

Charles Aznavour to Be Honored in NYC by FAR

By Florence Avakian

NEW YORK – Mark Friday, May 20 on your calendars. The date marks an event sponsored by the Fund for Armenian Relief (FAR) that celebrates both the 20th anniversary of Armenia's independence, as well as one of the world's greatest singers, showmen, songwriters and philanthropists, Charles Aznavour. He is also Armenia's ambassador to Switzerland, Armenia's permanent delegate to the United Nations in Geneva and

French ambassador-at large to Armenia.

The gala tribute will take place at New York's elegant Cipriani Wall Street venue, with a reception starting at 7 p.m., and dinner with a special program at 8 p.m. Introducing Aznavour will be singer Liza Minnelli, and master of ceremonies will be actor Eric Bogosian, both of whom are on the "Honorary Committee of Tribute to Aznavour." Other known personalities on the committee include Sir Elton John, Celine Dion, Atom Egoyan and the ambassadors of France and Armenia to the United States and the United Nations.

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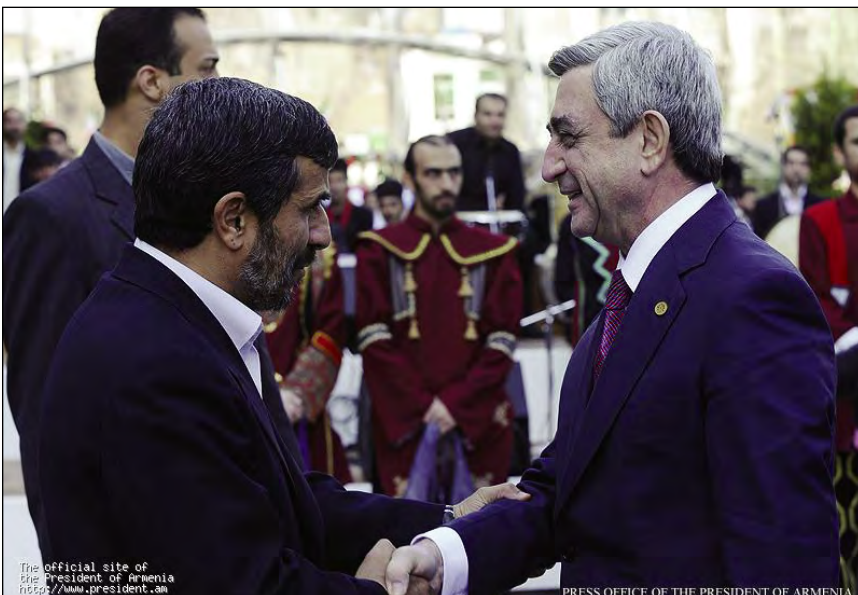
Charles Aznavour

Iran Seeks 'Unlimited' Cooperation with Armenia

By Emil Danielyan

TEHRAN (RFE/RL) – Iranian President Mahmud Ahmadinejad reaffirmed Iran's desire to expand political and economic links with Armenia during weekend talks with his visiting Armenian counterpart, Serge Sargisian.

The two men reviewed bilateral ties and, in particular, the implementation of



President Serge Sargisian, right, with President Mahmud Ahmadinejad in Tehran

Michigan Armenians Mourn Death of Community Leader and Philanthropist Edgar Hagopian

DETROIT – For the past several years, the members of the Michigan-Armenian community shared the agony of Edgar Hagopian, as he battled cancer. He lost his valiant fight against the disease on March 27.

The community was still rocked by the news of the loss, despite knowing that it had been anticipated. As he suffered from excruciating pains, his mind lucid to the end, he was always thinking about this community and extending a hand to someone in need.

Hagopian had won many accolades for his generosity and leadership. The last tribute was paid to him on February 19, at a banquet organized in his honor by the Tekeyan Cultural Association.

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Edgar Hagopian

Armenian-Iranian commercial projects on the sidelines of official celebrations of the ancient Persian Nowruz holiday.

Sargisian attended the festivities along with the presidents of Afghanistan, Iraq, Tajikistan and Turkmenistan. Several other

regional states were represented by more low-level officials.

According to Iran's English-language Press TV network, Ahmadinejad told Sargisian last Sunday that Tehran "has

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Orhan Pamuk Ordered to Pay Compensation For Armenian and Kurdish References

ISTANBUL (*Milliyet*) – Nobel Laureate Orhan Pamuk will pay a total of 6,000 liras (about \$4,000) in compensation to five people for writing in 2005, "The Turks have killed 30,000 Kurds and 1 million Armenians in this land." Pamuk has 15 days to appeal the court decision levying the fine, according to the legal procedures.

Pamuk was sued in 2005 by five people, including lawyer Kemal Kerişsiz, the head of the Lawyers' Association at the time and currently under arrest in the Ergenekon court case, as well as four other people who are relatives of soldiers killed in action. They accused Pamuk of "having accused all Turkish people." The Sisli court in Istanbul initially rejected to hear the case, arguing that "the complainants are simply individuals of the Turkish nation" and thus it was impossible to accept that individual rights had been violated.

Kerişsiz then appealed the case to the



Orhan Pamuk

Supreme Court of Appeal, which decided to reject the court decision and thus asked the Sisli court to consider the case once more. After the latter's resistance, the file was sent to the Supreme Court of Appeal's General Committee. The committee decided in 2009 that the case concerned individuals and had to be considered by the court, "taking into account people's honor and

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NEWS IN BRIEF

Azeris Launch Attacks

STEPANAKERT (PanARMENIAN.Net) – Between March 20 and 26, Azerbaijan violated the ceasefire regime at the Karabagh conflict zone.

According to updated data of the Nagorno Karabagh Defense Army, Azerbaijan violated the ceasefire 250 times during the week, firing 1,800 shots.

The NKR Army press service stressed that in addition to typical weapons, the Azerbaijani forces used AGA grenade launchers against the Karabagh positions in Martuni on March 24 and 25.

Davutoglu: 2015 Will Be Dedicated to 'Armenian Issue'

LONDON (Arminfo) – The year of 2015 will be dedicated to the "Armenian issue," Turkish Foreign Minister Ahmet Davutoglu said in a speech at the symposium "On the way to the Great Turkey" organized here by a Turkish group.

The Turkish *Sabah* newspaper reported, Davutoglu said that the year of 2015 is the most convenient for summing up the results, and perhaps for starting a new policy. "We should enter the new century with the problems resolved. Turkey cannot stay at the regional level any more. To be more successful at the world arena, we should first of all settle the problems with our neighbors," Davutoglu said.

US Envoy Visits Raffi Hovannisian

YEREVAN (RFE/RL) – Marie Yovanovitch, the US ambassador to Armenia, visited opposition leader Raffi Hovannisian on Monday, on the 14th day of his hunger strike in protest of the Armenian government.

Hovannisian said that they discussed his health, the state of human rights and the overall political situation in the country. He said he reaffirmed his view that the Armenian authorities must embrace "radical solutions."

The ambassador's visit was construed by Hovannisian as a call for an end to his round-the-clock sit-in in Yerevan's Liberty Square. "The ambassador urged me silently, not with words," said the US-born leader of Zharangutyun (Heritage) party.

Hovannisian made clear that he would continue the hunger strike because the authorities have still not showed readiness to address his concerns.

Hovannisian said he is still awaiting "substantive proposals" from the authorities.

Asked whether he expects President Serge Sargisian to state that he is ready to call for snap elections, Hovannisian replied, "I have no such expectation. But I am ready to listen to any word uttered in good faith and reflecting the interests of the state from any official, be it the current president or an ordinary citizen."

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Actor's Actor

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ARMENIA

News From Armenia

President of Swiss Confederation Visits Armenia

YEREVAN (Armenpress) — Swiss Foreign Minister Micheline Calmy-Rey paid a two-day official visit to Armenia upon the invitation by President Serge Sargsian at the end of March. The presidential press service said that, within the framework of the visit, Calmy-Rey met the authorities of the republic, visited the Mother See of Holy Echmiadzin and met with Catholicos of All Armenians Karekin II.

She took part in the opening ceremony of the Swiss Embassy to Armenia. On the second day of her official visit, Calmy-Rey went to Gumri, to visit the CASA Swiss Humanitarian Fund.

Sargsian Pays Tribute to Late Premier Markarian

YEREVAN (Armenpress) — President Serge Sargsian, accompanied with the top leadership of the country, visited on March 25 the Yerevan Pantheon to pay tribute to the late former prime minister of Armenia, Andranik Markarian, on the occasion of the anniversary of his death, the president's press office reported.

Yerevan Police Chief Questioned in Murder Cover-Up Probe

YEREVAN (RFE/RL) — Major-General Nerses Nazarian, the chief of Yerevan's police department, has been questioned by law-enforcement authorities in connection with a criminal investigation that has resulted in the arrest of another police general, it emerged on Friday.

Hovannes Tamamian, the controversial head of the Directorate General of Criminal Investigations at Armenia's national police service, was arrested last Thursday on charges of abuse of power, carrying up to six years in prison.

Tamamian is accused of deliberately mishandling a murder investigation conducted by the police last year. He and the police chief of Yerevan's Arabkir district, Colonel Varuzhan Adamian, were dismissed from their positions late last month.

Nazarian refuted media claims that Adamian has implicated not only Tamamian but also Nazarian himself in the allegedly botched probe. "God forbid such things," he said. "The chief of the Yerevan police has nothing to do with such cases."

Tamamian's arrest and prosecution is a major embarrassment for the Armenian police, coming less than a year after the mysterious death of a man in police custody in the central town of Charentsavan. Last November, a local police officer was sentenced to eight years in prison in connection with that incident.

Nazarian did not deny media reports that the SIS and prosecutors are now also looking into other suspicious criminal cases handled by Tamamian. One of them led to the death of a man questioned at the Directorate General of Criminal Investigations in 2007.

The police claimed at the time that the 30-year-old Levon Gulian fell to his death while attempting to escape from a second-floor interrogation room.

Third Conference on Fairy Tales Takes Place In Yerevan

YEREVAN (Armenpress) — The third conference on the study of fairy tales, titled "Eastern Fairy Tale: Fairy Tales in East," was held March 30-31 at the Hovhannes Tumanyan Museum.

Alvard Divanyan, head of the museum's fairy tale department, reported that over 20 reports by ethnographers and literary specialists from Yerevan State University and the State Pedagogical University (named after Kh. Abovian), branch in Gumri, were made during the conference. Coverage of the conference will be published in *Voske Divan*.

Supreme Spiritual Council Meets at Mother See of Holy Echmiadzin

ECHMIADZIN — From March 17 to 19, the Supreme Spiritual Council convened its regular meeting in the Mother See of Holy Echmiadzin under the presidency of Karekin II, Supreme Patriarch and Catholicos of All Armenians.

Following the opening, the pontiff welcomed the presence of Archbishop Aram Ateshian, patriarchal vicar of the Armenian Patriarchate of Constantinople.

Archbishop Khajag Barsamian, Primate of the Eastern Diocese of the Armenian Church of America and Archbishop Hovnan Derderian, Primate of the Western Diocese of the Armenian Church of America served as co-chairmen of the meetings.

The members of the council were presented with information on the relationship between the hierarchal Sees and the Mother See. Co-chairmen of the committee Barsamian and Bishop Arshak Khachatryan, chancellor of the Mother See, reported on the recent activities of the Canonical and Liturgical Committee of the Catholicosate of All Armenians and the Catholicosate of the Great House of Cilicia.

Barsamian and Navasard Kjoyan, vicar of the Araratian Pontifical Diocese, presented a report on the outcome of the Brotherhood of St. James General Assembly. It was reported that a committee elected during the meeting would shortly present to Abp. Torkom

Manoogian, Armenian Patriarch of Jerusalem, relevant details taken from the Patriarchate Constitution, on a coadjutor patriarch.

Ateshian reported on the current issues of the Armenian Patriarchate of

parishes served as a base for the Pontifical Diocese and in Switzerland, where the World Council of Churches and other ecumenical institutions are operating, there was a need to raise the level of representation from the

Armenian Church. As a result of discussions, the Supreme Spiritual Council decided to appoint Rev. Mesrop Parsamian, vice chancellor of the Mother See, to serve as a Locum Tenens of the Armenian Diocese of Switzerland and to contribute to the reorganization of the Diocesan life. It was also decided to invite Rev. Abel Manoukian, of Geneva, to return to the Mother See



The members of the Supreme Spiritual Council at the meeting

Constantinople. He also presented upcoming events on the occasion of the 550th anniversary of the establishment of the Armenian Patriarchate of Constantinople.

Archbishop Norvan Zakarian, Pontifical Legate of Western Europe and Archbishop Yeznik Petrosian, reported on the current issues in the Armenian Diocese of Switzerland. The Armenian Diocese of Switzerland was established by the late Catholicos Vasken I in 1992. Bishop Viken Aykazian was appointed to serve as the first Primate of the Diocese. The local

of Holy Echmiadzin for other service.

Bishop Ararat Kaltakjian presented preliminary details of the visit of the Armenian Pontiff to the Dioceses of South America, scheduled for May 7 to 26.

There was also a review of the Inter-Church and Pontifical visit of the Armenian Catholicos to the Georgian Church and to the Armenian Diocese of Georgia which is planned for June. Bishop Hovakim Manoukian, director of the Inter-Church Relations Department of the Mother See and Bishop Vasken Mirzakhanian presented the agenda and outline of the visit.

Iranians Flock to Armenia on Nowruz Holiday

By Hasmik Smbatian

YEREVAN (RFE/RL) — Sabeh has long, bleached hair, and for once she does not have to hide it in public. The young woman is one of thousands of Iranians traveling to neighboring Armenia during two-week celebrations of *Nowruz*, the Persian New Year that began on Monday.

"I have come here for concerts, for fun and just to see the culture. I love Armenian culture, churches and things like that," she said shortly after arriving in Yerevan by bus from Tehran.

Sporting red baggy pants and a white jacket, Sabeh could already feel the difference between her country's stringent Islamic code of conduct and appearance for women and a more liberal environment in Armenia.

"Yeah, of course I feel freer," she said, grinning. "In Iran, they have restrictions on wearing clothes and we have no fun. I hope to have fun here."

So do at least 10,000 other Iranians of different ages and social background that are expected to visit Armenia in the next two weeks. Farsi speech can already be heard across downtown Yerevan, with groups of tourists — many of them wearing Western-style clothing — strolling in the streets, taking pictures and visiting its numerous cafes and restaurants.

"It's my first-ever trip to Armenia,"

said one Iranian woman. "It's a new country for me and it's nice, good. And I think people here are very, very calm."

For the Iranian tourists, visiting Armenia is also a rare opportunity to see and hear exiled Iranian singers banned in the Islamic Republic. Several such pop stars will give concerts in Yerevan's biggest indoor sports arena in the coming days.

Tereza, a young Armenian working for a local travel agency, expected capacity crowds at the 7,000-seat Hamalir arena as she briskly sold tickets to newly arrived tourists on Monday morning. "If things continue like this, all the seats in the Hamalir will be sold out," she said.

"It's illegal to have such concerts in Iran," explained one Iranian man. "There are some restrictions due to the regime. So they have to come to Armenia for concerts."

Iranian music will also be played in some of Yerevan's night clubs. They have reportedly been booked by Iranian DJs and entertainers.

The influx of Iranian tourists, which began in earnest two years ago, may not be massive by international standards but it creates a logistical headache for Armenian travel agencies grappling with a lack of accommodation and other underdeveloped tourism infrastructure. All Yerevan hotels have already been booked, practically in full, for the next two weeks, forcing them to accommodate many visitors in private apartments or small hotels outside the city.

"We don't have enough hotels," complained Arlen Davudian, the owner of the Tatev Tour agency. "According to our estimates, there are only between 3,700 and 4,000 hotel beds in Yerevan."

Davudian estimated the number of Iranians that will visit Armenia during this year's *Nowruz* holiday at 12,000. "People cite illogical numbers of Iranian tourists: 40,000, 100,000," he said. "They are grossly exaggerated."

Our city does not have the capacity to receive that many guests."

The businessman said many more Iranians would travel to Armenia if it had more inexpensive hotels. The Armenian government has so far done little to address that problem, he said.

Even so, the influx of Iranians appears to have already given a massive boost to Armenia's tourism industry. Travel firms and economic analysts say Iran's 70 million-strong population holds much greater revenue potential for the sector.

"A total of \$12 million in cash should come here from Iran in the next two weeks," said Davudian. "Tourism could earn this country very serious revenues. There just has to be a state approach to this."

New Ambassador of Ghana Presents Credentials to Foreign Minister Nalbandian

YEREVAN — On March 28, Armenian Foreign Minister Eduard Nalbandian received Seth Koranteng, the new ambassador of Ghana to Armenia (based in Moscow) so that Koranteng could present officially his credentials.

Congratulating him, Nalbandian wished Koranteng success in carrying out his mission in Armenia and expressed hope that he would contribute to the deepening of the relations between Armenia and Ghana.

Koranteng expressed gratitude for the wishes and underlined that his country is interested in the expansion and development of relations with Armenia. The ambassador of Ghana also assured that he would do his utmost for the further strengthening of bilateral relations.

Correction

The obituary about Sister Serena Menzagopian, which appeared in the March 19 issue, had the wrong age for her. She was 81.



INTERNATIONAL

AGBU YP Sofia Hosts Skylark Farm Author Antonia Arslan

SOFIA, Bulgaria – On March 2, the AGBU Young Professionals of Sofia (YP Sofia) hosted Antonia Arslan, author of *Skylark Farm*, at the Cinema Hall Lumiere. The presentation was followed by a screening of the Italian movie “The Lark Farm,” based on Arslan’s novel. One-hundred people attended the event and among the distinguished guests were Arsen Sehoian, Armenia’s newly-appointed ambassador to Bulgaria, and Hristo Angelichin, deputy mayor of Sofia.

YP Sofia’s Tamara Arutyunyan and Serzh Uzunyan welcomed Arslan on the stage. The author explained her motives for writing the novel, which describes her family’s experience during the Armenian Genocide. She also discussed the long path of turning the book into the 2007 film, directed by Paolo and Vittorio Taviani. Before the film’s screening, Arslan distributed AGBU scholarships awards to 14 young students, and renowned composer and musician Haygashot Agasyan performed *Fire a Candle*, a song dedicated to the Genocide. On this occasion, YP Sofia presented a trophy, representing the world globe with the statue of Victory, to Arslan. The presenters thanked the author and expressed their desire that the Armenian Genocide be recognized by more countries around the world. The screening was followed by a dinner at an Armenian restaurant, where guests had the chance to meet and talk to the visiting author.

The following day, Arslan visited the city of Plovdiv and was hosted by members of YP Plovdiv for another film screening event. During her visit to Bulgaria’s second largest city, Arslan visited the St. Kevork Armenian Church and its adjoining museum.



Italian-Armenian author Antonia Arslan presents one of 14 AGBU scholarship awards to students of Armenian descent in Sofia.

Prior to Opening of Airport in Karabagh, Flights Safety Issue Must Be Resolved, Bryza Says

BAKU (PanArmenian.Net) – Prior to the opening of the Stepanakert airport in Nagorno Karabagh, Armenia and Azerbaijan must resolve the flight safety issue, the US Ambassador to Azerbaijan Matthew Bryza said.

“I uphold the position of the US leadership, which believes that the sides should come together and discuss these issues before the airport is opened in Stepanakert,” he told reporters on Tuesday, March 29. “We think that the details can be worked out,” Trend News quoted him as saying.

Azeri threats to shoot down planes bound for Stepanakert will not frighten

Karabagh, according to the head of the central information department at the office of the Artsakh President, David Babayan.

Babayan stated, “The threats are a proof that medieval psychology is prevalent in Azerbaijan. Those who issue them do not simply lack in self-possession, but openly support Nazi values. The international community must adequately respond to criminal statements of the kind.”

“Azerbaijan seeks to scare Artsakh people into refusing to use airport services. We are determined to open the airport, no matter whom it vexes in Azerbaijan. Any attempt Azerbaijan might take will be fraught with unpredictable repercussions for Azerbaijan itself,” Babayan stressed.

Earlier, Baku had threatened to shoot down civilian planes flying to Karabagh after the planned reopening of the Stepanakert airport.

“According to the law on aviation, it is even possible to physically destroy airplanes which are heading there,” Arif Mammadov, director of Azerbaijan’s Civil Aviation Administration, said in comments to local media. “We asked the ICAO to notify the opposing side in order to prevent incidents,” he said.

The airport will be ready for operation in May, the head of the department of civil aviation at the Artsakh government, Dmitry Atbashyan said.

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self-respect, as well as the feelings of belonging to a nation, in the framework of constitutional provisions.”

The Sisli court then re-assessed the file and decided Pamuk should pay compensation to the complainants.

“The right of individuals to open compensation cases was finalized. This decision is a precedent [for other cases],” legal expert Ersan Sen said, adding that the lapse of time for filing a complaint on this and other related cases had extended from one to eight years through this decision.

International News

Turkish Government Proposes New Ministries

ISTANBUL (Bloomberg) – Turkey’s government proposed legislation giving it power to rule by decree and establishing four new ministries, the newspaper *Milliyet* reported.

The draft law sent to the Ankara parliament would give the government six months during which the Cabinet can issue decrees with the force of law, according to the newspaper. The country is due to hold nationwide parliamentary elections on June 12.

The measure would also upgrade four state ministries to full executive ministries, according to *Milliyet*. The changes would be to the economy, women’s affairs, social security and sport portfolios, it said.

WHO Study Gives Low Marks to Healthcare in Azerbaijan, Armenia

BAKU – Azerbaijan has held the 109th place in the list of countries with the most advanced healthcare systems.

The World Health Organization (WHO), having analyzed the health-care systems of 191 countries, named France’s health care system the best.

When analyzing the level of medical care, the WHO took into account such criteria as efficiency, availability and compliance to needs of the population.

The top five countries with the most advanced health care system, in addition to Azerbaijan, include: Italy, San Marino, Andorra and Malta. They are followed by Singapore and Spain. Remarkable success was achieved by Oman, which occupies the eighth place in the list. Austria and Japan are also among the top 10.

Despite solid investments in the development of its health care the US was in 37th place.

As for the post-Soviet countries, Kazakhstan is (64th), Lithuania (73rd), Belarus (74th), Ukraine and Estonia (79th). Moldova, Armenia and Latvia came in 101th, 104th and 105th positions respectively. Russia has the 130th place.

EU Official Criticizes Turkey’s Chief Envoy for Tearing down Monument

ISTANBUL (Tert.am) – The director general of European Union (EU) Commission on expansion issues, Michael Lague, has recently voiced strong criticism of Turkey’s chief envoy to that body.

After a speech at the Brussels Forum, Turkey’s State Minister and Chief Envoy to EU Egemen Bagish directed several questions to Lague, who criticized Turkey for restrictions on freedom of speech and the Ergenekon trial.

The EU senior official also reproached the Turkish envoy for a recent court decision to tear the Monument to Humanity in Kars. He said Turkey’s statements on freedom do not fit well with the country’s policies.

“On the one hand you speak of the zero problems with neighbors policy, but on the other hand you demolish a statue which symbolizes the friendship with Armenia. How to understand such conflicting approaches?” was Lague’s question.

Event Dedicated to Armenia Held in Madrid

MADRID, Spain (Armenpress) – An event dedicated to Armenia was held March 17 at the Casa del Libro bookstore in the center of Madrid, the organizers of which were the Armenian Embassy in Spain and Marco Polo tour agency.

The Armenian Foreign Affairs Ministry press service said that commercial director of the agency, José Luis Angulo, who has visited Armenia recently, shared his impressions with his partners and people in the hall, presenting Armenia as a small, but glorious nation, which has been the beacon of the European civilization and which strives for the European family.

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placed no limits on the development of cooperation with Yerevan” and wants to deepen ties between the two “friendly neighbors.”

The Iranian Fars news agency reported that the talks focused on ways of “strengthening bilateral cooperation and good neighborly relations.” It said Ahmadinejad stressed the importance of the multimillion-dollar energy and transport projects approved by the two governments.

A statement by the Armenian presidential press service said Sargisian also reaffirmed Yerevan’s strong interest in their implementation. It said the two presidents specifically discussed ambitions plans to build a railway connecting Armenia with Iran.

The railway construction is estimated to cost at least \$1 billion. Neither government has so far identified concrete sources of funding for the project.

Yerevan and Tehran are much closer to starting work on two hydro-electric plants on the Arax river marking the Armenian-Iranian border and a pipeline that will ship Iranian fuel to Armenia.

In a speech delivered during the Nowruz celebrations later on Sunday, Sargisian described the Armenian-Iranian relationship as “truly exemplary.”

“Our friendship and the existence of a thriving Armenian community in Iran is a good example of cooperation and mutual enrichment of the Christian and

Islamic civilizations,” he said.

“Cooperation between Armenia and Iran is a history of friendship, tolerance, mutual respect and cultural dialogue,” he added.

Sargisian’s press office said on Friday that the Armenian leader is also scheduled to meet with Iran’s Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei. However, no such meeting was reported by official Armenian and Iranian sources by Monday evening.

The Armenian and Iranian foreign ministers held separate talks in Tehran on Sunday. The Armenian Foreign Ministry said they discussed a “wide range issues related to bilateral relations.”

The Islamic Republic’s growing ties with its sole Christian neighbor appear to have caused serious unease in Azerbaijan. In a series of public statements made last month, several pro-government members of Azerbaijan’s parliament accused Iran of pursuing an “anti-Azerbaijani” policy and demanded that Baku scale back relations with Tehran.

The Azerbaijani government has until now avoided endorsing such accusations or publicly demanding that Iran join in Azerbaijan’s and Turkey’s long-running economic blockade of Armenia. Still, Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev was conspicuously absent from the Nowruz celebrations in Tehran.



Community News

Tibrevank Alumni, Inc. Announces New Scholarship Fund

PALISADES PARK, N.J. — The Tibrevank Alumni, Inc. announces the new Vahan Ajemian Scholarship Fund, for students of Armenian descent who have completed one year of college by June.

The scholarship is named for Vahan Ajemian, a teacher who taught at Sourp Khatch Tibrevank in Istanbul, Turkey for many years and holds a very dear place in the hearts of all Tibrevanktsees. He is fondly and respectfully known to them as simply, "Baron."

Ajemian was born in 1922 in Uskudar, Istanbul. His father was from the historic Armenian city of Sepastia, and his mother was from Bulgaria. They married in Bulgaria during World War I, became Bulgarian citizens and moved to Istanbul after the war ended. Ajemian's Bulgarian nationality would later become an obstacle for him throughout his life.

Ajemian attended several Armenian schools in Istanbul and graduated from Getronagan Armenian High School. He majored in physics and chemistry at Istanbul University and received a master's degree in nuclear physics from the Technical University of Istanbul.

He began his teaching career in 1956 at the Sourp Khatch Tibrevank, on the encouragement and invitation of the Very Rev. Karekin Kazanjian, who served as principal at the time, and later as patri-

"Ajemian is a giver. He never asks for anything nor is he willing to accept anything from his students."

arch of the Armenian See of Istanbul. Later, Ajemian went on to work at the Sahakyan and Esayan Armenian High Schools. He taught mathematics, physics and chemistry until his retirement. He now lives in Paris, France.

Ajemian is loved and remembered by all of his past students but he holds a very special place in the hearts of all Tibrevanktsees. Besides being an excellent teacher, he was a role model, big brother and best friend to all his students. The special relationship with his Tibrevanktsee students is due to Tibrevank being a boarding school, where deeper relationships were formed within the school community. He kept in touch with his students after their graduation and still continues the relationship today, even though some of them are now grandparents. He has come to know his students' children and then even their grandchildren. He believes in maintaining strong family bonds and friendships.

Ajemian is a giver. He never asks for anything nor is he willing to accept anything from his students. He has always been the one to give.

In this spirit of giving, the Tibrevank alumni find it very fitting to offer scholarships in his name to Armenian students. It is what he would do.

Application and other information may be obtained from: Tibrevank Alumni, Inc., Vahan Adjemian Scholarship Fund, P.O. Box 14, Palisades Park, NJ 07650 or www.vahanadjemianscholarship.org.

Deadline for returning completed applications is June 30.



ArmenBar members present a plaque to United States Attorney André Birotte Jr. From left: Vice-Chairman Garo Ghazarian, Chairman Edvin Minassian, United States Attorney André Birotte Jr. and Assistant United States Attorney John J. Lulejian

Armenian Bar Association Welcomes US Attorney André Birotte Jr.

GLENDALÉ — Appointed by President Barack Obama and confirmed unanimously by the United States Senate to one of the most elite federal positions, United States Attorney André Birotte Jr. was the featured speaker at a standing room-only gathering organized by the Armenian Bar Association on February 24.

With more than 200 judges, lawyers and law students in attendance at the Phoenicia restaurant in Glendale, the Armenian Bar Association recognized Birotte for his dedication to public service and for his sustained commitment and contributions to law enforcement, victims' and civil rights, public integrity and the legal profession.

In the words of Armenian Bar Association Chairman Edvin Minassian, "The enthusiastic response of the capacity crowd reflects the Association's deep devotion to professional excellence and, just as importantly, to our firm commitment to the Armenian community and to the rule of law."

Minassian expressed his organization's resolve and successful results in acting as the community's gatekeeper for the protection of its rights and the education about its responsibilities.

Garo Ghazarian, Armenian Bar Association vice chairman, and dean of the People's College of Law, served as master of ceremonies with a smooth blend of humor and respectfulness. The gathering was addressed by Minassian, Board members Hovanes Margarian and Assistant United States Attorney John J. Lulejian, who delivered an inspiring introduction of Birotte.

Rising to the podium to a rousing ovation, Birotte singled out the Armenian Bar Association for its unique and valuable leadership position in legal and local institutions and causes. "It is important to work with our community," said Birotte and continuing with "coming from Haiti, I would always remember the emblem associated with their flag, 'With unity we build strength,' and this is a statement that lives with me today, and will continue to. That saying has been a major guideline in my life, and a major guideline we work by."

Birotte looked to Armenian Bar Association for helping bring unity and strength to the Armenian community. On a personal note, he expressed great praise and respect for former Armenian Bar Association Board member United States Magistrate Judge Jacqueline Chooljian who guided and mentored the rising star when both were assistant United States attorneys.

In attendance was a full roster of judicial leaders and law enforcement brass on both the federal and state levels, elected officials, as well as a wide spectrum of leaders and representatives from the Armenian community, including Los Angeles City Attorney Carmen Trutanich, Archbishop Hovnan Derderian, Primate of the Western Diocese of the Armenian Church of North America, former Los Angeles County District Attorney Robert Philibosian, Magistrate Judge Chooljian and retired United States District Judge Dickran Tevzorian.

Los Angeles County Superior Court Judges in attendance included site supervising judges of Los Angeles County Superior Courts in the cities of Burbank and Glendale, Patrick Hegarty and Fred Rotenberg, respectively; Kevin Brazile, Soussan Bruguera, Ruth Kwan, Mark Mooney and Armenian Bar Association past Chairman Zaven Sinanian. Both Brazile and Sinanian are on the Board of the California Judges Association.

Also in attendance at the Armenian Bar Association program were Michael Garcia, the chief assistant city attorney of Glendale; Gary Schram, chief of the Los Angeles City Attorney's Bureau of Investigation; Wayne Williams, special agent in charge, United States Secret Service, Briane Grey, assistant special agent in charge, Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA); Jon Goldberg, DEA assistant special agent in charge; Sgt. Thomas Lorenz, adjutant to the Glendale Chief of Police, Sergeants John Gilkerson and Tigran Topadzhikyan of the Glendale Police Department; Assistant United States Attorney Lawrence Middleton, chief of Public Corruption and Civil Rights Section of the United States Attorney's Office; Felipe

see ARMENBAR, page 5

LA City Councilmember Paul Krekorian Endorses Nayiri Nahabedian for Re-Election to Glendale's School Board

GLENDALÉ — Los Angeles City Councilmember Paul Krekorian has formally endorsed Nayiri Nahabedian for re-election to the Glendale School Board of Education.

Krekorian, former president of the Burbank Board of Education, is a strong supporter of Board member Nahabedian and understands the challenges the district faces during California's worst budget crisis in history.

"I have known and worked closely with Nayiri Nahabedian for 15 years," Krekorian said. "I know first hand Nayiri's dedication, integrity and courage, and I am constantly impressed anew at her ability to think outside of the box and find creative solutions. Nayiri's leadership and her willingness to tackle complex problems have led to measurable progress for Glendale students and their families. As a former president of the Burbank Board of Education, I know that Nayiri Nahabedian has the experience, the vision and the character that we need on the Board of Education, especially during these difficult times. Nayiri has my unequivocal support and I hope she has yours too."

Krekorian's endorsement is a key addition to Nahabedian's growing list of endorsements from community leaders and organizations, including Glendale City Councilmember Laura Friedman and the Democratic Party of the San Fernando Valley.

"I'm honored to have the support of Los Angeles City Councilmember Paul Krekorian," Nahabedian said. "Both the respected councilmember and myself have experienced the challenges associated with trying to improve our schools during a financial crisis. We both agree that the GUSD is facing an uphill battle and requires an experienced and strong board member to lead our schools down a path of improvement, not devastation, during the tough road ahead."

Glendale's Municipal Election will be held Tuesday, April 5, and Nahabedian is a candidate for re-election on the Glendale Unified School District's Governing Board.

She was elected to the Glendale Board of Education in 2007 and has been a forceful



Nayiri Nahabedian

advocate for making schools safer, keeping class sizes small, ensuring excellence in teaching and protecting each child's opportunity to learn and succeed.

Nahabedian, a graduate of Glendale High School, is a committed child advocate and education reformer. She graduated from UCLA with a bachelor's in psychology and an MSW from UCLA's School of Public Policy and Social Research.

She has been a teaching faculty member at California State University, Los Angeles, for more than 10 years.



COMMUNITY NEWS



San Diego Ararat Guild and special guests

Ararat Guild Hosts Fundraiser at Home of Kathy and Khoren Kassardjian

SAN DIEGO, Calif. — The San Diego Ararat Guild (SDAG) held a special luncheon event at the home of hosts Kathy and Khoren Kassardjian on March 8.

The guest speakers were financial planners Ryan Belmer and Mike Shea, who spoke on taxation and investments. The gathering included guests from San Diego, Orange County and Los Angeles, to raise funds for the Ararat Home. At the event, \$1,000 was raised for the Ararat Home.

Kathy and Khoren Kassardjian hosted the event, in memory of Kathy's mother, Sara Keledjian, who was a resident at the Ararat Home and recently passed away. Keledjian's portrait was placed prominently among the gathering as a memorial tribute.

"The Ararat Home is very special to us and close to our hearts," says Kathy Kassardjian, "and we were honored to host this special event for the San Diego Ararat Guild."

The attendees also enjoyed an Armenian lunch, catered by Ani Lanuza of Ani's Best Gourmet (www.anisbest.com).

Belmer is a senior investment management specialist and portfolio manager at Morgan Stanley-Smith Barney, San Diego. He is a two-time Five Star Wealth Manager named by *San Diego Magazine*. He is also the son-in-law of Kathy and Khoren Kassardjian, who is married to their daughter, Nora. Belmer spoke about various investment approaches and insurance instruments that older Americans should consider.

Shea is a regional vice president with Eaton Vance Investment Management in Southern California. Shea spoke about how the coming tax law changes will affect the investment landscape and open up opportunities for investment capital. He addressed the audience with great insight and sparkling Irish humor.

SDAG is one of the auxiliary guilds of the Ararat Home of Los Angeles.

Late Priest's Vestments Serve As Memorial to Life Cut Short

By Tom Vartabedian

NORTH ANDOVER, Mass. — It's been two years since Rev. Vartan Kassabian died at his Methuen home, ending a brilliant career as beloved pastor, family patriarch and community activist.

His death in March 2009 at the premature age of 51 drew the curtain on a 17-year tenure inside two churches and marked the first time in the 50-year history of the Armenian Prelacy that one of its own had died so young.

On March 13, during Sunday Badarak, six priests from around the country wore the vestments Kassabian left behind as a memorial tribute to the beloved cleric. Each was delivered personally by his wife, Pauline.

"My husband established a very close brotherhood with members of the clergy across the land," Yeretskin Pauline said. "His life was full of love and friendship for his family as well as his peers and he has been sadly missed. By wearing these vestments on the second anniversary of his death, a part of him remains on God's altar to be used by his brothers in Christ."

Each vestment was carefully boxed by Yeretskin and off she went, visiting each church and making her special delivery like a widow on a mission.

Participating pastors included: Rev. Archpriest Antranig Baljian, St. Stephen's Church, Watertown; Rev. Stephan Baljian, St. Gregory the Illuminator Church, Granite City, Ill.; Rev. Krikor Sabounjian, Metro West Church, Framingham; Rev. Archpriest Gomidas Baghsarian, pastor, St. Vartanantz Church, Providence, RI; Rev. Douglas Papulis, St. Nicholas Church, St. Louis, Ill. and Rev. Leonard Faris, Antiochian Orthodox Church, Lowell.

On that day, Kassabian's son, Mgo, a college student, also wore the vestment in which his dad was ordained as a deacon. The younger Kassabian is presently a stole bearer

in the church and seldom misses a Sunday on the altar.

"It's a privilege and an honor to wear my father's robe," he said. "There's a lot of history behind this and I feel his presence with me every time I've worn it. It's what he would have wanted."

"While I was going through the steps toward ordination, *Der Vartan* helped me along," said Rev. Stephan Baljian. "He helped train me for my upcoming parish — the one he also served in his inaugural year. Succeeding him in Granite City was very special for me."

"He left behind a rich legacy in the church," said Rev. Antranig Baljian. "He may be gone but his memory will always persevere. Wearing his vestment kept the pieces of my heart and soul together during a very emotional moment for me."

Armenian Bar Association Welcomes US Attorney André Birotte Jr.

ARMENBAR, from page 4

Plascencia, president of the Mexican American Bar Association's Political Action Committee; Ara Najarian, current mayor of Glendale; Consul General Grigor Hovhannissian and Deputy Consul General Mesrop Shaboyan from the Republic of Armenia in Los Angeles; Rafi Manoukian, past two-term mayor of Glendale, and a current commissioner of the Burbank-Glendale-Pasadena Airport Authority and Nayiri Nahabedian, board member of the Glendale Unified School District.

In September 2009, Obama appointed Birotte to the top federal prosecutor post in all of Southern California, whose district includes seven counties, Los Angeles, Orange, Riverside, San Bernardino, San Luis Obispo, Santa Barbara and Ventura, and a population that is the largest of any district in the country. For much of the past decade, Birotte has served in capacities of increasing responsibility in the Los Angeles Police Commission's Office of Inspector General. Before assuming his administrative duties as Inspector General, Birotte served as assistant United States attorney and as a deputy public defender in Los Angeles. He is a graduate of Tufts University and the Pepperdine University School of Law.

The 22nd Annual National Meeting of the Armenian Bar Association is being held from April 29 to May 1, at the Marriott Union Square, in San Francisco. Among the attractions will be the attendance and participation of members of the California Supreme Court, including Chief Justice Tani Cantil-Sakauye and Justice Marvin Baxter. This year's other guest will be Hrair Tovmasyan, the justice minister of the Republic of Armenia. Last year's annual national meeting, which was held in Chicago, drew an audience of lawyers and jurists and the 22nd Annual National Meeting in San Francisco will continue that high standard. Members and non-members may register online (www.ArmenianBar.org).

For further information, contact Lisa@ArmenianBar.org.



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COMMUNITY NEWS

UCLA Conference on Armenian Genocide Oral History Collections

LOS ANGELES — A unique conference on the Armenian Oral History Collections in North America, their uses for research and evidence, the media, the visual arts and the performing arts, will take place on the UCLA campus, Humanities Building 51A, on Saturday, April 2, from 9:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.

The conference, titled “Armenian Oral History Collections: Development, Uses, Potential,” has been organized by the UCLA AEF Chair in Modern Armenian History and the Oral History Research Center (John B. Jackson Faculty Curator Grant), with support from the Near Eastern Center, Bob and Nora Movell Fund and the Souren and Verkin Papazian Fund.

Holders of Armenian Oral History Collections in Canada, Mexico and the US will gather to consider the potential of the collections, their preservation and means of access. The public conference on April 2 will be preceded a day earlier with the participants being given a private tour of the extensive Holocaust oral history archive maintained by the Shoah Institute Foundation at the University of Southern California. Deliberations will then

continue in the UCLA Oral History Research Center to consider critical issues relating to the maintenance, archiving and possible sharing of the Armenian Genocide Oral History collections around the world.

The Public Conference

For the public conference, on Saturday, April 2, on the UCLA campus, four thematic panels have been organized. The first morning panel is titled “The Collections: Their Origins, Scope, and Evidence.” Participants include Marc Mamigonian (NAASR); Varoujan Froundjian (Parsegian Collection, Columbia University); Bethel Bilezikian Charkoudian and Haig Der Manuelian (ALMA Collection, Massachusetts); Greg Sarkissian and George Shirinian (Zoryan Institute Collection, Toronto); Richard Hovannissian (UCLA Collection) and Taner Akcam (Kaloosdian-Mugar Chair, Clark University — Dersim Project).

The second morning panel, “Publications, Performance, and the Visual Arts,” includes demonstrations and visual presentations by Carla Garapedian and Jerry Papazian

(Armenian Film Foundation); Donald and Lorna Touryan Miller (USC); Ara Oshagan (Photography, Los Angeles) and Bianca Bagatourian (Armenian Dramatic Arts Alliance).

The afternoon sessions begin with a panel on “Preserving, Indexing, Archiving, and Accessing.” Participants include Steven Smith (director, Shoah Foundation); Teresa Barnett (head, UCLA Oral History Research Center); Hayk Demoyan (director, Armenian Genocide Museum-Institute, Yerevan) and Mark Greenberg (director, Oral History, University of South Florida, Tampa). The final session considers “Potentials for Upcoming Scholars, Writers, and Creative Artists” and includes Armen Marsoobian (South Connecticut State); Ara Sanjian (Armenian Research Center, University of Michigan-Dearborn); Carlos Antaramian (Mexican-Armenian Oral History Project); Arda and Doris Melkonian (UCLA) and Reuben Zaramian (University of Toronto).

Prof. Richard Hovannissian said: “After organizing 17 conferences in the series ‘Historic Armenian Cities and Provinces,’ as well as

four conferences on the Armenian Genocide just in the past 15 years at UCLA, I am gratified that this gathering will highlight the importance of Armenian oral history for the fields of anthropology, sociology, history, political science, economics, linguistics, music and arts, humanities, immigration and diaspora studies, women’s studies and comparative genocide studies. It is critical that we consider how best to preserve and utilize these precious first-person audio, video and film testimonies of the last generation of Armenians to have been born in their native lands of Western Armenia, Cilicia, and Asia Minor and even in the European areas of the former Ottoman Empire.”

The April 2 public conference is open to the public and free of charge. Registration is required.

The full program, map and parking information and registration form may be accessed on the web at: oralhistory.library.ucla.edu/conference.html.

For more information, contact Prof. Richard Hovannissian at hovannis@history.ucla.edu.

OBITUARY

Michigan Armenians Mourn Death of Community Leader and Philanthropist Edgar Hagopian

HAGOPIAN, from page 1

Edmond Azadian was the keynote speaker, who presented Michigan-Armenians’ gratitude to the ailing patriarch, who was too weak to attend the banquet.

Said Azadian, in part, “Our annual functions ordinarily do not focus on any single individual. But this year we have made an exception, because we believe the time has come for us to pay tribute to a person who has given so much of himself to the Detroit-Armenian community and he also raised this community’s profile nationally. That person is Edgar Hagopian, a man of foresight and distinction and a legend in his own day.”

He continued, “Edgar has been a political activist, benefactor, humanitarian and cultural icon, accessible to anyone. His greatness is in his humility. He knows how to be on a level with everyone. His generosity is not confined to a particular segment of the community; all segments belong to Edgar and Edgar belongs to the entire community.”

Hagopian was born in Detroit in 1930 and began working in his father’s laboratory while a teen. He attended Cass Tech High School. After graduating in 1948, he attended the University of Michigan, where he majored in chemistry until he was drafted into the Army during the Korean War.

Under his leadership, Hagopian World of Rugs and Cleaning Services quadrupled in size

and currently employs more than 150 people. Hagopian was affectionately known company-wide as “Mr. H.” He was regarded as a mentor. His children — two daughters, a son and a son-in-law — work in this dynamic family business.

Hagopian companies donate in excess of \$70,000 in goods and services to local charities annually. Dedicated to community involvement, his companies have been a major benefactor to the Detroit Institute of Art (DIA) where he was named an honorary board member for his unwavering support. He was also a supporter of Detroit Public TV. He hosted in his Birmingham Showroom (for the last 20 seasons) the Detroit Chamber Winds “Nightnotes” series, bringing fine musicians and performers to the city at an affordable venue. In addition, for the past 22 years Hagopian has sponsored a design contest in collaboration with Detroit’s College for Creative Studies (CCS) to promote interest in textile design for students. Winners are awarded scholarships and the first-place design is produced as a rug and displayed at the Annual Student Exhibition.

Hagopian was recognized by the Oak Park Business & Education Alliance for his contributions to the educational community and he was named an honorary director of the Detroit Institute of Arts and served as a member of the Providence Health Foundation as well as Seeds of Peace, metropolitan Detroit Chapter.

In 2002 he spearheaded the passing of the Michigan Public Act 558 recognizing the Armenian Genocide.

In 2006, through the Hagopian Family Foundation, he initiated the Facing History and Ourselves project promoting awareness of the Armenian Genocide, the first genocide of the 20th century, through education. Educator workshops are held annually to provide a basis for more in-depth study of the Armenian Genocide, offering instructional materials for classroom course work, teaching resources and continuing education credits for participants. That same year he began planning “Armenia Fest,” an event designed to showcase Armenian culture and heritage. The first outing in Birmingham in 2007 was a huge success, attended by more than 2,000 people. The tradition will continue in 2011 in his memory with the fourth Annual metro Detroit Armenia Fest. Proceeds are designated for Armenia Fund USA and to date more than \$25,000 has been raised to help humanitarian projects in Armenia.

In 1995 Hagopian won Franklin Bank’s “Best Family-Owned Business” Award in their category (150 Employees or more). His retail stores won the prestigious “ROY” (Retailer of the Year) Award at the national Oriental Rug Show in July 1998. Hagopian was also awarded the 1999-2000 Michigan Retailer of The Year Award. In 2002 he was honored as “Best

Oakland County Employer” by The Oakland County Business Finance Corp. He was also inducted into the Detroit International Institute Hall of Fame in 2002 honoring his commitment to community and ethnicity.

In 2005 Hagopian received the Ellis Island Medal of Honor.

He served on the boards of numerous organizations, including Armenian Assembly of America, Michigan Design Center; AGBU (Armenian General Benevolent Union), Detroit Chapter, Seeds of Peace, Michigan Chapter; St. John’s Armenian Church Christian Ministry Board and Oak Park Chamber of Commerce, as well as held leadership posts in Providence Health Foundation, Founders Society, Detroit Institute of Arts (Associate), Armenian Library and Museum of America, Wayne State University and junior council Fash Bash event. He founded the Detroit Chapter of the Armenian American Business Council (AABC).

Hagopian leaves his wife of 54 years, Sarah, his sisters Mary and Ilene, his brother Steve, and his children Suzanne, Edmond and Angela and three grandsons, Alexander, Adam and Nicholas.

Funeral services were held on Friday, April 1, at St. John’s Armenian Church, Southfield. In lieu of flowers, donations can be made to the Hagopian Family Foundation, at www.hagopianfamilyfoundation.org.

Veronica Roseline Bagatourian

LOS ANGELES — Veronica Roseline Bagatourian died on March 16. She was born 72 years ago in Tehran, Iran. Her mother, Michelle Maleskai, was Russian and her father, James Bagdassarian, was Armenian.

Bagatourian was well known for her kindness and gentleness of spirit. She was also renowned for her extraordinary talents as a singer of classical songs, recognized in many circles for having the voice of an angel. Throughout her life, Bagatourian worked as a teacher, first in Iran and later in America.

A founding member of the University of Southern California’s esteemed Friends of Armenian Music, Bagatourian succeeded in always being a tireless advocate for the arts in every medium. She was a gifted writer who wrote stories and poems in her spare time and would share them with her family to their delight.

Living in America for 34 years, she spent the majority of that time in Orange County, Calif. Her husband, George Bagatourian, died last year.

Veronica Bagatourian is survived by her children,



Veronica Roseline Bagatourian

Bianca and Steven, as well as her sister, Liana.

The funeral was held on Thursday, March 24, at Forest Lawn Cemetery. Services were conducted by Archbishop Hovnan Derderian.

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COMMUNITY NEWS



WATERTOWN, Mass. — The new billboard paying tribute to the Armenian Genocide victims went up on Tuesday, March 29 on Mount Auburn Street. Artist Daniel Varujan Hejinian has designed the billboards and funded their placement in various locations across the state.

University of Michigan Post-Doctoral Fellow Highlights What Novels Say about Author's Time

ANN ARBOR, Mich. — On March 14, Dr. Vahram Danielyan presented a public lecture titled “History, Novel, Historical Novel: The Contemporary Historical Novel in Armenia,” at the University of Michigan, under the auspices of the university’s Armenian Studies Program.

Danielyan is currently a Manoogian Simone Foundation post-doctoral fellow at the university (2010-2011 academic year) and is teaching a course on the subject. Danielyan completed his PhD in 2009 at Yerevan State University, continuing his association with that university as a lecturer. As a literary critic he contributes articles in Armenia and abroad.

In his lecture, Danielyan argued that the historical novel, in addition to telling the main story, offered the opportunity for writers to comment on or critique the historical period of the novel or of the political, social, economic reality of the writers’ own times transposed to the period covered by the novel.

However, he argued, this transposition is done through different methods by different writers. Focusing on Levon Khechoyan, Zorayr Khalapyan and Perch Zeytuntsyan, three prominent authors of the historical novel, Danielyan illustrated how each author contributed to the genre. Khechoyan used a structure of multi voice debate common in the historical novel. Khalapyan created a sub-genre with a story of an apocryphal novel parallel to the historical novel. For Zeytuntsyan, modernity becomes the dramatic farce of historical absurdity.

A recording of this lecture is available on the Armenian Studies website at www.umich.edu/~iinet/asp/.

Armenian Assembly Provides Florida Briefing on Armenian-American Issues

BOCA RATON, Fla. — Under the auspices of the Armenian Assembly’s South Florida Regional Council (SFRC), members and supporters came together earlier this month here for the Assembly’s annual briefing and reception.

Executive Director Bryan Ardouny, along with Grassroots Director Taniel Koushakjian, provided a recap of last year’s activities and a detailed overview of the legislative challenges ahead in 2011, from US assistance to Armenia and Nagorno Karabagh, the ongoing Turkey and Azeri blockades against Armenia, to US affirmation of the Armenian Genocide, among other issues.

Ardouny also highlighted the upcoming 40th anniversary of the Armenian Assembly, which coincides with the 2012 presidential election year. In addition, Ardouny emphasized the Armenian Assembly’s successful internship programs in Washington, DC and in Armenia while Koushakjian discussed spe-

cific issues geared toward greater grassroots activism in Florida.

A lively question-and-answer session also took place with many constructive recommendations for the Assembly’s ongoing work in Washington, DC and Armenia.

“With over 90 new members of Congress, we must redouble our state-wide grassroots outreach efforts,” stated Koushakjian. “In Florida, for example, we have a unique opportunity to make inroads with several new members. Our goal is to further strengthen our advocacy efforts from coast to coast,” added Koushakjian.

“On behalf of the Assembly’s board, I would like to thank the Members of the South Florida Regional Council, in particular Carol Norigian, as well as our hosts Harry and Edna Keleshian, for the fantastic turnout and for making this event possible,” stated Assembly Board member Lu Ann Ohanian.



From left, Taniel Koushakjian, Carol Norigian, Edna and Harry Keleshian (who were presented with a signed copy of Michael Bobelian’s book, *Children of Armenia: A Forgotten Genocide and the Century-long Struggle for Justice*), Lu Ann Ohanian and Bryan Ardouny

TCA-ADS Dickranian Lions Impress Athletic Community

LOS ANGELES — The Tekeyan Cultural Association (TCA) Arshag Dickranian School’s basketball team, known as the Dickranian Lions, impressed the athletic community with its series of triumphant games and high scores in the California Interscholastic Federation (CIF) Tournament this season.

The Dickranian Lions played in the Mulholland League, a division of the CIF, winning 17 and losing only five games in their series of league and non-league games. Their games were marked with the cheers and dedicated support of their fellow students, parents and fans who followed them from court to court.

In order to reach the State Championship level, the Dickranian Lions had to beat the Mulholland League teams and be qualified for the CIF playoffs for the Southern Division of the championship. Then, the Dickranian Lions won the first round against Westmark School on February 18, the second round against Calvary Baptist School on February 22 and the semifinal game against Padre Pio on February



The Dickranian Lions with Principal Vartkes Kourouyan (left) and Coach Rudolph Rameh (center)

25. Winning all these three games qualified the Dickranian Lions to enter the state championship and be challenged by the Redlands Adventist Academy.

On Friday, March 4, a bus load of cheerful ADS students, parents and fans drove to the Mater Dei High School basketball court in Santa Ana to watch their team challenge the

Redlands Adventist Academy for the CIF Southern California Championship. Though the Dickranian Lions lost the championship, they were very proud to end up being the runners-up of the championship and for being congratulated for their effort and success.

Throughout the games, 11th-grader Jack Karapetian became the Most Valuable Player (MVP) of the team by averaging 32 points and 18 rebounds per game. Two senior players, John Gukasyan and Alex Garibyan, were selected by the CIF as Allstars, whereas Jack Karapetian and Artur Karapetian were picked as All American Players First Team.

“I am very proud of our team for having a successful season,” said Coach Rudy Rameh, “I wish we had more players in the team. Hopefully next year we can win the championship. I would also like to thank board Chairman Mr. George Mandossian, Principal Vartkes Kourouyan and the Athletic Committee for their support.”

For more information visit www.dickranianschool.org.

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Genocide Survivors Remember their Tragic Stories of Survival

By Taleen Babayan

FLUSHING, N.Y. — While almost 100 years have passed since the Armenian Genocide, the memories of the horrific massacres remain vivid in the minds of three genocide survivors who told their stories at the New York Armenian Home in Flushing, Queens on



Arshaloys Dadir telling her story, with Aggie Ellian (left), executive director of the Armenian Home and Armenian Home Board Member Dzaghigh Callian (right)

Sunday, March 27.

Arsaloys Dadir, Perouz Kalousdian and Charlotte Kechejian, residents of the Armenian Home, recounted their escape from the genocide to reporters representing local New York media organizations. While their stories seemed

to have a common thread of suffering and survival, each lived different lives, hailing from different parts of Anatolia before the onset of the genocide.

The last memory 99-year-old Charlotte Kechejian has of her father is of him trying to hug her before being taken away by the Turkish soldiers during the Armenian Genocide. Forced to walk through the Der Zor desert during the death marches, she remembers how hungry and thirsty she was, gaining strength from her mother, whom she credits for their survival.

"I was hungry and not well-treated," said Kechejian, born in Nikhda. "I didn't know where we were going."

Making their way to the US via Beirut, Kechejian and her mother moved to New York where her mother made a living by working as a seamstress. Her mother, who insisted that her daughter earn her high school diploma, eventually opened her own grocery store on 33rd Street in Manhattan, and with her daughter's permission, remarried.



Charlotte Kechejian, with Aggie Ellian (left) executive director of the Armenian Home and Armenian Home Board Member Dzaghigh Callian (right)



Perouz Kalousdian speaks to a group of reporters about her escape from the Armenian Genocide.

Arsaloys Dadir's father was also killed during the Genocide. "They tied my father's hands together, took him in the backyard and shot him," recalled 98-year-old Dadir, who was born in Shabin Karahisar.

Dadir, her mother and siblings survived with the help of their Turkish neighbors who hid them in chicken coops.

"We walked and we walked and saw dead bodies on the roadside," said Dadir. Born into a wealthy family, their money and land was taken from them during the Genocide. The surviving members of the family moved to Constantinople, where Dadir married and raised two children, and eventually moved to the United States.

The oldest survivor of the group, 101-year-old Perouz Kalousdian, was born in Palu, and witnessed her father being taken away by Turkish soldiers when she was just 6.

"We had nothing to eat," said Kalousdian. "They kicked us out of our home." Her mother put her in an American orphanage in Kharpert where she learned to sew, a skill that would serve her well later in her life. Eventually reuniting with her mother, they moved to the US when Kalousdian was 14.

All three survivors will be present for the 96th Armenian Genocide Commemoration in Times Square, which will take place on Sunday, May 1, 2-4 p.m. For more information, visit www.april24nyc.com.



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Arts & Living

Lara Setrakian Joins Bloomberg TV as Dubai-Based Reporter

NEW YORK – Bloomberg announced recently that Lara Setrakian has officially joined Bloomberg Television as a reporter based in Dubai. Setrakian, who joins Bloomberg from ABC News in Dubai, has extensive expertise covering the Gulf. Most recently, she reported on the unrest in the Middle East from Saudi Arabia and Cairo's Tahrir Square. While at ABC, Setrakian covered the 2009 Iranian presidential election, energy prices in Saudi Arabia, Dubai's financial crisis and other key economic and political stories.

Bloomberg's news operations in Dubai is currently the company's largest bureau in the Middle East, with more than 15 news professionals covering markets, energy, finance, government and other news. This week, Bloomberg LP officially unveiled its Dubai office, the company's 10th global hub, to house Bloomberg's expanding news operations and provide customer support for a growing client base in the region. Bloomberg Television, available in more than 250 million homes globally, provides 24-hour live coverage of business, economic and political news with the strength of one of the largest news-gathering operations in the world.

"Lara is a seasoned journalist with a strong understanding of the important news stories coming out of the Gulf," said Malcolm Fried, managing editor, EMEA for Bloomberg Television. "Her on-the-ground expertise and contacts will offer our global audience a unique perspective



Lara Setrakian

on how the Middle East is impacting politics and business worldwide."

"I am elated to be joining Bloomberg Television and its fantastic team of journalists," said Setrakian. "It is a vital moment for us to be ramping up coverage of geopolitics and the global economy, and Dubai is an ideal perch."

Setrakian joined ABC News in 2005 as a contributor to the network's legal and investigative coverage. She will continue to make contributions to ABC News on television, radio and digital platforms as part of her new role at Bloomberg Television. Setrakian previously served worked as a business analyst with McKinsey & Company. She graduated magna cum laude from Harvard College with a degree in government. Setrakian speaks Arabic, Armenian, French and Spanish, and has studied Persian and Portuguese.



Ed Setrakian and his wife, Kathryn Grant

Ed Setrakian Reflects On a Lifetime of Acting

NEW YORK – Ed Setrakian is an actor who by now has pretty much done everything possible in theater, film and TV. Over a long career, he has followed a natural progression as a young leading man, a leading man and now, a character actor. He has taught for 45 years at St. Francis College and has directed many plays. He has written several plays. Even his wife writes plays and is an actress.

Setrakian's background provides powerful dramatic material, which he himself mined at least once. His mother, Agnes Notalian, found herself in an orphanage in Istanbul after World War I, while his father, born in Mush, was married at a young age and came alone to the US one year before the war to earn some money in order to bring his family over. Instead, he lost his mother, wife and young daughter. Some

By Aram Arkun
Mirror-Spectator Staff

years later, he married again, in a surprising variant to the usual Armenian "picture-bride" arrangement.

He was gambling in a card game. As Ed Setrakian related, "An Armenian fellow in the game went broke, and told my father, 'Look, Samuel, I have this woman coming over. I have her papers. We are supposed to get married, but now I'm destitute and can't take care of her. Would you like to have her? All you need to do is give me \$200.'" Setrakian's father agreed. The young bride was surprised, but in the end accepted the arrangement and married him.

Setrakian's father decided to move to Pocahontas, WV, where his cousin Sahag Sahagian had a dry cleaning plant. As Ed Setrakian put it, "Sahagian said, 'Come down here – this place is booming.' It was a coal mining area, and my father started a business there." The family eventually went to Anawalt, which was a more thriving village. At one point, he opened a beer tavern there.

Setrakian grew up in Anawalt. At home, everybody initially spoke Armenian, though aside from Sahagian, there were no other Armenians in the area. Setrakian related, "The beer tavern was in a really rough town. My mother had passed away when I was about 9- or 10-years-old. My brother was 6 at the time, and my father had to raise us alone. He stopped speaking Armenian then."

There was not much prejudice in the area because a lot of foreigners had come to work the coal mines – Italians, Greeks and Czechs in particular. There were Greek families to which the Setrakians were close.

The two brothers were sent every Sunday to a Methodist church on the hill. Though the parents did not attend, Setrakian became fairly religious.

Setrakian's father tried his hand briefly at businesses in two other places. During World War II, he took his family to Oakland, Calif., where he went into partnership with another Armenian in a restaurant. That did not work out, so they went for a year to Akron, Ohio. When this business also did not go well, they returned to Anawalt, where the father ran another beer tavern.

Setrakian reminisced about Anawalt, "I remember some beautiful experiences there. It was a wonderfully situated little village, just terrific with the trees and mountains all around. In the end, my father fell in love with West Virginia and West Virginians." Setrakian's brother stayed to run the tavern, and Setrakian himself visits once a year.

Setrakian's father made an effort to keep the family in touch with Armenians, as much as was possible under the circumstances. In Akron and Oakland there was much more contact. Football coach Ara Parseghian was a distant relative in Akron, while in Oakland there was a large Armenian community. His father tried to set his son up with Armenian girls in Akron, and once even in West Virginia. Setrakian recounted, "There was another Armenian family in Williamson, about 60 to 70 miles distant. I must have been about 14 at the time, and my father took me. We

see ACTING, page 11

Pianist Sahan Arzuni Celebrates Centenary of Alan Hovhaness

Concert Series to Be Broadcast Nationwide

NEW YORK – Pianist Sahan Arzuni has launched a series of concerts to mark the centenary year of Armenian-American composer Alan Hovhaness.

The concerts will be broadcast by some 300 radio stations across the nation; the first one aired on Monday, March 28. The programs – part of the prestigious "Performance Today" program produced by American Public Media – can also be heard online at www.performancetoday.org.

Born on March 8, 1911, Hovhaness became one of the iconic musicians of the 20th century, noted for his mystical strain and his creative use of classical Armenian musical elements.

His ability to fuse Eastern musical aesthetics with Western compositional technique made him one of the fathers of the genre known as "World Music."



Sahan Arzuni, left, joined by Alan Hovhaness, right, in July 1986, to record, *Child in the Garden*, which was featured on Arzuni's acclaimed all-Hovhaness disc, titled "Visionary Landscapes"

Hovhaness was also one of the first musicians to experiment with "minimalism" in Western music. In many of his compositions, the music is stripped to its most fundamental elements, for the purpose of achieving – through repetition and iteration – what Hovhaness termed a direct, subjective communion with ultimate reality.

As a tribute to the 100th anniversary of the composer's birth, Arzuni began the current concert series in Berkeley, Calif., sponsored by Other Minds, an organization devoted to presenting cutting-edge music.

The performance was recorded by American Public Media.

As an authority on Hovhaness and his music, Arzuni was also interviewed by Fred Child, the host of TV's "Live from Lincoln Center." His comments and observations from that interview will be interspersed between the musical selections during the "Performance Today" broadcasts.

Hovhaness was a widely recorded and lauded composer in the 1950s and '60s, and received numerous awards. Since the 1990s he has enjoyed somewhat of a revival, as audiences have rediscovered him.

All the programs will be available on the site's online archive.



ARTS & LIVING

Ed Setrakian Reflects on a Lifetime of Acting

ACTING, from page 10

went to the restaurant where the fellow was with his wife, and he had a daughter my age. They sat us down together in a booth, and they went to another booth and started talking. Then my father said it is time to go. On the way back, he asked, 'How do you like this young lady?' I said, 'I guess she is okay.' He asked, 'Will you consider marrying her?' I answered, 'How can I...I don't even know her.' That turned out to have been the whole point of the trip."

Setrakian only appeared once before an audience before college, when he graduated middle school. He said, "I remember my father looking up at me fondly. It gave me a big thrill." It was in college that he found his calling. He went to a small college near Anawalt, called Concord.

After Concord, Setrakian went to do graduate work at West Virginia University and then worked in a summer stock company in Plymouth, Mass., where Paul Newman had preceded him by one year. From Plymouth, he went to New York City in 1953, and rented an apartment with two other men. He somehow got into a farce in Dobbs Ferry, NY. Next he helped a friend audition in Actors Studio, and that led them to take him in as an observer. He has remained connected to the famous institution ever since. They cast Setrakian in a play called "Bullfight," which became a big hit. He even appeared on the "Ed Sullivan Show."

Setrakian explained how the Actors Studio worked: "The Studio was a place to go to, then not go to for a long time, then to come back to. It would depend on how busy I was. Once you were accepted, you could work on something. It was a place to practice or try out something new. Your peers, and a moderator like Al Pacino or Alec Baldwin or Harvey Keitel, give you feed-

back." Everything was free. Lee Strasberg was the chief moderator when Setrakian started, and James Dean, Marlon Brando and other famous older actors were there.

Setrakian split his time between acting and directing. He started directing in 1962 in a summer stock company. He liked it, but stopped and instead acted at the New York Public Theater's Shakespeare Festival for two or three years. Then from 1966 to 1972, he directed a lot. As Setrakian put it, "I was just directing all over the place." He moved from one town to another, but then he went back to New York and started getting good acting parts, which pay more than directing.

Setrakian's burst of directing included several years at La Mama Ensemble in New York. Setrakian said, "I was very involved in the experimental theater movement at La Mama. It was exciting trying new techniques...breaking the fourth wall. It was one of the most exciting times in my life." He also has done a lot of classical work, especially Shakespeare. He was in "Othello" with James Earl Jones. He also has appeared on a variety of television shows, including soap operas, "Law and Order" and "The Sopranos."

His all-time favorite roles include Banquo in "Macbeth" and Claudius in "Hamlet," in the New York Shakespeare Festival. The latter role was in a special version called "The Rock Hamlet," and he performed together with Cleavon Little. Setrakian really enjoyed playing the part of Al Hyman, the newspaper editor who had to deal with the letters of a serial killer in the movie "Zodiac" and the part of the Greek-American father Demo in the film "Astoria." Another favorite role is that of Monsignor, which he just played in "Handicapped People in

Their Formal Attire," written for him by his wife, Kathryn Grant.

Setrakian pursued his education while acting. He obtained a doctorate in performance studies in 1976 from New York University. His thesis analyzed the acting of James Earl Jones in five prominent productions and compared it to other historical performances. Jones asked Setrakian not to publish it since he himself might want to publish something, but he never did.

During much of the time that he taught at St. Francis College in Brooklyn, Setrakian served as chairman of the Communication Arts Department. He taught acting, directing, speech and TV studio production there. After receiving emeritus status in 2005, he has also taught elsewhere, most recently at Pace University. Aside from teaching and running workshops in various places periodically, Setrakian did a lot of commercials and voice-overs, to keep him going financially.

Over the years, Setrakian has worked professionally on many Armenian projects in the New York area. The first time was when he was asked by the Armenian Diocese to direct William Saroyan's "Time of Your Life" at the Barbizon Theater in 1964. There was only one performance, and it was packed with Armenians. A second Saroyan play he directed was "Armenians," which saw six performances in October 1974. Setrakian said, "We had a lot of fun doing that play and it was quite successful — a big production. Bill came to town and I got my cast together. He came to the Diocese and stood up for one hour and a half. He said I knew every one of these guys, and told in detail how they sat and drank. It was remarkable. He had a photographic memory of all these people." Although Saroyan, who did not see the play himself, heard a bad recording of one of the performances later, he admitted that the audience and critics liked it.

He was asked by Louise Simone and the Armenian General Benevolent Union (AGBU) to direct one more Saroyan play after Saroyan's death. He went to the Saroyan archives and found something never published or performed before. Setrakian described it as "a kind of black, sardonic comedy. It was really about his

ex-wife. I thought no one would think that Saroyan had written this play." Real life tragedy interrupted its production. Setrakian said, "We were meeting with a team up in Louise's apartment. Everything was falling into place, when she got a phone call. She said, 'Oh my God.' It was the earthquake in Armenia. It shattered her, and us all, and we had to abandon the production. Everything Louise did afterwards was only for Armenia."

Setrakian did other work for the AGBU and the Diocese. He directed the film "The Growth of Our Children for the Church." It was about young Armenian-American children in the metropolitan area, and it was shown around. Aram Avakian edited the film, together with Setrakian and Archbishop Torkom Manoogian.

Setrakian was involved in the initial organization of the One World Festival, led by Jack Antreassian, Sam Azadian, the Diocesan archbishop and several others. For two days every fall, a variety of different ethnic groups participated with outdoor performances and many politicians, including Mayor Ed Koch of New York, would drop by. It was covered on television and was quite popular. Setrakian continued with it for five years.

Thanks to the encouragement of Jack Antreassian, Setrakian wrote an essay in the first issue of *Ararat*, the quarterly of Armenian-American culture that the AGBU published. He also adapted part of a novel for *Ararat*.

Later, around 1972, Antreassian got Setrakian to start an acting class for AGBU. He did it with Armenian actors, and Al Pacino (then auditioning for "The Godfather"), participated. They did readings and themes. After teaching it a while, Setrakian turned the class over to a friend of Pacino. The class lasted about a year or so.

Louise Simone in 1988 produced a play off-Broadway which Setrakian wrote, called "Yellow Dog Contract." Unfortunately the director was not good and the play received a bad review in the *New York Times*. Set in Appalachia with an Armenian father who escaped the Genocide to run a restaurant, it contains some autobiographical references mixed with pure fiction. Setrakian said, "Elia Kazan and Norman Mailer both saw it. They were both friends of mine at the time and they both essentially said the same thing, that I should concentrate more on the relationship of the father with the son and his Armenianism, and less about the coal mining union aspect." Setrakian has considered reviving it one day.

A decade later, from 1996 to 1997, Setrakian performed as the grandfather in Leslie Ayvazian's "Nine Armenians" at the Manhattan Theater Club. Ayvazian, like Setrakian, is a member of the Ensemble Studio Theater.

Setrakian continues today to juggle many projects, but his main focus is the future of "Handicapped People in their Formal Attire." I had the good fortune of seeing it in a workshop production at the Actors Studio in early March, and can attest that Setrakian was both comic and moving. Setrakian did not just perform in this play set in Wilmington Delaware in 1968, which deals with issues of race, handicap and character. He also directed it. Pacino saw an earlier staged reading of the play and arranged for the performance. Hopefully investors will be found to allow for more productions in the future.

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ARTS & LIVING

Cultural Event in Pasadena Dedicated to Paruyr Sevak

PASADENA, Calif. — The Giligia Committee, a two-year-old offshoot of the AGBU Glendale-Pasadena Chapter that organizes cultural and social events, celebrated the memory of one of the greatest and most popular 20th-century Armenian poets, Paruyr Sevak, at the AGBU Pasadena Center on November 21, 2010. More than 20 Giligia Committee members volunteered their time, effort and talents to put this event together, which featured not only a reading of Sevak's biography and some of his well-known works, but also a selection of songs and music.

Born Paruyr Ghazarian in 1924, Sevak graduated from the Philological Faculty of Yerevan State University in 1945. After working as a member of the editorial staff of local Armenian newspapers, he attended the International Institute of Literature in Moscow, where he worked as a lecturer following graduation. From 1963 until his "accidental" death in 1971, he was a senior researcher at the Institute of Literature of the Armenian Academy of Sciences. In 1966, he was elected secretary of the Armenian Writers Union.

Paruyr Sevak is remembered for having elevated Armenian poetry to new heights on a



AGBU Glendale-Pasadena Chapter's Giligia Committee holding its first cultural event dedicated to the memory of the great poet Paruyr Sevak

spiritual/emotional level. An anti-establishment writer, he wrote eight books of poetry between 1948 and 1971, the most highly-regarded of which are *Anreli Zankagadoon* (The Ever-Ringing Belfry), devoted to Komitas Vartabed and the Armenian Genocide, and *Yeghitsi Luys*

(Let There Be Light). He also wrote a highly-regarded monograph on the famous 18th-century troubadour, Sayat-Nova.

The hall was filled with more than 400 attendees who supported and encouraged the performers throughout the evening. Opening

remarks were delivered by Dr. Rita Belderian. The program ended with acknowledgements from event director Hampartsoum Aghbashian, committee head Berge Jonian and Chapter Chairman Shahe Seuylemezian. A reception followed at Boyajian Hall.

Charles Aznavour to Be Honored In New York by FAR

FAR, from page 1

The evening's proceeds will benefit the disadvantaged elderly people of Armenia, including the Vanadzor Old Age Home in Armenia, a loving, nurturing refuge for older Armenians who have no other means of support. The Vanadzor home was started by Aznavour, who personally requested FAR to assume responsibility for its upkeep and operation.

This year marks the 10th anniversary of the collaboration between Aznavour Pour L'Armenie fund and FAR. "FAR and Aznavour share the same mission of working to have Armenia become a prosperous, democratic country insuring a comfortable life for its people," said FAR Executive Director Garnik Nanagoulain.

"I have the guts to do anything," Aznavour said in one of this writer's several exclusive interviews with him. And that has been the motto of his extraordinarily successful life and career. He has sold 100 million albums, composed about 1,000 songs and acted in 60 films. In addition, his philanthropic work has been prolific in helping the people of Armenia since the tragic 1988 earthquake.

He was born Shahnour Vaghenag Aznavourian, 87 years ago in Paris, to Armenian parents who opened their own restaurant the day he was born. When World War II came, Aznavour's father joined the French army and his parents closed the restaurant. Raised in an atmosphere of "music, love and poverty," Aznavour was encouraged to entertain. To help support the family, he joined a touring children's company, and even hawked newspapers on boulevards, acquiring the famous "frog" in his throat.

"I learned about songs and music from my father and about theater and poetry from my mother. I grew up among singers, actors, dancers who were Armenian and Russian in a Jewish ghetto. Can you imagine what a beautiful combination that is," he says animatedly during an interview, smiling disarmingly, gesturing animatedly and using his expressive penetrating eyes, his most impressive features.

But success was not always his constant companion. Making his stage debut at 9 as an actor-dancer, he spent 20 years fighting to get to the top of the theatrical world, seeing the songs he had written become famous only when sung by Edith Piaf, Mistinguett, Maurice Chevalier, Juliet Greco and others.

"I became a successful writer very slowly. My songs became so popular in France that one day they accepted the man who wrote them. I started the kind of song that faces the reality of life — everyday movement, everyday feelings, everyday story. Nobody before wrote anything about deaf-mute love, homosexual love, a song

about an ugly woman. They were all afraid. I've done it. Everybody else came after me."

Since those difficult days, Aznavour has ridden to the top of the performing crest. His best has been described in eloquent terms, as "fantastic charisma" and "electric magic." He describes it as the "hunger of succeeding, of achieving something. Any entertainer who achieves something important has a monstrous attitude. Piaf was a monster. I'm a monster. We're frightening people."

Though described as the Frank Sinatra of France, he has sung in nine languages in the world's most famous musical venues, including Carnegie and Radio City Music halls. His songs, such as *She, Dance in the Old Fashioned Way* and *Yesterday When I Was Young* are regular staples in the international record-selling markets and have been performed by world famous singers. *Ils sont tombes* (They Fell), his song dedicated to the victims of the Armenian Genocide, became a best-seller in many countries.

Aznavour's best-known film, "Shoot the Piano Player," which has been screened countless



Charles Aznavour in the Vanadzor Old Age Home, with the Very Rev. Raphael Andonian to the right

times, will again be shown at Lincoln Center's Walter Reader Theatre in the near future.

In 1998, Aznavour was named Entertainer of the Century by CNN and international users of *Time* online. The recipient of numerous other honors, including the National Order of the

Legion of Honor and the National Hero of Armenia, he is married to his third wife, has six children and currently lives in Geneva, Switzerland.

More information about the FAR Cipriani tribute can be obtained on www.farusa.org.

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COMMENTARY

COMMENTARY

Moving towards Genocide Centennial

By Edmond Y. Azadian

In four years' time, 2015, the world Armenian community will mark the first centennial of the Armenian Genocide. Although mass preparations are not in sight yet, the landmark is in the minds and hearts of every Armenian.

Those who had advocated the "wisdom" of the forgive-and-forget policy (believing that the murder of 1.5 million souls was trivial) have come to realize that during the last 100 years, not only the Genocide was not forgotten, but efforts to bring universal acceptance to that monumental tragedy have intensified, the mission and the message having transcended from one generation to the other.

The survivors of the Genocide, after piecing their lives together, organized themselves to meet the challenges of denial. After murdering a nation and taking over its ancestral homeland, the Turks have directed the denial campaign into many realms: academia, the media, politics and culture. Fortunately, Armenians have been able to meet the challenges successfully, by producing many academic volumes, by confronting the Turks in the media and politics, with relatively scarce resources. Yet much remains to be done.

The Genocide centennial will mark a watershed, and efforts and organized work need to be intensified to do justice to the Genocide victims.

It took almost an entire century to make a crack in the wall of silence in Turkey. Today many historians, writers, journalists and politicians in Turkey have taken up the cause of the Armenian Genocide, bringing the message to the Turkish masses, which have been fed with all kinds of distortions in history. Ironically, the Kurds, who were active participants and accomplices in executing the Genocide, have become the most vocal group in Turkey supporting the Genocide recognition, because they also fell victim to the Turkish rulers' genocidal policies.

While the house of cards is crumbling around Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan, he still persistently continues to ask Armenians to produce one single proof that the Turks have committed a genocide against Armenians. His recent visit to Moscow was planned to coincide with the 90th anniversary of the Treaties of Moscow and Kars signed between the founder of the modern Republic of Turkey Mustafa Kemal Atatürk and leader of the Russian Revolution and founder of the USSR Vladimir Lenin to give away historic Armenian territory to Turkey. He presented a copy of the Peace and Fraternity Treaty to Russia's President Dmitry Medvedev, announcing at a press conference, "The document is a turning point in our history; our Eastern borders were recognized by Moscow agreement." The symbolism was directed at Armenia, since Armenia refused to bite the bait and accept the Moscow and Kars treaties by signing the Protocols. The Turks are now carrying the ball to Moscow.

Many historians and legal experts have raised questions about the legality of that treaty. The Moscow Treaty was signed by the Soviet government in Moscow on March 16, 1921, without Armenia's participation. On October 13, 1921 the Kars Treaty was imposed on the Armenians by Moscow.

In addition, Atatürk's Turkey was not even recognized at that time as a functioning government in order to be able to sign an internationally-binding treaty with any country. That treaty is especially without validity now because Moscow does not sit across the border from Turkey to give away Armenian territory to any party.

Thus Erdogan's theatrics are part and parcel of the Turkish denial machinery to prevent any future territorial claims by Armenia. Turkey's former dictator, Kenan Evren, once warned Armenians by saying: "Territories are gained by blood. Come and take any piece of Turkey's land if you can." We have to take

Evren by his word, because history has so many surprises.

Another symbolic action Mr. Erdogan is about to pursue, is to dismantle the goodwill monument erected in Kars extending a hand of friendship to Armenia.

The Genocide centennial is the most opportune occasion for Armenia to come up with its own symbolism. Armenia abounds with monuments, but this one will not prove to be superfluous. The Tzitzernakaberd Monument is a magnificent memorial to the victims of the Genocide. But we do not yet have a monument memorializing the mass murder of Armenian writers, artists and intellectuals. It seems ironic that the great assassins of history seem also to be competent literary critics to be able to select the best of the crop and mark them for execution. Talaat Pasha's ruse was to behead the Armenian population in the Ottoman Empire, before deporting the population to the desert for annihilation. Thus he selected Krikor Zohrab, Daniel Varoujan, Yerukhan, Komitas, Siamanto, Indra, Ruben Sevak and others and marked them for murder. Zohrab's skull was smashed with a rock and Varujan's fingers were severed and he was blinded before he was killed. There has never been a collective monument to these Armenian giants, whose greatness made them targets for torture and a painful, public death to quench the blood-lust of the Young Turk regime.

Meanwhile, another great assassin of history, Stalin, proved to be an equally capable literary critic, as he chose Charents, Mahari, Zabel Yessayan, Bakunts and Mugurditch Armen to be exiled to Siberia or murdered outright. These greats were killed in order to silence their intellects and their brave, original voices.

One hundred years later it is neither practical nor possible to trace the remains of our murdered writers within the current borders of Turkey. However, it is unbelievable that Charents' remains cannot be traced within the borders of Armenia. Perhaps there are still people alive with blood on their hands.

Therefore, a centennial monument dedicated to all the murdered writers calls for two wings. In one section, the names of the Genocide victims could be inscribed, in a format that we see on the Vietnam War Veterans' memorial in Washington, DC. The other wing can be dedicated to the writers and other creative forces who fell victim to Stalin's purges.

The monument could be erected somewhere near the current Armenian-Turkish border, with many elements of symbolism; to remind the Turks of their unspeakable crime and to mark the aspiration of all Armenians to recover lost historic territory across the border.

The Yerablur Monument is dedicated to all the heroes who have fallen in defense of Armenian lands, from General Antranik to Vazgen Sargisian, and all those in between, including all the victims of the war in Karabagh.

This monument will also give an opportunity to the intelligentsia in Armenia to revise their value system and express their recognition of Western Armenian writers and values.

When Armenia became part of the Soviet empire, values were codified and frozen in time. All the artists, writers and intellectuals who had been living within the borders were accepted as part of our national treasury. Western Armenian values and writers, therefore, did not enjoy equal opportunity.

Armenia's currency and streets are dedicated to all Eastern Armenian writers and intellectuals and, save for some individual exceptions, Western Armenian writers continue their exile from our Homeland.

Especially today, when the diaspora is bound to lose its identity, the Western Armenian intellectual treasury deserves more than just lip service.

Our challenges are great in our march towards the centennial. This monument will correct many old mistakes and herald a more hopeful, healthy and stronger future.

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- Articles sent by fax are acceptable, and e-mail submissions are encouraged.
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- Photos will be published without charge at the discretion of the editors and art director. Photos will be returned only if a self-addressed and stamped envelope is included.
- The *MS* will publish only one article about an upcoming organizational event. For major special events, exceptions may be made only by special arrangement with the editors.
- Telephone numbers, ticket prices and other details (at the discretion of the editors) will not be included in press releases, but should be reserved for calendar listings and advertisements.

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EDITOR

Alin K. Gregorian

ASSOCIATE EDITOR

Aram Arkun

ART DIRECTOR

Marc Mgrditchian

PRODUCTION

Dilani Yogaratnam

CONTRIBUTORS:

Elizabeth Aprahamian, Daphne Abeel, Dr. Haroutiune Arzoumanian, Edmond Azadian, Prof. Vahakn N. Dadrian, Diana Der Hovanesian, Philip Ketchian, Kevork Keushkerian, Sonia Kailian-Placido, Harut Sassounian, Mary Terzian, Hagop Vartivarian, Naomi Zeytoonian, Taleen Babayan

CORRESPONDENTS:

Armenia - Hagop Avedikian

Boston - Nancy Kalajian

Philadelphia - Lisa Manookian

Contributing Photographers:

Jacob Demirdjian, Harry Koundakjian, Jirair Hovsepiyan

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Telephone: 617-924-4420

FAX: 617-924-2887

www.mirrorspectator.com

E-Mail: **editor@mirrorspectator.com**

For advertising: mirrorads@aol.com

New York/New Jersey Office

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(201) 800-1164

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COMMENTARY



My Turn

By Harut Sassounian

Armenian Attorneys Respond to Court Appeal of German Companies

Attorneys for Armenian heirs of life insurance policyholders filed a powerful response last month to the petition of German companies seeking a rehearing by a federal appeals court. The majority of a three-member panel of the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals had ruled in favor of the Armenians' right to pursue their demand for unpaid claims, reversing an earlier ruling by the majority of the same panel of judges.

The response of the Armenian lawyers dealt a devastating blow not only to the German insurance companies, but also to the Republic of Turkey, which had shamelessly filed a "friend of the court" petition in support of the German defendants. It is ironic that instead of Germany, the Turkish government is the one objecting to the lawsuit against the German firms.

The Armenian claimants asked the Court of Appeals to deny the German petition for a rehearing. The German defendants had based their appeal on the contention that the California State statute extending the deadline for filing claims against insurance companies was unconstitutional because the law's endorsement of the Armenian Genocide contradicts the federal government's foreign policy.

The Armenian attorneys contested the German defen-

dants' claim by asserting that "there have been no negative foreign policy repercussions from statutes and/or enactments promulgated" by more than 40 US states on the Armenian Genocide. The attorneys further stated that while several US presidents have objected to congressional resolutions on the Armenian Genocide, there have been many other statements by the federal executive and legislative branches in favor of such recognition. The attorneys specifically mentioned the two congressional resolutions on the Armenian Genocide adopted by the US House of Representatives in 1975 and 1984, as well as President Ronald Reagan's reference to the Armenian Genocide in his Presidential Proclamation of 1981.

The attorneys asserted that previous US administrations maintained a "deafening silence" while more than 40 US states recognized the Armenian Genocide, without constituting any threat to US foreign policy. Furthermore, even if past administrations were opposed to congressional resolutions on the Genocide issue, there would be no reason to object to local and state resolutions, as they would have no impact on US foreign policy.

The Armenian attorneys cited previous court decisions asserting that state statutes could be challenged on the basis of the foreign affairs doctrine only if they conflicted with "an expressed unmistakable executive treaty, Congressional enactment or executive policy." The attorneys reasoned that the courts had ruled a similar California statute on the Holocaust to be invalid because the federal government had created a Presidential Advisory Commission on Holocaust Assets in the United States, obviating the need for separate Holocaust-related lawsuits. No federal commission has been established to regulate lawsuits related to the Armenian Genocide. Another key difference in the two cases is that the Armenian plaintiffs are not seeking restitution, but only the recovery of insurance benefits owed to them.

The Armenian attorneys also made the convincing argument that even if previous Administrations have had con-

tradictory stands on the Armenian Genocide, "there is no evidence of an express federal policy banning the term 'Armenian Genocide' in legislative enactments by the States."

The Armenian lawyers proceeded to slam the "friend of the court" petition filed by the Republic of Turkey, which claimed that the California statute conflicted with federal foreign policy on the Armenian Genocide. The Armenian attorneys asserted that "Turkey does not create or dictate United States foreign policy; only the United States government can do that." Turkey's allegation that "the current Administration opposes recognition of the Armenian Genocide are flatly contradicted by President Barack Obama's own statements. As senator and presidential candidate, he spoke forcefully on the Armenian Genocide. As president, he reasserted: "I have consistently stated my own view of what occurred in 1915, and my view of that history has not changed."

Finally, the Armenian legal team pointed out that this case also safeguards the right of the State of California to regulate insurance companies operating within its borders. Thus, overturning the California statute on Armenian insurance policyholders would "impair California's interest in providing individuals with access to its courts to resolve disputes concerning insurance policies held by them and issued by companies doing business in the State."

Based on these powerful arguments – and the "friend of the court" briefs filed by several major law firms and organizations to be discussed in a future column – it is hoped that the federal Court of Appeals will rule against the German insurance companies' petition for a rehearing. Should the German firms lose the appeal, they have the final recourse of petitioning the US Supreme Court.

It is critical for Armenians to win these appeals in order to protect not only the interests of the heirs of insurance policyholders, but also to prevent Turkish denialists from exploiting this lawsuit to invalidate decades of efforts in support of Genocide recognition in the United States.

An Unprecedented Exhibition upon 15th Anniversary of Constitutional Court

By Hagop Vartivarian

Starting on February 4 to April 1, the halls of Constitutional Court remained open both for the public and staff. During this period works of Armenian artists have been exhibited there for the first time. This year is the 15th anniversary celebration of the establishment of the Constitutional Court, and on this occasion an exhibition has been organized upon the request of the Chief Justice of the Constitutional Court, Gagik Harutyunyan. We can say that this exhibition brought a breath of fresh air to the working atmosphere of the court employees, when Dr. and Mrs. Raffy and Shoghag Hovanessian from New Jersey, benefactors, art patrons and promoters of contemporary Armenian artists' works from the motherland, accepted to organize it. Shoghag Hovanessian was entrusted the responsibility of curating this unique exhibition within the walls of the Constitutional Court.

Perhaps for some people the connection between constitution and art might seem unexpected and surprising. However, it should be indicated to them that this connection is the close inner expression of the Armenian persona emanating from our long history, where one can find excitement, tragedy, meditation, soulful expression and, along with these, surely justice. Finally, who should be the most righteous person, if not the artist, who is the disposer as well as the mirror of mankind's complete feelings, and throughout that way of standards and universal values.

Especially in our case the Armenian artist, who created during the most unjust and turbulent period of our history, in spite of all pressures, insecurities, blockades and most

elemental injustices.

For preparation of this exhibition Shoghag Hovanessian had in her mind three various phases from the current 20th and 21st centuries – works of art from immediate past, present and future. Thus works of 10 contemporary artists have been exhibited on the first floor: Arevik Arevshatyan, Ruben Grigoryan, Narek Avetisyan (son of eminent artist Minas), Sargis Hamalbashyan, Hamlet Hovsepyan, Moko (daughter of great artist Rudolf Khachatryan), Vahan Rumelyan, Ararat Sargsyan, Arthur Sargsyan and Davit Kareyan. This is a beautiful bouquet of mid-career contemporary Armenian artists.

The walls of the Constitutional Court's second floor were exhibited with works of the great artist at the end of the past century, Hakob Hakobyan, who is now already considered a classic. In spite of his advanced age, he continues creating. He is certainly the last of the Mohicans who comes from the old

“...this connection is the close inner expression of the Armenian persona emanating from our long history, where one can find excitement, tragedy, meditation, soulful expression and, along with these, surely justice.”

times.

The past, in this exhibition is presented by the French-Armenian eminent late artist, Carneg Zouloumian, known as Carzou, which is exhibited in the hall of the Constitutional Court where serious deliberations take place. The 21 works have been loaned to the exhibition by the same curator – the aforementioned couple, who is very dear to us. Let us remember that Shoghag Hovanessian, who is known as Vicki in American circles, before moving to New Jersey, had been the chairperson of the Collectors' Forum at the Contemporary Art Museum in Chicago. Already since 1995, she has played a pivotal role in presenting works of contemporary Armenian artists in her gallery, to the American museums, art galleries and private collectors.

On the day of the opening of the exhibition, the Chief Justice of the Constitutional Court, Harutyunyan mentioned that "this exhibition is an attempt to organize our state

life in a meaningful way, to appreciate the professionals surrounding us." On this occasion, Harutyunyan awarded Shoghag Hovanessian and Hakobyan with special appreciative certificates.

Prime Minister Tigran Sargsian, mayor of Yerevan Karen Karapetyan, general procurer Aghvan Hovsepyan, all the justices and other high officials of Armenia were present during the opening ceremony.

Indeed Shoghag Hovanessian will continue organizing similar exhibitions. Last autumn she organized another major exhibition of

our contemporary Armenian artists upon the request of the dynamic rector Gohar Kyalyan dedicated to the 90th anniversary of Yerevan State Medical University after MekhitarHeratsi. Her love towards her motherland has no boundaries. She has the decades of experience promoting arts, inherited from her parents and from her current environment in Beirut, where she was born into an intellectual family who instilled in her a profound fondness and respect of the arts.

We are looking forward to Shoghag Hovanessian's new initiatives.

LETTERS

ADL Should Drop the 'A' from its Name

To the Editor:

The avowed purpose of the Anti-Defamation League is to fight discrimination. The group has no expertise in international history or affairs. Thus, although it has no expert knowledge of the genocide of Armenians, the ADL claims Turkey did not commit genocide against Armenians.

It's obvious that ADL's interest in this debate is not to advance historic truth but to protect the tarnished reputation of Turkey, a long-time friend of Israel— although that friendship is

strained these days.

When the ADL denies the veracity of the Genocide of Armenians, it is calling Armenians, historians and scholars (mostly non-Armenian) and eyewitnesses to the Genocide liars.

In other words, ADL is defaming Armenians, historians and scholars and eyewitnesses.

It's high time the ADL dropped the 'A' from its name and called itself the Defamation League.

— Jirair Tutunjian
Toronto

ADL's Message Is Not Welcome in Watertown

(This letter originally appeared in the March 27 issue of the *Watertown Tab*.)

To Editor:

Watertown gave the national Anti-Defamation League [ADL] a strong message more than three years ago: you and your opposition to the recognition of the Armenian Genocide of 1915-23 are hypocritical and immoral, and you are unwelcome here.

Now I walk down Mount Auburn Street, and I see a huge advertisement by the ADL about "bullying." Looks like the ADL is poking its finger in Watertown's eye as revenge.

Didn't the national ADL get the message when more than a dozen cities tossed out the ADL's No Place For Hate program because the

ADL had lost all credibility on human rights? Didn't the ADL understand that principled Jewish Americans were embarrassed by the ADL's actions against Armenians?

And it still has not reversed its stance against Armenians. No organization that claims to believe in justice and human rights would ever sit down with a major human rights violator such as Turkey, as the national ADL has done, to cook up a plan to target a group, in this case Armenians that suffered a holocaust.

Due to its sponsor, the billboard is offensive and not credible.

The ADL should take its act to a more appropriate place. I suggest Turkey.

— Vany Tashjian
Watertown, Mass.



A Week of Literature for Children and Teens in Armenia

YEREVAN (Armenpress) — March 28-April 4 has been proclaimed a week of literature for children and teens. Chairman of the Armenian Writers' Union Levon Ananyan said this week that Armenia had that tradition from the Soviet years. A number of events will take place within the framework of the festive week, the goal of which is to convey the literary merits to schools. A number of meetings both in the capital and in provinces will be held.

The official opening of literature for children and teens was held March 31 in Artashat. On the closing day of the festive week, an exhibition of children's books will open in the National Library of Armenia.

An awards ceremony was also held the same day. According to Ananyan, at the moment they have introducible literature for children and juniors. And though the literature does not become "commodity," and does not manage to cover the expenses, the interest in literature for children does not decrease.

The chairman of the Writers' Union said on the occasion of proclaiming Yerevan a book capital 2012 there is a goal to set up a bookstall in every community of the capital. The idea of setting up a center of culture and book has developed in the capital.

Director of Khnko Aper Library, Ruzan Tonoyan, said that as a result of the book fair the library has had 6,000 visitors in two days.

"No law can make the child read. The child should learn reading from an early childhood," Ananyan said.

Turkey's Press Freedom Problem

By Matthew Brunwasser

There are now 61 journalists in detention in Turkey, a country that is held up as a model for Islamic democracies.

Eight Turkish journalists have been arrested over the past month. They are accused of, among other things, participating in a terrorist organization called Ergenekon. Lawyer Huseyin Ersoz represents three jailed journalists. He says it's clear from their interrogation that they were arrested because of their critical reports on the ruling AK Party.

"All the questions directed to our clients were not just about the events but about the reporting process: how they found their news and which contacts they used," Ersoz said. "They were interrogated about their sources, specific phone calls and what their point in doing the story was?"

Turkish press groups say silencing journalists is a big problem that's gaining attention worldwide. There are now 61 journalists in detention and some 5,000 pending court cases. Senior European Union and US officials have weighed in on the seeming discrepancy between Turkey's stated support for a free press and the detention of journalists.

"We are trying to make sense of this," US Ambassador to Turkey Frank Ricciardone said.

Lawyer Huseyin Ersoz said there's no mystery.

"It's the beginning of an empire of fear," Ersoz said. "If the AKP were to use the law against offending the Turkish nation, then everyone in society and the international community would

oppose them. But since they are fighting against terrorism, the greatest crime you can imagine, no one dares to resist."

Turkish legislation provides a rich arsenal of ammunition to silence reporters. There are laws against spreading propaganda and laws against obtaining sensitive information for example.

Those laws — alone — are used by the government to punish reporting on Kurdish rebels and national security issues. In one case, the government is accused of using tax authorities to punish a critical media group. *Turkish Daily News* editor and columnist Barcin Yincan said the Turkish government is hypocritical when it criticizes others in the region for a lack of freedoms.

"While at home they don't implement some of the basic tenets of democracy," Yincan said. "One of them is freedom of the press."

Emma Sinclair-Webb, who is with Human Rights Watch, said that Turkey still hasn't got a record that fits a democratic society. She said that Turkey today is politically more open than it was but that there is a "confusing" pattern of state harassment of journalists.

Reporters from the left and the right, secularists and Islamists all feel the pressure. And as the party in power, the ruling AKP is simply the worst offender.

"Until Turkey gets its own house in order, it will never be a fully credible leading country in the region to advise others what to do," Sinclair-Webb said. "And getting its own house in order, on issues like press freedom, freedom of expression, has to be a priority for a country which does seek a regional role and play as a big actor in the newly emerging Middle East."

Political Motivations

Turkish politicians also launch personal legal actions to silence critical journalists, including one famous suit by the prime minister against a political cartoonist, for portraying his face on a cat tangled in yarn.

"What message does that send out about your tolerance of free speech, your tolerance of dissent, your tolerance of shocking and disturbing views, which are all permissible in a democracy?" Sinclair Webb asked.

Government officials deny any political motivations in the recent arrests. At a recent meeting of the governing AK Party, Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan wondered whether journalists considered themselves exempt from Turkish law.

"A legal action has been taken against a website," Erdogan said. "They say, the government muzzles the journalists. What it got to do with us? Certain chorus immediately weighs in. I wonder, are there any provisions stating media executives, journalists have legal immunity and we don't know about it? Are media entities privileged? Are they exempt from laws, taxes? Can't they be prosecuted?"

The prime minister's strong public warnings to journalists may have a chilling effect observers say — but Turkish journalists are still writing punchy stories. And the clash between the press and the state, loud and spirited under normal conditions, is just cranking up as Turkey enters the campaign season for national elections in June.

(This story originally was broadcast by Public Radio International's "The World," a radio news magazine offering a mix of news, features, interviews and music from around the globe.)

COMMENTARY

96th Anniversary Commemoration of the ARMENIAN GENOCIDE

Friday, April 15, 2011

11:00 AM

House of Representatives Chamber
Massachusetts State House, Boston
Followed by a reception in the Great Hall



Keynote Speaker

Dr. Tom Samuelian
Dean of Law School, American
University of Armenia

Buses will be leaving at 9:00 AM
from St. James and St. Stephen's Churches

For more information contact:

Senator Steven Tolman (617) 722-1280

Representative Jonathan Hecht (617) 722-2140

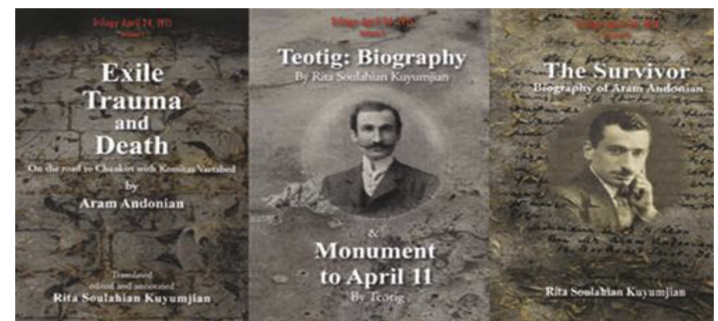
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(Buses generously provided by the Knights of Vartan, Ararat Lodge No. 1)

Tekeyan Cultural Association & St. Leon Armenian Church
Present

Trilogy- April 24, 1915

Before and After- The Lives of Survivors



by Dr. Rita Kuyumjian

Assistant Professor of Psychiatry at McGill University, Montreal, Canada

Trilogy is a treasure of our forgotten past and confirmation that *the struggle of man against power is the struggle of the memory against forgetting.* (M. Kundera)

It is a three-volume work that will enhance your view and understanding of the ghastly events that took place on and after April 24, 1915.

Trilogy is a joint publication of the Tekeyan Cultural Association and Gomidas Institute of London. It was made possible with the support of Ruth and Sarkis Bedevian.

Introduction by Dr. Anie Kalayjian

Book Signing and Discussion with the Author

The event is free and open to the public. A reception will follow the book signing.

Date: Wednesday, April 13, 2011

Time: 7:30 P.M.

Place: St. Leon Armenian Church Charles and Grace Pinajian Youth Center
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