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Armenian Leaders Mark First Republic Anniversary

YEREVAN – Armenia’s political and religious leaders, including Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan, Karekin II, Supreme Patriarch and Catholicos of All Armenians and President Armen Sarkissian attended the celebrations dedicated to the Republic Day on May 28.

The prime minister laid a wreath at the monument to the memory of the heroes of Sardarapat battle and paid tribute to them. Then a memorial dedicated to the 140th anniversary of the founder of the First Republic of Armenia, Aram Manukyan, was unveiled. The monument was created by architect Hayk Asatryan and sculptor Artak Hambardzumyan.

Afterwards, the Prime Minister watched the exhibition titled “Formation of the First Armenian Republic and the history of May’s heroic battles” at the National Museum of History of Armenian Ethnography and Liberation Struggle of Sardarapat memorial.

In his speech Pashinyan praised the anniversary, adding that the declaration of independence “happened at a time when it seemed that the history of the Armenian people reached its final stage. Just 500



From left, Parliament Speaker Ararat Mirzoyan, Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan, President Armen Sarkissian and Catholicos of All Armenians Karekin II make their way to Sardarapat.

years after the collapse of the Cilician Armenia, the Armenian people who had no state, were subjected to a grave catastrophe, a genocide. 1.5 million Armenians were killed, hundreds of thousands of refugees were in danger.”



Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan delivered an address at Sardarapat.

Yet, instead of defeat, a new country was reclaimed. “The unexpected happened, and the Armenian people gained what seemed to have been lost irrevocably, gained statehood, acquired a state flag, acquired a state emblem, acquired a national anthem, which expressed our nation’s The tragic, but at the same time, the miraculous story of the historical revival.”

He praised the heroes and members of the government of the First Republic, as well as Armenia’s population for supporting it. He went on to praise modern officials and heroes, from government to sports and science.

He concluded, “Long live freedom, long live the Republic of Armenia, live Artsakh, live the heroes of Sardarapat, Bash-Aparan, Gharakilisa, live fathers of the First Republic, we and our children will live and live free and happy in Armenia.”

Janigian Discusses With Poet Barba Life, Novels, Literature

By Aram Arkun
Mirror-Spectator Staff

WATERTOWN – The Tekeyan Cultural Association (TCA) Boston Chapter and the Armenian General Benevolent Union (AGBU) New England District presented a literary evening on May 15 with California novelist Aris Janigian and Susan Barba, poet and editor, as discussant.

TCA Executive Director Aram Arkun thanked the AGBU and its local chairman Ara Balikian, traveling that week, for cosponsoring the event and introduced the new chairwoman of the TCA Greater Boston Chapter, Dr. Aida Yavshayan, who presented the biographies of the two speakers.

Janigian started the evening with a reading from his third novel, *This Angelic Land*. To make it accessible, he first provided

see JANIGIAN, page 9



Aris Janigian, left, with Susan Barba



ALBIN LOHRJONES PHOTO

The Armenian Ambassador to the US Varuzhan Nersesyan and Armenia’s Representative to the United Nations Ambassador Mher Margaryan with Bishop Daniel Findikyan

Primate Findikyan Leads First Service as Bishop at St. Vartan

NEW YORK – On Saturday, May 18, the Primate of the Eastern American Diocese, Bishop Daniel Findikyan, celebrated his first Episcopal *Badarak* in

America before more than a thousand worshippers who filled every crevice of New York’s St. Vartan Cathedral.

The tremendous excitement and enthusiasm was palpable as people from all over the United States filed into the Cathedral on a Saturday morning at 10 A.M. to see their beloved Primate celebrate his first *Badarak* as a bishop.

Findikyan is the first American born Primate, now elevated to bishop, in the history of the 121-year old American Diocese.

It took quite a while for the excitement shared by so many in attendance to quiet down for the special service.

see BISHOP, page 20

By Florence Avakian

NEWS IN BRIEF

Mirror-Spectator Annual Summer Break

WATERTOWN – The *Armenian Mirror-Spectator* will close for two weeks in July as part of its annual summer break.

The last issue published before the vacation will be that of June 29, and the first edition back would be that of July 20.

The office will be closed July 1 through 12.

Armenia Expects 150 New Tech Enterprises

YEREVAN (PanARMENIAN.Net) – During the My Step for Syunik Province business forum on May 27, the director of the Union of Information Technology Enterprises of Armenia, Karen Vardanyan, announced that from 2019 to 2024, 150 technology enterprises with a total turnover of 75 billion drams (\$156 million) are expected to be founded in Armenia.

As a result of the implementation of the project, 1,500 workplaces will be opened in the field of high technology and 3,000 more in related fields.

Canberra Genocide Commemoration on June 5

CANBERRA, Australia (PanARMENIAN.Net) – The Armenian National Committee of Australia - Canberra Branch has organized the first Armenian Genocide Commemoration event to be held in the Australian Capital Territory (ACT). It will take place on June 5.

Dr. Panayiotis Diamadis, vice president of the Australian Institute for Holocaust and Genocide Studies, will be the keynote speaker at the event.

The Canberra Armenian Genocide Commemoration Evening will take place at the Reception Room in the ACT Legislative Assembly.

Beard Festival to Be Held in Armenia

YEREVAN (Panorama.am) – The organizers of “Yerevan Wine Days” have come with an idea to hold the first ever beard and moustache festival in Armenia in which men with beards and moustaches display lengthy, highly styled facial hair. As the initiators report this unique and interesting event will break the stereotypes about standard festivals being held in Armenia and raise the country’s attractiveness among tourists worldwide.

According to the source, the festival will be held in the scope Fest Food & Eclectica Music Fest which is organized by Dolmama founder Zhirayr Avanyan to be held at one of Dilijan restaurants on June 14, 15 and 16.

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NAASR Fundraiser

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ARMENIA

News From Armenia

Foreign Minister Says Genocide Recognition Is Priority

YEREVAN (News.am) – The recognition of the Armenian Genocide is not only on the agenda of bilateral relations, but it is also one of the priorities of the Armenian foreign policy, Armenian Minister of Foreign Affairs Zohrab Mnatsakanyan said in the Armenian National Assembly on Wednesday.

His remark came in response to comment on My Step Bloc MP Vahe Hovhannisyan's question on whether recognition of the Armenian Genocide by Beijing is possible, given the latest statement by Chinese President Xi Jinping about the "tragic events that occurred to the Armenian people" made at a meeting with Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan.

In response, the minister noted that the issue of recognizing the Armenian Genocide is a problem of restoring justice.

"This is not only a question of Armenia or the Armenian people. It concerns any state, any nation that take seriously prevention of genocides," he said.

The minister noted that the recognition process is complex and is taking place against the background of acute manifestations of intolerance, racism and xenophobia in different parts of the world.

At the same time, the Armenian Ministry of Foreign Affairs takes this issue into account in relations with different countries, including China.

Fitch Ratings Gives Yerevan a B+ Rating

YEREVAN (Armenpress) – Fitch Ratings has affirmed Yerevan's Long-Term Foreign- and Local-Currency Issuer Default Ratings (IDRs) at 'B+' with Positive Outlook.

"Yerevan's IDRs are constrained by Armenia's sovereign IDRs (B+/Positive) as the city's standalone credit profile (SCP) is assessed at 'bb+'. The city's SCP reflects a combination of a 'Vulnerable' risk profile assessment and strong debt metrics leading to a 'aaa' debt sustainability assessment.

"Yerevan is Armenia's capital and its largest metropolitan area. It is the country's largest market with a developed services sector and most populous community, with 1.1 million people. Yerevan's wealth metrics remain relatively modest in the international context affecting the city's overall financial profile. Yerevan remains debt free, although it can borrow on the domestic debt capital market, subject to certain restrictions. The city's accounts are cash-based, while budget framework covers single year", Fitch said in a news release.

Former President Kocharyan Addresses Supporters

YEREVAN (News.am) – During a May 28 meeting with his supporters, the second president of Armenia, Robert Kocharyan, gave a speech, the video recording of which has been posted on the non-official Facebook page of Robert Kocharyan.

"About a decade ago, it seemed to me that the main events of my life were in the past and that I would be living a very tranquil and predictable life, but I was wrong. It also seemed to me that my possible and impossible life experiences were also in the past, but I was wrong. A prison deprives you of freedom, but only in the physical sense, and no prison can restrict your freedom of thought, and it gives you a very serious and new motive to move forward and lead a struggle, and I am happy to see that I'm not going to lead this struggle alone and that there is a team of very active and interesting people with whom I will move forward and achieve new victories. I thank all of you for your support. Frankly, a year ago, I had no idea that there are so many things that have yet to be done," Robert Kocharyan said.

Kocharyan also noted that the meeting with his supporters by coincidence took place on the day marking the anniversary of the First Republic of Armenia, making it symbolically important.

Armenian, Azeri FMs to Meet Again

YEREVAN (RFE/RL) – The foreign ministers of Armenia and Azerbaijan will meet again soon for further talks on the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, the Armenian Foreign Ministry said on Monday, May 27.

The ministry spokeswoman, Anna Naghdalyan, said Foreign Minister Zohrab Mnatsakanyan and US, Russian and French mediators discussed in Yerevan preparations his "upcoming" talks with his Azerbaijani counterpart Elmar Mammadyarov.

The three mediators co-chairing the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) Minsk Group visited the Armenian capital at the start of a fresh tour of the Karabakh conflict zone. They met with Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan later in the day.

Naghdalyan gave no date of Mnatsakanyan's planned talks with

Mammadyarov.

The top Armenian and Azerbaijani diplomats most recently met in Moscow on April 15 in the presence of Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov. A joint statement released by the three ministers said the warring sides reaffirmed their stated intention to strengthen the ceasefire regime around Karabakh and along the Armenian-Azerbaijani border and to take other take confidence-building measures.

Pashinyan and Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev briefly spoke with each other when they visited Brussels on May 13. It was Pashinyan's and Aliyev's fifth face-to-face contact in about eight months. Their first meeting held in Tajikistan in September was followed by a significant decrease in ceasefire violations on the frontlines.

In an interview with the Russian daily

Kommersant published on Monday, Mammadyarov sounded cautiously optimistic about further Armenian-Azerbaijani peace talks. He said Baku last year gave Armenia's new leadership time to "familiarize itself with details of the negotiation process."

"That transitional phase ended, and negotiations resumed at the level of both the leaders of the two countries and the foreign ministers ... The dialogue is going on in the existing format and under a particular agenda, which gives rise to certain optimism," he said.

Mammadyarov also stressed that confidence-building measures by the two sides must go hand in hand with "real steps in the negotiation process" and "elimination of severe consequences" of the conflict. That first and foremost means a "withdrawal of occupation forces from Azerbaijan's territories," he said.

Head of Armenian Judicial Watchdog Resigns

YEREVAN (RFE/RL) – Gagik Harutyunyan, the head of a state body overseeing Armenia's courts, resigned on Friday, May 24, citing recent days' developments that followed the government's strong criticism of the Armenian judiciary.

In what may have been a related development, Harutyunyan's brother, Arzuman, was dismissed as deputy director of the National Security Service. No official reason was given for the sacking proposed by Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan and formalized by President Armen Sarkissian.

In a letter publicized by his spokesman, Harutyunyan said he no longer finds it "expedient" to head the Supreme Judicial Council (SJC) "in view of ongoing developments relating to the judicial authority and courts and my concerns expressed in that regard through the media on May 20."

"I wish you continued fruitful activities in the establishment of an independent judicial authority befitting a rule-of-law

state," read the letter addressed to members of the council.

The concerns cited by Harutyunyan followed Pashinyan's May 19 appeal to his supporters to block the entrances to all court buildings in the country. The appeal came the day after a Yerevan court ordered former President Robert Kocharyan released from jail pending the outcome of his trial on coup and corruption charges. The court's decision angered many allies and supporters of Pashinyan.

Speaking at a May 20 meeting with senior state officials, Pashinyan said that Armenian courts remain linked to "the former corrupt system" and distrusted by the population. He announced plans for a

mandatory "vetting" of all judges. Many of them should resign even before the start of such a process, the prime minister said.

Harutyunyan was among the officials



Gagik Harutyunyan

Armenian Parliament Holds Hearings On 'Transitional Justice'

YEREVAN (RFE/RL) – The National Assembly held on Friday, May 24, hearings on the introduction of "transitional justice" in Armenia which Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan regards as a major element of judicial reforms planned by him.

Pashinyan told the parliament dominated by his allies to start working on "mechanisms for transitional justice" when he held an emergency meeting with senior state officials on Monday. The meeting came as his supporters blocked the entrances to court buildings across the country.

Pashinyan called for such a blockade on Sunday following a Yerevan court's decision to release his bitter foe and former President Robert Kocharyan from custody. "The judicial authority does not enjoy the people's trust and therefore lacks sufficient legitimacy to act," he said, demanding a mandatory "vetting" of all judges.

According to Deputy Justice Minister Anna Vardapetyan, such vetting should be part of transitional justice. "This in no way presupposes any humiliating processes," she insisted during the hearings attended by lawmakers, government officials and legal experts.

"Vetting is done to verify the integrity of individuals holding public positions," said Vardapetyan. She listed the three main criteria for the planned eval-

uation of judges: "attitude towards human rights, attitude towards the rules of professional ethics and asset status."

Pashinyan has repeatedly called for "transitional justice" ever since he swept to power in May 2018 following mass protests dubbed a "velvet revolution." But he has so far shed little light on what that would mean in practice.

Parliament speaker Ararat Mirzoyan, who chaired the hearings, admitted that Pashinyan and his political team have yet to flesh out their plans for judicial reform. "The state authorities have not formulated a position," he said. "These hearings are also aimed at helping to formulate that position."

In any case, Mirzoyan said, the reform will not lead to the creation of "emergency courts" controlled by the current authorities. "Transitional justice must support, cleanse, vet and reform the existing judicial system in a legal and legislative manner," he said.

Opposition lawmakers warned in this regard any reform of the domestic judiciary must conform to the constitution. One of them, Naira Zohrabyan, said Armenian courts must not be told hand down ruling under popular pressure engineered by the government.

Armenian opposition groups have denounced as unconstitutional the court blockade initiated by Pashinyan.

invited to the emergency meeting. However, he did not attend it because of being unable to leave the SJC building in downtown Yerevan blockaded by government loyalists.

Two dozen protesters again rallied outside the building on Thursday, demanding the resignation of Harutyunyan as well as judges.

Pashinyan's calls for the court blockade were denounced as unconstitutional by Armenia's leading opposition groups. The SJC likewise said in a statement that any pressure on the courts is "unacceptable."

The SJC was formed just over a year ago in accordance with sweeping constitutional changes enacted in 2015. According to Armenia's amended constitution, its main mission is to "guarantee the independence of the courts and the judges."

The council has the power to nominate virtually all new judges appointed by Armenia's president and parliament. It is also empowered to take disciplinary action against judges or have them terminated altogether.

Harutyunyan, 71, headed the Armenian Constitutional Court before until being elected SJC chairman in February 2018 by the country's former parliament controlled by Serzh Sargsyan's Republican Party.

A Communist Party figure in Soviet times, Harutyunyan had been elected in 1990 deputy speaker of Armenia's first post-Communist parliament. He served as vice-president in the administration of Levon Ter-Petrosian, Armenia's first president elected in 1991.

Harutyunyan became chairman of the newly established Constitutional Court in 1996 shortly after the post of vice-president was abolished by the Ter-Petrosian administration. The court has rarely handed down rulings challenging the former Armenian presidents.



ARMENIA

HOVSEP DAGHDIGIAN PHOTO

Unseen Armenia

Physics Summer School at CRD

By Hovsep Daghdigian

YEREVAN – With the end of summer approaching, most students are anxious to be out of school for the next few months. However at the Cosmic Ray Division (CRD) of the Yerevan Physics Institute's Nor Ambert research station, 16 enthusiastic young Armenians gathered for a series of intensive physics lectures. Starting on May 13, a three-day class on physics began with lectures by noted scientists: Prof. Ashot Chilingarian, head of Armenia's Cosmic Ray Division; visiting Prof. Johannes Knapp, from the DESY research center in Germany; and Dr. Tigran Karapetyan, a senior researcher at the Cosmic Ray Division.

The 16 students were from Yerevan, Vanadzor, and Vaghashapat (Echmiadzin) with enrollment equally divided between young men and women. Some of the students were originally from Syria. Three of the students recently completed or are completing their bachelor degrees and are continuing their science education. The rest are high school students.

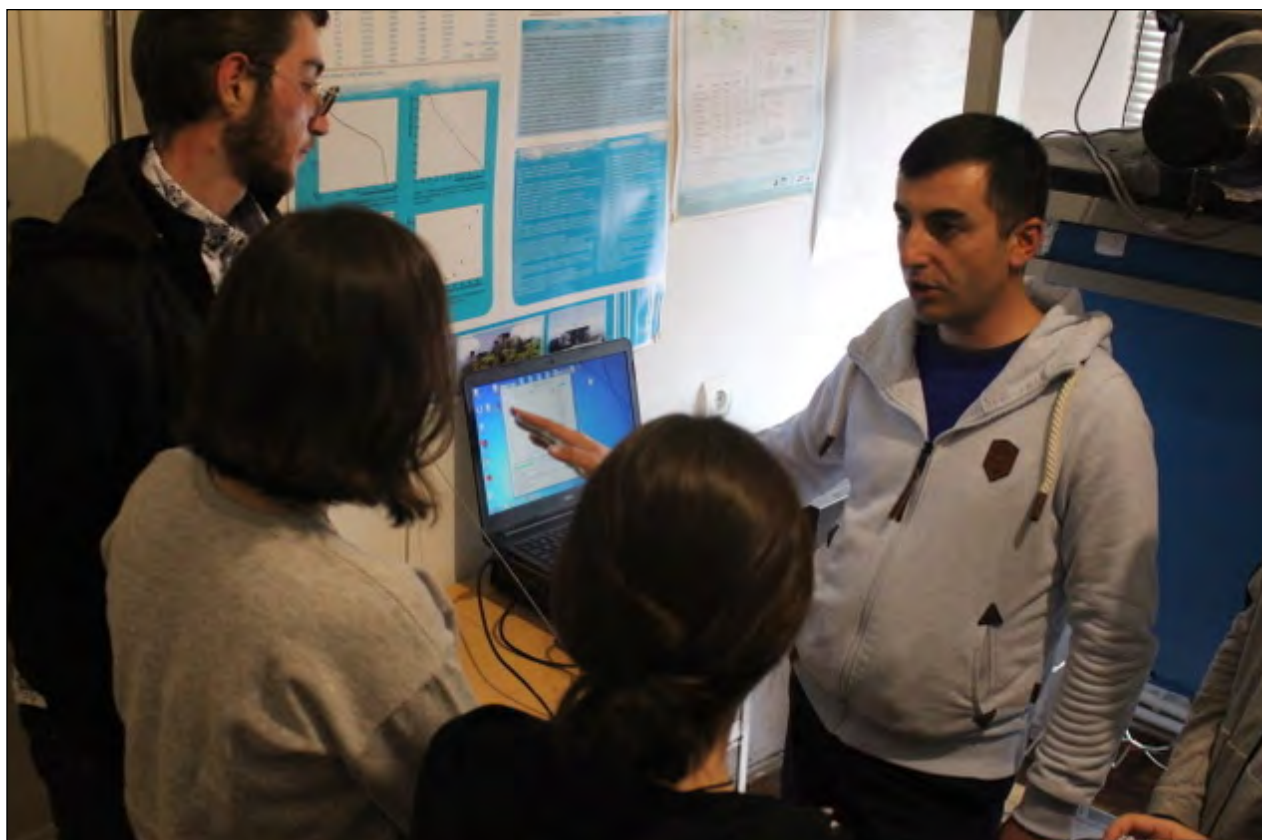
ASHOT CHILINGARIAN PHOTO



L-R, Prof. Johannes Knapp, DESY research institute, Germany; Prof. Ashot Chilingarian, head of Cosmic Ray Division, A. Alikhanyan National Laboratory (Yerevan Physics Institute), Armenia, Nor Ambert research station is in background.

Students remained at CRD's facilities on Mt. Aragats for the duration of the class. Enrollment was free; students had only to successfully complete a test indicating they were prepared for the level of instruction that was offered, and that they were reasonably proficient in English.

On day one, Prof. Knapp opened with introductory remarks, followed by a lecture on cosmic ray physics by



Dr. Tigran Karapetyan instructing summer school students in operation of cosmic ray monitor, in laboratory at Nor Ambert research station, Mt. Aragats

Chilingarian. After an hour break for lunch, Dr. Tigran Karapetyan delved into the physics of the instruments which monitor cosmic radiation. While doing so he established a remarkable rapport with the students, with numerous questions and answers illuminating the subject. Occasional humorous comments by both Karapetyan and the students elicited laughter. Later that afternoon all proceeded to the laboratory for a hands-on examination of a cosmic ray particle detector designed by CRD's physicists. Students adjusted operational parameters, and viewed the detector's data which was displayed on an attached computer screen. During the subsequent days, Prof. Knapp lectured in English with Chilingarian and Karapetyan lecturing in Armenian.

The level of instruction was impressive and a testimony to the seriousness of the students' intent to pursue their interest in science, as well as the ability of the lectures to connect with and encourage the students.

A few days after the

class, a group of the students sent an email to the organizers of the summer school. With quotes from Albert Einstein, they expressed their appreciation to the lecturers, thanking the Cosmic Ray Division and DESY for making this summer school possible. In addition to world class research, science education is one of the primary goals of the Cosmic Ray Division.

ASHOT CHILINGARIAN PHOTO



Students at CRD's physics summer school,

Zoryan Institute and AUA Launch New Center for Oral History

YEREVAN and TORONTO – The Zoryan Institute and the American University of Armenia (AUA) are pleased to announce the launch of the Zoryan Institute and AUA Center for Oral History. The Zoryan Institute will be depositing copies of its renowned Armenian Genocide Oral History Archive to a dedicated Center on the AUA campus. The university will provide the facilities for the center, which will house the collection, thereby creating the opportunity for students and scholars to view and research the materials in the collection. Additionally, AUA students will transcribe the recordings in the collection, and those in Armenian will be translated into English to increase the usefulness of these invaluable resources.

Zoryan's Oral History Collection is one of the Institute's earliest, largest and most significant projects. It began in 1983 when it became evident that time was running out for capturing the eyewitness accounts of the generation of survivors of the Armenian

Genocide.

To this day, the collection holds considerable significance for scholars, students, researchers and filmmakers. Tremendous effort was made into developing the interview questionnaire that would not only elicit information about the Genocide, but also provide details and valuable insights into the life of the Armenian people before the Genocide. The questions were designed to garner as much detail as possible, covering a range of topics from games the Armenians played at home to their personal experiences during the Genocide.

This project was an enormous and costly undertaking at the time. The Institute purchased state-of-the-art camera equipment and hired professional videographers to ensure the quality of the recordings. There were teams of Institute staff and volunteers who conducted the interviews with survivors living across North America and Armenia.

The collection consists of approximately

800 video recordings of interviews with Genocide survivors, now digitized, making it the largest video collection of Armenian survivor testimonies. While there are earlier oral history collections, this project by the Zoryan Institute has added a valuable visual dimension. Many researchers who have used the collection have commented how the video testimonies have considerably enhanced their understanding of what the survivors recalled when coupled with the interviewees' body language and expressed emotions.

Animation Based on Oral History

The Institute is currently working with the largest documentary film studio in Yerevan, BARS Media, to produce the animated film, *Aurora Sunrise*. This film will bring to life Aurora Mardiganian's amazing story of survival through animation, using the Institute's Oral History Project of the 1980s. Aurora Mardiganian wrote the best-selling book, *Ravished Armenia*, in which she shared her survivor experiences. She later starred in a

film adaptation – one of the biggest blockbusters of the silent-era. Animating Aurora's interview will make her story more dynamic and expand its reach to larger audiences. Through this film, Aurora's 104-year-old story will be accessible to future generations perpetually.

Additional materials from other similar oral history collections and projects, such as the Zoryan Institute's Syrian-Armenian Oral History Project, will be subsequently added to the center's collection. The Zoryan Institute will also use the newly established center to publish oral histories as educational material for researchers, as was done in its 1989 publication of *The Sumgait Tragedy: Pogroms against Armenians in Soviet Azerbaijan*. The Zoryan Institute and AUA Center for Oral History could serve as an ideal platform for embarking on a new oral history project that would document the Velvet Revolution and its impact on the nation.



International News

Three Armenians Included in Ranker List Of Top-30 Violinists

NEW YORK (PanARMENIAN.Net) – Ranker Portal recently published the list of the world's most prominent violinists of our time. 30 violinists were included in the list, three of whom are Armenians.

Samvel Yervinyan and Sergey Khachatryan represent Armenia while Ara Malikian represents Spain, culturavrn.ru reports.

The published list also includes Itzhak Perlman (US-Israel), Hilary Hahn (US), Maxim Vengerov (Russia-Israel), David Garrett (Germany), Anne-Sophie Mutter (Germany), Leonidas Kavakos (Greece), Sarah Chang (US-Korea), Pinchas Zukerman (Israel), Joshua Bell (US), among others.

Several Million Archives Classified in 2018

ANKARA (Hurriyet Daily News) – The Directorate of State Achieves under the Turkish Presidency last year classified 7 million archive documents covering the period from the beginning of the Ottoman history to today, it announced on May 28.

Of this figure, 6 million consists of archive documents from the beginning of Ottoman history to the declaration of the Turkish Republic, whereas the other 1 million documents cover the Turkish Republic era.

The Turkish Republic era has 30 million archive documents in total.

As part of the same project, the directorate also converted about 50 million archive documents into a digital format. Combined with another some 10 million digital archive documents similarly converted by other state institutions and already in hand, the figure reached 60 million digital documents.

During the work, some 40,256 documents have been restored.

Meanwhile, the directorate has undertaken checks on whether other state institutions were keeping up with care and conservation of archive materials in line with the regulations.

Bus Carrying Tourists Overtakes in Italy

ROME (PanARMENIAN.Net) – A bus carrying tourists in Italy plunged off the highway and flipped over on Wednesday, May 22.

Citizens of Armenia, Russia, Georgia and Kazakhstan were among the 60 travelers inside the bus that overturned not far from Siena.

A 40-year-old woman was killed, 19 other passengers were injured, Vesti.ru reports.

The woman in the front seat, who probably was the guide, flew through the window, after which the bus flipped and crashed onto her. The rescuers discovered her body only after lifting the bus with a crane.

The cause of the accident has yet to be revealed.

ICJ May Establish Cooperation with Universities of Armenia

THE HAGUE (Armenpress) – The registrar of the International Court of Justice Philippe Couvreur met this week with Ambassador of Armenia to the Netherlands Tigran Balayan and expressed willingness to establish cooperation with the law faculties of all Armenian universities to organize internships for students in courts.

Couvreur attached importance to the dialogue and cooperation with the diplomatic corps accredited to The Hague and presented the court's activities.

Balayan talked about the reforms that the Armenian government has launched in the judicial-legal sector and their purpose. The opportunities for cooperation with the Court for training Armenian students and specialists to deepen their knowledge in the field of international law were considered during the meeting.



Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan arrives in Nur-Sultan to attend a summit of the Eurasian Economic Union, May 28, 2019.

Pashinyan Attends Eurasian Union Summit, Praises Its Efforts

NUR-SULTAN, Kazakhstan (RFE/RL) – Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan said the Eurasian Economic Union (EEU) is opening up new opportunities for its member states, including Armenia, as he attended a summit of the Russian-led trade bloc in Kazakhstan's capital Nur-Sultan on Wednesday, May 29.

"As I have said on many occasions, we are interested in Armenia's maximally effective participation in the Eurasian Economic Union and will make every effort to improve cooperation mechanisms and attain four [economic] freedoms," he

has ratified one such deal which was signed with Iran last year.

Pashinyan described the summit as a success when he addressed reporters afterwards. "Today we discussed a broad range of issues and made decisions and reached agreements on practically all issues on the agenda," he said.

The Armenian leader hailed the "viability" of the EEU when he visited the bloc's headquarters in Moscow in January.

Pashinyan criticized Armenia's accession to the EEU and even called for its

withdrawal from it when he was in opposition to the former Armenian government. However, immediately after he swept to power in May 2018 he made clear that he will not pull his country out of the EEU or the Russian-led Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO).



Former Kazakh President Nursultan Nazarbayev (R) and Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan meet in Nur-Sultan, May 28, 2019.

said in his speech at the summit.

Speaking about the priorities of Armenia's current rotating presidency in the EEU, Pashinyan singled out the bloc's planned trade deals with other countries, including India, Egypt and Israel. He said the Armenian parliament

Contrary to some media expectations, Pashinyan did not meet with Russian President Vladimir Putin on the sidelines of the Nur-Sultan summit. His spokesman, Vladimir Karapetyan, told RFE/RL's Armenian service that such a meeting had not been planned beforehand.

Putin's press secretary, Dmitry Peskov, said that the Armenian and Russian leaders will meet next week during an annual economic forum which will be held in Saint-Petersburg.

While in the Kazakh capital, Pashinyan held separate meetings with Kazakhstan's President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev and his predecessor Nursultan Nazarbayev. The latter retains sweeping authority as head of the oil-rich Central Asian state's security council and leader of the ruling party.

Meeting with Pashinyan, Nazarbayev claimed that Kazakhstan and Armenia have always had "good relations" and never had "any problems."

The former Armenian government denounced Nazarbayev's administration for forcing the cancellation of a meeting of the prime ministers of the EEU member states which was due to be held in Yerevan in the wake of the April 2016 war in Nagorno-Karabakh. The Kazakh move was construed in Yerevan as a show of support for Azerbaijan.

Like other Muslim and Turkic Central Asian states, Kazakhstan has also repeatedly signed up to pro-Azerbaijani multilateral declarations on the Karabakh conflict, prompting strong criticism from Armenia.

Pashinyan did not mention those controversies and heaped praise on Nazarbayev instead. He stressed that the veteran Kazakh leader was a key driving force behind an agreement on the creation of the EEU signed by Russia, Kazakhstan and Belarus five years ago.

China and Armenia Sign Visa Waiver Agreement

YEREVAN – China and Armenia on Sunday, May 26, signed an agreement for mutual visa exemption for ordinary passport holders, during Chinese State Councilor and Foreign Minister Wang Yi's visit to the country.

Wang said during a meeting with his Armenian counterpart Zohrab Mnatsakanyan that China treats Armenia as an important partner in Eurasia.

He noted China is willing to enhance cooperation with Armenia in trade, technology, infrastructure construction as well as security.

Wang called on the two sides to conduct exchanges among different civilizations and oppose the theory of civilization clashes.

"We reconfirm our determination to develop our relations based on mutual

respect between our two nations. As old civilizations, we know each other well," the Armenian foreign ministry said in a news release.

Mnatsakanyan said Armenia is willing to align its development strategies with China's Belt and Road Initiative and deepen bilateral cooperation in all areas.

On the same day, Wang also met with Armenian President Armen Sarkissian and Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan.

"The friendship between our nations traces back to the friendly cooperation spanning centuries and millennia," Sarkissian stated, adding that the two nations cooperated successfully back in the era of the Silk Road.

The president spoke highly of China's BRI and said he welcomes China's

enterprises to involve in Armenia's development.

Wang emphasized that the Armenian people have made great contributions to the history of human civilization and added that China is willing to help the country with its development.

Pashinyan said he admires China's development achievements and is willing to learn from Beijing.

The prime minister added that Armenia adheres to the one-China policy and support China's stances on the international stage.

During the meeting, they also agreed to deepen bilateral trade and economic ties, and enhance cooperation under the framework of the BRI, and boost cooperation in areas such as new technologies, science, education, and security.



INTERNATIONAL

Levon I and the Kingdom of Cilicia

By Muriel Mirak-Weissbach

Special to the Mirror-Spectator

HALLE, Germany – Eight hundred years ago Levon I, a king who left an indelible mark on Armenian history and culture, with respect to relations with other powers, temporal and religious, died. The German city of Halle marked the anniversary with a series of special events, coinciding with the 20th anniversary of the cultural agreement signed between the Federal Republic of Germany and the Republic of Armenia. On May 17, a cabinet exhibition opened at the Moritzburg state museum, titled, “Levon I (1187-1219): An Armenian King in the Hohenstaufen Crusader States,” followed by a festive concert by guitarists Stepan Galantryan and Emil Georgiev, a “Voyage of Songs through the Mediterranean Coasts.”

The following day, an international scientific conference took place, organized by the Mesrop Center for Armenian Studies at the Martin Luther University in Halle-Wittenberg, which is also celebrating its 20th anniversary. (<https://mirrorspectator.com/2018/11/08/two-decades-of-armenian-studies-in-germany/>)

Titled “The Armenian Kingdom on the Mediterranean: Cilicia in the International, Cultural and Political Context (On the Occasion of the 800th Anniversary of the Death of Levon I),” it brought together prominent scholars from the U.S., Armenia and France in the Leopoldina National Academy of Sciences. Greetings were delivered by the academy’s Vice President Prof. Gunnar Berg, Director of the Institute for Oriental Studies Prof. Cornelia Horn and Armenian Ambassador Ashot Smbatyan. A message was received from Aram I, Catholicos of the Great House of Cilicia, and Dr. Stefan Moeller read greetings from P. Frank Bayard, Grand Master of the Teutonic Order, an order established in the 12th century in the Holy Land.

Diplomacy, Foreign Policy and Church Relations

It was the political side of Levon I’s activities that occupied the opening session, introduced by Mesrop Center director Prof. Armenuhi Drost-Abgarjan. Claude Mutafian (Paris) presented Levon the Great as “a brilliant diplomat.” Finding himself at the head of the Rubenid dynasty in Cilicia, which was sought after by both the Christian and Muslim neighbor states, he deemed the best means of consolidating his position would be through the establishment of a kingdom, one recognized by the surrounding powers. In pursuit of this, he turned to Henry



Prof. Drost-Abgarjan Opening the conference.

Bozoyan pointed to the coins and royal seals issued in 1198 as proof of this; here Levon is “King of Armenia,” “By the Grace of God,” “King of all Armenians” and “Dei et romani imperii gracia rex Armenie.”

Liana Aghabekyan (Yerevan) narrowed the focus to relations between the Holy Roman Empire and the Armenian Principality of Cilicia in the 1180s, when diplomatic relations were established between the Hohenstaufens and the Rubenids. Political interests motivating both sides to forge such ties included the Hohenstaufens’ desire to expand their power in the region and the Armenian principality’s ability to function as a political and cultural bridge between western and eastern Christian regions. With a western crown, Levon could strengthen his power in the Crusader states region, and he hoped to create a unified Armenian-Antiochene political system. Good relations between the Hohenstaufens and Rubenids would strengthen both in relation to the Byzantine Empire. Thus the importance of Levon’s being coronated King of Armenia, in the name of the Holy Roman Empire in 1198.

Coining the Image of the King

Before visiting the nearby museum to wander through the exhibition of selected coins honoring the Armenian king, participants heard papers dealing with the scientific approach to the matter. Ruben Vardanyan (Yerevan) spoke on “Cilician-Armenian Numismatics: Questions, Solutions, Perspectives and Limits.” In 2008 a systematic research project got underway to classify and catalogue all the silver and copper coins from the Armenian Kingdom of Cilicia – about 4500! – that are housed in the Historical Museum of Armenia. Of the planned five volumes, the first (bilingual, Armenian and English) appeared in 2014 and the last in 2017. Numerous questions arose in the course of the work, for example, regarding classification and placement, which opened up further research into the history of mintage in Cilicia. Careful study of iconographical and stylistic changes is required to clarify the identity of coins from the 13th and early 14th centuries, even those bearing the names of Levon and Hethum. One major problem, Vardanyan said, derives from the lack of reliable information on the finds and treasures, despite the huge number of specimens unearthed. The problem lies in the lack of systematic archaeological excavations in the Armenian sites there, and the destructive treasure hunting that has been taking place in recent decades.

Stefan Moeller (Halle) spoke on Levon I’s coinage reform, which he termed a “Numismatic Great Project.” The new coinage introduced by the king bears witness to the meteoric rise of the Rubenid dynasty, he said, as such large-scale reforms were quite unusual at the time. In the period of the principality (1095-1198) the five basic coins in use were made of copper sheet metal. Already in this period, the use of the Armenian language in Armenian script is noteworthy, as well as the depiction of the cross as a *khachkar*. Following the coronation of Levon in 1198, the capital was relocated to Sis and a new mint was inaugurated, a sign of “this new sovereign pride.” In the first emission phase, the first coins depicting Levon as king appeared with the head of the ruler, stylized, on one side, and a cross on the other side. The second phase was marked by the introduction of silver coins of high nominal value. Here the

king’s face is shown in a majestic pose, and he is identified as “Levon, King of each and every Armenian, by the grace of God.” On the reverse side is a crowned “Agnus Deo Lion holding the banner of the cross.”

The very first series of coins bearing the Armenian language, according to Roy Arakelian (Paris), are those from Lori in the 11th century. The coins show Christ, with robe and halo, holding a bible, with “Jesus Christus” on both sides, as well as, on the reverse side, “Lord, help Kiurike, the Kuropalat” (a Byzantine title). Arakelian’s research has led him to conclude that the person in question was Kiurike II (1048-1100), king of Lori, who, after making peace with Sultan Alp Aslan, issued coins during his long reign. Although his immediate successors did not carry on this practice, Arakelian sees the real successors to Kiurike II in the barons of Armenian Cilicia.

Turning to the relations of the Armenians to the Latin world, Maxime Yevadian (Lyon) examined 11th-century source material and the image of Armenians it offers. Armenia is seen as the site of sacred history, for example, as a heavenly paradise and Noah’s Ark, and several Armenian or Armenianized saints are named; there are even references to the myth of a supposed Armenian origin of the Germanic peoples. It was in the period following the destruction of the Armenian highlands in the 11th century, Yevadian noted, that Armenian pilgrims headed westward, among them saints Macarius of Gent, Simeon of Mantua and Davinus of Lucca.

Modes of Narration

Illuminated manuscripts were among the works produced in Armenian Cilicia, contributing to the rich tradition. Cornelia Horn (Halle) showed how artists working on these illuminations performed an important role in transmitting and creating non-canonical traditions. These are the apocryphal narratives, that is, accounts that expand or elaborate on stories and figures known in canonical Scripture. Examining material in the framework of New Testament apocrypha, Horn combined methodological considerations with an in-depth analysis of individual examples to demonstrate the vast array of apocryphal traditions reflected in manuscript illuminations from Armenian Cilicia. The presentation located these examples within the broader history of Armenian illuminated manuscripts, identifying these as among the earliest examples.

Historiography, too, may reveal “non-canonical” material, may expand and elaborate on known events. Heiko Conrad (Frankfurt/Main) discussed how written historical accounts may reveal political attitudes. The case in point is the *History of the Armenians* by Kirakos Gandzaketsi (1200-1271) and his rather extensive treatment of the coronation of Levon I. Although King Levon wins praise for his courage and military successes, in this account his role in negotiations with papal representatives is ambiguous; there are nuances of censure regarding Levon’s intervention into church affairs. At the same time, certain facts touching on clerical affairs are obscured in the work, for example, the coronation itself and the council of Sis.

At the conclusion of an extraordinarily rich conference, participants were invited on a guided tour of the cabinet exhibition, which will continue until July 29. Later the same exhibition will be on display in Armenia.



The invitation to the conference.

VI Hohenstaufen and on January 6, 1198 in Tarsus, under the aegis of the Holy Roman Empire, was crowned King Levon I of Armenia. The Byzantine emperor recognized him but before he could gain comparable status from the Papacy in Rome, he had to settle the controversial issue of the alleged schismatic character of the Armenian church and its autocephalic character. This Levon I succeeded in doing, by organizing his clergy to accept papal conditions in word only, and the union of the churches became a fact. In an effort to subdue hostilities in Antioch and the Hethum dynasty, he tried his hand at match-making diplomacy, but was not always crowned by success.

Azat Bozoyan (Yerevan) examined the direction of Levon’s multifaceted foreign policy vis-a-vis European powers as well as the Crusader states, through which he hoped to protect Cilicia’s independence. In his church policy with Rome, he acted in accord with the Catholicos, whose See however lay outside Cilicia. From 1193 on, he sought to set up a state order along the model of the Byzantine system, whereby Cilician royal power would be based on the spiritual structures of the Armenian church, which at the end of the 12th century stretched from Greater Armenia to the Balkans and Egypt.

Community News

Dr. Levon Avdoyan Receives Lifetime Achievement Award From SAS

WASHINGTON – On Thursday, May 16, the Society for Armenian Studies (SAS) co-sponsored a special evening honoring Dr. Levon Avdoyan, longtime area specialist for Armenia and Georgia at the African and Middle Eastern Division of the Library of Congress.

Avdoyan was recognized by the SAS for his outstanding service and contribution to the field of Armenian Studies during his more than 40-year tenure at the Library of Congress. The special event was co-hosted by the Embassy of the Republic of Armenia in Washington, DC.

The reception took place at the Armenian Embassy with the presence of former US ambassadors to Armenia Michael Lemmon and John Evans, diplomats from the Embassy of Georgia, representatives of Armenian-American organizations, and members of the Armenian community.

The opening remarks were made by Ambassador of the Republic of Armenia to the United States Varuzhan Nersesyan. In his remarks Nersesyan acknowledged Avdoyan's contribution to the field of Armenian studies and his many scholarly accomplishments. The ambassador especially highlighted Avdoyan's efforts in putting together a number of crucial projects throughout his career, including the 2012 exhibition on the 500th anniversary of the first Armenian printed book, the annual



Ambassador Nersesyan and Dr. Avdoyan

Vardanants Day Lectures on various topics of Armenian studies, support during the 2018 Smithsonian Folklife Festival, and the extensive social media program to popularize the Armenian collection of the Library.

Following Nersesyan's remarks, SAS President Prof. Bedross Der Matossian (Associate Professor of History, University of Nebraska, Lincoln) took the podium and introduced the activities of the SAS to the audience. He highlighted the strategic importance of establishing an Armenian Studies Program at one of the Washington-area universities. After discussing Avdoyan's academic journey from the University of the South at Sewanee, Tennessee, to Columbia University, Der Matossian highlighted the important work that Avdoyan has undertaken in the field of Armenian Studies, both as a scholar and as an invaluable source for scholars. At the end of his talk, Der Matossian presented Avdoyan with the inaugural Society for Armenian Studies "Lifetime Achievement Award" in recognition and appreciation his outstanding service and contribution to the field of Armenian Studies.

Next, Dr. Mary-Jane Deeb (former chief of the African and Middle Eastern Division at the Library of Congress) described the tremendous effort that Avdoyan had made in increasing the Armenian collection in the Library. She said that in Avdoyan's tenure the Armenian collection grew from some 7,000 items to about 47,000 and that the Georgian collection increased more than five-fold. In 1994, Avdoyan created the annual Vardanants Day Armenian Lecture series which in 2018 celebrated its 21st year with an international symposium "New Topics in Armenian History and Culture."

see AVDOYAN, page 8



Hovhanness Markuyan Zirekyants

Reaching for the American Dream

The Story of Young Armenian Tech Entrepreneur Hovhanness Marukyan Zirekyants

LOS ANGELES – It's not often one gets to meet a young, successful banker-turned-tech-entrepreneur of Armenian descent. As Armenians, our parents tend to encourage us down traditional career paths where one can make a good salary, save one's pennies and eventually buy a house and start a family.

By Monique Svazlian

Special to the Mirror-Spectator

Hovhanness or "Hov" as he likes to be called, has a familiar story similar to many Armenian immigrants. His parents are professional musicians trained in Armenia who came to the United States to give their children a better future when Zirekyants was 15. At the age of 18, he started working as a bank teller and later went on to become a Private Client Banker for Chase Bank, making a six-figure salary. As soon as he got his first job, his mother spoke to him the importance of saving money, and he opened his first savings account. By the time he was 27, he had saved enough money to purchase his first house.

But as he continued down this traditional career path, something inside of him was brewing. "When I worked in banking, I could see a lot of money related stress in people. I'd been saving about 30-50 percent of my income since I first started working, and ultimately it's what allowed me to leave my job. But many people I serviced didn't have the same savings skills. That's when the idea of Savely was first born."

Although he had achieved what most would consider "success" at a fairly young age, Zirekyants knew there was something more he was meant to do. His original plan was to get an MBA at a top business school to pursue his dreams. "I got a 62 percent the first time I took the GMAT and then a 71 percent. I thought I needed a prestigious degree for people to take me seriously. But a friend challenged me one day and asked me 'why do you even need an MBA?' And it just shook me awake. A few days later I told my boss I was quitting and abandoned my pursuit of an MBA."

It was with just an idea that Zirekyants approached his mom with his dream of launching an app. "Before I left Chase, I told my mom what I wanted to do. And I put it plainly to her. I said we didn't come to America to be slaves in the system. We came here to make something of ourselves. Not surprisingly, she agreed and fully supported my decision to leave Chase."

With that green light, Zirekyants quit his job, sold his house and invested all his money into launching an app called Savely designed to help people save money toward their next travel adventure. It took him nearly six months of

see DREAM, page 8

TCA Metro Los Angeles Chapter Hosts Community-Wide Meeting With Rep. Judy Chu

ALTADENA, Calif. – On Friday, May 24, the Tekeyan Cultural Association (TCA) Metro Los Angeles Chapter was pleased to host a community-wide meet and greet with Congresswoman Judy Chu (D-CA-27), a five-term Member of the US House of Representatives whose district encompasses a wide stretch of southern California's San Gabriel Valley, and includes sizable Armenian-populated cities such as Altadena, Arcadia, Monrovia, Pasadena, South Pasadena, and Sierra Madre, among others. Congresswoman Chu serves on the powerful House Ways and Means Committee and on the House Small Business Committee, in addition to chairing the Congressional Asian Pacific American Caucus, which advocates for the needs and concerns of the Asian American and Pacific Islander communities throughout the United States.

Held at the TCA Beshgueturian Center in Altadena and jointly organized by the Armenian Assembly of America and the TCA Metro LA Chapter, the meeting commenced with a warm welcome by TCA Metro LA Chapter Chairman Carl Bardakian, who acknowledged Rep. Chu as the first Chinese American woman elected to Congress. During his welcome statement, Bardakian shed light on the first Armenian American elected to Congress, namely the late Steven Derounian, who was elected in 1952 and served constituents residing on New York's Long Island for six terms. Notably, due to his valor overseas during the second World War, US Army Captain Steven Derounian was awarded the Purple Heart and the Bronze Star with oak leaf. Bardakian introduced Mihran Toumajan, the Assembly's Western Region Director, who thanked over two dozen leaders of Armenian American community organizations for attending, and saluted Rep. Chu for her steadfast support on issues of concern to her Armenian American constituents. Toumajan introduced former California State Assemblymember and founder and CEO of California Consulting, Inc., Steve Samuelian, who praised Chu not only for her stellar record on Armenian issues in Congress, but also during her service as a Member of the California State Assembly (2001-



(from left to right): TCA Metro LA Chapter Chairman Carl Bardakian, Congresswoman Judy Chu, Pasadena-Glendale Chapter Vice-Chairman Kevork Keushkerian

2006) and the California State Board of Equalization (2007-2009). Samuelian requested that meeting participants briefly introduce themselves and their respective organizations prior to inviting Rep. Chu to deliver her prepared remarks.

Chu conveyed how honored she was to reconnect with long-time friends as well as new leaders of the Armenian American community. She highlighted her solid record in favor of official Congressional recognition of the Armenian Genocide and emphasized her original co-sponsorship of House Resolution 296 (H.Res.296), introduced by Rep. Adam Schiff (D-CA-28) in April 2019, which affirms the United States' record on the Armenian Genocide. H.Res.296 currently has 100 bipartisan co-sponsors. Further, Chu shed light on her support for

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COMMUNITY NEWS

TCA Metro Los Angeles Chapter Hosts Community-Wide Meeting With Rep. Judy Chu

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robust FY2020 US assistance to the Republics Armenia and Artsakh, including \$70 million in economic development, democracy strengthening, and military aid to Armenia, in addition to \$20 million for Armenia's exemplary role as a regional safe haven for over 25,000 refugees from Syria, and \$10 million to Artsakh for demining purposes and health rehabilitation services, as well as for pro-peace mechanisms delineated in the Royce-Engel initiative of the previous 115th Congress. Moreover, Congresswoman Chu stressed her support for the Artsakh Travel and Communication Resolution (H.Res.190), which encourages unfettered transportation, communication, meetings, and other direct contacts between officials of Artsakh and their counterparts at all levels of government in the United States, in addition to the direct participation of the Artsakh government with respect to its security and status during negotiations within OSCE and other institutional frameworks. Finally, in partnership with her colleague Rep. Brad Sherman (D-CA-30), Rep. Chu vowed to continue the fight to realize a US-Armenia bilateral treaty to eliminate double taxation for Americans conducting business in Armenia and vice versa.

During a brief question-and-answer session, and bearing in mind Armenia's recent democratic transformation, as well as free, fair and transparent December 2018 Parliamentary elections,



Southern California-based Armenian American community leaders with Congresswoman Judy Chu.

participants encouraged – and Chu accepted – the idea of a Congressional Armenian Caucus-led visit to Armenia and Artsakh should the opportunity avail in 2019. Specifically, attendees shed light on multiple international conferences taking place in Armenia in October 2019, including the World Congress on Information Technology (wcit2019.org), the first Aurora Forum (auroraforum.com), and the inaugural "Forest Summit: Global Action and Armenia" jointly organized by the Armenia Tree Project and the

American University of Armenia's Acopian Center for the Environment (armeniatree.org/en/forestsummit).

An important topic of discussion with Chu centered on Azerbaijani authorities' penchant for intolerant behavior towards Armenians, with the Aliyev regime's most recent manifestation of bigotry meted upon professional footballer of Armenian descent, Henrikh Mkhitaryan, who plays for the Arsenal Football Club in the English Premier League. Mkhitaryan's Arsenal squad

faces the Chelsea Football Club on the 29th of May during the UEFA Cup / Europa League final match held in Baku, Azerbaijan. Moreover, community leaders expressed their outrage about the racist behavior of Azerbaijan's authorities not only with respect to Mkhitaryan, but also towards dozens of British Armenian soccer fans of both teams, who, due to their "ian" or "yan" ending surnames, will not be allowed to enter Azerbaijan to view the UEFA Cup final. Finally, meeting participants reminded Rep. Chu that the government of Azerbaijan's policy of blacklisting individuals also extends to non-Armenians who have visited Artsakh, including to Congressional colleagues like former Rep. David Valadao (R-CA-21), and current Representatives Frank Pallone, Jr. (D-NJ-6) and Tulsi Gabbard (D-HI-2), who traveled to the Republic of Artsakh in 2017 for fact-finding purposes.

Upon the conclusion of the meeting, Chu presented Certificates of Congressional Recognition respectively to the Tekeyan Cultural Association Metro Los Angeles Chapter and to the Armenian Assembly of America. In turn, Toumajan presented Chu with Dr. Hagop Martin Deranian's seminal book, President Calvin Coolidge and the Armenian Orphan Rug, conveyed the assembled community leaders' gratitude to the Congresswoman for gracing the gathering with her attendance and passionate overview of her record on pro-Armenian issues, and thanked attendees for their active participation.

Community leaders in attendance for the meet and greet with Rep. Chu included: Judge Armenuhi A. Ashvanian, Los Angeles County Superior Court. Ashvanian is the first appointed American judge to hail from the Republic of Armenia. For this community-wide gathering, Judge Ashvanian represented the Armenian Bar Association.

- Roy Boulghourjian, Pasadena Unified School District Board Member (District 2).

- Steve Samuelian, former California State Assemblymember, founder and CEO of California Consulting, Inc.

- Victoria Dochoghlian, Field Representative of California State Assemblymember Laura Friedman (D-43).

- Representing the American Armenian Rose Float Association: Fundraising / Corporate Sponsor Committee Director Arthur Kokozyan.

- Representing the Armenian Assembly of America: Southern California Regional Council members Margaret Mgrublian and Helen Haig, and Western Region Director Mihran Toumajan.

- Representing the Armenian Bar Association: The Hon. Judge Armenuhi A. Ashvanian, Chairman of ArmenBar's Pro Bono Committee Mesrop Khoudagoulian, Esq., and Armen Mikayelyan, Esq.

- Representing the Armenian General Benevolent Union: Western District Office Manager and Chapter Operations & Community Outreach Manager, Hrant Vartzbedian.

- Representing the Armenian International Women's Association: AIWA-Los Angeles President Nicole Nishanian.

- Representing the Armenian Missionary Association of America: Former Executive Director and West Coast Director Levon Filian, and Class of 2020 Board of Directors member Vahe Nalbandian, Ph.D.

- Representing the Armenia Tree Project: West Coast Operations Manager Sarah Hayes, and West Coast Community Outreach Manager Anahit Gharibyan.

- Representing the Common Path for Armenian Leadership PAC: Mr. John (J.P.) Perron.

- Representing the Ghevont Lodge of the Knights of Vartan: Sbarabed Dennis Takessian.

- Representing Nerouj, a youth mentorship platform developed by the Western Diocese of the Armenian Church: Delilah Shahbazian and Meg Chakerian.

- Representing the Sahag-Mesrob Armenian Christian School of Altadena, CA: Principal Maral Aroyan-Boyardjian.

- Representing the Social Democratic Hunchakian Party of the Western USA: Mehran Khatchadorian.

- Representing the Southern California Armenian Democrats: President Araz Parseghian.

- Representing the Tekeyan Cultural Association: TCA Metro Los Angeles Chapter Chairman Carl Bardakian, and TCA Pasadena-Glendale Chapter Vice-Chairman Kevork Keushkerian.



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COMMUNITY NEWS

Dr. Levon Avdoyan Receives SAS Lifetime Achievement Award

AVDOYAN, from page 6

Deeb also highlighted Avdoyan's other major achievements at the Library of Congress, such as curating two Armenian exhibits at the Library, one in 2000, "Armenia at the Library of Congress," in conjunction with the conference on "The American

ing in people from all walks of life to attend programs, briefings, music concerts, tours, displays, films and more, hosting them, entertaining them, teaching them, all in his inimitable style, with humor and a sense of fun. From school children and scholars to people who just wanted to learn more about

Krikorian discussed the impact that Avdoyan had on his academic and personal life. Krikorian stated that many people do not fully realize the wide-ranging impact that Avdoyan has had on the understanding of Armenia and its interactions and interconnections with the wider world. He stressed that Avdoyan has strived to portray Armenia as a bridge between worlds, cultures, and civilizations, and he has succeeded brilliantly. "For decades, Avdoyan's writings and lectures have never failed to connect Armenia to the wider world, to broader issues. His mastery of the complexities of Armenian history has allowed him to contextualize and enrich our scholarly understanding of the Roman Empire, Byzantium, Persia, and the Arab and

Turkic worlds," said Krikorian.

Concluding remarks were made by Avdoyan where he expressed his gratitude to the Society for Armenian Studies, to the Embassy of the Republic of Armenia, and to Nersesyan for co-hosting the event. In addition, he thanked Deeb and Krikorian for their two decades of friendship and professional support. Avdoyan became a charter member of SAS in 1974 and since then has remained an active member. He retired on January 3, 2019, after a 41-year career at the Library of Congress. At the moment he is collaborating with Dr. Nina G. Garsoïan on a dictionary of the Armenian Middle Ages, but eventually hopes to return to his true passion – pre-Christian Armenia.



Prof. Bedross Der Matossian with Dr. Levon Avdoyan

Response to the Armenian Genocide," and the other, "To Know Wisdom and Instruction: The Armenian Literary Tradition at the Library of Congress" in 2012 to commemorate the 500th anniversary of the first printed Armenian book. The latter brought in almost a quarter of a million visitors during its five-month run.

Deeb argued that the honoree made Armenia a focal point at the library by "bring-



Mary-Jane Deeb



Robert Krikorian

Armenia, Dr. Avdoyan has displayed for them the Library's Armenian treasures, he has thrilled his audience with information and anecdotes about the history and provenance of the items acquired by the Library, he has been the pharos, the guiding lighthouse to all things Armenian."

Dr. Robert Krikorian, a longtime friend of Avdoyan's, spoke next. In his remarks,

Reaching for the American Dream

DREAM, from page 6

non-stop research on behavioral science and goal achievement that led to the initial concept and design. Then he was able to find a co-founder and a UX designer who joined the team to start Savely. "We aren't really a financial app or a travel app, we are a goal achievement platform. The reason why I chose money as a focal point is because I wanted to help people reach their goals. Saving money is a universal idea people can relate to. At Savely, we help you quantify your future."

He goes on to talk about the reasons why people have a difficult time saving their hard-earned money. "There are three main reasons why people don't save: they lack direction, they don't know how to begin and they don't know how to get to their goal. With Savely, let's say your goal is to go to Paris for two weeks. We help you identify how much you'll need for air fare, hotel, food, etc., you set the date when you want to go, where you want to go and we tell

you how much you need to save each week to be able to afford to go on that trip. Once you figure out how to do it and what to do, you need to keep going, but many people don't stay motivated and its why they don't reach their goals. We've addressed this in the design as well – users are able to save the money for that trip with Savely and then able to book flights, hotels, etc."

When I asked whether he would have made such a leap in his career without the support of his family, Hov imparted some inspiring advice. "If you look for an excuse to not do something, you'll find a thousand reasons not do it. If you don't have supportive parents or a supportive boss or a supportive partner, you can still do it, and you should. If you have an idea and want to pursue it, you have a responsibility to do so. It's not a choice anymore." Sage advice from an ambitious young man much wiser than his years.

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COMMUNITY NEWS

Janigian Discusses His Novels, Literature and Life with Susan Barba

JANIGIAN, from page 1

some context. He explained that he chose as the most appropriate character to witness the destruction of the Los Angeles riots of 1992 a refugee from violence of the Beirut Civil War, Adam Derderian. The other main characters also are Middle Eastern. One of them is the Kurd, the best friend of Adam and a painter. Adam's brother Eric, a documentary filmmaker, comes to Los Angeles to figure out what happened to Adam and speaks with the Wizard, an old Jewish mentor of Adam.

Barba said that this novel forms a bridge between Janigian's heart-wrenching first two novels, *Bloodvine*, about two American-born Armenian half-brothers torn apart over a disagreement about a plot of land in 1950s Fresno, and *Riverbig*, the sequel, and his later works. They focus on the first-and second-generation Armenians in the US, whereas *This Angelic Land* moves forward 30 years or so.

In 1992, Janigian explained, he was living in Los Angeles, 32-years-old, in the mid-Wilshire area when the riots started. He said he had written three novels before his first published novel. He was working on a new novel when the riots happened but dropped that to work on this new topic and write his observations. However, Janigian said, "It was so complicated, the feelings I had watching the city go up in flames. Essentially I put the story aside for 18 years." When the 20th anniversary of the riots were coming up he thought to revisit it and got advice from Arno Yerezian of Abril Bookstore, who suggested making the main character Lebanese. That gave so many parallels (Lebanon and Los Angeles, the old world and the new, the Armenian Genocide) that it jumpstarted Janigian's work.

Barba pointed out that though there is much action, the dialogue is what moves this novel. She queried Janigian on a shift in the later books compared to the earlier ones. In the earlier books the main characters do not have mentors and are left alone to fall back on their own resources when they confront challenges. What changed, she wondered?

Janigian replied that *Bloodvine* was based on his father's life, as he had a relationship with his brother that came to a catastrophic end, about which he never talked. Janigian did not even know that he had an uncle until he was around 12. He wrote the book after his father died to recreate what happened.

Janigian said that he himself had great mentors, like his own father, whereas his father's father had died early. In *Bloodvine* people escape the old world into the new. There is a conflict on how to become American while remaining Armenian and America, not a person, offers a way to guide Andy Demerjian, the protagonist, but in *Riverbig* that project fails him. In his later books, there are younger characters who are already part of this country. Though Adam is an émigré, he is young enough, astute enough, with many people around him, to become sophisticated.

Barba thought there were a lot more questions in the first two novels. Andy Demerjian's being on his own and asking big questions are what makes it poignant. Andy asks himself whether Abe is a bad person, she commented, what made him so, and could he be redeemed.

Barba said she likes the farming metaphors Janigian uses, such as grafting, and asked Janigian to comment on it. Janigian said that though he was a farmer's son, he was raised in the nearby city. His father had polio and therefore hard labor was difficult for him but he did it every day, and Janigian would see its effects up close. Every day he would pull off his father's boots to give his feet relief.

Later in life he took over his father's business, in the grape industry, and he continues to this day to work at least two months a year in the fields. Farming, he said, is like watching fate come at you. The rain, for example, can destroy "your beautiful grapes" and there is nothing one can do. In one night, mice may come and desiccate the vines. "Farming is a struggle with nature," he concluded, "and farmers are very interesting people. They are pragmatic, they are philosophical, they are narrowminded at the same time that they are generous. They are very interesting people to write about and no one

writes about them."

The reason, he said, is that writers tend to live in urban settings like New York City and therefore have little knowledge of farming life. Furthermore, the successful writers form a sort of club or network which is hard to penetrate from the outside. Janigian has never been, for example, to even one writing convention or conference, which he feels puts him at a disadvantage in promoting his work. Nonetheless, Janigian said he loves to use farming life as "a foil to the decadence and the abstractness of city life, which is mostly the literary scene. So there is part of me that is a jester in the literary scene."

Janigian said that not only does no one write about farmers, no one likes to read about them.

Barba asked what had changed in American society since John Steinbeck (1902-1968), who was an enormously popular writer dealing with agriculture. Janigian said many fewer people live on farms or have any connection with farming. There has always been a contempt for farmers among city people, going back to Egypt and definitely Greece. He said, "I think the abstractness of life now with the internet and social media has reached a point where we are almost devouring ourselves."

He added that writing about Armenians makes for an even tougher sell than just about farming. However, he emphasized, "Now for me, Armenians are important and interesting because their story is like the archetypal human story, especially as immigrants. All the drama of human history is linked up to them in a way that you can't have a better people to talk about if you are going to talk about the American experience especially." Attempts to pigeonhole this type of writing as merely ethnic literature are false, he said, because American literature is ethnic literature.

Janigian said, "If my books still sell, at least I know some Armenians are going to buy them...I hope that people can learn our stories through these novels. They are beautiful stories. They are rich stories. They are the human experience. They are the American experience."

When asked from the audience about his liter-

ary influences, Janigian started with William Saroyan, whom he would see riding his bike on occasion, when he lived two blocks away from Janigian, or at the public library. He would be awestruck, he said, and Saroyan became a very big influence on his life. His biggest literary influences, Janigian said, were William Faulkner, a rigorous writer who liked to tell stories, the Austrian writer Thomas Bernhard and Cormac McCarthy.

Janigian said that he writes three to four hours daily and that being a writer "is mysterious and magical," as he nourishes intimate relationships with the characters he creates. Janigian said, "It teaches you about what you are not. Everybody wants to be what they are but writers are what they are not. This is why I think I want to be a writer. I want to not be me. I am sick of me already...I want to be other people." However, he feels that despite the power of literature, with changes in contemporary culture and society, "we are losing this great thing. It is very, very sad. It is slowly dying. No doubt about it."

Janigian said that he is changing focus with his new book, *Waiting for Sophia at Shutters on the Beach*. It follows *Waiting for Lipchitz at Chateau Marmont* as part of a planned trilogy. He said that it is about political correctness, sexual politics and academia. A professor is waiting for a doctoral student of his whom he hopes to seduce, while he faces charges of sexual harassment from an undergraduate student. With a laugh, Janigian said that it is very controversial. In fact, the publisher of his last novel, which did so well that it spent 17 weeks on the Los Angeles Times best-seller list, refused to publish this book, stating that it would bring down his press. Janigian said everyone rejected it, even the French.

Janigian believes, he said, that many of our concerns today are a result of decadence and indeed that we are living in a period of decadence. In his new novel, he has a quote to the effect that puritanism is a reaction against decadence, but there is also a type of puritanism which is a final phase or refinement of decadence. His new book fleshes this idea out.



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COMMUNITY NEWS

NAASR Spring Benefit Hosted by Dr. Seda and Vartan Keshishian

By Aram Arkun

Mirror-Spectator Staff

CAMBRIDGE, Mass. — The National Association for Armenian Studies and Research (NAASR) held a benefit dinner at the historic home of Dr. Seda and Vartan Keshishian on May 18. The Keshishian home, which used to belong to Gov. William Weld of Massachusetts, was recently renovated and formed an impressively elegant backdrop for the brief formal program and dinner, at which more than 80 guests were present. The fundraising was to support NAASR's operational expenses, not the construction of its new building.

Dr. Keshishian welcomed the guests to their home on behalf of her husband and herself. She declared, "We are here tonight to help NAASR in its mission, which is to promote the field of Armenian Studies and research."

Nancy Kolligian, former chair and current vice-chair of the NAASR board, as well as member of the NAASR host committee, thanked the Keshishians for their generosity as hosts and gave the couple a present from the new lineup of Michael Aram. She acknowledged the rest of the host committee, including Yervant Chekijian, Nicole Babikian Hajjar, Sarah B. Ignatius, Marc Mamigonian and Laura Yardumian, and recognized NAASR librarian and curator Ani Babayan, as well as Vartus Varadian, who had designed the invitations for the evening.

Kolligian then introduced the two main speakers, Julia Hintlian and Khatchig Mouradian. Hintlian is a doctoral student of religion at Harvard University. Her main research interests are Eastern Christianity, including the



Dr. Seda and Vartan Keshishian addressing the guests

University, Worcester State University and Stockton University. He holds a PhD in history from the Strassler Center for Holocaust and Genocide Studies at Clark University. He is the former editor of the *Armenian Weekly* and the current editor of the *Armenian Review*. He has received support from NAASR and the Knights of Vartan.

Hintlian addressed the crowd and said that for the last three years, "NAASR has played a very pivotal, a very crucial role in my academic career." She explained that NAASR helps people make connections, and gave some examples. NAASR sponsored a conference at Harvard in which scholars from all over the world participated, allowing them to get to know each other. It also provides scholarships for travel to conferences which allow new audiences to become

exposed to Armenian topics. It helped Hintlian locally too, on a community level, by providing a personal level of support.

Hintlian noted: "I think this organization brings people together to exchange ideas in order to consciously and deliberately define what it means to be Armenian today and in the future by looking at the past. When I share a seventh-century Armenian idea with a scholar of 20th century Armenia and that scholar gives me a lens through which to reinterpret the seventh century, we both walk away with a more complete, more comprehensive, and more nuanced picture of what it means to be Armenian. Together, we reinterpret, we rediscover and we recreate an Armenian identity. And that identity formation and celebration has connotations and implications that travel far behind scholarly circles and indeed far beyond Armenian circles."

She concluded by thanking NAASR and all those who work in it and by promising to make them all proud and pass on its worthy mission.

Mouradian took Hintlian's place on the staircase and began his talk by remarking that he just returned from a conference on genocide in Thessaloniki. When viewing one of the photographs taken there, it struck him that everyone in the photograph had benefited from NAASR's support. He added that NAASR has been supporting scholars constantly even while embarking on an ambitious building project.

Much of its work is also non-financial. Many authors published in the last decade thank NAASR and its academic director Marc

Mamigonian for scholarly assistance.

Mouradian personally benefited in many ways both as a doctoral student and now while teaching at Columbia. He gave as one current example that Mamigonian annually comes to New York to speak to Mouradian's students on genocide denial. Mouradian's



Khatchig Mouradian

own students apply and now get travel grants from NAASR. NAASR has also supported Mouradian's own doctoral professor, Taner Akçam, thus the chain of support continues over the generations. Mouradian expressed his deep thanks for this.

Mamigonian commented after the event that



From left, Dr. Armineh Mirzabegian, Ani Babayan, Carine Avakian

"It meant a lot to hear from Julia Hintlian and Khatchig Mouradian, since supporting scholars is fundamental to what NAASR does. The fact that our support has made a difference to them and their development is extremely gratifying."

Judith Saryan, NAASR Board member and treasurer said: "Every detail was beautiful from the stunning fresh flowers to the creative food. I loved how we all came together at the grand staircase to reflect on NAASR's legacy and plans for the future."

NAASR Executive Director Sarah Ignatius first declared, "We extend heartfelt thanks to our very generous hosts for sharing their beautiful home with us in support of NAASR's mission," and then reflected: "A lot of people see that we are stepping into a new era at NAASR and the evening made that evident, bringing together a lot of people who are supporters but whom we do not always see at our regular programs."



Nancy Kolligian

Armenian Apostolic Church and the Syriac Orthodox Church, as well as pre-Islamic Persian religions.

Mouradian is a lecturer in Middle Eastern, South Asian, and African Studies at Columbia University. He has served as the Kazan Visiting Professor at California State University - Fresno and has taught courses at Rutgers



Julia Hintlian



From left, Jirayr Balayan, Larry Welch, Alice Avanian and Yervant Chekijian

Arts & Living

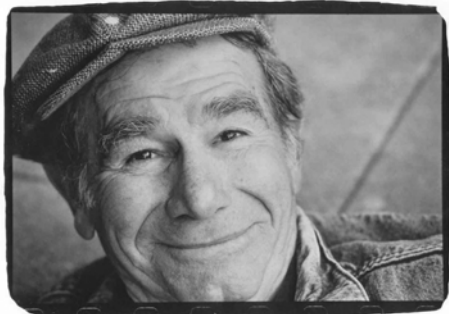
Buck Kartalian

'Being Armenian Is Important for Me'

By Artsvi Bakhchinyan

Special to the Mirror-Spectator

YEREVAN/MISSION HILLS, Calif. — On May 25, 2004, I met American stage and film actor Buck Kartalian at the Ararat Eskijian Museum in Mission Hills, California. The actor came with his wife Margaret to attend my lecture on Armenian-Scandinavian historical relations, but before this I had conducted an interview with him for the Armenian press. I cherish fond memories about my meeting with that super-positive, dynamic, humorous man, as well as Mr. Buck's photo with his autograph.



On May 24, 2016, Buck Kartalian passed away in a hospital in Mission Hills, at age 93. I published my interview with this veteran actor, who appeared in 77 films and TV series, in Armenian and Russian translation, but the original English text remained unpublished. On the occasion of the third anniversary of Buck Kartalian's death, I would like to bring to light our conversation.

Today is the 25th of May. I am interviewing Mr. Buck Kartalian. So, barev, Mr. Kartalian. Pavev, pavev!

I hope to publish this interview in the Armenian press!

Thank you. I really appreciate that.

Do you speak Armenian?

Hayeren choori bes ge khosim! [I speak very fluent Armenian!]. My mother was Vartanoosh. My father was Hovhannes. He died very young, maybe about 38 years old because of high blood pressure. My mother struggled with six kids - 4 sisters and a brother. I only have three sisters now. I get my humor from my mother. She was very funny and had a wonderful sense of humor. I would say things and then she would excuse me in front of people. I was going to do a play with them. My mother had made me go to Armenian school in New York. When I was in the 1st grade, my family moved to New York. That is where I mostly went to school, in Manhattan. I was born as Vahe Kartalian... being Armenian is important for me.

And then you moved to California and started to act.

The strange part of it is that here in California the people that are Armenian kind of take me for granted. It's the Americans that make a fuss over me, because I did a film 35 years ago. To me, it was just another job, and I went in to see the director. He was in his little wagon, and he looked at me and said, "How about reading for Julius?" I said okay, and so I read with him. He smiled. He said, "Okay, you're Julius." As simple as that. Usually it doesn't happen that easily. Today, I have to compete with all the old actors.

I said okay. I then discovered that the movie was "Planet of the Apes," the original one. In see KARTALIAN, page 13



Prof. Khachig Tölölyan

Society for Armenian Studies to Mark Anniversary with Conference On Armenian Diaspora in Honor of Khachig Tölölyan

FRESNO — The Society for Armenian Studies (SAS) is marking the 45th anniversary of its founding by holding a two-day International Conference in honor of Khachig Tölölyan at the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA) on October 12-13.

The SAS was established in 1974 by a group of scholars including Richard Hovannisian, Robert Thomson, Nina Garsoian, Dickran Kouymjian and Avedis Sanjian.

Titled "Diaspora and 'Stateless Power': Social Discipline and Identity Formation Across the Armenian Diaspora during the Long Twentieth Century," the conference is co-sponsored by the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation, the Richard Hovannisian Endowed Chair in Modern Armenian History (UCLA), the Narekatsi Chair in Armenian Studies (UCLA), the Meghrouni Family Presidential Chair (University of California, Irvine), the Institute of Armenian Studies (University of Southern California), the Armenian Studies Program (California State University, Fresno), the Armenian Studies Program (California State University, Northridge), and the National Association for Armenian Studies and Research (NAASR).

Tölölyan is one of the founders of the field of diaspora studies and the founding editor of the prestigious journal *Diaspora: A Journal of Transnational Studies*. Initially published by Oxford University Press *Diaspora* is currently published by the University of Toronto Press. Tölölyan established the basis of Armenian Diaspora Studies and played a leading role in examining the Armenian Diaspora from a theoretical perspective. He has influenced a whole generation of scholars who research and write on the Armenian Diaspora from multidisciplinary perspectives. Tölölyan is currently professor of English and comparative literature at Wesleyan University.

Over the last few decades, scholarship on transnational social formations known as diasporas and their complex workings of power have proliferated across western academia in part due to the pioneering work of Tölölyan. Dedicated to Tölölyan's continued influence in the field of diasporan studies, this Conference focuses on the exercise of what he has called "stateless power," and indeed of "governmentality," in the formation of the Armenian diaspora during the long twentieth century.

"We are excited about this conference," commented Prof. Bedross Der Matossian, President of the Society for Armenian Studies and Associate Professor of History at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. "This will be a unique occasion not only to honor one of the greatest Armenian scholars but also to bring together scholars from diverse fields to present their latest research on the complexity of the Armenian Diaspora."

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

For membership or other information, visit societyforarmenianstudies.com.

BOOKS

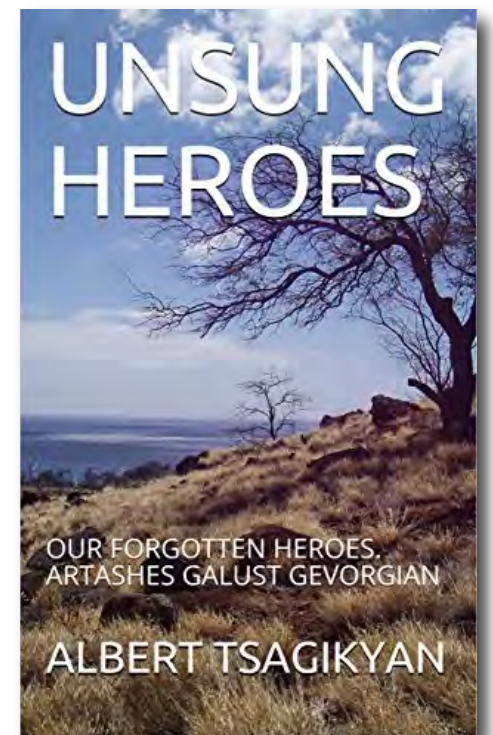
Tsagikyan's *Unsung Heroes*

By Aram Arkun

Mirror-Spectator Staff

Albert Tsagikyan has published a 43-page booklet titled *Unsung Heroes: Our Forgotten Heroes, Artashes Galust Gevorgian, Torgom Galust Gevorgian, Onik Yanikian, Gurgun Yanikian, Asatur Melik Hasan-Jalalian*. This is not an academic study but a work prepared with passion from a unique personal point of view. Tsagikyan is able to provide some insights concerning the assassination of Ahmed Cemal Pasha in 1922 via his maternal grandmother's older sister, Arpenik Rostomian (born Melik Hasan-Jalalian), whose husband Artashes Galust Gevorgian was one of the leaders, as well as on the earlier assassination of a Tsarist governor. These events are linked together not only through history but through family connections for Tsagikyan, along with the more recent act of Gurgun Yanikian, which helped lead to the creation of the Armenian Secret Army for the Liberation of Armenia (ASALA).

Artashes and his younger brother, Torgom, held Cemal Pasha responsible for the



destruction of their native village of Khodorchur. They formed a group of guerrilla fighters and engaged in partisan tactics behind the Ottoman lines, and later joined General Andranik Ozanian's irregular forces. After Andranik withdrew from Armenia, Artashes, his brother and others returned to Tbilisi but kept searching for Cemal and worked with the Nemesis group of the Armenian Revolutionary Federation, which located Cemal in 1922. Artashes and his friend Petros Ter Poghosian planned the assassination and carried it out on July 25 of that year.

Earlier, the author's great-grandfather's brother, Asatur Hasan-Jalalian, he claimed, assassinated a Tsarist governor, Prince Grigory Golitsyan, in 1903 in response to the latter's anti-Armenian policies and the confiscation of properties of the Armenian Church. He was a priest in a small church who stabbed Prince see HEROES, page 17



ARTS & LIVING

Buck Kartalian: 'Being Armenian Is Important for Me'

KARTALIAN, from page 12

1968, we just celebrated the 35th anniversary at a new theater in Hollywood. I was on the panel there. Not too many people are alive that were in the movie. I did the part of Julius, who is the keeper of the cages. The first one was really the ultimate in the movies. You know, it's been selected as one of the 25 best films in history for the Library of Congress in the United States to be preserved forever. I am kind of proud of that.

During the movie, I remember one scene, Franklin J. Schaffner was the director, a very somber man. I worked for all kinds of directors. Directors that talk to the actor and get excited, calm, some that ignore the actor and just worry about the camera. You just go with the waves, the way they go. I like to think for myself as an actor. I'll get an idea and I'll say, "Ah! Ah! I have an idea!" Then maybe the director says, "Please, I don't want any ideas." The director says, all right, let's do the scene.

Franklin J. Schaffner is now deceased, but a relaxed man, and he worked mostly with the camera. You had to know what you're doing or you'd be lost. There's something about being a professional actor. You have to know - you're going to do his, and then to go for it! If the director wants it completely different, then you do it exactly the way the director wants it. You should be able to switch immediately.

Anyway, the director says: "This scene will open up directly on Julius." That's me. I was thinking, well, the scene is going to be opening up on me - what should I be doing? I can't just sit here. I then said, "Ah! Mr. Schaffner, why don't I be smoking a cigar?" He gave me a look...if looks could kill. Then he said, "Let's shoot it." Then he said, "All right. Somebody get Buck a cigar." And in the scene I am humorous, and it's the first funny scene and he didn't want it to be ludicrous. He wanted it to be real. I talked to him later and said, well, the apes are humans. We have to act like we're human.

But before your acting you had a wrestling and bodybuilding career.

When I got out of the Navy (I was in the Navy for two years in World War II), I didn't know what to do. I was with some actors, and when we came out, one day we wandered up to this gymnasium on New York's Time Square, near 8th Avenue, this huge place; at one corner, wrestlers are working out, and at the other, people are lifting weights. There is a harness to do

flips with. I start going there to work out and in a couple of months I really develop a lot of muscles. People can't believe it. I learned to do flips. And hand-balancing. I was very strong.

They had acrobatics acts back then and they were everywhere. And hand-balancing acts were the opening acts and I would help out, fill in. One day a big Greek guy came in. He said to me, "I'm waiting for my partner. Hey, uh, Buck, you want to wrestle with me?" I said, "Wrestle with you?"

In the meantime, before the wrestling, I entered some contests, but I had a shape, I was symmetric. I was in perfect proportion. I entered the contest and I won. I was Mr. New York City. Then six months later, I entered the Mr. America contest. I was the runner-up. I came very close to winning.

In the gym, I was wrestling with a strong tall guy. Everything I do, I put humor into it. It's just my way. Usually I don't get into trouble. I dived under his legs. I leaped on his shoulders. A promoter was there in the gym. He told me: "Hey, kid, come here. I want you to join my troupe. We tour wrestling. We go several places and wrestle." I said, "Yeah, but I only weigh 145 pounds. Those guys weigh two hundred or more!" He said: "But you're a mass of muscle and you're very funny." That's the way I am. I tried it out. I was a big hit with the wrestlers. We'd go to these little towns. They'd believe it was real. It was all fake - it was like dancing with a partner. I'd do all my little tricks. They billed me as the "Mighty Mouse." I learned from the crowd. If they're making noise, it's going well. If they're quiet, then it's not so well.

Then one day some actors were going to a reading. I was through with my workout, and they asked me if I wanted to come along. I said, "Okay." We go to some theater. A lady hands us each a book. I try to say I am only here with my friends, but she ignored me. Then the lady says, all right, you're next. She says, you're next, will you go in there? So I go in. The lights are all over me. The darkness out in the theater. A voice with an English accent asks, "Are you ready?" I say, not really.

So they tell me to turn to page 6. Somebody came out with me. I read with them and then I left.

To make a long story short, I got the part. Two weeks later they called me to come down and take fencing lessons. I'd forgotten all about it by then. It was Shakespeare, "Romeo and Juliet." But Olivia de Havilland was Juliet. Jack Hawkins was Mercutio. An all English cast except for me! It was wonderful. When it was over, I didn't know what to do. But, a guy told



Interviewer Artsvi Bakhchinyan, left, with Buck Kartalian

me that instinctively, I do the right things. They need someone in "Mr. Roberts." You'll be perfect and they're going on the road. So, I went and read. I got the part. I kept going from one thing to another. I said, this is it!

And then the wrestler became a theater actor.

I never had any intention to be an actor. I always did funny things - that was me. "Romeo and Juliette" by Shakespeare was my first play. I did Samson. I enjoy theater very much. I have done maybe 200 plays. I did about six years of summer stock around the New York area. There used to be summer tents in the round. This was in the 1960s. I loved it.

I was on the road with "Mr. Roberts" for two years. I was in the movie, too. I traveled all over the country with that. Then people wanted me to do it. So they would call me in. I'd stage the play and do my own role. Then they'd ask me to stay on for another show. I was doing seven or eight shows every summer. Rehearsing one in the day time and then doing another one at night. I learned everything about acting - really, what acting is about. Not going to a teacher and it's all, "Do you feel this? Do you feel that?" What the hell is that? I put myself into the character and I do it. I use myself, too.

Can you recall some interesting moments from your acting life?

I use my arm a lot, my hands when I act. I can be as big as can be. One time in Philadelphia I was doing a play called "The Great Sebastians." It took place in Vienna. I was assigned to this big actor and big actress. I was supposed to be a quiet man and spy on them in this play. I was supposed to be a pleasant man, a jokester. People liked him. So, when he turns them in, the audience is shocked. I was doing this part. I'd worked with this director maybe 15 times. They loved me. They knew what I could do.

So we were ready to rehearse and the producers keep looking at me. So, I asked him why? He said, well, Bucky, I just finished in New York, and the guy in New York who did this role was very tall. The guy plays a 45-year-old communist. I asked him, how tall is a forty-five-year-old communist? So, anyway - the director said he'd talk him into the job. I do the part. The first couple of days, the reaction that I got was so good. The producer called me in. Then he told me, you know Buck, I learned a lesson. Right now I can't think of anyone who can do this part better than you.

So, I also sang one time. I did several musicals, but I had never sung. One director said, for this, Buck, you're going to have to sing a song. I said, no, not me. The director said, a good actor can sing. Buck, please. It's a character song. It was Kiss Me Kate. A big opera star did the lead in this. I said okay.

He talked to the piano player. I couldn't even get past the first line. I went to talk to the director. The director said he'd talk to him. Then there was also an orchestra. The director then

told the piano player to follow my lead, whatever I did. I said to myself, I am going to have fun with this part and do it my way. I did a little dance with it. The audience loved it. We got a standing ovation. The director said, I'd never heard anyone sing so badly and be so good! Even on Broadway in the chorus. The leads, their training is not the same as the chorus. The leads know how to sell themselves. In a show, you want to see someone create a character.

Is your being Armenian somehow visible in your acting? I have read in one review about you characterizing your humor as Armenian. Do you agree?

I think so! I did a couple of roles that had Armenians involved in them. I can show them on a DVD. I did a thing on the Lou Grant Show about a family that is going to marry a Turk. I worked with actress Magda Harout. She was my wife about four or five times, in a play and on a couple of other TV shows. I worked very well with her.

With Krikor Satamian they were at the Armenian General Benevolent Union Artavazd Theater. They were successful and I don't know why they didn't further pursue it. The critics just embraced everything we did. We got rave reviews. This Armenian group - they can do anything! They should do more work.

I did a couple of things for an Armenian director, in "Sons of Sasoun" by Sarky Mouradian. Armenian directors don't know that they have to train. You can't just say you are one. You have to do other and observe and watch the directors' work. That's why their movies turn out like (makes a bad noise). The Armenians can do anything that they want to do. You look at any field and there is an Armenian. They are very bright people.

I know you created an Armenian family with Margaret Poloshjian, and one of your sons' names is Aram, like my second son's. I know also your other son made a short film, "Pedestrian," with you and Krikor Satamian.

Ah, you have seen Jason's film? (laughing). He had written four or five scripts. I told him which I thought was the best and that I'd be perfect in the lead. About a man, who when he was younger, who gets arrested for something he didn't do and spends 25 or 30 years in prison. Finally, he escapes. He wants to get revenge on the people who sent him to jail. The police are looking for him. So, my son told me it would cost too much to do. So, he chose a different movie. I got some character actors together and we all did smaller roles just help him out. He got wonderful reviews. A thousand films are made each year by new filmmakers.

And what you have done recently?

Now, I am still with an LA agent. In this city, you have to have an agent. You make appointments and you go see the casting person. The casting person will see maybe 30 or 40 people for one part then pick out three and send them to the director for another call back. I haven't done anything in a couple of years. I was offered a few things. But the theater is a big commitment.




I have been doing independent film. I did three or four independent films. I work a few days. They are union films. I get paid my union pay. My agency has a big commercial department. This year I did four commercials. One is a Velveeta cheese, another a Cingular phone - a really cute commercial. I did a Rally hamburgers. Then I did Wachovia Bank commercials. I don't need the money, I just love the work. I love to work!

What do you wish your compatriots in Armenia?

I just wish that Armenia could prosper. For people to love one another. Really to make their country a good and strong and united country. It's hard for me to say it. I know a bunch of Armenians. Seven families on my block. One family invites me over. They have a very big house and two sons - everyone lives there together. They all have cars. They're in business together. They love to have their own businesses and they become successful right away. They're wonderful business people and good workers. People across the street, they talk about how hard it is in Armenia. I've never been there. I wanted to go there.

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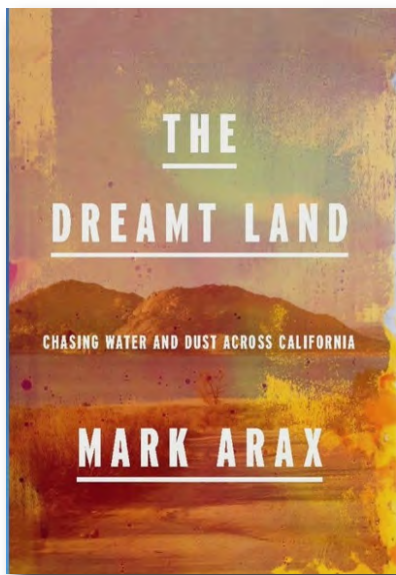
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The Beautiful Schemers Who Took Desert and Marsh and Turned California into an Agricultural Wonder



From the beginning, the Central Valley's productivity was a result of the most intensive farming experiment the world had ever seen. And now, farmers are pushing even harder against biological realities. An excerpt from Mark Arax's critically acclaimed new book, *The Dreamt Land*, was published in *Pacific Standard Magazine* on May 16.

U.S. horticulturalist Luther Burbank is considered the father of California agriculture and one of the first to manipulate plant genetics to create new versions of plums, potatoes, and other crops.

The letters traveled from Fresno to Constantinople as the First World War was coming to an end. They were written with the purpose of selling a man without a country – my paternal grandfather in this instance – on the idea of California. He had survived the 1915–1918 Armenian Genocide by hiding in the attic of a dwelling he shared with his mother, sister, and brother on the Asiatic side of Constantinople. An aspiring poet, he had his mind set on moving to Paris and studying French literature at the Sorbonne. But the letters, each one more blood red than the one before, kept arriving from Fresno, already known as the “raisin capital of the world.” They were written by his mother's brother, the last patriarch left in the family, who had fled Turkey after his wife and two children were killed in a massacre in their village on the shores of Lake Nicea. The uncle had lost everything and yet he had begun to believe, out of some obstinacy deep inside, that a new life was possible in a sunbaked valley in the lee of the Sierra.

“Here find an Eden of pomegranate and peach,” he wrote to my grandfather Aram Arax. “Grapes that hang like jade eggs. Watermelons so capacious that when you finish eating their delicious meat, you can float inside their shells in the cool waters of irrigation canals.” Paris or Fresno, which to choose? That my grandfather chose the latter became one of the longest running jokes in our family. He would find out soon enough that he had been played for a sucker. His uncle could hardly be blamed. The elder had been caught up in the “Golden State” hype, unwittingly enlisted in the legion of promoters proclaiming a new Eden in the Far West. Not since gold rush times had such spectacular tales been told about California. With slick pamphlets and colorful brochures, each city and county lined up side by side to boast about the fertile wonders that God had given them best. As a matter of fact, the stories of nature producing monstrosities in one blessed soil and another were true. The impression they left – that gold could now be plucked from vines and trees – was another matter.

Outside Fresno, in the little town of Parlier, founder I.N. Parlier had grown in his front yard a Calimyrna fig tree (half California, half Turkish Smyrna) to such proportions that its wingspan measured 85 feet wide and its trunk nine feet around. It became so magnificently laden with crop that the Parliers had to move their house three times to get out of its way. In Santa Barbara, a single vine bore in one season not pounds of grapes but tons. In San Jose, a pear weighing two pounds and 12 ounces astonished visitors to the state fair. In Chico, an orchard of cherry trees included one freak that produced 1,700 pounds of fruit in a single season. In Los Angeles, a pumpkin grew to such girth, a reported 1,200 pounds, that the farmer had to chop it off the vine with an ax.

In the spring of 1920, as my grandfather undertook his 7,000-mile migration by boat and train, a folklore of California climatology was being published to explain such aberrations. The California State Agricultural Society, Department of Meteorology, had chosen a booster from each county to sing that county's glories. “The climate of Solano is a benediction,” one such pitchman began. “We have but little fog, no thun-

derstorms, lightning or tornadoes, no cyclones, no earthquakes, no blizzards, no sleet, no snow-drifting snows, no storms, not scalding heat in summer or freezing weather in winter. The wet and dry periods come with such regularity that the farmer knows just how to provide for them. He sows his seeds and cultivates his land with the positive assurance that the rain will come to sprout it and the sun will shine to warm it into life. When winter comes, it is only so in name and called such in order to distinguish different periods of the year. We have a rarity, crispness and tone of the atmosphere, freedom from malaria-breeding swamps, a perfect system of drainage so that epidemic disease, either among men or animals, is rarely known.”

The curative powers of sun and air had made Southern California the first tropical land that “our race has mastered and made itself at home in,” wrote Charles Nordhoff, a correspondent for *Harper's* and a barker for the Southern Pacific railroad. Even Carey McWilliams, one of the first chroniclers and debunkers of the California myth, couldn't contain himself when describing how the harsh desert light of Los Angeles turned into a thing of beauty the moment ocean mist rolled in. “This is not a desert light nor is it tropical for it has neutral tones,” he wrote. “It is Southern California light, and it has no counterpart in the world.” Southern California, not so paradoxically, had become the destination of the invalid. Trainloads of the pallid were shipped out to God's country from New York, Ohio, Illinois, Missouri, and Iowa. Carrying a doctor's diagnosis of jaundice, cirrhosis of the liver, tuberculosis, chronic bronchitis, fatty liver, weak kidneys, they gave themselves to the sunshine and liquid air. Sanitariums across the San Gabriel Valley kept filling with consumptives at the same time their more healthy kin flocked to the groves at the foot of the mountains to plant Washington navels end to end.

In Northern California, on 15 acres of gopher-riddled land outside Sebastopol, an amateur nurseryman from Massachusetts named Luther Burbank had set up a most peculiar shop. The genetic tampering that took place there – he had as many as 3,000 experiments involving millions of plants at any one time – created the Santa Rosa plum, the Elberta peach, the plumcot (half plum, half apricot), and the eponymous Russet Burbank potato. The father of California horticulture was an odd strain himself. He stood five foot three with a long face and an emaciated body. Twice married, he produced no offspring of his own. A dignified man, he dressed in a black wool suit, bolo tie, and a short-brimmed top hat even while at work, because he never knew when a curious visitor might interrupt his test trials. People regarded him as half Darwin, half Edison, and he became known far and wide, much to his disliking, as “the plant wizard.” Over a half century of breeding and hybridization, he created more than 800 strains and varieties of plants and watched his seeds and cuttings get cultivated by the state's largest growers, who often made fortunes off his fruitful bending but gave him little in return.

The first time my grandfather recounted his journey out of genocide to me, it was no wonder he never talked about the Statue of Liberty or the first skyscrapers rising out of the prairie or the great expanse of salt desert that had called the Mormons west. From the straits of the Bosphorus to the edge of California, America did not register to him. Then his train found the mountain where the Donner Party got trapped in a



bad winter's storm and had to resort to cannibalism, the same mountain the Chinese railroad workers had dug through to make transcontinental travel possible before a grateful California called for their exclusion. As the engine descended into a valley knifed by two giant rivers, the Sacramento and the San Joaquin, my grandfather finally glimpsed the country his uncle had written about. Outside his window, beneath the snowy caps of the Sierra, the earth shimmered. Vineyards and orchards and vegetable fields, row after perfect row. “Just like the old land,” he kept muttering in Armenian.

He would soon figure out that it was nothing like the old land. This was fertility supercharged by irrigation and the science of the Agricultural College at the University of California – the most extensive and intensive farming experiment in the world. No other landscape in history had been so bent by the designs of man. The Great Central Valley, 450 miles long and 60 miles wide, had resembled in its natural state a rolling savanna not unlike the Serengeti. Then a man named Porteus invented the Fresno Scraper, a five-foot-wide hunk of sheet iron that revolutionized the movement of dirt. The scraper reconfigured the valley field by field, leveling hillocks and hog wallows and filling in gulches, a huge continuous flattening that allowed the waters of irrigation to move like a cue ball across green felt. The mining of gold, after all, had been the mining of river water first. This, though, was a magnitude of extraction never seen. The state and federal water projects that would dam the major rivers and carve out an aqueduct to move snowmelt from one end of California to the other had yet to be built. But already, farmers from Fresno to Kern counties had erected a webwork of levees and ditches that corralled nearly all of the flow of their local rivers – in the name of growing specialty crops. Who could blame them? By 1920, the Golden State was producing 57 percent of the nation's oranges, 70 percent of its prunes and plums, more than 80 percent of its grapes and virtually all of its raisins, apricots, almonds, walnuts, and olives.

The farmers were gritty and brave and not a little greedy. They weren't satisfied with the flow of the rivers alone. With the advent of the turbine pump, they were now mining the ancient groundwater stored deep in the earth. Across Tulare County, farmers counted 739 pumps in 1909. A decade later, the pumps numbered 3,758. This extraction was causing the water table to plummet 10 feet a year in many spots. Strangely, the land itself was sinking, first in inches and then in feet. The sound of earth's subsidence was silence. The sound that greeted my grandfather upon his arrival in raisin town was anything but. In the hardpan of northwest Fresno, Jesse Clayton Forkner, half farmer, half real estate buccaneer, was blasting the earth to plant the world's biggest garden of figs – 600,000 trees. “The whole town was booming,” my grandfather recalled. “I thought it was an earthquake. And then I thought, ‘I'm in the middle of war again.’ Boom. Boom. The ground shook. It was dynamite. Blast after blast. They were bombing the earth. They were planting figs. The Kadota. Luscious and golden yellow. And the new variety, the Calimyrna.”

On a hot summer day almost a century later, I stand in a vineyard on the east side of the valley to behold a new realm of California bending, an example of what historian Kevin Starr liked to call the infinite “reinventions of the dream.” The vineyard belongs to Jack Pandol Jr., whose father was considered a legend in these parts for the way he marketed California grapes to the world and went after Cesar Chavez and his campesinos during the labor strikes and grape boycotts of the 1960s. The old man died in 2010, and the table grapes his son now grows aren't Flames or Red Globes or Crimsons or any of the other usual varieties. These grapes emerged from a test tube in a lab inside the old Delano farmhouse where his grand-



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father and grandmother used to live. Pandol will tell you that they are like no other grapes anyone has ever eaten, and that may be true. One of the varieties is a hybrid of two distinct species – East Coast father, West Coast mother – and tastes like cotton candy. Fat, green, and seedless, it actually goes by the name Cotton Candy and carries 30 percent more sugar than a conventional grape. The other grape, Sweet Celebration, seedless and red, is a genetic freak of a different derivation. It was bred by combining the strongest traits inside a single species of grapes commonly found in the United States and Europe. Breeding, though, is only half the trick of altering the taste and durability of these grapes. The other half is the way Pandol tends to his berries right up to the moment they're picked. All through spring and summer, he's been pumping calcium into the tissues of both varieties to boost their natural flavors and enhance their ability to ward off fungal disease.

"The biggest problem with this vineyard is water," he explains. "Not only the lack of it but the quality. It's high in sodium. So we use calcium in the drip irrigation system. I happen to believe that calcium is one of the most overlooked ingredients in growing good fruit. We've way overdone nitrogen. Nitrogen pumps up the fruit to unbelievable sizes because it blows it up with water. Nitrogen may be great for corn in the Midwest, but it kills the flavor of a grape in California. Calcium, by contrast, kicks out a grape that tastes sweet and smooth on the tongue. And it strengthens the cell walls so the skin doesn't break open and rot the whole vineyard."

Pandol is an average-sized guy with green eyes and blond hair that's begun receding since he hit middle age, like his dad's did. His build isn't quite as stocky, and he has only a hint of his old man's sweetly tough face. He says he more resembles the Zaninovich side of his mom's tribe, though who knows what a full-blooded Slav should look like given the roads that have crossed Croatia for 2,500 years. His father's father left the vineyards on the island of Hvar more than a century ago and farmed this same valley dirt. He outlasted drought, flood, and pests with little more than sulfur dust at his side. He used to tell his grandsons, "Learn from your mistakes, but don't go to school all your life."

As soon as a grape starts to ripen, it's on a fast track to perish. Trouble in a vineyard begins with the microscopic, but it doesn't stay that way for very long. If moisture gets out of hand, the skin on a berry cracks open, and filaments of fungus rot the whole cluster in a hurry. Many of the interventions Pandol employs during the growing season have to do with keeping the clusters free from mold and mildew. There's no fruit more bent and coddled by human hands than the table grape – and that doesn't count Pandol's genetic tampering. What's done in the name of fighting fungus isn't any more of a stretch than what's done to pump up size, color, and yield. Crews of workers thin the leaves to allow more air to flow through the berries. They apply sulfur dust and a steady dose of fungicides.

Most table grape growers, attuned to the lurk of mold and mildew, harvest their grapes on the early side. Pandol, who may be the most picky table grape grower in California, which is to say the nation, wants to maximize flavor. He'll hold his fruit on the vine until it reaches peak taste and only then call in his picking crews. For a couple extra points on the sugar register, a measure known as Brix, he'll even risk a week of 105-degree weather.

So much fruit hangs on the vine that the whole place feels swollen. Pandol steps under the canopy of cane and leaves, a gable-roofed trellis system he borrowed from South African grape growers because it maximizes both sun and shade. His boots sink into the earth made spongy by all the compost he's spread. For too long, he says, grape farmers have treated soil like dirt. He's found over the years that the more fertile the earth – the more potent its microbial matter – the stronger and more flavorful his grapes turn out to be.

"The way it's looking with this crop," he tells me, "we're going to pull off something in the range of 1,500 to 1,800 boxes an acre."

"How does that compare to the old days?"

"When I first got out of school, growing those old varieties with the old T-trellis system, watering by furrow instead of drip, we were probably averaging 500 to 600 boxes of grapes an acre. We've tripled production. My dad was using five acre-feet of water for every acre. We're using three acre-feet."

His father was a big-hearted man who loved nothing more than cooking for large gatherings of people, feeding his famous mostaccioli with meaty Slav-style sauce to Richard Nixon and Ronald Reagan, among others. For Jack Jr., the family cooking gene morphed into a fascination with how science might join art to tease out different flavors in the vineyard. What if he could create shapes and flavors that had never existed before

and let each cluster ripen to its fullest? Not the 16 or 18 on the Brix sugar scale that most grapes reach but 20 to 24 Brix. "Farmers in California, my family included, have been going down one road for at least the last 60 years," he explains. "The way we breed fruit isn't for taste but for shipping. The way we grow fruit isn't for the tongue but for the eye. We harvest early so the fruit doesn't go soft by the time it reaches the market. What does it matter that it tastes like wet cardboard?"

Talk to most growers and supermarket buyers, and they'll tell you that the consumer wants fruit that's big and colorful. Flavor is an afterthought at best. But Pandol says that's outdated thinking. Foodies demand flavor. The lack of it is why so many people have stopped eating fruit, or why they buy it once a season but not twice. It's why tens of thousands of acres of peaches and plums, apricots and nectarines are being bulldozed across the valley. He yanks a few berries off a vine and hands them to me. They're fat and colorful, like the grapes they sell at the supermarket. I bite down, and they're crunchy too. But they don't taste like a supermarket grape. They taste like the sunbaked Thompson seedless grapes that my father and grandfather used to grow. Sweet but not syrupy sweet. Then another flavor, one I'm not prepared for, takes over.

"Wow. Those are really good."

He smiles and nods. "We want you to say, 'Wow.' That's the response we're looking for. And if that sensation on your tongue triggers a recollection of you walking down the midway of the county fair as a kid and eating cotton candy, all the better."

Most grapevines in California and Europe belong to the species *Vitis vinifera*, a hardy type that produces a single crop of fruit each year and reaches peak production between the ages of five and 20 years. Plenty of recessive genes exist in the

row 48, vine 221, Cain recalls, when it began to fruit in 2005. He popped the first ripe berry into his mouth and wasn't sure what to make of the flavor. "I wasn't looking to create a grape that tasted like cotton candy," he tells me. "I kept saying it was burnt sugar, a caramel flavor. I wasn't sure how other people would react to it. One of the workers took some bunches home to his family, and his kids loved it. They said it tasted like cotton candy. That sounded as good a description as any."

In the decade since Pandol introduced Cotton Candy, more than 50,000 acres of his genetically flavored varieties have been planted in the San Joaquin Valley and around the world. Growers pay him a licensing fee and a 5 percent royalty on sales and must adhere to certain quality controls and acreage limits to keep the market from glutting up. From field to lab to licensing to the growing, it's a model his father would scarcely recognize. "All this genetic breeding aside, my father would probably say we're returning to the old way. To flavor. We've forgotten that what brings people back to fruit is taste, the memory of taste."

We climb into Pandol's 4Runner and carve a path through layers of valley dust suspended in the air. We arrive back at his headquarters, a big white industrial complex skirted by vines and palm trees. Workers are stacking boxes of warm berries onto pallets and tying them down for a stay in cold storage. He throws a couple bags of Cotton Candy into my back seat and tells me to enjoy them. I leave Delano in the throes of harvest, wondering if agriculture is now doing to fruit what it has already done to soil, river, aquifer, and man. I ponder the old Plant Wizard laid to rest under the big cedar of Lebanon at the Luther Burbank Home & Gardens in downtown Santa Rosa, only for the cedar to die of root rot. How fancy can a table grape get? How far can Jack Pandol Jr. take the sunrise and



family to endow the children with endless variations. This allows a breeder to play all sorts of fun genetic games, crossing a Cabernet Franc with a Sauvignon Blanc, for instance, and creating a Cabernet Sauvignon. What if the goal, however, is to create a table grape that does a better job of resisting drought or mildew or, daresay, tastes like spun sugar with a hint of vanilla? What if the only way to steal such properties is to reach outside the species and hunt in the gene pool of a different species? Say a Concord grape from *Vitis labrusca*, a clan native to the Northeast with large seeds and tough skins but also flavors and aromas that can be almost exotic? This requires a different scale of rending, techniques known in the trade as hand emasculation and embryo rescue, that might make Luther Burbank wonder what exactly he set in motion more than a century ago when he bred the Santa Rosa plum.

To create the Cotton Candy berry, Pandol's plant breeder, David Cain, reached out to the University of Arkansas, in Fayetteville, where the resident fruit breeder had been collecting different hybrids and species of grapes since 1964. Cain knew who his female was going to be. She was a Princess grape from California, a fat green berry with a nice crunch and the faint flavor of Old World Muscat. For its mate, he combed through the storehouse in Arkansas and chose grains of pollen with Concord grape lineage (think Welch's juice) plus five different wild species indigenous to North America. He waited for the spring blooming of the Princess vine and pulled its male parts off the flowers. This emasculation left its ovary, part of the pistil, without a sex partner. Cain then introduced the pollen shipped out from Arkansas – horticulture's version of a stud. The mating of the two, a dab of pollen applied with an artist's brush, produced hundreds of green berries, and those berries produced row after row of spindly plants.

Cotton Candy was standing in the middle of the test plot,

sprinkle it with dew? How much more can he push grapes to sugar before they become not "nature's candy" but confectioner's candy? I expect the obesity police will soon be on the prowl for his Gum Drops, Brix 26. He isn't taking taste back to memory, they'll say. He is using science to create new tastes that obliterate memory. He's now hired a molecular geneticist out of Cornell University to identify exactly which genes in a given cultivar express the traits of mildew resistance or extra yield or that citrusy flavor on the back end. He believes the ability of molecular science to single out these markers will guarantee more precision when he tailors his next generation of flavored grapes.

As he powers forward in his vision, he seems not unlike the artificial intelligence boys in Silicon Valley moving forward in theirs, with a belief that the pursuit alone is cleansing. This is not to say that he hasn't given thought to its implications. Obesity and diabetes, if you don't count meth and opioids, are the two great robbers of life in this valley. But each harvest season, as Pandol samples his fruit and gains five pounds, he comforts himself with the knowledge that fresh fruit, for all its sugar, delivers healthy phenols for the heart. He reminds himself that candy has been stealing flavors from fruit since candy began, and when fruit turns around and does the same, it can be a slippery slope. Fruit isn't candy, he knows, nor should it try to be. But while he respects the line between the two, he isn't precisely sure where to draw it. As I approach a stinky dairy outside McFarland, I reach into the bag of grapes, yank a Cotton Candy off the stem and pop it into my mouth. I pop another and another. The line, my tongue tells me, already has been crossed.

This piece was adapted from the book *The Dreamt Land* © 2019 by Mark Arax, published by Knopf on May 21.



ARTS & LIVING

CALENDAR

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.

NOVEMBER 16 — SOAR (Society for Orphaned Armenian Relief) Annual Golf Tournament. Saturday 7 a.m. to 1 p.m. Stonecreek Golf Club, 4435 E. Paradise Village Pkwy, Phoenix. This is a fundraising event for Armenian orphans. For more information, contact Dr. Alan Haroian, 603-540-1961.

MASSACHUSETTS

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 more Plus Activities for the Children, White Elephant Table, Gift Basket Raffles.

JUNE 3 — 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. Guest will be Michael Zildjian, author, podcaster, and speaker. Zildjian is a Watertown native and former AGBU student. His Zilosphy platform leads conversations which teach self-awareness and honest self-evaluation with the goal of helping people make informed choices that allow them to bring their best to whatever they do. He will lead a discussion based on what it means to be the best Armenians we can be for our community and our world. 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.

JUNE 6 — First Thursdays at the Armenian Museum of America: Jazz Night with the Black Sea Salsa Band directed by Dan Teager featuring John Baboian and other artists. 7 pm jazz concert in the Armenian Museum of America Adele & Haig Der Manuelian galleries, 3rd floor. Black Sea Salsa Band is a 15-piece World-Music group made up of 6 horns, 4 vocalists, and 5 rhythm, playing an original blend of Armenian music and Afro-Cuban Jazz. Led by trumpeter Dan Teager, who writes and arranges the band's repertoire. Made possible by donation from Dadourian Foundation. Free to Members or free to non-members with Museum admission. 6 p.m. viewing of the museum's newest Family Case featuring a uniform belonging to SSG Berge Avadonian.

JUNE 9 — St. James Armenian Festival Annual Picnic! Join us for a fun-filled festival! Delicious Armenian food, Live Armenian music, children's activities with moon bounce, face painting, and more! Rain or shine. St. James Armenian Church, 465 Mt. Auburn St., Watertown. For more info visit www.stjameswatertown.org or call 617.923.8860.

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 — Screening of documentary, "Motherland," 7 p.m. screening in the Armenian Museum of America Adele & Haig Der Manuelian galleries, 3rd floor. Directed by Emily Mkrtichian and Jesse Soursourian. In this eloquently crafted film, women in Artsakh courageously work to clear land mines in the wake of a brutal war, combating traditional gender roles and forming close bonds in the process. Thursday. Co-sponsored by the Armenian International Women's Association (AIWA). Reception and moderated Q&A to follow screening. FREE to Members or FREE to non-members with Museum admission.

JUNE 14 — The Friends of Armenian Culture Society presents the 68th annual Armenian Night at the Pops, featuring cellist Laura Navasardian as soloist with the Boston Pops Orchestra. Symphony Hall, Boston. 8 pm. For tickets and information, visit <http://www.FACSBoston.org>.

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 more. Weekly sessions at \$250/week, begin June 17 - August 16, 8 am - 3 pm. Late stay available. Register at www.abakadanceacademy.com. For more information, email abakadanceacademy@gmail.com or call 617-283-2010.

JUNE 17 — Gregory Hintlian Memorial Golf Tournament, sponsored by Holy Trinity Armenian Church of Greater Boston at the Marlborough Country Club, Marlborough. Monday. 9:30 a.m., registration; 11 a.m., "Shot Gun." Join us for a day of golf — two player fee options: \$180 (includes hospitality, lunch, dinner, green & cart fees, prizes and gifts), and \$200 (also includes \$40 worth of raffle tickets) — or just for dinner and a social evening (\$50 per person). Limited to 128 players. Tournament and tee sponsorships available. RSVP deadline, June 10. To register or for further information, call the Holy Trinity Church Office, 617.354.0632, log onto www.htaac.org/calendar/event/653/, or email office@htaac.org.

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

JUNE 22 —Armenian Food Fair, 11 a.m. -7 p.m., St. Gregory Armenian Apostolic Church Ladies Guild. Jaffarian Hall, 158 Main Street, No. Andover. Serving all day. Lamb Shish Kebab, Chicken & Losh Kebab, Kheyma, Vegetarian plates. Pastry, Boregs, Choreg, Khadaif, Paklava, Gift Table, Country Kitchen, White Elephant, 50/50 Raffles and much more.... Take out available. Call the Church @ 978-685-5038 Ann @978-521-2245 or Sossy @ 978-256-2538

JUNE 27 — Reading of "Zabel in Exile." 6 pm reception followed by 7 pm reading in the Armenian Museum of America Adele & Haig Der Manuelian galleries, 3rd floor. Reading of a new play "Zabel in Exile" based on the life and writings of early 20th century Armenian writer and political activist Zabel Yessayan. The play, written by R. N. Sandberg and directed by Megan Sandberg-Zakian, will feature six actors live in the Museum's newly renovated Adele & Haig Der Manuelian galleries, 3rd floor. Tickets are free, email or call to reserve a seat (Email or call to reserve a free seat: info@armenianmuseum.org, 617.926.2562 ext. 101). Co-sponsored by the Armenian Museum of America, Armenian International Women's Association, and National Association for Armenian Studies and Research, also supported by Project SAVE.

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 5 — Armenian Church of Cape Cod presents Third Annual Kef Time - Dinner & Dancing Friday, 6 to 11:30 p.m. at The Cape Club, 125 Falmouth Woods Road, North Falmouth. Chicken Kebab & Losh Kebab dinner Leon Janikian band with special appearance by Harry Minassian and a DJ \$65/person, children 7 to 14 \$15 For tickets/tables contact Andrea Barber (617)201-9807

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 anous'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 — Celebrating Contributions of Our Nation's Immigrants – Gala Benefit for the Endowed Fund for Care of Armenian Heritage Park on The Greenway Honoring Dr. Noubar Afeyan, Leader & Philanthropist Recognizing Organizations Serving Immigrants & Refugees InterContinental Hotel Boston. Advance Reservations only. For information, hello@ArmenianHeritagePark.org

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

OCTOBER 3 — Cigar Night sponsored by Holy Trinity Armenian Church of Greater Boston, 6 p.m., Charles and Nevart Talanian Cultural Hall, 145 Brattle St., Cambridge. Save the date; details to follow. For further information, contact the Church Office, 617.354.0632.

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, November 1 — Grand Opening & Ribbon Cutting, NAASR Vartan Gregorian Building, at NAASR's new world headquarters, 395 Concord Avenue, Belmont, MA. Saturday, November 2 — 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.

DECEMBER 6 and 7 — Friday and Saturday, Trinity Christmas Bazaar, Friday, 12 noon-9 p.m., Saturday, 10 a.m.-7 p.m.; Holy Trinity Armenian Church of Greater Boston, 145 Brattle Street, Cambridge. For further information, contact the Church Office, 617.354.0632.

DECEMBER 15 — Christmas Holiday Concert — Erevan Choral Society and Orchestra, Church Sanctuary, Holy Trinity Armenian Church of Greater Boston, 145 Brattle Street, Cambridge, MA. Save the date; details to follow. For further information, call the Church Office, 617.354.0632, or email office@htaac.org.

MICHIGAN

JUNE 12 — The Alex and Marie Manoogian Museum and Richard A. Manoogian will host Dr. Helen C. Evans, at St. John Armenian Church Cultural Hall, on Wednesday, at 6:30 p.m. Slide-lecture program based on the recent Armenia! Art, Religion, and Trade in the Middle Ages exhibit at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York. She is the Mary and Michael Jaharis Curator for Byzantine Art, Metropolitan Museum of Art. For the occasion, Sylvie Merian, a contributor to the Armenia! catalog, and also one of the editors and contributors to A Legacy of Armenian Treasures: Testimony to a People — Alex and Marie Manoogian Museum, will read a specially written colophon. Free. Complimentary Reception following program. For more information: www.manoogianmuseum.org. To RSVP for the event, call by June 7: Gloria Korkoian, 313-730-6698.

NEW JERSEY

JUNE 23 — Summer Picnic, Sunday, 1:00 p.m. to ??? St. Stepanos Armenian Apostolic Church, 1184 Ocean Avenue, Long Branch. Chicken, Lamb Kebab, Dolma Dinners. Armenian Cuisine featuring Cheese Beoreg,

continued on next page



ARTS & LIVING

Recipe

Corner

Guest Recipe



by Christine Vartanian Datian

Kidney Bean and Potato Soup

INGREDIENTS

1/2 pound ground lamb or beef
 2 (15 oz.) cans dark red kidney beans (do not drain)
 4 medium potatoes, peeled and cut into chunks
 3 large cloves garlic, minced
 1 large yellow onion, diced
 1 large red or green bell pepper, seeded and diced
 2 medium carrots, peeled and diced
 1 (15 oz.) can tomato sauce
 2 tablespoons tomato paste
 1 tablespoon each dried cumin and crushed dried rosemary
 1 teaspoon each crushed dried oregano and chili powder
 Salt and black pepper, to taste
 2 cubes beef bouillon
 6-8 cups water
 Garnish with sliced lemon or lime, chopped parsley, onions, tomatoes, and mint, olive oil, or crushed red pepper flakes

PREPARATION

In a large pan, brown the meat in a little olive oil or butter for a few minutes. Drain and set aside.

Add the kidney beans, potatoes, garlic, onion, bell pepper, and carrots, toss, and cook until kidney beans and onions are soft.

Add the meat, tomato sauce, paste, spices, bouillon cubes, and water, and bring to a full boil.

Cover, reduce heat, and cook on medium low for 1 1/2 to 2 hours, checking and stirring occasionally.

Add more water if needed.

Garnish with sliced lemon or lime, chopped parsley, onions, tomatoes, and mint, olive oil, or crushed red pepper flakes.

Top with plain yogurt or sour cream.

Serve with pita bread, garlic bread, or crusty French bread, and assorted olives and cheese.



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

CALENDAR

NEW JERSEY

from previous page

Pastries, Paklava and more. Armenian Music and Children's Games.

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.

PENNSYLVANIA

JULY 21 — Special viewing of the award-winning "The Stateless Diplomat," a film about Diana Apcar, a 19th century Armenian writer living in Japan who became the de facto ambassador of a lost nation. Historical documentary done by her great-granddaughter Mimi Malayan. 2.30-4.30 p.m., (the exact time may be adjusted depending on the runtimes of the Sunday morning screenings), at the Phillips Mill Theater, a mile outside of New Hope, Penn.

RHODE ISLAND

JUNE 1 — The Cultural Committee of the Sts. Sahag & Mesrob Armenian Church, Providence, Talent Show "Reflections of Armenian Youth" dedicated to 20th anniversary of Arts Education program, on Saturday, 6 p.m. Egavian Cultural Center 70 Jefferson St. (Mesrob Mashdots Blvd.) Performances by students of our Cultural Committee's Arts Education Classes;

featuring Nazeli Dance Groups, Art Exhibit including Sculpture, Solo Singers, Junior Choir, several musical instruments, and more! Any youngsters wishing to participate in the Talent Show are urged to contact Janna Guegamian at 861-3573 or Irene Eranosian at 942-5423 by May 26. This Talent Show is open to the youth of the entire Rhode Island Armenian Community. Donation: \$5.00 at the door. Children under 16 no charge

JUNE 23 — The Cultural Committee of Sts. Sahag and Mesrob Church (Providence) will present the first in a series of talks, "Meet with Armenian Doctors," on Sunday, June 23, at 12 noon, in Hanoian Hall of the church complex. (70 Jefferson St., Providence, RI). Dr. Stephen S. Kasparian, obstetrician-gynecologist 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.

Tsagikyan's
Unsung
Heroes

HEROES, from page 12

Golitsyn in the neck after a failed assassination attempt by the Hnchakian Party organized by Paramaz (Madteos Sarkisian) earlier the same year. Golitsyan died later in a hospital from his wound. This attempt as far as I know has not been attested to elsewhere. The extant literature only mentions the Hnchagian Party's attempt organized by Paramaz in October 1903, which left Golitsyan wounded but able to recover.

Gourgen Yanikian's father was the brother of Khodorchur village chief Vartan. Vartan's son, Onik Yanikian, married the author's grandmother's oldest sister. Gourgen, born in Karin (Erzerum), saw his older brother murdered in front of him by Ottoman soldiers. His family escaped to the Ukraine and later to Russia. During World War I he volunteered in General Drastamat Kanayan's battalion in the Russian Tsarist army. He was wounded but survived to return to Russia and graduate university as an architect. After working in Iran as a sculptor for some time, moved to the United States. During a visit in 1973 to Armenia he met with some relatives and told them to look for news about him over the next three months. In fact, he did shoot and kill a Turkish diplomat, and was imprisoned, but his act inspired the founding of the Armenian Secret Army for the Liberation of Armenia, with the goal of compelling the Turkish government to acknowledge the Armenian Genocide, pay reparations and cede territory to Armenia.



Albert Tsagikyan

This book is important not only for passing down some orally preserved information about 20th century Armenian history, which will no doubt be helpful for historians, but also for providing information on the fate of the Khodorchur Armenians who had left their homeland and anecdotes about the Stalinian oppressions in Armenia. Writer Aksel Bakunts makes a brief appearance, as he supported the creation of a new Khodorchur community in the USSR and wrote a novel about the Khodorchur Armenians.

There are a number of typesetting and typographical errors (e.g. Kavayan for Kanayan, Aretashes, Melick, Hammid, etc.).

The author at the end of this book makes clear his goal: "I hope this book will help people understand how important it is to fight for their own rights, no matter what; it should become an awakening call for humanity against any type of genocide in any corner of the world." In addition, aside from being a call for young Armenians to continue their predecessors' struggle for justice for the Armenian Genocide, Tsagikyan hopes that the booklet will "help reconnect the American descendants of the Yanikian family to their Armenian relatives," and perhaps find some long-lost relatives in Europe.

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Church-State Relations in Armenia

By Edmond Y. Azadian

The Armenian Church has played a central role in Armenian history. When Armenia lost its sovereignty, the church replaced the role of the state. That is apparent particularly in the Ottoman era. The Sultans recognized the very special place the Armenian Church occupied and also found the church to be a convenient vehicle to regulate the internal affairs of the Armenian millet.

Thus, the Sultan recognized and approved the Armenian National Constitution in 1863. Similarly, the Russian Tsar used Bolozhnia, the constitution for Armenia, to regulate the affairs of the Armenian Church in the Russian Empire.

Even today some of the guiding principles from those eras are used in communities in the diaspora.

During the Soviet period, the clergy were persecuted and church properties were confiscated. However, the Soviet leaders recognized the part that the Armenian Church could play in bridging relations with the homeland, and hence they created an office to regulate or oversee church affairs.

When the Soviet regime began exercising its plans and principles of molding the Soviet individual, they had to deconstruct his or her moral and religious values and infuse the citizen with new values. With the collapse of the Soviet system, that social engineering task also fell apart. For most citizens of Armenia, the church or religion in general had superficial value, as per the Soviet system. That is why today, the general public in Armenia is vulnerable to the lure of religious sects promising anything and everything and the Armenian church authorities cannot respond adequately.

For the Armenian citizen, the role model of a religious leader remains Catholicos Vasken I and in the public perception, no other leader has yet met that moral compass.

Since the Armenian Church still has the calling to resume its historic role across the board in Armenia and in the diaspora, it has to reform itself and regulate its affairs with the state.

For several decades now, the constitution or the by-laws of the Armenian Church have not been finalized impacting its role as a moral authority.

Ever since Armenia's independence, the leadership similarly shared the mindset of the average citizen regarding its assessment of the role of the Armenian Church, finding it tangential at best to Armenian life.

The first president, Levon Ter-Petrosian, was naive enough to believe that he could solve the division in the church through a magic trick, which unfortunately backfired. He invited Karekin II, Catholicos of the Holy See of Cilicia, to Echmiadzin to serve as the Catholicos of All Armenians Karekin I.

Successive presidents did not fare any better; they tried to use the divided segments of the church to their own political ends, rather than helping to unite the church.

Although there has been a formal protocol between the church and the state since the 1990s, the current administration has felt the need to develop a new one after the Velvet Revolution. There is also a clause in Armenia's current constitution (Article 163-2), recognizing the special place of the Armenian Apostolic Church, whose chaplains are the only ones to serve in the army.

That status has been criticized by the hired guns of the universalists currently active in Armenia. Although the constitution endorses religious freedom, the role of the Armenian Apostolic Church has come under scrutiny. The answer and the argument is a common sense one; since the majority of the Armenians belong to the Apostolic Church, therefore, under majority rule, the Armenian Church should

be the state religion.

Since independence, the leadership in Armenia has not developed an analytical approach to the diaspora and consequently has failed to formulate a coherent policy. And that includes the church. The Armenian Church still remains as a diasporan phenomenon to many citizens of Armenia.

A misstatement by Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan wreaked havoc in Armenia regarding the church; indeed, he stressed the concept of separation of church and state, abandoning the role of the state as a protector of the church. That misstatement encouraged people with their own agendas to launch a campaign against the Catholicos of All Armenians Karekin II. Mr. Pashinyan soon realized the impact of his statement and ever since, has been trying to mend fences with the Catholicos. Indeed, both parties have taken concrete steps to return some rationality into the discourse.

The prime minister and the catholicos held a joint meeting on May 3 to regulate the relations between the church and the state. Reading their opening remarks, one can still detect a divergence of opinions on the issue but the two groups will continue the work to come up with a new protocol.

The Catholicos' remarks highlight three major principles: To recognize the Armenian Apostolic Church as the national church in Armenia, similar to the national churches in Scandinavia; the church and the state are separate entities but not antagonistic to each other and finally, the state has to return to the church properties confiscated during the



Soviet period.

That last issue entails two different items: properties that are income bearing or the the ancient churches and monasteries which need tremendous amounts of investment to maintain their historic value.

From a rather verbose statement by Mr. Pashinyan, one can detect two ideas: that the state has to tax the church properties and business activities, and second, the prime minister believes upholding more general Christian values than accepting the special role of the Armenian Apostolic Church.

This last concept is promoted by foreign religious sects' NGOs currently active in Armenia to undermine the traditional value system of the populace.

Communism upheld the universal rights of the masses but ended up destroying individual nations. The same role may play the emphasis on general Christian values versus the role of the Armenian Apostolic Church.

The prime minister has also confessed that he read the Bible recently and the values represented in the Holy Book directly conform with the value system of his political party, My Step.



COMMENTARY



My Turn

By Harut Sassounian

Unbelievable but True: Trump Nominated for Nobel Peace Prize

While President Trump is visiting Japan this week, it is the appropriate time to comment about his nomination for the Nobel Peace Prize by Japan's Prime Minister Shinzo Abe. The nomination was announced by none other than President Trump himself who boasted that Abe had given him "the most beautiful copy of a five-page letter that he sent to the people who give out a thing called the Nobel Prize."

Japan's Asahi newspaper reported that President Trump had asked Shinzo Abe to nominate him. Abe refused to confirm the nomination, citing a Nobel Committee policy of not disclosing nominees for 50 years after prizes are awarded. When Abe was asked in Parliament if the report was accurate, he responded: "I am not saying it is not true."

Two Norwegian lawmakers had already nominated President Trump for the Nobel Peace Prize in June 2018. Interestingly, in February 2018, the Norwegian Nobel Committee announced that two Nobel Peace Prize nominations for President Trump were forgeries. In addition, 18 Republican Members of Congress sent a joint letter to the Nobel Committee last year nominating President Trump for the 2019 Nobel Peace Prize.

Japanese Prime Minister's nomination of President Trump created a major political stir with domestic opposition leaders protesting Shinzo Abe's move. Junya Ogawa, a lawmaker representing the Constitutional Democratic Party of Japan, criticized President Trump's withdrawal from the Paris climate accord and the nuclear agreement with Iran, his decision to

suspend the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty, and his relocation of the American Embassy in Israel from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem. These actions, Ogawa said, should make it "not possible to nominate him for the Nobel Peace Prize, and it's shameful for Japan."

The reason the Japanese Prime Minister nominated President Trump for the Nobel Peace Prize is that the leader of Japan had figured out that flattery is the best way to be on President Trump's good side. Apparently, playing countless rounds of golf together was not sufficient. Japan has three requests from President Trump:

1) To seek President Trump's help in arranging for the Japanese Prime Minister to meet with the North Korean leader Kim Jong Un to discuss "unconditional" denuclearization. This is an important request for Japan as recent North Korean missiles have either fallen in or near Japanese territorial waters or have overflowed the Japanese territory panicking the population.

2) To dissuade President Trump from his repeated threats to impose US tariffs on Japanese imports, mostly cars, which would impact Japan's economy and undermine Prime Minister Shinzo Abe's re-election.

3) To get President Trump's assistance in negotiating the return of Japanese citizens who were abducted by North Korea between 1977 and 1982.

Nevertheless, Shinzo Abe's nomination of Trump "was unexpected, given Trump's aggressive 'America first' foreign policy and disdain for multilateral international cooperation. After US talks with North Korea collapsed... a Nobel nod seemed wholly unwarranted," according to the Washington Post.

While the Prime Minister of Japan may have good reasons for nominating President Trump for the Nobel Peace Prize, the Nobel Committee has better reasons to reject the request in order not to dishonor its prestigious award by presenting it to such a charlatan, liar and cheater, both financially and morally. He has insulted other races and religions, abused minorities and immigrants, and refused to comply with US laws and international treaties.

Just in case some may think that my antagonism to

President Trump's nomination stems from partisanship, I need to remind readers that when President Barack Obama received the Nobel Peace Prize in 2009 for "extraordinary efforts to strengthen international diplomacy and cooperation between people," I wrote an editorial expressing my opposition to his award. The Nobel Peace Prize was awarded to President Obama within the first year of his presidency, way too soon to judge his accomplishments. President Trump had criticized President Obama for receiving the Nobel Peace Prize and some say that he wants the same award that Obama received out of jealousy. President Trump was quoted saying: "They gave it to Obama. He didn't even know what he got it for. He was there for about 15 seconds, and he got the Nobel Prize." In addition to Obama, three other US Presidents were awarded the Nobel Peace Prize: Theodore Roosevelt, Woodrow Wilson, and Jimmy Carter.

In President Trump's case, he has already served over two years as President, and it is clear that he does not deserve any kind of an award, let alone the Nobel Peace Prize. In fact, he does not even deserve to be President of the United States. With each passing day, the actions and statements of the self-declared "extremely stable genius" further antagonize more people both in the United States and around the world. As Lord Acton had wisely written: "Power tends to corrupt and absolute power corrupts absolutely!"

Not surprisingly, President Trump continued his controversial behavior by sending a series of tweets during his first morning in Japan. In one of his tweets, President Trump committed three errors or improprieties:

1) He agreed with North Korean dictator Kim Jong Un that the leading Democratic presidential candidate Joe Biden is "a low IQ individual," violating the long-held principle of not speaking about domestic divisions while overseas;

2) He misspelled Biden's name as "Bidan";

3) He contradicted the statements of his own National Security Adviser John Bolton and Japan's Prime Minister that North Korea's recent missile launches are a violation of United Nations Security Council resolutions.

Finally, President Trump admitted that he will probably never get the Nobel Peace Prize. For once, I agree with him!

US-Turkey Tensions Reach Boiling Point Over Russia Rocket Saga

By Stasa Salacanian

AFTER MONTHS of repeated warnings, the US has suspended the delivery of Lockheed Martin F-35 Lightning II jets parts and program materials to Turkey, what has been seen as the first step toward ending of the actual aircraft sale.

The US Defence Department says deliveries will not resume unless Ankara abandons its planned acquisition of a Russian missile defence system. The first Russian S-400 delivery is reportedly expected in July.

US officials have also expressed concerns over Turkey's acquisition of both US and Russian systems as this could give Moscow access to sophisticated American technology and allow it to find ways to counter the F-35.

Instead of purchasing S-400s, US has pressed Turkey to buy an American-made air defence battery, and in December the State Department approved the sale of a \$3.5 billion US Patriot system to Ankara.

But according to many, US Patriots are no match to Russian "super weapon". The Russian S-400 SAM, known as the "Triumph" at home and better known to NATO as the SA-21 "Growler," is the most capable and lethal long-range air defence missile system on the planet. It is designed to destroy aircraft, cruise, and ballistic missiles, including medium-range missiles, and can also be used against ground objectives.

The ongoing dispute signals broader political tensions that will be hard to solve and which may have heavy consequences. According to Professor Selcuk Colakoglu, director of the Ankara-based Turkish Centre for Asia Pacific Studies, "if Turkey finalises the S-400 purchase, there will be a severe political crisis between Washington and Ankara."

The acting Pentagon spokesman Charles Summers Jr has been clear that Turkey's acquisition of the S-400 is unaccept-

able. Moreover, the US Vice President Mike Pence described the Russian-Turkish deal as "deeply troubling" saying it "poses a great danger to NATO."

However, the ruling Justice and Development Party - commonly known as the AKP and Turkish government officials made clear that they will stay firm to fulfil its commitment and purchase the Russian S-400 missile system.

Professor Colakoglu noted that according to some rumours in Ankara, Turkey may seek alternative solutions from the unpacking of the Russian missiles after delivery to Turkey or selling them to a third country like India, Iran, Qatar, Azerbaijan, and Venezuela or deploying them the Turkish military base in Somalia.

"This only indicates how the AKP government is desperately seeking an alternative solution without souring relations with the United States," he told The New Arab. However, the Trump Administration has recently said that the United States is against not only deployment of the S-400 but also its purchasing. So, soft-landing of the escalated crisis between Ankara and Washington has become less likely, if both sides keep their positions inflexible.

Moreover, US Vice President Mike Pence warned Turkey that it seriously risks expulsion from the Joint Strike Fighter (JSF) program what be a serious blow for Turkish companies involved in this program. Additionally, he also mentioned the possibility of broader retaliation measures.

But Turkey's involvement in F-35 project is a part of its long-term air defence strategy. So, jeopardising the participation in F-35 project due to the purchasing S-400 is closely linked with Turkey's long-term national interests. It is likely that Ankara ultimately chooses to save its assessments over the F-35 project if Washington keeps its firm stance since, according to Professor Colakoglu, since Turkey does not have "plan B" in the short term.

According to latest reports, the Pentagon has already started looking for new sources of supply which would replace some 800 Turkish-produced parts for the F-35.

While the purchase of the Russian S-400 air-defence system, makes the unprecedented case, which according to some, threatens the NATO security system, the dispute reveals deep cracks between traditional allies.

It also proves the major misconception in the recent US and Western attitude towards Turkey. The ongoing dispute is only the tip of the large iceberg made of complex issues which Tukey perceives to be neglected. Thus, the S-400 deal with Russia could be understood as a response to those who have ignored the vital internal and external security interests of Turkey. And the more the Turkish core interests are ignored the greater is the chance that Turkey will be pushed to Russia's (and possibly) China's embrace.

This brings us to the matter of mistrust and sincerity among once close allies. Turkey repeatedly tried to buy modern mid-range air defence system from its NATO fellow members, but Turkish pleas fall on deaf ears. Only then, Turkey decided to

purchase the S-400 system in 2017.

Meanwhile, Germany and the US have removed their Patriot systems from Turkey leaving the country vulnerable to foreign threats. Thus, from Ankara's perspective, acquiring the advanced air-defence system is a matter of survival and urgent need. Although Pentagon eventually approved the export of Patriot system in January, Ankara cannot accept to be a hostage of its NATO allies, primarily the US, which have been using the carrot and stick tactics to press the Turks. But this is not the way to deal with an ally.

Additionally, some Turkish analysts argue that Turkey could not accept the US offer since it did not include either a loan agreement or a pact to share the system's technology.

But more importantly, the ongoing rocket saga reveals a much broader issue: US and Turkey do not share common interests and differently understand the regional issues. Turkey repeatedly urged the US to stop supporting groups, such as PKK-affiliated arm militias in Syria, which Ankara sees as a major threat to its security and sovereignty. The tensions especially increased after a US refusal to extradite a US-based preacher Turkey blames for a 2016 failed coup.

The high price of disobedience

But Turkish stubborn stance may cost them dearly. Professor Colakoglu warned that even a rumour about the occurrence of a big issue with a big Western ally was enough to make the Turkish financial system uneasy. When the Trump administration imposed some symbolic sanctions to Turkey in August 2018 during the pastor crisis, the Turkish lira experienced a historic free fall.

In early January, a single Trump tweet seriously shook the Turkish financial market again. From there, "the US have enough leverage to destabilise the Turkish economy if the AKP government ignores warnings and proceed with purchasing of the S-400," Colakoglu added. It is also very likely that the purchase of S-400 will trigger sanctions under the Countering America's Adversaries Through Sanctions Act (CAATSA). This would have a devastating effect on overall US-Turkey relations and intra-NATO defence cooperation.

On the other hand, Professor Colakoglu observes that Russia has no capacity to subsidise Turkish economic loss, in the case of US-Turkey greater crisis outbreak. He believes that due to a very high degree of Turkish and its dependence on a Western financial system the AKP government will likely refrain itself from radical measures that could lead to the introduction of potential US sanctions.

As a sign, the Turkish military was very eager to participate in recent NATO military exercises with relatively large capacity in the Baltic Sea, the Black Sea and the Mediterranean in order to confirm its commitments to the alliance.

So, is it possible that the S-400 purchase has been used as a bargaining chip of Turkish diplomacy to press the NATO and US as well as to address other issues? Quite possible, but Professor Colakoglu recalls that the AKP government tried the



Primate Findikyan Leads First Service as Bishop at St. Vartan

BISHOP, from page 1

To the majestic strains of the Hrashapar hymn, Findikyan led a large group of priests and deacons into the crowded St. Vartan Armenian Cathedral.

His immediate family, including his father Nurhan, his brother Stephan, and sister Tamara, with their families were visibly emotional, as they partook of the powerful and moving service.

Among the many dignitaries present were Armenia's Ambassador to the United States Varuzhan Nersesyan, Armenia's Ambassador to the United Nations Mher Margaryan, and several leaders of Armenian-American organizations, including the Armenian General Benevolent Union, the Armenian Missionary Association of America, and the Fund for Armenian Relief.

Findikyan had just returned from Echmiadzin where the Catholicos of All Armenians, Karekin II had elevated him and two Armenian Primates from Europe to the rank of bishop, as more than 100 American Armenians who had made their travel arrangements several months ago, witnessed the ceremony.

For all who know him or have met him, Findikyan is a priest deeply admired and loved for his dedication, humility, honesty and compassion.

The holy Badarak at St. Vartan Cathedral, attended by dozens of priests – Armenian as well as representatives from sister churches – was a unique inspiration to hear and witness, as the angelic voices of choirs from local Armenian parishes joined the Cathedral choir conducted by Director Khoren Mekhanejian. Florence Avakian accompanied on the organ.

In his inspiring and powerful sermon delivered in both Armenian and English, with all the faithful listening intently, Findikyan described how before the outdoor altar in Echmiadzin, “three of us vartabeds walked on our knees, and knelt as Christ had done 1700 years ago.”

“We were referred to as ‘hovvabed’ – chief pastor. It’s an audacious and terrifying claim,” he stated quietly. “Jesus was referred to as ‘the



At the altar during the first or Antranik service

chief shepherd, the good shepherd, called to lead His flock. The good shepherd cares for his sheep because he has a personal interest in them. The sheep are more precious than his own life, because he loves them.”

Elected to the “awesome” position as Primate a year ago, he continued, “my vocation includes loving my flock to the extent of laying down my own life to raise you up and lead you to green pastures. You are under my care,” he declared emotionally.

“You have also been called to be like the Good Shepherd. Our call of love for you and me is to lift up one another, and love one another. Let us revive that call that apostles Thaddeus and Bartholomew brought to us, the call that could not extinguish the souls of one and a half million martyrs.”

“Come and join me in this new chapter in the life of our Diocese,” he declared, his voice cracking with passion.

Holy Journey

This holy journey had begun in Echmiadzin on May 11 before an outside altar, since Echmiadzin Cathedral is under massive renovation. The three vartabeds, the Very Rev. Daniel Findikyan, Primate of the Eastern U.S. Diocese, Serope Isakhanian, Primate of Germany, and Tiran Petrosian, Primate of Austria, had approached the tufa stone altar flanked by the symbolic white and purple flowers, approaching slowly on their knees.

Witnessing this spiritual and most humble action in Echmiadzin was mysteriously beautiful for this writer.

The three priests were accompanied by dozens of Armenian and sister church clergy, including the Patriarch of the Syriac Orthodox Church, and clerical dignitaries from the Vatican, Syrian, Ukrainian, American, German and Austrian churches.

“It was a once in a lifetime moment for me,” related Findikyan. His facial expression reflected the intense emotions he was feeling, as he slowly knelt before the Echmiadzin altar with his eyes closed in prayer.

Throughout the May 11 initial liturgy, as well as during the Pontifical Badarak on May 12, celebrated by the Vehapar when the second phase of the elevation sacraments continued, Bishop Daniel often had his eyes closed, his face reflecting his love, and the responsibility he was feeling for his future calling.

May 12, Mother’s Day, was also a very special day for him. Six months ago, he had lost his

beloved mother, Ursula. His intense feelings were visibly obvious, as he often looked towards heaven, with moistened eyes.

Armenian-Americans were in great anticipation on Monday May 13, as Bishop Daniel celebrated his first historic Episcopal Badarak in the beautiful and intimate setting of the 1500-year old St. Gayane Church in Etchmiadzin.

Totally focused and garbed in the robes, mitre, medallions and the insignia of bishop, he movingly celebrated his first Episcopal Badarak before an enthralled group. A group of priests and deacons from the Eastern Diocese spiritually sang the holy hymns.

His sermon again reflected the profound belief of his vocation. “Our responsibility is to confirm our calling – the new identity every hour, every moment, with every breath in our church so we can walk with our Lord into the kingdom of heaven.”

A brilliant homilist who always speaks from the heart without any notes, Findikyan delivered his message to worshippers who are often led to tears. His face often reflects the depth of his spiritual responsibility.

At the reception held in Kavookjian Auditorium following the bishop’s Antranig Badarak at St. Vartan Cathedral, there were many emotionally overwhelmed attendees who wanted to express their feelings.

Among them were his 14-year-old nephew James, and 12-year-old twin nieces Julia and Kira who gushed, “We are so terribly proud of our uncle whom we love so much.”

Deacon of the Indian Syriac Church Kuriakos said that “the legacy of Bishop Daniel is about giving love. He will multiply that love everywhere.”

Bishop Daniel’s clerical godfather, the Rev. Karekin Kasparian who has taught hundreds of



Bishop Findikyan gives communion to a young girl, as Rev. Hovnan Demerjian and Rev. Abraham Malkhasyan assist him

seminarians over more than 50 years at St. Nersess Armenian Seminary, tearfully and quietly voiced, “I am very much moved. Thank God that my very favorite seminarian became a Bishop, and gave me the honor to represent our clergy for him.”

And Findikyan’s lay godfather Dr. Garo Garibian, who was the donor of the reception, called the bishop “the perfect choice. Srpazan never sought this position. He was chosen by a higher being.”

US-Turkey Tensions Reach Boiling Point Over Russia Rocket Saga

TENSIONS, from page 19

same bargaining tactic when it tried to acquire air defence system from China in 2013, but after huge pressure from NATO Ankara cancelled the deal with Beijing in 2015.

At the same time, it is rather unclear what is to expect in the case Turkey breaks the deal with Moscow. There is an expectation that Russia may offer a delay to Turkey for a certain period to avoid a confrontation with the United States or that Ankara offers Moscow to re-sell the S-400 to a third country.

But Professor Colakoglu told The New Arab that Moscow has already expressed their concern whether the AKP government can keep its promise to purchase the S-400. It is assumed that Turkey’s purchase of the S-400 is around \$2.2 billion and Ankara already paid \$1.1 billion of it to Russia.

However, if Turkey proceeds with the purchase it will likely feel the pain of the sanctions and enormous pressure from the US. Since Turkey’s annual oil and gas imports from Russia are worth around \$10 billion, any introductions of the US sanctions and economic crisis resulting from it may directly affect the Russian energy income and would not be a desirable outcome for Moscow either.

It seems that Turkey has now found itself between the hammer and anvil and it will take a lot of diplomatic skills to find a way out from this unpleasant situation.

(Stasa Salacanian is a freelance journalist who has written extensively on Middle Eastern affairs, trade and political relations, Syria and Yemen, terrorism and defense. This analysis originally appeared in the May 28 edition of *The New Arab*.)

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