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Appeals Court in Armenia Rejects Sergio Nahabedian's Suit against ADL

YEREVAN (*Azg*) – On February 20, the Court of Appeals of the Republic of Armenia rejected an appeal by Sergio Nahabedian of Argentina against the Democratic Liberal Party (ADL) of Armenia. Nahabedian, representing himself as the “Chairman of the Democratic Liberal Party,” had submitted a protest to the court demanding that the name, coat of arms and seal of the Democratic Liberal Party, which are recorded in the bylaws of the party and ratified by the appropriate governmental body of the



Republic of Armenia, be changed.

The same individual in February 2018 had applied to a court of general jurisdiction of the city of Yerevan, which by its decision of December 13, 2018 completely rejected the plaintiff's case. The rejection of the plaintiff by the Appeals Court confirms explicitly that the claims of the plaintiff and his “executive” to be legal heirs of the ADL founded in Constantinople in 1921 are baseless attempts to change the bylaws of the party which have been legally registered in Armenia.

Turkey's Armenian Church Leader Patriarch Mutafyan Dies

ISTANBUL (Armenpress, AP) – Patriarch Mesrob II, the leader of the Armenian Apostolic Christians in Turkey, died on March 8. He was 62.

Turkey's state-run Anadolu Agency said Mesrob Mutafyan, the 84th Armenian Patriarch of Constantinople, died Friday at Istanbul's Armenian Surp Pirgic hospital where he was being cared for. He had been incapacitated since 2008 because of early onset of dementia.

Mesrob was elected Patriarch in 1998, replacing the late Karekin II. He withdrew from his duties in 2008 and Archbishop Aram Atesyan was appointed as the acting patriarch for the Armenian community which numbers an estimated 70,000.

Mutafyan graduated from the American High School in Kornwestheim near Stuttgart in Germany. From 1974 to 1979, he studied philosophy and sociology

in Memphis, Tenn.

On May 13, 1979, he was ordained to priesthood and was commissioned pastor of Kinalada, one of the Prince Islands in the Sea of Marmara in Istanbul. Between 1979 and 1981, he continued his theological studies in Jerusalem.

On September 21, 1986, Mesrob Mutafyan was elevated to the rank of a Bishop in Echmiadzin, Armenia. From 1982 to 1990, he coordinated the ecumenical relationships of the Patriarchate. He attended the Pontifical University of St. Thomas Aquinas (Angelicum) in Rome, Italy in 1988-1989.

see MUTAFYAN, page 5



Archbishop Mesrob Mutafyan

UK Armenian Council Holds Reception for New Armenian Ambassador Kirakossian

LONDON – A reception in honor of Arman Kirakossian, the newly appointed ambassador of the Republic of Armenia to the Court of St. James, organized by the Armenian Community Council of the United Kingdom (ACC), took place on March 7, at the Medical Society of London, Lettsom House.

Over 100 dignitaries representing grass-roots organizations and the Armenian Church attended the reception. In his opening speech, Chairman of the ACC Arman Abrahamian welcomed the ambassador and introduced him to the community pledging support and cooperation.

see AMBASSADOR, page 20



Ambassador Arman Kirakossian with Dr. Hratch Kouyoumjian vice-chair of the Armenian Community Council of the UK



Marc Davie Baer (left) and Umit Kurt

Life After Babylon

HANNOVER, Germany – People of Jewish or Armenian heritage know that they share a painful history, one that deprived them of statehood and forced them into life in the diaspora over centuries.

In view of this shared, but differentiated experience, the European Center for Jewish Music (EZJM) and the German-Armenian Society (DAG) joined to organized a symposium at the Cultural Center in Hannover, from February 24-27.

By Muriel Mirak-Weissbach
Special to the Mirror-Spectator

Titled “We Will Live After Babylon: Armenian and Jewish Historical Experience between Expulsion, Exile and Destruction,” the three-day conference presented a vast spectrum, highlighting the diversity as well as the similarities in their historical experience. Scholars from all over the world joined in panels to exchange views on diaspora and minority issues, the Genocide and Holocaust as a breach of civilization, their commemoration and reception, and the relationship between the two communities today.

see BABYLON, page 4

NEWS IN BRIEF

Putin, Pashinyan Spokespersons Meet in Russia

MOSCOW (Armenpress) – Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan's spokesperson Vladimir Karapetyan in Moscow on a working visit, met with President Vladimir Putin's spokesperson Dmitry Peskov, according to the embassy. Armenia's Ambassador to Russia Vardan Toghanyan also took part in the meeting.

During the meeting various issues regarding cooperation between the press services of the two sides were discussed. Particularly, the sides addressed the partnership between the press services of the Armenian PM's office, the Kremlin and the Russian government, and the coverage of events taking place within the framework of the Armenian-Russian relations.

Karapetyan and Peskov agreed to hold regular consultative meetings that will contribute to exchange of experience and strengthening of ties in the news sectors. On the same day, Karapetyan also met with editors of leading Russian news media.

New US Ambassador Meets with Government Officials

YEREVAN (Armenpress) – Minister of Nature Protection Erik Grigoryan on March 11 had a meeting with new US Ambassador to Armenia Lynne Tracy.

The minister welcomed the delegation led by the ambassador and congratulated Tracy on assuming her diplomatic mission in Armenia. Grigoryan introduced the ministry's future visions on solving environmental issues and expressed confidence that the bilateral cooperation will further expand by involving new areas.

In her turn the US Ambassador thanked for the reception and wishes. She reaffirmed her country's readiness to continue and expand the partnership for solving environmental issues.

She also met with Deputy Prime Minister Mher Grigoryan, who congratulated Tracy on assuming the position of the ambassador. He noted that the Republic of Armenia attaches great importance to the future deepening and development of relations between Armenia and the US.

Thanking him for the reception, Tracy said, “Mr. Grigoryan, I am confident that by today's meeting with you, a series of straightforward, open and effective dialogue that will allow Armenia and the United States to build stronger ties of partnership and cooperation is launched”.

During the meeting the sides exchanged views on the opportunities of creating favorable investment environment in Armenia and prospects for the development of the Armenian-US cooperation.

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ARMENIA

News From Armenia

President, Prime Minister, Send Letters of Condolence to Ethiopian Leader

YEREVAN (Armenpress) – President of Armenia Armen Sarkissian sent a condolence message to Sahle-Work Zewde, President of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia on the occasion of the airplane crash at the airport of Addis Ababa.

“I learned about the crash of the plane flying from Addis Ababa to Nairobi on March 10 with great sorrow. At this difficult moment I express my deepest condolences and sympathies and wish the families and friends of the victims strength and patience.”

Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan also sent a letter of condolence.

“I extend my deepest condolences and support to the families and relatives of all the victims, wishing patience, strength for overcoming this tragedy,” he said.

The Boeing 737 en route from Ethiopia’s capital of Addis Ababa to Kenya’s Nairobi crashed on Sunday morning near Debre Zeit in central Ethiopia. The plane lost contact six minutes after takeoff, the airline said. There were 149 passengers and 8 crewmembers on board the plane.

There are no survivors in the crash.

March 11 was declared a mourning day in Ethiopia.

Armenian Sapper Wounded In Syria

YEREVAN (RFE/RL) – One of the Armenian demining officers recently deployed to Syria has been seriously wounded while clearing landmines near Aleppo, officials reported on March 8.

According to Armenia’s Center for Humanitarian Demining and Expertise (CHDE), the sapper (or deminer) hit an improvised explosive device and was rushed to hospital on Thursday.

“According to our information, his right foot was amputated,” Nazeli Elbakian, a spokeswoman for the center overseen by the Armenian Defense Ministry, said.

“Doctors now describe his condition as stable. He will be transported to Armenia,” said Elbakian. She refused to identify the injured officer.

The officer was among 83 Armenian army medics, sappers and other servicemen who were sent to Syria on February 8 in what the Armenian military described as a humanitarian mission coordinated with Russia.

Russian troops stationed in Syria were tasked with protecting the small Armenian contingent and providing it with logistical assistance.

The United States, which has been highly critical of the Russian military presence in Syria, criticized the Armenian deployment on February 13.

“We do not support any engagement with Syrian military forces, whether that engagement is to provide assistance to civilians or is military in nature,” the U.S. State Department said in a statement. “Nor do we support any cooperation between Armenia and Russia for this mission.”

Armenian officials downplayed the criticism, saying that U.S.-Armenian relations will not deteriorate because of it.

In a February 8, the Defense Ministry in Yerevan cited “the severe humanitarian situation” in Aleppo and “written requests from the Syrian side.” It also pointed to the existence of an Armenian community in Syria.

Artsakh Soldier Killed By Fellow Officer

STEPANAKERT (news.am) – A soldier has been arrested in Nagorno-Karabakh on suspicion of killing a fellow soldier on March 12.

Earlier, military officials in the Nagorno-Karabakh had reported that the young conscript, Karen Karapetyan, had sustained a fatal gunshot wound at an outpost in the northeastern direction of the line of contact with Azerbaijan.



Armenia’s Ambassador to the Holy See Karen Nazaryan presents his credentials to Pope Francis.

Ambassador to Vatican Nazaryan Meets with Pope

VATICAN CITY (Armenpress) – Armenia’s Ambassador to the Holy See Karen Nazaryan on March 9 presented his credentials to Pope Francis, the Armenian Foreign Ministry reported.

During the meeting, Nazaryan on behalf of the citizens and new leadership of Armenia, conveyed warm greetings to the Pope, stating that Armenia always remembers his historic visit. He expressed his gratitude for the principled stance of Pope Francis regarding the recognition of the Armenian Genocide.

Nazaryan used the chance to say that

proclaiming St. Gregory of Narek as Doctor of the Church further strengthened the bridge of unity and faith encouraging and supporting all Armenians living in Armenia and abroad. He expressed his willingness to make all efforts to ensure the constant expansion of inter-state ties in different sectors.

Pope Francis welcomed the Armenian authorities’ plan to further develop the bilateral ties with the Holy See. He wished the new ambassador a productive diplomatic mission to further strengthen the ties between the two

states and addressed his wishes to the citizens of Armenia, Cathlicos of All Armenians and the country’s political leadership.

On the same day, Nazaryan had a private meeting with Secretary of State of the Holy See, Cardinal Pietro Parolin during which they discussed the bilateral agenda and mutual partnership, as well as touched upon the Nagorno Karabakh conflict settlement process and the regional developments.

Parolin conveyed his warm greetings to Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan.

Mediators Say ‘Reducing Tensions’ Key Ahead of Armenian-Azerbaijani Summit

YEREVAN (RFE/RL) – International mediators brokering a peaceful solution to the protracted Nagorno-Karabakh conflict have urged the leaders of Armenia and Azerbaijan to refrain from statements and actions “suggesting significant changes to the situation on the ground” ahead of their summit talks expected soon.

In a statement published on the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe’s (OSCE) official website on March 10, co-chairs of the Minsk Group Igor Popov, of Russia, Stephane Visconti, of France, and Andrew Schofer, of the United States, welcomed the commitment of Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan and Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev to meet soon under the auspices of the co-chairs.

The three said that working closely with the two countries’ foreign ministers, they “have been making preparations for this important leaders’ meeting,” which will be the first direct contact between Pashinyan and Aliyev conducted under the Minsk Group auspices.

The co-chairs stressed the importance of “maintaining an environment conducive to productive discussions and continue to assess positively the recent lack of casualties on the front lines.”

“The Co-Chairs also welcome some initial steps being taken in the region to prepare the populations for peace and encourage the sides to intensify

such efforts. At the same time, the Co-Chairs reiterate the critical importance of reducing tensions and minimizing inflammatory rhetoric. In this context, the Co-Chairs urge the sides to refrain from statements and actions suggesting significant changes to the situation on the ground, prejudging the outcome of or setting conditions for future talks, demanding unilateral changes to the format without agreement of the other party, or indicating readiness to renew active hostilities,” the mediating troika said.

Pashinyan and Aliyev traded accusations in their public statements earlier this month just days after the U.S., Russian and French mediators co-chairing the OSCE Minsk Group announced that the two leaders had agreed to meet soon for further talks.

Speaking in parliament on March 6, the Armenian prime minister dismissed Baku’s offers to grant Karabakh a high degree of autonomy, insisting that “the people of Nagorno-Karabakh have a right to self-determination and must be able to exercise that right.” The Azerbaijani leader claimed, for his part, the day before that “Yerevan is not showing a serious desire to conduct substantive negotiations and is trying to impede a Karabakh settlement by all means.”

Referring to “some contradictory recent public statements on the substance of the Minsk Group process,” the Co-Chairs reiterated that “a fair and lasting settlement must be based on the core principles of the Helsinki

Final Act, including in particular the non-use or threat of force, territorial integrity, and the equal rights and self-determination of peoples.”

“It also should embrace additional elements as proposed by the Presidents of the Co-Chair countries in 2009-2012, including: return of the territories surrounding Nagorno-Karabakh to Azerbaijani control; an interim status for Nagorno-Karabakh providing guarantees for security and self-governance; a corridor linking Armenia to Nagorno-Karabakh; future determination of the final legal status of Nagorno-Karabakh through a legally binding expression of will; the right of all internally displaced persons and refugees to return to their former places of residence; and international security guarantees that would include a peacekeeping operation.”

In their statement the Co-Chairs further stressed their view that “these principles and elements must be the foundation of any fair and lasting settlement to the conflict and should be conceived as an integrated whole.”

“Any attempt to put some principles or elements over others would make it impossible to achieve a balanced solution,” the mediators said.

“The co-chairs are prepared to meet with the leaders and foreign ministers of Armenia and Azerbaijan at any time, and call on the leaders to resume negotiations in good faith at the earliest opportunity,” Popov, Visconti and Schofer emphasized in their joint statement.



ARMENIA

Attack on Critical Blogger Investigated

YEREVAN (RFE/RL) — Law-enforcement authorities on Monday, March 4, pledged to investigate an overnight attack on a video blogger highly critical of Armenia's government, which was reportedly carried out by a youth group at loggerheads with him.

The blogger, Narek Malyan, was confronted outside his home in downtown Yerevan by members of the group called Restart shortly after midnight. A YouTube video of the incident showed the Restart leader, Davit Petrosyan, and several other men forcibly carrying Malyan along an adjacent street before being stopped by police officers.

Petrosyan posted the video on his Facebook page, writing: "There are moments in life when you can't choose between the good and the bad and just have to listen to your conscience."

In a statement, Restart said it wanted to throw Malyan into a trash container. Petrosyan likewise explained that he and his comrades tried "put the garbage in its place" in response to what he called Malyan's offensive and slanderous statements about their activities.

Malyan, Petrosyan, and four other men were

detained on the spot but set free a few hours later. The Armenian police said afterwards that they are "preparing materials" for an inquiry.

The Office of the Prosecutor-General reported later on Monday that it has opened a formal criminal case in connection with the incident. It said the investigation will be conducted under an article of the Criminal Code dealing with "hooliganism."

Malyan, who worked until last year as an adviser to former police chief Vladimir Gasparyan, described the assault as a "kidnaping attempt" and blamed the Armenian branch of US philanthropist George Soros's Open Society Foundations (OSF) for it. He said that Restart is financed by the OSF. The latter did not immediately react to the accusation.

Malyan linked the incident to his vocal efforts to prevent the sacking of the long-serving rector of Yerevan State University (YSU), Aram Simonyn, which is sought by the government. The former police official last week staged a lone protest at a meeting of YSU's supervisory board that narrowly failed to fire Simonian.

Restart has on the contrary been campaigning for the controversial rector's ouster since last year's "velvet revolution" in Armenia. The youth group comprising current and former YSU stu-

dents actively participated in the revolution.

By contrast, Malyan has been very scathing about the dramatic regime change in the country. He regularly attacks Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan and other government officials and pours scorn on their supporters on his Facebook page.

Incidentally, Pashinyan was quick to condemn the assault. "Any attempt to solve issues in Armenia through violence must meet with a tough legal reaction," he said in a statement. "In the New Armenia all those who follow the logic of violence, deceit and spread of lies act against Armenia, against democracy and against the people."

The Armenian branch of US billionaire George Soros's Open Society Foundations (OSF) on Tuesday condemned a violent attack on an Armenian anti-government blogger while strongly denying responsibility for it.

OSF-Armenia also decried broader "false allegations" about its activities in the country made by individuals and groups critical of the current Armenian government.

The OSF-Armenia director, Larisa Minasyan, confirmed that Restart recently received a \$20,000 grant from her organization. But she insisted that the funding was only meant to sup-

port the group's stated efforts to make the Yerevan State University (YSU) administration more accountable to students. OSF therefore cannot bear responsibility for, let alone order, any other actions taken by Restart, said Minasyan.

Restart has been campaigning for the dismissal of YSU's long-serving rector, Aram Simonyan, since last year's "velvet revolution" in Armenia in which its members actively participated. By contrast, Malyan, has vocally opposed Simonian's sacking and accused the rector's foes of acting on Soros's orders.

Minasyan dismissed those allegations, insisting that her organization is not involved in the government-backed efforts to oust the YSU chief.

"Any suggestion that Open Society Foundations-Armenia aims to weaken Yerevan State University or undermine Rector Aram Simonian are ludicrous, offensive, and untrue," read a separate statement issued by OSF-Armenia.

The statement also condemned the attack on Malyan, while saying that it resulted from "false allegations about our work and the work of our grantees." "We condemn any personal attack of this kind as well as those who promote falsehoods in an attempt to divide us," it said.

Few Women In Armenian Government

YEREVAN (RFE/RL) — Armenia's new leadership has had trouble recruiting women for high-ranking state posts, a senior lawmaker said on Friday, March 8, commenting on a continuing lack of female presence in the government.

Armenian women have traditionally held few ministerial or other senior positions in the executive branch. This situation has hardly changed since last year's Velvet Revolution that brought younger and more progressive individuals to power.

Only one member of Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan's current cabinet, Labor and Social Affairs Minister Zaruhi Batoyan, is a woman. Pashinyan's first cabinet formed in May 2018 had two female ministers. One of them, Lilit Makunts, now leads the parliamentary group of the ruling My Step alliance.

Speaking on International Women's Day, a public holiday in Armenia, Makunts insisted that the new authorities have tried hard to appoint more women to run ministries but have so far been thwarted by conservative public attitudes.

"Nothing works out artificially," she told reporters. "If you force a person to do things she doesn't want to do, the quality of that work will suffer and we won't get what we want to see in the social sense."

"There are many [female] professionals. It's just that social and political pressure [on them] is extremely strong," said Makunts, who served as culture minister until January. Many women refuse to take up senior positions at the urging of their husbands and other relatives, she explained.

"Especially in the regions, it's quite hard to find women familiar with local problems for leadership positions," said Tsovinart Vartanian, another female parliamentarian representing My Step.

Women make up almost one-quarter of Armenia's 132-member parliament elected in December, a record-high percentage in the country's post-Soviet history. Twenty-three of the 32 female deputies are affiliated with Pashinyan's bloc. One of them, the 25-year-old Sona Ghazarian, is the youngest member of the National Assembly.

Makunts, 35, said that attracting more women to politics in the socially conservative country has proved just as difficult.

Makunts made clear that the authorities will continue to seek greater female presence in the higher echelons of political and administrative power.

NATO Caucasus Special Rep. Visits Armenia

YEREVAN (Armenpress) — Foreign Minister of Armenia Zohrab Mnatsakanyan received on March 11 James Appathurai, NATO Secretary General's Special Representative for the Caucasus and Central Asia.

Mnatsakanyan saluted the visit of the NATO official in the sidelines of the "NATO week" in Armenia. The two reaffirmed their commitment for cooperation in the sidelines of the Armenia-NATO Individual Partnership Action Plan (IPAP).

The two sides praised the approval of the National Action Plan 2019-2021 for the implementation of the provisions of the UN Security Council resolution 1325 "Women, Peace and Security" by the Government of Armenia.

Appathurai welcomed Armenia's active participation and contribution to the establishment of international peace, noting that such actions contribute to the enhancement of Armenia's reputation as an important participant of international security.

At the request of Appathurai, Mnatsakanyan presented the foreign policy priorities of

Armenia, the approaches and principled position of the Armenian side in the peaceful settlement of the Karabakh conflict.

At a press conference on March 11, Appathurai responded to several questions. When asked if NATO has taken a position on Armenia sending a humanitarian delegation to Syria, he responded: "NATO has no official position on this issue. We discussed that issue the Foreign and Defense Ministers of Armenia. I listened to their argumentation over the situation. We clearly understand the political and humanitarian incentives of Armenia to lend a helping hand to that community."

A group consisting of humanitarian deminers, doctors and specialists ensuring their safety, a total of 83 people, departed from Armenia for Syria's Aleppo on February 8 aimed at providing professional humanitarian support to the locals.

Later President of Armenia Armen Sarkissian received Appathurai, who again stressed that Armenia is a firm and reliable partner of the NATO.



James Appathurai, NATO Secretary General's Special Representative for the Caucasus and Central Asia, left, with Foreign Minister of Armenia Zohrab Mnatsakanyan

111 From Around the World Become Aurora Goodwill Ambassadors

YEREVAN — The Aurora Forum announced this week that 111 person from political, academic, entertainment, and business sectors around the world have joined the Aurora Forum as Goodwill Ambassadors.

Aurora Forum Co-Founders Noubar Afeyan, Vartan Gregorian, and Ruben Vardanyan welcome the Goodwill Ambassadors as luminaries of Aurora's vision to promote innovative and effective approaches to advancing positive social change in Armenia and beyond.

The inaugural Aurora Forum to be held in Armenia, October 14-21, will bring together thought-leaders and change-makers from Armenia and across the world to facilitate discussions, share knowledge, and experience educational and cultural activities in the sectors spanning from health to technology to education to arts to ecology to humanitarianism. The Aurora Forum is made possible with the cooperation of various organizations in Armenia and globally.

"We are proud to have established a network of people who have made real impact on the world in their particular field," said Vartan Gregorian. "The role of the Goodwill

Ambassadors is crucial in making the Aurora Forum a platform to inspire the next generation to take the leap toward achieving meaningful, sometimes disruptive, change."

The 2019 Aurora Forum coincides with a special moment in Armenia's history. Last year's non-violent transition of political power put Armenia in a global spotlight by demonstrating how a nation with an educated workforce and commitment to peaceful means can push for a national change. Armenia's "Velvet Revolution," combined with its location at the crossroads between East and West and its rich cultural heritage led to The Economist's designation of Armenia—one of the world's smallest countries in landmass and population—as the Country of the Year in 2018. The Aurora Forum will harness this momentum to highlight the possibilities of social change and the solutions that can be developed by combining national and international efforts and resources to advance humanity.

"There is no greater time to convene and celebrate the disruptors, the thinkers and the innovators in Armenia and across the world," said Armen Orujyan, the CEO of the Foundation for Armenian Science and

Technology (FAST). "We truly believe the expertise and professional achievements of the Goodwill Ambassadors will help make the Forum a success and position Armenia as a hub for scientific, technological and socio-economic development in the region. Aurora Forum will serve as the epicenter of creativeness and innovation assembling some of the greatest thought-leaders and luminaries in science and technology from all over the globe."

The list includes writer Peter Balakian, philanthropist Nicholas Aznavour and chess grandmaster Levon Aronian.

The Goodwill Ambassadors were announced on March 10, marking the fourth anniversary of the founding of the Aurora Humanitarian Initiative - the founder of the Aurora Forum along with IDEa Foundation, FAST, Scholae Mundi Global Educational Platform, UWC Dilijan International College, and Ameriabank. The October 2019 Aurora Forum's events in Armenia will consist of various activities presented by each of these organizations.

To see the full list visit <https://auroraprizo.com/en/aurora/detail/14024/111-prominent-individuals-from-around-the-world-became-aurora-forum-goodwill-ambassadors>



INTERNATIONAL

International News

Joint Meeting Held Between Armenian, Artsakh Leaders

STEPANAKERT (Mediamax) – “Artsakh is ready to continue its constructive contribution to establishment of lasting and durable peace in the region,” President of Artsakh Bako Sahakyan said on Monday at the joint session of the National Security Councils of Armenia and Artsakh in Stepanakert.

“This is the first time we discuss the most important, primary matters for our two republics, our homeland. We have highlighted the importance of a national agenda and I am absolutely certain that our joint session will facilitate creation of that agenda. The priorities listed in that agenda are unchanged. I believe we all agree that the international recognition of the Republic of Artsakh has always been and will remain the priority,” said Sahakyan.

The attendees reiterated that ensuring security and status of Artsakh is the exclusive priority for both Armenian states. They also attached importance to formation of the atmosphere of peace, introduction of risk reduction and incident prevention mechanisms and confidence-building measures, as it was agreed at the summit of Dushanbe and prior to it during those in Vienna and St. Petersburg.

Iran and Russia Discuss Connecting Power Grids Across South Caucasus

YEREVAN (Arka) – Iranian Energy Minister Reza Ardakanian discussed with his Russian counterpart Alexander Novak by telephone the prospect of connecting the two countries’ power grids through the territory of Azerbaijan, Georgia or Armenia, Russian news agency TASS reported on Tuesday, March 12, referring to the official website of the Ministry of Energy of Iran.

The ministers agreed also to hold a three-day meeting of the bilateral intergovernmental commission in Tehran and Isfahan, which is scheduled for June 16. The parties also decided to organize a conference on the economic and trade cooperation between Iran and the North Caucasus on May 15 in the Iranian capital.

In February, the Russian ambassador to Iran, Levan Jagaryan said the US sanctions would not affect the cooperation between Russia and Iran in the energy sector and the implementation of the signed contracts.

First of all, it concerns the construction of four power units of the Sirik thermal power plant by the Russian side in the Iranian province of Hormozgan. According to him, Moscow is satisfied with the dynamics of development of energy cooperation between the countries.

Baku Starts Military Exercise Ahead of Planned Talks

BAKU(RFE/RL) – Azerbaijan has launched large-scale military maneuvers ahead of an expected first meeting between President Ilham Aliyev and new Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan.

Azerbaijan’s Defense Ministry said on March 11 that up to 10,000 troops, 500 tanks, 300 missile systems, aircraft, and other military equipment will take part in the five-day exercises.

Armenia’s Foreign Ministry said the drills “do not contribute to the creation of an environment conducive to peace.”

No date has been decided yet for the meeting between Pashinyan and Aliyev.

Internationally mediated negotiations helped forge a cease-fire in the region, which is not always honored, but have failed to produce a lasting settlement of the conflict.

James Appathurai, the NATO secretary-general’s special representative for the Caucasus and Central Asia, welcomed Armenia’s new approach toward easing tensions with Azerbaijan over the disputed region.

“We are encouraged by the fact that the new government is making new efforts in the political process,” Appathurai said at a news conference in Yerevan on March 11.

Life After Babylon

BABYLON, from page 1

Between Annihilation, Dispersion and Revival

Following welcoming remarks on behalf of the sponsoring organizations by Prof. Sarah Ross (EZJM) and Dr. Raffi Kantian (DAG), historian Dan Diner from the Hebrew University in Jerusalem delivered the keynote on Imperial Remnants: Minority, Nation-State and Genocide, which laid out the conceptual parameters for the proceedings.

The diaspora was at the center of the symposium, and to present the Armenian experience, renowned historian Richard Hovannisian from UCLA had been invited. In his broad overview, he presented the consequences of the Armenian genocide and its effects on life in the diaspora, on the one hand, and the impact on those who lived in Soviet Armenia, on the other. Following irreparable destruction of the Armenian way of life in most of their former territories, the Armenians in the diaspora sought to maintain their collective identities in the community, and nurtured hopes of returning to the homeland one day. They did gradually heal economically and socially, despite the toll taken by assimilation. With the collapse of the Soviet Union, the perspective emerged for an independent Armenian state in 1991, which offered the opportunity for an exceptional national revival, if the opportunity was properly utilized and developed.

How the trauma of genocide affected the identity of survivors was the subject of a paper by Harutyun Marutyan. Traumatized survivors often saw themselves as victims, “slaughtered sheep,” an identity which intellectuals sought to overcome. This led to the Knesset’s changing the memorial day into a date that honors heroes as well; in the Armenian case, the reference is still to genocide victims. Yet, the speaker noted, it was the memory of the genocide that instigated the struggle for democratic progress during the 1988-1990 revolution and led to the creation of the Third Republic.

And through the recent Velvet Revolution, the process of reshaping the culture of remembrance has progressed further. This was the subject of research presented by Öndercan Muti from the Humboldt University of Berlin. In a series of interviews with young Armenians (aged 19-35) in Turkey, Armenia, Lebanon, Germany and France in 2015, the research team asked how family memory had been transmitted and how the genocide affected their daily lives and political attitudes, including the way in which they commemorated the genocide. Muti reflected on the process through which the Velvet Revolution of 2018 has changed the political order and cultural and social norms. This has been reflected in the mode of commemoration and the critique by young Armenians of an identity based on victimhood.

Other aspects of the theme of identity among survivors came to light in talks by Daniel Gerson from the University of Bern, and David Leupold from the Humboldt University in Berlin. Gerson examined the experience of Holocaust survivors in Switzerland, in the context of a travelling exhibition on the subject which had met with controversy, regarding the implications of the appellation, “Swiss Holocaust Survivors.” Leupold discussed the limits of Turkey’s policy of memory regarding the genocide, on the basis of a study of local memory among the Kurdish

minority in Southeastern Turkey. He argued that local memory, in the absence of recognition on a state level, may favor the emergence of “mnemonic cells of resistance,” against denialist state narratives.

Learning from the Language of Music

One most intriguing facet of the proceedings related to the role of music. Philip V. Bohlman, from the University of Chicago and the Hannover College for Music, Drama and Media, turned to music in an effort to grasp the reasons why Jewish and Armenian histories have unfolded as parallel courses. To understand what he calls the “architecture of expulsion, the geography of exile and the flight from destruction,” he listened very closely to the two musical traditions together, examining five historical moments cohabited by the two cultures. He began with biblical texts, the confluence of Jewish and Christian metaphor, then moved to the music of the diaspora and into the modern era, before reaching the post-modern moment in the current century.

A researcher from the same university, Miranda Crowds spoke on the role of collective memory in recent popular music genres in Israel, drawing on her original research. She focused on pieces dealing with the Jewish experience, with particular stress on the role of collective memory in the construction of group identity and cohesion. Taking examples from contemporary Jewish popular music, she showed how performers draw on and illustrate simultaneous states of dispossession and collective memory. She applied her term “converging dispossessions” to describe the temporary unification brought about in the process of music-making by the evocation of collective memories and collective experiences of trauma.

Musicologist Dorit Klebe examined the influences of Armenian musical elements on Ottoman-Turkish urban and courtly songs. The subject of her specific investigation was a series of early sound documents in the Aleppo province. These wax cylinder recordings contain songs sung by a 12-year-old Armenian boy in Turkish and were made in Aleppo, which was characterized by a diversity of ethnic and religious minorities, among them Armenian and Greek Christians, and Oriental and Sephardic Jews. Thus these recordings, and others she investigated, provide material to analyze the different cultural components of the music, as to repertoire and compositional method. Klebe demonstrated some aspects of the multi-ethnic cultural environment and possible influences of specific elements of Armenian music, the “tetrachord system” as well as performance parameters such as vocal style and intonation.

As Judith Cohen, a Canadian ethnomusicologist, pointed out, exile takes many forms: it can involve entire communities, families and individuals, and can involve vast dimensions in time and space. Whether associated with expulsion or not, it is always associated with memory, and sometimes, with return. Cohen illustrated this concept through a presentation of Sephardic, specifically Judeo-Spanish (Ladino) songs of exile, expulsion, memory and return. It turns out that there are more songs about specific circumstances than about collective movements, and romantic elements may intervene, but Cohen mooted that “behind every song of personal exile, there is an awareness of collective exile, expulsion, subsequent wanderings and new homes, memory and, some-

times, on various levels, return.” In a workshop, Cohen would later present the basic genres of songs sung in Moroccan and former Ottoman lands.

Jewish musicians in the diaspora faced the question of how to deal with traditional Jewish songs, as a way of seeking and confirming identity, as musicologist Heidy Zimmerman demonstrated in a talk on three compositions, all based on Fritz Mordechai Kaufmann’s small collection, “The Most Beautiful Songs of the Eastern Jews” (Die schönsten Lieder der Ostjuden).

In the music of Armenian survivors, songs have served as means of dealing with the theme of loss of the homeland and exile. Elke Hartmann from the Free University in Berlin, explored the long tradition of the Armenian song poet, stretching back to the 12th century, and the unique symbolic language therein developed. After the 1915 genocide, many songs were updated, while others were detached from their original contexts and reinterpreted; today they are understood as allegories of the genocide experience. Hartmann traced this tradition through the lens of the experience of violence, loss and longing for a home, analyzing songs of survivors, in traditional songs, in wartime songs and in the music that developed in the new colonies of the diaspora.

In 2015 to mark the centenary of the genocide, it was music that played the leading role. It served as an “invitation to mourn with,” as Sylvia Angelique Alajaji, from Franklin & Marshall College, put it. She examined the concerts organized throughout 2015 as meditations, acts of remembrance that served to evoke and construct past traumas. These concerts, which included pieces by Western European composers alongside those by Armenians, engaged in musical discourses that broadened forms of cultural exchange, and posed the question not only of how to commemorate the genocide but who is being invited to join in the mourning; and, what it means to be an Armenian.

Life in a Minority

Two papers addressed the issue of what it is like to live as a member of a minority and how it affects one’s sense of identity. Laurence Ritter, a sociologist from Paris, presented results of her field study conducted between 2007 and 2010 on converted Armenians living in Turkey. Armenian scholar Arpine Maniero (Armenian State Pedagogical Institute and Academy of Sciences of Armenia) looked into the experiences of Armenian and Jewish students attending German universities at the beginning of the last century.

Ritter’s field study dealt with Armenian Genocide survivors and their descendants who had been forced to convert to Islam. She and her colleagues found that the experience of Hrant Dink and Fetiye Çetin served as catalysts for such “hidden” Armenians to research and rediscover their family histories. In her presentation she explored the distinction between hidden and Islamized Armenians, in light of case studies of families, and reported on changes that have occurred over the past decade, without losing sight of the dangers inherent in the currently tense situation in Turkey, with respect to this tenuous “awakening” of silenced Armenians.

In Maniero’s lecture, what was striking was the extent to which Armenian and Jewish students engaged in study within German and Russian academic institutions and circles had to fight for their national identities, against the see HERITAGE, page 5



INTERNATIONAL

Turkey's Armenian Church Leader Patriarch Mutafyan Dies

MUTAFYAN, from page 1

In 1993, he was elevated to the rank of archbishop to serve the diocese of Prince Islands. From 1997, Mutafyan acted as the vicar general of the Armenian Patriarchate of Turkey. (See related editorial on page 18.)

Following the death of the then Armenian Patriarch of Turkey Karekin II Kazanjian,

Mesrob was born Minas Mutafyan in Istanbul in 1956. He was ordained in 1979 following studies in Germany and the United States.

Preparations for the election of a new patriarch for Turkey were expected to begin after a 40-day mourning period.

Last year, the Turkish government intervened to halt elections at the patriarchate, on the grounds “that the necessary conditions for the electoral process had not been met” and that Mesrob was still alive.

Despite the Turkish-Armenian community's demand for new elections, the Turkish government has always rejected the holding of an election, citing a 1863 National Constitution article that

prohibits new elections if an incumbent patriarch is alive.

In 2015, Mesrob Mutafyan was retired by the synod because of his illness.

The synod sent a request to the Istanbul Governorate asking permission to hold new elections. In 2017, a new church assembly was convened to begin the process of organizing elections. Archbishop Karekin Bekchyan was elected locum tenens – or patriarchal vicar.

After many months of work, however, the Turkish government declared they do not recognize the church assembly's decisions. The



In this October 21, 2005 file photo, Patriarch Mesrob II, the spiritual leader of Turkey's Armenian Orthodox community, holds his dog in Istanbul. Turkey's state-run Anadolu Agency said Mesrob Mutafyan, 62, the 84th Armenian Patriarch of Constantinople, died Friday, March 8, 2019 at Istanbul's Armenian Surp Pirgic hospital where he was being cared for. (Associated Press)

Mesrob Mutafyan was elected on March 16, 1998 to serve as the temporary leader of the Church.

Mesrob Mutafyan was elected the 84th Armenian Patriarch of Turkey on October 14, 1998.

Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan and other Turkish officials called Atesyan to offer their condolences.

Garo Paylan, a member of the Armenian community and a legislator in Turkey's parliament said on Twitter: “Patriarch Mutafyan will remain in our minds as a memorable spiritual leader.”

government said it doesn't recognize Bekchyan as patriarchal vicar and that new elections cannot be held because Mutafyan is still alive.

Eventually Bekchyan left Turkey, and Atesyan continued serving as vicar. However, a large part of the local Armenian community was unhappy with Atesyan's tenure.

After Mutafyan's death, it is expected that the Patriarchate will begin the process of

holding an election of the 85th Armenian Patriarch of Constantinople.

The funeral ceremony will be held on Sunday, March 17 at Kumkapi Mother Church at 10 a.m. Patriarch Mutafyan's body will be buried in Sisli Armenian Cemetery. A commission was established to organize the ceremony. Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan and other Turkish officials called Atesyan to offer their condolences.

Life After Babylon

HERITAGE, from page 4

pressures to be considered part of the dominant national elites at the time. Not only students but also professors they interacted with displayed prejudices and ignorance regarding Armenians, for example, by stating that most Armenians were engaged in trade, etc. The case of the Russian students entailed prejudices of a political nature, expressed by consular officials in Leipzig, for example, regarding Russian youth studying there. More than a comparison, the study dealt with the socialization of these two groups from the Soviet Union, who complained of discrimination in their homelands, while fighting in Germany against prejudice, or anti-Semitism.

The impact of the Armenian genocide on the perceptions of Zionists during the First World War was the subject addressed by Avital Ginat. She presented partial results of her doctoral research at the School of Jewish Studies and Tel Aviv University. In her view, the Armenian genocide constituted a turning point in the attitude of the Zionists toward the Ottoman Empire, and shifted the balance in their orientation towards the British, while generating empathy for the Armenians. Although censorship at the time makes documentation difficult, she found that as rumors about the massacres began to arrive, anxiety increased as the Ottomans continued their policy of deporting Zionist activists from Palestine. The mood turned against the Turks and Zionists saw the war as an opportunity to reorganize the region. Ginat touched on the differences within the Zionist movement regarding their cultural orientation to Germany or Britain and the controversies around the reaction to the Armenian genocide.

Genocide in Literature and Cinema

Literary works have played an important role in the culture of remembrance and in the attempts at denial as well. Birgit M. Körner of the University of Basel examined treatment of the Holocaust and the genocide in Ephraim

Kishon's “Israeli satires.” These were humorous texts, bestsellers also in Germany, which were initially seen as contributing to reconciliation between Germans and Jews. Later his stories were accused of having dissolved guilt and shame. In the 1990s, Kishon, himself a survivor, began to integrate his personal experience into his humorous poetry. It is this aspect of his work that Körner was the first to investigate, with the conclusion that Kishon was a political author and a pessimistic “humanist.”

Marc David Baer of the University of Chicago introduced an unusual approach to denialism, in a paper on the way Ottoman Jewish historiography has treated the subject. By portraying Jewish-Turkish relations in an idealized form, characterized by harmony, conviviality and a common purpose, historians have thus painted a rosy picture that excludes contradictory details and silences counternarratives. Baer views this dominant utopian narrative as a reflection of fear and anxiety at what had befallen others, and an attempt to be accepted by Muslims.

In contrast, Hervé Georgelin from the National and Kapodistrian University of Athens, presented a work that represents a “rare perception of both Jewish and Armenian suffering.” This is an 800-page handwritten autobiographical fragment by Zaven Biberyan (1921-1984) that focuses on his ordeal as a young non-Muslim conscript during World War II in a forced labor battalion. The presentation shed light on the uniqueness of this work, in the author's awareness of the collective loss suffered by the Armenians as well as the Jewish people.

Cinema is a powerful tool in shaping perceptions, and misperceptions. Lawrence Baron, formerly at the San Diego State University and the author of many books on cinema, spoke about “persistent parallels” in films about the Armenian genocide. He traced the process through which the Turkish campaign of denial enabled Holocaust films to establish the cinematic iconography and tropes employed in subsequent films about the Armenian Genocide. He showed clips from films like “The Forty Days of Musa Dagh” (1982), “Karot” (1990), “Ararat” (2002) and “The Lark Farm” (2007). In his concluding analysis of “Army of Crime” (2009) and “Remember” (2015), which deal with the anti-Nazi struggle, he raised the issue

of how historical memory can be sustained and justice attained for the Armenians' ordeal during World War I.

In the academic world, there is still a gap between historiography of the Holocaust and research into the genocide of the Armenians, as Christin Pschichholz from the University of Potsdam demonstrated. Her comparative study considered the effects of discussion about terminologies (intention, genocide), which are often subjected to political conditions, the influence of the discipline of Genocide Studies, which is still young, the integration of survivors' accounts and the influence of the Armenian and Jewish diasporas on the respective fields of research.

Teaching the Genocide

If future generations are to maintain and transmit an understanding of these past catastrophes, so as to ensure they not be repeated, education is paramount. Thus the question of how to address these themes in the classroom had to be featured. Roy Knocke, a research assistant at the Lepsiushaus Potsdam, led a workshop on the Armenian genocide, in which he presented materials that the Lepsiushaus has developed for use in upper secondary education, and has been tested in practice. The workshop aimed at teachers and illustrated how the teaching materials allow educators to approach the subject from different perspectives.

Michael Stach, a student trainee at the State Seminar for Didactics and Teacher Training in Heidelberg, conducted a workshop on genocide and human rights as topics in teaching. His approach differed from that of Knocke, in that he located the topics in the context of artistic-creative subjects. This involves the use of texts, pictures or pieces of music as means to point out individual perspectives on moral-ethical questions and shed light on the causes, connections and effects of these topics from various viewpoints. In the workshop he presented teaching materials, especially for artistic-creative subjects, and devoted special attention to the role of the teacher in the process, with regard to competency and the sensitivity required to deal with the theme.

A round table discussion concluded the conference, on the theme, “Culture of

Remembrance in the Field of Tension between Empty Promises and Ritualization.” It was a statement made by German Federal Chancellor Angela Merkel during her visit to Yerevan last August that framed the concept. “The suffering of countless Armenians must not and will not be forgotten,” she said. “Germany will make its contribution.” Those who debated the ways and means for Germany to do this included Ulla Jepke, Bundestag member for the Left Party (Die Linke), Micha Brumlik, retired professor in the education department, Goethe University in Frankfurt, Herbert Schmalstieg, former Lord Mayor of Hannover and Raffi Kantian of the German-Armenian Society.

The Role of the Arts

Literature, music and cinema utilize different artistic means to transmit a message, as speakers illustrated in diverse presentations. Conference attendees had the opportunity to experience the power of art, during film showings of “From Ararat to Zion” (2009) and “The Key from Spain: The Songs and Stories of Flory Jagoga” (2000). A special treat was offered in a theatrical production of “Das Märchen vom letzten Gedanken” (The Story of the Last Thought), based on the novel by Edgar Hilsenrath, performed by the ZAKHOR ensemble. Hilsenrath, who died recently, was a Jewish survivor who told the story of the Armenian Genocide in the form of a fable related by the storyteller Meddah to the Armenian Thovma Khatisian.

The final concert was a unique event, which brought together Armenian and Jewish musicians for the first time. Two Jewish and two Armenian ensembles presented songs from home and exile in very different styles. Opera singer and cantor Assaf Levitin, accompanied by pianists Naaman Wagner, performed songs of the Sephardic Jews in the Ottoman Empire, in compositions by Alberto Hemsí, and the Trio Kramim/Zaks presented folk-style music in contrast. The Armenian bard Stepan Gantralyan sang of the homeland and exile with his own chansons and works of other Armenian songwriters, accompanied by guitarist Emil Georgiev. And the ensemble INDIVIDUAL from Yerevan made its German debut with Armenian folk music. The title of the final concert was a statement: “We did not stand lamenting at the rivers of Babylon.”

Community News

Helen Evans to Be Featured Speaker at Tufts Genocide Commemoration

MEDFORD, Mass. — Tufts University, the Darakjian-Jafarian Chair in Armenian History, the Department of History, the Armenian Club at Tufts University, and the National Association for Armenian Studies and Research (NAASR) will sponsor the Commemoration of the Armenian Genocide at Tufts on Thursday, April 4, at 7 p.m. The Tufts event will feature a lecture by Dr. Helen C. Evans, Mary and Michael Jaharis Curator for Byzantine Art, Metropolitan Museum of Art, titled “Medieval Traditions of Commemoration.”

The commemoration and lecture will take place in Goddard Chapel on Tufts’ Medford campus. A reception will follow in the Coolidge Room in nearby Ballou Hall. Parking is available in the Dowling Garage, 419 Boston Ave., and in designated on-street areas.

In the wake of the successful exhibit “Armenia!,” Evans, Mary and Michael Jaharis Curator for Byzantine Art at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, will speak at Tufts on the Armenian belief in the power of memory using works recently on display



Dr. Helen Evans

in the “Armenia!” exhibition at Metropolitan Museum. Medieval monuments offer exceptional testimony to a long tradition of commemoration through colophons in manuscripts and inscriptions on church facades, reliquary containers, textiles, and doors. Commemorative art has preserved memory, cultural tradition, and identity for the Armenians through wars, invasions, and displacement.

Previously she co-curated the Morgan Library and Museum’s 1994 exhibition, “Treasures in Heaven: Armenian Illuminated Manuscripts.” At the Metropolitan Museum, she curated “The Glory of Byzantium (843-1261)” in 1997, “Byzantium: Faith and Power (1261-1557)” in 2004, and “Byzantium and Islam: Age of Transition” (7th-9th century) in 2012. Karekin II, Catholicos of All Armenians, presented her with the Order of Saint Sahak-Saint Mesrop at the opening of the exhibition “Armenia!” and the Great House of Cilicia has presented her with the Mesrop Mashtots and Queen Zabel awards and most recently with the “Spirit of Armenia.”

More information about the lecture is available by contacting NAASR at hq@naasr.org.



Very Rev. Daniel Findikyan and the other members of the clergy at St. Vartan Cathedral (Albin Lohr-Jones Photo)

St. Vartan Cathedral Honors Its Heroic Namesake

NEW YORK — On Thursday, February 28, the Eastern Diocese of the Armenian Church of America commemorated the Feast of Vartanantz with a Divine Liturgy service and dinner program held at St. Vartan Armenian Cathedral in New York.

Rev. Vartan Joulfayan, pastor of the St. Mary Church of Hollywood, Fla., celebrated the badarak. Diocesan Primate the Very Rev. Daniel Findikyan, cathedral vicar Very Rev. Mesrop Parsamyan, Diocesan vicar Very Rev. Simeon Odabashian, Diocesan Sacred Music Instructor Very Rev. Mamigon Kiledjian, and Rev. Daniel Karadjian (of St. Stepanos Church, Elberon, NJ) all participated in the service.

Seminarians from St. Nersess Seminary served on the altar, while the St. Vartan Cathedral Choir sang under the director of Khoren Mekanejian, with Florence Avakian accompanying on the organ.

Following the Divine Liturgy, a dinner program was held in the Haik and Alice Kavookjian Auditorium with the participation of the Mid-Atlantic Knights and Daughters of Vartan, featuring Arpi Nakashian, of the Diocese’s Creative Ministries department, as the evening’s keynote speaker.

In her stirring remarks, Nakashian recalled how St. Vartan Mamigonian, the leader of the Battle of Avarayr, led 66,000 Armenian fighters against a vastly more powerful Persian force in A.D. 451.

“Since the hearts of our saints are revived through us, as the living stones of our church, we have a responsibility: to keep breathing for our church,” she said.

The Astghikner Junior Vocal Ensemble and Yerevan Dance Ensemble, both of the St. Gregory Mission Parish of Brooklyn, under the direction of Maria Sahakyan, performed in honor of the occasion.

Knights of Vartan member Edward Barsamian served as the evening’s master of ceremonies. Grand District Representatives Dr. Edward Sanossian (Knights of Vartan) and Seta Izmirliyan (Daughters of Vartan) offered reflections on the meaning of the occasion and the continuing role of the Knights and Daughters of Vartan in promoting community life.

Findikyan closed the evening with thoughts about the moral victory won by Armenians following their material defeat at the Battle of Avarayr. Their tenacity to retain their faith, even in the face of armed opposition, eventually resulted (in A.D. 484) in the Persian empire’s recognition of the Armenian people’s right to practice Christianity without impediment.



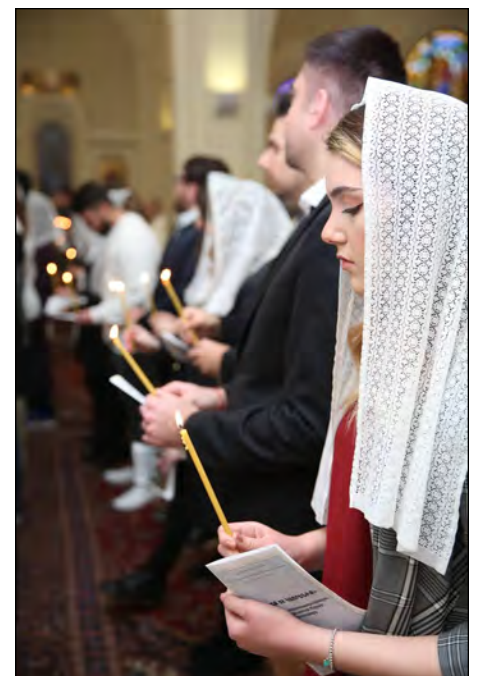
Very Rev. Daniel Findikyan follows Armenia’s Ambassador to the United Nations Mher Margaryan (Albin Lohr-Jones Photo)

Remembering St. Vartan Mamigonian

LOS ANGELES — The inherent spirit and resolve of St. Vartan Mamigonian was transported centuries from the golden plains of Avarayr in historic Armenia to the commanding St. Leon Cathedral in Burbank, where 50 Armenian-American youth conveyed their commitment to God and the Armenian Church during the inaugural Faith and Motherland ceremony on Tuesday, February 26.

The evening’s symbolic service allowed a moment of pause and clarity for the young church members, who live in an increasingly daunting and pressure-filled society, and strengthened their bonds to their faith and national identity during the Feast of Sts. Vartanantz. They drew power from the bravery of the martyr, who made the ultimate sacrifice of giving up his life in order to protect the Christian identity during the Battle of Avarayr in 451 AD. The ceremony blossomed at a relevant time — when the pursuit of maintaining the Christian faith in today’s complex world — remains paramount.

The encouraging and supportive atmosphere, led by Archbishop Hovnan Derderian, Primate of the Western Diocese of the Armenian Church of North America, also included a number of priests from various parishes who stood alongside the youth. Following Divine Liturgy and a fervent sermon by Fr. Hovel Ohanyan, pastor of the St. Vartan Armenian Church in



Young people at the Faith and Motherland ceremony

Oakland, California, who delivered the compelling message to the next generation to follow the heroic and valiant efforts of St. Gevont and St. Vartan, they approached the altar as Derderian addressed them directly.

“Today is a very historic day in your life and in the life of the Western Diocese,” said Derderian, who fulfilled the vow he made during the January ACYO Assembly in San Francisco to establish a new mission in the life of the Armenian Church that “guides, inspires and empowers us so we may renew our baptismal vow to be true Christians and to entrust our lives to the hands of God.”

Although the nation’s first fight for Christianity took place 1,500 years ago, Derderian said the Armenian Church and the Diaspora still faces challenges, though in a different capacity.

“We are not fighting persecution but many other obstacles in order for us to remain devoted to our Christian faith,” he said.

Recognizing the youth as “wise, intelligent see VARTANANTZ, page 9



COMMUNITY NEWS

Cruise Combines Armenian Heritage with Caribbean Sun

By Barbara Haroutunian

MIAMI – More than 1200 Armenians boarded Royal Caribbean's Allure of the Seas in January, for the Armenian Heritage Cruise XXII, sponsored by the Armenian Cultural Association of America, Inc., sailing from Miami, for a week. Ports of Call included Nassau, Bahamas, Cozumel, Mexico, Roatan, Honduras and Costa Maya, Mexico.

Armenians came from all over the world: Argentina, Australia, Canada, England, France, Germany, Greece, Lebanon, Uruguay, Sweden, Switzerland and of course, the United States. Each guest received an AHC tote bag. For seven days everyone found themselves enjoying good music, good food, meeting new and old friends aboard a mega ship.

This year, on board was Archbishop Khoren Toghramadjan, Prelate of Cyprus, who each morning conducted divine Liturgy. For those guests who needed a little help on the dance floor, Margo Kaftajian taught traditional Armenian Dances like the Shourch Bar, Tamzara, Haleh and many others. Guests participated in Backgammon and Belote Tournaments under the direction of Antranik Boudakian. A well-stocked AHC Bookstore was open each day supplying all kinds of unique Armenian merchandise. There was a special table set up for the Armenian Heritage Tour 2019 going to Armenia and Karabagh on September 19-October 3, 2019 with Maro Assadourian, the ACAA liaison. The ACAA Hospitality desk was open each day to assist passengers with all their needs.

The evenings were filled with great music for both listening and dancing by Harout Pamboukjian, Kevork Artinian and Khatchig Jingirian.

On opening night there was a Welcome Aboard Presentation hosted by Margo Kaftajian and Maria Tavitian who announced the highlights of the week's special events.

The days at sea were spent attending the many cultural presentations, or simply pool side to enjoy the beautiful tropical weather. Guests participated in a vast array of Armenian activities, as well as the ships' offerings, or just spent the day relaxing in their luxurious staterooms.



Armenian tri-color outfit utilizing our national colors of red, blue and orange!

For the second time, AHC hosted a Continuing Medical Education (CME) Seminar for health care professionals and dentists. The registrants were able to attend specific medical classes to obtain ongoing accreditation under the auspices of Columbia University. The lectures were conducted by renowned authorities in health care who have made a major contribution to improving education and increasing the standards of health care in Armenia. The program featured Dr. Samuel S. Badalian MD, Dr. John P. Bilezikian MD, and Dr. Lawrence V. Najarian MD.

Each day there were lectures and programs about relevant Armenian topics, including:

- Anahid Yeremian presented on The Cosmic Ray Division in Armenia, Scientific Excellence on a Global Scale.
- Armenian Genealogy: Tracing Your Armenian Family Roots – George Aghjayan
- Dr. Taner Akçam did a presentation on his ground-breaking book, *Talat Pasha's Telegrams and the Armenian Genocide*.
- A presentation by Bared Maronian of his

upcoming film projects – “Bloodless”, a documentary film about the 2018 peaceful revolution of Armenia; and “Titanic Love”, a documentary film about the Armenian survivors aboard the Titanic was well received.

• This year's Armenian Business Networking Program featured Valot Atakhanian, one of the founders of DAV Cigars, who led a presentation about the boutique Cigar business and the chal-

lenges of licensing, importing and developing the business of a US Corporation whose primary operations are based in the Dominican Republic.

• Armenians in Greece and the Mediterranean was presented by Archbishop Khoren Toghramadjan from Cyprus.

• Armenian Comedian Vahe Berberian had the audience roaring with laughter.

• The Armenian Relief Society (ARS) sponsored a program where members and friends from all over the world were invited.

• The Knights and Daughters of Vartan were on board and highlighted their recent Veratarts Hayrenik Mission III trip to Armenia in September 2018. Presented by Avak Sbarabed Dr. Gary Zamanigian and Avak Dirouhi Diana Tookmanian. The Homenetmen Presentation included members and friends from all around the world.

The Armenian Heritage Cruise is the only event in the world that brings Armenians together for a week of cultural, educational, religious and social experiences. The AHC hosts individuals and makes welcome all Armenian charitable organizations, providing activities on a national and international level for the betterment of the Armenian nation and people worldwide. The Armenian Heritage Cruise has become a respected program working under the guidance of the Armenian Cultural Association of America, Inc., a Registered US 501(C)3 non-profit organization.

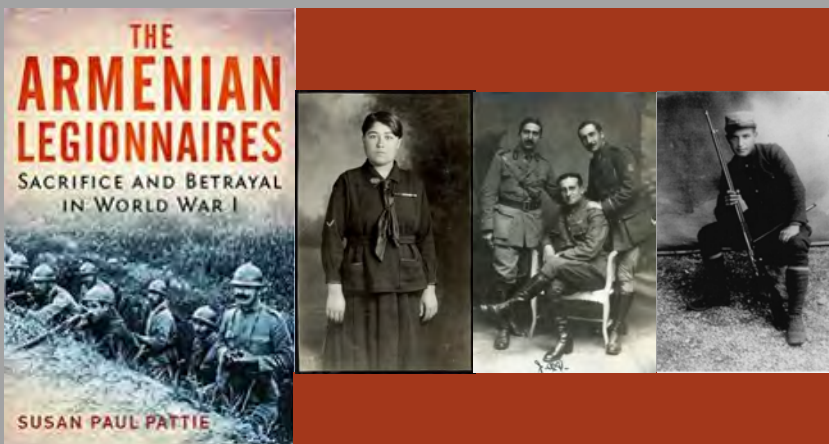


THE ARMENIAN LEGIONNAIRES: SACRIFICE AND BETRAYAL IN WORLD WAR I

By SUSAN PAUL PATTIE

Saturday | March 23, 2019 | 4:00 – 6:00 pm
Sorp Khatch Armenian Apostolic Church | 4906 Flint Drive, Bethesda, MD, 20816
Free street parking or Friendship Heights Metro (+ 10 minute Lyft/Uber ride away)
Admission free | Book launch and signing followed by light appetizers and beverages

For more information, please contact Nancy Najarian
202-251-7821 or nancynaj@gmail.com Books will be available for purchase



Using illustrations from the more than 150 photographs in *The Armenian Legionnaires*, Susan Pattie will discuss the creation of the book, the research and translation and how the many sources were found. The book describes the motivations and dreams of the Armenian Legionnaires and their ultimate betrayal as the French and the British shifted priorities, leaving ancestral Armenian homelands to the emerging Republic of Turkey. Complete with eyewitness accounts, letters and photographs, this book provides an insight into relations between the Great Powers through the lens of a small, vulnerable people caught in a war that was not their own, but which had already destroyed their known world

'The author has done a wonderful job by giving voice to the main actors of this story, the Legionnaires themselves, who through extracts from their memoirs make this book more vivid, concrete and comprehensible. The richness of the photographs of the Legionnaires in this book is also a very important contribution towards successfully reconstructing this crucial period of Armenian history.'

Vahe Tachjian
director and chief editor of Houshamadyan Project

Susan Pattie is an Honorary Senior Research Associate at University College London and former Director of the Armenian Institute in London. She holds a PhD in Anthropology from the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor.

Meet the Doctors

PROVIDENCE, R.I. – The Cultural Committee of the Sts. Sahag & Mesrob Armenian Church presents a special series of programs: “Meet with Armenian Doctors—Questions and Answers.” Members of the community are invited to these sessions to learn from the doctors.

Sunday, March 17, 12:30 pm - Dr. Robert Janigian, Ophthalmologist

Sunday, April 7, 12:30 pm - Dr. Raffi Calikyan, Pulmonologist

Sunday, May 5, 12:30 pm - Dr. Sevak

Stepanian, Anesthesiologist

Sunday, June 23, 12:00 noon - Dr. Stephen S. Kasparian, Obstetrician-Gynecologist

Sunday, September 22, 12:30 pm - Dr. Martin Papasian, Ear, Nose & Throat

Sunday, October 20, 12:30 pm - Dr. Herman Ayvazyan, Internal Medicine

All Sessions to be held at: Hanoian Hall, 70 Jefferson Street, Providence, RI, 02908

Admission is free. Call the church office or e-mail: petroskon@aol.com for future information.

Read News in Armenian at:





COMMUNITY NEWS

OBITUARY

Ashkhen Alice Seferian

WATERTOWN — Ashkhen Alice Seferian of Watertown, died peacefully at the Armenian Nursing Home in Jamaica Plain, Mass., on Monday, February 4, aged 91 years.

Born in 1927 to parents Vartan and Mari (Zaroukian) Baharian in Athens, Greece, and the last surviving member among her five siblings, she was named after the first Christian Armenian Queen, Saint Ashkhen (c. A.D. 300).

Ashkhen's family fled their homes in the Hadjin and Adana areas of historic Armenia (now Turkey) as a result of the tragic impact of the Armenian Genocide of 1915. Her parents' families were victims of earlier pogroms against Armenians in Turkey in the 1890's — her mother Mari experienced life in an orphanage in Adana.

Aided by American Protestant Missionaries, the Baharians, then a family of four, were able to survive the Armenian Genocide. They then made their way to the port city of Lavrion, Greece, and soon after to Athens where they joined other Armenian refugees in the D'ghrouti neighborhood community.

Growing up in Athens, the family grew to eight members. Ashkhen's father Vartan "Agha" operated a neighborhood restaurant adjacent to the family home. He was known to be generous to those in need. Her mother

Anthony and Alice began raising their family just down the street from where they were married. A daughter and three sons would bless them with many accomplishments, including college degrees. They would also provide more blessings with nine grandchildren and a great-grandchild.

Perhaps taking a cue from her restaurant-owner father, Alice was a wonderful cook and provided her family, friends and guests with delicious meals of both traditional Armenian and common American foods and delicacies. Some argue that she worked cooking-magic in what she produced from her small kitchen.

Alice was an active Christian at St. James Armenian Apostolic Church. Her involvements in the parish and Armenian community were many and varied. She was a regular at worship services, a member of the Women's Guild, and helped with parish Bingo. Serving on different committees, Alice was at the ready to assist with projects with great energy and commitment. She gave countless hours to help make the annual Bazaar a success — participating in derev (grape-leaf) picking excursions in early summer, and particularly as the Tourshi Lady — ensuring the succulent pickled vegetables were plentiful and worthy to be part of anyone's dinner table.

Occasionally, she would also worship at the Armenian Protestant Churches in Watertown and Belmont.

As a teacher and superintendent of the St. James Armenian School, Alice demonstrated a love of her Armenian heritage and provided a serious dedication to teaching/learning for hundreds of students.

As her four children became older, Alice devoted more time to her parish Church. She, together with then-pastor the Rev. Dajad Davidian, of blessed memory, began one of the first formally organized, staffed, Armenian Church Social Service Programs in the Armenian Church Diocese. Alice delighted in helping immigrants and others in the community navigate the various local and state services available and transition to a new culture. Her multiple-language fluency enabled her to quickly endear herself to those in need. This also carried over to work in the Watertown Public Schools with non-English speaking parents grateful for her help. She also worked as a translator for the U.S. Department of Justice Boston Immigration Court.

Long after retirement, many Armenian immigrants that she helped in time of need identified themselves to Alice's children and explained the many ways her social worker expertise assisted during very difficult days after arriving in America. Indeed, Alice remembered the living examples of her parents in helping others. In her own way, and with equal meaning, she honored her parent's memory in caring for others. She was that same kind and loving person.

Ashkhen Alice Seferian is survived by a daughter, Cynthia Marie Magarian and her husband Deacon James of Tyngsborough; three sons: James Hagop and his wife Lisa of Wayland; Alan Vartan and his wife Marlene of Lexington; Daniel Benjamin and his wife Colleen of Reading; nine grandchildren and one great-grandchild; and many nieces and nephews. She is also survived by a sister-in-law, Nora Kalajian.

However, Ashkhen had a passion for education, and understood the special opportunity that attending college might provide. Having her older sister, Shnorig, who was married to Benjamin Margosian, living in New Jersey helped make the thought of leaving her family a little easier to accept.

During a college semester break Ashkhen visited with her sister and met Antranig Anthony Seferian of Watertown. Their romance quickly bloomed and he convinced her to transfer to "Seferian College," and to use the name "Alice". They were wed at Saint James Armenian Apostolic Church in Watertown on November 2, 1952.

Arrangements were on Thursday, February 7 at the Giragosian Funeral Home, with the services at St. James Armenian Church.

A 40th day Requiem Service / *Karasonk Hokehankisd Bashdon* is planned for Sunday, March 17 at Saint James Armenian Church in Watertown.

Marriages That Thrive: An Invitation from the Kouzouians

By Fr. Vasken and
Yn. Arpi Kouzouian

CAMBRIDGE, Mass. — This summer we will celebrate 25 years of marriage. Over the years, we have often thought back to our wedding day. Our wedding took place in Yn. Arpi's home parish in Toronto, Canada, and included many guests from Fr. Vasken's home parish who traveled to be a part of that special day. Our wedding day, as is true for all couples, was an unforgettable day, filled with joy, love, family and friends. A beautiful start to a relationship that began on a mission trip to Armenia two years earlier, one that we know was truly designed by God.

As the day of celebration came to a close, a blessed marriage sacrament and joyous wedding reception, we collapsed into the limo that we had

arranged to drive us to the airport to begin our honeymoon. As we got underway, the driver started in with his own marriage story, "I was married once, it was a disaster, thank God we divorced, marriage is tough . . ." We both looked at each other, somewhat stunned, somewhat caught off guard, and most definitely speechless. The real world seemed to be trying to find a way to shatter the bliss of our hours-old marriage. Not knowing how to respond to the driver's discouraging words, we simply spent the remainder of the drive hand-in-hand, looking into each other's eyes, tuning out the world around us. We knew we were in love. We knew our families loved and encouraged us. And we knew that God loved us. Our life together, as one, was just beginning.

After 25 years of marriage, we can still look into each other's eyes and tune out the rest of the world, because the joy of our wedding day, and the oath we made to each other and before God on that day, has been both our guiding light and our refuge.

To be honest, looking back on our wedding day, as a young couple, we were completely naïve. We had no idea what would happen in the days and years ahead, about the joys and

pains that awaited us. We were newlyweds with a lifetime of adventure ahead, overflowing with faith, hope and love. To us, that is the basis of our marriage. Marriage is a journey, setting out and walking together, hand in hand, inviting Jesus Christ to walk with us and embrace our love and marriage, then, now, and for the rest of our lives.

Twenty-five years after the driver's comment, our marriage has given him our response. Our marriage is centered on Christ and in His Love for us as a couple, united by His blessing. The world around us may have thrown obstacles and roadblocks along the way, and from time to time they may have taken us off course, but God has blessed our lives in ways that only we know, and in ways that the world around us cannot diminish. With trust in God's faithfulness, and our faithfulness to each other, we face the world without fear, and with the trust that we stand together . .

. . . as one . . . united by the blessing of God, filled with abundant faith, hope, and love.

On Saturday, March 30, the Armenian clergy of the Greater Boston area, unite to offer a second Marriage Seminar, entitled, "Marriages That Thrive," with guest speakers Drs. Paul and Virginia Friesen, from Home Improvement Ministries. As a follow up to

last year's successful marriage seminar, where 66 couples attended and found an evening devoted to just them and their marriage, the conversation will continue by focusing on establishing and maintaining marriages that last. The Friesen's present in an entertaining and engaging way, helping couples to look inward and devote time to their most important relationship, their own marriage.

The couples event includes an Armenian buffet dinner, live Armenian Music, and candid conversation. It is being hosted this year, at the Holy Trinity Armenian Church, 145 Brattle St. The cost is \$100 per couple. We encourage the couples of the Greater Boston area to join us and devote this evening to their marriages. We look forward to experiencing the evening together.



Mari was a devout Christian who often would lead Bible study sessions as well as read various newspapers to those who gathered in her home and restaurant, particularly those less-literate. Some of the poorer young men in the neighborhood would come for handouts from the restaurant, and Mari was known for her kindness and for giving out ample portions. From a very young age, Ashkhen knew loving and kind parents who demonstrated such qualities to others.

Ashkhen attended American Protestant Schools and earned her European Baccalaureate. Fluent in Armenian, Greek, Turkish, and English, as well as a working knowledge of German and French, she was awarded a scholarship to attend Schaeffler College in Cleveland, Ohio, to become a social worker. But love of family gave her pause to contemplate the scholarship opportunity and a 5,000-mile life-changing journey to America.

However, Ashkhen had a passion for education, and understood the special opportunity that attending college might provide. Having her older sister, Shnorig, who was married to Benjamin Margosian, living in New Jersey helped make the thought of leaving her family a little easier to accept.

During a college semester break Ashkhen visited with her sister and met Antranig Anthony Seferian of Watertown. Their romance quickly bloomed and he convinced her to transfer to "Seferian College," and to use the name "Alice". They were wed at Saint James Armenian Apostolic Church in Watertown on November 2, 1952.

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COMMUNITY NEWS

Remembering St. Vartan Mamigonian

VARTANANTZ, from page 6

and enriched young leaders in the life of the Diocese,” Derderian exemplified their connection to their forefathers who brought the Armenian Church of America to life, from one coast to the other, when the institution was officially established by Catholicos Mkhrtich Khrimian (Khrimian Hayrik) in 1898.

“After a century, we continue to be a living

Western Diocese and remember those before us who gave their lives for their Christian faith and for their motherland.”

As the youth held burning candles, signifying the light within each of them, they made a pledge out loud to revive their Christian faith. Derderian presented every individual with a certificate and a gift, opening channels of communication and solidifying his or her distinct relationship to the Armenian Church.

“February 26 is a historic day,” said Derderian. “It is the day that a new spiritual army has been born.”

The youth were touched by the ceremony and the chance for a platform to become engaged and viable members of the Armenian Church.

“The oath we took, besides being a promise to God, was also a promise to ourselves and a way of finding ourselves in the Christian world,” said Manuel Nazarian, a student at the University of California, Riverside, who expressed his gratitude to the St. Leon Armenian Cathedral and Derderian. “The ceremony overall was very influential and proved to us, the youth, that we can achieve greatness by following the Bible and by spreading God’s word.”

The lessons of St. Vartan and the heroism he portrayed to protect the Armenian Christian faith was not lost on the participants, who understand the responsibility of carrying on this mission in the present day.

“I give my word to God and our Church that I will always remain close to our religious roots,” said Hagop Karaian. “Since Armenians were the first nation to accept Christianity as their religion, I am obligated to continue what my ancestors started and I am thankful to Archbishop Derderian and his dedication to bring more of our Armenian youth closer to our roots.”

The Faith and Motherland ceremony was seen as a “historic movement in the lives of our youth” for Anush Minasyan, a student at



Archbishop Hovnan Derderian, Primate of the Western Diocese of the Armenian Church of North America, with two young students

community in the Diaspora because our forefathers kept their Christian faith,” said Derderian. “It is a master key to succeed in life and to help us understand our Christian and national identity.”

He acknowledged the role they, too, will play in strengthening the future of the Armenian Church, culture and community when one day they create their own families and collectively “move mountains.”

“St. Vartan’s soul is in each of you,” he said. “We dedicate our lives as soldiers of the



The services at the Faith and Motherland program

California State University Northridge, who is studying psychology.

“I am blessed to be part of this unforgettable moment that reaffirmed my faith in Christ and reconnected me to my motherland,” she said.

Deacon Nareg Kasian, also a college student, reflected on the continuous fight of Armenians to safeguard their Christianity against those

who “threatened our faith and motherland.”

“In remembrance of those martyrs, we as members of the Armenian Apostolic Church are facing similar circumstances in today’s world,” said Kasian. “It was an honor and a blessing to participate in this historic event, organized by Archbishop Derderian and the Western Diocese ACYO, that will be a tradition for generations to come.”

—Taleen Babayan

A Celebration of Hope and Gratitude

ARMONK, N.Y. — On Saturday, May 18, St. Nersess Armenian Seminary will host a celebratory banquet titled “Hope and Gratitude” to honor the Archbishop Khajag Barsamian and the Very Rev. Daniel Findikyan as the past and present St. Nersess board presidents.

The event, to be held at the Old Tappan Manor in Old Tappan, NJ, will also celebrate the seminary’s history and future throughout the evening. St. Nersess Seminary remains a center of learning and inspiration for its alumni, students, clergy and youth for the past 58 years.

Barsamian was the seminary’s board of directors president for 28 years. During his tenure, he guided the seminary through five deans and ordained 25 St. Nersess graduates into the holy priesthood. He also was instrumental in leading the relocation of the seminary from New Rochelle to Armonk, NY. “We are so grateful for his belief in the mission of the seminary and his confidence for our future, which has guaranteed our success today,” commented the Rev. Mardiros Chevian, dean.

Findikyan, a 1989 St. Nersess graduate, will be consecrated as a bishop by Karekin II, the Supreme Patriarch and Catholicos of All Armenians, at the Mother Cathedral of Holy Echmiadzin on May 12. Findikyan is the first clergyman born in America to serve as a diocesan primate and president of the St. Nersess board of directors and only the second American-born clergyman to be elevated to the rank of bishop. “We are also appreciative to Fr. Daniel, as a past seminary dean and current professor, for strengthening the seminary academically,” Chevian added.

To celebrate their successes and to express the seminary’s gratitude to Archbishop Barsamian and Findikyan for helping the seminary reach its spiritual and educational goals, a commemorative booklet is being published for the May 18 event. All proceeds will go directly to St. Nersess Seminary and its mission.

Those interested in donating towards the booklet or attending the event may contact Lynn Beylerian, event co-chair, at lynnbeylerian@gmail.com.

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Tom Peretzian and Son Plan to Open Double T's Tavern in April in Marlborough, Mass.

By Jonathan Phelps

MARLBOROUGH, Mass. (*MetroWest Daily*) — A father and son won Licensing Board approval for a liquor license to open a tavern in the spot of the former Sully’s Pub.

The board voted 3-0 in favor of the license last week.

Tom Peretzian and his son, T.J., decided to the name the spot Double T’s Weed Street Tavern after conducting a poll on Facebook. The Florence Street space was most recently O’Hearn’s Tavern, which was only open for a short time. Sully’s closed in 2015.

“We are trying to put something back in town that’s been missing for a long time,” Peretzian told the board. He worked at a bartender at Allora Ristorante on Lakeside Avenue for eight years before it abruptly closed a few weeks ago.

The new tavern will specialize in steak tips,

burgers, fries and standard pub fare with “a little Armenian twist,” including Armenian pizza.

“We are going to keep it as simple as we can,” Peretzian said.

Board members said they were glad the pair invested in the vacant property near downtown.

“I’ve known Tom for a while and I am very confident he will do a great job running this establishment in town,” said member Gregory Mitrakas.

While the address is technically 11B Florence St., the front faces Weed Street. Lost Shoe Brewing and Roasting Company is also expected to open soon on the same street.

T.J. Peretzian turned 24 recently.

“The idea is to get something up and running for him, to leave a legacy in the city of Marlborough,” Tom Peretzian said.

The restaurant is expected to open shortly after final approval from the state Alcoholic Beverages Control Commission. The Peretzians hope to be open by next month.



COMMUNITY NEWS



Miss Nebraska Lex Najarian Vies for Miss USA 2019

By Aram Arkun
Mirror-Spectator Staff

LINCOLN, Neb. — Lex Najarian was crowned as Miss Nebraska USA in January 2019 and now is preparing to compete in the Miss USA pageant while promoting health-related causes dear to her heart.

Najarian grew up in very sports-oriented environment because of her father's and uncles' early careers in football. She said, "I thought that I wanted to be a professional tennis player for a very long time. With sports being so prevalent in my life and my uncles' and dad's success it seemed achievable. I played tennis for about



Lex Najarian as Miss Nebraska USA

12 years, from the time I was 4 to 16. I played in high school and loved it." Born in Western Springs, Illinois, Alexis Nicole Najarian grew up in Connecticut and went to New Canaan High School there.

However, she thought she was better suited for track when she got to the age to apply to colleges. She switched to become a high jumper and a triple jumper for the track team and just played tennis for fun.

She modeled briefly when living in Connecticut and took a gap year after graduating high school in 2012, intending to model in New York City. She did some local work in

Connecticut and did some shoots for a yoga and fitness company in New York. However, nothing really came of it, she said, "because I decided I wasn't really that interested in it at that time of my life."

She was working part time and went to school part time, but after the gap year reapplied to colleges and decided on the University of Nebraska in Lincoln. Her track work paid off because she ended up high jumping for one year at the University of Nebraska.

She studied psychology at the university and graduated in 2017. Her goal, she said, is to use her background for sport psychology. She said, "I would love to someday own my own gym, with a holistic approach to athletics, and incorporate sports nutrition and sports psychology into the physical training aspects of becoming elite in your sport." In addition to a sports psychologist and sports nutritionist, she would hire coaches specialized in various sports, and help high school athletes from about 15 to 19 years old, to hone their skills so that they could compete at the college level.

She said that she wants to bring the great staff support for training, nutrition, injury prevention and everything that goes into the mental side of a sport that colleges like the

University of Nebraska provide their athletes to the high school level since there is a lack of knowledge and resources there.

Najarian had never entered a pageant before the Miss Nebraska contest but did continue to do some modeling while at the university. About three years ago, she said, a friend of hers told her about the Buckle, a men's and women's clothing store based in Kearny, Neb., about two hours west of Lincoln. She interviewed there to become an online model and was also asked to be a fit model. She went twice a week to Kearny to do this for about a year and a half, and only recently at the end of October 2018 stopped working for them. She also has occasionally done some modeling and photo-shoots for pageants.

One of Najarian's friends had competed a few years earlier in a pageant and suggested it to her as a great platform through which to develop an online training and fitness business. This made sense to Lex so although there were only a few months before the pageant weekend she decided to enter it. Not only did she win the title but she also received the Overall Interview Award and Most Photogenic Award. She is now getting ready to compete for the title of Miss USA 2019. Najarian on her paternal side comes from a well-known Armenian family originally from Kharput (Harput). Her great-great-grandfather, Lazar Najarian (1860-1953), donated \$20,000 in 1952 from the US via the Armenian General Benevolent Union to help buy a building in Aleppo. This became the site of the AGBU Lazar Najarian School in 1954. It was turned into a high school in 1959 and renamed as the AGBU Lazar Najarian-Calouste Gulbenkian Central High School, and it continues its mission to the present.

In 1905, Lazar's son, Garabed Lazarus (1884-1940), came to the United States. Garabed and his wife Siran moved to Oakland, Calif., where they had three boys. The middle son, John Sarkis (born in 1927), became a famous surgeon.

Lex explained: "My grandfather ended up becoming a transplant surgeon and became interested in the medical field because his father was very sick when he was growing up and he passed away at a young age. And this led my grandfather to go to the University of California Berkeley. He played football there and he also studied medicine." He became a pioneer in kidney, pancreas and liver transplants. He married a nursing student of Swedish

descent and after having four sons moved to Minnesota, where he served as chief of surgery for the University of Minnesota Medical School for many years.

All four boys played football in college and then professionally. Lex's oldest uncle Jon was a linebacker for the Chicago Bears for a little while and stayed in Chicago to become involved in the stock market and the Chicago Board Options Exchange. Lex's father Peter is the youngest of the four siblings, and after playing football, including with the Tampa Bay Buccaneers, Minnesota Vikings and Sacramento Surge, moved to Chicago and started trading stocks with Jon in the early 1990s. They started several financial companies together and sold the online brokerage firm TradeMonster to Etrade in 2016 for \$750 million. Both brothers are contributors to CNBC on the "Fast Money" halftime show and the "Fast Money" financial investing show in the



Lex Najarian

evenings.

Uncles David and Paul Najarian owned a Popeye's Chicken franchise in southern Minneapolis for many years, which has been sold now. Paul passed away from ALS in 2014 after a three-year battle. David now owns a gym in Oak Park Heights, Minn.

Lex had various Armenian friends as well as relatives while growing up in Connecticut. She said that while her grandmother was 100 percent Swedish the only Swedish dish she would make was Swedish meatballs. She learned Armenian recipes from her mother-in-law and always made *dolma*, *paklava* and various other Armenian foods. Lex said, "We would always have Armenian food at family gatherings." Lex's

continued on next page



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COMMUNITY NEWS

from previous page

uncle David and her aunt have a restaurant in Minnesota where they are trying to incorporate some Armenian recipes, according to Lex.

In Nebraska, unlike Connecticut, she said there are very few Armenians. She said, "I don't think I have come across very many at all during my time here. I have lived in Lincoln for about six years. Any time I see somebody with the last name ending in -yan or -ian, I always ask, are you Armenian. I always look for those." She added, "I am really happy and proud to be part of a community that is so

win, she would give her Miss Nebraska title to her runner-up, and if not, keep it for a full year. As Miss Nebraska, she began to focus on spreading awareness of Lyme disease, she said, “because I am now realizing how big my voice is and how big of an audience I have. My mom suffered from Lyme disease. She has had it for about 20 years now but was only diagnosed 3 years ago when we moved to Minnesota. I shifted gears because I realized that while I have my whole life to pursue everything I want to do in fitness and health, this is a critical year where I can make a real difference for the Lyme disease



Alexis Najarian with her parents Lisa and Peter

proud of our culture.”

As far as Lex knows, no one in her family has traveled to the Republic of Armenia. She said, "I would love to visit Armenia. I would love to bring everyone in my family and make it a big family trip. We have had two or three family reunions in the past with my dad, brothers and grandparents. It would be a really cool thing to have an Armenian family reunion in Armenia."

In a few months, Najarian will go compete at Miss USA, the national pageant. If she were to

community by advocating for proper diagnoses and treatment processes.”

She said that the pageant process might be difficult but, she said, "We have all chosen to enter these competitions so I think that it is just a matter of being mentally prepared. We all know we are going to be judged and it is very subjective judging. Some think skinny is beautiful, some people think strong is beautiful, others think having more body fat is beautiful. I think it is up for us as women to do whatever



we feel is healthy and beautiful and makes us feel good. It is up to each individual to decide to be strong enough to accept the results no matter what. Of course it is easier said than done."

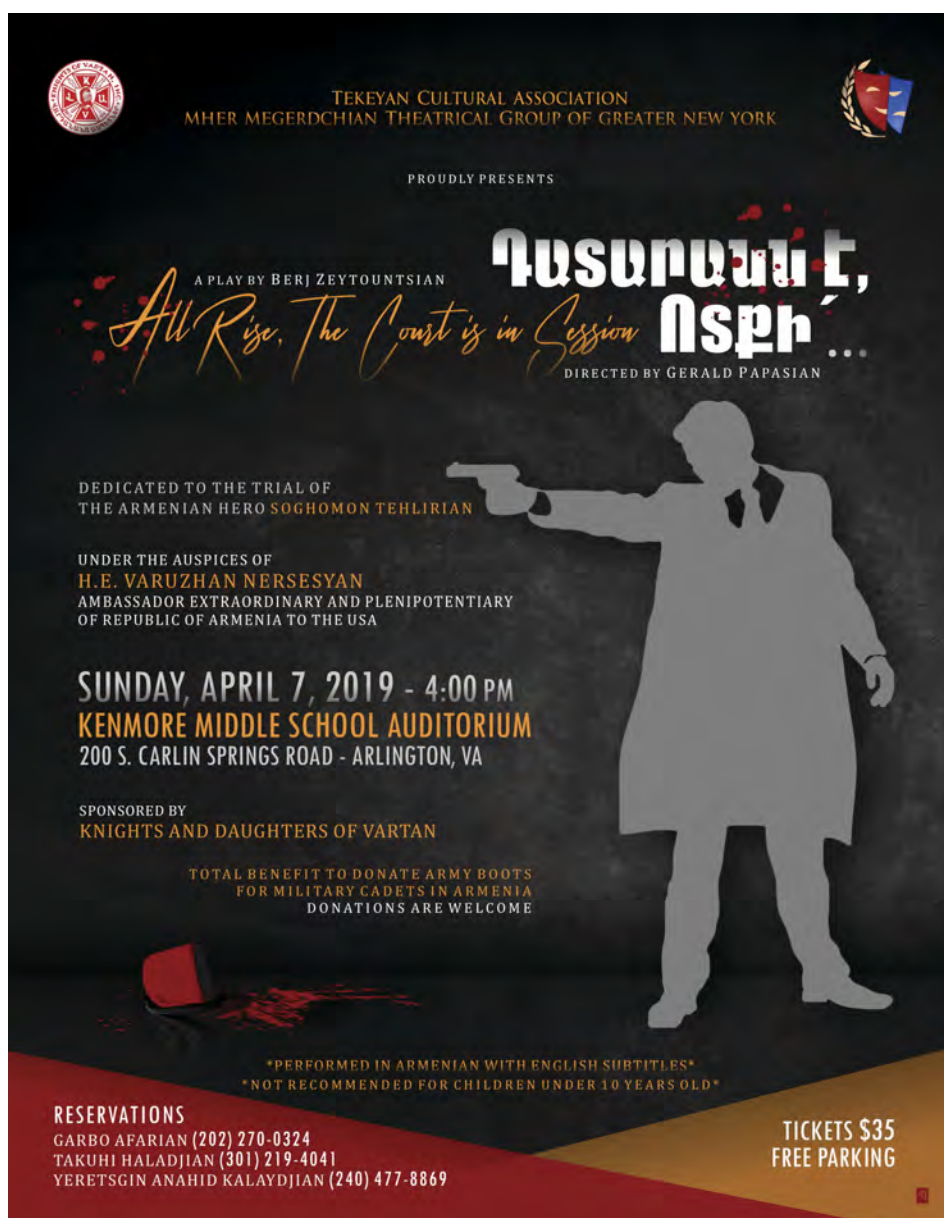
She had been working as a sales associate for Orangetheory Fitness in South Lincoln, Neb. after graduating the university but in February decided to take a break to focus fulltime on preparation for the next pageant as well as travel and appearances. She will be speaking to middle school girls at a yoga studio in a few weeks about female empowerment and feeling confident about their bodies. In April she will participate in an autism walk, and has some

other events coming up.

She already went to Dallas and Austin for some boot camps and to pick up her gowns for Miss USA in late January and early February, and at the end of March has another such camp. There, she does mock interviews, reads about current events, pop culture and US history, and practices walking and photo shoots. It is run by WME-IMG (William Morris Endeavor-International Management Group), a talent management group which puts on the national pageant. The VanBros organization helps prepare all the candidates from six states, including Nebraska, for the latter, as well as runs their state pageants.



Najarian family reunion in 2011, with Dr. John Najarian in middle of back row



The four Najarian brothers in 2011 at a family reunion



Arts & Living



Laurence-Anahit Mekhitarian

The Mediator between Armenian and Belgian Music

By Artsvi Bakhchinyan

Special to the Mirror-Spectator

YEREVAN/BRUSSELS — Dear Laurence, let's start our conversation with your father. Before knowing you, I read much about Arpag Mekhitarian, the eminent Egyptologist, who was also involved in Armenian art research and was active in community life in Belgium.

My father was born in Egypt in 1911 and died in Belgium in 2004. His own parents were born in Anatolia: my grandfather, Digran Mekhitarian (1875-1922) was born in Tokat and died in Egypt; my grandmother, Repega Djigamian was born in Marzevan (1896-1945) and died in Egypt at the end of the Second World War. After the death of my grandfather, the family came to Belgium in 1925, I think (mother Repega and the three boys, Arpag, my father, Bared who died earlier, and Mekhitar who died in 2013). My father met my mother, Aimée Briggen, in Switzerland in 1954, and she came just afterward to Belgium to marry him.

I would like to talk about my own experience and how I got in touch with Armenian culture little by little. Even my father never spoke in our family in the Armenian language during our childhood; however, we were regularly in contact with the Armenian community in Belgium. My parents had good Armenian friends and I remember our visits to them and the pleasure taken by my father from talking in the Armenian language, including, of course, with my uncle Mekhitar, his brother. They were always talking in their mother language when they were together.

We had at home a lot of books on Armenian culture and my father wrote also some books on Armenian art, especially on medieval miniatures. I remember also that my father, even though he was not a believer, took me to the church at Christmas and Easter because of his position in the Armenian community (and mostly also because he found the liturgy so beautiful). At that time we did not have an Armenian church in Belgium but there was a liturgy [conducted] twice a year in Brussels. This constitutes for me very deep and moving memories. We were going to some other meetings in our Hay Doun (Armenian House) in Brussels.

see MEKHITARIAN, page 14



Soloist Suzanne Waters (soprano)

Lark Pays Tribute to Agbabian with Brahms Concert

PASADENA, Calif. — A monumental and moving concert by the Lark Musical Society, featuring Johannes Brahms magnum opus, took place on Saturday, March 2, at the Ambassador Auditorium, under the auspices of the Armenian Missionary Association of America (AMAA) and dedicated to the memory of Dr. Mihran Agbabian.

Conducted by the Vatsche Barsoumian, the program, titled "A Promise of Hope," centered around Brahms's *German Requiem*, a 19th-century classical masterpiece and was performed by the LARK Mastersingers, the LARK Orchestra and soloists Garineh Avakian (mezzo-soprano), Suzanne Waters (soprano), and Edward Levy (baritone). The composition, written in German, was composed

By Taleen Babayan

Special to the Mirror-Spectator

posed by Brahms between 1865 and 1868 at the age of 30, and was a critical work that launched his professional career as an influential composer.

The theme of hope and comfort for the living was relevantly timed with the advent of Easter as the libretto conveyed passages from the Bible's Old and New Testaments, compiled by Brahms himself. The religious atmosphere heightened the spiritual ambiance of the evening as Gwen Gibson, pastor of the HRock Church, which holds services in the Ambassador Auditorium, opened the program's remarks.

"This is our home and it is our delight to share the stage with Lark Musical Society," said Gibson of the Ambassador Auditorium, referred to as the "Carnegie Hall of the West." "As a multi-generational and multi-ethnic church, it is our pleasure to host this performance."

Kenneth Kevorkian, chairman of the organizing committee, expressed gratitude for the audience's attendance, while reflecting on the recent passing of Agbabian. As co-founder of the American University of Armenia, Agbabian was a dedicated individual who generously gave to the Armenian people, from the homeland — establishing its first Western style academic institution — all the way to California, where he effectively participated and impacted myriad cultural, religious and humanitarian organizations.

"We are saddened by the loss of our former board member," said Kevorkian. "He was a guiding inspiration for all of us and we dedicate tonight's concert to him and his memory."

He thanked the Lark Musical Society and highlighted its accomplishments and advancements over the last three decades under the direction of its humble founder, Vatsche Barousmian, "a man who never wants to be recognized."

Following the opening prayer delivered by Reverend Vatche Ekmekjian, pastor of the Immanuel Armenian Congregational Church, the audience was enlivened by the sacred pieces of Brahms's *German Requiem*, as well as the German composer's

see LARK, page 17

REVIEW:

Mansurian in Context: UCLA Honors Composer On 80th Birthday

By Nestor Castiglione

LOS ANGELES — Since at least the death of Stravinsky, the composer has become an anonymous figure in the West, whether through willful academic seclusion on their part, or neglect by lazy happenstance on the part of listeners. Few people today outside the ever narrowing factions of classical music lovers would probably recognize a John Adams or Philip Glass walking down their street. Quite a number would probably be surprised to learn that the profession of "classical composer" is still alive, even sought after by some.

In some corners of the world, however, the role of composer still carries a powerful aura for people.

As violinist Movses Pogossian mentioned in his prefatory remarks to UCLA's tribute to the composer last Wednesday, the 80-year-old Tigran Mansurian enjoys the status of celebrity in his native Armenia, with passersby regularly seeking autographs and selfies from him. His reputation there

was built upon his neo-Romantic film scores, which seem to stand at a remove from the concert works that have carried his name abroad. Or do they? Something of the sensuality, the earthy directness of those soundtracks can be heard distantly echoing in the masterpieces of his maturity.



Tigran Mansurian

Within the same composer there thrives the Armenian, the Russian, and the European cosmopolitan, fusing those three into a single inimitable voice which remains one of the most compelling of our age.

His String Quintet, which was performed in the US for the first time on Wednesday night, took scattered shards evoking Armenian folk musics, and reassembled them in startling ways that were more IRCAM than Ijevan.

Against a backdrop of works by Schnittke, Silvestrov, and Pärt, Mansurian's art was revealed to be as much a product of his own originality, as they were of a generational shift felt by him and his peers. Each drew from the liturgical past in order to express things that are startlingly modern in the secular present.

Emblematic of this was Mansurian's *Agnus Dei*, one of his most immediately gorgeous chamber scores. A quartet of clarinet, violin, cello, and piano wordlessly intone liturgical words, transcending the barriers of faith, yet quietly proclaiming that life is more than the sum of what we can see and touch. The bold pianism of Artur Avanesov at the UCLA performance imbued a carnality altogether different from the ethereality of Steven Vanhauwaert's performance with Dilijan earlier this year, augmenting further this quality of Mansurian's music being perched delicately between the earthly and celestial.

At the end of the concert, the composer expressed his thanks to the audience via Skype, followed by all of Schoenberg Hall singing Happy Birthday in reply. Mansurian's 80th birthday is not merely a celebration for Armenian music, but for music as a whole. His art is and will continue to be part of the patrimony of great music, a birthright of any ready listener as much as Beethoven and Brahms.



ARTS & LIVING

Krikor Balakian's *The Ruins of Ani* Published By Rutgers University Press

NEW YORK — *The Ruins of Ani* published in 1910 in Constantinople has just been published for the first time in an English edition — the translation by Peter Balakian and Aram Arkun, with an introduction by Balakian. The edition includes the 33 original black and white photographs taken by Balakian in 1909 and a dozen color images take by Peter Balakian in the past decade.

The Ruins of Ani is the only monograph on the history and legacy of Ani in print today. A unique combination of history, art criticism, and travel memoir, Balakian's book charts the historic pilgrimage made there in 1909 with a clerical retinue led by Catholicos Matteos II. Balakian documents carefully the Armenian founding, building and decline of Ani.

From the 10th to the 13th centuries, the city of Ani was the capital of the Armenian Bagratuni kingdom, and a leading city of trade on the silk road and renowned for its architecture and arts and crafts. Balakian argues the cathedral at Ani is the forerunner of the European Gothic style, and that the dozens of other Armenian churches and buildings there were landmarks in Armenian and world civilization. From the eleventh century on Ani was conquered by Seljuks, Mongols, Georgians and Kurds and by the 15th century Ani had been ruined by pillage and earthquakes and abandoned until the excavations of the archeologist Wilhelm Marr in the 1890s. Its ruins have remained a symbol of cultural accomplishment that looms large in the Armenian imagination.

The Ruins of Ani: A Journey to Armenia's Medieval Capital and its Legacy.

Krikor Balakian; Translated and with an introduction by Peter Balakian with Aram Arkun Rutgers University Press: New Brunswick, New Jersey and London, December, 2018.

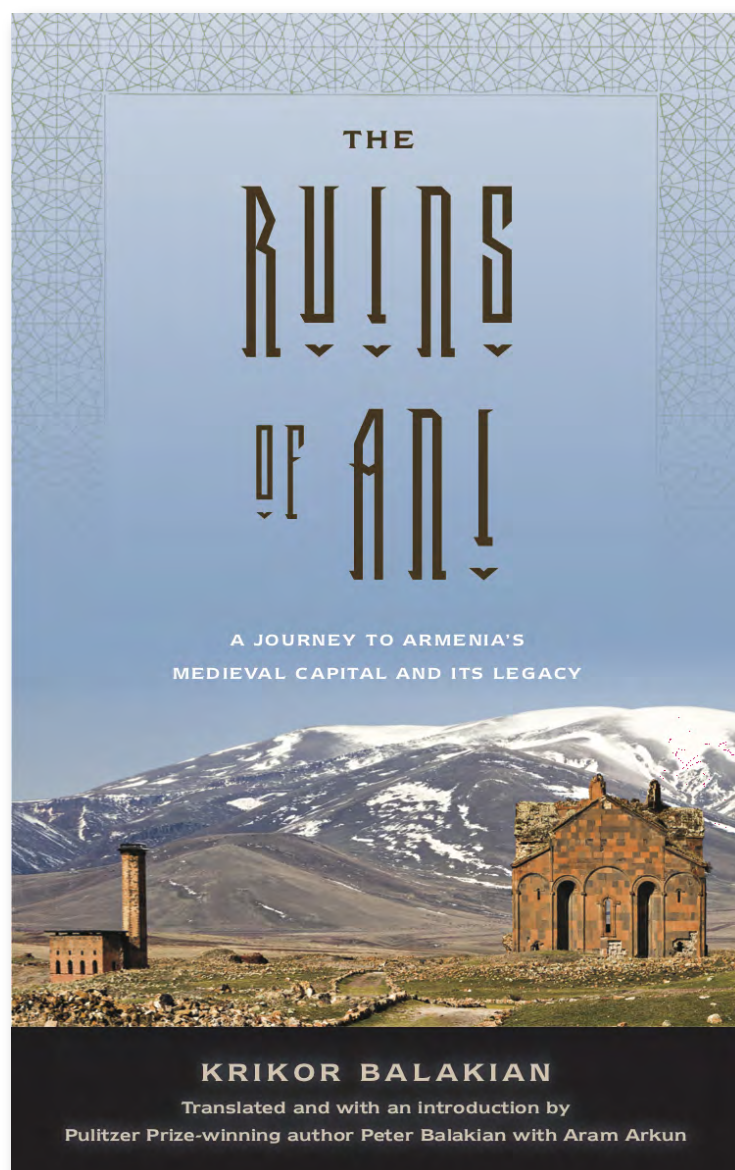
174 pages, 45 color and black and white plates.

Today, Ani is a popular tourist site in Turkey with many of the Armenian churches partially restored and supported by the World Monument Fund, but the city has been falsified in its presentation by the Turkish government in order to erase Armenian history in the wake of the

Armenian Genocide. This timely publication raises questions about the preservation of major historic monuments in the face of post-atrocity campaigns of cultural erasure, and about the ethical ownership of Ani in the post-Armenian Genocide impasse. The book has already received critical praise from major scholars: "A remarkable and invaluable study," Robert Jay Lifton; "breathes new life into a crucial yet neglected source," Christina Maranci; "His eye on the ancient capital is mournful and creates new

depth post genocide," Donna-Lee Frieze; "underscores forcefully how central cultural destruction was and is in the unfolding of that crime against humanity," Jay Winter.

The young *vartabed* Krikor Balakian published his first book just a few years before his arrest on April 24 in Constantinople at the outset of the Armenian Genocide, after which he wrote his epic survivor memoir *Armenian Golgotha*. This new translation by Aram Arkun and the author's great-nephew, Pulitzer Prize-winning poet Peter Balakian, eloquently renders the book's vivid descriptions and lyrical prose into English. Peter Balakian's new introduction explores Ani's continued relevance in the 21st century,



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Tekeyan Cultural Association Metro Los Angeles Chapter
Presents

AN EVENING OF COMEDY II

Featuring
HAROUT SOGHOMONIAN

Special Guest
MARO AJEMIAN

Saturday, May 4, 2019
7:30 PM Cocktails • 8 PM Dinner • 8:30 PM Program
Phoenicia Restaurant (Upper Hall) • 343 N. Central Ave., Glendale, CA
Admission • \$80 • www.itsmyseat.com/tekeyan
Contact • info@TekeyanLA.org for group seating (12 per table)
Tickets must be pre-purchased • No tickets will be sold at the door

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A SPECIAL TRIBUTE TO CHARLES AZNAVOUR

Embassy of Armenia to the United States, in partnership with the French Embassy, La Maison Française and Smithsonian Associates, presents two concerts by Paris Chansons, a French band with a global twist based in Los Angeles, organized as part of DC Francophonie Festival 2019.

A Special Tribute to Charles Aznavour
Plus French classics by Dassin, Piaf, Macias, Adamo, Zaz and others.

On March 16, at 3:00 pm and 7:00 pm At La Maison Francaise
4101 Reservoir Rd, NW
Washington, DC 20007

Tickets: \$30+processing fee.



ARTS & LIVING

The Mediator Between Armenian And Belgian Music

MEKHITARIAN, page 12

My parents were very involved during the 1980s and later with the Armenian newcomers from Turkey and Armenia. They never imposed on us to be in concrete action in Armenian activities, but we knew about their actions in social life for Armenian newcomers. There is still a social center with the name of my father (Centre social Arménien Arpag Mekhitarian). The last thing is also that I began to practice the piano, and my father received the works of Armenian musicians. I have everything and step by step I learned some of the music of Komitas and other Armenian composers.

The music fans of Yerevan had the opportunity to listen your piano recitals twice. You prefer playing avant-garde pieces, often with nontraditional interpretations (for instance, playing on piano strings, singing or using multimedia). Do you think that over time piano playing should experience some changes?

I think we need, and it is our duty as musicians, to be open to the new ways the composers offer us. But it is not why we have to deny the past. I love Bach, Schubert, Beethoven, Schumann, Debussy... and many other composers. But the living music of today is the music composed today, and there is still a gap between that music and the audience. Music creation is always in evolution, changing, offering new ideas of playing our instrument, how to use new technology. It will never stop and it is really fascinating to listen to the always new possibilities created by the composers. That's not why I appreciate all new music but as a professional I feel this interest, curiosity and the duty, as I said before, to be of service to the today's composers. And I can say more: it is a real chance to be in contact with them because it is the real lively music and they can explain what they wish, what they mean, and what they have the urgency to say in their works.

I taught the piano for many years and the most important thing for me was really the personal expression and wellbeing of my students with the music they played. In that way, meeting the Hungarian composer György Kurtág through his *Jâtekok* collection was for me a great experience, not only as he is a lively contemporary composer but as a possibility to know what is essential in playing music. Of course we need technical knowledge of our instrument and of music theory, but the most important thing is to know the sense, the deep meaning of the sounds we are listening to and we are playing. In that way Kurtág offered us a lot of possibilities to explore and to test what musical meaning we can apply to every music and every composer throughout the ages and different countries. Music is our internal experience of life. The sound we produce has to be inhabited by the depth of our inner search.

You always played Armenian composers' works. Do you share the opinion that Armenian folk music and its interpretation are not that suitable for piano? For instance, while commenting on Arno Babajanian's performance of his own *Elegy*, famous American pianist Norman Krieger wrote that Rachmaninoff surely would dislike both the composition and performance. Do you think he was right?

I cannot speak in Rachmaninov's place of course, nor for Norman Krieger. I will never adopt a strict limited view. I think each instrument can be the good instrument for playing every music, if there is a good spirit in the playing of the musician.

The best compliment I received one day when I was playing Komita's *Dances* on the piano is that you could not hear the sound of the piano but something fairer, like a traditional music sound. Of course it was because of the fantastic musical writing of Komitas, but I think in our playing we have to seek always to suggest the right and deep spirit of something fundamental, the deep feeling of what the music means.

You are among those rare musicians of the Armenian diaspora, or rather, world musicians of Armenian origin, who keeps under the spotlight the oeuvre of contemporary Armenian composers. Do you think they can have a certain place in contemporary piano music scene?

My knowledge of contemporary Armenian composers begun only few years ago. For many years I was interested in Belgium in contemporary musical compositions, but not especially in Armenian

composers. In 2015 I wanted to play a program with the young generation of Armenian composers and I had the chance to receive scores from some of them (Vache Sharafyan, Arthur Avanesov, Arthur Akhshelyan, Aram Hohannissyan, Davit Balasanyan). In the same period, I asked Belgian composers to write new piano music, in their style of course, but in the spirit of Armenia.

My first concert was for the commemoration of the genocide centennial, and I received a great piece from Claude Ledoux (*Saveurs de pierre et de miel*), and afterwards from Jean-Pierre Deleuze (*Hayastan*) and Jean-Luc Fafchamps (*Feuillets d'Arménie*). It helped me to enter deeper in Armenian musical culture through those echoes from outside. After this concert in Brussels I had the opportunity to come to Armenia for playing as part of the Crossroads Festival created in 2017 thanks to the young Quartertone association. I

played also at this occasion a piano piece with electronic music of Franck-Christoph Yeznikian, a composer from the French diaspora.

I am sure that all of that music may have a place in international musical life. My contribution is on a small scale, but now Belgian composers are also involved in Armenian musical life because they are invited to come and give some lectures and master classes as part of the Crossroads Festival. This year we will come to Armenia for the third time, this time with Jean-Luc Fafchamps (after Claude Ledoux in 2017 and Jean-Pierre Deleuze in 2018).

Please tell us about your upcoming projects.

I am continuing to prepare some programs to play in May 2019 in Armenia with Belgian, Armenian and other contemporary composers ... and I will play this program also in Brussels.

I am also preparing a lecture on Kurtág's music. I met Kurtág many times a few years ago. I was

very interested in his pedagogical orientation that is intimately linked to his entire musical production. In that way I always provide training in contemporary music for piano teachers in Belgium.

I also suggested to J. L. Fafchamps to compose a new piece for *duduk* and piano, like a rediscovery, a re-reading of this Armenian instrument so emblematic, and I am really curious to discover what can this new sonorities association be in his music.

I have also a new project with F. C. Yeznikian, with his electronic music in the world of R. Schumann in which I will play alternately some Schumann's pieces.

And in the pedagogical mode, I was asked to prepare a publication of current new Belgian repertoire for young pianists I explored during the last years with my own students and with other colleagues.

Recipe Corner

by Christine Vartanian Datian

Mixed Vegetable Salad with Tahini Lemon Dressing



INGREDIENTS

5 cups loosely packed green leaf lettuce, spinach or arugula, torn into bite sized pieces
1 1/2 cups cherry or heirloom tomatoes, halved
1 cup finely diced cucumber, seeded
1 cup garbanzo beans, washed and drained
1 cup finely chopped flat-leaf parsley
1 cup finely chopped mint leaves
1 cup grilled eggplant or zucchini, diced
1/2 cup diced or sliced white or red onion
1/4 cup Kalamata or black olives, halved
1/4 cup pomegranate seeds, optional
2 roasted red or green bell pepper, diced
6 radishes, finely chopped
6 green onions, white and green parts, finely chopped
1 large avocado, diced or sliced
2-3 white or whole-wheat pitas
Kosher or sea salt and pepper
1/2 teaspoon sumac
Olive oil
Lemon wedges
2 tablespoons toasted pine nuts, optional, to garnish

PREPARATION

Toast the pita bread until crisp but not browned. Heat 3-4 tablespoons of olive oil in a large pan. Tear pita bread into pieces, and place in the heated oil. Fry briefly until browned, tossing. Season with salt, pepper and 1/2 teaspoon of sumac. Remove the pita chips from the heat and place on paper towels to drain.

Assemble the salad ingredients in a large bowl by layers of vegetables or toss together in a bowl. Drizzle with Tahini Lemon Dressing and season with salt and pepper.

Top with the toasted pita chips and pine nuts, if desired, and serve with extra dressing and lemon wedges on the side.

*Homemade cooked falafels, diced chicken, beef or lamb kebobs, or diced leftover Armenian kufta may be added to this salad, as well as chopped baked or grilled chicken or turkey.

Serves 4-6.

TAHINI LEMON DRESSING INGREDIENTS:

1/2 cup tahini, or a little more
3-4 tablespoons olive oil
2 large cloves garlic, minced or crushed
1/4 cup water
2 scallions, coarsely chopped
2 tablespoons minced flat-leaf parsley
1/4 teaspoon sea or Kosher salt
Juice of 1 large lemon, more to taste
Pinch of cumin and sumac

PREPARATION

Whisk all ingredients in a bowl for a few minutes until combined or place in a blender or food processor and blend thoroughly until very smooth. Check seasonings, adding more tahini, salt, olive oil or lemon juice for a smoother consistency.

Use dressing immediately or store (sealed) in the refrigerator for up to 5 days.

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





ARTS & LIVING

CALENDAR

ARIZONA

APRIL 15 — Genocide Awareness Program featuring presenters Prof. Taner Akçam and Prof. Barlow Der Mugrdechian. Dr. Akçam will discuss the Amrenain Genocide including his evidence of Turkish denials which he covers in his latest book, *Killing Orders*. Der Mugrdechian's topic will be Genocide in the 21st Century: Turkey and Armenia. Monday, 1 p.m. Scottsdale Community College, 9000 E. Chaparral Road, Scottsdale. Admission is free and open to the public. Dr. Akçam will sign copies of *Killing Orders* following the program. Speakers are sponsored by St. Apkar Armenian Apostolic Church.

CALIFORNIA

MARCH 23 — Book presentation by Adrienne G. Alexanian, editor of her father's memoir, *Forced Genocide: Memoirs of an Armenian Soldier in the Ottoman Turkish Army*. Saturday, 2 p.m. Calabasas Library Multipurpose Room. 200 Civic Center Way, Calabasas. Special Guest — Councilman James Bozajian RSVP blockwood@calabasaslibrary.org. Reception and book sale/signing will follow presentation — proceeds donated to the library.

MARCH 24 — Book presentation by Adrienne G. Alexanian, editor of her father's memoir, *Forced into Genocide: Memoirs of an Armenian Soldier in the Ottoman Turkish Army*, Sunday, 2:30 p.m. Museum of Tolerance. Co-sponsored by the Armenian General Benevolent Union, the Armenian International Women's Association, National Association for Armenian Studies and Research and the Armenian Assembly of America. 9786 Pico Blvd., Los Angeles. RSVP (310) 772-2505. Book sale/signing will follow presentation — proceeds will be donated

MARCH 28 — Book presentation by Adrienne G. Alexanian, editor of her father's memoir, *Forced into Genocide: Memoirs of an Armenian Soldier in the Ottoman Turkish Army*, Thursday, 7 p.m., Glendale Downtown Central Library, With support from the Armenian National Committee of America. 222 East Harvard Street, Glendale. RSVP (818) 548- 2021. Book sale/signing before and after the presentation — proceeds will be donated

APRIL 4 and 7 — Alessandro Safina, will bring in his pop-opera to the US during his upcoming concert tour in April. 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/1C005554CB5A> 7778 Dolby Theater in Los Angeles on April 7. (Times 8:00-9:30pm) https://dolbytheatre.com/events/details/alessandro_safina <https://www1.ticketmaster.com/alessandro-safina-with-victor-espinola-the-forbidden-saints/event/3B005546FA735928>

April 7 — Heghnar Watenpaugh, "The Missing Pages: The Modern Life of a Medieval Manuscript from Genocide to Justice," Sunday, 4 p.m., at the Ararat-Eskijian Museum. Co-sponsored by the Ararat-Eskijian Museum and the National Association for Armenian Studies and Research (NAASR).

APRIL 22 — 7:30 p.m.: Hans-Lukas Kieser, "Talat Pasha: Father of Modern Turkey, Author of Genocide," at the Ararat-Eskijian Museum, 15105 Mission Hills Road, Mission Hills, CA. Co-sponsored by the Ararat-Eskijian Museum, Nor Serount Cultural Association, Hamazkayin Educational and Cultural Society, and the National Association for Armenian Studies and Research (NAASR).

APRIL 27 — The Tekeyan Cultural Association of the United States and Canada Presents the 2019 North American tour of the VEM Ensemble of the UCLA Herb Albert School of Music, Danielle Segen, mezzo-soprano, Ji Eun Hwang, violin 1, Aiko Richter, violin 2, Morgan O'Shaughnessey, viola, Jason Pegis, cello. 7:30 p.m. Tekeyan Cultural Association Los Angeles Chapter

Cosponsored with Abril Bookstore, 415 E. Broadway, Glendale. For tickets, call Abril 818 243-4112. Introductory remarks by Artistic Director Professor Movses Pogossian. Performing a world premiere of Tekeyan songs by the Los Angeles-based composer Artashes Kartalyan, commissioned by the Tekeyan Cultural Association, and masterworks by Komitas, Khachaturian, Mirzoyan, Hovhannes, and Schubert. For more information, email tcadirector@aol.com.

APRIL 28 — Christina Maranci, "The Art of Armenia: An introduction," at the Ararat-Eskijian Museum. Co-sponsored by the Ararat-Eskijian Museum and the National Association for Armenian Studies and Research (NAASR). 4 p.m.

MAY 4 and MAY 5 — 2nd Feminist Armenian Studies Workshop: Gendering Resistance and Revolution, at the University of California, Irvine. Co-sponsored by the National Association for Armenian Studies and Research (NAASR)/Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation Lecture Series on Contemporary Armenian Topics.

MAY 5 — Mathew Karanian, "The Armenian Highland: Western Armenia and the First Armenian Republic of 1918," 4 p.m. at the Ararat-Eskijian Museum, 15105 Mission Hills Road, Mission Hills, CA. Co-sponsored by the Ararat-Eskijian Museum, Kharper Cultural Association, and the National Association for Armenian Studies and Research (NAASR).

MAY 19 — The Tekeyan Cultural Association of the United States and Canada Presents the 2019 North American tour of the VEM Ensemble of the UCLA Herb Albert School of Music, Danielle Segen, mezzo-soprano, Ji Eun Hwang, violin 1, Aiko Richter, violin 2, Morgan O'Shaughnessey, viola, Jason Pegis, cello. 7:30 p.m. Tekeyan Cultural Association Los Angeles Chapter Cosponsored with Abril Bookstore, 415 E. Broadway, Glendale. Introductory remarks by Artistic Director Professor Movses Pogossian. Performing a world premiere of Tekeyan songs by the Los Angeles-based composer Artashes Kartalyan, commissioned by the Tekeyan Cultural Association, and masterworks by Komitas, Khachaturian, Mirzoyan, Hovhannes, and Schubert. Tekeyan Cultural Association, Pasadena-Glendale Chapter, TCA Beshgeturian Center, 1901 North Allen Ave., Altadena. For more information, email tcadirector@aol.com.

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 21 — Book Presentation of English translation of Andranik Tzarukian's Letter to Yerevan, translated by Tatul Sonentz-Papazian and Rupen Janbazian, at the Armenian Cultural and Educational Center (ACEC), 47 Nichols Ave. Watertown, 7:30 p.m. Co-sponsored by Hamazkayin Armenian Cultural and Educational Society of Boston, ARF Sardarabad Gomideh, the Hairenik Press, and the National Association for Armenian Studies and Research (NAASR).

MARCH 24 — Luncheon and Book Talk featuring Senator Lou D'Allesandro of New Hampshire, sponsored by Holy Trinity Armenian Church of Greater Boston and the Trinity Men's Union, 12:30 p.m., Charles and Nevart Talanian Cultural Hall, Holy Trinity Armenian Church, 145 Brattle St., Cambridge. Senator D'Allesandro will be discussing the book about his extraordinary career in politics, *Lion of the New Hampshire Senate and Thoughts for Presidential Hopefuls*. Donation for lunch: \$8. Tickets on sale at the door. Books available for purchase. For information, contact the Church Office, 617.354.0632, or www.htaac.org/calendar/event/652/.

MARCH 28-29 — Graduate Student Conference, "Entangled Encounters: Antiquity and Modernity in Armenian Studies," at Harvard University. Co-sponsored by the Hrant Dink Memorial CMES Fund and the National Association for Armenian Studies and Research (NAASR). Christina Maranci, Tufts University; David Zakarian, Oxford University; Marie-Aude Baronian, University of Michigan and Sylvia Alajaji, Franklin & Marshall College 5 to 7 p.m. Fong Auditorium, Boylston Hall, Harvard Yard, Cambridge.

MARCH 31-APRIL 14 — Needlelace Workshops at the Armenian Museum. Join us for this unique opportunity to continue the tradition of Armenian needlelace! Taught by Textile Curator Susan Lind-Sinanian, these three sessions are a unique opportunity to learn intricate regional techniques that were passed down through generations from mother to daughter. All materials are supplied so just show up ready to learn techniques practiced by Armenian women for centuries. Examples from the Museum's textile collection will provide inspiration as you find your voice by sewing edgings on linens. Have Armenian needlelace at home? Bring them in to share your family story! Sundays, 3–5 p.m. Adele & Haig Der Manuelian galleries, 3rd floor. Cost: \$90, Members discount: \$60. 65 Main St, Watertown.

MARCH 31 — The Tekeyan Cultural Association of the United States and Canada Presents the 2019 North American tour of the VEM Ensemble of the UCLA Herb Albert School of Music, Danielle Segen, mezzo-soprano, Ji Eun Hwang, violin 1, Aiko Richter, violin 2, Morgan O'Shaughnessey, viola, Jason Pegis, cello. BOSTON Sunday, March 31, 1 p.m. cosponsored with Holy Trinity Armenian Church, 145 Brattle St., Cambridge. Free admission. Introductory remarks by Artistic Director Professor Movses Pogossian. Performing a world premiere of Tekeyan songs by the Los Angeles-based composer Artashes Kartalyan, commissioned by the Tekeyan Cultural Association, and masterworks by Komitas, Khachaturian, Mirzoyan, Hovhannes, and Schubert. For more information, email tcadirector@aol.com.

APRIL 1 — St James Men's Club Dinner Meeting - social hour and mezza at 6:15 p.m. and dinner at 7 p.m., St James Armenian Church Charles Mosesian Cultural and Youth Center - Keljik Hall, 465 Mt. Auburn Street, Watertown, MA. This meeting will be celebrated as a "Father, Daughter, and Son" evening. Speaker Steven Biondillo is a pioneer in the fields of public health and human services marketing, and special-event fundraising. "Rethinking Teambuilding." 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.

APRIL 4 — Tufts Armenian Genocide Commemoration, Thursday, 7 p.m., featuring a lecture by Helen Evans, "Medieval Traditions of Commemoration." Co-sponsored by the Darakjian Jafarian Chair in Armenian History, the History Department at Tufts University, Tufts University, the Armenian Club at Tufts University, and the National Association for Armenian Studies and Research (NAASR).

APRIL 4-June 6 — SAVE THE DATE. First Thursdays: Jazz at the Armenian Museum. Featuring the John Baboian Quartet. Thursday, April 4 from 7–9 pm, Thursday, May 2 from 7–9 pm, Thursday, June 6 from 7–9 pm. Armenian Museum of America, 65 Main St, Watertown.

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.

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE



ARTS & LIVING

C A L E N D A R

MASSACHUSETTS

FROM PREVIOUS PAGE

To learn more, 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 7 – “Vaping 101: A Seminar for Parents,” sponsored by the Parent Partnership of Holy Trinity Armenian Church of Greater Boston, 12:30 pm-2 pm, Charles and Nevart Talanian Cultural Hall, 145 Brattle Street, Cambridge. All are invited to an educational session designed to help parents and caregivers learn more about the effects of the dangerous epidemic of teen vaping. Presenters are Carlene Newell, Health Educator/Tobacco Specialist, Karen Koretsky, Community Coalition Director, Arlington Youth Health and Safety Coalition, and Cindy Sheridan Curran, Arlington High School Truancy Officer. Admission free; light refreshments served. RSVP by April 5 to Director of Youth Ministries at youth@htaac.org. For information, log onto <http://www.htaac.org/calendar/event/667/>

APRIL 7 – Annual Reconfiguration of the Abstract Sculpture Armenian Heritage Park on The Greenway, Boston. Sunday at 7:00 am. Coffee & Conversation from 8:00am -9:00am. A crane lifts and pulls apart the two halves of Abstract Sculpture, made of steel and aluminum, to create a new sculptural shape. The annual reconfiguration is supported by the Park’s Charles and Doreen Bilezikian Endowed Fund. Rain date: April 14. RSVP appreciated – hello@armenianheritagepark.org

April 11 – Jonathan Conlin, “Mr. Five Percent: The Many Lives of Calouste Gulbenkian, the World’s Richest Man,” at the AGBU Center, 247 Mt. Auburn St., Watertown. Presented by the National Association for Armenian Studies and Research (NAASR). 7:30 p.m. Details to follow.

APRIL 12 – Massachusetts State House annual Armenian Genocide Commemoration, 10 a.m. to 12.30 p.m. Reception to follow. Boston. Bus transportation free from Watertown to State House. Deadline April 8 to register. Bostonagcc@gmail.com

APRIL 24 – Armenian Heritage Park Armenian Genocide Commemoration, 7 to 9 p.m. Bus transportation available. Reserve by April 22. Bostonagcc@gmail.com

APRIL 24 – Save the Date! “In the Shadow of Branches: Diana Apcar/Berjouhi Kailian. The Armenian Museum. In recognition of Armenian Genocide Remembrance Day. 6–8.30 pm. The Armenian Museum presents a new exhibition in the Adele & Haig Der Manuelian galleries that explores the intertwined lives of diplomat Diana Agabeg Apcar (1859–1937) and artist Berjouhi Kailian (1914–2014). The Armenian Museum wishes to engage in meaningful dialogue around this solemn subject that permeates Armenian experience around the world. Candlelight viewing of the galleries followed by a discussion of the traumatic effects of the Genocide to remember the victims, survivors, and individuals who chose to intervene.

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/.

APRIL 27 – SAVE THE DATE! Hai Guin Scholarship Association 2019 Spring Benefit Luncheon. Belmont Country Club. Saturday, 11:30 a.m. Sip, Shop and Support! Featuring Fashions and Pop-Up Shop by St. John. Please contact Christine Berberian 978-500-1116 or Andrea Garabedian 978-618-3030 to reserve your tickets (\$65 each).

APRIL 30 – Panel, “Bucking the Trend? Why Is Armenia Moving Towards Democracy When Authoritarianism is on the March Worldwide?” (provisional title), , 7:30 p.m.: featuring Anna Ohanyan (Stonehill College), Dmitri Sotiropoulos (Visiting Scholar, Center for European Studies, Harvard), and Valerie Sperling (Clark University), moderated by Lisa

Gulesserian. At Harvard University. Co-sponsored by the NAASR/Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation Lecture Series on Contemporary Armenian Issues, AGBU YP Boston, and the Harvard Armenian Students Association. Further details to follow.

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.

MAY 4 – Celebrate Public Art two-part program during ARTWEEK BOSTON. Armenian Heritage Park on The Greenway, Boston. Saturday at 1 p.m. World Labyrinth Day: Walk as One. Join people in cities and towns in 35 countries world-wide walking in peace and harmony including Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Belgium, Brazil, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, England, France, Germany, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Lithuania, Mexico, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Peru, Poland, Romania, Russia, Scotland, South Africa, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Uruguay and USA followed by reception to view the 2019 configuration of the abstract sculpture , hosted by Eastern Lamejun Bakers and MEM Tea Imports. RSVP appreciated hello@armenianheritagepark.org.

MAY 6 – Irina Ghaplanyan, “Post-Soviet Armenia: The New National Elite and the New National Narrative,” at the AGBU Center, 247 Mt. Auburn St., Watertown, 7:30 p.m. Sponsored by the NAASR/Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation Lecture Series on Contemporary Armenian Issues. Further details to follow.

MAY 10 – Lenny Clarke & Friends. Fundraiser to benefit the Armenian Apostolic Church at Hye Pointe Building Fund. 8 p.m. The Armenian Apostolic Church at Hye Pointe, 1280 Boston Road, Bradford. Mezze/Appetizers are Included & Cash Bar. Call Dro Kanayan at 978 828 5755 or Stephanie Naroian at 978 835 1636 for tickets or tables and packages are available. Tickets will only be sold in advance, not at the door.

MAY 15 – The Tekeyan Cultural Association and the Armenian General Benevolent Union will present a literary evening with writer Aris Janigian, author of *Waiting for Lipchitz at Chateau Marmont*, *Bloodvine* and *Riverbig*, among others, with discussant author, poet and editor Susan Barba. 7.30 p.m., AGBU Building, 247 Mount Auburn Building. Free, reception to follow. Books will be on sale.

MAY 19 – SAVE THE DATE! Concert at the Armenian Museum. Concert to celebrate the 150th anniversary of the birth of Komitas Vardapet and poet Hovhaness Tumanyan. Sunday, 2-4 p.m.

MAY 19 – “International Food Festival – A Taste of the World,” presented by the Women of Holy Trinity, Holy Trinity Armenian Church of Greater Boston, 12:30-2:30 p.m., Charles and Nevart Talanian Cultural Hall, 145 Brattle Street, Cambridge. Join us to sample authentic cuisine from 9 countries: Armenia, Iran/Persia, Lebanon, Greece, France, Russia, Brazil, China and Italy. Donation: \$15 adults; \$10 children 12 and under. Tickets on sale at the door. For further information, contact the Holy Trinity Church Office, 617.354.0632.

JUNE 1 – Armenian Food Festival, Saturday, 11:30 a.m. to 6:30 p.m., Armenian Church at Hye Pointe, 1280 Boston Road, Haverhill. Chicken, Losh Kebab, Kheyma, and Dolma Dinners. Armenian Cuisine featuring Spinach Pie, Lahmajoon, Cheese Beoreg, and more. Pastries Paklava, Kadayif, Cheoreg and morePlus Activities for the Children, White Elephant Table, Gift Basket Raffles.

JUNE 12 – Tea and Tranquility. Armenian Heritage Park on The Greenway, Boston. Wednesday from 4:30 p.m. -6 p.m. Meet & Greet. Walk the Labyrinth. Enjoy refreshing Ice Teas, hosted by MEM Tea Imports and dessert. Introduction to walking the labyrinth, mindful and meditative walking at 4:45pm. RSVP appreciated hello@armenianheritagepark.org

JUNE 27 – Under a Strawberry Moon. Armenian Heritage Park on The Greenway, Boston. Thursday at 8:30 p.m. Meet & Greet. Moonlit Labyrinth Walk. Luscious Chocolate Dipped Strawberries, hosted by vicki lee’s and refreshing Ice Teas, hosted by MEM Tea Imports and the fabulous Berklee Jazz Trio. RSVP appreciated hello@armenianheritagepark.org

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 [\[town.org/armenia\]\(http://town.org/armenia\).](http://www.stjameswater-</p></div><div data-bbox=)

JULY 17 – Tea and Tranquility. Armenian Heritage Park on The Greenway, Boston. Wednesday from 4:30-6 p.m. Meet & Greet. Walk the Labyrinth. Enjoy refreshing ice teas, hosted by MEM Tea Imports and dessert. Introduction to walking the labyrinth, mindful and meditative walking at 4:45pm. RSVP appreciated hello@armenianheritagepark.org

AUGUST 14 – Tea and Tranquility. Armenian Heritage Park on The Greenway, Boston. Wednesday from 4:30-6 p.m. Meet & Greet. Walk the Labyrinth. Enjoy refreshing Ice Teas, hosted by MEM Tea Imports and dessert. Introduction to walking the labyrinth, mindful and meditative walking at 4:45pm. RSVP appreciated hello@armenianheritagepark.org

AUGUST 22 – Under the August Moon. Armenian Heritage Park on The Greenway, Boston. Thursday from 7:30– 9 p.m. Delightful evening for supporters, partners & friends featuring fabulous signature dishes, hosted by anoush’ella and the Berklee Jazz Trio. RSVP appreciated hello@armenianheritagepark.org

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

SEPTEMBER 22 – Sunday Afternoon for Families and Friends. Armenian Heritage Park on The Greenway, Boston. 2:00pm-4:00pm. Wonderful afternoon with The Hye Guys Ensemble featuring Ron Sahatjian and Joe Kouyoumjian. Hoodsies, Face Painting and more RSVP appreciated hello@armenianheritagepark.org

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

MARCH 27 – The Tekeyan Cultural Association of the US and Canada Presents the 2019 North American tour of the VEM Ensemble of the UCLA Herb Albert School of Music, Danielle Segen, mezzo-soprano, Ji Eun Hwang, violin 1, Aiko Richter, violin 2, Morgan O’Shaughnessey, viola, Jason Pegis, cello. Wednesday, March 27, 8 p.m. Cosponsored with Music Guild of St. John Armenian Church Recreation Center, 22001 Northwestern Hwy, Southfield. Free admission. Introductory remarks by Artistic Director Professor Movses Pogossian. Performing a world premiere of Tekeyan songs by the Los Angeles-based composer Artashes Kartalyan, commissioned by the Tekeyan Cultural Association, and masterworks by Komitas, Khachaturian, Mirzoyan, Hovhannes, and Schubert. For more information, email tcadirector@aol.com.

NEW JERSEY

MAY 18 – St. Nersess Armenian Seminary invites you to Hope & Gratitude, a celebration honoring Archbishop Khajag Barsamian and Bishop-elect Very Rev. Daniel Findikyan. 6:30 p.m. Old Tappan Manor, Old Tappan, NJ. For more info on reservations and booklet sponsorships, please go to www.stnersess.edu.

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

NEW YORK

MARCH 18 – “Women as Agents of Sustainable Peace: From Revolution to Governance.” Presented by the Armenian International Women’s Association. United Nations, Church Center of the UN, Second Floor. Featuring Mary Galstyan, member of Parliament from Amrenia; Dr. Anna Ohanyan of Stonehill College; Alex

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE



ARTS & LIVING

Lark Pays Tribute to Agbabian with Brahms Concert

LARK, from page 12

two other well-known pieces, *Song of Fate* and *Alto Rhapsody*, that also seek to capture the human spirit. A pre-concert lecture by Doris Melkonian, who holds a Master of Arts in musicology from UCLA, shed light on the inner workings of the compositions as well as Brahms's deep interest in Martin Luther's German Bible, which translated the holy scriptures into the vernacular and its influence on the young pianist and composer.

Throughout the seven movements, which ranged from dramatic moments to softer ones, Brahms thread alternating verses from the Bible that touched upon death, life and life after death. The catalyst of the creation was the eternal rest of his mother and may have also been rooted in the passing of his mentor, composer Robert Schumann, nine years earlier.

"It is an incarnation of the promise of eternal life that is the anchor of our faith in the living Lord, Jesus Christ," said Barsoumian, who is the founder and director of the Lark Musical Society. "As brass hits brass and fire engulfs fire in the Middle East and as man's inhumanity to man once again unfolds in abundance, we are again reminded of how trivial is all earthly glory and how pitiful is man in his pursuit of withering earthly



Soloist Garineh Avakian



The performers take a bow at the conclusion of the moving concert

pleasures."

The Lark Musical Society was established 30 years ago when Barsoumian invited a group of Armenian-American musicians, teachers and community leaders to connect their community with superior artistic programs and performances. The vision of its initial mission has flourished over the years and the organization now consists of educational opportunities, concert series, choirs, publications and a conservatory, in addition to its large-

scale performances, which in the past have included Beethoven's Choral Symphony, Anton Bruckner's tripartite *Te Deum*, and Benjamin Britten's *War Requiem*. The joint AMAA/Lark Musical Society concert has become an annual tradition.

Attracting talented musicians of all backgrounds, the LARK Musical Society, which has staged more than 300 concerts for the general public, maintains meaningful ties with its performers, in particular Dr. Garineh Avakian, assistant professor of voice and choral music at Pierce College, who performed "Alto Rhapsody" as a soloist, hitting every emotional note.

"Being the first graduate of the Lark Conservatory, it was a great honor to be asked by *Baron Vatsche* to perform in such a setting," said the award-winning Avakian, whose students and colleagues from Pierce College attended the performance. "Singing Brahms is both soothing and strengthening and it was

a pleasure to give back to a community that has helped raise, educate and support me throughout my years of study."

The stirring performances of the chorus, soloists and orchestra took the audience on a soulful journey that concluded in a peaceful and transcendental manner.

"Our committee gracefully dedicates this performance to all who have lived and witnessed the faith that so magnificently transforms their being," said Kevorkian, a member of the Board of Directors for the AMAA, a non-profit charitable organization that serves as the missionary arm of the Armenian Evangelical churches worldwide. "This concert was one of the most moving experiences I have ever had and as the music permeated my body and soul, I felt as if I was going to heaven on the wings of an angel."

NEW YORK

FROM PREVIOUS PAGE

Sardar, chief innovation office of Civicus and moderator Anna Astvatsaturian Turcotte, author and human rights advocate. 10:30 a.m. For info, www.aiwainternational.org/AIWAUN.

MARCH 28 — Ara Sanjian, "Unwelcome Topics in Armenian Diaspora Historiography," at Columbia University. 7 p.m. Co-sponsored by the Columbia University Armenian Center, Armenian Society of Columbia University, the National Association for Armenian Studies and Research (NAASR)/Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation Lecture Series on Contemporary Armenian Issues, and Research Institute on Turkey.

APRIL 9 — Alessandro Safina, will bring in his pop-opera rhythms to the US. Safina will be accompanied by Victor Espinola and the Forbidden Saints. The tour will feature Armenian Duduk Soloist 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. (Times 8:00-9:30pm) <https://www1.ticketmaster.com/alessandro-safina-with-victor-espinola-the-forbidden-saints/event/3B005546FA735928>

APRIL 10 — Wednesday, 7 p.m., Jonathan Conlin, "Mr. Five Percent: The Many Lives of Calouste Gulbenkian, the World's Richest Man," at Columbia University. Co-sponsored by the Columbia Armenian Center and the National Association for Armenian Studies and Research (NAASR).

APRIL 18 — Sato Moughalian, "Feast of Ashes: The Life and Art of David Ohannessian," at Columbia University. Co-sponsored by the Columbia Armenian Center, Research

Institute on Turkey, and the National Association for Armenian Studies and Research (NAASR). 7 p.m.

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

OHIO

APRIL 28 — Book presentation by Adrienne G. Alexanian, editor of her father's memoir, *Forced into Genocide: Memoirs of an Armenian Soldier in the Ottoman Turkish Army*, Sunday 2 p.m. Maltz Museum of Jewish Heritage. In co-sponsorship with St. Gregory of Narek Church and Armenian Cultural Group, 2929 Richmond Road Beachwood, Ohio 74122 RSVP info@mmjh.org or (216) 593-0575. Book sale/signing during reception following the presentation – proceeds will be donated

RHODE ISLAND

MARCH 17 — The Cultural Committee of the Sts. Sahag & Mesrob Armenian Church, Providence, present a special series of programs: "Meet with Armenian Doctors—Questions and Answers". Learn about keeping healthy! Sunday, 12:30 p.m. - Dr. Robert Janigian, ophthalmologist, Hanoian Hall, 70 Jefferson St. Free admission.

MARCH 30 — Sainly Women's Day dedicated to the Three Women from the Holy Gospels, hosted by the Women's Guild of Sts. Sahag & Mesrob Armenian Church, Providence, 70 Jefferson St. 10:00 a.m. greeting of guests, 11:00 a.m. Worship Service in Sanctuary followed by a Lenten Luncheon in the Egavian Cultural Center.. Guest speaker Dr. Fotini Dionisopoulos, DMD. Proceeds

will be divided between CASP and the Vanadzor Old Age Home in Armenia. Donation \$35.00. For reservations please call Ann Ayrassian 401-529-5210.

TEXAS

APRIL 4 — Book presentation by Adrienne G. Alexanian, editor of her father's memoir *Forced into Genocide: Memoirs of an Armenian Soldier in the Ottoman Turkish Army*. Thursday, 6:30 p.m. Holocaust Museum Houston. Co-sponsored by Armenian Church of St. Kevork, 9220 Kirby Drive (Suite 100), Houston, Texas. RSVP (713) 527-1604. Book sale/signing will follow presentation – proceeds will be donated

CANADA

MARCH 29 — Tekeyan Cultural Association of the US and Canada Presents the 2019 North American tour of the VEM Ensemble of the UCLA Herb Albert School of Music, Danielle Segen, mezzo-soprano, Ji Eun Hwang, violin 1, Aiko Richter, violin 2, Morgan O'Shaughnessey, viola, Jason Pegis, cello. Wednesday, March 27, 8 p.m. Cosponsored with Music Guild of St. John Armenian Church Recreation Center, 22001 Northwestern Hwy, Southfield. Free admission. Introductory remarks by Artistic Director Professor Movses Pogossian. Performing a world premiere of Tekeyan songs by the Los Angeles-based composer Artashes Kartalyan. Friday, Tekeyan Center, 825 Manoogian St., St. Laurent, Canada. For tickets call 514-747-6680. For more information, email tcadirector@aol.com.

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.

Mirror Spectator



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COMMENTARY

Turbulent Journey Ahead after Patriarch's Death

By Edmond Y. Azadian

The long-expected end finally arrived for Archbishop Mesrob Mutafyan on March 8, at St. Purgich Hospital, where he had been in a vegetative state for more than a decade.

To say that he had suffered much in his short life is an understatement. He was an erudite scholar and an independent-minded member of the clergy. He influenced Istanbul Armenian life during his active years and even later, when he had lost contact with the world around him.

Prominent Armenian writer and editor Robert Hadedjian rightfully remarked that he impacted community life more when he lay unconscious than when he was in full command of his mind and body, because so many controversies arose as a result of his incapacitation.

He occupied a twilight zone for the Armenians in Turkey; he was not well enough to tend to his responsibilities as the spiritual leader of the community, nor was he dead to allow

passed away, Vicar General Archbishop Aram Ateshian was visiting President Recep Tayyip Erdogan in Diyarbakir at Sourp Giragos Armenian Cathdral. That was indeed a symbolic coincidence, since that very church symbolizes the embattled life of Archbishop Mutafyan and his own Armenian people. It was first confiscated by the Turkish government, then given back to the Armenian community, rebuilt by the Armenians and local Kurdish mayor and then destroyed once again when the Erdogan government launched a campaign of extermination against the Kurds.

At that very moment, a pious and kind-hearted Erdogan was there to help the second post-destruction renovation of the church. At that moment, vintage Erdogan was at work, Tweeting his condolences to Mutafyan's family and to the Armenian citizens of Turkey in the Armenian!

While the Patriarch lay unconscious in his hospital bed, the Armenian community was given the runaround by the Turkish authorities, who successfully divided the community in the wake of the Patriarch's incapacitation. One group applied to the government to elect a new Patriarch while

another proposed the election of a co-adjutor Patriarch to help the incapacitated Patriarch, without pushing him out of office.

After years of delaying tactics, both applications were declined. In the meantime, Archbishop Aram Ateshian managed to have himself "elected" vicar general by a pliant clergy council.

In the process, four candidates emerged and the Turkish government tried to play them against each other, but the parties agreed amongst themselves to elect Archbishop Karekin Bekjian, Primate of Germany, as locum tenens. The Turkish government refused to recognize the community's choice and instead recognized Ateshian as the head of the Patriarchate, because the latter had served his "brother," President Erdogan, well; a brazen member of the clergy who has surrounded

himself with a coterie of builders, real estate magnates and bankers who have been cannibalizing the properties when the government has been returning to the community. All these parties who have vested interests in this arrangement will not let Ateshian go anywhere. For almost 10 years now, Ateshian has been acting as Patriarch and that is how the Erdogan administration wishes to impress upon the Armenian community that there is no other choice than Ateshian.

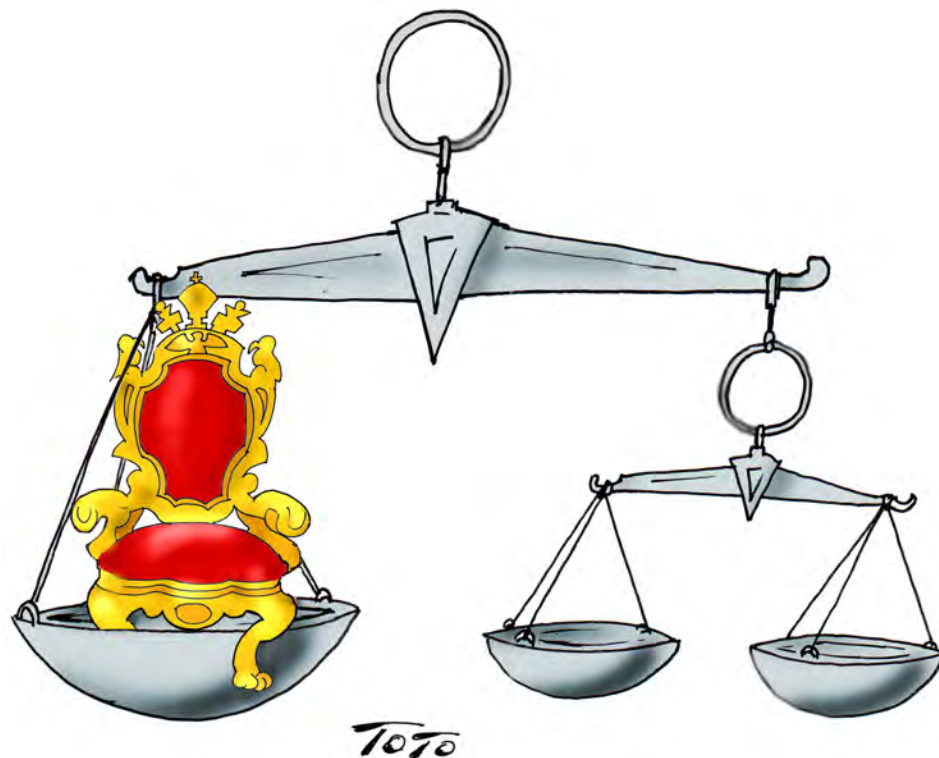
In the meantime, the community leader, Bedros Shirinoglu, Erdogan's messenger to the Armenian community has been whispering to some ears that it is not right to oppose the government's wishes.

With the elimination of Archbishop Bekjian, who is up there in age, and bitterly frustrated, the remaining candidates are Archbishop Ateshian, Bishop Sahag Mashalian and Bishop Sebouh Chouldjian, Primate of Gougark, in Armenia. As far as community sympathies are concerned, the most eligible candidate is Archbishop Khajag Barsamian, who has an important position in Europe, at the Vatican, and he is not a candidate.

Bishop Chouldjian is too Armenian to be acceptable to the Erdogan administration, which has already made its choice obvious. Despite their misgivings, the two Catholicos and the local Armenian community have been treating Ateshian with deference, assuming that he will be forced to occupy the Patriarch's seat, one way or another.

Erdogan's authoritarian rule has incarcerated more than 350,000 scholars, journalists, jurists and members of the military, and he has been thumbing his nose at the world. Therefore, to impose a docile clergyman on the Patriarchal throne will not present a challenge to the sultan.

While the journey ahead for the Istanbul Armenians will be turbulent, let the Patriarch rest in peace.



the cutting of the Gordian knot and enable the election of a successor.

The community went through hell to figure out a succession plan, and the Turkish government did its best to scuttle any progress in that arena.

Archbishop Mutafyan was elected to the Patriarchal throne in Istanbul on October 14, 1998 and for more than 10 years, he served his community with dedication, developing ecumenical ties with other communities and faiths.

His charismatic persona attracted many young people to the religion of their ancestors, despite his antiquated moral principles.

His relations with the Turkish state was more challenging. He had to walk on a tightrope to please the authorities, while trying to preserve the interests of his flock. He willingly allowed the Turkish government to use him as a political tool when he lobbied against the passage of Armenian Genocide bills at different countries' legislatures or when he advocated for Turkey's admission into the European Union.

That kind of behavior antagonized the world Armenian community, yet it did not buy him any security from the government. He received death threats and his headquarters was bombed.

It is believed that the breaking point of his mental and physical health came at Hrant Dink's funeral. Although he had chosen a very different path in dealing with the Turkish authorities, Dink's assassination shook him to the core. Perhaps that was the moment when he experienced the transformation of the priest in Arpiar Arpiarian's novel, Garmir Jamuts (The Crimson Offering). But from that point on, there was no recovery for him, as his physical and mental health deteriorated inexorably.

On March 8, at exactly 12.15 p.m., when the Patriarch



COMMENTARY



My Turn

By Harut Sassounian

Rabbi Schneier Takes Evangelical Pastors On a Propaganda Tour of Azerbaijan

For several years, the government of Azerbaijan and its diplomats overseas have gone to great lengths to win over Jews worldwide, American Jewish organizations, and Israel.

Azerbaijan is simply copying Turkey's sinister behavior that until recently wooed Jewish organizations in the United States and Israel's government to block the passage of a congressional resolution recognizing the Armenian Genocide. Many Jewish groups ended their immoral cooperation with Turkey, after Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan began making anti-Semitic statements and threatening Israel.

Just like Turkey, Azerbaijan's outreach to Jewish organizations and Israel is based on the typical anti-Semitic belief that Jews control American politicians and it is therefore in Azerbaijan's interest to be on the good side of 'powerful' Jews. According to the Israeli newspaper Ha'aretz, "many countries nurture their relationship to Israel in hopes of finding favor with influential American Jewish organizations who will in turn speak well of them to the U.S. government."

Furthermore, Azerbaijan's pro-Jewish efforts are based on the fact that it purchases billions of dollars of modern weapons from Israel. In return, Azerbaijan sells a large amount of oil to Israel. There have been also intelligence reports that Azerbaijan has provided Israel with several bases on its border with Iran, should Israel decide to attack Iran's nuclear facilities.

The latest example of the collaboration between American Jewish leaders and Azerbaijan is the visit to Baku on March 3-8 by a group of U.S. evangelical pastors led by New York-based Orthodox Rabbi Marc Schneier "to promote interfaith dialogue and highlight cooperation with Israel," according to

the Associated Press. This was the first ever evangelical delegation to visit the Muslim Shiite nation. The Rabbi described Azerbaijan as "the most beloved and respected Muslim country in the eyes of the Jewish American community," reported Trend, an Azeri news agency. Schneier spoke at an event in the U.S. Congress last year celebrating the close friendship between Azerbaijan and Israel.

The group of 12 U.S. evangelical pastors met President Ilham Aliyev of Azerbaijan, the foreign minister, Muslim Sheikhs, local church leaders, and Israel's ambassador. Rabbi Schneier told the Associated Press that President Aliyev "announced during the delegation's visit that the country's first-ever Jewish cultural center would be built in Baku with Kosher dining options and a hotel to accommodate Jewish guests." Schneier heads the Foundation for Ethnic Understanding based in New York and founded the Hampton Synagogue in Westhampton Beach, New York. As a sign of their cozy relationship, Azerbaijan's national airline flies directly to Tel Aviv and President Aliyev hosted Israel's prime minister in 2016.

Not surprisingly, Azerbaijan's Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov took advantage of his meeting with the evangelical leaders to disparage Armenia and distort the facts of the Artsakh conflict. He said, "the recent statements of the Armenian leadership highlighted that such statements undermine the peace process."

Pastor Adam Mesa, who leads the Abundant Living Family Church in Rancho Cucamonga, Calif., told the Associated Press that it was his first time in a Muslim-majority country. The pastor said he was encouraged to take part in the trip because of Azerbaijan's stance supporting Israel and interreligious efforts. "It's incredible that a Muslim-majority country is the one that has to actually lead the charge on religious dialogue and community and solidarity."

Rabbi Schneier confirmed to the Associated Press the political agenda behind the religious group's visit: "from a political point of view, listen there is no question you know that Azerbaijan is looking to strengthen its relationship with the U.S. administration, with the United States Congress. Israel is very much a conduit to that."

As in the case of Rep. Alcee Hastings, Azerbaijan seems to have picked another disgraced individual to disseminate its propaganda. The 60-year-old Rabbi Schneier has been married six times, the last on March 2017. In February 2018, the State of Florida ordered Schneier to pay \$5,000 a month for

\$64,594 in unpaid child support he owed to his third wife for the care of their 19-year-old son. Rabbi Schneier was expelled in June 2015 by the Rabbinical Council of America for breaching the code of ethics by carrying on an extramarital relationship. In June 2010, the Rabbi announced to his congregation that he was suffering from "bipolar disorder."

According to Wikipedia, "under pressure from his congregation for his multiple divorces and philandering, Schneier resigned in 2016 from his pulpit position at the Hampton Synagogue, which he had founded in 1990. Congregants had threatened to withhold pledges and payments until he left the synagogue."

The *New York Post* reported that after cheating on his third wife, Rabbi Schneier in 2006 married Tobi Rubinstein, "a sexy worshipper," who became wife No. 4. "In 2010, Tobi hired a private investigator who turned up explicit photos of her husband and Gitty Leiner, a then-30-something worshipper, getting hot and heavy in the Holy Land on what Schneier had told his wife was a routine business trip. Marriage No. 4 ended in divorce soon after." The Rabbi ended up marrying Gitty Leiner in 2013 – wife No. 5. The couple had a child in 2014, "but then in 2015, Schneier was caught dining out in Queens with sexy young Simi Teitelbaum" who became his sixth wife in 2017! Interestingly, the *Post* reported that "Schneier explained away his unholy extramarital hookups by saying he was mentally ill and seeking treatment."

Rabbi's ex-wife Toby Gotesman told the *Post* "When I left him, he was making \$800,000 ... that included a \$500,000 salary, plus hundreds of thousands in additional compensation, including mortgage payments on his 5,000-square-foot Westhampton Beach home, said to be valued at around \$3 million."

Rabbi Schneier's visit to Azerbaijan last week was not his first. He has been there several times in recent years on propaganda tours. One wonders if the Rabbi has received any compensation from President Aliyev for his 'valuable' services. His multiple trips to Azerbaijan makes the Rabbi look more like a lobbyist for Azerbaijan than a religious figure!

I would urge Armenian evangelical church leaders to contact the 12 pastors who visited Baku last week in order to counter the propaganda they were fed against Armenia and Artsakh. I would also like to know if these pastors and Rabbi Schneier came back from Baku with suitcases full of the usual Azeri "gifts" of caviar, rugs, and other valuable items.

GREAT LENT 2019: Confessing And Promising

By Father Zaven Arzoumanian, PhD

Two Directions

This year Great Lent began on Monday March 4, and behooves on us to clarify the balance between the formal confession and its effective promise in lucrative action to be taken by the believer. He not only goes through the formal Confession, but in return he also makes a firm resolution and promise in action to honor the forgiveness offered by God, namely not to repeat sinful deeds as much as humanly possible. The healing therefore becomes a gradual progress in two directions, one from above, and the other from the recipient addressed to God Almighty. The process is not and should not be a passive process, if we want fruitful and permanent results from the God-given absolution. A subjective understanding is just as essential, otherwise to depend only on the divine pronouncement "May God grants you forgiveness" with no follow-up action to justify, will reduce the Sacrament of Absolution to formality and habit.

We all hear the sins listed in those nine stanzas of the confession form each Sunday. Not only those numerous and applicable sins named there are feasible, but hopefully believers do confess them sincerely from the heart and mind, realizing that it is not occasional, nor reasonable to leave all the weight on God and sit back and feel comforted. Dutiful believers have to help themselves as they assist God's immense care and love for mankind, in truly eliminating sinful behavior by way of a strong will and determination, as also by getting involved in charitable activities.

One should not take advantage of the divine favor thinking that one has the chance for a next confession. There is no bargain nor is there an easy way out. There is a "price" to pay, since man was created by God "according to His image" that tells us there is a spark of light directly from the Creator God that will help us return the human "assistance" to the divine

creation by way of the "free will" and courage He has given us in the first place. This responding process, our firm promise, is no less than helping ourselves following the initial divine absolution.

Confession

Hearing sins read in the nine verses of the confession form, the confessor by all means promises silently not to repeat them, lies, gossips, slanders, curses, theft, and "all such sins". He will understand that "returning to God" is a process totally his own, especially during Lent when certain foods and enjoyment in social life are limited to the minimum by his personal resolution. The "divine image" must be re-established in us and strengthen us to promise actions beyond the formal confession, with the assurance that both, confession and promise complement each other effectively. Obviously, the confessor and only him becomes the subject of those sins, committed or not, as much as they are listed in the first person singular, for each individual personally.

The response "I have sinned against God" must be a conviction rather than a statement, imminent with the assurance not to fall again. On the contrary, hearing the absolution on behalf of God repeated by the priest should not by any means suggest "an opportunity" for the next confession. There can be no bargain with God thinking "today I will not sin, but not sure for tomorrow." Theological and philosophical theories sound instructive and academic, not for the average believer however, who needs simply the Gospel of Christ to find real peace.

Parables and Miracles

The simple messages of the Lord in His parables and miracles are accessible to the Christian believer, such as the parables of the Pharisee and the tax collector, and the Prodigal son, and many others, where the fall is corrected by a return after a sincere self-examination. While praying, the Pharisee praised himself only to degrade himself, not even to remain where he was, but adding more sins as detected by Jesus, while the tax collector realized his sinfulness fully and asked only for God's forgiveness. The parable of the prodigal son is more striking, a return after wasting his father's money, and the welcoming reception by the same father, with open arms and great joy, who saw him leave his house and now returning with repeated requests of forgiveness.

The same in the miracles that Jesus performed, all of them conditioned first and foremost by a genuine faith, and then by the forgiveness of sins before the actual miracle took place. The paralytic man asked to be healed, and Jesus forgave his sins first, and then told him to get up and take his mattress and walk. Or, the deaf and the speechless man who approached him in faith and asked if he can be healed. He was healed after his sins were forgiven, was able to speak correctly, and above all to acknowledge the Person who healed him. These and many others contain ample messages and responsi-

bilities for today's society, individually and collectively.

St. Nersess the Graceful

Especially in his 24-verse daily prayer known as "I confess with faith," our 12th century great theologian and hymnologist St. Nersess the Graceful has implicated quite often the requirement of actions taken by the individual as follow-up to the confession of his sins. Asking God for his "holy awe" he commits himself to be most cautious as to what he hears, what he sees, where he goes, and what he says, instead of leading him astray to ways of iniquity. Or, naming Jesus as the "wisdom of the Father," the believer puts himself before God asking wisdom to speak, think, and work "all the time", and stay away from evil thoughts, words and deeds, thus confirming the principle of confession and its prayerful response with a firm promise. In another verse St. Nersess moves the believer closer to God who says "may my conscience and physical sins be forgiven," not letting everything on God and shun responsibility, but praying that "I may stay away from every bad habits and head toward God with good habits," requiring strong will and determination for lucrative labor as a response to the divine absolution of sins.

In his touching hymn known as Daradzyl ("spreading the arms and the feet on the Cross"), St. Nersess alludes the entire hymn to personal efforts, claiming that our hands and feet are "replacing" those of our Lord on the Cross, especially our "walking feet" as he says, thus maintaining responsibility to work and walk according to His ways. Next, the Saint specifies that the Church is the functioning Body of Christ on earth "in place" of the Cross, and the faithful are performing actively and paying the "price" of their sinful lives sincerely and vicariously from "the blood and water issued from the side of the Lord", the first for the Communion Cup, and the second for Baptism in the Font, the two essential Sacraments of the Church.

The Church Breviary

This is the book that contains the seven daily services, the Mid-night, Morning, Mid-day, Evening, Sunrise, Peace, and Rest services. In all of them we read those canonical psalms, prayers, hymns, litanies and hymns, geared toward the basic relationship between God and men through the Most Holy Trinity. They suggest commitments such as "we ask Thee, O Lord, that the daily labors of Thy servants may be acceptable by Thy divinity as just and God-pleasing works". In another prayer, the worshipper asks God to accept his daily labors "not as worthless, but worthy to reach His divinity." In all, the Church and Christ through the Holy Spirit may accept their actions against their sins as remedies, not to be denied by the Heavenly Father. This becomes another source to confirm the reciprocal effectiveness of repentance as response and promise to evaluate the remission of our sins.

I conclude my Lenten address reminding our faithful to take



Denied Accreditation, Two German Journalists Leave Turkey

ISTANBUL (DPA) – Two German journalists have left Turkey after their press credentials were not renewed. Berlin has condemned the decision as unacceptable, saying journalists should be allowed to do their work unhindered.

Thomas Seibert, a reporter for the Berlin-based Tagesspiegel daily, and Jörg Brase, a correspondent for public broadcaster ZDF, flew to Germany on Sunday, March 10, after

anything they reported. “I don’t think it’s about anything I have written,” Seibert told DW. “I think it’s a message to the Western press. They need a scapegoat or two or three, and I was one of the unlucky ones.”

German Foreign Minister Heiko Maas on Saturday said on Twitter it was “unacceptable” that German correspondents could not do their jobs “freely” in Turkey. In an interview with Tagesspiegel, he said denying the journalists their right to report was “incompatible with our understanding of press freedom.”

At a press conference in the ZDF studio in Istanbul before their departure, both reporters criticized the actions of the Turkish government.

After seeing how they could control domestic media, authorities appear to be trying to intimidate



Thomas Seibert and Jörg Brase

their accreditation to work in Turkey was not renewed.

They were told by the relevant authorities in Ankara about a week ago that their applications for new press cards had not been approved.

“[I] have not been given any reason why my application to extend my press credentials was denied,” Brase told DW. “Turkey also has a press law that I have not broken – at least as far as I am aware.”

Seibert said the decision to force them out of the country may not have even been because of

foreign media as well, according to Brase.

“There is hardly any critical [domestic] reporting, at least not in state media,” Brase said. “Now they are trying it with international media, but I cannot imagine the plan will work.”

Brase said he was considering moving to Tehran since the Iranian government had given him the necessary paperwork to live there. He had been working in Turkey since January 2018.

ZDF is planning on taking legal action against the decision. Brase said he and Seibert want to continue reporting on Turkey, if necessary from abroad.



Ambassador Kirakossian surrounded by Primate Bishop Manukyan and the members of the Armenian Community Council of the UK

UK Armenian Council Holds Reception for New Armenian Ambassador Kirakossian

AMBASSADOR, from page 1

Kirakossian in turn thanked the ACC for organizing the reception and for the warm welcome. He said he is committed to developing ties between Armenia and the UK and he looked forward to the support and collaboration of all. He likened Armenia to a building which will grow taller when and if we all add to it brick by brick. He said he welcomes any action that is Armenia-centred (hayasdanagentron) since a strong, secure and prosperous Armenia is the anchor of all the Diaspora.

Bishop Hovakim Manukyan, the Primate of the Armenian Apostolic Church in the UK and Ireland, then took the floor. His message was one of collaboration and cooperation between the Church, the Embassy and the Armenian Community Council; the three, he concluded, are the new trinity which we all cherish.


The speeches were followed by a cocktail reception to provide the Ambassador with an opportunity to meet members of the community.


Kirakossian is a career diplomat and historian. He has represented Armenia in various capitals including Washington, Athens and Vienna, and in various international organizations such as the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe. Between 1991 and 1994, he served as First Deputy Foreign Minister and from 1992 to 1993 as acting foreign minister. In 2005, he was reappointed Deputy Foreign Minister. He has been accredited at various times to Cyprus, Slovenia, Croatia, Albania and the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia.

He is the author of numerous scholarly articles and books on Armenian studies both in Armenian and in English. He is well traveled and as such is an expert on the Armenian Diaspora.

He has received accolades and medals from various countries and organisations, which include the TCA Haigashen Ouzounian Prize in 2004 for his studies on the “Armenian Massacres in 1894-96.”

HK






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DETROIT • Wed. March 27 8:00 pm
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For more information, email tcadirector@aol.com