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Catholicos Karekin II Embarks on Pontifical Visit to Australia and New Zealand

SYDNEY – On February 1, Karekin II, Supreme Patriarch and Catholicos of All Armenians, arrived on a pontifical visit to the Armenian Diocese of Australia and New Zealand.

The Catholicos of All Armenians was welcomed at the airport in Sydney, Australia by Diocesan Primate Bishop Haikazoun Najarian, clergy of the Diocese; diocesan and parish as well as about 20 representatives of Armenian organizations.

On February 2, the “Hrshapar” service was held in the Holy Resurrection Church in Sydney. In front of the church, the Catholicos was welcomed by the clergy, members of diocesan and parish councils, choirs, schoolchildren and scouts with processional banners, flags and welcome posters.

Following the Salt and Bread service, under the singing of the hymns, Karekin II solemnly entered the church where more than 400 faithful were waiting for the blessed visit of the Armenian pontiff. Blessing the pious Armenians, he ascended to the Holy Altar, where the church worship service was held.

Following the service, Najarian, Primate of the Armenian Diocese of Australia and New Zealand, welcomed the Catholicos of All Armenians and invited to convey his Pontifical blessings to the attending faithful.

In his comments, the Catholicos said, “Throughout the ages, our people have faced challenges and trials, and as a result of the Genocide spread all over the world, but in every place, according to the Apostle’s order, have remained loyal to God, endured hardships and through praiseworthy deeds raised his life. As in the Armenian communities throughout the world, here in Australia also, the history of the Armenian community has become an overcoming of trials, creation of new successes, a glorious testimony to the Motherland, our Holy Church and our spiritual center, the Mother See of Holy Echmiadzin.



Catholicos of All Armenians Karekin II with students

“You have united here from different Armenian communities of the world, bringing and preserving your traditions, with their beautiful diversity you have enriched and improved the community of Sydney. see CATHOLICOS, page 2

Pashinyan Visits Germany

By Muriel Mirak-Weissbach
Special to the Mirror-Spectator

COLOGNE, Germany – When Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan and his wife Annas Hakobyan paid an official visit to Germany last week, their first stop was not the capital city but Cologne. This may have come as a surprise to some, but there were good reasons for it. As Pashinyan explained to a gathering of members of the Armenian community on January 31, “Cologne is the capital of the Armenians of Germany, and it was not accidental that we started the official visit here.” The meeting took place at the Diocese of the Armenian Apostolic Church, which is the seat of the church in Germany.



Prof. Dr. Stefan Herzig, Rector of the Technological University of Cologne, welcomes Nikol Pashinyan, Prime Minister of the Republic of Armenia

In his address that evening, in Armenian, Pashinyan touched on themes he was to see GERMANY, page 4



Turkish flags outside the Ferrahian School in Los Angeles

LAPD Investigates Turkish Flags Hung at Armenian Schools

LOS ANGELES
(Los Angeles Times)
– The masked figure in black walked

By Alejandra Reyes-Velarde and Alene Tchekmedyan

the perimeters of the two private Armenian schools, clutching Turkish flags. In the early-morning hours of Tuesday, January 29, school officials and police said, he zip-tied more than a dozen flags on the schools’ gates and fled.

Authorities are investigating the incidents, which have sparked concern and outrage among L.A.’s Armenians. Many

have described the display of the flags as an act of hate, intended to intimidate the community and discredit the Armenian genocide. Los Angeles police were reviewing surveillance footage and planned to boost patrols near the schools.

“It came as a complete shock and surprise in the sense we weren’t expecting it,” said Arpi Avanesian, principal of AGBU see INVESTIGATION, page 7

NEWS IN BRIEF

US Official to Explore Closer Defense Ties With Armenia

YEREVAN (RFE/RL) – A senior Pentagon official has said that she will visit Yerevan soon to explore the possibility of stepping up military cooperation between the United States and Armenia.

“I look forward to visiting Yerevan in the near future and learning first-hand how we can deepen the defense and security ties between our two countries,” Laura Cooper, the US deputy assistant secretary of defense for Russia, Ukraine and Eurasia, said at a reception hosted by the Armenian Embassy in Washington on Tuesday, February 5.

The embassy organized the event to mark the 27th anniversary of the official creation of Armenia’s Armed Forces.

Despite its military alliance with Russia, Armenia has already deepened its military ties with the US and other NATO member states since the early 2000s. It currently contributes troops to NATO-led missions in Kosovo and Afghanistan and regularly participates in multinational exercises organized by the Western alliance. US military assistance to Armenia has totaled about \$50 million since 2002.

Cooper expressed Washington’s “appreciation” of the Armenian troop deployments in Afghanistan and Kosovo.

The 160 Armenian soldiers serving in Afghanistan and Kosovo are part of a special Peacekeeping Brigade.

Henrikh Mkhitaryan Returns from Injury

LONDON (Public Radio of Armenia) – Henrikh Mkhitaryan made his return from injury on Monday night during the Under-23s’ Premier League 2 match against West Ham United.

“After a while, I came back. I started playing with the under-23s and I’m very happy. I hope that I won’t have any more injuries and I will keep playing,” he told Arsenal’s official website after the game, on February 4.

“I’m thankful to everyone who has been working with me. To the medical staff, to the fitness coach and everyone, even to my team-mates. They were supporting me every day. It’s life, everything is happening and you can get injured or something like that. I hope that no one gets injured any more and the team can be fully fit for the next games,” he added.

The match was called off after half-time due to fog.

“I think we did very well. We could improve in some aspects but we scored three goals, were playing very good football and could’ve scored,” Mkhitaryan said.

The Armenian had been out of action since December 19 after he fractured a metatarsal in his right foot during the Carabao Cup defeat to Spurs.

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ARMENIA

News From Armenia

German Airline Files for Bankruptcy

YEREVAN (Armenpress) —Germania airline has filed for bankruptcy, announcing the cancellation of all flights, including Berlin-Yerevan direct flights, Armenia's Zvartnots International Airport announced this week.

The company is facing financial difficulties, therefore, it suspends all flights.

Zvartnots International Airport urges its passengers to contact with the office of the Germania airline in Armenia for all questions.

Polish Delegation Led by Ambassador Meets with Pashinyan

YEREVAN (Armenpress) — Prime Minister of Armenia Nikol Pashinyan received on February 5 the Ambassador of Poland to Armenia Pavel Ceplak and the representatives of Polish Lyubava military industrial company.

Greeting the guests, Pashinyan highlighted the continuous development of Armenian-Polish relations and noted that the government of Armenia is ready to discuss the future steps in that direction.

Ceplak also talked about the importance of deepening relations with Armenia and reaffirmed the invitation for Pashinyan to pay a visit to Poland.

During the meeting cooperation in various spheres were discussed. In this context the sides highlighted the activation of the works of the Armenian-Polish Intergovernmental Commission for Economic Cooperation.

Tankians Help Feed Needy Families in Armenia

YEREVAN (Armenpress) —Armenian-American rock musician Serj Tankian and his wife, Angela, provide assistance to more than 200 needy families in Armenia.

"It has been several years that Serj and Angela Tankian are implementing charity programs together with the Orran NGO, Teach for Armenia, Women's Resource Center and Bari Mama, aimed at overcoming poverty in Armenia.

Serj and Angela Tankian's annual Food Assistance Program for the Needy for the year 2018/2019 was successfully completed. Over 240 families from the provinces of Gegharkunik, Lori, Shirak, Aragatsoth, Armavir, Ararat, Vayots Dzor, Syunik, Kotayk and Yerevan received three-month food supplies.

"The Tankian family has been helping families in need for the last several years and every year has been expanding the number of their beneficiaries," the statement says.

No Color, Just Velvet Revolution, Pashinyan Says

YEREVAN (Armenpress) — Prime Minister of Armenia Nikol Pashinyan in an interview with Deutsche Welle Russian service on February 5 assessed as unacceptable placing the revolution in Armenia among the so-called "color revolutions."

"It's unacceptable, since there was no geopolitical context in or revolution, there was no foreign actor that could participate or be involved in our domestic political process. It's very important for understanding what's going on in our country. I understand that it's very easy to group the conflicts or processes, but if we want to really understand the processes in a given place, we should be very attentive towards the details and differences," Pashinyan said.

The premier emphasized that the developments that took place in Armenia in April-May 2018 were totally domestically driven processes.

"No foreign actor had the opportunity to be involved in our domestic processes. During those days, like now, the Armenian people were and remain consolidated. We held democratic elections. By the way, it's not only my assessment, it's the assessment



Catholicos of All Armenians Karekin II

Catholicos Karekin II Embarks on Pontifical Visit to Australia, New Zealand

CATHOLICOS, from page 1

From the middle of the last century, the confirmation of the parish, the establishment of the Holy Resurrection

founder and president of the Christian Democrat party; Father Tovmas Varkis; Roy Williams, President of the New South Wales Ecumenical Council;

Church; Gwen Harris, President of the Emanuel Synagogue Council; members of diocesan and parish councils; representatives of Armenian organizations and philanthropists.

Led by the procession, the Catholicos of All Armenians entered the temple, where with the participation of devout Armenian and numerous guests he offered a Divine Liturgy.

In his remarks, the Catholicos of All Armenians confirmed with satisfaction: "We are very excited and consoling that the Australian-Armenian community is experiencing new awakening, strengthens his life of faith, united around the Armenian Church, re-evaluating the glorious memories of the history and heritage of our ancestors. Today you are the Ambassadors of the Armenian People in Australia and due to you the Armenian Christian and faithful spirit are known here, as well as the ancient and rich heritage of our people and culture, love, peace, freedom to create.

"Dear beloved, we are responsible for our time, and it is by our actions that it will be recorded as a time of restoration. It is with our new accomplishments and victories that time should move forward of rebuilding the Homeland and the Diaspora. Christ is our way, whom our fathers have recognized and whom we know."



On February 4, the parliament of the state of new south Wales, Australia held an official reception in honor of the pastoral visit of Catholicos of All Armenians Karekin II. He met the prime minister of the state of Gladys Berejikian.

Church and the consolidation around it has intensified the national and spiritual-ecclesiastical life of the Armenian community of Sydney. The opening of Armenian-language schools, establishment of youth unions, Elderly Care Organization; all national, charitable and cultural institutions that have been established and operated through your efforts."

Conveying his appreciation to everyone for their dedicated service and caring efforts in national-community and church life, the Catholicos of All Armenians offered prayers for all Australians.

At the conclusion, the Armenians had the opportunity to approach the pontiff and kiss his hand and receive crosses.

A meeting reception followed.

On February 3, Karekin II offered a Divine Liturgy at the Armenian Apostolic Church of Holy Resurrection of the Armenian Diocese of Australia and New Zealand.

The Divine Liturgy was attended by Gladys Berejikian, Governor of New South Wales; Paul Fletcher, member of the Parliament and Minister; Fred Nile,

Elizabeth Stone, General Secretary of the Australian Ecumenical Council; Bishop Daniel, Primate of the Coptic



Catholicos of All Armenians Karekin II at a dinner in his honor.



INTERNATIONAL

Echmiadzin Representatives Meet with Turkish Foreign Minister in Ankara

ANKARA (*Jamanak, Nor Marmara*) – Turkish Foreign Minister Mevlüt Cavusoglu hosted Archbishop Khajag Barsamian and Very Rev. Shahe Ananyan as representatives of Catholicos of All Armenians Karekin II on February 4. Archbishop Aram Atesian, Vicar General (Acting Patriarch) of the Armenian Patriarchate of Istanbul, accompanied the Armenian delegation.

Former Primate of the Eastern Diocese of the Armenian Church of America, Barsamian has been Pontifical Legate of the Armenian Church in Western Europe and Representative of the Armenian Church to the Holy See (Vatican) since September 2018, while Ananyan is director of ecumenical relations of the Mother See of Echmiadzin. The two arrived in Istanbul from Rome on February 2 and visited the Armenian Patriarchate.

The three clerics went to Ankara together on February 3. The meeting agenda is said to have been focused on the issue of the Armenian patriarchal election in Turkey. In October 2016, Patriarch Mesrop Mutafyan was declared incapacitated due to health reasons and unable to serve as patriarch. Archbishop Aram Atesian was chosen as locum tenens in 2010, while Archbishop Karekin Bekchyan of Germany was elected as locum tenens in March 2017. However, the Istanbul governor's office did not recognize the latter's election and so Bekchyan left his position in early 2018 without being able to ensure a new patriarchal election.

For the first time in the 11 years that

the seat of the patriarch has for practical purposes remained empty, direct contact has been established between the Turkish government and the See of Echmiadzin. However, until the present, Echmiadzin followed all relevant developments closely in Turkey and they have been on the agenda of its Supreme Spiritual Council.

The February 4 meeting lasted 40

minutes. On their return to Istanbul later that same day, the three clerics came directly from the airport to visit Rober Haddedjian, editor of the Istanbul newspaper *Nor Marmara*. Haddedjian wrote that Catholicos Karekin's concern over the ultimate fate of the Patriarchate of Istanbul led Archbishop Barsamian to contact Ankara for an appointment. The three clerics reported that they were received warmly by the foreign minister. They told him that not only the Armenian community of Turkey but the Church of Armenia and the Armenian people await the filling of the patriarchal chair. Cavusoglu replied that the issue has been transferred to Turkey's Interior

Ministry. However, Cavusoglu promised that he personally would contact the Interior Ministry on this matter. Barsamian told Haddedjian that he was convinced that the Turkish state also wanted a speedy election and that there was no serious obstacle to this. The news of the Ankara meeting spread quickly. On the evening of February 4, the three clerics were hosted at a dinner by Onnig Nalbandghazaroglu at which Armenian community leaders were present, and the next morning the three visited Surp Prgich, the Armenian National Hospital, and met with the chairman of its board of trustees, Bedros Sirinoglu. Discussions were held with the latter on the patriarchal situation in the light of the meeting in Ankara.

According to *Jamanak's* editor Ara Kochunian, Turkish Interior Minister Süleyman Soyly last year during a meeting with Armenian community representatives already had promised that the state would insure that the traditional method of a patriarchal election would be carried out. The Armenian Patriarchate's current report asks for patience, and Kochunian interprets this as requiring time for the necessary atmosphere inside the Armenian community to be created for the election.

Barsamian participated in the divine liturgy at St. Stepanos Church in Yesilköy on February 3.

Born in Turkey, Barsamian has over his years kept in contact with various representatives of the Turkish government.



From left, Fr. Shahe Ananyan, Archbishop Aram Atesian, Turkish Foreign Minister Mevlüt Cavusoglu and Archbishop Khajag Barsamian

Israeli Military Drone Firm Banned for Attacking Artsakh Cleared for Business Again

YEREVAN (Armenpress, RFE/RL) – The Armenian Foreign Ministry is planning to raise the issue of Israel's unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV) or military drone supply to Azerbaijan in different bilateral and multilateral platforms, foreign ministry spokesperson Anna Naghdalyan said at a news conference on February 5.

The Israeli Defense Ministry reinstated the export license of Aeronautics Ltd. – a defense company suspected of testing one of its suicide drones against the Armenian military for Azerbaijan in violation of Israeli law, allowing it to once again sell the unmanned 'suicide' aircraft. The incident took place when the company officials were in Azerbaijan to finalize a contract for the sale of its Orbiter 1K UAV when they were asked to strike the Armenian military position in 2017.

According to Israeli media reports, the company, Aeronautics Defense Systems, was working on a potential \$20 million deal with Baku when Azerbaijani officials asked its specialists to demonstrate its Orbiter 1K unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV) on Karabakh Armenian soldiers in the summer of 2017.

The reports said two Aeronautics employees refused to carry out the attack before two higher-ranking executives eventually agreed to do it. They said the drone did not directly hit their targets but

two soldiers were injured in the attack.

Aeronautics' export license was suspended after a complaint was filed with the Israeli Defense Ministry. Israel's Justice Ministry moved in August 2018 to charge the company's chief executive, deputy CEO, and other employees with violating an Israeli law on security export controls. The company denied any wrongdoing.

The *Times of Israel* newspaper reported that the Defense Ministry returned the export license on Monday, leading the company to inform the Tel Aviv Stock Exchange that the ban on Orbiter 1K sales to its "central customer 'A'" has been lifted. "The company can continue to supply the UAV to the aforementioned customer as soon as possible," Aeronautics said in a statement.

The ministry's decision came three weeks after Aeronautics was purchased by another, state-owned Israeli defense company, Rafael, in a \$231 million deal.

The Azerbaijani army heavily used similar suicide drones manufactured by another Israeli company during the April 2016 hostilities in Karabakh. Baku had bought the Harop drones as part of multimillion-dollar defense contracts signed with Israeli arms manufacturers.

In 2012, Israeli defense officials confirmed a reported deal to provide the Azerbaijani military with more weapons worth a combined \$1.6 billion. Those

included, among other things, sophisticated anti-tank rockets which were also used by Azerbaijani forces in April 2016.

Armenia has long expressed concern at the Israeli-Azerbaijani arms deals, saying that they undermine international efforts to end the Karabakh conflict. A senior Armenian military official hailed in September 2017 the freeze of Orbiter 1K sales to Baku.

Commenting on the lifting of the Israeli ban on Tuesday, an Armenian Foreign Ministry spokeswoman said: "We will raise this issue both in our bilateral meetings [with Israeli officials] and on multilateral platforms ... We will keep telling our international partners that an arms race is extremely dangerous for our region."

"The regional arms race issue has always been on our agenda, and we have and will continue raising about this issue, both during bilateral meetings and in multilateral arenas. This issue will be no exception," Naghdalyan said.

The drone scandal was exposed by the Israeli press more than two weeks after Israel's Minister of Regional Cooperation Tzachi Hanegbi visited Yerevan in an apparent bid to improve his country's frosty relationship with Armenia. Then Armenian Foreign Minister Edward Nalbandian visited Israel and met with Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu in November 2017.

International News

Azeri Reporters Visit Armenia for Interviews With Officials

YEREVAN (Armenpress) – The editor of Azerbaijani Turan news agency, Shahin Hajiyev, and a group of reporters, arrived in Armenia to conduct a professional activity, Foreign Ministry spokesperson Anna Naghdalyan told reporters on February 5.

"They have submitted an application to the Armenian Foreign Ministry. After passing through all procedures, like you do, their application has been approved, and Hajiyev and a group of reporters of the agency have arrived in Armenia. The visit exclusively aims at conducting a journalist activity. This is a natural process for us because dozens of journalists apply to the ministry daily for accreditation," she said.

She added that the Armenian side never creates obstacles for limiting the activity of journalists.

Earlier Armenian president's advisor Tevan Poghosyan wrote on Facebook: "I just gave an interview to the reporter of the Azerbaijani Turan news agency Shahin Hajiyev who currently is in Yerevan. I hope there will be no distortion of words and thought as he promised."

Sweden Embassy to Be Used for Danish Representation Also

YEREVAN (Armenpress) – Armenia's Embassy in the Kingdom of Denmark will merge into the Embassy in Sweden, Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Anna Naghdalyan told reporters during a briefing on February 5.

"Certain reforms are being carried out aimed at increasing the effectiveness of the diplomatic activity. This includes also the optimization of Armenia's diplomatic representations. And in this regard it is necessary to consider the merger of the Embassy in Denmark into the Embassy in Sweden," she said.

Armenia to Have Embassy in Qatar in Near Future

YEREVAN (Armenpress) – Armenia will have an embassy in Qatar, and the topic is to be included on the agenda of a February 6 meeting of the cabinet.

The residence of the Ambassador will be in Doha.

The maintenance expenses of the embassy will amount to nearly 93.7 million drams annually, with the state of Qatar ready to pay 53.5 million of the total sum for 3 years. The remaining 40.2 million dram funding will come from the state budget.

Diplomatic relations between the Republic of Armenia and the State of Qatar were established in 1997.

Armenia on List of Countries Making Democratic Progress

YEREVAN (Armenpress) – Freedom House has released the Freedom in the World report where Armenia is included in the list of the countries that recorded significant progress in democracy during 2018.

The report says last year numerous citizens in Armenia went out to the streets protesting against the leadership of that time. It says the mass protests led to the resignation of Prime Minister Serzh Sargsyan and the rise of opposition leader Nikol Pashinyan to the premiership.

"Pashinyan's My Step alliance decisively won snap parliamentary elections in December, clearing the way for systemic reforms. After snap elections in December, a new reformist majority in the parliament has pledged to promote transparency and accountability for corruption and abuse of office", the report notes.

Among the countries that recorded progress in terms of democracy in 2018 are Angola, Ecuador, Ethiopia and Malaysia.



Pashinyan Visits Germany

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develop in greater depth in other meetings. First was the new role Armenia has come to play since the revolution; it has become “more visible and more audible for the civilized world,” he said. Sometimes the new situation creates embarrassment, he said, “when representatives of different powerful civilized countries ... tell us straight away ... that they have much to learn from us.” One should take due note of such statements, when they are repeated again and again, he said. “Yes, we have problems in many areas, but there is a sphere in which we are truly considered a leader in the world today. I mean the building of a society free of violence without resorting to violence. For this very reason,” he added, “we can say yes, we are a country of great importance in the world.” Citing poet Paruyr Sevak, he said Armenians do not put themselves above anyone else. However, “we should understand what we have, what we say and do in the modern world. These tasks are positive, they are endowed with universal logic, and they are interesting to the world and civilization.”

The revolution that took place, he said, was the result of a collective effort, an example of nationwide cooperation. Now that free and fair elections have been held, and acknowledged at home and abroad, these “political transformations need to be translated into economic changes.” This, the central message of his visit, means moving from a political to an economic revolution, to improve living standards for all, and eliminate poverty. To achieve this requires the contribution of all, citizens and compatriots abroad. He stressed the role of the single individual: “Who can change the world? Who can change reality? Individuals are the ones to do that. The 21st century belongs to those who believe in their strength. The time has come for us and our people to believe in our own strength.”

In dialogue with the community, Pashinyan addressed a question related to the elimination of the Diaspora Ministry, explaining that his staff would have an ambassador tasked with special responsibilities for the diaspora. The ministry itself should be reorganized, he said, with redistribution of functions, and “only one agency should be involved in each function.” He cited the example in education, where one ministry would provide text-



Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan and German Chancellor Angela Merkel at a press conference

Thanking her, Pashinyan voiced his commitment to following up the political evolution with economic improvements, and hoped that Germany investments would contribute to the process. Pashinyan also expressed his appreciation for the German Bundestag’s recognition of the genocide in 2016. As Reker emphasized, the city of Cologne had contributed to the commemoration of the victims with a khachkar, an important step in the “process of recognition and condemnation of the Armenian Genocide,” which must be continued, “in a bid to develop a global memory policy.” In response, Pashinyan said recognition was “crucial in terms of preventing future genocides,” and that this constituted a key aspect of Armenian foreign policy.

In addition to economic cooperation, especially in the IT sector, Pashinyan proposed establishing collaboration between Cologne and Gyumri, the earthquake-stricken city which shares with Cologne a rich cultural heritage. Reker responded positively to the suggestion and was ready to discuss details.

Prior to his talks with the mayor, Pashinyan had witnessed the signing of a memorandum of cooperation between the Technical University of Cologne and Armenia’s National Polytechnic University. The Rector of the university Stefan Herzig and

Armenia should be a guest of the university during his state visit.

Pashinyan then delivered a lecture, entitled “Armenia after the Velvet Revolution: Fulfilling the Promise of the Digital and Technological Age.” Speaking in English, he focused on the role of the ongoing technological revolution, which is transforming “everything we do, say and produce.” Not only has the digital revolution introduced new forms of communication, it has “empowered citizens to amplify their voices and hold governments responsible,” as was manifest in Armenia’s revolution. Among the positive transformation made possible by the information technology (IT) age, are “transparency, accountability and better protection of human rights,” as achieved in Armenia. If, after snap parliamentary elections, this political process has been completed, new challenges face the country. “Now we have a task,” he said, “not less important. We desperately need an economic revolution. To this end, we are going to widely utilize all the opportunities that digital age promises.”

Armenia has prioritized the IT sector, also because it provides opportunities for all players, large and small. Armenia’s special expertise in the sector is of particular value; Pashinyan explained that in the Soviet Union, Armenia was considered its equivalent of Silicon Valley, because that is “where Nairi-2, the Soviet-era first semiconductor computer and one of the first in the world, was manufactured.” Armenia is also the place where most “computing systems and electronics for submarines and spacecraft of the USSR” were invented and produced. Armenia hosted the most advanced facilities for research, design, production and testing of antennas and semiconductors.

Pashinyan gave an impressive overview of the five-fold growth of the IT sector in Armenia over the past seven years, and the increasing number of multinational companies that have set up facilities there for research and development. Furthermore, he mentioned “exciting startup projects to create ecosystems, incubators, including sustainable development laboratories. Artificial intelligence, cyber security, block-chain and semiconductor technologies are among our priorities,” he told the students of technology. He described the TUMO Center for Creative Technologies and its educational program, as well as the ARMAT laboratories, where schoolchildren are given access to robotics. Finally, he noted the National Academy of Sciences and the National Polytechnic University of Armenia, which latter had just signed the cooperation memorandum with Cologne.

“And, last, but not least,” he concluded, “Armenia’s main asset is its bright-minded and talented people with cutting-edge education.” Pashinyan said that the fact that the World Congress on Information Technologies will hold its congress in Armenia this year signals recognition of the country’s potential. He ended by extending an open invitation to all the students to attend the congress, which is expected to draw over 2000 delegates from 60 countries, and to see for themselves, not only what Armenia offers in IT, but also to “enjoy our ancient culture, hospitality, art and food.” Rounding out his visit to Cologne, Pashinyan had also met with Olaf Zimelka, who is the Eastern Europe Regional Director of the German Development Bank (KfW). This development institution is already a partner of Armenia, having signed a grant agreement for more than 23 million euros in November 2018 under the Armenia Biodiversity and Sustainable Local Development Program. During their talks, the two discussed perspectives for new initiatives.

Lunch with the Chancellor in Berlin

In the state capital, the Prime Minister and his wife were received by Chancellor Angela Merkel, Federal President Frank-Walter Steinmeier and Bundestag President Wolfgang Schäuble.

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Foreign Minister Zohrab Mnatsakanyan, Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan, Rector Prof. Dr. Stefan Herzig and Vice-Rector Prof. Dr. Sylvia Heuchemer (left to right). (Photo: Michael Bause / TH Köln)

books to Armenian schools abroad, while another would provide teacher training. Now, he said, “the Ministry of Education and Science should take care of education,” and the aim should be to bring educational policies and culture within Armenia and among the Diaspora into harmony.

Khachkars and Computers in Cologne

Earlier in the day, Cologne’s Mayor Henriette Reker had received the prime minister at City Hall, with words of admiration and praise for the accomplishments of the peaceful Armenian revolution. “You are raising hopes in all those who stand for the promotion of democracy in the world,” she said.

Armenian Ambassador to Germany Ashot Smbatyan signed the document, which provides for cooperation in the field of information and high technologies.

“Internationalism is one of the fundamental values for us at the Cologne Technological University,” said Herzig, in welcoming the Armenian prime minister. “We want to encourage our students to acquire intercultural competencies, which are increasingly important in the global world of work.” Scientific networks have always extended beyond national borders, he added, and his institution is eager to contribute to this further with international partners. In this regard, he considered it “an extraordinary honor” that the Prime Minister of the Republic of



INTERNATIONAL

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He delivered a speech at the Konrad Adenauer Foundation and met with representatives of the Germany-South Caucasus Parliamentary Friendship Group.

After an official welcoming ceremony, Pashinyan joined Chancellor Merkel for a working lunch at the Chancellery. Later, in an exchange with the press the two reported on the substance of their discussions. Merkel referred to her official visit to Armenia last summer, saying she was “glad to visit” and to “see the dominant mood in the country.” She expressed her confidence in the new leadership that has been confirmed by elections. She had discussed with her guest the ways that Germany may contribute especially to economic development in Armenia, and mentioned in this context the contacts with leading research institutions. Trade between the two increased last year by 40 percent, she reported, adding that this could increase. She thought rapid economic progress would be crucial for Pashinyan’s government, to halt the economic downturn. The two had also dis-

Pashinyan noted that Germany is especially important as Armenia’s biggest economic and trade partner in the European Union, and second in the world. He too recalled Merkel’s visit as “an important milestone” in bilateral cooperation, adding that he was happy and proud to be able to return the visit just five months later. Declaring that the democratic process in Armenia was irreversible, Pashinyan said that the recent parliamentary elections had demonstrated his government’s commitment to the rule of law, human rights, an independent judiciary and a continuing fight against corruption.

Under such conditions, the government, he said, was “set to implement an economic revolution in a bid to improve the well-being of Armenian citizens.” In this, assistance from Germany and the EU would be crucial. He placed special emphasis on his appreciation of the fact that Armenia’s European partners, “especially Germany,” have placed no geopolitical preconditions on relations with his country. This refers to the fact that Armenia, which is a member of the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU), can



Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan with German Bundestag President Wolfgang Schoeble



Prof. Dr. Stefan Herzig, Rector of the Technological University of Cologne, and Ashot Smbatyan, Ambassador of the Republic of Armenia, sign the Declaration of Intent on Academic Cooperation (left to right). (Photo: Michael Bause / TH Köln)

cussed geostrategic issues, including the Karabakh conflict; expressing support for Pashinyan’s repeated contacts with Azerbaijan, she stressed that to find a solution, both sides must demonstrate willingness to compromise.

In expressing his gratitude for the official invitation,

enjoy productive relations with the EU at the same time. Indeed, it has a Comprehensive and Enhanced Partnership Agreement (CEPA) with the EU. They had discussed bilateral and multilateral cooperation, especially economic projects, and Pashinyan encouraged German companies to invest. Joint programs in IT,

environmental protection and other areas were on the agenda.

In response to questions about the Karabakh conflict, Merkel remarked that Pashinyan had “taken courageous steps, but it still remains to be seen if the other side will take such brave steps as well.” She urged Pashinyan to continue; at the same time, she repeated that actions have to follow, and on both sides. Pashinyan said he was waiting for a response from Azerbaijan, which is a precondition for any progress. Referencing a statement he had made in Parliament, he said any settlement would have to be acceptable to the peoples of Armenia, Karabakh and Azerbaijan. To date he has not heard a comparable viewpoint from Azerbaijan. Committed to a peaceful settlement, he pointed out that he can negotiate only in the name of the Republic of Armenia, and not on behalf of the people of Karabakh. “They have their own president, their parliament and government, who are supposed to negotiate on their behalf as the authorized representatives of the people of Karabakh.” As for a possible mediating role of the EU in this process, Pashinyan drew attention to the Minsk Group in the OSCE Co-Chairs, who have provided the necessary platform for negotiations. But “it is up to the three sides involved in the conflict to solve it,” he said. “The international community cannot solve the conflict for the three sides to the conflict; it can just provide a platform.”

Touching on the issue of visa liberalization with the EU, Pashinyan ended on an optimistic note. He announced that in 2018, for the first time in decades, the number of Armenians returning to the country had increased. “We need to carry out institutional reforms in our country,” he said, “so that Armenia is not considered a country producing refugees.”

(Sources for this article include the official website, www.primeminister.am, the Cologne university press office, German wires)

Holocaust Memorial Day in Derby Includes Reflection on the Armenian Genocide

LONDON – The activities of the Holocaust Memorial Day in Derby this year extended over 5 days from 28 January to 1 February and included a variety of commemorative and remembrance events and multi faith religious services. The commemoration service at the Chapel of St. Mary on the Bridge was memorable. It was an opportunity for remembrance and hope with readings from the Bible the Qu’ran, and the Jewish Kaddish, accompanied by a roll call of genocides and music from the Cathedral Choir that also involved local school students. During this solemn reflection the poem by Paruyr Sevak, “We are Few, but we are called Armenians” was read in Armenian and in English.

Following the Service of Reflection, the Act of Commemoration took place at the memorial trees on Cathedral Green where stones were placed around the trees in commemoration of the victims of Holocaust and all Genocides.

The programme of activities was opened by the Mayor’s reception in the City Council rooms. In attendance were diplomatic representatives from Jewish, Bosnian, Ukrainian and Armenian communities. The Armenian community was represented by the Consul of the Armenian Embassy in London Hayarpi Drmeyan, and the representatives of the Armenian Community Council in the UK headed by the Vice-Chairman Dr. Hratch Kouyoumjian and members, Viken Halajian and Vahan Krikorian. The Armenian Consul thanked the Mayor for his efforts in recognising and remembering the Armenian Genocide in the commemoration events. In their turn the ACC delegation thanked the Mayor, the Councillors and the HMD committee for their steadfastness in remembering and recognising the Armenian Genocide. The mayor was presented with several books on the Armenian Genocide and the remembrance pin.

The day of commemoration and celebration continued with performances and presentations



Left to Right: D. Saroukhanian from the Armenian Embassy, V. Krikorian ACC, V. Halajian ACC, the leader of Derby Council Ccl C. Poulter, Armenian Consul H. Dermeyan, Dr. H. Kouyoumjian Vice-Chair ACC and Dr. S. Boghosian ACC.

by communities that have found sanctuary and safety in Derby. The afternoon programme significantly included a reflection on the Derby response to the Armenian Genocide.

Derby became in 2019 the first major city in

England to recognise and remember the Armenian Genocide, following a unanimous vote to do so, thanks to the efforts of photo-journalist Mr. Russell Pollard and HMD member; a staunch supporter of historical facts. It

should be also remembered that Edinburgh in 2005-2006 became the first city in the United Kingdom to have done so despite political pressure and representations from various quarters including the Turkish Embassy.

Community News

UCLA to Host 17th Annual Graduate Student Colloquium In Armenian Studies

LOS ANGELES – The Armenian Graduate Student Association of the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA) will host its 17th Annual Graduate Student Colloquium in Armenian Studies on February 15 from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. The event will be held at UCLA in Royce Hall 314 and will be followed by a catered reception.

For 17 years, the UCLA Graduate Student Colloquium in Armenian Studies has dedicated itself to encouraging, fostering, and promoting scholarly research among graduate students in the field of Armenian studies around the world.

This year features presentations by 10 young scholars from the United States, France, China and Armenia on a variety of topics centered around the following themes: the role of literature and the press in culture and identity formation; late antique religious art; early modern circulation of art and ideas between Europe and the Near East; and contemporary sociopolitical movements.

“We are delighted to welcome stellar young scholars in the field of Armenian studies and to give them an opportunity to present their cutting-edge research, receive feedback, and network with their peers and the faculty at UCLA. This year, we are also pleased to welcome Dr. Sebouh David Aslanian, who will be our guest speaker at the event,” said Jennifer Manoukian, director of the 2019 UCLA Graduate Student Colloquium in Armenian Studies.

Among the speakers will be Dr. S. Peter Cowe, Narekatsi Professor of Armenian Studies, Near Eastern Languages and Cultures, UCLA; Aram Ghooasian, “The 1862 Zeytun Rebellion and the Armenian Press” (University of Chicago); Deanna Cachoian-Schanz, “Dare (Again) Not to Speak its Name? Translating ‘Race’ into Early 20th century Western Armenian Feminist Texts” (University of Pennsylvania); Khoren Grigoryan, “The Transformation of Collective Identity after 1915: The Case of Musa Dagh” (Institute of Archaeology and Ethnography, Yerevan); Sipana Tchakerian, “Stone Crosses before Khachkars: Early Christian Four-Sided Stelae from Armenia and Georgia” (Université Paris 1 Panthéon-Sorbonne); Ani Yenokyan, “Illustrations in Armenian Printed Books in the Context of Early Modern Armenian Culture: Printed Woodcuts and Armenian Miniatures” (Matenadaran Institute of Ancient Manuscripts); Sargis Baldaryan, “An Armenian Trade Manual in Circulation: Constant of Julfa, His Compendium and the Dissemination of Information in the Julfan Trade Network” (Yerevan State University); Xi Yang, “How to Measure Sayat Nova’s Aesthetic and Poetic Achievement” (Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, Beijing); Armen Adamian, “The Azgagrakan Movement: An Embodied Form of Armenian Nationalism” (UCLA); Stefanie Kundakjian, “Homemakings and Unmakings: Syrian-Armenian Women Integrating in the Homeland” (American University of Paris); Gevorg Petrosyan, “‘New Awakening’: Gezi Park and the Transformation of Armenian Youth Activism in Turkey” (Institute of Oriental Studies, Yerevan) and Dr. Sebouh Aslanian.

The colloquium is free and open to the public and will be live-streamed on the colloquium’s Facebook page (<https://bit.ly/2HnVBWu>).

More information about the colloquium, including the full program, can be found at the colloquium website (<https://nelc.ucla.edu/conference/agasc/>) as well as on Facebook (<https://bit.ly/2HnVBWu>).



Dr. Thomas Lee, Archbishop Hovnan Derderian and Alice Chakrian

Western Diocese Gives Back Helping One Family At a Time in LA

LOS ANGELES – A stone’s throw away from Children’s Hospital Los Angeles is Little Armenia, for years the inaugural stop for immigrants arriving from a slew of conflicted countries in the Middle East during the latter half of the 20th century. As the peace in these communities derailed, Armenians found refuge in this pocket of an American Dream in the balmy Los Angeles weather, planting a new set of roots by establishing businesses, schools, churches and recreating yet again another Diasporan community. It wasn’t too long after that the homeland became an independent nation and another wave of Armenians arrived in Hollywood, the largest influx ever, who had pressing needs to be tended to.

By Taleen Babayan

Taking a walk down the long stretch of Hollywood Boulevard, scores of homeless occupy the streets, some sitting on a bench waiting for a bus to nowhere, while others camp out in front of churches. Many assume this scene of squalor, beneath the infamous Hollywood sign which bears so much promise, is a far cry from the prosperous Armenian community - but that is not always the case. As the immigrants from decades ago rose to their feet and achieved financial success, they began to give back and became productive members of society to the community at large. It was with this humanitarian initiative in mind that Agape Circle was created under the leadership of Archbishop Hovnan Derderian, Primate of the Western Diocese of the Armenian Church of North America, to connect those in fruitful circumstances with those in precarious ones.

“It is a must for our people to participate in society and reflect our Christian faith and love in action,” said Derderian. “We cannot just enjoy the benefits. We have to create them.”

In its short history, the non-profit organization has spearheaded a number of luminary contributions within and outside of Los Angeles, its reach extending cultural and religious boundaries, while maintaining its focus on the Armenian population.

see PAGE, page 8



Trevor Turner, Armen Kavoukjian, Abp. Hovnan Derderian, Heidi Kavoukjian, Alice Chakrian and Eileen Kesusyan

Uncovering a Century-Old Armenian Refugee Crisis

By Florence Avakian

NEW YORK – The displacement of refugees has been an international concern in recent years. A talk at the Eastern Diocese’s Krikor and Clara Zohrab Information Center looked at a similar humanitarian emergency from a century ago, which developed at the Caucasus front following the Armenian Genocide.

Asya Darbinyan spoke on the subject on Thursday, January 17, at the Diocesan Center. She was introduced by Zohrab Center Director Dr. Christopher Sheklian, who detailed her background as a doctoral candidate at the Strassler Center for Holocaust and Genocide Studies at Clark University in Worcester, Mass.

To begin her talk, Darbinyan noted how a century ago, the Armenian writer Hovhannes Toumanyan recorded his observations after arriving in the town of Echmiadzin to help to the thousands of Armenians fleeing across the Ottoman border of Transcaucasia.

“In that hell called Turkish Armenia,” he wrote, “three armies exist. The first is the one in combat. The second is the army of the abandoned women and children, the sick, the famished, the naked, the refugees which is the largest army. And third is the army of activists and helpers which is the smallest and weakest.”

Between 1914 and 1917, thousands of Armenian refugees escaping from Turkey across the border to Transcaucasia came from Kars, Igdir and Julfa. Two-thirds of them were women, since most of the men had been slaughtered. More than 200,000 refugees from Turkey had reached the Caucasus between July and August 1915. Upon arrival, they were accommodated in Yerevan, Elizavetpol, Tiflis and Kars.

The local Armenian populations “mobilized all their resources towards the organization of relief work for the displaced Armenians, many of whom were very poor, disabled, and in need of urgent assistance,” Darbinyan related.

Dr. Samuel G. Wilson, a Presbyterian missionary from the American Committee of Armenian and Syrian Relief, reported, “Many of the Armenian villagers have taken in and cared for the destitute refugees. Others have given them the use of their spare rooms, bake-houses, stables and barns.”

Echmiadzin became one of the major refugee towns in the Caucasus. And Mayor Alexander Khatisyan of Tiflis stated, “the number of refugees in Echmiadzin is 30,000, with the daily death toll above 300. Five hundred corpses remain, that are not buried. Healthy refugees have scattered in panic.”

Humanitarian Crisis

Reports of Turkish atrocities against the Armenians and the Caucasian humanitarian crisis quickly reached the imperial Russian authorities. The Russian government as well as a number of non-governmental organizations in the Russian Empire provided humanitarian assistance to thousands of Armenian refugees, the speaker revealed.

“Russia’s joint declaration with Great Britain and France in May 1915 defined the atrocities against the Armenians in the Ottoman Empire as a crime against humanity, and promised to hold the Ottoman government and those implicated in the massacres personally responsible for those crimes.”

Two prominent Armenian organizations in the Russian Empire that addressed the Armenian refugee crisis were the Caucasus

see DARBINYAN, page 7



COMMUNITY NEWS

LAPD Investigates Turkish Flags Hung at Armenian Schools

INVESTIGATION, from page 1

Manoogian-Demirdjian School in Canoga Park, where Turkish flags were found. "I don't know what this person was thinking about. Why today? What set them off to do this? What doesn't shock me is they did it."

Flags were also found hanging at Holy Martyrs Ferrahian High School, an Armenian school in Encino founded nearly 60 years ago by members of a generation of Armenian Genocide survivors, said Nora Hovsepian, chair of the Armenian National Committee of America Western Region.

"This is a direct affront to them and to their descendants," Hovsepian said.

As many as 1.5 million Armenians were rounded up and killed by the Ottoman Turkish government beginning in 1915 in what is widely regarded as an orchestrated effort by the Turkish government. Historians have considered what happened a model for other genocides that followed. Turkey denies that the deaths constitute an act of genocide.

The incident in Encino was logged as a hate crime and the one in Canoga Park was recorded as a hate incident, said Officer Jeffrey Lee, a spokesman for the Los Angeles Police Department. He did not know why there was a discrepancy.

Police described the suspect as a man who stands 5 feet, 8 inches to 5 feet, 11 inches tall. He wore a black mask, black hooded sweatshirt, black pants and black shoes.

Some elected officials told reporters at a news conference Tuesday evening that they were urging authorities to find and prosecute the suspect.

"It is the equivalent of putting a Nazi swastika on the side of a Jewish school," said Los Angeles City Councilman Paul Koretz, whose district includes one of the schools. "This is a terrible affront. It is the equivalent of a positive statement about the Armenian genocide. Putting out Turkish flags is that kind of statement."

The flags on both campuses were taken down before students arrived.

Avanesian said the school's P.E. coach and

chef, who arrive at the campus first, saw the flags hung outside the main gate when they pulled in. They took photographs and removed the flags. Later that morning, staff walked the perimeter of the six-acre school, finding more flags posted, she said. Video surveillance footage shows one or two men dressed in all black hanging the flags on the school gate early Tuesday, she said.

"We want to all get along," Avanesian said. "We want people to understand the crimes of the past and we can all have a bright and happy future. Our hope is one day Turkey will understand what their government did over 100 years ago."

A number of countries have issued statements over the years condemning Turkey's actions as genocide. But the United States has not.

By the end of the school day, Ferrahian students had responded: Armenian flags waved all over campus, hanging from stair railings and gates.

Community Condemnation

The Armenian National Committee of America (ANCA) Communication Coordinator Dickran Khodanian commented on the incident in a tweet, saying, "Earl this morning, Turkish flags were hung on various Armenian schools in LA including Ferrahian Armenian School. Absolutel disgusting and unacceptable in 2019."

US Rep. Adam Schiff made a statement over the incident:

"Private Armenian schools in Southern California were vandalized today with Turkish flags. These schools are attended by many



Turkish flags on the gates of the AGBU Manoogian-Demirdjian School

descendants of survivors of the Armenian Genocide perpetrated by the Ottoman Empire, and I stand with the Armenian community in condemning this act of hate."

Rep. Brad Sherman also condemned the incident on Twitter, saying, "I strongly condemn this hateful act of vandalism. It is particularly cruel to those whose family members died in the Armenian Genocide." (PT/VK)

The incident took place on Wednesday at

04.00 a.m. local time and the police are investigating it as a "hate crime," the *Agos* newspaper reported.

While the display of the flags caused concern among the Armenians in Los Angeles, Sossi Shanlian, the principal of the school, said that the necessary measures for the students' safety have been taken.

(Additional information from NBC and the ANCA was used in this story.)

Uncovering a Century-Old Armenian Refugee Crisis

DARBINYAN, from page 6

Armenian Benevolent Society with its 72 branches, and the Armenian Central Committee in Tiflis for its assistance to victims of war. Both established hospitals and feeding stations in more than a dozen cities and towns.

Savior or Master?

The Russian motivation was complicated. Ottoman Armenians wondered whether Russia was a savior or another imperial master. Russian policy towards Armenians had generally fluctuated depending on the economic, mili-



Asya Darbinyan speaks at the Eastern Diocese's Krikor and Clara Zohrab Information Center, in New York.

The Moscow Armenian Committee mainly operated in Yerevan, opening a hospital, a food depot, three orphanages and a school for 110 orphan-students in Ashtarak and Echmiadzin. And the Committee of Brotherly Aid was a major institution with branches in Echmiadzin, Alexandropol (now Gyumri) and other major areas which was under aegis of the Catholicos of All Armenians.

With the emergency growing speedily, the Russian imperial authorities established the Special Council for Refugees to ensure the efficiency of the refugee humanitarian activities, issuing cards to all identified refugees for food and medical assistance.

They also insisted that able-bodied refugees find work in farming and workshops and help with the education of refugee children who were housed in orphanages throughout the Caucasus. Other Russian aid groups included the All-Russian Union of Towns and the Caucasus Committee.

tary, political and geographical developments in the region. According to historian Avetis Harutyunyan, "Russian imperial authorities never actually aimed at protecting Armenians." Their relief work was just the "by-product" of Russian imperialist and colonization policies.

Historian Peter Holquist wrote that when the war was waged, "urgent military interest, rather than an anti-Armenian policy shaped those decisions." Another historian Halit Akarca called Russian policy in Eastern Turkey during the war as "humanitarian occupation," motivated by strategic and political concerns.

Darbinyan concluded that "the desire to help others and save lives of strangers was there and mobilized people, agencies, governments and even empires. As the providers of assistance often made, and still do make for the 'people in distress', help was and is based not on the actual needs and concerns of the refugees, but rather on their sometimes-inaccurate perceptions of those groups."

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COMMUNITY NEWS

Western Diocese Gives Back Helping One Family at a Time in LA

AGAPE, from page 6

A recent collaboration between Agape Circle and Armenian Relief Society Western Region's Social Services alleviated the financial burdens of Armenian families in Los Angeles County. Through their Holiday from the Hearts program, Agape Circle adopted 21 Armenian families, raising more than \$7,000 to help them cover basic necessities, including rent and housing. They distributed goods, gift cards and presents for children, in person, while interacting with their fellow brethren.

"We live in a bubble and think Armenians here are fine but that is not true," said Alice Chakrian, Chair of Agape Circle. "Through this partnership we were able to give to needy Armenian families."

It was a mission that brought "joy and hope in the hearts of our brothers and sisters during the Christmas season," said Derderian.

By working hand-in-hand with Jasik Boniatian Jarahian, general manager of ARS who identified the families in need, Agape Circle served as an exemplary leader for the greater community.

"Not only are we making a small contribution but we are showing a united front," said Alice. "We hope to be an example that our two groups can always work together."

The families who benefited from the Holiday from the Hearts program were scattered across the city, from Hollywood to Sunland to Burbank to the Valley. Jarahian cites the increase in rents that attributed to a number of Armenian families ending up homeless.

"They are good people but they cannot afford housing," she said. "We are trying to keep families in their homes and through donor support we provide the money to the landlords."

She recalls an Armenian woman who was living in her car with her two children. Through this Christmas collaboration, they successfully moved her into a motel and paid for her lodging until she could secure long-term housing.



Ani Adjemian, Suzonne Slaughter, Seda Khojayan, Abp. Hovnan Derderian, Tera Peterson and Alice Chakrian

"It's very hard when we see Armenian ladies who are not living in a home," said Jarahian, who assists families with finding permanent residences and employment. "Agape Circle and ARS have a shared goal of helping our people, which was shown during the holiday season."

This contribution was a drop in the bucket for an organization that has fulfilled substantial and vast endeavors since its inception in 2015 when a valuable relationship was forged with Children's Hospital Los Angeles.

During a meeting of community leaders where the needs of the top-ranked pediatric hospital were outlined, Derderian, keenly aware of the significance of the Armenian Church not only as a religious shepherd but as a beacon of humanitarian work, stood up to announce a \$100,000 commitment on behalf of the Western Diocese, heeding the Christian words of the Bible throughout his years as a Church servant and steward.

Agape Circle was soon launched as a bridge for the Western Diocese to provide direct support to community groups, outreach programs, and institutions that strive to ease human sufferings and to support and contribute to organizations that have impacted the lives of not only the Armenian-American community, but everyone who is in need of essential services such as healthcare and housing as well as those who suffer from addiction, poverty and abuse.

"We have a group of incredible ladies in Agape Circle who have compassionate hearts," said Alice. "As one voice and as one community, we all agreed to take on Archbishop Derderian's \$100,000 pledge."

Under the leadership of the archbishop, the Western Diocese was inaugurated as the founding member of the Armenian Ambassadors of Children's Hospital Los Angeles and became the first ethnic Ambassador Group.

"Communities have to be project-oriented," said Derderian. "People will give and will be eager to give when they see the necessities and become stakeholders in these God-pleasing missions."

As a monumental establishment in East Hollywood, Children's Hospital Los Angeles provides world-class medical care that extends into the adjacent Armenian community, treating over 14,000 Armenian children in the last decade.

In less than five years, the group raised and donated this instrumental amount and earmarked it towards Children's Hospital programs such as the Vision Center, the Children's Center for Cancer and Blood Diseases, the Newborn and Infant Critical Care Unit, the Literally Healing Program and the Interfaith Center. To commemorate their symbolic friendship, a wooden Khatchkar (cross-stone) was unveiled in the hospital as a gesture of gratitude.

After fulfilling the \$100,000 commitment and witnessing the positive effects of the donated funds, Agape Circle decided to make another pledge of \$50,000 last month. Through their fundraising efforts and events, they offer the Armenian community a new and meaningful way to become engaged in altruistic causes, particularly through Children's Hospital Los Angeles and the "huge task that the hospital realizes."

"Participating in such God-pleasing missions certainly is a privilege," said Derderian.

Led by 17 women from the metro Los Angeles community, Agape Circle champions the projects of Dr. Thomas C. Lee, director of the Retina Institute in the Vision Center at Children's Hospital Los Angeles, who has provided innovative, noninvasive and surgical treatment to children in Armenia suffering from retinal diseases, retinopathy of prematurity and pediatric ophthalmological issues. Through medical missions, telemedicine efforts and partnerships with the Armenian Bone Marrow Donor Registry and the Armenian Eye Care Project, Lee and his Children's Hospital Los Angeles colleagues share their expertise and touch the lives of Armenian children locally and in Armenia.

"Agape Circle has been incredibly generous with their funds to address the plight of children across the world and they have always asked how they can help and how they can do more," said Dr. Lee, an associate professor of ophthalmology at the Keck School of Medicine at the University of Southern California. "They have a huge well of love and compassion for those in need and the underserved."

Alice refers to Lee as a "star," whose strong ties to Armenia date back to 2009 when he joined the Armenian EyeCare Project on a mission trip to Yerevan to help diagnose and treat diseases affecting Armenian infants. After the mission's conclusion, he continued his connection and set up telemedicine programs so he could monitor exams and surgeries in Armenia from over 7,000 miles away. His critical work is sustained through Agape Circle.

"They were the very first group to really believe in us," said Lee, reflecting on Derderian's immediate commitment that was "full of conviction" and was made "without skipping a beat."

"We are grateful to Archbishop Derderian because he created the impetus for so many other organizations through his powerful and passionate call for action," said Lee. "We view the Agape Circle as our guardian angels."

Broadening the scope of its humanitarian work, Agape Circle turned towards assuaging the plight of abused women by partnering up with the YWCA Domestic Violence Shelter in Glendale, California. Through their donation, the computer room was fully renovated, creating a safe space where women will have a second chance at establishing new lives for themselves and their children. The computers - equipped with software in multi-

ple languages including Spanish and Armenian - allowing the members to search for jobs, housing and other important resources while they work towards their independence. As the relationship flourishes further between Agape Circle and the YWCA, one of the world's oldest and largest multicultural organizations that seeks to empower women, they plan to renovate the backyard of the shelter so girls and women can find haven following abusive experiences. In recognition of their philanthropic efforts, the YWCA Glendale bestowed the Heart of Excellence Award to The Western Diocese - Agape Circle.



Maggie Sumian, Celene Culhaoglu, Jasik Boniatian Jarahian, Nilay Celik, Rev. Fr. Khajag Shahbazyan, Alice Chakrian

Expanding its outreach abroad, Agape Circle joined in the efforts of Armenia Hearing Aid Project's partnership with Starkey Hearing Foundation, a non-profit that provides hearing aids to people in need in the U.S. and around the world. To date, the organizations have supplied over 5,600 hearing aid units that have been distributed and fitted for over 2,800 men, women and children in Armenia since its first mission in 2017. The vital project caught the attention of Sir Elton John, who joined the following year's mission trip, journeying to Tsaghgadzor and helping fit over 1,000 patients for hearing aids over the course of two days.

"The mission trips have been an amazing experience," said Heidi Kavoukjian, who with her husband, Armen, founded Armenia Hearing Aid Project. "I saw the faces of children and adults light up when they were able to hear for the first time."

In addition to the audiologists, hearing aid dis-

pensers, doctors and volunteers from around the globe that were provided by Starkey Hearing Foundation, the organization also set up aftercare centers in Yerevan and Gyumri so people would have a place to turn to for new batteries, free repairs or other related services.

"Agape Circle has supported us unconditionally since day one," said Heidi, who is planning a mission trip to Artsakh this summer. "Through fundraising and participating in our missions, Agape Circle has truly believed in our project."

During its 5th anniversary luncheon last October, Agape Circle honored the Kavoukjian and Starkey Hearing Foundation for their significant work in Armenia. In turn, Heidi appreciates the genuine efforts of the Western Diocese to gain support for this venture.

"Archbishop Derderian has been a great help and has raised awareness for our program," said Heidi. "By supporting us, they are supporting the Starkey Hearing Foundation, which has given our people the gift of hearing."

Recognizing the far-reaching impact of Agape Circle, Alice seeks to establish a junior group in order to welcome a new generation of givers.

"Our organization is growing because there is a great need for humanitarian work," said Alice. "We have a strong following and my team of incredible women wholeheartedly contribute their time and resources and do everything from deep within their heart to secure the lives of those around us."

While much has been accomplished, Derderian has his sights set even further - implementing visionary and fundamental programs that will service everyone from all generations and walks of life. Derderian rightly places the Armenian Church at the forefront as a problem solver and leads by example for others to follow suit and embody Christ's message.

"We are not only building churches," said Derderian. "We are building communities."

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COMMUNITY NEWS

New Colorado Rep. Meets with ANCA Members

AURORA, Colo. — Colorado's freshman Rep. Jason Crow (D), whose district is home to the Centennial State's largest Armenian-American constituency and the Sardarapat Armenian Memorial Highway, has become the newest member of the Congressional Caucus on Armenian Issues.



Rep. Jason Crow

"The Armenian community is a vital part of Colorado sixth's district and, as a member of the Armenian Caucus, I look forward to working with our

local Armenian leaders and helping serve as the community's advocate in Congress," said Crow in a statement sent to the Armenian National Committee of America - Western Region.

"We thank and commend Congressman Crow for joining the Armenian Caucus within just weeks of starting his service in the US House of Representatives," remarked ANCA-WR chair Nora Hovsepian, "and we look forward to his sustained advocacy for Armenian Genocide recognition, humanitarian assistance to the Republic of Artsakh, and enhanced US-Armenia relations."

In November 2018, after a heated campaign, Crow unseated five-term Republican incumbent Mike Coffman, who in recent years had become a strong supporter of the Armenian American community. During the campaign, Crow reached out to the Armenian community and, upon victory, met with ANCA-WR's

Denver-based community development coordinator Simon Maghakyan and constituents Byuzand Yeremyan, Hasmik Khachaturyan, and Mher Ginosyan to discuss issues of concern to the Armenian American community.

"I am pleased that Congressman Crow acted swiftly on his promise to join the Armenian Caucus," remarked constituent and community leader Yeremyan. "In December, when we met with him over coffee, it was evident that Jason Crow was not a typical politician but a fellow citizen who cares about the communities he represents. He was very knowledgeable and sympathetic about the issues concerning his constituents, which makes me believe that he will make a difference for our district, including by being a proactive advocate for the Armenian community."

A former Army Ranger and lawyer, Crow represents Colorado's Sixth Congressional District in central Colorado including Aurora, much of the eastern Denver metropolitan area as well as portions of Centennial, Littleton, Brighton, and Highlands Ranch. The son of small business owners, Crow worked his way through college by joining the National Guard and working construction jobs. It was during his National Guard training that he first felt the call to serve and joined the Reserve Officers' Training Corps, ultimately graduating at the top of his class as the Distinguished Military Graduate. Congressman Crow was commissioned as an Army officer upon which he served in the 82nd Airborne Division. During the invasion of Iraq, Crow led a platoon of paratroopers where he earned a Bronze Star for his combat actions. Following his tour in Iraq, Crow joined the U.S. Army's 75th Ranger Regiment and served two more tours in Afghanistan, eventually achieving the rank of Captain. Congressman Crow serves on the House Armed Services Committee.

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Armenian Studies Program at Fresno State to Hold 31st Annual Banquet

FRESNO — The Armenian Studies Program of Fresno State will hold its 31st Annual Banquet on Sunday, March 17, at the Fort Washington Country Club in Fresno.

This year's banquet will feature special guest Dr. Armen Baibourtian, consul general of the Republic of Armenia.

Baibourtian was appointed consul general on September 6, 2018. He was Armenia's first Consul General in Los Angeles from 1995 until 1997 and later as Armenia's first Ambassador to India, Nepal, Sri Lanka and Indonesia from 2000 until 2004. He also worked as Deputy Permanent Representative of Armenia to the UN in New York where he focused on international security and conflict resolution issues.

"We are honored that the Consul General of Armenia will be the special guest at the Armenian Studies Program 31st Annual Banquet," said ASP Coordinator Prof.



Dr. Armen Baibourtian

Barlow Der Mugrdchian. "The Banquet is an opportunity for our student to interact with administration, faculty and the community."

More than 50 student recipients of Armenian Studies scholarships and grants for 2018-2019 will be recognized at the Banquet, together with students who are graduating with a Minor in Armenian Studies.

The Armenian Studies Banquet brings together Fresno State students, faculty, administrators, and the community, to celebrate the achievements of the Program and its students.

The reception will begin at 5:00PM followed by the Banquet at 6:00PM.

Tickets are available at \$50 per person, with a special price of \$25 for Fresno State students and Fresno State faculty. Reservations for tables of 10 are also being accepted.

For more information about the banquet, visit fresnostate.edu/armenianstudies.

Knights and Daughters of Vartan Sponsor Genocide Commemoration Essay Contest

NEW YORK — The Knights and Daughters of Vartan invite high school and college students to participate in an essay contest as part of the 104th Anniversary Commemoration of the Armenian Genocide that will be held in Times Square on Sunday, April 28, 2-4 p.m. The Knights & Daughters of Vartan (www.kofv.org), are an international Armenian fraternal organization headquartered in the U.S.

Deadline to submit the essays is Sunday, April 7.

The essay must be 1,000 words or less. Only one essay per student may be submitted.

The topic is: how has creative expression — literature, music, cinema, visual arts, witness testimony — enhanced your personal understanding of the Armenian Genocide and how has it contributed to your preservation of the memories and lessons of the first holocaust of the 20th century?

Writers should identify a specific example (a novel, a poem, a film, a painting, a memorial, etc.) and convey their understanding of the Armenian Genocide and how it relates to the creative expression you chose. Elaborate on why this piece touched you, why if it has personal meaning, and how it has helped or will help share the history and memory of the Armenian Genocide with others.

The essay will be judged on its originality, clarity, historical accuracy and understanding of the essay contest theme.

All essays should be double spaced, have 1-inch margins, include page numbers, include essay title, be typed in 12-point font, be in Microsoft Word format only. No zip files or Google documents are permitted and be submitted by 11:59 P.M. (EST) on Sunday, April 7. Submissions can be emailed to apri24nyc@gmail.com.

The 1st, 2nd, and 3rd place winners chosen by the judges will be awarded \$300, \$200 and \$100 respectively. The best essays will be published in print and online.

The winners will be contacted directly and announced to the mainstream and Armenian media the week of Monday, April 8.

Tekeyan Cultural Association and the AGBU Alex and Marie Manoogian School Jointly Sponsor

Lecture and Discussion

Self-Determination of Nagorno Karabakh Armenians Under International Law

Wednesday, February 27 7 p.m.

On the eve of the anniversary of the Baku and Sumgait Pogroms

AGBU Alex and Marie Manoogian School Hall
22001 Northwestern Hwy, Southfield, Mich.

Moderator

Prof. Ronald G. Suny
University of Michigan
Introductory remarks

Very Rev. Aren Jebejian,
St. John's Armenian Church,
will offer Memorial prayers at
the beginning of the program
In remembrance of the victims

Reception to Follow

Keynote Speaker

Philippe Raffi Kalfayan

International Law
Expert from Paris,
France



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Advance ticket purchase required.





COMMUNITY NEWS

Armenian Assembly's Annual New Year Event Brings Together Community, Elected Officials

PASADENA, Calif. – Elected officials and a cross-section of the Armenian American community of southern California, including Armenian Assembly of America (Assembly) members and supporters, gathered on January 13 to celebrate the new year at the home of Assembly Southern California Regional Council (SCRC) member Al and Diane Cabraloff. The Cabraloffs generously opened their home to over 125 members and guests for an evening filled with good cheer and delectable food to usher in a new year of effective advocacy on pro-Armenian issues on Capitol Hill and in California's State Capitol in Sacramento.

Rep. Judy Chu (D-CA-27), California State Sen. Anthony Portantino (D-25), California State Assemblymember Adrin Nazarian (D-46), and Los Angeles County 5th District Supervisor Kathryn Barger participated in the gathering, shared remarks, and presented certificates of recognition to Al and Diane Cabraloff for their exemplary work in the

community in the County of Los Angeles," said Barger.

On an annual basis during the month of April, Supervisor Barger and fellow supervisors formally salute Armenian Americans making a positive impact in Los Angeles County, in addition to officially commemorating the Armenian Genocide, in partnership with a wide array of community organizations, during a Board of Supervisors session. Notably, in December 2018, Barger spearheaded a \$1-million contribution from the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors for the future Armenian American Museum in Glendale.

Portantino chairs the California State Senate's Appropriations Committee and serves as the founding Chairman of the State Senate's Select Committee on California, Armenia and Artsakh Mutual Trade, Art and Cultural Exchange. In 2018, Portantino secured state funding for six full scholarships available to American University of Armenia student candidates to attend the University of California's Hastings College of Law.

Nazarian chairs the California State Assembly's Committee on Aging and Long-Term Care. In 2017, Nazarian authored the landmark Divestment from Turkey Act, which received broad, bipartisan support in both chambers of the California State Legislature.

Other officials and staffers in attendance included California State Assemblymember Laura Friedman (D-43); Pasadena Mayor Terry Tornek; Dickran Tevzirian, retired senior judge of the United States District Court for the Central District of California; former California State Assemblymember Steve Samuelian; Board Member of the Pasadena Unified School District Roy Boulghourjian; Mary Hovagimian, representing Congressman Adam Schiff (D-CA-28); Garo Manjikian, representing California State Assemblymember Chris Holden (D-41); Jack Kayajian, representing City of Los Angeles Attorney Mike Feuer; Z. Greg Kahwajian, member of the County of Los Angeles Civil Service Commission; and Harout Smerdjian, member of the City of Los Angeles Human



SCRC member Jim Melikian, OCRC member Nicole Nishanian, SCRC member Flora Dunaian, SCRC member Michelle Kezirian, Board member Lisa Kalustian, Diane Cabraloff, Western Region Manager Aline Maksoudian, SCRC member Helen Haig, Lily Balian, Western Region Director Mihran Toumajan, Diyana Danielian, and SCRC member Al Cabraloff



Rep. Judy Chu (D-CA) with Diane and Al Cabraloff

Armenian community and in light of their contributions for the greater good of humanity.

"I'm always pleased to stand with my friends in the Armenian-American community. I'm proud of the strong relationship between the U.S. and Armenia, and I appreciate the important part the Armenian Assembly of America has played in helping to promote and strengthen that relationship. I'm committed to continuing that relationship, including continued support for foreign aid to Armenia, a new double-tax treaty to encourage growth in both coun-



CA State Senator Anthony Portantino with Diane and Al Cabraloff

tries, and an official recognition of the Armenian Genocide which will finally put our country on the right side of history," Rep. Chu said. The Congresswoman is a Member of the US House Appropriations Committee, and a dedicated champion of consistent US foreign assistance to the Republic of Armenia, as well as continued humanitarian and de-mining aid to the Republic of Artsakh.

"It was such a pleasure to kick off the New Year with the Armenian Assembly of America. I am always appreciative of opportunities to spend time with this terrific organization and its hardworking and caring members. It's truly an honor to represent the largest Armenian

Relations Commission.

The Cabraloff are dedicated members and supporters of the Armenian Assembly. Al is a long-time member of the Assembly's SCRC, which regularly meets with elected officials to educate them on policy priorities for Armenian Americans residing throughout southern California.

During a brief program, Assembly Western Region Director Mihran Toumajan welcomed



LA County Supervisor Kathryn Barger with Diane and Al Cabraloff

Assembly members and guests to the gathering and served as the master of ceremonies. Assembly Board of Trustees member Lisa Kalustian delivered a presentation on the Assembly's advocacy, community outreach, and summer internship programs' achievements in 2018, and encouraged attendees to get involved with the Assembly through membership, volunteerism, and political activism.

Southern California-based leaders of the Armenian Assembly in attendance at the gathering included Board of Trustees members Lisa Kalustian and Talin Yacoubian; SCRC members Flora Dunaian, Helen Haig, Michelle Kezirian, Jim Melikian, and Margaret Mgrublian; and Orange County Regional Committee members Sosy Hachigian, Christine Kotchian and Nicole Nishanian.

"The Armenian Assembly is grateful to Al and Diane Cabraloff for warmly welcoming a diverse group of members and friends of the Assembly to their beautiful home. The Cabraloff family's generous hospitality compounded the positive and forward-looking vibes permeating at the gathering. The Assembly intends to harness the constructive energy of the gathering in its advocacy, outreach, and policy planning work in 2019," stated Toumajan.



Tekeyan Cultural Association
Metro Los Angeles Chapter

ROUPEN HERIAN

RESCUER OF ARMENIAN ORPHANS

Keynote speaker
Aram Arkun
Executive Director of the
Tekeyan Cultural Association of the
United States and Canada

Special guests: **Patille**
Dance Studio of Pasadena

Sunday, February 17, 2019, 5 PM
Tekeyan Center
1901 N. Allen Avenue
Altadena, CA 91001
info@TekeyanLA.org

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COMMUNITY NEWS

TexaHye Two-Step for Justice, Star Speaker

AUSTIN, Tex. - If you have ever been to a Texas honky-tonk, you know what it means to do the "Texas Two-step." The music can be a bit "kicky" while guys and gals dressed in western wear glide across the dance floor. Armenians in Texas just completed a major two-step victory, and are looking for a third!

Step 1: After a successful grassroots lobbying effort, the Texas State Board of Education moved the classification of the Armenia Genocide from "political mass murder" to "genocide" in the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) for Social Studies, the official state education standards for students.

State Board of Education member Patricia Hardy, Fort Worth, introduced the move by referencing H.R. 191 and numerous comments online detailing the international acceptance of the Armenian Genocide. Originally Texas Armenians were led to believe that this move was unlikely before 2023. However, due to the overwhelming effort by Texas Armenian communities, sending comments to the State Board of Education, the TEKS reclassification happened in December.

It will take time for this to impact Texas schools. The Texas Education Agency (TEA) must incorporate the Armenian Genocide into



Texas Two-Step

its statewide curriculum and eventually into textbooks. The textbook implication has ramifications nationwide. As states with larger popu-

lations require teaching the Armenian Genocide, many textbook publishers will begin adding it to more editions. Once enough critical

mass happens, it will appear in all textbooks.

In 2018, Dallas and Austin Armenian communities hosted several teacher training workshops in conjunction with the Genocide Education Project (GenEd, genocideeducation.org), a nonprofit that creates and delivers teacher training on the Armenian Genocide. In October, Houston Armenians hosted GenEd for the Texas Council for the Social Studies, a state-wide teacher conference. Their educational presentations on the Armenian Genocide were packed with standing-room only. GenEd's Roxanne Makasdjian, Sara Cohan and Seda Aghamianz make regular trips to Texas and have been incredibly supportive of each community's efforts.

Step 2: The Texas two-step continued with the passage of a new policy by the Texas Commission on Holocaust and Genocide (TCHG, <http://thgc.texas.gov>). The TCHG is responsible for educating all Texans about genocide, including students. Their official policy has been to only recognize genocides recognized by the United States. After Texas became

the 46th state to recognize the Armenian Genocide in May 2017 (House Resolution 191), Texas Armenian Mihran Aroian began working with TCHG Executive Director Matt Verdugo to see what could be done to include the Armenian Genocide. On Verdugo's invitation, Aroian provided testimony at TCHG's October 2018 quarterly meeting, with Armenians from across the state who gathered in support, at the George H.W. Bush Presidential Library in College Station, TX.

On January 17, 2019 at the Texas State Capitol, TCHG again invited Aroian to provide testimony, and the Commission voted unanimously to include the Armenian Genocide in their policy. Aroian and others will continue working with GenEd to provide TCHG with educational material on the Armenian Genocide.

The Next Step: Lone Star Armenians are on an active search for a national star. In November 2019, the National Council for the Social Studies (NCSS) will host their 99th annual conference in Austin. The NCSS is the largest association in the U.S., devoted solely to social studies education. Beth Hudson, Social Studies Curriculum Specialist for the Austin Independent School District, is helping to make introductions at the national level of the NCSS. Our goal is to have one of the keynote speeches delivered about the Armenian Genocide. In order to gain a keynote slot, Aroian and Austin-area Armenians are searching for a high-profile speaker.

Hudson wants a high-profile pro-Armenian star for NCSS, someone who can draw a larger audience and speak about the Armenian Genocide. "Our knowledge of world and U.S. history has alarming gaps," Hudson says, "and such gaps enable the same tragedies to repeat every generation. Recognizing and understanding the Armenian Genocide could lead to a better understanding of subsequent modern genocides and, by recognizing patterns of the past, prevent future genocides. The history of the Armenian people and Armenian Americans is a rich and meaningful one that deserves a relevant position in our history books."

"Many all-stars in Texas have worked hard to support these recent victories," Aroian says of the state's active Armenian communities, "and without the assistance of Armenians around the country, these efforts would have been even more difficult." Aroian is quick to acknowledge valuable assistance from Professor Taner Akcam at Clark University, Bryan Ardouny at Armenian Assembly, Haig Baghdassarian with ANCA, Professor Peter Balakian at Colgate University, Natalie Gabrielian at AGBU, and Marc Mamigonian at NAASR. "We also especially thank the GenEd team. Roxanne Makasdjian, Sara Cohan and Seda Aghamianz have devoted their time, energy and resources to educating Texas teachers about the Armenian Genocide. Now, TexaHyes begin a search for another big star, one from TV or film to come to Austin in November."



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COMMUNITY NEWS

St. James Men's Club Dinner Meeting on March 4 to Feature Dick Flavin

WATERTOWN – On Monday, March 4, there will be a St. James Armenian Church Men's Club dinner meeting at the St. James Charles Mosesian Cultural and Youth Center. The speaker will be Dick Flavin, an American poet known as the poet laureate of the Boston Red Sox. He is also the team's public address announcer and a former journalist, TV commentator, and playwright.

Flavin was born in Boston and grew up in Quincy. He became the press spokesman for the Massachusetts State Democratic Committee in 1963 and a speechwriter for several politicians, including the late Sen. Edward Kennedy. He went on to become press secretary for the president of the Massachusetts Senate and, in 1967, for the successful campaign of Kevin White for mayor of Boston. In 1970, Flavin left politics for reporting.



Dick Flavin

He became political editor and reporter for WNAC-TV in Boston before moving to WBZ-TV in 1973 where he spent 14 years as a commentator. It was while at WBZ that he was nominated for 14 New England Regional Emmy Awards, winning 7 times. His work as a broadcaster was honored in 2011 with his induction into the Massachusetts Broadcasters Hall of Fame.

On the creative side, Flavin's one-man play, "According to Tip," was produced at Boston's Repertory Theatre in 2008. The play captured both the public and private life of Tip O'Neill, the Democratic Speaker of the US House of Representatives. It was awarded "Best New Play of the Year" by the critics and writers that make up the Independent Reviewers of New England.

Most notably, Flavin is the New York Times bestselling author of Red Sox Rhymes: Verses and Curses, a collection of 64 humorous and nostalgic poems celebrating the Boston Red Sox.

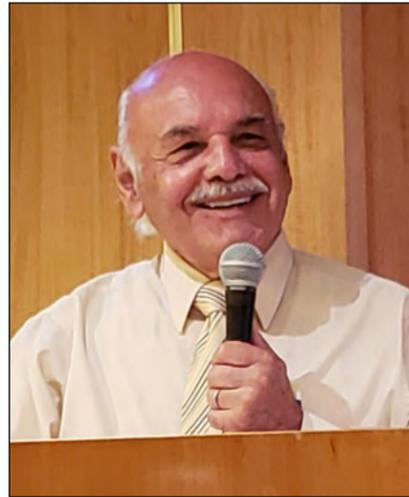
This St. James Men's Club dinner meeting will begin with a social hour and mezza at 6:15 p.m. and dinner at 7 p.m. Ladies Invited.

The Charles Mosesian Cultural and Youth Center - Keljik Hall is located at 465 Mt. Auburn St.

Knights and Daughters of Vartan Program On Armenian Heritage Cruise 2019

By Barbara Haroutunian

FORT LAUDERDALE, Fla. – This year the Armenian Heritage Cruise (AHC) took place January 20 to January 27, 2019 aboard Royal Caribbean's Allure of the Seas. The AHC Committee honored the Knights and Daughters of Vartan by providing time to pre-



Past Grand Commander Bob Barsam

sent a program during the cruise.

Members of the Knights and Daughters leadership in attendance were Grand Commander Dr. Gary Zamanigian, Grand Matron Diana Tookmanian, Past Grand Commander Bob Barsam and Past Grand Matron Sona Manuelian. Special guests included Archbishop Khoren Toghramadjian, Prelate of Cyprus, and Prof. Taner Akçam, author of *The Killing Orders - Talaat Pasha's Telegrams and the Armenian Genocide*.

AHC Cruise Committee Member Past

Matron Barbara Haroutunian introduced Barsam, who served as master of ceremonies (MC) in his usual grand style. The program began with a prayer offered by Toghramadjian. Barsam first introduced Akçam, who thanked the Knights of Vartan by stating, "My book which provides undeniable proof that the intent of the Young Turks was to exterminate the Armenian people could not have been pub-



Grand Matron Diana Tookmanian

lished without the financial support of the Knights of Vartan."

Next to speak was Zamanigian, who began by reminding the audience of the principles and values of the Knights of Vartan and he articulated the three major periods over its 103 years of existence. Zamanigian proceeded to give an animated Power Point Presentation about the Knights of Vartan "Mission III Veratarts Hayrenik Trip to Armenia" September 16 to September 23, 2018, which was prepared by the Knights of Vartan

Communications Office Liaison in Armenia Gohar Palyan.

Zamanigian concluded his remarks by saying, "With the past as our teacher, we Armenians learned quickly that we have to defend ourselves, our land, our cherished Christian Faith and our treasured traditions."

Following the Grand Commander, Barsam asked Grand Matron Diana Tookmanian to say a few words. She pre-



Grand Commander Dr. Gary Zamanigian

sent a detailed history of the Daughters of Vartan and informed everyone about all the projects supported by Otyags (chapters) throughout the United States and Armenia. Members of the Knights and Daughters of Vartan were then invited to introduce themselves and talk about their chapters' projects.

Immediately following the program, the AHC Committee invited everyone to a private elegant ocean view luncheon which ended of course with the group singing Armenian songs.



Knights and Daughters of Vartan

Public Discussion

"What Happened in Armenia: Revolutionary Catalyst and the Roads Ahead."

By



Emil Sanamyan

Emil Sanamyan is a Washington-based fellow with the University of Southern California's Institute of Armenian Studies. As a freelance writer, he contributes and analyses to publications in Armenia, Europe and the U.S.

Tuesday, February 12, 2019, 7:00 PM

St. Mary Armenian Church Cultural hall
4125 Fessenden Street, NW, Washington DC

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Arts & Living

Peggy Hinaekian

Painting and Writing Avidly

By Artsvi Bakhchinyan

Special to the Mirror-Spectator

YEREVAN/GENEVA – Peggy Hinaekian is an artist and author living in the US (Florida and California) and Switzerland. Born and raised in Egypt, she immigrated to Canada with her first husband and then went on to the United States, where she pursued a career in fashion design and fine arts. After her divorce, she moved to Geneva, and con-



tinued her career as an artist. She has exhibited extensively in galleries and art fairs worldwide. Hinaekian's works figure in numerous private and corporate collections, notably in various financial institutions and pharmaceutical companies in Switzerland. Her paintings are also in three museums. She exhibits frequently in Switzerland and in the United States.

Dear Peggy, you come from Armenian community of Egypt during its now-passed prosperous times. What was it like for an Armenian child to be raised in the Egyptian-Armenian community?

Life was wonderful in Egypt. The Armenians, like other ethnic minorities, had their own schools, social clubs, sporting clubs and churches. My paternal grandfather came to Egypt as a tobacco merchant from Yezenga (now in Turkey). He died when my father was 1; therefore neither of us knew him. My maternal grandfather came to Egypt from Lancashire, England, where he had a textile firm and was exporting cotton from Egypt for his cotton mill. His ancestors had moved to England during the first Turkish massacres. He died during the Second World War and I never met him either. My paternal grandmother also came from Yezenga. As for my maternal grandmother, her family had escaped the Turkish massacres and gone to Greece, and then to Egypt. Both of my parents were born in Egypt. I went to Armenian Elementary school at first, where we were taught four languages, then continued my education in an English school.

Do you continue your journal that you began at the age of 12?

I have written a journal since age 12 but stopped doing so after getting see HINAEKIAN, page 15



VEM: Members of the VEM Quartet performing on stage with Danielle Segen

VEM Quartet Delivers Music of Armenia by an International Group Of Artists

PASADENA, Calif. – The VEM Quartet of the University of California Los Angeles, performed for students of the AGBU Vatche and Tamar Manoukian High School on Friday, January 11, in an inspiring and educational program under the guidance of artistic director Professor Movses Pogossian.

By Taleen Babayan

Special to the Mirror-Spectator

and Edvard Mirzoyan, including selections from the “Gayane” ballet (*Dance of the Rose Maidens* and *Lezginka*) and Miniatures for the String Quartet (*Shogher Jan* and *Gakavik*).

In an effort to celebrate the culture and influence of Armenian music, this concert was part of VEM Quartet's outreach service to the greater community. A graduate string-quartet-in-residence at the prestigious University of California in Los Angeles (UCLA) Herb Alpert School of Music, the VEM ensemble is composed of diverse and gifted group members who offer quality music to the public, including violinists Ji Eun Hwang, Aiko Jimena Richter and Morgan O'Shaughnessey as well as cellist Jason Pegis and mezzo-soprano Danielle Segin.

In her welcoming remarks, Dr. Silva Karayan, chair of the Board of Trustees Education Committee of the AGBU Vatche and Tamar Manoukian High School, noted the “special and unique occasion” of the VEM Quartet's live performance that brings to life the vibrancy of Armenian music.

“We are proud and delighted to have the VEM Quartet perform for our students,” said Karayan. “The beauty of today's program is that the performers, led by the award-winning Professor Pogossian, are all young and talented musicians of diverse backgrounds.”

Karayan emphasized the importance of a “well-rounded education for students” and the significance that music plays in this endeavor. She expressed gratitude to “generous benefactors” Vatche and Tamar Manoukian, who spearheaded the construction of the Performing Arts Center, which serves as a state-of-the-art venue for Armenian cultural performances, such as the VEM Quartet, to take place for the student body in order to expand their minds.

Introducing the afternoon's program, Pogossian said that the VEM Quartet is a see VEM, page 14



Mezzo-soprano Danielle Segen

Michelle Ekizian Paints Emotional Portrait of Gorky In New Opera

By Corbett Charles McCarthy

NEW YORK – I believe the spirit of Arshile Gorky lives on, and that in this time of continued turmoil – whether it be of walls that divide or protect – what's of most importance is common sense. Who knows what is in the minds of people on each side of a wall? When will the unending list of our modern times' travesties including the Armenian Genocide of 1915, the Holocaust to the hate crimes going on today cease?

The work of the great 20th century artist Arshile Gorky and the trail blazing contemporary composer Michelle Ekizian sheds light on these persistent questions. The story of Ekizian's new hybrid musical theater opera,



Composer Michelle Ekizian before a copy of “The Artist and His Mother” by Gorky

“Gorky's Dream Garden,” (now veering toward fully staged and concert symphonic premieres) is on the life of the Armenian-American artist, Arshile Gorky (b. 1904, Van, Turkey, d. 1948, Sherman, Conn.). The opera places its protagonist as a questing exiled heart. Through scenes of seeing, hearing and feeling, the audience becomes immersed in the starry conundrums

Judging from Saturday, January 5's performance of an eight-minute segment of one of the “dream dances” from “Gorky's Dream Garden,” one can sense that Ekizian's work is brilliant. It crosses boundaries. Its unique blend of styles and techniques crosses high and popular culture featuring large-scale operatic forces. It is a spellbinding, uplifting psychodrama that breaks not only the fourth wall of the stage, but barriers among the audience members themselves. The drama spans the pre-and post-World War II-era of America featuring bachelor days of New York's City's dynamic bohemian art scene and married life in a modernist Glass House in a countryside idyll of rural Connecticut (where Gorky lived during his final years of his short life). But amidst the familiar Americana, there is inserted Gorky's lost Armenian lands of his childhood: his place of beginnings stemming from the enduring beauty of Eden, Ararat and Noah – and also ironically, the site of the first genocide of the 20th century.

“Gorky's Dream Garden” shows Gorky voicing the truth (to right the wrong) through his artistic progress. Running alongside his life's events (assimilation in newfound lands and marriage to a lovely American girl from Boston – offset by fire, loss, terminal cancer, marital infidelity, car accident and apparent suicide), Ekizian places escalating memories of the see EKIZIAN, page 17



ARTS & LIVING

International Group of Artists Delivers Music of Armenia

VEM, from page 13

“cultural extension” and the performers “admire and celebrate Armenian culture.”

“Through our performances we introduce Armenian music to different ethnicities and we encourage them to learn more about our culture,” said Pogossian, who has been leading the quartet since its inception five years ago.

Conveying a personal memory, he recalled the music of Komias Vartabed that would play continuously on April 24 at the eternal flame memorial to the Armenian Genocide at Dzidzernagapert in Armenia. It was a recollection that stayed with him his entire life and that is now emanated through the VEM Quartet.

“It is very touching to me that my young colleagues at UCLA are feeling this pride in being Armenian,” he said.

The 150 students, from grade 9-12, listened intently during the hour-long performance and closely followed the program notes to learn the significance of each piece.

“The students were so attentive, captivated and inspired,” said Karayan, who is planning a return performance on campus for the VEM Quartet. “It was wonderful for students to experience quality entertainment and to be empow-

posiums and workshops with UCLA’s Narekatsi Professor of Armenian Studies Peter Cowe at the American University of Armenia. Locally, the ensemble is preparing for upcoming performances at the Abril Bookstore in Glendale sponsored by the Tekeyan Cultural Association Metro LA Chapter, the Tekeyan Cultural Association Center in Altadena and the Hammer Museum in April to commemorate the anniversary of the Armenian Genocide.

“This is an excellent program that is growing,” said Pogossian in a post-concert interview. “I’m glad that one of the aspects is outreach so we can connect with Armenian communities and schools.”

He was impressed with how much the students were engaged in the concert as well as their “positive reaction to the music.” While the group currently plays classical music, Pogossian envisions that the ensemble will further evolve into Armenian folk, religious and pop music genres.

Pogossian plans to return to the AGBU Vatche and Tamar Manoukian High School in order to do a more in-depth presentation for students based on the music of contemporary Los Angeles based composer Artashes



Members of the VEM Quartet (l-r): Ji Eun Hwang, Jason Pegis, Aiko Jimena Richter and Morgan O’Shaughnessey.



Mezzo-Soprano Danielle Segen, Dr. Silva Karayan and Professor Movses Pogossian

ered and challenged as they saw in person non-Armenians appreciating and disseminating our culture.”

“Even though the musicians were not Armenian, they made the Armenian spirit in the music come alive and showed the audience that they were very interested in Armenian music and culture,” said Nanor Derbedrossian, a student at the Manoukian High School, who herself is a piano player.

The VEM Quartet has a busy schedule ahead in the coming months as the group will embark in the Spring on an East Coast tour of Boston, Montreal and Detroit, and in June they will perform for the second time in Armenia. While in the homeland, VEM Quartet will fuse musical concerts and education through organized sym-

Kartalyan, Chair of Lark Conservatory’s Composition Department, who creates music based on the poetry of Vahan Tekeyan.

“It will be interesting for students to learn

how a composer conceives and creates new pieces of music,” said Pogossian, a violinist who has performed with orchestras around the world, including the Brandenburger Symphoniker and the Halle Philharmonic in Germany, the Sudety Philharmonic in Poland, the Scandinavian Chamber Orchestra of New York and the Toronto Sinfonia.

As the VEM Quartet’s longest performer, Segen said it has been “a joy from the very start” to become involved in the ensemble that was an “eye-opening experience” for her as she learned about Armenian music and culture.

“Before, I would not have been able to place Armenia on a map, but now I have brought into my awareness such a rich culture and history of an incredible people,” said Segen, who holds a Master of Music degree from UCLA in Vocal Performance. “Being able to give that knowledge to others has been such a rewarding experience.”

Segen appreciates the opportunity to broaden her horizons and build knowledge of a new culture that “encourages us to be more thoughtful and kind to one another as people inhabiting the same earth.”

One of the highlights of participating in the VEM Quartet was the chance to travel to Armenia, which she discovered to have “a wealth of history, art, architecture, and culture.”

The trip allowed the group to forge bonds with Armenia and Segen looks forward to returning this summer, where she was touched by the warm hospitality of the people.

“We were welcomed by everyone with whom we had a chance to interact,” said Segen. “It was obvious to us how much the people of Yerevan appreciated that we, non-Armenians, were learning and performing these beautiful works by Armenian composers which we would never have come to know without this program.”

TCA VEM Tour

The TCA-sponsored tour of VEM in the US and Canada schedule is as follows:

- Montreal: Friday, March 29, at the Tekeyan Center, 825 Manooagian, Saint-Laurent, 8:30 p.m.
- Detroit: Wednesday, March 27, at St. John Armenian Church 7:30 p.m.
- Boston: Sunday, March 31, 1 p.m. Holy Trinity Armenian Church, Cambridge.

There will be two Los Angeles-area performances in the spring, at the TCA Beshgeturian Center in Altadena, sponsored by the TCA Pasadena-Glendale Chapter and a second at Abril Bookstore in Glendale. Further details will be announced as soon as possible.

Email tcadirector@aol.com for more information,

Winter Studio Classes for Kids at Armenian Museum

WATERTOWN – Beginning this February break, the Armenian Museum will offer a six-week art program for children of all backgrounds ages 7-14. The program’s classes are Drawing and Painting, Collage, and Pottery Decoration. Students will find inspiration among the objects on display in our galleries, and study global influences on Armenian art and culture. Each class will be a fun, interactive session.

Session 1 will be on Wednesdays, 3:30-5:30 p.m., February 20-March 27. Session 2 will take place on Saturdays, 1-3 p.m., February 23-March 30.

Full information can be found on the museum’s website at <https://www.armenianmuseum.org/events/winter-studio-classes>.



Tekeyan Cultural Association
Metro Los Angeles Chapter

Presents

Ara Dabandjian Quartet of Element Band

Saturday, February 9, 2019
8 PM Dinner • 9:30 PM – 10:30 PM

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.



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ARTS & LIVING

Oudist Richard Hagopian to Present 'Armenian Song Repertoire of the Middle East: Part II'

FRESNO – Richard Hagopian, an internationally-recognized master of the oud, will present a lecture entitled "Armenian Song Repertoire of the Middle East: Part II" at 5 p.m. on Friday, March 1, in the University Business Center, Alice Peters Auditorium, Room 191, on the Fresno State campus.

This public event is co-sponsored by the Middle East Studies Lecture, Performance & Film Series, the Music Department's Global Music Lecture Series, and the Armenian Studies Program.

Hagopian has recorded four dance albums in the "Kef Time" series (style of dance music popular in the Armenian-American community), and an album

of Armenian composers produced by ARC Music in Europe. Hagopian began playing the oud at a young age and has received numerous awards throughout his life including the prestigious National Endowment for the Arts National Heritage Fellowship Award, the nation's highest honor given in the traditional folk arts, in 1989.

Hagopian has performed throughout the United States and taught a master class at the Manhattan School of Music, as well as teaching as artist-in-residence at Fresno State.

The lecture is free and open to the public.

For more information about the lecture visit www.fresnostate.edu/armenianstudies.



Peggy Hinaekian: Painting and Writing Avidly

HINAEKIAN from page 13

married. I am currently writing my memoir. It will be in three volumes. The first will cover my life in Heliopolis, Egypt, Montreal and Manhattan, until my divorce. The second volume will be my life in Geneva, Switzerland, my wild single years and the ups and downs of being single and sowing my wild oats. The third volume will cover my second marriage with my children and all my travels from one continent to the other, describing my chaotic life of bringing up the children and continuing with my artistic career simultaneously. I am very much a multitasker. One has one life to live and I am adamant in making the most of it.

You lead a creative life, painting and writing. Which you consider yourself to be more – an artist or a writer?

At first, I considered myself an artist but after I published my first fictional novel, *Of Julia and Men*, I considered myself both an artist and a writer. I say fictional here because most of my readers think this is an autobiography. They associate Julia with me. It is certainly not my life but it is similar. The settings are authentic, though, as I have travelled to all these places. I have also written whimsical short stories which have been published in magazines in the US. They have been published separately as booklets of short stories with an original, signed drawing on the inside of the back cover.

In your biography there is also an episode when you worked as a fashion designer.

Fashion designing had been my dream since a very young age. As a kid, I was designing all the clothes of my extended family and I dreamt of going to New York to practice this activity. I did, both in Boston and in Manhattan. However, painting took precedence over it and I gave up fashion designing. Life in New York was too hectic for me. I was making loads of money but had no time to spend it. That is when I decided to go to Switzerland where I had to change careers. In order to be able to live and work in Switzerland I had to work for the United Nations which gave me the necessary work permit. I never gave up my painting though. I was frenetically painting and exhibiting.

Is there anything that we could characterize as Armenian in your paintings and writings?

My artistic career took off in Switzerland. There is nothing really Armenian in my paintings. Some of my etchings tend to be oriental in their style, being very detailed and colorful. At first, I was fascinated with the theme of man/woman relationships, then my theme became abstract landscapes, all imaginary renderings of the ocean and the desert. My paintings have been titled "Blue Reveries and Red Desert Scapes" in newspaper articles. As for my writings, I often depict a Middle Eastern woman in them. Julia is a Lebanese young woman born in Egypt who wants to shed the conventional lifestyle in the Middle East to live

life as a free woman in Europe. Much like myself when I grew up. I wanted to work and be independent. I did not like the constraints put on women in the Middle East. At that time, a young woman working outside the home was not considered to be quite acceptable.

You gave two of your sons Armenian names – Varoujan Daniel and Vartan. Daniel Messier has acted in about 30 American films and TV series, and last year shot his first film. I highly hope that finally the ambitious project "East of Byzantium: War Gods and Warrior

Saints" will be released this year, where Daniel acted as Armenian king Tiridates III.

I married my second husband, an American, in Geneva and he insisted that we give our sons Armenian names. I chose my two heroes, Vartan and Varoujan. My father who was an Armenophile, wrote two poems in Armenian about my sons. Vartan, our younger son, is a professor of comparative literature in a university in New York.

You are an avid traveler. Have you ever been in Armenia? It will be great to host your exhi-

biton here, to have your novel Of Julia and Men translated into Armenian...

I was an avid traveler and regret the fact that I have never been to Armenia. I do have several Armenian friends from Armenia who are urging me to take the trip, but I don't know if I can survive the jet lag. It would be great if my novel were translated into Armenian. I am hoping to find a sponsor to cover the expense. I did translate it into French and this version will soon be published.

Recipe Corner

by Christine Vartanian Datian

Cucumber, Onion, and Mint Salad



INGREDIENTS

4 large cucumbers, peeled and seeded
1 quart plain Armenian or Greek yogurt
1 medium onion, finely minced or sliced thinly
2-3 cloves garlic, finely grated
2 tablespoons olive oil
2 tablespoons chopped chives (or scallions)
2 tablespoons chopped parsley
1 tablespoon white vinegar
1 teaspoon lemon zest plus 1 tablespoon fresh lemon juice
1 teaspoon crushed dried mint (or 2 tablespoons chopped fresh mint)
Salt, pepper
Kalamata or black olives, roasted peppers, assorted vegetables
Chopped parsley, red onions, and fresh or dried mint as garnish
Olive oil, paprika
Pita bread*

PREPARATION

Place sliced or diced cucumbers in bowl, sprinkle salt on top, toss and set aside for 20 minutes. Combine the yogurt, onion, garlic, olive oil, chives, parsley, vinegar, lemon zest, juice, salt, pepper and dried mint in a large bowl. Drain the cucumbers, add them to the yogurt mixture, and toss well. Serve immediately or cover and chill overnight. Serve with olives, roasted peppers, and assorted vegetables. Garnish with parsley, red onions, and mint, and drizzle with olive oil and paprika. *Brush pita bread with olive oil and sprinkle za'atar on top. Bake in the oven until crispy and serve. Serve with salad. Serves 6.

*This salad is excellent served with beef or lamb patties, kebabs, dolma, kufta or stuffed grape leaves. Can be served as a spread or dip for crackers and vegetables.

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





ARTS & LIVING

CALENDAR

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 Roupén 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/1C005554CB5A7778> Dolby Theater in Los Angeles on April 7. (Times 8 : 0 0 - 9 : 3 0 p m) 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 feature Armenian Duduk Soloist and Classical Clarinetist Mher Mnatsakanyan and Bassist Hova Burian. Official FaceBook Page: <https://www.facebook.com/AlessandroSafinaUSA/> The performance will be held at Fillmore Miami Beach in Miami (Times 8:00-9:30pm)

MASSACHUSETTS

FEBRUARY 20 – MARCH 30 — The Armenian Museum is offering a six-week art program for children of all backgrounds ages 7-14. The program's classes are Drawing and Painting, Collage, and Pottery Decoration. Students will find inspiration among the objects on display in the galleries, and study global influences on Armenian art and culture. Full information can be found at <https://www.armenianmuseum.org/events/winter-studio-classes>. Session 1, Wednesdays, 3:30–5:30 pm, February 20–March 27; Session 2, Saturdays, 1–3 pm, February 23–March 30

MARCH 2 — Sts. Vartanantz Mardi Gras Family Kef Night. What a better way to anticipate Great Lent than to dance up a storm at Sts. Vartanantz's fabulous Mardi Gras Family Kef Night Dinner-Dance, 6 p.m., 180 Old Westford Rd., Chelmsford. Saturday. Following a sumptuous chicken-pilaf dinner, Armenian and Middle East dance music will be provided by the dynamic Jason Naroian Ensemble featuring Jason Naroian-dumbeg/vocals; Ara Jeknavorian – clarinet; Brian

Anisbigian – oud; and Dave Anisbigian – guitar/vocals. Prior to the dinner-dance at 5 p.m., there will be an Armenian and Middle East line dancing workshop led by the fabulous "Hye Stepper" Diane Juknavorian where all can learn all the favorite Armenian and Greek dance steps. Paid in advance tickets must be received by February 26: Adults \$25, Students \$10, and 5 & under Free. At the door: Adults \$35 and Students \$15. For reservations, contact Maria Kazanjian (617) 240-3686 or Ria.tk@verizon.net. Tables of 8 can be reserved in advance with full payment Checks made payable to: Sts Vartanantz Armenian Church.

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+.

MARCH 2 — Poon Paregantan Family Kef Night, Sts. Vartanantz Armenian Church, 180 Old Westford Rd., Chelmsford, MA. Featuring the Fabulous Jason Naroian Ensemble: Jason Naroian – Vocals and Dumbeg, Ara Jeknavorian – Clarinet, Dave Anisbigian - Guitar and Brian Anisbigian – Oud. Armenian Dance Class - 5 p.m. Dinner and Dancing at 6:00 pm. Paid in advance tickets must be received by February 26: Adults \$25, Students \$10, and 5 & under Free. At the door: Adults \$35 and Students \$15. For reservations, contact Maria Kazanjian (617) 240-3686 or Ria.tk@verizon.net. Tables of 8 can be reserved in advance with full payment Checks made payable to: Sts Vartanantz Armenian Church.

MARCH 3 — Sunday, Amaras Art Alliance presents Dolma Fest and Contest, Celebrating Poon Parekentan. Also serving traditional harissa and featuring Armenian music for dancing. Holy Cross Armenian Catholic Church, 200 Lexington St., Belmont, 2 pm. Come and taste a variety of dolmas and vote for your favorite recipe. Two of the competing chefs will win cash prizes: \$200 first place and \$100 second place. Voting open to valid ticket holders and while supplies are available. Tickets \$25 at Amarasonline.com or by calling 617-331-0426. To register for the contest call Arax at 617-733-7162.

MARCH 4 — St. James Men's Club Dinner Meeting - social hour and mezza at 6:15 PM and dinner at 7:00 PM, St James Armenian Church Charles Mosesian Cultural and Youth Center - Keljik Hall, 465 Mt. Auburn Street, Watertown, MA. The speaker will be Dick Flavin, poet laureate of the Boston Red Sox. He is the senior ambassador of the Boston Red Sox and voice of Fenway Park, serving as public address announcer for Red Sox day games. His television commentaries won seven New England Emmy Awards. He is a nationally known speaker and is a member of the Massachusetts Broadcasters Hall of Fame. Mezza and a Losh Kebab & Kheyra Dinner \$17/person. Ladies invited. For additional information call the St James Church office at 617-923-8860 or call Hapet Berberian at 781-367-6598

MARCH 9 – Commemoration of the February 18th Against Soviet Rule and Commemoration of the Baku/Sumgait Pogroms. Buffet Dinner and Program. Narrated Slide Presentation by Joe Dagdigian on "Unseen Armenia – Two Sides of the Border." Rare images of Armenian Homeland on both sides of Armenia's and Artsakh's borders, as well as the patriotic Armenians who inhabit these lands. Jaffarian Hall, St. Gregory Armenian Church, 158 Main St., No. Andover, MA. 6:00 pm. Adults - \$15; Students - \$5. For information and reservations, please contact armenij@comcast.net or call 978-256-2538. Sponsored by the Lowell Aharonian Gomideh of the Armenian Revolutionary Federation.

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.

MICHIGAN

FEBRUARY 27 — The Tekeyan Cultural Association and the AGBU Alex and Marie Manoogian School jointly sponsor a lecture and discussion featuring Philippe Raffi Kalfayan, international law expert, and regular contributor to the Armenian Mirror-Spectator. Talk titled "Self-Determination of Nagorno Karabakh: Armenians Under International Law." Kalfayan is the former deputy secretary general of the International Federation for Human Rights and still plays an active role in the organization. Since 2003, he has been a consulting legal expert for the Council of Europe's Directorate General for Human Rights and the Rule of Law. Opening remarks by moderator Prof. Ronald G. Suny of the University of Michigan. 7 p.m. AGBU Alex and Marie Manoogian School Hall, 22001 Northwestern Hwy, Southfield. Program will be on eve of anniversary of the Baku and Sumgait pogroms. Very Rev. Aren Jebejian of St. John's Armenian Church, will offer a memorial prayer for the souls of the victims. Free. Reception to follow.

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/TCAValentinesDayDinnerDance>. For further information and seating, write to rsyptaliab@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 Archbishop Khajag Barsamian and Bishop-elect Very Rev. 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.

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE

ARTS & LIVING

Michelle Ekizian Paints Emotional Portrait of Gorky In New Opera

EKIZIAN, from page 13

night time, enigmas and nostalgias of his lost Armenian lands with six of Gorky's seminal art works to bring the creative vision full circle.

The dance of "The Exiled Heart" of the Sorrowful Intermezzo: So be It, The Spirit is Forever from "Gorky's Dream Garden," opened Saturday's five-hour Booking Dance Festival presented at Jazz of Lincoln Center's Appel Room which highlighted the week's 2019 conference of APAP (American Performing Arts Professionals). The segment featured solo dancer Lynn Needle (director and choreographer of Art of Motion Dancer Theatre). It was pure ecstasy. Needle singlehandedly entranced the audience with an incredible dramatic arc of emotion. Implying art in motion, the intensity and intricacy of the music and dance combined was remarkably in tune and in step with Gorky's art. The collaboration imparted the visceral impact of Gorky's fluid, biomorphic abstractions and his heartbreaking artist and his mother portraits.

In New York's venerable jazz arena by its Glass Wall overlooking the evening's city lights of the merging Columbus Circle at street level below, pure magic ensued. The music track's opening sotto voce intoned by the outreaching pop voice of a soulful singer introduced the enthralling episode. With audio levels of the hall's surround sound system set to emulate the feeling of being amidst the echo of a mighty international cathedral – or Mt. Ararat – Ekizian's moving

symphonic setting of the bedrock Our Father hymn of the ancient Armenian Liturgy enveloped the audience with sorrow and grace aiming to rise above.

With the melismatic chant song in ancient Armenian heard as a universal wail across the transitioning twilight to night sky outside, the music set the stage for Needle to appear from its depths of darkness. As the city's cars, shops and people from all walks of life and ethnicities glistened through the Appel Room's Glass Wall, the stunning backdrop appeared not as a barrier wall, but as a window to the world.

Knowing of the anticipated set design for the staged production of "Gorky's Dream Garden," I could not help thinking of Gorky's Glass House in Sherman, Connecticut (where his life ended in 1948 at the age of 44) as an eerie tie-in to this grand perspective.

The gripping music with the magnificent Lynn Needle held center stage. It is an attribute to Ekizian's and Needle's mastery that the audience felt the emotional pull without knowing of the story line and the scene's pivotal turning point. It did not matter that the audience did not know of the opera's gender, boundary crossing avatar "The Black Monk" hailing from Anton Chekhov and the 10th-century Armenian Saint Gregory of Narek of Gorky's ancestral lands cast to sing the Sorrowful Intermezzo as a Prayer for Peace. It did not matter that the presentation's lighting did not flood the Appel Room stage in blood red light recalling the two defining opening and closing paintings for this scene which Ekizian has noted in her script to align with the themes of Genocide and loss ("Charred Beloved I," 1946, of the David Geffen Collection and "Agony," 1947, at MoMA). Was it planned or of profound coincidence that the performance's blue lighting forecasted Ekizian's script notes for the opera's "Rainbow Dawn" Finale – posed to take place in the blue hour before sunrise? In any event, the segment was illuminating and transcendent.

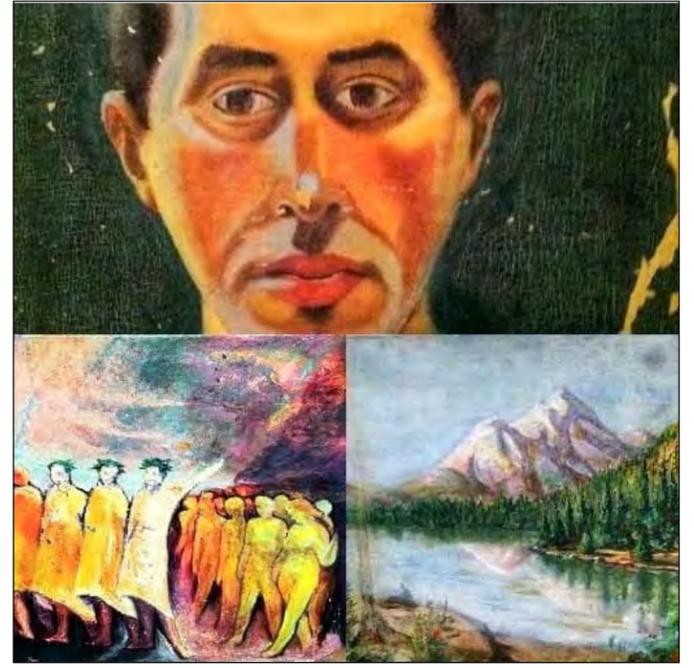
The room was pin drop quiet with all eyes and ears wide open as you felt the collective heartache and passion of an exiled heart aiming to rise above. Needle's golden sheath gown and long garland suggested the scorching heat of the desert sand during the death marches, the genocide crawl of the faithful Armenians and the resilient leaves of the opera's "wishing tree." The 25-foot-long rustling garland of gilded leaves and "dream strips" in Needle's hands

was an amazing prop that spoke of reaching, tension, struggle and release. As the winter sky's 5:30 p.m. twilight blue hour changed to the darkness of nighttime void, a growing ethereal blue lighting scheme surrounded Needle as she rose with the music. Her movements and poses seemed to be received by not just the seated audience in the Appel Room, but by the cosmos outside the Glass Wall/the Window to the World Beyond. It appeared as though the entire world was momentarily watching and listening together with compassion and hope—be it for our earth or fellow man of today and centuries past.

Michelle Ekizian is a composer creating hybrids of classical, rock, musical theater, opera and Armenian ethnic recastings in richly orchestrated, epic-like settings. For the Interfaith Committee of Remembrance at the Cathedral of St. John the Divine, her commissioned Remembrance collection confronts issues of intolerance and survival in the perspective of the human spirit. She is a recipient of a Prix de Rome from the American Academy in Rome, Guggenheim Fellowship, National Endowment for the Arts grant and a Doctorate in Music Composition from Columbia

University.

(Corbett Charles McCarthy is an art collector and owner of the Spring Lake Gallery in Spring Lake New Jersey specializing in 20th century art of which his collection includes works by Willem de Kooning, Jean-Michel



SpringLakeGallery

Basquait/Francesco Clementi/Andy Warhol, Jasper Johns, Donald Judd, Kenny Scharf, Peter Max, Vaclav Vytacil and Jim Gary. Recently he acquired 32 works found in a folder marked "A. Gorky" with one from Arshile Gorky's commercial artist cousin John Hussian. The collection points to Gorky's early student works and private studies (1921-1940's.)



Michelle Ekizian standing behind Broadway cabaret singer and actress Lynne Charnay and art collector Corbet Charles McCarthy

Christmas Concert in Providence Brings Together Different Cultures

PROVIDENCE – The Cultural Committee of the Sts. Sahag & Mesrob Armenian Church presented a Christmas concert "O Holy Night" on Saturday, December 8 in the church sanctuary.

Conductor Konstantin Petrossian, music director of concert, invited Armenian Chorale of Rhode Island, Choir of St. Michael Ukrainian Orthodox Church (Woonsocket, RI) to attend the concert. Before the beginning of the concert Steve Megrđichian, chairman of Parish Council, warmly welcomed the clergy Rev. Shnorh Souin, pastor of Sts. Sahag Mesrob Armenian Church, and Fr. Borislav Kroner, Pastor of the St. Michael Ukrainian Orthodox Church, all the participants of the concert, and the audience.

The concert began with the performance of *Hayr Mer*. The Armenian Chorale of Rhode Island, whose members prepared a unique program of Armenian Christmas songs, performed beautifully. The choir, directed by Petrossian, with piano accompanist Mari Panosian, and flutist David Griego sounded great and was highly appreciated by the public. The surprise of the concert was the singing of a young Larisa Poghosyan song *Erebuni/Yerevan* with an Armenian chorale.

The Junior Choir of the Sts. Sahag & Mesrob Armenian Church performed more Christmas

songs. A real surprise was the performance of a famous singer from New York soprano Anahit Zakaryan, who performed Ave Maria by Schubert, and *Diramayr* by Petrossian. Concert



Larisa Poghosyan in the foreground

continued the choir of the Ukrainian church.

The Ukrainian Choir was familiar to our audience for their beautiful performance at last year's Festival of Sacred Music. And this time, the Ukrainian Choir has prepared an interesting program from Ukrainian Christmas songs.

Under the leadership of Donna Teper Eichorn a cappella Choir beautifully sang chants, and honored the warm welcome of the audience. The concert ended with a joint performance of the Armenian, Ukrainian Choirs and the Junior Choir, who performed *Silent Night* in Ukrainian, Armenian and English. And, also, sang together *Hark, the Herald Angels Sing*, and *Joy to the World*.

In his closing speech, Rev. Souin warmly congratulated, and thanked all the participants and organizers of the magnificent evening, wished happiness, health and creative success in the New Year.

A festive refreshment was organized by the Cultural Committee in Egavian Hall.



The chorus with Donna Teper Eichorn and Conductor Konstantin Petrossian

CALENDAR

FROM PREVIOUS PAGE

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.

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COMMENTARY

Church Politics and Political Church

By Edmond Y. Azadian

Conflict and competition between the spiritual and temporal world are old trends in history and no nation is immune from them. A remarkable chapter in British history is the confrontation between King Henry II and Thomas Becket, the Archbishop of Canterbury, in the 12th century. They were, at the beginning, close friends but had a falling out when the king tried to usurp the church's rights. The king was so infuriated with the resistance that he had the archbishop murdered in the cathedral on December 29, 1170. Later on, the king repented and was absolved by the church. Thomas Becket was declared a saint and remains to this day a symbol of a hero who stood up to a tyrant.

Armenians have their own martyr in the cathedral in the person of Archbishop Ghevont Tourian who was murdered during a Christmas Eve service, in 1933, at the Holy Cross Church in New York.

He was killed by the ARF (Dashnag) party because he refused to bow to their political demands. In the Armenian version of the story, the murderers have not repented to this day and instead of the martyred cleric, the criminals were canonized by the party, although the US justice system had sent them to Sing Sing Penitentiary.

In 1956, the Dashnag Party, with the support of the Lebanese government, took over the Antelias Church, the Catholicosate of Cilicia; they threw out the majority of the outraged clergy and elected one of the docile bishops, Bishop Zareh Payaslyan, as catholicos, contrary to the canons of the Armenian Church, which calls for three bishops to anoint a new catholicos. They had only two: the notorious Archbishop Khoren Paroyan and the wretched Archbishop Ghevont Chebeyan.

After the takeover of the Catholicosate in Lebanon, dissident churches in the US, which were already under the party's control, came under the See of Antelias.

These recollections lead us to the modern days of church-state relations. During the Soviet era, the church had no power whatsoever. But the Soviets had studied the spiritual role of Holy Echmiadzin in the world Armenian community and they used it to their political advantage. In the meantime, the Holy See survived, mostly through the wisdom of the pontiff at the helm, His Holiness Catholicos Vasken I.

In order to be able to use an object or an entity, one must study the nature of that subject fully. An analogy may be found in Picasso's art; the artist deconstructs human figures and reconstructs them through his vision creating a new harmony and wholeness.

Our church in Armenia has been misused (or unused) by the authorities and the people in general, because no one has cared to figure out or account for the degree of lack of knowledge in dealing with the church.

During the previous administration, Holy Echmiadzin and the Catholicos had no other choice but to stand by the authorities. After the Velvet Revolution, that policy became an issue. The extreme wing of the enthusiastic revolutionary crowd thoughtlessly believed that with the departure of the old regime, everything else should go; "New Homeland, New Catholicos" slogan became the mantra of the day and His Holiness Karekin II was even physically harassed by a crowd agitated by the teachings of an atheist regime.

Ever since independence, no serious effort has been exerted for a widescale religious education program nor introducing religious studies on the history of the Armenian Church in the school curricula. The outcome of that negligence certainly manifests itself in the misconceptions about the church's role and consequently, the ignorance with regard to the church and church leaders.

Finally, the new government has realized that it needs a proper venue to deal with the church.

A commission has been set up composed of several deputy ministers, to operate under the aegis of the prime minister's office. We are not certain of the competence of the members appointed to that body and whether they are knowledgeable about church matters or will be learning it on the job. One omission is obvious: that the diaspora's input is ignored at their own peril.

When the Catholicos was physically harassed, the statement by the government officials said there is a separation between the church and state, which only encouraged the attackers. Even if the authorities had to adhere to the principle of separation of church and state, they were still duty-bound to protect the pontiff's physical wellbeing.

As the issue of the Catholicos and church and state relations evolve, it turns out that those statements were not benign nor innocent. At this time, a subtext is emerging to prove how poor in understanding and knowledge those government officials are.

Incidentally, Armenians are not alone in church politics issues, as a parallel drama is being played out in Russia. The Russian Orthodox Church severed its relations with the head of the

Ecumenical Orthodox Church Patriarch Bartholomew in Istanbul, because the Patriarchate there has been reduced to a shell of its former self. In addition, the standoff between Russia and Ukraine has filtered down to the church level as the Ukrainian Orthodox Church has severed its relations with the Orthodox Church in Russia. Just a few days ago, President Petro Proshenko anointed a new patriarch to the Ukrainian Orthodox Church.

The campaigners against the Catholicos in Echmiadzin had been questioning the method and procedures of his election to the throne, while cooking another illegal scheme behind the scenes. The media has discovered there was a plan to invite His Holiness Aram I to Echmiadzin to take over the Mother Church, irrespective of the sentiments of the church leaders and members worldwide.

Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan's political mentor, former President Levon Ter-Petrosian, once committed that illegal move and failed miserably, because he was not aware of the role of the church in the life of the Armenians, despite his scholarly background.

He believed that by moving Catholicos Karekin II of Cilicia to Echmiadzin, where he became Catholicos Karekin I of Echmiadzin, he would solve with a magic wand the division in the Armenian Church. It proved to be a failed policy, because a more robust successor took his place in Antelias, Aram I, who controls the church at the behest of the ARF. Moving Aram I to Echmiadzin will not solve the church division. From the perspective of the dissident church, Antelias was opposing Holy Echmiadzin because the latter was under Soviet control. But with the collapse of the Soviet Union, that argument also collapsed and the truth is revealed by all its nakedness, that the dissident church is a lucrative business venture for the party and an outlet for influence.

The news site 168hours has found through its investigations that the My Step alliance members Alain Simonian, Lena Nazarian and Hratchia Hagopian, had been dispatched to Lebanon to explore the feasibility of the plot. The author of the article explains that the delegates were planning to extend the Velvet Revolution all the way to the church. The author also believes that police inaction when the Catholicos was harassed in Vayk and when campaigners erected tents on the border of the Echmiadzin campus were deliberate acts, encouraged by the authorities.

Following the unsuccessful mission of the delegates, Prime Minister Pashinyan himself approached Catholicos Aram I, when he attended the celebration of the latter's 50th anniversary of priesthood. The Catholicos turned down the prime minister's offer, perhaps remembering the disastrous outcome of Ter-Petrosian's plan.

All these immature and amateurish actions are emblematic of inexperience, particularly in church matters.

We need to be reminded that the sole purpose of the Velvet Revolution was to overthrow the corrupt regime and to restore the legitimacy of the government. Diversions into foreign policy or church matters were never on the table.

A case in point demonstrates the dangerous ignorance of some of the new leaders. It is true that people in Armenia are proud to see young professionals, many without deep pockets, in leadership positions. But they had not bargained for the inexperience of those leaders.

Arayik Harutyunyan, the minister of education, science and culture, recently visited a school in the Ararat province. Coming across a priest in the school named Rev. Ghazar Petrossyan, he ordered the priest to leave the premises immediately, adding that everybody must abide by the law, even the clergy and the minister. The priest left the school frustrated by the behavior of the "uneducated minister of education" and the education minister said that by law, the priest belongs in the church.

In fact, a law enacted on February 22, 2007, calls for the Armenian Apostolic Church to espouse religious programs in public schools.

A second article of the law defines that "the Armenian Apostolic Church is duty-bound to develop religious studies, textbooks and teacher-training programs." Section 4 of the law calls for the Armenian Apostolic Church to participate in the religious education of the public institution programs to that effect."

A good place to begin would be to develop a curriculum of religious education, starting with the history of the Armenian Church.

Teaching the theology or the dogma of the church may raise questions, but the history of the church can be part of academic studies.

The divide between the public and the church is the outcome of decades of atheistic and anti-clerical campaigns. The knowledge of the history and the mission of the church is an urgent need, so that the public may understand the role and importance of the church and avoid taking a negative position.

Once the church history classes are offered at schools,
CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE



COMMENTARY



My Turn

By Harut Sassounian

Turkish Flags Desecrate Two Armenian Schools in the Los Angeles Area

An unknown individual wearing black clothing from head to toe hung dozens of Turkish flags on the gates of two private Armenian schools in the Los Angeles area during the middle of the night last week.

The news spread like wildfire in the Armenian community as this was an unprecedented event. Given the long-standing antagonism between Armenians and Turks emanating from the 1915 Armenian Genocide, it was natural that most Armenians and elected officials attributed the flag incident to one or more Turkish individuals, calling it a hate crime!

The principals of the Holy Martyrs Ferrahian High School in Encino and AGBU Manoogian-Demirdjian School in Canoga Park reported that the cameras on the perimeter of the schools recorded an individual in black clothing hanging Turkish flags on the outside gates of both schools, and in the case of Ferrahian, also on the stairway railings inside the school.

The reaction of the Armenian community was swift. A press conference was immediately organized by the coalition of the Armenian Genocide Committee, attended by dozens of Armenian and non-Armenian media, including several TV networks which covered the flag incident in their nightly news. All of them referred to the Armenian Genocide committed by Ottoman Turkey as the impetus for the vile hate crime on the Armenian schools.

Over a dozen elected officials condemned the attack on the Armenian schools:

- Cong. Frank Pallone
- Cong. Adam Schiff
- Cong. Brad Sherman
- California State Senator Anthony Portantino
- CA State Senator Henry Stern

- CA State Assembly member Laura Friedman,
- CA State Assembly member Jesse Gabriel
- CA State Assembly member Adrin Nazarian (Ferrahian school graduate)
- Los Angeles County Supervisor Kathryn Barger
- Los Angeles Mayor Eric Garcetti
- LA City Attorney Mike Feuer
- LA City Council member Bob Blumenfield
- LA City Council member Paul Koretz
- LA City Council member Paul Krekorian
- LA Unified School District Board member Scott Schmerelson
- LAUSD Police Department
- Los Angeles Police Department

Several of these officials attended last week's press conference and strongly condemned the attack on the schools. Cong. Sherman urged the FBI to investigate the incident as a hate crime. Los Angeles City Council member Paul Koretz described the incident as "the equivalent of putting a Nazi swastika on the side of a Jewish school."

The principals of both schools held assemblies with their students reassuring them that all necessary precautions have been taken for their safety. Ferrahian students organized a march in the vicinity of the school, protesting against the Turkish vandalism, while holding Armenian tricolor flags. The Los Angeles Police Department intensified its patrol of all Armenian schools in the area to prevent the re-occurrence of a similar incident.

Two Ministries of the Republic of Armenia also issued statements condemning the attacks against the Armenian schools in the Los Angeles area. Arayik Harutyunyan, Minister of Education and Science, stated that the hanging of Turkish flags at the two Armenian schools "causes indignation, since such demonstration of hatred in our schools in our days is simply unacceptable and incomprehensible to the civilized world." The Ministry of Diaspora of the Republic of Armenia also condemned the hate crime against the Armenian schools "intended to discredit the Armenian Genocide." The Ministry expressed its solidarity with the Armenian community: "We firmly condemn all actions based on hatred, intolerance, and illegality."

Armen Baibourtian, Consul General of the Republic of Armenia in the Western United States, located in Glendale, also condemned the attack against the two schools: "The Consulate strongly condemns manifestations of hatred directed at the Armenian educational institutions and the entire Armenian Community in Los Angeles, sturdily supporting the common stance of the Los Angeles Armenian Community on

this issue." Also condemning the attack were several Armenian-American organizations. In addition, the Assyrian American Association of Southern California issued a statement calling the vandalism "a disgusting act of bigotry that was perpetrated to incite fear in these students and in the community at large. To both our communities, the Turkish flag represents more than just a flag. It is a symbol of oppression and genocide; a symbol of millions murdered, the children that were torn away from their families, the years of persecution our ancestors endured; and a symbol of outright, systematic denial of a dark history that created wounds still open to this very day."

On the other hand, the Turkish Consulate in Los Angeles called the incident "a defamation campaign against Turkey." The Consulate also posted on its Facebook page a statement by the Association of Turkish Americans of Southern California (ATASC), claiming that "the Turkish American community has not been part of the deliberate provocation staged today in Los Angeles." By describing the vandalism as a "deliberate provocation staged today," ATASC is shamelessly implying that the vile act was committed by Armenians against their own schools!

This is the same baseless accusation made by several Turkish individuals on social media, further enraging the Armenian community. It is not surprising that the Turkish Association and the Turkish Consulate deny the involvement of a Turk in this incident. After all, when the Turkish government denies the genocide of 1.5 million Armenians, it can easily deny a flag incident. Neither the Turkish Association nor the Turkish Consulate is in a position to know that not a single Turk was involved in this attack.

The Los Angeles Armenian community organizations, the Consulate General of Armenia, and the two Ministers of the Republic of Armenia acted swiftly and properly in condemning the attack on the two Armenian schools. The messages of solidarity expressed by over a dozen elected officials have reassured the community that the local, state and federal governments are seriously pursuing the suspects of the vandalism in conjunction with law enforcement officials. Such solidarity would hopefully preempt any further attacks on local Armenian schools and prevent their escalation. Under these circumstances, it would be unwise and unnecessary for Armenians to take matters into their own hands by staging a counter-attack against Turkish targets. Fortunately, law enforcement officials are professionally dealing with the incident. They will make public their findings as soon as they identify the perpetrators.

Why Russia Needs Armenia and Vice Versa

By David Boyajian

Astute observers know that Russia needs Armenia as much as Armenia needs Russia.

Russia's dependence on Armenia explains the Kremlin's extra pressure on Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan and his reformist My Step Alliance following Armenia's democratic Velvet Revolution in 2018.

Armenia is Russia's only ally in the strategically-crucial Caucasus.

Russia would, consequently, lose the entire Caucasus (which includes Georgia and Azerbaijan), if Armenia joined the Western Bloc – defined as America/Europe/NATO (sometimes including Turkey and Israel).

Here's why.

Georgia has favored the Western Bloc since independence, desires NATO membership, and no longer depends on Russian natural gas.

Azeris feel hemmed in by Russia and would like to join NATO. Azerbaijan sends its Caspian Sea oil and gas westward through Georgia, Turkey, and beyond. Another major gas pipeline is planned. Significantly, at Israel's behest top Jewish American organizations quietly support Azerbaijan.

Russia's underbelly

Russia sees its left flank, consisting mainly of NATO and pro-NATO nations, as a major threat.

An even more ominous threat is Russia's Central Asian underbelly: the five Muslim and largely Turkic countries of Turkmenistan,

Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, and Tajikistan.

If Russia loses Armenia, and thus the Caucasus, sooner or later the Western Bloc would penetrate via Turkey straight to the Caspian and create a powerful NATO fleet. Just 150 miles farther lay the vast energy resources of Russia's Turkic/Muslim underbelly, ripe for NATO's picking.

This is essentially pan-Turkism. Russia dreads it while the Western Bloc tacitly supports it. This explains Russia's acute anxiety over what happens in Armenia.

That is, Moscow pressures Yerevan precisely because its security depends on Armenia.

Military allies

Russia has two military bases in Armenia, sells it weapons, and guards its border with

Turkey.

Armenians rightly welcome this as defense against genocidal Turkey.

But – again – Russia's primary motive is thwarting Western Bloc/Turkish domination of the entire Caucasus and, from there, the Caspian, and Russia's Central Asian underbelly.

Armenia must, nevertheless, remain militarily (though not always economically) tied to Russia because for the foreseeable future Armenia cannot find security in the pro-Turkish Western Bloc.

The Pro-Turkic Western Bloc

Even if Yerevan and Ankara normalized relations, and the former joined NATO – huge 'ifs' – Turkey's belligerence and greater weight would still threaten Armenia.

see RUSSIA, page 20

Church Politics and Political Church

FROM PREVIOUS PAGE

perhaps Minister Harutyunyan can become their first beneficiary.

A recent development underscores the role of the Catholicos in Echmiadzin. For eleven years, the Istanbul Armenians have been applying to the Turkish authorities for permission to elect a new patriarch to no avail, as the current patriarch is not fit to serve because of Alzheimer's.

On February 4, Turkey's Foreign Minister Mevlut Çavusoglu received Archbishop Khajag Barsamian, pontifical legate at the Vatican and Western Europe, sent at the behest of Catholicos Karekin II, to discuss matters related to the Armenian Church in Turkey. When the Catholicos at Echmiadzin commands such respect among friends and foes, like the Pope and Mr. Çavusoglu, it is not wise to undermine his authority at home.

The church is an important institution that needs proper handling. Besides, it plays a vital role in the spiritual life of Armenians. It is one of the bridges spanning Armenia and the diaspora.

The Church has been used as a political pawn by many parties but if it is elevated to its venerable position on a pedestal, it can play its own role in the spiritual guidance of the masses and in the process become a stalwart foundation helping the homeland.

LETTERS

Agree with Editorial With One Exception

To the Editor:

A great editorial (Armenia Could Be Left in the Cold with Growing Turkish, Russian Ties, Feb. 2 by Edmond Azadian) with hugely important and critical observations regarding the rapidly approaching Eleventh Hour in Armenia, unfortunately spoiled by one single slip, namely the reference to "the genocidal actions of Serbia" during NATO's destruction of Yugoslavia in the 1990s.

Bernard Nazarian

Edmond Azadian Responds:

My topic was not intended to cover the Balkans. Otherwise, I would have covered the atrocities committed by all ethnic groups including the Croats and particularly the Kosovar gunrunners, who came to power through NATO support usurping sacred territories from Serbia. Today Kosovo has become the European hub of narco-trafficking under the shield of NATO's guns. We may assert with certainty that the geopolitical reasons of the Balkan war were to draw a line in the sand in Europe to thwart Russian expansion.



Why Russia Needs Armenia and Vice Versa

RUSSIA, from page 19

NATO has, after all, long tolerated Turkish aggression in Cyprus, the Aegean Sea, the Middle East, and against its own minorities.

The Western Bloc has, moreover, never offered Armenia any real security, and has implicitly consented to Turkey's ongoing closure of its border with Armenia.

Had Turkey, as planned, invaded Armenia in 1993 during a failed coup in Moscow, the Western Bloc would likely not have stopped the invasion.

The Western Bloc even supports blatantly corrupt Azerbaijan and tolerates its aggression against Artsakh/Armenia.

And, of course, Europe and America provided no significant military aid to Armenians during the 19th and 20th century genocides.

Moreover, Russia has substantial 'soft power' to prevent Armenia's leaving the former's orbit.

More Russian leverage

Russia supplies nearly all Armenia's natural gas and oil and has a significant position in its energy infrastructure. Russia also limits the amount of natural gas that Iran supplies to Armenia.

Armenia's Soviet-era Metsamor nuclear power plant is also controlled by Russia. It generates about 40% of the nation's electricity.

Moscow irrationally worries that its only democratic ally, Armenia, could be a model for unseating Russia's own leaders.

The Kremlin apparently prefers autocratic, corrupt foreign leaders whom it can intimidate because they don't answer to the people in free elections.

Added Russian pressure against post-Velvet

Revolution Armenia has been particularly unhelpful.

Recent Russian pressure

The Kremlin did not congratulate Pashinyan on his party's smashing parliamentary victory in December 2018. It did, however, phone ex-president Robert Kocharyan, sitting in jail on various charges, on his birthday.

The Kremlin has also unfairly sided with corrupt Belarus and Kazakhstan in not allowing an Armenian to complete Armenia's remaining term for the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CTSO) ex-secretary-general, Yuri Khachaturov. Pashinyan's government had indicted Khachaturov over the March 2008 killings of Armenian demonstrators.

Russia apparently will also raise the price of the natural gas it supplies Armenia by 10%.

Now the Kremlin is pushing Armenia to sign a long-term agreement prohibiting the latter from hosting troops from third countries, though Yerevan plans no such deployments.

To alarm Armenia and make it ever more dependent, it's foreseeable – indeed, may have happened in the past – that Moscow would give Baku the green light for a major attack on Artsakh/Armenia. Russia would then use some pretext to refuse to defend Armenia despite their mutual defense treaty. Armenia would be unable to ask another country for military support if it signs the Kremlin's proposed agreement.

PM Pashinyan has promised that Armenia's pro-Russian orientation will not change. He has even vowed allegiance to the CSTO, the ineffectual, Russian-led defense alliance, even though mem-

bers Belarus and Kazakhstan are hostile to Armenia. Armenia will also stay in the EEU, the Russian-led economic bloc of debatable benefit to Armenia.

Armenians don't want to break away from Russia – unless Russia betrays Armenians first.

They simply want to eradicate corruption, benefit from the political/economic freedoms people have in democracies, trade with the West and others (as Russia does in the hundreds of billions), and build a stronger Armenia. Diasporan Armenians feel similarly.

A stronger Armenia whose citizens stay in the country is in Russia's own interests.

But non-too-subtle Russian threats are no way to treat an ally. No country should be bullied into being undemocratic, corrupt, poor, and dependent.

Unfortunately, the two countries often misunderstand the other's perspectives.

Different perspectives

Russia believes that Armenia lacks gratitude for "defending" it and is too distrustful. Though Armenians actually are grateful, they remember Russian betrayals that include giveaways of Armenian territory to Turkey and Azerbaijan in the 20th century.

Russia is alarmed by Armenian interaction with the Western Bloc and China. Armenia feels similarly about massive Russian arms sales to Azerbaijan and military and energy deals with Turkey, the latter two countries being genocidal enemies of Armenians.

Russia feels that Armenia should have a more positive view of Russians. Armenia generally does

regard Russians well. But polls reveal that many Russians view Armenians negatively. Moreover, Armenians rarely hear Russian leaders tell their citizens about Armenia's importance and the two peoples' commonalities.

Due to geography and its history of empire, Moscow has often manipulated other ethno-national groups or set them against each other. While Russia sees this as natural, Armenians wonder whether Russia can distinguish between its proven enemies and a friend and ally such as Armenia.

Russia controls and limits the natural gas that Armenia imports from Iran in order to profit from selling Russian gas to Armenia (via hostile Georgia) and to make Armenia more dependent and compliant. Armenia correctly believes this endangers its national security.

Perhaps because it's far larger and brawnier, Russia too often looks down on Armenia. Armenians regard this as overbearing and ill-mannered.

With effort, though, every contrasting perspective can probably be reconciled.

Armenia should always remember, however, its vital importance to Russia.

There is no turning back from the path of self-reliance that Armenia is walking. This must be voiced in the most friendly way to Russia.

And the two countries must always fully and publicly air their differing perspectives for both their sakes.

(David Boyajian is a freelance journalist.

Many of his articles can be found at Armeniapedia.org/wiki/David_Boyajian.)

Diaspora Survey Provides Snapshot of Armenians in 21st Century

LONDON – More than 1,000 Armenians in four cities in the Diaspora took part in a first-ever survey led by a team of academics, researchers and experts. This pilot phase of an ongoing larger project aims to provide a snapshot of the contemporary diaspora.

The Armenian Diaspora Survey (ADS) is a new initiative launched and funded by the Armenian Communities Department of the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation and carried out under the auspices of the Armenian Institute in London.

"We have initiated this study to fill a critical gap in our knowledge of the Diaspora, to have evidence-based understanding of the multilayered and diverse aspects of diasporic life in our times," said Dr. Razmik Panossian, director of the Gulbenkian Foundation's Armenian Communities Department.

In May and June 2018 four teams conducted the survey and interviews in Boston, Cairo, Marseille and Pasadena. These cities were chosen to provide variety for the initial phase, as well as for their community history and characteristics. A set of other cities are in the process of selection for survey this year.

"We asked people about their thoughts on identity and related issues of belonging as Armenians and as citizens of different states," explained Dr. Susan Pattie, who led the pilot project. An international advisory committee, a dedicated team and 12 field work researchers were involved in the project, which took about 18 months to develop the methodology, research tools, fieldwork preparations, survey administration and data processing.

For institutional and community leaders in the Diaspora, as well as policy-makers in Armenia, ADS provides valuable research-based information as to what the issues and thinking in the Armenian communities are today and how to serve their needs.

The data and the knowledge gained from the survey will be available to scholars as a resource for further research.

Some initial findings stand out in the first stage of the research. These are only preliminary results from the pilot phase of the survey in four cities.

The overwhelming majority of the respondents consider the continuation of the Armenian diaspora as important and meaningful space – 94 percent marked as "fairly"

to "very" important. Along these lines, 84 percent of respondents felt it was important to help diaspora communities in the Middle East. This is significant as traditionally the Genocide and the Republic of Armenia have been the focus of funding, study or discourse in the Diaspora. The respondents showed interest in all of these, but considered the diaspora equally important. Armenia is "fairly" and "very" important to 90 percent of respondents and 75 percent have visited the country at least once, while 93 percent intend to visit.

Respondents said that Armenian language, history and religion were important to themselves and to Armenian identity generally – but variations appeared between the cities and further questions revealed broad variations in practice.

Even as ADS respondents in the four cities seem to be more active than perhaps a broader population of Armenians, 73 percent claimed no active affiliation with any Armenian political organization. However a majority said they were active in other Armenian organizations such as the AGBU, Hamazkain and others.

Christianity is considered an important part of Armenian identity – for Apostolic, Evangelical and Catholic respondents across the four communities. While only 14-16 percent attended church weekly or monthly, 70 percent felt it is important to be married in an Armenian church. Some 43 percent of respondents felt that women should be ordained in Armenian churches, while 30 percent had no opinion on the matter.

"Armenians in each community expressed the need to be listened to. They welcomed the opportunity to discuss their experiences, expectations and hopes as individuals and as Armenians," explained Dr. Pattie. Many ways of being Armenian were reflected in the responses and for those who took part. "Expressing this diversity within a common bond was most important," Pattie added.

The survey will continue in 2019 with a new set of selected cities. In the meantime, the results of the pilot survey are being studied and analyzed, which will be shared with the public and will be made easily accessible in the coming months. Further details are on ADS website: www.armeniandiasporasurvey.com.

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