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Five Armenian Genocide Commemorative Billboards Displayed in MA

METHUEN, Mass. — Those who drive these days on Route 1 in the towns of Foxborough and along the Lynnway, or on 495 in Methuen may notice several billboards honoring the memory of the victims of the Armenian Genocide and all genocides. As during each of the last twenty-three years, this year too Peace of Art, Inc. continues its annual Armenian Genocide commemoration campaign in various Massachusetts cities.

“The teenager on the billboard, orphaned in 1915 and survived the genocide, is the same teenager who roamed the whole world being born on a foreign land, the same one who later liberated Artsakh and the same youngster who currently lives proudly in independent Armenia. In the soul of every

Armenian, no matter where he lives in the homeland or abroad, will always live the same youngster that will never forget and never give up, demanding condemnation and redemption for impunity,” says artist Daniel Varoujan Hejinian, from Chelmsford, Mass. He is the president and founder of the Peace of Art organization.

Since 1996, Hejinian has been displaying the Armenian Genocide Commemorative Billboards. In 2015, Peace of Art Inc. launched its Armenian Genocide Centennial awareness billboard campaign under the name of “100 Billboards for 100 Years of Genocide,” in the cities and towns of the US and Canada.

This year the billboards will remain on display until April 30.

Bishop Sahak Mashalian of Armenian Patriarchate in Istanbul Visits New York

By Florence Avakian

NEW YORK — On Sunday, April 7, Bishop Sahak Mashalian from the Armenian Patriarchate of Istanbul celebrated an Episcopal Badarak at St. Vartan Armenian Cathedral and delivered an inspiring sermon, delivered in both Armenian and English. Presiding over the occasion was Diocesan Primate the Very Rev. Fr. Daniel Findikyan.

His visit to America afforded an occasion to speak with Bishop Mashalian about his personal ministry and the state of the church in general.

A wise, respected, charismatic, deeply faithful, and compassionate clerical leader, Mashalian has served in his birthplace of



Bishop Sahak Mashalian on his visit to Eastern Diocese this month

Istanbul, in Jerusalem, and in Armenia as dean of the Gevorkian Theological Seminary. At present, he is the director of ecumenical and interfaith relations of the

Armenian Patriarchate of Constantinople, and secretary of its Religious Council.

In his April 7 sermon, he paid tribute to see MASHALIAN, page 10

Gerald Papasian Speaks Out on the Constantine Orbelian Controversy

By Aram Arkun
Mirror-Spectator Staff

PARIS — The controversy about the dismissal of three-time Grammy award nominee conductor Constantine Orbelian as managing or executive director of the Alexander Spendiaryan National Academic Theater of Opera and Ballet continues to grow. This week noted director, musicologist and actor Gerald Papasian gave an interview presenting his views on the topic. Papasian has a unique perspective, one of both an insider and outsider, and knows Orbelian personally, as he has worked with him professionally.

The Egyptian-born Papasian studied acting and directing in a five-year master's program in Soviet Armenia, including a stint as intern assistant directing at the see CONTROVERSY, page 7



NEWS IN BRIEF

Genocide Survivor, 108, Wants to Lay Flowers at Monument

YEREVAN (Armenpress) — A 108-year-old survivor of the Armenian Genocide, Yepraksya Gevorgyan has expressed the desire to personally visit the Tsitsernakaberd Armenian Genocide Memorial to pay tribute to the memory of the victims on April 24 in Yerevan, Armenian Genocide Museum-Institute Deputy Director Edita Czoyan reported before the day.

“A few days ago the grandchild of an Armenian Genocide survivor visited us and asked us to arrange his grandmother's April 24 visit to the memorial. We are planning to welcome the woman and escort her on a wheelchair so she doesn't appear in a big flow of visitors,” Czoyan said.

“In recent years she is thinking a lot about laying flowers at Tsitsernakaberd for the memory of the victims. I would like to fulfill her desire. She is recalling it all the time, telling about it,” said her grandson, Arthur Karapetyan, adding that his grandmother is from Kars, and is currently living in Armavir, Armenia.

Libyan Gov. Marks Armenian Genocide

BENGHAZI, Libya (The Address) — The Libyan Interim Government announced through its Foreign Ministry on Thursday, April 18, that will commemorate the Armenian Genocide, committed by the Ottoman Empire, on April 24.

The Interim Government officially adopted a resolution in March recognizing the Armenian Genocide.

The statement reads in part: “In April 1915, Ottoman authorities rounded up, arrested, and deported from Constantinople (now Istanbul) to the region of Ankara, 235 to 270 Armenian intellectuals and community leaders, the majority of whom were eventually murdered.

This was followed by the deportation of women, children, the elderly, and the infirm on death marches leading to the Syrian Desert.”

French Premier Attends Paris Commemoration

PARIS (Armenpress) — Prime Minister Edouard Philippe was scheduled to attend the ceremony dedicated to the victims of the Armenian Genocide in Paris on April 24 near the monument of Komitas, *Nouvelles d'Armenie* reports, adding that the ceremony was of historic importance this year, given its official nature. By a decree of French President Emmanuel Macron April 24 was declared national day of commemoration of the Armenian Genocide.

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Balakian Award

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PARIS (Armenpress) — The commune of Clichy in France inaugurated the Charles Aznavour Square dedicated to the memory of the Armenian Genocide victims, the Armenian Embassy in France said on Facebook, on April 23. Armenia's Ambassador to France Hasmik Tolmajian attended the inauguration ceremony of the square named after the legendary French-Armenian crooner Charles Aznavour, who died in 2018 aged 94.



ARMENIA

News From Armenia

Defense Minister Attends Conference on Security

MOSCOW (Panorama.am) — A delegation headed by Defense Minister of Armenia Davit Tonoyan is visiting Russia to attend VIII Moscow Conference on International Security from April 23 to 25.

As the ministry press service reported, Tonoyan will address the conference on the topic of “International peacekeeping: new approaches and military cooperation.”

The agenda of the conference will encompass the problems of utmost significance in terms of shaping views on the international security. Separate plenary sessions will offer space to exchange views on modern military challenges and threats, including the improvement of the arms control system. Situation in the Middle East will be discussed with an emphasis on nation-wide stabilization of Syria. Subject-matter panel sessions will consider peacekeeping, military-to-military engagements, regional security in Asia, Africa and Latin America.

Kurd Delegation Discusses Genocide Prevention

YEREVAN (Panorama.am) — Member of Parliament and representative of the Yezidi community Rustam Bakoyan met on April 23, with a delegation that had arrived from Iraqi Kurdistan.

The guests were in Armenia to pay tribute to the memory of the Armenian Genocide victims.

Bakoyan highlighted the process of the Armenian Genocide recognition and the fight against genocide as a crime. The MP has noted that the genocide is a crime against humanity, and we should fight against it from the lowest levels, without letting hatred and intolerance be established in the societies.

Bakoyan touched upon the genocide against Yezidis in the state of Sinjar in Iraq, urging the members of the delegation to take steps in their turn for excluding the discrimination and intolerance towards Yezidis in Iraq.

Oversight Director Denies Charges

YEREVAN (Armenpress) — State Oversight Service Director Davit Sanasaryan’s lawyers have applied to the Prosecutor General on behalf of their client requesting to drop the criminal proceedings and overrule the decision on temporarily suspending his duties, Sanasaryan’s lawyer Arsen Sardaryan noted on April 22.

“We do not agree with the indictment, Mr. Sanasaryan is innocent,” Sardaryan said. “The charges are groundless. We will fight with all legal ways for defending our rights. We believe that justice can be achieved in our legal system,” he said.

On April 18, Sanasaryan was indicted by the National Security Service on charges of abuse of power. He is currently on bail, banned from leaving the country. Sanasaryan’s duties as Director of the State Oversight Service have been temporarily suspended.

Injured De-Miner Returns after Treatment

YEREVAN (Armenpress) — An Armenian de-miner, who was wounded during the humanitarian mission in Syria, has returned to Armenia, PR manager at the Center for Humanitarian Demining and Expertise Nazeli Elbakyan said on April 19.

She noted that the de-miner has undergone two surgeries after being transported to Moscow from Syria, but he has recovered and returned to Yerevan.

The de-miner was wounded on March 7 during Armenia’s humanitarian mission in Syria.

A group consisting of humanitarian de-miners, doctors and Armenian specialists ensuring their safety, a total of 83 people, arrived in Syria’s Aleppo on February 8 aimed at providing professional humanitarian support to the Syrian people.

The deployment, status, functions and security issues of the Armenian specialists in Syria will be settled in accordance with the Armenian legislation.



STEPANAKERT, Artsakh (Armenpress) — Artsakh Republic President Bako Sahakyan received representatives of the “Hayastan” All-Armenian Fund and Tufenkyan Foundation on April 16. Issues relating to the implementation of various projects in Artsakh were on the discussion agenda. During the meeting President Sahakyan handed in the “Vachagan Barepasht” medal to American-Armenian physician and philanthropist Carolann Najarian for consistent support shown to Artsakh and services rendered to our republic. President Sahakyan highlighted Carolann Najarian’s patriotic activity considering it exemplary and expressed hope that the philanthropist would further on be involved in developing and strengthening Artsakh.

Parliament Rejects Import Tariff Sought by Tsarukyan

YEREVAN (RFE/RL) — The National Assembly approved on Friday, April 19, a government bill which the opposition Prosperous Armenia Party (BHK) said is not far-reaching enough to protect domestic manufacturers of cement against cheap cement imports from neighboring Iran.

The parliament’s pro-government majority refused to amend the bill amid mounting political tensions with BHK leader and businessman Gagik Tsarukyan, whose assets include one of Armenia’s two cement plants.

Earlier this year, the Armenian government moved to impose hefty taxes on imports of much cheaper Iranian cement which more than tripled last year, threatening continued operations of the Armenian plants. An Armenian parliament committee on economic issues watered down the relevant government bill on April 12 to ensure that the tariff does not apply to cement clinker, a nodular material developed before the final stage of cement production and easily turned into the construction material.

Tsarukyan’s Multi Group, which includes the Ararat Tsement plant, denounced the amendment, saying that it renders the bill meaningless. It said Ararat Tsement would be able to use cheap Iranian clinker and manufacture cement without the vast majority of its more than 1,000 workers. Hundreds of them received notices of termination later on April 12.

The workers responded by going on strike on April 15. They ended the protest after Tsarukyan cancelled the planned layoffs two days later. The tycoon cautioned at the same time that the clinker tariff sought by him is vital for the future of the plant located in Ararat, a small town 50 kilometers south of Yerevan.

BHK lawmakers echoed those warnings as the parliament debated the bill and ultimately passed it in the first reading on Friday. “We would lose our cement production capacities,” one of them, Mikael Melkumyan, said.

Minister for Economic Development Tigran Khachatryan and pro-government deputies insisted, however, that cement imports must not be blocked altogether because healthy competition between domestic and foreign manufactures will only benefit Armenia’s construction sector.

Hayk Gevorgyan, a senior lawmaker representing Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan, also attacked Tsarukyan, saying that a company presumably linked to the BHK leader had privatized Ararat Tsement for just \$200,000 in 2002. Gevorgyan also implicitly accused the company of evading taxes until last year’s “Velvet Revolution” that brought down the country’s former government.

Tsarukyan angrily denied those claims in a rare speech delivered on the parliament floor. In separate comments to the press, he said that Pashinyan’s bloc will bear responsibility for economic consequences of the bill.

Tensions between My Step and the BHK have risen since Tsarukyan strongly criticized the government’s economic policies early this month. Senior repre-

sentatives of the two political forces traded fresh accusations in the parliament on Thursday.

Pashinyan and Tsarukyan met to discuss the cement dispute and other contentious issues later on Thursday. Tsarukyan afterwards described the meeting as “very warm” but did not report any concrete agreements.

The BHK backed the Pashinyan-led movement as it gained momentum in April 2018. It joined Pashinyan’s first cabinet formed in May. The premier fired his BHK-affiliated ministers in October, accusing Tsarukyan’s party of secretly collaborating with the former ruling Republican Party.

The BHK finished a distant second in the December 2018 parliamentary elections which Pashinyan’s bloc won by a landslide.



Simon Martirosyan with some of the toys destined for the children of Aleppo

Weightlifting Champ Has Giant Heart

YEREVAN (Armenpress) — Two-time European Weightlifting Champion Simon Martirosyan has joined the We are With You humanitarian campaign of the Armenian Center For Humanitarian De-Mining and Expertise.

According to the organization’s spokesperson Nazeli Elbakyan, Martirosyan had learned about the campaign before departing for the European Championship and had vowed to participate and personally hand over toys to organizers for sending to children of Aleppo, Syria.

Olympic Games Champion, European and World Greco Roman Wrestling Champion Arthur Alexanyan also joined the campaign recently, along with lawmakers, government officials, students and others.

The donated gifts, toys, books and other items will be sent to the children of the Armenian community of Syria.

The Armenian Center For Humanitarian De-Mining and Expertise has currently more than 80 medics and de-miners dispatched in Aleppo.



ARMENIA

Young Musicians Prepare for a Better Future

By Muriel Mirak-Weissbach

Special to the Mirror-Spectator

YEREVAN — “If music be the food of love, play on!” Shakespeare’s Duke of Orsino, who could not get enough if it to surfeit his appetite, may have been a hopeless romantic, but he had a point. Music is the food of love, and it nourishes not only the heart but also the soul. Nowhere is this more evident than in Armenia, where a rich musical culture pervades the land, in a manner and to an extent that reminds one of Germany. The country is far smaller, covering a land area the size of one German federal state, and its population of 3 million a fraction of Germany’s 80 million. But the role of music in education and daily life is indeed comparable.

During a trip to Armenia in early April, my husband and I were able to witness this once again, as we visited four music schools that our small foundation has been associated with.

Gyumri, the cultural capital of Armenia and its second largest



Dilijan Drummers

major in music can attend a four-year college, which will prepare them for a teaching career. With 178 pupils in the first level and 63 in the upper level, they are coordinating work in 15 music schools in the region. By equipping young musicians to teach others, they are a motor force in the educational process.

Thanks to the efforts of FAR, the concert hall has been renovated and equipped with 300 new chairs. But, as it was not yet completely ready, the concert we attended was held in an older concert hall. The teachers and students organized the event as a gesture of gratitude to those who had sponsored the purchase of badly needed new instruments, 37 of them, jointly financed by our foundation and FAR’s Galust Galo Fund.

We were treated to an afternoon of wonderful music, performed by youngsters from both levels of instruction. We marveled at an original jazz piano piece performed by the young composer herself, and heard a soprano with an Armenian lullaby, followed by another vocalist singing a Puccini aria. It was amazing to see how early these children begin! A very small lad walked confidently onto the stage and, with a huge voice that defied credulity, treated us to

a lively rendition of an Armenian folk song. His classmate, about the same size, had to adjust the piano stool downward to be able to mount it. With concentration, he placed his hands on the keys, fluttering gently through a piece from the classical repertoire. A teenage girl carried on stage one of the new instruments, a majestic *kanon*, and played with virtuosity and emotion, accompanied on the piano. Concluding the program was a trio of girls on *kanons*, followed by a brigade of drummers (some with newly acquired instruments) who moved from one rhythmic escapade to the next with the ease of a kaleidoscope. And yes, we were right to recognize one of the drummers as the talented young pianist...

They performed with technical skill and confident mastery of their medium, but with no trace of that stiffness that often hampers young musicians when they are on stage. Here was enthusiasm, extreme musicality and the pure joy of producing beautiful works. It was the best thank-you anyone could wish for.

And it was not the only one. The very next day we went to the Alexan Hekimyan music school in Yerevan, on the invitation of Lusine Arakelyan and Director Monika Petrosyan. Arakelyan is an opera singer who has continued her education after graduating from the Yerevan Conservatory, through master classes in Europe, and now teaches singing at the school. In June, she, along with other teachers, plan to accompany a group of students to participate in a competition in Italy.

In this concert we were able to enjoy the fruits of musical training from the youngest to the oldest students, in roughly chronological order. The first to appear on stage were two girls, about 8 years old, who performed *Arishka* by Doljnikov on flutes with piano accompaniment. Other solo instrumentalists followed, the very young pianist Aram Asmangulyan with

Berkovich’s *Variations* and later teenager Garnik Hayrapetyan, who performed a challenging piece by Rachmaninov, *Polichinelle*, with great skill. Among the vocalists were several pupils of Arakelyan’s, the promising tenor Narek Baldryan and soprano Nare Samvelyan singing a duet by Leoncavallo, and Narek alone, singing *Kanche krunk* by Komitas.

As this is the 150th anniversary of the birth of Komitas, other works of his also were featured; a female vocal trio presented *Swallow* and the young Narek Sahakyan sang *Krunk*.

Traditional Armenian instruments were featured, including the *kanon*. Alexander Avetisyan displayed his mastery of the saxophone with a rendition of *Rhapsody* by Waignein. And to conclude the concert, a robust brass band played *Valse* by Tjeknavorian, a Strauss polka and Aznavour’s *Je t’attends*. As my husband remarked in his words of thanks to the musicians, we never stop marveling at the high level of musical excellence achieved by these young performers, some of whom we have had the pleasure of hearing over the years, thus witnessing their continuing progress.

Only one day later we were treated to yet another concert, this time at the music school in Gegashen, about 30 kilometers from Yerevan. Though the village has only 4,000 inhabitants, it has a flourishing music school, whose director is pianist Mariam Kazaryan. Here the concert opened with choral pieces, performed by a mixed choir of varying ages singing traditional Armenian songs. The entire event was a tribute to Komitas; the emcee was a student who stood at the podium and delivered an impressive overview of Komitas’s life and works. Interspersed in the presentation were then the selected pieces by the great composer. There followed soloists on the piano and *kanon*. Again, we were amazed to see how young the pupils are, and how seriously they take their music work. One girl, perhaps not 8, was provided with a foot stool so that she could manage to balance her *kanon* on her knees and play. Some of the instruments had been newly acquired through a donation. The concert concluded with a trio of teachers, featuring Kazaryan on the piano, her brother on the clarinet and a colleague on the *kanon*.

After the concert, which received lengthy, enthusiastic applause from a very happy audience of family and friends of



Director Mariam Kazaryan helps Gegashen mayor plant trees.

city, has more than one music school, and boasts a long tradition of musicians, composers and graphic artists. At the Octet School, destroyed in the 1988 earthquake and rebuilt in 2013 thanks to the efforts of Ian Gillan and his Deep Purple music ensemble, together with the Mardigian Foundation and the Fund for Armenian Relief (FAR), we met Manya Hovhannisian, the new director, who told us there are 224 students receiving instruction there this year. In fact, they were in the last stages of preparation for a concert of instrumental and vocal music.

Days later we visited the music school in Dilijan, about 120 kilometers from the capital. Margarit Piliposyan, regional director of FAR, accompanied us to the school, which is the regional hub for music education in the province (marz) of Tavush. The State Art College of Dilijan provides instruction at two levels for children and youth: a seven-year program offers after-school lessons for children, and older students who choose to



Gegashen kanon player



Hekimyan school soloists

the pupils, everyone streamed outside to take part in a tree planting ceremony organized by the new mayor of Gegashen. Next to the music school on an empty lot, we could see bulldozers ready to prepare the terrain for a new building. Though Gegashen has a school going up to the 12th grade, it has lacked a kindergarten so far. Now that too is under construction. As the country moves toward the first anniversary of the “velvet revolution,” expectations are great that progress will be made in improving and expanding basic infrastructure, including education. In this process, cultural policy will be crucial, and it is to be hoped that music will continue to fill the lives of children and youth with joy and optimism in the future.



INTERNATIONAL

International News

Crimea to Establish Museum District around Aivazovsky Gallery

FEODOSIA, Crimea (Panorama.am) — A museum district will be created on the basis of the Aivazovsky National Art Gallery in Feodosia (Theodosia), the Crimea in the next two years, TASS reports, citing Crimean leader Sergey Aksyonov.

The top official said leading experts from the Tretyakov Gallery have arrived in Crimea to assess the museum fund.

“Such a program has never been implemented in the Crimea or in Russia’s south,” he said on Facebook.

The Russian news agency says the museum district will be set up under a federal target program, with some of the funds to be allocated by the Ministry of Culture, while the Aivazovsky Gallery and the house of his sister will remain the property of Theodosia.

The gallery runs in the house designed by Aivazovsky in 1848. Later, the artist built a large exhibition hall adjacent to it. The gallery holds the largest collection of the seascape painter’s artwork.

President, Premier Congratulate New Ukrainian President

YEREVAN (Armenpress) — President of Armenia Armen Sarkissian sent a congratulatory letter to Vladimir Zelensky on his victory in the Ukrainian presidential election, the Armenian President’s Office told Armenpress on April 22.

“I am confident that the development of relations between Armenia and Ukraine derives from the interests of our countries and peoples, and it is possible to raise the Armenian-Ukrainian relations to a new level with joint efforts for the benefit of our peoples who are connected with centuries-old friendship.”

Similarly, Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan congratulated Zelensky on his landslide.

“Volodymyr Oleksandrovych, I am confident that assuming this high position you will make every effort to upgrade the deeply-rooted Armenian-Ukrainian relations to the benefit of the Armenian and Ukrainian peoples. I wish you every success in your new position of great responsibility,” Pashinyan said.

Church, Government Extend Condolences to Sri Lanka

YEREVAN (Armenpress) — Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan has sent a condolence cable to President Maithripala Sirisena of Sri Lanka in the aftermath of the terrorist attacks carried out during Easter celebrations, which left hundreds of innocent people dead or injured.

The letter reads, in part: “I express my deepest condolences to you and to the friendly people of Sri Lanka on the horrific terrorist acts perpetrated during Easter celebrations that left hundreds of innocent people dead or injured.

“The Republic of Armenia strongly condemns these appalling crimes and reaffirms its commitment to counter the growing tide of evil with the international community.

“In this difficult time for Sri Lanka, I express my deepest condolences to you and to the families of the victims.”

The Catholicos of All Armenians Karekin II also extended his condolences.

“With deep sorrow we have learnt about the terror attacks carried out in catholic churches of Sri Lanka during Easter celebrations.

“We extend our support to our sisters and brothers and strongly condemn these terror attacks committed during the most important holiday of Christianity. At the same time we call on the authorities of Sri Lanka and the international structures to take all necessary actions to eradicate the deadly crimes which are being committed based on religious intolerance and hatred.

“We pray for the servants of our Sister Church and wish speedy recover to the injured.”

100 Years after Genocide, Armenians In Turkey Revive Their Identity

By Neil Hauer

ISTANBUL (Public Radio International) — Last month, in the lead up to Turkey’s recent mayoral elections, Mesrob Mutafyan, the Armenian Patriarch of Constantinople (modern-day Istanbul), died following a long illness. While this was expected, what happened next was not: Turkey’s President Recep Tayyip Erdogan tweeted a message of condolence to Turkey’s Armenian community in the Armenian language.

Shortly thereafter, the Republican People’s Party (CHP), the country’s main opposition party, shared their own Armenian-language message.

This was a surprise because, for decades, Armenians in Turkey who survived a genocide committed by Turkey’s predecessor state — the Ottoman Empire — remained largely underground. The genocide began in 1915, during World War I, when the Ottomans accused Armenians of holding sympathies for Russia, their opponents, and led a campaign of ethnic cleansing that left an estimated 1.5 million Armenians murdered or displaced.

Those who survived either concealed their ethnicity or left their infant children with sympathetic Muslim villagers to raise them. Scholars estimate that about 200,000 Armenians converted to Islam to survive.

Istanbul, the capital of what later became the Republic of Turkey in 1923, was the only city where a cohesive and openly Armenian society remained.

Over 100 years later, Erdogan’s attempts to connect with Armenians before the elections confirmed that Turkey’s Armenian community is once again a recognized component of Turkish society.

Ultimately, Erdogan’s ruling Justice and Development Party (AKP) suffered defeats in long-held major urban centers like Istanbul, Ankara, and Izmir. As Erdogan attempts to annul and repeat the Istanbul vote, the small Turkish Armenian community in Istanbul — only about 50,000 of the city’s 15 million residents — remain stunned with this renewed attention during the mayoral elections.

Turkey’s first Armenian newspaper

A turning point came for underground Armenians when, in 1996, Turkish Armenian journalist Hrant Dink founded a newspaper called Agos. The paper, published in both Turkish and Armenian, was the first Armenian-language newspaper in the Republic of Turkey’s history.

Agos’ office, located in an unassuming high-rise in Istanbul’s Sisli district, boasts its epic history of Armenian heritage: flowing runes of the Armenian script abound — a rare sight in the Bosphorus city.

“Before Agos, the situation of Armenians in Turkey was almost unknown,” says Pakrat Estukyan, a veteran journalist with the paper, as he finishes his first of many cigarettes during the interview. “When we started, no one knew how many Armenians were in Turkey.”

The paper aims to educate Turkish society about its still-extant Armenian element, including Turkish Armenians. “Many Turkish Armenians can’t read the [Armenian] alphabet,” Estukyan says, explaining that the decision to publish in two languages was as much for Istanbul’s Armenian community as it was for Turks themselves.

As the paper’s stature grew, so did the

attention — and not all was positive.

“We first started getting threats when Hrant began publishing excerpts from Raymond Kevorkian’s [a French Armenian historian] book, discussing the Armenian heritage of cities like Van, Mush, Diyarbakir,” Estukyan says. The cities named, all in the far eastern part of Turkey known as Anatolia (previously known as Western Armenia), each had a large Armenian population until 1915.

Dink was prosecuted three times under Article 301 of the Turkish penal code for “denigrating Turkishness.” The largest escalation came in 2004 when Dink released an article claiming Sabiha Gokcen, Turkey’s first female fighter pilot and the adopted daughter of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, the founder of Turkey, had Armenian heritage.

Dink was shot dead by a Turkish nationalist near his paper’s office on Jan. 19, 2007.

Out of the Shadows

From tragedy came opportunity. Over 100,000 mourners attended Dink’s funeral, including ethnic Turks who carried placards reading “We are all Hrant Dink.”

“Hrant’s death was a catalyst,” Estukyan says. “After this, people started to come out more openly, to say, ‘I am Armenian.’” Rather than quash the topic, Dink’s murder ignited it.

Avedis Hadian, a journalist and author of the book “Secret Nation: The Hidden Armenians of Turkey,” agrees. Hadian traveled the eastern Turkish countryside in historically Armenian areas, looking for signs of Armenian life. He drew on historical records indicating that over 100,000 ethnic Armenians had remained in the region following the genocide.

What Hadian found astonished him. Significant signs of Armenian heritage and history existed nearly everywhere he went and, in most cases, villagers knew exactly who was Armenian and how they had been hidden.

As Estukyan put it, there were some “crypto-Armenians” who knew their identity and embraced it, some who knew and denied, and others who were unaware.

Dink’s assassination, and the 100,000-strong march in support of him and Turkish Armenians in the aftermath provided the immediate momentum for Armenians to reveal their concealed identities in the long-cleansed villages of eastern Turkey.

“Their neighbors knew that they were Armenian, that they had converted during the genocide,” Hadian says. “Everyone in these communities has known each other for generations, even centuries.”

This latent awareness provided the background for the reawakening of Armenian identity. But decades of stigma and fear still proved a difficult barrier for many to overcome.

Hadian adds that a perceived social liberalization between 2007 and 2015 — the midpoint of Erdogan’s AKP rule — also contributed heavily to the willingness of Armenian self-identification. “There was a brief window of opportunity,” he says.

By 2015 — the centenary of the Armenian genocide — Turkey’s general elections featured three openly ethnic Armenian candidates to Turkey’s parliament for the first time in history.

Selina Dogan was one of them.

“The problems of not only the Armenians but all [of Turkey’s] minority communities became more visible ... in the public sphere.”

A lawyer by trade, she was the leading

candidate on the opposition party CHP’s electoral list for the second of Istanbul’s three electoral districts. The moment was “instrumental,” she wrote in an email to The World. “The problems of not only the Armenians but all [of Turkey’s] minority communities became more visible ... in the public sphere.”

‘At Home in Armenia’

Turkey backslid on its short-lived liberal moment, a process that began in 2013 with the crackdown on the Gezi Park protests and accelerated sharply following the coup attempt in July 2016.

Dogan — a political insider from her time as an opposition candidate — became acutely aware of growing resentment. “Hate speech ... dominated the political scene, the parliament became too dysfunctional, with increasing populist rhetoric,” she recalls.

Some of the Armenian community’s autonomy also rolled back. “It’s been 12 years [since we could elect our Patriarch,” she says. The Turkish government has repeatedly canceled the election of a new Armenian Patriarch of Constantinople, something Istanbul’s Armenian community had requested since 2008 when the then-Patriarch (now deceased) fell into a coma and became unable to perform his duties.

Dogan also notes “financial and infrastructural problems” of Armenian schools, run separately from Turkish schools under ethnic minority status, which have also seen enrollment drop in recent decades, owing partly to difficulties receiving state funding.

At the same time, Turkish Armenians have found new hope in seeing a revived interest in Yerevan, the capital city in the Republic of Armenia, a former Soviet state.

The civil war in neighboring Syria has generated more than five million refugees, including many from Aleppo — the center of Syria’s Armenian community. An estimated 22,000 Syrian Armenians have fled to Armenia since the war began in 2011.

Watching the warm reception provided for their ethnic compatriots by their estranged motherland — most of which their ancestors never saw — spurred new attention to Yerevan among Turkey’s Armenians.

“It was amazing when I first saw [this sentiment] in Turkey, but it’s very common,” Hadian says. “They [Turkish Armenians] feel very at home in Armenia, they are very warmly received.”

Most Turkish Armenians had little contact with the Republic of Armenia, divided first by the Cold War and then by the closed border that has existed between Turkey and Armenia since 1993, which was declared as a gesture of Turkish support for Azerbaijan during the Nagorno-Karabakh War.

“The destruction of Aleppo had a big impact [on Armenian reawakening in Turkey]. ... Ten years ago, many Turkish Armenians dreamed of a [US] green card. Now they want [Republic of Armenia] citizenship instead.”

Pakrat Estukyan, journalist, Agos Armenian newspaper, Istanbul, Turkey

Estukyan has seen this as well. “The destruction of Aleppo had a big impact,” he said. “Ten years ago, many Turkish Armenians dreamed of a [US] green card. Now they want [Republic of Armenia] citizenship instead.”

It’s still too early to talk about reconciliation between Ankara and the Republic of Armenia or to expect movement on the genocide recognition issue in Turkey, but “Armenianness” is no longer a black mark.

Shoah Foundation Delegation Visits Rwanda to Mark 25th Anniversary of Genocide

LOS ANGELES – A delegation from the University of Southern California (USC) Shoah Foundation traveled to Rwanda this month to participate in events marking the country's 25th anniversary of the Genocide against the Tutsi, including the dedication of the Garden of Memory in Kicukiro. Joining First Lady Jeannette Kagame, local leaders, and long-time program partners Aegis Trust at the dedication ceremony from the Institute were Senior Director of Programs and Operations Kori Street, Associate Director of Education – Evaluation and Scholarship Amy Carnes, Senior Executive Director of Advancement Andrea Waldron, and Next Generation Council members Jodi Harris Schwartz and Qanta Ahmed. The group attended at the invitation of Aegis Trust. The Memory Garden is one of Rwanda's latest effort to confront its genocidal past while inspiring a more peaceful future. Located adjacent to Nyanza Genocide Memorial Centre, the Garden of Memory symbolizes both the rebirth of life after the genocide and the protection that nature provided survivors.

The event was part of the nation's Kwibuka 25 activities, which his named for the Rwandan word for "remember." Street noted the years of partnership between the Institute and the Kigali Genocide Memorial and Aegis Trust to bring the Institute's educational programs to the country, most recently with the launch of the IWitness Rwanda Umbumuntu homepage in IWitness that will link to their new digital platform. The education programs are founded on the 88 testimonies from Rwandan survivors in its Visual History Archive, a collection of 55,000 interviews with survivors and witnesses to genocidal violence around the globe. "I have listened to those stories of what happened here in 1994 and have learned from them what happens when identity-based hatred is allowed to descend into violence," Street said. "And I have learned from survivors like Live Wesige, whose testimony describes what happened to him and so many others who did not survive here on this ground. It is with great humility that I stand with you now to share in this

moment of hope and renewal." When completed, the Garden of Memory will cover 7.5 acres and include a stone monument, a dry garden, landscaped terraces, a meditation corridor, marshlands and an amphitheater. It's located at a place where thousands of Tutsis were killed. It will also include waterways, rivers, trenches, trees and flowers, to represent places where victims were killed or thrown dead or alive, retrieved alive or dead during the genocide. "Twenty-five years ago, this was a place of division, destruction and death," Street said. "Today it is a place of remembrance, unity and renewal." In her remarks, Street promised that USC Shoah Foundation will continue to work with their friends in Rwanda to bring its message of empathy and respect to young people.. "We are here once more for the 25th commemoration to remember with you," she said. "And we will continue to be here, to witness, to remember, and to unite towards a more peaceful Rwanda and a more peaceful world."

Iraq Begins Payment to Each Female Yezidi Survivor

ERBIL (Kurdistan 24) – The Iraqi government will begin its delivery of financial grants to female Yezidi survivors who suffered at the hands of the so-called Islamic State, the country's immigration minister said on April 18. During a press conference, Iraq's Minister for Displacement and Migration Nofal Mousa announced the start of a program called the "Yezidi Survivors' Grant" which provides each survivor with two million Iraqi dinars, equivalent to about \$1,600. Hussein Qaidi, a member of the Kurdistan Regional Government's (KRG) Yezidi Rescue Office, told Kurdistan 24 on Thursday that the decision was implemented after several meetings between Kurdish and Iraqi delegations. The meetings led to a bill called the "Compensation of Yezidi Survivors" being sent to the House of Representatives at the Iraqi Parliament who then voted to approve it. "This is a good step in the right direction by the Iraqi government," Qaidi told Kurdistan 24. "Although it is late, we are still happy that the grant program has begun." He added that the first batch of survivors, numbering at 899 women, will receive their grants first and will be followed by the dispersal of payments to two additional groups of women at a later time. At the press conference, 100 female Yezidi survivors were present with their families to receive their grants. According to Qaidi, 3,451 Yezidis had been

rescued to date while about 2,900 others remain missing. The emergence of the Islamic State and its violent assault on Sinjar (Shingal) in 2014 led to the displacement of hundreds of thousands of Yezidis. Most of them fled to the Kurdistan Region, while others resettled in neighboring countries in the region or Western states. Others were not as lucky and remained stranded in the war zone, where they experienced atrocities and mass executions at the hands of the extremist group for years. Militants subjected women and girls to sexual slavery, kidnapped children, forced religious conversions, executed scores of men, and abused, sold, and trafficked females across areas they controlled in Iraq and Syria. Before the 2014 attack, there were roughly 550,000 Yezidis in the Kurdistan Region and Iraq. As the militants took over large swaths of territory in Nineveh province, 360,000 Yezidis escaped and found refuge elsewhere, according to the KRG's Ezidi Rescue Office. So far, over 69 mass graves which contain the remains of Yezidis have been excavated along with untold numbers of individual graves. Kurdish and Ezidi Peshmerga forces, with the support of the US-led coalition, liberated Shingal from the Islamic State in November 2015. However, the town remains virtually vacant with little to no basic services available.



Cover of the Killing Orders: Talat Pasha's Telegrams and the Armenian Genocide

Akcam's Book *Killing Orders* Translated into Armenian

YEREVAN (Armenpress) – The Armenian translation of the book by Turkish historian, expert in genocide studies Taner Akcam, *Killing Orders: Talat Pasha's Telegrams and the Armenian Genocide*, has just been published. The book presents unique telegrams that refute the main thesis of Turkish denialism. They prove that there have been orders for killings given by Talat Pasha. The author assures that the study and publication of the documents are the greatest blow to the Turkish denialism. The book was presented on April 22 at the Armenian General Benevolent Union center. The book is published by Newmag printing house. "In the scientific circles the thesis that Talat Pasha's telegrams are mainly unconfirmed documents prevailed and many did not even initiate to check again the history and find out the truth through the telegrams. Taner Akcam set to that work and did it", translator of the book Andranik Israelyan said, adding that he admired the professional skills of the writer. "Akcam examined even the sorts of paper used then, the types of coding. He checked if the people mentioned in the telegram really existed or not," the translator said. The editor of the book, Armen Sargsyan, said that the book emphasizes that the Armenian Genocide started to be denied from the first seconds of its implementation.

Russian Military Said to Deploy Advanced Jets in Armenia

MOSCOW (RFE/RL) – Russia will replace its 18 MiG-29 fighter jets stationed in Armenia with more sophisticated and powerful aircraft, it was reported on Tuesday. Citing an unnamed official in the Defense Ministry in Moscow, the TASS news agency said the Russian military will start deploying Sukhoi Su-30SM jets to the Erebuni airbase in Yerevan next year. "The delivery of the aircraft will be carried out in two phases: in 2020 and 2021," the said the unnamed source. "It is planned that all 18 MiG-29s, which are currently flown by pilots of the airbase, will be replaced by Su-30SMs." Su-30SM is a modernized version of a heavy fighter jet developed by the Sukhoi company in the late 1980s. The Russian military received the first batch of such aircraft in 2012. It can carry much heavier and more wide-ranging rockets and has more advanced electronic equipment than MiG-29, which was designed in the 1970s. The Russian ambassador to Armenia, Sergey Kopyrkin, did not deny or confirm the TASS report when he spoke to journalists later on Tuesday. "I am not prepared to talk about this subject in detail," Kopyrkin said, according to the Sputnik news agency. For its part, Armenia's Defense Ministry declined to comment on the possible deployment of Su-30SM aircraft, saying that Moscow has made no official statements to that effect.

An Armenian government source told RFE/RL's Armenian service that Yerevan would welcome such a deployment because Su-30SM is more modern than the aging MiG-29s that are part of the Russian military base in Armenia. The MiG-29s were modernized by the Russian Air Force several years ago. The Russia base headquartered in Gyumri is in turn part of Russia's Southern Military District. The district commander, Colonel-General Alexander Dvornikov, met with the visiting chief of the Armenian army's General Staff, Lieutenant-General Artak Davtian, on April 19. According to the Armenia Defense Ministry, the two generals discussed "joint combat readiness activities." A ministry statement said Dvornikov also praised the most recent Russian-Armenian military exercises that were held at a training ground 50 kilometers west of Yerevan on April 1-12. Earlier this year, Moscow and Yerevan signed a contract for the delivery of four Sukhoi Su-30SM jets to Armenia. Defense Minister Davit Tonoyan said in February that the Armenian military will receive them by the beginning of 2020. It plans to buy more such aircraft in the following years, he said. Financial details of the fighter jet deal remain unknown. Membership in the Russian-led Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO) entitles Armenia to buying Russian weapons at discounted prices.

Armenia Wants to Develop Cooperation Black Sea Economic Organization

YEREVAN (ARKA) – Armenia wants to develop cooperation with the Organization of Black Sea Economic Cooperation (BSEC) on an equal footing, Armenian National Assembly Vice Speaker Lena Nazaryan said on Tuesday, April 16, at the 52nd session of the BSEC Parliamentary Assembly's Culture, Education and Social Affairs Committee. "The members of the organization have common goals, such as establishment of peace and stability as well as development of welfare and friendly relations," she said. "The organization should keep serving its key goal – to form a stable region with taking into account harmonization of its participants' interests." In her words, development of cooperation helps the countries not only to solve their domestic problems, but also establish mutual

trust among nations. "Although the key focus of the organization's activity is economic cooperation, I am convinced that it is possible to create more favorable conditions for solving also political problems in the region," Nazaryan said adding that complicated political relations between particular countries hobble economic development of the region. The Organization of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation is a regional international organization focusing on multilateral political and economic initiatives aimed at fostering cooperation, peace, stability and prosperity in the Black Sea region. The members of the organization are Azerbaijan, Albania, Armenia, Bulgaria, Greece, Georgia, Moldova, Russia, Romania, Serbia, Turkey and Ukraine.

Community News

Taner Akçam Lectures at USC

LOS ANGELES — At a recent lecture at the University of Southern California (USC), historian Taner Akçam said the trove of documents he discovered in a once-obscure archive in 2015 “blows up this main Turkish denialist argument. “For a century, the Turkish government has denied that the atrocities that killed 1.5 million Armenians at the hands of the Ottoman military constituted a genocide. One of its most oft-stated claims: there is no proof that the World War I-era death marches and massacres were carried out on orders from the Ottoman government.

But then came along a man whom the *New York Times* has dubbed the “Sherlock Holmes of Armenian Genocide.”

Akçam has unearthed documents that prove what virtually all genocide scholars have already long asserted: The killing orders came directly from the Ottoman government.

At a recent lecture at USC, Akçam said the trove of documents he discovered in a once-obscure archive in 2015 “blows up this main Turkish denialist argument.”

“It’s a bombshell, really,” he said.

Akçam has been a thorn in the side of the Turkish government for decades. One of the first Turkish scholars to call the atrocities that befell the Armenians a genocide, he was arrested in 1976 and sentenced to 10 years in a Turkish prison for becoming the editor of a Marxist publication that opposed the government. He escaped from prison after a year, using the leg of a stove to tunnel his way out.

At the March 22 lecture co-sponsored by USC Shoah Foundation’s Center for Advanced Genocide Research and USC Dornsife Institute of Armenian Studies, Akçam detailed how many of these documents came to light — and how anyone can view them online.

“After I discovered these materials, I’m scanning everything, and I’m putting it there online — nobody should suffer like myself,” Akçam said. “I heard about this archive in 1996; I couldn’t get access until 2015.”

The materials were compiled by Krikor Guerguerian, a genocide survivor and Catholic monk who in the early 1950s came into contact with an exiled Ottoman judge who told him about the whereabouts of a trove of military and court documents. Guerguerian then made a pilgrimage to the Armenian Patriarchate of Jerusalem to photograph every copy.

Guerguerian lost 10 siblings in the genocide and witnessed the murder of his parents. (To watch a clip of testimony in the Visual History Archive of Guerguerian telling the story of what happened when he met the perpetrator later in life, visit <https://sfi.usc.edu/video/day-26-30-days-testimony-lorna-miller-testimony-harry-krikor-guerguerian>.)

When Guerguerian died in 1988, his massive archive was entrusted to his nephew, Edmund Guerguerian. It was Edmund who finally allowed Akçam to view the archive in 2015.

The first scholar to lay eyes on it, Akçam helped Edmund organize and digitize the Krikor Guerguerian Archive and make it available online.

In his lecture, Akçam shared some of the military dispatches in the archive that show high-ranking Ottoman authorities discussing the extermination of the Armenians. The telegrams, he said, were written on paper marked in Ottoman letterhead.

In one, Bahaeddin Shakir, a prominent Ottoman politician, asks: “Are the Armenians being dispatched from there being liquidated? Are these troublesome people you say you’ve expelled and dispersed being exterminated or just deported? Answer explicitly.”

Akçam peppered his talk with colorful anecdotes about how some of the documents wound up in the hands of people who would go to great lengths to ensure that they wouldn’t be destroyed by the Ottoman government.

The lecture was co-sponsored by USC Shoah Foundation’s Center for Advanced Genocide Research and USC Dornsife Institute of Armenian Studies. see LECTURE, page 8



Gr. 4 students presenting their project about Energy Transfer

St. Stephen’s Armenian Elementary School Celebrates STEM Month

WATERTOWN — St. Stephen’s Armenian Elementary School is rededicating itself to its Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM) Initiative for more than a month this spring. The students engaged in an array of activities designed to spark creative and innovative thinking across the grades. The mission of this initiative is to increase the focus and emphasis on throughout the school.

The Stem Month included: Computer Programming K-5, Robotics, Engineering Design Challenges, Math Activities, Presentations by Audubon Society instructors and by Animal Ambassadors (animal science education company bringing awareness about exotic animals) and a field trip to the Harvard Natural History Museum.

The month ended on April 8, with a Science Fair.

Fifth graders, after studying different forms of energy, worked with partners to create the most energy for their roller coaster engineering design.

Fourth graders, after exploring how forms of energy can be transferred, went through the engineering process, first individually, then with a partner, creating trebuchets (catapults).

Third graders built windmills to study energy in motion. Their goal was to figure out the most efficient way to transfer the kinetic energy from the wind to do work.

Second graders worked in pairs to engineer cost effective boats that would float and hold the most weight. This project introduced students to monetary concepts and budgeting as well as engineering successes and failures.

The first graders investigated different birds and how the shape of their beaks affects the type of food they can eat. They experimented with tooth picks, spoons, and tweezers to simulate three different types of beaks. The children then practiced picking up four different types of “food” using each beak and found out which beak could pick up the most food!

The kindergarteners studied the life cycle of the chicken by incubating and hatching chicken eggs in the classroom. The children learned what the needs of the chicks are both while incubating and after they hatch. They learned new vocabulary words by labeling the inside of the egg.

Parents, grandparents and friends of the school enjoyed viewing and learning about the students’ projects. There was also a special visit from Lisa Ann Gulesserian, lecturer at Harvard University with her students enrolled in her Armenian Language and Culture Class. The Harvard students had prepared a small booklet of fun science facts in Armenian that they distributed to the student body. They had the opportunity to interview SSAES students, while practicing their Armenian conversation skills.



Catapults Harvard lecturer Lisa Gulesserian and her students with Principal Boyamian

Balakian Wins 2019 Balmuth Award

HAMILTON, N.Y. (Colgate News) — Peter Balakian, Donald M. and Constance H. Rebar Professor in humanities and professor of English, has been selected as the 2019 recipient of the Jerome Balmuth Award for Teaching.

Balakian is the author of seven books of poems, including the 2016 Pulitzer Prize winner for poetry, *Ozone Journal*. His memoir, *Black Dog of Fate*, received several awards, including the 1998 PEN/Martha Albrand Prize for the Art of the Memoir and was named a best book of the year for the *New York Times*, *LA Times* and *Publisher’s Weekly*.

“Professor Balakian, as an author and activist, belongs to the world,” said Provost and Dean of the Faculty Tracey Hucks ’87, MA ’90. “As a teacher, he has always dedicated himself to the students of this University. I congratulate him on receiving the Balmuth award — he has transformed generations of undergraduates.”

The recipient of many awards — including a Presidential Medal and the Moves Khoranatsi Medal from the Republic of Armenia; Guggenheim and National Endowment for the Arts fellowships; the Emily Clark Balch Prize for poetry; the Spendlove Prize for Social Justice, Tolerance and Diplomacy; and Anahid Literary Prize — Balakian has also been featured broadly in the national and international media.

Since 1980 Professor Balakian has taught courses in American literature, creative writing workshops, as well as courses in genocide studies that have been part of the curriculum for Core Distinction and Peace and Conflict



Peter Balakian teaching a class at Colgate

Studies of which he has been an advisory board member since 1986.

“Peter’s endless curiosity, his willingness to turn every encounter into an opportunity for learning and teaching, his ability to engage with the world imaginatively, intellectually, and politically, set a high bar for those who would follow in his footsteps,” wrote one of Balakian’s former students.

“For Colgate students such as me,” wrote another, “Peter is the family member we were able to select, the great ancestral teacher whose care and power has nurtured us through our own scholarly and personal lives.”

The Balmuth award, named in honor of the late Jerome Balmuth, Harry Emerson Fosdick Professor of philosophy and religion, emeritus, was established by Mark Siegel ’73 in 2009 to celebrate and recognize superb teaching by Colgate faculty of undergraduates. The prize is awarded to a faculty member whose teaching is distinctively successful and transformative, recognizing that such distinction can be achieved through a broad spectrum of methodologies ranging from traditional to innovative.

The award will be officially presented to Balakian during a dinner and ceremony on May 2.



COMMUNITY NEWS

Gerald Papasian Speaks Out on the Orbelian Controversy

CONTROVERSY, from page 1

National Opera of Armenia. Later he produced a number of operas in the United States, France, Great Britain, and Armenia. Today he is involved in the work of the National Opera, having directed the opera buffa "Gariné" by Dikran Tchouhadjian there last year.

Orbelian was appointed as artistic director of the Spendiaryan Opera and Ballet in 2016 and given the additional position of executive or managing director in February 2017. He was given a three-year contract which, according to Orbelian, expires on August 3, 2020.

Papasian declared that though on the surface the situation appeared to be just a clash of individuals, Orbelian versus Armenia's Acting Minister of Culture Nazeni Gharibyan, larger issues are involved. One factor is financial. The government apparently is trying to save money by cutting expenditures in every domain, including the cultural one. Gharibyan earlier tried to shut down some drama theaters in Armenia and asked the Opera and Ballet Theater to cut some 25 positions (which it did). Orbelian is indirectly also accused of contributing to the debt of the opera.

A second issue is that Orbelian does not speak Armenian, which is supposedly unacceptable constitutionally for a state opera director. A third matter is that he travels abroad constantly.

The fourth aspect is organizational. In the Soviet period, Papasian explained, the managerial or administrative director was often given greater powers to control the artistic director, and often would be a sort of politician, as member of the Communist Party. He could hire or fire the artistic director. In certain instances, the same person held both offices (e.g. Gohar Gasparyan's husband Tigran Levonyan, Hovhannes Chekijian and Edgar Hovhannisyan, all at the Opera).

The Soviet-era laws or rules have been changed in countries like Russia and Georgia but remain on the books in Armenia. When Orbelian was invited to come to Armenia from the United States to the opera, it was understood that he would be given full authority to control the executive and artistic dimensions of the opera without interference.

Organizational Background

Papasian explained that the organizational issues that Orbelian is now facing first emerged in the case of the Hamazgayin Sos Sargsyan Theater, founded in 1991 and turned into a state theater in 2003. The actors of that company opposed filmmaker Vigen Chaldryan, who was appointed to the two positions of managing director and artist director simultaneously by Minister of Culture

Armen Amiryan.

This appointment, Papasian said, was "Soviet-style," meaning forced by the ministry without taking into consideration the company's needs. After two years of unsuccessful efforts at working together, the frustrated actors asked Chaldryan to resign, but he refused. The matter went to the level of the ministry, by now run by Gharibyan. The latter ruled that the same person cannot be both managing director and artistic director and gave Chaldryan the choice of which office to hold, unlike what was to happen in Orbelian's case.

Astutely, Chaldryan chose to remain as managing director because of the greater power of this office in Armenia, and brought in a friend of his as artistic director. However, his efforts failed because the theater company went on strike and Chaldryan was forced to resign completely.

After this, Gharibyan was planning to close down or merge six or seven other theaters but when the news was leaked, a controversy emerged, Papasian said, and she had to stop.

Tension with Orbelian

Pressure initially was brought to bear on Orbelian after Gharibyan's predecessor, Lilit Makunts, came to office. She famously wrote posts on the Ministry of Culture's Facebook page in the fall of 2018 noting that the staff and executive personnel of the Opera are banned from discussing politics and holding meetings at the building. The post, so soon after the bloodless Velvet Revolution, surprised many and drew much unfavorable attention.

With the government's decision to dismantle the Ministry of Culture, Makunts left her post as minister and soon became a member of parliament. Deputy Minister Gharibyan was left temporarily as acting minister. Gharibyan's next move was to dismiss Orbelian from his position as executive director. He remains artistic director, but Papasian said "this means very little." As artistic director, he will not have the right or capacity to make any deals with outside operas. He can only take care of the opera house itself, under the orders of a new managing director.

Papasian suggested that if there is no other choice than to continue the current system, at least Orbelian should hold the managing director position and hire an artistic director of his choice, thus remaining in control of the situation to exercise his unique talents. Papasian emphasized that "a personality like Orbelian with all his international celebrity and fame, and international ties all the way to the Metropolitan Opera, to mention one out of

hundreds, is very important to Armenia as publicity. He has to be the executive or managing director to be able to talk with the Metropolitan people and make agreements. As such, he had brought in a lot of celebrities in the last two years to Armenia and put Armenian's opera house on the international map. That is the most important thing for us today." He noted that Orbelian has introduced more premieres in Armenia in two years than has been done in the past 17 years.

Papasian pointed out that financially, Orbelian has spent money out of his own pocket for his travels and for the Opera, unlike his predecessors. The Opera has a 92-million-dram debt which was inherited from the past, not created by Orbelian, Papasian said, adding, "Most probably, his predecessors have stolen everything all day long, all the time over the last 20 years."

As far as language goes, there are many other examples throughout the world of famous directors of operas who did not speak the national language. A Japanese director of the Bastille Opera House of Paris spoke with his artists in English, for example. Papasian said, "Directors are not supposed to learn the country's language like ambassadors. Orbelian does speak Russian and everybody understands him, so there is no problem. He speaks 'music' rather than Armenian, and that should be enough."

Orbelian's travels should not be considered a negative, but a positive, Papasian said. It is normal for someone of his stature to travel and keep relations with the outside world. Instead he could have capable deputy directors, Papasian suggested, or another method of facilitating his work. He must have had contracts in place for the next five years throughout the world when he was offered the Armenian position.

A fifth factor must be considered in addition to the above-mentioned broader issues, and that is the personal one. Papasian surmised that there is a minority group connected with the Opera House which wants to expel

Orbelian to control the opera itself. What role it played in creating the initial pressure on Orbelian is unclear, but Papasian says that it, at present, is supporting the ministry's actions. Orbelian himself has noted that Gharibyan had a candidate in mind to replace him. The minority group is introducing additional political undertones in connection with Orbelian having been appointed during the prior regime.



Gerald Papasian, left, with Constantine Orbelian

Generally, Papasian said, "No big-name director in the world accepts having a boss. There are many examples of important artistic personalities who are both executive and artistic director in the West." Orbelian in particular, Papasian declared, "is a brilliant concert master and a brilliant musician. He is very well known all over the world. Consequently, letters have poured in from noted artists ranging from China to the Metropolitan Opera in New York in support of him, and this is not good for our image. In Armenia, the entire theatrical community, with all the other theaters' directors, is standing with Orbelian." The latter also fear that if this situation continues, a dictatorial environment will be created in the arts, and, Papasian said, they are right.

The Way Out

"In short," Papasian concluded, "it is obvious to everyone that all the above mentioned 'faults' Orbelian is being accused of, i.e. the Armenian language issue, the maestro's travels, etc., are unfounded and mere pretexts to get control of the opera house. I'm sure this will be obvious for Pashinyan as well. Already, based on the support of the entire opera house staff and all Armenian theater directors, the decision to hire a replacement for managing director has been postponed by Pashinyan. That's a first positive step. In the future, perhaps someone may be appointed who would be more apt to conduct cultural affairs for the government, or a seasoned adviser be selected for the minister of culture. There are intellectuals in Armenia, very intelligent and wise and learned, who know international rules and are talking about it. Some of them are saying the right things about how things are done in America, France, Britain and Japan, and the funny thing is that I, who have lived and worked outside, say that they are absolutely right, as if they've lived there themselves."

Perhaps there is also a silver lining to the present controversy, Papasian added, as it calls attention to the rigid rules and regulations inherited from Soviet times. Either these rules should be changed, he said, or flexibility and exceptions should be allowed in the case of important artists. Furthermore, after the Velvet Revolution, people opposing government decisions are at least capable now to openly protest and voice their opinion. This would have been unheard of during the previous regime, or would have been forcibly repressed. The blessing in disguise would be if this incident finally triggers the much-needed change of laws for culture in Armenia since its independence.

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COMMUNITY NEWS

OBITUARY

Albert I. Kassabian, 96

Longtime Attorney, WWII Veteran

OAKTON, Va. — On April 21, longtime practicing attorney, Albert I. Kassabian, of Oakton, VA, passed away from lung cancer at the age of 96.

His wife of 63 years, Dr. Alice Kassabian, predeceased him on June 9, 2011.

He was the father of five children, Dr. Keith Kassabian (Amy), Lynne Kassabian (David Hick), Judge Brett Kassabian (Jacqueline), Clay Kassabian (Inge) and John Kassabian. A loving and involved grandfather, affectionately known as Papa Al, he adored his seven grandchildren, Peter, Rachel (Alex Usé), Rebecca, Hannah, Joshua, Ani and Sarah. He was uncle to John Anooshian (Cynthia), Dr. John Anooshian, Ann Anooshian and Robert Kassabian (Vanessa), and great-uncle to Chanel Anooshian and Carson Kassabian. His doting sister, Gloria Kassabian, survives him. His younger brother, Judge Arnold Kassabian (Naomi), predeceased him.

The son of Armenian immigrants, Ohannes and Araxy Kassabian, he was born in Richmond, Va., on June 24, 1922. He moved to New York City and later served as a lieutenant in the US Army during WWII, seeing combat action in Okinawa and subsequently serving in occupied Japan as a courier for Gen. MacArthur.

Upon his honorable discharge, he graduated from CCNY, married his loving Alice and in 1950 earned his law degree from the University of Virginia. He practiced law at Kassabian & Kassabian, PLC in Annandale, until the week before he passed, a span of almost 70 years.

During the Civil Rights movement, he was

active in confronting Virginia's massive resistance to school desegregation.

He was a long-standing member of Little River United Church of Christ, serving on the



board of deacons. He will be remembered for his unflagging humor, his powerful strength of character and his complete devotion to his cherished family.

A funeral service will be held Saturday, April 27, at 11 a.m. at Little River United Church of Christ, 8410 Little River Turnpike, Annandale.

Agnes Krikorian, 91

Teacher, Daughter of Genocide Survivors

FRAMINGHAM, Mass. — Agnes (Kalousdian) Krikorian, 91, passed away peacefully after a period of declining health on April 23. Her husband George, who was a public-school teacher like her, predeceased her in 1997. The daughter of Armenian Genocide survivors Isaac (Yessayi) and Sarah (Siranoush)(Manassian) Kalousdian from Shabin Karahisar in the Black Sea region, Agnes was born on February 8, 1928 in Worcester, grew up in Whitinsville, MA, graduated from Hill College and worked in the



accounting department of Whitin Machine Works before moving to Framingham with George in 1959. She worked at Framingham Union Hospital and Perini Corporation.

She later graduated summa cum laude from Framingham State College, and spent a distinguished career teaching Spanish and reading in Framingham and Marlboro. She was dedicated to addressing the needs of each student as an individual to extract their best efforts and inspire them to lead lives of accomplishment. Like her husband, she was a strong teachers

unionist. Because of her background and skills, she was selected among an initial group of teachers in Massachusetts to advance the Facing History and Ourselves program to teach the connection between history with an emphasis on genocides and the moral choices we confront in the modern world.

She profoundly loved her church, her students, her family, her community, and the circle of close friends she held with her husband over the years. With the formation of the Framingham Armenian church in 1998, a host of new friends and a close bible study group at the church became a part of her life. Agnes continued to read, share lessons, and make new friends until her last breaths. She spared no effort in trying to make others' lives better and was deeply loved and respected in return.

She is survived by her son and daughter-in-law Van and Priscilla Krikorian of Rye, NY, both attorneys (Van serves as co-chair of the Armenian Assembly of America); as well as grandchildren Ani and her husband Frank Oliver, also both attorneys in New York City; Sarah Krikorian who is a public school teacher in Stratford, Conn.; Lena Krikorian who is studying at the Diplomatic Academy in Vienna, Austria; and George Krikorian who is studying law in New York. Her siblings, Sebouh Kalousdian and his wife Margaret of Whitinsville and sister Prudence Blake of Rhode Island predeceased her.

She is also survived by her nieces and nephews Jeffery M. Kalousdian of Whitinsville, Mark Kalousdian of Uxbridge, Melanie and Fran Walker of Falmouth, Willard Gould, Marilyn Gould Papa, and Elaine Gould McKenzie, Timmy and Tommy Beech of Rhode Island, and all their respective children and grandchildren.

Her funeral will be on Saturday, April 27, at 11 a.m. in the Armenian Apostolic Church, 315 Church St., Whitinsville. Calling hours will precede the funeral at the same church beginning at 10 a.m.

Bronze Sculpture 'Genocide' on Long-Term Loan from Armenian Museum to Holy Trinity Armenian Church

CAMBRIDGE, Mass. — Holy Trinity Armenian Church of Greater Boston has been honored with the care of the bronze sculpture "Genocide" now on long-term loan from the Armenian Museum of America. The cast bronze sculpture was commissioned in 1984 by Dr. Rafik Sarkissian of California. The artist, Alice Melikian, is a Paris-born Armenian who was trained in Armenia and immigrated to the United States. The piece depicts a mother seated with a deceased child across her lap — an exquisite and painful representation of Mother Armenia and the land and people lost during the atrocities of the Genocide. It is also the poignant portrayal of a mother's love.

The sculpture was donated by Sarkissian to the Armenian Museum of America in December 2000 and was included in an exhibit called Who Today Remembers? The Armenian Genocide. It was then on display briefly at the entrance of

the Museum in Watertown MA and later shown as part of the Who Are the Armenians? exhibit. The original intent of the piece was to be sighted outside in a contemplative space. The Museum offered the sculpture to Holy Trinity last year and worked together with the Church to provide the appropriate placement of the piece. It is now situated on the eastern side of the complex.

On Mother's Day, May 12, the church will host an outdoor requiem and reception immediately following the Badarak. Prayers will be offered for the souls of all mothers and their families lost during the Genocide. The newly landscaped remembrance garden will be unveiled. The hope is that this special sculpture and garden will provide a space for quiet reflection and remembrance for the whole community. Holy Trinity Armenian Church is located at 145 Brattle St. All members of the community are invited.

Taner Akçam Lectures at USC

LECTURE, from page 6

Research and USC Dornsife Institute of Armenian Studies.

He told the story of a crooked Ottoman officer in Aleppo who was in charge of deporting Armenians to their deaths in the desert.

The officer, Naim Efendi, was a gambler and a drunk who needed money.

Exploiting this weakness was an already exiled Armenian journalist named Aram Andonian, who bribed Naim Efendi for documents that demonstrated that the killing orders were coming from the highest reaches of the Ottoman government. This scheme produced 26 original documents that Andonian revealed in his 1921 book, *Great Crime*.

"This became one of the most important documentation of the Armenian Genocide," Akçam said.

Andonian later took a job as the director of the Nubar Library in Paris. He brought the Ottoman documents with him, thinking they would be safe.

"You think that when you go there you will find the materials?" Akçam said. "They are gone. Nobody knows what happened with these materials."

Until, that is, Akçam discovered them in Guerguerian's archive.

Despite the incontrovertible proof that the documents provide, Akçam cautioned that even the most damning evidence isn't likely to make a dent in Turkish denialism.

"Denialism has nothing to do with the facts," he said. "It is a political decision."



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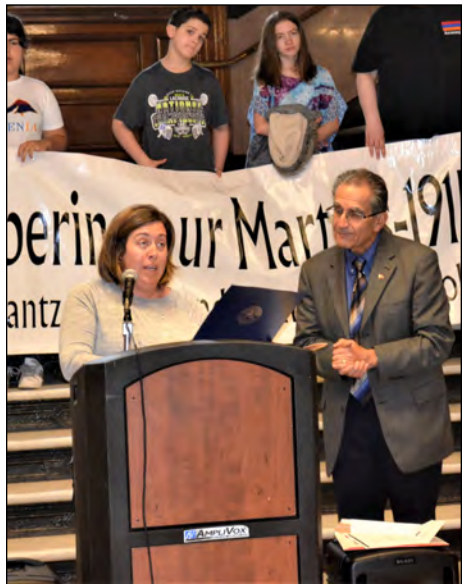


COMMUNITY NEWS

Merrimack Valley Armenian Community Commemorates Armenian Genocide

By Ara Jeknavorian

LOWELL, Mass. – The 104th anniversary of the Armenian Genocide was commemorated in Lowell, MA on Saturday, April 20 with the raising of the Armenian flag at Lowell City Hall and by a proclamation by the Mayor of the Lowell, the Honorable William Samaras. The commemoration, organized by the Armenian National Committee (ANC) of the Merrimack Valley, enjoyed the participation of all local Armenian Churches and Armenian organizations. The Honor Guard of the Armenian-American Veterans of Lowell presented both the American and Armenian Flags during the singing of the American and Armenian National Anthems. Rev. Father Khachatur Kesablian from Sts. Vartanantz Armenian Church, Chelmsford, Rev. Stepan Baljian of St. Gregory Armenian Church, No.



Emily Byrne, district director for Congresswoman Lori Trahan, MA 3rd and Ara Jeknavorian, Merrimack Valley ANC Chair



Greater Lowell Armenian Community at Lowell City Hall

Andover, and Rev. Fr. Vart Gyozeian offered the invocation and benediction. Messages were offered by ACYOA member, David Arakelian from Sts. Vartanantz Armenian Church, Chelmsford, and Middlesex County West AYF member, Narineh Gevorkian. A proclamation was presented by Lowell Mayor William Samaras, and a Certificate of Special Congressional Recognition by Emily Byrne, representing US Rep. Lori Trahan.

Remarks were also offered by City Council woman, Rita Mercier, and former Lowell City

Mayor, Rodney Elliot. Recognition was also extended to artist, Varoujan Hejinian, who designed the beautiful "Mother's Hands" Armenian Genocide Memorial that adorns the entrance to Lowell City Hall. Ara Jeknavorian, Merrimack Valley ANC Chair and Master of Ceremonies, expressed the heartfelt appreciation of the Greater Lowell Armenian community to the City of Lowell for once again providing the Armenian community the opportunity to proudly express its Armenian Heritage, to remember the holy

martyrs of the Armenian Genocide, and to once again recognize the historical truth of the Armenian Genocide. Jeknavorian also thanked Congresswoman Trahan for being one of the 70 co-sponsors for the new Armenian Genocide Resolution recently introduced into Congress. A reception followed in the Lowell Mayor's Reception room hosted by the Lowell Lousintak ARS Chapter and Sts. Vartanantz Women's Guild with a music interlude provided by Datev and Tsoline Gevorkian.

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Vicar General of the Armenian Catholic Eparchy in the U.S.

Reception to follow

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COMMUNITY NEWS

Bishop Sahak Mashalian of Armenian Patriarchate in Istanbul Visits New York

MASHALIAN, from page 1

the late Patriarch of Constantinople Archbishop Mesrob Mutafyan, who was mourned by Armenians worldwide. “I pray that we elect a worthy patriarch,” he declared.

Mashalian is himself one of six candidates to succeed the late Patriarch. An election to choose the next occupant of the patriarchal throne is scheduled to take place at the Istanbul Patriarchate following the 40-day mourning period for Patriarch Mutafyan, who passed away following a decade of illness and incapacitation.

Mashalian extolled the spiritual power of the late Patriarch during a luncheon-reception that followed the April 7 service.

Instrumental in bringing the bishop to the Diocese and donating to the event were community benefactors Hrant Gulian and Harry Toufayan, who called the day’s presentation “inspiring and uplifting.”

When Gulian introduced Mashalian to the crowded Kavookjian Auditorium, the guests gave the visiting leader a lengthy and thunderous standing ovation.

The bishop had been invited to the Eastern Diocese to lead the Diocesan clergy in their annual Lenten retreats, meeting regionally from April 1 to 10, organized by the Primate, Very Rev. Daniel Findikyan, and Diocesan Vicar Fr. Simeon Odabashian.

As the retreat leader, Mashalian led three sessions on the theme, “Prayer in the Personal Life of the Priest.”

“Bishop Sahak drew on his own experience of prayer and deep knowledge of the Bible and the Armenian Church’s spiritual tradition,” explained Fr. Findikyan. “He addressed the distinctive challenges to prayer faced by priests: praying for a living, and praying for others. Ironically, this can sometimes negatively affect a priest’s personal prayer life, which can become mechanical or cold.”

The Primate continued: “Srpazan addressed these issues head on with specific advice on how to revive and fortify our own prayer life. He spoke to us frankly and in a relaxed and fatherly way about a topic of great importance for our lives, faith, and work.”

The retreat also focused on liturgical prayer, including the meditative Armenian service known as the “Service for the Forgiveness of Penitents,” which is conducted in monasteries on Holy Thursday morning, but is little-known in common parish life.

For Mashalian, the retreats were a very positive experience. “We don’t have this tradition in Jerusalem, Echmiadzin, or Bolis [Istanbul],” he said. “Retreats like this are more of a Western custom. But this gave me an opportunity to slow down a little while enjoying the spiritual, brotherly atmosphere. This is a positive influence of American religious culture, which I would like to spread to other parts of the Armenian Church.”

During an exclusive interview, he spoke of his childhood in a family with Armenian parents, two sisters, and a grandmother

whose 15-year-old brother Avedis had been killed during the Genocide.

“Over this tragedy, my paternal grandfather became blind from incessant weeping,” he revealed quietly.

During his childhood, the young Shaheen (the bishop’s baptismal name, meaning “bird of prey”) found happiness in nature. “I loved the sea very much. Summertime entertainments left vivid and lovely memories, and I always rejoiced when guests filled our home. There were special meals, laughter and jolly noise. I was a naughty boy as a youth and had many accidents which jeopardized my life, but I was mostly saved by sheer miracles.”

“God kept me for these days, I suppose,” he said.

Growing up in a family of strong Armenian feeling and faith, he attended the Armenian Church from the age of five. “It was natural to become a priest,” he related, adding, “My paternal grandmother prayed for me to become a *vartabed*.”

The family lived in an area near Istanbul with no Armenian schools, so he read the Bible in Turkish. At university, he studied electrical engineering and philosophy, and decided to attend Christian meetings in a Protestant church, preaching in Turkish at age 18, and even helping to write a book on the existence of God at age 19. At age 20, he met Patriarch Shnork Kaloustian.

In 1982, he met the future Patriarch Mesrob Mutafyan, who in that phase of his life had come to Istanbul to start a youth movement, giving lectures in Armenian which young Shaheen attended, learning Armenian at age 20. Following a six-month stint in the army, he decided to become a celibate priest.

Eager to Do, Not Just Observe

Why did he take vows as a *vartabed*? I asked. His answer: “Life is very short. Celibacy is more focused, dedicated. I wanted to understand things more deeply. I didn’t want my life to be as an observer, but as a doer; to be more contemplative, contented.”

Some of the difficulties of his work have been that “we are in a church that is not complete, especially for celibates. We don’t have a monastery, not enough accommodation,” he lamented.

“If I had a choice, I would be a teacher, a preacher in a monastery. But I have to do administrative work.”

He said he considers the best elements of his work “preaching, teaching, advising, listening, organizing, helping charities, and other activities which are essential parts of being a pastor. “They have given me a rich human experience that for an attentive person becomes the source of wisdom,” he said.

“My relations have enriched me greatly, and my contacts with other people have balanced my intellectual flights and inner journey. In my work, I meet all kinds of people – both good and evil. It has greatly helped me to understand humankind.”

He added, “God changed my life. When I preach the word of God, I feel refreshed. To imitate Christ is the meaning of my life. You feel whole when you feel the grace of God.”



Bishop Sahak Mashalian celebrating the Divine Liturgy at New York’s St. Vartan Cathedral.

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COMMUNITY NEWS

Armenia's Consulate General Celebrates 25th Anniversary with Anna Hakobyan

GLENDALÉ — On April 7, the Consulate General of the Republic of Armenia marked its 25th anniversary in Los Angeles with a banquet held at the Glendale Hilton, at which Anna Hakobyan, wife of Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan, was the keynote speaker. Other guests from Armenia included Vahagn Melikyan, the Secretary-General of the Armenian Foreign Ministry and Ambassador to the US Varuzhan Nersesyan. Many local politicians, both of Armenian and non-Armenian descent, were present, as well as Armenian religious leaders. The Armenian community came out in force to support the event, with approximately 600 estimated attendees.

The master of ceremonies was Los Angeles Superior Court Judge Armenui ("Amy") Ashvanian. After the opening prayers, Consul General Dr. Armen Baibourtian reflected on the history of the founding of the consulate and its present activities, and read a congratulatory



Consul General Dr. Armen Baibourtian

message from Prime Minister Pashinyan. Ambassador Nersesyan noted the many years of cooperation and sister city relationship between the cities of Los Angeles and Yerevan. Melikyan read a special message of Foreign Minister Zohrab Mnatsakanyan about the special role of the Los Angeles consulate.

Anna Hakobyan began her speech by noting that the Consulate General was established in the early years of the independent Republic of Armenia, not long after the independence of Armenia, and said: "This underscored the importance that Armenia has always attached to its relations with California – a state that has provided you all, my dear compatriots, with a safe



Anna Hakobyan

haven and with limitless opportunities to live in and create. This was also a testament to the importance that Armenia has always attached to each of you individually, and to the large, thriving Armenian community of California." She praised the California Armenian communi-



Consul General Armen Baibourtian, far left, and Anna Hakobyan, sixth from left, with Founding Friends of the Consulate General, including Parsegh Kartalian of Tekeyan, third from left.



Judge Armenui Ashvanian, left, and Anna Hakobyan

ty for its assistance during the April War of 2016 and its solidarity with the Velvet Revolution.

Hakobyan praised Baibourtian's principled stance as an Armenian diplomat under the prior regimes, declaring: "You chose to stand with justice and expressed solidarity with your people, paying a heavy price for your decision. But sooner or later, justice always prevails. And now, you are here, at the helm of one of our most important diplomatic missions." She noted that the consulate strengthened the relationship between California and Armenia in many spheres.

After speaking briefly about the successes of the Velvet Revolution, she described the two foundations which she leads and asked the community to support them. She said, "The goal of the My Step Foundation is to support the creation of a society and civic infrastructure in Armenia that promote the human development of all individuals, and equip them with the necessary tools to contribute to their families' and communities' prosperity... As for the City of Smiles Foundation, its mission is to help children and youth suffering from cancer and from blood disorders."

She concluded by inviting all to visit Armenia, exclaiming: "The new Armenia is experiencing its renaissance. Anchored on the love of land and water and the bonds of kinship among all Armenians, she awaits each one of

you with love and excitement."

Together with Baibourtian, Hakobyan participated in honoring those who helped establish the consulate general and made it flourish. This included the members of the Founding Friends of the Consulate General, Elizabeth Agabian, Flora Dunaian, Hermine Janoyan, Greg Kahwajian, Parsegh Kartalian (chairman of the Tekeyan Cultural Association Los Angeles Chapter), Khachatur Khudikyan, Rafi Ourfalian and Savey Tufenkian, who were invited up to the stage. Vahan and Anoush Chamlian, also members of this group, were not able to be present. In addition, the members of the Board of Directors of the House of Armenia, which helped purchase the consulate general's building, were honored, including Sinan Sinanian, Vahe Yacoubian, Charles Ghailian, Gerald Turpanjian and Joseph Kanimian, and trustees Vatche Manoukian, Sinan Sinanian and Gerald Turpanjian.

The chapters of the Tekeyan Cultural Association in Southern California were represented by twelve leaders at the banquet.

Hakobyan had come to the United States as part of a tour to support her City of Smile and My Step foundations. During her Los Angeles visit, she met with Mayor Eric Garcetti of Los Angeles on April 9, at which occasion City Council member Paul Krikorian and Deputy

Mayor of International Affairs Nina Hachigian were also present. That same day Hakobyan was honored by a reception at the Los Angeles City Council. She met with the public on April 8 at the Alex Theater in Glendale which was organized by the Consulate General with the participation of the Glendale City Council, and on April 6 participated in the Armenian American Medical Society's fundraising banquet for the City of Smile Foundation at the Sheraton Universal Hotel (Universal City).



Secretary-General Vahagn Melikyan



Trustees and directors of the House of Armenia with, around podium, Anna Hakobyan, Armen Baibourtian and Vahagn Melikyan



COMMUNITY NEWS



Anna Hakobyan (center), with invited guests of AGBU.

AGBU Hosts Luncheon with Anna Hakobyan and Diasporan Women in New York

NEW YORK – On April 13, Anna Hakobyan, founder and leader of two new charitable foundations in Armenia and spouse of Armenia’s Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan, was the guest of honor at a luncheon with Armenian-American women in New York City organized by the Armenian General Benevolent Union (AGBU). Her visit to New York was the last stop of her 17-day US tour, the main goal of which was to raise awareness for My Step and City of Smile foundations.

Welcoming Hakobyan on behalf of AGBU, Central Board Member Arda Haratunian described Hakobyan “not as the wife of the Prime Minister, but as an accomplished journalist, a passionate advocate, someone who has been an activist almost her entire life, and as a mother of four children.”

Hakobyan responded by stating, “It is very important for me to meet powerful Armenian women, in New York City, the heart of the world.” She also characterized the numerous meetings and events she attended over the past few weeks as

“very successful.”

Hakobyan expressed her gratitude for the support of Armenians and non-Armenians alike, emphasizing how very proud she was to hear what Americans had to say about Armenia. “The American people who I met were so excited about Armenia, about our revolution, about our people, and their achievements. And this is so important for me.” She explained that, while her foundations are charitable, her goal is to provide sustainable and long-term development, not just a handout. She also spoke about the need for culture change in Armenia. Acknowledging that many in Armenia are accustomed to receiving help from the diaspora, she expressed hope that My Step Foundation will create a new culture of philanthropy within Armenia.

She also fielded questions about women’s rights, domestic violence and educational reforms. She agreed these are pressing concerns for Armenia and, in time, hopes to

address them all. In response to a question about the one message that diasporans should deliver as ambassadors for Armenia, Hakobyan replied, “The Women for Peace Initiative is very important for me; I would like us to be advocates of this initiative and raise our voice as Armenian women and mothers for peace in our region. Call on decision-makers not to use force or violence.” In regard to the frozen conflict between Republics of Armenia and Artsakh with Azerbaijan, Hakobyan was clear. “My message is that it doesn’t matter whether they are Armenians or Azerbaijanis, they are just 18 to 20-year-old soldiers, and they don’t deserve to die because politicians can’t sit around a table and work to find a solution to the conflict.”

Guests were also given the opportunity to engage with Hakobyan in one-on-one conversations at her table, before she departed for a town hall meeting with the Armenian community at the Eastern Diocese of the Armenian Church.

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Arts & Living

Cleveland Parish Hosts Armenian Miniature Icon Painting Workshop

CLEVELAND, Ohio – The St. Gregory of Narek parish of Cleveland Ohio for the second consecutive year held a painting workshop for children and adults. With the success of last year's workshop The Art of Identity, the painting of Armenian decorative capital letter, once again Yeretzgin Naira Azatyan Sargsyan organized this year's program of painting Armenian illuminated icons.

Father Hratch Sargsyan, pastor of St. Gregory of Narek, welcomed the children and introduced them to the day's workshop leader Father Garabed Kochakian, an art historian and iconographer himself and the retired pastor of St. John Armenian Church of Greater Detroit.

Kochakian holds a master's degree in Armenian Art and Architecture and offers such workshops and lectures about the Sacred Arts and Architecture of the Armenians. With this year's gathering for 17 excited students he challenged their artistic skill by leading a day-long activity painting, as the monks and scribes did centuries ago, miniature icons.

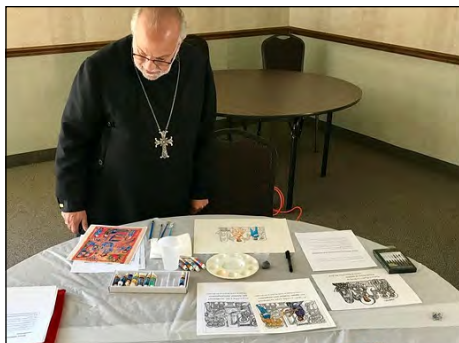
He first presented a Powerpoint explanation about iconography and the sacred art of painting in the Armenian Christian tradition. He then focused on four particular images from Holy Week and Easter explaining their stories, pointing out particular features in the icons, and discussing color and design. Before the painting session, Kochakian demonstrated how to mix and apply paints, the order of painting the figures, garments and features within the icons; actually showing them with his artistic hand just how the monks painted. Following the demonstration the students returning to their tables embarked upon their tasks of painting.

He led them all as they prayed in unison, the prayer *Uzkordus tseratz merotz/ O Look upon the works of our hands.*

At the conclusion of the four-hour session, the group gathered to display their work. Kochakian encouraged them as part of their Holy Week preparation for Easter, they were to finish their icons at home with their paints and brushes and bring them to church on Easter for Rev. Sargsyan to bless.



Father Garabed Kochakian with the artwork of some of the youth



Father Garabed Kochakian looks at some of the paintings



Antoine Wagner

How Vardges Sureniants Inspired Antoine Wagner

By Marine Karoyan

YEREVAN – Antoine Wagner (b. 1982) is a European/American artist. He has a background in theater, filmmaking and photography. Wagner explores the limits of his media through installation, site-specific projects and most recently opera set design and directing. Wagner is the great-great-grandson of German composer Richard Wagner, and great-great-great-grandson of Franz Liszt and French romantic author Marie d'Agoult.

On April 6, Karoyan Gallery (www.karoyangallery.com) opened Wagner's "Sentimental Analysis" multimedia installation at the National Gallery of Armenia. The curator of the project is Nazareth Karoyan. This project is the opening event of the ARé performing arts festival-2019 (www.arepaf.am).

When and why did you decide to dedicate your life to art?

I think there was never another choice. It came at a very early age. For as long as I can remember, it was only about making the choice of the form or language I should use. To date, I have worked with video, sound, photography, drawings, sculpture and recently opera. I have chosen to carve a craft that allows me to integrate all the mediums and art forms observing the relationship of concept and narrative, which is in perpetual movement under the circumstances of the time. Nature is the main subject of my work. I see my role as a messenger participating in giving it a voice.

Do you think that the interest in art came from your family, from your ancestors?

Well, yes, of course; it has come from everything and everyone I've seen around, when everybody values creativity, everyone has an artist deep inside and very seldom [am I] seeing someone who hasn't an artistic passion outlet. For me also, art is not only a priority, not only passion, but my life. Of course, I owe it mainly to my mother and father, whose respect and integrity for the arts are unmatched, although it has come from everything and everyone – the environment.

I started going to the opera at a very early age, and never had any idea about the plot. I found myself for hours watching the same set. I used to close my eyes and the music became the soundtrack of the visuals and narrative that I imagined. Today I am working on assembling the visuals and narrative to communicate through my own visual language.

If you think of your connections with your ancestors (having Franz Liszt and Richard Wagner among them), to which one you would click more personally, as an artist, as a citizen? They were so very different.

Yes, they were very different but not being in competition is maybe what allowed their friendship. Richard Wagner had this desire for total control of every single element but in the end, in this control of all elements, a lot of people were involved. Liszt was going on tour with his portable piano by himself. He needed no one to express his creativity. He was most likely closer to freedom.

Please, tell me about your collaboration with ARé performing arts festival. How did it happen?

Marine Karoyan was kind enough to send me an email about a year ago. We started our conversation around Gesamtkunstwerk (Total Artwork) which was the theme of ARé's conference last autumn. Working with Marine on the 2019 edition see WAGNER, page 15

Sahan Arzruni Pours His Heart into Music at The Armenian General Benevolent Union 75th Anniversary Concert

By Frank Daykin

NEW YORK (NYConcertReview.com) – Turkish-born Armenian pianist Sahan Arzruni gave an important and deeply-felt recital April 5 in the intimate Florence Gould Hall of the French Institute/Alliance Française, and it was in works by Armenian composers that he was most colorful and convincing. Marquee names Hovhanness and Khachaturyan were present, but so was the relatively unknown Edward Mirzoyan. Come to think of it, one doesn't often hear music by the "marquee" names either, so this recital served an important musical as well as patriotic function. A nearly full house of enthusiastic supporters seemed to thrive on the life assertion of a culture that was nearly eliminated in 1915 by a deliberate genocide planned by the Turks.

The recital began with a generous helping of works by Chopin, however. Here, Mr. Arzruni exhibited great dexterity and a very personal rubato and flow, as well as heartfelt commitment, in two impromptus (Op.29 and Op. 66) and three nocturnes (Op 9, No.1 &2, Op.32, No.1).

He then turned to music by Alan Hovhanness, with verbal remarks that clarified what was about to be played, stating that Hovhanness could be regarded as the "first minimalist," so much of his piano music consists of single-line (or very lightly supported) melody. Don't let



Pianist Sahan Arzruni

the phrase "single line" fool you; the music abounds in subtlety and rhythmic surprise, and Mr. Arzruni created vivid, eloquent atmospheres, even with these "limited" means. In *Vanadour: Armenian God of Hospitality, Op. 55, No. 1*, the pianist is actually imitating the oud (similar to the Western lute). *Farewell to the Mountains, Op. 55, No.2*, displayed again the maximal result of such slender writing. *Achtamar* (sometimes spelled Akdamar), *Op. 64*, was inspired by an island in Lake Van, the largest lake in Turkey, with the Cathedral of the Holy Cross and a tenth century monastery that were spared from demolition (three others were destroyed). Hovhanness joked (or was he joking?) that it was "composed by the cat," Hovhanness' cat Raja Hoyden.

After intermission, the old chestnut *Toccata* (first movement of a largely forgotten three-movement suite) by Aram Khachaturian was given a propulsive reading full of abandon when appropriate, making the most of the lyrical moments that are also in the work. Armenian folk melodies and rhythms form the raw materials of this dazzler. After this master rendition, one never wants to hear it played by a student pianist again!

Thereon followed a small suite by Edward Mirzoyan (1921-2012), a Georgian-born Armenian composer who was previously unknown to me, although in his day he was regarded, right along with Khachaturyan and four others, as a leading light. The suite, see ARZRUNI, page 14



ARTS & LIVING

Armenian-American Comedy to Perform in Fresno

FRESNO — Fresh off the heels of a sold-out performance in Los Angeles, the cast of “Where Is Your Groom? II” will hit the stage next for the Fresno-Armenian community at the Bullard Theater on Saturday, May 11, in an event hosted by the AGBU and Tekeyan Cultural Association Fresno chapters.

The comedy play and its sequel, which follows

the story of a Diasporan Armenian family seeking to preserve its cultural heritage amidst the aura of assimilation, is written by Taleen Babayan and has performed to great fanfare for various communities around the country.

“Fresno is looking forward to hosting ‘Where Is Your Groom II’ and for all of us here to experience the play and enjoy an evening of laughter

together,” said organizer Charlie Jamgotchian.

The 20-person cast and crew are all Los Angeles based professionals from different Diasporan backgrounds who share a love for their cultural heritage and the arts.

“We had a wonderful time performing in Los Angeles to over 600 people and we are enthusiastic to now have the chance to connect with the Armenians in Fresno,” said actor Harout Soghomonian.

The original play debuted in New York City’s Players Theatre in the historic Greenwich Village neighborhood in 2013 and its sequel was staged

in 2017 at Columbia University’s Miller Theatre, entertaining thousands of audience members along the way who discover meaning and self-reflection through the lens of comedy.

“We are excited to perform in a city that has deep roots in our American-Armenian history,” said Babayan. “Fresno is synonymous with shaping the landscape of Armenians in California and we’re honored to stage this relevant and humorous play for the local community.”

“Where Is Your Groom? II” will take place at 7 p.m., at the Bullard Theater, 5445 N. Palm Ave. For questions, email fresno@agbuca.org.

Arzruni Pours His Heart into Music at The AGBU 75th Anniversary Concert

ARZRUNI, from page 13

inspired by and dedicated to his granddaughter Mariam, could easily take its place next to Debussy’s *Children’s Corner* and Schumann’s *Kinderszenen* as an adult’s “view” of childhood. Mr. Arzruni was absolutely authoritative — he knew Mirzoyan — and particularly haunting in two movements titled *Meditation* and *Sad Waltz*.

The recital closed with a performance of the most famous sonata of all time, Beethoven’s so-called *Moonlight*. Once the audience hears the all too familiar first measure of triplets at the beginning, it really ceases critical listening, and far be it from me to be too hard on this performance. The sempre pianissimo delicacy and pedaling required by Beethoven were not present, and the triplets were consistently distorted to “fit in” the sixteenth note, something we tell all our students not to do, yet I found myself pulled in to the interpretation because Mr. Arzruni was so convincing in his concept. The Allegretto “flower between two abysses” was nicely delineated, and the tempestuous finale thundered appropriately, with some extremes of rubato that even scholars are beginning to admit “may” have been more commonplace in Beethoven’s time than we are willing to admit. I just felt that the time could have been better used to present even more rarely heard Armenian music (perhaps some Komitas).

Mr. Arzruni received a standing ovation, well deserved, and he played two unannounced encores, neither of which I knew, though the first sounded like Hovhanness to me, and the second a bit like Mirzoyan, or was it a touch of Arzruni?

For encores, he later told the *Mirror-Spectator*, he played works by Komitas and Arno Babadjanian.



The cast of the play in Los Angeles

Matthew Karanian To Present the *Armenian Highland* In Watertown Talk

WATERTOWN — Author Matthew Karanian will discuss his recently published book, *The Armenian Highland: Western Armenia and the First Armenian Republic of 1918*, at the Armenian Museum of America, 65 Main St., Watertown, MA, on Thursday, May 9, 2019, at 7:30 p.m. The event is co-sponsored by the Armenian Museum of America and the National Association for Armenian Studies and Research (NAASR).

The Armenian Highland is a geographic term that has been used for millennia to identify the vast highland plateau of Asia Minor — the ancient homeland of the Armenian nation.

One century ago, and lasting for a period of thirty months, the Armenians formed an independent democratic republic for the first time in their history, on lands that covered roughly 20 percent of their homeland on the Armenian Highland. Today, the words Armenian Highland have been purged from most maps and the Armenians have a free state on just 10 percent of their ancestral lands on this Highland. But the cultural history of the Armenians here is still present.

Karanian explores this vast Armenian homeland in his new book. His illustrated presentation celebrates the ancestral home that Armenians today know as Western Armenia, as well as Ani and Kars, on the lands of the Armenian Highland that are located outside the borders of today’s Republic of Armenia.

Karanian practices law in Pasadena, and he is a former law professor and associate dean of the law school at the American University of Armenia. He is the author of several books about Armenia and he is the 2016 recipient of Armenia’s Arshile Gorky Medal, in recognition of his service to homeland and for his role in helping to unite the homeland and the worldwide diaspora of Armenians.

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

Recipe Corner

Guest Recipe

by Christine Vartanian Datian

Marinous’ Kumba Cake



The following recipe for Kumba Cake comes from Sonia Tashjian’s grandmother. This cake is very flavorful due to its combination of spice and sweet, but tends to be rather dense in texture. It is also a great Lenten treat since it contains no dairy or eggs.

INGREDIENTS

5 cups all-purpose flour
1 cup sugar
2 teaspoons baking powder
1 teaspoon ground cinnamon
1/2 teaspoon ground cardamom
1/2 teaspoon ground nutmeg
1/2 teaspoon ground mahlab
1 cup olive oil
1 cup boiling water
1 cup chopped nuts (walnut, almond, pistachio, hazelnut)
1/2 cup raisins (if desired)
A coin, wrapped in foil
1/2 cup white sesame seeds for the top

PREPARATION

If you desire, lightly roast the flour in a dry, non-stick skillet stirring often, until flour turns very lightly golden. Allow to cool. Mix the flour, sugar, baking powder and the spices in a large mixing bowl.

Add the oil and boiling water, stir until a thick dough is formed. Add the nuts and raisins.

Spread the dough in a large, non-stick baking pan. Put the wrapped coin in it and cover it with dough.

Dip your hands in water and smooth out the surface of the dough. Sprinkle sesame seeds on the surface to garnish.

Bake in a preheated at 350° F, about 25-30 minutes, until golden brown.

Serves 6-8.



Readers can learn about Armenian cuisine and traditions at:

<https://www.houshamadyan.org/en/mapottomanempire/vilayetaleppo/mousa-ler/local-characteristics/cuisine.html>

Sonia Tashjian was born in Ainjar, Lebanon, and currently lives and works in Armenia.

ARTS & LIVING

How Vardges Sureniants Inspired Antoine Wagner

WAGNER, from page 13

of the festival, a path to extend the conversation exploring the progress of Total Artwork in the contemporary art realm outside of theater arena, felt like a natural progression.

I acquainted myself with the festival's early editions. How the festival looks at the genesis of contemporary art in Armenia sparked my curiosity. The festival is part of the Institute for Contemporary Art, Yerevan, and the suggestion was to implement my project inside the Karoyan Gallery working with Nazareth Karoyan himself as the curator (Nazareth being the first private gallery owner in Armenia and later a part of Venice Biennale).

Today our project moved from a virtual exchange to a site-specific installation at the

The installation is decomposed into several mediums including Free Works (free hanging photographs on canvas mounted by wood hangers), Intermission (an animation installation with four-channel sound), video, copper and wax modular sculptures, drawings and helio-engravings. The majority of the work has been produced in Yerevan.

And what is the exact point of inspiration for this site-specific project?

The painting of "Ara the Beautiful" from the National Gallery's permanent collection [painted in 1899 by Vardges Sureniants (1860 – 1921), an Armenian painter, sculptor, illustrator, translator, art critic, and theatre artist. He is considered to be the founder of Armenian historical painting – M.K.].

What particularly interests me is the tridimensional interaction of three time periods: legendary, 1899 (pre-digitalization) and how I could represent it in the present through my installation. The Free Works are high definition details of the painting of "Ara the Beautiful" (1899). These works are a microscopic reading of the

textures of the paint and pigment, the ancient legend seen through the lens of time. The encounter of present-time technology (a high definition digital 2019 sensor and 120mm lens) and the painting of "Ara the Beautiful" from 1899 re-translates the emotion of the legend. The cyclical aspect of time is brought forward. Sentimental Analysis is a short visual poem, a haiku if you wish.

What role does the selected location play in forming the concept of the artwork itself?



Antoine Wagner photographing Vardges Sureniants's painting "Ara the Beautiful" as part of the preparation for the installation

National Gallery of Armenia.

What kind of project are you going to implement in the frame of ARé 2019, named, by the way, edition "Failure"?

Sentimental Analysis is the name of my exhibition at the National Gallery of Armenia. It is a response to the legend of Ara the Beautiful and Semiramis. My analysis will extend to the unseen content of some of the related artworks contributing to this legend, enlightening a few semantic coincidences.



Antoine Wagner's Free Works installation at the Karoyan Gallery in Yerevan

Let's start with ARé and the things we spoke about previously – the etymology of AR (being the main root for the majority of words in Armenian) and the é part standing for the verb to be. With this in mind, I visualize the festival as roots, sinking deep and wide. I connected immediately with this sublime root. Secondly, it is inspiring to be surrounded by so many great artists from the National Gallery's collection and of course the encounter with you and your husband Nazareth. The architecture, staircase, elevators of this monumental institution also participate in sharing the emotion sought after. The scaling of the work process was important: working at first from far away via the internet, then getting even closer to the works than the human eye ever can via the 120mm macro lens, discovering the anthropomorphic shapes of the pigments of the paint. Now it is time to allow some distance again, in a different direction. The exercise feels like landing on the moon and leaving on a new route returning with new timeless facts.

How do you see this project in your oeuvre?

Emotion and sentiment are communication, which remains the sole purpose of art. Ara inspires a character for an opera-film project I am working on. The modular copper and wax sculptures are an experiment with time and light.

All of these things are actually very inspiring. What is there about failing really?

First I look at failure within the myth: how can a sincere and loyal hero, such as Ara, encounter failure despite all his virtues? Can one capture the beauty or is its freedom and movement what defines it? "Perfection brings destruction," in Ovid's words.

Then I question failure in the present: Sentiment Analysis, or opinion-mining, is a modern method used to understand the reception of a particular message. Its key purpose is to analyze a body of data to understand typical human moods, emotions, and feelings expressed by it. Emotions are no longer a preserved domain for intimacy and the arts. What can we do? We have failed.

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Tekeyan Cultural Association Metro Los Angeles Chapter

Presents

AN EVENING OF COMEDY II

New Material

Featuring
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Saturday, May 4, 2019
7:30 PM Cocktails • 8 PM Dinner • 8:30 PM Program
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ARTS & LIVING

C A L E N D A R

ARIZONA

NOVEMBER 2-3 — ARMENIAFest at St. Apkar Armenian Apostolic Church. Weekend food and cultural festival featuring traditional Armenian foods, beverages, exhibits, music and dance performances. 8849 E. Cholla St., Scottsdale.

CALIFORNIA

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, Kharpert 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.

CONNECTICUT

APRIL 27 — Connecticut Commemoration of the 104th anniversary of the Armenian Genocide. Connecticut Hall of the House at the State Capitol, 210 Capitol Avenue, Hartford. 11 a.m. Speaker will be Salpi Ghazarian, director of the University of Southern California’s Institute of Armenian Studies. Her topic will be Looking to the Future Without Forgetting the Past. Please arrive by 10:30 a.m. to clear security and be seated. Reception and refreshments to follow.

MASSACHUSETTS

APRIL 27 — Trinity Talent Showcase, doors open 7 p.m., show 7:30 p.m., Holy Trinity Armenian Church of Greater Boston, Charles and Nevart Talanian Cultural Hall, 145 Brattle Street, Cambridge MA. All are invited to an entertaining evening of traditional and unique talents with featured entertainer Hilby, The Skinny German Juggling Boy, and music by Black Sea Combo. Cabernet Table Seating: \$20/person or \$100 for full table (max. 6 people), paid table reservation deadline is April 22. Auditorium Seating: \$10 in advance, \$15 at door. Cash Bar/Refreshments available for purchase. To reserve online or for further information log onto www.htaac.org/calendar/event/689/ or call the Holy Trinity Church Office, 617.354.0632.

APRIL 30 — Panel, “A Trend or an Exception?

Democratization in Armenia and Authoritarianism Worldwide,” featuring Anna Ohanyan (Stonehill College), Dimitri Sotiropoulos (Visiting Scholar, Center for European Studies, Harvard), and Valerie Sperling (Clark University), moderated by Lisa Gulesserian. Tuesday, 7:30 p.m.: At Harvard University, Fong Auditorium (Boylston Hall). Co-sponsored by the NAASR/Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation Lecture Series on Contemporary Armenian Issues, AGBU YP Boston, and the Harvard Armenian Students Association.

MAY 2 — First Thursdays: Jazz at the Armenian Museum of America, Watertown, 6–7 pm: Gallery hours will be extended until 7 pm for guest to explore the Museum. 7 pm: Reception in the Adele & Haig Der Manuelian galleries, 3rd floor. 7:30–9:30 pm: The John Baboian Quartet, with special guest Christina Baboian. Adele & Haig Der Manuelian galleries, 3rd floor. Free to Members or FREE to non-members with Museum admission. Special thanks to the Dadourian Foundation for their generous grant in support of our 2019 music events. The John Baboian Quartet features Baboian on guitar, Daniel Ian Smith on woodwinds, Bruce Gertz on bass, and Larry Finn on drum set.

MAY 3 — 117th Diocesan Assembly Gala Banquet. Diocese of the Armenian Church of America (Eastern). V. Rev. Fr. Daniel Findikyan, Primate, Presiding. Honoring Diocesan Award Recipients: Armenians of the Year - Edward (of blessed memory) and Nancy Guleserian, and children Kristine and Michael; Friend of the Armenians Dr. Helen Evans. 7pm Cocktail Hour, 8pm Dinner and Program. Boston Marriott Burlington. Hosted by St. James Armenian Church in Watertown. \$125 per person. Advance Reservations Required by April 25th. Purchase tickets online at www.stjameswatertown.org or by calling the church office at 617.923.8860. assembly@stthagop.com.

MAY 4 — Guests and Members, join us at the First Armenian Church Nahigian Hall, 380 Concord Avenue, Belmont, MA, for NAASR’s 65th Annual Assembly of Members , Luncheon, and Program, on Saturday, 12-3:30 pm. Registration and Check-in at 11:30 am. Featured Presentation on NAASR’s new global headquarters by the architectural, engineering & design team of Symmes, Maini & McKee Associates – Ara Krafian, CEO. Luncheon: \$18 per person. Please register by April 26, 2019. To register, visit <https://interland3.donorperfect.net/weblink/> weblink.aspx?name=E332049&id=22

MAY 4 — Celebrate Public Art two-part program during ARTWEEK BOSTON. Armenian Heritage Park on The Greenway, Boston. 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 5 – Andre! Back by popular demand! One of Armenia’s most popular stars, Andre will appear in a concert with Sayat Nova Dance Company of Boston. Don’t miss out on this energetic evening of song and dance. Reserve your seats now! Shaw Auditorium, Watertown High School, 50 Columbia St., Watertown. Doors open at 4:30, concert begins at 5 p.m. Donation: \$45, \$60 and \$80. For tickets call Vrej - 339-222-3429, Meghri - 617-932-9237 or email SNDC.ANDRE@GMAIL.COM ! Tickets are also available online at <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/andre-in-boston-with-sayat-nova-dance-company-tickets-59460537067>.

MAY 6 — St. James Men’s Club Dinner Meeting - social hour and mezza at 6:15 PM and dinner at 7:00 PM, St James Armenian Church Charles Mosesian Cultural and Youth Center - Keljik Hall, 465 Mt. Auburn Street, Watertown, MA. The speaker will be Dick Flavin, poet laureate of the Boston Red Sox. He is the senior ambassador of the Boston Red Sox and voice of Fenway Park, serving as public address announcer for Red Sox day games. His television commentaries won seven New England Emmy Awards. He is a nationally known speaker and is a member of the Massachusetts Broadcasters Hall of Fame. Mezza and a Losh Kebab & Kheyma 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.

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 9 — The Armenian Museum of America and the National Association for Armenian Studies and Research (NAASR) present an illustrated talk by author Matthew Karanian, The Armenian Highland: Western Armenia and the First Republic of 1918. On Thursday, May 9, 2019, 7:30 pm at the Armenian Museum of America, 65 Main St., Watertown. Copies of The Armenian Highland will be available for purchase. Reception following program.

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 11 — Holy Trinity Armenian Church Presents “Battle of the Bands,” 7 p.m., doors open; 7:45 p.m., music and dancing, Charles and Nevart Talanian Cultural Hall, Holy Trinity Armenian Church of Greater Boston, 145 Brattle St., Cambridge. All are welcome to join us for a night filled with vibrant music, great food and dancing. Featuring the musical styles of Classic Groove (R & B, Soul, Motown, Jazz), Hye-Kef-G Band (Armenian) and Black Sea Salsa (Salsa, Latin American). Saturday. Donation: \$40 per person, includes dinner buffet from each genre of music. Cash bar available all night. Tickets can be purchased at the door or by calling the Holy Trinity Church Office, 617.354.0632, by May 3. Tables of 8 can be reserved with payment in advance. For further information, log onto www.htaac.org/calendar/event/694/.

MAY 13 — Trinity Men’s Union 10th Annual Tavloo Tournament and Dinner, Monday, 6:15 p.m., Social Hour and Dinner, Charles and Nevart Talanian Cultural Hall, Holy Trinity Armenian Church of Greater Boston, 145 Brattle St., Cambridge. Open to all. Donation for Losh Kebab and Kheyma dinner is \$15 per person. RSVP requested by May 10 to the Holy Trinity Church Office, 617.354.0632, or email tmuhtaac@gmail.com. Tavloo Tournament to follow dinner; entry fee, \$5. All levels welcome. To sign up, please contact David Dorian atmuhtaac@gmail.com or call 617.501.4300. For further information, log onto www.htaac.org/calendar/event/692/

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 Street. Free, reception to follow. Books will be on sale.

MAY 19 — 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 6 — First Thursdays: Jazz at the Armenian Museum of America, Watertown, 6–7 pm: Gallery hours will be extended until 7 pm for guest to explore the Museum. 7 pm: Reception in the Adele & Haig Der Manuelian galleries, 3rd floor. 7:30–9:30 pm: The Black Sea Salsa Band

JUNE 6 — First Thursdays: Jazz at the Armenian Museum, Thursday, 8–10 p.m. Armenian Museum of America, Watertown. Featuring The Black Sea Salsa Band. More details coming soon!



ARTS & LIVING

C A L E N D A R

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 13 — SAVE THE DATE. Film Screening: "Motherland" At the Armenian Museum in Watertown. Cosponsored by the Armenian International Women's Association (AIWA). Thursday. More details coming soon!

JUNE 17 - AUGUST 16 – Abaka Dance Academy, Summer Program for ages 5-12, with principal/director Apo Ashjian at 101 Bigelow Ave., Watertown. Arts and Crafts, Indoor games, Sports, Music, Dance, Free T-shirts, Friday pizza and much more. Weekly sessions at \$250/week, begin June 17 - August 16, 8 am - 3 pm. Late stay available upon request. Please register at www.abakadanceacademy.com. For more information or questions, email abakadanceacademy@gmail.com or call 617-283-2010.

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 www.stjameswatertown.org/armenia.

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 16 — Registration is now open for the 2019-2020 sessions of the Abaka Dance Academy, 101 Bigelow Ave., Watertown, MA. Principal/director Apo Ashjian. Classes begin September 16 for grades Nursery II - Grade 10 students. Check the schedule and enroll today at www.abakadanceacademy.com. For more info, email abakadanceacademy@gmail.com or call 617-283-2010.

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. Hoodies, 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.Armenia-FriendsofAmerica.org

NOVEMBER 1,2 — NAASR Grand Opening and Gala. Friday, Grand Opening & Ribbon Cutting, NAASR Vartan Gregorian Building, at NAASR's new world headquarters, 395 Concord Avenue, Belmont, MA. Saturday, NAASR 65th Anniversary Gala, at the Royal Sonesta Hotel, Cambridge. 6 pm Reception, 7 pm Dinner and Program. Honoree Dr. Vartan Gregorian, president of the Carnegie Corporation of New York; Master of Ceremonies David Ignatius, columnist for the Washington Post and novelist; Featuring renowned soprano Isabel Bayrakdarian, accompanied by the Borromeo String Quartet, performing a program of songs by Komitas. Further details to follow.

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

MAY 5 — Tekeyan Cultural Association Detroit Chapter presents My Times and My Contemporaries: Literary Memoirs and Philological Studies by Edmond Azadian. Saturday, 7 p.m. AGBU Alex and Marie Manoogian School Library, 22001 Northwestern Hwy., Southfield. Program will feature Prof. Kevork Bardakjian speaking about the book in English, and Monsignor Andon Atamian will discuss the book in Armenian. Musical performance by kanon master Narine Ghambaryan. Reception to follow. Free and open to the public.

NEW JERSEY

MAY 18 — St. Nersess Armenian Seminary invites you to Hope & Gratitude, a celebration honoring Archbishop Khajag Barsamian and Bishop-elect V. Rev. Fr. Daniel Findikyan. 6:30pm. Old Tappan Manor, Old Tappan, NJ. \$150pp. For reservations and booklet donations, please contact Mrs. Lynn Beylerian, event co-chair, at 201-914-0354 orlynnbeylerian@gmail.com. More info at 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

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

PENNSYLVANIA

MAY 4 — Save The Meher Statue Dance/Fundraiser - Saturday, 8 p.m. Sponsored by the Philadelphia Chapter of the Knights & Daughters of Vartan. Santerian Hall - 101 Ashmead Rd, Cheltenham. Live entertainment with Anto Vartanian and the Artsakh Band, Full Mezza, Dessert Table, Cash Bar; For tickets, visit phillykov.com or call 610-389-4633

RHODE ISLAND

APRIL 28 — Armenian Martyrs' Memorial Committee of Rhode Island will commemorating the 104th Anniversary of the Armenian Genocide on Sunday, starting at 12:45 p.m. at the Martyrs Monument in North Burial Ground, Branch Avenue, Providence. The three Armenian Churches and clergy along with their deacons and choir will participate in the memorial services. Local federal and state officials are invited to speak or attend as well as the local Armenian organizations. Keynote speaker Stephen Kurkjian who spent nearly 40 years as an editor and reporter for The Boston Globe. For further information, email joyce41@cox.net

MAY 5 — The Cultural Committee of Sts. Sahag and Mesrob Church will present the first in a series of talks, "Meet with Armenian Doctors," on Sunday, at 1 pm., in Hanoian Hall of the church complex. (70 Jefferson St., Providence, RI). Dr. Sevak Stepanian, anesthesiologist will speak and take questions. Admission is free and open to the public.

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.

Fresno Premiere of 'Singing in Exile' Features Musicians Aram and Virginia Kerovpyan

FRESNO — Paris-based musicians Aram and Virginia Kerovpyan will be present in the Fresno premiere of the film "Singing in Exile" on Wednesday, May 1, at 7:30 p.m., in the University Business Center, Alice Peters Auditorium, Room 191 on the Fresno State campus. The presentation is part of the Armenian Studies Program Spring 2019 Lecture Series.

The film, a prize-winning documentary directed by Nathalie Rossetti and Turi Finocchiaro, follows the Kerovpyans as they transmit an ancestral, endangered singing tradition to a troupe of European actors (Teatr Zar).

During the process of creating a new play, the couple takes the company on a trip to Asia Minor where Armenian civilization has been destroyed. Along the way, the questioning of the actors brings to the forefront the wealth of this culture: singing becomes a language of creation and sharing, the breath of life.

The film touches subtly upon the Armenian Cause, showing the loss of the homeland and myriad folk and church traditions, while also leaving the viewer with the hope that these traditions can still be taught and can continue to nourish those who come into contact with them.

Virginia Pattie Kerovpyan was born in Washington, D.C. and moved to Paris in the 1970s. She has performed and recorded

with various early music ensembles, as well as contemporary music. Soloist of the Kotchnak and Akn ensembles, she has specialized in Armenian song since 1980.



Aram and Virginia Kerovpyan

Aram Kerovpyan was born in Istanbul, Turkey and learned to play the kanoun and studied the Near Eastern music system with Master musician Saadeddin Öktenay. Moving to Paris, he joined the Kotchnak ensemble, performing Armenian folk and troubadour music and in 1985, established the Akn ensemble specializing in Armenian liturgical chant. He holds a PhD in musicology and publishes about modal theory and history of Armenian liturgical music.

The film screening is free and open to the public.

For more information about the program contact the Armenian Studies Program at www.fresnostate.edu/armenianstudies.



COMMENTARY

COMMENTARY

Inexorable March of Genocide Recognition

By Edmond Y. Azadian

For people who have not experienced the horrors of genocide or the loss of their ancestral homeland, it is easy to advocate to the Armenians the advice of “forgive and forget.” But the genocide has shaped the history and the future of the entire Armenian people, for whom life will not be the same even if full restitution comes. The prominent writer Shahan Shahnour calls Armenians to struggle not only with the survivors but even with the martyrs. The martyrs are the witnesses of that colossal trauma.

The dispersion of the Armenians throughout the globe has brought about tremendous losses through assimilation and attrition. And that was one of the goals of the Genocide perpetrators; after the physical human losses, the target was the loss of memory. In 1922, during the negotiations leading to the Lausanne Treaty of 1923, the Turkish representative Ismet Enunu, answering Lord Curzon’s question of where to settle the Armenian survivors, cynically answered: “There are vast vacant territories in Canada and Brazil. Settle them in those countries.”

Despite the losses, Genocide recognition has taken on a life of its own and has been marching through history, even after 104 years. Therefore, the truth is more powerful than Turkey, which has become a major player in international politics, where it has invested heavily in the fight against the recognition of the Armenian Genocide.

The Turkish government, through its contacts and alliances, has made genocide denial a major political goal. David Swindle, writing in the American Thinker edition of April 20, states: “While Turkey has long fought the recognition of the Armenian Genocide internationally, the situation under President Recep Tayyip Erdogan’s Islamist ideology has led him into an alliance with the international Muslim Brotherhood and its American affiliates. One such organization officially embracing Turkey’s genocide denial is the US Council of Muslim Organizations (USCMO), an umbrella group of 30 Islamist charities and mosques, which published a ‘statement on 1915 Turkish-Armenian events’ that favors Turkey’s denialism.”

Turkey has been applying the same policy internationally, particularly at the Islamic Conference, simply manipulating the issue and capsulizing it into the context of Muslim-Christian conflict. That is why we find extremist countries like Pakistan and Bangladesh solidly behind Turkey and Azerbaijan during UN votes.

President Erdogan’s Islamist and Ottomanist ambitions not only have killed democracy domestically but they have scared and alienated major powers from China to Europe.

In addition to inciting Uyghurs in China, Erdogan is meddling into the internal affairs of European countries, where Turkish minority groups are very active. They are so active that Erdogan defiantly decided to extend his election campaign into Germany, as if that country was his own turf. He had a fallout with Holland and Austria, antagonizing those countries. His quarrel with European leaders, compounded with his authoritarian rule at home, brought Turkey’s negotiations with the European Union to a halt. That situation is playing into the hands of anti-Erdogan forces globally. Politically, one of the beneficiaries is the recognition of the Armenian Genocide. Germany’s Bundestag passed a strong resolution, even paving the way for seeking restitution for the Armenians. Indeed, the German resolution was not only a condemnation of the Ottoman crime, but also an admission of German collusion, which Armenians need to explore and use for restitution.

France had already passed a law recognizing the Armenian Genocide but failed in criminalizing its denial. To compensate for that failure, President Emmanuel Macron declared April 24 as a day for Genocide remembrance throughout France. The proclamation also includes the participation of a high-ranking French official in commemorative events in Armenia. Consequently, at this moment, France’s Prime Minister Edouard Philippe is on his way to Yerevan. Ankara has angrily criticized France for the move. First, Turkey’s Speaker of Parliament Mustafa Sentop spoke but at the 99th NATO Parliamentary Assembly gathered in Antalya, Turkey, earlier in April. Foreign Minister Mevlut Çavusoglu added insult to injury, inviting France to look at its colonial past in Algeria. Sonia Krimi of the French delegation answered that Mr. Sentop’s statement had shocked her. Following that statement, the French delegation left the hall. In his remarks, Çavusoglu stated that 700,000 Turks living in France felt insulted by the French government’s action. Mr. Çavusoglu knows better than the French government that most of the Turks living in Europe do not favor Erdogan’s authoritarian rule and perhaps only a few fanatics would justify the foreign minister’s statement. Incidentally a Turkish newspaper rejoiced at the fire devastating Notre Dame Cathedral in Paris, con-

sidering it as a revenge for recognizing the Armenian Genocide. The real cause appears to be either mechanical malfunction or human error.

Mr. Sentop was offered another opportunity for an outburst, this time around against the Italian government. Indeed, on April 10, the Italian parliament ratified a proposal recognizing the 1915 events in the Ottoman Empire as a “genocide.” The votes were 382 with none against, but 43 abstentions.

Turkey is a powerful country and these European countries have many interests in Ankara, particularly as a fellow member in NATO structures. But they take a resolute stand because the truth about the Genocide is gaining momentum and because Turkey is becoming an international pariah.

Besides Europe, the US and Israel taunt Turkey, from time to time with the threat of recognizing the Genocide, when they need to pressure Turkey into making concessions. However, powerful statemen and scholars in both countries strongly support the recognition of the issue.

The US has recognized the Genocide in 1951 and again by President Ronald Reagan in 1981, who officially used the word “genocide.” The presidents since Reagan have shied away from using the term but their statements are no less powerful, including George W. Bush, Obama and even Trump.

The recognition of the Armenian Genocide has been making cautious but steady inroads in the Islamic world, which Turkey claims as its own bastion. A Turkologist based in Yerevan, Prof. Ruben Safrastyan, believes that “Armenian Genocide recognition is moving into the Muslim world.”

He said he is confident that “the Muslim world will stand above the idea of having religious commonality with Turkey and will realize the gravity of this crime against humanity.”

Indeed, the crack in the wall of Muslim denial came with a statement by Egyptian President Abdel Fattah Al-Sisi, speaking on February 18, at the Munich Security Council. He stated that Egypt had hosted survivors of the Armenian Genocide after it had been perpetrated by the Ottoman Turkish government 100 years earlier. The president’s statement triggered a barrage of inquiries, TV debates, seminars and newspaper articles.

This statement is particularly notable because for many years, Turkey has been publishing and distributing distorted history books and pamphlets in Egypt and the rest of the Arab world.

There are very few Armenians living in war-town Libya and the news reports suggesting that Libya’s government was about to pass a resolution recognizing the Armenian Genocide caught the Armenian world by complete surprise.

Libya was also been under Ottoman rule dating back to the 17th century and the people there certainly have historic memories similar to the Armenians. In the current century, Libya was ruled by King Idris, beholden to Turkey, until he was deposed by Col. Muammar Qaddafi in 1968. Since the NATO powers destroyed that country in the name of restoring democracy, it has become a haven for warlords and terrorists. There are two competing governments with one advocating more devotion to Islam, supported by Turkey and Qatar, and the other run by anti-Islamist forces ruled by Khalifa Aftar, enjoying the support of Egypt and the West. Thus, we can realize where the motivation to recognize the Genocide might stem from.

Since the perpetration of the Armenian Genocide, many cases of mass murder have been recorded in modern history, from the Jewish Holocaust to the Cambodian, Rwandan, Darfur, the Balkans, Rohingya, Yezidi and others. The proliferation of those incidents may raise the question for Armenians: where do we stand in that list? Will the Armenian case be lost in the shuffle? But on the other hand, the occurrence of those atrocities raises awareness about the dangers of genocide and world powers take measures to punish those perpetrators as it happened in the case of Rwanda, Cambodia and the Balkans. There is already a legal framework in place to seek justice, the UN Genocide Convention of 1948. That can help and prevent mass atrocities if it does not become a casualty of political machinations.

History is moving in favor of recognizing the Armenian Genocide because of the political developments cited above. That is also coupled with the tremendous amount of academic publications, researched and published by both Armenian and non-Armenian scholars. Writer Artsvi Bakhchinyan has published an extensive article in the Yerevan publication Azg where he presents hundreds of literary works in 23 countries – both poetry and prose – where writers have used the genocide theme.

As history marches toward the ultimate truth, recognition will become a reality by Armenia’s rise to power and by the production of more historic and scholarly documentation.



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COMMENTARY



My Turn

By Harut Sassounian

By Denying the Armenian Genocide, Turkish Leaders Publicize it Even More

More than a century after the mass crime of Genocide against Armenians, Assyrians and Greeks, most Turks still feel self-conscious as April 24 approaches and whenever someone refers to their Crime Against Humanity.

Many Turkish officials and journalists feel compelled to defend their country's tarnished reputation by trying to cover up the Genocide committed by their ancestors. By doing so, they automatically associate themselves with the guilt of their forefathers and in turn become guilty themselves for denying one of the most heinous crimes in the history of mankind.

Why would Turkish Foreign Minister Mevlut Çavusoglu, on April 15, 2019, falsely claim that Turkey "has not committed any genocide" in its history? How many leaders of other countries have made such a statement? Çavusoglu knows well that the Ottoman Turks did commit Genocide as he is desperately trying to conceal their crimes. Çavusoglu and his fellow denialists do not seem to realize that the more they proclaim their innocence, the more they affiliate themselves with the Genocide and become accessories to that barbaric crime!

Each time Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan or his underlings talk about the Genocide, even in a dismissive manner, they are actually publicizing worldwide the facts of the

Genocide and informing everyone that Turks are accused of committing Genocide!

Interestingly, Çavusoglu warned that "the Turkish government will not stay silent against some countries trying to lecture Turkey on history." This is exactly what Armenians want him to do. The more he talks about the Genocide, the more he exposes the Turkish crime to the world! Çavusoglu and other Turkish denialists find themselves in the ironic situation of "damned if you do, and damned if you don't." In other words, if they remain silent against the accusations of Genocide, they would be acknowledging it, and if they deny it, they would be spreading the news about their historic crime. There is no positive outcome for them. They are caught in the horns of a serious dilemma!

In early April, at a NATO meeting in Antalya, Turkey, Çavusoglu criticized French President Emmanuel Macron for declaring April 24 as a National Day in France for the commemoration of the Armenian Genocide. By lashing out at Pres. Macron, the Turkish Foreign Minister made the situation even worse for his own country. In protest, a French Parliamentarian walked out of the NATO meeting, which was covered by the worldwide media, further publicizing the Armenian Genocide.

This incident caused some hateful Turks to threaten the life of the French Parliamentarian, which further disseminated the true facts of the Armenian Genocide.

Another example of Turkish self-consciousness is the article by commentator Ozan Ceyhun in the Daily Sabah newspaper. He correctly wrote that "April 24 is used as a day for 'getting even,' by those who do not wish to see Turkey as an EU member due to various reasons, those who do not wish to see it become stronger in the region, or countries like the US that want to see Turkey as a dependent state." My response is that no one wants to see a brutal and unrepentant country as a member of international military and economic alliances. Turkish leaders are the ones forcing themselves out of such alliances by behaving in an uncivilized and

undemocratic manner. They have no one else to blame but themselves!

Ceyhun wonders why no one cares about the opinions of "Armenians living in Turkey." The answer is very simple. Armenians in Turkey, having survived the Genocide and many other repressions since then, know all too well that if they dared to say anything negative about Turkey's oppressive regime, they will be locked up, if not killed!

The Turkish commentator then shamelessly mentions Armenian journalist Hrant Dink, who was assassinated by a Turk for expressing himself on Turkish-Armenian relations. Ceyhun selectively quotes from Dink as stating that outsiders should not meddle in the "events" that happened in the past and that this issue should be resolved between Armenians and Turks. Dink had made many statements which were often contradictory depending on whether he made them while he was inside or outside Turkey.

It suits Turkish denialists to quote statements that third parties should not meddle in the Armenian-Turkish issue. If it were not for the Armenian Diaspora lobbying the international community for decades, the Armenian Genocide would have been forgotten long ago. Furthermore, Ceyhun prefers that outsiders listen to the views of Turkish Armenians who are suppressed and are unable to express their honest opinions on the Armenian Genocide. As immediate descendants of the Genocide, they know exactly what happened to their ancestors, but they cannot talk about it openly, fearing for their lives.

Just as irritating are the Azerbaijani denials of the Armenian Genocide. Fortunately, it is easier to deal with the Azeris as they are not as powerful as Turkey and Armenians have already shown their power by recovering their historic territory of Artsakh from Azerbaijan. If Azeris do not behave and continue to insult Armenians by their denials of the Armenian Genocide, Armenia's leaders may halt the negotiations with Azerbaijan and incorporate Artsakh in the Republic of Armenia.

Easter Message of Catholicos Karekin II

On Easter Sunday, April 21, Catholicos of All Armenians Karekin II delivered the following message to the faithful.

"God has risen, and all of his enemies have been scattered."

(Book of Hours)

Dearly beloved faithful,

The joy of the Feast of the Holy Resurrection has filled our souls, and the victorious exuberance of the Resurrection is to be found everywhere: in our surroundings, our churches, our families, the entire Christian world, as well as in the budding nature. Christ has triumphantly arisen from the sealed cave, and the angel announces the Good News of His Resurrection from the empty tomb. The chains of sin and death have been shattered by the victory of the Saviour, the doors to the Heavenly Kingdom have been opened, and divine grace is offered to humanity – the priceless gift of inheriting eternal life. "I am the resurrection and the life; he who believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live, and whoever lives and believes in me shall never die" (John 11.25-26).

The path of eternal life and resurrection in Christ begins in this world. It begins with a change in the life of the person, the rejection of sin and evil, and with a movement toward a way of holiness and perfection. Indeed, wherever human souls are exposed to the light of Christ's resurrection, there also the darkness of God-rejecting evil thoughts, corrupting ideologies, divisions and polarizations, intolerance, enmity and dissensions retreat and are scattered. In their stead, cooperation and agreement, faithfulness, holiness, love and happiness are established. "God has risen, and all of his enemies have been scattered," proclaims the prayer.

Those paths, which reject renewal in Christ, making life captive to sin and subject to corrosion and destruction, are antithetical to peace in the world, the public welfare, the harmonious coexistence of humanity, the strengthening of families, and all that is good.

The Good News of the resurrection of Christ is an invitation to all – to live in the graces bestowed upon us by the Saviour as a new person, as the Apostle exhorts and says, "put off your old nature which belongs to your former manner of life and is corrupt through deceitful desires, and be renewed in the spirit of your minds, and put on the new nature, created after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness" (Eph 4.22-24). To believe in the resurrection of Christ and our resurrection through Christ as well as transformation of our life, means not only to overcome sin, addictions and spiritual error, but also to be filled with love toward all and to reject everything that tramples justice, dignity and all that is human. It also means striving to spread care and general goodwill as did Christ, "who came and saved all creatures" (Sharakan - Hymnal). Greed,

theft, violence, hatred, enmity and other manifestations of blindness to God's commandments have no place in the life of the Christian who has received the grace of the Resurrection. Such deeds reject the grace of freedom in Christ from sin and death, they destroy good and undermine the well-being of the human person, the family unit, and national life. Freedom is given in order to choose good and not as a pretense for evil and unruliness (cf. 1 Peter 2.16). Truly, being an heir of the grace of the Resurrection is made apparent in one's lifestyle and deeds, not only personal and familial, but in the help rendered and efforts brought in the life of the public, nation and humanity. Faith is

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made radiant and fruit-bearing, hope increases, love of others is affirmed as we move forward together.

The passions and resurrection of Christ for our sake and for all humanity, are the expression of divine, boundless love. "And he died for all, that those who live might live no longer for themselves but for him who for their sake died and was raised" (2 Cor 5.15). Love, dearly beloved, does not focus on the self, it does not look for its own benefit (1 Cor 13.5), but rather it is expressed in dedication toward one another and is the foundation of flourishing, ascension and resurrection. It is this great message that Our Lord and Saviour passes on to humanity through His own example. The resurrection of the Lord manifests the mystery of solidarity, community and accord to the

world. Christ brought his service to all, and in a similar manner we too must live with each other in a spirit of service, dedication and commitment. It is with this understanding, that we will be able to overcome the difficulties that afflict our state and pan-national life, to solve the problems befallen to us, to strengthen families, to defend steadfastly and build up both our homeland and our diasporan national life. Our people—which accepted Christ as its Saviour and have risen from the ashes of history in faithfulness and the love of the Lord – will today with that same faith and strength continue to fortify its victories and accomplishments. Now, dearly beloved, let us always keep the light and power of Christ's resurrection in our lives and in our land, sanctified by the descent of Christ, and continually be renewed by the grace bestowed upon us by our Saviour. Doing so, we will be able to join together toward a revival of a strong homeland and toward new horizons in our life, testifying, that we are a people resurrected in Christ; we are the people of Christ, God's own people.

In the exuberant Good News of the Resurrection of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, We convey our greetings to the incumbents of the hierarchical sees of our Apostolic Holy Church: His Holiness Aram I Catholicos of the Great House of Cilicia, the Armenian Patriarch of Jerusalem, His Beatitude Abp. Nourhan Manougian, the Vicar General of the Armenian Patriarchate of Constantinople, His Eminence Abp. Aram Ateshian, to the spiritual leaders of our sister Churches in supplication for the fruitfulness of their service. With patriarchal blessing we greet and bring our well-wishes to the President of the Republic of Armenia, Mr. Armen Sarkissian and to the Prime Minister of the Republic of Armenia, Mr. Nikol Pashinyan. We extend our greetings to the President of the Republic of Artsakh, Mr. Bako Sahakyan, and to the state officials of Armenia. On this graceful occasion of the Resurrection we convey our best wishes to the representatives of the diplomatic missions accredited in Armenia. We express Our love and blessings to the clergy of our Holy Church and to all our faithful people.

On this grace-filled day of the Holy Resurrection we pray, that the grace of our Saviour's Resurrection work miracles in the world; that people be renewed by the good intentions and fulfillment of life, peace and unity and that they may be one family under divine blessing. We ask again that in this year, dedicated to the family, our family ties may become strong and radiant with the light of Christ's resurrection, full of love, solidarity and happiness. May the Lord protect our people in his boundless love, and keep the light and joy of the resurrection aflame in our hearts, in our country and in the entire world.

May the grace, love and peace of our Lord Jesus Christ remain with us and with all. Amen



Artificial Intelligence Panel Sponsored by CYSCA

MEDFORD, Mass. — The Cambridge-Yerevan Sister City Association (CYSCA), in partnership with the National Association for Armenian Studies and Research (NAASR) and the Tufts Armenian Club, presented a panel discussion, “Artificial Intelligence: Getting Smarter Every Day,” to a standing-room only crowd at Tufts University on Tuesday, April 16. Graciously moderated by Aram Adourian of Flagship Pioneering, the panel included: John W. Fisher III, Senior Research Scientist in the Computer Science and Artificial Intelligence Laboratory at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT); Gevorg Grigoryan, associate professor at Dartmouth College and Chief Technology Officer at VL56, Inc., a new privately-held, early-stage biotechnology company investigating computational protein design; André Rocha, Venture Capitalist at Glasswing Ventures; and, as a special guest from Armenia, Vazgen Hakobjanyan, co-founder of Teamable Software and partner at Smartgate VC. Each panelist gave a brief presentation before a lengthy and animated question and answer session, followed by informal conversation over a hearty spread of dolma, simit, and halva.

In his research at MIT, Dr. Fisher applies machine learning techniques to help humans more easily make the approximately 35,000 decisions we’re presented with daily. Machine learning involves training computer algorithms to make decisions and process informations more quickly than humans. As an example, Dr. Fisher cited his own research on rural electrification in developing nations, where the central and regional governments might not know with certainty what homes are hooked up the to the grid. By training a computer algorithm to identify signs of a house with electric power from satellite imagery - for instance, if rechargable electric scooters are frequently parked around it - the program can create its own estimated electrification map much more quickly and efficiently than a team of humans.

Dr. Hakobjanyan presented a range of the

exciting AI-related research and business ventures currently taking place in Armenia, primarily in Yerevan. These include Superannotate.AI, specializing in detection for image annotation. For countless technologies, such as self-driving cars, it is vital to rapidly understand what information is contained in an image (for self-driving cars, distinguishing between pedestrians and cyclists, for instance) and react accordingly. He also discussed 2hz, an AI-enabled noise-cancelling product to remove background noise from a call and focus on only the voice; with such technology one could make a business call from a bar, and the listener would hear none of the background noise. Dr. Hakobjanyan emphasized that many of these enterprises are working with world-famous partners and clients, have published papers in leading journals, and presented at prestigious conferences, and that it is an excellent time to invest in these companies, and in the tech industry in Armenia in general.

Dr. Grigoryan, in his private work and teaching at Dartmouth College, uses computers and AI technology to study proteins. With combinations of a mere 20 amino acid building blocks, proteins can nevertheless show incredible diversity in form and function. For instance, a “small” protein of 100 amino acid blocks has 10 to the power of 130 possible arrangements, a number several times greater than the entire number of atoms in the universe. Using technology and resources such as the Protein Data Bank, an online repository of protein information, Dr. Grigoryan and his team have generated novel new proteins not found in nature, with a wide range of applications.

André Rocha’s venture capital firm special-

izes in funding projects such as those discussed in this panel. Having invested in these projects for more than a decade, they specialize in funding businesses leveraging AI to solve problems

cinating questions for the panelists to grapple with, including: how can we keep in mind the ethical aspects of these technologies, to ensure that they are used to better humanity? How

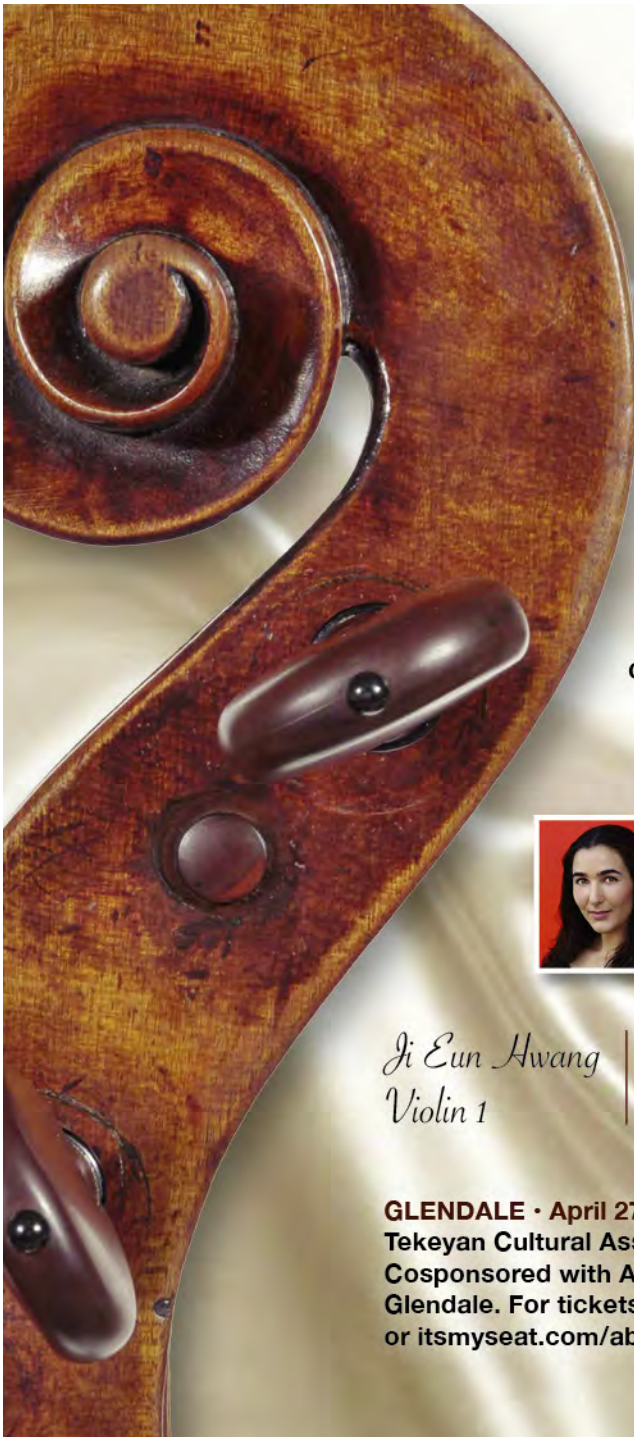



From left, Prof. Gevorg Grigoryan, moderator Dr. Aram Adourian, President of CYSCA Alisa Stepanian, Dr. John W. Fisher III, Vazgen Hakobjanyan, and Andre Rocha (photo: David Medzorian)

in the real world, with applications from robotics to drones to cyber security. Of greatest importance to them in evaluating new technologies and programs is what makes it different from other similar products, and how it can be applied to specific enterprise applications - for instance, how can marketing firms use AI to create better ads that people actually like being shown? Regardless of the specific product, the investment landscape is constantly shifting, as key technological enablers of this work are continuously improving.

Attendees to the event raised a variety of fas-

must we consider the gap between how different generations feel about AI and private industry gathering of personal data? How do we address the potential for AI and technological advancement to take away jobs from millions of people, such as tellers at a bank? And finally, how can we defend ourselves and our society against “weaponized” AI, for instance falsely-generated speech created by programs to make it appear someone has said things that they truly did not? The questions and conversations generated by this panel could likely have continued for several hours longer.






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