

# Kocharyan Freed Pending Trial

YEREVAN (RFE/RL) – A court in Yerevan on Saturday, May 18, ordered Armenia's former President Robert Kocharyan released from prison pending the outcome of a trial on coup charges.

Announcing the decision, the judge presiding over the trial, Davit Grigoryan, cited written guarantees of Kocharyan's "adequate behavior" which were signed by the current and former presidents of Nagorno-Karabakh during a court hearing on Thursday.

Nagorno-Karabakh's current and former leaders, President Bako Sahakyan and his predecessor Arkady Ghukasyan, appeared before a court in Yerevan on May 16 to reaffirm their calls for the release of Armenia's



Robert Kocharyan hugs Karabakh President Bako Sahakyan while former NKR President Arkady Ghukassyan can be seen in the foreground.

Kocharyan, who governed Armenia from 1998 to 2008, was set free about an hour later, according to his lawyers.

The trial prosecutors said they will appeal the judge's decision which sparked jubilant scenes among Kocharyan support-

ers present in the small courtroom.

Hundreds of backers and critics of the 64-year-old ex-president demonstrated, meanwhile, outside the court building in the city's Nor Nork district. Riot police see KOCHARYAN, page 3



Former President Robert Kocharyan reacts to news that he is freed before his trial.

Karabakh-born former President Robert Kocharyan from custody.

The Karabakh leaders had asked the court to free Kocharyan pending the outcome of his trial. They said they could guarantee that the ex-president will not obstruct justice if set free.

GHukasyan and Sahakyan deposited 500,000 drams (\$1,030) each before signing a relevant document in the courtroom.

They then sat next to Kocharyan as the court continued hearings on his lawyers' separate demand for his release.

## Pashinyan Tells Supporters to Block Courts, Asks Judges to Resign

YEREVAN (RFE/RL) – Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan on Monday, May 20, demanded a mandatory "vetting" of all judges in Armenia and said many of them must already resign because they are connected to the country's former leadership and not trusted by the public.

"The people of Armenia perceive the judicial authority as a remnant of the former corrupt system in which plots against the people are constantly hatched and exe-

cuted," Pashinyan said in live televised remarks. "To what extent this theory is true and substantiated is a different matter."

"But the fact is that the judicial authority does not enjoy the people's trust and therefore lacks sufficient legitimacy to act, which now poses a direct threat to the normal life, stability and national security of our country," he declared at an emergency meeting with senior government and law-enforcement officials and lawmakers. see JUDGES, page 2

## Arsenal's Henrikh Mkhitaryan to Miss Europa League Final Against Chelsea

LONDON (BBC) – Arsenal midfielder Henrikh Mkhitaryan will not play in the Europa League final against Chelsea on May 29.

It is understood the Armenian, 30, feared for his safety on the pitch in Baku, Azerbaijan.

"Having considered all current options, we had to take the tough decision for me not to travel with the squad to the Europa League final," said Mkhitaryan. "It's the kind of game that doesn't come along very often and I admit, it hurts a lot to miss it."

As a result of political tensions between Azerbaijan and Armenia, Mkhitaryan has missed club matches played in Azerbaijan in the past.

"We have written to UEFA [Union of European Football Associations] expressing our deep concerns about this situation," read an Arsenal statement.

"We have thoroughly explored all the options for Micki [Mkhitaryan's nickname] to be part of the squad but after discussing this with Micki and his family we have collectively agreed he will not be in our travelling party. see MKHITARYAN, page 3



Zareh Zurabyan addressing the guests (Aram Arkun photo)

## Boston Armenians Raise Money for 2016 War Victims at Night of Carpets and Cognac

WATERTOWN – The Knights of Vartan Ararat Lodge No. 1 and the Armenian General Benevolent Union (AGBU) Young Professionals Boston sponsored a fundraiser on Friday, May 17, at the AGBU New England headquarters in order to raise funds for the orphans of the April War of 2016 via the Diaspora for Frontline Families Fund (DFFF) of the Knights of Vartan. The allure of philanthropy was literally sweetened by the dessert creations of pastry chef Nathan Kibarian and the Armenian drinks of Ararat Brandy, including a signature drink made for this event by Kibarian's colleague Vannaluck Hongthong from Island Creek Oyster Bar. Many guests also enjoyed the products of Davtian Premier Cigars. see COGNAC, page 7

**By Aram Arkun**  
Mirror-Spectator Staff

## 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.

### Pashinyan Warns of Islamist Involvement in Karabakh Conflict

YEREVAN (RFE/RL) – Islamist militants operating in Syria and Iraq could flock to Azerbaijan in case of a major escalation of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan claimed on Friday, May 17.

"There are large numbers of militants of radical Islamist groups in Syria, and they realize that they have no place in Syria and Iraq anymore," Pashinyan told Russian journalists in Yerevan. "According to our information, they are now looking for a new place where they can move."

"If a new escalation starts in our region, that would be a good excuse for them to go to, say, Azerbaijan," he claimed. "For them, that's a very convenient point from which they could extend their operations towards Iran, Russia, the South Caucasus and Central Asia."

A war in Karabakh, Pashinyan went on, could therefore spill over into neighboring countries. He said he hopes Russia, Iran and Azerbaijan realize this.

### Nisanyan Granted Armenian Citizenship

ATHENS (Panorama.am) – Author, linguist and columnist Sevan Nisanyan, who fled Turkey in 2017, has been granted Armenian citizenship.

"I received my Armenian passport and citizenship papers today from Mr. Fadey Charchoghliyan, Ambassador of the Republic of Armenia in Athens. I take pride in being a member of a peaceful and civilized nation that has withstood the tribulations of history by its labor alone. I thank Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan and all others who helped me achieve this great honor," he said in a post on Facebook this week.

Nisanyan was jailed in Turkey in December 2014, for "construction infractions" and sentenced to over 11 years in prison. The charges stemmed from the renovations and additions to his hotels in Sirince, an old Greek village in Izmir that has become a tourist destination thanks to him. However, many intellectuals believed Nisanyan was jailed due to his book, *The Wrong Republic*, in which he criticized the official history of Turkey.

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## ARMENIA

## News From Armenia

## Pashinyan to Take Part In St. Petersburg Economic Forum

YEREVAB (Armenpress) — Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan's office announced that he will take part in the St. Petersburg International Economic Forum on June 6-8.

"The Armenian PM will attend the economic forum in St. Petersburg," his spokesman said.

The St. Petersburg International Economic Forum is a unique event in economic and business world. The Forum is being held since 1997, with participation of the Russian president since 2006. The Forum serves as a platform for contacts between the top officials of various states and leaders of international organizations.

Major business, economic meetings, round-table discussions with the participation of business representatives will be held on the sidelines of the Forum.

## Armenia's Brandy Production Volumes on The Rise

YEREVAN (Panorama.am) — The production volumes of alcoholic beverages have grown in the first trimester of 2019 in Armenia with brandy production volumes recording the most growth.

According to the data released by the National Statistical Service, the brandy production volumes totaled to 8 million 326.2 thousand liters in the period of January-March 2019, which is 31.2 percent up compared to the volumes produced in the indicated period of the past year.

According to official data, 2 million 264.7 thousand liters of wine were produced in Armenia in January-March 2019, showing a 3.4 percent rise against the same period of 2018.

Meantime, the production volumes of vodka increased by 7.1 percent totaling to 850.8 thousand liters in the indicated period, while the beer production grew by 26 percent amounting for 3 million 764.1 liters.

## Resident of Kapan Offers Eco-Friendly Alternative to Plastic Straws

YEREVAN (Panorama.am) — A resident of Kapan, Gevorg Gasparyan, has found a new method to fight against the proliferation of plastic: he is proposing to replace plastic straws used to drink juice with straws of plant origin. He said environmentalist Mariam Sukhudyanyan has prompted the idea to him, Ecolur reports.

"We have named the initiative of eco straws 'Green Revolution' aiming to create an alternative to plastic straws," he said.

Gasparyan intends to establish a production of eco straws. He will consult with a specialist in forest studies to take seeds and to cultivate this plant.

## Armenia Hosts International Dolma Festival

YEREVAN (Armenpress) — The ninth International Dolma Festival was held May 19 at the Zvartnots Cathedral in Armenia.

The 7th-century cathedral, now in ruins, will attach cultural significance to experiencing the taste of the trademark dish of the Armenian cuisine.

Master Chef Sedrak Mamulyan, the President of the Development and Preservation of Armenian Culinary Traditions NGO, said, "National cuisine is our cultural heritage, and we have a very, very presentable cuisine. It is important for us that many tourists visit Armenia to participate in the Dolma festival."

The festival featured a number of restaurants of Armenia, individuals, NGOs and other public food services.

Cooks from the military will also take part in the event this year.



Protesters blocking the entrance to a court in Yerevan.

# Pashinyan Tells Supporters to Block Courts, Asks Judges to Resign

JUDGES, from page 1

"Unfortunately, I can't conclude that the judicial system is not subjected to shadowy and illegal influences mainly coming from the former corrupt system because these two systems are connected to each other through human, political and other ties," added Pashinyan.

In particular, he said, Armenian courts have validated "dozens of illegalities" which he said were committed by the former ruling regime.

All judges must therefore undergo "vetting," he said. "That is, the public must have full information about the judges' political ties, origin, property status and activities as judges and in their previous capacity, and their individual and professional traits," explained the prime minister.

The judges whose decisions have led to rulings against Armenia handed down by the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR) "must resign, leave or be sacked," Pashinyan went on.

"All those judges who know deep down that they cannot be impartial and objective must resign and thereby provide an important service to the Republic of Armenia and its people," he added.

The emergency meeting chaired by Pashinyan came as his supporters blocked the entrances to court buildings in and outside Yerevan, acting on his appeal made on Sunday. Pashinyan urged them to end the blockade in a live Facebook transmission aired right after the meeting. He said the unprecedented action, condemned by the Armenian opposition as unconstitutional, "served its purpose."

The premier called for the court blockade one day after an Armenian court ordered his bitter foe and former President Robert Kocharyan freed from custody pending the outcome of his trial on charges stemming from the 2008 post-election violence in Yerevan.

Pashinyan's political allies and supporters reacted furiously to Kocharyan's release, accusing the judge who ordered it of having ties to the ex-president and the country's other former rulers. Kocharyan's lawyers say it is the current authorities that have pressured courts to keep their client in detention on coup charges which he rejects as politically motivated.

Pashinyan did not explicitly mention Kocharyan's release in his public statements. But he did state on Monday that Armenian courts cannot be "objective" when dealing with the 2008 unrest case. He argued that the Strasbourg-based

ECHR has ruled in favor of some of the former opposition politicians who were jailed following the deadly March 2008 clashes between security forces and opposition protesters. Eight protesters and two policemen were killed at the time.

The protesters demanded a rerun of a disputed presidential election held in February 2008. Pashinyan was one of the main speakers at the post-election demonstrations organized by the main opposition candidate, Levon Ter-Petrosian. He subsequently spent nearly two years in prison as a result of a crackdown on the Ter-Petrosian-led opposition which Kocharyan ordered less than two months before serving out his second and final presidential term.

Amid opposition uproar against the blockade of the court buildings, Pashinyan insisted on Monday that he is not seeking to have "puppet courts." He said that he is on the contrary keen to build a "truly independent judicial system."

In that regard, Pashinyan told the Armenian parliament dominated by his allies to speed up the drafting of laws that will introduce "mechanisms for transitional justice." The authorities could go as far to amend the Armenian constitution for that purpose, he said.

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.

### Opposition Speaks Out

A senior representative of the Prosperous Armenia Party (BHK), the second largest in parliament, said the appeal violated an article of the Armenian constitution which bans any outside interference in the work of the judiciary.

"If [Pashinyan] is politically disappointed with some persons he must not express that by exerting pressure on the courts and disrupting, paralyzing the work of the courts," Gevorg Petrosian told RFE/RL's Armenian service.

Petrosian claimed that Pashinyan's actions amount to a "manifestation of the overthrow of the constitutional order" and could lead to a "civil war" in the country.

Bright Armenia (LHK), the other opposition party represented in the parliament, accused Pashinyan of disrupting "the administration of justice for thousands of people" and thus violating their constitutional rights as well as

Armenia's international obligations.

"We are calling on Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan to reconsider his appeal and refrain from his intention to block the entrances to the courts," read a statement issued by the LHK.

The LHK also called for an emergency session of the National Assembly. At the same time it expressed readiness to participate in "institutional reforms of the judicial system."

Pashinyan's move also drew strong condemnation from opposition groups not holding seats in the current assembly, notably former President Serzh Sargsyan's Republican Party (HHK).

In a statement, the HHK's governing board charged that the "unprecedented pressure" on the Armenian judiciary violates not only the constitution but also the Criminal Code. Accordingly, it urged Armenians to steer clear of the "dangerous and adventurist procedures" initiated by Pashinyan.

The Armenian Revolutionary Federation (Dashnaktsutyun) likewise issued a statement condemning Pashinyan's "step taken against the constitutional order."

### US Urges Caution

The United States urged the Armenian government on Monday to stick to Armenia's constitution in its declared efforts to reform the domestic judiciary.

"The United States is committed to working with Armenians to support the strengthening of an independent judiciary, which includes anti-corruption efforts and the development of rule of law institutions," the US Embassy in Yerevan said in a written comment to local media.

"This requires determination, vigilance and a long-term strategy to build transparent and accountable government institutions," it said.

"The Armenian people have made it clear that they support these changes, and we encourage the government to pursue judicial reform in a manner commensurate with the Armenian Constitution," added the embassy.

The U.S. mission commented on protests outside Armenian courts organized by Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan and his ensuing demands for a mandatory "vetting" of all judges.

Armenian opposition parties have denounced Pashinyan's actions as unconstitutional. The premier insisted on Monday that he is only trying to create a "truly independent judicial system" in the country.



## ARMENIA

## Kocharyan Freed Pending Trial

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deployed additional forces there to keep the two rival groups apart.

The first four preliminary sessions of the closely watched trial, which began on May 13, focused Kocharyan's and his lawyers' demands for his release from custody. The prosecution led by Armenia's Prosecutor-General Artur Davtyan objected to them, saying that the defendant could obstruct justice and even flee the country if freed.

Kocharyan dismissed the objections, arguing that he flew back from Europe shortly after being summoned for interrogation in June last year.

Kocharyan was first arrested and charged in July with overthrowing the constitutional order in the wake of a disputed presidential election held in February 2008, two months before he served out his second and final presidential term.

The Special Investigative Service (SIS) says that he illegally used Armenian army units against supporters of his predecessor and main opposition candidate Levon Ter-Petrosian, who protested against alleged electoral fraud. Kocharyan denies the accusation as politically motivated.

Eight protesters and two police officers were killed in street clashes that broke out in central Yerevan late on March 1, 2008. Citing the deadly violence, Kocharyan declared a state of emergency and ordered army units into the capital on that night. Nobody has been prosecuted in connection with those deaths.

The same coup charges were also leveled against Kocharyan's former chief of staff Armen Gevorgyan and two retired top army generals, Seyran Ohanyan and Yuri Khachaturov. The three men, who have not been held in pre-trial detention, deny them.

Earlier this year, Kocharyan and Gevorgyan were also charged with bribe-taking. They reject this accusation as well.

On Friday, Kocharyan's lawyers showed journalists footage of the 2008 clashes which they said exonerates their client. The Office of the Prosecutor-General responded by accusing them of resorting to "manipulations" and putting "psychological pressure" on Judge Grigoryan.

In a statement, the prosecutors also warned that they could take unspecified measures to stop the "spread of these lies generated with the help of certain media outlets and real or fake social media users."

One of the defense lawyers, Hayk Alumyan, countered on Saturday that the authorities and Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan in particular themselves have been pressuring courts dealing with the high-profile case. In particular, Alumyan said that earlier in the day a parliament deputy close to Pashinyan, Hayk Sargsian, urged government supporters to rally outside the court and press the judge to keep Kocharyan behind bars.

Pashinyan's press secretary, Vladimir Karapetyan, dismissed those claims shortly after Kocharyan's release. He said the court order showed that the Armenian judiciary enjoys "complete freedom" thanks to last year's "velvet revolution" which brought Pashinyan to power.

In a Facebook post, Karapetyan also signaled Pashinyan's disapproval of that order. He said that "the old judicial system" continues to function in Armenia and to be mistrusted by the public.

Kocharyan was already freed from custody in August. The Court of Appeals ruled at the time that Armenia's constitution gives him immunity from prosecution on charges stemming from the dramatic events of February-March 2008.

Acting on prosecutors' appeal, the higher Court of Cassation overturned that ruling in November, ordering the Court of Appeals to examine the case anew. The latter allowed law-enforcement authorities to press charges against Kocharyan and again arrest him in December.

## China's Xi Sees Closer Ties with Armenia

BEIJING (RFE/RL) — Chinese President Xi Jinping reportedly reaffirmed China's desire to deepen political, economic and cultural ties with Armenia when he met with Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan in Beijing on Tuesday, May 14.

"Xi Jinping expressed confidence that bilateral cooperation will develop soon in the areas of trade, industry, transport and culture," Pashinyan's press office said in a statement on the talks. "The Chinese president added that his country will continue to support projects that will contribute to Armenia's development and enhance the well-being of the Armenian people."

"We are united by the common goals of cooperation of civilizations," the statement quoted Xi as saying. "We are well aware of momentous events in the history of Armenia. We believe that tragic events that befell the Armenian people must be prevented in the future."

"Our peoples represent ancient civilizations," Pashinyan said for his part. "Already in the 5th century Armenian manuscripts described ties between the two peoples."

"Constructive and productive relations with China are very important for us," he added.

Chinese-Armenian relations have been cordial ever since Armenia gained independence in 1991. Xi and former Armenian President Serzh Sarkisian reported "mutual understanding on issues relating to pivotal interests and concerns of the two countries" after holding talks in Beijing in 2015.

China underscored its interest in Armenia in 2017 when it started building a new and much bigger building for its embassy in Yerevan. It will reportedly be the second largest Chinese diplomatic mission in the former Soviet Union.

Chinese aid to Armenia has totaled at least \$50 million since 2012. In addition, the Chinese government has spent over \$12 million on



Chinese President Xi Jinping meets with Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan in Beijing, May 14, 2019.

building and equipping a school in Yerevan where hundreds of Armenian children study the Chinese language.

Pashinyan attended the inauguration of the Chinese-Armenian Friendship School in August last year. Speaking at the opening ceremony, he said that having many Chinese speakers is an "economic necessity" for Armenia.

China is Armenia's second largest trading partner. According to official Armenian statistics, Chinese-Armenian trade soared by over 29 percent in 2018, to \$771 million. Exports of Chinese goods to Armenia accounted for 86 percent of that figure.

Xi was reported to tell Pashinyan that China is ready to participate in major infrastructure projects in Armenia such as the ongoing recon-

struction of the country's highways stretching from Iran to Georgia. A Chinese company is already carrying out highway upgrades in the northwestern Shirak region.

Pashinyan said Yerevan is interested in the implementation of "joint projects" as part of Beijing's ambitious Belt and Road program to re-create the old Silk Road.

According to the Armenian government statement, the two leaders also discussed international security issues and the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict.

As part of his working visit to Beijing, Pashinyan attend and addressed on Wednesday, May 15, the Conference on Dialogue of Asian Civilizations organized by the Chinese government.

## Arsenal's Henrikh Mkhitaryan to Miss Europa League Final Against Chelsea

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"Micki has been a key player in our run to the final so this is a big loss for us from a team perspective."

"We're also very sad that a player will miss out on a major European final in circumstances such as this, as it is something that comes along

pointed" that Mkhitaryan would not be traveling. In a statement, the association said: "We very much regret this unwarranted decision taken. Whilst we recognize the right to make a personal decision not to travel, we would like to reiterate that as the host country Azerbaijan has provided all the necessary guarantees

Henrikh Mkhitaryan is captain of Armenia and their record scorer with 27 goals in 82 games.

On Monday, Azerbaijan's ambassador to the UK, Tahir Taghizadeh, said there was no cause for concern.

"I would say [to Mkhitaryan] 'you are a professional athlete, you are a footballer, and a class A footballer', so let's make sure this is a class A event if our purpose is to make a great final," Taghizadeh told Sky Sports.

"If our purpose is to play political games around it, that is something different, but I hope it is not, because you are being paid as a footballer, not as a politician, so let's leave other issues aside."

There are no diplomatic relations between Armenia and Azerbaijan because of a long-standing conflict over the disputed Nagorno-Karabakh region. Azerbaijan usually does not allow foreign nationals of Armenian descent to enter the country.

While playing for Borussia Dortmund in 2015, Mkhitaryan did not travel for a Europa League tie against Azerbaijan Premier League side Gabala because of security concerns.

He also missed Arsenal's 3-0 Europa League win at FK Qarabag in October, with manager Unai Emery saying "he cannot travel here" despite UEFA offering their support over a visa application.

Armenian media reported that Anna Naghdalyan, a spokesperson for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Armenia, said Azerbaijan had an "opportunity to show how real it is to prepare the people for peace."

"Manifestations of racism and xenophobia in sport should not take place," added Naghdalyan.

"In this regard, the refusal of Azerbaijan to provide such guarantees and a ban on the entry of alleged fans of Armenian origin is nothing but a new manifestation of racism, and this calls into question the holding of similar international events in Azerbaijan."



Arsenal's Henrikh Mkhitaryan

very rarely in a footballer's career."

UEFA responded to Arsenal with a statement that said: "Working alongside Arsenal FC, UEFA sought and received assurances regarding the player's safety in Azerbaijan from the highest authorities in the country."

"As a result of these guarantees, a comprehensive security plan was developed and given to the club."

"While the club acknowledges the efforts that UEFA and the Azeri government have gone to in this matter, we respect the personal decision not to travel with the player."

The Azerbaijan FA said they were "disap-

required by UEFA to ensure the personal safety of Mr. Mkhitaryan."

Arsenal, which finished fifth in the Premier League, will qualify for next season's Champions League if they beat Chelsea.

It would be their first European trophy since they won the Cup Winners' Cup in 1994.

Arsenal manager Unai Emery said: "He wants to play with the team, but he spoke with his family and decided not to go."

"It's a very, very personal decision and we need to respect him. I don't understand the political problems but I must respect his decision."



## INTERNATIONAL

## International News

## Turkey Orders Fresh Arrests Over Gulen Links

ISTANBUL (Panorama.am) — Turkish prosecutors on May 20 ordered the arrest of 249 current and former foreign ministry personnel over alleged ties to a US-based cleric accused of orchestrating the foiled 2016 coup, local sources reported.

At least 91 of those have been arrested, state-run Anadolu news agency said.

They were suspected of being supporters of Fethullah Gulen, who is accused by Turkish authorities of masterminding the failed putsch three years ago. Gulen has denied any role.

More than 77,000 people have been jailed pending trial since the coup and widespread arrests are still routine. Authorities have suspended or sacked 150,000 civil servants and military personnel.

## Paylan Meets with Boy Tricked into Converting To Islam

ISTANBUL (Panorama.am) — Member of Parliament Garo Paylan, representing the pro-Kurdish Peoples' Democratic Party (HDP), has met with the Armenian boy forcibly converted to Islam on live TV, Ermenihaber reports.

The 13-year-old child, named Artur, was tricked into converting to Islam by Turkish theologian and TV personality Nihat Hatipoglu during his Ramadan program. The boy was also renamed to Nihat during the live show broadcast on May 11.

Paylan posted a photo from the meeting on Facebook, writing: "I met Artur. He is quite well. I will always be there for him and will do my best to protect him from evil."

Earlier, the lawmaker said he would file a complaint to the Prosecutor General's Office over the case.

## Armenian President Meets IMF Chief

NUR-SULTAN, Kazakhstan (RFE/RL) — President Armen Sarkissian floated the idea of turning Armenia into a "financial hub" when he met with the International Monetary Fund's managing director, Christine Lagarde, in Kazakhstan on Thursday, May 16.

Sarkissian and Lagarde held talks in the Kazakh capital Nur-Sultan on the sidelines of an international economic forum organized by the Central Asian country's government.

Earlier this year, the IMF moved to allocate a fresh \$250 million loan to Armenia, praising the Armenian government's macroeconomic policies and "ambitious" reform agenda. An IMF mission indicated at the end of a two-week visit to Yerevan that the Washington-based fund's Executive Board will likely approve the allocation in May.

The IMF's most recent lending program for Armenia, worth roughly \$115 million, was launched in 2014 and completed in 2017.

## Events in Paris Mark Aznavour's Birthday

PARIS (Armenpress) — May 22 marked the 95th anniversary of the birth of artist Charles Aznavour.

Different events are being organized around the world throughout the year. Among them are exhibitions, concerts, opening of monuments, naming of public places and institutions.

Within the framework of these activities, the Paris Municipality, in cooperation with the Aznavour Foundation, organized the following events in the French capital on May 21.

A memorial plaque was unveiled at the first Paris apartment building of the Aznavour family. Paris Mayor Anne Hidalgo, city authorities, prominent figures, and members of the Aznavour family attended the event. The memorial plaque was placed at 36 rue Monsieur-le-Prince, where the Aznavouryans originally settled and where Aznavour spent his childhood.

# An American's Journey to His Roots

By Matthew DeLong

As a third-generation Armenian-American boy growing up in a southern sunny suburban community nestled within the golden hills of San Jose, Calif., extended family get-togethers around holidays always revolved around retellings of the stories of our ancestors, debating which famous celebrities were suspected of being Armenian, and discussion about school and what the children were learning and what we hoped to become. There was pride in our collective persistence to succeed — a mentality of perseverance in the face of struggle I attribute to my great grandparents, the Armenian immigrants, who had found a new home in Fresno.

Yet somewhere between the stories, our insistence on family gatherings around the holidays, and the indulging in shish-kebab, tolma, kufta, pilaf and other Armenian dishes, the actual place "Armenia" and its people took on almost mythical proportions. In school, I had never met any other Armenian children. My parents didn't know any other Armenians from the neighborhood — in fact, I'm not sure we knew any other Armenians except those in our extended family. Even as a young child, I remember asking my mother where Armenia was, to which she replied "oh, honey, it's not a country anymore."

Even in the second grade, explaining where my ancestors came from for a class project wasn't as simple for me as other children who could mention immediately recognizable names like Ireland, Germany, or China. I'm sure to many of them it sounded as if the very name were the work of fiction, either made-up or too insignificant to even consider. Looking back on it, it wasn't too far off from how I thought about it as a child.

It wasn't until my time in Germany, at the age of 27, that I was able to get to know and befriend other Armenians. Getting to know them felt in some cases like trying to solving this giant puzzle of who my ancestors were while also trying to form a closer bond with the country, its people and the culture itself. I felt that, if I could get to know them, I would understand better where my ancestors came from, and would thus be able to better understand myself.

A few years later, when I was studying at the Humboldt University in Berlin and working as an intern at the Mesrop Center with Prof. Armenuhi Drost-Abgarjan, I applied to a DAAD-sponsored summer school program taking place in Yerevan. The Deutscher Akademischer Austauschdienst (German Academic Exchange Service) is a government supported organization that promotes international exchange for students and researchers ([www.daad.org/en](http://www.daad.org/en)). For two weeks, there would be lectures with other students who had an interest in Armenia on topics ranging from the language, genealogy, literature, history, politics to post-Soviet Armenian geopolitics. Excursions to many of its oldest and prominent monasteries were planned, as well as to Areni, the world's oldest-known wine-making region. And in addition, each participant would stay with a host family to practice the language and have the chance to get to know Armenians. It would be a great two weeks to get better acquainted with the country, its culture, history, language and above all — its people.

My ancestors on my mother's side came to the US and settled in Fresno. Originally hailing from Bitlis (now part of eastern Turkey), they, like many others there, found refuge in the vast, fertile lands of Fresno. Over time, many others followed like my ancestors, and a vibrant Armenian community developed there

with numerous Armenians from Bitlis, among them one of the — if not the most — famous Armenian diaspora writers, William Saroyan.

It was through Saroyan that the diaspora found a unique voice who was able to articulate in beautiful yet somber detail the emotional complexities and mental anguish in one's yearning for one's homeland.

I was surprised to find a DAAD-sponsored summer school program for Armenia. Armenia isn't a country or a culture that people easily find — it must be sought after. I was therefore interested to meet the other students who, like me, had developed an interest in this small, unassuming country in the Southern Caucasus. It's not every day that one meets someone who knows something — let alone anything — about Armenia. Yet its people who settled in the crossroads between Europe, Asia and the Middle East date back thousands of years to many other commonly known ancient civilizations such as the Greeks, Babylonians and Assyrians. Its language, comprising its own branch in the Indo-European language tree, has its own unique alphabet that was created by the early theologian Mesrop Mashtots in 405 A.D. It is also the first nation to have adopted Christianity as its state religion, dating back to 301 A.D. For the richness and longevity of its history, culture, language, it is almost remarkable that such a country and its people continue to remain a mystery to so many. As an Armenian-American, the only reason why I know these facts about Armenia is that my grandmother dutifully insisted on trying to remind us of who and where we were descended from.

The next two weeks would consist of morning language courses in Yerevan's Brusov State University, even learning the alphabet and how to read. Late morning and afternoon lectures focused on the history of Armenia and the region, Armenian literature, the peculiar origins of Armenian last names, Armenian politics, as well as the conflict with Azerbaijan and the resulting geopolitical situation post-Soviet Armenia finds itself in. As many other students had studied other languages, history or politics from the region, each session ended with lively discussion, with many students chiming in with insights from their own respective academic backgrounds. As one student knew Kurdish, for example, he was able to point out some linguistic similarities between Armenian and Kurdish — something which I had never considered yet, given the history of both peoples having lived side by side for centuries during the Ottoman Empire, is not a stretch of the imagination. In the literature session, for example, a passage from William Saroyan's book was read and discussed.

As much as each session was well-organized and informative, no academic trip to Armenia would be complete without excursions to its vast countryside full of storied, centuries-old monasteries. Khor Virap, which sits on a bluff overlooking the Armenian-Turkish border below the towering Mt. Ararat — the mountain where Noah is said to have landed his Ark — is home to the legend of Tiridates III and Gregory the Illuminator, the latter who is said to have been imprisoned in a dark, windowless pit for over a decade. What follows is the story of Gregory the Illuminator's release, his healing of Tiridates III's madness and the declaration of Christianity as the official Armenian religion.

A drive to Lake Sevan and Dilijan also warranted stops at Sevanavank, Haghartsin monastery and Goshavank. Sevanavank and its two monasteries perched atop a hill on the edge of the peninsula used to stand alone together

on an island surrounded by the magnificent blue waters of the lake. Once a home of isolation to monks ordered to copy manuscripts and follow a strict regimen from Echmiadzin, the cathedral and see of the Armenian Apostolic Church, it also featured prominently in a cunning and legendary battle between the Armenians and Sajids.

Haghartsin monastery and Goshavank, both tucked in between the lush, green hills of Dilijan, were interesting to compare and contrast given their common origin in the 13th century. Haghartsin monastery, which has been mostly masterfully renovated, is quite striking with its detailed bas-reliefs and carvings. Goshavank, not as far along with its renovation as Haghartsin, is still nonetheless impressive as one is able to see its age and consider its long history and the many people who walked and roamed its halls.

Though a trip to Armenia can be justified on the merit of its monasteries alone, the history of the country and its people extends much farther beyond that of its religious significance. Areni, a small and inconspicuous rural village, is home to the earliest-known wine-producing settlement. Today, the region still continues this tradition, as one can visit Areni and taste many wines made by local Armenians. Armenia also has its own tradition of dance and music, and instruments like the duduk, an ancient woodwind instrument whose origin is at least a thousand years old, are an important hallmark of Armenia's musical heritage. All the students and host siblings thus gathered for an intimate evening concert of traditional Armenian music in Yerevan's city center. Afterwards, we continued on to the Cascades nearby, while crowds of hundreds of Armenians gathered under the setting summer sun as traditional Armenian music rang out with Armenians side-by-side, hands clasped with one another, dancing well into the night.

Our last evening together was spent with the organizers and our host siblings at a restaurant in Yerevan with wine, khorovats, lavash, cheese and dancing. Only this time, one of our host sisters led us and gave us lessons!

As a country and a people that has always existed at the crossroads between East and West, Armenia and its culture also resembles a curious juncture between these different worlds, embodying aspects of all while resembling something completely of its own making. No matter how often throughout their lengthy history the Armenians have been ruled by others, the fact that their culture, traditions and language have persevered and continue to be celebrated and kept intact as keenly as they are today is quite an astonishing feat in itself.

As much as I was impressed by the DAAD summer school program for its mix of history lectures as well as ones touching upon contemporary issues, especially the recent "Velvet Revolution" that saw Nikol Pashinyan elected as Prime Minister, my experience in Armenia wouldn't be complete without mentioning the generosity and hospitality of my host family. It is one thing to travel to a country to visit it, but it is another to stay with a local family, to spend time with them, eat with them and get to know them. And while the trips to its many monasteries, the relics of its illustrious past, were enjoyable moments in themselves, traversing the country's gorgeous landscapes of sprawling golden pastures, soaring mountains and winding rivers was a pleasure to the eyes.

Armenia may never become a well-known travel destination outside of the Armenian diaspora. But for those unacquainted with it, it will surely surprise, amaze and offer a rich and unforgettable experience.

# Community News

## ANCA-WR Endorses Kathryn Barger for LA County 5th District Supervisor

GLENDALÉ — The Armenian National Committee of America - Western Region (ANCA-WR) this week announced its endorsement of incumbent Kathryn Barger in her bid for Supervisor in Los Angeles County's Fifth District for the 2020 Election.

"The ANCA-WR has enjoyed a very close and productive relationship with Supervisor Kathryn Barger throughout her first term in office and is proud to endorse her candidacy for re-election. We are confident that she will continue to listen to and address our concerns on behalf of the large Armenian-American constituency within her district, and we look forward to continuing to work with her and her wonderful staff throughout her career in public service," remarked ANCA-WR Chair Nora Hovsepien.

The ANCA-WR has met with Supervisor Barger and her office regularly throughout her first term to address issues of mutual concern. Supervisor Barger has been highly supportive of Armenian-American issues and has worked hard to empower the community through many efforts, most notably through her very generous donation of \$1 million to the Armenian-American Museum in Glendale and proclaiming the month of April as the "Armenian History Month" each year during which the work of numerous community organizations and individual activists is highlighted and publicly honored by the LA County Board of Supervisors.

"I am very honored for ANCA's endorsement of my reelection. I take great pride in the strong partnership we have forged over the years. Representing the highest concentration of Armenians in Los Angeles County is an honor and a privilege," noted LA County Supervisor Kathryn Barger.

The five Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors, voted by district, are responsible for a roughly \$30 billion annual budget covering a wide range of services, which include child services and foster care, the sheriff's department, jails, transportation, among many others. The 5th District encompasses the Antelope and Santa Clarita valleys, the San Gabriel and San Fernando valleys and the foothills of La Verne and San Dimas. The district includes the cities of Alhambra, Arcadia, Bradbury, Burbank, Covina, Duarte, Glendale, Glendora, La Canada-Flintridge, La Verne, Lancaster, Monrovia, Palmdale, Pasadena, San Dimas, San Gabriel, San Marino, Santa Clarita, Sierra Madre, South Pasadena, Temple City, portions of the City of Los Angeles including Canoga Park, Chatsworth, Granada Hills, Mission Hills, Porter Ranch, Sunland, Sun Valley, Tujunga, town councils including Altadena, Monrovia / Arcadia / Duarte, Crescenta Valley, and portions of unincorporated areas of LA County including Altadena, East Pasadena, La Crescenta, Montrose, and others. The Fifth Supervisorial District of Los Angeles County includes the largest concentration of Armenian-American constituents anywhere in the United States.



Kathryn Barger



From left, Deacon Van Der Mugrdechian, Zaroohi Der Mugrdechian, and Dr. Matthew Jendian

## Two Families' Histories Share Horrors and Miracles

FRESNO — Documenting and preserving the stories of one's ancestors and their immigration to America is itself a noble endeavor, and it takes on increased importance for those whose ancestors survived genocide. The very

By Michael Rettig

goal of a genocidal regime is to obliterate a people and any memory of their prior existence. To remember those lost, as well as those who survived, honors their suffering and perseverance. For this reason, the Armenian Cultural Conservancy (ACC) of Fresno hosted a community lecture, Family Histories of Immigration to the United States, at the Woodward Park Library on April 25, following the 104th anniversary of the Armenian Genocide.

Presenters Deacon Van Der Mugrdechian, ACC board member; Zaroohi Der Mugrdechian, former principal of the Charlie Keyan Armenian School; and Dr. Matthew Ari Jendian, professor of sociology and director of Humanics at Fresno State, shared their family histories using oral histories, memoirs, letters, and photographs.

Deacon Van opened the event by emphasizing the importance of documenting family stories for future generations. He encouraged the audience to research their own ancestors and to share their histories with the community in similar lectures in the future. "This presentation is one step towards the Conservancy's goal of preserving this history."

Deacon Van and his sister Zaroohi shared the story of their grandfather Anooshavan Der Mugrdechian, using his memoir, *Anooshavan: The Intrepid Survivor*, as well as family photographs and stories. Anooshavan grew up in Aikestan, Van. He fought in the city's defense during the Hamidian Massacres before moving to Urmi, where he met his wife Rakel Sahagian. He moved to the United States to seek a safe haven for his family, but responded to the call for volunteers to return to his homeland to fight in the Defense of Van in 1915. Anooshavan and the other Armenian volunteers successfully defended Van, but were forced to evacuate the city with the Russian Army. Later, during the long exodus from Van to the Caucasus, Rakel left their infant daughter Lucy on a rock because she felt they could no longer feed her. Upon hearing the cries of her daughter, Rakel immediately returned for her. They traveled through Siberia to reach Yokohama, Japan, and then to the United States. Lucy died in Fresno at the age of 102. Several community members in the audience remembered her.

Anooshavan's family immigrated to Fresno County in 1917 when the congregation at the St. Gregory Armenian Church in Fowler invited his father, Der Melkisedek, to serve as parish priest. Der Melkisedek was a schoolmaster, see HISTORIES, page 9

## Prof. Hovannisian Sharpens Armenian Genocide Teaching Skills of Arizona Educators

SCOTTSDALE, Ariz. — A special partnership between the Armenian Bar Association and BASIS.ed to develop Armenian Genocide-related educational studies in Arizona's public schools climbed to new heights on April 29. With the 104th anniversary of the Genocide fresh in mind, approximately 50 social science teachers from the highest-ranked network of public charter schools in America gathered together to hear a unique and constructive message of how to incorporate lessons about the Genocide into their students' broader understanding of world history.

The teacher-training program was held at the BASIS flagship campus in Phoenix and was masterfully led by pioneer educator Prof. Richard G. Hovannisian. With deeply personal reflections about his own all-American upbringing in the San Joaquin Valley during the Great Depression — when the stories of the Armenian people's terrible trauma went largely untold — Hovannisian explained to the teachers that there are certain basic and broad themes of instruction into which the Armenian Genocide may comfortably be accommodated.

For example, whether drawing from his childhood memories about the isolation of his ethnic identity or tying together the demonization and dehumanization of various victim groups by their oppressors, Hovannisian made a compelling case of how much more alike, rather than dissimilar, the Armenian experience is to other crimes against humanity and recurring episodes of prejudice. With nodding heads and knowing eyes, the BASIS teachers and administrators absorbed his advice with appreciation and expressed their poise to take back to their classes the lessons they had learned. (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Cp45galQF6E&feature=youtu.be>)

Hovannisian highlighted his presentation with attention-grabbing video clips of Genocide survivors which brought the immediacy of the subject matter into clear focus for the BASIS teachers. Nearly 50 years ago, Hovannisian initiated a ground-breaking oral history project aimed at capturing survivor testimonies and his collection of more than 1,000 accounts are now housed at the University of Southern California's Shoah Foundation where they are being digitized and studied, both in the context of Armenians' unique experiences and also through the wider lens of shared experiences with other groups.

In a lively question-and-answer session which followed the program, the BASIS educators probed with interest and departed with an understanding of how to welcome the Armenian Genocide into the learning lives of their students. Thanks to Professor Hovannisian, every question was met with an uncomplicated and relatable answer.

Hovannisian is widely known for his legacy of institutionalizing Armenian history and genocide scholarship at the University of California in Los Angeles. He has lectured in nearly 40 countries, more than 150 colleges and universities, and more than 1000 public lectures and forums on six continents. Hovannisian has served as a consultant to the California State Board of Education, authoring the chapter on the Armenian Genocide in the State's Social Studies Model Curriculum on Human Rights and Genocide. He has also served as a consultant to the Facing History and Ourselves Organization, assisted in the preparation of its resource book on the Armenian Genocide, and introduced the subject in numerous teacher-training institutes and summer workshops.

"We often struggle with how best to teach see ARIZONA, page 6



## COMMUNITY NEWS

## Rob Nahigian and Robert Cleary, Jr. Receive Prestigious James Felt Real Estate Award

CHICAGO — Robert Cleary, Jr., CRE, senior vice president of Colliers International in Boston, and Rob Nahigian, CRE, principal of Auburndale Realty Company in Newton, have earned the James Felt Creative Counseling Award from the Counselors of Real Estate. The award celebrates outstanding achievement and ingenuity in real estate counseling by a member of the CRE organization and was presented April 29 in Chicago. This is the first award for Cleary and the second time recipient for Nahigian having received this award in 2009.

The pair was recognized for its site selection, development, lease analysis, and adaptive reuse work in converting a World War II-era U.S. Army ammunition building in Boston's Seaport District into the new design, fabrication, and manufacturing facility for JC Cannistraro, LLC. The company consolidated operations from Wilmington, Stoughton, and Watertown, MA, into the 320,000 square-foot Art Deco building, relocating existing employees and anticipating growth to total up to 200 jobs in the popular burgeoning development district.

Cleary and Nahigian were retained as real estate advisors in 2014, initially performing a lease audit of Cannistraro's existing locations, as well as an analysis of relocation sites for a potential consolidation of the company's multiple office, manufacturing, and warehouse locations. Real estate options included (1) purchasing 10-15 acres of land for the development of new office and manufacturing space of approximately 200,000 square feet; (2) buying an existing commercial building of 150,000-200,000 square feet and renovating it to Cannistraro's specifications; (3) purchasing an existing facility that could accommodate expansion plans; and (4) leasing a suitable property. Cleary and Nahigian researched more than 100 locations before conducting financial feasibility assessments for several select sites and pre-



Rob Nahigian and Robert Cleary, Jr.

senting recommendations. "This relationship is with the Cannistraro family goes back several decades, and when we identified real estate as a means to bring operational efficiencies to the growing business the leadership got very excited about the prospect. In partnering with Rob Nahigian, we presented a highly knowledgeable and experienced advisory team embraced by the Cannistraro brothers. It was a demanding process and review, but Cannistraro had the imagination, capacity and capability to realize a truly amazing accomplishment," said Cleary. Rob Nahigian stated that "Working with Bob had so much synergy and it was great to work with a veteran. We have worked together on past projects but never at this level."

The pair's four-year corporate advisory assignment resulted in Cannistraro, a manufacturer of plumbing, HVAC, sheet metal, and fire protection systems, signing a 50-year lease valued in excess of \$25 million, with two additional 10-year options. Significant additional capital was invested in the full, historic renovation of the nearly 80-year-old property, which is owned by the Economic Development and Industrial Corporation, a unit of the Boston Planning and Development Agency.

The award honors the memory of James "Jack" Felt, CRE, a prominent real estate pioneer, founding father of The Counselors of Real Estate, former chairman of the New York City Planning Commission, and a trustee on many well-known corporate and charitable boards.

## Hovannisian Sharpens Genocide Teaching Skills

ARIZONA, from page 5

our children about one of the darkest pages of our people's history and its long-lasting consequences of trans-generational trauma and resilience," said Lucy Varpetian, co-vice chair of the Armenian Bar Association. "The survivors themselves may have been hesitant to share openly their stories as a guard against passing on the heavy burden of their Genocide memories. It's important to forge these relationships with educational institutions like BASIS so that we can learn to impart information about the Genocide to our children in more inclusive and universal ways."

For four years, the Armenian Bar and BASIS have worked together to open and broaden the avenues of Armenian Genocide instruction in many Arizona high schools and middle schools. Following the teachers' workshop, a second Genocide commemoration program took place, drawing a more diverse audience of student families and members of the local Armenian community including Father Zacharia Saribekyan of Scottsdale's St. Apkar Armenian Church.



From left, Armen K. Hovannisian (Armenian Bar), Father Zacharia Saribekyan (St. Apkar Church), Michelle Keogh (Basis), Professor Richard Hovannisian, John Hillis (Basis), Lucy Varpetian (Armenian Bar)



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# Armenian Cultural Leaders Honored by LA Councilman Krekorian



City Council Member Paul Krekorian with representatives of Armenian-American organizations

LOS ANGELES – On Tuesday, April 30, City Council Member Paul Krekorian led the Los Angeles City Council presentation to commemorate the 104th anniversary of the Armenian Genocide in the City of Los Angeles. This year’s event honored cultural leaders in the Armenian-American community who have been dedicated to preserving Armenian culture through the arts and music. The honorees included Element Band, Lark Musical Society, Tekeyan Cultural Association and Hamazkayin Armenian Educational and Cultural Society. The Tekeyan Cultural Association was represented by Shahnour Hovsepian, treasurer of the Tekeyan Cultural Association’s Metro Los Angeles chapter.



City Council Member Paul Krekorian (left) of the Los Angeles City Council and Shahnour Hovsepian (right), treasurer of the Tekeyan Cultural Association’s Metro Los Angeles chapter, accepting the proclamation

# Boston Armenians Raise Money for 2016 War Victims at Night of Carpets and Cognac

COGNAC, from page 1

Kibarian and Hongthong spoke briefly about their creations. Kibarian had made brandy praline bonbons (molded chocolate with a brandy and praline ganache filling), an Ararat brandy, Bourbon vanilla and chocolate mille feuille, and apricot Bavarian cream shooters for this occasion. Hongthong explained how to properly drink cognac or brandy and even revealed the ingredients of his special cocktail, which included 10-year-old Ararat Brandy, lemon juice and apricot brandy.

While this was primarily a social event, Zareh Zurabyan of the Knights of Vartan displayed some Armenian carpets from his personal collection and ran a quiz on the symbols used on these carpets. He gave a brief talk on the symbols and some aspects of Armenian carpets, including regional particularities. The carpets were from Kars, Gedashen, Lori and other areas from the end



Pastry chef Nathan Kibarian speaking

of the 19th century and the early 20th century. Zurabyan relied on information from his mentor Hratch Kozibeyokian, who was president of the Armenian Rug Society.



From left, Zareh Zurabyan, Nathan Kibarian and Vannaluck Hongthong

The quiz was an icebreaker and in addition chess and backgammon sets placed in corners of the room appealed to different tastes. The guests formed a very diverse crowd spanning ages 21 to 76 from countries like China, Singapore, Haiti, New Zealand, Germany, Dominican Republic, and France. There were over 85 people present in all.

DFFF was founded by Ararat Lodge Secretary Nerses Zurabyan and his brother Zareh and some other Boston-area Armenians after the 2016 war in Artsakh. There were around 100 casualties. Nerses Zurabyan and other Knights noticed that the distribution of funds to the victims’ families was uneven, and the children who lost their fathers and main breadwinners were suffering. No complete list existed of these victims so the first thing necessary was to compile a full and accurate list before sending aid.

There are 61 children included in the program at present. Children of Armenia Sponsorship Program (CASP) of the Eastern Armenian Diocese’s Fund for Armenian Relief helped distribute the resources raised in the United States by DFFF, while the Knights of



From left, guests Jason, Jay, organizer Zareh Zurabyan, Freymers, and Maren



From left, Ertan Kibarian, Nerses Zurabyan, Nathan Kibarian, Vannaluck Hongthong, Zareh Zurabyan, Greg Hartunian and Ara Barsoumian

Vartan provide tax-deductable receipts for donors. This is now the third year of a five-year commitment, which may very well be extend further in time (for more information, see the

Davtian Premier Cigars. The organizing committee was composed of Zareh Zurabyan, Nathan Kibarian, Nerses Zurabyan, Greg Hartunian, Ara Barsoumian, Nigoghos



Guests enjoying the event

following “Talking Vartan” podcast interview of Nerses Zurabyan run by David Medzorian: <https://www.listennotes.com/podcasts/talking-vartan/talking-vartan-a-knights-and-i8r56gBxacv/#edit>. Prior to this event, approximately \$72,000 had been raised by DFFF over the course of its existence, and while the donations for this evening are still being tabulated, the organizers declared it to be a success. The event was cosponsored by Ararat Brandy, Island Creek Oyster Bar, and Davit Davtian’s

Atinizian and Ashot Papoyan, as well as Vrej Pilavjian and Rebecca Shahverdian from the AGBU Young Professionals. Michael Demirchian helped with marketing and Ara Balikian of AGBU arranged for the use of the AGBU building. Sona Karamyan served as photographer. Those who wish to support DFFF can go to the following website: <https://squareup.com/store/knights-of-vartan-ararat/item/dfff-donation-and-pledge>.



## COMMUNITY NEWS

# The Revival of Berd in Tavush Marz

By Eva Medzorian

Special to the Mirror-Spectator

WINCHESTER, Mass. and BERD, Armenia – I wanted to evaluate the Velvet Revolution which took place in Armenia in 2018, so I again traveled far beyond my Winchester home, through the mountains and oceans and into the arms of my ancestral Armenian homeland towards Armenia's Tavush Marz (province) on the northeastern border with Azerbaijan.

## Restore Christian Faith

It is very important to note that on September 2014 in the Berd Tavush region, the majestic St. Hovhanness Church was consecrated thanks to the estate of benefactor John Stephens, Fresno, and architect Artak Ghulyan. After nearly a century of loss the people's faith has been restored.

Fr. Aram Mirzoyan is the heart and soul, not only for this Church but for the whole community. He provided the great momentum which was sorely needed. I have witnessed how in any



Youth in Berd

## A New Mayor

After the many years of mismanagement which Berd has suffered through, I am very happy to say that Berd is now on the right track! Mayor Harutyun Manucharyan is a humanitarian and a successful hands on businessman with vision. He has personally taken on the huge challenge to rebuild a whole new community here. He knew exactly what had to be done, and made it happen. He took the broken streets and shanties and is continuing to rebuild and clean up the streets and stores, to make it safe and beautiful for all the people who now love and trust him. Rescued from abject misery, decay and corruption, the people of Berd are now enjoying their liberation.

## A New Governor

The newly appointed governor of Tavush Province, Hayk Chobanyan, is a very successful businessman, experienced with business strategy, product management, marketing and e-commerce. He believes in justice, honor and dignity for his people and also demands it from the people that work for him. He works night and day so that his people can live through the terrifying dangers which constantly followed them.

The good news is that he has started a new movement named, Veradarts Toon, which translated means "Return Home." Ter Aram and I met with him in Ijevan, the Tavush Marz Capital city. It was thrilling for me to hear the Governor describe his new project to help the poor and destitute Armenian families with young children who are now stranded in Russia and other countries to return home to Armenia where they will then be given free housing and work focused specifically in the Tavush Berd region.

## Veradarts Toon, Return Home



Governor of Tavush Province, Hayk Chobanyan with Eva Medzorian

emergency situation, Ter Aram will reach out to his people when they need him and help solve the problem. The people dearly love him, his wonderful wife Armine, and 3 active young boys. He is not only a spiritual leader for these last six years but also a great community leader.

I arrived just in time to attend the moving April 14 Palm Sunday service at the St. Hovhanness Church in Berd officiated by Rev. Aram Mirzoyan. After church my attention became focused on 5 young soldiers. I was impressed by their quiet dignity and ventured to speak to them. I found that they came from regions in Yerevan, Echmiadzin, Vanadzor and Ardashat and were very proud and happy to serve their Armenian army to protect their borders from Azerbaijani aggression. My conversation with them was warm and engaging, and in a very short time we became very good friends.



Eva Medzorian and young soldiers in Tavush

clothes on their backs.

## Youth in Charge

Yerevan: It was a chilly night with light rain. The birthday party for 38-year-old Arman Hayrapetyan who works in Ijevan's Tumo Center started at 7 p.m. and lasted until midnight. Ter Aram and I were invited to attend this fundraising birthday party to help aid three similar projects to Veradarts Toon Srpazan Bagrat drove a very long way from Ijevan to support the young peoples' effort. It was impressive to see how much love and respect the youth had developed for him. In the entrance way, 3 large empty glass jugs labeled with 3 similar projects sat on the counter waiting to be chosen by the guests for support re the Veradarts Doon/Return Home' projects. The party was organized in a large, local grand Cafe in the heart of the city of Yerevan. What made this project so special was that it was totally planned and executed by the youth. It looked like it could have taken place anywhere in Harvard Square. I was surprised to see even little babies present. It was great to see how well families and youth enjoyed one another. Everything was donated. There was plenty of wine from Berd, fancy tea biscuits, and warm friendliness which led to an open mike for one and all. A few people sang songs they had written while others brought their musical instruments and played / improvised music. I could see that the youth had enthusiastically now fully taken charge. Their focus was to create more interesting ways to encourage fund raising successes for Veradarts Toon-type projects to aid all of the many families who want to return home, regardless of what country they are stranded.

I sensed a camaraderie. You could hear, see and feel it. The words and music of Komitas Vartabed describe it best for me. Translated into English in part he stated, "Armenia, a country like paradise. You are the cradle of civilization. You are my precious homeland. Hayastan."

(Eva Medzorian is founding president of the Armenian International Women's Association, as well as a longtime former member of the board of the Cambridge Yerevan Sister City Association and is a current member of the Daughters of Vartan. She and her husband, Jack, visit Armenia often.)

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## COMMUNITY NEWS

# Two Families' Histories Share Horrors and Miracles

HISTORIES, from page 5

teacher, and author in Van who opened the first all-girls school in the city and created children's songs.

Deacon Van shared that while he was preparing his photo exhibit for the night's presentation, Dr. Jendian noticed his own great-grandfather in a photo, as the caretaker at the St. Hripsime School for Girls, which was established by Der Melkisedek. "Discovering both of our great grandfathers in the same photo in Van is another revelation of the connection we all have if we look deep enough," Jendian remarked. Deacon Van and Zaroohi Der

Mugrdechian concluded their family history by sharing childhood memories from their grandparents' home in Fresno.

Jendian presented his family history, wearing his grandfather Avedis Antranikian's traditional Armenian clothing. Avedis, also from Van, grew up in a home his family had lived in for generations. However, Avedis' early life was marked with tragedies. When Avedis was 8 years old, his father, Ohannes, was ambushed and murdered by Turkish gendarmes. Three months later, Avedis' 17-year old brother, Armenag, died from an unrelated accident. Avedis did his part



Deacon Van Der Mugrdechian displays a map showing the location of Van, Armenia.



Dr. Matthew Jendian displays a picture of his great grandparents, Abridsemeh and Ohannes Antranikian in Van, Armenia, in 1915.

## ASA's Sixth Annual Journalism Internship Program Set for 2019

At its recent meeting the Board of Trustees of the Armenian Students' Association of America, Inc. (ASA Inc.) announced it is again sponsoring two internships in journalism in partnership with the **Armenian Weekly** and the **Armenian Mirror-Spectator**.

Interns will work under the supervision of either the editorial staff of the **Armenian Weekly** or the **Armenian Mirror-Spectator**.

"The ASA, Inc. Journalism Internships coupled with its Annual Scholarship Grant Program which awarded \$102,000 in grants in the previous couple of years continues its mission of providing financial assistance and professional level opportunities to qualified students of Armenian heritage. The ASA, Inc founded in 1910 is the oldest Armenian student organization in the United States," said Brian Assadourian, Chairman of the ASA Inc. Board of Trustees in making the announcement.

Participants in the six-week internship program will receive a weekly stipend of \$150. Interns will work under the supervision of either the editorial staff of the **Armenian Weekly** or the **Armenian Mirror-Spectator**.

"The Internship provides a valuable opportunity for students of Armenian heritage to have hands-on experience as a member of the editorial staff of the respective publications" noted Dr. Michael G. Mensoian, a member of the ASA Inc. Board of Trustees who oversees the program.

The **Armenian Weekly** and the **Armenian Mirror-Spectator** are two of the leading English-language newspapers in the United States and Canada keeping our community informed of developments locally as well as in Armenia and the Diaspora through their print and online editions. The offices of both papers are located Watertown, Massachusetts.

Applications for the ASA Inc. Journalism Internship are now available and may be downloaded by accessing <http://www.asainc.org>. Applications must be submitted no later than Friday May 30, 2019. Candidates must have completed at least their sophomore year of college by May 2019. Currently enrolled graduate students are also eligible.

Since its establishment 106 years ago the Armenian Students' Association of America, Inc. has encouraged the educational pursuits of Armenians in the United States by providing financial assistance in the form of scholarship grants, professional opportunities through internships, and fellowship through social and professional activities.

**The Armenian Weekly**  
**Mirror-Spectator**

in defending Van by digging bullets lodged into the wall from Turkish gunfire and giving them to the gun smiths to reload shells, and often dodging bullets whizzing past.

Like Anooshavan and the Der Mugrdechian family, Avedis and his mother, Abridsemeh, evacuated Van with the Russian army. They embarked on an 11-day, nearly 200-mile-long, arduous walk to Igdir where they providentially encountered the eldest Antranikian brother Mourad who had voluntarily enlisted from America to help fight in the Defense of Van. Mourad arranged for Avedis and Abridsemeh to travel by wagon and train from Igdir to Echmiadzin, to Moscow, to Oslo, Norway, where they boarded Oscar II, headed to the United States and arrived on Ellis Island on July 28, 1916. After a short stay with sister Calipse Hotzakorgian's family in Everett, Mass., the Antranikians traveled cross-country by train and settled in Kingsburg, Calif., where brother Yeghiazar had settled. Avedis was known in high school for his poetry and athleticism, earning varsity letters in three sports – football, basketball, and baseball.

After graduating from Kingsburg High in 1926, he married Rose Missakian in 1933, and they worked in canneries until they built and opened the Elm Avenue Fruit Market in 1936, which became the Fresno Grape Stake Yard in the 1960s. In 1943, Avedis was touted as a "local hero" on the front page of the Fresno Bee, for saving Mrs. Reuben Taylor from drowning in Preacher's Hole in the Kings River. The young boy from Van who had such a tumultuous childhood, died in Fresno in 1973 doing what he loved – folk dancing.

Though many Armenians grew up hearing similar stories, it is important to document, preserve, and continuously share these memories with generations further removed from the Genocide. Presentations such as these foster collective storytelling and help elucidate the many connections among Armenians in the Diaspora. More importantly, they keep alive the memory of those who perished and those who persevered in 1915 so they will never be lost to history.

(Michael Retting, is a recent Fresno State graduate, receiving an MA in history. He was also the former editor of Hye Shazhoom.)

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COMMUNITY NEWS



# Armenia Tree Project Partners with City of Boston Parks

**BOSTON —** On Tuesday, May 14, several members of the Armenia Tree Project (ATP) partnered with the City of Boston and Boston’s Parks and Recreation Department to hold a commemorative tree planting in Dorchester. Attendees at the program, sponsored by the ATP, included Boston City Councilor Frank Baker, ATP founder Carolyn Mugar, ATP Executive Director Jeanmarie Papelian, and Dorchester Park Association board members David Mareira and Lisa Ahern. Four white oaks and three cherry trees were planted.

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# Arts & Living

## Helene Pilibosian's Papers Now Available At Harvard Library

CAMBRIDGE, Mass. — The papers of Helene “Hosmig” Pilibosian (1906-2018), editor, publisher and poetry, are accessible now at the Schlesinger Library of Radcliffe Institute at Harvard University. Pilibosian served as the first woman editor of the *Armenian Mirror-Spectator* from 1964 to 1966 and returned as

assistant editor from 1975 to 1981. As founder of Ohan Press in 1983, she

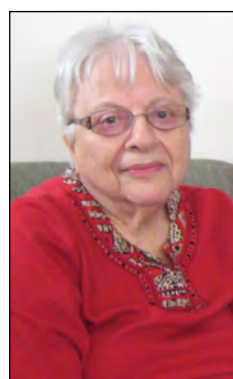
**By Aram Arkun**  
Mirror-Spectator Staff

published several books of poetry, prose and a memoir.

Born in Boston in 1933 to survivors of the Armenian Genocide, she attended Boston University and then studied at Harvard University Extension to receive the equivalent of a bachelor's degree in 1960. She later collaborated with her father Khachadour Pilibosian on his memoir, *They Called Me Mustafa* (1992, 1999), which she published through Ohan Press. Her own works include *Carvings from an Heirloom: Oral History Poems* (1983), *At Quarter Past Reality: New and Selected Poems* (1998), *History's Twists: The Armenians: Poems* (2007), *My Literary Profile: A Memoir* (2010), *A New Orchid Myth* (2014), and the posthumously published *Candor Candy* (Global Poems (2016) and *Planet Tome Reborn* (2016).

Her poems appeared in a number of literary journals, including the *Seattle Review*, *Louisiana Literature*, the *Cape Rock* and *Ararat*.

She married Hagop Sarkissian, who had immigrated to the United States in 1957 from Lebanon, in 1960.



Helene Pilibosian

After Pilibosian's death following exploratory brain surgery, Sarkissian prepared her papers to be given to Harvard. His copy-right on these papers will be transferred to Harvard upon his death.

The collection includes certificates, diplomas, correspondence (including concerning the

Armenian Genocide commemoration at the Massachusetts State House), articles, speeches, published poems, articles, book reviews and editorials, scrapbooks of published writings, reviews and publicity for her books, photographs, and a digital audio file of her reading her poetry. The physical extent of the collection is 2.63 linear feet (4 file boxes, 1 folio box, plus 2 folio+ folders, 3 photograph folders, 1 oversize photograph folder, and 1 archived web site).

The physical materials in this collection must be requested for use 36 hours in advance, as they are kept offsite, but are being digitally scanned and will eventually be available online. Pilibosian's Ohan Press website has already been digitally preserved as part of this archive. In addition, Sarkissian provided the library with digital scans of unpublished collections of Pilibosian's poetry, as well as of other documents.

Books by Pilibosian and Sarkissian were transferred to the Schlesinger Library's Printed Materials division and periodicals including Pilibosian's poetry was offered to other Harvard Libraries. Most of the photographs in this collection are or will be digitized and available online.

The Schlesinger Library is a prominent research library specializing on the history of women in the United States. For the finding aid and further information on this collection, identified as MC972, see Harvard Library's HOLLIS for Archival Discovery website.



The man on the right struggles with leaving his puppy with his friend in Yerevan.

## Big Love in a Small Package: Heartbreak In Yerevan

YEREVAN — It was my last day in Armenia. I had travelled there to report on the elevation of the Very Rev. Fr. Daniel Findikyan, the Primate of the Diocese of the Armenian Church of America (Eastern), to the rank of bishop by Catholicos of All Armenians Karekin II.

I decided to walk through the streets of Yerevan and people watch.

**By Florence Avakian**

Special to the Mirror-Spectator

the dog, he did not answer. I asked if he lived in Armenia. He said he was from Damascus, Syria, and his parents, who had fled the war in Syria, were now living in Yerevan.

He said he would be returning to Damascus, because as a goldsmith, he would receive more work and higher pay in order to support his parents. Why had he brought his dog with him if he was returning to Damascus, I asked.

Looking at the dog, he quietly answered that he would be giving up the pup to a friend because there was regular bombing in Damascus and he did not want the dog to be killed.

Soon a woman joined him. She was carrying a bag. She apparently had gone shopping and had bought clothes and food for the puppy.

He held and kissed the trembling dog for more than five minutes, crying all the time, even though the woman assured him that she would love and care for the pup, and send him weekly e-mails with photos.

As she walked away with the dog, who continued to shake and look at him, he continued to sob, turning away so I would not see his tears. I found myself crying with him.

He refused to talk any further or give his name for safety reasons.

For some people, this small story of a small dog and his human may not seem like a tragedy, but it symbolizes the emotional devastation and separation that persists on a personal level in a world of cruelty, and never-ending warfare.

It also demonstrates the indelible love between a human being and his soulmate for whom no effort can ever be too much.

On a side street, I saw a young, tall man holding the leash of his dog, who was shaking uncontrollably, his eyes planted firmly on the man's face. I approached him and asked if everything was alright. Looking sadly at

THIS SMALL STORY OF A SMALL DOG AND HIS HUMAN MAY NOT SEEM LIKE A TRAGEDY, BUT IT SYMBOLIZES THE EMOTIONAL DEVASTATION AND SEPARATION THAT PERSISTS ON A PERSONAL LEVEL IN A WORLD OF CRUELTY, AND NEVER-ENDING WARFARE.

## The Light Of the Bosphorus

Orhan Pamuk's Photography in *Balkon*

**By Erdag Gökner**

Orhan Pamuk's photographs emerge from a specific and recurring moment. As much as they capture subtle aspects of Istanbul geography in and around the iconic confluence of the Bosphorus and the Golden Horn, they also reveal the moments when the writer stops writing and is drawn away from his desk. Taken during a period of self-described dissatisfaction with his work — perhaps verging on writer's block — these images are linked obliquely to novel-writing. The photos depict Bosphorus panoramas of light and monuments of Ottoman history, while their serial framings convey the author's creative play and frustration. This is the contextual drama of *Balkon*, a collection of 568 color photographs taken from the “balcony” of Pamuk's writing studio.

What do the pictures tell us? They were taken in the winter of 2012–13 while Pamuk struggled in a state of melancholy with his novel *A Strangeness in My Mind*. Perhaps capturing the light of the Bosphorus and the way it limns the geography and architecture of Istanbul evokes a feeling of consolation. After all, this is the stage of all of Pamuk's fictions. The photographs, arranged often in a series of two to eight per page, convey an affective aura as they depict variously: the snow-covered dome of the 16th-century Cihangir Mosque; triangles of phantasmal light over the historic Topkapi Palace; patches of white light falling near the Princess Islands; illuminated ripples on the surface of the straits; and the impressionistic disappearance into haze of the Hagia Sophia and the Blue Mosque — or conversely, their combined 10 minarets broadcasting an Ottoman legacy. Subtle shifts of light, often breaking through clouds in epiphany and revelation, are effectively captured in these sequences. Meanwhile, the novel-writing waits.

The small format of the Steidl volume somewhat limits the impact of some of the images, which beg to be enlarged: a nighttime ferry whose lights create a halo on the water, seemingly elevating and sacralizing it; a distant white boat to which twilight winter light clings like an object of salvation; a “rear window” shot of women around a table — the only one with people; black birds alighting on a mosque dome with its verdigris finial; and a fishing boat silhouetted against a field of silver and blue ripples. Looking at Pamuk's pictures you might be persuaded that some eternal Istanbul reigns in a world of ideal forms. That's not quite the case. In the mix there are refined and rough images — crisp and detailed, abstract and contemplative, gouache-like and figurative — with the cumulative effect of updating the Ottoman past in the Turkish present.

The camera holds an iconic place in late Ottoman and Turkish modernity, and photography has been used as a vehicle to both articulate state power as well as to document the Turkish everyday, particularly as evidence of progress. Notably, the 1,819 photographs (51 large-format albums) of the Sultan Abdülhamid II collection, presented to the Library of Congress and the British Museum in the 1890s, see PHOTOGRAPHS, page 13



## ARTS &amp; LIVING

# The Light of the Bosphorus: Orhan Pamuk's Photography in *Balkon*

PHOTOGRAPHS, from page 12

reveal an anxiety about Ottoman modernity and the attempt to document it as a project of state power. The collection includes architecture, monuments, panoramas, and urban scenes, a majority of which were taken in and around Istanbul. There is no specific aesthetic concern here, but rather a bureaucratic one. The challenge of reconciling the modern with the historical legacy of an Islamic empire looms large, along with an unacknowledged anxiety about failure and loss. Pamuk comments on the affective role of photography when he compares Abdülhamid's collection, in an analogy, to his mother's family photo album:

I love these [Hamidian] photographs, devoid of human figures in which [...] everything looks tidier, cleaner, and more modern than it is — just as in my mother's album. I like to think that I've discovered in these strange photographs a range of emotions that neither the photographer nor [Abdülhamid] II ever intended to record.

The photographic image, he implies, often reveals what it is attempting to conceal.

Pamuk received his first camera when he was 10 years old. In Kemalist Turkey, the camera and photography constituted a primary means of engaging in the secular modern. Pamuk states, "Our greatest shortcoming, we felt, was never being as modern as we wanted to be. So when posing for the camera, we strove to appear more successful and more modern than we actually were." Pamuk contrasts this posed and representational function of the family album with the work of the great Armenian-Turkish photographer Ara Güler: "Until the photographer Ara Güler — whose photographs of the city in the twentieth century remain unsurpassed — began taking photos of daily life in Istanbul in the 1950s, [...] it was rare for the human side of the place to creep into any photographs."

Güler, who died last fall, built an archive of over a million negatives. In *Istanbul: Memories and the City*, Pamuk included 200 of his pictures. In a recently reissued edition, Pamuk added over 200 more Istanbul photographs by Güler. In addition to conveying the important place of photography in Pamuk's aesthetic life, *Balkon* reveals the strong influence of Ara Güler's mid-20th-century black-and-white Istanbul, in many ways, the visual source for Pamuk's concept of *hüzün*, the strain of melancholy particular to Istanbul and its inhabitants.

In the world of Pamuk's fiction, doubles abound, and in some respects the unnamed double in *Balkon* is Ara Güler. Many of the

images here recall "Güler framings," oneiric *instantanés* of quotidian Istanbul, of ferries and skylines in a kind of homage. Recently, Pamuk wrote an obituary in the *New York Times* lamenting the loss of this friend and cultural icon who was memorialized in the film "The Eye of Istanbul." In the obituary, he states:

Ara Güler's Istanbul is my Istanbul. [...] The crucial, defining characteristic of an Ara Güler photograph is the emotional correlation he draws between cityscapes and individuals. [...] For those who, like me, have spent 65 years in the same city [...] the landscapes of the city eventually turn into a kind of index for our emotional life.

Pamuk's photographs, taken at all hours, reveal an open secret about

Bosphorus, which becomes a magic mirror, a collective unconscious, or a cultural meaning between continents. *Balkon* begins with an epigraph attributed to the journalist immortalized in *The Black Book*, Celâl Salik, in a column apparently published on Pamuk's birthday in

photographs are intertextual representations linked to his oeuvre. Among other intersections between image and text, the many seagulls and ferries in his *Balkon* photographs evoke the meditations in his nonfiction collection *Other Colors*, such as "Seagull in the Rain" and

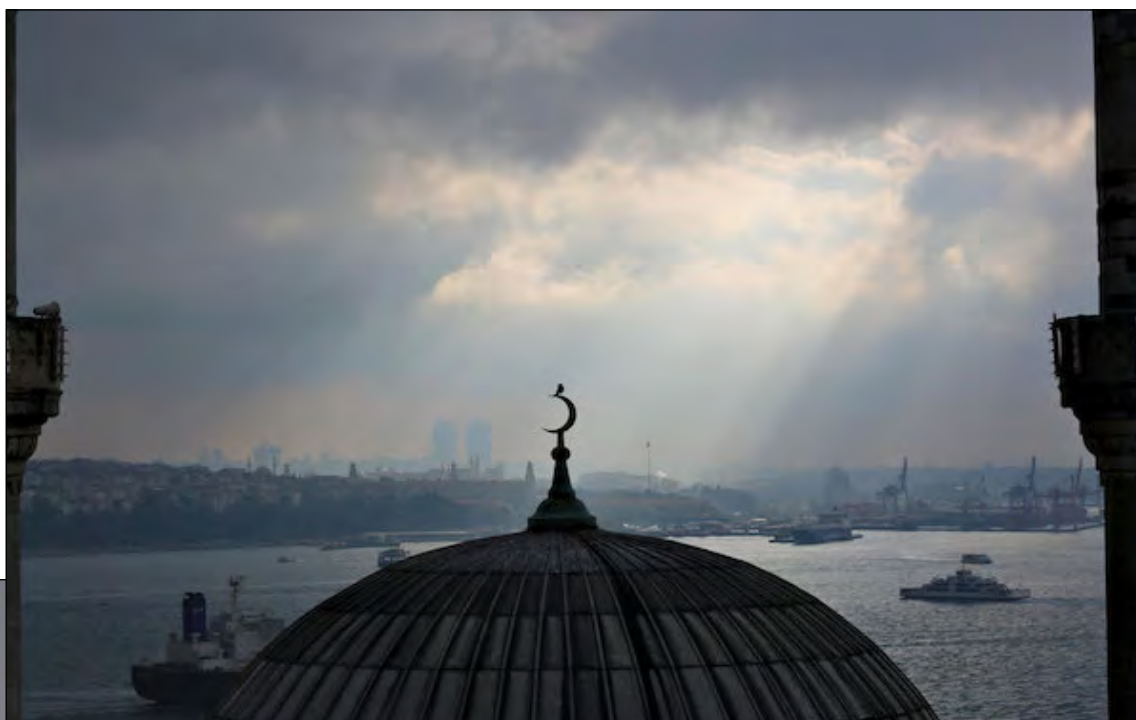
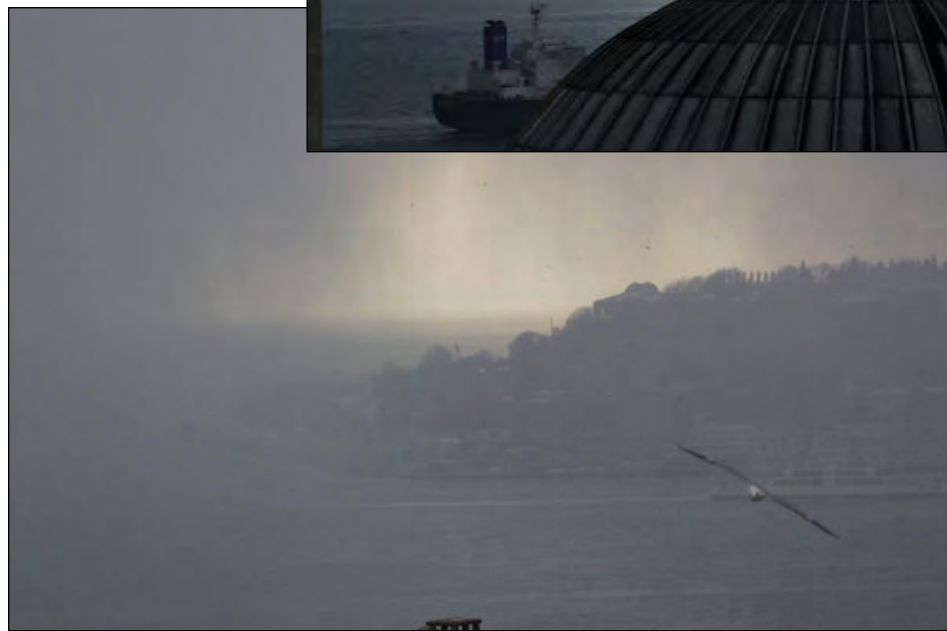


Photo of the Bosphorus by Orhan Pamuk



Another Pamuk Photo

"Bosphorus Ferries." Close readers of Pamuk will also realize the significance of the number 19. The number of photos in *Balkon*, 568, adds to 19 (five plus six plus eight), a number that appears throughout Pamuk's work. Nineteen is the abjad numeral (or sum of the numerical values of letters) for the Arabic word *wahid* (*vahid* in Turkish), which means "oneness" in Sufi traditions of mystical Islam. Here, the photos symbolically unite the author, the city, and the literary text. They are all taken from the height of a minaret, literally as can be measured by the height of the two Cihangir Mosque minarets that appear in many images, which defines the divine perspective of the Islamic miniatures described in his novel *My Name Is Red*.

Large-scale exhibition formats of the photographs have been on display in Istanbul's Yapı Kredi Art Gallery, an exhibition which will likely travel to the United States as well. Other renowned authors have recently opened exhibitions or published books of photography, notably Michel Houellebecq and Teju Cole (*Blind Spot*). Such photography at times mixes image and text, at others it documents travel. The literary eye is frequently drawn to archival aspects of photography. Of course, W. G. Sebald's use of uncaptioned photography provides a sense of documentation and archival verisimilitude. J. M. Coetzee's early photographs of apartheid South Africa reveal something of the context of his fiction — notably a haunting self-portrait of the author as an adolescent. Similarly, Eudora Welty's snapshots reveal the lives of blacks in segregated Mississippi, among them the racist "pickaninny aesthetic" of two little black girls holding identical white baby dolls. And Lewis Carroll, whom Pamuk quotes three times in *The Black Book*, photographed the Liddell girls, including Alice and a recently discovered nude of Lorina.

In *Balkon*, Pamuk also relies on photography to provide historical and literary context as well as archival evidence. The photographs become part of the process of writing — the hidden act that Pamuk is engaged in while he clicks the shutter button to stop time. They constitute the nurturing negative space of the writing ritual. When we look at these arresting images of Bosphorus light exposing the cultural geography of Istanbul, we not only sense the multiple meanings of the word muse, but we also understand that image and text coexist as the lived duality of Pamuk's literary modernity.

(Erdag Gökner directs the Duke University Middle East Studies Center. His most recent books include *Orhan Pamuk, Secularism and Blasphemy* and *Nomadologies: Poems*. This review originally appeared in the May 19 edition of the *Los Angeles Review of Books*.)

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# Holy Trinity Show Combines Variety and Talent

By Aram Arkun

Special to the Mirror-Spectator

CAMBRIDGE, Mass. — Once again, the Charles and Nevart Talanian Cultural Hall of Holy Trinity Armenian Church was transformed by its Armenian Church Youth Organization (ACYOA) Junior and Senior members, together with parent volunteers, into an elegant setting for a talent show. During the evening of April 27, Holy Trinity parish members were joined by outside professional performers to provide an entertaining program in order to raise money for the youth and adult ministry programs of the parish.

Michael Hilbig, the self-styled “Skinny German Juggling Boy Hilby,” was the headliner who kept the audience laughing with his jokes as well as his juggling dexterity. A local but



Adult bass player is Mark Pucci; drummer Alberto Netto; pianist Reverend Burns Stanfield. In addition, Van Teager on bass, Lulu Teager assisting on piano, Dan Teager on trumpet and Christina Baboian on saxophone



Skinny German Juggling Boy Hilby

unusual act was that of ACYOA Senior Gregory Dorian, “the Puzzlemaster,” who is a mechanical engineer with the special talent of speedily solving Rubik’s Cubes one after the other. Armenian-by-choice Doug Westian provided a video demonstration of “Deep South Southern Armenian cooking” and then gave all audience members samples of his banana pudding.

Mary Gyulumyan, 10-years old, recited Armenian poetry and six members of the Erebouni Dance Ensemble showed off their Armenian dancing skills.

Musical acts included vocalists Christina Baboian; Sevan Dulgarian; and the Arlington High School Madrigal Singers (including Alina Kouzouian). Pianists included Dr. Artem Abramian, Christina Avakian, Mark Arkun and Raffi Arkun. Other instrumentalists were oudist Brian Ansbikian and Edward Khatchatrian on the trumpet. Groups included the jazz duo Lulu and Van Teager; Haig Babaian, Thomas Babaian and Oscar Derderian III in a Neil Young tribute; and of course the Black Sea Combo (part of the 15-piece Black Sea Salsa, <http://www.blackseasalsa.com>), led by trum-

peter Dan Teager.

The multitasking Teager, who was the musical director of the evening showcase, ably served as the master of ceremonies. Yn. Arpi

Kouzouian, Holy Trinity Youth Director, thanked all the performers and volunteers at the end of the evening for their contributions to making the evening a success.



Erebouni Dance Ensemble



unusual act was that of ACYOA Senior Gregory Dorian, “the Puzzlemaster”

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ARTS & LIVING

C A L E N D A R

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**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

**MAY 30 — Annual Spring Dinner and Drawing sponsored by the Friends of Holy Trinity 1000 Club,** 6:30 pm, Charles and Nevart Talanian Cultural Hall, Holy Trinity Armenian Church of Greater Boston, 145 Brattle St., Cambridge. Open to all. You don't have to be a member of the 1000 Club to join us for a delicious losh kebab and pilaf dinner, \$9.99 per person; tickets on sale at the door. Regular monthly raffle drawing at 8 p.m., plus 5 \$25 door prizes. "One-time" numbers will be sold on the night of dinner; special offer: purchase five "one-time" numbers for \$20, save \$5. For further info, contact the Holy Trinity Church Office, 617.354.0632, or log onto [www.htaac.org/calendar/event/696/](http://www.htaac.org/calendar/event/696/).

**MAY 31 — Tribute to 150 birth anniversary of Komitas, Friday, Holy Cross Armenian Catholic Church,** Nishan and Margrit Atinizian Hall, 200 Lexington St., Belmont. 7 p.m. A benefit concert presenting the life and music of Komitas Vardapet. Concert will benefit wounded soldiers' hospital and their families in Yerevan. A reception will follow. Performers will be Marina Margarian and Gegam Margarian on piano, and Zori Babroudi on duduk, with members of the Holy Cross Church Choir and the Meghedi Children's Vocal Ensemble.

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

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

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

**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](http://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](mailto:hello@armenianheritagepark.org)

**JUNE 13 — SAVE THE DATE. Film Screening: "Motherland" At the Armenian Museum in**

**Watertown.** Cosponsored by the Armenian International Women's Association (AIWA). Thursday. More details coming soon!

**JUNE 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](http://www.abakadanceacademy.com). For more information, email [abakadanceacademy@gmail.com](mailto: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/](http://www.htaac.org/calendar/event/653/), or email [office@htaac.org](mailto: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](mailto: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 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](http://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](mailto: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](mailto:hello@armenianheritagepark.org)

**AUGUST 22 — Under the August Moon. Armenian Heritage Park on The Greenway,** Boston. Thursday

from 7:30– 9 p.m. Delightful evening for supporters, partners & friends featuring fabulous signature dishes, hosted by anoush'ella and the Berklee Jazz Trio. RSVP appreciated [hello@armenianheritagepark.org](mailto: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](http://www.abakadanceacademy.com). For more info, email [abakadanceacademy@gmail.com](mailto:abakadanceacademy@gmail.com) or call 617-283-2010.

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

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

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](http://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, Pastries, Paklava and more. Armenian Music and Children's Games.

*continued on next page*

# Kenneth Martin to Teach Photography Course in Yerevan

BOSTON – Prof. Kenneth Martin is headed to the American University of Armenia (AUA) in Yerevan to teach Photography! Joining AUA's Summer Program 2019, Martin will teach “Lens on Armenia: Photojournalism in Yerevan.” Students from the United States and around the world are invited to join the course with current students of AUA.

Martin’s courses are fast-paced, informative, and lots of exciting excursions complement the in-class experience. In Lens on Armenia, students will grasp the basics of digital photography, camera handling, and standard practices for finding and reporting news with visual journalism. Students will also create telling photo essays presenting the life and times of Armenia and the issues that define the culture. Students will also get an introduction to the history of photography so they understand they are part of a timeline of great image makers.

“Lens on Armenia: Photojournalism in Yerevan,” is a three-credit course, running from July 8-August 8.

Martin has been teaching photography and photojournalism for many years in the Communication and Journalism Department at Suffolk University in Boston, where he is a senior lecturer, and has designed and taught



Prof. Kenneth Martin

all of the photography courses at the university including in the Graphic Arts Program of the Department of Art and Design.

He has created and taught multiple teacher-led study abroad courses for Suffolk University (SU) at the SU Dakar Campus in Senegal, West Africa, the SU Madrid Campus in Spain, and led students to the Lorenzo de Medici Italian International Institute in Tuscany, Italy. He also has taught courses for the School for International Training (SIT) in Dakar.

In addition to teaching, Martin is a professional photographer and photojournalist and has worked for several photo agencies and shoots for many human services organizations and other businesses and organizations especially in the Boston area. He was an early member of the Impact Visuals Photo Agency, contributed to the Landov Agency, and is currently a member of Zuma Press the largest photography agency in the world.

Martin is originally from Worcester, attended local schools and is a graduate of the College of the Holy Cross where he majored in history and studied art history, fine arts, archaeology, and political science. He is also a graduate of the New England School of Photography where he majored in Editorial Photography. Ken is former co-chair of the New England chapter of the American Society of Picture Professionals. He is currently faculty adviser to the Suffolk University Armenian Student Association.

Visit [summer.aua.am](http://summer.aua.am) for more information about AUA’s Summer Program 2019, Lens on Armenia, how to apply, and more.

# Recipe Corner

## Guest Recipe

by Christine Vartanian Datian



## Yeranouhe Nanny’s Sarma Gurgood

Robyn Kalajian says this is one of her favorite summer recipes that her maternal grandmother used to make called Sarma Gurgood.

Robyn and her siblings grew up in New Jersey eating bulgur – lots of it. It was served as pilaf, an ingredient in soup or stews, as kufteh, bulgur and potato kufteh, and as a favorite summer side dish called Sarma Gurgood, and in numerous other recipes.

Some might refer to Sarma Gurgood as tabbouleh, except that tabbouleh contains a lot of parsley with a little bit of bulgur, and Sarma Gurgood’s base is mostly bulgur with a little bit of parsley by comparison.

Robyn adds, “My maternal grandmother, Yeranouhe Vartanesian, a master in the kitchen, prepared many recipes without using a recipe, of course. She was from Musa Dagh, Syria. In the early 1900’s, Yeranouhe Nanny was in her teens when she climbed down the mountain with the remaining villagers to be rescued by the French waiting in their ships in the Mediterranean Sea. If you’ve seen the film, “The Promise,” there is a very emotional scene at the end depicting this incredible rescue.”

During the summer months, Sarma Gurgood was the perfect meal for the family, Robyn adds. Her family would gather around the picnic table which sat under Nanny’s huge grape arbor. She would serve this dish with fresh, tender grape leaves, lettuce leaves and Armenian bread.



- INGREDIENTS**
- 2 cups (#2) bulgur
  - Tap water (see directions for amount)
  - Cumin, to taste
  - Paprika, to taste
  - Allspice, to taste
  - 1/4 teaspoon cayenne pepper, optional
  - Dash salt
  - 3 scallions, chopped
  - 1 medium onion, chopped
  - 1/4 cup fresh mint leaves, roughly chopped
  - 1 bunch flat-leaf Italian parsley, stems removed, thoroughly washed and roughly chopped
  - 4 oz. tomato paste, diluted in a 2 to 3 tablespoons of water
  - 1 to 2 tablespoons red pepper paste, optional
  - Juice of one large lemon
  - About 1/2 cup olive oil
- PREPARATION**
- Place bulgur in a large mixing bowl.
  - Measure 2 cups of water from the faucet. Pour the water over the bulgur and stir. Cover the bowl with plastic wrap. Allow the bulgur to soak up the water, about 20 - 30 minutes, until it begins to soften. The grains should not become mushy. Strain any excess water. The bulgur grains should be tender, but with a slightly chewy texture. The grains will continue to soften as it absorbs moisture from the other ingredients.
  - Stir in all of the spices, onions, scallions, mint, parsley, diluted tomato paste, and lemon juice to the bulgur. Add the oil a little at a time. NOTE: If using red pepper paste in addition to tomato paste, dilute the pepper paste along with the tomato paste.
  - Sample and adjust the seasonings according to your taste. Cover and refrigerate until ready to serve.
  - Yield: 8 servings
- (NOTE: This recipe is best when made ahead of time so the flavors have time to blend.)
- Recipe courtesy of Robyn Kalajian at [TheArmenianKitchen.com](http://TheArmenianKitchen.com)

# CALENDAR

from previous page

## NEW JERSEY

**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.

## 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

Center70 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.**



## COMMENTARY

## COMMENTARY

# The Battlefield of Armenia's Domestic Politics Has Moved to Karabakh

By Edmond Y. Azadian

Everyday a dramatic development takes place in Armenia's domestic politics but all hell broke loose this weekend with the release of Robert Kocharyan, Armenia's second president, who was incarcerated pending his trial. He stands accused of subverting Armenia's constitution during the riots of March 1, 2008, when 10 people were killed, including two police officers.

The trial sessions had become a circus with the demonstrations and cheers of Kocharyan fans and jeers of his opponents. The trial sessions became also topics of heated discourse in the news media. It is ironic that no one has been questioning why there is so much attention on Kocharyan, when the Velvet Revolution had targeted Serzh Sargsyan (*Merjeer Serjin* – Refuse Serzh).

Indeed, the latter is free and active at the helm of his decimated Republican Party and planning his political comeback.

The Velvet Revolution had come and swept away the old guard monopolizing the political scene in Armenia. Some groups also tried to export the revolution to Karabakh (Artsakh) but cooler heads prevailed there, realizing the delicate and precarious situation in that territory. But that did not deter all the losing parties in Armenia's last parliamentary election from trying their luck in Karabakh, by building their own power bases there. The movement began with a convention of the ARF (Armenian Revolutionary Federation, Dashnaksutyun), which held its convention last February in Stepanakert, where the outgoing leader of the party, Hrand Markaryan, did not hesitate to state in his parting salvo that his party will wipe away Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan's Social Contract Party from power and take over the government to steer it away from its current course.

The ARF returned to Karabakh for a second time in May for a political powerplay by organizing a forum and inviting many other groups, including former prime minister and presidential candidate Vazgen Manukyan, who presided over the forum, the purpose of which was to generate public opinion to force the conclusion of a treaty between Armenia and Karabakh, featuring the first as a guarantor of the security of the latter. Never mind that the idea did not gain much traction, but that was beside the point, because the organizers intended to send a message that the party was alive and well even after losing the parliamentary elections.

Next on the stage was the former president, Serzh Sargsyan, who delivered his first political speech since his ouster from power.

Another phase in this chain of events is the gnashing of teeth of the Sasna Tserer militant party, which has been claiming that as long as the current political elite in Karabakh is not toppled, the Velvet Revolution could not be considered complete.

Under the shadow of this invasion of political forces from Armenia, the Karabakh people have been minding their own domestic politics, preparing for the next presidential election. As the current president, Bako Sahakyan, has declared that he will not seek the office again, four candidates have emerged.

At this point, the major contenders seem to be Arayik Harutyunyan, the former prime minister of Karabakh, who has developed agricultural infrastructure there, enjoying the support of the population. Harutyunyan, although popular, has not been involved in the Karabakh negotiations.

Samvel Babayan has been a Karabakh war hero, but his political career is checkered with opportunistic actions which have landed him in jail twice, in both Karabakh and Armenia.

Valery Balasayan is another hero who can check Babayan's adventurous impulses.

The last candidate is Ashod Ghoulyan, the current speaker of parliament. Although a solid politician, his popularity and chances of success are low.

In all Karabakh elections, the discreet hand of the government in Yerevan has been in action. Thus far, that influence has been subtle.

But back to Kocharyan's release from jail. It looks like it was the last straw which broke the camel's back, by exposing the simmering rift between the governments in Armenia and Karabakh.

The seeds of this discord had been sown by Armenia's first president, Levon Ter-Petrosian, who during his entire career in political opposition has claimed that the Karabakh clan has usurped power in Armenia, building up resentment among Armenia's population. That resentment was expressed at the Kocharyan trial when the judge ordered the end of his incarceration before the for-

mer's trial. As Kocharyan's supporters cheered the decision, his opponents began blaming President Sahakyan and former President Arkady Ghukasyan, labeling them as "traitors" and "Turks."

Many believed that the Velvet Revolution had brought about the end of the Karabakh clan, yet with Kocharyan's release, they suspect future mischief will be afoot once again from that front.

The decision itself has led to many diverse interpretations and heated debates; some people believe that the decision was the result of the freedom of the courts from political pressure, courtesy of the current administration. Others interpret the situation to mean that Pashinyan has lost control of the runaway judiciary system. Still others opine that the decision was made by the old corrupt judges left over from the previous regime.

But all the indications lead one to believe that the entire issue was the outcome of political pressure from Moscow. Indeed, President Vladimir Putin had sent congratulatory birthday messages to Kocharyan while the latter was in prison, indicating his displeasure over the plight of his former ally and personal friend. There is no doubt that the Russian president must have personally pleaded Kocharyan's case during his meetings with Prime Minister Pashinyan.

And ever since Pashinyan came to power, friendly relations with Russia have failed to improve, no matter how hard the Armenian prime minister tries.

Mr. Putin cares less about how much mayhem may have been created by the leaders of the previous corrupt regime. From his perspective, the Velvet Revolution had all the trimmings and methods of the color revolutions in Georgia and Ukraine, and as a result, Russia's staunch friends were being traumatized.

There must be some truth to that perspective, because in this day and age, regime change and the toppling of governments are not always achieved by guns. Modern techniques are much more refined. Any head of state who is in the way of a major power is first vilified and demonized through powerful social media. That task is completed by the "charitable" mission of the likes of the Soros Foundation and hired guns in the press.

Certainly pressure from Putin's front on Pashinyan brought to bear Kocharyan's release. Pashinyan needed only a legal fig leaf to

set Kocharyan free. That legal leaf was provided by Bako Sahakyan and Arkady Ghukasyan, former comrades-in-arms of Kocharyan and Sargsyan during the independence war in Karabakh, who undertook the mission anticipating insults to be hurled at them at the courthouse.

The rift between Armenia and Karabakh will lead to a disastrous course which should be avoided at all costs.

There is no doubt that outside forces may have been involved in breaking the Armenian resolve to hold on to Karabakh at all costs.

All these internecine quarrels

are taking place under the watchful eyes of Ilham Aliyev, who has been holding murderer Ramil Safarov's symbolic ax to strike our people in Karabakh and Armenia.

Ever since Pashinyan came to power, his supporters have been itching to establish transitional justice, to be able to garner sweeping powers to settle scores with the leaders of the previous administration. The turmoil created with Kocharyan release provided that opportunity to the prime minister to act. On May 20, he ordered all the courts to close down and he took to social media to announce his decision.

Armenia's Constitution (Article 163-2) forbids the establishment of special courts to prevent the executive from wielding absolute power. The next session of the parliament will debate how to circumvent that issue and move on. All dictators in history have spoken on behalf of the people and assumed power on behalf of the people, seldom using them for the good of the people. This situation inspires some fears as the prime minister already has under his control the executive and legislative branches of the government and now he will add the judiciary, to give him absolute power. There is a wait-and-see attitude to find out where this power consolidation will lead.

In our history, the empire of Tigranes the Great collapsed with the collusion of his son with his Roman enemies. In 1375 the Cilician Kingdom fell to the Mameluks, because the quarrels of the princes had weakened the kingdom. Those cases have to put us on guard regarding a repeat performance on Tuesday, May 21.

Only a look over the Azerbaijani border may sober up all political hot heads, promoters of dissension and myopic politicians. The view of the Azeri military build-up on our border should be sufficient cause for caution and the use of wisdom.



# Mirror Spectator

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COMMENTARY

# Armenian Democracy Needs To be Brought to Balance

By Anrdanik Melik-Israelian

COUNTRIES have varying historical experiences with “checks and balances.” As a result, each country has a slightly different perception of what the phrase means. The concept is well known in the United States due to its extensive use. As a federal democracy, the US has a multi-layer system of horizontal and vertical checks and balances in place. On one hand, the division of power between executive, legislative and judicial branches create a balance between them horizontally. At the same time, liberals and lonservatives balance each other horizontally on federal and state levels. In the vertical dimension, the power is divided between states and federal authorities and further on to counties and municipal units, which creates a multi-layer horizontal balance. In addition, interest groups and NGOs advocating for certain groups and entities are among the main actors in US politics balancing both against each others’ interests horizontally and against the authorities vertically. The synergy of self-help efforts of all the entities mentioned above form the wide balance of US politics. This balance helps keep together the third largest, yet democratic country in the world by population.

In Armenia, checks and balances are almost exclusively associated with the balance between the three branches of power, which is a horizontal type of a balance. During the last Parliamentary elections in December 2018, another aspect of checks and balances was also widely discussed – the opposition countering the ruling party in the National Assembly. This is also a horizontal balance. Nikol Pashinyan’s Yelk Alliance was obviously going to receive the overwhelming majority of votes, so the other parties were basically campaigning for second place. Most of them were positioning themselves as the “only real opposition” suitable to “check and balance” the Yelk Alliance. However, Prime Minister’s party ended up getting 70 percent of the votes, leaving very little opportunities for the opposition parties to implement checks and balances. The remaining seats are split between two parties – Prosperous Armenia and Bright Armenia.

The current Armenian political system is out of balance, but not because the opposition is weak, but because labor unions and other interest groups are not strong enough. In other words, Armenia lacks efficient vertical balances rather than horizontal ones. And that is paradoxical at

first glance, since Armenia has just achieved the most important vertical balance – free and fair elections. However, the revolution and subsequent elections have only helped establish the majority rule, leaving more work to do for the empowerment of interest groups. Without those groups being active and vocal, political parties are free to avoid from specific pledges and measurable commitments.

For instance, the mentioned promise to oppose the ruling party in the Parliament is in itself a vague and immeasurable commitment. It basically means escalating any discussion in the parliament and harshly criticizing government, while having no chance to have any impact on the actual votes in the Parliament. It would be more and more constructive for all parties to campaign for specific results and give specific campaign promises to as many interest groups as possible. It would also be great to see a dialogue between parties and different professional unions, where the latter determine their goals independently and put forward their own agenda rather than letting the parties to do so on their behalf.

Armenia does have many unions of the public servants, state universities, teachers, artists and other professionals, but most of these are a legacy from the Soviet times with not much tradition of acting independently, let alone countering the government. Most of the unions I am aware of

THE CURRENT ARMENIAN POLITICAL SYSTEM IS OUT OF BALANCE, BUT NOT BECAUSE THE OPPOSITION IS WEAK, BUT BECAUSE LABOR UNIONS AND OTHER INTEREST GROUPS ARE NOT STRONG ENOUGH.

have been keeping themselves busy with things like giving out Christmas presents, organizing Christmas parties for the children or negotiating discount vacation tours for the employees. All these activities should be dropped at this point, and the unions should concentrate on the actual problems their members have (e.g. low wages, labor rights protection, high taxes etc.).

There are also some efficient unions in Armenia which have always had a determined agenda and been very vocal of their needs. Such an example is the Union of Advanced Technology Enterprises, which is the oldest union of Tech companies in Armenia. Demonstrations by different groups, like farmers, dentists or taxi drivers, are also frequent in Armenia. However, very few of them are acting as institutionalized entities with a specific long-term agenda, roadmaps and an entity speaking on their behalf.

Now is the best time for professional unions to be reformed and get organized on their agenda. They should be an essential part of the New Armenia’s political balance. The fact that the current government has a high legitimacy should encourage the activities of interest groups rather than discouraging them. The government should not be expected to create its own vertical counterbalance. It is up to each individual in Armenia to join with people he has common interests and uphold these interests, and it is totally fine to do so while also supporting and sympathizing the current government in general. Everyone has problems, and they are never solved all at once. Thus each group should constantly advocate for its rights and individuals, and the synergy of those efforts upholds the balance and harmony in the entire society, no matter how big or small.

# Pashinyan Is Navigating Dangerous Waters



By Philippe Raffi Kalfayan

Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan’s decision to block access to the courts of the Republic of Armenia, using as an excuse the necessary purge of the judiciary, is unconstitutional, dangerous and barely hiding his impulsive reaction to the decision of the Avan Court judge to release Robert Kocharyan on bail and under surveillance.

The fate of the latter is a permanent and personal obsession of the prime minister. This impulsive reaction could compromise the positive transformation that Pashinyan has undeniably brought to Armenian public life since coming to power. The humiliating incarceration of Robert Kocharyan, we wrote in August 2018 (<https://mirrorspectator.com/2018/08/23/pashinyan-needs-to-succeed-but-questions-remain-about-methods/>), was legally questionable and politically useless; its only consequence was to make him a political victim and to awaken his inner warrior. Instead, it would have been wiser to quickly put in place the recommended transitional justice mechanism.

The pressure of two Artsakh presidents who brought their weight to obtain Robert Kocharyan’s conditional release, adds an additional risk, that of exacerbating an anti-Karabakh sentiment in the Armenian population supporting Pashinyan. On the legal side, the bail of Bako Sahakyan and Arkady Ghukasyan is also questionable: what would be the remedy of the judicial system of Armenia against these two persons, owners of multiple citizenships, one of them being “head of state,” if Robert Kocharyan were to not respect the conditions imposed for his release?

This does not detract from the fact that the Monday, May 20 appeal by Pashinyan to the “people” to block access to all courts and tribunals in the country is unconstitutional: it violates the separation of powers and contradicts the alleged non-interference in judicial system, although the Prime Minister defends himself from it. At 13:30, he launched a new appeal to the people, this time to unblock the courts’ access.

Everybody knows that the judicial system has been corrupt for many years, but there has been a lot of progress over the past 25 years in both the training of judges and the functioning of the justice system. With the exception of some exposed criminal or economic cases involving prominent individuals, the overwhelming majority of cases are handled professionally and humanely. There is no justification for carrying out this coup against the justice system today, in such a brutal way and calling on the “people.” There is a constitution that defines the rights and obligations of the institutions. It is not up to the people to dictate the decisions of the judges. The rational criteria which would make it possible to measure the confidence of the “people” in its justice are difficult to fix so much the perception of justice is subjective, that is to say personal.

President Armen Sarkissian, absent from the country, did not make a mistake: in the middle of the night he immediately called for reason and calm. The human rights mediator, Armand Tatoyan, alerted the public on the dangers of this decision to block the courts. At the same time, he condemned the aggression against former ARF leader Hrand Markaryan in front of his grandchildren while walking in Yerevan. This act is not trivial; it is even novel, because in the traditional culture of Armenia, it is a sacred principle to spare children this type of a scene. The fact that this incident took place shows a dangerous radicalization. The prime minister announcing that the second phase of his “revolution” is starting gives a green light to these types of excesses. This week at least one judge was physically assaulted while trying to enter his court. The calls to people to pressure institutions are dangerous in that they participate in this culture of popular violence, which could quickly degenerate into a bloody confrontation.

The prime minister’s intervention on Facebook, where we can see sitting around him a group of officials, such as ministers, the ombudsman, the chief of police, the head of the Special Investigative Services, the public prosecutor, the army chief of staff, etc., creates discomfort. It is obvious that Pashinyan leads the country alone and without prior consultation. Video recordings of government sessions show it regularly; on Monday, the faces of the gathered people were tense and nervous. The Minister of Justice, Artak Zeynalyan, who was eagerly taking notes, seems to have discovered the mea-

sures announced by Pashinyan while they relate mainly to his ministry.

The main opposition political parties, whether present in Parliament or not, have all denounced the violation of the constitutional order.

Faced with this personal isolation, Pashinyan appeals to the people of the Republic of Armenia, but also to the people of the Republic of Artsakh to fight against the rulers there. This appeal shows once again the ambiguity of the political situation between the Republic of Armenia and the Republic of Artsakh. Pashinyan, who, a few weeks ago, claimed he could not make a decision on the future of Artsakh because he had not been elected by its inhabitants, now calls upon them to stand up against their rulers!

While the major economic and social challenges remain, the prime minister plays a political card that he is likely to lose, but it is Armenia that would come out weakened again. Pashinyan’s unconstitutional outbursts, if repeated, risk ruining his own efforts and President Sarkissian’s efforts to attract major international investors to Armenia. Moreover, if chaos sets in, it will lead to massive emigration.

Let’s not kid ourselves; euphoria around the dynamism of new technologies and real assets that Armenia has in this area will not be enough to fill the void of the rest of the economy, especially because this young, educated, and talented population is distant from the world of politics and has the particularity of being “globalized,” that is to say that many countries will be happy to host them so that can prosper.

The precursors of this vindictive, authoritarian and contradictory personality were present in his speech of August 17, 2018. If the situation worsens on the ground, opportunists and courtiers who have joined Pashinyan and his party are likely to turn their backs just as quickly and opportunely, increasing its isolation a little more. What would be the next “revolutionary” measure to counter opponents? Tanks?

[Philippe Raffi Kalfayan is a Lawyer, Lecturer in International Law and a former Secretary General of FIDH (International Federation of Human Rights). He is a regular columnist for the *Mirror-Spectator*.]



## COMMENTARY



My Turn

By Harut Sassounian

## US Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee's Acknowledgment of The Armenian Genocide

In recent years and months, Arab countries have been liberating themselves from the nefarious political influence of the Turkish government and are beginning to take an honest position on the Armenian Genocide.

The Arab governments, despite their long-standing sympathy and support for survivors of the Armenian Genocide who sought shelter in various Middle Eastern countries, had been reluctant to acknowledge the Armenian Genocide due to their shared Islamic faith with Turkey.

The first Arab state to break the yoke of the Turkish blockade to acknowledge this genocidal crime was Lebanon. On April 3, 1997, the Lebanese Chamber of Deputies (Parliament) adopted a resolution recognizing the Armenian Genocide. A second resolution was adopted by the Lebanese Parliament on May 11, 2000, stating that it “recognizes and condemns the genocide perpetrated against the Armenian people and expresses its complete solidarity with demands of its citizens.”

Since then, Syria's President and various Parliament members have spoken about the Armenian Genocide several times, but have yet to adopt an official Parliamentary resolution recognizing it as genocide.

There have been similar moves in Egypt where a lawsuit

was filed against Turkey on the Armenian Genocide. However, no formal resolution has been adopted by the Egyptian Parliament.

In March, the Interim Libyan government that is attempting to overthrow Libya's central regime issued a statement recognizing the Armenian Genocide. This came as a complete surprise since there is no Armenian community in Libya.

Another Arab country is rumored to be considering the acknowledgement of the Armenian Genocide, but I prefer not to name it in order not to alert the Turkish government and prevent it from lobbying against it.

More recently, an unexpected acknowledgement was made on April 25, 2019 when The American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee (ADC) issued its first official statement recognizing the Armenian Genocide.

According to its website, “ADC is a civil rights organization committed to defending the rights of people of Arab descent and promoting their rich cultural heritage. ADC was founded by former US Sen. James Abourezk in 1980. Today, ADC is the largest Arab-American grassroots organization in the US. ADC supports the human and civil rights of all people and opposes racism and bigotry in any form.”

Here is the full text of ADC's sympathetic statement: “Over 100 years ago, the Ottoman Empire systematically massacred 1.5 million Armenians and forcibly displaced the Armenian people from their historic lands. Today, we remember the Armenian Genocide and commemorate all of those who lost their lives and homes. The ADC stands in solidarity with the Armenian people. Following the systematic massacre that took place between 1915-1918, many Armenian survivors fled to nearby Arab lands to seek refuge to later build new homes. Over the centuries, Armenians established thriving communities in Arab countries, particularly in the Fertile Crescent. The Armenian community has been an intrinsic part of Arab society, existing in Palestine for centuries, as well as in Lebanon and Syria. As we mark our moral stain on our global society, the ADC stands shoulder-to-shoulder with our Armenian brothers and sisters. Our communities know too

well the price of systematic dispossession and oppression, and together we will continue to defend those facing injustice and persecution.”

I am sure Armenians worldwide thank ADC for its compassionate stand. In response to an email I sent to ADC, Abed Ayoub, ADC's legal and policy Director, wrote that this is the first time that ADC has issued an official statement on the Armenian Genocide.

In response to my question as to what prompted ADC to issue such a statement this year, Mr. Ayoub stated: “Over the course of the past couple years we have had the privilege of working with young Armenian-Americans on issues that impact us all, and as a result of this relationship we began exploring the idea of issuing a statement as a show of solidarity. Additionally, many of our members have connections and roots to the community. Finally, with the rise of hate and bigotry across the world we felt now is an important time to issue a statement.”

When I asked if ADC is planning to issue a similar statement on next April 24, Mr. Ayoub responded affirmatively.

I also asked Mr. Ayoub if ADC had received any criticism for its statement from the Turkish government, and Turkish or Islamic groups in the United States, he stated that ADC had received no such criticism. However, “our membership was overwhelmingly supportive of the statement.”

Finally, when I asked what ADC thought about President Trump's refusal to use the term Armenian Genocide, Mr. Ayoub answered: “Most of what President Trump does is troubling, however, his refusal to use the term Armenian Genocide is in line with prior Administrations. Failure to use the term is a failure to recognize the pain and suffering inflicted on millions of innocent lives.”

Naturally, I welcome ADC's statement on the Armenian Genocide and Mr. Ayoub's answers to my questions. I suggest that Armenian organizations send ADC's statement to Embassies of all Arab countries in Washington, D.C., asking them to urge their governments to acknowledge the Armenian Genocide.

# WSJ: When Turkey Destroyed Its Christians

By Benny Morris and Dror Ze'evi

Between 1894 and 1924, the number of Christians in Asia Minor fell from some 3-4 million to just tens of thousands – from 20 percent of the area's population to under 2 percent. Turkey has long attributed this decline to wars and the general chaos of the period, which claimed many Muslim lives as well. But the descendants of Turkey's Christians, many of them dispersed around the world since the 1920s, maintain that the Turks murdered about half of their forebears and expelled the rest.

The Christians are correct. Our research verifies their claims: Turkey's Armenian, Greek and Assyrian (or Syriac) communities disappeared as a result of a staggered campaign of genocide beginning in 1894, perpetrated against them by their Muslim neighbors. By 1924, the Christian communities of Turkey and its adjacent territories had been destroyed.

Over the past decade, we have sifted through the Turkish, U.S., British and French archives, as well as some Greek materials and the papers of the German and Austro-Hungarian foreign ministries. This research has made it possible to document a strikingly consistent pattern of ethno-religious atrocity over three decades, perpetrated by the Turkish government, army, police and populace.

The concentrated slaughter of Turkey's Armenians in 1915-16, commonly known as the Armenian genocide, is well documented and acknowledged (outside of Turkey, which still bitterly objects to the charge). But the Armenian genocide was only a part, albeit the centerpiece, of a larger span of elimination that lasted some 30 years. Our work provides the first detailed description and analysis of the 1894-96 massacres and the destruction of the region's Greek and remaining Armenian communities in 1919-24 by Mustafa

Kemal Atatürk, the founder of the Turkish republic.

The bloodshed was importantly fueled throughout by religious animus. Muslim Turks – aided by fellow Muslims, including Kurds, Circassians, Chechens and Arabs – murdered about two million Christians in bouts of slaughter immediately before, during and after World War I. These massacres were organized by three successive governments, those of the Ottoman Sultan Abdulhamid II, the Young Turks and, finally, Atatürk. These governments also expelled between 1.5 and 2 million Christians, mostly to Greece.

The U.N.'s Genocide Convention defines it as a series of acts committed “with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnic, racial or religious group.” Such acts include killing, causing bodily or mental harm, inflicting conditions calculated to bring about physical destruction, imposing measures intended to prevent births and “forcibly transferring children of the group to another group.” The events of 1894-1924 meet this test.

The official Turkish position denies any intent or policy of systematic elimination. Just last month, President Recep Tayyip Erdogan wrote to the Armenian patriarch of Turkey to “offer my sincere condolences” to the grandchildren of “the Ottoman Armenians who lost their lives under [the] harsh conditions of the First World War” and to urge him “to avoid helping those who seek to create hatred, grudge and hostility by distorting our common history.”

The slaughter that we describe and analyze doesn't conform to any narrative attributing the deaths to the “exigencies of war.” One particularly horrific aspect alongside each bout of killing was the mass rape of tens of thousands of Christian women and their forced conversion – together with their children and thousands of children whose parents had been murdered – to Islam. Indeed, so pervasive was the sexual violence and kidnapping that many of today's Turks, whether they know it or not, can trace at least part of their ancestry to these abducted Christians.

The tragedy began during 1894-96, when Sultan Abdulhamid II unleashed a series of massacres against the Ottoman Empire's Armenian minority, fearing that they threatened the integrity of his realm. Some 200,000 people, almost all Armenians, were killed; many thousands of Turkish villagers, townspeople, officials, policemen and soldiers took part, as well as Kurdish tribesmen. At each site, alongside the pillage and murder, many thousands of Armenian women were raped or abducted. Some would eventually be killed; many more were forced into Muslim households and converted, serving for the rest of their lives as wives, concubines or servants.

In January 1896, in the southern Turkish town of Palu, an American missionary reported that the Turks “continue to carry off girls and women, keeping them a few days and then returning them with their lives blasted.” His meaning was made clear in an August 1896 report by another missionary in Mardin: “We saw girls not a few who returned from the hands of their captors weeping bitterly, shrieking and crying: ‘We are defiled! No one will take us in mar-

riage.’”

Turkey and Germany were allies in World War I, but on July 7, 1915, the German ambassador in Constantinople, Baron Hans von Wangenheim, reported that deportation columns of Armenians from the eastern city of Erzurum were being ambushed by Kurdish bands, with “the men and children...butchered and the women carried away.” On July 27, a German engineer on the Baghdad railway reported that a Turkish sergeant “abducted 18 women and girls and sold them to Arabs and Kurds for 2-3 Mejidiehs,” a coin that was a fifth of a Turkish pound.

During the war, slave markets emerged in Aleppo, Damascus and several Anatolian towns in which Armenian girls who had been corralled by Turkish troops were sold for a pittance. Officials of the Ottoman Interior Ministry seem to have encouraged abduction and conversion. In December 1915, a telegram from the ministry decreed it “necessary for young Armenian girls to be married with Muslims.”

During 1919-22, amid a war against invading Greek forces in western Anatolia, Turkish nationalist forces commanded by Atatürk mounted a campaign of ethnic cleansing against Turkish Greek communities, concentrated along the Black Sea and the Aegean coast. Claiming that Ottoman Greeks were assisting the invading Greek army, the Turks took the opportunity to murder hundreds of thousands of them, as well as expelling more than a million Ottoman Greeks to Greece.

After the defeat of the Greek army, many thousands (and possibly tens of thousands) of the Greek and Armenian inhabitants of Smyrna (now known as Izmir) were murdered. The American consul general in the town, George Horton, reported that one of the “outstanding features of the Smyrna horror” was the “wholesale violation of women and girls.” In 1924, the British Foreign Office assessed that “not less than 80,000 Christians, half of them Armenians, and probably more” were still being detained in Turkish houses, “many of them in slavery.”

In all, we found that tens of thousands of Christian women suffered rape, abduction and forced conversion during this period, along with the mass murder and expulsion of their husbands, sons and fathers.

The German people and government have long acknowledged the genocidal horrors of the Third Reich, made financial reparations, expressed profound remorse and worked to abjure racism. But every Turkish government since 1924 – together with most of the Turkish people – has continued to deny the painful history we have uncovered.

(Dr. Morris is a professor emeritus of Middle Eastern studies at Ben Gurion University of the Negev in Israel, at which Dr. Ze'evi is a professor of Middle Eastern studies. This essay is adapted from their new book, *The Thirty-Year Genocide: Turkey's Destruction of Its Christian Minorities, 1894-1924*, published by Harvard University Press. It originally appeared in the May 18 edition of the *Wall Street Journal*.)



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