

Inspirational Vergin Mazmanian, 103, Dies

Genocide Survivor

ARLINGTON, Mass. — Vergin (Virginia) Mazmanian, 103, a Genocide survivor who never shied away from telling her tale even when well past her century mark, died on June 14, at the Lexington Health Care Center after a lengthy illness.

Her daughter, Grace K. David, suggested that the very inner strength that allowed her mother to survive her horrific childhood during the Armenian Genocide was the one that allowed her to live to such a ripe age.



Vergin Mazmanian at the State House with Gov. Deval Patrick in 2009, during the annual Armenian Genocide program

“Survivors are very strong, determined people,” David said. “What keeps these people alive? The love of the preservation of our culture, heritage and Christianity.”

Her mother, she said, died without the realization of her greatest hope: acknowledgement or an apology from Turkey.

David took care of her mother in their two-family house, until she became too ill to be at home. She said she has not been able to go to her mother’s apartment since her death, as the memories are simply too painful and overwhelming.



Vergin Mazmanian

Vergin Simsarian was born in Amasia, historical Armenia, in 1908. She had taken refuge during the Genocide and hidden in a large pit in Deir Zor. However, Turkish soldiers had started a fire in the pit, killing some of the children and forcing the others to run out. She was rescued and brought to the Khrimian Hairig Orphanage. She found her only sister, Gladys Yerchanging Simsarian, by chance at the orphanage. The two were eventually sponsored by the extended Simsarian family and brought over to the US.

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Bipartisan Genocide Resolution Introduced In House

Schiff Cosponsors Resolution Urging Turkey to Return Confiscated Church Properties

WASHINGTON — Rep. Adam Schiff (D-CA) last week introduced a bipartisan House Resolution with Rep. Robert Dold (R-IL) recognizing and commemorating the Armenian Genocide in the House of Representatives. The resolution calls on the president and the US government to properly recognize and commemorate the atrocities that occurred in Armenia beginning in 1915, and which resulted in the death of 1.5 million Armenian men, women and children, as genocide.

“The facts of history are clear, well documented and non-negotiable — 1.5 million Armenians were deliberately murdered in the first genocide of the 20th century,” Schiff said. “If we are to prevent future atrocities, we must condemn genocide whenever and wherever it occurs. It has never served our national

see RESOLUTION, page 10



Rep. Adam Schiff



Rep. Robert Dold

Program in Honor of Yerevan My Love Held at Buckingham Palace

LONDON — Charles, the Prince of Wales, hosted an Anglo-Armenian charity event at Buckingham Palace on June 15. Project initiator and main benefactor Armen Sarkissian, former prime minister of Armenia and president of Eurasia House International, welcomed more than 250 guests to the program raising funds for the charity Yerevan My Love and Dumfries

honor.

“It gives me the greatest pleasure to be able to welcome you all to this very special occasion at Buckingham Palace,” said the Prince of Wales in his remarks and expressed his thanks to all the donors to Yerevan My Love and Dumfries House.

The evening started with a reception, followed by a concert, especially put together

on this occasion. Soprano Renée Fleming and violin virtuoso and conductor Maxim Vengerov, took part in the program, along with the Philharmonia Orchestra (London) and the Bach Choir. In addition to Handel, the choir sang pieces from the Armenian liturgy, *Surb, Surb* and *Hayr Mer* by Makar Ekmalian. Vengerov played Komitas’s *Krung* for the first time in his musical career, captivating the emotions of the audience. Fleming enthralled the audience not only with her mesmerizing voice, but also with her remarks. A banquet

followed in the Picture Gallery of the palace.

Yerevan My Love is a heritage-led regeneration project dedicated to preserving architecturally-significant buildings in Yerevan and putting them to use to improve the lives of disabled children,

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From left, Charles, the Prince of Wales, and Noubar Afeyan, at the charity concert and dinner at Buckingham Palace in support of Yerevan My Love and Dumfries House.

Members of the royal family, dignitaries, political, cultural and civic leaders and business leaders attended this event. Prime Minister of Armenia, Tigran Sargsian, and mayor of Yerevan, Karen Karapetyan, were among the guests of

Elena Bonner, Widow of Sakharov, Dies At 88

By Alessandra Stanley and Michael Schwartz

BOSTON (*New York Times*) — Elena G. Bonner, the Soviet dissident and human-rights campaigner who endured banishment and exile along with her husband, the dissident nuclear physicist Andrei D. Sakharov, died here on Saturday. She was 88.

The cause was heart failure, said Edward Kline, a director of the Andrei Sakharov Foundation. He said Bonner had been in the hospital since February.

Maligned by the government and, for much of her life, cast aside by society, Bonner and her husband were considered royalty among the tight-knit and embattled community of dissidents who challenged Soviet authority.

see BONNER, page 11



NEWS IN BRIEF

Monument to Fridtjof Nansen to Be Erected

YEREVAN (Armenpress) — The Committee for Fridtjof Nansen’s 150th Anniversary held a session this week, chaired by Armen Gevorgyan, Armenia’s vice prime minister.

An official said that during the session the committee discussed a number of issues on organizing events dedicated to Fridtjof Nansen, a Norwegian diplomat, humanitarian, Nobel laureate and a great friend of the Armenian people.

The committee agreed to erect a monument to Nansen in Yerevan.

Azeris Violate Ceasefire On Eve of Meeting

BAKU (PanARMENIAN.Net) — More than 250 incidences of ceasefire violation by the Azerbaijani armed forces were reported in the past week.

According to the Nagorno Karabagh armed forces, the Azeri side fired more than 1,700 shots along the line of contact, with the most intense violations reported on June 12 and 14.

UNESCO Objects to Jugha Reference to Khachkar Exhibit

PARIS (HETQ) — Just hours before the opening of an exhibit on Armenian stone crosses at the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) headquarters here on June 16, the organizers removed all place names and an informational map, as well as a photo of the Armenian cemetery in Jugha after the stone crosses had been destroyed by the Azerbaijani government.

The exhibit is titled “Art of the Stone Cross: Armenian Holy Stones.”

Arev Samvelyan, Armenia’s deputy minister of culture, said UNESCO officials not only found any mention of Armenian crosses in Turkey and Azerbaijan objectionable but references to crosses in Karabagh as well.

The Armenian delegation gave in on the Jugha issue but insisted on keeping the photo of the Armenian cemetery before the destruction of hundreds of stone crosses.

In response, UNESCO staffers removed the organization’s official flag from the exhibit hall and didn’t show for the opening ceremony, claiming that they were otherwise engaged.

Commenting on the flap, art historian Patrick Donabedian said, “I just want to underline that today UNESCO is far removed from fulfilling its stated mission. They wanted to remove my exhibit just because the word Jugha was in the text.”

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ARMENIA

News From Armenia

Fatah Delegation Visits Armenia

YEREVAN (armradio.am) – A delegation of the Palestinian Fatah party, led by Nabil Shaath, coordinator for international relations, arrived here on Sunday, June 19, to strengthen support for the recognition of a Palestinian state.

The visit is part of preparations to obtain international support for UN recognition of a Palestinian state in September.

The delegation was scheduled to meet with the high-ranking officials in Armenia, spokesman for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Armenia Tigran Balayan said.

In addition to Armenia, Shaath and his delegation will also visit Moldova, the Philippines, Mexico and Colombia.

National Security Council Secretary to Visit the Netherlands

YEREVAN (armradio.am) – A delegation headed by the secretary of the National Security Council of Armenia, chairman of the Board of National Social Housing Association of Armenia, Arthur Baghdasarian, will pay a visit to the Netherlands on June 20-22 at the invitation of the Dutch International Guarantees for Housing Foundation.

Within the framework of the visit Baghdasarian will meet with the Dutch Secretary of State for Security and Justice, the National Security Adviser of the Kingdom of Netherlands, as well as the leadership of the Hague Centre for Strategic Studies.

Armenia Needs \$1 Billion Investment to Improve Drinking Water System

YEREVAN (Tendersinfo News) – Patrick Lorin, director general of Armenian Water and Sewage Company (AWSC), said that \$1 billion in investments are required to improve the drinking water supply system there.

Approximately \$100 million was invested to modernize the system by 2011, and the government is expected to take a loan worth \$100 million for the coming five years. This will allow for the goal of providing a 17-hour water supply in the country by 2017.

The company is now implementing a large investment project in Hrazdan. This project will be completed by the end of the year.

According to the official, so far, the AWSC serves 37 cities and 300 communities, except for Yerevan, Gumri, Vanadzor and Armavir, where the average index of water supply duration makes 14 hours compared to six hours in 2004.

Byurakan Observatory to Host Seminar on Shirakatsi

YEREVAN (PanArmenian.Net) – By a decision of the Armenian government and UNESCO, 2012 will be declared the year to honor Armenian mathematician, astronomer and geographer, Anania Shirakatsi, on the 1,400th anniversary of his birthday.

The main event of the year will be a scientific conference to be held at Byurakan observatory, which will focus on Shirakatsi's works in astronomy as well as the country's monuments dedicated to that field.

As preparation for the event, Byurakan observatory will host a seminar July 12-13, on the initiative of Prof. Hrach Martirosyan, of Leiden University.

Wikileaks Declassifies Document On NATO-Armenia Relations

YEREVAN (Noyan Tapan) – Wikileaks has declassified a new document on the NATO-Armenia relations with the North Atlantic Alliance. As azatutyun.am reports, Anthony Godfrey, the then-temporary attorney of the United States Embassy to Yerevan, touched upon the existing mood in the Armenian government on the threshold of military exercises by NATO in Baku.

The participation of the Armenian military officers in those military exercises, titled The Best Effort 2004, was put into doubt by Azerbaijani authorities.

The Best Effort 2004 military exercises within the frameworks of the For Peace program of The leading representatives of the Armenian government Partnership are considered as an indicator: whether NATO and particularly the United States are actually willing to work with Armenia. "Until the five Armenian military officials have not received the permission by the Azerbaijan Embassy to Tbilisi to participate in the military exercises, the Armenian officials, from the president

to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, will continue to consider the situation as a test for the NATO," Godfrey writes, noting that the Armenian authorities want to see whether the alliance's leadership is able to show a political will if the Azerbaijan leadership doesn't allow the Armenian officials to enter the country.

The American diplomat also notes that in summer 2004, the Armenian authorities actively pointed out the positive approach Yerevan displayed in NATO's implemented projects in the Southern Caucasus.

"The members of Armenian government especially stress that they allowed Turkey to participate in The Best Effort 2003 military exercises held in Yerevan. The Armenian authorities noted that they also officially invited the representatives of Azerbaijan.

"The Armenian authorities expect that the United States and NATO allies will put pressure on Azerbaijan, forcing Baku to allow Armenian officers to take part in the military exercises," a US diplomat writes.

The pressure made by the Armenian

side in the end led to certain results. Azerbaijan authorities didn't allow the Armenian officers to enter the territory of their country, but in response to which several hours before the start of the military exercises James Jounce, the chief supreme commander of the joint armed forces of the NATO to Europe, announced the cancellation of the holding.

In general, assessing the Armenia-NATO relations, the temporary attorney Godfrey wrote in August, 2004: "Serious signs appeared during the recent months according to which Armenian trends to make cooperation closer with NATO in the field of Defense. The Armenian side develops the Individual Partnership project as well as has agreed to accept the assessment mission of official field. The Armenian authorities, however, assure that if The Best Effort 2004 military exercises are carried out without Armenia, it will lead to serious disappointment to both the Partnership for Peace and the North Atlantic Alliance in general."

United Nations: Phenomenon of Demographic Aging In Armenia Striking

YEREVAN (PanARMENIAN.Net) – The United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) launched the report of its first Road Map for Mainstreaming Aging, a project to help guide Armenia in devising policies relating to aging and older people. The government of Armenia has formally adopted the recommendations as a part of their National Strategy and Action Plan on Aging.

"Mainstreaming aging," the overarching goal of the road map, means ensuring that population aging and the specific needs of older people are routinely considered in all policy areas, rather than being sidelined and treated as a separate issue or "problem."

The Armenian Road Map includes an analysis of existing laws and documents relating to aging. Specific recommendations include pension and housing reform; promotion of lifelong learning; media campaigns to combat negative stereotypes; improved medical training in gerontology and geriatrics; changes in labor law to provide incentives to employers and employees alike for continued labor market participation; formal recognition of family-based care and improvements in institutional care facilities.

Eleven percent of Armenia's 3.1 million inhabitants are 65 years or older, and this segment of the population is projected to reach 18 percent by 2030. A significant factor that has quickened the pace of change is the massive migration of young people: around two thirds of Armenians live outside of the country and in the period 2005-2010 net migration out of the country totaled 15,000 people (about 0.5 percent of the total population) each year.

Combined with a total fertility rate of 1.74 children per woman – well below the level of about 2.1 required for long-term generational replacement – and a gain in life expectancy of almost six years since 1990, the phenomenon of demographic aging in Armenia is now striking.



Armenian TV anchor with the logo of the *Armenian Mirror-Spectator*

Armenian TV Does Report on *Mirror* Anniversary

YEREVAN – On June 18, Haylur news broadcast of Armenian Public TV H1 presented its Washington Bureau correspondent's report about the celebration of the 80th anniversary of the *Armenian Mirror-Spectator*, which took place in Teaneck, NJ.

Correspondent Haigaram Karapetyan said that in 1932, when there was no Armenian Radio or TV, the ADL Party decided to publish an English-language newspaper to help the new generations to cope with their new lives in the new Country, thus, the first English-language Armenian newspaper of the world was born. Then he showed sections of the celebration of June 4 in New Jersey, where the Armenia's Ambassador to the United Nations Garen Nazarian spoke about the Azeri assault on the American media and the role of the *Mirror-Spectator* to inform that to the Armenian public and to counter them.

The report included a section where editor Alin K. Gregorian explained the daily work of the paper, and Edmond Azadian, a 40-year veteran of the paper, explained the role of the paper in the life of the Armenian people in America.



Hagop Vartivarian



Edmond Azadian

Correction

An article by Bethel Charkoudian which appeared in the *Mirror-Spectator* recently incorrectly stated that the name of Dr. Martin Deranian's grandmother was Varter. Indeed, that was his mother's name.



ARMENIA

Tekeyan Armenia Sponsors Program for Children

YEREVAN – Tekeyan Armenia focused its attention on the students in Gumri and Stepanavan. Recently, the Tekeyan Centre held a program taking children to museums and various other cultural sights. The point of the program is to familiarize the children with the important historical sites and allow them to make new friends at the same time.

The first visit was to Hovhanness Toumanian House Museum in Yerevan. They saw documents he had written by hand and some of the translations of his stories.

The students also visited the Armenian National Gallery, where they viewed the collections of Armenian, Russian and foreign works of art including paintings, sculptures, etc.

From Yerevan, the Tekeyan students went to the seat of the Armenian Apostolic Church, Echmiadzin. Here is one of the great masterpieces of Armenian architecture, Sourp Hripsime Church, said to be built in 618, at the site where the saint was tortured.

Then the children visited the Mother See, built in 303, by King Trdat.

The children next visited the ruins of Zvartnots church, built in the seventh century.

Vartan Ouzounian Visits

Vartan Ouzounian, the chair of the Tekeyan Centre Fund, was in Yerevan on a brief working visit. His visit aimed at expanding the activity of the Fund by launching new projects. In connection with it, the chair and the director had a number of important meetings both with authorities and individuals.

First of all, Ouzounian visited the fund's



Children at the Hovhanness Toumanian House Museum in Yerevan

beneficiaries, the Tekeyan Schools in Gumri and Stepanavan.

Both schools welcomed the Tekeyan representatives. During the meetings with the school principals the parties discussed the upcoming projects of the Fund – the project Free Textbooks for Tekeyan Students in particular, the realization of which can be possible thanks to many benefactors from the diaspora. The parties also discussed the problems the schools face, such as the lack of school buses in Stepanavan, classrooms which need supplies, the problem of the inadequate gym hall in Gumri and many other issues. Tekeyan Center will try to support the schools in solving the problems as far as possible.

Ouzounian had a further meeting with fund's trustee Nar Khatchadourian, who had arrived in Armenia from Lebanon with his

family members on the occasion of the open performance at Opera square of Kohar choir, and other musical groups and pop stars. Ouzounian congratulated the Khatchadourians, the founders and benefactors of Kohar, on the successful event. During the meeting Tekeyan members discussed various issues and problems concerning the fund's activity. The trustees also touched upon some resolutions adopted at March AGM in London and inquired about their progress. Khatchadourian on the occasion of his visit to Armenia donated \$1,000 to one of the most important programs of the fund, which is the project of textbooks. Later on Ouzounian had a meeting with Ara Aharonian, the husband of TC Fund Trustee Sylva Krikorian. As the chair of several Catholic charity groups operating in Armenia, Aharonian praised Tekeyan Centre Fund's initiative to support Tekeyan educational establishments. Aharonian said he hoped that the Fund would extend its geography and would involve school children from the diaspora in its projects as well, since it would secure stronger relations between Armenia and the diaspora. He donated \$1,000 for the implementation of the fund's next projects.

Tekeyan Centre hosted Jirair Tanielian of Lebanon, an editor, linguist and educator on the occasion of his 70th anniversary. For his great contribution to the Armenian language, history and education, Tanielian received the Brilliant Ararat, the highest award of the

Tekeyan Cultural Association.

After the event Tanielian met with his old friend Vartan Ouzounian. Ouzounian and Tanielian were, for many years, classmates in AGBU's secondary school in Beirut, Hovagimian-Manougian, and worked together during their school years in organizing functions and various student activities.

Kamo Areyan, deputy mayor of Yerevan, received the chair and the director of Tekeyan Centre Fund to discuss some important issues concerning Yerevan city. The Tekeyan representatives offered the authorities to undertake the arrangement of green spaces, as well as the illumination matters in the neighborhood of Tekeyan Centre and to prevent these areas from being abandoned or turning into cafes. They also reminded the Deputy about the Yerevan Municipality decision of 1997 to name the neighborhood of Tekeyan Centre after Vahan Tekeyan. As per Ouzounian's request, the fund is ready to support Yerevan Municipality in erecting a monument to the great Armenian poet.

Tekeyan Centre Fund is also willing to make its contribution to the reconstruction of botanical gardens in Yerevan, which are in critical condition. Thus, at the meeting the parties came to an agreement to cooperate for the benefits of Yerevan city.

Ouzounian completed his business trip to Yerevan with a meeting with the UK ambassador in Armenia, Charles Lonsdale, and the ABBC director, Armine Israyelyan.



The students visited Sourp Hripsime Church

Sargisian Details Stance on Dialogue with Armenian Opposition

YEREVAN (RFE/RL) – President Serge Sargisian last Friday insisted that he is committed to engage in a meaningful dialogue with the Armenian National Congress (HAK) but again ruled out any formal negotiations between his administration and the opposition alliance led by former president, Levon Ter-Petrosian.

In a written statement, Sargisian also signaled greater flexibility on the format and agenda of that dialogue favored by the HAK. He at the same time warned the country's largest opposition force against attempting to "corner" him.

"The essential principle is clear: ultimatums are unacceptable, and talking in ultimatums is a road which leads nowhere, and turning a dialogue into negotiations is simply unacceptable," said Sargisian.

Ter-Petrosian and his associates want the dialogue to take the form of negotiations conduct-

ed by special delegations representing the two rival parties. The HAK formed a five-member negotiating team earlier this month.

Sargisian's chief of staff, Karen Karapetian, and senior representatives of the ruling Republican Party of Armenia (HHK) made clear afterwards that no such teams will be formed by the government side. They also said that the dialogue cannot center on the holding of fresh elections, the key opposition demand.

Sargisian sounded less categorical on both issues. "If instead of negotiations, which are unacceptable, the Armenian National Congress is genuinely ready to continue the dialogue on the outline of the country's development, essential issues of the country's foreign and internal policies and desires to do so through the specially designated individuals, representatives of the [ruling] coalition parties can sit down at the

negotiation table with them," read his statement.

The president also said, "If among the numerous problems facing our people and our country the HAK is interested exclusively in the elections, the Speaker of the National Assembly is ready to personally receive the representatives of that political body and hear them out.

"If, however, there are suggestions aimed at the rise of our economy and solution of the social problems existing in the country, then the prime minister personally will receive them and discuss these issues. If there are issues which command intervention by the president, the head of the presidential staff will receive them and discuss all issues."

The HHK's parliamentary leader, Galust Sahakian, said earlier on Friday that the ruling party and its two junior coalition parties are

ready to hear HAK demands for fresh elections. But he said they will remain adamant in rejecting those demands.

Sahakian said the Sargisian administration would like to discuss with the HAK the proper conduct of regular parliamentary and presidential elections due in 2012 and 2013 respectively.

Asked about the dialogue format, the Sahakian said, "If they call me one day and say 'Mr. Sahakian, we want to meet with your parliamentary faction,' no problem, we'll meet. If they say they have issues to discuss with the government, the prime minister will receive them."

The HAK's immediate reaction to Sargisian's remarks was cautious. In a short statement, the bloc said it needs more time to pass judgment on them because of "certain ambiguities contained in the statement."



INTERNATIONAL

International News

More than 360,000 Azeri Refugees in Armenia

GENEVA (PanArmenian.Net) – June 20 has been named World Refugee Day since 2001, by a decision of the United Nations General Assembly. The General Assembly adopted a resolution to express its solidarity with Africa on December 4, 2000, as a result of the great number of displaced persons there.

The resolution noted that 2001 marked the 50th anniversary of the 1951 Convention relating to the status of refugees, and that the Organization of African Unity (OAU) agreed to have International Refugee Day coincide with Africa Refugee Day on June 20. The Assembly therefore decided that June 20 would be celebrated as World Refugee Day from 2001 onwards. This day was designated by the UN High Commissioner for Refugees to bring attention to the plight of approximately 14 million refugees around the world.

Currently there are about 20 million refugees and 25 million internally-displaced persons registered in the world, most of whom are in Africa, Afghanistan and the Balkans. This makes the problem of refugees one the most urgent in the world.

According to statistics, there are 360,000 refugees in Armenia deported from Azerbaijan.

Sargisian Sends Congratulatory Message For Russia Day

YEREVAN – President Serge Sargisian sent a congratulatory message to the president of the Russian Federation, Dmitry Medvedev, and Premier Vladimir Putin, on the occasion of Russia Day.

Defense Ministry Delegation Participates In Sitting of NATO Committee

BRUSSELS, Belgium (Noyan Tapan) – On June 17, in the NATO headquarters, the delegation headed by the first Deputy of Republic of Armenia Minister of Defense Davit Tonoyan took part in the sitting of the NATO Political and Partnership Committee.

The 2011 report of evaluation for the Republic of Armenia-NATO Planning and Review Process, as well as the goals referred to the field of Republic of Armenia Defense and the results of the strategic review of Republic of Armenia Defense within the frames of the new project of the Republic of Armenia-NATO Individual Partnership Actions Plan were discussed at the sitting. NATO's 28 member states welcomed the end of the strategic review of Republic of Armenia Defense and expressed willingness to support the implementation of reforms in the field of Defense formed at the result of the review. NATO member countries highly praised also the trebling of Republic of Armenia troops in Afghanistan, the continuation of the peacekeeping mission in Kosovo and the recorded progress in the implementation of the objectives of the partnership of Republic of Armenia-NATO planning and review process.

At the end of the sitting, the Armenian delegation expressed its satisfaction about the results of the meeting and thanked the member countries for providing the security of the Republic of Armenia and for the readiness to support the development efforts in the fields of defense.

System of a Down Show Sold Out in Brazil

RIO DE JANEIRO (PanARMENIAN.Net) – System of a Down (SOAD) will co-headline the Rock In Rio concert with Guns n' Roses, on Sunday, October 2.

According to the SOAD website, tickets for the concert have already been sold out.

SOAD announced its reunion in November 2010 after a five-year hiatus, saying it will tour Northern America and Europe. Prior to that, lead singer Serj Tankian had performed solo concerts, while Daron Malakian and John Dolmayan created the band Scars on Broadway.

Armenian, Georgian Churches Fail to Settle Disputes

TBILISI (RFE/RL) – The spiritual leaders of Armenia and Georgia have failed to reach any concrete agreements on disputes between their state-backed churches after nearly one week of negotiations held during Catholicos Karekin II's visit to Georgia.

The supreme head of the Armenian Apostolic Church and Catholicos-Patriarch Ilia II of the Georgian Orthodox Church publicly disagreed on the main sticking points as they wrapped up the talks late last Wednesday.

Karekin began the trip last Friday in the hope of convincing Georgia's political and religious leadership to grant an official status to the Georgia Diocese of the Armenian Church and return several churches in and outside Tbilisi to the latter. Karekin's office said after his week-end meeting with Georgian President Mikheil Saakashvili that the Georgian side agreed to register the diocese and pledged to preserve the churches "until their return to the diocese."

However, no agreements or joint declarations were signed as a result. Speaking to journalists in Georgia's Javakhi region mostly populated by ethnic Armenians, the two pontiffs said they failed to work out a mutually acceptable document. "I think that we are saying the same things but with different wordings," said Ilia.

Ilia insisted that the Armenian Church should gain official recognition in Georgia only if the Georgian Church is granted the same status in Armenia. Karekin countered that Armenia's small ethnic Georgian community, numbering less than 1,000 people, never applied for such a status. He argued that Armenian law provides for the easy registration of religious minorities.

Contradicting Saakashvili's assurances reportedly given to Karekin, Ilia also stated that "Armenian churches will be repaired in case of the restoration of Georgian churches in Armenia." "If



Catholicos of All Armenians Karekin II (right) and Catholicos-Patriarch of All Georgia Ilia II

Georgia restores Armenian churches, then Armenia must repair and preserve Georgian churches as well," he said.

The elderly patriarch referred to several medieval and mostly abandoned churches located in Armenia's northern Lori province. The area was for centuries controlled by Georgian kings through their Armenian vassals. Some of those noble families were members of the Georgian Church.

The Armenian Church disputes Georgian claims to these worship sites, saying that they were built and always used by Armenian adherents of the Greek Orthodox faith.

"Of course, restoration of historical monuments must be an obligation of the two states, but one must first of all ascertain their origin," said Karekin.

Asked by RFE/RL's Armenian service whether the Georgian Church is ready to substantiate its claims with documentary evidence, Ilia replied, "Yes, we are ready."

The Georgian Church proposed that

the two sides form a joint commission of scholars and historians for that purpose. The proposal was not accepted by Karekin.

"We replied that they should first present necessary facts as to what exactly the commission should investigate," said the Armenian Catholicos. "An appropriate decision [on whether to set up such a body] would be made after that."

In an interview published by PanArmenian news agency, Ilia II said that "Karekin II is young and should gain more experience. He is smart and in a hurry. But I told him that calmness is the best choice."

"Armenians want more Armenian churches in Georgia and, in response, we offered to open more Georgian ones in Armenia. We also agreed that our future cooperation will be more effective," he added.

Both religious leaders stressed that the two churches will continue to seek a negotiated solution to these disputes.

UK House of Lords Debates Armenian Genocide

LONDON (armradio.am) – The House of Lords of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland held a debate on the Armenian Genocide on June 16.

"There is no doubt that the treatment of the Armenians was horrific and caused the deaths of hundreds of thousands by force of arms, starvation or disease. They should not be forgotten, but we believe that it is for the Turkish and Armenian people to work together to address their common history. We encourage any process, which helps them do so in an open, honest and constructive manner, but it would not be helpful for us to pre-empt their conclusions," said Minister of State at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office David Howell.

"France has already recognized the Genocide. One-and-a-half million people were massacred in 1915. I have just come back from Armenia, where I visited the Genocide Museum. I am sure that many of your Lordships have visited the Holocaust museum. This is no less upsetting, shocking and dreadful than the Holocaust museum. There is so much evidence and it was known at the time that this was happening. Every newspaper from every country had headlines about this massacre. It is time that we recognize the Armenian Genocide," Baroness Shreela Flather stated.

"After a century of taboo and silence, Turkish journalists and historians are at last beginning to discuss the evidence of murder, enslavement, deportation and forcible transfer, rape, persecution and other inhumane acts of a similar charac-

ter directed against the Armenian population of Turkey in 1915-16. Would it not help Turkey's application to join the European Union if Turkish politicians acknowledged the crimes of their ancestors?" said Eric Lubbock, Lord Avebury.

"There is a serious risk in Turkey of prosecution for journalists and writers who use the term 'Armenian Genocide.'

Some have been prosecuted, and much educational material for schools has been produced by the Turkish Government denying the Armenian genocide. Such censorship in public discussion and education is unacceptable for a nation that hopes to join the European Union," Baroness Caroline Cox stated.

Man Sells 'Worthless' Painting by Aivazovsky for More than \$1 Million

STOCKHOLM (Tert.am) – A painting considered worthless by its owner, a former lumberjack who almost donated it to charity, sold for \$1.1 million at a Swedish auction.

The painting, which had been left to the man by his wife and was hanging on his wall for almost a decade, turned out to be an 1858 work by Ivan (Hovhannes) Aivazovsky, titled "The Battle of Bomarsund," reported *The Local* this week.

The *Local* reported the unidentified elderly man, a former lumberjack who earned his education through correspondence courses, was downsizing to a new home and sent a small Stockholm auction house several boxes of unwanted goods, along with a large canvas.

On a note he had written, "Will you accept these things? Sell what you can and leave the rest to the Red Cross."

The painting was put up for auction on the Internet with a starting price in the \$1,200-\$1,500 range, but when activity around the painting exceeded

expectations, the head of the auction house decided to seek expert advice.

Enter the Uppsala Auction House, known for selling a number of Russian objects, which in turn contacted its own specialists.

When the painting was authenticated as a genuine work by Aivazovsky, Knut Knutson of the auction house went to see the owner in person to deliver the news that the expected price would be a bit higher than originally thought.

Knutson, who has traveled the country as part of the Swedish version of "Antiques Roadshow," began by saying, "We are thinking of a starting price of five or six..." he told *The Local*, and the owner interrupted him saying "surely, you don't mean 500,000 or 600,000 (kronor) do you?"

When Knutson replied, "No, actually I mean five or six million..." the atmosphere in the room turned "electric," he said.

On Tuesday, the painting sold for 7.6 million kronor (\$1.1 million) to a Russian collector.



INTERNATIONAL

Syria Unrest: Clashes as Large Pro-Assad Rallies Held

DAMASCUS (BBC) — Clashes have broken out between supporters of Syrian President Bashar al-Assad and anti-government protesters in Homs, Hama and Deir al-Zour.

At least seven people were killed when security forces opened fire on anti-Assad demonstrators this week, activists said.

Large rallies in support of Assad have been held across Syria, including Damascus, Deraa, Hama and Homs, state TV reported.

On Tuesday, June 21, Assad addressed the country, calling for national dialogue.

He called on refugees in Turkey to return to Syria and promised various reforms in the speech, which was dismissed by the opposition as inadequate.

Rights groups say at least 1,300 civilians have been killed in demonstrations since March, along with more than 300 soldiers and police.

After the speech, state media announced a new presidential decree granting amnesty to prisoners for certain crimes committed before Monday.

The government has also published a draft law organizing the formation of political parties, according to Syria's state-run Sana news agency.

Assad's promised reforms, if they are actually implemented, will lead to nothing more than a

sham democracy"

A state TV presenter said millions of Syrians across the country were expressing support for the reforms.

TV images showed large crowds carrying Assad's portraits and waving Syrian flags.

But anti-government protesters said reforms were no longer enough and that the only solution was a change of regime.

Protesters also pointed out that there was no announcement on ending the violence, nor any mention of holding the security services accountable for the recent crackdown in the country.

The president ordered a general amnesty on May 31 for all political prisoners, including members of the outlawed Muslim Brotherhood. Hundreds of detainees were released, but thousands more remain in jail, according to rights groups.

In Monday's speech — his third since protests began — Assad blamed recent protests on a small group of "saboteurs" who were exploiting popular grievances.

He also said Syria should deal with people's demands for reform and that a national dialogue would shape the country's future.

Continue reading the main story

Meanwhile, a group from the UN refugee agency (UNHCR) went on a government-organized visit of the town of Jisr al-Shughour on Monday.

Jisr al-Shughour is the town in the north-west of the country near the border with Turkey where the military launched an offensive after 120 army personnel were reportedly killed there.

The UNHCR said most of Jisr al-Shughour was deserted, with shops closed, while nearby villages from about 40 kilometers (25 miles) away were also quiet, with little evidence of people working in the field.

"Syrian refugees spoke to our team about their fears and trauma. Many had lost family members, who they said were either killed, missing or in hiding," the UNHCR said in a statement.

"Our team heard accounts of murders, tar-

Turkey, Israel in New Bid To Overcome Crisis: Report

JERUSALEM (AFP) — Israel and Turkey have been holding secret talks at several levels to end their diplomatic crisis, Haaretz newspaper reported last Tuesday, quoting a senior Israeli official.

The report, for which there was no confirmation, said an official representing Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and Feridun Sinirlioglu, undersecretary at the Turkish Foreign Ministry, were involved in the discussions.

Talks were also being held between the Israeli and Turkish representatives on a UN panel investigating Israel's deadly raid on a Gaza-bound flotilla in May 2010 that left nine Turkish nationals dead, the paper said.

The two representatives — Israel's Yosef Ciechanover and Turkey's Ozdem Sanberk — have been working together on the flotilla inquiry for the past several months.

But they have also been onpassing messages to their respective governments and even drafted understandings to end the crisis, according to the Haaretz.

"Israel is interested in the restoration of healthy and positive bilateral relations, which are in the interest of both parties," a senior Israeli official told AFP, although he declined to comment on the report.

Turkish and Israeli officials previously tried to patch up the row in December, and Haaretz said they also held a second meeting in April that was not reported.

Relations between the once-close allies hit an all-time low after the bloody storming of the flotilla on May 31, 2010 that prompted a bitter exchange of words and Turkey's immediate recall of its ambassador.

A second flotilla is expected to set sail for Gaza in the coming weeks but the Mavi Marmara, the ferry which led last year's ill-fated convoy, will not be taking part, its Turkish owners said last week.

The move was welcomed by Israel, who had urged Turkey to prevent its citizens from attempting to run the blockade.

"We believe that this is a positive decision and hope it will contribute to restoring normal relations between Israel and Turkey," a government official said on Sunday.

After last year's showdown, Turkish President Abdullah Gul said relations with Israel, a former strategic ally, would "never be the same."

Ties had already been strained over Israel's deadly 22-day campaign in Gaza which began just before New Year 2009 as well as by Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan's outbursts against the Jewish state and his defense of Hamas.

Israel imposed its blockade on Gaza in June 2006 after Palestinian militants based in the Strip snatched Israeli soldier Gilad Shalit.

The restrictions were tightened a year later when Hamas took control of the enclave, but last year, Israel took steps to ease the closure following a wave of international outrage over the flotilla carnage.

Russian Parliament Ratifies New Defense Pact with Armenia

MOSCOW (RFE/RL) — The lower house of the Russian parliament, the State Duma, ratified last Friday a key agreement to prolong Russia's military presence in Armenia and deepen wider defense links between the two countries.

The agreement, signed during Russian President Dmitry Medvedev's August 2010 visit to Yerevan, extended Russia's lease on a military base headquartered in Gumri by 24 years, until 2044. It also upgraded the base's role in contributing to Armenia's security and committed Moscow to supplying the Armenian military with modern weaponry.

The Armenian parliament ratified the agreement in April, two months after its legality was upheld by the Constitutional Court in Yerevan.

Alexei Ostrovsky, chairman of a State Duma committee on the Commonwealth of Independent States, stressed "the exceptional significance" of the defense pact as he presented it to Russian lawmakers for ratification. He said it will not only step up Russian-Armenian military cooperation but also serve as an "additional argument in our everlasting allied, friendly and mutually beneficial relations."

"The presence of the Russian military base has become an integral part of partnership between Russia and Armenia on issues related to the security of our countries as well as an element of security in the Caucasus region," the Itar-Tass news agency quoted Ostrovsky as saying.

The Gumri base numbers some 3,500 troops and is equipped with hundreds of tanks, armored personnel carriers and artillery systems. It was beefed up a decade ago by Russian fighter jets and sophisticated S-300 surface-to-air missiles.

The Russian troop presence has been a key element of Armenia's national security strategy. Georgia complicated it in April when it annulled an agreement that allowed Moscow to make shipments to the base through Georgian territory and airspace.

According to Itar-Tass, Ostrovsky mentioned the Georgian move in his speech. He told the Duma that the Russian Defense Ministry has "additionally addressed the issues of supplies to the base, including by using third countries." He did not elaborate.

Dink's Killer Faces 27 Years in Prison

ISTANBUL (*Hurriyet Daily News*) — The prosecutor in the case of murdered Turkish-Armenian journalist Hrant Dink has demanded that the confessed killer received between 18 and 27 years in prison for the crime of assassinating him in 2007.

Dink was viewed by ultra-nationalists as a traitor, an enemy of Turks and a despicable person, due to the defamatory campaign launched against him, read the legal statement issued by Prosecutor Ali Demir.

Demir presented his legal opinion Friday based on case investigations pertaining to Dink at the trial of Ogün Samast, who is being tried at juvenile court on charges of premeditated murder and carrying an unlicensed firearm.

ged assassinations, assaults, civilians getting killed in crossfire, torture and humiliation by the military.

"Most of these people had lost virtually all their belongings and property. In many cases, their livestock were shot, fields were torched

and homes and businesses destroyed or confiscated."

More than 10,000 Syrian refugees have crossed the Turkish border and Ankara says another 10,000 are sheltering on the Syrian side.

"Dink was involved in leftist activities in 1970, changed his name to Firat by appealing to the court due to his concerns about whether the name 'Hrant' may damage the Armenian community and founded in 1996 *Agos* newspaper, where he advocated for the rights and interests of the Armenians," read the prosecutor's legal opinion on the issue.

Dink was targeted as an enemy of Turks because of the articles he wrote, the legal opinion said, according to the Anatolia news agency.

Demir's statement argued that Samast committed the murder with premeditation and in cold blood. Samast has, however, shown repentance in the time since the killing, according to Demir.

The statement also referred to an article that Dink had written on the same day that Samast departed from the Black Sea province of Trabzon. Dink's article showed that he had sensed that he was in peril, but that he did not want to think about his own death, according to Demir.

The legal opinion also referred to an expert report, which claimed that Samast had no problems in terms of his level of intelligence and comprehension, but that he had not internalized universal humanitarian values and that he had not developed a proper sense of conscience. The report went further to argue that Samast had been subjected to violence by his father, which later affected his personal development.

Iran's Ahmadinejad in Phone Talks with Armenian, Azeri Leaders

TEHRAN (RFE/RL) — Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad telephoned his Armenian and Azerbaijani counterparts on Sunday, ahead of their crunch negotiations on the Nagorno-Karabagh conflict.

According to President Serge Sargsian's office, the Armenian and Iranian leaders discussed ways of "developing bilateral relations and stepping up cooperation in a number of areas of mutual interest."

They also spoke about "regional developments and partnership," the office said in a statement. "The telephone conversation took place at the initiative of the Iranian side," it added.

Official Baku also gave few details of

Ahmadinejad's phone call with Azerbaijan's President Ilham Aliyev. Aliyev's press service said only that they discussed Azerbaijani-Iranian relations, regional security and "the fight against terrorism."

The phone calls came two weeks after a last-minute cancellation of Ahmadinejad's visit to Yerevan. A spokesman for the Iranian president said that the Armenian side "did not prepare documents" that were due to be signed in Yerevan on June 6.

Sargsian's office did not confirm that. It said vaguely that the trip was postponed by "mutual consent" and will take place "at a more convenient time."

Some Armenian analysts attributed the post-

ponement to Iran's alleged unease over a resolution of the Nagorno-Karabagh conflict desired by the West and Russia. They pointed to Iranian concerns about the composition of an international peacekeeping force that would have to be deployed around Karabagh in case of the conflict's resolution.

Iranian diplomats have warned on a number of occasions that Tehran would not tolerate any US participation in that force. Seyed Ali Saghaeyan, the Iranian ambassador to Armenia, claimed last year that Washington is keen to have troops in Azerbaijan's Fizuli district bordering Iran. The area was mostly occupied by Karabagh Armenian forces in 1993.



Community News

Saroyan Mementos Packed into Fresno Warehouse

By Tara Albert

FRESNO (*Fresno Bee*) – For many Fresno residents, the name Saroyan isn't synonymous with a Pulitzer Prize-winning playwright or short-story master whose fiction they've read. It's the name of a theater downtown.

"As far as his own home turf, the interest in him has just been lagging for a number of years," said Bill Secrest, a special collections librarian for the Fresno County Public Library.

Looking on the bright side, Haig Mardikian, president of the William Saroyan Foundation in San Francisco, said that the storage warehouse at least protects the items until a museum or university might agree to house them. "For the time being, the foundation is mostly concerned with preserving the material," he said.

That Saroyan's possessions now sit in a warehouse gathering dust is an indignity that the author himself might find amusing. After all, Saroyan spent much of his life in a personal war with materialism. According to legend, he lost hundreds of thousands of dollars to the roulette tables and the racing ponies.

As is often the case with writers, Saroyan had a complicated relationship with the city that defined his early life. Depending on what



Haig Mardikian

Saroyan essay or short story you read, he either loved or hated the place. By age 18, he wanted nothing more than to leave Fresno's small town "rot and decay and ferment," he once wrote.

The town, in turn, regarded him with similar ambivalence.

Sure, Fresno held a centennial celebration of his life in 2008 that included photo and art exhibits, performances of his plays and discussions of his books, not to mention a Saroyan wine made locally and a bus with the visage of the author, his thick eyebrows and walrus mustache, plastered on its side.

And yet the house he lived in after his birth on August 31, 1908, was long ago torn down to make way for progress. After his death in 1981, local libraries, museums and Fresno State had a chance to keep a treasure trove of his published and unpublished manuscripts, his artwork and correspondence and diary. Instead, most of the Saroyan collection was allowed to slip away to the University of California at Berkeley, and now Stanford University.

For many years, the items that remained in Fresno became part of a highly regarded permanent Saroyan exhibit at the Met. It took up a full room and included rare photographs and letters, his typewriter and the Oscar he won for the screenplay of his novel, *The Human Comedy*.



AGBU Vice President Sinan Sinanian presents an award to AGBU Manoogian-Demirdjian's retiring principal, Hagop Hagopian.

AGBU Manoogian-Demirdjian School Celebrates Its 35th Anniversary

Honors Retiring Principal Hagop Hagopian

SIMI VALLEY, Calif. – The 35th anniversary gala banquet of the AGBU Manoogian-Demirdjian School took place on March 26, at the Ronald Reagan Presidential Library here, with nearly 500 attendees. The event was organized by the Canoga Park School's Parent-Teacher Organization. The evening's motto was "The Past and the Present; Then and Now."

The school's alumni were highlighted throughout the program and numerous awards were presented to the school and its principal, including the AGBU President's Award. During the program, which was emceed by Peter Musurlian, a special honor was paid to the school's principal, Hagop Hagopian, who is retiring. A surprise presentation took him, and his entire family who was in attendance, by surprise. Sinan Sinanian, vice president of AGBU and member of the school's board of trustees, expressed his deep appreciation for Hagopian's devoted service over the years and presented him with a symbolic gift. Rep. Brad Sherman (D-CA), as well as Eileen Keusseyan, chair of the Parent-Teacher Organization, both spoke warmly about the school reaching this milestone under Hagopian's leadership.

Archbishop Hovnan Derderian, Primate of the Western Diocese of the Armenian Church of North America, honored Hagopian for his 30 years of educational service with a certificate of blessing and appreciation. Mentioned in the certificate was the fact that Karekin II, Catholicos of All Armenians, had bestowed the St. Sahag and St. Mesrob medal upon Hagopian in 2001. The certificate further read: "The popular saying says, 'Educating a child is educating a nation.' We highly appreciate the uncompromising services of the veteran principal and educator Hagop Hagopian. Today, the Manoogian-Demirdjian is steadfastly and courageously continuing its mission as an educational institution serving the community and the nation, while preserving the Armenian language."

The AGBU Manoogian-Demirdjian School began in 1976 as St. Peter-AGBU Day School with an enrollment of 19 pupils and a staff of three teachers. Since then, it has grown into an accredited, state-of-the-art college-preparatory academy with close to 800 students, nearly 100 highly qualified educators, and a dedicated support staff.



The members of the AGBU Manoogian-Demirdjian School's Parent-Teacher Organization, which organized the event at the Reagan Presidential Library

Prof. Dadrian Celebrates 85th Birthday, Aims Not to Slow Down

TORONTO – Showing no signs of slowing down, Prof. Vahakn N. Dadrian, director of Genocide Research at the Zoryan Institute and renowned expert in the field of genocide studies, recently celebrated his 85th birthday. Widely recognized as the foremost scholar of the Armenian Genocide, Dadrian has devoted more than 50 years to the study of virtually every aspect of it, and he has no intention of stopping now.

On the occasion, President of Armenia Serge Sargsian commented, "You are one of the most important Armenian scientists of our time, whose work and findings are hugely meaningful for both public and political policy. Your investment in the campaign for international recognition of the Armenian Genocide and your ongoing efforts in fighting attempts at denial, has resulted in ongoing feats of success. Your work has a huge impact in the study of genocide and its denial, where Armenia has staked its place as a groundbreaking leader in the field."

In honor of his steadfast dedication and immeasurable contribution, a list of con-



Prof. Vahakn Dadrian

gratulations from some of Dadrian's admirers and colleagues worldwide follows.

Current president of the International Association of Genocide Scholars and director of the Irish Centre for Human Rights at the National University of Ireland in Galway, Prof. William A. Schabas, declared, "Vahakn Dadrian's historical research on the Armenian Genocide is informed by a rich grasp of the legal issues. In particular, he has examined the efforts nearly a century ago to bring perpetrators of genocide to justice. His contribution both to historical and legal scholarship is enormous."

Israel Charney, a past president of the IAGS, executive director of the Institute on the Holocaust and Genocide in Jerusalem, and editor-in-chief of *Genocide Prevention Now*, noted: "Prof. Vahakn Dadrian was one of the earliest students of comparative aspects of the Holocaust and the Armenian Genocide, and in recent years he is at the crest of his dedicated research, including a sterling study of the judicial process of post-Ottoman Turkish courts-martial."

M.C. Bassiouni, professor of law and president of the International Human Rights Institute at De Paul University, has written, "Of all the conflicting and contradictory literature on the subject, including many Turkish publications denying, justifying or explaining what happened, Dadrian's work is the most

see DADRIAN, page 9



COMMUNITY NEWS

Chicago Armenians Raise More than \$5,000 for Orphanages

CHICAGO — A rooftop residence on Lakeshore Drive, overlooking Navy Pier, Lake Michigan and the Chicago skyline, was the venue for the first annual charity fundraiser of the Chicago Chapter of Society for Orphaned Armenian Relief (SOAR). The event was held on Saturday, June 4, at the residence of Dr. Kevin and Deana Bargamian.

Nearly 100 guests were welcomed to the event by Anne Galovich, Chicago SOAR chapter president. The guest speaker, Dr. Levon Saryan of Greenfield, Wis., spoke about the condition of orphanages in Armenia and the importance of providing aid and support for the most disadvantaged children in the country.

Two guest artists showcasing examples of their work were in attendance: Boris Khechoyan, a master woodcarver from St. Louis, Mo., and Dr. Chuck "Garbo" Hajinian, an impressionist painter/artist from Delafield, Wis. Both offered several pieces for the silent auction, as did renowned artist and designer Michael Aram, who provided signed pieces from his collection. Proceeds from the silent auction will be used to support 16 orphanages in Armenia as well as two orphanages in Nagorno-Karabagh (Artsakh) that are part of the SOAR network.

The theme of the evening was "Our Armenia, Our Children." Upon arrival, guests were escorted to the rooftop by two young ladies dressed in traditional Armenian costume, Melissa Mardoian and Nora Dulkadir. Armenian appetizers were provided by several volunteers (Betty Arakelian, Aline Nigohosian, Pearl Gopoian, Violet Bargamian and Bonnie Baboorian). A four-piece band of Chicago-area musicians composed of Jimmy Hardy, John

Paklaian, Shahan Alexanian and Mark Gavoor provided music for the event. Chicago magician Ashod "Mr. Ash" Baboorian entertained guests. Flower arrangements for the evening were donated by Sylvia and Hratch Yacoubian of Magic Flowers in Harwood Heights. Graphics were provided by Michelle Goodman and printing was by Erin Grogan of United Graphics and

to providing support for orphanages in Armenia and Karabagh. SOAR distributes food, clothing, medicine, educational supplies and other essential resources to orphanages in Armenia. SOAR has chapters in New England, New York/New Jersey, Delaware, Washington, Chicago, Northern California, Los Angeles, Seattle and Idaho and an office



Chicago SOAR Chapter Board, from left, Anne Galovich, Deana Bargamian, Eric Diekhans, David Baboorian, Lucie Ishkhanian and Ardem Hardy

Mailing Group.

The evening ended with a display of fireworks at Navy Pier.

The evening netted more than \$5,000, which will be used to aid needy orphanages in Armenia.

SOAR, Inc., founded in 2006 and headquartered in Philadelphia, is a 501-c3 non-profit humanitarian organization dedicated

in Yerevan.

The Chicago Chapter of the Society for Orphaned Armenian relief was founded in March 2010. Officers are Anne Galovich (president), Deanna Bargamian (vice president), David Baboorian (treasurer), Eric Diekhans (secretary), Lucie Ishkhanian and Ardem Hardy. For more information, visit www.soar-us.org or contact soarchicago@gmail.com.

Ricki Lake Sued Over 2010 Malibu Fire

MALIBU, Calif. (*Hollywood Reporter*) — Former talk show host Ricki Lake was hit with a lawsuit earlier this month relating to a blaze that damaged a home she rented here last year.

Lake has been alleged to be a fire starter.

The television personality has been sued, TMZ reports, in Los Angeles County Superior County court by Hovsep Kousouyan, who alleges the former talk show host burnt down his Malibu home last year.

Lake, who has a memoir forthcoming in 2012, has yet to respond to the suit, which was filed Monday in Los Angeles.

In September 2010, Sgt. Ernie Masson of the Los Angeles Sheriff's Department (LASD) Malibu/Lost Hills station told Access Hollywood that the home, which Lake was renting, had "burned to the ground," causing traffic on Pacific Coast Highway to stall "for hours."

A different LASD official, Lt. Rich Erickson of the Malibu/Lost Hills Station, told the *Los Angeles Times* on September 18, 2010, "It appears that she was refueling some sort of portable heater when a couch caught fire and that set the whole house ablaze."

In legal papers Monday, the owner claims that Lake had admitted liability when she spoke with emergency officials who responded to her 911 call.

Kousouyan says his house was all but destroyed, and he wants Lake to reimburse him for all costs incurred.

He is seeking undisclosed damages for the house, which could easily run into the millions, given the size of the home and exclusive location.



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LONG WEEKEND - CAPE COD *

June 24, 25 and 26, 2011 (St-Jean Baptiste weekend – Friday to Sunday)

JOIN US FOR A FUN FILLED WEEKEND



- Luxury coach (3 days)
- Accommodation (2 nights)
- Food and drinks during trip
- Beach and Bathing
- Shopping, Backgammon ... etc.
- Fishing from the shore
- Private fishing boat (6 hrs/Sunday)
- Tackle and bait
- ... etc.

HURRY! SPACE IS LIMITED

(3 days & 2 over nights)

\$ 232 (quadruple occupancy)

\$ 242 (triple occupancy)

\$ 252 (double occupancy)

(Plus \$ 8 for tips)

Departure: Friday, June 24 at 7:00 am sharp from Tekeyan

Return June 26 around 10:30 pm

* This trip is catering a mixed group. Women are welcome

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MARTUNI REGIONAL HOSPITAL

NAMING OPPORTUNITIES

There may be no better way to honor or memorialize someone special to you than to help restore the health of many in need—the residents of Martuni province in Karabakh. With Armenia Fund USA's construction of a new multi-faceted Martuni Regional Hospital, naming opportunities abound for individuals, families and organizations alike, starting at \$25,000. However, various options are available for \$5,000–\$20,000 donations. For more information, please contact Irina Lazarian at 212-689-5307 or email irina@armenianfundusa.org

\$300,000 COMMITTED **First Floor:** The new Diagnostic and Imaging center and patient rooms for infectious diseases, including thoracic and pulmonary, will be named after: **ARMENIAN MEDICAL FUND USA**
Donation is made in 3 annual installments of \$100,000

\$200,000 AVAILABLE **Second Floor:** Surgical / operation suites
A pledge of \$200,000 may be made in 2 annual installments of \$100,000

\$150,000 AVAILABLE **First Floor:** Polyclinic outpatient center, adult care
A pledge of \$150,000 may be made in 3 annual installments of \$50,000
First Floor: Polyclinic outpatient center, pediatrics
A pledge of \$150,000 may be made in 3 annual installments of \$50,000

\$100,000 AVAILABLE **First Floor:** Emergency Room (ER)
A pledge of \$100,000 may be made in 2 annual installments of \$50,000

\$100,000 COMMITTED **Second Floor:** OB-GYN, including delivery / neonatal care unit
A pledge of \$100,000 is made.

\$50,000 AVAILABLE **Outdoor:** Landscaping for the Healing Garden
First Floor: Registration and patients' records
First Floor: Administration
Second Floor: Intensive Care Unit (ICU)

\$25,000 AVAILABLE **Basement:** Cafeteria
First Floor: Pharmacy
Throughout the hospital: Waiting areas
Reserve fund for continuous medical education / hospital needs
Donations and pledges are accepted on an ongoing basis



COMMUNITY NEWS

Inspirational Genocide Survivor, Vergin Mazmanian, 103, Passes Away

MAZMANIAN, from page 1

She was a pillar of the Armenian Democratic Liberal Party (ADL) for more than 70 years. She and her husband, Gregory Mazmanian, dedicated themselves to Armenian causes. They were the main donors and the Godparents of St. Gregory the Illuminator Church in Montreal and the headquarters of the Diocese of Canada there, the latter realized with the efforts of Dr. Arshavir Gundjian.

Mazmanian was an active member of the Holy Trinity Armenian Church of Cambridge and its Women's Guild. She was affectionately known there as "Master of Pilaf" and attended church every Sunday, except a few times that she was sick.

In 1996 Mazmanian received a proclamation on the Armenian Genocide at the State House from then-Gov. Paul Cellucci. Shortly thereafter, Mazmanian started receiving threatening phone calls from the Turkish Embassy in Washington, asking if she really remembered the Genocide.

The ADL District Committee honored Mazmanian during its annual convention in Boston, on April 4, 2009.

In addition to her daughter, Grace K. David of Arlington, she leaves her grandchildren John A. David and his wife Carol of Woburn and Karen Monson and her husband Peter of Andover and great-grandchildren Christopher David and Nina, Samantha and Derek Monson.

She was preceded in death by her first husband, Harry Kezarjian, and her second husband, Gregory Mazmanian; her parents, Garabed Simsarian and Karan Arcenian, as well as her sister, Gladys Yerchanig Simsarian.

Services were held at Holy Trinity Armenian Church, Cambridge, on Friday, June 17. Interment was in Woodlawn Cemetery, Everett.

David was touched by the large outpouring of support and love at Holy Trinity Armenian Church and the strong representation of the ADL at her mother's funeral. "She would have loved how beautiful it all was. It is what she would have wanted," David said.

Expressions of sympathy may be made in her memory to Holy Trinity Armenian Church or the ADL District Committee, 755 Mt. Auburn St., Watertown, MA 02472.

"She had a drive to keep the young generation interested. The sheer, stubborn determination to keep pushing and the love of the church compelled her," David said. "She was set in her ways and determined."



100th birthday of Vergin Mazmanian, pictured with Dr. Arshavir Gundjian

Vergin Mazmanian Eulogized by Fr. Vasken Kouzouian

CAMBRIDGE, Mass. — The late Vergin Mazmanian was a weekly fixture at Holy Trinity Armenian Church of Greater Boston. At her funeral, Fr. Vasken Kouzouian delivered a eulogy in which he recalled her dedication to the church, as well as many personal stories on his interactions with her. Below is an excerpt from that eulogy:

"Those who trust in the Lord, will find new strength. They will soar high on wings of eagles."

These words of the Prophet Isaiah explain very beautifully what happens to a person who places his or her complete trust in God.

Isaiah is saying that people of faith can rise higher than their troubles because they travel with God and they can soar to heights where their troubles can no longer reach them.

Deegin Vergin had this kind of faith. Without question. Without reservation, she believed in her Lord Jesus Christ, not only when it was convenient, but everyday. In the good days, and certainly in the difficult days she faced.

"Those who trust in the Lord will find new strength. They will soar high on wings like eagles."

This is the Deegin Vergin I knew. And this is the Deegin Vergin our parish knew. She was a woman whose faith would soar high.

Back in early December of 2008, I had the opportunity to accompany this dear lady to Wilmington High School, where she was invited to share her story with the students of a class called "Facing History, Facing Ourselves." The topic was the Armenian Genocide and she was their guest speaker. For nearly 90 minutes, Deegin Vergin spoke of her memories of the past and hopes for the future. And as she recounted of what she remembered about the Armenian Genocide, I noticed something amazing taking place within the classroom. I looked around the room and as she retold her stories I noticed that every single student was focused and hanging on to every word she spoke. It was as if their textbooks had come to life — that history was now addressing them directly. It was a powerful experience.

At the end of her talk, several students rose to ask questions of their guest — questions about her feelings, her fears, and her hopes.

One young man rose and asked a question of her: "Mrs. Mazmanian," he started, "can you tell us if you believed in God during the Genocide, or did your faith start later in life?"

So, she began telling this young man about her faith as she understood it, and about how she felt God's constant presence as she walked through the deserts of Anatolia during the aftermath of the deportations.

"God is all I had, and my faith is all I knew,"

she began to share.

It was a fascinating couple of hours because two very different generations sat facing each other discussing: the Armenian Genocide and faith within a public school classroom.

And I kept thinking that here was a woman, so tiny in stature, over 100 years old, sitting in a public school classroom and in her broken English — held the attention of 30 high school students — for over 90 minutes.

She was a remarkable woman. And she had a remarkable story to tell.

In 2004, I visited Deegin Vergin who was just getting over a bout with pneumonia. During that visit, she shared her story with me.

I kept the notes of her story until we celebrated her 100th birthday a few years later. . . and in this church sanctuary, I shared it.

Here's what she told me:

"I was born in Amasia, on the Black Sea . . . my life was spared during the Genocide. I was very seriously hurt — my face, my arms and legs were all torn and bleeding from the dogs that the Turkish soldiers sent upon us. My face and lungs were greatly affected. The nerves on the side of my face were permanently affected — and my lungs were punctured severely.

I laid down on top of my dead loved ones, bleeding on top of dead relatives and friends, but when I got up off the ground, I wandered in the desert looking up into the clouds asking God to come closer to me and take me to Heaven.

But as I approached the clouds and horizon, it seemed that God continued moving away — as if He didn't want to take me at that time.

He spared me for a greater purpose — to serve my Church and my people.

— But what have I done for God — nothing — Voch inch! I've done nothing for Him. And now, having overcome pneumonia, He gives me a second chance; I can now serve Him again."

And she did. She was one of the most active and caring parishioners Holy Trinity Armenian Church has ever seen.

After living in the wilderness for some time, Deegin Vergine was found by American Legionnaires searching for Armenian orphans.

In 1922, at the age of 14, she came to the United States and became like a daughter to the Dickran Simsarian family of New Jersey.

Her long time commitment to Holy Trinity dates back to when our church was located on Shawmut Avenue in Boston.

In 1936, she was the Women's Guild Chairman and served other organizations. Vergin was a lifetime member of the Senior Women's Guild.

She, along with so many other women, went

door-to-door raising money to build this church of ours.

We have this beautiful church today because of people like her. The Armenian community owes a great deal to her for her services to our church and community.

At every banquet, church function, bazaar and picnic, Vergin was in charge of making her special pilaf. And as she approached 100 years old, she took it upon herself to teach the fine art of pilaf making to three men, whom we affectionately call "Deegin Vergin's Disciples."

She was also a faithful and devoted member of the ADL, the Tekeyan Cultural Organization, and the Baikar.

On numerous occasions, Vergin was recognized at the Annual April 24 Commemoration at the State House in Boston, where we remember, with other nations, the tragic Genocide of 1915.

I would look at her, as she entered into this Sanctuary, every single Sunday, kiss the floor of the Altar and I would see the spirit of our people reaching out to all of us as if saying: "Go as far as you can in this world. Become professionals in your fields; become successful; raise your families as you see fit. But don't forget your past. What happened to me and my generation — is part of your history. Our story is a part of your story. Our blood is flowing through

your bodies.

We have no doubt that God will accept her dedicated and energetic soul into His loving and caring hands in Heaven.

In our parish, we shall miss our Deegin Vergin.

Amen.

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COMMUNITY NEWS

APS Talk Addresses Recent Nuclear Disaster in Japan

LA CANADA, Calif. — On May 13, the Armenian Professional Society (APS) hosted a dinner and lecture evening at the La Canada Country Club. The topic of the lecture was the recent nuclear disaster in Japan. Dr. Mardy Kazarians was the guest speaker for the evening; he discussed the recent earthquake in Japan, the tsunami that followed. His presentation gave the audience great insight as to how and why the events occurred and what it means for California.

The evening was a success attended by many. Those in attendance included members, guests, as well as past presidents of the APS. Shahan Minassian, the current president, started the evening's program with a summary of recent events hosted by the APS. Some of the events included the installation event of the new Executive Board, a Los



Dr. Mardy Kazarians

Angeles Philharmonic concert at Disney Hall, a mixer held at the Edison, as well as the Santa Barbara wine tasting trip that included a museum tour of Charles Garabedian's 28-year retrospective.

The evening started with Minassian welcoming the guests and thanking them for their continued support. Minassian acknowledged the current members of the board: Angelo Ghailian, first vice president; Taline Hanna, second vice president; Sarko Nalband, treasurer and Seta Khajarian, scholarship chair. A video clip of the recent trip to Santa Barbara was presented before inviting Ghailian to the podium to introduce the guest speaker.

Ghailian introduced Kazarians providing a brief biography of Kazarians professional accomplishments. Kazarians graduated with a PhD from UCLA in 1981, specializing in risk assessment of engineered systems. He has prepared risk assessments for nuclear power plants in the US and abroad and for facilities from other industries that included chemical processing and oil refining. In 1992, he started his own consulting company, Kazarians & Associates, Inc., that

specializes in risk assessment and safety services. Kazarians is an instructor at USC's School of Engineering, Aviation Safety and Security Program and is on standards writing committees at ASME and NFPA.

Kazarians went through a PowerPoint presentation illustrating the Fukushima Power Plant model. He provided a step-by-step timeline of the events following the earthquake and resulting tsunami. He illustrated to the audience what protective measures the plant was equipped to withstand the natural disaster and

what underlying causes attributed to the failure of the cooling systems, which ultimately led to the failure of the nuclear reactors. The lecture was informative and provided details that not only encompassed the nuclear disaster in at the Fukushima Power Plant but touched on nuclear radiation and how it affects our daily lives. The presentation concluded with a question-and-answer period.

Additional information about The Armenian Professional Society and upcoming events is available at www.apsla.org.

Matthew Dorian and Meredith Dorian Johnson Graduate

Nubar Dorian, a frequent contributor to the *Mirror-Spectator*, recently saw two of his grandchildren, Matthew Niles Dorian and Meredith Dorian Johnson, graduate with flying colors from high school and university, respectively.

Matthew Niles Dorian

On June 3, Dorian graduated from Palm Harbor University High School, in Palm Harbor, Fla., with a 4.83 GPA. He was named the salutatorian of his class of 520 students.

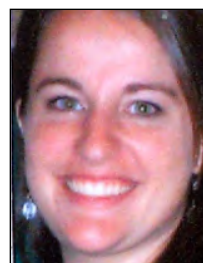
Dorian received a leadership award from the faculty for his character and exemplary attitude. He was also the top student in both math and biology. His peers have voted him both the most likely to find a cure as well as the most likely to receive a Nobel Prize in medicine. In the fall, Dorian will attend Oxford College of Emory University, in



Atlanta, Ga. on full academic scholarship. He plans on majoring in neuroscience with the aim of becoming an oncologist.

Meredith Dorian Johnson

On May 12, Johnson graduated from Loyola University in Maryland with her master's in counseling psychology. She is a member of Psi Chi, the national psychology honor



society. Johnson has served in many capacities as a counselor throughout her education, including her work with children who are victims of abuse and neglect. Further service at a local college in Baltimore as a career counselor has sparked her interest towards this field. She hopes to serve students of the undergraduate population at colleges and universities in order to help them discover their strengths and the many career paths available to them.

Prof. Dadrian Celebrates 85th Birthday, Aims Not to Slow Down

DADRIAN, from page 6

legally convincing and from other accounts, the closest to historical accuracy with such debated facts."

Prof. Roger W. Smith, chairman of the Academic Board of the Zoryan Institute, gave this observation: "Vahagn Dadrian helped to create the field of comparative genocide studies, bringing to his work an interdisciplinary perspective that joined sociology, history and law, enriched further by his ability to draw upon half a dozen languages. He is best known, however, for his pioneering work on the Armenian Genocide, which proves beyond any reasonable doubt that the wartime treatment of the Armenians can only be described as genocide."

Prof. Taner Akcam, holder of the Kaloosdian-Mugar Chair in Armenian Genocide Studies at Clark University, stated: "The renowned sociologist, Norbert Elias, upon receiving the Adorno Prize in 1977, said during his acceptance speech that he carried a torch lit well before him and there will be others after him to carry it into the future. In Dadrian's case, we should say that he was not the carrier of a torch lit before him; he was the inventor of the torch in the field of Armenian Genocide research. For me, Dadrian is a founding intellect in the field of comparative genocide studies and he laid the foundation of Armenian Genocide studies, upon which we, today, build our research."

With undergraduate degrees in mathematics, history and international law, and a PhD in sociology, Dadrian began his career serving as a professor of sociology at the State University of New York. Soon thereafter he shifted his academic career to conducting research full-time on the Armenian Genocide. His tireless activity in the field of genocide studies has produced a wealth of material that is invaluable to the study of genocide, particularly the Armenian case. In reference to Dadrian's scholarship,

writer, philosopher and pioneering genocide scholar Leo Kuper stated, "Professor Dadrian has succeeded in extracting authoritative documentation of the crime of genocide involving first-hand evidence...It is an outstanding work of scholarship along with his Yale Journal of International Law article, a major contribution to the rebuttal of denial." In 2008, Dadrian co-authored with Akcam a massive legal and historical study of the post-WWI Turkish Military Tribunals on the Armenian Genocide, which was published in Turkish by Bilgi University Press. The English edition of this book is now in its final stages of publication and will be released later this year.

Dadrian also received warm congratulations from the Armenian Ambassador to Washington Tatoul Markarian, as well as Radik Martirosyan, the president of the National Academy of Sciences of the Republic of Armenia. Hayk Demoyan, the director of the Armenian Genocide Museum-Institute, said on the occasion: "With your productive academic activity of many years, you have become a living legend for the new generation of academics. Your studies are precious in terms of giving a comprehensive academic illustration of the historical reality of the Armenian Genocide, which significantly contributed to the international recognition and condemnation of the fact. We are sure that your academic path is life-long, and that you will still present new volumes and studies to the public."

Commenting on the importance of the occasion was president of the Zoryan Institute, K.M. Greg Sarkissian, who stated, "Dadrian's knowledge, wisdom, multidisciplinary publications and teaching have been an inspiration to Zoryan's board members, staff, students and volunteers. His 85th birthday is a cause for celebration and an impetus for the urgency of developing new scholars to follow in his footsteps."

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COMMUNITY NEWS

Schiff Honors Archbishop Hovsepian on 60th Anniversary of Ordination

WASHINGTON — This past week Rep. Adam Schiff (D-CA) inserted the following statement into the Congressional Record, honoring Archbishop Vatché Hovsepian upon his 60th anniversary of consecration and ordination into the priesthood:

“Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor His Eminence Archbishop Vatché Hovsepian upon his 60th anniversary of consecration and ordination into the priesthood.

“Archbishop Hovsepian was born in Beirut, Lebanon, where he received his elementary education at the Mesrobian Armenian National School, and later was accepted as a postulate at the Antelias Theological Seminary. Upon successfully completing his studies, he was ordained Fr. Vatché Hovsepian, and served in the capacity of assistant dean and instructor of the seminary.

“In 1953, Father Vatché went to England to further his theological studies and was simultaneously active in the World Council of Churches Youth Movement. After attending the College of the Resurrection near Manchester, he continued his studies at the University of Edinburgh, Scotland. During his stay in Edinburgh, Father Vatché was a vibrant member of the Theological Commission. When Father Vatché was assigned to the Pastorate of the Holy Cross Armenian Church of Union City, NJ in 1956, he diligently continued to pursue his studies and obtained his Bachelor of Divinity Degree at the New Brunswick Theological Seminary at Rutgers University.

“Father Vatché’s journey continued to Canada during the influx of Armenian immigrants to the region. In 1967, he was designated as ‘Bishop of Canada,’ and he immediately organized a new Diocese. Through the efforts, dynamism and perseverance of the bishop, a cathedral with school facilities was purchased in Montreal, Quebec.

“In 1971, Archbishop Vatché was elected as the Primate of the Armenian Church of North America Western Diocese. Upon attaining his new role, the Primate arrived at the Diocesan Headquarters, which at the time was a rented house in Los Angeles, Calif. Immediately, he began searching for a potential site for a cathedral, and a church was soon purchased in Hollywood, Calif. This church was later transformed into the St.



Archbishop Vatché Hovsepian at a mass paying tribute to his 60 years of ordination

John Armenian Cathedral, where the vast Armenian population living in Hollywood frequented every Sunday.

“In 1988, when the disastrous earthquake struck in Armenia, the archbishop established the Orphan’s Fund, through which the Diocese sends aid and medical supplies to the orphans in Armenia regularly. In addition, Archbishop Vatché was instrumental in the founding of the St. Gregory Alfred and Marguerite Hovsepian Armenian School in Pasadena, Calif., as well as numerous other Armenian Day Schools in the community. Under

Archbishop Vatché’s leadership and guidance, the Western Diocese purchased a multi-purpose complex in Burbank, Calif., where the present Diocesan Headquarters stands. Archbishop Vatché has also actively participated in civic issues, and has met with five presidents of the United States and various religious leaders.

“I ask all members to join me in thanking Archbishop Vatché Hovsepian for his selfless dedication and commitment to the Armenian Community and wish him well in all future endeavors.”

Armenian Assembly Meets with Genocide Resolution Sponsor Dold

WASHINGTON — Last week, Armenian Assembly Executive Director Bryan Ardouny and Grassroots Director Taniel Koushadjian met with Rep. Robert Dold (R-IL). Dold is the lead Republican sponsor of H.Res. 304, the Armenian Genocide Resolution. The resolution is modeled after H.Res. 252 (111th Congress), H.Res. 106 (110th Congress), H.Res. 316 (109th Congress) and H.Res. 398/596 (106th Congress), which were all adopted by the House Foreign Affairs Committee.

During their briefing with Dold, Ardouny and Koushadjian recalled the proud chapter in America’s history in helping to save the survivors of the first genocide of the 20th century, provided an overview of the tactics used by those who deny the Armenian Genocide and

stressed the need to secure an affirmative vote on the House floor.

“I look forward to working with the Armenian Assembly and the community on this important human rights issue,” stated Dold. “The Armenian Genocide is a historical fact that cannot be ignored and must be recognized,” he added.

In addition to US affirmation of the Armenian Genocide, funding for Armenia and Nagorno Karabagh, as well as the growing concern regarding Azerbaijan’s ongoing war rhetoric, was also discussed.

“We commend Congressman Dold for his leadership in spearheading the Armenian Genocide Resolution with Congressman Schiff (D-CA),” Ardouny stated. “We appreciate his enthusiastic



Bryan Ardouny and Rep. Robert Dold (R-IL) discuss Armenian Issues.

Bipartisan Genocide Resolution Introduced In House

RESOLUTION, from page 1
interest to be complicit in another nation’s campaign of Genocide denial and it never will. While there are still some survivors left, we have a compelling, urgent and moral obligation to speak plainly about the past.”

“The United States has a duty to remember those who have no voice,” Dold said. “Ninety-six years ago, 1.5 million people were killed simply because they were Armenian. I’ve personally heard stories from Armenian-Americans in my district who lost loved ones during the Armenian Genocide. This appalling tragedy should not be ignored; rather, as a nation that fights for justice, it is only fitting that the United States honestly recognize the Armenian Genocide and the victims so that together we can help prevent future genocides.”

Bolstering his efforts to achieve justice and human rights in the region, Schiff has also joined in co-sponsoring a second resolution introduced recently by Representatives Ed Royce and Howard Berman, calling on the government of Turkey to end religious discrimina-

tion, to cease all restrictions on gatherings for religious prayer and education and to return stolen church property.

“By expropriating church properties, harassing worshippers and refusing to grant full legal status to members of the Christian faith, the Republic of Turkey is violating its obligation to uphold basic freedoms that are the foundation of justice and peace worldwide,” Schiff said.

The Republic of Turkey is a signatory to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which requires “freedom of thought, conscience and religion.” While Turkey considers itself a secular democracy, the US Commission on International Religious Freedom has identified the Republic as one of the world’s leading violators of religious freedom.

“Christians constitute less than 1 percent of Turkey’s population, placing them in an especially vulnerable position,” Schiff said. “This resolution will help to promote religious equality by shining a light on the unacceptable violations and intolerance of religious freedom in Turkey.”

support and look forward to working with him to advance this important legislation.”

Elected to office in 2010, Dold, from Illinois 10th Congressional District, occupies the seat previously held by Mark Kirk, the former Armenian Caucus chair and current senator

from that state. Preceding Kirk, former representative and Armenian Caucus founder John Porter (R-IL) held the seat. Dold serves on the House Financial Services Committee and is also a member of the Congressional Caucus on Armenian Issues.



From left, Bryan Ardouny, Rep. Robert Dold and Taniel Koushadjian



Elena Bonner, Widow of Sakharov, Dies At 88

BONNER, from page 1

Before and after exile, their modest Moscow apartment was a command center of sorts from which a seemingly quixotic, but in many ways successful, war against Soviet authoritarianism was waged.

Though Sakharov was better known, Bonner became a force in her own right, waging a tireless campaign to improve the lives of her people long after her husband's death in 1989.

It is a role she accepted out of necessity, she would say. A pediatrician by training, whose family suffered greatly during the Stalinist purges, Bonner longed for a simpler life.

Rather than being "the heroic woman," she once said, she would vastly prefer to be a "babushka," using the Russian word for grandmother. "I would much rather be a simple woman, mother and daughter," she said.

Elena Georgievna Bonner, whose first name is often spelled Yelena, was born in Merv (now Mary) in Turkmenistan on February 15, 1923. As a child, she saw her parents' lives stamped by Soviet totalitarianism.

Her father, Gevork Alikhanov, was an Armenian who founded the Soviet Armenian Communist Party. He was arrested and disappeared into Stalin's prisons in 1937.

Her mother, Ruth Bonner, was Jewish and originally from Siberia. She was arrested in 1938 and sent to the gulag. Bonner, who was then 15 and already a worker in a Communist Party archive, later told a biographer that she remembered helping her mother pack and console her younger brother, Igor.

Bonner recalled years later that her background had given her "deep respect toward all beliefs, all religions."

"The most deplorable teaching," she said, "is the superiority of any nation over another."

Bonner confronted that teaching head-on in World War II, joining the front lines as a nurse in the fight against the invading Nazis. She was repeatedly wounded and received top Soviet honors for her contributions.

After the war, she studied medicine in Leningrad, now St. Petersburg. She became a pediatrician (though she did not achieve the title of doctor) and, despite what had happened to her parents, joined the Communist Party. She married a medical school classmate, Ivan Semyonov, and had two children.

But by the 1960s, a brief political thaw had created fissures in Soviet society, and Bonner became swept up in a movement against the government. She eventually divorced her husband, quit the Communist Party and gave up her medical practice to become a full-time member of the sometimes shadowy world of Soviet dissidents.

It was at this time that she met Sakharov, a widower and a renowned nuclear physicist.

By then, Sakharov was already famous in the

dignified protest within the Soviet Union. Half Jewish, she was a target of anti-Semitism. Tough-minded and uncompromising, she was fiercely protective of her husband; indeed, she was caricatured as a Lady Macbeth by both the KGB and the writer Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn, whose own dissident views were based more upon traditional Russian nationalism.

In 1984, after she was prosecuted on charges of anti-Soviet slander, Bonner joined her husband in exile in Gorky, on the Volga River, 250

the Soviet leader to release other jailed dissidents. Sakharov was later elected to the Congress of People's Deputies, and Bonner continued her human-rights work and writings.

She became an ardent critic of Gorbachev, even as her husband tried to work with him. When Gorbachev was awarded a Nobel Peace Prize in 1990, she asked the Nobel Committee to delete Sakharov's name from the list of winners. The committee declined.

At the funeral of her husband in December 1989, a frail and visibly devastated Bonner wore her husband's gray fur hat as she greeted thousands of mourners. She lost her composure only once, at the wake the night before, when she suddenly stepped into the corridor outside their apartment and glared teary-eyed at waiting journalists.

"You worked hard to see that Andrei died sooner by calling us from morning to night, and never leaving us to our life and work!" she shouted. "Be human beings. Leave us!"

Bonner wrote two memoirs: *Alone Together* (1986) and *Mothers and Daughters* (1992).

She is survived by two children from her first marriage, Tatiana I. Yankelevich of Boston and Alexey I. Semyonov of Springfield, Va.; five grandchildren and three great-grandchildren.

While she maintained an apartment in Moscow, Bonner had been living primarily in the United States for the last five years, mostly in Brookline, Mass., Kline said. She continued her fight for human rights, publishing articles in the Russian and American press until a few months before her death, he said.

"She felt that Russia was backsliding," he added, "and she campaigned vigorously to improve justice and the rule of law in Russia and the democratization of the political system."

For all her stern rectitude, Bonner would sometimes exhibit a more lighthearted side. While in the United States for medical treatment in 1985, Bonner attended a dinner in her honor in connection with the docudrama "Sakharov," which came out the year before.

When a screenwriter asked her over cocktails if she and her husband got to the movies much in Gorky, Bonner replied that they seldom had the chance, but added that they had recently seen and enjoyed one: "What was the name of it? Oh, yes, 'Tootsie.'"



Elena Bonner, right, with her husband, Andrei Sakharov, in 1988

Soviet Union for his work developing the country's first hydrogen bomb. His break with officialdom for the sake of his principles had made him infamous among the authorities and an idol among dissidents.

They were married in 1972, and almost immediately became targets of the KGB. Bonner was hauled in for interrogations, where she was told she was mentally ill and threatened with detention. Secret police officials even threatened retaliation against her children.

But Sakharov was the main target and Bonner was at times permitted to leave the country. In 1975, she traveled to Oslo to accept her husband's Nobel Peace Prize, after the Soviet authorities had refused him permission to make the trip.

Strong-jawed, bespectacled and austere in dress, Bonner was something of a symbol of

miles east of Moscow, a once-closed military city that has since reclaimed its prerevolutionary name of Nizhny Novgorod.

Sakharov had been banished to Gorky in 1980 after he protested the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan.

The spare apartment they lived in there — and in which they were spied upon — has since been turned into a museum. But Bonner never went back, telling friends that the mere mention of the place made her ill.

In 1986, workmen unexpectedly appeared at the Gorky apartment and installed a telephone. Shortly after, Sakharov received a call from Mikhail S. Gorbachev, the Soviet leader. Just beginning to push the reforms that would become glasnost, Gorbachev wanted Sakharov and his wife back in Moscow.

Sakharov accepted and immediately lobbied

Program in Honor of Yerevan My Love Held at Buckingham Palace

BUCKINGHAM PALACE, from page 1

young people and disadvantaged families. Following the successful fundraising in 2010, three buildings in the vicinity of St. Hovhannes Church in the Kond neighborhood of Yerevan are being built and renovated. Three additional architecturally-significant buildings will be rehabilitated in the Old Yerevan neighborhood as part of the second phase of Yerevan My Love project, supported by the fundraising this year.

In his remarks, Armen Sarkissian highlighted the role of every

individual in the preservation of culture and heritage and the universality of culture. He said, "It is a privilege for me to thank each and every one of you for your contributions, for your support and, most importantly, for sharing a belief that culture and heritage are part of our soul and we have to pass it on to the next generation, to our children."

Prince Charles stressed that the evening was also an occasion to strengthen the ties between Armenia and the United Kingdom. He said, "I have long admired Armenia as the oldest Christian nation in the world, with its unique architectural heritage. It is so heartening that the Yerevan My Love project is preserving and continuing traditional Armenian architecture and craftsmanship."

Dumfries House is a unique house in southwestern Scotland which had retained much of the furniture commissioned for it from Thomas Chippendale. A few years ago, Prince Charles forestalled the separate sales of the House and its contents to private bidders. He has since made sure that the House and its unique collection of furniture are preserved for future generations.

Sarkissian thanked Prince Charles for his leadership and foresight in architectural conservation. "We thank him for his full support and cooperation in making this night a very special occasion," said Sarkissian. He pointed out that "the international array of participation is a wonderful example of global cooperation in charity and heritage preservation."



Charity concert and dinner at Buckingham Palace in support of Yerevan My Love and Dumfries House. From left, Charles, The Prince of Wales, Prime Minister Tigran Sargsian, Gohar Sargsian, Yerevan Mayor Karen Karapetyan and Hayk Didizian



From left, Charles, the Prince of Wales, Levon Sayan, Charles Aznavour and Armen Sarkissian



From left, Vatche Manoukian, Charles, the Prince of Wales and Tamar Manoukian


New York
METRO

The Camel's Homeland

A Western Armenian Puppet Show in New Jersey

By Aram Arkun
 Mirror-Spectator Staff

PALISADES PARK, N.J. — Some 130 children and adults crowded into the hall of the Armenian-American Support and Education Center on June 11 to see an Armenian-language puppet show, “Ughdin Hayrenike” [The Camel's Homeland], performed by children. The show was organized by Vartan Garniki's Hye Theater Studio.

Seven young Armenians performed with their puppets a dramatized Western-Armenian version of a short story by Sergey Vardanian of Yerevan. Vardanian originally published a set of children's short stories in Yerevan in 1989 called *Arevadzaghi* [Sunflower], which was translated by Makruhi Hagopian and published in Western Armenian in Istanbul in 1994. Vardanian, today working at the Archaeology and Ethnology Institute of the Armenian Academy of Sciences, worked for many years as a journalist and also served from 1991 to 2002 as the vice president of the State Council on Religious Affairs of the Republic of Armenia. He has organized a movement to collect folkloric materials in Armenian schools in Armenia, Georgia, Azerbaijan, Mountainous Karabagh, Nakhichevan, Abkhazia and Krasnodar (Russia), which were published in two volumes in 1981 and 2003. He has published a volume on the twelve historical capitals of Armenia, first in 1985, and then in an enlarged edition in 1995, and is a specialist on the Hamshen Armenians of Central Asia and founding editor of the monthly *Dzayn Hamshenakan* [Hamshen Voice].

The plot of the play concerns a camel that sets off to find his homeland and convinces other animals he meets along the way to join him. When they arrive in the desert, the other animals realize that this may be an ideal home for the camel but it is too hot and in general unsuitable for them. They then return to their original homes with renewed appreciation of their own value. The story can be taken as a parable for Armenians scattered throughout the world.

Naturally, a show performed by children may not be perfect in all aspects of its presentation, but in this particular instance, it was appropriate for the children in the audience, who seemed to enjoy it greatly. My own two boys eagerly asked

when the next performance would take place. Such plays should be constants in the arsenal of tools to make Western Armenian relevant to children. Several children apparently afterwards expressed an interest in participating in future performances.

The positive effects of the play were not limited to the children in the audience. Director Vartan Garniki told the audience that some of the children in the play, who are of varying ages, did not know much Armenian when they began their rehearsals. In fact, one boy could only recite his lines and did not understand any Armenian at all.

Garniki has organized similar plays for children for the Khirmian Lyceum of the Diocese of the Armenian Church of America (Eastern). He established Hye Theater Studio in 2006 and its first performance, “Honest Person,” was performed by children and based on four tales by Hovhannes Toumanian. Hye Theater Studio has also presented two plays for adults in Armenian.

Garniki (Oganesian) was born in Yerevan, and



a scene from Ughdin hayrenike, with Camel (Arnag Baltaian), Squirrel (Shant Bekarian), Rabbit (Talia Melkonian), Frog A (Sayat Bekarian), Frog B (Allen Melkonian), and Narrator (Arthur Kesenci)

inspired by his father, a well-known reciter and actor, he studied drama at the Theatrical Institute there. His final project won first prize at the Moscow Festival of Russian Dramaturgy. Afterwards, he worked as an actor five years before becoming director of the Alexander Shirvanzade State Dramatic Theater of Kapan, where he directed over twenty productions from 1985 to 1992. Garniki established his first puppet theater while in Kapan in 1988 with his wife and two sons. He and his family moved to the United States in the early 1990s. In 2002, he joined the Tekeyan Cultural Association's Mher

Megerdichian Theatrical Group and served as its artistic director for six years. His wife, Anahid Oganesian, was the stage and puppet designer for “Ughdin Hayrenike.”

Garniki works in theater as a labor of love. He exclaimed, “Drama, I have to do – if I didn't do it, I would not be myself!” To make a living, he



Director Vartan Garniki



The actors receive their accolades

works as a tour guide, showing Russian and Armenian speakers the sights in New York City, Philadelphia, Atlantic City, Niagara Falls and elsewhere. He arranged with Armenian military attaché Col. Mesrop Nazarian that any profit from “Ughdin Hayrenike” will be donated to the children of Armenian soldiers who died in the struggle for the liberation of Artsakh. Several more performances of this puppet play are planned for this fall at Armenian schools and churches in the New York and New Jersey area.

For more information, see www.hyetheaterstudio.com.

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Azarian Scholarship Extends Deadline

MIDLAND PARK, N.J. — The John M. Azarian Memorial Armenian Youth Scholarship Fund has extended the deadline for submitting applications for the 2011-2012 academic year to July 15. To download an application and all other necessary forms, visit www.azariangroup.com/scholarship.htm

The John M. Azarian Memorial Youth Scholarship Fund was formed in 1976 following the untimely death of John M. Azarian Sr. by his wife, Barbara. The purpose of the scholarship is to award opportunities to students of Armenian descent who demonstrate compelling financial need, academic achievement and Armenian church-related activities.

It is the goal of the Azarian Scholarship Fund to assist deserving students with the hope that they will one day be beneficial to the Armenian community.

For more information, contact Matthew Scozzari at info@azariangroup.com.



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Arts & Living

The Family Tree

How a Palestinian family from 1930s Jaffa Ended up in the Heart Of a 2011 Israeli Political Storm

By Dr. Rona Sela

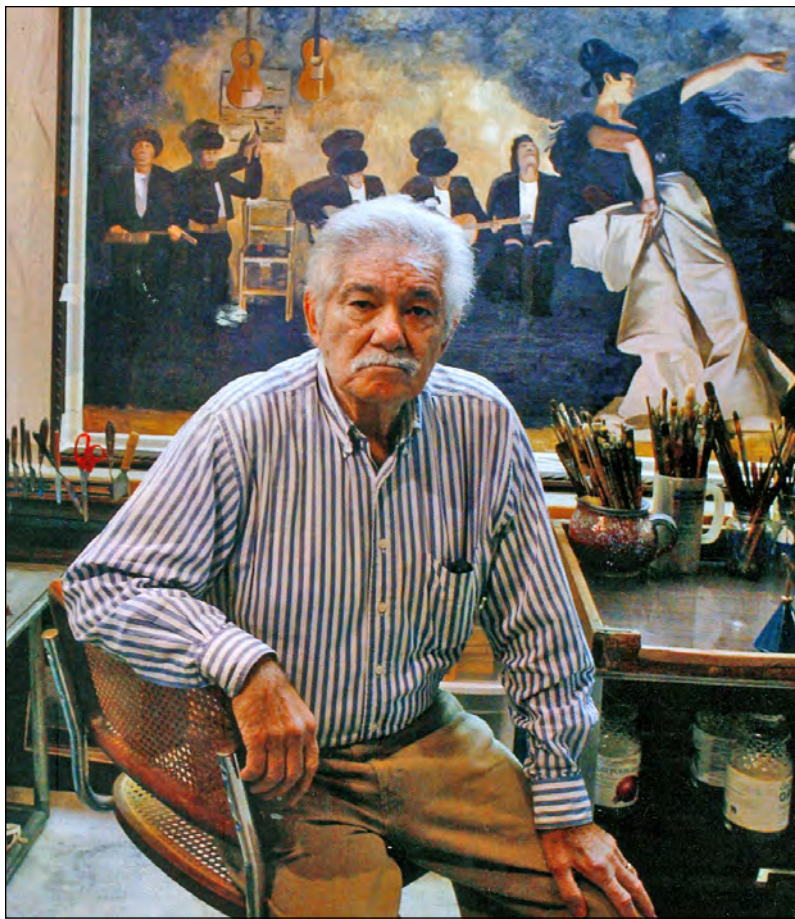
JERUSALEM (*Haaretz*) – The painting “The Citrus Grower,” whose recent acquisition for display in the Knesset caused a storm, is based on a portrait of a Palestinian family from Jaffa in the 1930s. The original photograph was taken by Elia Kahvedjian, a survivor of the Armenian Genocide. He was born in Turkey in 1910, and experienced the death march with his family. He was saved by a Kurd whom they encountered along the way. His mother, who understood where they were headed – and who had already lost three other children since the start of the march – gave Elia, then a young child, to the Kurdish man to save him.

After an arduous journey, and the loss of most of his family, Kahvedjian finally arrived in Nazareth with the help of the American Aid Association for the Near East. He got his love of photography from Borosian, a teacher at his boarding school in Nazareth. When he turned 16, this love took Kahvedjian to Jerusalem, where he studied photography with the Armenian photographers Joseph Toumaian and Garabed Krikorian, and later started to work at the shop of the Hannania brothers, Christian-Arab photographers.

The Armenians were among the local photography pioneers in Palestine in the second half of the 19th century, and Kahvedjian continued this glorious legacy. In 1940, he bought the shop from the Hannania brothers, and thereafter became a very active and successful photographer, opening two more shops at the end of Jaffa Road, near the Fast Hotel. There were numerous such shops in this area, including those owned by photographers Chalil Raad, Garabed Krikorian and Militad Savvides. After the war in 1948, the area became a no-man’s land. Alerted in advance, before the war, by friends in the British army, Kahvedjian was able to save his negatives and the contents of the store in time, and he opened a photography studio in the Christian Quarter of the Old City. The store has been located in the same place ever since and the work there has been carried on by Kahvedjian’s son Kevork and his grandson Elli.

Throughout his life Kahvedjian was involved in Arab society in Palestine and documented scenes of daily life in cities and villages – chess games, women at a well, the plowing season, a Friday market, the orange harvest and more – many of them near Jerusalem, but also elsewhere, such as the Jaffa port. Copies of these photographs, produced from the original negatives, may still be purchased at Kahvedjian’s studio. He did not document the Old Jewish community of Jerusalem and avoided photographing the new Jewish-Zionist settlement. At the same time, Kahvedjian sometimes documented the consequences of the Arab struggle against the Jews, such as Jewish vehicles that were damaged and left by the side of the road in Bab el-Wad (known by Israelis as Sha’ar Hagay, on the road to Jerusalem).

see FAMILY TREE, page 16



Robert Mardirosian (aka, Romard), in his basement art studio, on the day he admitted publicly that he had been secretly holding the Bakwin paintings for decades.

The Lost Cézanne

After Seven Paintings Were Stolen from Him in 1978, Michael Bakwin Thought He’d Never See Them Again. Thirty Years Later, the Saga of the Missing Art – with Twists and Turns Worthy of a John Grisham Novel – Continues

NEW YORK (*Town and Country*) – Two Enormous steel security gates block entry to Michael Bakwin’s rolling 48-acre estate in Ossining, nestled in New York’s Hudson River Valley. His parents built this Tudor-style manse – with 13 bedrooms and gardens so spectacular they’re on horticultural society tours – as a summer retreat back in 1932. Bakwin, now 77, lives here mostly in the summer, entertaining his children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

Pressing a strong hand in greeting, he radiates an embracing warmth, which is reflected in the cozy flannel of his moss-colored button-down shirt. “Come,” he says, deftly taking my coat. “Let me show you the views.” As I try to match his brisk gait through the narrow hallways, he apologizes, telling me that he wishes he could show off his art. But the works he still owns are now locked in a vault. “It makes me nervous even to have them,” he says, gesturing to the walls of windows that make up three sides of the great room. “There’s no way to secure this place.”

By Gretchen Voss

Over a lunch of chicken salad and warm slices of crusty bread, Bakwin proves an engaging raconteur, with a mischievous twinkle in his bright green eyes. Get him chatting about his travels, or the croquet party he throws each summer, and he floats with lightness of a man born into privilege. It’s only when he speaks of “the burglary” that he suddenly wears of his age. His eyes, fixed in the distance, visibly darken.

On the weekend before Memorial Day 1978, Bakwin, then 44, left what was at the time his primary residence on remote Hawthorne Road in Stockbridge, Mass., for a brief visit to Ossining. He doesn’t recall if he locked the front door before driving down the meandering unpaved driveway with his second wife and two young daughters. Even if he had, it wouldn’t have been hard for someone to get in; a front door key was tucked under a stone frog.

Bakwin knows that sounds bizarre – ridiculous, even – considering there was artwork worth millions of dollars, including a much-admired and uninsured Cézanne, displayed throughout the house. But this was the Berkshires, summer playground for the Vanderbilts and counterculture refuge of the intellectual elite. One simply did

see CÉZANNE, page 14

Bloomberg Television’s Lara Setrakian Talks Middle East Reporting

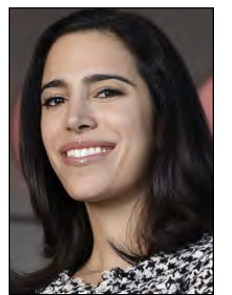
NEW YORK (Bloomberg) – Lara Setrakian, Bloomberg Television’s reporter in the Middle East, joined the network in March. She is based in Bloomberg’s bureau in Dubai, currently its largest bureau in the Middle East, with more than 15 journalists covering markets, energy, finance, government and other news.

Setrakian first began reporting from the Middle East in October 2007 for ABC News. Since joining Bloomberg Television, she has covered the turmoil in Libya, the killing of Osama bin Laden and reported live from Tahrir Square in Cairo as President Hosni Mubarak stepped down. Setrakian speaks French, Spanish, Arabic and Armenian and has studied Persian and Portuguese.

Setrakian took the time to answer some of News on News’ questions;

Bloomberg: You recently joined Bloomberg Television, but you continue to contribute reporting to ABC News. Does ABC News look to you for the economic story or the news story? How does reporting for ABC News differ from reporting for Bloomberg Television?

Lara Setrakian: Both ABC and Bloomberg TV look to me for news – a telling snapshot of people, politics and power players in the Middle East and Southwest Asia. That inevitably ends up covering both business and general news and, given the nature of the past few months, the two are intertwined. Bloomberg Television has a stronger interest in the economic picture, markets and energy security, but those all critically important to understanding the universe of what’s happening in the world today.



Lara Setrakian

The format of what I do for each network – the packaging and delivery of my reporting – is tailored to their style. The bulk of what I file for Bloomberg Television is live, in hits no more than two minutes long, all of our newsgathering molded into the graphics, sound bites and script. Pictures are crucial, but they are not the centerpiece of the story. The information is.

For ABC News, we might do a conversational two-way on Iranian politics for ABC News Now, but largely we’re putting together a polished package. The pictures are the story, we’re crafting around them.

Bloomberg: Bin Laden’s killing took the media and the world by surprise. Where did your instincts take you – to the economic impact or the straight news aspect of the story?

LS: My instinct took me immediately to the regional repercussions of the story and how this would change the dynamics of the Arab and Muslim world. I was surprised to see oil drop. One analyst told it was the \$15 per barrel premium in oil prices – the “Osama factor” – coming out of the market. How long had it been there?

I am a keen tracker of regional politics and one large aspect of that is the sectarian divides and the politics of US-Muslim world relations. The news was clearly going to bookend an era in that history.

I’ve interviewed members of Bin Laden’s family and I called them immediately, but I knew they were not the relevant piece – they are not the direct heirs to his legacy.

see SETRAKIAN, page 15



The Lost Cézanne

CÉZANNE, from page 13

not feel a sense of menace in the idyllic setting where Norman Rockwell lived and painted so many of his wholesome visions of America, where Edith Wharton wrote *The House of Mirth*. As the owner of Avaloch, a small resort in Lenox, Bakwin was knit tight into the community. “I was very social,” he says with a sly laugh. “That’s how I lost my first wife.” He owned a bar, a converted barn that seated 2,000, that was located across the street from the Boston Symphony’s summer home at Tanglewood, and Bakwin spent many evenings there tipping cups with Leonard Bernstein, Beverly Sills, Norman Mailer and Arlo Guthrie.

Bakwin was raised in a townhouse on the Upper East Side of Manhattan and educated at Cornell. His parents, both pediatricians, were leading collectors of Impressionist and post-Impressionist art, and they took Bakwin and his three older siblings on trips around the globe; Bakwin can recall shaking hands with Matisse and Picasso. Bakwin’s mother, Ruth, was the granddaughter of two pioneering Chicago meatpackers, one of whom became one of the country’s wealthiest men after developing the refrigerated railcar. Ruth married Harry Bakwin in Paris in 1925, while they were both studying medicine, and it was there that they bought their first painting, a Renoir. Acquiring art became a passion and the young couple soon formed a close friendship with the artists, dealers and curators who then comprised the international modern art scene. By 1970 they had amassed on the most important collections in America.

In the late 1950s the Bakwins began planning how they would divvy up their 100 paintings and sculptures — which included major works by Picasso, Monet, Rembrandt, Matisse and van Gogh — a collection that would be valued at around \$1 billion today. When Harry Bakwin died in 1973, each of his four children was allowed to select a major piece to keep. Michael knew exactly which painting he wanted: “Bouilloire et Fruits” (Pitcher and Fruit), a still life done by Paul Cézanne in the late 1880s.

Picasso called the work one of the greatest pictures ever painted. Cézanne was at the peak of his career at the time he completed it; “he was engaged with the sophisticated investigations of form and space that are a feature of his mature style,” Sotheby’s later declared when it auctioned the painting. Little is known about who owned “Bouilloire et Fruits,” which depicts an arrangement of apples, oranges and lemon sitting next a pewter pitcher on a table dressed with a white tablecloth, before its purchase in 1963 by Ruth and Harry Bakwin for \$500,000. But as art scholars began a more aggressive study of Cubism and the development of modern art in the 20th century, “Bouilloire et Fruits” came to be considered a masterpiece.

Bakwin hung the Cézanne in his formal dining room in Stockbridge, alongside works by de Vlaminck, Utrillo, Jean Jansem and Soutine. He rarely discussed the art decorating his walls with others, but he lived in a small town and in small towns, people talk. He was, by his own estimation, “a big fish in a little pool.”

When Bakwin and his family returned from Ossining that Memorial Day in 1978, there were no signs that the biggest robbery of a private residence in the history of Massachusetts had just taken place. It would be two days, in fact, before they realized that the seven paintings in their dining room were missing.

Bakwin immediately called the local police chief, William Obanhein, who was known locally as “Officer Obie” and who had arrested Arlo Guthrie for littering in Stockbridge, inspiring the song (and then the movie) *Alice’s Restaurant*.

“I don’t think he gave a damn,” Bakwin says of Obanhein. “He thought, eh, these are just wealthy people.” Bakwin posted a reward in the local paper and hired his own detective, but nothing came of it.

By mid-July, however, the FBI had identified

a 31-year-old man named David Colvin, a well-known petty criminal who had told an undercover federal agent several days after the theft that he had access to stolen paintings, as a prime suspect in the Bakwin burglary. Even so, the authorities couldn’t unearth enough evidence against him during a grand jury investigation to put him on trial. Seven months later, on February 13, 1979, Colvin was shot and killed in a gambling dispute and apparently took with him any hope of solving the case. It seemed that Bakwin was destined to be just another casualty of this country’s \$3-billion stolen art market.

“It was terrible, awful. In many ways it changed my life,” he says quietly. “It was like taking away a child. I just loved Cézanne so much.” He fell into a depression. He also feared for the safety of his daughters after the local papers ran endless headlines about his

in 1978. “We’re interested in talking,” Radcliffe recalls telling Westbrook, knowing he had to read lightly or risk losing the lead. “But I need to speak with the person who is in possession of it.” Westbrook said he was not sure who, exactly, had contacted him to assist in moving the work — from his accent he thought the man was American — but he would try to find out. When he called back, he gave Radcliffe the name of a Swiss lawyer, Bernhard Vischer, who would be taking over the talks.

Vischer told Radcliffe that his client was willing to return the Cézanne — for \$15 million. “I made it absolutely clear to him that we would not pay a penny to get this picture back,” Radcliffe says. “One of our principles is not to pay ransoms and I was convinced we were dealing with criminals.”

Radcliffe is arguably the world’s leading art



Bakwin in 2010 with his latest recovered works, by Jean Jansem

collection. So he moved his family out of state, splitting time among Suffolk, Va. and Ossining, all the while brooding that he might never see his beloved Cézanne again.

It would turn out that the tale of the lost Cézanne was anything but over. It had many more chapters to go, in a twisting and turning saga of theft, intrigue, deception and money, all swirling through the rarefied air of the international art world.

On January 18, 1999, a phone rang at the London office of the Art Loss Register (ALR), the world’s largest private international database of lost and stolen art. A Lloyd’s of London insurance agent was calling to report that he had received a call from an Englishman named Tony Westbrook inquiring about insuring the shipment of Cézanne from an Eastern European country to London. Before agreeing to insure it, Lloyd’s wanted to check the ALR database to vet the provenance of the painting, to make sure the title was clear.

It wasn’t. It was “Bouilloire et Fruits,” which had been missing for 21 years.

The man who answered the phone was the ALR’s founder, Julian Radcliffe, who was known as much for his signature glasses, perpetually perched near the tip of his nose, as for his staccato manner of speaking, which can make his sentences feel as if they’ve been clipped by rusty wire cutters.

Like a bloodhound tracking an irresistible scent, Radcliffe demanded Westbrook’s number. That painting, he told Westbrook after he’d gotten him on the line, had been stolen

sleuth. He is also the antithesis of the soft-handed art aficionado. “I found the leading kidnap negotiation company in the world,” he says with matter-of-fact braggadocio, referring to Control Risk. “And I have a strong background in the intelligence world as well.” He created the Art Loss Register in 1991 after Sotheby’s asked if he might be able to assist in the reclamation of some stolen works. (Radcliffe receives anywhere from 5 to 30 percent value of any painting he recovers as a commission.) It was the perfect assignment for a man with a prodigious ego, a hankering for publicity and a zest for international intrigue. “Julian, he’s a character,” Bakwin says with a chuckle. “He leaves out details and makes you think he was in MI5 or something.” He is also relentlessly persistent, which serves him well as he jets around the world haggling for the return of poached masterpieces — only 15 percent of which are ever recovered, often years later.

The Cézanne’s chances were now looking good. But as the tedious negotiations between Radcliffe and various lawyers, insurance brokers, police departments and prosecutors in several different countries stretched on for eight months, Bakwin began to panic. He feared that if some resolution weren’t reached soon, his beloved Cézanne — the six other stolen works, which were also in the possession of Vischer’s mystery client — would slip underground for another two decades. With a heavy heart he authorized Radcliffe to broker a deal in which the unknown holder of the

paintings — now known simply as Erie International Trading Co., a Panamanian shell company — would return the Cézanne in exchange for the ownership title to the other stolen paintings, which were then worth an estimated \$1 million.

On October 25, 1999, the day the deal was set to be done, Radcliffe had been pacing the floors of a Geneva law firm for hours when the door swept open and Vischer walked in, sweaty, flustered and toting a briefcase bulging with papers. After a few minutes, Radcliffe and Vischer signed documents ceding Bakwin’s ownership of the six other works and Vischer walked out the door.

Radcliffe looked out onto the street below. He watched Vischer put his cell phone to his ear. Seconds later a car pulled up, the back window rolled down and a cumbersome package was handed to Vischer. The car then sped off.

When Vischer returned to the boardroom he gave the parcel to Sotheby’s top expert in Impressionist art, who knelt on the floor and pushed aside a small corner of the layers of wrapping. As soon as the first brushstroke was revealed, everyone could see it was the Cézanne.

Radcliffe and Bakwin knew they should feel relief that the painting had been returned, and in good condition, after more than two decades missing. Both men still felt uneasy. The exchange had only raised more questions. Where had the seven paintings been for the past 21 years? Who was this anonymous part now returning the Cézanne? And what would he do with the six stolen works he now legally held title to?

“I was pretty sure that they would never be able to sell the other paintings,” Radcliffe says now, “because I would keep them in the database as stolen and claim that we had entered into this transaction under duress and therefore it wasn’t valid.” He had also insisted that the clandestine owner of Erie International sign an affidavit stating that he had not been involved in the original theft; the document would then be sealed and held in escrow by a disinterested attorney in London. Assuming that the owner had signed his real name — no sure thing — this would prove key in exposing his identity if he later tired to sell the works. Radcliffe knew it wasn’t a foolproof trap, but it was the best he could do.

While one might conjure the image of dashing playboy Thomas Crown for the role of fine art burglar, the FBI says that art theft is actually just another thuggish street crime. “The same guys fencing stolen art could be dealing drugs or selling guns,” says Geoff Kelley, a member of the FBI’s Art Crime Team in Boston who worked on the Bakwin case. This might seem to be true of Colvin, the original suspect. But would the description hold for the anonymous American whose signature was being held in escrow?

Radcliffe was working in his office one day in March 2005 when he received a pro forma call from Sotheby’s in London. They wanted to include four of the six stolen Bakwin paintings in their June Impressionist auction. “Are the titles in order?” a representative asked.

Radcliffe paused. If he disclosed the truth, the works might again disappear — possibly forever. Instead he told Sotheby’s that the paintings were clear for auction. The following month, when Sotheby’s had them in possession, Radcliffe and Bakwin sued to enjoin the sale.

Radcliffe’s gambit had finally paid off. A judge at the Higher Court of London agreed that the 1999 deal with Vischer and his mystery client had been made under duress and, in late January 2006, awarded the four paintings to Bakwin. (The other two missing works, by Jean Jansem, remained at large.) The judge also ordered that the envelope locked in escrow for the past six years be opened to reveal the name of the anonymous American.

At the offices of London, solicitors Herbert Smith, Radcliffe and his lawyer were presented a large manila envelope. As if handling a Russian nesting doll, Radcliffe unwrapped layer after layer of envelopes, tin foil, post card, sealing wax and packaging. Finally he reached the two-page declaration. The signature at the bottom read “Robert Mardirosian.”

A second-generation Armenian-American, Mardirosian, it turned out was a criminal

continued on next page



ARTS & LIVING

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lawyer based in his hometown of Watertown, Mass., a blue-collar suburb of Boston. In 1978 one of Mardirosian's clients was David Colvin, who was facing a firearms charge and also emerging as the prime suspect in the Bakwin case.

Six months after the theft, in November 1978, on the night before his firearms trial was due to commence, Colvin drove from western Massachusetts to meet Mardirosian at his office. Colvin brought seven paintings that he had said he had stolen and was planning to fence through drug dealers in Miami. Mardirosian would later claim that he advised Colvin against it and that, after Colvin spent the night in an attic above Mardirosian's office, he simply left the paintings behind. Mardirosian later insisted that he didn't discover them until months after Colvin was murdered in 1979. After determining that he couldn't get a reward for returning them because they hadn't been insured, Mardirosian would eventually tell the authorities that he had simply held on to them, trying to devise a way to finagle a profit. ("We take that version of events with a grain of salt," Jonathan Mitchell, a prosecutor for the case, says wryly.)

In the years that followed, Mardirosian slowly ascended Boston's social ladder. Through a close friend and fellow Armenian-American named Petros Palandjian, the founder of a multibillion-dollar Boston real estate development company called Intercontinental Real Estate Corporation, Mardirosian was introduced to the Swiss-born CEO of Cambridgeport Bank, Henri Klein, and was later invited to join the bank's board. He also

purchased a house on the French Riviera.

At around that time, in 1988, Mardirosian transported the seven stolen Bakwin paintings out of the country. To this day no one knows how. But it is believed the works landed first in Monaco and then were squirreled away in the vault of Discount Bank in Geneva, which was now headed by Mardirosian's friend, Klein, who had relocated to Switzerland. Mardirosian kept his identity a secret by communicating through lawyers in Europe and ultimately by incorporating the sham Erie International, which did not name him as owner.

But his reinvention was not yet complete. In 1989, now 55, Mardirosian retired and moved to Falmouth, on Cape Cod, and remade himself as a painter, signing his works "Romard" and splitting his time between the Cape and the South of France.

Cézanne, he wrote in his artist's biography, was a major influence. Romard sold hundreds of his colorful, emotion-driven abstract works around the world and even had several exhibitions in the United States. "I learned there is a lot more to life than making money," he told the Watertown Tab and Press in January 1999, explaining his passion.

After returning the Cézanne later that same year, Mardirosian began mulling how to sell the six other stolen paintings, which, thanks to the deal his lawyer had struck with Radcliffe, he believed he now legally owned. But he needed to keep his identity hidden, since he knew the ALR was surely still searching for them. In December 2003 he went to the Boston office of Paul Palandjian, the son of his friend Petros, who, along with his older brother, was now running Intercontinental.

Knowing the paintings had been stolen but believing Mardirosian to be innocent of the crime, Palandjian agreed to assist in selling them in exchange for a commission.

Eventually Sotheby's in London agreed to put four of them — two Soutines, an Utrillo and a de Vlaminck — up for auction, at an expected total price of nearly \$1 million.

But when Sotheby's called the ALR, the 25-year jig was up. After the envelope was unsealed and Mardirosian's name was revealed as the sole owner of Erie International Trading Corp., the English judge ruled that not only did he have to relinquish the paintings to Bakwin but that he was also responsible for some \$3 million in court, legal and investigative fees that Bakwin had paid to recover them.

The next morning Mardirosian went on a public relations offensive, granting interviews to both the *Boston Globe* and a local public radio program in which he admitted his role in the caper yet claimed he had done nothing nefarious. "If it weren't for me, Bakwin would not have his Cézanne back," he said, clearly annoyed. He hinted that he might sue the ungrateful Bakwin for breach of contract.

Mardirosian then promptly fled the country, hiding out on the Riviera for the next 10 months. Meanwhile, the FBI searched the house he shared in Falmouth with his wife and oldest son. There they found 53 pounds of marijuana and three firearms. By sheer happenstance, it turned out that Mardirosian's son, Marc, was a major drug dealer on the Cape.

Threatened with extradition, the elder Mardirosian finally agreed to return to the United States. The FBI arrested the silver-

haired, mustachioed fugitive — by now in his 70s and showing early stages of dementia — as he stepped off a plane from Paris at Boston's Logan Airport on February 13, 2007. In August 2008, he was convicted of possession of stolen goods and ordered to serve seven years in prison.

After the Supreme Court refused to hear further appeals from Mardirosian, Bakwin was reunited with his last two paintings, two small works by Jansem that has also been kept by Henri Klein, on November 17, 2010 — 32 years after they were stolen from his dining room in Stockbridge.

These days Bakwin does not seem to be angry at the man who kept his paintings from him for most of his adult life. "He's my age," he says. "He shouldn't be in jail. I feel awful. An old guy my age in jail? He should have to pay some other way."

Bakwin just wants to be compensated for the expenses he incurred trying to get his paintings back. But a civil trial to do just that has been postponed for months.

Whether it's the strain of recounting his tale or a side effect of the cancer treatments he had on his vocal cords while the trial played out, Bakwin's voice is a rasp. He gestures to a Sotheby's brochure on a coffee table. On the cover is a photo of his prized Cézanne, which he felt forced to auction a month after he got it back in 1999. "I couldn't secure a painting of that worth," he says. "I don't think people should have things of such value anymore."

After an anonymous bidder paid \$29.3 million for it, Sotheby's let Bakwin visit "Bouilloire et Fruits" alone, one last time. "It was," he says, "like saying goodbye to an old friend, again."

Bloomberg Television's Lara Setrakian Talks Middle East Reporting

SETRAKIAN, from page 13

Those who are, from the radical Yemeni cleric to the terrorist entrepreneur in the West, would need to be identified and understood. It was and still is of tremendous importance to the personal safety and commercial prosperity of everyone on earth.

Bloomberg: In Dubai, you're effectively on the fringes of the mainstream business media. Do you feel that Bloomberg Television gives you the same exposure to tell your story that you'd expect in London or New York?

LS: It doesn't feel like the fringe! It feels like the beating heart of the emerging markets — a multi-lateral view of so many economies rising. It is up to me, and my team, to highlight the importance of that to a global audience. They may not already be invested in India or Africa, but they want to know what's going on and coming up.

One thing I love about Bloomberg Television viewers is that they value insight and ideas, in part because that's where they might find the next big deal. It pays to be well informed. But what it feels like we're building at Bloomberg Television is more than a tip sheet, it's distilled intelligence made for television. We're just serving it up from a different geography.

Bloomberg: Dubai has been through some economic roller coasters in recent years. How do you think the next few years are going to pan out for the emirate?

LS: For the most part, Dubai has taken its hit. The bubble has burst and the model has adapted. Plenty of businesses and businesspeople are still hurting, but other than the glut in real estate and a banking sector still in revival, the hangover has passed. The next big leap, if it happens, is in seeing the market mature. Will the best ideas rise to the top? Will the rules evolve? Is the game fundamentally one that global investors want to play, or were they too burnt by the last round?

Remember, though, that it's not us they need to convince, in New York or London. It's the Indian investor, the Kazakh oil mogul, the Iranian trader, the African conglomerate. And they are doing that — segmenting the audience within an eight-hour flight radius, and convincing them that it's the time to be in Dubai.

Bloomberg: With so much movement in Middle East politics in recent times, how does

that weigh into your Bloomberg Television role?

LS: It means staying on top of every country, every movement and being nimble across them. In the morning we could be talking about Syria, by midday Libya, and by evening Saudi equities.

Working with the Bloomberg terminal and print reporters helps tremendously. It does also put more politics into our business news, because that's what's moving markets and because of the kind of state capitalism at work in the Middle East. You need to understand the business of politics and the politics of business. Right now both are getting a shake, separately and together.

Bloomberg: Contributing still to ABC News, how do you cope with changing from a business mind-set to a general news agenda?

LS: It's been a challenge, because when you're surfing for stories, waiting for the light bulb to flash overhead, it's because you know what you want. For ABC it's the human story that helps inform the bigger narrative. At Bloomberg Television it's a telling nugget of information somewhere in the mix of political economy.

Here's how I've figured it out: take in everything noteworthy and run it through what feels like a mental version of a coin sorter, one of those machines that sorts nickels, quarters and dimes. If it's really an important story it will have a home somewhere on Bloomberg TV, on ABC News or on ABC Radio. If nothing else, there's always Twitter.

Bloomberg: With news of the killing of Osama Bin Laden, how did that change the mood of the region?

LS: There are two regions I'm watching: Southwest Asia, especially Pakistan and Afghanistan, where it inflamed the situation. There has been a deadly ripple effect that the US needs to contain and calm if it wants a smooth exit for US troops anytime soon.

In the Arab world it has had a neutral-to-positive effect, depending on who you're looking at. Those who hate us will keep hating us, they will find any reason. But while we spent a decade hunting Osama, Arab moderates have been growing stronger in number and voice. They were glad to see him go, but it was just a brief interruption in their busy schedules of reform and revolution. In their world, September 11 may have been a generational game-changer, but they're not looking back.

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ARTS & LIVING

How a Palestinian Family from 1930s Jaffa Ended Up in the Heart of a 2011 Israeli Political Storm

FAMILY TREE, from page 13

The Painter

The painting that was hung in the Knesset was done by Eliahou Eric Bokobza, a former pharmacist, who was born in Paris in 1963, the son of Tunisian immigrants. Like Kahvedjian, he came to live in the country as a child. Bokobza speaks of his mother Silvie's longing



"The Family" 1939 by Elia Kahvedjian

for the East; she had never been at home in Paris, and felt that she really belonged in the Orient. When she saw that returning to her beloved Tunisia was not an option, she instead fulfilled the dream of her father, who was an ardent Zionist and treasurer of the Jewish community in Tunis.

Tali Tamir, curator of the exhibition of his works at the Nahum Gutman Museum of Art in Tel Aviv, describes Bokobza as "the last of the Oriental painters of the Bezalel school." Because of the difference in periods, he can be associated only in a fictitious way to this group of students of Mizrahi (Middle Eastern or north African) background, who studied at the old Bezalel Arts Academy in the first two decades of its existence at the beginning of the 20th century, and who were excluded from the canon of Israeli art; yet they shared the same identity.

Bokobza inherited his love of Nahum Gutman's work from his mother, who had reproductions of his work from Jaffa hanging in her home, for they reminded her of her life in Tunisia. For her son's 21st birthday, she gave him a book of Gutman reproductions, inscribed with the following dedication: "May you continue until 120 to look upon the world with the same innocent gaze of Gutman and to continue, like him, to

paint the world."

And so he did, but with a gaze devoid of innocence. While Bokobza clearly has deep affection and admiration for Gutman's work, is inspired by its boldness and draws on its richness and intensity, he casts a more critical and sober eye on its contents, symbols and contexts. He follows the city of Jaffa, its orchards and orange groves, which for Gutman and his contemporaries were mostly affiliated with Zionist images — and returns these scenes to the history of the Palestinian entity. By means of historic photographs, like the Kahvedjian family portrait taken from the photographer's own archive — he also returns the Palestinian identity of Jaffa, including its orchards and people, to the Israeli public consciousness.

1948 hardly existed in the Israeli consciousness. Moreover, a photograph or painting of a Palestinian family from before 1948, against the backdrop of an orchard, would not have precipitated a discussion of the Nakba, as MK Eldad has done now.

Generations of Israelis were raised on the ethos of "a land without a people for a people without a land," and of Israelis making the wilderness bloom, while suppressing the existence of the Palestinian people in the country. The national institutions of the Yishuv (state Jewish community) made extensive use of visual imagery to spread these ideas both before and after the state's founding. But today, everyday images by photographers and painters, both Israeli and Palestinian, depicting mundane

scenes of Palestinian society, allude to the *Nakba* and immortalize the Palestinian life that has been largely erased. There is no need to show the disaster itself or its consequences: mass flight, expulsion, refugee-hood,

Jewish settlement in Palestinian houses, and so on.

One image is

enough — a group portrait, or other everyday images, such as a crop harvest, olive picking, a chess game, a coffee break, laborers in action, etc. — to reflect in Israeli eyes, whether consciously or not, the crisis experienced by the Palestinian people.

This important change in consciousness has been taking place in Israeli society mostly in the last decade, though its roots date back much earlier. And from this position, in which each people recognizes the history of the other and the tragedies and disasters it has experienced — it is perhaps possible to start a sane discussion about the region's future.

(Dr. Rona Sela is a curator and researcher whose focus is the visual aspect of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.)



The painting the photograph inspired by Eliahou Eric Bokobza, "The Citrus Grower" (2007)

Bokobza deals with images that have been erased from the Israeli collective memory, while conducting a dialogue on many different levels with Gutman, one of the main figures in Israeli art. He raises questions about the complexity of life in a country where two peoples cling to the same land, about the encounter between them and especially about the history of the representation of the conflict.

The Knesset Member

The storm stirred up by MK Aryeh Eldad (National Union) following the recent acquisition of the Bokobza painting for the Knesset reflects the way Israeli society has evolved. Until just a few years ago, the word *Nakba* (meaning "catastrophe") was not in regular use in Israel, and the Palestinian presence before

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Talk at Ararat-Eskijian Museum On Armenians on the Titanic

MISSION HILLS, Calif. — Dr. Gregory Ketabgian will give an illustrated lecture titled "Armenians on the Titanic," on Sunday, June 26, at 4 p.m., at the Ararat-Eskijian Museum, 15105 Mission Hills Road. The lecture is co-sponsored by the museum and the National Association for Armenian Studies and Research (NAASR).

Ketabgian is a retired specialist in internal medicine and endocrinology in Pasadena. He is an emeritus staff member at Huntington Memorial Hospital and served as medical director of Student Health Services and on the faculty at California Institute of Technology, 1969-1984. He was elected to the NAASR Board of Directors for Southern California in May.

News of a couple getting married at a Milwaukee museum where "Titanic Relics" were exhibited sounded unusual. The fact that the great-grandfather of the bride was one of the survivors and that he was an Armenian running away from Turkish persecution aroused even more interest on the subject. Further research uncovered additional Armenian sojourners who were on the same journey.

Ketabgian's talk will describe the living conditions in these travelers' homeland villages in the Keghi region at the time and discuss why they were trying to get away. Numerous difficulties were encountered on their trip over land and at sea to get to their port of embarkation. There will be some quotations from William Saroyan's writings about his family's travel along similar routes. Ketabgian will also discuss their humble accommodations on the Titanic as well as how they were rescued.

These Armenians were coming to the New World to work in industrial jobs that were readily available and planned to send the money they earned back home to help their family members. After 1915 their objectives changed, however, and they tried to create new lives in their adopted country.

There also will be a short vignette of a "Blood-Stained Bible" from Urfa and its connection to the State Department's denial of the Armenian Genocide.

For more information e-mail [mgoschin@mindspring.com](mailto:megoschin@mindspring.com) or hq@naasr.org.

Daylight Is Bright and Bold

It Is Daylight By Arda Collins
Yale University Press, 2009

By Michael Casey

Arda Collins’ *It Is Daylight* is the 103rd winning volume in the Yale Younger Poet Series. The series publishes one first book of poetry every year. Of course, poetry is not a big deal in American publishing, but if one has a first book manuscript of poems, this Yale Series is the best place to try.

Truth be told, the series has been man-centric. Although superb collections by female poets, Jean Valentine and Adrienne Rich, have appeared, the series mostly has male poets selected by male editors. Sylvia Plath, a premier American poet, submitted manuscripts twice to the competition without any luck. All this changed with the tenure of editor Stanley Kunitz, renowned as a poet and as a nice man. His selections included books by Carolyn Forché and by Olga Broumas. The current judge is Louise Glück, a wonderful poet, and in like manner, just as talented as an editor. Collins’ book, selected by Glück, is an achievement.

Adam Hochschild’s *To End All Wars* Shows resistance to World War I, Its ‘Needless Folly and Madness’

By Karen R. Long

Reading the indispensable Adam Hochschild’s latest book of history, *To End All Wars*, puts the reader in mind of the playground.

In this charged, lucid account of the First World War, we watch generals and politicians avail themselves of techniques common to any middle-school brawl: catcalls, face-saving, paeans to honor, appeals to manliness, cries to God and gleeful maneuvering so as to be able to say, “He started it.”

Celebrities stoke the hostilities, like boys circling the fray. Thomas Mann, Germany’s greatest living writer, declared the coming war meant “purification, liberation” from the “toxic comfort of peace.” Just as bellicose was Rudyard Kipling, whose writing characterized the nasty British aggression in the Boer War as a foretaste, “a first-class dress-parade for Armageddon.”

Nearly a century after World War I, it remains difficult to grasp its “needless folly and madness,” as Hochschild puts it. He has a way with telling detail, including this one: “If the British dead alone were to rise up and march 24 hours a day past a given spot, four abreast, it would take them more than two and a half days.”

And still, the civilian toll – an estimated 12 million to 13 million dead – was higher than the military’s. The war brought famine and the Armenian Genocide. Hochschild, in his subdued, signature way, also notes what few governments bothered to count: the deaths of 400,000 underfed, whipped African porters along the Western front.

He begins by walking the northern French countryside, reading visitor’s logs and plaques in hundreds of cemeteries. The farmland is still gouged and pitted. Here, the gunners’ ears bled from the concussive noise. And here, on the edge of and into a new millennium, passers-by still trigger unexploded shells – 31 such deaths in 1991 alone.

Hochschild has written two classic books: *King Leopold’s Ghost*, about forced labor and murder in the Congo; and *Bury the Chains*, about England shedding its slave trade. A founder of *Mother Jones* magazine, he has long been a keen and eloquent student of how cultural consensus is reached, resisted and remade.

It helps that his writing is as clear and stirring as a church bell. Hochschild describes the obstinate prosecution of Europe’s first industrial war and the patchy resistance to that conflict, mostly in England, where some 20,000 men defied the draft. Roughly 6,000 conscientious objectors

Collins’ use of idiom is superb, subtle and incisive. The poems in the second person are so completely bright and innovative and in her hand inimitable. She takes delight in everyday things: grocery stores, the human hand, salt and pepper shakers, dentists, etc.

The elegy for her great-aunt I found profoundly moving. It addresses generational conflict, the Genocide, cultural ethnic differences, religion, life, death and hope:

...I saw her a number of times,
starting in the predictable moss-covered
stone chambers and ending on an astringent
deck of a ship
heading for probably
a Greek island with one olive tree on it,
I felt an urgent question forming.
I didn’t know what it was though.

It came to me though: Is it better to be alive
or dead?

She said “It’s better alive.”

This is a very important poem to read for all Armenians and worth the price of the book on its own. It is a triumph. As an Ordu-tzi would say, “Mazeltov!”

With the interest these days in total disclosure, I must say that I believe that Collins and I have some of the same ancestors in the city of Ordu on the Black Sea. Still, I affirm that I am pleased to objectively review her first book of poems, *It Is Daylight*.

went to prison; some were executed.

Fifty were handcuffed, transported to France and informed, a few days before the Battle of the Somme, they would be executed if they refused to fight.

“In an act of great collective courage . . . not a single man wavered,” Hochschild writes. “Only at the last minute, thanks to frantic lobbying in London, were their lives saved. These resisters and their comrades did not come close to stopping the war, and have won no place in the standard history books, but their strength of conviction remains one of the glories of a dark time.”

Hochschild follows the stories of a handful of such individuals, including the crusading Charlotte Despard, whose own brother commanded the British forces in Europe, and Albert Rochester, a railway signalman court-marshaled for the temerity of questioning why every English officer kept a personal servant to polish his boots.

At trial, he was as withering as the era’s most celebrated resister, Bertrand Russell.

“This war is trivial, for all its vastness,” wrote the mathematician, who was also prosecuted and jailed. “No great principle is at stake, no great human purpose is involved on either side. . . . The English and French say they are fighting in defence of democracy, but they do not wish their words to be heard in Petrograd or Calcutta.”

Questions of patriotism and morality sting along these pages, which chronicle the lethal advent of chlorine gas and tanks, and German women so hungry they tear apart a faltering horse. Kipling, we learn, rushed his only son into uniform at age 17, pulling strings to have the boy’s myopia overlooked.

A shell fragment in Belgium shattered John Kipling’s mouth. He was last seen crying in pain; his body was never found. No one dared tell his formidable father, who imagined his son’s last act as laughing at some soldierly jest. Still, when an American friend came to visit the imperialist poet, he squeezed her hand hard and said, “Down on your knees, Julia, and thank God you haven’t a son.”

Such scenes cut us and underscore Hochschild’s fairness and empathy. Many books about World War I crowd the shelves; more will arrive to mark its centennial in three years. Here is one to give pause as the United States tries to discern its own purpose in three separate conflicts.

Idealists all around fought in and resisted the Great War, and, as Hochschild shows, all that sacrifice, all those rivers of blood, changed the world for the worse.

(Karen Long is the book editor of the *Cleveland Plain Dealer*.)

Saints Vartanantz’ Picnic

By Michael Casey

my uncle Mugarditch was
at Saints Vartanantz’ picnic
And who should be there
but Grandma Yeranoohy’s buddy
Mrs. Sebanjian
some family history...
I have two Armenian uncles
Uncle Vasken and Uncle Mugarditch
bother barbers sapritchned eheen
And Vasken was very very portly
both of them really hot tickets
both them went to BC
barbers’ college
and did you hear
about the low calorie hair tonic
for fatheads??
Mugarditch Mugarditch sapritch eh
Mugarditch Mugarditch
son of a gun
well Vasken moved to California
but Mugarditch was still in Massachusetts
and had gained some girth
and now back to the picnic
Mrs. Sebanjian sees Mugarditch
and right away walks over to give him
a great big kiss and hug
and a How You, Vasken?
I’m fine, Mrs. Sebanjian
but I’m not Vasken
I’m Mugardtich Midgie
and Mrs. Sebanjian
is really hip
knows that Vasken is a card
Vasken, you yamman
ter tombelig es
you full fun
you karpes eem
you make joke eem vra
and walks away laughing
waving her finger at Vasken

(To reach Michael Casey, contact
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COMMENTARY

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COMMENTARY

Turkey's Parliamentary Elections and Emerging Minority Rights

By Edmond Y. Azadian

Turkey has become a world power and consequently, its policies and actions have a broader global impact than those of its immediate neighbors. That is why the international news media, pundits and statesmen were concentrating recently on the parliamentary elections on June 12, in which Erdogan's party won a third term.

Those elections brought some anticipated and unanticipated results. The anticipated result was the landslide victory of Prime Minister Tayyip Erdogan's AKP party, which was based on certain fundamental factors. Those factors were economic growth (almost 9 percent), assertive diplomacy and finally a promise to revamp the constitution, which was adopted in 1982 by Gen. Kenan Evran's military dictatorship following the coup of 1980. Erdogan promised to bring "basic rights and freedoms" through the new constitution and eliminate the tutelage of the military enshrined in the constitution by Evran's putschist government.

Turkey's population is estimated to be 74 million, of which 20 percent, according to very conservative estimates, are Kurds. There are 50 million voters of which 84.5 percent have been at the polls — an impressive participation by any measure. AKP won 50 percent of the votes, garnering 326 seats in the 550-seat parliament. This outcome will not help the party to unilaterally change the constitution, but it paves the way for some horse-trading with opposition parties in order to push the change through.

The constitutional change issue has also split longtime allies, Prime Minister Erdogan and President Abdullah Gul, the latter apparently opposing the change.

The AKP has taken Turkey in new directions in terms of domestic and foreign policy; domestically, the party has opened the way for Islamic culture, a trend opposed by Ataturk's Republican Party (currently in opposition), upending the founding fathers' secularism. Internationally, Erdogan has demonstrated an independent streak, veering his course and putting distance between Turkey and the West, and instead cozying up to Iran, challenging Israel and making Russia the country's major trading partner.

In a recent article, political scientist George Friedman foresaw some ominous trends in the region, writing: "Now the United States is withdrawing from the region, leaving behind instability and an increasingly powerful and self-confident Turkey. In the end, the economic and military strength of Turkey had to transform it into a major regional force."

This scenario does not augur well for the countries in the region, and especially for Armenia, when Turkey can dictate the political agenda for the entire region.

Through shortsighted political expediency, the West helped bankrupt Turkey to attain economic boom and above all build the strongest army in Europe. Now, the West has to deal with the outcome of its shortsighted Cold War policy.

An unintended or unanticipated result of these elections is the emergence of the minorities, and especially the vocal Kurdish minority, which may eventually break up Turkey's territorial integrity. However, not yet.

When the US invaded Iraq, Turkey vehemently opposed the disintegration of that country and in fact, conditioned its cooperation with Washington on a promise not to allow the formation of an independent Kurdistan, which could inspire and incite its indigenous Kurdish population towards autonomy or independence.

Although the US held on to its promise, Israel infiltrated Iraq and built up a Kurdish army and organized its administrative set-up. Today, Iraq enjoys only a nominal unity, while an independent Kurdistan has been formed, for all practical purposes. In fact, the Turkish-Israeli row owed more to the Kurdish issue than to the plight of the Palestinian people in the occupied territories.

Erdogan is a political pragmatist; while he could not contain the formation of Iraqi Kurdistan, he was able to prevent the spillover of that independence movement into Turkish territory by engaging the Kurds politically. Although this policy is a race against time, it may bear fruit for a while. Eventually the Kurds may rise up for independence, as long as another junta does not emerge to crush their movement as in the past.

During the election campaign, when asked by a TV reporter what Erdogan has done on the Kurdish problem, he answered: "First we changed the denialist policy in the country [i.e., suggesting that Kurds don't exist]. We faced the Kurdish issue as a problem and we reversed the policy of assimilation. And today, we are dealing with their social and economic problems."

The Kurds have been brutally persecuted in Turkey. After becoming willing partners with Turks in perpetrating the Armenian Genocide, they received a raw deal from successive Turkish governments, beginning with the founding father, Kemal Ataturk, who continued the Turkification policies of the previous Ittihad ve Terrake Party. Ataturk suppressed the Dersim uprising of the Kurds through aerial bombardment.

The Kurds have never enjoyed independence in their history; they have never had a sovereign government. Instead, they have been used as political pawns by different governments. The Shah of Iran used them against Iraq and the latter used them — in turn — against Iran. The Soviet Union used the Kurds in all the countries over which their people have been spread; they even set up a government in Iran and they armed and financed them in Turkey. One of the Kurdish rebel leaders, Mustafa Ali Kilani, even cozied up to Hitler to liberate the Kurds from the British rule.

The only place the Kurds have felt at home has been Armenia, where they have been able to use their language and practice their culture and literature openly, without fear of reprisal.

The Kurds have always believed that they don't have any friends except the mountains and they fortified their forces in the mountain areas to no avail, because of the advancement of modern weaponry.

Evren's government and succeeding "democratic" administrations dislodged the Kurds from their mountainous habitats into modern Gulan communities in the plains, where they would be more easily muffled if they were to stage a rebellion.

In the June 12 election, the Kurdish Peace and Democracy Party won 36 seats. The Kurds are in euphoria and they no longer conceal their ultimate goal, independence.

Following the victory, 50,000 Kurds rallied in front of the city hall of Hakkirai, a Kurdish city, where one of party leaders, Salaheddine Demitas, addressed the crowd, saying: "We are ready to negotiate about the constitution. The Kurdish people have endorsed our right to negotiate. Now we have to open the road to peace together. But in order to stop the raging war in the country, it is important to continue the negotiations with the honorable Ocalan and establish contacts with the PKK as an opposing force in the war. The government should not avoid doing that in order to bring peace should accept PKK as a negotiating party."

Their demands seem very hard ones for the Turkish government to accept, since it has declared PKK a terrorist organization and Ocalan as a common criminal incarcerated in a prison at Imrali Island, with a life sentence.

While Ocalan has extended his declared ceasefire from his prison cell, another leader at the Hakkiri rally, Feliz Kocali, announced that the Kurds will continue the struggle until they have independence, while the crowd chanted "Kurdistan is our homeland and Diarbekir its capital."

It is a moot question if Erdogan ever imagined that his policy of opening up the Kurdish question would lead to such an outburst of extreme nationalism. The Kurds have even begun to bring up the issue of the Armenian Genocide in the Turkish Parliament. We don't believe they have a genuine interest in the recognition of the Armenian Genocide, but they will use it as a political chip against their adversaries, until they achieve their own agenda.

Similarly, recognition of the Armenian Genocide has surfaced in the Israeli Parliament to threaten Erdogan to tone down his anti-Israeli rhetoric.

But that is the nature of political deals, unless another party sees value in a life-and-death issue to another nation, it will not cooperate on that issue.

But a more serious venue has reminded Turkey of its international obligations, including Armenia.

Indeed, the International Crisis Group has already submitted 10 demands to Erdogan's new government, even before it is formed; they deal mostly with the European Union, progress on Cyprus issue, Aegean islands with Greece, Turkish Israeli relations and the seventh demand relates to Armenia; that the new government has to take seriously relations with Armenia, opening its borders and establishing diplomatic relations with the latter.

We notice that Armenia and the Armenian issues have emerged from three different fronts, mostly with self-serving policies, but anyway reminding Turkey of its outstanding obligations to the Armenians. Whether those are genuine interests or not, we have to capitalize on them.

We don't know how far the new Turkish government will accommodate the Kurdish demands and minority rights, but the EU is on Turkey's back to loosen its grip on its minorities, whose fallout will certainly benefit Armenia, and the Armenian community in Turkey.



COMMENTARY



My Turn

By Harut Sassounian

From Genocide Recognition To Reclaiming Church Properties

The Armenian-American community took a major step last week to reverse the consequences of the Armenian Genocide and end the Turkish government's long-standing policy of erasing all traces of Armenian civilization from present-day Turkey.

Going beyond mere acknowledgment of the Armenian Genocide, some members of Congress have introduced a new resolution that urges "the Republic of Turkey to safeguard its Christian heritage and to return confiscated church properties."

The sweeping House Resolution 306 calls on the government of Turkey to:

- 1) end all forms of religious discrimination;
- 2) allow the rightful church and lay owners of Christian church properties, without hindrance or restriction, to organize and administer prayer services, religious education, clerical training, appointments and succession, religious community gatherings, social services, including ministry to the needs of the poor and infirm and other religious activities;
- 3) return to their rightful owners all Christian churches and other places of worship, monasteries, schools, hospitals, monuments, relics, holy sites and other religious properties, including movable properties, such as artwork, man-

uscripts, vestments, vessels and other artifacts; and

4) allow the rightful Christian church and lay owners of Christian church properties, without hindrance or restriction, to preserve, reconstruct and repair, as they see fit, all Christian churches and other places of worship, monasteries, schools, hospitals, monuments, relics, holy sites and other religious properties within Turkey."

This bipartisan resolution, sponsored by Rep. Ed Royce (R-CA) and Rep. Howard Berman (D-CA), was immediately endorsed by 30 of their House colleagues, 10 of them Republicans. This is a good start, as Republicans constitute the majority in the House and their support is crucial for the successful passage of the resolution. Significantly, Rep. Ileana Ros-Lehtinen (R-FL), chair of the House Foreign Affairs Committee and a long-time opponent of the Armenian Genocide resolution, was one of the first supporters of the resolution regarding the return of church properties.

It is not surprising that this resolution has such broad support, as it is hard to imagine that any member of Congress, the State Department or the Obama administration would oppose returning a religious building back to its proper owners. By contemporary societal standards, no one would accept the conversion of a church into a mosque or vice versa. Turkey's devout leaders, as good Muslims, would be the first to acknowledge and uphold the sanctity of houses of worship.

Beyond building a strong bipartisan coalition in Congress, practically all religious denominations in America, be they Evangelical, Catholic, Orthodox, Jewish or Muslim, would support such a resolution. All ethnic groups, such as Latinos, Greek-Americans, Irish-Americans, Jewish-American, Arab-Americans, Afro-Americans, Asian-Americans and Assyrian-Americans would also lend their support to this resolution.

The Armenian National Committee of America noted that the resolution intends "to highlight, confront and eventually reverse decades of official Turkish policy of

destroying Christian church properties, desecrating holy sites, discriminating against Christian communities and denying of the right of Armenians, Greeks, Assyrians, Chaldeans, Pontians, Arameans (Syriacs) and others to practice their faith in freedom."

The right to religious freedom is not simply an internal Turkish issue. This right is protected by many international agreements, including the United Nations' Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the European Convention on Human Rights and the 1923 Treaty of Lausanne to which Turkey is a signatory. Turkey continues to violate Articles 41 and 42 of the Lausanne Treaty which obligate it to provide funding and facilities to non-Muslim minorities for educational, religious and charitable purposes and to protect their religious establishments. Regrettably, the House resolution makes no mention of these violations and Turkey's obligations under the Lausanne Treaty.

The US Commission on International Religious Freedom, which issues an annual report documenting violations of religious rights around the world, has placed Turkey on its "Watch List," for the third year in a row. The Commission has found that "the Turkish government continues to impose serious limitations on freedom of religion or belief, thereby threatening the continued vitality and survival of minority religious communities in Turkey." The Turkish government also "continues to intervene in the internal governance and education of religious communities and to confiscate places of worship."

In recent years, the House and Senate passed several resolutions calling on Turkish-occupied Northern Cyprus, Lithuania, Romania and Vietnam to protect houses of worship and return wrongfully confiscated properties belonging to religious minorities. In line with these resolutions, the House of Representatives should adopt Resolution 306, calling on the Turkish government to respect the right of worship for all Christian minorities and return to them their expropriated churches and other religious properties.

Time for Justice for Genocide Victims

By Harry Koundakjian

While some criminals guilty of committing genocide (such as those in Serbia or Germany) are brought to trial, the majority go free, never penalized for their horrific crimes. In particular, the Armenians live with the unacknowledged Genocide of 1.5 million Armenians, and the perpetrators have never been charged. Among the victims was my great-grandfather, the Reverend Hagop Koundakjian, who was burned alive near his town church with 28 of his parishioners. My great-grandmother, Yeretgin Maryam, reported this in a letter in which she explains how she had to walk behind the Turkish officers' horses to collect their manure and try to cook the undigested seeds for her children and grandchildren.

Great-grandmother Yeretgin Maryam (Mary) Koundakjian writes: "I wish I had not been compelled to write about the terrible and frightening tragedies that took place.

"The catastrophe struck like lightning. With tears in my eyes, I write to you. Your father (Rev.) Hagop Koundakjian was luckier than we were, because at the beginning of the catastrophe, on the road to Adana, he was killed and did not see the sudden destruction and premeditated attacks on our city. He did not witness the burning of his city, did not hear the shocking and frightening shooting by the cruel and heartless enemy.

"He did not see his sisters, brothers and relatives shot to death indiscriminately.

"On April 11, 1909, we had our communion (at church, during the worship service). It was a rather heartfelt ceremony. Nobody knew or imagined that this would be his last sermon.

"On the next day father journeyed for the annual Armenian Evangelical Church conference.

"As you might have heard already, all in the group of 28 from Osmaniah were burned alive with your father. I want to assure you, my children, that all these difficulties, threats of persecutions and doomsday announcements have strengthened us in our faith — Christianity — and belief in God.

"On April 16th, a gang of wild Turks, Kurds and Circassians attacked Hassanbeyli. Our youth, with their limited arms, protected us heroically but the enemy fighters advanced like locusts, obliging us to take cover in the nearby hills. We prayed to the Lord to protect us.

"We were driven and took refuge at Bahche, where we still are today. They (the Ottoman Turks) threatened us with death if we did not convert to and accept Islam. We are very tired. We are near half-dead.

"Everything was destroyed. The church, in which your father served for over 30 years, disappeared."

This is a fraction of the letter written by our great-grandmother found so far. All our efforts to locate the rest have been in vain. But we continue the search.

Having been born into an Evangelical family, I only have this portion of our people's story, but I understand from very reliable sources that Bishop Papken Charian of the Apostolic Brotherhood wrote his dissertation on this same issue. He had collected all the martyrs from the three denominations (Apostolic, Catholic and Evangelical) and published it in a single volume. This is also translated into English. You all can get this book under the title *Nahadag Hay Hokevoraganner* (Martyred Armenian Clergy).

Last December, during a two-day forum attended by Genocide scholars from about 20 countries, Armenia's President Serge Sargsisian said broader international recognition of the Armenian Genocide is essential for preventing more crimes against humanity:

"The bitter lessons of the Armenian Genocide did not go down in the history and memory of humankind as mere memories of the past. They came to be replaced by the horrors of the Holocaust and the tragedies in Rwanda, Darfur and many other places."

Foreign Minister Eduard Nalbandian of Armenia made the same point: "Genocide denial and impunity pave the way for new crimes against humanity. Regardless of geopolitical or other interests, the international community must be united in condemning and preventing genocide."

A comment made around the world was, "I want to hear the words, 'Armenians across the world, along with the Republic of Armenia, demand reparations for the crime of genocide and the rightful return of our confiscated lands.'"

My anger is because of this: What are our political leaders around the world doing to compel the great powers — the US, Great Britain, France, Russia and Germany — to make clear to successive Turkish governments that either they accept these facts as truly Genocide, and if not, that they would break off relations with Turkey. Turkey is acting like a superpower now around the world in order to get into the European Union. This should not happen. Yes, I know they are 80 million now, but surely we can prove that some of them — or perhaps many, many of them — have Armenian blood in their veins. Many of their earlier leaders were not Turks anyway; they were known as 'Deunmeh' or converts.

Not many people know about our Tricolor flag. It is known as *Yerakoouyn* and consists of three horizontal bands of red, blue and orange. The meaning of the colors have been interpreted in different ways. Red stood for the blood shed by Armenian soldiers in war, blue for the Armenian sky and the orange represents for fertile lands of Armenia and workers who work there. The official definition of the colors, as stated in the Constitution of the Republic of Armenia, is: The red emblemizes people's continued struggle for survival, and for the blood our brave ancestors shed, fighting the enemy and sacrificing their lives to save the Armenian nation from annihilation, ensure their freedom to practice their Christian faith, Armenia's independence and freedom. The blue is for the people of Armenia to live beneath peaceful skies and the orange symbolizes the creative talent and hard-working nature of the people of Armenia. Long live the flag of Armenia. History of the Armenian flag says it was created after the First World War between 1918 and 1921, after Armenian gained independence and was readopted on Aug. 24 1990, just before gaining independence from the Soviet Union in 1991.

It is a must for all Armenian families to read about and remember our Martyrs. They should not and cannot be forgotten.

(Harry Koundakjian was chief photographer for the Associated Press in the Middle East and North Africa for many years.)

Notice to Contributors

The *Armenian Mirror-Spectator* welcomes articles, commentaries and community news from our readers. In order to assure the accurate and timely publication of articles submitted, please note the following policies:

- All articles submitted should be typed, double (or triple) spaced and printed in a type size large enough to be clearly legible (10 point or larger). Submissions that do not conform to these specifications will be assigned lowest priority.
- Articles sent by fax are acceptable, and e-mail submissions are encouraged.
- All submissions should include the name of a con-

tact person and a daytime telephone number.

- Deadline for submission of all articles and advertising is 12 noon on Monday of the week of publication.
- Photos will be published without charge at the discretion of the editors and art director. Photos will be returned only if a self-addressed and stamped envelope is included.
- The *MS* will publish only one article about an upcoming organizational event. For major special events, exceptions may be made only by special arrangement with the editors.
- Telephone numbers, ticket prices and other details (at the discretion of the editors) will not be included in press releases, but should be reserved for calendar listings and advertisements.



We Can't tell the Victims to Leave Mass Graves in Peace

By Robert Fisk

The Syrians say they discovered a mass grave this week containing the bodies of murdered soldiers outside a town called Jisr al-Shughour. “Armed gangs” are to blame, according to Syrian state television.

Well, maybe. Or perhaps they were killed by their colleagues for refusing to open fire on unarmed anti-Assad demonstrators. But all the world’s a mass grave. Why, only a few miles north of Jisr al-Shughour, the Syrian fields are still strewn with thousands of bones and bits of skulls; all that is left in just this one location of the one and a half million men, women and children who were murdered in the 1915 Armenian holocaust. Then there’s a place called “Barbara’s Pit” near a town called Lasko where the mass grave, only 66 years old this time, contains perhaps 1,000 skeletons about whom no one really wishes to talk.

The investigation has been going on for two years now, a darkly political, deeply fearful inquiry because this mass grave is in Slovenia and contains the victims of Tito’s victorious partisans, the pro-Nazi Croat Ustashe militia and their families, anti-communist Cossacks as well, perhaps, a few Hungarian collaborators no doubt, certainly some anti-Tito Serb Chetniks and their wives and fathers and brothers and children and nieces. Handed over to Tito’s forces by us, the Brits, at the end of the Second World War, at the point of a bayonet; screaming with fear, they were, cut-

ting their throats in the trains that took them back into Yugoslavia from the safety of Austria, women and children hurling themselves to their deaths off the carriages as they passed over river gorges.

We didn’t want to have the communists infect Austria, you see. We wanted peace with Tito. Our own PoWs had to be returned to us. So we helped the killers to perpetrate the massacres that left perhaps 100,000 corpses rotting in the 600 mass graves of Slovenia. Most can never be identified, although Ljubljana’s brave little government promises to dig up every one.

Some were, no doubt, war criminals, tools of the Nazis who ruled Croatia and gobbled up Bosnia and part of Serbia in 1941. There were extermination camps in the Ustashe’s brutal “nation.” But there are children’s shoes in the mass graves and many of the bodies appear to have been executed naked. Women were among them. Small shoes still cover the lower part of femurs. The first writer to reveal the secrets of Barbarin rov, Roman Leljak, was charged by the police with “desecrating” a tomb. The real culprit – the head of the local mass murderers in 1945 – was a member of the First Slovene Division of Tito’s “People’s Defence”. The slaughter lasted from May until September 1945, four months after Hitler’s death, when even the Japanese war was over.

Mass graves are opened, I was told by a Serb colonel’s wife during the Balkan wars, to pour more blood into them. But opening a few graves at Katyn – containing the corpses

of thousands of Polish officers and intellectuals murdered by Stalin’s NKVD, uncovered by the Nazis, denied by the Soviets and by the West for decades because it wanted to keep its relations with Stalin’s butchers, until the new Russia itself told the truth – led to a strange new trust between Moscow and Warsaw with even ex-KGB man Putin bowing before the slaughter field.

Do these corpses matter now that most of their relatives – and their murderers – are dead? Memorializing individual deaths in war started only in 1914. Save for the glorious leaders, the Wellingtons and the Napoleons and the Nelsons, mass graves awaited all who fell in battle. The French dead of Waterloo were shipped off to England to be used as manure on the fields of Lincolnshire. If war is judicial murder, I suppose they suffered a crueler fate than the Chetniks and Cossacks and Ustashe and their families in 1945 whose graves are at least known even if their identities will always be anonymous.

Where we can, we do now identify the dead. The vast 1914-1918 war cemeteries and the graveyards of the Second World War define our craving for individualism amid barbarism. Yet mass graves lie beneath every crossroads in Europe; from the war of the Spanish succession to the Hundred Years War, to the Franco-Prussian war, from Drogheda to Srebrenica and, of course, to the ash pits of Auschwitz. In 1993, I visited the remains of

the Treblinka extermination camp in Poland just after a gale had unearthed trees from the ground. In the roots of one, I found human teeth. Known unto God.

There’s a mass grave only two miles from my home in Beirut – of Palestinian victims of the Sabra and Shatila massacre whom I watched being buried, only a few of whose names I know – and which will never be reopened. Not in our lifetime. And there are mass graves – of perhaps 30,000 Iraqi dead – buried alive by US forces in the 1991 Gulf War, unmarked, of course.

I’m not sure where the search should end. Who would deny the relatives of the dead of Srebrenica – whose principal killer at last resides in the Hague – the chance of praying at the graves? Who would turn their backs on the mass graves of Buchenwald? Or the frozen hills of bones that mark the burial of the 350,000 Leningraders who starved to death in 1941 and 1942?

I am reminded of that great American poet, Carl Sandburg. “Pile the bodies high at Austerlitz and Waterloo,” he wrote. “And pile them high at Gettysburg/And pile them high at Ypres and Verdun./Shovel them under and let me work... I am the grass,/Let me work.”

(Robert Fisk is a Middle East correspondent and commentator for *The Independent* newspaper. This commentary originally appeared in the June 18 issue of that publication.)

Armenia Claims Military Drone Manufacturing Capability

YEREVAN (RFE/RL) – Armenia manufactures and supplies its armed forces with unmanned military aircraft capable of flying deep into enemy territory, the deputy commander of the country’s small air force said over the weekend.

“We have quite serious unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs), even those capable of carrying out objectives deep inside enemy territory,” Col. Armen Mkrtchian told journalists. “They are made in Armenia.”

“Having said that, we do not rule out the possibility of acquiring foreign-made ones, including for mere comparison,” he said. “After all, you can tell apart good and bad things through comparison.”

Mkrtchian refused to give any details of domestic drone manufacturing, which exists only in a limited number of countries. He would not say if Armenian-made UAVs are designed only for surveillance missions or air strikes as well.

That the Armenian military is equipped with domestically designed and manufactured drones has been claimed by some local defense analysts in the last few years. Mkrtchian’s remarks are the first official confirmation of these assertions.

Azerbaijan is known to have UAVs. It pur-

chased them from Israel until recently. An Azerbaijani-Israeli joint venture reportedly began assembling drones in Azerbaijan earlier this year.

Over the past decade, Azerbaijan has also acquired dozens of conventional military aircraft as part of an ongoing military build-up. Its air force is now thought to have numerical superiority over its Armenian adversary.

Both Mkrtchian and Artsrun Hovannisian, an Armenian Defense Ministry expert, downplayed that advantage. They claimed that Baku’s air capability is grossly inflated and that it would be of little use to the Azerbaijani army in case of another war for Nagorno-Karabagh.

Mkrtchian also said that the Armenian air force has received “quite sophisticated and precise air strike means” that put it in a position to wage offensive warfare. “In the last 19 years, we have gone through a very difficult process of military training,” he said. “Our pilots are today ready to carry out flights at night and in difficult meteorological conditions. They are ready for any actions in any place and at any moment.”

“Just like developed NATO countries, we are ready to carry out targeted strikes on any enemy target, economic facility and the like,” the official added without elaborating.

Turkey to Host NATO Ground Forces

ANKARA (Press TV) – Amid ongoing deadly unrest in Syria, NATO plans to turn its airbase in Turkey into a stronghold for the US-led military alliance’s ground forces.

The alliance would transfer its ground forces from a military base in the city of Heidelberg in southwestern Germany and another outpost in Spain to the Izmir Air Station in western Turkey, Journal of Turkish Weekly reported earlier in the month.

The base currently accommodates 400 operational and technical forces.

The move constitutes a part of sweeping reforms in the alliance, which according to its Secretary General Anders Fogh Rasmussen,

would ultimately “make NATO leaner, more flexible and better able to deal with future challenges.”

Outlining the changes, Rasmussen has said, “We have agreed to reshape NATO’s command structure, making it more efficient, more deployable and more compact.”

The reforms include effort to “streamline the agencies, which run individual NATO projects, such as ground surveillance and strategic airlift,” he added.

The developments come amid Turkey’s recent adoption of a toughened stance vis-à-vis its southern neighbor Syria, which has been grappling with unprecedented unrest since mid-March.

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