information about Mari Beylerian's life. Although she was well known during her lifetime thanks to her journal, her name and activities were mostly forgotten after the Armenian Genocide. It is said that Mari was one of the two women (along with Zabel Yesayan) who was arrested with over 200 hundred Armenian intellectuals on April 24, 1915. Her fate remains unknown still today.

Beylerian was born in 1880 in Constantinople (Ottoman Empire) and received her education at the Esayan School. She later returned to her school as a teacher. Some sources state that she continued her education in the Pera Studio (Pera was a district in Constantinople). As a young student, she started writing for a newspaper called *Arevelk* (East) under the pseudonym Calipso. Beylerian was full of enthusiasm, and keen to be a part of the Armenian liberation movement. Soon she decided to join the Hnchakian Party. The leaders of the party decided she was very young to be a member and assigned her to be the media correspondent of the party. In 1890, she participated and covered the Kum Kapu demonstration organized by the Hnchakian Party against the Armenian patriarchate. In 1895 she became one of the organizers of the peaceful Bab-i Ali demonstrations in Constantinople against the Turkish government, which called for the implementation of the May Reforms. The Turkish Government sentenced her to death in absentia as Mari escaped to Egypt.

Soon, she started teaching at Alexandria's Armenian School and in 1902 founded the monthly periodical *Ardemis*. In her article about *Ardemis*, Lerna Ekmekcioglu mentions that Beylerian married revolutionary Avo Nakashian shortly after arriving in Cairo.

In 1908, after the Young Turk revolt that restored the Ottoman Constitution, Mari returned to the Ottoman Empire and started teaching at the Armenian school in Smyrna (later Izmir) and later at the Yevdokia Armenian School. She also published a literary collection of her own work called *Depi Ver* (Upward) until her death in 1915.

Ardemis

Founded in Alexandria, Egypt, *Ardemis*, a monthly literary periodical was published until 1904 and was popular among Armenian women not only from Armenia, but from the Diaspora as well. Before publishing the periodical, Mari sent her husband to Echmiadzin to

see BEYLERIAN, page 15

Danish, Armenian and Thai Artist Elizabeth Romhild Draws on World Culture

ROMHILD, from page 13

marrying my father, she moved to Iran, and was fully integrated into the Armenian family and culture, speaking fluently both Persian and Armenian.

Your childhood partly took place in Iran, in an Armenian milieu. What did that give you?

I was born in Denmark, but my childhood years were spent in Tehran, with my Armenian family. I attended both Armenian and Persian schools, before moving abroad to study. I met my Danish husband Peter Emil Romhild in Tehran in 1978, when he was working there with a Danish company just before the revolution in 1979. Both the Armenian and Persian cultures are very rich, and unconsciously are a strong part of my creativity.

What about your children?

Peter and I have two children. Wenja was born 1990 in Bangkok, and named after Peter's older sister. She lives in Copenhagen and is a makeup artist and cosmetologist with an artist's soul, after having studied at a well-known Danish fashion design university. Henrik was born in 1990, also in Bangkok, and named after my brother. He studied business strategic design management at Parsons in NY, recently got married to Adrianna who is Mexican American, and the two of them are currently living in Bangkok as newlyweds.

Are you in touch with Armenians in Thailand? What can you tell about them?

Yes, there is a small Armenian community here in Bangkok, mainly from Lebanon or Syria, who we meet at social functions, and some are close friends.

Do you believe in "national in arts?" Is it possible to notice some Armenian or Danish motifs in your works? If yes - how?

I guess subconsciously I have my "national" signature in my colors. Without intending it, the Armenian flag color is visible in my bold color paintings. The blue which was an inspiration in the early '90s, when I saw a deep blue glass bowl with bright colored oranges, and was the beginning of my Woman and Orange series, and of course the ardor red, which is also in the flag.... I feel the Persian miniature is also visible in my women with their large eyes, with their untold stories.

Have you any special Armenian inspirations? Music, for instance?

Music is always a great inspiration. I love classical and sometimes melancholic tunes, to reach my deeper self in art. I do not have any specific Armenian music that inspires me, but the Armenian national duduk (specially played by Djivan Gasparyan) is now used by many other composers and musicians, including soundtrack. I like eclectic music. Another favorite rhythm is the Armen Chakmakian cheerful Gypsy Rain, where I see my signature whimsical piano keyboards (now also in my designs) dancing together.

What were your best impressions from your visit to Armenia?

There were of course many joys visiting beautiful Armenia with its rich cultures. But most of all was the feeling to be in a place you have never been before, and where everything was in Armenian, even the fasten seat belt sign on the plane. And I could read and understand.

You have been to Armenia twice, in 2003 and 2004. Your friends in Armenia, including myself, are eager to organize your personal exhibition in the country of your ancestors, but this seems to be a rather difficult project.

I would be very happy to have exhibited my work in Armenia, but unfortunately the logistics both ways seems to be the main issue.... and also very expensive.

Let us hope for wealthy sponsors appreciating art and the connections between Armenia and Diaspora! And what are your current inspirations in fine arts?

Having completed my art circle, meaning exploring my inner self in art, I am back into my well known whimsical female characters, in operatic costumes and theatrical staging, which comes naturally for me.



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Tekeyan Cultural Association
Metro Los Angeles Chapter

Presents

Ara Dabandjian Quartet of Element Band

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11 PM • International Singer Koko Hayitian

Phoenicia Restaurant • 343 N. Central Ave, Glendale, CA 91203

Admission • \$80 • www.tekeyanla.eventbrite.com

Contact • info@TekeyanLA.org for group seating

Tickets must be pre-purchased • No tickets will be sold at the door.





ARTS & LIVING

From the Forgotten Pages of History: The Life and Times of Mari Beylerian

BEYLERYAN, from page 13

see Catholicos Mkrtich Khrimyan and ask for support. Khrimyan Hayrik liked the idea of a women's periodical and helped Beylerian with new fonts. Moreover, he gave some of his writings and asked to donate all the profit from the publication for the newspaper.

The main purpose of the publication was to raise awareness about women's rights and promote women's education. *Ardemis* was also fostering philanthropic activities. Beylerian, the chief editor of the magazine, with her feminist editorials, progressive thought and wit have the ability to amaze readers even today.

The magazine was an open platform for any woman who wanted to express herself and was a powerful way to reach different social classes and allow everyone to debate and openly talk about women's issues. The various articles published in the magazine by ordinary Armenian women came from cities like Tbilisi, Moscow, Kars, Nor Jugha, New York and Paris. Famous writers and public figures such as Vahan Tekeyan, Yeghia Demirjibashian, Zaruhi Kalemkaryan and American journalist Alice Stone Blackwell wrote articles for *Ardemis*.

In her book, *A History of Armenian Women's Writing 1880-1992*, Victoria Rowe (2009) identifies four main topics the periodical covered: women's rights, education, motherhood and employment. These were the most essential issues Armenian women had been facing for centuries. Some of these issues, such as women's right to education and employment or woman's right to make decisions in her family are still relevant in 21st century Armenia.

Women's Rights

Beylerian touched upon the issue of women's rights in several editorials, calling for justice and empowerment of the Armenian woman. She believed that western feminism was not compatible with the Armenian reality. She argued that Armenian women first needed to demand "natural rights," (their right to have their own opinion, to make decisions and control their fate) and then raise questions about their role in the country's socio-political discourse. In her editorial titled "A Glance Into the Past of the Armenian Woman," Beylerian openly spoke about the harsh realities of the Armenian woman's daily life, criticizing husband-wife relationships and a women's status within the family.

"Family life was hell for the Armenian in the past. She was forced to be a shadow, nothing more. It was considered shameful for a young man to speak openly, friendly and lovingly to his wife. If he dared to, those around him would call him effeminate. He would be reproached and insulted by them. If he had something important to say to his wife, he did so without looking at her face."

Beylerian's language is very easy to understand as she took everyday realities and "compelled" Armenian women to finally see, analyze and demand justice. In her editorial "Zavagy" (The Child) she even wrote a short manifesto dedicated to Armenian women's rights.

"We, Armenian women, see more hardship and tyranny than others. Civilization has barely weakened our chains of slavery. And the provincial Armenian woman still sobs under the same load of hardship..."

We are moderate in our demands, although recognizing that we have equal rights, we agree to moderate them. We struggle fiercely against these prejudices which have plagued us for centuries and today threaten our well-being.

We demand to have the right to love completely and freely; we have the right to choose without coercion and with a free will our life's partner, whose heart is tied to our own.

We have the right to speak freely and reveal our bold opinions about all issues having a bearing on communal life and we demand that our opinions be taken seriously and our ideas respected.

We are free in our family life, free and independent in our activities and thoughts, free to pursue whatever idea or goal that is beautiful to us. In short, we are free in everything that is pure and free from prejudice, and we allow that which is ethical and does not damage the work of raising the next generation.

Beyond this limit we will not pass. We voluntarily and with love remain in our sacred role

and remember that the greatest satisfaction and the greatest joy consist of perfect fulfillment of responsibility."

Education

In one of her editorials, Beylerian first discussed how the concept of an educated woman was perceived by society.

"Heart, mind, education, not a thought was spared to these. It was considered shameful for a woman to say an educated or progressive

according to Mari, should know how to engage young girls and inspire their young hearts and natures. Avo agrees with her, writing: "We don't have idealist girls because in the schools we did not give them any target to follow, and in the house, the only thing a girl hears is that 'she will become a bride.'"

Employment

As an established journalist and teacher, Beylerian was keen on motivating her readers

ing patriotic and educated children who would serve for the good of their country. Mari criticized the traditional family structure, "gerdastan," noting that poor Armenian girls were often pressured by their mothers-in-law without any right to raise their children the way they wanted.

"She is a woman but she waits for instruction. She waits for them to acquaint her with her responsibility. She is a mother, but she waits to be taught how to care for her child. She has a family but she waits to be shown how to manage her household."

Beylerian believed that families should have a nuclear structure and mothers should have their special role without any interference from their relatives. Motherhood gave women greater status than men. Beylerian was confident that women were protectors and guardians of "reason and sense," while men were prisoners of "passion and sense."

Woman had to be prepared for marriage. They have to be adults to understand their responsibilities and the life they were entering. Mari believed that ill-timed marriages for young girls were great misfortunes and she spared no effort in the pages of her magazine to educate and awaken young Armenian women.

"By an unforeseen and cruel fate, the inexperienced and naive Armenian woman is thrust out of her country and her beloved home and is forced to inhospitable shores, where everything looks harsh to her – the air, the earth, the water, manners, customs and language. In mind and spirit, she is completely unprepared and unable to digest outside ideas, unable to correctly ponder, to see clearly, to judge rightly, and is susceptible to deception by a pretty speech or a tender glance. It is understandable that she cannot, without moral injury to herself, take on indiscriminately any sort of work. We believe that above all else she should work in a career with definite regulations and rules..."

Motherhood

One of Beylerian's strengths was that she combined all the important roles of a woman and thoroughly explained each one. While discussing motherhood, she did not reject the idea of women's employment, or when talking about education, she did not state that a woman's main goal is to get an education and become a scholar. Beylerian's ideal woman was one who was educated, had a family, knew how to express herself, knew her rights and had her input in the development of her nation.

In the pages of *Ardemis*, one can find an article devoted to Countess Mariam Tumanyan, who is introduced as a great example of an active Armenian woman who changed perceptions, and was a role model for younger generations. The author notes that Armenian women started to break stereotypes, and from humble and modest housewives they transformed into socially active women. The article lists Tumanyan's activities and praises her as a young entrepreneur. The author is amazed by her initiatives to help the immigrants from Western Armenia who had fled the slaughter, her input in the theatrical and cultural life of Tbilisi, as well as her charity salon evenings for the Armenian elite.

Besides Mari's progressive and liberal editorials, *Ardemis* was also a great source for inspiration and education for women from various classes. In *Ardemis* one could find letters from readers across the world, articles about the western world and feminism, reports about new book publications or various events. It was also a platform for sharing educational short stories and poems. *Ardemis* was a small world of a great thinker.

A century later, no one remembers Mari Beylerian and *Ardemis*. We have to honestly ask ourselves – how can we change society and make women's voices heard, if we do not know women like Mari? She was a role model for thousands of Armenian women a century ago, but she still is an inspiration and from now on, she will not be forgotten.

(This article originally appeared on EVN

Report's website:

<https://www.evnreport.com/arts-and-culture/from-the-forgotten-pages-of-history-the-life-and-times-of-mari-beylerian>)



Mari Beylerian

word. A woman who could read and write was considered a new type, outside of her place and sex, an unnatural mannish creature who other woman looked upon with bitterness and as scandalous."

At the end of 19th century, this stereotype started to break down as Armenians understood that the nation needed educated girls in order to have educated mothers. The concept of mother-educator became more popular and many girls started to attend school. However, Beylerian was not happy with the educational system and continued criticizing it through her editorials. She believed that instead of giving knowledge, schools taught girls how to play piano or speak French. In other words, education made them selfish women who were not capable of thinking.

One of the writers of the publication, Avo also wrote for *Ardemis*. In a three-part article published in the magazine titled *Activities of Young Armenian Women Since Graduation*, he severely criticized Armenian girls, calling them lazy and not willing to commit to their nation. In her memoirs, Countess Mariam Tumanyan, a member of Tbilisi's elite at the end of the 19th and turn of the 20th centuries expressed the same criticism and disappointment in young girls who were not interested in studying.

Avo writes: "We have opened up schools, even in the remote corners of villages, but we forgot to implant the kind of soul that was necessary to manage those schools. We did not care about the needs and practical obligations of Armenian girls to their social class, to their nation, and to their motherland."

Mari also thought that the educational system was not capable of producing strong and fearless girls. Interestingly, several years before the genocide she writes in one of her editorials:

"It is time for education to strengthen our girl's minds and hearts. They need practical classes to prepare them, using real life examples, to go along life's path, so that the wind does not carry them here and there and evil events and massacres don't take advantage of their weakness and throw them to the ground."

Mari foresaw the future of many orphaned girls for whom an education could provide the best tools to take care of themselves. Instead of teaching girls how to be pretty "ladies," Beylerian would suggest teaching them their responsibilities to their parents, homeland, and nation. However, she recognized that Armenian schools lacked skilled teachers. A great teacher,

to not just be housewives, but to also study, start their own careers and stand equally next to Armenian men. Almost all the issues of *Ardemis* discussed the importance of a woman's career, especially in early-20th century Armenian society. In one of her editorials she argued that one of the reasons for a woman's low status within the family is because she simply does not earn money. Beylerian believed that throughout time, economic factors highly affected the way women were being perceived within society. She writes: "Until now women's employment was seen as something alienating, weakening. This is a rooted prejudice. People are hungry, but do not allow their women to work. They still perceive it as an insult to their manhood."

At the age of 12, boys were able to work and help their fathers, thus becoming a helping hand for the family. According to Beylerian, it was one of the reasons they were always welcomed in the family. As for having a girl, parents were always worried since they knew that to prepare her for marriage, they had to give her a decent dowry. Moreover, a birth of a girl was shameful for a bride. Mari mentioned that this was not typical only to Armenians: "hatred towards girls was common in Asian nations."

According to Beylerian, one of the solutions to this problem was employment for women. Women would be treated equally and valued like men if they earned money and shared the burden of the family. "Employment is our salvation," Mari writes in one of her editorials.

Mari stressed that Armenian women already worked very hard in their households; they prepared meals, cleaned, dried fruits, took care of the children, sewed beddings, did laundry and even helped their husbands in the fields when there was a lack of workers. However, because they were not being paid, their labor was not valued as work.

Beylerian connected the need for employment with the political situation in the Armenian provinces. Being in exile herself, she talked about the importance of women's employment as a way to earn a living wherever fate would take them.

"A great thinker once said: Give me your mothers and I will give you a nation. *Ardemis*' goal must be to prepare girls, wives, and mothers for the day when it can be said with pride - here are your mothers, give us the nation."

Motherhood, the sacred role of the Armenian woman had its special place in Mari's *Ardemis*. Armenian women had an important role in rais-

ARTS & LIVING

Art Laboe Spins Oldies to Link Inmates and Family

LABOE, from page 13

Over the decades, Laboe maintained a fan base, especially among Mexican-Americans who followed him from station to station. He started getting calls from inmates' family members in the 1990s on his syndicated oldies show. Current and former gang members were some of his most loyal fans.

"Here is someone who gave a voice to the most humble of us all through music," said Lalo Alcaraz, a syndicated cartoonist and television writer who grew up listening to Laboe in San Diego. "He brought us together. That's why we sought him out."

Over the years, the syndicated show on Sunday has aired in California, Nevada, Arizona and New Mexico.

In 2015, iHeartMedia's KHHT-FM (92.3) dropped Laboe's syndicated oldies show after the station abruptly switched to a hip-hop format, sparking angry protest in Los Angeles.

"Without Art Laboe, I'm So Lonely I Could Cry," wrote essayist Adam Vine. Laboe later returned to the Los Angeles airwaves on another station.

Alex Nogales, president and CEO of the Los Angeles-based National Hispanic Media Coalition, said generations of Latino fans still attend Laboe-sponsored concerts to hear the



DJ Art Laboe

likes of Smokey Robinson, The Spinners or Sunny & The Sunliners.

"I see these really tough looking guys in the

crowd. I mean, they look scary," Nogales said. "Then Art comes out and they just melt. They love him."

Recipe Corner

by Christine Vartanian Datian



Rice, Eggplant and Lamb

INGREDIENTS

1 cup white rice (long-grain, basmati or jasmine)
 1 medium eggplant, cut in 1" cubes
 1 large onion, chopped
 3-4 tablespoons olive oil
 2-3 large cloves garlic, minced
 1 medium green or red bell pepper, seeded, chopped
 1 pound lean ground lamb
 1 cup canned garbanzo beans, washed and drained
 2 1/2 cups low sodium chicken broth or vegetable broth
 1/2 cup tomato sauce
 1/4 cup tomato paste
 1/4 cup parsley, chopped
 1 tablespoon each lemon juice and chopped fresh mint leaves
 3/4 teaspoon salt
 1/2 teaspoon dried oregano
 1/4 teaspoon each black pepper and allspice
 Paprika, Aleppo pepper or cayenne pepper to taste
 1/2 cup ricotta cheese
 1/2 cup shredded mozzarella cheese
 1/2 cup grated Parmesan cheese
 Armenian or Greek yogurt and sliced red onions and cucumbers as garnish

PREPARATION

Pre-heat oven to 350 degrees.
 Combine the ricotta, mozzarella, and Parmesan cheese in a bowl and mix. Set aside.
 In a large pot, sauté the onions, garlic and bell pepper in olive oil until the onions are tender. Add the eggplant, lamb and garbanzo beans, toss, and cook until lamb is lightly browned.
 Add the broth, tomato sauce, tomato paste, parsley, lemon juice, chopped mint, and spices, bring to a low boil, and cook for 10-12 minutes on medium heat until bubbly.
 Pour into a prepared casserole dish, and top with the cheese mixture. Bake for one hour or until lamb and rice are tender. Remove from oven and let set 10 minutes before serving.
 Serve with yogurt and sliced red onions and cucumbers on the side.
 Serves 6.

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



'Roupen Herian: Rescuer of Armenian Orphans' Program Hosted by TCA Los Angeles Chapter

ALTADENA, Calif. — The Tekeyan Cultural Association Metro Los Angeles Chapter will host a bilingual program titled "Roupen Herian: Rescuer of Armenian Orphans" on Sunday, February 17, 2019 at 5 p.m. at the Tekeyan Center in Altadena. Boston-based scholar Aram Arkun, executive director of the Tekeyan Cultural Association of the United States and Canada and assistant editor of the *Armenian Mirror-Spectator*, will serve as the keynote speaker and, with the help of illustrations, present the fascinating life of Roupen Herian, who was entrusted with the herculean task of locating kidnapped Armenian women and children.

Herian was born in Tokat sometime between 1868 and 1872, but after graduating the local Armenian school, left to engage in commerce in Constantinople. He left for the United States in May 1895, possibly due to the oppressions of Sultan Abdul Hamid II and his regime.

Herian immigrated to Boston and later moved to New York City. He became a successful businessman, while continuing to be deeply involved in Armenian political activities. In 1916 he carried out a secret war mission for the British government.

Herian helped arrange the transportation of the 1,200 Armenian-Americans who joined the Armenian Legion, which successfully defeated the Turkish and German forces at the Battle of Arara in Palestine in September 1918, and himself later enrolled as a legionnaire.

Herian served as the director of an infirmary in Egypt for the legionnaires, and participated in an abortive expedition to help the besieged city of Hajin. He also played a



role in the defense of the Cilician city of Dört Yol (Chork-Marzban).

As representative of the Armenian General Benevolent Union (AGBU), Egyptian Armenian Relief, and [Armenian] United Orphan Care, with additional financial support from the Armenian Church, the Armenian Democratic Party (predecessor of the Armenian Democratic Liberal Party), various other Armenian relief organizations, and, most strikingly, many individual Armenians who themselves barely had enough money to live after the Genocide, Herian tried to rescue kidnapped Armenian women and children from Bedouins, Turks, Kurds and their harems. Using his adept language skills, Herian disguised himself as needed as an American missionary, British official or Bedouin, primarily in the Aleppo, Der Zor and Mosul regions, to carry out his mission. Despite threats of death and robbery and facing great resistance from those who did not want to easily relinquish Armenian women and children from their hold, Herian remained valiant. Herian used persuasion, money and sometimes threats to rescue Armenian women and children from their captors.

continued on next page



ARTS & LIVING

CALENDAR

CALIFORNIA

FEBRUARY 9 — Ara Dabandjian Quartet of Element Band, Saturday, 8 PM Dinner, 9:30– 10:30 p.m. Ara Dabandjian Quartet of Element Band. 11 p.m. International Singer Koko Hayitian. Phoenicia Restaurant • 343 N. Central Ave, Glendale. Admission •\$80 • www.tekeyanla.eventbrite.com. Contact • The Tekeyan Metro LA Chapter at info@TekeyanLA.org for group seating. Tickets must be pre-purchased. • No tickets will be sold at the door.

FEBRUARY 17 — Lecture by Aram Arkun of Boston, Executive Director of the Tekeyan Cultural Association of the United States and Canada, on Roupen Herian: “Rescuer of Armenian Orphans.” Sunday, 5 p.m. at the Tekeyan Center in Altadena. Sponsored by the Metro LA Tekeyan Chapter.

APRIL 4 and 7 — One of the opera world’s hottest stars, Alessandro Safina, will bring in his pop-opera to USA during his upcoming concert tour in April. Safina appeared with Elton John, Cher and Jennifer Lopez for Queen Elizabeth’s 73rd Royal Variety Performance. He also performed for the Pope, sang duets with Andrea Bocelli, Sarah Brightman, and Rod Stewart. Safina when he performed Elton John’s “Your Song” with actor Ewan McGregor for the Oscar-nominated soundtrack of “Moulin Rouge.” Safina will be accompanied by Victor Espinola and the Forbidden Saints. The tour will also feature Armenian Duduk Soloist and Classical Clarinetist Mher Mnatsakanyan and Bassist Hova Burian will take part. Official FaceBook Page: <https://www.facebook.com/AlessandroSafinaUSA/> Official Promo Video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DHHKpxTCSSY> The performance will be held at City National Civic in San Jose on Thursday, April 4. (Times 8:00-9:30pm) <https://www1.ticketmaster.com/event/1C005554CB5A77> 78 Dolby Theater in Los Angeles on April 7. (Times 8:00-9:30pm) https://dolbytheatre.com/events/details/alessandro_safina <https://www1.ticketmaster.com/alessandro-safina-with-victor-espinola-the-forbidden-saints/event/3B005546FA735928>

FLORIDA

APRIL 11 — One of the opera world’s hottest stars, Alessandro Safina, will bring in his pop-opera rhythms to USA during his upcoming concert tour in April. Safina appeared with Elton John, Cher and Jennifer Lopez for Queen Elizabeth’s 73rd Royal Variety Performance. He also performed for the Pope, sang duets with Andrea Bocelli, Sarah Brightman, and Rod Stewart. Americans first became familiar with Safina when he performed Elton John’s “Your Song” with actor Ewan McGregor for the Oscar-nominated soundtrack of “Moulin Rouge.” Safina will be accompanied by Victor Espinola and the Forbidden Saints. The tour will also feature Armenian Duduk Soloist and Classical Clarinetist Mher Mnatsakanyan and Bassist Hova Burian will take part. Official FaceBook Page: <https://www.facebook.com/AlessandroSafinaUSA/> The performance will be held at Fillmore Miami Beach in Miami on Thursday, April 11th. (Times 8:00-9:30pm)

MASSACHUSETTS

MARCH 2 — St. Stephen’s Armenian Elementary School (SSAES) PTO will present its annual fundraiser. We hope you can join us in support of SSAES for an evening of food, drinks, art, music and fun! 7 to 11 p.m., Sanborn House, 15 High St., Winchester. SSAES is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization. All donations are tax-deductible. For additional information and sponsorship please e-mail: event@ssaes.org. Note: This event is 21+.

APRIL 5 — Friday, City of Smile Boston Friends will host an evening to benefit children with cancer in Armenia. Special guest Anna Hakobyan, the City of Smile Charitable Foundation’s Honorary Chair, wife of Armenia’s Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan, at the Westin Waltham Hotel for her inaugural visit to Boston. The City of Smile Charitable Foundation is based in Armenia providing financial support to children with cancer. In addition, the foundation is dedicated to training doctors to provide the best cancer care in treating oncological and hematological diseases. To learn more about the City of Smile Charitable Foundation, visit www.cityofsmile.org. Tickets-\$150 each. For reservations, contact Postaljian@hotmail.com 617/921-8962 or Manuk0102@gmail.com 781/883-4470. Deadline to RSVP is March 22. Tickets will not be sold at the door. Cocktail Reception/Cash Bar - 6:30pm, Dinner and Program - 7:30 p.m.

APRIL 25 — 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/.

MAY 3 — 117th Diocesan Assembly Gala Banquet – V. Rev. Fr. Daniel Findikyan, Primate, presiding. Boston Marriott Burlington. Hosted by St. James Armenian Church in Watertown. Save the Date – Details to Follow.

JUNE 28 – July 10 – St. James Armenian Church 7th Pilgrimage to Armenia. Led by Fr. Arakel Aljalian. Join us and Discover the Land of our Ancestors. All are welcome. Registration deposits due March 1; Full Payment due April 1. For full details visit www.stjameswatertown.org/armenia.

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

OCTOBER 19 — The Vosbikians are coming to the Merrimack Valley. The Armenian Friends of America proudly present their Annual HYE KEF 5 Dance, featuring The Vosbikians. The DoubleTree by Hilton Hotel, Andover, MA. Tickets Purchased before 9/13/19 will include the Great Venue, Outstanding Buffet, The Vosbikian Band and 5 Free Raffle Tickets Adults \$75.00 & Students 21 & under \$65 Specially priced AFA Rooms available through 9/17/19. For Tickets and more information, Contact: Lu Sirmaian 978-683-9121 or Sharke’ Der Apkarian at 978-808-0598 Visit www.ArmeniaFriendsofAmerica.org

NOVEMBER 16 — St. Stephen’s Armenian Elementary School 35th Anniversary Celebration. 6:30 PM Cocktail Reception, 7:30 PM Dinner and Program. The Westin Waltham - Boston, MA \$150 per person.

NEW JERSEY

FEBRUARY 9 — The Tekeyan Cultural Association of New York, under the aegis of the TCA Board of Directors of the US and Canada, will present a Valentine’s Dance featuring international Armenian singer Andre. The Elan, Lodi, NJ. Tickets are \$125 before February 2, and \$150 after, while tickets for young professionals are \$100. To reserve seats, visit https://ticket-stripe.com/TCA_ValentinesDayDinnerDance. For further information and seating, write to rsvptaliab@gmail.com or call 917-238-3970.

May 18 — SAVE THE DATE! St. Nersess Armenian Seminary invites you to A Celebration of Gratitude & Hope, honoring His Eminence Archbishop Khajag Barsamian and Bishop-elect Fr. Daniel Findikyan. 6:30pm. Old Tappan Manor, Old Tappan, NJ. For more info, please go to www.stnersess.edu.

OCTOBER 25, 2019 — SAVE THE DATE. Honoring Dr. Taner Akçam. Abajian Hall St. Leon Armenian Complex, Fair Lawn. Sponsored by Knights and Daughters of Vartan, Under the Auspices of Primate Very Rev. Fr. Daniel Findikyan.

NEW YORK

APRIL 9 — One of the opera world’s hottest stars, Alessandro Safina, will bring in his pop-opera rhythms to USA during his upcoming concert tour in April. Safina appeared with Elton John, Cher and Jennifer Lopez for Queen Elizabeth’s 73rd Royal Variety Performance. He also performed for the Pope, sang duets with Andrea Bocelli, Sarah Brightman, and Rod Stewart. Americans first became familiar with Safina when he performed Elton John’s “Your Song” with actor Ewan McGregor for the Oscar-nominated soundtrack of “Moulin Rouge.” Safina will be accompanied by Victor Espinola and the Forbidden Saints. The tour will also feature Armenian Duduk Soloist and Classical Clarinetist Mher Mnatsakanyan and Bassist Hova Burian will take part. Official FaceBook Page: <https://www.facebook.com/AlessandroSafinaUSA/> Official Promo Video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DHHKpxTCSSY> The performance will be held at Beacon Theater in New York on Thursday, April 9th. (Times 8:00-9:30pm) <https://www1.ticketmaster.com/alessandro-safina-with-victor-espinola-the-forbidden-saints/event/3B005546FA735928>

APRIL 28- Sunday at 1:30 p.m. to 4:30 p.m. Armenian Genocide Commemoration at Times Square, NYC Sponsored by : Knight & Daughters of Vartan, AGBU, ADL-Ramgavars. Armenian Assembly of America, ANCA and Armenian National Council

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.

‘Roupen Herian: Rescuer of Armenian Orphans’ Program Hosted by TCA Los Angeles Chapter

from previous page

He was a moving and effective speaker who participated in fundraising activities in the United States, France, the Ottoman Empire and Egypt with the intent to rescue more women and orphans. His untimely death in Cairo, Egypt on July 7, 1921 prevented him from fulfilling those plans.

Keynote speaker Arkun is a graduate of Princeton University and has a master’s degree in international relations from the University of Pennsylvania and a C. Phil. degree in Armenian history from the University of California Los Angeles. He has been editor-in-chief of the AGBU Ararat quarterly, director of the Krikor and Clara Zohrab Information Center of the Diocese of the Armenian

Church (Eastern) and adjunct assistant professor at New York University, among other past posts. He has written a number of articles on Cilician Armenians in the modern period.

Also participating in the program are the dancers of the Patille Dance Studio of Pasadena, under the direction of Patille and Cynthia Albarian.

Roupen Herian made many personal sacrifices to serve the Armenian people, in part by means of the Armenian Legion, Armenian Democratic Party and AGBU. Herian remains a great patriot and hero of the Armenian nation, whose bravery, determination and sacrifice led to the rescue of countless Armenian orphans and women.

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COMMENTARY

Symbolism and Realism in the Karabakh Issue

By Edmond Y. Azadian

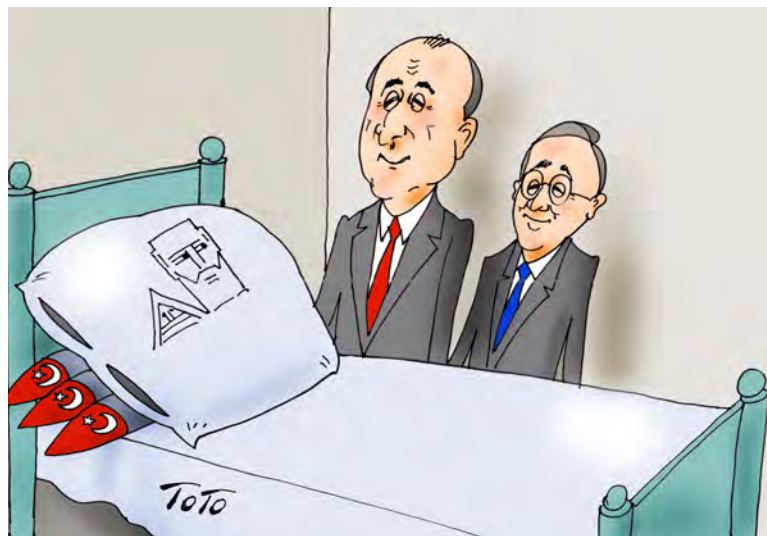
Since the ceasefire of 1994 between Azerbaijan and Karabakh the world Armenian community has been locked in a political roller coaster. Every summit meeting between the two sides, or any hopeful announcement by major powers, raises hopes for a settlement, yet the conflict continues on, with the same intensity. What is more alarming is the contradictory announcements that emanate from different camps.

After every meeting, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) Minsk Group co-chairs, representing the US, France and Russia, come up with assurances that “concrete discussions” had taken place, only to be refuted by Azerbaijan’s President Ilham Aliyev who says that he will not be satisfied with anything less than the return of Karabakh (Artsakh) to Azeri rule and not only that, but he is ready to conquer Armenia proper as well.

Those bellicose statements are discounted as rhetoric for domestic consumption, but they do not contribute in any way to building confidence or inspiring any hope for a real, peaceful settlement of this intractable conflict. That is why people in Armenia meet all positive announcements regarding Artsakh with indifference or skepticism.

There is a new announcement this week about hopeful steps taken at an OSCE-sponsored January 16 meeting in Paris with the participation of the foreign ministers of Armenia and Azerbaijan, Zohrab Mnatsakanyan and Elmar Mammadyarov, respectively.

The positive tone of the group’s announcement is reinforced by a statement from Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov, who indicates that Armenia must respond in kind to the positive announcements coming from Baku.



What the OSCE announcement says is that the two peoples of Armenia and Azerbaijan have to be prepared for the outbreak of peace. That statement, all along, has served as a code word for concessions. And concessions are only expected from the Armenian side.

When Pashinyan was asked what compromises Armenia is ready to accept, his answer was: “We have to learn what Azerbaijan is offering.”

Armenia’s Foreign Minister Zohrab Mnatsakanyan has announced that there are red lines for Armenia: the security of the people in Karabakh and its final political status.

Jean-Baptiste Lemoine, secretary general of the OSCE, made a cautious statement: “All the participants express their sincere gratitude to both foreign ministers for their intensive negotiations and their efforts towards creating a positive atmosphere.”

There is no word about the understandings reached at the meetings of St. Petersburg, Vienna and Geneva toward curbing border incidents in the interim. It is true that after a brief meeting in person between Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan and President Aliyev in Astana, incidents on the Nakhichevan border with Armenia have subsided.

An equivocal statement by President Aliyev may also be interpreted as a positive sign; he has blamed the previous regime in Armenia for its intransigence and has taken credit for himself that he has contributed to the downfall of that regime.

All the parties which have a stake in the Karabakh conflict hide their self-interest under the guise of international law. Karabakh has never been an integral part of Azerbaijan’s territory. It was lopped off Armenia by Stalin and given to Azerbaijan. And based on that historic fact, Armenia’s contention is that Azerbaijan’s territorial integrity is not being violated. Therefore, to juxtapose the principal of territorial integrity

with the Karabakh people’s right for self-determination becomes a legal nonstarter. But even Armenia’s friends, Russia and Iran, give credence to Azeri claims.

The international community has always imagined a resolution for the conflict based on a scenario in which one or both parties suffer from political weakness. At this time, unprecedented rallies are taking place in Azerbaijan for the release of jailed Azeri bloggers and journalists. It seems that the movement is out of control and Aliyev’s administration is incapable of containing it. The Panama Papers and the Malta Laundromat have embarrassed the dynastic Aliyev regime internationally. On the other hand, the Kremlin had always treated Azerbaijan with kid gloves. But the controversy between Baku and Moscow has taken a serious turn over the recent bad treatment of Russian citizens of Armenian origin in Azerbaijan.

Armenia, in its turn, has presented a similarly problematic situation to the powers-that-be. The Velvet Revolution, which ostensibly had the single goal of overthrowing the previous regime, also has impacted its international relations, particularly with its Moscow standoff and its extension of the Velvet Revolution to Karabakh, when Karabakh is at war and any instability may prove fatal. Despite that delicate situation, there were some demotions among the military brass. Fortunately calls to also replace the civilian government in Karabakh died down when the current president, Bako Sahakyan, announced that he will not seek reelection.

Another sticky point was Pashinyan’s announcement that Karabakh should be a party to negotiations. Unfortunately, he did not stop there and he went on to state that Armenia is not authorized to negotiate on behalf of the Karabakh government. That statement is a double-edged sword; by forcing the parties to treat Karabakh as an independent entity at the negotiation table it may also mean that Karabakh is on its own before the international community, weakening its bargaining position.

Following the recent elections in Armenia, the new government was challenged to sign a pact with the Karabakh administration about assisting each other in case of aggression against either party. That motion was tabled after a seasoned statesman, Andranik Kocharyan objected. Kocharyan has served as deputy minister of interior and deputy minister of defense in the past. He is extremely articulate and he can be considered as the most serious asset of the young government.

Armenia faced another diplomatic row with another friend, namely Iran. Damage control was able to prevent the controversy from progressing further, after tarnishing the new administration’s foreign policy. Shock waves were sent through the news media when one of the young deputies in the parliament representing Pashinyan’s My Step Party, Hayk Konjoryan, had a slip of the tongue when in his speech he stated that Armenia is surrounded by authoritarian governments like Turkey,

Azerbaijan and Iran. Of course, no one has any doubt that Iran is ruled by an authoritarian government, but that kind of a statement in the parliament about the only country in the region friendly to Armenia sounded awkward. Although the said deputy apologized and admitted it was a slip of the tongue, the media made a major issue of it, because the incident had coincided with another occurrence, which the media interpreted as a rebuke. Indeed, the chief of staff of the Iranian army, Maj. Gen. Mohammed Bagheri, was visiting Baku and at a meeting with the Azeri Minister of Defense Zakir Hasanov stated that Karabakh belongs to Azerbaijan and that Iran supports that country’s territorial integrity.

The news item ricocheted from Baku to Tehran and Yerevan. Finally, the military attache at the Iranian embassy calmed down nerves and said the general’s statement was not a rebuke against the parliament speech. It was a reflection of Iran’s standard policy.

Iran itself has faced a territorial claim from Azerbaijan and the latter’s former president, Abulfaz Elchibey, almost went to war to “liberate” Northern Azerbaijan from Iranian rule. In fact, Iran feels safer and more comfortable when Karabakh joins Armenia, which would extend the Iranian-Armenian border, at the expense of the Iranian-Azeri border.

At this time, Armenia is facing more negotiations as a summit between Pashinyan and Aliyev is being planned. Armenia’s Foreign Ministry is tight lipped about the outcome of the Paris meeting and therefore Armenians are perfectly justified if they don’t raise their hopes at this time.

In the Caucasus, preparing people for peace is an ominous symbol which cannot be taken as a realistic chance for a fair settlement.



COMMENTARY



My Turn

By Harut Sassounian

Turkey Abuses Interpol to Extradite Regime Opponents

Turkey and several other repressive governments are increasingly abusing their membership in the Interpol to harass and punish their opponents. Interpol or the International Criminal Police Organization, composed of 194 countries, focuses on fighting transnational crimes.

Although Interpol's charter forbids the pursuit of individuals for political, religious, military or racial reasons, several member states continue to abuse the power of the Interpol to pursue their opponents.

The most recent case is the Turkish government's demand to Interpol to have Enes Kanter, an NBA basketball player of Turkish origin, arrested and extradited to Turkey by placing his name on Interpol's Red Notice list. Kanter declined to join his team, the New York Knicks, to fly to London for an NBA game. He said that he was wrongly charged by the Erdogan government as a "terrorist" and feared that he may be assassinated by Turkish agents in London.

Abdullah Bozkurt wrote in the Turkish Minute website, on May 19, 2017, Kanter "barely escaped arrest while in

Jakarta, [Indonesia] where he stopped as part of a global goodwill tour. The Indonesian army and secret service raided a school where an event was planned in order to detain him at Turkey's request, but he managed to leave Indonesia for Romania. On his return trip to the US, Kanter was detained on May 20 at Henri Coanda International Airport in Bucharest because his passport was reported to have been cancelled by the Turkish government. The NBA star was subsequently released after the US government and NBA officials intervened on his behalf. He remains a staunch critic of Erdogan for his rights violations."

In a Washington Post op-ed column, Kanter wrote: "Anyone who speaks out against him [Erdogan] is a target. I am definitely a target. And Erdogan wants me back in Turkey where he can silence me." Kanter told Newsweek that the Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan is "the Hitler of our century." According to ESPN, the Turkish government requested Interpol last November to have more than 80 people arrested in other countries and extradited to Turkey!

Several other Turkish dissidents have barely escaped the Turkish government's long reach through the Interpol. Last October, Turkey requested that the Interpol arrest and extradite Can Dundar, the former editor of Cumhuriyet newspaper, and Ilhan Tanir, editor of the Ahval news website. "I have not killed anyone, run a cartel, robbed a bank or done anything else to warrant a global manhunt," Tanir wrote. "The Turkish government is pursuing me for my activities as a journalist."

Ragip Zarakoglu, a journalist, author, publisher, and human rights defender, was placed on Interpol's Red Notice list to be arrested and extradited to Turkey. He is currently in Sweden, safe from Erdogan's clutches.

Another Turkish journalist was less fortunate. Hamza Yalçın, who had escaped to Sweden, was arrested at Turkey's request to Interpol in 2017 during his visit to Spain. He was released after two months following pressure from the governments of Sweden and Germany.

"We welcome the Spanish government's decision, which shows respect for international law," Reporters Without Borders stated. "Hamza Yalçın's release sends the Turkish government a clear message that Interpol should not be used for the political purpose of pursuing journalists who have fled abroad."

Shortly after the failed coup in July 2016, Turkey made more than 60,000 Red Notice requests to Interpol. Red Notices are only for people accused of serious crimes, and Interpol's constitution calls on countries not to use the system for political ends and to act within the spirit of international human rights standards. Turkey, China, Russia, and the UAE, are in blatant violation of these regulations, stated the Foreign Policy magazine.

In an April 2017 resolution, the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe called on Interpol "to continue improving its Red Notice procedure in order to prevent and redress abuses even more effectively." Johann Bihr, the head of Reporters Without Borders' Eastern Europe and Central Asia desk, stated that "dozens of Turkish journalists have had to flee abroad since the coup attempt in Turkey in July 2016. But like other exile journalists all over the world, they are now threatened by political manipulation of Interpol. The reforms begun by Interpol must now be completed as a matter of urgency so that it is better able to guard against abusive requests from Turkey and other repressive states."

From Behind Bars, Armenia's Former President Releases Memoir

By Grigor Atanesian

FORMER PRESIDENT ROBERT KOCHARYAN, widely despised in Armenia and currently being held in a Yerevan jail, has released a memoir in which he takes shots at his current nemesis, Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan, and praises his one-time Azerbaijani counterpart Heydar Aliyev.

Kocharyan left office in 2008 and largely dropped out of public view. But since the coming to power last year of Nikol Pashinyan, Kocharyan has reemerged as the bête noire of the new government. He was arrested on charges related to the violent breakup of protests in 2008 over the election of his successor, Serzh Sargsyan; as such he is the first post-Soviet leader ever to face trial.

Now, with the new autobiography, Kocharyan has yet again managed to insert himself into Armenia's public conversation.

The book, *Life and Freedom: Autobiography of the Ex-President of Armenia and Karabakh*, was written in Russian and published in Moscow. Kocharyan has said he began the book before last year's "Velvet Revolution," but that he finished it while in jail.

As with most politicians' memoirs, it offers a heavily subjective view of his life in politics, from the late 1980s — when he first gained prominence as one of the leaders of the Karabakh Armenians' independence movement — until 2008. Self-aggrandizing even by the standards of the genre, the book portrays Kocharyan as an apolitical leader, a talented manager who never sought power but was always invited and cajoled, able to manage any crisis and to discipline and rebuild a government and a nation.

More than anything else, the book reads as socialist realism: Kocharyan is constantly engaged in everyday constructive work, making unpopular but wise decisions and resolving a series of crises. His enemies are, by contrast, invariably ill-intended schemers driven by greed and self-interest.

He confesses to a lack of understanding of economics and finance, but claims that his outstanding memory, learning ability and dedication have been enough to compensate. He writes about his interest in psychology, and the book is replete with pop-psychology clichés. Encounters with opponents are portrayed as a clash of characters in which Kocharyan's strong personality inevitably defeats his opponent's indecisiveness. Cooperation with his allies, on the other hand, is never anything but a smooth and amicable process.

Kocharyan does touch on some of the most notorious chapters from his career. In one episode, Kocharyan details his earlier

clashes with Pashinyan, when the latter was an opposition activist who helped organize the protests against Sargsyan's election in 2008. Kocharyan depicts Pashinyan as a ruthless politician whose unhinged rhetoric and irresponsible behavior led to bloodshed. "The purposeful manipulation of the masses and the effort to create an atmosphere of hate resulted in an uncontrollable and destructive energy of the enraged crowd," Kocharyan writes, singling out Pashinyan as "a main actor behind the riots in front of the city hall that resulted in casualties." In the scenes leading to the bloodshed, he repeatedly describes Pashinyan as "controlling the crowd."

The book omits, meanwhile, the story of Poghos Poghosyan, the man beaten to death in 2001 by Kocharyan's bodyguards in a downtown Yerevan restaurant. The story has shaped the former president's public image in Armenia as not only a strongman but a "murderer," an accusation repeated by his many opponents, including Pashinyan. (One of the bodyguards involved in the killing eventually went on trial and was sentenced to two years of probation, spending no time in jail).

More illuminating are Kocharyan's descriptions of his encounters with world leaders. He is cautious about saying much about those still in office, like Russia's Vladimir Putin or Azerbaijan's Ilham Aliyev. He opens up more, though, about those retired or dead. Russia's Boris Yeltsin is described as a commanding and authoritative figure, but a bull in a china shop. Bill Clinton is an exemplary, deeply informed statesman. George W. Bush is primitive, distracted and disengaged; Jacques Chirac is ever-interested, a pleasure to work with, understanding every nuance.

Perhaps the single most compelling part of the book is Kocharyan's account of his many conversations with Azerbaijan's former leader, Heydar Aliyev. Aliyev, Kocharyan claims, not only was ready to recognize Karabakh as a part of Armenia, but spoke frankly with him about many other topics, sharing his frustrations with his domestic opposition and even touting the idea of passing power onto his son. Kocharyan's account of the failed 2001 Key West peace talks portrays his Azerbaijani counterpart as backing out of the initial agreement under pressure from his family, an account Kocharyan claims has been privately confirmed to him by Ilham Aliyev. But overall, the elder Aliyev's image in this book is positive, one of an experienced and wise statesman and at the same time a witty and engaging interlocutor.

Kocharyan also allows for a few other admissions that would normally constitute sins in Armenia's mainstream nationalist discourse. He confesses to never believing in God and is open about his poor command of the literary Armenian language, a recurring topic in the chapter describing his move to Armenia as prime minister in the late 1990s. "I had difficulties with writing and reading in Armenian," writes Kocharyan, who, like many Karabakh Armenians of his generation, considers the local Karabakh

dialect his mother tongue and Russian his primary formal language. "All the paperwork in Armenia was naturally done in Armenian, and that seemed like a catastrophic challenge to me," Kocharyan admits.

The book has been widely panned in Armenia. Levon Barseghyan, a prominent Pashinyan ally who chairs the board of the Shirak State University in Gyumri, suggested that those who even bothered to read the book ought to seek medical attention. That was a common theme in social media reactions; one user rhetorically asked readers of the book, "Do you guys have nothing else to do? Have you read all of Jamie Oliver?" referring to the prolific British TV chef.

Others criticized Kocharyan's decision not to write and publish the book in Armenian. "Why the hell is the book in Russian?"

one commenter asked. "Why the hell was it published in a Russian publishing house, printed in a Russian printing shop?"

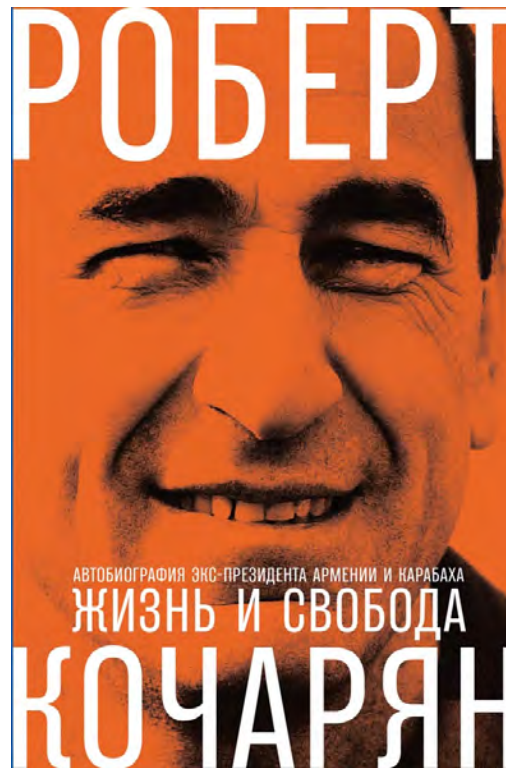
Among those mentioned in the book, Aram Sargsyan, who served as prime minister under Kocharyan between 1999 and 2000, has been the most high-profile figure to respond. In a Facebook post, Sargsyan challenged Kocharyan's account of the 1999 shooting in parliament, in which eight people were killed including speaker of parliament Karen Demirchyan and then-prime minister Vazgen Sargsyan, Aram Sargsyan's brother. In the book, Kocharyan denied the rumors that persist to this day that he was somehow behind the attack, describing the death of Vazgen, a close friend, as a personal loss.

But Aram Sargsyan challenged the account and listed questions that Kocharyan should have addressed in the book. "If you were friends, why is that even your book doesn't hide your disgust towards people from Vazgen's circle? ... Why

is there no recording of your negotiations with the villains? Why did you decide, while the investigation was under way, that is should be conducted on the level of the municipal police?"

Whatever its weaknesses, *Life and Freedom* is nevertheless a valuable piece of nonfiction. Kocharyan's obsession with imaging himself an alpha male crisis manager, projected on almost every page of the book, is important for understanding of Armenian political reality, as it reflects many Armenians' view that a national leader should be a workaholic strongman. And if Kocharyan himself has long fallen out of favor with the people, this style of leadership nevertheless remains popular, as evidenced by many Armenians' admiration for Putin. Even Pashinyan, with his performatively energetic style and frequently violent denunciations of his opponents, at times echoes this image, regardless of his personal differences with his predecessor.

(Grigor Atanesian is a freelance journalist who covers Armenia. This analysis originally appeared on the eurasianet.org website.)





Thousands Rally in Baku Calling for Release of Political Prisoners

BAKU (RFE/RL) — Thousands of demonstrators took to the streets of the Azerbaijani capital, on January 19, to call for the release of a jailed anticorruption blogger and other people they consider political prisoners.

The protesters taking part in the sanctioned rally in Baku demanded President Ilham Aliyev's government release Mehman Huseynov and other political prisoners.

Police said some 2,800 people took part in the rally, though opposition organizers said the figure for the number of demonstrators was around 20,000.

The National Council for Democratic Forces, an umbrella group of opposition parties, organized the rally.

Security forces said there were no violent incidents at the event. Police checked participants for weapons before allowing them to attend the demonstration.

Protesters held signs saying "Freedom For Political Prisoners" and "We Will Win," among others.

A resolution was adopted at the end of the demonstration calling for all political prisoners to be freed and that activists who were detained on the eve of the protest action also be released.

Rally organizers said about 100 activists had been detained by police ahead of the demonstration, with most of them still being held.

Azerbaijani officials reject the notion that there are political prisoners in the country.

Speakers at the rally also criticized what they called widespread corruption in the state government.

Ilqar Mammadov, the head of the opposition REAL Party who was recently released from prison, said "if Azerbaijan was a true republic then the...serious problems of Azerbaijan would be discussed in the [parliament]."

He also pointed out that Azerbaijan's neighbors, Georgia and Armenia, had become progressively more democratic than Azerbaijan in recent years.

Calls for Huseynov's release have intensified inside and outside Azerbaijan since he was tar-

geted with a new charge late last month, just weeks before his expected release from prison.

He is accused of "resisting a representative of the authorities with the use of violence dangerous to [the representative's] health and life."

Huseynov himself and several other political prisoners have started hunger strikes in protest.

Huseynov is already serving a two-year prison term on libel charges that he and his supporters considered to be politically motivated. He was originally arrested and charged with slandering a police officer.

Huseynov has also alleged that he has been tortured while in prison.

Rights groups and Western governments have urged the Azerbaijani authorities to release political prisoners for years, and have accused the government of fabricating criminal cases to stifle dissent and media freedom.

Aliyev, who has ruled the oil-producing former Soviet republic of almost 10 million people with an iron fist since shortly before his long-ruling father's death in 2003, has shrugged off the criticism.



Mehman Huseynov (file photo)

Hearst Names New Business Chiefs at *Cosmo*, *Marie Claire*, *Women's Health*

By Greg Dool

NEW YORK (Folio) — It's a new year, and several Hearst magazines are kicking it off under new publishers.

Cosmopolitan publisher Donna Kalajian Lagani is stepping down after 23 years to take on a new position within the Hearst Foundations effective February 4, the company announced Wednesday, January 9.



Donna Kalajian Lagani

Nancy Berger, VP and publisher of *Marie Claire* since 2009, will shift over to succeed Lagani

as senior VP, publishing director and chief revenue officer of *Cosmo* as well as *Seventeen* and *Women's Health*, which had also been put under Lagani's oversight in recent years.

For Berger, the move means a reunion with *Cosmo's* current editor-in-chief Jessica Pels, who was tapped to replace Michele Promaulayko last year after shifting over from *Marie Claire*, where she had served as digital director since 2014.

The change atop *Cosmo's* business side was one of four moves revealed Wednesday. Elsewhere within the company, *Town & Country* VP and publisher Jennifer Levene Bruno has been given additional oversight of the company's design group, which includes *House Beautiful*, *Veranda* and *Elle Decor*.

Bruno replaces Kate Kelly Smith, who intends to retire in March after eight years running the group, according to the company. Smith first joined the company in 2006 as VP and publisher of *House Beautiful* after arriving from *Women's Health*, which was owned by Rodale at the time.

Succeeding Berger as publishing director of *Marie Claire* will be Kevin O'Malley, currently senior VP/publishing director of *Elle*, who will now run both titles. O'Malley joined *Elle* in 2011 after eight years atop *Esquire* as publisher and chief revenue officer. *Elle* associate publisher Blair Hecht has been elevated to publisher of *Marie Claire* as a result, where she will presumably continue reporting to O'Malley.

On the editorial side, Leah Wyar Romito, chief beauty director for some 12 titles including *Cosmo*, *Elle*, *Good Housekeeping*, *Harper's Bazaar* and *Marie Claire*, resigned last week to join Dotdash, where she'll head up that company's

newly launched beauty business.

The moves are among the most significant since the company's former digital chief Troy Young took over as president of Hearst Magazines last summer before tapping Kate Lewis to succeed Joanna Coles as chief content officer. Another early course of action was taking *Seventeen* digital-only (apart from intermittent stand-alone issues) in November.

"Donna [Lagani] and Kate [Kelly Smith] are two of our industry's shining stars," said Hearst Magazines president of marketing and publishing

director, Michael Clinton, in a statement announcing the changes. "We thank them for their significant contributions, extraordinary leadership and consummate professionalism, all of which position the business they stewarded for the future, and we wish them the very best."

With approximately \$1 billion in assets, the Hearst Foundations, comprised of The Hearst Foundation, Inc. and the William Randolph Hearst Foundation, have made over 20,000 philanthropic grants since their founding in the 1940s, according to the company.

Spain Arrests 15 Connected to Armenian Tennis Match-Fixing Gang

MADRID (Deadspin) — Spanish police arrested 15 people, and said another 68 have been investigated, as part of probe into tennis match-fixing by an Armenian criminal gang.

In a statement released on Thursday, January 10, the Spanish Civil Guard said that 28 of those 83 people are professional tennis players, one of whom took part in the last US Open. The statement doesn't name any of the individuals who have been investigated or detained. The statement said:

"A group of Armenian individuals used a professional player who served as the link between them and the other members of the network. Once the bribe had been paid, the Armenians went to the match venues to use their imposing muscle to make sure that the player kept their end of the deal. They then gave the order for bets to be laid both nationally and internationally."

The Civil Guard said that the operation had been prompted by complaints from the Tennis Integrity Unit, the sport's anti-corruption body. Law enforcement began to investigate a Spanish player, which

led to the Armenian group.

According to the Civil Guard, which investigated the corruption along with Europol and Spanish tax authorities, the match-fixing group had been operating since at least February 2017, generating millions of dollars in profit. During the operation, police searched 11 addresses in Spain, finding €167,000, a handgun, stolen identity documents, jewelry, more than 50 electronic devices, and five luxury vehicles. Law enforcement froze 42 bank accounts.

As has been repeated in numerous reports and investigations into corruption in tennis, match-fixing is rampant in lower levels of professional tennis where many thousands of players don't make any money. Last month, yet another report from the Independent Review Panel, which was tasked with finding ways to clean up the sports after BuzzFeed and the BBC published a report in 2016 that revealed widespread match-fixing, recommended that there be no live streaming, or scoring data provided, at low-level professional tennis tournaments.