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NEWS IN BRIEF

Farce in Turkey's Courts: Act Two

By **Muriel Mirak-Weissbach**
Special to the Mirror-Spectator

ISTANBUL – The turmoil that has swept Turkey since the eruption of protests in Gezi Park and Taksim Square seems to have reached the institutions of the judiciary as well. On October 4, the Istanbul court convened to review the case of Dogan Akhanli, a German-Turkish author and human rights activist who had been framed on charges of membership in a subversive political organization and participation in armed robbery and murder.

In 2010, the same Istanbul court had handed down an acquittal, clearing him of all charges. Then, the Appeals Court in Ankara called in Spring 2013 for reversing the acquittal and reopening the case, so the Istanbul court had to decide whether to confirm its earlier ruling or lift the acquittal. That was on July 31, and, as reported in this newspaper (*Armenian Mirror-Spectator* August 6), the judge declared the court would issue no decision but rather adjourn to October 4. It issued an international arrest warrant against Akhanli, who, it must be stressed, is a German citizen protected by German law. Now, on October 4, in an uncanny repeat performance, the court again adjourned, this time to December 20.

The accused, who monitored the proceedings with friends and associates from his Cologne home, received the news from



Dr. Michael Charness embraces Dr. Ernest Barsamian as guests look on.

All Eyes on Ernie

Dr. Ernest Barsamian Receives Medal from Armenian Government, Feted at AUB Gala at Boston University

BOSTON – The life and career of Dr. Ernest Barsamian was celebrated in grand fashion in September, first with a gala reception at Boston University on September 21, organized by the New England chapter of the Worldwide Alumni of the American University of Beirut (AUB), and then, with a special private medal-ing ceremony on Wednesday, September 25, with Armenia's Foreign Minister Eduard Nalbandian and Ambassador to the US Tatul Markarian, at Harvard University.

During a private reception at the Harvard Office of the University Marshal Jackie O'Neill, in Harvard Square, Nalbandian awarded Barsamian the Mkhitar Heratsi medal – the Armenian government's highest medal in medicine – on behalf of President Serge Sargisian, and spent some time with Barsamian and O'Neill.

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his lawyers in Istanbul. His comment was that the court had "decided not to decide" but had "decided" to maintain the arrest
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40th Anniversary Celebration of Philadelphia TCA Honors Founders Dr. Diran and Koudsi Mikaelian

PHILADELPHIA – Founders of the Philadelphia chapter of the Tekeyan Cultural Association (TCA), Dr. Diran Mikaelian and his wife, Koudsi Mikaelian, were honored on the occasion of the 40th anniversary of the chapter's establishment, celebrated on Saturday, September 27, in

the Haytayan Hall of Wynnwood's St. Sahag St. Mesrob Church.

A capacity audience of members and friends of the Philadelphia TCA first enjoyed dinner prepared by the women of the association.

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From left, Antoine Bazarbashian, Yeretsgin Angel Metjian, Fr. Oshagan Gulgulian, Koudsi Mikaelian, Dr. Diran Mikaelian, Dr. H. Arzoumanian and Mayis Seapan

Edward Guleserian Dies

BELMONT, Mass. – Edward Nubar Guleserian of Belmont and Scituate died on October 7.

He leaves his wife, Nancy (Aghaian); children Dr. Kristine Guleserian of Dallas and Michael Guleserian of Cambridge; sister Mary Bergoudian and many nieces and nephews. He was the brother of the late Walter Guleserian.

Edward Guleserian was the owner and president of the Sheraton Commander Hotel, in Cambridge, where many Armenian government officials and church leaders have stayed as his guests.

He was a member of Knights of Vartan Ararat Lodge number 1 and Rotary Club of Cambridge. He was chosen as the Man of the Year of St. James Armenian Church of Watertown.

Funeral service were at St. James Armenian Church, on Thursday, October 10. Interment was in Mount Auburn Cemetery, Cambridge.

Arrangements were made by the Aram Bedrosian Funeral Home, Watertown.



Edward Guleserian

Napoleon's Armenian Bodyguard Commemorated

DURBAN, France (Armenpress) – On October 3, the city organized a ceremony dedicated to the memory of Napoleon Bonaparte's bodyguard, Armenian mamluk Roustam Raza.

French-Armenian former warriors and resis-tants, Durban Mayor Olivier Leguay, representa-tives of local government, Armenian spiritual attendants and other guests partook in the cere-monial tribute.

The newly-appointed military attaché of the Embassy of Armenia in France, Garegin Margaryan, and representatives of his diplomatic staff were also present.

Sixth Astronomy Conference Launched

YEREVAN (Armenpress) – Astronomers from various countries around the world attended the opening ceremony of the sixth astronomy conference held at the National Academy of Sciences of Armenia, on October 7.

Chairman of the National Academy of Sciences Radik Martirosyan, Director of the Byurakan Observatory Hayk Harutyunyan, UK Ambassador to Armenia Jonathan Aves, Co-Chairs of the international scientific conference Areg Mikayelyan (Armenia) and David Sanders (US), as well as Armenian astronomer Yervand Terzyan made remarks at the course of the conference titled "Multi-wavelength AGN Surveys and Studies."

Several statesmen, ambassadors and renowned scientists participated in the opening ceremony.

The scientific conference promotes the estab-lishment of ties between young and experienced astronomers, with 165 scientists from 35 coun-tries of the world participating.

Ruins of Ani Bear Armenian Stamp

ISTANBUL (Armenpress) – he grandson of Armenian Genocide architect Jemal Pasha, noted Turkish writer and journalist, Hasan Cemal, recently visited Western Armenia (now eastern Turkey) and shared his impressions of the cities Kars and Ani in the pages of Agos newspaper.

Speaking of the historical days in Kars, Cemal tells how the names of historical monuments and buildings have changed. "We were passing by a beautiful building. It was an opera house during the period of Russians, now it is the building of Tax Inspection. Being a school previously, the stone building now serves as a building of Security Department," said Cemal.

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ARMENIA

News From Armenia

Armenia, Greece Sign Military Coop. Pact

YEREVAN (Armenpress) – The chief of the general staff of the armed forces of the Republic of Armenia, Maj. Gen. Yuri Khachaturov met with the chief of general staff of the Greek armed forces, Gen. Mikhail Kostarakos in Yerevan on September 25. At the end of the negotiations, Armenia and Greece signed a cooperation pact in the military sphere for 2014.

First Lady Lends Voice (And Song) to Aragil

YEREVAN (Armenpress) – The Aragil fund, which provides assistance to families dealing with infertility, will now showcase its activities with a new promotional song. The song *Prayer* by first lady Rita Sargsian, has been chosen as its anthem.

At a conference dedicated to reproductive medicine, Sargsian said, “I hope that this [song] will be the kind stork that will bring the children to families.”

Board of Regents member and gynecologist Karine Pokhunts noted the increase in infertile couples in Armenia. According to Pokhunts, 9,000 couples in Armenia are in need of aid. The Armenian Association of Reproductive Medicine founded the Aragil to fund these expensive procedures.

Armenia Military Demonstrations Aim to Impress

ARMAVIR, Armenia (Armenpress) – Armenia demonstrated its modern warfare approaches during routine military exercises called “Reaction-2013.”

Operative-tactic missiles SCUD and 8K14-1, anti-aircraft missile systems C300, “OCA” complexes, “Krunk,” “Baze” and other drones, radiolocation systems and weapons of Armenian production were presented. Representatives of the Armenian government followed the mass military exercises from a vantage point on the ground.

Writers’ Union to Elect New President

YEREVAN (Armenpress) – The Writers’ Union of Armenia will hold a special session on October 20 to elect a new president for the union. Writers’ Union Acting President Eduard Militoniyann announced the election during a recent press conference.

According to the organization, the most important condition for election the union’s presidency is membership in the organization. Diaspora Armenians are eligible to apply for the presidency, if they are considered members of the Writers’ Union.

The position has been vacant since the death of the former President Levon Ananyan on September 2.

Parliament Supports Prison Amnesty

YEREVAN (RFE/RL) – The Armenian parliament has given its support to a presidential proposal on a national prison amnesty. Last month, President Serge Sargsian proposed an amnesty for prison inmates to mark the 22nd anniversary of Armenia’s independence, celebrated on September 21.

Justice Minister Hrair Tovmasian told journalists on October 3 that 1,200 to 1,300 inmates out of some 4,600 inmates in the country’s penitentiaries and detention centers will be amnestied. Some 500 to 600 men and women will be released from the country’s penitentiaries, while the prison terms of others will be shortened.

Convicts who committed crimes before September 1, 2013, are eligible, not including those serving sentences for serious offenses such as murder and rape. It is the ninth national amnesty in Armenia since the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991.

Giving Back to Teachers at Tekeyan Schools

By Varujan Sirapian

YEREVAN – As it does every year, the Tekeyan Cultural Association brought financial assistance to the employees, teachers and staff of Tekeyan schools in Armenia.

During my third visit to Armenia this year, at the end of September, I was invited by the Tekeyan Center of Yerevan to accompany them to visit the schools in Gumri and Stepanavan. Of course I accepted the invitation with delight.

I knew that the Tekeyan schools are well organized, clean and pleasant to frequent. My first visit took place in October 2001, to the Tekeyan school of Sebastia, near Yerevan.

On September 26, I accompanied Gayane Muradyan and Karekin Kevorkian to the Gumri Tekeyan School. I was delighted to see the good conditions in which the students are welcomed. Beside I was happy to find

out that there was a French-language classroom in that school. As one of Institut Tchobanian’s purposes is the enhancement of the “Francophonie” in Armenia (which has been a full member of Francophonie since 2012) I offered to donate some books in French to the Gumri Tekeyan School’s library.

The next day we went to Stepanavan. Again I was agreeably surprised to see a very modern school, with a theater and a very up-to-date gymnasium. Even in France it’s rare to find a school as clean as this one. Not a tag on walls, pupils well dressed and very respectful toward their teachers and visitors.

It is hard to describe the joy of the employees as they received their envelopes. Their salaries do not match



Distributing checks to staff in Gumri, with Gayane Muradyan, left, and Varoujan Sirapian, right

their efforts and commitment.

I also appreciated the serious and professional job conducted by Muradyan, who kept track of every single envelope distributed to the employees of Tekeyan.

(Varoujan Siropian is the President of Institut Tchobanian, Paris.)

Armenian Church, Survivor of the Ages, Faces Modern Hurdles

By David M. Herszenhorn

ECHMIADZIN (*New York Times*) – In this ancient city, tucked in a valley that has witnessed the rise and fall of empires, King Tiridates III converted to Christianity and declared Armenia to be the world’s first Christian state. The year was 301.

Since then, the Armenian Apostolic Church, which still has its main cathedral here, has survived conquest and dispersion, genocide and government-imposed atheism during the years Armenia was part of the Soviet Union. It also endured centuries of internal rancor, including a split in 1441 that led to the establishment of a rival leadership now based in Lebanon.

As church leaders gathered here last week for a rare bishops’ conference, they seemed to be ready to put at least some of those differences aside as they confronted a new set of challenges: entrenched secularism at home, assimilation of followers in the Armenian Diaspora abroad and general disaffection with organized religion.

“The church is in dire need of renewal,” Catholicos Aram I, the leader of the Lebanon-based faction of the church, said in an interview. “And by renewal, I mean the church has to be responsive to the needs and expectations of the people.”

He added, “The church has to respond to the challenges of the present-day world.”

Exactly how the church plans to do that remains elusive, however, and some skeptics said the split remained as divisive as ever.

The church has more than nine million adherents worldwide, most outside Armenia. Statistics show that more than 98 percent of Armenians consider themselves Christians, but only 8 percent said they attended services at least once a week – data that suggest the church is still struggling to overcome the legacy of forced atheism 23 years after Armenian independence.

There have also been a number of recent controversies, including the resignation of the head of the church in France, Archbishop Norvan Zakarian, in a dispute over demands by the church leadership to reinstate a priest facing criminal assault charges.

“The whole situation of the division of the Armenian church is not resolved,” said one Western-based archbishop who asked not to be identified. “Yes, this is a conclave, but the church is not unified.”

Aram acknowledged that he claimed the same basic title as Catholicos Karekin II in Echmiadzin, who also has the added designation of supreme patriarch of all Armenians. Still, Aram denied any fissure.

“We don’t have any division in the Armenian church,” he said. “We are one church. We are one people. We are one nation. We are one mission. We have two Catholicos, and we are rich – this is an expression of the richness of the church.”

For his part, Karekin told his audience of 62 bishops, who had come from as far away as Australia and Latin America, that it was time to come together.

“All these controversies and administrative divisions did not allow carrying out unified reforms,” Karekin said. “We are an entire century behind the opportunity to modernize the church.”

He added, “The time has come to consolidate all forces.”

To minimize the prospect of sharp disagreements at the conference, a tight agenda was adopted: creating universal practices for baptisms and confirmations, discussing the canonization of victims of the 1915 Armenian Genocide in recognition of the 100th anniversary and planning another conference next year.

In an apparent bid to generate positive publicity around the conference, church officials billed it as the first synod of its kind in nearly 600 years – a bit of snappy marketing that was widely repeated by the Armenian news media.

“Now, we are witnessing the epoch-making event indeed,” said President Serge Sargsian. “For centuries, due to different circumstances, and particularly in the last six centuries, it was not possible to invite a bishops’ synod of the Armenian Church.”

Experts, however, said that was not quite true.

At the event nearly 600 years ago, a conclave in Echmiadzin in 1441, church leaders decided to move the headquarters back here from Sis, in what is now Turkey, where the Armenian kingdom

of Cilicia had been conquered by Egyptian Mamluks.

A new leader, Kirako Virapetsy, was elected to replace Catholicos Gregory IX, who was ill and remained in Sis. But when Gregory died, officials in Sis elected their own replacement.

“The year 1441 is being mentioned here and there as if to give it more importance and significance,” said Hratch Tchilingirian, an expert on the church who teaches at Oxford University’s Oriental Institute.

Tchilingirian said a bishops’ synod was held here in 1969. Armenian clerics from the US attended, even though it was during the cold war, while those from Lebanon refused to attend.

He said that last week’s agenda seemed to ignore tough issues in favor of safe topics. For example, before the 75th anniversary of the Genocide, both branches of the church issued statements about canonizing victims.

Archbishop Aris Shirvanian, the director of ecumenical and foreign relations at the Armenian Apostolic Patriarchate of Jerusalem, said reaching an agreement to canonize victims – the first saints designated by the church since the 1500s – was a top priority.

“We, the bishops and archbishops living today, are descendants of Armenian genocide,” Shirvanian said. “All of us are survivors. That’s the driving spirit behind this meeting.”

Whatever the agenda, Echmiadzin, which is also called by its original name, Vagharshapat, remains at the center of Armenian spiritual life.

The conversion of Tiridates III in 301, a decade before the Roman emperor Constantine embraced Christianity, is credited to St. Gregory the Illuminator, the patriarch of the Armenian Apostolic Church.

Living in Vagharshapat, then capital of Armenia, Gregory reportedly had a vision that the skies parted and a ray of light blazed down, surrounding a group of angels and a man – Jesus – who struck the ground with a golden hammer and made an altar-shaped structure appear amid a column of fire with a cross shining above it.

It was on that spot that Gregory oversaw construction of the Cathedral of Echmiadzin – meaning, “Jesus Christ, the only begotten, descended.”

Noah Snider contributed reporting.



INTERNATIONAL

Russia's Olympic Torch Flames Out, Again

By Kathy Lally

MOSCOW (*Washington Post*) – The first time the Olympic flame died out was amusing – that was last Sunday at the Kremlin, when a plainclothes officer relit it with a cigarette lighter. But then on Monday, a second torch flickered out, threatening national embarrassment.

A torchbearer taking part in the Olympic relay through Moscow on Monday afternoon was jogging along Raushskaya Embankment, on the other side of the river from the Kremlin, when his flame was extinguished, according to reports on TV Rain and amateur videos.

The torchbearer, accompanied by a police car, SUV, small van and several volunteer marshals, stopped. A volunteer rushed up to him with another torch. A third arrived holding what might be a small lantern – it was difficult to see.

The seconds dragged by. Dark clouds pressed down from above with seeming displeasure. The spectators could be heard. "It's sad." They chuckled uneasily. "Is Gazprom sponsoring this?" (Gazprom is the giant government-controlled energy company.) Then the new torch ignited and the runner was on his way.

The flame had arrived in Moscow Sunday afternoon by chartered flight. As a former Olympic swimmer named Shavarsh Karapetyan carried the flame into the Kremlin, where it spent the night, the fire went out.

Fortunately, at least in this case,



Russia's Olympic torch continues to have trouble remaining aflame.

Russia is filled with smokers. The nearest one leaned over and relit the torch with his lighter. Officials later said the valve had not been turned on properly. They reassured the nation that the original flame was safely guarded in lanterns, which would relight relay torches.

The relay began with fanfare Monday, with a two-day, 50-mile route through Moscow. President Vladimir Putin was spared the sight of the failed flame. He was in Bali for the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation meeting, where he was quoted as politely saying he understood why President Obama had canceled, what with a national crisis, government shutdown and so on.

Putin had personally wooed the

International Olympic Committee for the 2014 Winter Olympics, which open February 7 in Sochi, where the weather is as unpredictable as an open flame. Last February, it rained in the mountains where the outdoor events will be held.

He has made successful Olympics a point of personal pride and honor. The 14,000 torches produced for the relay were described as state of the art, designed to withstand the bitterest Russian winter.

And now here, on Monday, on the first day of the 123-day, 40,000-mile relay across this great land, the Olympic flame had gone out once again.

AGBU-Supported Seminar Marks Beginning of New Armenian Leadership Network in Europe

WARSAW – A new network of Armenian leaders in Europe is now taking shape, following an AGBU-supported seminar that brought together key policy makers, entrepreneurs, journalists, and academics in Warsaw, hosted by Polish Senator Lukasz Abgarowicz.

The event, held earlier this month, served as a forum for senior professionals from across Central and Eastern Europe, who have an Armenian background or an interest in

grounds as industry leaders and lawmakers, the representatives discussed ways that the AGBU-supported network will further strengthen Armenian leadership in the public arena, facilitate dialogues with public authorities in their respective countries, and advance Armenian issues across Europe. These are issues that will be on the agenda at future regional seminars, which will be held in France, Romania and Sweden in the coming months, as the new network is formed.

need to succeed in their fields. While GORIZ offers trainings, networking opportunities and seminars, representatives at the Warsaw conference agreed to advance those efforts by including a mentoring component for GORIZ members. The AGBU Europe District president Alexis Govciyan welcomed the proposal for the new mentorship initiative, stating, "These outstanding individuals are willing to invest in the promotion of leadership in others. Their contributions will be invaluable to encourage all of us, and particularly the next generation, to strive for excellence."

Through a series of seminars, participants also discussed some of the opportunities and challenges facing the Armenian diaspora in Europe today. Professors Chan Choenni of the VU University Amsterdam and Lukasz Lotocki of the University of Warsaw presented their research on the migration and social integration of Armenians in the Netherlands and Poland. Participants agreed that comparable research on Armenian communities in other countries should be promoted as an invaluable tool for policy and action.

As AGBU Europe Director Nicolas Tavitian noted, the new leadership network will help the Armenian diaspora continue to thrive in Europe. Commenting on the Armenians' centuries-old presence across the continent, he stated, "We need Armenians who are building their lives in Europe to know that they already have a long history here, with a distinguished record. Through these seminars and our leadership network, we will continue building on those foundations."

To learn more about the leadership network, email contact@agbueurope.eu.



Industry leaders and lawmakers from across Europe spearhead a new Armenian leadership network at an AGBU-sponsored seminar in Warsaw in September.

Armenia, to develop a new peer leadership network. The 23 representatives included member of the Parliament of Ukraine Arsen Avakov; member of the Parliament of Sweden Esabelle Dingizian; business executive Edward Mier-Jedrzejowicz; opera conductor Haig Utidjian (Czech Republic); and member of the Parliament of Romania Varujan Vosganian.

Drawing from their diverse back-

The representatives also strategized ways to leverage their expertise to foster future leadership in diasporan young professionals, who will meet the challenges of Europe's rapidly changing political and economic environment. They discussed the AGBU GORIZ program, which provides post-graduates who have an exceptional academic record and experience in civic engagement with the tools they

International News

Former Foreign Minister Of Turkey Favors Ties with Armenia

YEREVAN (*Armenpress*) – Some Turkish diplomats have started voicing opinions about normalizing ties with Armenia. Some believe that because of bad relations with its neighbors, Ankara may have to stay out of the political processes in the Middle East. In their opinion in order to avoid diplomatic isolation, the country should immediately change its foreign policy. "Turkey must keep and maintain, and for the sake of short-term interests" not put in danger its "unique geostrategic position in the relations with both the West and the Islamic world," former Ambassador of Turkey Nuzhet Gandemir said in an interview with *Today's Zaman*.

Sargisian Discusses Karabagh at PACE Session

STRASBOURG (RFE/RL) – Armenian President Serge Sargisian has urged the Council of Europe to initiate direct contacts with Nagorno-Karabagh authorities to settle the conflict.

During an October 2 speech to the body's Parliamentary Assembly, Sargisian said the Council of Europe could start direct communications with Nagorno-Karabagh, considering the organization has acted similarly in other conflict zones.

Sargisian also criticized his Azeri counterpart, Ilham Aliyev, over the issue, claiming Baku continues to threaten Armenia with war and to boast about its disproportionate increases in military spending.

UNESCO Includes Sayat Nova Works with International Community

YEREVAN (*Armenpress*) – Sayat Nova's 300th anniversary was included in the 2012-2013 calendar of international events by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO.)

With the support of a national commission dealing with the affairs of UNESCO in Armenia, the event was celebrated with various ceremonies not only in Armenia, but also in different neighboring countries.

The organizing commission noted on its website: "The implementation of the project with the help of UNESCO, will promote wider recognition of Sayat Nova's works in Armenia as well as in the international community, which can become the basis for the translations and the intercultural dialogue of Armenian prominent troubadour's heritage. The collection of Sayat Nova's songs will also be published."

Germany Respects Armenia's Decision to Join Customs Union

GENEVA (*Armenpress*) – Within the framework of the summit of the Interparliamentary Union held in Geneva, on October 6 the President of the National Assembly of the Republic of Armenia Hovik Abrahamyan met with the President of the Bundestag of Germany Norbert Lammert. The National Assembly of Armenia press office reported that during the meeting the two discussed a wide range of issues.

Abrahamyan noted that Armenia is greatly interested in the expansion of the relations with Germany.

Lammert highlighted the development of the Armenia-Germany relations, the deepening of the interparliamentary cooperation and the strengthening of the collaboration in different fields. He added that Germany respects the decision of the Republic of Armenia to join the Customs Union.

At the end of the meeting Abrahamyan invited Lammert to visit Armenia.



INTERNATIONAL

Dr. Hratch Kouyoumjian Discusses Future of TCA, International Convention in London November 8-9

(The following interview was conducted between the *Armenian Mirror-Spectator* and Dr. Hratch Kouyoumjian, chairman of the London branch of the Tekeyan Cultural Association [TCA].

MS: Please give us some background regarding the upcoming TCA International Consultation.

A: As you know, the Tekeyan Cultural Association was established in 1947, right after the difficult war years, by a group of Armenian intellectuals and businessmen. Last year we celebrated its the 65th anniversary. Since 1947, there has not been any attempt to bring the various chapters and sister organizations together in order to discuss the future of the Association and plan ahead collectively in a rapidly-changing world.

This is a long-overdue attempt to bring all the major players together. It was universally felt that we need to conduct this action and London was a natural choice.

MS: Tell us about the history of the TCA.

A: It all started in Beirut through the dedication and sacrifices of prominent personalities

who have unfortunately now left us: Hratch Setrakian, Kersam Aharonian, Parounag Tovmassian, Hamparsoum Berberian, Hagop Tavitian, Haigashen Ouzounian and others, who formed the Founders' Committee in 1947. TCA then branched out into many diasporan communities that are now well established and respected organizations in their respective countries. This expansion took place first in the Middle East, then in the US and Canada, followed by Europe and finally in Armenia. Today there are branches and sister organizations in 12 countries, with most of them attending this meeting.

TCA is a cultural organization dedicated to the promotion of Armenian culture and history and acts as a bridge joining various diasporan communities. It is an apolitical organization. However, the founding members professed democratic and liberal ideologies which have impacted TCA, and which are still professed to this day and form the backbone of the association.

MS: What do you mean by sister organizations?

A: Prior to 1947, people who had been prepared for future leadership roles, had established various organizations and trusts to pursue their ideals in the service of the Armenian Diaspora and Armenia. For example, the Dikran Yergat Armenian Cultural Association in Alexandria was established back in 1902. I am glad that the umbilical chord has kept all these organizations together as one family. Most of these organizations will be with us in November except for Jordan and Syria, due to understandable reasons.

MS: London is playing a central role in this gathering. What can you tell us about the local chapter?

A: The London chapter was established in 1975. It was thanks to the efforts of people such as Haigashen Ouzounian, Garo Arevian, Tavit Messerlian, Antranig Dzouligian, Garbis Yessayan, Garo Krikorian, V. Ouzounian, D. Vorperian and many others.

Sadly some of these figures, particularly those representing the Founders Committee are no longer with us, but others such Vartan Ouzounian still continue to play prominent roles, particularly in the Tekeyan Trust, which the London Chapter had established 1979.

MS: Can you speak about the London Trust?

A: The London Trust was established by the local TCA chapter initially in order to acquire the premises for the London Chapter, through the generous donation of the late Mr. Garo Krikorian. However, after the independence of Armenia, the TCA leadership decided to acquire headquarters in the newly-independent Armenia. Thus, the semi-completed "Groung" building was acquired through public donations, renovated and renamed as the "Tekeyan Centre" in Yerevan. The Centre, together with the Tekeyan Centre Fund, is today both a major landmark and hub of activities in Armenia.

MS: What is the expected outcome of this gathering?

A: It is difficult to predict all the expected outcomes. One has to be modest in his/her expectations. The fact that so many chapters and people in leadership roles are attending, in itself will be a major testimony. It is no secret that there are issues in our family of organizations; this will be a unique opportunity to bring most major players together in order to iron out these difficulties and plot ahead collectively with a new vision adaptable to the condi-

tions of the 21st century, taking into consideration the new and evolving realities in the diaspora and Armenia.

Naturally, a review of operational modalities and the need for having an effective organization and a sustainable budget will figure amongst major issues to be debated. This naturally necessitates an overall coordinating body to streamline operations and communication, which can then direct assistance where needed.

MS: Dr. Kouyoumjian, you have played an important role in this. Could you explain why you undertook it?

A: I said earlier that this meeting was long overdue. There had been regional meetings in the US and Canada or in the Middle East, but at no time had all the chapters and sister organizations debated collectively major issues and the challenges facing them all. The fact that I had been studying the central archives of the TCA during my periodic visits to Beirut, and those of my late father, coupled with the fact that he had played a prominent role in the TCA and sister organizations, and that many of today's leaders had been his students, helped me tremendously. Without an exhaustive knowledge of the inner workings of such an organization, and close contacts with people in leadership roles, this would not have been possible. I take this opportunity to thank all those who rallied to the call and supported the process in more ways than one.

My role is a very modest one. I simply tried to catalyze a process which many felt had to be undertaken. The real credit goes to my local London Chapter, and to those who supported the process and the gathering in London.

Finally, let me thank the *Armenian Mirror Spectator* for this interview.

Iranian MP Meets with Pakradounian As P5+1 Countries Hold Talks on Iran's Nuclear Program

GENEVA (Armenpress) – A senior Iranian parliamentarian has reaffirmed the Islamic Republic's stance on defending its nuclear energy program, stressing that the country will never give up its absolute rights, Armenpress reports referring to Press TV.

"The Islamic Republic of Iran is ready for negotiations and talks with representatives of the P5+1 countries on the nuclear issue with based on mutual respect and on an equal footing," Chairman of the Majlis National Security and Foreign Policy Committee Alaeddin Boroujerdi said on Sunday.

Boroujerdi made the remarks in a meeting with Hagop Pakradounian, an Armenian deputy in Lebanon's parliament, as Iran and the five permanent members of the UN Security Council – Russia, China, Britain, France and the US plus Germany – are scheduled to hold talks mainly on Iran's nuclear issue in Geneva on October 15 and 16.

The United States, Israel and some of their allies have repeatedly accused Iran of pursuing non-civilian objectives in its nuclear energy program, with the US and the European Union using the unsubstantiated claim as an excuse to impose illegal sanctions against Tehran.

Iran has categorically rejected the allegation, stressing that as a committed member of the International Atomic Energy Agency and a signatory to the Non-Proliferation Treaty, it is entitled to develop nuclear technology for peaceful purposes.

Boroujerdi further said that Iran and Lebanon share a common stance on developments in Syria. "The Islamic Republic of Iran's approach is based on promoting sustainable peace and security in the region and across the world," the Iranian lawmaker added.

The Lebanese MP, for his part, said that his country supports Iran's efforts to promote regional peace and security and believes that Tehran has played a very constructive role in averting war in the crisis-stricken country.

Farce in Turkey's Courts: Act Two

TURKEY, from page 1

warrant for him and then to postpone the other "decision." This, Akhanli noted, only served the purpose of keeping him out of his native land. As he knows from experience, if he were to try to enter Turkey under current circumstances, he would be arrested. That happened to him in August 2010 when he travelled there in hopes of visiting his dying father. He was apprehended at the airport, thrown into jail and kept there for months, and prevented from attending his father's funeral. Only after his acquittal in December could he visit Turkey again.

For his part, the novelist declared he did not suffer any such pangs of indecision: he had made up his mind that he would assert his freedom from the trial.

In a statement prepared to be read out at the hearing, he wrote the following:

Following the lifting of my acquittal by the Appeals Court in Ankara, the case against me has taken on a Kafkaesque character. The very same court which was unable to find any organization behind the murder of Hrant Dink accuses me again of being the head of a terrorist organization – under the alias 'DOGAN K.' – and expects me even to stage manage my "execution" together with the accusers.

As a writer I know the frightening ability to accommodate and the tragic end of Josef K., the protagonist of Kafka's novel, *The Trial*. For this reason on December 8, 2010, the first day of the trial against me, I was able with my silence and protected by public solidarity to flee the Kafkaesque room that the Turkish justice system had walled up for me.

Now the court wants to use all its power to shut me up again in this room. I am fight against this with all my strength, I will not go back. I will face the Turkish justice system with my silence in the future too. I am not the figure in Kafka's novel, who at the end of his "trial" lets himself "voluntarily" be executed with a butcher's knife, and yet is again reawakened by every reader to new life. Different from the fig-

ure in the novel I have only one life. And I do not want to spend this life in a Kafkaesque farce.

I am making my exit. I will no longer appear before the Turkish courts, not voluntarily, and not by force. I take the liberty that they want to deprive me of. I will be free, on my own will.

I am doing this also because my case, from the political and human rights standpoint is one part of numerous unjust cases which are opened, conducted and ended in Turkey with shrill arbitrariness and arrogance. With my decision, I know that, in refusing this trial, I am on the side of those who each in their own way are standing up against the Turkish justice system, which is the expression of a hopelessly unjust state.

– Dogan Akhanli

This is, indeed, not the first time the Turkish justice system has displayed such arbitrariness, and the jails filled with journalists, writers, dissidents and human rights activists bear testimony to this fact. What is not clear is the reason why the court continues to perform the same farce over and again. One reason might be found in Gezi Park. The AKP government, to be sure, did not hesitate to deploy violence against demonstrators, and it has come under strong international censure as a result. Talks with the European Union are being delayed, as criticism of such anti-democratic police-state methods is particularly

strong in Germany. Prime Minister Erdogan has just issued a reform package, promising rapid strides along Turkey's "irreversible progress towards democracy," with proposals to ensure respect for human rights, by easing restrictions on the use of languages other than Turkish (i.e. Kurdish), lifting the ban on headscarves in most public offices and reforming the electoral system to allow easier access to parliament for smaller parties, etc. Whether or not the proposals will become reality, whether or not such a reform would guarantee basic human rights at all are big questions; but the fact that the government has come forward with such a package may mean it is feeling the pressure from abroad. In this situation, if the Istanbul court were to decide to reopen the case against Akhanli, go through the motions of a trial, pronounce him guilty and sentence him to life in prison, that could have an explosive effect both domestically and abroad. The Akhanli case has already intersected the Gezi Park ferment; the high-level delegation of observers from Germany who attended the July 31 hearing on his case linked their defense of Akhanli with their solidarity for the Gezi Park movement. If the court were to decide the opposite, that is, confirm its acquittal and drop all charges and arrest warrants against him, then that could send a shock wave throughout civil society, generating more optimism and self-confidence among human rights layers that they can in the end prevail. With its chronic vacillating, the court seems to be in a state of paralysis – anything but free.

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Community News

AGBU Donors Worldwide Raise More than \$1 Million for Syrian Relief

NEW YORK – The Armenian General Benevolent Union (AGBU) has officially broken its \$1 million fundraising mark to benefit the ongoing Humanitarian Emergency Relief Fund in Support of Syrian Armenians, which was made possible by donors worldwide. The money is now at work to meet the urgent humanitarian needs of countless Syrian Armenians on the ground. Yet, as the devastating conflict unfolds with no end in sight, thousands of vulnerable families continue to look to the global Armenian community for support.

Since the outbreak of Syria's civil war over two years ago, an estimated four million people have been internally displaced. Many have watched their homes, religious institutions, and neighborhoods be reduced to rubble. They are losses that are felt acutely by Syrian Armenians, whose presence in the country can be traced to the 11th century and whose future there is now in peril. Cities that were once safe havens for survivors of the Armenian Genocide have become battlegrounds as diasporans across the country struggle to survive.

Amidst the devastation, AGBU is working to ensure that Armenians in Syria receive the food, healthcare, shelter and emergency assistance they need. In August 2012, the AGBU District Committee of Syria formed the AGBU Emergency Body in order to cope with the humanitarian crisis. Comprised of local AGBU representatives, the Body has created its own social welfare system, registering beneficiaries, assessing their needs, and administering life-saving aid to more than 3,000 families. Throughout Syria, AGBU is now supporting emergency shelters, distribution centers and clinics staffed by volunteers trained in first-aid. With care and determination, over 100 AGBU



An Armenian man surveys what was once his home in Aleppo's Midan district.

volunteers are risking their lives every day to ensure that the elderly, sick and injured are among those who remain a priority as conditions deteriorate.

While a scarcity of fuel and public transportation has made it nearly impossible for scores of Syrian Armenians to leave the country, those who have found refuge in Armenia and Lebanon face their own challenges. Not knowing when – or if – they will be able to return home, those individuals have relied on AGBU for housing stipends, grocery coupons, medicine, warm clothing and school fees. Last see RELIEF, page 7



Arman Serebrakian hopes to represent Armenia at the 2014 Olympic Winter Games in Sochi, Russia.

Olympic Journey an Uphill Quest for Skier

NOVATO, Calif. – Like the Catskills, the road to Sochi has been long and bumpy for Olympic hopeful Arman Serebrakian, but the journey continues, over mountains and valleys, as he works towards joining fellow skiers in the winter games.

Serebrakian's journey is not focused on Olympic gold, but rather is the story of a man who would withstand an avalanche to be counted among the best alpine skiers in the world with the Tricolor in his hand.

By Tom Vartabedian

While he has the talent to compete, Serebrakian is missing the funds. But, he is making inroads.

As a member of the Armenian National Ski Team, Serebrakian just returned from seven weeks in New Zealand and Australia for quality training. In the process, he completed seven races and saw his world rating jump from 2,568 to 753, putting him right on track for a berth before the January 20 deadline.

In order to qualify, he needs a ranking of 500 or below for a guaranteed spot. "We trained alongside many national teams," Serebrakian said. "I'm now skiing slalom better and more confidently than ever."

Serebrakian took a year's sabbatical from his medical studies where he is between his second and third year at Temple University. He still keeps up his studies while on break in order to maintain scholastics as he works towards becoming a surgeon.

You can find him inside a gym twice on any given day, striving to increase his leg strength and gain muscle weight. Though he has no lack of dedication, the 27-year-old has had his share of challenges since he was first introduced to the slopes at age 2.

One sacrifice has been the absence of the social life he used to enjoy.

"It is all necessary in reaching my potential," said the dual citizen. "Overall, I'm happy with my skiing and my progression is right on track. My goal is to put Armenian skiing on the map."

Serebrakian and his "sidekick" Arsen Nersisyan are strong candidates for Armenia. Serebrakian's sister Ani Serebrakian – another talent – decided to forego Olympic intentions in order to help her brother with fundraising.

Over the past eight years, Serebrakian has been the top-ranked Armenian alpine ski racer in the world. He has had four top-10 National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) finishes while competing for the University of Colorado where he made the All-Academic Ski Team, served twice as captain and one year as an assistant coach.

The skiing is a costly sport with elite level equipment, coaching, on-snow training, lift tickets, travel, lodging, ski tuning supplies and competition fees. It all adds up.

"I'm closer to reaching my \$90,000 goal needed to compete, but it has been a long road," he said mentioning a European trip to the Alps this October. "My training and competition schedule will continue to take me across the globe where the best snow conditions exist. Now I face the challenge of raising my own funds while still paying my way through medical school with student loans."

The intensified on-snow training in the Alps will cover some of the rugged glaciers as a final tune-up before the winter's competitive season.

Loans, fundraisers and just about any option necessary will help fuel his budget, including a bar night in San Francisco, as well as a silent auction and dance in Los Angeles.

see SKIER, page 8

Health Care Professionals Learn About Effective Medical Education In Armenia

By Lawrence V. Najarian, MD

FAR HILLS, N.J. – More than 50 health care professionals from New Jersey, New York and Connecticut learned about new, more effective ways to educate doctors in Armenia, from two Fulbright Scholars who have presented programs there.

Members and guests of Armenian American Health Professionals Organization (AAHPO) attended presentations on September 13 by Fulbright Scholars Charles J. Greenberg, MSL, MEd and Gevorg Yaghjian, MD, PhD. Greenberg is research services librarian at the Yale Cushing/Whitney Medical Library, and an American who visited Armenia as a Fulbright Scholar. Yaghjian is an Armenian medical educator and leader who recently returned to Armenia after visiting the US for a year as a Fulbright Scholar.

"We were honored to have these presenters, who are top professionals in their respective fields. They offered first-hand perspectives that are invaluable to AAHPO members. Increased knowledge about medical education in Armenia helps us to plan initiatives to fulfill AAHPO's mission," noted Kim Hekimian, PhD, an



AAHPO President Lawrence V. Najarian, MD (far left) is shown with Charles J. Greenberg, MSL, MEd, Haikaz Grigorian, MD, John Bilezikian, MD, Gevorg Yaghjian, MD, PhD and Edgar Housepian, MD. Greenberg, and Grigorian, Yaghjian and Housepian are Fulbright Scholars. Grigorian, Bilezikian and Housepian are AAHPO Honorees.



The event was attended by AAHPO officers and other Armenian leaders. From left are Irina Lazarian, Presenter Charles Greenberg, Shohag Hovanessian, Louiza Pushkilian-Kubikian DDS, Joyce Kurdian DDS, Toline Kojoghlanian MD and Raffi Hovanessian MD. Pushkilian-Kubikian, Kojoghlanian and Hovanessian all are members of AAHPO Board of Directors.

AAHPO board member, public health specialist, and Assistant Professor at Columbia University who has made frequent trips to study health care in Armenia.

AAHPO's mission is to improve health care awareness, increase disease prevention and early detection, foster fellowship and career development of Armenian health care professionals, and provide medical support and education to both our local communities and Armenia.

"I appreciated the invitation to present and share my experiences educating both librarians and early career clinical researchers during my two short-term Fulbright Specialist visits to see HEALTH CARE, page 6



COMMUNITY NEWS

Lowell Veterans Give out \$150,000 in Scholarships

By Tom Vartabedian

LOWELL, Mass. — Sam Manoian Post # 1, Armenian-American Veterans of Lowell, has much to celebrate these days.

With eight scholarship presentations to worthy high school graduates Sept. 28, the group exceeded \$150,000 in gifts — a milestone that ushered in loud applause during an annual dinner-dance inside the Kazanjian Memorial Pavilion of Sts. Vartanantz Church, attended by more than 200 guests.

As protocol had it, each student offers words of gratitude upon his or her presentation.

The sum extends over 23 years, covering some 130 students during this time, the proceeds from which have come from this affair. The Veterans are celebrating their 62nd year of existence and continue to be a viable force in the Merrimack Valley community.

“It’s a tradition that has been woven into the fabric of our community life,” said Commander Richard Juknavorian. “The future of our younger generation is a matter we take seriously. Anything we can do to enhance that goal will be encouraged.”

Honored this year were: Alex Paroyian, Genna Kludjian, Tahleen Seifel, Taleen Kalajian, Spencer Dean, Laurel Kazanjian, Sam Balian and Brett Duffy.

According to Scholarship Chairman George Manuelian, many recipients have graduated college, started careers and showed their gratitude by contributing to the Menas Boghosian Scholarship Fund.

“The moral responsibilities they have exercised are exemplary,” said Manuelian. “It’s nice to know that we’ve contributed to their welfare with scholarship aid. We try to make it very per-

sonal. Parents and siblings become part of the celebration.”

The group’s history dates back to 1947, when Armenian-American Veterans of World War 2 gathered at the Pine Street Potato Chip Company on Gorham Street and elected Menas Boghosian as their first commander.

The numbers grew enough to become officially chartered and in 1961, they joined the Veterans’ Council of Lowell.

Over the decades, they’ve served the Armenian-American community with diligence and pride, volunteering at Veterans’ hospitals, assisting the indigent, sponsoring Christmas parties for children and donating Easter baskets and Christmas toys to children. Roses are distributed after church services on Mother’s Day.

Members conduct special graveyard services for some 50 deceased Armenian-American Veterans and have never missed a Memorial Day Parade or Armenian Genocide commemoration.

Just recently, the Lowell Veterans have been one of the major sponsors of the Armenian Genocide Memorial project, which will soon place a remarkable monument at Lowell City Hall.

Many members of that organizing committee



Lowell Armenian-American Veterans of Sam Manoian Post #1 honored eight high school graduates with scholarship presentations Sept. 28 at Sts. Vartanantz Church, Chelmsford. Pictured are students with their families, joined by Commander Richard Juknavorian, left, and Scholarship Committee Chairman George Manuelian, right.

Health Care Professionals Learn about Effective Medical Education in Armenia

HEALTH CARE, from page 5

Yerevan State Medical University in 2008 and Republican Scientific Medical Library in 2012,” noted Greenberg.

He also discussed real-time teletraining he provided for the RSML librarians with Skype desktop sharing. AAHPO supports the HyBridge Telehealth program, which remotely connects Armenian doctors with medical experts here in the US. AAHPO also supports a Continuing Medical Education program for doctors located in remote Armenian villages.

Greenberg’s distinguished career in Library Science has included numerous scholarly publications. At Yale he is the project co-director, Yale Medicine Thesis Digital Library. He teaches Library Science, Medical Librarianship, Consumer Health Librarianship and Advanced Reference, part-time for San Jose State University

and Southern Connecticut State University.

Yaghjian spoke about “Evidence Based Medical Education: Myths and Realities.” He is former Vice Dean of Yerevan State University Medical School and Associate Professor, and is currently visiting Boston University Medical School as a Fulbright Scholar.

Yaghjian also is a widely published medical and academic leader, as well as a highly trained surgeon. As a plastic surgeon with a specialty in reconstructive microsurgery, Dr. Yaghjian helped to develop the plastic surgery program at YSMU.

“This was my second presentation to AAHPO members,” noted Yaghjian. “I find AAHPO health care professionals to be inquisitive and dedicated to improving health care in Armenia by generously sharing information and ideas with their colleagues in Armenia.”

are Veterans, including its chairman, Armen Jeknavorian.

Members have served this country in World War I, World War II, as well as the wars in Korea, Vietnam and Iraq.

In 1975, the organization purchased a building and named it the Sam Manoian Post, honoring a devoted past commander. Ten years

later, they erected a monument dedicated to the Armenian settlers who became a vital part of the Greater Lowell society.

“To all our deceased members, their sacrifice will never be forgotten,” added Juknavorian. “We dedicate our efforts to both the living and the dead. By honoring our youth, we’re investing in the future of this country.”

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OBITUARY

Dr. John Sarkis Manuelian

WINCHESTER, Mass. — Dr. John Sarkis Manuelian died on October 3.

He was a clinical professor of internal medicine at Boston University Medical School. As a captain the USAF, he was Chief of Medicine for the Tactical Air Command at New England Air Force Base in Alexandria, LA.

He was the husband of Lucille (Kuludjian) Manuelian. He was the son of the late Sarkis and Margaret (Nanian) Manuelian and brother of the late Harold and Haigoohi Manuelian, Zabel and Ross Ajemian and Lucille and Greg Boyajian. He was the brother-in-law of Marian

Felegian and the late Peter, Vivian Karaian and the late George. He also leaves seven nieces and nephews and their spouses and 15 great-nephews and great-nieces and three great-great-nephews and great-great-nieces.

Services were conducted at St. Stephen’s Armenian Apostolic Church, 38 Elton Ave., Watertown on Tuesday, October 8. Interment was in Mt. Auburn Cemetery, Cambridge.

Expressions of sympathy may be made in his memory to St. Stephen’s Armenian Church or the Armenian Heritage Foundation, 25 Flanders Rd., Belmont, MA 02478.

Donation

In memory of their cousin, Alice Mulkigian Melkonian, Sonia Ketchian, Philip Ketchian and Elsa Ronningstam Ketchian have donated \$100 to the *Armenian Mirror-Spectator*.

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COMMUNITY NEWS

One Priest's Mission in Armenia

By Tom Vartabedian

WHITINSVILLE, Mass. — When it comes to performing mission work in Armenia, look no further than Rev. Archpriest Aram Stepanian. In fact, look again, and maybe several other times.

The affable pastor of Soorp Asdvadzadzin Church has made the country his second home and embraces the population he serves so religiously and profoundly in the name of salvation. He visits there 3-4 times a year, often with his wife Margaret and family by his side.

If it isn't operating a summer camp for orphans in July, it's taking feeble tin shacks and turning them into respectable dwellings for the indigent. Over the past 15 years, 175 homes have either been constructed or refurbished.

"Lately, we've been purchasing flats and turning them into comfortable living quarters to meet the pressing need," he says. "Donations are often slow and volunteers are not easy to find but we somehow manage through God's help."

Greenhouses are also erected to supply resources and a livable standard of life. His mantra may be "The Voice of the Armenian

Church." In reality, it's the actions of an individual who cares enough to do his very best.

"The greenhouses were a complement," he concluded. "If you build a resource, people will benefit."

And let's not forget the Agape meal in Echmiadzin he has been serving up to the elderly for the past six years. The guest list ranges from 70-75 and here again, volunteers kick in. More appropriately, they call it the "love meal."

In the end, it's creating a better world for those who need it most.

"It's been a desperate calling to which I have answered as a conscientious Armenian priest," says the 76-year-old. "Some people might call it a mission. I refer to it as a labor of love."

The summer camp for orphans was organized four years ago. Each July, the priest and his corps of volunteers take to a place called Tsaghkadzor. It is located 50 kilometers north of Yerevan on the southern slope of the Teghenis Mountains near Lake Sevan.

The area is known for its ski slopes, a place where Olympic athletes train and refine their skills. Somewhere in the miasma is this camp operated by the University of Yerevan where 50 destitute children arrive each year to spend a week of solidarity and comfort.

Their director is affectionately called "Brother Aram." He prefers the informality. To them, they're like his own kids.

The children range in age from 10-16 and more than half differ from year to year. They are chosen by the Eastern Prelacy and are desperately in need of care. Fun complements their enrollment.

The \$10,000 it takes to fund the project annually is raised through sister churches, private contributions and businesses. No shortfall is so

big that it cannot be met through persistence.

"Because the children are coming from broken homes, with no father or mother, we're able to create a big family atmosphere for them where they would experience comfort, love, compassion and care," he maintains.

"At the same time, we spread the word of God, teach them the Scriptures and history of the church. Baptizing 15 children is only one of my highlights. The gratitude shown is another," Stepanian added.

Two counselors who were literally taken off the streets wound up becoming public accountants. Others served with the military in Artsakh.

"I find myself getting motivated when I see lives being changed drastically," he confirms. "They come to us under dire circumstances and we get them back on track in God's world. The tears we shed are often tears of joy and comfort."

One year, the good deed took a bad toll, sending him to the hospital. Recovery was imminent and he was back on the job with bare-handed initiative.

They tell him there are no funds available. So he goes out and raises his own. The cost of building supplies have soared over the years. No matter. The priest finds a way.

It has only been 14 years before he was assigned a church. Since then, Soorp Asdvadzadzin has been his home. Prior to that, he was a preaching deacon, traveling the world.

One year, Stepanian took 22 volunteers from his community to Armenia. Sixteen of them were from one family, the Zartarians of Boxboro. They to personally help build the home which was dedicated in memory of Garbis Zartarian.

"For 14 days, these energetic people worked

diligently in the oppressive 105-degree heat," he recalled. "So many times, I tried to pull them aside to protect them from heat stroke. They wanted to be left alone to finish their work."

The Stepanians are a year away from celebrating their golden anniversary. They are parents to two children, Seta Mammola and Ara Stepanian, with two granddaughters.

It was at St. Stephen's Church in Watertown that Stepanian spent 37 years as a deacon and Sunday School superintendent before being ordained in 1999 by Archbishop Oshagan Choloyan.

Prior to that, his deacon years were shared with a working life. The cleric worked as a car dealer and auto body mechanic. He sold cars and ran a rental business. There was the electronics side and a dry cleaning establishment.

The entrepreneur in him took a condemned building in Watertown and transposed it into a state-of-the-art enterprise with seven employees.

It has been 14 years since he first arrived in Whitinsville, leading a flock of 160 members best known for its eclectic picnics that attract over 1,000. It's a parish that sponsors some 15 students abroad through adulthood.

Much of his time is also rendered to the Northbridge Association of Churches, working with 11 non-Armenian parishes. Together, they perform all phases of charity work toward a better community.

He was born in Der Zor, raised in Aleppo and educated in Lebanon and England before arriving here in 1961 and securing a degree from Gordon-Conwell Theological School in Wenham.

"I remember bringing earthquake victims here for treatment and caring for their needs," he recalled. "It's left an indelible image with me."

AGBU Donors Worldwide Raise More than \$1 Million for Syrian Relief

RELIEF, from page 5

year, AGBU fully subsidized tuitions for 120 students who were continuing their education at AGBU schools in Beirut. Currently in Armenia, AGBU is assisting the Diaspora Ministry's Syrian-Armenians Relief Coordination Center NGO and is forging a partnership with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees to offer professional development programs to Syrian Armenians. These will include language lessons in Eastern Armenian, English and Russian, as well as web design courses. Hundreds are expected to enroll, each of whom will gain the knowledge and skills to support

themselves no matter what the uncertain future brings.

AGBU is extending these lifelines to Syrian Armenians with the support of its donors, members, chapters and Young Professionals (YP) groups around the globe. Responding immediately and generously to AGBU's appeal, many individuals have repeatedly donated to the Syria Emergency Relief Fund, as others organize their own grassroots fundraising campaigns. Events hosted by YP Athens, YP Boston, YP Greater New York, YP Northern California and YP Toronto have brought in thousands of dollars, while the AGBU Toronto

Chapter, the AGBU France District, and the AGBU Sao Paulo Chapter have set new fundraising records, collecting over \$40,000, \$25,000 and \$9,000, respectively. Following suit, AGBU Montreal has also pledged \$10,000. Even non-AGBU entities, such as the Armenian Youth and Student Association of Austria, have joined the cause.

Together, those efforts are making a difference across the region, but resources are stretched thin as Syria's conflict persists. AGBU Central Board member and Damascus native Vasken Yacoubian praised AGBU's relief work, commenting, "AGBU was the first organization to

foresee the immediate and long term needs of the Syrian Armenian community within and outside Syria, and to develop and implement an effective response strategy. As the demands change, so, too, does our approach: over the past several months, we've expanded from Syria to neighboring countries, going wherever we can help. AGBU will do its utmost to sustain its efforts for as long as needed. However, we need more support than we ever could have imagined, and are calling on AGBU members and Armenians everywhere to continue giving to let the Syrian Armenian community know that they are not alone and have not been forgotten."

To learn more about AGBU's humanitarian work for Syrian Armenians, visit: <http://agbu.org/syriahumanitarianrelief/>.

To contribute to the relief effort, visit: <https://donate.agbu.org/agbu-urgent-appeal>.

To make a pledge by phone, call +1-855-AID-AGBU (243-2428) from Monday to Friday, 9 am to 5 pm (EST).

Checks can be sent to, AGBU Syria Emergency Fund, 55 East 59th St., New York, NY 10022. Indicate "Emergency Humanitarian

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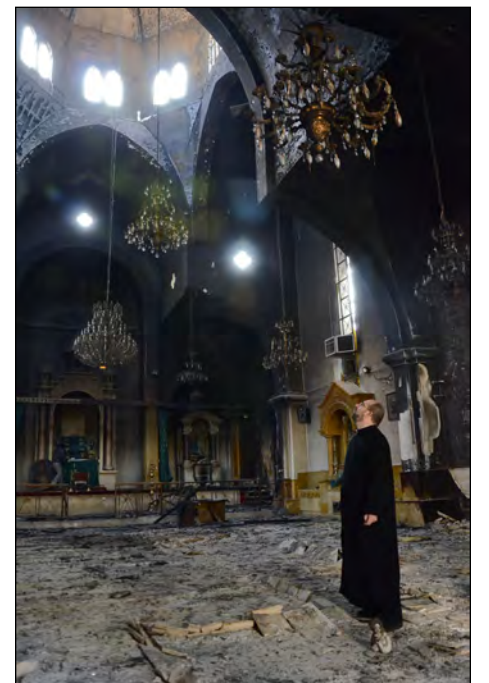
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Father Zareh assesses the damage to the St. Kevork Armenian Orthodox Church in Aleppo's Midan district after a severe fire in October 2012.



COMMUNITY NEWS

All Eyes on Ernie:

Dr. Ernest Barsamian Receives Medal from Armenian Government, Is Feted at AUB Alumni Gala at Boston University

BARSAMIAN, from page 1

As consecutive speakers pointed out at the Saturday gala, Barsamian's achievements would have been impressive for anyone. However, for Barsamian, 87, growing up poor in Aleppo, Syria, the beautiful campus of AUB in Beirut was a dream, as were the hallowed halls of Harvard Medical School.

Barsamian's accomplishments are numerous. He was professor of surgery at Harvard Medical School. At the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), he invented one of the early heart-lung machines. He was faculty dean at Harvard Medical School, chair of Cardiac and

Thoracic Surgery, chair of Surgical Services and chief of staff at the Boston Veterans Administration Medical Center. He was the senior consultant to the New England VA regional director and consultant in cardiac surgery to the Department of Veterans Affairs. He is a diplomat of the American Board of Surgery, among others.

He was the first Armenian foreign graduate to get accepted to the Harvard Surgical Residency Program at Boston City Hospital in 1956. He retired in 2000.

In 1963 he was appointed chief of Cardiothoracic Surgery at the West Roxbury VA Medical Center. He started the Open Heart

Surgery Program, which was the first among the 170 hospitals of the Department of Veterans Affairs and the third in New England. He became chief of all surgical services in 1972, chief of staff of the hospital, supervising all the clinical programs in 1978 and chief of staff of the Brockton/West Roxbury VA Medical Center, which became a major Harvard teaching hospital, in 1983.

He became an associate dean of Harvard Medical School in 1984 and a full professor in 1988. He became the faculty dean of the medical school in 1992.

He has won dozens upon dozens of awards, but he said he was exceptionally proud of the Ernest Barsamian



Foreign Minister Eduard Nalbandian at Harvard with Dr. Ernest Barsamian at the medal ceremony



From left, Ambassador to the US Tatul Markarian, Dr. Ernest Barsamian, Foreign Minister Eduard Nalbandian, Sonig Kradjian and Jackie O'Neill



Michael Lawson, the recently retired director of the VA Boston Healthcare System and Dr. Ernest Barsamian embrace.

Auditorium at the VA, with the letters in the crimson of Harvard. Others, he said, included the Meritorious Service Award by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs and the Plaque of Valor from the Congressional Medical of Honor Society, as well as the Exceptional Service Award by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs.

The president of AUB, Peter Dorman, had been scheduled to attend the program but cancelled at the last minute due to political instabil-

ity in the region. He issued a message, read by university trustee Dr. Joseph Martin.

In his statement, he praised the New England Alumni Chapter "for your excellent efforts in raising funds for scholarships. AUB's annual financial aid program has grown tremendously in the past dozen years. In 2001, it was only \$2.6 million and last year it reached almost \$22 million. This remarkable achievement has constituted an historic effort, thanks in large part to peo-

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Olympic Journey an Uphill Quest for Skier

SKIERS, from page 5

The hype has already fueled "Go Arman" T-shirts and "Armenia Ski Team" scarves. Serebrakian has been on the public radar since his collegiate skiing days at the University of San Francisco. He was one of four athletes to represent Armenia 2010 along with Nersisyan, Sergej Mikaelian and Kristine Khachatryan.

Given the 20th anniversary of Armenia's participation in the World Olympics as an independent country, the exposure has added incentive for Serebrakian and his teammates. He says he will stop at nothing to realize his dream.

Serebrakian said his role models are Joe Almasian and Kenny Topalian who competed for Armenia in the bobsled competition during that inaugural year of 1994 in Lillehammer.

"I'm so focused on reaching this goal - so hungry - that I look at it as something necessary to reach my potential," he said. "Ski racing has long been a part of my life and I intend to bring it to the homes of Armenians everywhere."

To donate to Serebrakian's Olympic funding, visit www.armanerebrakian.com or on Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/ArmanSerebrakianRoadToSochi>.



COMMUNITY NEWS



From left, Jasmine Chobanian, Dr. Aram Chobanian, Dr. Joseph Martin, Dr. Ernest Barsamian and Sonig Kradjian, in front of a painting of Dr. Aram Chobanian



Handing Dr. Ernest Barsamian his trophy, from left, Dr. Raja Sayegh, Barsamian and Dr. Joseph Martin

ple like you, and we will continue toward our ultimate goal of being able to make an AUB education a possibility of all those who have worked hard enough to qualify for admission, but are blocked only by financial constraints."

This sentiment applies directly to Barsamian, who himself was able to attend the university only through a scholarship.

Barsamian finished high school at age 15 in Aleppo, and started attending Aleppo College, a junior college. "I dreamt that one day I could attend AUB," he recalled, adding that instead, after that first year, he worked for four years to support his family. He was finally able to enroll at AUB in 1946 through a scholarship given by Harry Dorman, then president of AUB and grandfather of Peter Dorman.

Opening the AUB program was Dr. Raja Sayegh, president of the New England chapter, who praised the evening's honoree. "We stand on the shoulders of giants like him," said Sayegh, adding that Barsamian happens to be the founding president of the New England chapter of the AUB alumni. He said the goal of the chapter and others around the world is to raise funds to help students attend a university that "for 150 years has been impacting the region in a positive way."

Jeffrey Karam, vice president of the New England alumni chapter, who is a PhD candidate at Brandeis University, delivered the keynote address.

He spoke fondly about AUB and the achievements of its alumni worldwide. "Tonight is your

the financial support of AUB. Just like Ernie, many young bright minds need our help," Karam said. "The world needs more Ernies and together we can make that happen."

He implored everyone to make donations to the AUB scholarship fund, so that students in that unstable region do not have to worry about inflation and can instead look toward a brighter future.

opportunity. He was willing to take a chance," he said. "It is the legacy of all great leaders. He sees things in people that they themselves don't."

Charness also praised the education provided by AUB, noting that every chief of surgery at the VA was a graduate of the school. He noted, however, that it was not a case of AUB graduates helping each other, rather "they achieved their legacy because they were so good."

Another speaker, old friend and colleague Dr. Aram Chobanian, president emeritus of Boston University and dean emeritus of the Boston University School of Medicine, said he first met Ernie, as he was called throughout the night by the speakers, when he came to Boston City Hospital. He spoke briefly and then sang a short song he had written for the occasion, as he said he now has time to indulge his hobby of music.

Dr. Joseph Martin, a member of the AUB Board of Trustees and dean emeritus of the Harvard Medical School, spoke about his 30-year ties with AUB. Martin praised the connections formed between Boston University and Harvard medical schools, which "came together in [providing] clinical care" at the VA hospital in Boston. He praised, especially, that those were two separate, private universities, which could only come up with this collaboration "through leadership like Ernie's."

He noted that the West Roxbury VA is the top-ranked veterans' hospital in the country. "I thank you, Ernie, for your leadership and support."

The honoree, in his comments thanked the assembled for their kind words. "The award I am getting is a very special one, as it is from my fellow alumni of AUB, that we all love and cherish so much."

He spoke about his late wife, whom he had met there as a student and his pain and her passing from cancer. He noted, however, that these past eight years, he has been restored again by meeting his "best friend," V. Sonig Kradjian. He also thanked his children. "I couldn't ask for a better immediate or extended family."

"I am very proud to have improved healthcare for our deserving veterans," Barsamian said.

In an interview after the program, Barsamian credited some opportune chances that came his way, noting that he knew he needed to jump on them.

The members of the gala organizing committee were: Tamar Chamassian Kouspakian, Roula Chahine Rayyad, Joanne Gholmie, Nicole Babikian Hajjar, Gheed Amara Itani and Sana Tannoury Karam.



From left, Sonig Kradjian, Rouben Shugarian and Dr. Ernest Barsamian



Chapter Leadership Team members with the honoree, from left, Michel Fayad, Dr. Raja Sayegh, Akl Fahed, Dr. Ernest Barsamian, Tamar Chamassian Kouspakian, Jeffrey Karam and Salim Chahine

chance to get back to our beautiful alma mater. We have had our fair share of an AUB experience, at a campus that has changed the lives of many in this room," Karam said.

He told the story of Barsamian's life, how as a child growing up in Aleppo, higher education was not even supposed to be in the cards. Instead, he said, Barsamian became someone "who improved the lives of everyone that he came into contact with. He inspires many of us though it would not have been possible without

Another speaker, Dr. Michael Charness, who had been recruited by Barsamian at the VA Hospital as a staff neurologist in 1989 and served as chief of neurology at the Brockton-West Roxbury VA and the VA Boston Healthcare System. He praised Barsamian for being both proactive and smart, praising Barsamian as someone who knew how to treat patients as well as how to teach students.

"I came to the West Roxbury VA in 1989. I came because Ernie Barsamian gave me an



From left, Sonig Kradjian, James and Marta Batmasian and Dr. Ernest Barsamian

Arts & Living

Forced Turkification, Anti-Semitism and Lobbying Against Recognition of Armenian Genocide Addressed by Rifat N. Bali

TORONTO – Against the background of the ongoing tensions in the Middle East, scholar Rifat Bali discusses the Jews of Turkey, one of the key elements in the strategic relationship between Israel and Turkey. His recent book, *Model Citizens of the State: The Jews of Turkey during the Multi-Party Period* (Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 2012), describes the struggle of Turkish Jews from 1950 to the present for their constitutional rights, their fight against anti-Semitism and the attitude of the Turkish establishment to these problems. It details the Turkish-Jewish leadership's involvement in the lobbying efforts on behalf of the Turkish Republic against the acceptance of resolutions in the US Congress recognizing the Armenian Genocide. The book gives insight into the situation of all minorities in Turkey today.

Marc David Baer, author of *The Donme: Jewish Converts, Muslim Revolutionaries, and Secular Turks* said about the book, "With the publication of the highly original Turkish Jews in the Republican Years, Rifat Bali established himself as the leading authority on Turkish Jewry."

Julia Phillips Cohen, assistant professor of modern Jewish history at Vanderbilt University said, "*Model Citizens of the State* is carefully researched, clearly written, and persuasively argued. It narrates masterfully the complex history of Turkish Jews' relationship to the modern Turkish Republic, exposing the tightrope act they have often undertaken as they moved between the position of suspect and model minority. Bali's monumental book promises to become the ultimate reference work on Jews in twentieth-century Turkey for a long time to come."

Bali is an independent scholar specializing in the history of Turkish Jews and an associate member of the Alberto-Benveniste Center for Sephardic Studies and the Sociocultural History of the Jews (Ecole Pratique des Hautes Etudes/CNRS/Université Paris-Sorbonne). He is the winner of the Alberto Benveniste Research Award for 2009 for his publications on Turkish Jewry.

Bali's appearances will take place at the following venues on the following dates: Columbia University, Hamilton Hall Room 703, 130 Amsterdam Avenue at 116th Street, New York, Monday, October 14, 8 p.m., organized by the Zoryan Institute with the participation of Armenian Society of Columbia University; St. Leon Armenian Church, 12-61 Saddle River Road, Fair Lawn, NJ, Tuesday, October 15, 7:45 p.m., organized by the Zoryan Institute, with the participation of the Armenian National Committee of NJ, Armenian Network of America – Greater NY, National Association for Armenian Studies and Research (NAASR), New York Armenian Students Association, St. Leon Armenian Church, Tekeyan Cultural Association, Tibrevank Alumni; Brookline Public Library, Main Library, 361 Washington St., Brookline, Mass., Wednesday, Oct. 16, 7 p.m., organized by the Zoryan Institute, with the participation of the National Association for Armenian Studies and Research (NAASR) and Temple Isaiah; NAASR, 395 Concord Ave., Belmont, Mass., Thursday, October 17, 8 p.m., organized by the Zoryan Institute, with the participation of the National Association for Armenian Studies and Research (NAASR); Bolsahay Community Centre, 2855 Victor Doré, Montréal, Québec, Sunday, October 20, 7:30 p.m., organized by the Zoryan Institute, with the participation of the Armenian General Benevolent Union of Montreal, the Armenian National Committee and the Bolsahay Cultural

see TURKIFICATION, page 12



A still from the film "Toastmaster"

'Toastmaster' Brings Tradition To Life

LOS ANGELES – When Spanish filmmaker, Eric Boadella, experienced the ancient Armenian tradition of the *tamada* or toastmaster, "It was love at first sight," he said.

From this initial reaction, Boadella found the inspiration to create the family-centered comedy-drama, "Toastmaster," which recently premiered during the 27th Wine Country Film Festival, in Sonoma, Calif. The film tells the story of Uncle Kapriel who decides to teach his adult nephew, Alek, the family tradition of toastmaster, just in time for his mother's wedding. But Kapriel does not expect Alek to uncover his

uncle's secret past.

Boadella was attending a social gathering when he encountered his first Armenian toastmaster. The *tamada* not only offers the traditional toast at a wedding or celebration, but serves as the master of ceremonies,

directing other speakers and adding his personal flavor along the way. It could be the respected family elder, or the uncle who has a knack for storytelling, along with a sense of humor to entertain an entire family, or anyone up to the challenge.

Boadella explained, "I immediately admired this poet and master of improvisation. Almost magically, with each lyrical and clever toast, he eternalized the moment and shared the joy with his loved ones." Inspired by the art form, Boadella said, "That night I realized the toastmaster and I shared the same vision. Although I use different tools than he does, cinematography and actors instead of poetry and vodka, the ultimate goal is the same: to immortalize a story. My admiration for the toastmaster was my catalyst for writing this humanistic story between two characters from two very different generations: Uncle Kapriel, the toastmaster and his nephew, the collector of stories."

Boadella, a native of Barcelona, had no previous involvement with the Armenian community, but discovered a new-found respect for the rich Armenian cultural history and made friends in the community along the way.

see TOASTMASTER, page 11



Arpa International Film Festival Announces Winners

LOS ANGELES – The 16th Annual Arpa International Film Festival concluded Sunday, September 29, with their annual Awards Ceremony and Closing Night Gala Reception at the Egyptian Theatre in Hollywood.

Following the screening of Robert Hatch's western drama, "Masque," Arpa International Film Festival director Alex Kalognomos took center stage to host the closing night awards ceremony. Kalognomos said, "This year we were proud to host over 60 films from 30 countries around the world. We laughed, cried and debated as we watched the filmmaker's visions unfold on the screen of the Egyptian Theatre. Arpa is proud to have hosted these films and applauds each and every one of 2013 filmmakers."

Colombian star Valentina Rendon (Allá Te Espero) was the first presenter of the evening to announce the Jury prize for Best Music Video. Capital Cities' "Safe and Sound" (US) directed by Grady Hall won the top honor. Accepting the award was Capital Cities' own Sebu Simonian, who was on hand to accept the award.

British-born actor/producer/director Sebastian Siegel ("Love Sex God, Part 1: Awakening World") then took the stage to present the Jury prize for Best Short Film to "Subhuman" (UNTERMENSCH) (US), directed by Michael Aloyan.

Siegel also presented the first special honor – The Silver Lens – in recognition of filmmakers who take extraordinary measures to pursue the important stories of the day to documentarian Matthew VanDyke for his short "Not Anymore: A Story of Revolution." VanDyke was previously announced as the recipient of the Armin T. Wegner Award although the festival felt the Silver Lens award better exemplified the nature of VanDyke's story and how he brought it to life.

"Venezia" director and 2009 Arpa International winner Haik Gazarian was next up awarding the Jury prize for Best Documentary to director Heather Winters for "Two The Story of Roman & Nyro" (US).

Australian singing sensation Vassy whose song, We Are Young, topped the charts earlier this year presented the Audience Award to "Abstraction" (US) written, produced and directed by Prince Bagdasarian.

Arpa co-producer Michael Ashjian introduced a film retrospective for the Breakthrough Filmmaker of the Year recipient Sev Ohanian ("Fruitvale Station").

Jury members Howard Rosenman, Felix Pire and Sev Ohanian gave the final Jury awards for Best Director to Ruben Kochar for "My Name Is Viola" (Armenia); Best Screenplay winner Christopher Cardiff for "Always Faithful" (US); Best Feature award "The Power of Few" (US) and the film's producer Roy Kurtluyan.

Arpa's head and founder Sylvia Minassian thanked everyone who made the festival successful this year before honoring actor Sid Haig with the Lifetime Achievement Award for a career spanning more than five decades.



ARTS & LIVING

Toastmaster Brings Tradition to Life

TOASTMASTER, from page 10

His own relationship with film began at a young age. He noted, "I was amazed and intrigued by film since the first time I saw a movie in a theater: 'Indiana Jones and the Temple of Doom.' I'll never forget the evil man removing hearts using his hands... I was just a kid!"

From a childhood appreciation for "Dr. Jones," to a discovery of a passion for producing art, Boadella began creating music videos for songs *The Bags*, *Serge Le Bonobo* and *Dancin' like Robots* and received awards at several festivals. He also experimented with narrative and cinematography, creating a number of short films. "Toastmaster" was my first attempt to tell a story as best as I can in a classic narrative form," he said.

"Toastmaster" was shot entirely in the Los Angeles area. While Boadella was new to the Armenian community, he made sure to include actors who truly understood and embraced the tradition and culture. The protagonists, David Hovan and Sevag Mahserejian are Armenian, as well as, producer Martin Yernazian, producer manager Nanor Abkarian, production designer Hourii Mahserejian, musical composer Ara Dabandjian and several other members of the cast and crew. "I was looking for three talented actors that didn't need a transformation or a big effort to become the characters. In other words: that they had a lot in common with the characters. So I could get a natural and spontaneous chemistry between the characters and a great sense of realism in the performances," he explained. "I think this was one of the keys of making 'Toastmaster' something special."

Crowd-sourcing, via Indiegogo, supplied the funding for "Toastmaster." "We had more than 200 contributors that made this film possible," noted Boadella. "Toastmaster" is in English and Armenian with English subtitles,



Scene from "Toastmaster"

but with Armenian subtitles forthcoming.

The film will be making the rounds of the international film festival circuit through next spring. Boadella and producers are currently planning a film premiere in Los Angeles and looking for a sponsor to aid in organizing the event. "It will be a great event, with the cast and crew and the Los Angeles Armenian community is expecting to see the film," said Boadella.

As for Boadella, he is waiting for that next inspirational moment and has several possible upcoming projects to choose from, with another independent film likely on the horizon. "The experience with 'Toastmaster;' was very positive, and I can't wait to repeat the experience with another feature-length film."

For more information on "Toastmaster,"

screening announcements or to donate to the film, visit the film's website,

www.toastmastermovie.com or Facebook page, www.facebook.com/toastmastermovie.



Director Eric Boadella

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David of Sassoun Book Published

FRESNO – *David of Sassoun: Critical Studies on the Armenian Epic* (The Press at California State University, Fresno, 2013), 228 pages, is a collection of essays by the world's foremost scholars on the great oral epic of Armenia.

Edited by Dickran Kouymjian and Barlow Der Mugrdchian, *David of Sassoun* was published as the newest addition to the Armenian Series of Fresno State's Armenian Studies Program. *David of Sassoun* is the fourth title in the Armenian Series established through The Press at California State University, Fresno.

The essays, by Charles Dowsett, Kouymjian, Aram Ter-Ghevondian, Earl R. Anderson, Chaké Der Melkonian-Minassian, Frédéric Feydit, Arpiné Khatchadourian, Aram Tolegian, Chaké Der Melkonian-Minassian, Vahé Oshagan, as well as an original poem on David by Ashough Hovnani, were presented at a symposium organized by Kouymjian the year after he was invited to the campus to establish a new program devoted to Armenian Studies. Kouymjian has described it as Fresno's contribution to the commemoration of the centennial celebration of the discovery and publication of the epic poem, which had survived until the 1970s orally, passed on, generation after generation, for more than a thousand years by anonymous village bards.

Many scholars from Armenia, France, England, Canada and the US who had published on the Armenian epic were invited to

participate in the International Symposium entitled "David of Sassoun: The Armenian Folk Epic after a Century."

In addition to the papers of the conference, the current volume contains an introduction outlining the history of the epic as well as a concise summary of all the episodes of the official version established by a team of scholars in Erevan in 1939.

Also included at the beginning of the volume is a new variant, the only known version of the epic recorded anywhere in the diaspora. Because of the publicity generated by the symposium, Lilyan Chooljian of Fresno, who was present at the conference, had recorded a recitation of the variant some years earlier and brought it to the attention of Kouymjian.

Thanks to a grant from the Dolores Zohrab Liebmann Fund and the M. Victoria Karagozian Kazan and Henry S. Khazadian Kazan Fund, and the efforts of Der Mugrdchian to include the volume in the Armenian Series of monographs the program sponsors, the book is now available to the general public.

According to its editors, these critical essays, which at times challenging traditional views held on the epic and how it should be presented and understood, will provide much source material for scholars.

David of Sassoun: Critical Studies on the Armenian Epic is available from The Press at California State University, Fresno through its website <http://shop.thepressatcsufresno.com>.



ARTS & LIVING

Shushi Dance Group to Have Premier Performance in Rhode Island

PROVIDENCE, R.I. — Saints Sahag & Mesrob Armenian Church will celebrate its 100 anniversary next year (1914 -2014). For this occasion the church plans to provide a few major cultural programs.

The first big event dedicated to the 100th anniversary will take place on Sunday, October 20. The Cultural Committee and the Armenian Church Youth Organization of America (ACYOA) branch have invited the Shushi Armenian Dance Ensemble of New York to have its first-ever performance in the state, the premier performance in Rhode Island. More than 65 dancers under the leadership of Seta Paskalian-Kantardjian, artistic director and choreographer, with Andranik Mouradian, musical director, Armen Hovhannisyan and Salbi Mailyan, vocalists from California, will present a graceful program.

The Shushi Armenian Dance Ensemble, under the auspices of the Saint Vartan Cathedral in New York City, came into existence in 1992 as a small, young cultural



The Shushi Dance Ensemble in Aleppo



The Shushi Dance Ensemble in Beirut

group. These past 20 years have proven to be memorable for the ensemble under the astute volunteer leadership of Paskalian-Kantardjian. With the help of 100-percent volunteer individuals, the ensemble's members have performed on numerous occasions for both Armenian and non-Armenian audiences across the world, with great success. In July 2000, Shushi performed in Yerevan for an international audience of 3,000 youth in honor of the 1,700th Anniversary of Armenia's adoption of Christianity. As a result of this performance, Shushi was featured in the March 2004 issue of *The National Geographic*. In addition, to name a few, Shushi has performed to sell out audiences in

Armenia, Middle East (Lebanon, Syria, and Jordan), Los Angeles, Orlando, Canada, Boston, New Jersey, New York, and last summer toured South America (Buenos Aires, Argentina and Montevideo, Uruguay). Most recently, the Shushi Dance Ensemble was admitted as a member of the International Dance Council CID, the official umbrella organization, recognized by UNESCO, for all forms of dance around the world.

The performance will be on Sunday, October 20, at 3 p.m., Roberts Hall, Rhode Island College, 300 Mt. Pleasant Ave., Providence. Tickets are now available at the church office, The Deli, Sonya's Market and at the door on the day of the concert.

Prelacy and Diocese Hold Joint Program with Author Karanian in Conn.

NEW BRITAIN, Conn. — More than 75 people recently turned out to hear Matthew Karanian talk about Armenia and Artsakh at a Prelacy-Diocese event in New Britain.

The presentation by Karanian was organized by both of New Britain's Armenian

churches — St. Stephen's Armenian Apostolic Church and the Armenian Church of the Holy Resurrection. Karanian presented his latest book, *Armenia and Karabakh: The Stone Garden Travel Guide*.

He also showed photographs from historic

Western Armenia, and included a brief video showing the September 8 performance of the *Badarak* (Liturgy) at the Armenian Church of the Holy Cross at Aghtamar.

Karanian was in historic Armenia last month doing research for an upcoming book

about the historic Armenian sites of Western Armenia. He was at Aghtamar during the Armenian church's first baptism ceremony there in nearly a century.

Armenia and Karabakh: The Stone Garden Travel Guide is now the top-selling Armenia title in bookstores and on Amazon.com. Further details are available online at www.ArmeniaTravelGuide.com.

Karanian practices law in Pasadena, Calif., and is a native of New Britain. He will continue his book tour on November 21, 22 and 24 in Montreal, Ottawa and Toronto, as a guest of Canada's Armenian Embassy and Hamazkayin cultural organization.

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Since its inception in 2001, TCA's 'Sponsor a Teacher' program has raised over \$563,000 and reached out to 4,440 teachers and school workers in Armenia and Karabagh.



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Forced Turkification, Anti-Forced Turkification, Anti-Semitism Addressed by Rifat N. Bali

TURKIFICATION, from page 10
Association of Montreal; Beth Tikvah Synagogue, 3080 Bayview Ave., Toronto, Ontario, Monday, October 21, 8 p.m., organized by the Zoryan Institute, with the participation of Beth Tikvah Synagogue and the Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs; AGBU Alex Manoogian Centre, 930 Progress Avenue, Toronto, Ontario, Tuesday, October 22, 7:30 p.m., organized by the Zoryan Institute, with the participation of the Armenian General Benevolent Union, the Armenian Missionary Association of Canada, the Bolsahay Cultural Association of Toronto, Daughters of Vartan-Artemis Ortyag #28, Holy Trinity Armenian Church, Knights of Vartan-Alishan Lodge and St. Gregory Armenian Catholic Church.

For more information, contact the Zoryan Institute.



ARTS & LIVING

CALENDAR

MASSACHUSETTS

OCTOBER 13 — Sts. Vartanantz Armenian Church in Chelmsford will celebrate the 35th anniversary of its consecration. His Eminence Archbishop Khajag Barsamian, Primate of the Diocese of the Armenian Church of America (Eastern) will preside. Following divine liturgy, ordination of sub-deacons and acolytes will be conducted. Fellowship reception at 1 p.m., followed by dinner at 1:30 p.m. Donation \$35. At the banquet the Primate will present the St. Vartan Award to Patricia Amboian and George Simonian, for their years of dedicated service to the church. Advance reservations requested by September 25. Contact Rose Amboian at (978) 256-3430 or Patty Kayajanian at (978) 937-9379.

OCTOBER 16 — Meet the Author: Chris Bohjalian discusses *NY Times* Bestseller *Sandcastle Girls*, 7:30 p.m. Winchester Town Moderator John Sullivan will introduce the author. Free and open to the public; McCall Middle School, 458 Main St., Winchester. Sponsored by Winchester Reads, a volunteer-based town-wide "Read" program.

OCTOBER 18 and 19 — St. James Annual Bazaar! Delicious shish, losh, kheyra and more! Fabulous pastries, manti, kufte and toorshi! Children's activities, vendors galore, farmer's market. Fun! Friends! Family! 11 a.m. to 9 p.m., daily, at the church hall, 465 Mount Auburn St., Watertown.

OCTOBER 19 — Hye Kef 5, featuring Leon Janikian, Joe Kouyoumjian, Greg Takvorian, Ken Kalajian, Bob Raphalian and Jay Baronian, Haverhill, 7:30 p.m., Michael's Function Hall, 12 Alpha St. Tickets \$40, students \$30. Includes individually-served mezza platters. Proceeds to benefit all Armenian churches in Merrimack Valley and New Hampshire. Call either John Arzigian, 6-03-560-3826, Sandy Boroyan, 978-251-8687, Scott Sahagian, 617-699-3581, or Peter Gulezian, 978-375-1616. No tickets will be sold at the door. For advance tickets, please call a committee member. Organized by Armenian Friends of America.

OCTOBER 20 — Holy Trinity Armenian Church's 52nd Anniversary Banquet; Stewardship Sunday, immediately following church services, Charles and Nevert Talanian Cultural Hall, 145 Brattle Street, Cambridge. Honoring "Parishioner of the Year," Deacon Gregory Krikorian and recognizing outgoing Parish Council members, Lt. Col. Robert G. Lang, Jr., Richard Sahagian and Armen Skenderian. Donation: \$25 per person; seating by paid reservation only. RSVP by October 15. For more info, contact the church office at 617-354-0632, office@htaac.org or log onto www.htaac.org.

OCTOBER 24 — K. George and Carolann S. Najarian, MD Lecture on Human Rights: In Our Midst: Slavery Unmasked; 7 p.m., Faneuil Hall, Boston, with keynote speaker Siddharth Kara, director at the Carr Center Program on Human Trafficking & Modern Slavery, Harvard



October 18 and 19, come enjoy the St. James Armenian Church's Annual Bazaar. Delicious shish, losh, kheyra and more. Fabulous pastries, manti, kufte and toorshi. Children's activities, vendors galore, farmer's market. Fun! Friends! Family! 11 a.m. to 9 p.m. both days, 465 Mount Auburn St., Watertown, MA.

Kennedy School of Government. For further information, email info@ArmenianHeritagePark.org.

OCTOBER 26 — Fall Harvest Bazaar, First Armenian Church, 380 Concord Ave., Belmont. Noon – 8 p.m. Armenian delicacies - manti, choreg, kufte and more. Enjoy kebab dinners (lamb, beef or chicken with pilaf and salad,) losh, boreg, paklava, pastries and more in our festive hall or takeout. 617-484-4779, or www.firstarmenianchurch.org. Handicapped and MBTA accessible.

OCTOBER 29 — Julia & the Zerounian Ensemble, in an enchanting cabaret evening of songs from around the world. 7:30 p.m., Regattabar, Cambridge. For information and reservations, visit <http://www.getshowtix.com/regattabar/moreinfo.cgi?id=3031>

NOVEMBER 1 and 2 — 57th Annual St. Stephen's Bazaar, 11 a.m. to 8 p.m., 47 Nichols Ave., Watertown. Open to the public; lamb, losh and chicken kebab, Armenian pastries, gourmet food, harvest store and silent & live auctions.

NOVEMBER 8 and 9 — Annual Autumnfest Bazaar sponsored by the Armenian Church at Hye Pointe, 110 Main St., Haverhill, Friday 12-8 p.m. and Saturday, 12-7 p.m. Lamb, losh and chicken kebab and kheyra. Dinner served all day. Pastry table, Armenian cuisine, gift basket

raffles and raffles for cash and prizes. For more info, visit our new website www.hyeointearmenianchurch.org or call 978-372-9227.

NOVEMBER 16 — Armenian Women's Welfare Association (AWWA) 38th Annual Luncheon/Auction, 11 a.m. at the Burlington Marriot, 1 Burlington Mall Road. Event kicks off with a silent auction and bidding; Visa and MasterCard accepted, tickets \$60. For reservations, contact awwauction@gmail.com.

NOVEMBER 16 — Second annual Mer Doon Benefit Dance, 7:30 p.m. to 1 a.m., Charles Mosesian Cultural and Youth Center, 465 Mount Auburn Street, Watertown. Featuring John Berberian, Bob Mougamian, Mal Barsamian and Bruce Gigarian. Mezza, dessert table and more. Tickets: \$40 adult, \$30 student; for tickets and table reservations, please call Mark at 617-256-5358.

DECEMBER 6 AND 7 — Trinity Christmas Bazaar, Friday, 3-9 p.m., Saturday, 10 a.m. to 7 p.m., Holy Trinity Armenian Church, 145 Brattle St., Cambridge.

NEW HAMPSHIRE

NOVEMBER 3 — Ararat Armenian Congregational Church Celebrates 100 Years: 1913-2013. Join the historic Armenian American community of Southern NH for a celebration lunch at Tuscan Kitchen restaurant, 67 Main St., Salem; 1 p.m. For tickets and sponsorship opportunities, contact janigian@comcast.net.

NEW JERSEY

NOVEMBER 23-24 — TCA Mher Megerdchian Theatrical Group celebrates 15th Anniversary with production of Hagop Baronian's "The Perils of Politeness" (Kaghavaroutyan Vnasneruh) directed by Gagik Karapetyan from Armenia; Dwight Englewood High School, 315 E. Palisade Ave., Englewood, NJ. Nov. 23, Saturday at 8 p.m. and Nov. 24, Sunday at 4 p.m. For tickets; \$50, \$35, \$25; call Marie Zokian (201)745-8850 or Missak Boghosian at (212)819-0097 or (347)365-6985.

RHODE ISLAND

OCTOBER 20 — Program in honor of the dedication of the 100 anniversary of Sts. Sahag & Mesrob Armenian Church, with the Cultural Committee and ACYOA presenting the Shushi Armenian Dance Ensemble in a program titled "Song and Dance.. Seta Paskalian - Kantardjian, artistic director and Choreographer; Andranik Mouradian, musical director, Armen Hovhannissyan and Salbi Mailyan, vocalists from California. 3 p.m., Roberts Hall, Rhode Island College, 300 Mt. Pleasant Ave., Providence. Donations: Adults \$20, Students \$10, children under 12 free. Tickets available at the Church office (401) 272 7712, The Deli (401) 461 4774, Sonya's Market (401) 941 9300.

Book Review: Rev. Tootikian's *Keeping the Balance*

Keeping the Balance By Rev. Dr. Vahan H. Tootikian. Royal Oak, Michigan: Armenian Heritage Committee, 2013. Pp. 160 ISBN 1-891583-15-8. \$25 plus \$3.25 S&H.

By Philip Tavlian

A leading pastor of the Great Lakes state has just published his 35th volume, a highly-readable compendium of inspirational essays in the English and Armenian languages.

Rev. Dr. Vahan H. Tootikian — emeritus pastor of the Armenian Congregational Church of Greater Detroit — has prepared a bilingual work emphasizing "a balance between one's personal salvation and the social implications of one's religious experience." As the author states in his preface, "[W]ithout faith a person's good works are futile and without good works one's faith is dead."

The English-language portion of the volume comprises 31 articles divided into three sections — "Holidays and Observances," "Views on

Issues" and "Armenian Issues." The initial section includes thoughtful pieces relating to the Advent and Lenten Seasons as well as Independence Day in Armenia.

"Views on Issues" surveys the underpinnings of the Christian faith, from the imperative of outreach to the friendship and nonconformity exemplified in the life of Jesus of Nazareth to the distinctions between divine Knowledge and human wisdom. Essays dealing with the pilgrimage of life — storms, weaknesses, good and evil, love, rejection, prayer and religious education — are of special benefit to 21st Century readers.

The section addressing Armenian issues eloquently examines theological diversity among Armenian Evangelicals, the 98th Anniversary of the Armenian Genocide, problems and solutions in the modern Republic of Armenia, the 2009 Armenia/Turkey Protocols and the interdependence of Armenia and the Diaspora.

The Armenian-language portion of the volume is entitled, "Nertashnagooyun" (meaning "harmony") and consists of ten articles dealing

with religious and patriotic subjects. The author acknowledges that not "all Christians and all Armenians think alike, feel alike, worship alike or act alike." He nevertheless urges that "in spite of their differences, they must united and create harmony, much like a choral group, with different voices blended together, creating beautiful music."

Balance is the rich literary harvest of a gifted scholar whose five and one-half decades of Christian ministry have taken him from Beirut, Lebanon and Damascus, Syria to pulpits in Massachusetts and Michigan as well as to the classrooms of Harvard University, Andover Newtown Theological Seminary and the University of Michigan.

Given recent tragic developments in the Near East and other points around the globe, the informed reader is well-advised to acquire this estimable volume and keep it within arm's reach in the trying times ahead.

Inscribed copies may be ordered from the Armenian Heritage Committee, 3922 Yorba Linda Boulevard, Royal Oak, MI 48073-6455.

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COMMENTARY

THE ARMENIAN Mirror Spectator

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COMMENTARY

Turkey Revamps Its Image

By Edmond Y. Azadian

Serving as a geopolitical bridge of NATO structure between Europe and the Middle East, Turkey improved its economy and international image to a point where Ottomanist ambitions were resurrected once more. The duo of Premier Recep Tayyip Erdogan and Foreign Minister Ahmet Davutoglu were credited with Turkey's high-flying position.

As a scholar-diplomat, Foreign Minister Davutoglu had begun to nurture and nostalgically portray the Ottoman Empire, when subject nations lived "in harmony" and "brotherly love," the Armenian Genocide and the bloodbaths from the Balkans to North Africa notwithstanding.

Fueled by the dynamics of a booming economy and the hegemony forged with Israel in the Middle East, Ankara entertained visions of reshaping the region in a configuration matching its dreams.

Davutoglu proudly proclaimed Turkey's new policy of zero problems with neighbors, which basically meant to force down Ankara's policies on its neighbors, under the umbrella of NATO powers.

At this time, Mr. Erdogan's "mildly" Islamist party, in power for the last decade, had to put the brakes on its domestic and foreign policy ambitions because it realized that it was biting more than it could chew.

Despite the dramatic achievements in its economy, its domestic policies hit some snags as revealed by the Gezi Park demonstrations. Erdogan was smart enough to diffuse another potential problem – the Kurdish issue – which could bring down his rule, if it had combined with the social unrest sparked by an environmental issue and conflagrated throughout the country. Generally the Kurds abstained from any action, waiting for the outcome of the Erdogan administration's negotiations with the jailed leader of the Kurdish Workers' Party (PKK), Abdullah Ocalan.

Erdogan's personal ambitions and the ambitions of his country are under a severe test at this moment; personally he is gearing up for the upcoming presidential elections, during which he would like to replace his erstwhile ally, President Abdullah Gul.

He has proclaimed his reform package with the visible intent of building domestic coalitions for a successful presidential bid.

His "zero problem" foreign policy is in complete tatters, because Ankara overextended itself to meddle in every neighbor's internal problems, which backfired.

On September 30, Erdogan announced his package of reforms, which were met with general discontent. The package does not go enough to satisfy Kurdish aspiration. The Kurds began their 30-year struggle for complete independence, which meant the partition of Turkey. Ocalan realized that the great powers would not allow the territorial disintegration of an ally and he toned down his rhetoric to settle for cultural self-determination, which meant in the first place, the use of the Kurdish language. Erdogan's package give only lip service to that demand. It allows for the instruction of the Kurdish language only in private schools, which very few Kurds can afford. The terror laws, which cost the lives of 40,000 Kurds, are still in place and Erdogan promises to dismantle them as he plans to draft and adopt a new constitution. The new constitution will also lower the bar, allowing Kurdish representatives to be elected to the parliament.

The Kurds are dissatisfied and they have been grumbling

about the withdrawal of armed guerillas from Turkish territory, the only guarantee to force the government to make concessions.

Turkey boasts a population of 75 million, of which 20 million are Kurds. Another 20 million are Alevi, whose religious rights have been completely trampled. Alevi ethnic pride has been mostly awakened by neighboring Syria, where the Alevi rulers are battling for their survival. Erdogan's Sunni-dominated administration has ignored Alevi aspirations, planting a time bomb under his reform package. While the Syriac Church has been promised the return of some shrines, the Heybeli Island Greek seminary remains closed and it is contingent upon some reciprocity with Greece. Turkey insists on opening two mosques in Athens to consider the opening of the seminary.

The Ecumenical patriarch of the Greek Orthodox Church Bartholomew is the spiritual head of 300 million adherents, yet Turkey refuses to recognize his title. If the seminary remains shut, no young seminarians will be educated to replace aging priests or the patriarch himself.

The same applies to the Armenian seminary as the Turks have set up a trap; no foreign-born clergy can be elected Greek or Armenian patriarch. And if their respective seminaries are closed, they are doomed to extinction.

Turkey's foreign policy is under intense scrutiny as most of its promises and premises have failed; Turkey was in hegemonic alliance with Israel which afforded Ankara Western powers' full support. In an effort to win over the Arab and Muslim sympathies, Ankara went too far with the Mavi Marmara incident which still keeps the Israel-Turkey axis under tension.

Erdogan's gamble in Egypt backfired as he supported the Muslim Brotherhood in the overthrow of President Mohamed Morsi, while Saudi Arabia and the Gulf emirates supported the military government, politically and through generous economic aid. Underneath that reaction, there was a rebuke by Arab countries towards Erdogan's pretensions to lead the Sunni world.

Of course, there is no talk of solving the Cyprus crisis, where Turkish occupation forces are well entrenched and a demographic engineering is in progress with Anatolian peasants settling on the island.

Turkey's involvement in the Syrian War resulted in a flood of refugees into its territory and the rise of Kurdish autonomy movement in Syria with the potential threat of a domino effect, spilling over into Turkey.

Erdogan's administration has realized that alliance with Israel not only assures Western powers' support, but also huge potential of natural gas reserves that Israel has discovered under its Mediterranean shores. Turkey is dependent on Azeri, Russian and Iranian energy (the latter under sanctions) and before Israel strikes a deal with Turkey's arch-enemy, Cyprus, it has to restore relations with the Jewish state to get a piece of the pie and deny Cyprus a boost to its economy.

Ankara has also extended all the way to Beijing negotiating over air defense systems to the chagrin of NATO. Two years ago Erdogan had accused the Chinese government of Genocide in relation to an incident with the Uyghur minority. Now it is extending its hand for a military deal.

The ill-fated protocols with Armenia remain frozen and there is no hope of reviving them, although a former Turkish ambassador to the US has commented that Ankara needs to restore its relations with Armenia to enhance its international image.

Thus far, Erdogan's magic has worked domestically and internationally. He has to prove his political mettle in the present challenges.

LETTERS

Kevork Marshlian Will Be Missed

To the Editor:

Since we have known Enger Kevork Marshlian for many years, it is most difficult to believe that he is retiring (as announced in the Armenian Mirror-Spectator's September 7 issue) from his positions with the ADL, Mirror and Tekeyan. But we know that all good things come to an end, with new ones in the horizon. Only God will answer what is next in his life.

His invaluable contributions to the organizations have been felt here with us in New Britain and especially with John and me. His visits to our traditional Father's Day picnics

and the many phone calls to him personally for Mirror anniversary reservations etc., were very much appreciated. The special day with Maritsa Ohanesian, and her receiving proclamation at age 100 during the April 24th Genocide Commemoration program at the State House in Boston on April 22, 2005 was unforgettable. All those arrangements that Kevork brought to fruition pleased her so much that she spoke of it to many people.

For the future, we wish him the best of health to do some of the things that he never had time for before.

We thank him many times over for all that

he has done for the ADL, Mirror and Tekeyan to keep them alive and growing. He is a "knight in shining armor" coming to everyone's rescue. Only those who are in touch with him every day really know what he has accomplished.

Until we see him personally, God Bless him and keep him smiling and happy.

– John and Roxie Maljanian
Newington, Conn.

(Editor's Note: All of us here agree with these sentiments.)



COMMENTARY



My Turn

By Harut Sassounian

European Court of Human Rights Provides More Options to Sue Turkey

While there is frequent talk about the pursuit of Armenian claims against Turkey in the International Court of Justice (World Court), the possibility of taking legal action in the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR) is rarely mentioned, despite its distinct advantages.

The key difference between the two courts is that only governments can file lawsuits in the World Court, while any individual, group or state can take legal action in the ECHR, giving Armenians countless possibilities for lawsuits against the Turkish state. Litigants before ECHR must first exhaust all domestic remedies and be from one of the 47 member states of the Council of Europe, which includes Armenia and Turkey.

It is not a coincidence that Turkey leads the list of countries being sued in ECHR, as in the last two and half years alone, over 20,000 cases have been filed against that country. Contrary to popular belief, Turkey has no choice but to comply with all ECHR judgments if it wants to maintain its membership in the Council of Europe. This explains why

the Ankara government has diligently paid tens of millions of dollars to litigants after losing hundreds of ECHR judgments.

A case in point is ECHR's October 1, 2013 decision against Turkey, in which the court awarded over 5 million euros (close to \$7 million) to two Greek brothers, Ioannis Fokas and Evangelos Fokas, who live in Katerini, Greece. The Turkish courts had barred them from inheriting their sister Polikseni Pistika's buildings in Turkey because of their Greek nationality.

In their lawsuit, the Fokas brothers claimed that "they had been deprived of the ownership and use of three immovable properties in the Beyoglu district of Istanbul, namely three buildings and land, which they were entitled to inherit from their sister." The expropriated properties consisted of an eight-story building worth 3.3 million euros, a six-story building worth 1.4 million euros, and a four-story building worth 400,000 euros, based on the appraisal by an Istanbul real estate agency.

The ECHR found that the Turkish courts' "refusal to recognize the applicants' status as heirs constituted an interference with their right to peaceful enjoyment of their possessions and that such interference was incompatible with the principle of lawfulness.... Accordingly, recognition of the applicants as the heirs of Polikseni Pistika... would place them in the position they would have been in, had the State [Turkey] not expropriated the deceased's property.... In those circumstances, an award of compensation for the pecuniary loss seems to be the most appropriate just satisfaction (see *Nacaryan and Deryan vs. Turkey*, no. 19558/02 and 27904/02, <<<16-17, January 8, 2008). The Court considers that such an award principally corresponds to the amount that the applicants could legitimate-

ly expect to have obtained as compensation for the loss of their property, had there been a mechanism to request such compensation."

Based on the above ruling, the European Court awarded the Greek brothers 5 million euros for their expropriated real estate, as well as compensating them for their "anguish and frustration which the applicants must have experienced over the years in not being able to use their properties." The Court ordered the Turkish government to pay the amount of the award to the applicants within three months.

In the referenced *Nacaryan and Deryan vs. Turkey* case, ECHR found that the Turkish courts had also violated the rights of Yeran-Janet Nacaryan and Armen Deryan by claiming that as Greek citizens, they could not inherit the property of their deceased relative in Turkey "on the ground that the condition of reciprocity between Greece and Turkey had not been met." ECHR declared Turkey guilty and awarded the two Greek-Armenian applicants a total of 500,000 euros.

At the international conference of Armenian lawyers held in Yerevan last July, Constitutional Court Chairman Gagik Harutunyan announced the formation of a committee of experts to study the legal merits of filing a lawsuit against Turkey to remedy the massive losses resulting from the Armenian Genocide.

Given the fact that ECHR provides for European Council litigants many more opportunities than the World Court, the recently-formed Armenian committee of legal experts should cast a wider net in considering the possibilities of filing lawsuits against Turkey in the European Court of Human Rights, as well as in national and international courts.

The Enemy Is Amongst Us

Twelve years ago I wrote an article titled "Pulling the Plug on Turkish Music" (*Armenian Mirror Spectator*, October 2001), the topic of which was Armenian musicians perpetuating a pseudo-Ottoman representation of Armenian music. The article started with the following sentence:

"Upon entering the 21st century, the taboo subject of Armenian musicians playing Turkish music to an unsuspecting and ignorant audience under the guise of the music being Armenian, must be addressed."

Twelve years later, this problem still exists, but in a different manifestation. The issue then dealt with Armenians propagating Turkish Ottoman music. Today the issue is Armenians propagating Turkish-Azeri music. *Rabiz* (a misnomer of the abbreviation "rabis" from the Russian "rabocheye iskusstvo" or workers' art) was originally a genre of

By Martin Haroutunian

urban folk music. According to the website rateyourmusic.com, "*Rabiz* is also a definition for a lifestyle and people with socially questionable behaviors that compromise the Armenian culture. In the early 1990s *rabiz* became a popular genre for demanding audiences. The quality of lyrics, vocals and music make *rabiz* a subject to criticism."

Since Armenia's independence, a number of *rabiz* musicians such as Aram Asatryan, Tatul Avoyan, Hayk Ghevondyan (Spitaksi Hayko), etc., have blatantly taken Turkish and Azeri songs and passed them off as Armenian. Some have even been seen performing such music with Azeri musicians, such as the infamous videos on YouTube of Spitaksi Hayko and *duduk* player Kamo Seyranian performing with Azeri singer Nasib. Not only do they propagate Turkish and Azeri music, they also present it under the guise of it being Armenian and are guilty of the Turkification of Armenian music, i.e. taking Armenian music and embellishing it with Turkish melisma. Needless to say, there is much uproar by Armenia's artistic and intellectual community over this matter. However, this problem continues to grow and has spread to our shores. On the West Coast, the likes of Armenchik, Tigran and Artash Asatryan continue to spew their Altaic vodeling.

This affliction has raised its ugly head on the east coast in the form of one Tigran Avetisyan, a clarinetist who not only collaborates with Azeri musicians such as Elman Namazoglu but also propagates Turkish Azeri music. One example is their rendition of *Getmeh, getmeh...* (Don't go, don't go...) which can be found on Facebook and YouTube. It is unfortunate that he can be allowed to perform on Armenian stages, such as the Armenian Independence Day Festival which was recently held at the Armenian Cultural and Education Center in Watertown on September 21.

One may ask, what's wrong with this?

First of all, it gives the real enemy legitimate claims that Armenians are guilty of plagiarism and second it is corrupting the true indigenous cultural heritage of the Armenian people.

The irony, even to any semi knowledgeable Armenian, is that for centuries Turkic peoples have coopted ancient, original Armenian melodies, shamelessly calling them Turkish and/or Azeri. So for Armenian musicians to do the inverse is a double insult – a slap in the face of past injustices, and a slap in the face of those artists who have struggled to keep traditional Armenian music true to its origins.

Twelve years ago my article ended with the following sentence:

"It is our obligation to engender the cultural survival of our new generation by ending the irrational romantic entanglement with the Ottoman Turkish past forced upon us centuries ago and reestablishing our rightful Armenian identity."

Twelve years later all I have to say is "Get, get..." Go, go...

(Martin Haroutunian is a musician and resident of Watertown.)

A Tragedy That Should Shame Lebanon Government

By Robert Fisk

This is the story of how the Syrian war reached out 5,000 miles across the globe and destroyed at least 29 Lebanese lives in the Indian Ocean.

It is a story of tragic irony; the destitute Lebanese families who wanted to live in Australia and left their arid villages in the hills of the northern Akkar plateau had been warned by their relatives not to leave their homes, and they died just off the coast of Indonesia.

And it is a story of a country whose authorities take no responsibility for the deaths of their own people.

The sinking of the overcrowded refugee boat that set off from the Java district of Cianjur cannot match the hundreds of fatalities of the north African boat that sank off the Italian island of Lampedusa, where up to 350 people are thought to have died and divers were still recovering bodies from the Mediterranean.

These disasters do not match in terms of scale of loss, but some features are the same: the desperation of the passengers to find a new life, the involvement of ruthless people-smugglers, the wooden hulks in which they sought illusory safety. What is different is the nationality of the refugees.

For Lebanon – of all Middle East countries – is a place of comparative security and wealth, despite the Syrian conflict and the violence it has brought to Beirut and Tripoli.

In some south-west Asian countries, television advertisements warn would-be asylum seekers of the fate that awaits them.

Scarcely an hour passes on an Afghan TV channel without an ominous man's voice – against a black screen – telling viewers in Dari (Farsi) and Pushtu: "Australia is not a country to reach by boat. If you attempt to go by boat, you will not be allowed onto Australian territory. You will be sent to the island of Papua New Guinea and will never be allowed to live in Australia..."

No such warning has ever been broadcast on Lebanese television. There seemed to be no need. Unlike the anonymous victims off Lampedusa, where there were too few coffins for the dead, the Lebanese who lost their lives and drifted ashore from the Indian Ocean have known identities.

Careful investigations by the local Lebanese press have discovered their home villages: Qabaait, Khreibet and Nabaa Fnydaq, close to the Syrian border, and the Tripoli suburb of Bab el-Tabbaneh, whose militias have been at war with pro-Syrian gunmen east of the city for two years.

There are no schools in much of the Akkar countryside, few hospitals, almost no jobs. The young men have no money to get married. Many of them are forced to join the Lebanese army in order to survive.

The "outgoing" Lebanese government – elected in a poll now hopelessly out of date – didn't care. Almost an entire family were lost from Qabaait. The Khodr family's only survivor was the father, Hussain, whose wife and nine children all perished.

The remains of his wife and one daughter were brought ashore. In Tripoli, the Gamrawy and Hraz families lost their loved ones, while Talal Rai died with his three children and his sister, Ahmed Abdo, the father of Mustafa who was 24 – who is still missing – borrowed \$10,000 from his friends to pay for the journey to Australia; the total cost for each family was \$60,000 to be paid to an Iraqi smuggler.

Many relatives had begged the families not to leave. Abdo told one local paper that "my son is one of the good young boys who sought to live in peace.

The economic and security problems we have suffered through forced him to emigrate and look for peace of mind." To the Lebanese government, Abdo declared: "You should look after your people, and your country, and enough of your disputes."

A photograph survives of the passengers aboard their boat, sitting on rough, wooden benches in the choppy seas off Java. The picture is spotted with raindrops, but you can clearly see the doomed Lebanese aboard.

One smiles broadly, another waves at the camera, most stare at the camera. Behind them is a bleak, grey sky and a sinister, frothing sea. They are only minutes from death.

We know that in the last moments, one Lebanese used his mobile phone to call a relative in Melbourne to seek help. The relative called the Australian naval authorities, who later launched helicopters and jets in a hopeless search for a boat that had already sunk.

But when the scale of the Lebanese losses reached Beirut – only 18 Lebanese survived – their pseudo-government sprang into action.

It promised that survivors would be brought home, and that all those whose bodies were found would be brought back to be buried in the barren soil of their own land.

In fact, they spent more time making pledges about the dead than they did about the living. And what does that tell you about Lebanon?

(Robert Fisk is a Middle East correspondent and commentator for the Independent. This column originally appeared in the paper's October 8 edition.)



40th Anniversary Celebration of Philadelphia TCA Honors Founders Dr. Diran and Koudsi Mikaelians

TCA, from page 1

Opening remarks were offered by Antoine Bazarbashian, another founder and a leader of the chapter from the chapter's inception. He welcomed the guests of honor and pointed to the fact that the unprecedented number of attendees serves as testimony to the respect the Mikaelians enjoy in the community. He then invited Mayis Seapan, the evening master of ceremonies, to open the program.

The cultural portion of the program was ushered in by a presentation of Vahan Tekeyan's poem, "The Armenian Church," recited in the original Armenian language by Mania Arabatlian. It set the theme of the night – the perpetuation of the Armenian cultural heritage by an inseparable bondage of the church and the nation. Next, Rose Zartarian sang a cappella the popular song *Kez em menoum anoush karoun*. Madelen Gouchian was then invited to prove her multitasking versatility by playing the guitar and singing a series of American country songs, most likely her own compositions. All of the artists were enthusiastically received by the audience.

The tribute to the guests of honor started by Yeretsgin Angel Metjian, who lauded Koudsi Mikaelian's achievements in diverse areas: receiving university degrees in nursing, psychology,

sociology, English and international literature and being a prolific writer of several books as well as numerous articles in English and Armenian. Her latest novel, *Autumn Leaves*, is in Armenian and being currently presented and discussed publicly. She has been not only a co-founder of TCA of Philadelphia but also an active executive member, an organizer of cultural and literary programs.

Seapan then introduced the keynote speaker, Dr. Haroutiun Arzoumanian of Montreal. A retired medical doctor, he is currently the chairman of the Board of Directors of the Tekeyan Cultural Association, Inc. that represents a score of TCA chapters in the US and Canada, headquartered in Boston. Arzoumanian has also carried various responsibilities in local parish and diocesan councils in Canada, as well as in the Armenian Democratic Liberal (ADL/Ramgavar) party at local and district levels. He has been a founder and assistant editor of the *Abaka* weekly of Montreal.

The speaker started with a brief address in Armenian acknowledging the legacy of the guests of honor, then continued in English, providing a brief overview of the history of the TCA that was established in Beirut, Lebanon in 1947, and subsequently spread to other Armenian com-

munities in the diaspora as well as Armenia, "to provide hope and a vision to the Armenian youth in the post-Genocide, Great Depression and WWII gloomy years, aiming at the rejuvenation and preservation of the Armenian cultural heritage," he said.

Dr. Mikaelian graduated from the Faculty of Medicine of the American University in Beirut, Lebanon, in 1954 and became a respected ear, nose and throat and neck surgery specialist. He taught medical and nursing students at AUB and became known in other Middle Eastern countries. He earned his American Board in ENT from Johns Hopkins University and eventually was invited by Philadelphia's Jefferson Hospital to head its ENT department. In 1972 he and an old friend from Beirut, Prof. Parounag Tovmassian, were conversing, when both expressed concern about Armenian youth in Philadelphia rapidly losing their cultural identity. Tovmassian's encouragement to establish a Tekeyan Cultural Association in Philadelphia soon became a reality led by the Mikaelians, with Antoine Bazarbashian as "the third pillar, who with other enthusiastic youth did the leg work in organizing wonderful cultural and social programs. The Philadelphia chapter of TCA became one of the most active chapters in US and

Canada, by weekly programs of traditional Armenian cuisine, almost always topped by a cultural program," said Arzoumanian.

He concluded, "The seeds sown 40 years ago by the two professors were healthy seeds and the ground was fertile."

He wished the Mikaelians many more years of good health and continued service to humanity and the Armenian nation.

At the end of the program, Dr. Mikaelian was presented with the catalog of *The Gospels of Gladzor* illuminated manuscripts (in English), while his wife was presented with a bouquet of flowers.

The formal part of the evening was closed by the blessings and appreciation of the pastor of the church Rev. Oshagan Gulgolian.

The celebration continued with music, dance and socializing.

— H.A.

Anniversary Banquet of Holy Trinity Church to Honor Gregory Krikorian

CAMBRIDGE, Mass. — Deacon Gregory Krikorian will be honored as the "Parishioner of the Year" on Sunday, October 20 in the Charles and Nevert Talanian Cultural Hall.

Divine Liturgy will be at 10 a.m., presided over by Archbishop Yeghishe Gizirian. Guest Celebrant will be Very Rev. Krikor Maksoudian.

"This year our banquet will honor a Parishioner of the Year who has shown unprecedented devotion to the altar of the Holy Trinity parish," stated Rev. Vasken Kouzouian. "Especially meaningful will be having a former pastor of Holy Trinity, Archbishop Yeghishe Gizirian, preside and offer the sermon of the day, and as guest celebrant, the Very Rev. Fr. Krikor Maksoudian, son of the pastor, the Rev. Fr.

Papken Maksoudian, who brought Greg to our altar nearly 50 years ago. Also on this day, we will remember His Beatitude Archbishop Torkom Manougian, Armenian Patriarch of Jerusalem, of blessed memory, in our Requiem prayers on the first anniversary of his eternal rest, and Father Papken and Yeretsgin



Gregory Krikorian

Azadouhie Maksoudian on the first anniversary of Fr. Papken's eternal rest."

Krikorian has served on the altar every Sunday for almost 50 years. He was ordained a *thir* by the Archbishop Mampre Calfayan in 1957. Chairman of the Holy Trinity Church's Choir since 2008, he also served as chairman from 1988 to 2001. For more than 40 years, he was a member of the Association of Armenian Church Choirs of America (AACCA), now the Sacred Music Council. He co-chaired the 46th Annual Assembly of the AACCA hosted by Holy Trinity and served as Assembly Coordinator of the 52nd Assembly. He received the Norman Noorjanian Award from the AACCA in 2005.

Last year, Krikorian chaired the 100th Anniversary of Holy Trinity Church's Choir.

He is an active member of the Holy Trinity Men's Union and was elected a Diocesan Delegate in 2000.

Krikorian is a registered Professional Engineer in Massachusetts and is a retired employee of the Department of Defense.

Krikorian and his wife Carol (Pierannunzi) have two children – Lisa Wentzell and her husband, Scott, and Gregory Krikorian and his wife, Lisa – and five grandchildren, Scotty, Ella, Luke, Ruby and Blake.


During the banquet, outgoing Parish Council members, Lt. Col. Robert G. Lang, Jr., Richard Sahagian and Armen Skenderian will be recognized for their services to the church.

For tickets, call the church office, email office@htaac.org, or log onto www.htaac.org.

Peter Koutoujian

FOR CONGRESS

Koutoujian for Congress



My family's story, like so many others in Massachusetts and across the nation, reflects the promise of the American Dream.



My parents always believed in the honor and importance of public service. My mom dedicated her life to teaching and my dad was the City Clerk in Waltham for 30 years.

They instilled in me a desire to help people and to try to make a difference in their lives. They taught me that when you listen to people, empower people, and help them take action – you can change lives for the better.

www.koutoujianforcongress.com
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- Providing affordable health care for all residents
- Creating high-paying jobs
- Banning assault weapons

