



Ani Cathedral

World Monuments Fund to Conserve Ani Cathedral

NEW YORK (armradio.am) – Bonnie Burnham, president of the New York-based World Monuments Fund (WMF), has announced that WMF and the Turkish Ministry of Culture and Tourism have embarked on a historic partnership to conserve the Ani Cathedral and the Church of the Holy Savior.

Once the site of hundreds of religious buildings, palaces, fortifications and other structures, Ani was, in the 10th century, one of the world's great cities. Today, however, it stands abandoned, and its celebrated historic buildings are in a precarious state.

see ANI, page 4

French Senate Drops Genocide Denial Bill

PARIS (RFE/RL) – The French Senate has effectively rejected a bill that would make it a crime to publicly say the World War I-era mass killings of Armenians in Ottoman Turkey did not constitute genocide.

The bill – which was drafted by lawmakers from the opposition Socialist Party – was adopted by the French lower house, the National Assembly, in 2006 amid vehement protests from the Turkish government.

But it also needs to be passed by the Senate, parliament's upper house, in order to become law.

The French-Armenian community has for years been trying to push the bill through the Senate, which is dominated by supporters of President Nicolas Sarkozy. The effort has faced tacit resistance from the government.

Spokesman Francois Baroin said on May 4 that the government did not support the draft law co-sponsored by three dozen Socialist senators.

He said existing French legislation

already allowed the state to counter public denials of what it has declared was a genocide against Armenians.

Baroin said France recognized the Genocide with a special law adopted in 2001. "France continues to believe that [genocide] denialism is unacceptable in any form," armenews.com quoted him as saying.

A standing committee of the Senate made similar arguments as it openly opposed the bill on May 4. The full chamber then voted 196 to 74 to block a formal debate on the issue.

The move angered several hundred French people of Armenian descent who had gathered outside the Luxembourg Palace in Paris, the seat of the Senate, during the debate.

"It's clear that the French Senate bowed to Turkish government pressure and simply found an excuse not to adopt this law," Hratch Varjabedian, one of the organizers of the demonstration, said.

Varjabedian said community leaders

see FRANCE, page 4

Shushi Anniversary Marked

Sargisian Warns Azerbaijan Against Hostile Moves

SHUSHI, Karabagh (RFE/RL) – President Serge Sargisian warned Azerbaijan against attempting to resolve the Nagorno-Karabagh conflict by force on Monday as he visited the disputed territory to mark the 19th anniversary of a key Armenian military victory.

"We silenced, and if need be will silence again all those fire spots from where our children and our parents were shot," he said in a written address to the nation. "However, I hope that it will not be necessary: our troops, who are guarding peace of our Fatherland, hold the greatest promise that it will not happen again."

Sargisian issued the statement as he celebrated the anniversary of the 1992 capture by Karabagh Armenian forces of Shushi, Karabagh's second largest town that was mostly populated by Azerbaijanis. The military operation led to the opening of a land corridor between the disputed enclave and Armenia and thus proved crucial for the outcome of the 1991-1994 Karabagh war.

A native of Karabagh, Sargisian was one of the top commanders of Karabagh see WARNING, page 2



Dr. Movses Housepian, a former editor of the *Armenian Mirror-Spectator*, will be remembered at the gala to be held in New Jersey on June 4, paying tribute to the longevity of the newspaper. See story on page 10.

Yovanovitch to Leave Armenia in June

YEREVAN (Azg) – US Ambassador to Armenia Marie Yovanovitch will conclude her three-year tour, the US Embassy in Armenia reported on May 5.

Yovanovitch will return to Washington, DC to take up her new duties as deputy assistant secretary for Northern and Central Europe at the US Department of State, in June.

France-based Participants of Artsakh War Receive Honors

PARIS (Armenpress) – A medal ceremony for Armenian and Diaspora-Armenian participants of the Artsakh War was held May 6 at the AGBU Alex Manoogian Cultural Center here.

An official from the Armenian Foreign Affairs Ministry said that Hayk Harutunyan, chairman of the Azatamartik military-patriotic benevolent NGO, former commander of the Sose Mayrik Detachment, gave the Azatamartik memorial order to six France-based participants of the Artsakh War. Several participants received certificates from the NGO.

At the evening program, Prof. Richard Hovannisian, soon-to-be retired UCLA professor, delivered a talk.

Istanbul Court Annuls Demotion of Police Chief over Failure to Prevent Dink Murder

ISTANBUL (PanARMENIAN.Net) – An administrative court on Monday, May 9, annulled an earlier Interior Ministry decision to demote Ramazan Akyürek, the former head of the National Police Department's intelligence department, over his alleged negligence in protecting the late Turkish-Armenian journalist and *Agos* newspaper's editor, Hrant Dink.

Akyürek, who was at the helm of the intelligence department at the time, was demoted by the Interior Ministry after allegations emerged that he was among a number of police officers who had failed to prevent the assassination of the journalist despite having credible evidence that it was imminent.

The Ankara 14th Administrative Court reviewed an appeal filed by Akyürek against his demotion and decided to annul the decision to demote the former police chief. The court said "there was no concrete evidence that required his demotion over allegations of negligence," *Today's Zaman* reported.

INSIDE

Illustrating Possibilities

page 13

INDEX

Armenia	2, 3
Arts and Living	13
Calendar	18
Community News.	6
Editorial	18
International	4, 5

New Reality in the Middle East in Wake of Revolts, Reforms and Religion

Eroding Diasporas Cling to Traditions

By Alin K. Gregorian
Mirror-Spectator Staff

WATERTOWN, Mass. – Political events of the past three decades have

uprooted or altered the lives of many Armenians living in Middle Eastern countries. From Iran to Lebanon, and now Syria, Jordan, Egypt and Iraq, communities that seemed well-established – and well-heeled – now seem to have either shrunk dramatically or shifted as equally dramatically because of past, present or anticipated revolutions.

Two scholars studying Armenian diaspo-

ras shed some light on the changing nature of the Middle Eastern communities, once home to the largest Armenian Diaspora.

Prof. Ara Sanjian, director of the University of Michigan at Dearborn's Armenian Research Center, suggested that in the past three decades, there has been a shift out of the Arab world for Armenians.

see DIASPORA, page 20



ARMENIA

News From Armenia

Aznavour House-Museum Completed

YEREVAN (Armenpress) – The construction of the house-museum of Charles Aznavour here has been completed. Urban Development Minister Vardan Vardanyan said the building is ready and that the next step is to bring in the collection.

Aznavour's Paris office is organizing the stage-by-stage transportation of the items. Vardanyan noted that the date of opening of the museum would be reported soon.

The building is situated on the left side of Cascade complex. The construction of the building started in 2007. The house-museum will have a hall with a seating capacity of 150, a reception hall, museum and an open-air café.

Foreign Minister Meets OSCE Parliamentary Assembly President

YEREVAN (News.am) – On May 10, Armenian Foreign Minister Eduard Nalbandian met with Petros Efthymiou, the president of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) Parliamentary Assembly.

Welcoming Efthymiou, Nalbandian mentioned that the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly is a well-established format of inter-parliamentary cooperation and Armenia actively participates in the activities of that institution.

The two exchanged views on the recent developments in the settlement of the Nagorno-Karabagh issue. Efthymiou stressed the importance of creating an atmosphere of confidence through the consolidation of cease-fire and withdrawal of snipers and underlined that a peaceful settlement of the issue is the only way to deal with the issue.

Armenian Opera and Ballet Theater Will Host Tango Festival

YEREVAN (PanARMENIAN.Net) – On April 29, the Armenian Opera and Ballet Theater hosted a Tango Festival.

The Theater's Symphony Orchestra under the guidance of Facundo Aguidin (Argentina) presented a concert within festival framework.

Argentinean musician, Marcelo Nisiman (bandoneon), and Armenian soloists, Armen Babakhanyan (piano) and Shmavon Grigoryan (bassoon), featured new interpretations of compositions by Piazzolla, Nisnman, Chopin, Weber and Ginastera.

ArmenTel to Sponsor BarCamp Yerevan 2011

YEREVAN (Arminfo) – ArmenTel CJSC is the corporate sponsor of the third BarCamp Yerevan, to be held on June 4-5 at the American University of Armenia. BarCamp Yerevan unites people engaged in web environment, creators of new media blogs and Web2.0 projects. They will meet to discuss new ideas and innovations in an informal atmosphere through training courses, reports, presentations in the sphere of IT, telecommunications and mass media.

This year BarCamp organizers anticipate about 1,000 visitors from 10 companies in related fields.

Premier Sargisian Attends Ani Exhibition

YEREVAN (Aysor.am) – Prime Minister Tigran Sargisian attended an exhibition dedicated to the ancient Armenian capital, Ani, at the Academy exhibition hall. The exhibition, which celebrates the 1,050th anniversary of the former Armenian capital Ani, has been initiated by the Ararat Diocese and the Union of the World Armenian Painters, the government press office reported.

The exhibition features 72 paintings by 26 artists and photos by photographer Zaven Sargsyan.

Armenia Remembers Soviet Victory in WWII

YEREVAN (RFE/RL) – Armenia officially marked the 66th anniversary of the end of World War II on Monday, with thousands of people visiting a war memorial in Yerevan to pay their respects to Soviet soldiers who defeated Nazi Germany.

A steady stream of people, among them gray-haired veterans wearing their wartime decorations, silently filed past an eternal flame in the city's Victory Park after an official ceremony led by parliament speaker Hovik Abrahamian, Prime Minister Tigran Sargisian and other senior Armenian officials.

An honor guard of Armenian and Russian soldiers stood to attention as they laid wreathes and flowers around the fire. Sargisian and Abrahamian

ing up an educated and healthy young generation – a generation which is true to the vows of its forefathers and which will build a new Armenia. For the Armenian nation, the World War II was the Great Patriotic War indeed," he added.

At least 320,000 residents of Armenia, then a republic of approximately 1 million people, were drafted to the Soviet army during the bloodiest war in history. The total number of Soviet Armenian participants is estimated at more than 500,000. Only half returned home alive.

There are currently about 3,600 veterans living in Armenia. May 9 is a rare moment of nationwide attention to them and their needs.

"This is wonderful because it's about

problems must be at the center of the government's attention."

"But we must also understand that our financial resources are not enough to solve all problems properly," the Armenian speaker told journalists.

Armenia to Extend, Expand Afghan Mission

YEREVAN (RFE/RL) – Armenia plans to almost triple the number of its troops serving in Afghanistan under NATO command and extend their mission at least until the end of 2012, Defense Minister Seyran Ohanian confirmed on Tuesday.

Ohanian formally asked the Armenian parliament to allow his government to commit an additional 85 troops to the US-led International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) for Afghanistan operating under the NATO aegis. Parliament is expected to authorize the deployment this week.

Armenia sent a platoon of 40 soldiers to the war-torn country last year in accordance with an agreement with NATO signed in late 2009. The small unit is tasked with guarding a military airport near the northern Afghan city of Kunduz. Five other Armenian servicemen were sent there to train an Afghan army battalion.

The agreement with NATO is due to expire in December. Amendments worked out by Armenian and NATO officials would extend it by one year and raise to 130 the number of servicemen the Armenian military will have on the ground. That number would temporarily reach 260 during regular troop rotations.

Speaking at the National Assembly, Ohanian said the additional troops were requested by Germany, which is in charge of ISAF's Northern Command headquartered in the city of Mazare-Sharif.

"The German side and Germany's defense minister in particular have given the highest appraisal to our troops and with a corresponding letter have asked us to send two more infantry platoons for deployment with ISAF in Mazare-Sharif," he said.

Germany will continue to finance the Armenian troops' presence in Afghanistan.



Veterans celebrate the 66th anniversary of Soviet victory in World War II with the prime minister and the chairman of National Assembly, in Yerevan's Victory Park, May 9.

then shared a ceremonial meal with some of the veterans in the park.

"May God grant you many more years of life," Sargisian told them. "The longer you stay with us, the better we will feel," he said, raising a toast.

President Serge Sargisian, who was visiting Nagorno-Karabagh, issued a written address to the nation on the occasion. "This victory brought long-awaited peace to Armenia which endured so much tragedy," he said.

"This victory opened new doors for progress; it opened new horizons for bring-

respect for the elders in general and especially the veterans," one veteran said. "We are grateful for that."

But others complained about a lack of government attention and modest benefits paid to them by the state. "They say they are unable to give us more aid," said one of them. "But that's not true." "We don't get one-third of what veterans in Moscow get," said another veteran.

"They deserve more," admitted Abrahamian. "We must be more caring toward them. Their socioeconomic

Sargisian Warns Azerbaijan

WARNING, from page 1

Armenian troops that stormed and seized the strategically important town overlooking Stepanakert on May 8-9, 1992.

Sargisian and the political leadership of Nagorno Karabagh laid flowers at a war memorial in Stepanakert. They also attended on Sunday a liturgy held at the Armenian cathedral of Shushi.

"Now and forever, we will be celebrating wholeheartedly our glorious victory; this was a victory of good over evil and barbarity," read Sargisian's message. "Those who stepped into immortality on the battlefield carry on with their great mission as a moral and political force."

Speaking at a news conference in Yerevan last week, the Armenian president accused Baku of torpedoing peace talks mediated by the United States,



Armenian President Serge Sargisian (right) and Karabagh President Bako Sahakian and other leaders attend a liturgy in the Armenian cathedral of Shushi.

Russia and France and planning to start another war.

The accusations were in sharp contrast to statements made by both Sargisian and Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev following their most recent

meeting that was hosted by their Russian counterpart, Dmitry Medvedev, in early March. The Armenian and Azerbaijani leaders said the summit brightened prospects for a peaceful Karabagh settlement.



ARMENIA

World Psychiatric Association Convenes in Yerevan

YEREVAN — More than 250 psychiatrists from around the world attended the annual regional meeting of the World Psychiatric Association (WPA), Eastern European Region, from April 14-17, here. Dr. Armen Soghoian, president of both the Armenian Psychiatric Association and World Psychiatric Association, Eastern Region, was director of the conference. The theme of the conference was “Mental Health in a Changing World.” World-renowned

the Armenian Genocide including the effects of denial, transgenerational transmission of trauma and issues relevant to revenge.

The superb efforts of the local organizing committee under the direction of Soghoian were evident at the Armenia-Marriott Hotel. Keynote speakers presented at the large ballroom and six breakout symposia were conducted simultaneously for three days with Power Point access available in each room.

Coffee breaks with lunch occurred without any problems and sessions were on time. Typical of such international medical conferences was the pharmaceutical support from such industry giants as Lilly, Janssen and GlaxoSmithKline, all with representatives in Armenia.

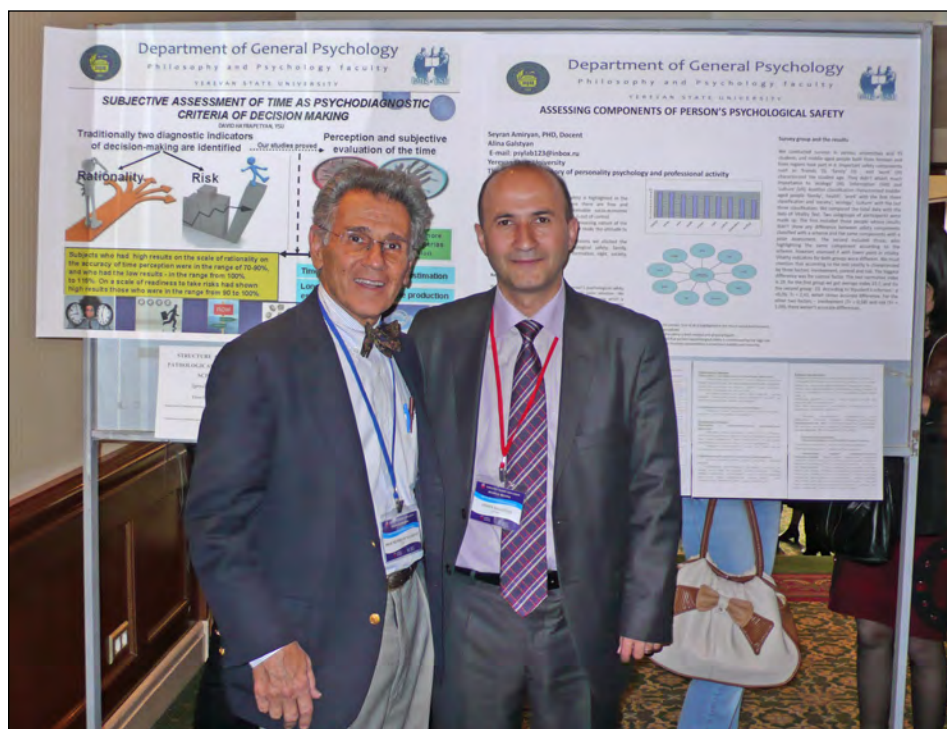
Dr. Hagop Akiskal, professor of psychiatry at the University of San Diego Medical School, is an internationally-recognized expert on mood disorders and he was a keynote speaker on the subject of bipolar disorders. Dr. Edward Khantzian, professor of psychiatry at Harvard Medical School in Cambridge,

Mass., presented a novel approach to understanding substance abuse. Dr. Armen Goenjian, professor of psychiatry at UCLA and Dr. Louis Najarian, professor of psychiatry at Hofstra North Shore-LIJ School of Medicine, presented a symposium on their 20 years of work since the 1988 Armenian earthquake. They discussed research and treatment methods developed



From left, Dr. Armen Goenjian, professor of psychiatry, UCLA; Dr. Samvel Torossian, chief psychiatrist, Republic of Armenia; Louis M. Najarian, MD; Kristine Torossian, psychologist, and Vahe Simonyan, MD, psychiatrist

psychiatrists from the US, Europe and Asia presented current research on topics of schizophrenia, depression, autism and mental health issues specific for women. Special symposia were devoted the worldwide impact of disasters both natural ones such as earthquakes and tsunami and manmade ones such as terrorism and war. A special symposium was devoted to



Louis M. Najarian, MD, professor of psychiatry at Hofstra University School of Medicine, on the left, and Armen Soghoian, MD, president of the Armenian Psychiatric Association and the World Psychiatric Association, Eastern Region, and director of the conference

from their experience which took place at the Western Region Armenian Relief Society's mental health clinics in Gumri and Spitak. Their research has been published in leading psychiatric journals and is the foundation for mental health interventions for disasters. Both clinics provided the only free mental health treatment for children and their families in Gumri and Spitak and it is unfortunate the ARS chose to

close the clinics in spite of the continued need.

The conference opening took place at the Opera House to a packed audience with comments from state officials and then a musical program with renditions by Khachaturian. A reception followed at the Opera House. Visiting guests enjoyed such Armenian culture and hospitality with tours of the city, their museums and a wonderful performance of the opera “Aida.”

Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights Presents Report on Armenia

YEREVAN (News.am) — Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights Thomas Hammarberg released a report on May 9 on his visit to Armenia in January. The report focuses on issues related to the March 2008 events, freedom of expression and freedom of assembly and association and the human rights situation in the army. The following is from the report posted on Council of Europe website.

“Some significant steps have been taken to address the human rights consequences of the March 2008 events, but more needs to be done to promote reconciliation in society and reinforce public trust towards the authorities,” Hammarberg said in the report.

The commissioner considers that the use of force on March 1-2, 2008 was excessive and that the investigation into the 10 deaths has not been effective. “None of the perpetrators have been identified to date. Command responsibility of senior officials within the police and the security services appears not to have been seriously considered. The Armenian authorities should pursue vigorously these investigations and bring all those responsible to account. The families of the 10 victims should receive adequate compensation for the loss of their relatives and should be fully associated to and informed about the investigation,” he said in the report.

The commissioner welcomes the recent instruction from President Serge Sargisian with regard to the investigation into the death cases and hopes that this will be translated into concrete progress in identifying and punishing those responsible.

While welcoming the release of many of those deprived of their liberty in connection to the March 2008 events, three of whom were released after his visit, the commissioner continues to have serious concerns about the situation of remaining imprisoned opposition activists and urges the Armenian authorities to release them.

The report also pays particular attention to freedom of expression, including freedom and diversity of the media. While welcoming the decriminalization of libel and insult through last year's amendments to the Criminal Code, the commissioner remains concerned about the

increase of cases brought against media outlets on the basis of amendments to the Civil Code. He stresses that unreasonably high fines in civil cases relating to media should be avoided. At the same time, ethical standards for journalism and a system of self-regulation should be encouraged.

Expressing alarm over the attacks and pressure on journalists that have taken place in the past two years, the commissioner calls upon the country's leadership to firmly condemn such incidents and to take measures to

prevent their recurrence.

The implementation in practice of the right to freedom of peaceful assembly in Armenia also remains a source of concern. “Unlawful and disproportionate impediments on peaceful assemblies, such as intimidation and arrest of participants, disruption of transportation means and blanket prohibitions against assemblies in certain places, should be immediately discontinued. It is crucial that the behavior and actions of police forces during assemblies abide

by human rights standards.”

Hammarberg encouraged the authorities to review the national legal framework and practices related to freedom of expression, freedom of the media and freedom of assembly in order to bring it in compliance with human rights standards.

The report also addressed the issue of non-combat deaths, torture and ill treatment, which have occurred in the Armenian army and have featured prominently in the country's public debate.

Armenian Church Service for Japan Quake Victims

YEREVAN (RFE/RL) — The head of the Armenian Apostolic Church, Catholicos Karekin II, on Wednesday held a special service for the victims of a catastrophic earthquake and tsunami in Japan. The prayer and requiem service, attended by President Serge Sargisian and a senior Japanese official, was held in Saint Gregory the Illuminator Cathedral nearly two months after the calamity that killed more than 25,000 people.

“In the great family of mankind created by God, each of us has a moral obligation and responsibility to extend a hand and console all of our brothers who are bearing the heavy burden of disaster or tragedy,” Catholicos Karekin II said in a sermon delivered at the end of the religious ceremony.

“Catastrophe, pain and loss do not recognize ethnicity and borders,” he told hundreds of people attending. “Our people were the witnesses to this knowledge and expression of conviction, by receiving aid during the years of the Armenian Genocide, as well as the terrible earthquake of 1988, when many countries, among them Japan, extended their hand of assistance to Armenia in brotherhood.”

Karekin II also praised governments, international organizations and individuals who have helped “the honest people of Japan.”

“Let us pray for disaster and misfortune to never again ‘knock on the door’ of any people, and strengthened and inspired by the Lord, that humanitarian hearts and hands never lessen in society,” he



Hundreds of people attend a requiem service in Yerevan's St. Gregory the Illuminator Cathedral for victims of Japan's devastating earthquake

said.

The Armenian government allocated \$500,000 in humanitarian assistance to Japan last month.

Sargisian likewise mentioned the 1988 earthquake, which left more than 25,000 Armenians dead, at a meeting with Japan's visiting Deputy Foreign Minister Hisashi Tokunaga earlier on Wednesday.

“We admire the courage and perseverance shown by your people in response to that severe blow of destiny,” Sargisian was quoted by his press office as saying. He said the Armenian gov-

ernment is following the ongoing Japanese efforts to deal with the consequences of serious accidents at the Fukushima nuclear plant.

According to a statement by the office, Tokunaga said Japan will continue to provide economic assistance to Armenia despite the disasters.

Japan has been one of the country's major foreign donors since independence. As recently as last summer, the Japanese government donated 28 fire engines worth \$8 million to the Yerevan division of the Armenian Rescue Service.



INTERNATIONAL

International News

Composure Helps Grischuk Defeat Aronian

KAZAN, Tatarstan (PanARMENIAN.Net) — Russia's Alexander Grischuk said he managed to eliminate Levon Aronian of Armenia in the Candidates Matches 2011 thanks to the composure he maintained during the game.

"There are no favorites and outsiders in such matches. I kept cool and this helped me win a victory over Aronian," the grandmaster said, quoted by sovsport.ru.

In the semifinals, Grischuk will face Vladimir Kramnik, also of Russia.

Armenia Takes Part in UAE Investment Forum

YEREVAN (Arka) — The Armenian delegation, headed by Vice-Premier, Minister of Territorial Administration Armen Gevorgian on Tuesday left for a three-day working visit to the United Arab Emirates (UAE) to participate in the first annual investment forum.

For Armenia, the forum is important for attracting investments, presenting the Armenian products in the Arab market, discussing opportunities for the implementation of joint programs and detecting new areas of cooperation. To convey these points, Gevorgyan made a speech during the forum.

The Armenian delegation participated in round table discussions which are devoted to trade and investment opportunities for the UAE and Gulf countries, economic development in the region, new opportunities conditioned by the development of China's economy, attracting direct foreign investments, prospects of development of free zones and investment strategies.

At the presentation of Armenia, which was held on May 12, heads of Armenian Development Agency (ADA) and National Competitiveness Fund (FNC) presented major projects implemented in Armenia, which are also of regional importance.

Armenia had a separate pavilion in the exhibition. Besides ADA and FNC, programs and different products of four companies were presented in the exhibition.

Armenia's 'Return of the Poet' Best Documentary At Iran Festival

TEHRAN, Iran (PanARMENIAN.Net) — "Return of the Poet" by Harutyun Khachatryan won the best documentary award in the international cinema competition division of the Kish International Film Festival.

"The Maritime Silk Road," centering on the first sailor who crossed the Indian Ocean to China, grabbed the best film award in the Iranian section, Tehran Times reports.

More than 2,000 titles found ways into the Iranian competition section, out of which 266 went on screen in the different sections of feature, video, short, and documentary. A total of 29 foreign films were screened at the international section coming from India, Turkey, Azerbaijan Republic, Armenian Republic, Russia, Great Britain, Canada, South Korea, Japan, France and several other countries.

Armenia Takes Part in Thessaloniki Book Fair

THESSALONIKI, Greece (Armenpress) — The eighth International Thessaloniki Book Fair was held May 5-8 and the Culture Ministry of Armenia had its pavilion at this book fair.

An official from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs said the official opening ceremony of the "Books and Education" exhibition was held May 5. Armenia's Ambassador Gagik Ghalachyan was present at the ceremony.

During the exhibition days the Armenian delegation had meetings with representatives of the Armenian community to Thessaloniki, visited the local Armenian Saturday School and donated books to the community library.

The opening of Armenia's pavilion was the first joint initiative by the Armenian Culture Ministry and the Armenian Embassy in Greece.

AGBU Swiss Honors Two Longtime Leaders of Topalian Foundation

GENEVA, Switzerland — Acknowledging their longstanding dedication and outstanding services to the Armenian community, AGBU Swiss honored the leadership of the HD Topalian Foundation with a special tribute held on April 29.

The Topalian Foundation, which is an AGBU-affiliated organization, was established in 1993 in Switzerland to fulfill the national aspirations of the late Hagop D. Topalian, a major benefactor of the AGBU. For close to two decades, the president of the foundation, Edmond Pilossian, and its most active vice chairwoman, Annie Mesrobian, continued to lead the activities of the foundation in carrying out its noble mission in support of a number of humanitarian and cultural initiatives. During the recognition, AGBU President Berge Setrakian emphasized the role of AGBU Swiss, which was established in 1924 by the late Boghos Nubar and is presently led by Vahe Gabrache of Geneva. Setrakian further praised all those who served on the board of the Topalian Foundation for their staunch dedication and he bestowed the status of AGBU Honor Member on the two honorees. They, in turn, thanked AGBU and humbly accepted this recognition. Following the bestowal of the certifi-



Honoree Annie Mesrobian receives an AGBU Honor Member certificate from AGBU President Berge Setrakian. From left, AGBU President Berge Setrakian; AGBU Swiss and AGBU Europe Board member, Vahe Gabrache; AGBU Europe District chairman, Alexis Govciyan; vice-chairwoman of the HD Topalian Foundation, Annie Mesrobian; president of Geneva's Center for Contemporary Art, Jean Altounian and president of the HD Topalian Foundation, Edmond Pilossian (seated)

cates, the two honorees were presented with crystal plaques as tokens of appreciation.

The tributary evening was attended by several AGBU Swiss Board members, including Gabrache, Aris Atamian and Yervant Zorian, as well as AGBU Europe District Chairman Alexis Govciyan and AGBU Europe Board members. The event was held in

conjunction with the 25th International Fair for Books and Press in Geneva, where, on the occasion of the 500th anniversary of the first printed book in Armenian, "Armenia — Hayastan" was this year's honorary pavilion. The event was organized mainly by the H.D. Topalian Foundation and co-sponsored by AGBU Swiss.

Turkey's Erdogan Urges Gaddafi to Quit

ISTANBUL (BBC) — Turkey's Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan has called for Libyan leader Col. Muammar Gaddafi to step down "for the sake of the country's future."

Erdogan said the Libyan leader had ignored the wishes of his people by using force against them.

Correspondents say it is a marked change in Turkish policy towards Libya, with Erdogan previously having taken a more conciliatory approach.

Gaddafi's troops have been fighting rebel forces for several weeks.

Turkey has temporarily closed its Tripoli embassy and withdrawn its employees, although it is keeping an

embassy open in rebel-held Benghazi.

Most other Western governments evacuated staff from the country when international forces began air strikes against Libya in March, under a UN mandate to protect civilians.

In a speech, Erdogan said Gaddafi had ignored calls for change in Libya and preferred "bloodshed" to listening to his people.

"One cannot establish future, liberty, stability, peace and justice on blood. Therefore we wish the Libyan leader immediately pulls out from Libya and steps down for himself and for the future of the country," he said.

He also said Turkey would do all it

could to ensure the people of Libya take the lead in establishing a more democratic system, and would talk to the anti-Gaddafi National Transitional Council.

"The people of Libya should determine their future in solidarity and unity, it is a priority for us. Hence, we will stay in touch with National Transitional Council to ensure that the elements in our road map can be carried out."

The BBC's Jonathan Head says that, with this statement, Turkey is for the first time in accord with its allies over Libya.

Popular anger over the suffering of civilians in the besieged Libyan city of Misrata has probably helped shift the Turkish government's policy, just a month before it faces a general election, our correspondent adds.

The UN withdrew all international staff from Tripoli earlier this week after they were confronted by angry crowds protesting over the death of Gaddafi's son in a NATO air strike.

Meanwhile, there have been reports of fresh strikes by NATO on Misrata, where forces loyal to Gaddafi have been bombarding the port.

World Monuments Fund to Conserve Ani

ANI, from page 1

Support for these conservation projects has been provided by the US Department of State's Ambassadors Fund, the Turkish General Directorate of Cultural Heritage and Museums and World Monuments Fund.

Burnham added, "There has long been international concern about the fragile condition of the many extraordinary ruins at Ani, and the site has been listed on the World Monuments Watch on multiple occasions, beginning in 1996. In conserving these two important structures, WMF and Turkey's General Directorate of Cultural Heritage and Museums will develop methods that can be applied to the other buildings still standing in this seismic area. We hope that this work will usher in a new era in the life of this important site."

Located in modern-day eastern Turkey, Ani Cathedral is one of the most significant architectural structures remaining from the prosperous Armenian Bagratid period in the 10th

and 11th centuries AD. The cathedral is one of the most impressive of the collection of ruins. The cathedral was completed in 1001 by Queen Katramide, and is widely noted as a leading example of the origins of Armenian ecclesiastical architecture. The cathedral is often considered a source of inspiration for many of the key features of Gothic architecture, which became a dominant architectural style in Western Europe more than a century later. The cathedral is noted for its use of pointed arches and a cruciform plan, articulated by four interior columns composed of clustered piers. Despite its ruined state, Ani Cathedral is a masterpiece of Armenian medieval architecture.

The conservation state of Ani Cathedral became an object of international attention in 1996, when the archaeological zone of Ani was placed on WMF's inaugural Watch list in 1996. Field missions to Ani were conducted in both 1996 and 1998, leading to documentation and analytic work in subsequent years.

French Senate Rejects Genocide Denial Bill

FRANCE, from page 1

would strive to ensure that the senators that defeated the bill do not get French-Armenian votes in the next presidential and parliamentary elections due in 2012.

Many activists will also blame Sarkozy, who is expected to run for reelection. One of his potential challengers, Socialist Party leader Martine Aubry, has reportedly backed the drive to criminalize genocide denial.



INTERNATIONAL

Hrant Dink Park Opens in Mersin

MERSIN, Turkey (Firant news agency) – BDP's Mersin Akdeniz Municipality has named a park and built a monument, both in honor of Hrant Dink. Dink, chief editor of the bilingual newspaper *Agos*, was murdered on January 19, 2007.

Hundreds of Turks, Kurds, Arabs, Armenians, Christians and Alevis came together in Mersin for the opening of Hrant Dink Park and monument which were made by the Akdeniz Municipality.

Following a dance performance by primary school students, the opening ceremony was made with the participation of prominent figures, such as Labor, Democracy and Freedom Block's Mersin Independent Candidate Ertugrul Kürkcü; Dink's wife, Rakel, and daughter, Delal Dink; BDP Provincial Chair Cihan Yilmaz; Akdeniz Municipality Mayor M. Fazil Türk; *Agos* Editor Rober Koptas; Armenian writer Vartak Estukyan; representatives of the Catholic and Orthodox churches in Mersin; journalists Ali Bayramoglu and Celal Baslangic and several other artists and poets.

Making the opening speech of the ceremony, which drew much interest from the public and media, Türk started off by expressing his pleasure of giving one of the most honorable and meaningful services during his presidency. Türk said: "We are giving this park the name of Hrant who was murdered with an unacceptable malicious attack. We will give a fight for the values peace, democracy and equality that he died for. We will not be afraid of those different us and we will keep take the differences as our richness. Everybody is equal in this country and deserves equal treatment. I once more condemn the dark hands that shadow this brotherhood. Dark focuses will not be able to prevent the breeding ground of the seeds of peace and freedom in our country. Names like Hrant Dink are the cornerstones on this way. We bow respectfully before the memory of our peace dove. We will not forget the name Hrant Dink."

Emphasizing that Dink is a companion who



Rakel Dink and others at the opening of the Hrant Dink Park

sacrificed his life for the peoples' liberty and for the great action of Deniz Gezmiş and his companions, Kürkcü said: "While entrusting himself to the conservation of the Turkish people, Hrant wanted to believe in something that was yet not proved. We, however, saw that this vessel head was not that much protective. The peoples cannot exist alone. They lapse into a political statement. And, unfortunately, the state, our political statement, is not on very good terms with its people, other peoples, families and religions. The murder of Hrant Dink is bitter realization of this bitter truth. We now owe an apology to the Armenian people and to our brother Hrant

Dink. And what a bitter fate is it that this apology is paid by a Kurdish local official, not by a dominant element of the state. In other words, the Kurdish people, on behalf of Turkey's peoples, have begun to apologize for the cruelty toward the Armenian people. We need to take this as an example. Turkey cannot put the blame of all happenings on minorities, others and the expelled. Turkey needs to face with its truth and its history."

Kürkcü who called referred to Dink as "our companion," was followed by Dink's widow, who emphasized that this name recalls of cruelty created by discrimination, racism and fascism and said: "My husband gave a fight for

truths along his life. He tried to address the unfairness suffered by all peoples but he was responded with death. But the only thing to console us is that his thoughts have expanded and born new people thinking like him. And I can see this picture here today. This idea is just a point to face the past. Our history is full of lots of pains."

The speeches were followed by concerts from the MKM (Mesopotamian Culture Center) group and Kardes Türküler who showed their support through their songs about freedom, equality and peace.

The program ended with the opening of the Hrant Dink Park and monument.

Diaspora Minister Addresses Concerns of Istanbul-Armenians

By Gayane Abrahamyan

ISTANBUL (ArmeniaNow) – Hranush Hakobyan, in her first visit here as Armenia's diaspora minister, this week heard the concerns of the community as well as immigrants who hailed originally from Armenia gave answers to a number of concerns voiced not only by Istanbul-Armenians but also migrants from Armenia. Top on their agendas was education.

Hakobyan was invited to Istanbul between May 5-7 to take part in the UN-held Women's World Summit at which a total of 82 countries were represented, with three first ladies – including Turkey's first lady Hayrunnisa Gul – and 34 ministers among the participants.

Hakobyan, however, devoted most of her time to meetings with the Armenian community in Turkey. This was her second visit to Istanbul, but the first in the capacity of the diaspora minister.

"Armenians of Constantinople are Armenia's love and pride; I am grateful that despite all the hardship and under these difficult circumstances they stay true to their identity," she said during her speech at the reception held in the hall of ceremonies at the Armenian Patriarchate of Istanbul after the Sunday liturgy.

During the reception she gave medals to 15 Armenians, including writers, musicians, doctors and artists.

After visiting some of the Armenian community's educational centers and churches, the minister said that the most important thing is to strengthen the ties with Armenia, for which frequent visits to their homeland are an important factor.

"By the end of the year, within the framework of various projects, some 500 young Armenians

from Istanbul will be visiting Armenia to see their motherland and establish a contact with their country. We are also planning to hold 'Days of Constantinople Armenians in Armenia,'" said the minister.

Although Armenians living in Istanbul do not consider themselves diaspora, because, as they say, they "were born and now live in historical Armenia" and it is their "motherland", nevertheless, they stress the importance of establishing closer bonds with Armenia.

The main issue raised during the meeting by the Istanbul Armenians was shortage of books and manuals at schools. Tuition at around 20 educational institutions of Istanbul (schools, seminaries, kindergartens) is done in accordance with the state curricula and books (all in Turkish) approved by the Turkish ministry of education, and the Armenian language is taught with outdated books or photocopies of more up-to-date manuals – this gradually leads to lack of interest in learning the language or, worse, to loss of the language itself.

Silva Guyumtchyan, principle of Istanbul's oldest Central Lyceum (founded in 1886), says that the issue of books was raised yet two years ago, but to no avail.

"Since Armenia and Turkey do not have diplomatic relations, our demands cannot be viewed as official, since schools belong to the state, the only thing we can expect is optional books that are not verified by the state but can help our children to improve the learning process of the Armenian language, and make the classes more enjoyable," Guyumtchyan, who has lead the lyceum for three decades, said.

Hakobyan promised that the issue of Western-Armenian language manuals will be solved in the nearest future.

"Every year our teachers come to Armenia for



Diaspora Minister Hranush Hakobyan and members of the community in Istanbul

training, and the manuals are being drafted; we have designated 70 places at state educational institutions for diaspora applicants, who are eligible for state-funded tuition at any department and then return to their countries of residence and pass the knowledge to their communities," the minister said.

Many of the migrants from Armenia attending the liturgy expressed no desire to meet with the minister for "lack of expectations", as they put it.

"There is only one thing we need – employment, so that we can return home. We are here for solely one reason – to work and earn our living and the minister cannot solve that issue," Susanna from Gumri, who has been working in Istanbul for two years, said.

The main issue for an estimated 12,000 Armenian migrants working in Turkey is their children's education, because, the parents' illegal

status in the country does not enable them to attend public schools (Armenian schools, too, are considered to be public or state-funded).

Many had not received any education for years – up until 2003, when an underground school opened in the basement of Gedik-Pasha's Armenian Evangelical Church (founded in 1850) for some 70 children illegally residing in Turkey; the school uses the same curricula and books as in Armenia.

Last year, when Turkish newspapers reported on this school and the issue of education of migrants' children, Turkey's Vice Premier Bulent Arinc promised Archbishop Aram Ateshyan, Armenian co-patriarch of Istanbul, to attend to the problem.

Hakobyan says that she discussed the issue with the co-patriarch and was told that the issue is being solved.



Community News

Sheriff Earns Ellis Island Medal of Honor

By Evan Lips

BILLERICA, Mass. (*Lowell Sun*) – Middlesex County Sheriff Peter Koutoujian is heading to New York City to be awarded the Ellis Island Medal of Honor for his work establishing Boston's Armenian Heritage Park on the Rose Kennedy Greenway, a spokesman said this week.

"It really comes from his work as a state representative," said Michael Hartigan, Koutoujian's spokesman.

In 1999, Koutoujian first filed legislation to consider an Armenian remembrance site in Boston. It took about 10 years, but last September the park was established.



Middlesex County Sheriff Peter Koutoujian

Hartigan said the Ellis Island Medals of Honor are awarded each year to Americans who "exemplify a life dedicated to community service." Previous

recipients include Rosa Parks, Muhammed Ali and former President Jimmy Carter.

Awards are handed out by the National Ethnic Coalition of Organization (NECO). NECO spokesman James Moore said Koutoujian is one of 350 nationwide being honored.

"Each nominee is vetted by an advisory committee and final decisions are made by our chairman and his executive selection committee," Moore said. "In consideration of Sheriff Koutoujian we took into account him being the lead sponsor of the Annual Armenian Genocide Commemoration."

Hartigan said Koutoujian was nominated by Jim Kalustian, president of the Armenian Heritage Foundation, for his work with the Armenian Heritage Park and the Armenian Genocide remembrance.

Rep. Schiff Highlights Legislative Initiatives at Community Briefing

WASHINGTON – Under the auspices of Archbishop Hovnan Derderian and joined by the Armenian Assembly, a community briefing featuring Rep. Adam Schiff (D-CA) was held at St. Gregory the Illuminator Armenian Church in Pasadena, Calif. last week.

Taking place at St. Gregory's Geragos Hall, Honorary Chairman Mark Geragos provided opening remarks. Before introducing Schiff and reviewing his extensive record, the Assembly's executive director, Bryan Ardouny, thanked St. Gregory's Parish as well as the Assembly's Southern California Regional Council (SCRC) members.

In his remarks, Schiff touched on a wide-range of issues, including affirmation of the Armenian Genocide and the continued efforts in the House of Representatives, President Barack Obama's April 24 statement, funding for Armenia and Nagorno Karabagh, Azerbaijan's continued war rhetoric and the recent California Court decision regarding insurance-related claims dating back to the Armenian Genocide era.

Looking ahead, Schiff highlighted several legislative initiatives, including the reintroduction of the Armenian Genocide resolution, as well as legislation to address Turkey's ongoing blockade of Armenia, and the protection of church property and minority rights in Turkey.



The Surp Dikranagerd Church before the restoration efforts

Toronto Raising Funds for Dikranagerd Church Reconstruction Project

TORONTO – The Surp Giragos Church in Diyarbakir/Dikranagerd, Turkey, is the largest Armenian Church in the Middle East and one of the most important examples of Armenian architecture. Since 1915, it has been subjected to both willful destruction and neglect, as a result of which it was in ruins and in danger of complete collapse. However, in 2009, a reconstruction project was launched by the Surp Giragos Foundation Board in Istanbul, under the auspices of the Istanbul Patriarchate. The board was successful in legalizing the deed and title for the Surp Giragos Church property, then obtaining authorization and all required permits for the reconstruction, followed by worldwide fundraising activities.

The Surp Giragos Church, originally dating from 1515, with seven altars and a huge footprint of 15,000 square feet, had a 100-foot-high bell tower, with a bell molded by the famed Zildjian family and a large golden cross at the top. The bell toward was bombarded and destroyed by German/Ottoman cannon fire in 1915, as it was deemed unacceptable to have a church tower higher than the mosque minarets. Unlike the other Armenian architectural masterpiece, the Holy Cross Armenian Church at Akhtamar Island near Van, which was renovated by the Turkish government but converted to a state museum, the Surp Giragos Armenian Church in Diyarbakir, is officially recognized as an Armenian church under the control of the Armenian Patriarchate. When reconstruction is completed, it will be not only an outstanding Armenian architectural masterpiece, but also a historic evidence to past Armenian presence in the region, as well as a future pilgrimage destination for all Armenians.



Workers are renovating the church.

The total reconstruction budget is \$2.5 million. The project is well underway, the first phase of the project already completed, on time and within budget. The worldwide fundraising efforts have successfully raised the funds needed for the first phase from the Armenian communities within Turkey, the Middle East and Europe, with the focus now shifting to North American Armenian communities in New York and Toronto.

After the church restoration is completed, the legal claims phase will be launched to pursue the transfer of deeds for all the properties to pursue the transfer of deeds for all the properties originally owned by the church prior to 1915. The Foundation Board has already successfully reclaimed a few of these properties, which will secure a steady income toward maintenance of the church building, but there are almost 200 other properties which will go through the legal channels for reclaim.

This is a project of interest not only for Dikranagerdtsi Armenians, but for all Armenians everywhere, with historic and future implications. It is the first Armenian church being reconstructed as an Armenian church in Turkey after its destruction in 1915. It is the first Armenian church to reclaim its land and properties, after losing them in 1915.

see RECONSTRUCTION, page 7

AGBU Young Professionals of Los Angeles, Armenian Assembly, Discuss Genocide

RANCHO MIRAGE, Calif. – In anticipation of the 96th anniversary of the Armenian Genocide, on Sunday, March 27, the Armenian General Benevolent Union (AGBU) Young Professionals of Los Angeles, in a joint effort with the Armenian Assembly of America, embarked upon a public campaign to educate the mainstream community on the first holocaust of the 21st century.

The program's interaction with the residents of the Coachella Valley fostered discussion on the present US policy of complacency in recognizing the Armenian Genocide and in debunking the Turkish government's continued denial of one of the greatest crimes in human history against its Armenian people.

AGBU Young Professionals of Los Angeles chair, Yeghig Keshishian, led a discussion on the Armenian Genocide. The discussion was held at the Tolerance Education Center in Rancho Mirage. The two-hour event included excerpts from the movie "Screamers," featuring System of the Down.

Tolerance Education Center director of operations, Melisse Banwer, invited Keshishian and Assembly Southern California Regional Council member Margaret Mgrublian to educate the audience of high school students and concerned citizens alike on history's forgotten genocide of the 20th century.

Present in the audience was Joyce Stein, a member of the Assembly Board of Trustees. After the event, Banwer commented, "This was our most successful event to date! It was successful in terms of favorable comments from attendees, the lively and poignant audience participation, as well as the number of people who walked away from the event with a new understanding and knowledge of the Armenian Genocide."

Keshishian also stated, "For Americans of Armenian descent, April is a time we – as a nation – commemorate the victims of the Armenian Genocide and share our human experience with all victims of genocides past in anticipation of Genocide Awareness Month. Only through our shared human experiences can we impart upon the youth the lessons we have learned from our own personal history and survival as told by our ancestors."

YPLA is the Los Angeles Chapter of the AGBU Young Professionals – a growing network of individuals, between the ages of 22 and 40, who individually and collectively mirror the AGBU's mission. For more information on how to get involved with YPLA, contact agbu.ypla@gmail.com.



From left, AGBU YPLA Chair Yeghig Keshishian, Tolerance Education Center Director Melisse Banwer and AAA Regional Council Member Margaret Mgrublian



COMMUNITY NEWS

South Florida Armenian Community Commemorates Genocide Anniversary

BOCA RATON, Fla. — Last week, hundreds of members, friends and human rights activists from the South Florida Armenian-American community commemorated the 96th anniversary of the Armenian Genocide at Florida Atlantic University (FAU).

This year's observance culminated the month-long display of the 21-panel Armenian Genocide exhibition on loan to FAU Libraries from the Florida Holocaust Memorial Museum in St. Petersburg. The exhibition displayed the systematic murder of 1.5 million Armenians in Ottoman Turkey during World War I. The panels showcased photographs, quotes from witnesses and the history and legacy of the Genocide.

"It was truly inspirational to see South Florida-Armenians from three generations come together to honor their fallen ancestors of the 1915 Armenian Genocide," stated Arsine Kaloustian-Rosenthal, Florida-Armenian public affairs director. "The importance of remembering, sharing of stories between families and of course the FAU exhibit itself, stands in the face of genocide denial and advances the cause of genocide prevention," stated Kaloustian-Rosenthal.

Armenians around the world commemorate the Genocide on April 24, when in 1915 Ottoman-Turkish authorities rounded up, arrested and murdered over 200 Armenian intellectuals in Constantinople (Istanbul), Turkey. Over 1.5 million Armenian men, women and children perished in 1915-1923 in what historians recognize as the Armenian Genocide.

Dr. Mary Johnson, senior historian with Facing History and Ourselves, and curator of the Armenian Genocide exhibit, served as mistress of ceremonies. Johnson opened the program with special thanks to Dr. Rose Gatens, director of the FAU Center for Holocaust and Human Rights Education. Johnson spoke about

her experiences teaching the Armenian Genocide and the consequences of its denial.

"The response of the Armenian community to the exhibition on the Armenian Genocide at Florida Atlantic University was incredible," Johnson told FLArmenians.com. "Visitors not only examined the panels and the narrative of the history but talked about the exhibition and its implications for today — this ensures that the historical event will be remembered and future generations will continue to tell the story," concluded Johnson.

On behalf of St. David Armenian Church, Gareg Kalender, Rita Vartanian and Kalliana Maronian presented traditional Armenian poetry. Albert Mazmanian offered remarks while his daughter, Natalie, recited her self-composed poetry. A musical interlude was offered by local talents from St. Mary's Armenian Church, Sage McBride (violin) and Marineh Alikhnyan (piano), who performed the famous Armenian composition *Groung* by Komitas. A short screening from the upcoming film "Orphans of The Genocide" was also presented by South Florida film producers Bared Maronian, Bedo Der-Bedrosian and Paul Andonian.

"Having the commemoration program and exhibition at FAU Library was a wonderful opportunity to teach others about the origins and the history of the Armenian Genocide, a major crime against humanity committed by



From left, Rev. Vartan Joulfayan, Dr. Mary Johnson, Dr. Rose Gatens and Very Rev. Nareg Berberian

Ottoman Turks at the dawn of the 20th Century," stated Very Rev. Nareg Berberian. "We pray that the time will come when justice will be served and Turkey will acknowledge its history," stated Berberian.

Berberian of St. David Armenian Church and Rev. Vartan Joulfayan of St. Mary Armenian Church offered the memorial ser-

vice for the victims of the Armenian Genocide. The South Florida Armenian Genocide Commemoration was held under the auspices of St. David Armenian Church of Boca Raton, St. Mary Armenian Church of Hollywood, the Armenian Assembly of America, the Armenian National Committee and the Knights of Vartan.

Noubar Afeyan to Speak at St. James' Men's Club Dinner Meeting

WATERTOWN — On Monday, June 6, Dr. Noubar Afeyan, managing partner and CEO of Flagship Ventures will be the speaker at the dinner meeting of the St. James Armenian Church Men's Club, at the church's Mosesian Cultural Center, Keljik Hall, 465 Mt. Auburn St.

The topic will be "The Global Armenian Nation: Fueling Armenia's Development."

Afeyan co-founded Flagship Ventures, which focuses on inventing, launching, funding and building new ventures, in 2000. He is also a senior lecturer at the Massachusetts Institute of

Technology (MIT), where he has taught courses on entrepreneurship and innovation since 2000. In addition, he recently joined Harvard University's Wyss Institute for Biologically Inspired Engineering as a visiting scholar.

Afeyan has written numerous scientific publications and earned many patents since earning his PhD in biochemical engineering from MIT in 1987. During his 23-year career as inventor, entrepreneur, CEO and venture capitalist, Afeyan has co-founded and helped build more than 25 life science, technology and energy startups. Currently, Afeyan serves on a number of public and private company boards and he is a member of several advisory boards including the Deshpande Center for Technological Innovation at MIT, the Whitehead Institute at MIT, the Skolkovo School of Management in Moscow and the National Competitiveness Foundation of Armenia.

Afeyan's past and current ventures include: PerSeptive Biosystems, ChemGenics Pharmaceuticals, EXACT Sciences, Color Kinetics, Celera Genomics, Affinova, Adnexus Therapeutics, BG Medicine, LS9 and Joule Unlimited.

A social hour beginning at 6:15 p.m. will start off the June 6 program, with a traditional Armenian dinner at 7 p.m. Women are welcome. For ticket information, call the church office.



Dr. Noubar Afeyan

Raising Funds to Restore Surp Giragos Armenian Church of Dikranagerd

RECONSTRUCTION, from page 6

All Canadian Armenians are invited to attend the benefit banquet on May 21 at the Magaros Artinian Hall, Holy Trinity Armenian Church, at 7:30 p.m. The program will feature Udi Yervant (on oud), who originally hails from Dikranagerd, soprano Lynn Anoush Isnar and pianist Raffi Bedrosyan. There will be a traditional Armenian and Dikranagerd-style entertainment and food.

Those unable to attend are urged to support this project through tax deductible donations to the Toronto Holy Trinity Armenian Church (Surp Giragos account), which will arrange transfer of the funds to the Istanbul Armenian patriarchate toward the reconstruction budget.

For more information regarding this project, contact Raffi Bedrosyan at jbedrosyan@rogers.com.

St. Stephen's Armenian School to Host Annual Fair

WATERTOWN, Mass. — St. Stephen's Armenian Elementary School (SSAES) will hosts its 25th annual fair, or bazaar, on Friday, May 20, at the Armenian Cultural & Educational Center (ACEC), 47 Nichols Ave.

The fair will feature a kids' carnival, from 3 to 7 p.m., as well as a special play area for children ages 4 and under.

The fair will feature the traditional Armenian

culinary favorites, including losh, beef, chicken and lamb kebabs, as well as falafel, from noon to 9:30 p.m. SSAES is also noted for its traditional pastries.

Raffle tickets featuring cash prizes will also be sold.

Proceeds will support the school.

For more information, call the school or visit www.ssaes.org

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COMMUNITY NEWS

San Fernando Veterans Committee Hosts Lecture on Challenges Facing Youth

LOS ANGELES — The AGBU-AYA San Fernando Valley Chapter's Veterans Committee held its fourth successful educational lecture on the evening of February 25, in the Agajanian Auditorium of AGBU Manoogian-Demirdjian School (MDS). The lecture was divided into four topics touching on the problems and challenges faced by schools and parents in educating and raising youth. MDS Vice-principal Anahid Nalbandian-Pezeshgian, who served as master of ceremonies, introduced the four guest speakers.

The first speaker was Haig Messerlian, chairman of the newly-created AGBU Western District Committee, who talked about AGBU's educational mission insofar as it concerns the organization's schools and the community. He stated that more emphasis should be placed on teaching the rich history of AGBU and its accomplishments dur-

ing. In addition, it can be carried out by rejecting, isolating, ridiculing, blackmailing, humiliating or annoying the victim, or by taking a neutral position in the face of wicked acts. Cyber bullying, now the most widespread form of this behavior, occurs on the Internet, mainly through Facebook or Twitter. Control over cyber bullying is a complex matter and hard to track. The challenge in overcoming bullying is met by having constant communication with the bully and the victim, including parents and teachers, in order to achieve peace and harmony between the parties.

The third speaker was Los Angeles Police Department Officer Jose Maldonado, a specialist in drug enforcement and alcohol abuse. In speaking about drug abuse, he discussed how the use of marijuana often gets young students started on drugs and that its legalization has led to abuse. He also stated



Chairman of the AGBU Western District Committee Haig Messerlian speaking at the February 25 event at the AGBU Manoogian-Demirdjian School's Agajanian Auditorium with Los Angeles Police Department Officer Jose Maldonado looking on

ing the 105 years since its establishment in Egypt. He stressed the importance of becoming a member of the organization and participating in its scouting, athletic, social and cultural activities. The final portion of his talk was a video presentation of AGBU's major global accomplishments.

Messerlian was followed by Hrag Hamalian, principal of the Valor Academy Charter School in Panorama City. Hamalian addressed the topic of "Bullying and Cyber Bullying." In his presentation, he identified the four principal kinds of bullying: direct, indirect, passive and electronic. Bullying may result from name calling, pushing, kicking or

that the urge or habit of drug use may turn the individual into a thief or criminal, due to lack of funds to support their addiction.

The final speaker was Hagop Hagopian, principal of MDS, who discussed parents' involvement in students' behavior. He emphasized that parents should assist their children with their homework or any other outdoor or indoor activities, in order to create a closer relationship to comprehend their children's needs. Parents need to exercise patience when communicating with their children, he suggested. They need to teach them how to become better individuals, set goals and try to achieve them.

OBITUARY

Norair Bahlavouni

WATERTOWN — Norair Bahlavouni of Washington, DC, died on May 3. He leaves behind his wife, Lydia (Aghamalian) Bahlavouni; children, Seda and Armen and his wife, Silva; grandchildren, Alina and Alex; sister, Roubina Baghdasarian; niece, Alenoush Baghdasarian and her children, Shake Hacobian and her husband, Gaspar and their children and Biayna Baghdasarian and brother-in-law, Artoosh Aghamalian and his wife, Hilda, and family.

Funeral services took place at St. Stephen's Armenian Church, 38 Elton Ave., Watertown on Wednesday, May 11.

Interment was at Mount Auburn Cemetery, Cambridge. Funeral arrangements were made by the Aram Bedrosian Funeral Home.

In lieu of flowers, memorial gifts may be made to St. Stephen's Armenian Church or Armenia Fund USA, 80 Maiden Lane, Suite 301, New York, NY 10038.



Some of the organizers and presenters at the February 10 Opportunities Fair organized by AGBU YP Montreal

AGBU Young Professionals of Montreal Hosts Opportunities Fair

MONTREAL — On February 10, the AGBU Young Professionals (YP) Montreal organized an "Opportunities Fair" to teach local university students of Armenian descent different ways to work and volunteer during their time off from school. More than 70 students participated in the event, which was attended by many YPs and alumni from several organizations. Those on hand used the opportunity to share their experiences with the students and explain the benefits of internship programs, volunteer work and unique international experiences, particularly those in Armenia.

Alique Akkelian and Laura Chadarevian shared their enriching experiences participating in the AGBU internship programs in Paris and New York. "I arrived not knowing what to expect, but the local AGBU chapter guided all interns throughout their two-month stay," Chadarevian said. Akkelian encouraged the students to push themselves to try something new. "The things you fear most will end up being those most worthwhile in your life," she said.

The vice chairwoman of YP Montreal, Maral Kassemjian, went into detail about her own experience helping to build a home for a family in need with the world-renowned Habitat for Humanity organization. "Everyone deserves a roof over their head. We all need a house, a place we call home," said Kassemjian. She mentioned that Habitat for Humanity will be building houses in the Tavush region of Armenia later this year.

During his volunteer assignment with the Canadian Youth Mission to Armenia, Alexandre Meterissian arrived in Armenia with his English-Armenian dictionary and the goal to contribute to a renovation project. The difficulties in communicating and living in an Armenian village didn't stop him from creating what he calls "some of the best memories of my life so far." Karl Armen Boudjikianian introduced Birthright Armenia to those who attended and explained their commitment to "making service to and experiences in Armenia an essential rite of passage afforded to all young Armenians around the world." YP Community Liaison Chahe Tanachian spoke to the audience about his inspirational trip with Discovering Armenian Jerusalem. Tanachian stressed that the 10-day spiritual journey was a must for all young Armenians. He is currently enrolled to return for his second trip later in the year.

YP Vice President of Finance Ayrem Ohennisian presented information on the Land and Culture Organization, while YP Chairwoman Sarine Chitilian spoke about the importance of connecting with leaders in the community, alumni members of associations and with other students and peers. She informed the students of the launch of the new online International Armenian Students Network, AgbuAcademics.com, which went live on February 27.

At the conclusion of the presentations, Bishop Bagrat Galstanyan, Primate of the Canadian Diocese of the Armenian Church, gave a closing message to the students and encouraged them to get involved in their community.

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COMMUNITY NEWS

Avedis Manoukian Honored By AGBU Pasadena Center

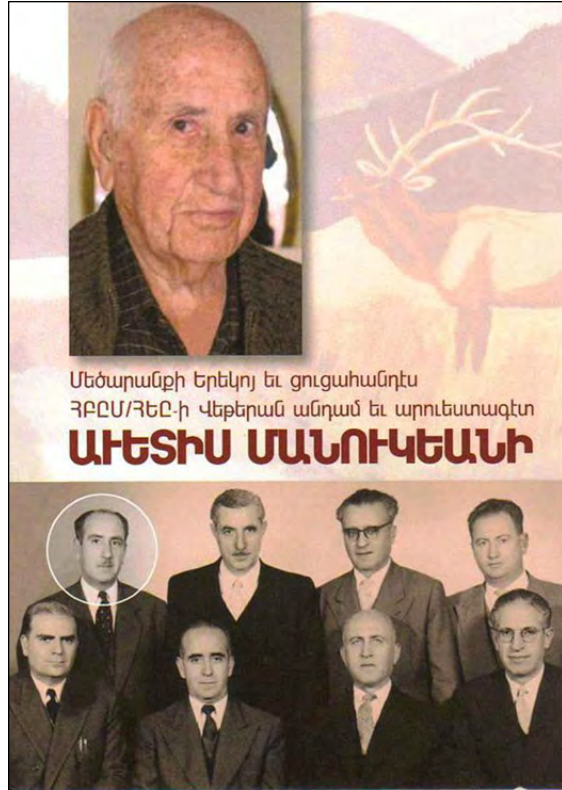
PASADENA, Calif. — On April 10, Avedis Manoukian, a veteran member of AGBU and

Committee Chairman Haig Messerlian spoke about the honoree and his many achievements.

Messerlian read a congratulatory letter from family member Seta Manoukian-Jebajian and presented Manoukian with the distinguished title of AGBU Honor Member, which was awarded to the honoree by the AGBU Central Board of Directors. Family members present included Manoukian's daughters, Seta and Ani, and his son, Nersess.

Per Manoukian's wishes, the proceeds from the sales of his paintings on display were donated to the AGBU Pasadena Chapter to benefit its youth activities, in particular to assist the participation of the AGBU Glendale/Pasadena scouts in the AGBU Scouts International Jamboree in Armenia this coming summer.

Manoukian was born on July 24, 1916 in Aintab, Turkey, and in 1933 settled with his family in Beirut, Lebanon, by way of Aleppo, Syria and Alexandria, Egypt. In 1936, Manoukian, together with Sissag Varjabedian, Garbis Nazarian, Hagop Ghazarian, Krikor Bedoyan, Avedis and Kevork Janjigian and Kegham Arzoumanian, founded the AGBU/AYA Zareh Noubar Chapter. He served as chairman of the AYA Central Committee for many years and was a founding member of the AYA Theater, where he directed and



Honoree Avedis Manoukian, veteran member of AGBU and its Armenian Youth Association, today (top) and during his earlier years as member of an AGBU committee in Lebanon (below)

the organization's Armenian Youth Association since 1936, was honored by the AGBU Pasadena Chapter with a special tribute and exhibition of his paintings at the AGBU Pasadena center.

Introduced by Pasadena Chapter Chairman Shahe Seuylemezian, AGBU Western District

acted in many plays.

Manoukian and his family moved to Los Angeles in 1988. After the passing of his wife in 2003, he started painting and, at the age of 90, had the first-ever exhibition of his works, which was held at the Tekeyan Cultural Center in Pasadena.

Memorial Day Bike-a-Thon to Benefit Armenian Village

QUINCY, Mass. — The ninth annual Memorial Day bike-a-thon by the Nish Boyajian Foundation is scheduled to take place on May 29. The riders will meet at 8 a.m. at Alewife Station in Cambridge. All the funds raised in the past eight years have gone toward the Hnaberd village Kindergarten and community center project. Through the past years' efforts, the organization was able to landscape and fence in the school grounds, carpet all the floors and install new plumbing.

This year is no different and the funds will go to children's projects in the same village.

In addition, the group conducted some community outreach through Rev. Joanne Hartunian. In April, she helped the group make a presentation about the impact of the organization in Hnaberd to the members of the Belmont Senior Center quilting guild. The members were so impressed that they also wanted to contribute. They have agreed to create 20 quilts for children's cots.



Belmont citizens are quilting for Armenian Kindergartners, helped by Peggy Ghazarian, left.



The new Kindergarten playground in Hnaberd, Armenia

80th

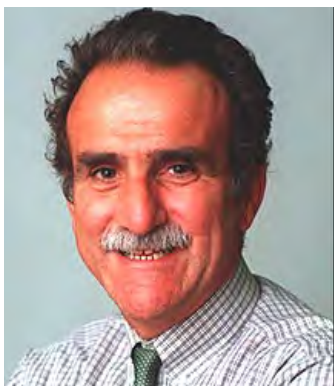
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*Stephen Kurkjian to Be Keynote
Speaker at June 4
New Jersey Banquet*

By Aram Arkun

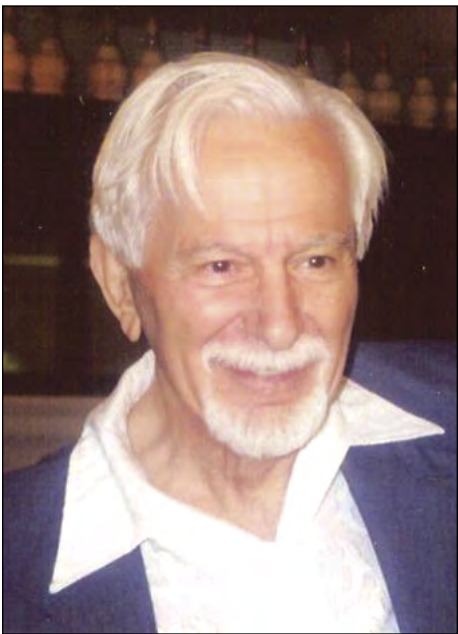
Mirror-Spectator Staff

NEW YORK — The banquet to honor the forthcoming 80th anniversary of the *Armenian Mirror-Spectator* on June 4 in New Jersey will have a little something for everyone. There will be classical music performed by Elizabeth Kalfayan, jazz with an Armenian flavor from Datevik Hovanessian and an opportunity to see old friends and support a worthy cause.

Banquet organizing committee Co-chair Shoghig Chalian announced that Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist Stephen Kurkjian will be the keynote speaker, while Peter Sourian, Florence Avakian and Nerses Babayan will salute the efforts of three great figures involved with the *Mirror* and the New York-area Armenian community — Jack Antreassian, Dr. Movses Housepian and Armine Dikijian.

Chalian exclaimed, “It is turning out to be a very interesting program. It promises to be a great literary and artistic evening.”

Jack (Ardavast) Antreassian (1920-2009) edited the *Mirror-Spectator* during the early 1940s and parts of the 1950s and 1960s. He had a long and distinguished career in various sectors of the Armenian-American community. He served, not simultaneously, as executive director of the Diocese of the Armenian Church and



Jack Antreassian

of the Armenian General Benevolent Union (AGBU) of America. He was an innovator who established a number of important programs during the golden age of the Armenian-American community.

Antreassian founded the two organizations’ respective presses — St. Vartan and Ararat Press, his own Ashod Press and the AGBU literary quarterly, *Ararat*, of which he was the first editor. He helped create the Antranig Dance Group and Camp Nubar for the AGBU, and the Anahid Literary Award, which became connected to the Columbia Armenian Center. His work at the Diocese after the Armenian earthquake of 1988 led to the creation of the Fund for Armenian Relief. He wrote four books of essays, satire and poetry, edited an anthology of pieces published in *Ararat*, and published a number of volumes of translations from the Armenian.

Antreassian’s work will be introduced by writer Peter Sourian. Sourian, born in Boston in 1933 but raised in New York, is the author of three published novels — *Miri* (1957), *The Best and Worst of Times* (1961) and *The Gate* (1965), and has completed three unpublished novels. He has published a book of essays and criticism called *At the French Embassy in Sofia* (1992), and a number of short stories. Sourian, a Harvard graduate, taught at Bard College from 1965 to 2010. He was a television critic for

The Nation (1975-81), and served on various American national awards committees and advisory boards.

Deeply influenced by French literature and culture, Sourian writes poetry in French and has done translations from French into English. A number of his works have Armenian themes, especially *The Gate*. Last year, a volume of Sourian’s short stories was published in Armenian translation in Yerevan as *Entrik otarneri het* [Supper with Strangers] and Sourian visited Armenia and Artsakh at the end of 2010 for a book tour upon the invitation of the Writers Union of Armenia. Sourian is a member of the Anahid Literary Award committee and served for many years on the editorial board of *Ararat* quarterly, as well as on the board of Columbia University’s Armenian Center.

Dr. Movses (Moses) Housepian (1876-1952), born in Kessab, now in Syria, fled the Hamidian massacres to England, and then came to the US in 1900. He graduated from Long Island (New York) Medical College in 1905 and practiced as a physician until his death. He unselfishly served the Armenian community, focusing on the needs of humble immigrants. He went to the Caucasus in 1916 to serve as a physician as part of the Armenian volunteer movement, and saved many lives.

Housepian became an important leader in the Armenian Democratic Liberal Party (ADL), regularly participating in New York chapter meetings and party conventions. Like the party, he was a staunch supporter of Soviet Armenia, and the work of the AGBU, and actively worked in the latter’s 1946 successful fundraising effort for repatriation. He served as a member of the central committee of the Armenian National Council of America until his death. The New York ADL chapter was named posthumously after Housepian. Housepian was a strong supporter of the *Mirror-Spectator*. Housepian’s children, Marjorie and Edgar, followed their father’s example and themselves soon became important leaders in the Armenian-American community.

Nerses Babayan, who will speak about Housepian, knew his family, as Mrs. Housepian was a friend of his father. Babayan moved to Boston from Beirut in order to be assistant editor of *Baika* and *Mirror-Spectator* from 1970 to 1973. He went to Boston State College in this same period and received a master’s degree in history and political science. He attended graduate courses at Johns Hopkins in 1974. Afterwards, Babayan came to New York and



Armine Dikijian

opened a consulting and managerial firm. He continues to support and contribute to the *Mirror-Spectator*.

Dikijian (1914-1991) was a reporter and columnist for the *Mirror-Spectator* from 1936 until her death. She obtained a bachelor’s degree from Barnard College and a master’s degree in library science from Columbia University, after which she worked for some two decades in the Brooklyn Public Library and several more decades as head criminal justice librarian for the National Council on Crime and Delinquency. She has served the AGBU, the Eastern Diocese of the Armenian Church of America and St. Gregory Armenian Church in various capacities. One of her most treasured awards was a 1971 gontag or encyclical of appreciation from Catholicos and Supreme Patriarch of All Armenians Vazken I. Dikijian’s father, Diradour Dikijian, was chairman of the ADL committee which founded the weekly *Armenian Mirror*, the predecessor of the *Armenian Mirror-Spectator*. The Eastern Diocese instituted the Armine Dikijian Journalism Scholarship in 1987 as part of the Armenian Church Endowment Fund.

Florence Avakian will reflect upon Dikijian’s journalistic career. Avakian is an accredited United Nations journalist who has contributed to both Armenian and non-Armenian publications on a range of topics. She has been a columnist for the *Mirror-Spectator*. Her work has appeared in the *New York Times*, *Boston Globe*, *Christian Science Monitor*, *San Francisco Chronicle* and *Baltimore Sun*. She served for many years on the editorial board of *Ararat* quarterly, for which she periodically wrote. For more than two decades, she has been the voice of Armenian news in English for the Armenian Radio Hour of New Jersey. Recently, she has delivered a number of lectures on her own adventures as a journalist. She has been the organist for St. Vartan Cathedral for some twenty years.

The June 4 banquet will take place at the Teaneck Marriott at Glenpoint (100 Frank W. Burr Boulevard). Donations are \$125 per person. For tickets, call Shoghig at 201-803-0240, Sirvart at 201-739-7775, or Shemavon at 718-344-7489. Information about the event’s keynote speaker and other aspects of the program will be presented in forthcoming articles.

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New York METRO

Greek Affiliate of Hayastan All-Armenian Fund Focuses on Children in Vanadzor

NEW YORK — Not even two years in existence, the Hayastan All-Armenian Fund's Greek affiliate is hard at work raising funds for much-needed initiatives in Armenia and Artsakh. One hundred and thirty eager schoolchildren in Vanadzor, located in the center of Armenia's Lori Region, now have ample furniture and a revamped playground — replete with slides and swings — at their disposal.

While infrastructure-development remains a vital area of focus, the Hayastan All-Armenian Fund is determinedly undertaking educational initiatives throughout Armenia and Artsakh. Still another project implemented by the Greek affiliate in Vanadzor, the establishment of a computer classroom at the Vanadzor Orphanage will enable the institution's disadvantaged children to build self-confidence and acquire the necessary knowledge and computer skills to have a competitive edge when they eventually enter the labor market, explains Arshaluys Harutyunyan, director of the orphanage. Currently, the institution shelters 102 children and youths, many of whom have lost their parents while others come from socially vulnerable families. Sixty of the home's residents attend public schools and 20 are students at colleges or universities.

The computer lab was created by renovating an existing room and providing it with furniture and state-of-the art equipment, including 10

late-model computers, a combination printer/scanner/fax machine, educational DVDs, and a local network which, in the future, will allow access to the Internet. Moreover, the Instigate IT company has agreed to offer free computer classes on the site and train an instructor.

"Although we attach a great deal of importance to infrastructure projects, we decided to initially focus our efforts on helping modernize primary-education institutions, thereby improving prospects for the emerging generation," says Vatche Der-Garabedian, chairperson of the fund's Greek affiliate. "Greek-Armenian donors believe that, with the establishment of the computer classroom, the students of the Vanadzor Orphanage will become as computer-literate as their peers. As for the children of Vanadzor's No. 30 Kindergarten, we're so very gratified that they'll be able to take their first steps in a beautiful and safe learning environment."

The computer classroom is the Hayastan All-Armenian Fund's second project to be implemented at the Vanadzor Orphanage. Last year, the Fund renovated the institution's ten restrooms, with the financial support of the Armenia Fund U.S. Western Region.

Armenia Fund USA, founded in 1992, was one of the first of "Hayastan" All-Armenian Fund's 21 international affiliates and serves constituents in all states east of the Mississippi.



The establishment of a computer classroom at the Vanadzor Orphanage will enable the institution's disadvantaged children to build self-confidence and acquire the necessary knowledge and computer skills to have a competitive edge when they eventually enter the labor market.

As a non-profit, non-governmental, nonsectarian organization, the fund represents all Armenian constituents, supporting strategic infrastructure projects in Armenia and

Karabagh. The fund has adopted a policy to provide sustainability for projects it sponsors.

For more information, visit www.ArmeniaFundUSA.org



One hundred and thirty eager schoolchildren in Vanadzor, located in the center of Armenia's Lori Region, now have furniture and a revamped playground — replete with slides and swings — at their disposal.

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Archbishop Choloyan Visits Armenian Nursing and Rehabilitation Center

EMERSON, N.J. — During April 20, four days before Easter, the Armenian Nursing and Rehabilitation Center (ANRC) had the distinct pleasure of hosting once again the visitation of Archbishop Oshagan Choloyan, prelate of the Eastern Prelacy of the Armenian Apostolic Church of America. He was accompanied by Rev. Hovnan Bozoian pastor of Saints Vartanantz Church in Ridgefield, NJ; Rev. Mesrob Lakissian, pastor of Saint Illuminator's Cathedral in New York City and Rev. Narig Terterian of Saint Sarkis Church in Douglaston, NY.

Choloyan and the clergy began the services with the participation of the residents singing the Lord's Prayer in Armenian. Choloyan then performed the Blessing of the Bread, Water and Salt. Those present knew that the message given by Choloyan was one of hope and salvation which gave them great gratification and comfort.

Upon completion of the liturgy, Choloyan took the cross to each resident for them to kiss. A meal was served to all and brought an end to the inspirational service.



From left, Shakeh Bautista, RN, ANRC director of nursing; Rev. Mesrob Lakissian, pastor of St. Illuminator's Cathedral; Archbishop Oshagan Choloyan, prelate of the Eastern Prelacy of the Armenian Apostolic Church of America and Andy Torigian, president and chairman of the Board of Directors of ANRC



From left, Rev. Mesrob Lakissian, pastor of St. Illuminator's Cathedral; Rev. Narig Terterian of St. Sarkis Church in Douglaston, NY; Andy Torigian; Archbishop Oshagan Choloyan, prelate of the Eastern Prelacy of the Armenian Church; Linda Amerkanian, secretary of the FAH Ladies; Matthew Russo, LNHA, administrator of the ANRC and Rev. Hovnan Bozoian, pastor of Sts. Vartanantz Church in Ridgefield, NJ, president and chairman of the Board of Directors of ANRC



New York METRO

Yeraz Dance Ensemble Pursues Its Dream

By Tom Vartabedian

NEW YORK — Karnig Nercessian had a dream. As an accomplished dancer, he sought out to launch his own company 12 years ago.

Joined by his assistant, Lena Orangian, the two choreographers formed what is today the Yeraz Dance Ensemble, housed at St. Sarkis Church in the Queens section of New York, which boasts a large Armenian population.

The two answered a request from Anoushavan Tanielian — then a priest — to form a dance company and provide for the cultural enhancement of their heritage. “Yeraz” translates out to “dream” in Armenian.

From humble beginnings in the fall of 1999, the group rose from eight dancers to more than 90 today, giving performances near and far with

Dele Yaman.

Rehearsals take place every Friday night from 8 p.m. to midnight and attendance is mandatory. Discipline remains in high order with no exceptions. Two groups comprise the ensemble, a younger (ages 5-13) and an older (ages 14-22). Of those attending school, most are honors students, despite the time constraints. One dancer remained in a hotel cramming for college finals during that Merrimack Valley appearance while the others were enjoying dinner at a nearby church the night before.

“We’re an extremely regimented group — you have to be,” says Nercessian. “The commitment and sacrifice our dancers have shown spills out onto a stage before appreciative audiences. All I ask in return is respect. Our intent is to become an advocate of the Armenian performing arts.”

Many of the steps originated from the villages and mountains of Armenia dating back over centuries. Others are more contemporary. The two groups weave in and out like a fine tapestry. Costuming is a cornucopia of color.

Born in Kessab, Syria, Nercessian immigrated to New York with his family and found solace on the stage in 1974 with the Hamazkayin Akhtamar Ensemble. Two years later, he was performing with the AGBU Antranig Ensemble at places like Lincoln Center and Carnegie Hall. After two decades with Antranig, it was time to branch out and start his own company.

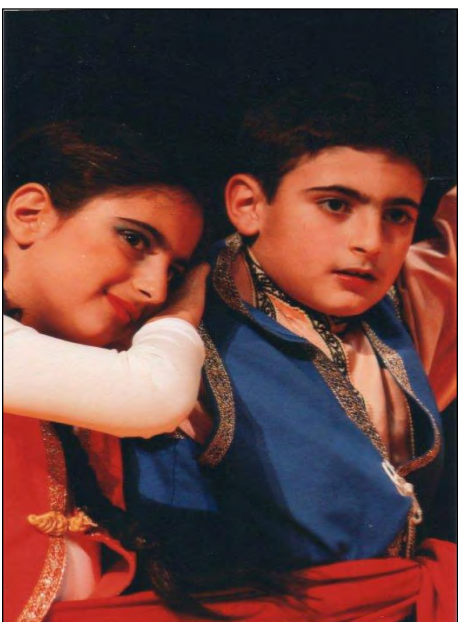
Acting has been another passion with the entertainer, having performed a variety of roles with the Tekeyan Cultural Association of New Jersey as well as New York’s Hamazkayin Theater Group.

It is a family affair for the 55-year-old, as he is joined by his wife, Ani, as general manager; daughter, Maria, as assistant director; a son, Hagop, and cousin, Shant Simonian. Five members of the immediate family have been there from the outset after propelling the enterprise.

“We travel together, eat together, dancing together and commiserate together,” he points out. “If something tragic happens, we all feel the torment. If it’s a happy occasion, we share in the joy. It’s really been an extended family life. We’re cultivating relationships. If nothing else, the dancers are keeping their heritage alive.”

In a world governed by economics and high business standards, this ensemble doesn’t charge. A stipend is welcomed to subsidize shoes and costume costs. What’s earned through fund-raisers and contributions helps to subsidize the budget.

In return, they get private lessons, access to a performing arts center, a lineup of concerts and venues like the cruise. Choreographers and stagehands work for gratis. Christina Vandian is an accomplished artist whose work is often integrated.

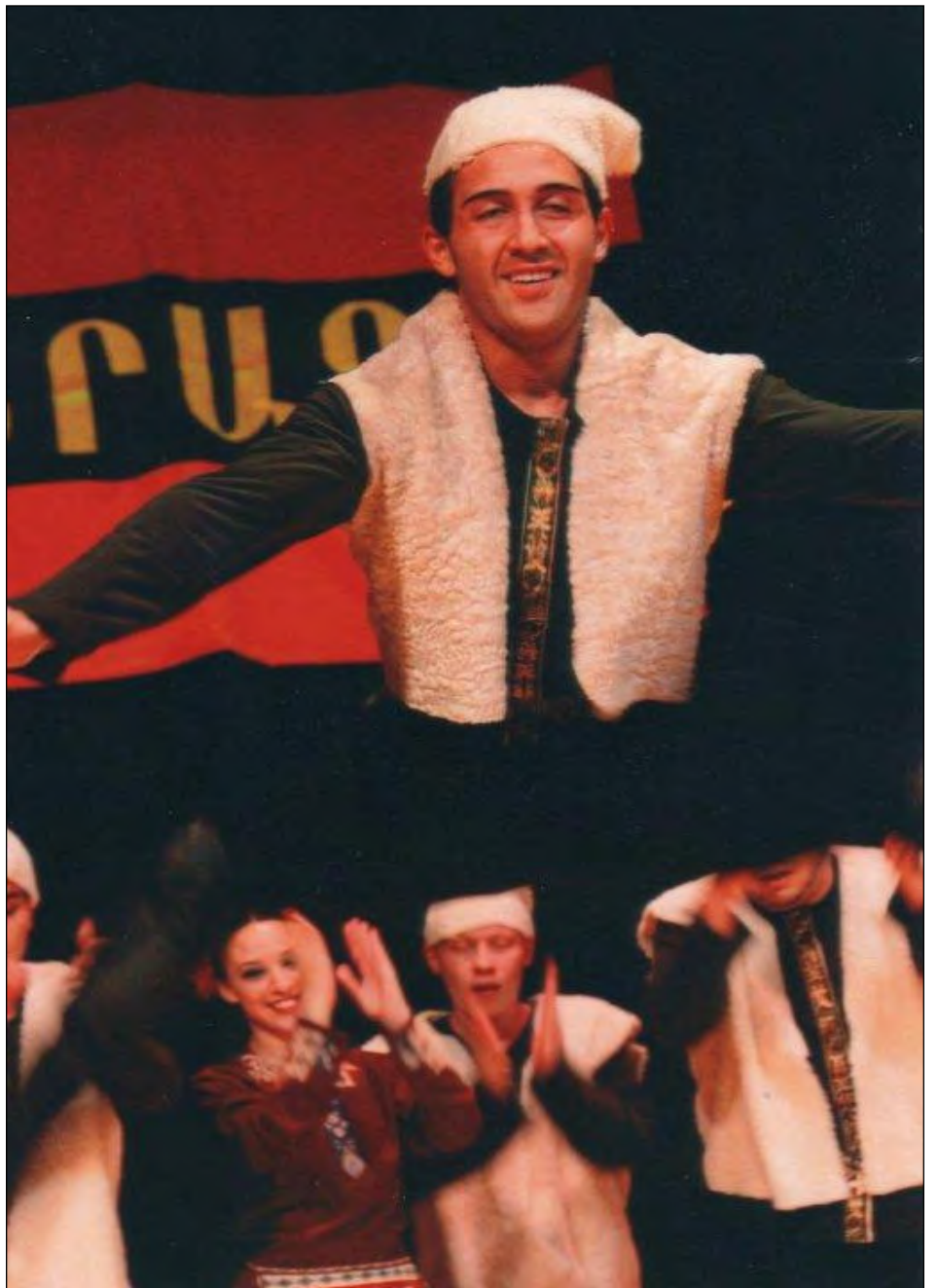


Brother-sister duo Tonya and Hovnan Orangian display their youthful flair with the Yeraz Dance Ensemble of New York.

both a youth and adult ensemble and a dedicated complement of adult volunteers.

“One part of us will never change,” says Nercessian. “We’re community-oriented. That’s how we started, performing to small picnics and church socials. We were a breath of fresh air and people loved watching us. That part of it hasn’t changed. But we’ve grown more refined over time.”

A recent visit to Merrimack Valley in Massachusetts on May 1 commemorated the 96th anniversary of Armenian Genocide with an opening number that simulated the eternal flame at Tsitsernakabert in Yerevan with the 12 pylons while engaged to the haunting strains of



Tigran Dumanyan goes airborne with the Yeraz Dance Ensemble of New York.

One highlight is the voice of 11-year-old Zovinar Aghavian, taking after her operatic mom. Another might be the brother-sister tandem of Tonya and Hovnan Orangian.

The elder Orangian has been dancing since age 5 and has been through the circuit, now teaching the girls of this troupe.

“It takes a lot of patience, persistence and determination to dance with heart and soul,” she says emphatically. “The energy is infectious.”

After six years of development, Yeraz made its debut before a thousand patrons at

Queensborough Community College. Since then, there’s barely an empty seat in the theater. Their appearances in parades have also drawn loud applause.

Much can also be said about the tutelage of Vanoush Khanamirian, former director of the State Dance Ensemble of Armenia, who worked with the ensemble for an entire month.

Nothing would please Nercessian and his colleagues more than to see their young dancers someday find their way to Armenia and dance before the foothills of Mount Ararat.

That would realize the ultimate dream.

Luminaries Reflect on Aznavour’s Achievements, Comment on His Activism

*Legendary Singer Will Be Honored
In May in New York City*

By Taleen Babayan

NEW YORK — Musicians, artists and community leaders from across the globe will gather to pay tribute to one of the world’s greatest musicians and entertainers — Charles Aznavour — in a star-studded event to take place at the exquisite Cipriani Wall Street on Friday evening, May 20.

The evening will serve as an opportunity to highlight not only Aznavour’s talents, but his decades-long service to Armenia on the eve of the republic’s 20th anniversary of independence.

Presenting the award to Aznavour will be the actress/singer Liza Minnelli, whose friendship with him dates back almost 50 years. Seeing Aznavour perform on stage for

the first time was “magnetic” for Minnelli. “The minute he walked onstage, I stopped breathing,” she said.

She commented that one of Aznavour’s greatest strengths is his ability to tell stories through his music. Following his performance, Minnelli told herself she wanted to be a storyteller like Aznavour, and when she asked him to be her mentor, he agreed.

“I never did a show without showing it to him first. Ever,” she said.

Minnelli noted how important Aznavour’s Armenian heritage was for him. “People would say he is a Frenchman, but he would say, ‘No, I am Armenian,’” she said. “There was such pride in that.”

Minnelli spoke of Aznavour’s dedication and commitment to Armenia, especially his efforts during the 1988 earthquake that took the lives of 50,000 Armenians. “He puts all his passion, time and stubbornness into helping Armenia, and it was spectacular,” she said.

Another world-famous singer who was

affected by Aznavour’s music was Celine Dion, who was introduced to his work by her mother when she was a young girl. “It was an honor and a grand privilege for me to sing with him,” said Dion, recalling how she performed with him years later. “Not only is he one of the biggest stars in the history of France, but he’s also a very kind and gentle person.”

Featured alongside Aznavour in Atom Egoyan’s 2002 film “Ararat,” actor/playwright Eric Bogosian commends him for the attention he has brought to Armenia and to the Armenian Genocide.

“He is one of the most brilliantly focused individuals,” said Bogosian, who will serve as master of ceremonies for the gala. “And he has been a gift to people around the world.”

As a young student in Beirut, Lebanon, Vartan Gregorian, president of the Carnegie Corporation of New York, fondly recalls listening to Aznavour, describing him as an “artist with a social conscience.”

Gregorian noted Aznavour’s success in rising to international stardom without forgetting his roots. “He is the embodiment of the best we can have for the world,” said Gregorian. “He symbolized for me, that the unique — the Armenian — can be universal without dissolving itself.”

As a representative of the Armenian government, UN Ambassador Garen Nazarian cited Aznavour as a “tireless advocate” for Armenia and worldwide recognition of the Armenian Genocide. He noted Aznavour’s service to Armenia as “truly commendable.”

“For me personally, his image of an exceptional artist and great Armenian is inspirational and empowering,” said Nazarian.

The Fund for Armenian Relief (FAR) will honor Aznavour for his dedication, service and efforts in Armenia on May 20. The reception starts at 7 p.m. and dinner and program at 8 p.m. Proceeds will benefit programs for the elderly in Armenia. For more information or tickets, visit www.farusa.org.



Arts & Living



Francis Kurkdjian

Francis Kurkdjian Talks Scents

By Sharon Forrester

LONDON (*Vogue*) – Perfumer Francis Kurkdjian first found commercial success after developing the Le Mâle fragrance for Jean-Paul Gaultier in 1995. A celebrated nose in the fragrance industry his accolades include being named one of France's greatest perfumers by the French Ministry of Culture in 2009, setting up his own perfume house Maison Francis Kurkdjian in the same year. In London from Paris to launch his new scent, Aqua Universalis Forte, we caught up with Kurkdjian to talk inspiration, going it alone and Kate Middleton.

Sharon Forrester: What was the inspiration behind the new Aqua Universalis Forte fragrance?

Francis Kurkdjian: I was in the middle of trialing a new bergamot presented to me by my grower in Calabria in Italy. My business partner asked me to create something as a gift for a friend – she really liked Aqua Universalis but wanted more density, more volume. I was in a rush so I gave the trial I was doing with the new bergamot away. She was full of compliments about it and my business partner said we should develop it. And so that is Forte. We called it Forte as a comparison to music – different notes that tell the same story. It's about changing nuances of Aqua Universalis, but not the whole fragrance.

SF: How different is it working on your own line to creating a fragrance for a brand?

FK: The main difference is that if I'm creating a fragrance for a brand, they give you a script – [for example] it's for a woman and we want it to smell fresh or of flowers. By myself I have to think of everything and I'm fully responsible for everything. When I work for a brand I wear clothes; when it's for me I'm naked working in front of people – there's nowhere to hide. There is an element of exhibition or showing off in that too.

SF: You are very creative with fragrances – what advice would you give people wanting to experiment with perfume?

FK: I think people need to change the way they buy fragrance – not just choose something because of the celebrity or brand. Ask for a sample, take it away, live with the fragrance. It's not just about how it smells to you it's also about the people around you and their reaction to the scent. A good perfume is one where you can't tell if someone is wearing something or not –

see SCENTS, page 17

An illustration from *Tunjur! Tunjur! Tunjur!*

Illustrator Envisions Series of Children's Books in Armenian

CAMBRIDGE, Mass. – “I am an illustrator, not an artist or a painter,” said Alik Arzoumanian firmly, as she settled her 4-month-old daughter, Aiki into her chair. “I do abstract art sometimes, but I need to have a story to inspire me.”

By Daphne Abeel

Special to the Mirror-Spectator

Arzoumanian, who was born in 1973 in Beirut, said it was her childhood books that made her want to be an illustrator.

“My aunt, who lived in America, would visit and bring all the Caldecott Award books for me to read. When I go back to Beirut, I still search out the books I read as a child,” she said.

Although Lebanon was torn by war during her childhood, Arzoumanian said she felt very little sense of disruption growing up there.

“Honestly, during the war, as children, we really didn't know what was going on. We would be happy if the war disrupted our going to school, and we used to play in the bunkers,” Arzoumanian said.

Now launched into a developing career as a successful illustrator of children's books, Arzoumanian began her working life in a very different milieu. A graduate of the American University of Beirut, she studied engineering and landed a job in Dubai, where she worked on irrigation designs for hotels.



Alik Arzoumanian

“I was terribly bored, and I knew this was not for me. I had a friend who was a photographer for *Gulf News*. I was going to explore an opportunity there, but then I met [her husband] Sevag, who was then living in England, and I moved there.”

Sevag Arzoumanian, who studied physics and mechanical engineering at Harvard, completed his PhD recently while living in England. The couple married and moved to the US where they now live in Cambridge. Sevag Arzoumanian works as an acoustical engineer in the Boston area.

“When we moved to the US, I wasn't sure I was going to like it here, but I discovered there was a big difference between the government and the people. I love the people here, they are so optimistic,” said Arzoumanian.

Upon arrival in the US, Arzoumanian enrolled in the Massachusetts College of Art, from which she graduated in 2007. “I was 27 when I enrolled there, older than most of the students, but there was a woman in her 60s who was just beginning her studies. That's what I like about America. You are not fixed, doomed to a certain way of life. There is so much freedom, you can begin again,” she said.

In addition to her illustrative work, Arzoumanian has taught art to young children at St. Stephen's Armenian Elementary School in Watertown and classes in color at her alma mater, Massachusetts College of Art. She hopes to return to some teaching when her daughter is a little older.

see ILLUSTRATOR, page 14

‘Finding Zabel Yesayan’ In NYC

By Aram Arkun

Mirror-Spectator Staff

NEW YORK – Zabel Yesayan, a prominent writer, activist and feminist, observed and survived many of the calamities of the Ottoman Armenians before falling victim to the Stalinist regime in Armenia. She created a number of important literary works as well as nonfiction works of witnessing, but she fell into obscurity after her death, outside of small literary circles and some Diasporan Armenian-language schools. A 40-minute documentary made by Talin Suciyan and Lara Aharonian in Armenia from 2007 to 2008, called “Finding Zabel Yesayan,” seeks to remedy this situation.

The film was shown at the end of March and early this April at the Armenian General

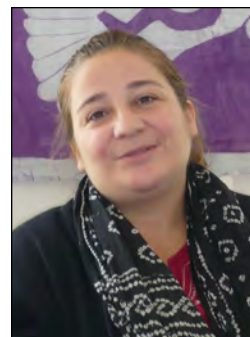
Benevolent Union (AGBU) Alex and Marie Manoogian School of Southfield, Mich., sponsored by the school, the Armenian Research Center of the University of Michigan at Dearborn and the Cultural Society of Armenians from Istanbul; National Association for



Talin Suciyan, codirector of Finding Zabel Yesayan

Armenian Studies and Research (NAASR), with the cosponsorship of the Armenian International Women's Association; St. Leon Armenian Church; New York University (NYU) with the sponsorship of NYU Armenian Hokee; the University of Pennsylvania, through the university's Armenian Student Association and the AGBU Young Professionals of Philadelphia; Duke University's Franklin Humanities Institute; and at the Krikor and Clara Zohrab Center of the Diocese of the Armenian Church of America. This US tour was made possible by the initiative of Dr. Ara Sanjian, head of the above-mentioned Armenian Research Center. Suciyan spoke about the film at each of these events, and her trip provided an opportunity to find out more about her work.

The idea for the film arose when Talin Suciyan, originally from Istanbul and a writer between January 2007 and October 2010 for the Armenian-Turkish weekly *Agos*, went to Yerevan in 2007 to participate in a three-month women's creative writing workshop run by Nancy Agabian of New York. The workshop was organized by the Women's Resource Center in Yerevan, led by Aharonian and the artists' collective and non-governmental organization Utopiana. Aharonian, originally from Beirut, see ZABEL, page 16



Lara Aharonian, codirector of Finding Zabel Yesayan



Köker to Talk about *Armenians in Turkey 100 Years Ago* at ALMA

WATERTOWN, Mass. — Turkish journalist and historian Osman Köker will present his book *Armenians in Turkey 100 Years Ago* at the Armenian Library and Museum of America (ALMA) on Thursday, May 19 at 7:30 p.m.

The special event, which marks Köker's first public appearance on the East Coast of the United States, is co-sponsored by ALMA, Friends of Hrant Dink, National Association for Armenian Studies and Research (NAASR) and Project SAVE Armenian Photograph Archives. The event is free and open to the public. A reception will follow.

Köker first came to international attention in 2005 when he organized the unprecedented exhibition "Sireli Yeghpayrs" (My Dear Brother) in Istanbul. Eventually seen by thousands of people, it presented photographs of Armenian life in pre-Genocide days, drawn from a large collection of postcards owned by the collector Orlando Calumeno. In the five years since then, the exhibition has also been mounted in Munich, Cologne, Frankfurt, Valence, Paris, Geneva, Yerevan and London.

Köker originally intended to write a book about Armenian life in the Ottoman Empire, but with the discovery of the postcard collection the scope of the project changed.

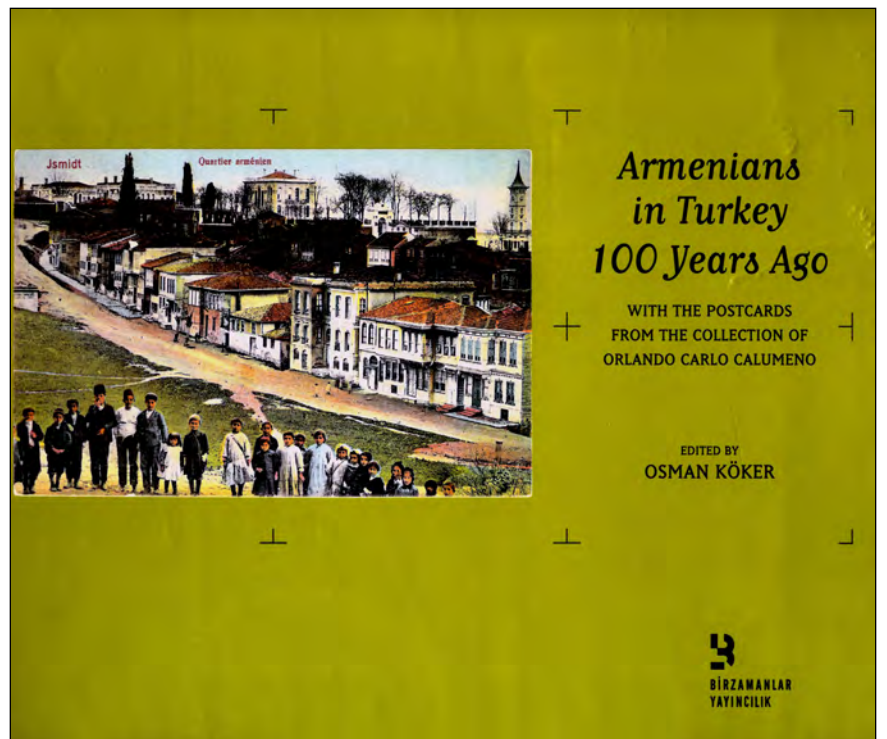
Following the exhibition he published the massive and beautifully-produced volume *100 Yıl Önce Türkiye'de Ermeniler*, subsequently published in English as *Armenians in Turkey 100 Years Ago*, featuring hundreds of images showing where and how Armenians in the Ottoman Empire lived.

He is editor of the books *Souvenir of Liberty: Postcards and Medals from the Collection of Orlando Carlo Calumeno* (2008), *Bir Zamanlar Izmir* (Once Upon a Time in Izmir) (2009), *Greek Painters of Istanbul* (2010).

He is also the curator of the exhibitions "Once Upon a Time in Sivas" on the Armenians of Sivas (2008), "Souvenir of Liberty" on the 1908 Revolution (2008), "The Blacks of Turkey" (2009), "Once Upon a Time in Izmir" on the multicultural past of Izmir (2009) and "Jamanak: 100 Year Old Armenian Newspaper in Istanbul" (2010), among others.

This will be his first public presentation on the East Coast.

The museum is located at 65 Main St. in Watertown. Parking is available in the municipal parking lot behind the Museum and in adjacent areas. For directions and more information, visit www.almainc.org.



Cover of Osman Köker's book

Illustrator Envisions Series of Children's Books in Armenian

ILLUSTRATOR, from page 13

Arzoumanian has taken a somewhat novel approach to contacting publishers, sending them postcards of her work; this strategy has been successful. Her work has now been published by a number of different publishers. Her first book, *Tunjur! Tunjur! Tunjur!*, with text by Margaret Read MacDonald, is the retelling of a Palestinian folk tale and was published in 2006 by Marshall Cavendish press in New York. It is the story of a Palestinian woman who prays for children but is rewarded, instead, with a little pot, that displays surprising human attributes.

The illustrations for this first book exhibit has become Arzoumanian's identifiable style, a reliance often on circular shapes that portray both people and things, and a use of strong, densely-saturated color. Both attributes would seem to make her work irresistible to children. There is a simplicity and directness about her style that communicates instantly. Her most recent book, *Children of God*, illustrates a Biblical text, written by the South African Most Rev. Dr. Desmond Tutu.

Arzoumanian recently attended the Bologna Book Fair, which is entirely devoted to displaying children's books, and hopes to see her work published in other countries than the US. Already, one title has been published in Lebanon.

Until now, Arzoumanian has illustrated work by other writers, but her new ambition is to



A scene from Rev. Dr. Desmond Tutu's *Children of God Storybook Bible*

imprint, Kirk-Mirk, which, roughly translated, means "book fruit." Her first title, *Dzirani Anoush*, is not about apricot jam, which is the literal translation of the title, but portrays twin

Publishing), *Grateful Animals* by Sona Zeitlian and *Where Are You, Little Frog?* By Kayleigh Rhatigan and published by Lark books.

Both Alik and Sevag Arzmoumanian have been active politically, and worked for Sen. John Kerry, the Democratic presidential candidate, in 2004. They were also deeply involved in helping to expunge the Anti-Defamation League (ADL) program from schools and towns when it became clear that the ADL did not acknowledge the Armenian Genocide.

Arzoumanian is the recipient of American Library Association Award (2007) and is a member of the Graphic Artists Guild and the Society of Children's Books Writers and Illustrators.

"What I want to concentrate on now is the writing and illustrating of children's books in Armenian. There isn't a wide selection of books in Armenian for children or indeed in any category. We need all kinds of books in Armenian."

To learn more about Arzoumanian's work, visit her website at www.alikart.com.



Royal City appeared in *Christmas Carols*, published by Ladybird Books

write and publish Armenian stories for Armenian-speaking children.

"There is so little that is good that is written in Armenian for children. I want to write for these young readers so that the language will live on," she said.

To that purpose, she has developed her own

sisters who make up new names for each other. While it is an entertaining story in and of itself, it also introduces new words and new ideas to the young reader, therefore the story functions as a teaching tool as well.

She has also illustrated *So Many Houses*, written by Hester Bass (Scholastic Library



An illustration from *Grateful Animals* by Sona Zeitlian



ARTS & LIVING

Friends of Armenian Culture Society Celebrates 60th Year

By Tom Vartabedian

BOSTON — Dr. Varant Hagopian's passion for classical music and the Armenian performing arts has made him a somewhat inveterate fol-lower.

Since 1952, when the Friends of Armenian Culture Society (FACS) began hosting Armenian Night at the Pops, he has never missed a concert.

Over that time, Hagopian has made the trip to Boston's Symphony Hall with members of his family. There is also an added inducement. He has served on the planning committee and delights in seeing his efforts come to fruition on stage with some of the world's greatest musicians and conductors.

For him, it has been a welcoming release from his ongoing medical practice and in addition has introduced his children to the best Armenian music possible.

"I've brought my children and now their children," he beams with pride. "I feel pleased that FACS has remained a staple throughout the Greater Boston Armenian community for six decades. Its success has been insurmountable."

From one table to two, the Hagopians occupy their seats with pleasure, attend the reception that follows and get their friends and associates involved. To say he is a consummate practitioner in both medical and concert stage is putting it succinctly.

"When a child of 8 sits at my table and is exposed to music like this, it gives me tremendous joy," he says. "Hopefully, FACS will be around long enough for him to bring his own children. It's all about generations and we're serving numerous."

As the 60th season unfolds Saturday, June 25, with an appearance by renowned soprano Hasmik Papian, members are hard at work tying up the loose ends for this milestone venue.

Boston Pops Conductor Keith Lockhart is getting his baton ready for what should prove another delightful encore for the group.

"He's really enamored by our music," said FACS President Ara Arakelian, who has been active with FACS the past 15 years. "He promotes our concerts and really gets into the spirit of the moment. He considers our music both profound and eclectic."

Papian has had a rich career since graduating from the Komitas Music Academy in Yerevan first as a violinist and then a singer. She made her debut with the Armenian National Opera as Rosina in "The Barber of Seville" and later as the angelic Mimi in "La Boheme," thus launching an international career.



Rouben Gregorian with Boston Pops conductor Arthur Fiedler

Today she is regarded as one of the most successful lyrical-dramatic sopranos worldwide and making her FACS debut.

Those who might recall the appearance of soprano Isabel Bayrakdarian might also connect her with Papian, whose resume is mirrored. Both bring a physical and vocal reputation to the stage with their renditions of everything from Puccini to Komitas.

"Through music, we're conveying some of our proudest achievements to the world," added Arakelian. "It's also showcased our talent — both rising and accomplished. We've hosted artists as

young as 14 and have remained diversified in our approach. This being the 20th anniversary of the Independent Republic, we're trying to establish a bridge between Armenia Proper and the cultural diaspora."

The 2001 concert celebrating the 1,700th anniversary of Christianity in Armenia remains an indelible moment with the group. That year FACS presented Rouben Gregorian's *Symphonic Armenian Mass* conducted by his son, Leon Gregorian. That year, the Armenian community sold out Symphony Hall.

Another recent highlight was the appearance of 18-year-old pianist, Nareh Arghamanyan, in 2008. It was at that concert where Lockhart announced she had just won the Montreal International Competition. She has since turned professional and performed in many prestigious venues and with many outstanding collaborators, including this summer with the Vienna Symphony Orchestra.

Memories of the late Rouben Gregorian conjure up images of a local icon as a composer, performing artist and conductor of the Komitas Choral Society for many years.

"He would take people off the street, teach them music, then stage a concert and make stars out of them," Hagopian recalled. "He made beginners sound very, very good."

The list of FACS accomplishments is long, thanks to the honorary board, directors, associates and thousands of patrons over these decades.

Another former president was the late Dr. Keran Chobanian.

FACS has done more than sponsor the Pops. Its goal of "enriching the Armenian cultural heritage" over the past 60 years has included a plethora of accomplishments.

For 36 consecutive years (1957-1993), they presented the Armenian Cultural Radio Program on Boston WCRB-FM, airing classical and folk music while broadcasting news of Armenian cul-



Nareh Arghamanyan, as an 18-year-old pianist, who performed in 2008 after winning the Montreal International Competition

tural events.

In 1969, a concert of shagrans at Jordan Hall commemorated President John F. Kennedy's untimely death — a recording of which remains part of the archives in the JFK Library.

Other memorable musical events through the years follow:

- The Boston premiere of "Come Creative Spirit" conducted by Rouben Gregorian with contralto Lili Chookasian and members of the Boston Symphony and choruses from the Boston Conservatory and Radcliffe Choral Society.
- A program honoring the late composer Aram Khachaturian;
- Jordan Hall recitals presenting kanonist Ara Sevanian, Metropolitan Opera bass-baritone Ara Berberian, and a Young Artists' Festival;
- Programs of tribute to soprano Lucine Amara of the Metropolitan Opera Society, composer Alan Hovhannes, conductor Richard Yardumian, Arthur Fiedler, Rouben Gregorian, Keith Lockhart (1995), Harry Ellis Dickson (1996), Seiji Ozawa (1997), Dr. Elizabeth Gregory (1998), Helen Shushan (1999) and Lili Chookasian (2000);
- A program of hymns and heroic ballads for solo voices and brass quintet by Rouben Gregorian under the direction of Roger Voisin at Tufts Cohen Auditorium in 1990;
- The establishment of a FACS endowed scholarship at the Tanglewood Music Center for an annual scholarship to a talented performing artist, conductor or composer of Armenian descent and
- The donation of \$6,000 to the Yerevan Philharmonic Orchestra.

Needless to say, the years have showcased a



Hasmik Papian

number of premiere performances by Armenian composers and featured many prominent and promising artists of Armenian descent.

In a 50-year history recapped by the late Virginia Tashjian, she recalls the fledgling years when organizers met in her home, listened to Armenian classical music, and decided to go public with it. They went banging on doors, raising whatever money they could, and responded to the challenge with great enthusiasm.

"After a discussion with Arthur Fiedler at his suggestion, it was decided to sponsor a concert with the Boston Pops in 1952 — a year after the groundwork had been laid," she wrote. "Outstanding members of the Armenian community were selling tickets and handling publicity. We socialized for any type of help that could contribute."

Pops ladies were dressed in elegant gowns, while the men were attired in tuxedos. It quickly became the social extravaganza of the Armenian community, drawing upwards of 700 Armenian guests a concert.

Among other trailblazers were Tufts University trustee John Baronian, Dr. Victor Aftandilian, Attorney Robert Kaloustian, Dr. Arthur Shushan, Gregorian, business expert Jack Avedisian and renowned organist Berj Jamkochian.

Nothing pleased Stella Aftandilian more than to see a concert dedicated to her late brother, John Baronian, after being aboard since the outset. That was in 2002 when violinist Ani Kavafian drew a standing ovation.

"Having my children along meant a lot to me," said Aftandilian. "We'd start hunting around for our Pops gowns three months prior. And usually with white gloves."

Vice President Robert Aghababian and his wife, Sandra, have a personal mission in sight: they want to keep Virginia Tashjian's memory intact.

A memorial service for Tashjian took place in 2008 at the Newton Public Library, where she served as director, featuring Mariam Nazarian, the youngest FACS artist at age 14, when she appeared in 1998.

Aghababian recalls attending concerts as a child and now considers it a privilege to be on the plenary end.

"Virginia was truly the matriarch of our family," he says of his cousin. "Her presence at these events was compelling. She was truly indispensable."

Raffi Yeghiayan has been aboard the FACS bandwagon for 35 years. He greets the people in Armenian and recounts the history as if it occurred yesterday.

"We're one of the only ethnic groups that has input in the Pops program," he reveals. "That's a major distinction for us. The outside world has shown its appreciation in many ways. They're surprised at how much talent we have."


Jessica Manguikian was a violinist growing up and attended these concerts for 20 years. The 34-year-old would like to see more young people at the Pops.

"Music was always part of my upbringing," she recalls. "My dad encouraged me."

When Dr. Nishan Goudsouzian got discharged from the Army in 1971, it was in time for a Pops concert. And he has been to most every other one since then.

"It's a place where people of all distinctions and character convene," he points out. "Half the audience is non-Armenian and they enjoy our music as much as we do"

This year's post-concert reception will take place at the hotel. For advance tickets, visit www.FACSBoston.org.



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ARTS & LIVING

Finding Zabel Yesayan

ZABEL, from page 13

immigrated to Canada during the Lebanese Civil War, but for the last nine years has been living in Yerevan, where she founded together with Shushan Avagyan and Gohar Shahnazaryan, the Women's Resource Center. Aharonian has studied psychology and comparative literature, while Suciyan in 2008 began her doctoral studies at Munich's Ludwig Maximilian University's Institute of Near and Middle Eastern Studies. She works at the Institute now as a teaching fellow, and is conducting her doctoral research on the Istanbul Armenian press after World War II.

At the Yerevan workshop, Suciyan and Aharonian read excerpts from *Averagnerun mech* [Among the Ruins], Yesayan's work about the 1909 Cilician massacres. Suciyan explained that they realized that as Western Armenians, "we knew certain parts of Zabel's life, and our friends in the group, Armenians from Armenia, knew another part of Zabel's life. Furthermore, we realized that according to ordinary public opinion, Zabel had no place in Armenia. Although she shared the same destiny as Charents or Bakunts [Eastern Armenian writers], she never became known in Armenia. This was a little weird for us..." Yesayan wrote in Western Armenian for most of her life, and this may have posed an obstacle for some Eastern Armenians to get familiar with her work. However, she wrote in Eastern Armenian after 1933.

The two women were moved to read more of Yesayan's works and when they were informed by Artsvi Bakhchinyan that Zabel Yesayan had descendants living in Yerevan, they immediately went to see them. They met her grandson, Alexander Yesayan, and other family members and family friend Clara Terziyan. They read the memoirs of her daughter, Sofi Yesayan, and listened to sound recordings of Zabel's son, Hrant Yesayan. The two researchers discovered that Zabel Yesayan's personal belongings, manuscripts and photographs – and even some of her hair – were held at the Charents Museum of Literature and Arts, run by Artsvi's father, Dr. Henrik Bakhchinyan, and found

archival materials at Armenia's National Archives pertaining to her lawsuit. All this material shed new light on the Soviet Armenian period of Yesayan's life, and the pair decided that it was worthwhile to prepare a documentary.

Aharonian and Suciyan had personal motivations for the documentary too. For Aharonian, Yesayan and her writings played an important and liberating role in her life. Suciyan said, "From my perspective, her being from Istanbul and at the same time being diasporan reminds me of the diasporic nature of Istanbul Armenians, which today we are forcibly made to forget. And I think that almost 70 years after her death, Zabel Yesayan as a woman who witnessed two major catastrophes, the first being the Adana massacres, and the second, the Genocide, as a woman who believed in her ideals and struggled for them courageously, still is an inspiring figure."

Suciyan added that Yesayan used the word "feminism" as early as 1914, in an article published in the Armenian newspaper *Azadamard*. She was an extremely independent woman for her time. Suciyan continued, "I think it is difficult to find an intellectual woman at the beginning of the century who travelled as much as Yesayan did and continued to produce and play a political role not only in Armenian world, but also was part of the societies in which she lived. For instance, she wrote a novel published in *Mercure de France*, where she dealt with the social inequalities of French society."

The film starts out by showing that even people at Zabel Yesayan Street in the First District of Yerevan do not know who Yesayan was. Yesayan was arrested in 1937 as an "enemy of the people" in Soviet Armenia. The manner of her death or even its exact date remains unknown. Yesayan's precocious start as a writer, her education in Istanbul and France, and her work of testimony on the 1909 Cilician massacres are related, as well as her escape in 1915 from the Ottoman roundup of Armenian intellectuals.

Literary critic Marc Nichanian noted in the film that Yesayan was the only woman in the list of intellectuals who were arrested on April 24



Zabel Yesayan (center) in Istanbul with several literary figures, including Krikor Zohrab, far right, and Levon Shant between Zohrab and Yesayan

and the weeks followed. After crossing the Ottoman border and arriving in Bulgaria in 1915, she wrote of her experience of hiding three months in a hospital in Istanbul. Furthermore, she published one of the earliest eyewitness accounts of the Genocide in 1917 in an Armenian journal, *Kordz*, in Baku. This 136-page-long testimony of Hayg Toroyan never was turned into a book. Yesayan spent two years in the Caucasus and in the Middle East collecting Armenian orphans. She sent articles to French newspapers in order to raise public awareness in Europe.

Nichanian declared that it was rare for someone escaping a dangerous situation like Yesayan to be able to write about it so quickly. Furthermore, Yesayan used to be close to the Armenian Revolutionary Federation (ARF) before 1915, but radically shifted after the war to become its ferocious enemy. Nichanian stated that this led to ARF not speaking about her life or politics after she became pro-Soviet.

Art historian Vardan Azatyan said that Yesayan wrote *Among the Ruins* as if she was inside the events, but also distant in a way that allowed her to write about the disaster. In December 1932, Yesayan was invited to lecture at Yerevan State University. Azatyan thought that this became a safe place, or a utopian place of hope, which allowed her to write *Silihdari bardeznere* [Gardens of Silihdar] about the similarly safe place of her childhood.

Finding Zabel Yesayan was first screened in Yerevan in 2009 and then in Istanbul the same year. It also has been seen in various cities in Germany, London and Beirut (at Haigazian University). Armen Haroutiunian, a writer and patron of Armenian publications in Beirut has offered to sponsor the preparation and distribution of the film in DVD form to Armenian schools in Syria and Lebanon.

(Marc Mamigonian of NAASR facilitated the connections necessary for the preparation of this article.)

April 24th poem For Gomidas

by Diana Der-Hovanessian

When the Music Stopped
When he was left for dead,
when he awoke and saw
the slaughter, the cut-off heads,
the crucified young girls
and his modest students raped
he never spoke again.
For twenty silent years
he only stared, past tears,
past outrage, stunned,
never to sing again,
staring into the dark time
when music came undone.

(From *Dancing At the Monastery*, Sheep Meadow Press, published April, Diana Der-Hovanessian's 24th book)

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ARTS & LIVING

Photographic Journey to Historic Armenia

MISSION HILLS, Calif. – The Ararat-Eskijian Museum and Nor Serount Cultural Association present a photo exhibition, titled “Journey to Historic Armenia,” by Shiraz-Hovhannes Djeredjian, with English narration by Harut Der-Tavitian, on Sunday, May 15, at 4 p.m., at the Ararat Eskijian Museum, 15105 Mission Hills Road.

Those attending will have the opportunity to see original photos taken by Djeredjian from the 1960s onward, representing natural scenes, historical monuments and Armenian landscape.

Djeredjian is known as “the Photographer of the Armenian People.” His storytelling photography preserves the richness of Armenian history. Djeredjian has an ability to narrate, coupled with capturing the breathtaking scenes and historical sights, taking one back to the places where one’s ancestors lived, prayed and fought.

Djeredjian started working with a French archaeological group as a photographer in the 1960s. After touring all over Lebanon, he decided to go to his home country and photograph Armenian fortresses and churches in Western Armenia (today’s Turkey) and Eastern Armenia, including Mount Ararat, Mount Arakadz and Nemrut.

By his own account, he is the first photographer to take aerial photos of Mount Ararat. Djeredjian risked his life to get photos in the Artsakh-Karabagh region, because after the liberation war, the Azeri army had left mine-bombs in the region, making it a dangerous area to visit.

A select number of photographs will be on sale. A reception will follow the program.

For more information, e-mail mgoschin@mindspring.com.



“The Searcher” by Ara Hagopian

Ara Hagopian to Have Show at Brush Gallery

LOWELL, Mass. – An abstract by North Chelmsford resident Ara Hagopian will be included in the Brush Gallery’s upcoming “For the Birds” exhibition. The show, which features bird-themed artwork by a variety of artists, is juried by David Allen Sibley, a well-known author, illustrator and ornithologist.

“For the Birds” runs May 7 to June 18 at the Brush Art Gallery, 256 Market St. Artists’ Reception is May 14, 2-4 p.m. The show is a collaboration with the Massachusetts Audubon Society to focus attention on birds and their habitats and to raise funds for the volunteers who care for injured birds until they are able to be returned to the wild.

Hagopian is an artist and writer. To view his work, visit TheLiterateShow.com.

CALENDAR

Francis Kurkdjian Talks Scents

SCENTS, from page 13
when the scent and the person become one.
SF: Who would you love to create a signature scent for?

FK: Actually Kate Middleton. Coming here at this time there is so much about the royal wedding, and it made me think: she has no intimacy with anything, everything is seen. Her dress will be seen, her hair, her ring. I love the idea that her scent, the fragrance she chooses to wear on the day, will be the only part that is intimate.

SF: What kind of fragrance would it be?

FK: I don’t see her [Kate Middleton] as a femme fatale. But she’s in the middle of something, something that is going to change her. Still, there is something that is warm and natural about her that is very interesting. I would choose something warm and fresh – the new Elie Saab fragrance I’ve created would be perfect for her.

SF: How do you stay inspired?

FK: I encourage myself to be as diverse as possible, playing on different scents and notes, that’s why I’ve been working more and more with artists. I’m excited about getting perfume to people in a different way, to reach people that don’t usually buy fragrance.

Aqua Universalis Forte by Kurkdjian will be available in June.

For more information, visit www.franciskurkdjian.com.

MASSACHUSETTS

MAY 20 – St. Stephen’s Armenian Elementary School, 25th Annual Fair (Bazaar), at the Armenian Cultural & Educational Center (ACEC), 47 Nichols Ave., Watertown. Kids Carnival, 3-7 p.m.; special play area for children 4 and under; losh, beef, chicken, lamb and falafel available from 12-9:30 p.m., and pastries. Proceeds to support the school. For info, (617) 926-6979 or www.ssaes.org.

MAY 21 – “Hiking in Armenia’s Mountains, Valleys and Villages,” an illustrated talk covering the Siunik area of Southern Armenia, given by Joe Dadgigian and Dik Dagavarian of Merrimack Valley, 6 p.m., ARS Community Center, 142 Liberty St., Lowell. Presented by the Lowell ARF Committee; dinner and program, \$20 adults, \$10 students.

JUNE 4 – Armenian Memorial Church Annual Fair and Silent Auction, (rain or shine), meals served all day, delicacies table, 32 Bigelow Ave., Watertown.

NEW JERSEY

MAY 21 – “We Are Like This,” one-man show with Krikor Satamian, 8 p.m., at Greek Orthodox Cathedral, St. John the Theologian, 353 East Clinton Ave., Tenaflly. Tickets, \$65, including dinner and wine. For tickets, call Mary (201) 745-8850 or Noushig (718) 344-5582. Organized by Tekeyan Cultural Association Mher Megerdchian Theatrical Group.

JUNE 4 – Anniversary-Banquet in anticipation of the 80th anniversary of the Armenian Mirror-Spectator newspaper, the first English language Armenian newspaper in the world, organized by the Friends of the Tekeyan Cultural Association of New Jersey. Saturday, 7 p.m., at Teaneck Marriott at Glenpoint, 100 Franklin W. Burr Blvd., Teaneck. For tickets, call Shoghig (201) 803-0240 or Sirvart (201) 739-7775.



On May 21, at 8 p.m., Krikor Satamian will perform in a one-man show, titled “We Are Like This,” at Greek Orthodox Cathedral, St. John the Theologian, 353 East Clinton Ave., Tenaflly, NJ, organized by Tekeyan Cultural Association Mher Megerdchian Theatrical Group. Tickets are \$65 and include dinner. For tickets, call Mary (201) 745-8850 or Noushig (718) 344-5582.



COMMENTARY

THE ARMENIAN Mirror- Spectator

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COMMENTARY

Armenian Culture: Our Defense, Our Weapon

By Edmond Y. Azadian

"If we have captivated other people, that has been done only through our songs," wrote the late, modern Armenian poet, Paruyr Sevak. Indeed, our music and culture have been our only weapons of self-defense and self-preservation, as well as the means to influence non-Armenians. Although our great revolutionary novelist Raffy had lamented that we could become a great nation had we tempered swords rather than chalices and had we built fortresses instead of churches and cathedrals, the historic truth is that Armenians have survived through their culture, by choice or by default and today no alternative is left for us. We need to know our culture, present it to the world and win appropriate recognition for its richness.

We have been too slow in showcasing our cultural heritage to the world, of course, partly because circumstances have not always been in our favor.

Perhaps our enemies have been more alert to grasp the value of the Armenian culture and that is why they have targeted the creators of that culture. The first task of Talaat Pasha was to exterminate the Armenian intellectuals. And today, Talaat's successors, the Azeris have been destroying with the same zeal the Armenian *khachkars* of Julfa, unique expressions and relics of Armenian culture.

Recent international recognitions have come to drive home that our ancestors have created and willed to us cultural and scientific legacy of global significance. A case in point, UNESCO's decision to award Melina Mercouri International prize for safeguarding and management of cultural landscapes to the "Garni Preserve Museum." The prize will be shared with the village of Batir in Palestine.

Garni is one of the best-preserved Hellenistic monuments in the world. At one time in history, Armenia was under the influence of Hellenistic culture. Our nation absorbed and preserved the finest traditions of that culture. Even several manuscripts of philosophy, which were lost forever for the world culture, were preserved in Armenian translation and were thus returned to the world.

The other cultural milestone is UNESCO's approval to celebrate in the year 2012 the 1,400th anniversary of medieval scientist Anania Shirakatsi, who was a philosopher, mathematician, astronomer and as well as the founder of exact sciences, natural science and astronomy in Armenia. He was a trailblazer in the study of the universe centuries before Galileo.

The proposal to include Shirakatsi in UNESCO's list came from the Byurakan Observatory team, which symbolizes the continuation of Shirakatsi's work in space exploration in the modern era.

Under astronomer Victor Harpartzoumian, Byurakan became a world-class center of cosmic-ray research as well as space-age sciences. The collapse of the Soviet Union diminished its role because of scarcity of funding and the massive brain drain from Armenia.

In today's globalized era, many nations have been translating and introducing their ethnic literatures and heritages into major languages and thus introduce them into the forum of

world culture. That is how they attract world attention and awards. We Armenians have traditionally (and subjectively) looked down upon Turks and Turkish literature. Yet they captured the Nobel Prize even before we could get one. And there are a number of Armenian writers who certainly are no less talented than Orhan Pamuk.

During the Soviet period, there was a program to translate Armenian literature into Russian in order to attract a broader audience and gain world recognition. But the Soviet Union at the time was encircled by its iron curtain, so that very little literature, except the Russian ones, filtered to the West. The French-Armenian community seems less organized, considering its size, but it has shown more instances of breaking the glass ceiling to present some treasures of the Armenian culture to the non-Armenian public. Recent examples include an exhibition organized by Claude Mutaftian presenting the culture of the Cilician Armenian Kingdom (10th and 14th century) under the title of "Silver Age of Armenia Culture." Then came the exhibition at the Louvre Museum, "Armenia Sacra," to bring to the world attention our Christian heritage in one of the most visible and prestigious cultural forums in the world.

Most recently, one of the gems of Armenian musical heritage was presented to the French audience: the opera buffa "Gariné" in French translation by Dickran Tchouhadjian.

Several French singers – none of them of Armenian descent – were so impressed by Tchouhadjian's music that they have formed a quartet named Arevadzaghigh to present Armenian liturgical and classical music to French audiences in Armenian.

The 1991 film "Mayrig," by French-Armenian filmmaker Henri Verneuil, and starring Claudia Cardinale and Omar Sharif, did not receive the attention and acclaim that it deserved, however.

All these major cultural activities are spearheaded by individuals without a coherent, broader program, nor sponsored by major funding. Unlike other countries, the French government is more sensitive and receptive to minority cultures, and therefore more willing to support those programs.

Today, with the emergence of the European Union, movements are more fluid within the continent and achievements in one country can move to the other or be easily replicated.

When we speak about Europe we cannot ignore the task of the Mkhitarist fathers in Venice (1717) and later in Vienna, who have served as beacons of Armenian culture and scholarship. Even the poet Lord Byron has left his footprint on St. Lazarus Island off the coast of Venice, with much praise to the achievements of the Mkhitarists.

Perhaps it was the offshoot of the Mkhitarists tradition that a group of Italian architects release the series of Armenian architectural volumes, under the leadership of Adriano Alpago Novello. The latter was an architect, art historian and professor who had fallen in love with medieval Armenian architecture.

All these references certainly do not cover the entire gamut of Armenian cultural achievements in Europe or elsewhere. Many more could be added to prove that Armenians may only be recognized and respected through their cultural identity.

All we need is to garner our resources to focus on greater and more significant cultures projects, especially in view of the Genocide centennial, so that we can continue "captivating others through our songs."

LETTERS

Don't Defend President Obama

To the Editor:

After reading Edmond Azadian's latest editorial, "Message from President Obama Once Again Causes Trauma," in the April 30 issue of the MS, I recalled that this is the second editorial of its kind in which Mr. Azadian seems to take on the role of apologist for President Barack Obama's disappointing policies towards Armenia. Basically, Mr. Azadian lays out the reasons as to why it's not in the Obama administration's interests to use the "G" word in its annual Genocide message, some of which are understandable and most of which we are all aware. But I do have some thoughts about some of his points:

Many of the same restrictions on the Obama administration, with regard to US-Turkey relations, were in place during the Reagan administration but Reagan, a Republican, had the backbone and ethics to use the word "genocide" in his annual April 24 message. By Azadian's own admission, in the past several years Turkey also hasn't

always been on board with US policy. Therefore, in his effort to rationalize Obama's backpedaling and thereby convince Armenians to continue supporting him in the face of his insulting policies, it seems as though Mr. Azadian is being self-serving by promoting his own personal political bent. Is continued support of Obama really in Armenia's best interest?

As an Armenian-American and not an American-Armenian I take exception to Mr. Azadian's statement "There are also staunch Republicans among Armenians who vote with their pocketbooks and don't give a damn about the Genocide issue." I would prefer to think that when Republicans or independents, like myself, vote for Republicans we do so because we vote with our heads and not with our hearts and for a variety of reasons. Perhaps, too, as loyal citizens of the US we vote for what's best for our country. Surely Mr. Azadian knows that there are Republicans in Congress who support recognition of the Armenian Genocide and that voting for a Republican and advo-

cating for Genocide recognition aren't always mutually exclusive.

Our advocacy groups and Armenian organizations "pulled all of the stops" in their efforts to convince Armenian-Americans to vote for Obama based on his pledge to use the word "genocide." They convinced both Republicans and independents that it was their moral obligation to do so. Not only did Obama renege on that promise, his administration tried to cut aid to Armenia and "recently discontinued extending Millennium Challenge grants to Armenia." Demonstrations are fine, but "voter remorse" can be used to better advantage. Just as we can help elect politicians who pledge to support the Armenian agenda we can also form coalitions to oust politicians who make false promises to us in order to garner our support to help get them elected and then renege. That will send a bigger message than any demonstration.

— Adrienne Alexanian
New York City



COMMENTARY



My Turn

By Harut Sassounian

Sarkozy Joins Obama in Deceit: Neither should be reelected in 2012

Armenians in France and the United States have a common challenge in 2012: To do everything in their power to block reelection of their deceptive presidents.

Neither Nicolas Sarkozy nor Barack Obama kept their promises to their respective Armenian constituents. The French President failed to honor his commitment to support a law penalizing denial of the Armenian Genocide, while the American leader broke his promise to acknowledge the genocide.

The long trail of Obama's broken promises is well known, but not many know about Sarkozy's deception. On January 29, 2001, President Jacques Chirac signed into law a decision adopted by the National Assembly on May 29, 1998, and the Senate on November 7, 2000, recognizing the Armenian Genocide. The Armenian community then petitioned the French government to assign a penalty of 45,000 euros and 5-year imprisonment for denial of the Armenian Genocide, similar to the existing law penalizing denial of the Jewish Holocaust.

This reasonable expectation turned into a major contro-

versy due to Turkish pressure on France and opposition from some French intellectuals who staunchly defended free speech. Under these circumstances, the French government tried to block a vote on this measure in the National Assembly.

The French intellectuals, who objected to this law on grounds of restricting freedom of expression, conveniently ignored the fact that a similar law existed in France since 1990 to punish those who deny the Holocaust. The objections raised by Turkish denialists, on the other hand, were totally absurd. Turkey's autocratic leaders had no right whatsoever to lecture the French on freedom of expression, while their own country arrested journalists, censored the media, and banned the acknowledgment of the Armenian Genocide.

It was unfortunate that some well-intentioned but naive Armenians and their liberal Turkish friends also opposed the proposed law, thereby unintentionally supporting Turkish denialism. They opposed this bill by equating the infamous Article 301 of the Turkish Penal Code banning the acknowledgment of the Armenian Genocide, with the proposed French law penalizing the denial of the genocide. This is a farcical comparison because the Turkish law makes it a crime to tell the truth about the Armenian Genocide, while the French law makes it a crime to lie about it! Why didn't these liberal Turks and French intellectuals, who claim to support freedom of speech, object to a similar French law penalizing denial of the Holocaust? Doesn't that law also restrict freedom of speech? Why shouldn't Armenian genocide victims be accorded equal protection under French law?

After lengthy debates and delays, the French National Assembly approved the law on penalizing denial of the Armenian Genocide on October 12, 2006, and sent it to the Senate, where it has been stalled until last week.

While Sarkozy was a presidential candidate, he repeatedly promised to support adoption of this law in the French Senate. But as President, he reversed course and opposed the measure. After coming under intense criticism by Charles Aznavour and the influential French-Armenian community and realizing that he is badly trailing his likely opponents in next year's presidential election, President Sarkozy recently met with several prominent French Armenians and promised not to oppose the bill in the Senate. This was too little, too late. After Turkish leaders once again unleashed an intense lobbying campaign, Sarkozy's political party (UMP), which holds a majority in the Senate, was instructed by his government to oppose the bill. On May 4, after a three-hour debate, the Senate refused to take up the measure by a vote of 196-74.

The battle for this bill is by no means over. Taking advantage of President Sarkozy's poor rating in the polls, Armenians will now join forces with a majority of French voters to support the Socialist Party's candidate in next year's presidential election, just as Armenian-Americans are preparing to oppose President Obama in the 2012 elections.

In an attempt not to alienate Armenian voters altogether in the upcoming elections, France's Justice Minister proposed the formation of a joint commission of Armenians and ministry officials that would bring to the courts' attention incidents of genocide denial. This is a welcome development and in line with the existing commission on the Holocaust, but French Armenians should still insist on having a law that penalizes denial of the Armenian Genocide.

While politicians, whether in France or the United States, are notorious for breaking their promises, Armenians in both countries can only reach their objectives by pooling their resources and forming a cohesive voting block that backs their political supporters and counters their opponents.

The Armenian Cause and International Law

By Alfred de Zayas

Murder has been a sin since Cain killed Abel, long before the first attempts by lawyers to codify penal law, before the Hammurabi and other ancient codes. More fundamentally, murder is a crime by virtue of natural law, which is prior to and superior to positivistic law. Crimes against humanity and civilization were crimes before the British, French and Russian note condemned the Armenian massacres in 1915. Genocide was a crime before Raphael Lemkin coined the term in 1944.

According to article 38 of the Statute of the International Court of Justice, general principles of law are a principal source of law. Not only positivistic law – not only treaties, protocols and charters – but also the immanent principles of law are sources of law before the ICJ and can be invoked. Among such principles are “ex injuria non oritur jus” which lays down the rule that out of a violation of law no new law can emerge and no rights can be derived. This is a basic principle of justice – and of common sense. Another general principle of law is “ubi jus, ibi remedium”, where there is law, there is also a remedy, in other words, where there has been a violation of law, there must be restitution to the victims. This principle was reaffirmed by the Permanent Court of International Justice in its famous judgement in the Chorzow Factory Case in 1928. Another general principle is that the thief cannot keep the fruits of the crime. Another principle stipulates that the law must be applied in good faith, uniformly, not selectively. Thus, there is no international law à la carte.

And yet there are those who claim that the Armenians have no justiciable rights, because the Genocide Convention was only adopted 1948, more than 30 years after the Armenian Genocide, and because treaties are not normally applied retroactively. This, of course, is a fallacy, because the Genocide Convention was drafted and adopted precisely in the light of the Armenian genocide and in the light of the Holocaust. Not only the Armenian Genocide but also the Holocaust predated the Convention, and no one would question the legitimacy of the claims of the survivors and

descendants of the victims of the Holocaust, simply because the Nazi atrocities were committed before the entry into force of the Genocide convention. Moreover, this argumentation is a kind of red herring, intended to confuse and to distract attention from the legal basis of the Armenian claims. Indeed, the rights of the Armenians do not derive from the Genocide Convention. Rather: the Genocide Convention strengthens the pre-existing rights of the Armenian to recognition as victims, to restitution and compensation.

Articles 144 and 230 of the Treaty of Sèvres, signed on August 10, 1920 by four representatives of the Ottoman Sultan Mehmed VI, recognized the rights of the survivors of the extermination campaign against the Christian minorities of the Empire, including the Armenians, the Greeks from Pontos, the Chaldeo-Assyrians, and affirmed the obligation of the Turkish State to investigate these crimes and punish the guilty. Article 144 stipulated in part:

“The Turkish Government recognises the injustice of the law of 1915 relating to Abandoned Properties (Emval-i-Metroukeh), and of the supplementary provisions thereof, and declares them to be null and void, in the past as in the future. The Turkish Government solemnly undertakes to facilitate to the greatest possible extent the return to their homes and re-establishment in their businesses of the Turkish subjects of non-Turkish race who have been forcibly driven from their homes by fear of massacre or any other form of pressure since January 1, 1914. It recognises that any immovable or movable property of the said Turkish subjects or of the communities to which they belong, which can be recovered, must be restored to them as soon as possible, in whatever hands it may be found...”

Article 230 stipulated in part: “The Turkish Government undertakes to hand over to the Allied Powers the persons whose surrender may be required by the latter as being responsible for the massacres committed during the continuance of the state of war on territory which formed part of the Turkish Empire on August 1, 1914. The Allied Powers reserve to themselves the right to designate the tribunal which shall try the persons so accused, and the Turkish Government undertakes to recognize such tribunal....”

Even though the League of Nations never established an international criminal tribunal to try the Turkish perpetrators of the genocide against the Armenians and other Christian minorities, numerous trials under Turkish law did take place in Istanbul in 1919, even before the treaty of Sèvres was signed. The Turkish authorities conducted these trials against Ottoman officials involved in the genocide pursuant to the Ottoman penal code. Many were convicted and three persons were executed.

The Treaty of Sèvres, however, was not implemented, because of the coup d'état against the Sultan conducted by a Turkish general, Mustafa Kemal, who not only overthrew the Sultan but proceeded to wage war against the Greeks and the British, push them out of Anatolia and negotiate a new Peace Treaty with the Allies, which ensured impunity for the thousands of Turkish officials, officers and soldiers involved in the massacres.

To deny that the Armenian massacres amounted to genocide manifests both ignorance of the facts and bad faith. There is no doubt that the Armenian genocide was many times worse than the ethnic cleansing that occurred in the former Yugoslavia in the 1990s, a crime which the UN General Assembly in its resolution 47/121 (1992) considered “a form of genocide”. There is no doubt that the massacres of the Armenians were many times worse than the massacre of Srebrenica, which the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia and the International Court of Justice condemned as genocide.

But let us return to the general principle of law *ubi jus ibi remedium*. What is of relevance today is not the punishment of the guilty, because no person criminally responsible for the massacres is still alive. What is crucial is the right to the Armenian homeland, which entails the right to return and the right to restitution and compensation. In this context it is relevant to cite the final Report of the United Nations Special Rapporteur on the Human Rights Dimensions of Population Transfers, Awn Shawkat Al Khasawneh (today a judge at the ICJ).

The Declaration appended to the Report, which was formally adopted by the Commission on Human Rights and by ECOSOC provides in article 8: “Every person has the right to return voluntarily, and in safety and dignity, to the

country of origin and, within it, to the place of origin or choice. The exercise of the right to return does not preclude the victim's right to adequate remedies, including restoration of properties of which they were deprived in connection with or as a result of population transfers, compensation for any property that cannot be restored to them, and any other reparations provided for in international law. “Article 10 reiterates the *erga omnes* obligation of all States not to recognize the consequences of crime: “Where acts or omissions prohibited in the present Declaration are committed, the international community as a whole and individual States, are under an obligation: (a) not to recognize as legal the situation created by such acts; (b) in ongoing situations, to ensure the immediate cessation of the act and the reversal of the harmful consequences; (c) not to render aid, assistance or support, financial or otherwise, to the State which has committed or is committing such act in the maintaining or strengthening of the situation created by such act.”

Similarly, the United Nations Basic Principles and Guidelines on the Right to a Remedy, adopted by the General Assembly on 16 December 2005 stipulate in part in Article IX:

“19. Restitution should, whenever possible, restore the victim to the original situation before the gross violations of international human rights law or serious violations of international humanitarian law occurred. Restitution includes, as appropriate: restoration of liberty, enjoyment of human rights, identity, family life and citizenship, return to one's place of residence, restoration of employment and return of property. 20. Compensation should be provided for any economically assessable damage, as appropriate and proportional to the gravity of the violation and the circumstances of each case, resulting from gross violations of international human rights law and serious violations of international humanitarian law, such as: (a) Physical or mental harm; (b) Lost opportunities, including employment, education and social benefits; (c) Material damages and loss of earnings, including loss of earning potential; (d) Moral damage; (e) Costs required for legal or expert assistance, medicine and medical services, and psychological and social services.” Since there is no

see LAW, page 20



New Reality in the Middle East in Wake of Revolts, Reforms and Religion

DIASPORA, from page 1

“If we take a very broad view since 1920, we see that there was an influx of Armenians in the Arab world and some migration of Armenians within the Arab world,” he said.

The revolution in Iran, he said, changed the dynamics. When Armenians left that country, he said, none went to Arab countries; instead, they all headed West.

Regarding Iran, Khachig Tölölyan, a professor of English and letters at Wesleyan University in Connecticut, as well as the editor of *Diaspora* magazine there, cited an interesting change. About half of Iranian-Armenians left when the revolution happened. Yet, the remaining Armenians are still able to carve a strong presence for themselves, albeit within the government-proscribed and sanctioned church organizations. For Muslim fundamentalists, he said, it is easier to recognize religion, therefore church organizations can play a more prominent role.

Sanjian said that Armenian populations within the Arab world are decreasing, but that decrease is not only a result of emigration; it is that there is normal attrition and new people are not coming in to take the places of those who have died.

“Arab countries are not attractive for new migration among Armenians,” he stressed. The

major group on the move among Armenians, he said, is those from Armenia proper, and they don’t go to any countries in the Middle East, except Israel.

The decrease of Armenians in the Arab world, he said, should also be seen in the context of the Christian exodus out of the region. The total number of Christians in the Middle East is decreasing, he said.

As for Lebanon, Sanjian said, the number of Armenians just prior to the 1975 civil war was appropriately 180,000. Now that number is about 80,000, thought about 145,000-150,000 Armenians hold Lebanese citizenship.

There are three kinds of diasporas, explained Tölölyan.

The first is residual, in which the community gradually and steadily weakens, such as the Armenian community in Ethiopia, which was “very strong” from the 1920s through the 1970s and now has practically disappeared.

Next, there are the emergent communities, which are the result of new migration, thus they have higher numbers and great commitment to their culture.

Third, he said, are the dominant communities, for example, Lebanon before 1975 and Iran before 1979.

Tölölyan said that “just the passage of time changes the nature of any country.”

He ascribed many changes in the Armenian community there to those of the greater host community, including the introduction of widespread media, including Al Jazeera and Western program, as well as wealth from oil and greater Islamization.

Tölölyan said that perhaps one should consider that a smaller community is not necessarily a weakened community. “The core group becomes even more committed. I don’t feel that everything is in decline,” he said, though in some communities the numbers are halved.

Western Armenian Culture in Jeopardy

One result of the move out of the Middle East, Sanjian said, is the erosion of Western Armenian culture and language. In fact, he said, last year the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) declared Western Armenian an endangered language.

“Western Armenian culture is under serious threat. This is a delayed consequence of the Armenian Genocide,” he added.

The Middle East, including Istanbul, traditionally has Armenian-speakers for about three generations, Sanjian said. However, in Iran, he said, Armenians have been able to keep their language for generations.

In France, the US and Canada, where newer waves of immigration have led, there is more pressure to conform and speak the host country’s language.

Tölölyan agreed that the attitude in Lebanon, unlike Iran, has been much more inclusive.

“The attitude is, ‘Let’s all be Lebanese together.’ It is much more receptive. Intermarriage has tripled and quadrupled. They say we can’t keep separate,” Tölölyan said.

Sanjian agreed that assimilation is happening rapidly. In countries, like Egypt and Lebanon, he said, with large Christian Arab populations, Armenians regularly intermarry with them.

The region is “overwhelmingly Muslim” and

thus, Armenians are marrying within their group, though increasing the definition to mean Christians.

“They think it’s much easier to be with fellow Christians,” Sanjian said.

At the same time, Tölölyan said, what is going on in Turkey, namely “a debate among themselves to figure out if there is a pluralist way” to define their identity and to find out what makes a pluralist society, makes it unique.

From about 1900-1940s, the Middle East experienced a pan-Arab movement, with the movement peaking in the 1960s. However, since the 1970s, instead of pan-Arab nationalism, it is pan-Islamism that has risen.

“Since the 1970s, there has been a shifting identity” in the Middle East, so that any person does not define themselves as Arab, but rather as Libyan, Egyptian, Syrian, Lebanese, etc., Tölölyan noted.

The number of students in Armenian schools in Lebanon has gone down accordingly – if not alarmingly. In 1975, he said, there were 21,000 Armenian students in grades K-12, but now it is about 7,000. There are many more ethnic Armenian school children, but now, he said, most parents opt for private Arabic-language schools in hopes of creating a better future for their children by making them more fluent in Arabic.

In Syria, he said, the number of students has been holding, approximately around 15,000.

In Egypt, Sanjian said that the number of Armenians, once so numerous, is down to a few thousand. The creation of the new Egyptian government, he said, once the dust settles, will resonate throughout the Arab world. “It will affect policy and discourse in other Arab countries,” he said, including Lebanon and East Jerusalem. “The changes are not going to stop at the Egyptian border,” he said.

One bright light, paradoxically, is Istanbul, he said. “It still has a thriving community,” though many are Turkish or Kurdish speakers. “It has recovered the feel of a community.”

Aram Khachaturian Trio Perform in Sydney

SYDNEY – Sponsored by Avo and Jacqueline Tevanian, the AGBU Sydney Chapter presented the Aram Khachaturian Trio, as well as pianist Sona Barseghyan at two concerts, at The Independent Theatre, on Friday, May 6 and Saturday, May 7.

Khachaturian Trio also performed on April 29 in Sydney, at a memorial event dedicated to the 96th Anniversary of the Armenian Genocide. The keynote speaker will be Assadour Guzelian of London.

In 2010, sponsored by the AGBU London Chapter, the Aram Khachaturian Trio gave an outstanding concert dedicated to the 95th Anniversary of the Armenian Genocide on May 22, 2010, at St. Yeghishe Church, in London. The same program was also performed by the Trio in Bulgaria, on May 20, under the auspices of AGBU Plovdiv Chapter.

The members of the group are Armine Grigoryan, Karen Shahgaldyan and Karen Kocharyan, each a distinguished virtuoso performing artist individually, playing piano, violin and cello respectively.

A graduate of the Yerevan Tchaikovsky School of Music, who has also completed Yerevan State Conservatory postgraduate studies under the guidance of Professors Georgy and Sergey Saradjian, Grigoryan has appeared with the Armenian Philharmonic Orchestra, performing piano concertos by Mozart, Beethoven and Brahms. As an accompanist, she has won Special prizes at Aram Khachaturian (1997) and Levon Chilingirian (2002) Competitions. Grigoryan has collaborated with violinist Nikolay Madoyan, performing versatile programs including the Beethoven’s 10 Sonatas. Grigoryan is a laureate of the Roma-2003 Piano Competition, where she also received a Special

prize and Medal from the Chamber of Deputies of Rome. Grigoryan is a professor at Yerevan State Conservatory and, since 2004, director of the Aram Khachaturian Museum.

A graduate of Moscow Conservatory, Shahgaldyan completed postgraduate studies with Prof. Maya Glezarova. From 1998-2002 Karen Shahgaldyan performed with members of the Moscow Virtuosi under Vladimir Spivakov. During the 2004-2005 season he appeared as a soloist with various orchestras, playing on a Stradivarius violin given him on loan by the Ministry of Culture of the Russian Federation. Shahgaldyan is a laureate of the International Pablo Sarasate Competition (Spain). He has won scholarships with the David Oistrach and Yuri Yankelevich Foundations, as well as the Mstislav Rostropovich International Foundation. Shahgaldyan has toured widely throughout the US, Sweden, South Korea, Armenia and Russia.

A graduate of the Yerevan Tchaikovsky School of Music and Yerevan State Conservatory, Kocharyan is one of the founding members of the Khachaturian Trio, first solo cellist of the Armenian Chamber Players (ACP) and Associate Concertmaster of the Armenian Philharmonic Orchestra. He has toured with the Armenian Chamber Players and Armenian Philharmonic Orchestra throughout Europe as soloist. In 2005, Kocharyan, under the conductor Alexander Ivashkin (UK), appeared as soloist with the Armenian Philharmonic Orchestra. In 2006, with Eduard Topchjan and the Pasadena LAC Symphony Orchestra, he took part in Beethoven’s Triple Concerto. Kocharyan is a highly-acclaimed chamber musician.

The Armenian Cause and International Law

LAW, from page 10


statute of limitations applicable in cases of genocide and crimes against humanity, the Armenian claims to restitution and compensation continue to be valid to this day. Most importantly, however, the Armenians have a right to recognition as victims of genocide. They have a right to truth (6) and a right to historical memory. Such recognition is a fundamental human right and a sine qua non to reconciliation. For decades the Armenians were victims of silence. And indeed, the crime of silence is worse than that of negationism. International law will ensure that truth

and justice shall prevail.

(Alfred de Zayas is an American lawyer, writer, historian and expert in the field of human rights, as well as a former high-ranking United Nations official. He is currently a professor of international law at the Geneva School of Diplomacy and International Relations and was formerly a senior lawyer with the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights. De Zayas has written and lectured extensively on human rights, including the Armenian Genocide. This commentary originally appeared in www.neurope.eu.)

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