



Keynote speaker Dr. Richard Hovannisian

Times Square Commemoration of 96th Genocide Anniversary Draws Thousands

By **Aram Arkun**
Mirror-Spectator Staff

NEW YORK – The gathering of several thousand Armenians in a public square in one of the most visible sites in the United States seems a fitting way to remember the past, and remind others who want to forget it.

This year because Easter was celebrated on April 24, the Times Square commemoration of the 96th anniversary took place on the following Sunday, May 1. Organizers estimated at least 2,000 people were present, and hundreds of thousands more walked by, or watched it on television. Turkish state television, along with several Armenian television and radio stations, recorded the event.

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Banquet in New Jersey Honoring Mirror-Spectator Set for June 4

By **Aram Arkun**
Mirror-Spectator Staff

TEANECK, N.J. – The Tekeyan Cultural Association and the Friends of the *Mirror-Spectator* are hosting a banquet in anticipation of the 80th anniversary of the



Singer Datevik will perform at the banquet.

Armenian *Mirror-Spectator* on June 4.

The idea for the first solely English-language Armenian paper in the United States was proposed in 1931, and realized in 1932. The Tekeyan Cultural Association has undertaken the effort to support the

newspaper with a gala fundraising event because of its very close ties with the *Mirror-Spectator*. Vartan Ilanjan, one of the advisors in the Greater New York chapter of Tekeyan, noted that the efforts of three pillars of ongoing support of the newspaper in the area in its early period – Dr. Moses Housepian, Jack Antreassian and Armine Dikijian – would be commemorated at the event, and more information will be presented about them.

Ilanjan declared: “The role of the *Mirror-Spectator* has been great in the United States, though its reach has been global. It has played a vital role in maintaining and perpetuating cultural values and ideology. Though some ask why we need newspapers while there is the Internet, as an information technology professional I would tell you this: Over the years there have been

numerous changes in media. The value of technology can be tremendous if and only if you can retrieve information from it. The only media that so far has withstood the test of time has been printed media. So we

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Sargisian Calls For Broader Genocide Recognition

BERN, Switzerland (RFE/RL) – President Serge Sargisian on Tuesday urged more countries to recognize the World War I-era mass killing of Armenians in the Ottoman Empire as genocide, saying that it would not damage their relations with Turkey.

Making an official visit to Switzerland, Sargisian cited a relevant resolution that was adopted by the Swiss parliament in 2003. He argued that its passage, strongly condemned by Ankara, did not prevent the Swiss government from mediating in Turkish-Armenian fence-mending negotiations held in 2008-2010.

“By recognizing the Genocide, Switzerland condemned that despicable crime against humanity and thereby ... pre-



President Serge Sargisian inspects the troops along with Swiss President Micheline Calmy-Rey during a visit to Bern.

vailed over all geopolitical and military-economic considerations,” Sargisian said after talks with his Swiss counterpart, Micheline Calmy-Rey.

“Most importantly, that absolutely didn’t prevent Switzerland from supporting the normalization of Turkish-Armenian relations within a short period of time,” he said at a joint news conference. “In this regard, Switzerland’s example is the best one, and it should serve as a lesson for many countries of the world.”

Sargisian similarly stressed the importance of Armenian Genocide recognition during Calmy-Rey’s visit to Yerevan in late March. He said he has personally asked US

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Top Iranian Defense Official Visits Armenia

YEREVAN (RFE/RL) – Iranian Deputy Defense Minister Reza Mozafari Nia discussed military ties between Iran and Armenia during a visit to the capital on Tuesday.

Mozafari Nia met with Armenian Defense Minister Seyran Ohanian and his first deputy Davit Tonoyan.

A short statement by the Armenian Defense Ministry said they spoke about “issues related to Armenian-Iranian cooperation in the area of defense.” It did not elaborate.

A ministry source linked the talks with Ohanian’s official visit to Tehran last July. The source said that they focused on the implementation of Armenian-Iranian agreements reached during that trip.

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Garni Temple Receives UNESCO Award

YEREVAN (news.am) – Garni temple received the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) Melina Mercouri International Prize (UNESCO-Greece) award.

The award is handed out annually to sites, which are best preserved and safeguarded. Garni is a pagan temple complex located in the Kotayk region of Armenia, dating back to the first century, BC.

In addition to Garni, the Palestinian village of Batir also received the top prize.

The award ceremony will take place on May 24 at UNESCO headquarters in Paris, the Armenian Foreign ministry announced.

1,400th Anniversary of Anania Shirakatsi Recognized by UNESCO

YEREVAN (Arminfo) – The 1,400th anniversary of the birth of astronomer Anania Shirakatsi has been included in UNESCO’s honorary list of anniversaries for 2012.

The application for marking Shirakatsi’s birth was submitted by the Burakan Observatory. This is no accident, as he was the author of *Cosmography and the Calendar*, a 48-chapter work that discusses astronomy, meteorology and physical geography. Shirakatsi had progressive views for his time and left a huge legacy; he is considered the founder of the study of the natural sciences in Armenia. For centuries, his books were used at schools in Armenia as textbooks.

Because of his contributions, an international scientific conference is being dedicated to Shirakatsi and to the study of tangible and non-tangible monuments.

USAID to Allocate \$27 Million to Armenia

YEREVAN (Arka) – The United States Agency for International Aid (USAID) will allocate Armenia \$27 million, the press-service of USAID reported, based on the visit of Senior Deputy Administrator for Europe and Eurasia Roberta Mahoney to Armenia.

The money will be aimed at reducing poverty, improving rule of law, providing better access to health care and social benefits, and strengthening private sector and infrastructure.

Mahoney was in Yerevan in regard with 20 years of cooperation of Armenia with USAID.

She met with representatives of the Armenian government, private sector and partner organizations. The parties discussed US-Armenia bilateral relations, USAID assistance programs in the areas of democracy, economic growth, health and social reform and Armenia’s development challenges.

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ARMENIA

News From Armenia

Three Armenian Soldiers Killed in Karabagh

STEPANAKERT (RFE/RL) – Three Armenian soldiers were killed in continuing skirmishes along the main Armenian-Azerbaijani “line of contact” around Nagorno Karabagh, military authorities in Stepanakert said over the weekend.

Karabagh’s Army said one of the soldiers, Vazgen Bakhshian, was shot dead on Friday, while the two others died on Saturday at unspecified sections of the frontline. In a short statement, it did not identify the latter victims or give other details.

The statement said the deadly shootings were the result of fresh ceasefire violations by Azerbaijani forces.

The Armenian Foreign Ministry was quick to condemn the deaths and accuse Baku of torpedoing international efforts to bolster the shaky ceasefire regime in the conflict zone. “This behavior deserves the most severe condemnation by the international community,” read a ministry statement issued on Saturday.

Defense Ministry Opposes Exempting Seminarians

YEREVAN (news.am) – In the future it will be necessary to reduce the number of seminarians exempted from military service, said Defense Minister Seyran Ohanian at a recent press conference.

Armenia’s government decided to exempt 17 seminarians from military service, while another 62 got deferments. Ohanian noted that the number of exempted seminarians is too big but nevertheless they made concessions based on the position of Catholicos of All Armenians Karekin II on the issue.

Ohanian agreed to give deferments to seminarians who continue their education but later, he said, they have to join the army.

Hrazdan Zoo Director Keeps Animals in His House in Winter

HRAZDAN (PanARMENIAN.Net) – During a press conference on April 27, Armenak Avetisyan, director of the zoo here complained about the bad conditions for the animals. He said he and his friends keep the animals in their houses in the winter.

“We lost 10 guinea pigs due to bad weather conditions last winter, as we can’t bring them home because of the heavy smell they give off,” Avetisyan said. “Currently, there are 20 kinds of animals in the zoo. We appealed to the parliament and various political parties for assistance. The zoo needs 1 million drams per month for normal operation. With financial assistance, I will myself mend the cages and bring everything in order,” he said.

According to Avetisyan, the zoo does not have a staff. “I do everything by myself; often my friends help me,” he said, adding that entry fee to the zoo costs 200 drams but local residents are often allowed in for free.

Foreign Minister Nalbandian Meets with Baroness Cox

YEREVAN – On April 19, Minister of Foreign Affairs Eduard Nalbandian received the parliamentary delegation led by the Baroness Caroline Cox, member of the UK House of Lords.

Nalbandian praised the support and humanitarian activity Cox has provided to Armenia and Nagorno-Karabagh for years and mentioned that the Armenian people are grateful to her.

Cox said that she would continue her activities in favor of strengthening the Armenian-British relations.

Nalbandian and the British parliamentarians discussed the perspectives of deepening of the Armenian-British cooperation.

Armenia, EU Hail ‘Good Progress’ Towards Association Accord

YEREVAN (RFE/RL) – The European Union (EU) and Armenia on Friday reported “good progress” in their ongoing negotiations on an association agreement meant to significantly deepen the country’s political, economic and other links with the EU.

In a joint declaration signed in Yerevan, the EU’s Commissioner for Enlargement Stefan Fuele and Armenian Foreign Minister Eduard Nalbandian said the signing of the agreement will elevate those ties to “a different level.” They also reaffirmed the Armenian government’s stated commitment to implementing wide-ranging reforms required by the 27-nation bloc.

The declaration signed after Fuele’s talks with President Serge Sargsian says the EU’s main executive body, the European Commission, is ready to significantly increase financial assistance provided to Armenia. According to the EU Delegation in Yerevan, it will double to 157 million euros (\$232 million) in the next three years.

The association agreement stems from the EU’s Eastern Partnership program covering six ex-Soviet states, including neighboring Georgia and Azerbaijan. Armenian and EU officials formally opened negotiations on the accord last July. They held two more rounds of negotiations later in 2010.

Nalbandian said the two sides have already concluded 16 negotiating “chapters.” “In effect, we have crossed half the distance,” he told a joint news conference with Fuele earlier in the day.



EU’s Commissioner for Enlargement Stefan Fuele and Armenian Foreign Minister Eduard Nalbandian meet, with President Serge Sargsian standing behind them in the photo.

Fuele stressed the importance of free trade and visa facilitation agreements to be signed within the framework of the association process. His declaration with Nalbandian says the Armenian side will take “further steps” to pave the way for the start of talks on a free trade deal.

The reforms promised by Yerevan would mostly affect Armenian state agencies dealing with external trade and immigration and lead to changes in various Armenian laws. The European Commission has already earmarked at least 32 million euros for financing

those reforms.

The EU says democratization, human rights protection and a stronger rule of law are another necessary condition for Armenia’s participation in the Eastern Partnership. However, it is still not clear just how aggressively it plans to press for such changes.

Fuele said the Armenian authorities should properly address the continuing fallout from the 2008 post-election unrest in Yerevan. He welcomed the release of more Armenian opposition members arrested three years ago and a renewed investigation into the unrest which was ordered by Sargsian last week.

“But the picture is much bigger and needs to be perceived as much also by the politicians here in Armenia,” the EU commissioner said. “What is also important is that three years after the [2008] events Armenian citizens get a full picture of what happened and who is responsible [for it] that there is an independent investigation of the events.”

“I personally believe that without addressing, reflecting fully on the events of 2008 and closing this chapter, it would be more difficult to create a conducive atmosphere in the society for the [parliamentary] elections in April 2012,” he added.

In a written statement, the EU Delegation said Fuele discussed with Sargsian and other Armenian leaders “the internal political situation” in Armenia among other issues of mutual interest. “He encouraged the authorities to make further efforts on media pluralism and the conduct of elections,” it said.

New Offices for ADL Chapter in Marduni

MARDUNI, Armenia – One year ago, when a new chapter of ADL Armenagan party was established in the Marduni region of Armenia, and 125 trees were planted in the outskirts of the city, Papken Megerian, co-chairman of ADL District Committee of the US and Canada and his wife, Anahid, pledged to furnish the offices of that chapter.

This year, Megerian visited Armenia again to participate in the Tekeyan Armenia Awards ceremonies, and traveled to Marduni to see first hand his donations at work. ADL Armenagan Central Committee members Gayane Mouradian and Souren Sargsyan accompanied him. Chapter Chairman

Housig Mekhitarian stated that the chapter office has been a center for



Papken Megerian at the new office with ADL Marduni Chapter executive Committee

meetings, not only for ADL members but also supporters who are preparing themselves for the coming parliamentary elections in Armenia.

Top Iranian Defense Official Visits Armenia

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While in Tehran, Ohanian met with President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, Defense Minister Ahmad Vahidi and other top Iranian officials. Official Armenian and Iranian sources said that both sides reaffirmed their commitment to strengthening Armenian-Iran ties and stressed their importance for peace in the region.

“Cordial bonds between Iran and Armenia will help maintain peace and stability in the region,” Ohanian said at the time. Few other details of his talks were reported.

Armenian Deputy Defense Minister Ara Nazarian reportedly said late last month that bilateral relations have now reached “the highest level.” He also reaffirmed Yerevan’s positive assessment of Iran’s role in regional security.

“Over the past years, Iran has pursued

a conscious and coherent policy in the region,” the IRNA news agency quoted Nazarian as saying at a ceremony organized by the Iranian Embassy in Armenia. The event marked Iran’s National Army Day.

Defense and security has arguably been the least advanced component of Armenia’s warm rapport with Iran, which has centered on economic cooperation and joint energy projects in particular. Still, military cooperation between the two neighboring states has prompted serious concern from the United States on at least one occasion.

According to one of the classified US diplomatic cables disclosed by WikiLeaks last December, Washington accused Armenia of re-exporting weapons to Iran and threatened sanctions against Yerevan in late 2008. In a secret December 2008

letter, then Deputy Secretary of State John Negroponte pressed President Serge Sargsian to “ensure such transfers do not occur in the future.”

Sargsian has pursued close ties with Iran throughout his three-year presidency. Visiting Tehran in late March, he described the Armenian-Iranian relationship as “truly exemplary” and called for its expansion.

Relations with the Islamic Republic is a rare matter of national consensus in Armenia, reflecting its unresolved conflict with Azerbaijan over Nagorno-Karabagh and strained relations with another Muslim neighbor, Turkey. With the Armenian-Azerbaijani and Armenian-Turkish borders closed for almost two decades, Iran is one of the landlocked country’s two conduits to the outside world.



Istanbul Funeral of a Turkish-Armenian Soldier: Death Occurred on April 24

By Gayane Abrahamyan

ISTANBUL (ArmeniaNow) – The funeral of an ethnic Armenian serviceman in the Turkish army killed on April 24 took place at Istanbul's St. Vartan Church this week amid increased attention from the media, aware of the sensitivity of the circumstances surrounding the death.

According to the Turkish military police force, 25-year-old Sevak Shahin Balıkcı was hit by a bullet fired as a result of a fellow soldier's mishandling his weapon.

The General Command of the Turkish Gendarmerie issued a statement earlier this week in connection with the serviceman's death on the day when Armenians around the world commemorated the victims of the Ottoman-era massacres.

The statement said a soldier, who was Balıkcı's close friend, accidentally pulled the trigger of an automatic weapon while playing with it, thus shooting in the direction of his fellow servicemen who were repairing a barbed wire damaged by torrential rains. As a result, Balıkcı was fatally shot and could not be saved by doctors after being rushed to the hospi-

tal.

The ceremony at the Armenian church of the Sisli district of Istanbul attracted about 1,000 people, including Balıkcı's fellow servicemen and commanders, who came to pay their last respects to the memory of the Armenian youth who lay in state, wrapped in a Turkish flag.

Both Armenians and Turks who had gathered for the occasion had pictures of the 25-year-old pinned to their chests, many said they went through emotions similar to those they had on the day of the assassination of Turkish-Armenian journalist and minority rights champion Hrant Dink in January 2007. But still they stressed Sevak's is likely to have been an accidental death.

Still Balıkcı's father couldn't check his emotions and was bitterly crying for his only son at the funeral, repeatedly saying in Turkish: "They've slaughtered my son."

Most of the Armenians present at the funeral said they did not doubt the death was accidental.

"Well, in Armenia they like linking everything to April 24. How can we know what happened in reality? But what I know for sure is that the shooter was his friend," a representative of the local Armenian community, who

wished to remain anonymous, said in an interview.

The Armenian Church was crowded that Wednesday afternoon, with high-ranking officers of the Turkish army alone occupying four rows. With their hats in their hands, they stood, listening to an Armenian liturgy.

Numerous representatives of Turkish media came to cover the requiem service for the Armenian soldier; in fact, some television stations were carrying live coverage of the event.

Raffi Hermon Araks, a prominent member of the community, described such great media interest in a soldier killed in the ranks in Turkey as "rare."

Araks, who is a deputy of the district council of elders and a senior advisor to the mayor of Princes' Islands, said: "Of course, I do not mean to say it as a consolation, but in the Turkish army as well as in all other armies in the world such incidents do happen. But this case generates more attention since it is impossible to overlook the fact that Sevak was an Armenian Christian and the killer was a Turk and that the killing took place on April 24. But it is meaningless to jump to conclusions now. It is too early yet."

Istanbul Armenian Church Doors to Open after 100-Year Wait

By Kristine Aghalaryan

ISTANBUL (hetq) – There have been no religious services in the Istanbul Armenian Surp Vortvots Vorodman Church (Children of Thunder) for the past 100 years. But the doors to the church will finally open this July.

Deacon Vagharshak said that the site hadn't been used as a church since World War I. "The community has been dreaming about renovating the church and in 1987 plans were drafted but the amounts needed were staggering. It remained a dream."

Today, renovations on the church are in full swing. After renovations are complete, the church, with its original style intact, will also serve as a cultural center.

This building was built upon the edict dated February 2, 1828, granted by Mahmud II to Kazaz Artin (Harutyun Amira Bezdjivan); and its plans were drawn by royal architect Kirkor Amira Balyan and M. Devlet Garabet. The compound is composed of a cathedral (Mother Mary) and two chapels (Surp Khach and Surp Vortvots Vorodman) and opened for services on October 14, 1828.

The transformation project in this



The Surp Vortvots Vorodman Church

monumental building is targeted to constitute an example for other churches.

Kevork Karakeuzian, who directs the renovation project, says the cost is 2.7 million Turkish liras, of which 70 percent has been allocated by the

Turkish government. The remaining portion is contributed by the Istanbul Armenian patriarchate.

The entire project was a part of the renovations in the city related to Istanbul's run as a 2010 European Capital of Culture. A total of 610 projects were completed with a total budget of 300 million Turkish liras.

"What's really important is that this is the first time that the government has allocated such a large sum for the renovation of a church," says Karakeuzian.

Allaying concerns that the renovated structure would be used solely as a cultural center, Karakeuzian said that religious services could be held and that there would be a place to light candles.

International News

Israeli Party Calls for Genocide Recognition

TEL AVIV (PanArmenian.Net) – The Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs should reconsider its stance on the Armenian Genocide issue, Likud Party Chairman Zeev Elkin said this week.

"The Jewish state, which demands worldwide historical justice and observance of ethic norms can't itself go contrary to these principles," Elkin stated when addressing a conference on the 96th anniversary of the Armenian Genocide.

"The Jewish state should be among the countries which officially recognizes the Armenian Genocide," he said.

Jewish Cemetery Desecrated in Istanbul

ISTANBUL (PanARMENIAN.Net) – A Jewish cemetery located in Beyoglu, was desecrated Tuesday, April 26, by vandals who smashed several headstones to pieces.

Eight of the cemetery's gravestones were damaged, as well as some parts of the cemetery's periphery, Ynetnews reports quoting Turkish website Stargazete.

According to the report, local police forces were called to the graveyard in the morning hours, once the damage was discovered. The investigation includes gathering tapes from several security cameras stationed in the area. Police hope the footage will provide them with leads as to any suspects.

Armenia Celebrated at 37th International Book Fair in Buenos Aires

BUENOS AIRES (armradio.am) – Armenia was singled out as part of the 37th International Book fair here.

Addressing more than 1,000 participants of the gathering, Armenian Ambassador to Argentina Vladimir Karmirshalyan noted: "The creation of the Armenian alphabet in the fifth century was perhaps one of the remarkable events in the 3,000-year history of the Armenian people. Thanks to that, the Bible was translated into Armenian and a number of books were published, which comprise the most valuable part of our cultural heritage."

Karmirshalyan noted also that it was symbolic that two sister-cities – Buenos Aires and Yerevan – were chosen as World Book Capital of 2011 and 2012, respectively. "Yerevan will organize a large international book exhibition next year. Books published in Armenian and foreign languages will be displayed. Argentine will be represented in a separate pavilion," the ambassador noted.

Dink Trial to Be Merged With Ergenekon

ISTANBUL (Bianet.org) – Public Prosecutor Hikmet Usta, appointed by the Istanbul 14th High Criminal Court for the final plea in the murder case of Turkish-Armenian journalist Hrant Dink, demanded an investigation into the connections between the Dink murder suspects and the defendants in the Ergenekon trial.

Ergenekon is a clandestine organization charged with various crimes staged for the ultimate purpose of triggering a military coup.

According to the Turkish news site Ntvmsnbc.com, Usta demanded to investigate the connections between defendants Erhan Tuncel, Yasin Hayal and also Ogün Samast and the defendants of the Ergenekon and Poyrazky cases. Dink murder trial suspects Tuncel and Hayal stand accused of instigation to commit murder. The file of suspect Samast was separated from the main file tried before the court and is now being handled by the Sultanahmet (Istanbul) Juveniles High Criminal Court.

The prosecutor demanded an investigation of the transcripts of the telephone conversations related to these persons. He also indicated that the Dink murder fuelled indignation in Turkey and abroad. The Dink trial will be continued on May 30.

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Community News

Judge: Lawyer Can't Represent Schmidt in Suit

BATAVIA, Ohio (*Cincinnati Enquirer*) – A lawyer who works for the Turkish American Legal Defense Fund can't represent Rep. Jean Schmidt in a defamation lawsuit filed on her behalf against former political opponent David Krikorian, and a different lawyer for the congresswoman must disclose records that could show who is paying her legal bills, a judge has ruled.

Bruce Fein, who works for the Turkish-American group and represented Schmidt in previous election-related disputes between the Miami Township Republican and Krikorian, could be called as a witness in the defamation case in Clermont County Common Pleas Court, visiting Judge John W. Kessler said in a decision on April 11.

It could be a potential conflict of interest for Fein to be Schmidt's attorney in the defamation case, the judge said.

Schmidt doesn't have to turn over to

Krikorian copies of fee agreements or billing invoices related to her lawyers, the judge said.

But the judge's decision means Schmidt attorney, Donald Brey, who works for a Columbus firm, must share records such as copies of checks or credit card statements that could indicate if someone made payments for her, Krikorian attorney Brian Hester said Tuesday.

Krikorian's attorneys had asked the judge to order Schmidt to reveal whether her attorneys are being paid by the Turkish American Legal Defense Fund, which is affiliated with the Turkish Coalition of America.

The records could prove Krikorian didn't lie in calling her a "puppet" of Turkish interest groups, Hester said.



Rep. Jean Schmidt

Schmidt had no comment on the judge's decision, a spokesman said Tuesday. Fein also declined to comment.

"I'm pleased with the judge's decision," said Krikorian, a Madeira businessman who ran against Schmidt as an independent in 2008 and lost a Democratic primary in 2010 in an effort to challenge her again.

Schmidt claims that Krikorian, an Armenian-American, falsely accused her of taking money from Turkish interest groups to deny the genocide of 1.5 million Christian Armenians by Muslim Turks during World War I.

The suit filed against him in June seeks \$6.8 million in compensatory and punitive damages for what Schmidt claims were false allegations by Krikorian that she was complicit in campaign finance crimes, bribery and perjury.

Krikorian's attorneys argued that either Fein or Schmidt lied regarding who is paying her legal bills.

"There apparently is an independent investigation being conducted by the Office of Congressional Ethics regarding approximately 200 hours of legal services received by plaintiff Schmidt," the judge wrote.

"In an earlier deposition, attorney Bruce Fein said that the Turkish American Legal Defense Fund was paying for Schmidt's legal fees, and plaintiff Schmidt denied that," the judge wrote. "The issue of who is paying for these fees is material in regard [to the defamation suit]."



Bruce Fein



Planting a garden, Peter Markarian of Hyannis, second from right, stands with, from left, Jean Boyle, Raye Kaddy, Linda Cook, Jim Berks and Paul Nevosh of the Barnstable Disability Commission. Markarian worked with the Barnstable Senior Center and disability commission to construct fully accessible gardens at the center for his Eagle Scout project, which was completed recently.

Peter Markarian Eagle Scout Project Takes off

HYANNIS, Mass. (*Barnstable Patriot*) – At a quick glance, the completed raised garden beds at the Barnstable Senior Center look as if they could have been there since the building opened more than a decade ago.

On closer inspection, the sod is freshly laid, the nearby ground has clearly been disturbed, there are nearby mounds of extra dirt and loam, and of course, the beds are empty of any plants.

That won't last long, as there have already been discussions about a fall vegetable crop and fall bulb planting to ensure a colorful spring.

Peter Markarian of Hyannis, Mass. developed and oversaw the project, completed August 14 and 15 for his Eagle Scout Project with Centerville's Boy Scout Troup 54.

He said a dozen workers came on each of the two construction days, taking all of one and a good part of the second to build three raised garden beds that are fully accessible to those with disabilities.

The idea came from watching his grandfather establish his own garden after relocating to the Cape.

Markarian worked with Susan Griffin, the center's activities director, and Jim Berks, a center volunteer who is wheelchair bound. Berks, who holds two degrees in horticulture, tends the center's existing gardens and helped build the flower bed outside the center's lower level for those in the Adult Social Day program.

Berks helped develop Markarian's idea for a single garden bed into three raised beds with concrete pads in between. Each is five-feet wide and 27-feet long and built from concrete blocks.

He also received a \$500 grant from the Barnstable Disability commission for the project.

Among the tasks for the project was contacting local businesses for help with supplies and labor. Landscaper Kevin Shea assisted with earlier Bobcat work, and Country Garden helped with materials. Markarian said that there are funds remaining, which will likely be donated to the center to help get the gardens under way.

Markarian, 17, will be a senior this year at Bishop Stang High School in Dartmouth.



Peter Markarian

Worshippers Flock to Saint Vartan Cathedral For Easter, Holy Week Services

NEW YORK – Easter morning in New York was marked by abundant sunshine and a warm breeze, as hundreds gathered at the city's St. Vartan Armenian Cathedral to celebrate the most important day of the year in the church calendar. The burst of spring weather defied earlier forecasts of heavy rainfall and was a welcome respite after an unusually harsh winter.

Inside the cathedral, the faithful shared the joy of Christ's Resurrection, greeting each other, lighting candles and bowing in prayer. They also paused to reflect on the rare coincidence of Easter and Armenian Martyrs Day – the first time ever that the two observances have overlapped.

More than 2,000 people participated in services – one of the largest crowds in recent years – with some 5,500 candles lit throughout the day. When seats had become scarce, many stood at the back or spilled onto the plaza,



The Release of Doves ceremony symbolizes the dispatching of the 12 apostles.



Archbishop Khajag Barsamian hands a dove to Aso Tavitian during the Release of Doves ceremony on the cathedral plaza.

where audio speakers broadcast the badarak going on inside the cathedral.

Archbishop Khajag Barsamian, Primate of the Diocese of the Armenian Church of America (Eastern), celebrated the Divine Liturgy and delivered the homily on April 24.

"As Christians, we must never forget that the victory of Easter came at a price. To reach the resurrection, Christ had to pass through death," Barsamian said. "But with his passage of suffering awaiting him, Christ promised his disciples that death would not be the end. And today, nearly 2,000 years later, we still remember and celebrate Christ's victory over death."

Barsamian went on to say that this very message of victory is how "we honor the death of our Genocide martyrs on April 24."

"Our martyrs died. They suffered. But they see EASTER, page 5



COMMUNITY NEWS

Worshippers Flock to St. Vartan Cathedral for Easter, Holy Week Services

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were not victims," he said. "Our martyrs understood that Christ was speaking directly to them when he said, 'The world will give you affliction. But take heart: I have overcome the world.'"

After the Divine Liturgy, the Primate led a procession to the cathedral plaza, where 12 doves were released, symbolizing the dispatching of the 12 apostles.

Also, Tavitian was the godfather of the Release of Doves ceremony. Tavitian, founder of the international technology company Syncsort, is a member of the Board of Trustees for the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. His Tavitian Foundation supports higher education, and his support of the Armenian Program at Tufts University's Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy trains promising diplomats and government officials from the Republic of Armenia.

Also taking part in the Release of Doves ceremony was Ambassador Garen Nazarian, Armenia's representative to the UN, and his family.

The AGBU Antranig Dance Ensemble, wearing traditional Armenian costumes, performed several dances on the plaza. Young girls carrying baskets of tulips passed out the flowers to those gathered on the plaza.

A reception followed in Haik and Alice Kavookjian Auditorium, where Barsamian officiated over a home-blessing service. The faithful received *nshkhars* (communion wafers) to take home.

The St. Vartan Cathedral Choir sang the Divine Liturgy on Easter Sunday under the direction of Khoren Mekanejian. Florence Avakian accompanied on the organ. The cathedral remained open until early evening on Easter Sunday, welcoming worshippers throughout the remainder of the day.

Similar celebrations were underway at parishes across the Diocese.

Holy Week across the Diocese

Easter was preceded by Holy Week, which commemorates the dramatic events leading to the Resurrection of Jesus Christ.

At St. Vartan Cathedral on Palm Sunday, April 17, the Rev. Mardiros Chevian, cathedral dean, celebrated the Divine Liturgy, and with Archbishop Yeghishe Gizirian conducted the Turun-Patzek or Door Opening Service.

At the conclusion of services, those attending walked from the cathedral plaza to the western entrance of the building, carrying

palms in commemoration of Jesus' triumphal entry into Jerusalem.

Also on Palm Sunday, a special Children's Day was held at the Diocesan Center, where young Armenians had the opportunity to learn about their faith and culture, do seasonal crafts, learn to bake choreg, participate in the *badarak* and enjoy lunch together.

On April 21, Great and Holy Thursday, Chevian celebrated the Divine Liturgy in the morning. In the evening, Barsamian officiated at the Washing of the Feet

ple active in lay ministry at the parish and Diocesan levels. Participants included: Haig Ariyan, St. Nersess Seminary Board of Directors; Bruce Ashbahian, Ararat Center Board of Directors; Thomas Ashbahian, Ararat Center Board of Directors; Gregory Dalakian, Diocesan Sacred Music Council; Stephen Haratunian, Armenian Church Endowment



Worshippers on the plaza enjoy the AGBU Antranig Dance Ensemble's performance.



The AGBU Antranig Dance Ensemble performs traditional Armenian dances on the cathedral plaza.

Fund; Dr. Raffy Hovhannessian, Diocesan Council; Kris Kalfayan, Diocesan Gomidas Choir; Danny Mantis, ACYOA Central Council; George Mekenian, Diocesan Board of Trustees; Avedis Ohanessian, St. Vartan Cathedral Council; Charles Simonian, Armenian Church Endowment Fund and Dr. Edgar Housepian, Fund for Armenian Relief.

The Washing of the Feet ceremony was followed by a Khavaroom or Vigil Service.

The Order of the Crucifixion of Christ and the Order of the Entombment of the Lord (or *Taghoom* Service) were commemorated with services on Great and Holy Friday, April 22.

On Easter Eve, Saturday, April 23, Gizirian celebrated the Divine Liturgy. Students from the Diocesan Khrimian Lyceum read scriptures and sang in the choir along with students of local Diocesan Armenian Saturday schools.

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ceremony, which commemorates Christ washing the feet of the 12 apostles after the Last Supper.

In recognition of the Diocese's upcoming year-long focus on lay ministry in the Armenian Church, the 12 were selected from among peo-

Peabody Hosts Flag-Raising Ceremony to Commemorate Anniversary of Genocide

PEABODY, Mass. — On Thursday, April 28, a flag-raising ceremony was held on the front lawn of Peabody City Hall to mark the commemoration of the 96th anniversary of the Armenian Genocide. The ceremony was led by Mayor Michael J. Bonfanti.

According to the former longtime mayor of Peabody, the late Peter Torigian, whose mother survived the Genocide, "This ceremony is our small way of paying tribute to the martyrs of the Armenian Genocide."

Bonfanti was elected to this office in 2002 and since then has maintained the annual ceremony. Mary Torigian Foley and the Torigian Family have provided their support for this annual commemoration.

Torigian was first elected mayor of Peabody in 1979 and served for 23 years until his retirement in 2002 and for four terms on the City Council. He was once voted by his colleagues in the state as the "Best Mayor in Massachusetts" and he ranked as the longest-reigning mayor in Massachusetts history.

Torigian spearheaded the Peabody International Festival, the "Pride in Peabody" campaign and numerous cultural and social programs.

Jackie Torigian, the late mayor's widow, recently donated a large collection of papers and other materials covering her husband's career in local government to the George Peabody House Museum.

After the flag raising and the singing of both the Armenian and American national anthems, the ceremony continued inside.

Bonfanti said it is important for this annual commemoration to continue. He is not seeking another term, therefore, this was Bonfanti's last as mayor. He assured the audience that two of the candidates running for the office have agreed to keep the ceremony going.

The Rev. Karekin Bedourian of North Andover's St. Gregory Armenian Apostolic Church performed a requiem service to memorialize the victims of the Armenian Genocide. Deacon Avedis Garavarian of the same church, who was also guest speaker, gave an interesting



Peabody Mayor Michael J. Bonfanti

presentation providing his personal and touching experience as a child of a Genocide survivor.

A representative from Rep. John Tierney's office extended his greetings and hope for the adoption of the Armenian Genocide resolution by the US Congress.

Jackie Torigian read the Proclamation and Nancy Torigian Buczko presented a gift from the Torigian family to Bonfanti.

After the ceremony, a luncheon was served in the Wiggin Auditorium, sponsored by the Mardiros family.



COMMUNITY NEWS

Armenian Genocide Recognized in Greenfield

By David Lührssen

GREENFIELD, Wis. — Milwaukee-Armenians gathered at St. John the Baptist Armenian Church here for the parish's annual Martyrs' Day commemoration. Greenfield alderwoman Shirley Saryan presented a proclamation from the city's mayor, Michael J. Neitzche, which acknowledged the longtime presence of



Alderwoman Shirley Saryan presenting the proclamation to Father Nareg

California and has taken the lead in involving Armenians in protests against genocide in Darfur.

It's no coincidence, he reminded listeners, that Martyrs' Day Commemoration as we know it began in 1965 alongside the rise of the American civil rights movement under Martin Luther King, Jr. But the resulting renewal of ethnic pride and call for public protests has had only limited effect in the US, where several years ago Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice blandly called for more historical study and President Barack Obama has not fulfilled his pledge to call the Genocide by its name.

"We need to look at ourselves as something bigger than a community consumed with Genocide," Movsesian said. "We need to show we are worthy to be called the people of the first genocide." Movsesian recounted a 2006 visit to Rwanda, where his conversations with

Armenians in the community, called memory of the events of 1915 "crucial for preventing new genocides" and proclaimed a day of remembrance in Greenfield.

The reading of the proclamation was part of a program held on Sunday, May 1, which also included a requiem in honor of the 1.5 million who fell during the Genocide, a traditional madagh dinner in the church's cultural hall and the screening of a DVD filmed during the 2009 Genocide commemoration at Glendale Community College in California. The film's keynote speaker, Rev. Vazken Movsesian, emphatically presented the prevention of genocide in our time as the message for Martyrs Day by placing the Armenian response to 1915 in the context of wider world campaigns for human rights. Movsesian is a well-known activist for the homeless and the needy in

survivors of that country's genocide where virtually identical with the memories of his grandparents. "Every story was an Armenian story — except the color of their skin was different." He also noted that the Genocide Museum in Rwanda devoted two rooms to 1915 while the so-called Museum of Tolerance in West Hollywood, Calif., constructed by a governor of Armenian descent ignores the Armenian Genocide.

A greater involvement by Armenians in contemporary campaigns against oppression could pay political dividends in the form of Genocide recognition, but Movsesian reminded listeners that the greater imperative comes from the gospel message of compassion for the least of our brethren. Only by being true to the deeper meaning of the Armenian Christian heritage will the Armenian cause of Genocide recognition move forward.

The Fresno observance of the 96th Anniversary of the Armenian Genocide was held at the First Armenian Presbyterian Church on Monday, April 25, sponsored by the Inter-Denomination Committee of Fresno. Participating churches were: St. Paul, Holy Trinity, Pilgrim Congregational, First Presbyterian and St. Gregory, Fowler.



The Very Rev. Dajad Dz. Vartabed Yardemian, vicar general of the Western Diocese, presided over the *Hokehankist*.



From left, Deacon Hagop Iskenian; Fr. Yeghia Hairabedian, pastor, St. Gregory; Fr. Dajad Dz. Vartabed Yardemian, vicar general Western Diocese; Fr. Vahan Gosdanian, pastor, Holy Trinity; Badveli Mgrdich Melkonian, host pastor, First Presbyterian; Deacon Allan Y. Jendian and Serge Tomassian, Esq., keynote speaker

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COMMUNITY NEWS

Shugarian Delivers Lecture at Sts. Sahag And Mesrob Armenian Apostolic Church

By Arpie Shiragian

PROVIDENCE — On April 2, Prof. Rouben Shugarian, the first Armenian ambassador to the United States, from 1993 to 1999, gave a talk at Sts. Sahag and Mesrob Armenian Church. The lecture was titled, “The Recent History of International Mediation between Turkey and Azerbaijan vis-a-vis their small but brave historic neighbor, Armenia.”

The capacity audience was enthusiastic, receptive to ideas and suggestions for amelioration of relations with Armenia's neighbors — Turkey and Azerbaijan. At the end of the lecture, the audience was given an invitation by the ambassador to comment or ask questions.



Prof. Rouben Shugarian

The moderator of the discussion was Ara Boghigian.

The most vital part of the talk concerned “open, but secure borders between our homeland and our neighbors.” Suggestions were made to look for answers within our common interests of commerce, friendly interchange, and mutual respect of our common borders.

The audience had many tentative solutions to offer; it seemed there would be no end to the discussion, which was informative, exciting, inspirational and patriotic.

Shugarian is a 1989 graduate with a degree in philosophy, theory of culture and aesthetics from Yerevan State University. After Armenia regained independence, Shugarian became a senior staffer of the Standing Committee on Foreign Relations of the National Assembly. He

also served as deputy minister from 1999 to 2005, and ambassador to Italy, Spain and Portugal from 2005 to 2008.

Currently, Shugarian teaches at the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy at Tufts University. He gives lectures around the world and has authored articles on conflict resolutions. He is also the author of the book, *West of Eden, East of the Chessboard*.



BOSTON — Work has begun on the future Armenian Heritage Park here. Bricks, rocks and dirt are going to transform the parcel into a graceful park. Regular updates will be forthcoming.

St. Gregory Church Hosts Second Annual Cigar Night and Dinner

NORTH ANDOVER, Mass. — The St. Gregory Church of Merrimack Valley Men's Club is planning the second annual Cigar night and Dinner, in memory of Fr. Vartan Kassabian, on June 16. Last year's event was a success on many fronts — it brought together the friends of Kassabian from all over New England, in a night of friendship and camaraderie, dinner and cigars, along with silent and live auctions and raffles.

Event Chairperson Greg Minasian said, “the success of last years event went beyond our wildest dreams. People kept coming up to me asking when are we going to have the next cigar event.”

The event raised over \$8,000 for the church.

All attendees will receive complimentary cigars of three premium labels, along with a premium lighter/cutter. This year there will also be a cigar roller, in order to watch the cigar being rolled, as the fourth complimentary cigar. The event is to be hosted by Miss Massachusetts Lacey Wilson. The auction items this year are intended to be better than the previous year. And, a large number of women are expected to attend this year's event.

For tickets contact Greg Minasian at gminasian@verizon.net, or Rich Berberian at richard@elysejewelers.com.

The Church Hall is located at 158 Main St.

Armenian Nursing and Rehabilitation Center Scores Perfect Marks on Survey

By Lalig Musserian

JAMAICA PLAIN, Mass. — The Massachusetts Department of Public Health conducted a three-day-long, unannounced inspection visit at the Armenian Nursing and Rehabilitation Center (ANRC) on March 28, and to verify the ANRC's compliance with the more than 180 federal and state regulatory standards.

This annual review was conducted by a team of four nurses who scrutinized every aspect of care, from nursing to rehabilitation services, to the cooking and food storage processes, as well as housekeeping and laundry processes. Additionally,

clinical files were reviewed for a randomly-selected sample of residents and discharged patients. Interviews were conducted with residents and family members to gain first-hand knowledge about the quality of care they received. In addition, the group observed the interaction between the nursing staff and patients.

The responses from residents and family members were overwhelmingly positive and speak volumes about the excellence in care the staff provides. The Massachusetts Department of Public Health declared the Nursing Center to be 100 percent in compliance with all regulations.

For more information on the survey process, visit www.Medicare.gov.

Ara Aharonian Receives Commendations from Armenian and NKR Governments

LOS ANGELES — Ara Aharonian, who has served in educational, cultural and political organizations for more than 40 years, starting in his youth in Lebanon, was honored by the Armenian government recently.

He has belonged to the Tekeyan Cultural Association, AGBU, ADL (Ramgavar) Party and many other affiliated organizations in member and leadership positions. He has organized youth groups (ADL-Armenagan) that have served to maintain and spread Armenian culture and has taken part in community-wide associations that were formed to pursue issues of Pan Armenian relevance. Additionally, Aharonian has written several books on the historical aspects of the Armenian cause and leaders of the ADL over the decades.

Since the independence of Armenia, he has worked with various diplomatic representatives of the Armenian republic as well as the Nagorno Karabagh republic. Aharonian has devoted decades of service to the Armenian press and especially *Nor Or* publication, and the TCA Arshag Dickranian School.

In recognition of the above contributions and taking advantage of the presence in Los Angeles of Hranush Hagopian, minister of diaspora of the Armenian government, a special event was organized at the studios of the ARTN-Shant Studios in Glendale on February 2. At this event, Hagopian thanked Aharonian for his years of service to the community and the Armenian nation by presenting him with an official commendation from the Ministry of Diaspora as well as another commendation on behalf of the parliament of the Republic of Nagorno Karabagh signed by Speaker Ashot Ghouljian.

The event was attended by various community leaders and friends and family of the honoree. Aharonian promised to continue his leadership and national duties in service of the Armenian culture.

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COMMUNITY NEWS

Unique Armenian Oral History Conference at UCLA

LOS ANGELES — Oral historians of the Armenian Genocide gathered in Los Angeles on April 1-2, to share information about their collections and consider issues of utilization, digitization, preservation and archiving. The conference was organized by AEF Chair in Modern Armenian History, Richard Hovannisian, and the UCLA Oral History Research Center, with support from the Near Eastern Center, Bob and Nora Movel Fund and the Souren and Verkin Papazian Fund.

Participants from Canada, Mexico and various universities and centers in the United States began their weekend with a private tour of the Shoah Foundation Institute's enormous collection of Holocaust survivor testimony housed at the University of Southern California.

The methods of preservation, digitization, indexing and utilization of the more than 50,000 interviews were explained by Karen Jungblut, director of research and documentation; Sam Gustman, assistant dean of USC Libraries; Kim Simon, managing director of the Shoah Foundation and Stephen Smith, the foundation's executive director. Demonstrations were given of the Institute's preservation and access systems as well as the digital access platforms. It is of great interest and encouragement that the Foundation is now prepared to expand its focus to the Armenian, Rwandan and other genocides. The large archive of Dr. J. Michael Hagopian's Armenian Film Foundation (AFF) is now being prepared for transfer to the Shoah Foundation Institute, according to Smith and AFF president, Gerald Papazian, who participated in all of the weekend activities. Sara Chitjian, daughter of Armenian Genocide survivors, hosted a luncheon at USC for the attendees.

At the UCLA Young Research Library

The afternoon session on April 1 convened in the UCLA Young Research Library, where a team of specialists coordinated by Teresa Barnett, head of the Oral History Center, discussed matters of digitization and preservation and legal and technical issues relating to the use of the survivor testimonies. In exchanges among the participants, it became obvious that the state of the various collections varies widely. Some are primarily audiocassette interviews, while others are largely videotaped sessions of survivors, who are seen as they speak. It is estimated that there are collectively some 5,000 existing interviews of survivors, when the collections that are known to exist in Europe, the Middle East and Armenia are taken into account. One or two of the collections remain in their original condition and are therefore at risk, whereas most have backup copies or else have been digitized. Most of the 800 interviews in the UCLA collection, for example, have not only been digitized but have also been transcribed into Armenian and then, with students in a course in Armenian oral history, have passed through a preliminary translation into English. At the end of the session, it was suggested that as a first step, a grand index of all interviews worldwide be created which would include the name, place and date of birth of the interviewee, and, if possible, the language and length of the interview.

The Public Conference: The First Session

Some 300 members of the community attended the public conference on the UCLA campus on April 2. The theme of the conference was "Armenian Genocide Oral History Collections in North America: Development, Utilization, Potential." Hovannisian opened the conference by emphasizing the value of oral history testimony and the critical importance of proper preservation and archiving. The day's proceedings were divided into four panels. The first panel, titled "The Collections: Their Origins, Scope, and Evidence," was chaired by Marc Mamigonian, director of academic research of the National Association of Armenian Studies and Research (NAASR). Varoujan Froundjian of New York described the collection initiated by the late Dr. V.L. Parsegian and now housed at Columbia University. He noted that the collection, like the

others, offers much more than descriptions of the horrific events of the Genocide. There are also subtle and multidimensional portrayals of life before the calamity and the experiences encountered en route to and after settlement in the United States. They include a great array of subject matter to be explored, including the special role of women, the challenges of living and raising children in a new country and the psychological aspects that frequently forced the survivors into silence or reluctance to discuss their tribulations.

Bethel Bilezikian Charkoudian, head of the Oral History Program of the Armenian Library and Museum of America (ALMA) in Watertown, Mass., explained that in 1973 ALMA made it a primary goal to interview and record Armenian Genocide survivors. This project culminated in the late 1970s with more than 200 interviews and 800 hours of recordings. The audiotapes have been digitized pro bono by Techfusion and have since been used as original source material by historians, sociologists, videographers and most recently by dramatists Bianca Bagatourian (Armenian Dramatic Arts Alliance) and Joyce Van Dyke (in her play "Deported") and videographer Bared Maronian ("Orphans of the Genocide"). Haig Der Manuelian, an ALMA founder and longtime guiding force, also participated in the two-day conference.

Hovannisian outlined the evolution of the Armenian oral history project at UCLA and how it was facilitated by introducing a course for credit on the subject. He projected charts and graphs relating to the composition of 800 interviews and described their strengths and weaknesses. The audio tapes have now been digitized, transcribed and translated, and the time has arrived to consider the options regarding permanent repositories and access to the collection by students and scholars.

Greg Sarkissian and George Shirinian completed the first session by describing the nearly 800 interviews held by the Zoryan Institute in Toronto, Canada, this being the largest collection of video testimonies worldwide. The interviews were conducted according to a carefully-prepared questionnaire in order to obtain as much detail as possible about Armenian life before the Genocide as well as experiences during and after the deportations and massacres. The interviews were conducted in many cities in the United States and Canada and some were done in Europe and Armenia as well. Efforts were made to have multiple interviews from as many Armenian towns and villages as possible in order to allow for cross-referencing.

The Second Session

The second panel, titled "Publications, Performances, and the Visual Arts," was chaired by Gerald Papazian of the AFF. Donald and Lorna Touryan-Miller spoke on "Time, Trauma, and Place in Survivor Narratives." As the authors of *Survivors*, the widely-used volume based on Armenian Genocide survivor testimony, they reflected on the more than 100 interviews they conducted in the process and the similarities and differences in Armenian accounts recorded more than a half century after the Genocide in comparison with the fresh memories of witnesses and survivors in Rwanda where the Millers are now focusing their work. Carla Garapedian of the AFF presented a video showing J. Michael Hagopian's film archive of Genocide survivors, gathered over a period of 40 years. She focused on the AFF's project to digitize this rare collection for the Shoah Foundation, whose extensive holdings are made available to universities and institutions around the world. After the conference, she wrote: "We are continuing to get e-mails and messages regarding the symposium — it really created a new dialogue."

Ara Oshagan of Los Angeles emphasized the effectiveness of combining photography, art and testimony. He explained: "Experiencing and witnessing extreme atrocity will leave survivors never feeling completely a part of the world again. The artist can play a role in symbolically restoring their connection to the world by incorporating their testimony with art to bring their story out into the world. The artist acts as a conduit in transforming testimony from merely being an 'archive' to one that 'lives' again."

He highlighted three projects that combine testimony with art: Furnee's "Prisoner of War" installation in an English town directly affected by World War II, Heyman's drawing of victims of Abu Ghraib prison, and his own and Levon Parian's photographs of Armenian Genocide survivors.

Bianca Bagatourian of the Armenian Dramatic Arts Alliance demonstrated ways in which survivor testimony may be used in the theater by showing excerpts of her dramatic productions based on such narratives. After the conference, she attested: "The UCLA conference was a very important moment in the history of Armenian Genocide Oral History. It brought together the various collections in order to contemplate how best to keep alive our ancestral stories. In visiting the Shoah Foundation as part of the conference, I understood from the point of view of a writer the importance of creating a searchable database and texts in order to make the stories much more accessible to artists and scholars alike."

As documentary filmmaker Zareh Tjeknavorian from New York was in the audience, he was called upon to describe his own experiences in oral history and interviewing surviving Armenian victims of the Stalin purges, captured in his outstanding film, titled "Enemy of the People." He also described his most recent project, a documentary relating to the US response to the Armenian Genocide and the important role of the Near East Relief (NER), which rescued and assisted thousands of survivors, especially women and children, after World War I.

The Third Session

The first of the two afternoon panels was titled "Preserving, Indexing, Archiving, Accessing" and included experienced practitioners in the field.

Teresa Barnett, head of the UCLA Oral History Research Center, introduced the panel by identifying the challenges and possibilities relating to the Armenian Genocide oral history collections. Stephen Smith, Shoah Foundation executive director, related his own involvement with memorializing the Armenian Genocide and offered a highly informative visual piece from the Internet regarding the work of the Shoah Foundation Institute in preserving, archiving and making available its enormous corpus of interviews. Mark Greenberg, director of Special and Digital Collections and head of the Holocaust and Genocide Studies Center at the University of South Florida in Tampa, Fla., shared how the oral history program at USF has developed several source solutions that are intended to link up with Armenian oral history archives.

The OHPi (Oral History Player Interface) offers full-text search capacity and synchronizes audio/video streams with verbatim transcripts. He added that details can be found at the website <http://ohp.lib.usf.edu>.

Stephen Davison, head of UCLA's Digital Library Program, explained the process of digitization and how it facilitates preservation and access, but he cautioned that one should not think that digitization is a permanent solution and that the UCLA library, like the Shoah Foundation, is continuously copying its collections.

Hayk Demoyan, director of the Genocide Museum-Institute of Armenia, completed the first panel with a description of the institute's small but growing collection of oral history testimony and the importance of cooperation and sharing among all the existing programs.

The Fourth Session

The fourth and final panel of the day, chaired by Armen Marsoobian of Southern Connecticut State University, was titled "Potentials for Upcoming Scholars, Writers and Creative Artists." Ara Sanjian, director of the Armenian Research Center at the University of Michigan-Dearborn, reflected on "Experiences in the Classroom with Third- and Fourth-Generation College Students." He argued that first-hand accounts by Armenian Genocide survivors can broaden our factual and interpretive understanding of the calamity by helping researchers to write academic works on regional histories of

the genocidal process, including the few cases of armed resistance. Such micro or local histories can pave the way for scholars to trace the similarities in the deportation process across the Ottoman Empire, but also the local particularities, and then look for explanations to these differences. In education, the first-hand accounts constitute a large reservoir of primary information to equip the youth with the analytical tools to share their knowledge. Guidelines need to be developed relating to teaching about the Armenian Genocide to children, teenagers and college students at various stages of their intellectual growth.

Carlos Antaramian of El Colegio de Michoacan introduced his Mexican-Armenian oral history project, which documents the settlement of Armenians in the La Merced neighborhood of Mexico City. After digitizing more than 1,000 photographs from 1900 to 1950, he interviewed a number of elderly Armenians who are the children of survivors and who are able to provide valuable information on the arrival and socioeconomic ascent of the immigrant Armenians and to relate important memories and stories of their parents' experiences during and after the Armenian Genocide. He showed excerpts from the hour-long documentary he is preparing on the subject.

Arda Melkonian and Doris Melkonian have utilized the UCLA collection to explore the experiences based on gender during the Genocide. Their presentation focused on the unique suffering of women and their strategies for survival. The two graduate students at UCLA are among the first to use its large oral history collection for scholarly research, following earlier studies by Hovannisian on childhood memories and acts of rescue and altruism by non-Armenians which run through many of the oral history narratives.

Reuben Zaramian, a graduate student at the University of Toronto, offered a rather novel perspective with his "Tropes, Memes, and Other Theoretical Stuff: Oral Genocide Studies in a New Way." He incorporated mnemonic (memory) and semantic (meaning in sentences) theory to identify a clear, replicable pattern of tropes and memes in the oral narratives. His presentation is part of a larger study on the efficacy and structural value of memory-based storytelling and oral transmission. He explained: "My theory is that there exists a minimum set of characteristics to oral information-sharing across cultures and types of literature (history, fiction, epic, etc.), which have been largely overlooked."

Taner Akcam, Kaloosdian-Mugar Chair Holder at Clark University, was the final speaker of the day. He used a comparative approach in describing a recent undertaking relating to the 1938 Dersim massacres (Charsanjak region). An estimated 30,000 to 50,000 people were massacred by the Turkish army that year, yet there are no available official documents on the operation. Thus, the Dersim oral history project will be one of the most significant sources relating to this crime against humanity.

After the Conference

The participants joined with members and friends of the Armenian Educational Foundation in a post-conference dinner reception hosted by Mr. and Mrs. Haco and Hilda Baghdassarian (AEF) in their Glendale home. Hovannisian introduced each of the guests and noted their important contributions and expressed his thanks to the AEF and the Baghdassarian family for the special birthday cake on the occasion of the 25th anniversary of the founding of AEF Chair in Modern Armenian History at UCLA.

In reflecting on the significance of the two-day Armenian Genocide Oral History conference, Smith stated: "It was heartening to see that we are all struggling with the same issues, but share a common resolve to bring together archives of extreme historical importance for the common good. There was no one better to convene this than Richard Hovannisian. Working with the Armenian community and seeing the care that is being taken to preserve archives in perpetuity is heartening. This conference set the ground work for us all to work together much more closely."


New York
METRO

Martyrs' Day Marked at St. Vartan Cathedral in New York

NEW YORK — On Monday, April 25, about 200 worshippers came to St. Vartan Cathedral to take part in the annual Armenian Martyrs' Day liturgy, commemorating the 1.5 million souls eradicated in the 1915 Genocide of the Armenians.

With Easter itself falling on Sunday, April 24, the Martyrs' Day Divine Liturgy and requiem service were held one day later, to coincide with the traditional day of remembering the dead — *merelots* — observed in the Armenian Church on the day following a major feast celebration.

and delivered a powerful sermon, in Armenian and English, on the meaning of Armenian Martyrs Day, in light of the prior day's observance of Easter.

Also participating in the service was the Very Rev. Guregh Davtyan, dean of St. Shoghakat Church in Vagharshapat, Armenia. Both have been visiting the Eastern Diocese with the blessing of Karekin II, the Supreme Patriarch and Catholicos of All Armenians.

Archbishop Yeghishe Gizirian, the Very Rev. Simeon Odabashian, the diocesan vicar, and the



A requiem service was held in front of the cathedral's Martyrs Chapel.

Diocesan Primate Archbishop Khajag Barsamian presided over the events of the day, including the liturgy and requiem service, the blessing ceremony on the plaza and the concluding *hokejash*.

The Very Rev. Vartan Navasardyan, director of the Department of Christian Education at Holy Echmiadzin, celebrated the Divine Liturgy

Rev. Mardiros Chevian, dean of the cathedral, also were present at the liturgy.

Khoren Mekanejian directed the St. Vartan Cathedral Choir, with Florence Avakian accompanying on the organ.

Following a solemn service of repose in front of the cathedral's Martyrs Chapel, Barsamian led a procession of priests, deacons and wor-



Pausing before one of the memorial trees, Archbishop Khajag Barsamian pronounced a blessing, as Adrienne Alexanian and Archbishop Yeghishe Gizirian looked on.



the procession passed, lending the impression of a soft snowfall to the solemn occasion.

When the participants filed to Haik and Alice Kavookjian Auditorium for the traditional memorial meal, they were greeted by an art exhibition featuring paintings by Mher Khachatryan.

The idea to refurbish the memorial trees began a year ago, when Alexanian was making arrangements for a 95th anniversary Martyrs Day concert at the cathedral. While hanging floral crosses on the trees, she noticed that the original plaques naming the lost provinces had lost their luster.

"I felt it needed to be restored as a fitting memorial to the sacrifices our martyrs made," she said. "When I realized that 2011 would

shippers down to the tree-lined memorial on Second Avenue, planted 35 years ago (on Martyrs Day 1976) to commemorate the provinces of Historic Armenia which were lost in the aftermath of the Genocide: Bitlis, Van, Evereg-Feness (dedicated separately in 1981), Sepastia, Kharpert and Garin.

The memorial had been restored with a donation from Adrienne Alexanian, in memory of her parents, Edward and Grace Alexanian. Alexanian orchestrated the restoration project, designing the wrought-iron guards and landscaping for each of the six tree plots constituting the memorial.

In silence, Barsamian and Alexanian led the column of mourners past each tree, pausing briefly at each to offer a prayer and moment of reflection. In a soft breeze, the six pear trees shed some of their delicate white blossoms as



Worshippers lit candles during the requiem service in observance of Armenian Martyrs Day.

80th

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mark the 35th anniversary of the original dedication, I knew I had to take on this task."

She approached Barsamian and Chevian with the offer to underwrite the restoration, and become involved with every step of the project.

"It was a daunting task, but I was absolutely driven to have it done in a unique and respectful way," she said.

The elder Alexanians were both Genocide survivors: Edward originally hailed from Sepastia, and Grace from Marzovan.

"I knew my parents hands were guiding me during this project," Adrienne Alexanian said. "And I know they would have wanted it done this way."

As part of the restoration, she also made arrangements to provide for the future maintenance of the memorial trees. In gratitude for her creative efforts and generosity, Barsamian presented her with a carved cross from Armenia, during the hokejash following the Martyrs Day ceremonies.



COMMUNITY NEWS

Arshag Dickranian School Celebrates 30th Anniversary

More than \$110,000 Raised at Benefit Gala Banquet

LOS ANGELES — The TCA Arshag Dickranian School (ADS) celebrated its 30th anniversary with a gala banquet on Saturday, April 2, at the Taglyan Cultural Center. The event was one of the series of affairs taking place throughout the school year in observance of the anniversary.

Traditionally being solely hosted by the PTO, this year the Banquet Committee integrated into including members of the Board of Trustees, past Parent Teacher Organization (PTO) chairpersons and several alumni.

At arrival, guests were greeted by the host committee, then moved to join the gathering at the lobby to rub shoulders with old and new acquaintances in attendance, amongst whom were benefactors, prominent officials, past and present parents, committee and faculty members, alumni, upper-grade students and friends. It was heartening to see the assemblage of 350 devotees gathered for the common purpose of paying tribute and offering their support to Arshag Dickranian School. At the end of the social hour, Fr. Manoug Markarian, archpriest of St. John Church, offered the invocation.

Houri Taglyan-Kourouyan was the emcee for the event. She introduced herself as a personification of the 30-year success story of the TCA Arshag Dickranian School. She was an alumna

of the first graduating class, in 1990, went on to pursue higher education, married a former classmate, enrolled her child at the school and became a member of the PTO.

After sharing her thoughts about the merits of her alma mater, Kourouyan concluded her remarks by acknowledging the presence of several dignitaries, amongst them the banquet's guest of honor, Hmayak Baltayan, Los Angeles City Council member Paul Krekorian and Grigor Hovhannisyan, the consul general of the Republic of Armenia, inviting the latter to the podium to present his congratulatory remarks.



Members of 30th Anniversary Banquet Committee

Dickranian School's Eighth Graders Visit Washington, New York and Philadelphia

LOS ANGELES — The eighth-grade students of TCA Arshag Dickranian School had a unique Easter Vacation this year, visiting New York City, Washington, DC and Philadelphia. The six-day trip was organized by Maro Travel Teck and took place April 16 through 22. The students were escorted by their homeroom teacher, Alvard Uzunyan, along with Principal Vartkes Kourouyan, his wife, Alice, and some 30 parents.

As a part of the educational curriculum, this is the second year that the school orga-



Eighth-grade students gathered around their homeroom teacher Miss Alvard Uzunyan in front of the Capitol Hill.

nizes the trip for its eighth graders during the Easter Vacation to give them the opportunity to observe these locations, so they can visually learn about the historical and significant sites of the nation.

The first day of the trip was spent in New York City, where students explored various historical and renowned places, including the Empire State Building, the United Nations Headquarters, Rockefeller Center, Central Park, Plaza Hotel and Fifth Avenue. The second day, being Palm Sunday, the students first visited St. Vartan Armenian Cathedral to light candles and offer prayers. The group then visited the Statue of Liberty, Wall Street, the New York Stock Exchange and Ground Zero, where they paid their respects to the lives lost on that ignoble September 11, 2001.

On the third day of the trip, the group boarded their bus heading towards Philadelphia. While there, they visited the historic Old Capitol Building, Independence Hall and the Liberty Bell.

The fourth day was spent in Washington, touring the significant sites of the Nation's Capital, such as the White House, Capitol Hill, The Jefferson Memorial, the Lincoln Memorial, Vietnam Veterans Memorial, World War II Memorial and the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier. The fifth and sixth days of the trip started with a stop at the Arlington National Cemetery, President John F. Kennedy's tomb, followed by the Smithsonian and Air Space Museums. A highlight on the fifth day was visiting the Embassy of the Republic of Armenia.

On the last evening of the trip, the students surprised the principal, his wife and Uzunyan with a small party at the Marriot Courtyard Gaithersburg to show their appreciation.

Following the consul general's remarks, the lights of the hall were dimmed for the video presentation of the blessings and congratulatory message of Archbishop Hovnan Derderian, Primate of the Armenian Church Western Diocese.

Krekorian delivered the keynote address. Being the first Armenian-American ever elected to serve in the Los Angeles City Council, Krekorian commended the Arshag Dickranian School for its accomplishments throughout the past 30 years. "Armenian schools are the only bastions for preserving our language and heritage. Hence, their presence in our communities

and the tremendous effort rendered to preserve their existence should not be taken for granted," he said, adding that the only reason why he can't express himself in his mother tongue today is because there were no Armenian schools in his time as a student.

The entertainment portion of the program was provided by singer Gaguik Badalyan, who performed a range of Armenian songs, after which the lights were dimmed again for a 20-minute video show depicting the land acquisition, the ground breaking, the Opening Day and the 30-year journey of ADS, produced by

Meher Kourouyan (Class of 1994).

Being her last year serving as chairperson of the PTO, Opheli Garibyan then presented her members with token gifts in appreciation for their devoted service to the school.

Principal Vartkes Kourouyan then took the podium to conduct the candle lighting ceremony with all those who donated \$1,000 or



From left, Dr. Missak Kitchian and his son Nareg, Hmayak Baltayan



Mr. and Mrs. George Mandossian

more for the occasion. "The 30 candles on display depict the years the Arshag Dickranian School has served this community," he said, calling the name of every donor to approach and light a candle. He then announced that aside from the candle-lighting ceremony, the school had received over \$50,000 from various donors, including a \$10,000 gift from Baltayan, a \$10,000 donation from the TCA Board of Directors and a \$5,000 gift from the TCA Pasadena-Glendale Chapter. He further added that the complete list of donations will be published soon.

The ceremony then continued with the raffle drawing and dancing into the midnight hours to disco music spun by DJ Chris Shahbazian.

For more information on the school, visit www.dickranianschool.org.



LA City Council member Paul Krekorian, emcee Houry Taglyan-Kourouyan and Armenia's Consul General Grigor Hovhannisyan


New York
METRO

Times Square Genocide Commemoration

COMMEMORATION, from page 1

New Jersey lawyer Armen McOmber and Dr. Mary Papazian, provost and senior vice president for academic affairs at Lehman College of the City University of New York, served as masters of ceremony. Vagharshak Ohanian led the Arekag Children's Choir of the Hamazkayin Armenian Educational and Cultural Society of the Eastern United States in several songs as well as the performance of the American and Armenian national anthems. Pianist and composer Karén Hakobyan led the choir in a special premier performance of his piece, *Independent Armenia*. Five important American politicians gave rousing speeches, along with representatives of four co-sponsoring organizations – Natalie Gabrielian, associate director of education at the Armenian General Benevolent Union; Bryan Ardroun, executive director of the Armenian Assembly; Doug Geogorian, Armenian National Committee Eastern Region director from 2004 to 2006, and representatives of the Armenian



NY Sen. Chuck Schumer



The Armenian demonstration can be seen from a distance at the heart of Times Square

brought Armenians from New York and New Jersey churches, as well as from the Knights of Vartan Boston Ararat Lodge and the Ardashad Lodge of Philadelphia. There were some attendees from as far away as California.

Knights of Vartan Grand Commander Dennis Papazian and Daughters of Vartan Grand Matron Melene Ouzounian introduced members of their grand councils and other important officials who were present. Papazian, also founding director of the Armenian Research Center at the University of Michigan-Dearborn, revealed the theme of the commemoration, that Turkey is guilty

of genocide, and denying genocide is a crime. He declared, "When a crime can be committed with impunity, criminals will act with impunity," and noted that the Assyrian and Greek geno-



NJ Sen. Robert Menendez



NJ Rep. Frank Pallone

Democratic Liberal Party and the Armenian Rights Council of America.

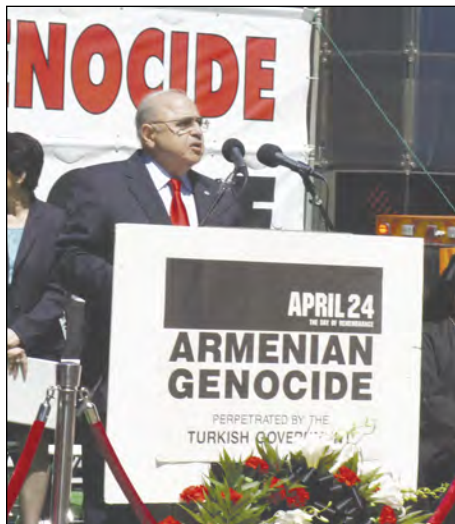
Archbishop Oshagan Choloyan, Primate of the Eastern Prelacy of the Armenian Apostolic Church of America, and Fr. Vazken Karayan, pastor of Holy Cross Armenian Church of Union City, NJ and representing the Diocese of the Armenian Church of America (Eastern), offered invocations and closing benedictions. Their institutions were among the participating organizations, along with the Armenian Missionary Association of America, Armenian Presbyterian Church, the Armenian Evangelical Church of America, the Armenian Catholic Eparchy for the US and Canada, Tekeyan Cultural Association, Hamazkayin and numerous Armenian youth organizations. Buses



Masters of Ceremony Dr. Mary Papazian and Armen McOmber

cides were also being commemorated along with the Jewish Holocaust. Papazian challenged the Turkish government to allow their people to study their own history without fear of punishment.

Ouzounian stressed the importance of educating the young about the great price paid by their ancestors for liberty and their faith. Later she introduced the winners of the Knights of Vartan Armenian Genocide Essay contest, who,



Grand Commander Dennis Papazian at podium

in declining order of rank of awards, were Jeremy Majerovitz, Gerard Nelson, and Samuel Levine, three students from the elite public Stuyvesant High School in Manhattan, and honorable mention recipient Katrice Karanfilian, from Bergen County Academies in Oradell, NJ.

with his words. He declared, "We are here today to tell future Hitlers that we do remember, that they cannot succeed, that they cannot brush history under the rug. We are lighting a candle for truth, not just for those who suffered in Armenia, not just for the Armenian people, but for the world, because in every generation, in every generation, there are those like the Turkish leaders during 1915 and 1916, there are those like the Hitlers, there are those like the Idi Amins, who seek to destroy people simply who they are. History tells us they always arise, but history tells us one other thing, that is, that truth may be temporarily dimmed, but the light of truth, the candle of truth, always burns through, and that's why we are here today. I say to you my friends, from the day I got into Congress, I was a staunch supporter of the Armenian quest, to remember the Armenian Genocide, the Armenian Holocaust, and I will continue to do that with every atom in my body, until the Turkish government admits the truth,



Olivia Katrandjian appealing for registration with the Armenian Bone Marrow Donor Registry

makes reparations for what they have done, and until the Armenian community is vindicated. My friends, I stand with you in solidarity."

Schumer was followed by Sen. Robert Menendez (D-NJ), another fervent and influential supporter of US recognition of the Armenian Genocide, who said, "Now, as a member of the Senate Foreign Relations [committee], I have said that American diplomacy must avoid the euphemisms. To overlook human suffering is not who we are as a people. It is not what we stand for as a nation. We are better than that and our foreign policy should always reflect that goodness. And that is why it is imperative that the president of the United States, of my own party, recognize that this was a genocide and call it as such." Menendez continued to great applause, "I promise you that for so long as I continue to be a United States senator, sitting on the Senate Foreign Relations



The three Genocide survivors brought before the crowd

New York Sen. Chuck Schumer, an influential Democrat who has for decades backed efforts at recognition of the Armenian Genocide, which he calls "one of the worst genocides in world history," stirred the crowd

Committee, that any nominee who comes before the committee having anything to do with Armenia, will have to answer the question, do you recognize the Armenian Genocide. And see TIMES SQUARE, page 12


New York
METRO

Times Square Genocide Commemoration

TIMES SQUARE, from page 11

I will continue to push — as I have held up nominees in the past — I will continue to push the people who we have in place around the world to represent the United States, to recognize the horrific events of 1915 as a genocide, and I will continue to push to make sure that the United States reflects a deep sense of moral outrage with respect to the Armenian Genocide.”

Rep. Frank Pallone, Jr. (D-NJ), founder of the Congressional Caucus on Armenian Issues, and one of the most active initiators and sponsors of legislation favorable to Armenia and Armenians in Congress, stated that he was frequently asked why one should focus on the



Armenian Assembly Executive Director Bryan Ardrouny

Genocide when contemporary Armenia and Karabagh have so many problems. Pallone’s answer was that both were crucial and interconnected issues: “People don’t seem to understand — I know that you do — that this is an ongoing effort, an ongoing effort to basically destroy the Armenian people.” The denialist rhetoric from Turks and Azerbaijanis has become more aggressive recently, Pallone said, “We will be here every day and will continue to agitate until the commemoration in Congress takes place. We do it for Armenia, we do it for



AGBU representative Natalie Gabrielian



Armenian National Committee Regional Director Doug Geogorian

Karabagh and we do it for those who suffer human rights violations anywhere on earth ... I worry every day. The United States needs to be supportive of Armenia and Karabagh militarily, economically. We need to continue to provide humanitarian and military assistance to both

countries.” He urged the Armenians and their sympathizers to be optimistic, concluding, “We will succeed, because we have right on our side.”

Rounding out the group of supportive national politicians who have year after year participated in the Times Square commemoration, New York Rep. Anthony Weiner strode out and said, “I say to all Turkish Americans, to all residents of Turkey today: This is not intended to be an exercise in finger pointing, but this is an exercise in making sure that the pages of history are not defiled by blank spaces, black marks, Xs where there should be circles. The only way we can become a more perfect union in the United States, and a more perfect people of the globe, is by speaking truth even of the atrocities.” Weiner pointed out that there are people even today who deny the Holocaust ever took place, as well as the Armenian Genocide. Consequently, he said, “So as long as those people are allowed to crawl along the surface of the earth, to crawl out from their rocks every so often, none of us can be safe to make sure that those atrocities don’t happen again. ...What we seek is the truth from the people who did the atrocities...My name is Anthony Weiner and I will never forget the Armenian Genocide.”

New York City Comptroller John Liu, one of the city politicians who back the Armenian cause, stated, “Here we are at the crossroads of the world, Times Square, we celebrate our diversity, but the diversity that we have here is strong only in recognition of where we came from, our roots, our heritage, our culture and our history; and the history that has happened with the Armenian people is a history that is undeniable.” He added, “Keep up the fight — we won’t let you down.”

A proclamation from Mayor Michael



Hamazkayin’s Arekag Children’s Choir, with singer Elen Ohanyan

Bloomberg was read, proclaiming May 1, 2011 as Armenian Genocide Commemoration Day in the City of New York (see the accompanying sidebar to this article for its text). Rep. Scott Garrett (D-NJ) also sent a statement which in part read: “While it is painful to commemorate these terrible acts each year, we must remember and must learn from the past. The Armenian Genocide serves as a powerful example of what can occur when governments persecute citizens based on ethnicity or religious affiliation.”

Keynote speaker Dr. Richard Hovannisian, holder of the Armenian Educational Foundation Chair in Modern Armenian History and professor of Armenian and Near Eastern history at the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA) for several decades, has edited many volumes on the Armenian Genocide. He said that the trauma of genocide was passed on to the following generations, compounded by



Homenetmen flag-bearing scouts with a model of Yerevan’s Dzidzernagapert Genocide Monument

continuing Turkish denial. Armenians and others ask for reaffirmation of what originally was recognized and then deliberately forgotten. However, Armenians must now not only focus on the lost dead, as so many were killed in the 20th century, but stress the loss that Raffi Hovannisian, Richard’s son, has focused on — *hayrenazrgutiwn*, or national dispossession. Richard Hovannisian felt “the loss of a civilization, the loss of a homeland, the loss of a way of life of 3,000 years is the major continuing traumatic aspect of 1915.” The Armenian

Three survivors of the Armenian Genocide, 101-year-old Perouz Kaloustian, 99-year-old Arshalouis Dadir, and 98-year-old Charlotte Kechejian, were wheeled out to receive the respect and applause of the audience, escorted



NY Rep. Anthony Weiner

by Aghavni “Aggie” Ellian, executive director of the New York Armenian Home in Flushing, NY.

Olivia Katrandjian made a powerful appeal for registration with the Armenian Bone Marrow Donor Registry for the sake of her



Archbishop Oshagan Choloyan

mother Irene, stricken with Non-Hodgkin’s Peripheral T-Cell Lymphoma, as well as for other ill Armenians (see www.abmdr.am).

Hirant Gulian was chairman of the organization committee for one of the largest events organized by the East Coast Armenian community, Papazian co-chairman in charge of academic affairs, with Tigran Sahakyan as vice-chairman. Taleen Babayan coordinated public relations and the essay contest. Members of the Armenian American Health Professionals Organization of New York and New Jersey under the chairmanship of Dr. Larry Najarian were present in Times Square to provide any necessary first aid.

Those who missed it can see the recording at <http://www.armenianradionj.com/>.

Genocide in many ways is a prototype for later genocides. For this genocide to be remembered, Hovannisian said, it must be integrated into the history of mankind; otherwise it will be lost and truly forgotten. Gathering in Times Square is also part of the struggle for memory against forgetting.

Dr. Joan Rivitz, associate director of the New Jersey Commission on Holocaust Education and chair of the New Jersey Commission on Civil Rights, a daughter of Holocaust survivors, said, “Armenians and Jews of the diaspora, survivors, second generation, third and fourth generations, and those yet to come, we must continue in solidarity to remember the true, undeniable facts of the dark parts of our parallel histories. ...The world community simply stood by and watched...If Turkey had been held accountable for the Armenian Genocide, Hitler might not have been able to plan and execute the Holocaust.”


New York
METRO

Primate Visits St. Thomas Church on Palm Sunday

TENAFLY, N.J. — On April 17, Diocesan Primate Archbishop Khajag Barsamian continued an annual tradition of spending Palm Sunday with the parishioners of St. Thomas Armenian Church.

The Primate celebrated the Divine Liturgy, delivered the homily and presided over a celebratory dinner. The church overflowed with parishioners for the Palm Sunday service, celebrating Christ's entry into Jerusalem and marking the start of Holy Week.

St. Thomas' pastor, the Very Rev. Papken Anoushian, offered a prayer to start the banquet honoring the parish's 46th consecration anniversary.

In his prayer, Anoushian remembered the recently-departed Noubar Akelian, as well as Misak Torosian in whose memory Jack and Sylva Torosian and Misak and Anjel Torosian had donated the banquet. The former couple also chaired the event.

Mary Cruickshank served as mistress of ceremonies for the occasion. Parish Council Chair Dr. Levon Capan thanked the Torosians, Kalust and Yeghsapet Bestepe (who led a cake sale fundraiser), chef Manuk Camcikyan and the dinner volunteers, Lucy Karamanoukian-Piligian,



Fr. Papken Anoushian and Archbishop Khajag Barsamian with altar servers at St. Thomas Church

the ACYOA Juniors and Vay Najarian, the only remaining member of St. Thomas' first Parish Council.

The program included vocal performances by Sareen Jebejian and Dr. Levon Capan, accompanied on piano by Susan Shamamian, and recitations performed by Ariana Cruickshank and Vehanoush Sabbagh, students from the parish's Kirikian Armenian School under the direction of teacher Sirvart Demirjian. Young

Chris Manoukian also recited poems in honor of his great uncle, Krikor Markarian, recipient of this year's St. Thomas Award.

Since Palm Sunday is ACYOA Day in the Eastern Diocese, the parish ACYOA Juniors helped serve the meal, and the group advisor, Peter Afarian, presented Anoushian with a \$1,000 donation for the church.

This year's St. Thomas Award honoree, Markarian, was introduced by his son, Ara, as a loving father and husband. A rug and Armenian antiques dealer originally from Beirut, Lebanon, Markarian with his wife, Diane, instilled a love for the Armenian Church in their sons Ara, Melik and Berj.

Anoushian portrayed Markarian's benevolent nature and how he presented St. Thomas with new altar curtains, a black curtain for Lent as well as the beautiful Jerusalem lanterns, which hang from the interior dome of the church. He added that the parish was blessed to have a parishioner like Markarian, and prayed that God would bless him with health, happiness and longevity.

Markarian thanked Anoushian and the Parish Council for the award, modestly adding that coming to church is not a duty but an honor for him.

Barsamian congratulated the pastor and parishioners. He mentioned Vay Najarian and Krikor Markarian, and recalled the special services they have lovingly rendered to the church and Diocese over the years.

In a closing benediction, the Primate prayed that St. Thomas would stay strong and vital, and that God would bless the church and the parish.



From left, Fr. Papken Anoushian, Archbishop Khajag Barsamian and Krikor Markarian with parishioners at St. Thomas Church

Evening to Benefit Restoration of Ancient Armenian Church in Dikranagerd

NEW MILFORD, N.J. — A benefit night to raise funds to restore the St. Giragos Armenian Church in Dikranagerd will take place on Saturday, May 14, at the Hovnanian Banquet Hall here.

The evening will feature Armenian music by Onnik Dinkjian and his band, dinner and information about the much-needed renovations to the St. Giragos Armenian Church. In attendance will be Archbishop Khajag Barsamian, Primate of the Diocese of the Armenian Church of America (Eastern), Archbishop Vicken Aykazian, Diocesan Legate, Archbishop Aram Ateshyan, vicar of the Armenian Patriarchate of Constantinople and Garen Nazarian, Armenia's ambassador to the UN.

The program will serve as an opportunity for the St. Giragos Church Restoration Committee (Eastern USA) to familiarize guests with the pressing reasons to save this symbolic church. Originally constructed in the 15th century, the church was rebuilt and enlarged in 1880 after a fire, which made it the largest Armenian basilica in Anatolia to this day. The first bell tower of the church was built in 1884 (cast by the world famous Zildjian Company), making it the tallest structure in Dikranagerd. Renowned for having seven altars signifying eternity in the Armenian alphabet, the church can accommodate more than 2,500 faithful during services.

Recognizing a need to renovate this historical cathedral — which is the property of the Armenian Patriarchate of Turkey — a group of concerned Dikranagertzi's in Istanbul came together to begin efforts to do so. Restoring the St. Giragos Armenian Church in Dikranagerd will ensure the existence of this significant church for future generations of Armenians.

For reservations, call: Hrant Gulian, Zakar Dikme, Hagop Uzatmajian, Charles Pinajian, Hagop Gulian or Diran Kilerjian.

HMADS Gala Dinner Dance: A Classic Affair with a Youthful Twist

BAYSIDE, N.Y. — The Friends of Holy Martyrs Armenian Day School (HMADS) 2011 Gala Dinner Dance Committee has been hard at work. Under the direction of Chairpersons Talin Ipek and Alex Baron, this year's dinner dance will feature singer Ashot Logian with his band.

Logian comes from a family of talented musicians and was a musical prodigy who was accepted at both Spondiaryan Music School and Sayat Nova Music Schools at a very young age. He began composing at the Komitas Conservatory in Yerevan and has even performed at Lincoln Center's Avery Fisher Hall, in addition to giving concerts throughout the United States. He recently released his first album of Armenian contemporary folk music, titled "Dream." In 1996, Logian co-founded the band HAYASA with drummer Markos Shahbazyan, and together they have never looked back, spending years perfecting their own unique sound by bringing together talented musicians who play a blend of percussion, keyboard and guitar to evoke the spirit and joy of Armenian music.

The Friends of HMADS have two distinguished gentlemen serving as the Honorary Booklet co-chairs for this year's event. Their leadership will undoubtedly galvanize the community to support the most important fundraiser of the year. Berj Haroutunian and Nichan

Tchorbajian are both longtime supporters of the Holy Martyrs Armenian Day School and Friends of HMADS organizations. Haroutunian is currently serving on the HMADS Board and is a devoted community philanthropist and entrepreneur.

Tchorbajian, whose children are both HMADS alumni, has been an active PTO executive member and the driving force behind the Armenian Church of the Holy Martyrs expansion project, which seeks to fortify our Church structures so that they will continue to be a center for Armenian spiritualism and culture for years to come.

A successful entrepreneur in his own right, Tchorbajian's educational background encompasses pure mathematics and physics.

Haroutunian, Tchorbajian and the entire Friends committee invite everyone to an evening of dinner and dancing on Saturday, May 14, at the Woodbury Country Club, the 18-acre estate once owned by United States Treasurer Ogden Mills, featuring an alluring landscape.

After the cocktail reception, a four-course meal will be served in the ballroom, with Logian and his band performing.

For further information about this event, contact the school office, Negdar Arukian or Siragan Varolian.



HMADS alumni with Principal Zarmine Boghosian



Arts & Living

Leading Armenian Actors to Reunite in Burlesque Comedy In Montreal in May

MONTREAL, Canada — Actors Gerald Papasian and Nora Armani will play the leading roles in the burlesque Armenian hit, “Taparnigos Ladies’ Dentist,” adapted by Papasian from the Armenian Classic the “Eastern Dentist” by Hagop Baronian. This acclaimed 19th-century comedy has been produced countless times for the stage, cinema and television. Papasian’s French adaptation was played in major Parisian theaters, but this time it will be performed in Armenian with French subtitles. This production by the Tekeyan Cultural Association of Montreal will run from May 13 to 15.

This show is a reunion for Armani and Papasian, who performed their award-winning show, “Sojourn at Ararat,” to great critical acclaim at Montreal’s Centaur Theatre in 1988, a play they recently reprised at Joe’s Pub and at the Public Theater in New York City. The duo, no longer a couple offstage, also animated a successful Armenian comedy evening in Montreal in 1999, a show still recalled by many to this day.

A founding member of the Irina Brook Company, Papasian recently performed in the play “Waiting for the Dream” in Montreal at

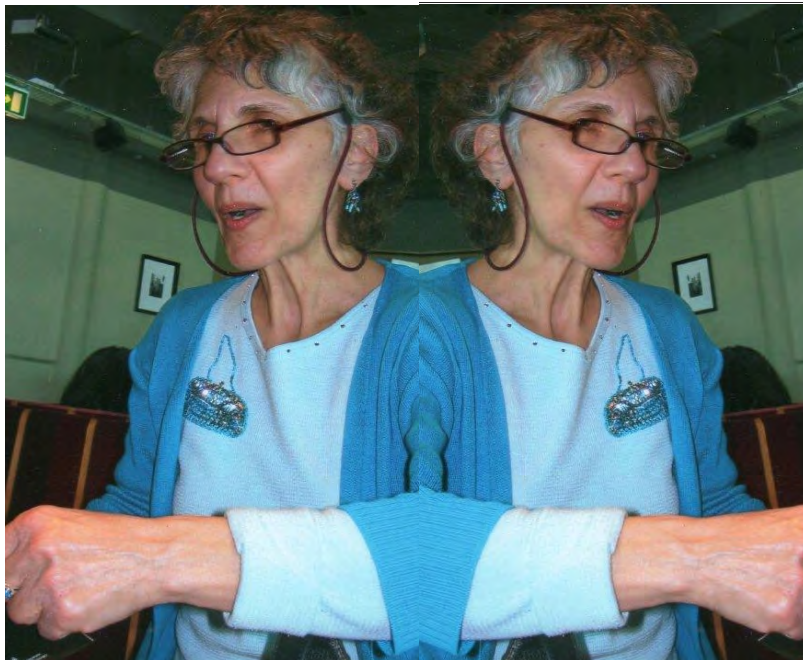


Gerald Papasian and Nora Armani

Usine C. In April and also in Montreal, he presented Armenian music masterpieces with the French vocal quatuor Arevadzaghig. He has helped revive several works by Armenian composer Dikran Tchouhadjian, including the operetta “Gariné” in Paris and Marseille this fall. The president of Armenia recently awarded him the Movses Khorenatsi medal, the country’s highest cultural and artistic honor.

An award-winning actress and playwright, Armani’s new one-woman show “Lend me an ID” was selected at the recent Diwan Forum for the Arts at the City University of New York, and she recently played one of the leads in the feature film “Snowed in LA.” She is currently developing another feature film project and filming a documentary about Egypt in the wake of the recent revolution.

The event will be at the AGBU Alex Manoogian School, 755 Manoogian St., Saint-Laurent on Friday, May 13 and Saturday, May 14 at 8 p.m., and Sunday May 15 at 7 p.m. For more information, call the school.



Susan Lind-Sinanian organizes programs at ALMA when not teaching the blind.

The Double World of Susan Lind-Sinanian

WATERTOWN, Mass. — In one door and out the other.

That pretty much sums up the life of Susan Lind-Sinanian, the textile guru at the Armenian Library and Museum of America (ALMA) who, for the past 25 years, has alternated her role with teaching the visually impaired.

By Tom Vartabedian

Come September, she’ll be entering her fourth decade as a home and personal management instructor at nearby Perkins School for the Blind where she started in 1972.

Throw in motherhood and it’s been one hectic but rewarding life for Lind-Sinanian who seems to be juggling her lifestyle with authority. Occasionally, a ball might fall, but the routine is impeccable. And there’s no intention to retire — at least not until 2014.

Should that occur, it only means more time for ALMA.

“It’s definitely been a balancing act,” she says. “When I mention this to my students, it surprises them that I’ve been able to hold down a job in two major areas. It requires patience, versatility and understanding. People take their health for granted until they’re suddenly deprived of it. The people at ALMA don’t really know about my life at Perkins.”

Each night before retiring to bed, Lind-Sinanian will take a pad and pen, sit at a desk and jot down five reasons to be thankful.

It could be anything from good health and a wonderful family to the birds chirping outside her home, the ability to cook and the fact she belongs to such a wonderful heritage.

A typical scenario? A child she recently evaluated couldn’t wait to enroll. Lind-Sinanian had the boy make toast for his parents and with some help, he was able to deliver. Because Lind-Sinanian sought the feeling of being sightless, she put a blindfold over her eyes to see what her students may encounter.

“It felt terrible ... scary, not to see the world you live in and the people who inhabit it,” she visualized.

Suffice it to say she’s been a valuable resource to the Armenian community in cultivating the fine arts and bringing it to an arena of respect and understanding in both the Armenian and American mainstream.

She’s even taken the liberty to teach Armenian dancing to the blind as a form of mobility. And they love it.

“The students have adjusted well to it,” said Lind-Sinanian. “I introduced it as a form of therapy but many love to hear music from all over the world — whether it’s a simple ‘bar’ or a dance from Ezeroum or ‘kherpan.’ Translated, ‘kherpan’ means a good thing.”

Over these four decades, she has taught daily living skills to multi-impaired students ranging in age from 13-22, taught them Latin as well, and created a better life for the handicapped. It translates out to seven classes a day with the idea of integrating them into an independent lifestyle. The school graduates about 10 students a year.

In what can become a quick burnout profession, Lind-Sinanian has weathered the storm. By teaching others less fortunate, she’s developed her own gratitude. Graduates have returned to the school, just to report the good it’s done them and wind up giving their beloved instructor a hug.

Her biggest satisfaction is sending a student off on their own into an apartment with a decent job in hand, knowing the skills she has introduced will pay dividends. Her tenure ranks among the longest at Perkins. As for ALMA, that’s been somewhat of a release valve for the woman, along with yoga, hiking and the violin.

Lind-Sinanian continues teaching lace and embroidery classes at ALMA. On weekends, she’s apt to coordinate a family day at the museum. Also in her docket is see LIND-SINANIAN, page 15

FACS to Present 60th Annual Armenian Night At Pops

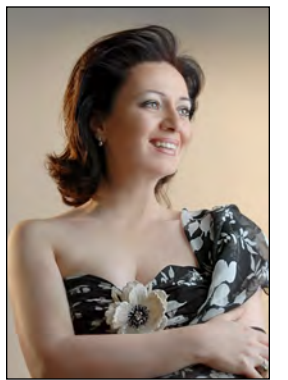
BOSTON — The Friends of Armenian Culture Society will present the 60th annual Armenian Night at the Pops on Saturday, June 25, at 8 p.m. at Symphony Hall. The evening will feature renowned soprano Hasmik Papian. Music director Keith Lockhart will lead the Boston Pops orchestra in this gala celebration concert.

The program will feature a selection of operatic arias by Puccini, Catalani and Johann Strauss. In addition to the traditional Lord’s Prayer (*Hayr Mer*), a group of Armenian songs will also be performed, including Arno Babadjanian’s sublime *Aria-Vocalise* for soprano and orchestra to mark the 90th anniversary of the composer’s birth. The concert will also feature overtures by Rossini and Suppé; the *Parade of the Charioteers* by Miklos Rozs and the Grammy Award-winner Ricky Skaggs and his Kentucky Thunder band, performing some of their greatest hits.

Papian graduated from Komitas Conservatory in Yerevan first as a violinist, then as a singer. After her debut at the Armenian National Opera as Rosina in Rossini’s “Barber of Seville” and as Mimi in Puccini’s “La Bohème,” she started an international career, which has since taken her to the most prestigious operatic stages in the world: the Vienna State Opera, La Scala of Milan, Bastille Opera in Paris and the Metropolitan Opera of New York, to name a few. She has sung with such notable conductors as Riccardo Muti, Plácido Domingo, Valery Gergiev and James Levine.

A “meet-the-artist” reception will follow the concert at the nearby Colonnade Hotel.

Tickets for this concert and the reception can be purchased online by visiting www.FACSBoston.org. Donations to the Friends of Armenian Culture Society, Inc. are tax deductible.



Hasmik Papian

Raymond Kevorkian On Lecture Tour in Canada and US

NEW YORK — French-Armenian historian and academic Raymond Kevorkian is embarking on a lecture tour of Canada and the United States this month to present and discuss the new English translation of his book, *The Armenian Genocide: A Complete History*. In this 1,000-page history, Kevorkian, who is also a lecturer at the Institut Français de Géopolitique, University of Paris, and director of the AGBU Nubarian Library in Paris, gives an account of the origins, events and consequences of the Armenian Genocide. Kevorkian considers the role it played in the construction of the Turkish nation state and Turkish identity, as well as exploring the ideologies of power, rule and state violence. Crucially, he examines the consequences of the violence against the Armenians, the implications of the deportations, and the attempts to bring those who committed the atrocities to justice. The book is the see KEVORKIAN, page 16



ARTS & LIVING

Loris Chobanian Premieres *The Traveler*

BEREA, Ohio — Baldwin-Wallace College Emeritus Composer-in-Residence and Professor of Composition and Guitar Loris Ohannes Chobanian has been devoting more time to composing and as a result has produced several new compositions that are being premiered. Many of these compositions have been conceived with Armenian themes. On Sunday, April 17, Prof. Benjamin Czarnota, baritone, and Kristin Ditlow, piano, presented the world premiere of Chobanian's dramatic aria, *The Traveler*, with Armenian text. The poem, "Gayanh's Verchi," "My Last Destination," is by Haigouhi Seropian. Chobanian's *Requiem* April 24 was also based on a Seropian poem, "Tadeh Hayoon." The requiem was premiered by Baldwin-Wallace Chorus and Chamber Orchestra conducted by Dirk Garner. The performance can be heard on YouTube.

Avarayr — Fires of Zarathustra for Symphonic Wind Ensemble, depicting the Battle of Vartanants, was performed at the Ohio Music Educator's Conference in Cincinnati. Other compositions include *In Search of Global Harmony for Symphonic Wind* ensemble which is scheduled to be premiered on Friday, January 27, 2012. The seven movements represent the music of seven countries: China, India, Russia, Zimbabwe, Iraq, Ireland and Spain. The Cleveland Mayor's office and the Cleveland Community Development personnel will participate in making the performance a nationalities day.

Said Chobanian, "The countries selected in the movements of *In Search of Global Harmony* were in part chosen because of their distinct musical features. The challenge was to compose individual movements that could be recognizable before knowing the title of the country they represented. Although these countries have their exclusive musical languages, there is a hidden universal expression shared in spite of their boundaries."

Extensive study of the music of each country was necessary for the success of the project. The outcome represents the composer's personal impression of the different musical languages. During World War II the Indian army came to Baghdad. As a result many theatrical performances related to Indian culture became available. In the second movement the composer has used one of the melodies he heard during that time.

Some of these countries have their own tunings and instruments. There are significant limitations and constraints when their music is performed by a Western Symphonic Wind Ensemble. China, for example, is a vast country in which the different regions have their unique musical approaches. Generally the tuning of Chinese instruments is similar to the Pythagorean tuning, in which the frequency relationships of all intervals are based on the ratio 3:2, whereas the western diatonic scale is generally equal tempered. Indian music also has a rich tradition. There are said to be more than 5,000 Indian *raga* tunings. Indian ragas are based on selecting tones from 22 possibilities within one octave.

Musical motives from different countries were used extensively. Only in the case of Iraq a complete melody — *Um Al Abaya* — was utilized. Some of these countries have outstanding choral traditions. Russian choral performances are exemplified with distinct recognizable features such as rich bass lines, pulsated rhythms and high, sustained pedal points. African countries have a unique approach to choral singing. Zimbabwe is representative of others such as South Africa or Uganda. There is much use of responsorial singing in which the solo chant is answered by the full chorus. African music also excels in the use of complex percussive rhythms.

Two aspects of Irish music, the lament song as well as music for dance, were featured in the sixth movement. Several forms of Spanish music were incorporated in the

structure of the last movement. They include influences of flamenco, cante jondo and jota. The latter is inherently rhythmic and percussive. Flamenco music, accompanied with guitars and hand clapping, originates from the southern region of Andalusia. The Jota hails from the Aragon region of northeastern Spain."

Just Violins, a composition for six violins, was composed for BW professor of violin Julian Ross and five of his students. Three *Impromptus for Piano and Orchestra* was composed for BW professor of piano Sungeun Kim. The word "Impromptu" can imply that the composition has been realized extemporaneously in an improvised manner. The initial musical idea is based on the intro-

duction of a specific tonal center which is subjected to constant pitch expansion similar to the opening of a flower or the unfolding of waves when a stone has been dropped in a pond. Pitches in all three movements experience this process and by the third movement the expansions also involve larger textures.

The title *Impromptu* for piano solo was first used by Jan Vaclav Vorisek in 1822. Many composers such as Schubert, Chopin and Liszt have written *Impromptus* for piano solo. The *Three Impromptus* are different, as they are written for piano and orchestra. The composition is dedicated to "a place and the people." The place is the BW Conservatory and the people are the students, the faculty and staff of the BW Conservatory.

Amaras Art Alliance Hosts Young Star's Concert

BELMONT, Mass. — Amaras Art Alliance of Watertown will present their Young Star's Concert featuring more than 20 talented aspiring musicians on Sunday, May 15 at Atinizian Hall at Holy Cross Armenian Catholic Church, 200 Lexington St., at 4:30 p.m.

The performers, ranging in age from 8 to 18, will perform classical and popular pieces. Featured will be Amaras' Young Star of 2010 pianist Merghri DerVartanian of Belmont, and the 2011 Young Star, vocalist and composer of Amaras' *Heaven's Music*, Alex Carroll of Cohasset. There will be a guest appearance by the Serenade String Ensemble of Waltham. Students in the Serenade String Ensemble study with Narine Doloukhanyan of Waltham. They will play two pieces by C. Dancia conducted by Tigran Doloukhanyan.

Performers include: Belmont residents Leah Babroudi, violinist; Gayane Kaligian, vocalist; Emma Gharibian, violinist and vocalist, and Ariana Maserejian, vocalist. Performers from Watertown include: guitarist, Alexander Abrahamyan; pianist, Ruben Karapetyan and pianist Lori Shirinian. Also

featured are Sonia Ourfalian a pianist and student at the St. Stephen's Armenian Elementary School; Hasmik Jasmine Gevorkian, a pianist from Rhode Island; pianist, Alik Fisher-Arslanian; pianist Nicholas Orchanian of Waltham; Arpi Parseghian of Arlington also a pianist; Shant DerTorossian a pianist from Waltham; Armenian Sisters' Academy student Garen Meguerditchian on the piano and Chloe Cawallader Barran, a singer from the Cambridge Rindge and Latin School.

The concert is under the direction of Nouné Karapetian, a piano and voice teacher, as well as a soprano. She founded and directed the Bell Music School for several years. Karapetian will be one of three featured sopranos at the "Escape the Ordinary" concert on June 12 at the Lexington Heritage Museum.

The Young Stars concert is a fundraising event to benefit the art programs at the high school in Aregnadem, a village in Armenia that borders Turkey.

For more information and tickets, go to amarasonline.com.

The Double World of Susan Lind-Sinanian

LIND-SINANIAN, from page 14
training volunteers and dealing with donors. No doubt, ALMA would be missing a vital link were it not for her contributions these many years.

"The fact I can smile or frown, tie a lace or put on a shoe gives me satisfaction," she admitted. "In working with the visually-impaired, what I teach them might take a year to learn, like using a microwave or pouring a glass of juice without spilling it. But at least it's a destination."

Often, Lind-Sinanian will bring her blind students to the museum for a hands-on education. Through touch and feel, they learn the value of Armenian hand-woven crafts. Her husband, Gary, a long-time curator, will pass around old Armenian coins and explain the history of the grand kings.

They'll try on costumes, handle musical instruments, and gain a better sense of appreciation for the Armenian identity. Her "outside" career was determined as a teenager.

"Ever since I was 17, I wanted to teach the handicapped," admitted Lind-Sinanian, who grew up in Dorchester. It all stemmed from her undergraduate days at Northeastern University. One of her co-operative jobs was working as a

house parent at Perkins. After earning a bachelor's degree in elementary education, she went to Boston College for a master's degree with a focus on visually-impaired studies.

Over the years, she has become a sort of "Mrs. Chips" at the campus, touching students from across the world. One was an Eskimo from Alaska who became so proficient, he was able to return home by dogsled and canoe.

As a leading authority on Armenian folk art and dance, she has honed her craft with unadulterated passion.

She and Gary wed 34 years ago and decided to have an old-fashioned Armenian wedding on a farm in Franklin. In the process of researching old Armenian dances to incorporate into their ceremony, they struck a mutual chord.

Lind-Sinanian has collected oral histories of Armenian culture, taught folk dancing at international camps and symposiums and shown equal skill toward needlework. She has co-authored a house-keeping manual for the visually impaired as well as a curriculum for teaching Armenian dance to children.

She is a person from whom vision is not restricted to the eyes.

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ARTS & LIVING

Julia Zerounian and Ensemble at Regattabar, May 12

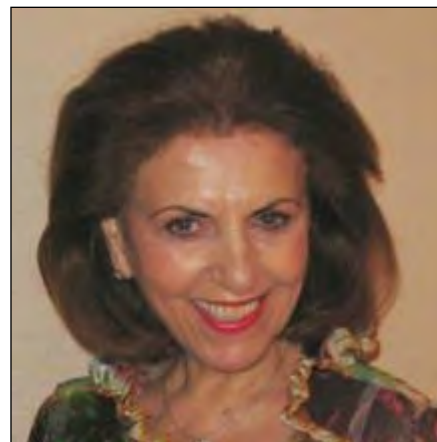
CAMBRIDGE, Mass. — Song-stylist Julia Zerounian and the Zerounian Ensemble will perform familiar and exotic songs from around the world on Thursday, May 12 at 7:30 p.m. at the Regattabar here. Singing effortlessly in 10 languages, the charming Julia Zerounian restores to the contemporary performance scene the glamorous heyday of international café-cabaret, creating an atmosphere of infectious enthusiasm and intimacy with her audience. She is a real artist who knowingly and lovingly shapes every phrase and colors every tone to elicit a maximum of feeling and expressiveness of mood in each song.

With a worldwide repertoire spanning French (Aznavour, Piaf, Brel), Armenian troubadour, Russian romance and gypsy songs, Greek, Persian, and Latin tunes and, of course, perennial classics from the American songbook, Julia and her ensemble deliver an ebullient musical experience with equal parts conviction, authority and heart. She takes on all the different musical genres of these countries performing with her glowing and warm personality and making her truly a “world music singer”.

Julia Zerounian began her singing and acting career at an early age in Armenia, later performing with various professional ensembles and theatrical groups throughout the former Soviet Union. Since her move to the Boston area in 1972, she has become well-known to audiences as a great interpreter of international folk and contemporary songs, Armenian minstrel and American songs.

The combination of her soulful, vibrant singing and mastery of musical idioms has not only gained a large and loyal following, but garnered rave reviews from prominent musicians and critics. In a review of her appearance last spring at the Regattabar, the *Boston Phoenix's* music critic Lloyd Schwartz described Julia as “an old-fashioned nightclub chanteuse with glamour, style, and a real voice — warm and inviting. Singing in English, French, Italian, Armenian, Russian, Persian and Yiddish she had the audience eating out of her hand and, invited or not, singing along with her. From the piano, her husband, Sarkis Zerounian, elegantly led the stylish jazz combo with violin.”

Musicians for the Zerounian Ensemble are violinist Lucia Lin, guitarist John Baboian, flautist Marco Granados, bassist Mark Henry, percussionist Grant Smith and on piano Sarkis Zerounian.



Julia Zerounian

For reservations and information, contact www.regattabarjazz.com.

Identity Unknown

By Thea Lenarduzzi

In April 1990, Mark Mustian's protagonist Emmett Cona is sitting in an American hospital, flicking through a magazine while waiting to have a brain scan. He reads about death marches in a feature commemorating the 75th anniversary of the Armenian massacres, which began in 1915. He does not remember it, but he was there: he was Ahmet Khan, a “gendarme,” overseeing the deportation of thousands of Armenians from Turkey to the Syrian desert. Emmett has forgotten this previous identity because he was also “Unidentified Patient Number A-17,” wounded in the head at Galipoli: “my memory is fine from the hospital forward, but before is still darkness, only speckles of light.”

At the age of 92, he develops a pea-sized tumor that triggers visions — flashbacks — which dissolve the membranes between past and present, dreams and reality, until the “vitality I find now exists in the dream.”

The Gendarme, which was published to

acclaim in the United States last year, is Mundian's second novel (The Return appeared in 2000). As well as writing fiction, Mutian is a lawyer, and a commissioner for the city of Tallahassee, Fla., someone familiar with playing different roles. His novel's title introduces a multi-form character: Emmett is a Turkish émigré plumber, “a Yankee” who reads Shakespeare and Steinbeck, “Papa,” a Rotarian and a cancer patient, but he is also a “gendarme” — a rapist and a murderer. As Emmett is transferred from doctor to psychiatrist, then taken from his home to a mental institution to be “monitored,” he moves through a personal wasteland — assembling fragments of memory and trying to understand the nature of his involvement with the beautiful Armenian girl, Araxie, who returns to his dreams.

This is a narrative of geographical and psychological displacements, and of the relationship between truth and memory. After delivering to the camps those few who survived the marches, Ahmet became a deserter, fixed on finding Araxie and escaping to America. From then on, his memory draws blacks that stretch into the present — a landscape peopled by amnesiacs. Parkinson's disease left his American wife unable to remember their daughters who, in their distress, stopped visiting and “forgot” her. The younger daughter had a child at 16, who her parents pushed to give up for adoption, without inquiring about its sex: they “forgot” it and carried on with their lives. Tiresias is attendant, too, in the form of Sasha, a hermaphrodite brothel

owner who employs Ahmet after his desertion and helps him to escape. Man and woman (“Oh, I am many things my dear”), Sasha transcends space and time to reappear to Emmett as a fellow patient in the South Georgia Psychiatric Center.

Mutian approaches his subject with compassion, reading “survivors’ stories...and history books,” and traveling the routes “to feel, to the extent possible, what those deportees...felt and experienced.” His tale is suitably serious, and its well-paced revelations — alternately beautiful and brutal — involve the reader and increase our awareness in step with Emmett's. One person's memory is not enough to sustain the novel's momentum, however, it needs characters as strong as Emmett to question his story. But they do not come. Emmett's nephew and niece, nicknamed “Brains and Brainsetta” are, in this sense, grotesque incarnations of T.S. Eliot's hypocrite lecturer, and they would be tragic were they not simply comic figures. Avoidance is easier for those who are too absorbed in the bleak expanse of their own lives to interrogate others. “Brainsetta” prattles on

about her dog's health and the “unfounded sexual allegations against her uncle Silias, in which a pet pig plays an unclarified part.”

This obliviousness, along with some heavy authorial interventions, drive the novel to its conclusion. The final chapters, a combination of the predictable and the incredible, seem designed to tie up any loose ends. Mutian's “Author's Note” tells us: “Genocide represents perhaps the ugliest human deeds...To stop it we must publicize it.” He writes: “We want to know. Sometimes that knowledge is painful, or inconvenient, or even damning.” To do justice to the historical material, and to an otherwise gripping narrative, there should be no neat closure and to suggest one presumes a reader unwilling to participate in further questioning.

The Gendarme. By Mark Mustian

304 pp. Oneworld. Paperback, 12.99 pounds
978 851 688265

(This review originally appeared in the Times Literary Supplement on April 22.)

Kevorkian on Lecture Tour in Canada and US

KEVORKIAN, from page 16

first to make extensive use of the archives of the Nubarian Library, which has an important collection of papers, documents and photographs related to the Armenian Genocide.

Kevorkian's tour began on May 3 in Toronto, where AGBU Toronto hosted him at the AGBU Manoogian Center. On May 4-6, the author traveled to Montreal, where he presented three separate lectures: “Armenian Refugees in the Near East during the 1920s” on May 4, under the auspices of the AGBU Manuel Keusseyan Armenological Lecture Series; “The Geopolitical Situation in the South Caucasus” on May 5, which is sponsored by the AGBU Young Professionals of Montreal and a book reading on May 6, which will focus on Kevorkian's new book and its remarkable findings.

On May 9, he will travel to California's Silicon Valley to speak to the local AGBU Chapter. The following evening, Kevorkian will give a presentation at the AGBU Pasadena Center hosted by the Pasadena-Glendale Chapter. His tour will continue in Detroit, where he will speak at the invitation of AGBU Detroit at the Hagopian Showroom on May 12. The Detroit event is co-sponsored by the AGBU Alex & Marie Manoogian School, the Tekeyan Cultural Association, the Knights of Vartan and the Detroit Armenia Fest Committee. The final stop of Kevorkian's tour will be the AGBU Central Office in New York, where he will speak on Friday, May 13.



Raymond Kevorkian, author of *The Armenian Genocide: A Complete History*, will present the book on a lecture tour of Canada and the United States this month.

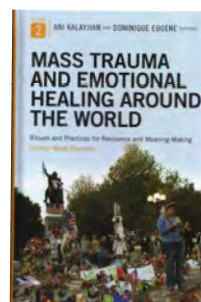
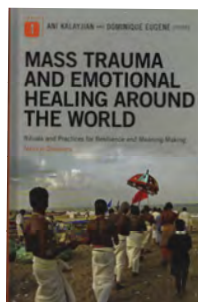
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Yerevantzi Olya Azatyan Speaks Her Mind

By Betty Apigian Kessel

DETROIT — She’s young, well educated and determined to make a difference in the improvement of her Armenian homeland. She is 29-year-old Olya Azatyan, a native of Yerevan.

I recently had the opportunity of having a frank discussion via e-mail with Azatyan. She and I were brought together through the good intentions of Toronto-based friend, Noubar Poladian. He had met her during his 2006 visit to Yerevan and suggested I interview her for my column knowing I had an interest in the status of women in Armenia including their professional advancement and the issue of abuse.

The response from Olya was immediate. I gave her an outline of questions and offered her a free hand in what she wanted to say. It went from there.

I found myself actually startled at her openness. Because her remarks were so frank I suggested she be cautious. She assured me that I had her permission to print her opinions and statements verbatim. She is well intentioned, loves her country, feels a sense of responsibility to it and has no plans to leave Armenia.

She is devoted to Armenia and has concerns for its well being. I wish her success while hoping she treads carefully. My desire in sharing Ms. Azatyan’s ambitions with you is that her dreams for a better, more advanced Armenia will emerge.

Olya was born and raised in a middle-class Armenian family. Because of her father’s job, the family moved frequently during Olya’s school years, giving her the opportunity to observe both various co-existing realities and human stories in different parts of Armenia.

“My inspiration to do my best comes from my family, many of whom have PhD’s and other formal academic qualifications,” says Azatyan.

She witnessed the devastation of the 1988 Armenian earthquake when she was 7, and 10, when the 1991 independence of Armenia came as well as the Nagorno Karabagh war of 1991-1994. She says, “I witnessed many downturns in the socio-economic conditions of my country. In the 1990s we had no heat, electricity, values changed and we had minimum resources. But with all that I was realizing the country is at war, my father was at war ...I knew I had to be strong ...”

Seeing these struggles gave her thought about her future and the future of Armenia. “I decided that I wanted to do something worthwhile with my life to help make things better in Armenia as much as I am able to.”

No doubt she is ambitious; she started working at age 20, while also taking on a heavy course load at school.

Azatyan has a bachelor’s from Yerevan State Linguistic University. She speaks Armenian, Russian, English, French and some Spanish. Her studies at the Armenian State Governance Academy included comparative constitution, theory of state and law, Armenian constitution, municipal law and political science, thereby cementing a foundation for her future career.

She earned a master’s degree in international public administration and social policy from London Metropolitan University, having been awarded a British Chevening Full Scholarship.

She also audited a course at the University of Strasbourg on French History and Civilization.

Currently she is working on her PhD in Armenia and will research how positive changes can be brought by the left political agenda. And with this impressive background, she tells me my e-mail made her day!

I had been told she wanted to become Armenia’s first female prime minister, so of course I became interested in Azatyan, representing a breed of Armenian woman who is strong, well educated and career oriented.

Her work experience includes international organizations such as Council of Europe (CoE); Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE); Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (IDEA International); International Foundation for Election System (IFES Armenia Office); National Democratic Institute for International Affairs (NDI) and the Institute for Democracy and Human Rights (IDHR).

“Armenia needs more professionals, especially

women. We are under-represented in the National Assembly. Only seven women are MP’s out of 131. In 10 years, I want to run for member of parliament of this region. I have had experience in elections and politics. I have organized volunteer events and mobilized school children with great success to think about those not as well off.”

“I will continue to show people I am sincere in making things better for them and the community. I believe it is important to have a good reputation, which I have, for them to believe me. I am part of a group that volunteer teaches at the Institute for Human Rights and Democracy to young activists.”

As a resident of Armenia, Azatyan, says, “I will continue to show the people here I am sincere in making things better for them. I am part of a group that volunteer teaches at the Institute for Human Rights and Democracy to young activists.”

As an activist herself, Azatyan is part of one of these, the Teghut Forest Defense group. In November 2007, the government of Armenia approved a project on copper-molybdenum mining in the north-eastern region of Armenia, in the watershed of the Debed River, in the region with complex landscape prone to earthquakes and landslides.

Allocated area for mining is 1,491 hectares (3,683 acres) 82 percent of which is covered with mountainous forests. Exploration of the mine will produce about 500 million tons of tailings of hazardous substances and 600 million tons of various other waste. Dumping tails will be disposed in the gorge of Duqanadzor River, flowing to Shnogh — a tributary of transboundary Debed.

There are also various animals in the *Red Book that will die after the mine is explored. Her group is trying to stop the mining. The Red Book contains registered animal and plant species facing extinction in Armenia.*

She strongly supports another initiative group. “We are against re-opening the foreign language schools in Armenia. To my deep regret the parliament has already passed the bill to re-open foreign language schools in the country which is a huge

threat to Armenian statehood. We know what role language plays in keeping a nation. We are expecting first of all the re-opening of Russian language schools, which will take us back to Moscow-led policies again. During the course of time we might be facing the loss of statehood.”

She has a lot to say about politics. “The oligarch criminal regime is destroying Armenia. The country is being ruled by a couple of oligarchs whose only power is force, all type of rights are violated. The courts are part of the distorted regime, corruption is flourishing, migration is increasing, monopolies are killing the small and medium businesses, prices are escalating and we have political prisoners. The growing poverty is destroying families.”

“Another big national tragedy occurred during the March 1, 2008 election, when the voters dissatisfied by election results came out to the streets to protest and ask for free and fair elections, and the government brought the army to oppress the true claim of the people, thus killing 10 individuals. Who must be blamed?” Azatyan asks.

“Surely not only the regime. The citizens equally share the blame of the current situation in the country. They are not getting together to fight to get rid of the present regime and establish order in the country. Most of the intelligentsia has now departed, and those that remain are in deep apathy, with only a small part of them fighting hard. People are under pressure from the government. They are under government control and don’t seem to care.”

Azatyan added, “I think the border between Turkey and Armenia has to be open. If the country cannot be healthy from the ‘inside,’ it cannot have normal relations with its neighbors. Let’s first enable our country to function before going out for international relations. Genocide is something every Armenian will have in our blood as long as Armenians exist, but having said that, you just can’t live in the past. It destroys you! Just concentrating on the recognition of Genocide will lead us nowhere. We need to build many bridges.”

Her strong viewpoints continue. “I appreciate the volume of effort on this matter by fellow

Diasporans but I do find this at the moment a bit off track for one reason — currently there is a White Genocide in Armenia! Why isn’t the diaspora interested in it? Only a few in the diaspora care about the current situation in Armenia. Let’s first rebuild our country. If we lose Armenia, we will lose everything. Once we build a strong state, we can manage many things.”

She feels that since independence, Armenia has not developed at all as she says, “In 1991 Armenia had a chance to start over from zero but now has fallen behind. We are already late. We have several crises developing here including civic, political, post soviet, scientific, cultural, moral values ... we must stop it. The only way out is by civic action. The people have to stand for their rights. They have to make the government their servant and not to tolerate the current situation. We need a civic mobilization. Revolution is part of evolution.”

She says, “Today my mission is to talk to people to encourage them to fight for their rights, to not be slaves, to not be afraid of living in their own land. I have found many young people who believe in making change for the better by starting from the bottom and going to the top. One day we will have a good country where the true leader will be the Armenian citizen. I believe this day will come and I am ready to be one of the servants for the people. Join us in saving our country, Armenia.”

I asked Olya about the Zaruhi Petrossyan situation, the woman beaten to death by her husband and mother-in-law. She said, “The passiveness of women themselves must be blamed as they do not seek to fight for their rights. They seem to not believe in change. The current Armenian society has now become very sick, very closed and conservative. The distorted ‘Asian’ rules of patriarchy are in place and women seem to find it normal. Men cannot change this situation. We need a new female action.”

Olya concluded, “I made a firm decision when I came back to never leave this country. Armenia needs me. I want to be part of a generation that will bring a positive turn in the making of our country’s history to help it grow into a democracy.”

Thanks to Olya Azatyan for her comments and her perception of how to improve living conditions and democracy in Armenia for everyone.

CALENDAR

MASSACHUSETTS

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 12 — Tekeyan Cultural Association Presents Book Talk by Dr. Anie Kalayjian, psychologist, co-author and therapist of global reach. Introduction by Vagheenag Tarpinian, MD. St. Thomas Armenian Church, Tenafly, 7:30 p.m. For information, call Tarpinian at (610) 823-8611. Admission free. Refreshments provided after the talk.

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., Tenafly. 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 12, psychologist and author, Dr. Anie Kalayjian, pictured above, will give a book presentation, with an introduction by Vagheenag Tarpinian, MD, at the St. Thomas Armenian Church, in Tenafly, NJ, at 7:30 p.m, presented by the Tekeyan Cultural Association. For information, call Tarpinian at (610) 823-8611. Admission is free.



COMMENTARY

THE ARMENIAN Mirror-Spectator

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EDITOR
Alin K. Gregorian

ASSOCIATE EDITOR
Aram Arkun

ART DIRECTOR
Marc Mgrditchian

PRODUCTION
Dilani Yagaratnam

CONTRIBUTORS:

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

CORRESPONDENTS:

Armenia - Hagop Avedikian
Boston - Nancy Kalajian
Philadelphia - Lisa Manookian

Contributing Photographers:

Jacob Demirdjian, Harry Koundakjian, Jirair Hovsepien

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FAX: 617-924-2887

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

For advertising: mirrorads@aol.com

New York/New Jersey Office

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(201) 800-1164

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Baikar Association, Inc.

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COMMENTARY

Polarization Gives Way to Political Realism In Armenia

By Edmond Y. Azadian

Since March 1, 2008, Armenia's political atmosphere has been extremely polarized because of the unfair election and the confrontation between the police and the opposition forces, which claimed 10 casualties.

The main opposition coalition, the Armenian National Congress (HAK), headed by former President Levon Ter-Petrosian, organized regular political rallies, with the participation of large masses. Many unemployed citizens, joined by former government officials, religiously attended these rallies; the starving populace was fed on Ter-Petrosian's rhetoric.

No president, nor any public official thus far, has been able to upstage Ter-Petrosian's oratorical skills. The former president was able to captivate his audience through his articulate and carefully-crafted speeches, in which his demands were sky high. His common refrain was to "dismantle" the "kleptocracy" and force early parliamentary elections.

Another former president, Robert Kocharian, had provided enough ammunition to the opposition to rally around. Emulating his master in Moscow, former President Vladimir Putin, who had elected his hand-picked successor to replace him at the end of the constitutionally-mandated term of absence, President Kocharian had decided to install a vulnerable lame duck administration to make his comeback possible.

Between Serge Sargisian's election and his inauguration, Kocharian staged an armed confrontation with the opposition, which had camped in the Liberty Square, next to the opera, where most of the killings took place. Kocharian knew he should wait out the confrontation, to wear down the opposition and come to a peaceful outcome. But he opted for the violent solution, whose victims became a powerful weapon in the hands of the opposition.

When President Sargisian was inaugurated, he did not distance himself from the actions of his predecessor and continued the repressive measures, jailing many opposition figures, which turned out to be cause celebres in Ter-Petrosian speeches.

For a while, the opposition was able to paralyze the country's political system and invited the sanctions of international agencies. For example, the European Union issued critical reports on Armenia and threatened to ban Armenia's delegation from participating in the PACE's sessions.

The most recent casualty was the US Millennium Challenge subsidies for Armenia's agricultural development.

In all fairness, however, Ter-Petrosian calibrated down his rhetoric every time the administration was in sensitive negotiations with Turkey or Azerbaijan, in order not to be accused of stabbing the government in the back. Sometimes, he even put a moratorium on his rallies.

Sargisian kept his cool and tried to consolidate his position domestically and internationally. He refused to give in to the opposition's demands to resign or hold early parliamentary elections.

In view of next year's elections, the opposing parties realized it was time to find a modus vivendi. Ter-Petrosian toned down his rhetoric; "kleptocracy" and "dismantling" were dropped from his lexicon. His 18 demands were reduced to a manageable three. His maximalist demand that the only topic for negotiation between the authorities and the opposition had to focus on the modalities of the president's removal from office disappeared from his agenda.

The demands which were left on the table were the following: a) a pledge by the authorities to investigate the March 1 killings; b) allowing Liberty Square to open for political rallies and, c) releasing the remaining political prisoners from jail.

Ter-Petrosian pledged to begin negotiations with the government, after the latter meets the above conditions.

President Sargisian seized the opportunity to make his major conciliatory move by pre-empting any extreme outcome which could develop on the April 28 rally, which Ter-Petrosian had

decided to make either the beginning of negotiation or a "watershed."

On April 27, on the eve of the opposition rally, the president released the following statement: "A very important tradition is shaping up in the parliament; the deliberations are held at their correct limits, although sometimes rough angles pop up. If the ruling coalition and the parliamentary opposition make joint efforts we can achieve some civilized benchmarks. I would also like to underline some positive developments in the opposition ranks outside the parliament. Rallies are being held, speeches are made, which do not intend to divide the people, nor do they intend to 'crush' or 'destroy,' rather they move the public to a political level. No one has been able to achieve anything through evil intent. Only strong people can dispel the evil. We have a strong government and an opposition, which keeps the government's toes to the fire. We can achieve great success through cooperation. We would like to be the first ones to take steps to defuse the situation. I have already given instructions to the minister of justice to come up with a proposal."

This last statement is interpreted as a pledge by the president to release the remaining political prisoners from jail by May 28. Thus, the president proved that he controlled the political agenda in the country.

The next day, Ter-Petrosian was equally magnanimous in his speech. "If the door is not yet fully open it is at least half open," he declared. "Two of our demands are already met (March 1 and Liberty Square.) The third one will be met with some delay." And then he continued in a more conciliatory tone: "We can resolve our problems through the methods dictated by the situation. There are only two approaches: one is negotiation through the spirit of national unity and the other is through physical confrontation, which may bring disastrous results. We have decided to take the first option and we believe that the majority of the people will support that decision."

Ter-Petrosian's moderation caused some cracks in his opposition block. Some elements who were looking for a more radical confrontation were disenchanted, as were some others who were expecting issues of social order to be resolved. The present topics of discussion do not bring food on the table, yet.

Therefore, the stage is set for next year's election and it is rumored that the negotiations are already being conducted behind the scenes. Also, political horse trading has already begun for the parliamentary seats between the competing powers. Rumors about apportioning the parliamentary seats coincide with the findings of political pollster Aharon Adibekyan. Thus, it is believed that the lion's share of parliamentary seats will go to the present ruling coalition. The combined seats of the Republican Party, Prosperous Armenia and the Country of Laws (Orinatz Yerkir) will constitute 70 percent. Although the Republican and Prosperous Armenia parties have signed an official pact, recently some dissenting voices were heard that the latter may participate in the election on its own. But these statements are dismissed as pre-election posturing to grab the maximum numbers of ministerial portfolios after the election.

The remaining 30 percent of the seats will be allocated to the opposition. Roughly 10 seats will be given to HAK. The ARF will have five to seven seats. Aram Karapetian (Karapetich), a vociferous media man, will get in with one seat. Although there seems to be a tendency to leave out Raffi Hovannisian's Heritage Party, its powerful sponsors may squeeze the party in the parliament at the expense of ARF and HAK.

Certainly these are mere speculations of some observers. Unforeseen political developments may completely alter the situation, rendering these speculations baseless.

Armenians are preparing for parliamentary elections a year ahead of time, and of course the outcome of these elections may determine the fate of the presidential election in 2013.

In view of this horse trading, one of the journalists in Armenia has made the following sarcastic statement: "Although we cannot hold fair elections, at least we anticipate peaceful elections."

LETTERS

Expanding on Hitler's Terrifying Quote Regarding Armenians

To the Editor:

A while back, I wrote the *Mirror-Spectator* a letter quoting Hitler's speech to his generals prior to his invasion of Poland. I left out a section that has relevance to the Armenian case:

"I have given the order that the war-aim is not to reach certain lines, but the physical extermination of the enemy. So, I have com-

manded my Death's Head battalions to be prepared to put to death without mercy, men, women and children of the Polish race. Only so will we win the *Lebensraum* [territory for living] we require. Who still speaks today of the annihilation of the Armenians. ... Poland will be depopulated and its land resettled with Germans."

The parallel here with the Turks' action against the Armenians is manifest. Yet, while Hitler's crime lives in infamy, that of the Turks is essentially forgotten. I guess, if you only kill 1.5 million, it's not worth obsessing over, but if you're responsible for the deaths of 50 million, it becomes hard to ignore.

— Berge Tatian



COMMENTARY



My Turn

By Harut Sassounian

Fox-TV Airs Two Interviews on The Armenian Genocide

Fox-TV (Los Angeles) invited this writer for a live in-studio interview on the Armenian Genocide for two consecutive days. The first, lasting five minutes, took place on April 24, during the TV station's evening news program. The second, lasting over six minutes, took place on April 25, during the "Good Day LA" show. Below are excerpts from both interviews:

April 24, 2011

Fox-TV: Joining us now is Harut Sassounian, the president of the United Armenian Fund. He's also publisher of the *California Courier*, a newspaper here in Southern California, published out of Glendale. It is the 96th anniversary of the Armenian Genocide. And it's also kind of a confusing issue for a lot of us, because Armenian-Americans want the president to say, to claim that this was genocide. And yet, you just told me prior to coming on the newscast that really it doesn't matter whether the president says it or not. Why?

Sassounian: Because we already have another president, Ronald Reagan, 30 years ago in 1981, who issued a presidential proclamation in which he mentioned the words Armenian Genocide. Plus, we have two congressional resolutions, in 1975 and 1984, commemorating the Armenian Genocide.

Fox-TV: Mr. Sassounian, then one would ask, and people who are not that familiar with the 1915 Genocide would say, why are you protesting out in front of the Turkish consulate?

Sassounian: We are simply protesting to let the president know, and every other politician know that if you come to us as a candidate and make [empty] promises and later on you get elected with our votes and money, we're not going to just remain silent, we're going to express our disagreement and we're going to make sure that you're not re-elected.

Fox-TV: It's not then good enough to have just the proclamation by President Reagan; to have the Department of Justice write in a 1951 paper that it was genocide. You want that confirmed by the current administration?

Sassounian: It would be nice if they confirm it, but we are trying to send a message to the president and all politicians that if you make a promise to the people, you have to keep your promise. You can't make a false promise, get their money, get their votes and then act like nothing happened! They have to pay a price! We have to change the whole political charade in this country where you just lie

to the public and get away with it.

Fox-TV: With Turkey being such a strategic ally of the United States, do you expect any president now or after this to come out and say, "The Ottoman Empire committed genocide against Armenians?"

Sassounian: There is a big difference between politics and historical facts. Historical facts do not change with time. If an event happened, it happened! ...So our alliances or relationships, good or bad, should not affect the facts of history.

Fox-TV: Yesterday Armenian boxer Vic Darchinyan, on his trunks, when he was in the ring, were in big numerals 1915, and on a sports blog, the blogger said "In case you haven't heard about the Armenian Genocide ..." and then started to explain it. Does it upset you that so many people outside of Armenian-Americans really are ignorant about this?

Sassounian: That doesn't upset me because most people don't know much about the world. They don't follow the news very closely, as some of us do. What upsets me more is when you said at the top of the introduction of this news item "Armenians claim genocide." Armenians are not the ones claiming genocide. The whole world knows there was a genocide. Hundreds of historians, 43 US states, Congress twice, President Reagan, 25 different countries have passed parliamentary resolutions. Just because Turkey, the successor of the criminal regime, denies it, that doesn't make it an allegation or a claim. It's a historical fact. For political reasons, Turks don't want to face up to their own history.

Fox-TV: And I think that was written, we were reporting that for the purpose of showing the contrast between Armenians and Turks. And yet, your point is well taken. Thank you for the correction.

April 25, 2011

Fox-TV: Yesterday around the world, [there were] commemorations of the Armenian Genocide in 1915 – a very controversial historical event – perhaps a million-and-a-half people died or were killed as a result of this. Joining us now is Harut Sassounian. He is the president of the United Armenian Fund and editor of the Armenian newspaper, the *California Courier*. We do this every year. The issue at stake is that the United States government, this president, the last president, the president before, all ran making big statements saying that the Armenian Genocide will be recognized as a genocide like the Holocaust around World War II. All three presidents run, all three presidents when they get into office, they look at Turkey, an ally we need badly in the Middle East, and they don't do it.

Sassounian: In general, politicians are all very bad in keeping promises on all subjects. But when it comes to this subject, there's a little unfortunate situation where people confuse politics with history. You can remain good friends, good allies, with Turkey, but at the same time not change historical facts.... So we should not mix up politics and history. We should be truthful about facts, but we can still remain friends, trade and maintain military relations.

Fox-TV: Let me just play the devil's advocate, as if I'm representing the president at this point. Yes, that's true, but where I sit right now, the world where it is, leaves us in a position where we do not want to insult Turkey and they've made it very clear to us that they would be deeply insulted.

Sassounian: First of all, this was done by the Ottoman Empire and not the Republic of Turkey, which didn't exist at the time. Secondly, Germany has no problem acknowledging what the Nazi regime did. There's no reason why today's Turkey should not acknowledge what was done by its predecessor....

Fox-TV: Turkey has become more and more important to us as the years go on.

Sassounian: It has become more important and recently it has become a serious problem for us because they've become more of a radical Islamic regime; they strengthened their ties with Iran and Syria and various other radical regimes.

Fox-TV: And I believe the administration is afraid of pushing them more into that camp, if they take the step of recognition.

Sassounian: This is the problem because we compromise our principles, our values, because of geopolitical considerations. We have to separate them. We have to say here are the facts, here's history, here are our values and you have to live with it. The more we cater to dictators, people who deny the facts of history, the more they're going to be demanding from us.

Fox-TV: And you know in history the Ottoman Empire, which fell right after that, the Turks say "not a genocide, it's the fog of war, people died from war, people died from disease, it wasn't planned, so therefore it wasn't a genocide," and you say...

Sassounian: There are hundreds of historians, experts on the Holocaust and the Genocide who have signed a unanimous letter saying it was genocide. We have court cases, we have the United Nations, we have the European Parliament that recognized the Genocide, so many countries, US states and President Reagan himself said it was genocide.

Fox-TV: I know you want recognition – there has been some – but maybe not enough. What else is it that you would want?

Sassounian: In fact, what we want is not really recognition, because from my point of view the world knows it was genocide. Some people don't want to say it publicly. But what we really want is...we lost a lot beyond the people who were killed – we lost our culture, our churches, our lands and our personal properties. Every Armenian had houses, farms, properties and bank accounts. We lost all of that. So my intent is to go to court – the World Court, the European Court and US Federal Courts. We want Turks to pay reparations, restitution and bring justice back for this massive crime they've committed. That's much more important to us than lip service that a politician would pay to us.

Fox-TV: The fact that there isn't that one level of official recognition keeps this topic very fresh. And to some extent there's an advantage to that because we're still talking about it all the time.

Sassounian: You're absolutely correct...let's forget about President Obama for a second. Even if the president of Turkey tomorrow morning would say it was genocide, most people around the world and maybe even some Armenians would say that we finally reached our objective, let's move on. So maybe it's a good thing that the Turks keep denying it.

In Praise of Erebuni Armenian School

By Satenik Karapetyan

After a full week of school, sports, and extra-curricular activities, most kids just want to wake up and watch cartoons all Saturday morning. That's not the case for more than 70 students of the Erebuni Armenian School in Belmont. These kids wake up bright and early every single Saturday to go to school, and not by force. Students happily admit they look forward to Armenian school every week, which they say has much more to offer than a typical, boring classroom.

For Phillip Petrossian, going to Armenian school is all about being a part of the community. "It's a good environment here where we get to learn about our Armenian language and culture, but we're also able to get together with all of our Armenian friends and it's a lot of fun."

According to principal, Armine Medzorian, the Erebuni School takes pride in the fact that they offer their students a very hands-on approach to learning. I caught up with some of the students doing an arts and crafts project in preparing for the Easter holiday. Medzorian says, "We teach our students the Armenian traditions and holidays in engaging and interactive

ways. For *Zatik* [Easter], we showed the students what a traditional Armenian Easter table looks like, by spreading an Easter table, where the parents, teachers and children celebrated Easter together." Each classroom also exhibited their Easter Projects on the table. The bright spring colors on display were resonant of the smiles and laughter spreading throughout the room of ecstatic students, parents and teachers who had all gathered for the festivities.

"There isn't a single thing I could complain about," said a beaming Marine Mkhitarian-Noble. "There's always something entertaining going on here for the kids, they always have activities and most importantly the work they do here is amazing. The teachers are wonderful." Noble says her daughter, Sophia, is only half Armenian. "The reason I bring my daughter to this school is for the education. We speak English at home, but here at the school she speaks Armenian. She has Armenian friends and she looks forward to coming here every week to spend quality time with them and to speak Armenian with them."

Nelli Harutyunyan, who teaches the third grade, has been working at the school for 10 years. "Language is so important. Our kids must speak Armenian. We as a people must maintain our language and here at Erebuni we try to

instill that in our students." The language is taught in the Eastern dialect of the Armenian language, which Medzorian says makes the Erebuni School unique. "We are in touch with the Ministry of Education in Armenia to obtain the latest didactic and educational materials. We live in times when the ties between the Diaspora and Armenia are very strong. The knowledge of Eastern Armenian is getting critical, no matter if you are western-speaking or eastern."

All of the Erebuni teachers have a background in education, and they are all natives of Armenia, some having been teachers there for many years. Naira Arsenyan teaches sixth grade. "What we are doing here with our students is keeping our Armenian traditions alive, and passing them down to the next generation. I really love kids and I'm happy to be able to pass down my knowledge to them."

For students like Eva Medzorian, the teachers' enthusiasm and passion for teaching is what really allows the students to come together at Erebuni as one community. "The school is so great. It's such a fun environment, and we're all part of such a loving and welcoming community here. More than that we're like a family and I love that our teachers are such a big part of that. I can tell they really like teaching us." Her friend Elaine Hovsepian agrees. "What I

love about this school is there are just warm hearts everywhere." As everyone gathers around the Easter table, nothing is more obviously on display.

At Erebuni, the Armenian language and culture are taught not only in the classroom but also through music, dance, poetry, games and theatre. This year, the school also started Zangakner, a performing arts group in which children are able to participate and learn many traditional and modern Armenian songs and dance. The school is constantly planning fun events and fundraisers for the Armenian community. On May 14, the Zankagner group will perform at the celebration of the 20th anniversary of the Independence of the Republic of Armenia hosted by the Erebuni School. All are invited to attend the free event to be held at 6 p.m. in the Holy Cross Armenian Church in Belmont.

Erebuni Armenian School continues to grow. Currently located at Plymouth Congregational Church in Belmont, school hours are from 10 a.m. to 12:45 p.m. each Saturday from September to June. To learn more about the school, visit their website www.erebunischool.org, or simply stop by.

(Satenik Karapetyan is a student at Emerson College.)



Banquet in New Jersey Honoring *Mirror-Spectator* Set for June 4

BANQUET, from page 1

need to keep the printed newspapers.”

The banquet will commence at 7 p.m. with a cocktail reception, and dinner will be at 8 o'clock. Dr. Raffy Hovanesian will serve as the master of ceremonies. There will be classical music performed by cellist Elizabeth Kalfayan during cocktails, while singer Datevik Hovanesian will provide jazz entertainment for guests later in the program.

Hovanesian, born in Jerusalem, graduated from the American University of Beirut. After medical school, he did post-graduate study at Johns Hopkins University. He is board certified in internal medicine and gastroenterology. He served one year as a major in the US army and then began private practice in Merrillville, Ind. He was chairman of medicine and president of the medical staff at both St. Mary Mercy Hospital and Methodist Hospital for many years. After retirement in 2005, he eventually moved to Englewood, NJ.

Hovanesian continues to be extremely active in Armenian circles. He has been vice chairman of the Diocesan Council of the Diocese of the Armenian Church of America (Eastern) since 2004, and serves on the boards of the American University of Armenia, the Armenian General Benevolent Union (AGBU), St. Nersess Seminary, and the Armenian American Health Professional Organization. From 1976 to 1996 he served as the delegate of Sts. Joachim and

Anne Armenian Church of Palos Heights, Illinois to the Diocesan Assembly, and was a member of the board of the Armenian Assembly of America in 1980.

His medals and titles include the St. Gregory the Illuminator Medal from Catholicos Karekin I of Holy Echmiadzin in 1998; Prince of Cilicia from the Catholicosate of Cilicia in Antelias in 1982; the Ellis Island Medal of Honor in 2000; and a gold medal from the Mkhitar Heratsi Yerevan State Medical University, as well as benefactor of the AGBU, the Contemporary Museum of Art (Chicago), and the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) of Indiana.

Elizabeth Kalfayan is director of the New Horizons Symphony Orchestra. She performs as soloist and principal cellist with numerous symphony orchestras and chamber music ensembles throughout the United States and internationally, and holds a master's degree in Performance from the Manhattan School of Music. Kalfayan is especially known for her performance lectures that present the works and genius of great composers for the violoncello, such as Schumann, Rachmaninov, Beethoven and Shostakovich.

Kalfayan has directed orchestra and chamber programs for the New Jersey public schools. She is founder and director of the Merritt Chamber Music Workshops and has coached chamber music at the Puffin Foundation and



Dr. Raffy Hovanesian

the New Jersey Youth Symphony. Her work is featured on a number of CDs.

Datevik, born to a family of musicians in Armenia, is the daughter of folk singer Ophelia Hambartsumian and *kamanche* player Norair Hovanesian. She made her first recording at the age of 11, and embarked on a life of musical performance and education. She toured Europe, the United States, Asia and Africa, giving solo performances in prominent jazz festivals, and even performed in movies. By 1979 she earned the title of “First Lady of Jazz” in the Soviet Union, which she maintained for nine consecutive years. It was during that time that her solo albums—“Day Dream,” “Concerto For Voice and Orchestra,” and “Doors” — were recorded.

Leaving everything behind, Datevik relocated to the United States.

Her first CD in the United States, “Ballads from the Black Sea,” (1997) was the result of a collaboration with pianist Larry Willis and his quartet in the studio of Mapleshade Record Productions. It prompted the president of the latter company, Pierre Sprey, to comment: “A rich new jazz voice of superb musicianship, earthy and passionate and swinging, proves that soul and jazz know no boundaries.” Working with American-Armenian pianist and composer Armen Donelian also had a great impact on Datevik.

Some of Datevik's greatest accomplishments in her career took place in the last 16 years when she introduced a new genre of music called ethnic jazz. She combined the Armenian folk music of Komitas, Sayat Nova and other sources with traditional jazz music. Consequently she has become a cultural ambassador of Armenia, introducing its heritage throughout the world. Thanks to her work, renowned Russian, American and Australian have adopted this music in their own compositions and concerts. “Listen to My Heart,” and “Stage to Stage” are her latest CDs.

Legendary jazz producer George Avakian has called Datevik “the finest new voice I have heard in a quarter of a century,” while internationally known composer, arranger and pianist Michel Legrand urges, “Listen to the heart of Armenia, listen to Datevik.”

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

AGBU Montreal Venturer Company Honored by Governor General of Canada

OTTOWA, Canada — On April 8, the governor general of Canada, David Johnston, hosted the AGBU Montreal Venturer Company and its scouting leadership to grant them the highest recognition in Canadian scouting, the Annapurna Award. The special ceremony was held in Rideau Hall at the governor's official Ottawa residence.



The governor general of Canada, David Johnston (center), with the AGBU Montreal Venturer troop at the Annapurna Award ceremony

The award was given to the AGBU team for their exceptional humanitarian and home-building mission, called Armenia 2010.

In a speech addressed to all the attendees, the governor general, who is also the chief scout of Canada, emphasized the virtues of scouting. He reminded the youth that it is in scouting that they learn leadership and teamwork, along with learning to challenge themselves and rise above all others. He also challenged them to think ahead to the year 2017, the 150th anniversary of the birth of Canada. He stressed that the Canada of tomorrow and the future must be built now by the youth through their everyday actions and by the

example they provide to others who look to them.

The attendees included many of the official leadership of the Scouts du Canada Federation, as well as co-winners from three other groups. They were particularly impressed by the complexity of the Armenia 2010 project, its multiple components and the financing that was raised by the teenage youth. The official emcee from the Decoration Committee of the Scouts du Canada Federation called on all to congratulate the AGBU youth as “young men and women with an immense sense of giving of themselves.”

At a special reception following the ceremony, the AGBU scout leadership handed commemorative plaques to the co-winning groups and to the Scouts du Montreal Metropolitan, as well as to Scouts du Canada. A special gift box containing the documentary DVD of the Armenia 2010 project with the names of the Annapurna winners, along with an engraved khachkar [stone cross] replica designed by Avedis Atamian, was donated to the personal collection of the Governor General. The Annapurna award is the highest distinction awarded to the AGBU Montreal scouting program during its 43-year history. The AGBU chapter is planning a recognition event to honor the Armenian-Canadian Annapurna award winners, which will be announced soon.

For more information, contact AGBU Montreal at agbumontreal@bellnet.ca, or visit www.agbumontreal.org.

Sargisian Calls For Broader Genocide Recognition

RECOGNITION, page 1


President Barack Obama to utter the word genocide in reference to the deaths of some 1.5 Armenians in Ottoman Turkey.

Obama has declined to do that since taking office. In a statement issued in April 2009, Obama implied that he is not using the politically sensitive term to avoid antagonizing Turkey and setting back its rapprochement with Armenia facilitated by Switzerland and the United States.

The rapprochement led to the signing in

Zurich in October 2009 of two Turkish-Armenian protocols on the full normalization of bilateral relations. Turkey subsequently made their parliamentary ratification conditional on the resolution of the Nagorno Karabagh stand-off.

Sargisian on Tuesday again condemned this precondition. He also accused Ankara of trying to “drive a wedge” between Armenia and its worldwide diaspora. The latter has for decades been at the forefront of the Genocide recognition campaign.



AGBU Detroit Chapter,
Tekeyan Cultural Association, Knights of Vartan,
AGBU Alex & Marie Manoukian School,
& the Detroit Armenia Fest Committee
present

The Armenian Genocide A Complete History

Historian Raymond Kevorkian lectures the
Armenian Genocide in His New Book



Thursday, May 12, 2011 at 7:30 pm


at the Hagopian Showroom
870 S. Old Woodward, Birmingham, MI

Mr. Kevorkian will be available to sign copies of his book

Winners of the 2011 Hagopian Family Foundation
Armenian Genocide Essay Competition
will be recognized at this book-signing event

Refreshments will be served
For more information, please contact:
David Terzhishian 248-229-0203



The Armenian Genocide was one of the greatest atrocities of the twentieth century, an episode in which up to 1.5 million Armenians lost their lives. In this major new history, the renowned historian Raymond Kevorkian provides an authoritative account of the origins, events and consequences of the years 1915 and 1916. He considers the role that the Armenian Genocide played in the construction of the Turkish nation state and Turkish identity, as well as exploring the ideologies of power, rule and state violence. Crucially, he examines the consequences of the violence against the Armenians: the implications of deportations and attempts to bring those who committed the atrocities to justice.

Kevorkian offers a detailed and meticulous record, providing an authoritative analysis of the events and their impact upon the Armenian community itself, as well as the development of the Turkish state. This important book will serve as an indispensable resource to historians of the period, as well as those wishing to understand the history of genocidal violence more generally.

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