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Denying Armenian Genocide Is not a Crime, European Court Rules

STRASBOURG, France (Reuters) – Denying that mass killings of Armenians in Ottoman Turkey in 1915 were genocide is not a criminal offense, the European Court of Human Rights ruled on Tuesday in a case involving Switzerland.

The court, which upholds the 47-nation European Convention on Human Rights, said a Swiss law against genocide denial violated the principle of freedom of expression.

The ruling has implications for other European states such as France which have tried to criminalize the refusal to apply the term “genocide” to the massacres of Armenians during the breakup of the Ottoman empire.

A Swiss court had fined the leader of the leftist Turkish Workers’ Party, Dogu Perincek, for having branded talk of an Armenian Genocide “an international lie” during a 2007 lecture tour in Switzerland.

“Genocide is a very narrowly defined legal notion which is difficult to prove,” the court said. “Mr. Perincek was making a speech of a historical, legal and political nature in a contradictory debate.”

The court drew a distinction between the Armenian case and appeals it has rejected against convictions for denying the Nazi German Holocaust against the Jews during World War II.

“In those cases, the plaintiffs had denied sometimes very concrete historical facts such as the existence of gas chambers,” the court said. “They denied crimes committed by the Nazi regime that had a clear legal basis. Furthermore, the facts they denied had been clearly established by an international tribunal.”

The judges cited a 2012 ruling by France’s Constitutional Council which struck down a law enacted by then President Nicolas Sarkozy’s government as
see DENIAL, page 4

Armenian Dies In Aleppo

ALEPPO (Armenpress) – An Armenian died in a bombing initiated by the armed rebels on December 17. The victim, 62-year-old Nazareth Trezhian, was killed on his way back to home from his workplace. The funeral for Trezhian took place on December 18 at the Armenian Apostolic Church of Holy Theotokos.

At least 125 people have been killed and many have been injured by army air raids on rebel districts.

Meanwhile, the United Nations sent its first delivery of humanitarian aid by air to Syria from Iraq on last week and said it plans to deliver more food and winter supplies to the mainly Kurdish northeast in the next 12 days.

The first cargo plane carrying food took off from Arbil in Iraq’s northern Kurdistan region heading to Hassakeh in Syria.

The food supplies over the next 12 days should be able to feed more than 6,000 Syrian families for the rest of
see SYRIA, page 5



Armenian Genocide survivor Vahram Nahikian with family and friends after receiving a proclamation from state Sen. Will Brownsberger (D-Belmont) and a citation from Middlesex County Sheriff Peter Koutoujian

Armenian Genocide Survivor Receives Proclamation and Citation

BELMONT, Mass. – On the 101st birthday of Armenian Genocide survivor Vahram Nahikian, his family and friends gathered at Holy Cross Armenian Catholic Church to hear his family’s survival story shared by his granddaughter Anaide Nahikian, and to see him receive a proclamation presented by state Sen. Will Brownsberger and a citation from Middlesex County Sheriff Peter Koutoujian. Very Rev. Raphael Andonian of the parish hosted the December 8 ceremony.

The gathering was arranged by Lalig Musserian of Belmont, the coordinator of the committee for the 29th annual Massachusetts State House Commemoration of the Armenian Genocide. That event, to have been held April 19, was cancelled due to the Boston Marathon bombings. Since that time, Musserian and fellow Belmont resident Jirair Hovsepian have been reaching out to survivors making it possible for them to receive their Armenian Martyrs Day Proclamations.

see NAHIKIAN, page 20

Australian Parliamentarians Condemn Visit of Genocide Denier McCarthy

CANBERRA, Australia – John Alexander, the Liberal Member for Bennelong, and Michelle Rowland, the Labor Member for Greenway, have both risen in Australia’s Federal Parliament to speak against visiting Armenian Genocide denier, Professor Justin McCarthy.

The Armenian National Committee of Australia reported that McCarthy, who is a well-funded denier of the Armenian Genocide, earlier this week had two planned events in Sydney and Melbourne cancelled on the grounds of his unwelcome denialist views.

McCarthy spoke in a room at Parliament House on Thursday, at an event attended by reportedly only “two or three politicians” after the Armenian National Committee of Australia (ANC Australia) wrote to all Members of Parliament and Senators about McCarthy’s denialist views. Among the attending politicians were Laurie Ferguson and Mehmet Tillem, who had helped organize the event.

While this event took place, on the same day, MPs Alexander and Rowland made addresses in the national Parliament, unequivocally confirming the historical reality of the Armenian Genocide to a far greater audience of politicians, media and members of the public.

Alexander said: “... revisionist Justin McCarthy has used parliamentary facilities

to promote his well-documented views questioning the systematic slaughter of Armenians, Assyrians and Pontian Greeks from 1915 to 1923.”

“The International Association of Genocide Scholars has discredited McCarthy’s work as selective and grossly distorting history.”

“ANZAC soldiers verify the Genocide as an irrefutable historical fact through their eyewitness accounts.”

“Denial of this Genocide is an attack on those who perished, those who survived, and their descendants.”

He added: “This institution should never again be used to express doubt over the scope of suffering experienced by the victims of a historical atrocity nor to justify these actions as merely part of a civil war.”

Rowland, adding her voice, said: “I can also understand the heightened frustration that many Australian-Armenians feel on this matter because of the venue at which this event is scheduled to take place.”

“My views on this are well known. I have joined in the past with members of parliament and community leaders from all sides of the political spectrum including the members for Berowra and Bennelong, and the New South Wales Liberal Minister Gladys Berejikian, to recognize the Armenian Genocide...”

see AUSTRALIA, page 20

NEWS IN BRIEF

Lawmakers Ratify Russian Gas Deal Amid Protests

YEREVAN (RFE/RL) – The Armenian parliament has ratified a controversial natural-gas agreement with Moscow amid protests.

Opposition lawmakers boycotted the vote on December 23, while the parliamentary majority representing the ruling Democratic Party voted for the agreement’s ratification.

Hundreds picketed the parliament in Yerevan, protesting the ratification of the agreement signed earlier this month.

The deal gives the Russian energy giant Gazprom, which already owns 80 percent of the ArmRosgazprom Armenian-Russian joint venture, the remaining 20 percent.

Gazprom will also control all Armenian gas imports until 2043.

Armenian President Serge Sargisian, who announced in September Yerevan’s decision to join a Russian-led Customs Union, traveled to Moscow on December 23 to take part in the session of the Supreme Eurasian Economic Council, the customs union’s governing body.

Witness to Murder Admits to Altering Story under Duress

ISTANBUL (Armenian Public Radio) – An eyewitness to the murder of a soldier of Armenian origin who was killed while performing his military service in 2011 has admitted that he altered his testimony under pressure from a relative of the suspected murderer, *Hurriyet Daily News* reports.

Halil Eksi had first said that Kivanç Agaoglu shot Sevag Sahin Balıkcı, but later claimed not to know how Balıkcı was killed. He now says that he was forced to change his testimony after being threatened by Agaoglu’s relative, Bülent Kaya.

Balıkcı was shot in a gendarmerie station in Batman province allegedly by Agaoglu, a fellow soldier, who was stationed at the same post.

Eksi had confirmed that suspect had pointed his weapon at the victim in his first testimony, but then claimed the incident was just an accident at a later hearing.

While the trial of suspect Agaoglu is continuing, Eksi and Kaya are now also facing lawsuits on charges of “false statements” and “instigation of false statements,” respectively.

Eksi admitted providing testimony in the first hearing of the lawsuit that took place on December 19. He said Kaya called him repeatedly after he completed his military service, asking him to change his statement.

“He talked to someone on the phone and wrote down the parts of my testimony that needed to be changed. After being pressured into doing so, we rearranged the respective parts of my testimony,” Eksi said.

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ARMENIA

News From Armenia

CU Membership to Boost Exports, Official Says

YEREVAN (Arka) – Membership in the Customs Union (CU) will give a renewed impetus to exports of Armenian ready products (i.e. knitting, tanning and light industries) as a whole, head of Armenia's Union of Local Manufacturers Vazgen Safaryan said.

A number of small machine-building enterprises as well will get their production output increased, Safaryan told a press conference last week.

Safaryan said Armenia has agreements about cooperation with 70 territories of the Russian Federation. Safaryan said development of small and medium-sized enterprises will increase if a special body is set up for strengthening these ties and looking into what Armenian products can be supplied to these regions.

The head of the Union said Armenia exported products were worth more than \$290 million to Customs Union countries in 2012 and worth \$260 million in the 11 months of this year.

Yerevan Celebrates Paris Herouni's 80th Anniversary

YEREVAN (Armenpress) – An event dedicated to the 80th anniversary of the birth of Armenian professor and scientist, former member of National Academy of Sciences of Armenia in the fields of radio-physics, radio-engineering, and radio-astronomy, Paris Herouni, was held last week. The Youth Foundation of Armenia introduced the contributions of the scientist to science.

Herouni was head of the "Antenna Systems" chair (founded by him), in the State Engineering University of Yerevan, as well as the Radio physics Research Institute (RRI).

He was born in Yerevan in 1933. Upon completion of his undergraduate studies in Yerevan, Herouni attended Moscow Power Engineering Institute, where he got his graduate degree in radio technology in 1957. He would go on to get his doctorate of philosophy in radio techniques, from the same institution in 1965.

Herouni has received numerous awards and holds more than 20 patents.

PM Questions Turkish Reservoir Construction

YEREVAN (Armenpress) – Prime Minister of the Republic of Armenia Tigran Sargsian participated in the presentation of the first Armenian Yearbook of International and Comparative Law, www.karabakhfacts.com information website, and the annual

conference-discussion dedicated to the legal issues of the foreign policy of Armenia. The event was held on December 21 in the session hall of the government headquarters.

The Information and Public Relations Department of the Government of Armenia reported that Sargsian highlighted the significance of the comprehensive study of various issues related to the country from the viewpoint of international law.

"This issue is very actual for us particularly taking into consideration the challenges our young state has to face with. The efficient exploitation of the water resources is also of a certain importance for us particularly taking into account that the formation of the vast majority of those resources takes place in the territory of modern Turkey. The government of that country made a unilateral decision to allocate \$20 billion for construction of reservoir on rivers, which significantly influence the formation of water resources in the Ararat plain."

KarabakhFacts.com is a comprehensive web database of documents, articles, publications, commentaries and other data about the Nagorno-Karabagh conflict. It has been created as "a database [for] pure, factual and balanced material for the researchers of the issue."

Presidential Palace Hosts Children From Border Villages

YEREVAN – This week, on the occasion of New Year and Christmas, President Serge Sargsian and First Lady Rita Sargsian hosted approximately 200 children from a number of border villages of Armenia such as, Chambarak and Vahan villages of Gegharkunik marz, Khndzorut, Bardzrouni, Khachik, Sers villages of Vayots Dzor, Eraskh village of Ararat marz, Berekamavan, Berdavan, Dovegh and Baghis villages of Tavush marz at the Presidential Palace. The palace's Christmas tree was lit.

Sargsian welcomed the children and wished them a Merry Christmas. "I wish you happiness, success; I wish that you – beloved [children] of your parents, make them happy with your good learning performance, exemplary behavior and greatest esteem towards your parents," said the president.

"I wish you all a happy childhood, I wish you to become good citizens of our country, active citizens. I wish you to become successful persons, and that, first and foremost, dear children, requires good education, diligence and, certainly, respect for your parents, the elderly and the country," added Sargsian.



President Serge Sargsian plays host to the children visiting from surrounding Armenian border villages.

On December 24, the festivities continued as the Presidential Palace hosted Armenian children from Syria, children of fallen and disabled freedom fighters and children and grandchildren of the veterans and servicepersons of the Artsakh war. On December 25, a group of nearly 1,000 children were invited to

the palace for their "excellent academic performance."

They visited the Museum of History of Armenia, watched a performance at the Tumanian State Puppet Show Theater and in the evening they participated at a festive New Year's event organized in Republic Square.



The Poghosyan with their old home, and a year later, with their new one

Poghosyan Family Gets a New Home

GUMRI – Just prior to Christmas 2012, the Poghosyan family's makeshift home – commonly known as a *domik* caught fire and burnt. Homeless and

Eric Rubin Meets with Armenian President

YEREVAN (Armenpress) – Armenian President Serge Sargsian received US Assistant Secretary of Bureau of European and Eurasian Affairs Eric Rubin.

Sargsian welcomed the guest and stressed the importance of his visit for the continuance of the comprehensive and multifaceted dialogue of the Armenian-American relations.

Both Rubin and Sargsian expressed their readiness to develop positive relations between Armenia and the US, noting the potential for further diplomatic expansion.

During the meeting, Sargsian updated Rubin on the current process of negotiations for a resolution to the Karabagh issue.

struggling from their loss, the family and their six children moved into yet another *domik*. The Paros Foundation, through its "Purchase a Home" project, part of its 100 for 100 Projects for Prosperity, launched an effort to solve the Poghosyan family's housing needs. In early December 2013, the family was presented with keys to their new apartment thanks to the generous sponsorship of California donors, who simply want to be referred to as Nejde and Lilit. "We first met the Poghosyan family during the implementation of our Gumri Winter Rescue project in January 2013," said Peter Abajian, executive director of The Paros Foundation. "It was hard to imagine what this family had gone through, and we quickly committed to figuring out what we could do to help."

Learning of the plight of the Poghosyan family and wanting to help, Nejde and Lilit committed the necessary funds and the search for a new apartment for the Poghosyan family began. Within several weeks, the transaction was complete and the family moved into their new apartment.

To view a short video of the Poghosyan Family's story, visit www.parosfoundation.org/purchaseahomeII.

Throughout the process, the group's Gumri Partner, Vahan Tumasyan, executive director of The Shirak Center, worked closely with Armenia-based Paros staff and spearheaded the effort to identify and help relocate the family.

The Paros Foundation underwrote all administrative expenses to allow 100 percent of sponsor contributions to be allocated towards the purchase the Poghosyan family's home.

Today, almost 4,000 families in Gumri, Armenia's second largest city, still live in these unsafe and extreme conditions, taking shelter in dilapidated buildings and in the rusted remains of overseas shipping containers. Some, left homeless following the 1988 Spitak Earthquake, and other, simple victims of extreme poverty are left with little alternative than to live in these inhuman conditions.

The Paros Foundation and the Poghosyan express their appreciation to Nejde and Lilit for making this miracle happen.



ARMENIA

Armenia Has Good Chance to Participate In Major Soccer Championship

YEREVAN (Armenpress) – The former head coach of the Armenian National Football Team Vardan Minasyan said he thinks that the Armenian Team can participate in Euro-2016.

Minasyan told Sport-express, “Judge for yourself. There are 56 national squads in the European region and only 24 of them can enter the final stage. We always aimed at passing to the final stage of a tournament despite our capabilities and opponents.”

Among other things the football expert touched upon the potential of the Armenian National Football Team and noted: “The progress is evident. For the first time the

like to thank our football fans. I have always felt their support. I am confident that they will always be with our national team, our football. I also would like to thank the media representatives. I have always been honest with them. And most importantly, I want to thank our players. It has been a great pleasure for me to work with them. Together we passed along a road which, I believe, was useful. They have a great potential, they are professionals, and I am confident that they still will climb great heights,” Vardan Minasyan told the Football Federation of Armenia website.

Minasyan has been largely credited for advancing Armenia international football. He led Armenia to a record 3rd place finish in Euro 2012 qualifications, where Armenia scored 22 goals, in his first qualification cycle. Minasyan was also the longest serving manager of the Armenian national squad to date and has the best match record of all the former managers of the national team. When he resigned in October 2013 after the FIFA 2014 qualifications, Armenia was ranked #38 by FIFA, the highest rank in the Armenian national team's history

Vardan Minasyan had played for several clubs in the

Armenian Premier League. His main achievements had been made playing for Pyunik Yerevan. Minasyan was a member of Pyunik before going abroad and Pyunik after returning from abroad. He played one season in Swiss Super League club Lausanne Sports, which won the Swiss Cup, and later moved to Lokomotiv St. Petersburg, which he played on for nearly two years.

Minasyan was a member of the Armenia national team. He participated in 11 international matches since his debut in an away friendly match against Peru on 20 June 1996.

Minasyan began his coaching career as head coach of the Armenia U-21 youth national team in August 2004. He resigned in 2005, and a year

later became assistant coach at the club for which he spent the last years of his life as a football player, Pyunik Yerevan. He also worked as assistant coach for head coach Ian Porterfield, along with Englishman Tom Jones, for the Armenia national football team. In September 2007, Porterfield died. Minasyan and Jones became the acting head coach and assistant coach, respectively, before the end of the year. In early 2008, the new head coach, Danish specialist Jan Poulsen, was invited and Minasyan went back to his position as assistant head coach. In March next year, Poulsen was fired because of poor results and Minasyan again temporarily (at the time) became the head coach. Minasyan learned much about managing from Samvel Darbinyan and Ian Porterfield.

In June 2008, Minasyan was replaced as head coach of Pyunik by Armen Gyulbudagyants after a defeat against Gandzasar Kapan. Throughout the season, he led the club to victory over Ararat Yerevan for the 2008 Armenian Premier League title. In 2009, Pyunik once again won the Armenian Premier League, defeating Mika Yerevan in the 2009 Armenian Premier League finals. At a ceremony on December 22, Vardan was awarded a special prize by the organization Telecom, naming him the best coach of Armenia for 2009.

With Minasyan as coach, Pyunik won the Armenian Premier League in 2008, 2009 and 2010, the Armenian Cup in 2009 and 2010 and the Armenian Supercup in 2010 and 2011. Also, at the end of the year, the national team, led by Minasyan, performed better in comparison with the previous matches. For good performances and matches won awards given by the Football Federation of Armenia, Minasyan made the list for the best coach of the season. In the final result for the best coach of the season, Minasyan unanimously won first place.

In November 2011, Minasyan as head coach of Pyunik, succeeded Suren Chakhalyan Minassian and was also appointed Technical Director of the club. Chakhalyan, in turn, after spending a year in the position, was fired on September 8, 2012 from his post for violating athletic discipline. On the same day, the club officially announced the temporary appointment to the post of Minasyan.



Vardan Minasyan

Armenian National Football Squad has big chances to participate in a major tournament.”

Previously, the Russian media spreads news that the German clubs carry out negotiations with the Armenian coach and it is possible that he will move to Bundesliga.

Earlier, Minasyan informed his bosses that he will not coach the national squad in the new qualification stage. “I prefer another continuation to my [coaching] career. There are several offers, specifically from abroad, and I want to discuss them. I would like to thank Ruben Hayrapetyan, who entrusted me the duties of the national team head coach for the past four years. It is a great honor for every coach to be the manager of a national squad. I also would

Ter-Petrosian Blames West for Fiasco in Armenia-EU Relations

YEREVAN (ArmeniaNow) – Armenia and the European Union would not be facing the current political fiasco had the West only warned Armenian authorities in 2008 against using force against peaceful demonstrators, Levon Ter-Petrosian, first president of Armenia who led post-election street protests five years ago, contended on Saturday.

Speaking at a meeting of the governing board of his Armenian National Congress (ANC) party, the opposition leader asserted that the application of double standards by the West was one of the reasons why Armenia's rejection of an Association Agreement with the EU and decision to join the Russian-led Customs Union did not result in the kind of protests in Armenia that have been witnessed in Ukraine and dubbed Euromaidan (by the name of Kiev's main square, Maidan Nezalezhnosti).

“Purely out of geopolitical considerations the West had turned a blind eye on the ten



Levon Ter-Petrosian

killed people in the 2008 post-election clashes in Armenia as well as the fact of hundreds of people becoming political prisoners,” said Ter-Petrosian, claiming that the further Western praise of President Serge Sargsian only paved the way for more vote riggings, violations of democratic norms and human rights in Armenia.

The opposition leader, however, said that the absence of anti-Russian sentiments and history lessons were the two major reasons for the absence of an Armenian Euromaidan. “One cannot deny that eventually the physical existence of the Armenian people was ensured and Armenian statehood was restored in the region of Great Hayk that was under Russian control. Therefore, it is impossible to erase that from the historical memory of the Armenian people,” he said. Ter-Petrosian also cited the example of 1920 “when as a result of an unconsidered stake on the West and essentially an anti-Russian position of the then authorities of our country we not only failed to liberate Western Armenia, but also lost half of the de-facto and de-jure territory of the republic.” On the contrary, Ter-Petrosian said that Armenia managed to maintain its territorial integrity and contribute to the liberation struggle in Karabagh in the 1990s due to its prudent policies of not turning anti-Soviet struggle into anti-Russian. Georgia, Moldova and Azerbaijan, he said, “lost the sense of reality by assuming from day one a tough anti-Russian position, as a result of which they had serious problems connected with the establishment of statehood accompanied by considerable territorial losses.”

Concluding his speech, Ter-Petrosian said that the only way to disprove his statements is to actually hold an Armenian rally. He said his party did not stage rallies in September-October because it was wary of the possibility of other forces not joining it. “And in that case those rallies would have become another blank shot, which would have only aggravated people's despair,” said Ter-Petrosian, adding that he believed there will be a time in the near future when the authorities will be made accountable for their actions.

Yerevan's Tekeyan Centre Fund Provides Free Textbooks

YEREVAN – Tekeyan Centre Fund (TCF) recently distributed textbooks to students who could not afford them, at the five Tekeyan Schools in Armenia and Arstakh.

Proving free textbooks has been the goal for the organization for the past year. Since 2010 it has supported mostly children in need and relieved the financial burden of their families.

Within the framework of this year's project, the TCF Director A. Tsulikyan visited Tekeyan Schools in Yerevan, Gumri, Stepanavan and Karbi to discuss issues concerning the project. As a result 319 students in need were provided with 3,958 textbooks for the academic year 2013-2014. And the total number of textbooks supplied by the fund within four years is 5,785 at total cost of 4,561,901 drams (\$11,250).

The textbooks project is entirely based on donations which are provided thanks to the efforts of the TCF's parent organization, the London Tekeyan Trust that every year initiates a fundraising campaign not only in the UK but also abroad.

The TCF aims at increasing the number of the project beneficiaries, so it invites organizations and individuals both from Armenia and the Diaspora to cooperate with the fund and to become benefactors of Tekeyan students in need by donating funds for the project “Free Textbooks” for the forthcoming years.

To make a donation, send it to Tekeyan Centre Fund, 50 Khanjanyan St, Yerevan 0025, Armenia; The bank : HSBC Bank Armenia CJSC, Account no : 001-008820-101 (USD account), Account no : 001-008820-002 (AMD account), Swift code : MID-LAM22; E-mail: info@tekeyancentre.am.



Students from the Tekeyan School in Karbi



Students from the Tekeyan School in Gumri



INTERNATIONAL

International News

Davutoglu Meets with Acting Constantinople Patriarch

ANKARA (Armenpress) – Minister of Foreign Affairs of Turkey Ahmet Davutoglu had a meeting with Archbishop and Acting Armenian Patriarch of Constantinople Aram Ateshian at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Turkey.

While media representatives were present at the start of the meeting, Davutoglu and Ateshian continued their meeting in private. Ateshian presented a book to Davutoglu, while Turkey's FM presented an ornamented plate to the patriarch.

Mkhitarian Declared a Top Shakhtar Footballer

KIEV (Armenpress) – The midfielder of the Armenian National Football Team and Borussia Dortmund, Henrikh Mkhitarian, is the second best player of Shakhtar for 2013. Croatian footballer Darijo Srna occupies the first position. Approximately 4651 fans cast their votes on behalf of the Armenian footballer. Bernardo occupies the third position with 15.67 percent of the votes.

Mkhitarian is Armenia's all-time top goal-scorer, scoring 12 goals in 43 international matches since his debut in January 2007. His previous clubs include Pyunik Yerevan, where he came through the youth system, Metalurh Donetsk and Shakhtar Donetsk. Mkhitarian was chosen Armenian Footballer of the Year in 2009, 2011 and 2012. In 2012, he was voted as the best Shakhtar player of 2011-12 season by the fans, and Ukraine Premier League MVP. In 2012, Mkhitarian was named in Union of European Football Associations' (UEFA) Top 100 players 2012-13. Mkhitarian was voted the Footballer of the Year for 2012, making him the first Armenian footballer to be named the best player from post-Soviet countries.

Turkey, Israel Hold Mavi Marmara Compensation Talks

ANKARA (Hurriyet) – An Israeli delegation headed by National Security Adviser Yossi Cohen, including Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's envoy Joseph Ciechanover and acting Foreign Ministry Director General Nissim Ben-Sheetrit met with Undersecretary of Foreign Ministry Feridun Sinirlioglu last week.

"The agreement is ready; all that's left is to fill in the blank with a number. There are still differences regarding the amounts, but they have narrowed," Haaretz quoted a senior Israeli official as saying.

"There is a will on both sides to wrap things up as soon as possible and normalize relations," he added. "As we said earlier, the talks did not stop. The recent meeting is a part of the ongoing process," the official said.

According to reports, the Turkish government had become more flexible on the question of compensation for the Mavi Marmara raid victims and offered to accept a lower payoff from Israel. The official objected to notions that the process was merely a negotiation over money.

The Turkish diplomat declined to elaborate on the content of the meeting, but reiterated Turkey's principles for the process of compensation.

"Justice is our priority; international standards and practices, as well as a workable process in the framework that Turkey has put forward, are the other principles," the diplomat said.

Turkey and Israel launched compensation talks for the Mavi Marmara victims after Israel's prime minister issued an apology to Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan for his navy's raid on the Mavi Marmara aid flotilla in 2010, which killed nine Turks.

A Turkish and Israeli official held two rounds of talks for compensation, but the process has been in limbo for several months.

Last week, Israel said it would renew regular flights to Turkey following a hiatus of more than five years, Israeli Transportation Minister Israel Katz said.

Turkish Academia and the Armenian Genocide

By Orhan Kemal Cengiz

ISTANBUL (Al-Monitor) – Thousands of master's theses and PhD dissertations in the social sciences are written each year in Turkey. The Higher Education Board (YOK) keeps an electronic database of their topics and titles. A search in the database of dissertations on the Armenian genocide returns a striking result: Only four theses have been written on the issue and, as their titles immediately suggest, they all reflect Turkey's official position on the massacres.

The four titles are as follows: "Armenian genocide claims in view of international law," "The importance of pressure groups, lobby activities within the context of the so-called Armenian genocide," "Turkish-Armenian relations in history and the impact of Armenian genocide claims on Turkey's European Union membership process" and "Armenian genocide claims in international law."

That is all Turkish universities have been able to produce in terms of theses on the topic of the Armenian genocide. How is this possible? Are there no academics willing to write dissertations contesting Turkey's official history line and argue, for instance, that the 1915 events were a genocide? Or is there a state mechanism in place that doesn't leave it up to chance?

A December 12 report in the bilingual Turkish-Armenian weekly Agos reveals that academics working on dissertations about the Armenian Genocide are under the close scrutiny of the Turkish Historical Society (TTK). According to Agos, the TTK has asked YOK for the details of academics studying the Armenian issue and the YOK chairman, in turn, has asked universities to provide that information. A document Agos published indicates that the YOK chairman had asked universities to supply "the names of master's and doctoral students working on the Armenian problem, the titles of their researches and contact information, in view of making

them available to the Turkish Historical Society in the work it conducts."

As I mentioned in my previous article for Al-Monitor, various government institutions in Turkey are busy making counter preparations for 2015, the 100th anniversary of the Armenian genocide. The TTK is one of them. The society is likely to have requested the said information from YOK with a view of using it in those preparations.

When Agos asked the TTK why they needed that information, a TTK official stated that scholarships might be offered to academics working in this realm. Agos then asked whether the TTK would give a scholarship to someone whose thesis qualifies the 1915 events as genocide. The official responded that, since the TTK does not officially recognize the Armenian genocide, providing a scholarship to such a study might not be possible.

Agos argues that the TTK's real motive is to control the academia and keep records of those working on the Armenian problem.

A subsequent report in the Taraf daily backed up Agos' argument that those studying the Armenian genocide are being secretly profiled. Two former presidents of Istanbul's Bogazici University, interviewed by Taraf, shed light on how the censorship mechanism works in the academia.

Ustun Erguder confirmed he had received letters from YOK with requests for information. "During my term as university president, YOK would send such letters, but we would dismiss them as [those requests] had nothing to do with our understanding of academic freedom. That's something that has been done for years. We had even received letters suggesting we made sure that theses 'supporting Turkish unity' were written. ... It is out of the question for me to approve of YOK requests seeking out the names and details of those writing theses on the Armenian problem," Erguder said.

Another former Bogazici University president, Ayse Soysal, made the following comments: "I used to receive similar

letters from YOK, while I was university president. It was routine. Two types of letters would come from YOK. One would be in the form of [suggestions] that we support studies backing the state's official view on subject X or subject Y."

The insight the two former presidents provide on how the system functions explains why only four dissertations have been written on the Armenian genocide and why all happen to be in line with Turkey's official view.

In another article for Al-Monitor, I had written also about how Turkey's non-Muslims' birth registries were marked with secret codes and how the non-Muslims could not become army officers, judges or policemen. And this latest example – the lack of even one academic thesis contesting Turkey's official position on the Armenian problem – is another indication that certain taboo realms are besieged by unwritten but stern rules.

True, the Armenian taboo has been broken in Turkish civil society and intellectual life. Yet, it continues to exist in this or that form in the "official" realm. Thanks to the exposure of practices such as the TTK request for information about academics studying the Armenian problem, we are getting clues on how Turkey's official theses are being produced and sustained.

No doubt, the exposed practices represent only part of the whole picture. To understand fully why, how and in what atmosphere Turkey's official theses remain intact, the known pieces need to be brought together with the pieces that remain beyond our knowledge. Only then will we be able to know how Turkey's official history theses are able to survive unchanged.

(Orhan Kemal Cengiz is a human rights lawyer, columnist and former president of the Human Rights Agenda Association, a Turkish NGO that works on human rights issues ranging from the prevention of torture to the rights of the mentally disabled. Since 2002, Cengiz has been the lawyer for the Alliance of Turkish Protestant Churches.)

Turkey Removes Another 25 Police Chiefs from Posts

By Humeyra Pamuk

ANKARA (Reuters) – Turkish authorities have removed another 25 police chiefs from their posts, widening a crackdown on the force since it launched a corruption investigation that Prime Minister Tayyip Erdogan has called a "dirty operation" against his rule.

Erdogan accused "international groups" and "dark alliances" on Saturday of encouraging the graft investigations and signaled the purge of people behind it would continue.

The furor has roiled markets and exposed deep rifts between Erdogan and his former ally Fethullah Gulen, a US-based Islamic preacher who wields influence in the police and judiciary.

Twenty-four people have been formally arrested under the corruption investigation, including the sons of two government ministers and the general manager of state-owned Halkbank. Scores have also been detained.

In response, about 70 police officers, including the powerful head of Istanbul's force, have now been sacked or moved to different posts since the detention of bribery suspects began last week.

Erdogan's position is under no immediate threat, but the row between his ruling AK Party and Gulen's Hizmet movement could help decide local elections due in March.

The prime minister said on Saturday the crackdown on people behind the corruption investigation would continue. "Those who want to establish a parallel structure alongside the state, those who have infiltrated into the state institutions: we will come into your lairs and

we will lay out these organizations within the state," he said in a speech in the northern city of Ordu.

Erdogan has refrained from naming Gulen, but years of disagreements between the two men spilled out into the open last month over a government plan to abolish private "prep" schools, including those run by Hizmet.



A woman holds a sign that reads "There is a thief" as protesters demonstrate against Turkey's ruling party and Prime Minister Tayyip Erdogan in Ankara December 2.

Denying Armenian Genocide Is not a Crime, European Court Rules

DENIAL, from page 1

"an unconstitutional violation of the right to freedom of speech and communication".

Switzerland has three months to appeal against the ruling.

The European Armenian Federation for Justice and Democracy condemned the decision and said the action clears the way for the denial orchestrated by Ankara and Baku.

The schools, part of a network with global reach, are an important source of revenue and bedrock of Hizmet's influence.

One of the first moves by Istanbul's new police chief, Selami Altinok, was to ban journalists from entering police stations across the country, local media reported on Sunday.



INTERNATIONAL

Armenian Culture to Return to Shakespeare's Globe

LONDON — Shakespeare's Globe was founded by the American actor and director, Sam Wanamaker. This internationally acclaimed theater is a faithful reconstruction of the open-air playhouse built in 1599 where many of Shakespeare's plays were first performed. January 2014 will see the opening of the Globe's new indoor Jacobean theater, the Wanamaker Playhouse. One of the productions marking the inaugural season of this groundbreaking theater will be Armenia: A journey through Armenian folksong, dance and poetry, April 13-14, 2014. Performance curator and director, Seta White, recently discussed how the event came about.

"Some months ago Bill Barclay, music director at Shakespeare's Globe, contacted me to come up with an idea to bring Armenian music to this Jacobean stage. I'd met Bill through his involvement in Salon Mashup, a production I had conceived and directed in the winter of 2013 for the Armenian Institute in London, an organization dedicated to making Armenian history and culture a living experience," White said.

Salon Mashup brought together more than 40 artists to collaborate on works around the themes of displacement and regeneration, focusing on the Armenian experience of loss and resettlement. Over three evenings, 13 performances took place at London's Shoreditch Town Hall. One of these was an excerpt from "Deported / a dream play" by Boston-based playwright, Joyce Van Dyke, and directed by Barclay. "The response to Salon Mashup was overwhelming and per-



Levon Chilingirian at the Playhouse

formance evenings filled the venue to capacity," she added. "Bill had also had contact with Armenians in the UK when the Globe brought Armenia's Sundukyan National Academic Theater to London to perform King John in May 2012 as part of the Globe to Globe World Shakespeare Festival. Bill wanted to tap into this energy and excitement for Armenian culture again," said White.

The Sam Wanamaker Playhouse, named after its founder, was part of Wanamaker's vision which extended beyond the now familiar and iconic "wooden-O," the Globe itself. Some years after the original Globe had been built, Shakespeare's acting troupe also leased a smaller indoor playhouse that served as their winter house. So Wanamaker incorporated into his blueprint of the theater complex an indoor Jacobean theater. When Shakespeare's Globe opened in 1997, the indoor theater was left as a shell and now 17 years later, it will at last fulfill its purpose.

The Playhouse is based on a set of drawings discovered in the late 1960s in Worcester College, Oxford. Dated 1660, they are the earliest known and most comprehensive designs for an indoor Jacobean theater in existence.

They have been attributed to the English architect and scholar, John Webb, protégé of the architect Indigo Jones.

Candlelit and timber-framed, the theater has pit seating and a musicians' gallery above the stage. This beautiful interior will be the setting for plays, operas and concerts. Being an indoor theater, it will also enable productions to play at the Globe throughout the year.

Armania, playing in April, will celebrate the work of great Armenian poets and composers from medieval times to the present day. "My vision is to ground Armenian music and performance in the genre of Jacobean theater and, through the poetry, to explore the powerful influence of Shakespeare in Armenian literature," White said.

Instruments have been chosen to reflect the Jacobean period and costume, poetry and song will all play an important part in delivering this style of theater.

Musicians and artists from both the UK and Armenia will be brought together to collaborate for the concert. The Dudukner Ensemble, including some members that played with King John, will be joining from Armenia.

White noted, "Levon Chilingirian, violinist and founder of the Chilingirian Quartet, is Armenia's music director and has put together a rich and varied repertoire." Chilingirian himself will be playing, alongside prize-winning cellist Alexander Chaushian, harpist and singer Cevanne Horrocks-Hopyan who is currently composer in residence at Handel House, and soprano Tereza Gevorgyan, acclaimed star of the recent London Armenian Opera's production of Anoush.

Armania: A journey through Armenian folksong, dance and poetry will be on at the Sam Wanamaker Playhouse, in association with the Armenian Institute, April 12-14, 2014. To purchase tickets, visit: www.shakespearesglobe.com/theater/whatson/sam-wanamaker-playhouse/armania. To learn more about the Armenian Institute, visit www.armenianinstitute.org.uk.



The Dudukner Ensemble



Armania promotional poster

Inauguration of ACYOB at Diocese of Armenian Church of Brazil

SAO PAULO — On Saturday, December 14, the Diocese of the Armenian Church of Brazil under the guidance of Very Rev. Dr. Nareg Berberian and with the teamwork of Rev. Yeznig Guzelian and Rev. Boghos Baronian inaugurated the First Armenian Church Youth Organization of Brazil (ACYOB) General Assembly at St. Kevork Armenian Cathedral in Sao Paulo, Brazil.

For the past three months, 16 ACYOB Central Council members were appointed to work with Berberian, Guzelian and Baronian in order to form and organize the ACYOB. After numerous meetings with clergy, the Central Council designed a plan of activities to be presented at the first General Assembly.

More than 100 young men and women were present at the General Assembly inside the sanctuary of St. Kevork Cathedral. Prior to the

meeting, Vespers Service was conducted presided by Berberian with the participation of the youth. Guzelian welcomed the youth and wished them to have a productive meeting. Thais Karamekian, a member of the ACYOB Central Council was appointed to chair the meeting and Nairi Zadikian was appointed as the secretary of the day. Thais welcomed everyone and explained the purpose of the Assembly. Then she invited Berberian to deliver his message. In Portuguese, he stressed the importance of youth in the life of the Armenian Church. He highlighted how their grandparents, who were survivors of the Armenian Genocide, built the Armenian community so that they would worship today in the Armenian Church of Brazil and maintain their faith and identity. In his message, Berberian appealed to the youth to take an active role in the Community and become



Inauguration of ACYOB at Diocese of Armenian Church of Brazil

Armenian Dies in Aleppo

SYRIA, from page 1

December, the UN's World Food Program said. This is the third winter since the Syrian conflict began in March 2011.

"We witnessed today the first flight that took place from Arbil International Airport to Qamishli city, which is populated by Kurdish inhabitants in Syria. This is the first flight to be conducted in this manner," Dindar Zibari, deputy head of Kurdistan's Foreign Relations Department, told journalists at the airport.

The 12-day airlift, involving various UN agen-

cies, will include 400 tons of food and 196 kilograms of medical kits, he said.

"We hope also by the beginning of January this air shipment and air cargo will continue to Syria. This is something the KRG (Kurdistan Regional Government) fully supports because it will possibly reach the most needy vulnerable families inside Syria," he added.

Both governments gave permission for the aid flights which will also include supplies of non-food items such as blankets, clothes and medicine in the coming days.

participants instead of observers. He also assured them that through youth programs the bridge between the youth and the Church will be restored and strengthened soon. He concluded, saying, "Since you were born out of this Church through your baptism and were presented to the Holy Altar of God, you are obliged to fulfill your duties as the upcoming leaders of the Church."

Thais thanked Berberian for his inspirational message. The participants watched a documentary video on the Leadership Conference prepared by the Eastern Diocese of the Armenian Church of America in order to understand the role of the ACYOA. Following the video, Ara Terzian, a member of the ACYOB Central

Council presented the upcoming ACYOB Programs on a power point. He presented and explained the new ACYOB logo and its mission. The power point program included: Organizing Leadership Conferences, St. Kevork Summer Camp, Pilgrimages to Armenia and Jerusalem, forming ACYOB Juniors, and series of Educational and cultural programs for the youth. It followed with a lengthy discussion. The participants were satisfied by the proposed programs. It was decided to hold a Leadership Conference in January or February 2014.

The ACYOB members were invited for a special dinner party and dance at the Diocesan Hall where they enjoyed food and each other's company.



Community News

Young Chess Champ Shines in Nashville

NASHVILLE, Tenn. — Earl-Vartan Maximillian Loh, the son of Drs. Anthony Alexander and Marlen Eordegian Loh, was born in Florence, Italy, on May 21, 2000. He is an eighth grader at the John Trotwood Moore Middle School here. He first played chess competitively in 2010-2011, and then again in 2012-2013. In 2012, Loh won first-place trophies in the section for grades 6-9. This year, on April 5-7, he competed again, winning six out of seven rounds and placing 10th (6th place actually, as there were 8 ties) and received a trophy at the Chess SuperNationals held in Nashville organized by the United States Chess Federation.

On November 23, Loh won all five rounds and received the first-place trophy in the High School Division of the Middle Tennessee Scholastic Chess Championship, held in



Earl-Vartan Maximillian Loh with the trophy he won in April

Murfreesboro, Tenn. Again, on December 7, Loh won the first-place trophy for the Junior-High Division at the 2013 Holiday Chess Tournament held in Nashville.

Loh currently qualifies for the Nashville City Chess Championship.

Loh's father, Dr. Anthony Alexander Loh, completed his postdoctoral fellowships at Harvard University and Yale University and then left for Nashville to take a position as professor in the Department of Political Science at Vanderbilt University. He most recently worked for the US Department of Defense.

His wife, Dr. Marlen Eordegian Loh, taught at the Department of Religion at Wesleyan University, Middletown, Conn., and then, in the Department of Religious Studies at Vanderbilt University.



Earl-Vartan Maximillian Loh with his chess trophies



ABMDR Board member Lara Yeretsian delivering her opening remarks at the sold-out event.

Laughter for Life Benefit Wows Los Angeles Audience

LOS ANGELES — The 11th annual Laughter for Life, the comedy event organized by the Armenian Bone Marrow Donor Registry (ABMDR), entertained a large audience. The sold-out event, which benefits the worldwide activities of ABMDR, took place on November 17, at the Comedy Store.

The lineup of comedians, brought together by Sam Tripoli, included headliner Ahmed Ahmed, host K-von, Fahim Anwar, Jackie Kashian and Vincent Oshana.

"Laughter for Life is all about having a blast while supporting the life-saving mission of ABMDR," said Tripoli, a veteran comedian whose work has been seen on Showtime and Comedy Central. As in previous years, Tripoli as well as ABMDR Board member Lara Yeretsian, both longtime members of the Registry's Comedy Night Committee, were instrumental in the success of the event.

In her opening remarks, Yeretsian spoke of the importance of joining the ranks of ABMDR as potential bone marrow stem cell donors, and highlighted the Registry's most recent milestones. Among these, she said, are new services provided at ABMDR's Stem Cell Harvesting Center in Yerevan, including molecular diagnostics and mutation analysis for determining susceptibility to breast cancer and sensitivity to certain drugs and treatments, and pioneering autotransplantation and cryopreservation procedures.

"Given its stellar lineup of performers and the enthusiastic support of the community, the 11th annual Laughter for Life has been an unprecedented success," Yeretsian said. "Ahmed Ahmed and his fellow comedians had the crowd laugh to the point of tears, while K-von, the star of MTV's hit show 'Disaster Date,' kept the energy going in-between acts."

The show also included an artful performance by an ensemble of pole dancers who mesmerized the audience.

To date, the registry has recruited over 25,000 donors in 18 countries across four continents, identified 2,135 patients and facilitated 17 bone marrow transplants.

For more information, visit abmdr.am.



The Comedy Night Committee with Laughter for Life host K-von (far right).

Gulbenkian Foundation Publishes Armenian Communities Plan

LISBON, Portugal — The new Programming Plan of the Armenian Communities Department (ACD) of the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation lays out the key components of its funding priorities and activities for the next five years (2014-2018). Launched this month, it is based on the department's mission "to create a viable future for the Armenian people in which its culture and language are preserved and valued." The plan is structured around the four priority areas which are crucial in fulfilling that mission: promoting the preservation of Armenian language and culture through education, supporting Armenia by investing in its youth and civil society, helping to improve Armenian-Turkish relations and preserving Armenian literary heritage.

A consultative process was undertaken that affirmed these needs. The most important issue arising is the rapid loss of the language Calouste Gulbenkian spoke: Western Armenian. For this reason much of the funding will go towards safeguarding and developing the language and culture, particularly in the diaspora. A strategic approach is being adopted as the Department begins to provide larger sums to fewer initiatives, so that greater impact is assured.

The proposed programs are grouped around four priority areas. In addition, two further initiatives will be introduced: turning the ACD into a hub of connections and strategic thinking for the Armenian world and humanitarian support in unforeseen circumstances (e.g. the Armenian community in Syria). Programs will be implemented throughout the world by trusted partners.

1. Preservation of the Armenian language and culture, and the development of the diaspora by linking its different parts and investing in education

i) Loss of the Western Armenian Language

Western Armenian is an "endangered language" according to UNESCO, under the threat of disappearing if serious initiatives are not undertaken to reinforce it. This generation is probably the last generation that can halt or possibly reverse this process of not-so-gradual loss of a language that was a vibrant source of Armenian culture only half a century ago. The ACD will focus on the following four areas to reinforce and develop the language:

A. Support to Armenian Schools and Other Educational Initiatives in the Diaspora

Armenian schools will continue to receive funding. There will be a focus on less developed countries where the Armenian community faces significant material limitations, and where there also is a critical mass of Armenian speakers (or the potential of having such a critical mass). Where there is demographic growth in a community, support for the set-up of new schools or the strengthening of existing ones will be considered.

Student-related initiatives that preserve the language will also be financed. Innovative youth initiatives that encourage Armenians in the diaspora to speak the language and to produce culture in it will be backed, particularly in Western countries. Emphasis will be put on extra-curricular activities related to culture and initiatives that are led by young people speaking to their interests as defined by them rather than defined by traditional community leaders.

B. Support the Creation of a Teacher Training Center for Western Armenian

The Department aims to foster an intellectual community that can teach the language in schools, edit the newspapers and websites of tomorrow, produce culture and manage community affairs in Armenian. To this end, it will provide a significant grant over the next two

see GULBENKIAN, page 12



COMMUNITY NEWS

Children of Armenia Fund Gala Raises \$2.9 Million

NEW YORK – The Children of Armenia Fund (COAF), a non-profit organization working to improve the living conditions for village children in Armenia, hosted its 10th Annual Holiday Gala on Friday, December 13, at Cipriani 42nd Street. The event

brought together more than 400 longtime friends and supporters and raised nearly \$3 million to support COAF's community-led programs.

Special guests in attendance included Michael Aram, Patricia Field, Kerry Butler and Benjamin McKenzie.

For the seventh year in a row, Emmy- and Tony-Award-winning actress Andrea Martin entertained guests throughout the evening as the master of ceremonies. Of Armenian descent herself, Martin is a longtime advocate of COAF's work. She is best known for her work on Broadway and roles in the films "Wag the Dog" and "My Big Fat Greek Wedding." She received her second Tony Award this year for her role in the critically-acclaimed show, "Pippin."

Award-winning film and television actor Victor Garber served as the honorary chair for the evening. Garber's introduction to COAF was at the 2011 gala, where he was awarded with the COAF Humanitarian Award. Since then he has shown steadfast commitment to the organization. He is best known for his role in major motion pictures such as "Titanic," "Milk" and "Argo."

Guest speakers included bestselling



Dr. Garo Armen and Andrea Martin



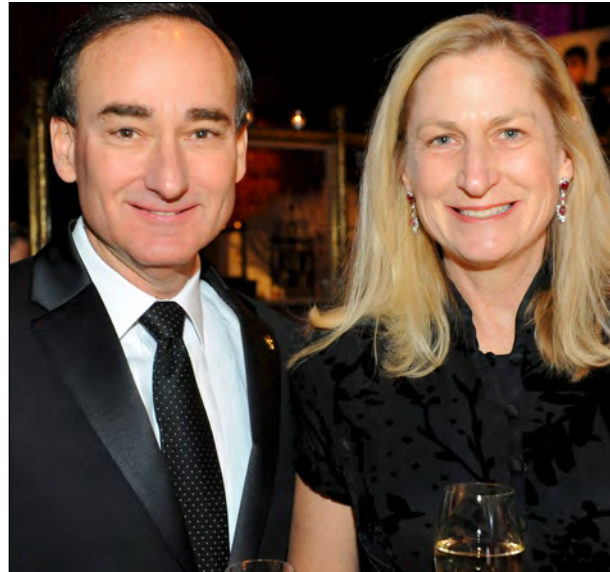
Susanna Eloyan



Anna and Noubar Afeyan



From left, Benjamin McKenzie, Scout Tufankjian, Nate Schenkkan and Nicole Vartanian



Chris and Victoria Bohjalian

using BidTech's iPads and a live auction conducted by Sotheby's celebrity auctioneer Aileen Agopian. The money raised from these auctions will jumpstart COAF's expansion into 100 new villages in the next 10 years.

For more information, visit www.coafkids.org



From left, Andrea Martin, Susanna Eloyan, Polina Sharafyan, Narek Baldryan, Victor Garber

author Chris Bohjalian and photographer Scout Tufankjian.

A highlight of the evening was the children who traveled to New York from Armenia to showcase their musical talents. Additionally, COAF welcomed back Anahit who spoke at COAF's 2012 Gala. This time she was accompanied by Nerses, another student from Lernagog. Together, they expressed their deep appreciation for having COAF help their great aspirations become realities.

In addition to the performances by the children, Kerry Butler serenaded the crowd with a rendition of *It's a Small World/God Bless the Outcasts*. "So You Think You Can Dance" finalist Paul Karmiryan electrified the dance floor with his dance partner and closed out the formal dinner and sparked the after-party, which lasted past midnight.

The event featured a high-tech silent auction



From left, children Polina Sharafyan, Narek Baldryan, Nerses Khachatran, Susanna Eloyan and Anahit Vardanyan



Khajak and Maryam Keledjian



Patricia Field and Garo Armen



From left, Aret Tikiryan, Janine Atamian, Michael Aram



COMMUNITY NEWS

Watertown's St. James Parish Observes Name Day

WATERTOWN — Archbishop Khajag Barsamian, Primate of the Diocese of the Armenian Church of America (Eastern), visited the St. James Church of Watertown, Mass., on Sunday, December 15, as the parish observed its 82nd anniversary and held its annual name day banquet.

The Rev. Arakel Aljalian, parish pastor, celebrated the Divine Liturgy, during which Barsamian ordained subdeacon Shant Broukian to the diaconate. Also taking part in the service were the Very Rev. Krikor Maksoudian, Rev. Arsen Barsamian, and Rev. Fr. Dajad Davidian.

Following the Divine Liturgy, a banquet was held to celebrate the Feast of St. James the Bishop of Nisibis, for whom the Watertown church is named.

Two longtime parishioners, Haig Deranian and Charles Guleserian, received "Parishioner of the Year" awards. Despite a snowstorm in Boston the night before, the community gathered to congratulate the honorees, who have served their parish and Diocese for more than 30 years.

Both Deranian and Guleserian have served as Sunday School teachers, parish council chairs, and Diocesan delegates, in addition to taking up other roles at the local and Diocesan levels.

During the banquet program, Deranian's and Guleserian's sons offered warm memories of

the influence their fathers have had in their lives. Davidian, who grew up with both honorees, offered congratulatory remarks.

Deranian began attending St. James Church in 1953. He said he is most proud of his 17 years as a Sunday School teacher. In addition to serving his parish, he has taken on leadership roles with the Armenian Church Endowment Fund (ACEF) and is a member of the Diocesan Board of Trustees. Deranian has also been active in the local Armenian community, especially through the Knights of Vartan.

A lifelong member of St. James, Guleserian recalls his parents enrolling him in Sunday School in 1944. For the past 23 years, he has served as a Diocesan delegate, and is also a member of the Diocesan Board of Trustees. In addition, Guleserian is co-

vice president of the Armenian Heritage Park Foundation and a member of the Knights of



Shant Broukian, center, was ordained as a deacon by Archbishop Khajag Barsamian.



From left, Charles Guleserian, Rev. Arakel Aljalian, Archbishop Khajag Barsamian and Haig Deranian

Judith Saryan to Address Wealth Management at St. James Men's Club

WATERTOWN — On Monday, January 6, Judith A. Saryan will be the speaker at the dinner meeting of the St. James Armenian Church Men's Club. The topic will be "Wealth Management."

Saryan is a vice president of Eaton Vance Management and portfolio manager on Eaton

Vance's large-cap core/equity income team.

Before joining Eaton Vance in March 1999, Saryan was a portfolio manager and equity analyst for State Street Global Advisors. In her 18 years there, her principal research specialties were the telecommunications, consumer non-durables and utilities industries. Prior to her tenure at State Street Global Advisors, Saryan was affiliated with Colonial Management for more than three years, during which time she was the utilities analyst and assistant portfolio manager of Colonial Tax-Managed Trust, a tax-managed utilities fund.

She earned a degree in economics from Wellesley College and spent a year overseas studying developmental economics and comparative economic systems. She is a CFA charterholder.

Her commentaries have appeared in *Barron's Online*, *The Boston Herald*, *CBS MarketWatch*, *Dow Jones*, *Financial Planning*, *The International Herald-Tribune*, *Investor's Business Daily*, *Reuters*, *SmartMoney*, *The Tampa Tribune*, *The Wall Street Journal* and she has been featured on *CNBC* and *CNNfn*.

The social hour starts with mezza at 6:15 p.m., followed by a traditional Armenian meal at 7 p.m. at \$14 per person. The dinner meeting will be at the St. James Armenian Church



Judith A. Saryan

Vartan.

Archbishop Barsamian expressed his appreciation to Deranian and for their dedication to the Armenian Church.

"Thank you for dedicating your time, talents, and treasure to the Armenian Church. You are

examples to the young generation of parishioners," he said. "May the Lord continue to bless you both and guide you in your service."

Last year's Parishioners of the Year, Ed Brewster and Karen Dederyan, organized this year's banquet.

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COMMUNITY NEWS

'Perils of Politeness' Continues Armenian Theatrical Tradition in America

By Taleen Babayan

ENGLEWOOD, N.J. – While there are many ways that Armenians preserve their identity in the Diaspora – through the church, schools and the arts – there is one avenue that ensures the literary elements of our culture are not lost among the new generations – and that is Armenian theater.

The Tekeyan Cultural Association's Mher Megerdchian Theatrical Group (MMTG) is a unique example of this dedication to our "mshagouyt" or culture, which has served as a personal role model for me throughout my life. Growing up, our family looked forward to the theatrical productions of the renditions of classic Armenian works on stage by Hagop Baronian, Yervant Odian and William Saroyan, among others. These productions reminded my parents of the literary works they had read and performed in Armenian school in Beirut, while I appreciated learning about these writers and their stories here in the US. They enjoyed the nostalgic aspect of it – while I reveled in the opportunity to see these works come alive for the first time.

Although I was a diligent Armenian school student and our culture was held in high regard in our home, the plays the Tekeyan Cultural Association (TCA) organized added yet another layer to my understanding of rich Armenian literature and served as an inspiration for us first generation Armenians born in the US, to not only learn more about these prolific figures, but to create our own works as well.

The TCA, which has a history of upholding the Armenian culture throughout the world, has provided a noteworthy service to our local Armenian community for almost two decades with the hard work of the MMTG, which is now in its 15th year.

The group's most recent performance of famed satirist Hagop Baronian's "The Perils of Politeness," on Saturday,

November 23 and Sunday, November 24 at Dwight Englewood High School in Englewood, NJ, proved once again that the MMTG continues to be an irreplaceable source for the Armenian arts.

The talented actors, staples in our community over the years, showcased their skills on stage as members of the different classes in Constantinople in the late 19th century. "The Perils of Politeness," in typical Baronian fashion, ridicules the customs and traditions from the bourgeoisie to the nouveau riche.

A series of vignettes, which originally appeared in Khigar monthly in Constantinople from 1886-1888, the play shows scenes of a man in a barbershop whose barber continuously cuts his face while shaving, but doesn't protest; a woman who doesn't smoke but accepts a cigarette anyway, only to get sick; a man looking to buy shoes only to be forced to buy a size smaller because he's told he looks good. The actors were, as always, animated on stage and kept the audience entertained with their physical comedy.

The play was directed by Gagik Karapetyan and featured Harout Chatmajian, alongside Missak Boghosian, Talin Karagolian, Harout Takvorian, Hacik Sariminasyan, Elizabeth Akian, Diran Jebejian, Armenak Kurusyan, Sarkis Pilavdjian, Roy Bahian, Carolin Melkonian, Harout Barsoumian, Talar Zokian, Shahe Jebejian, Robby Stepanian, Arto Stepanian and Hagop Vartivarian.

The performance of "The Perils of Politeness" and the many other shows the group has delivered over the years, affirms that the TCA's MMTG is fulfilling a bigger mission than simply producing plays – they are earnestly carrying on Armenian theater in America. The group brings to life works that once entertained entire communities – and works that needed a reawakening – and presents these pieces to a new generation of Armenians, who are introduced to these ingenious writers and their pens for the first time.

American University of Armenia Celebrates Launch of its Undergraduate Program

BRENTWOOD, Calif. – On Saturday, December 14, Zaven and Sonia Akian opened their home to host a fundraising event celebrating the launch of the undergraduate program at the American University of Armenia (AUA). The sold-out event, which took place under the night sky, netted the university over \$110,000.

"We were so pleased with the turnout for this event," noted Zaven Akian. "The enthusiasm of the crowd in support of AUA's undergraduate program was fantastic."

AUA President Dr. Bruce M. Boghosian, who traveled all the way from Armenia to attend the event, remarked, "It is great to see AUA's founding academic fathers in the room, Dr. Mihran Agbabian and Dr. Armen Der Kiureghian."



Archbishop Moushegh Mardirossian with AUA President Dr. Bruce M. Boghosian



AUA Board Members Zaven Akian, Dr. Armen Der Kiureghian, Jerry Turpanjian, Dr. Mihran Agbabian with Board Chair Dr. Larry Pitts and AUA President Dr. Bruce M. Boghosian

Boghosian continued "I was also pleased to see Seta Karamardian, representing Dr. Stepan Karamardian, and her husband, Gerry Soma, who came all the way from the Bay Area to join us."

Dr. Lawrence Pitts, chairman of the Board of Trustees of AUA, was also in attendance.

With the addition of an undergraduate student body, AUA's regional impact is growing. Boghosian continued, "At this new size, we will create more new graduates in just a few years time than we have created in our entire 22-year history – more graduates to start new business-

es and spur the Armenian economy, more graduates infused in businesses and government who will introduce transparency and best practices, more graduates who will transform the Armenian economy and the Armenian nation."

The evening's master of ceremonies was Bernd Stephan, son-in-law of Zaven and Sonia Akian. Touching letters of gratitude from scholarship recipients were read by the Akian daughters Lori and Lena.

Pitts remarked, "This event is the result of the hard work of many people, including the ladies of the organizing committee." Pitts continued, "I am especially grateful to Zaven and Sonia and their children Lori, Bernd, Lena, and Haig, who generously opened their home and their hearts to welcome us all."

Pitts urged the crowd to continue to support AUA in its mission to educate a new generation of leaders in Armenia. "Your financial support allows us to continue to provide a high-caliber American education in Armenia," Pitts noted.



Dr. Mihran and Elizabeth Agbabian



Gerry Soma and Seta Karamardian

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Merry Christmas



and a Very Happy New Year to All Our Readers

Have a good, healthy year and keep up the good work. Merry Christmas and a Happy and Healthy New Year.
Van & Mary Aroian
Worcester, MA

We wish all our friends a Happy New Year and a Very Merry Christmas.
Kevork and Silva Keushkerian
Pasadena, CA

Happy New Year and Merry Christmas
Mr. & Mrs. Herman Hintiryan
West Bloomfield, MI

Best wishes for a wonderful Holiday Season
Ruth Kaprelian
Worcester, MA

Happy Christmas and New Year 2014 to all our family and friends worldwide
Sirop and Maro Bedrosian
Houston, TX

Best wishes to all
Zareh and Hasmig Maserejian
Belmont, MA

The Armenian Mirror-Spectator is a superb newspaper. We wish you many, many more years of your outstanding reporting of the varied Armenian community worldwide.
Florence M. Soghoian
Glen Allen, VA

Best wishes to our friends living on the East Coast
Vatche and Sossy Semerdjian
Glendale, CA

May all your wishes come true. Merry Christmas and Happy New Year.
Charles Gazarian
Brookline, MA

Best wishes and Season's Greetings to my relatives and friends
George W. Haroutunian
Stoneham, MA

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year to all friends and relatives
David S. and Armenouhi Nalbantian
Rotonda West, FL

Merry Christmas December 25 and January 6 to the Mirror-Spectator that has informed, educated and enlightened its readers for many decades.
Ernest M. Barsamian, MD
West Roxbury, MA

You are the Best!
Michael & Seta Kalajian
Bedford, MA

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!
Dr. Ara and Mariam Stepanyan
Watertown, MA

May the spirit and blessings of Christmas be with you and your family throughout the year!
Richard, Ann and Talene Tarvezian
Watertown, MA

Happy New Year and Sourp Dznout to all our relatives and friends
Papken and Anahid Megerian
Newtown Square, PA

Our best wishes for a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year
George Yacoubian
Broomall, Penn.

Our Warmest Christmas and New Year Wishes to All Members of Tekeyan, ADL, AGBU and the Armenian Church here and worldwide
Antoine, Rose, Armen and Vicken Bazarbashian
Paoli, Penn.

Keep up the good work you are doing with your paper. Best to you in 2014 and on.
Peter Abidian
Belmont, MA

Wishing our Friends a joyous Christmas and a happy, healthy and prosperous New Year
Kevork Atinizian and Family
Belmont, MA

Happy New Year and Merry Christmas!
Mihran, Rosalyn and Garine Minassian
Burlington, MA

Special prayers for peace to our brothers and sisters in Syria
John and Roxie Maljanian
Newington, CT

Merry Christmas
Dr. Edgar M. Housepian
Englewood, NJ

We wish all our family and friends a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year.
Edmond and Nora Azadian
West Bloomfield, Mich.

Best Wishes
Arahamian family
Northville, MI

Merry Christmas and Good Health to All!
Margaret Ajemian Ahnert
Fort Lauderdale, FL

May the simple joys of the season be yours.
Serope Kalpakjian
Boise, ID



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COMMUNITY NEWS

Gulbenkian Foundation Publishes Armenian Communities Plan

GULBENKIAN, from page 6

years to establish somewhere in the diaspora an Armenian teacher training center or program. It will also support the establishment of an International Western Armenian Teachers Association.

C. Academic centers and university-based Initiatives that Teach Western Armenian and Culture, Research the Use of Western Armenian or Contribute to Armenian Studies

Support will be available for academic centers and initiatives where Western Armenian is taught to students who specialize in Armenian studies or are learning the language for personal reasons, as well as innovative projects on the use and reinforcement of Western Armenian. Additionally, some support will be given to conferences and lectures focused on Armenian studies.

D. Use of New Technologies

Historically Armenians have been at the forefront of new technologies and have adapted these to the needs of Armenian culture. The ACD hopes to continue this tradition and encourage the use of modern technologies in teaching the language, producing culture and making Armenian part of the “technological world” of youth. As such, web courses and other electronic learning opportunities, innovative apps for culture and language, interactive electronic publications, online networks and other such initiatives will be considered for support. Emphasis will be put upon initiatives that reach out to Armenian youth around the world electronically, linking them, bringing Armenian culture to them and encouraging them to produce culture.

ii) Scholarships

Scholarships continue to be at the heart of the Department's funding. It has developed five principal categories for university student support. In general, fewer, larger, merit-based scholarships will be awarded in order to ensure greater impact. Full information on each grant and applicant eligibility will be available on the Department's website. The scholarship categories for the next five years are as follows: i) The Calouste Gulbenkian Global Excellence Scholarship for Armenian Students (four per year); ii) The Calouste Gulbenkian Armenian Studies Scholarship (six to ten); iii) Western Armenian Teacher Training Scholarships (six); iv) Short Term Conference and Travel Grants to Students in Armenia (approx. forty); v) The Calouste Gulbenkian Undergraduate Studies Scholarships (approx. forty). On an ad hoc basis, modest support to Armenian university students already studying in Portugal may be considered. Emergency scholarships will be provided to students caught up in conflict or other major crisis situations.

Finally, the potential for a Calouste Gulbenkian Armenian Communities Department alumni association and the establishment of an internship program for young Armenians will be explored.

2. Development of a viable Armenia through investing in its youth and their commitment to civil society

Grants will be provided to civil society organizations that encourage civic education, engagement and mobilization among the youth, providing them employment opportunities while being socially active citizens. Projects that balance engagement in Yerevan with activities and initiatives outside of the capital city will be favored.

Another element of the Department's work in Armenia will be to link young intellectuals in the country with their peers in Europe, North America and other developed countries. A series of exchange programs, study tours and intensive summer courses are planned to enhance the exposure of Armenia's scientific and cultural community to innovations and trends elsewhere, particularly in the social sciences and humanities.

The ACD will collaborate with the Ministry of the Diaspora on certain initiatives, particularly to strengthen the Western Armenian language and culture.

Within the Armenia “envelope” of funding, there is scope for initiatives from Artsakh (Nagorno-Karabagh).

3. Improve Armenian-Turkish relations by sponsoring projects that encourage a common

understanding of their long shared history

Turkey is in the process of undergoing a significant transformation which has enabled the discussion of subjects previously considered taboo, including the Armenian Genocide. The Department welcomes this and is keen to contribute to it. Two types of activities will be supported in Turkey: first, the reinforcement of Armenian community structures and institutions in the country, including schools, particularly if they contribute to the preservation of Western Armenian language, culture and traditions. Second, initiatives of civil society and academic dialogue between Armenians on the one hand, and Turks and Kurds on the other. This will include projects of translation from Armenian into Turkish and Kurdish (and vice versa), arts and cultural events, as well as research and training in Ottoman studies.

4. Preserve and make available the Armenian literary heritage

A signature program of the Department has been its publication support for books, journals and newspapers, whether in Armenian or about Armenian issues. This work continues, but will be modernized in two important respects.

First, while maintaining some funding for the “classics”, more emphasis will be put upon producing publications on modern and contemporary topics, including original research on current issues and problems facing Armenia and the diaspora, contemporary literature, social and cultural issues of interest to younger readers. Second, print publishing will be complemented by electronic publishing. Digital media will be privileged: funding will go towards supporting newspapers and journals to go online, and encouraging the production of interactive e-books, as well as Armenian-related smartphone applications, online dictionaries and lexicons. It is anticipated that online publications will receive the majority of this funding by 2020.

Projects will be undertaken to digitize important ancient manuscripts, archival documents and other rare texts.

A two-way translation program will be developed: initiatives to make important Armenian texts available in other significant languages will be financed, along with translation into Armenian of important foreign language texts.

Some funds will be set aside to explicitly encourage the creation of new literature and culture – be it in Western Armenian or in another language but concerning Armenians. To this end, the Department will sponsor initiatives such as creative writing workshops that encourage Armenians to engage in cultural production that is innovative and participatory.

Plans are being made for an international prize for best new fiction and non-fiction, open to younger authors writing in Western Armenian.

5. Turning the Department into a hub of connections and strategic thinking and collaborating with other Departments within the Foundation

The ACD is changing from a traditional fun-

der into a catalyst for change, and a facilitator of strategic thinking and long term planning. Its international and independent position is unique in the Armenian world, enabling it to act above partisan community politics. Organizations, experts and noted leaders will be invited to Lisbon on a yearly basis to discuss current issues of mutual concern and to strategize collectively to find solutions. The meetings will focus on common interests and concrete goals, linking components of the Armenian world that do not usually come together. The first meeting will take place in 2014 on a broad “inaugural” theme: Armenians in 2115. This will be a valuable chance for community leaders to ask: “Where is the Armenian nation heading after the commemoration of 2015?”

In collaboration with other colleagues at the Foundation, Armenian cultural events will be staged in Portugal so that Armenian culture, music, art and history becomes known in the Foundation's home country.

6. Unforeseen circumstances and humanitarian needs (Urgent Action fund)

From time to time there are calls to intervene in a major humanitarian crisis (e.g. Syria). Some funds will be set aside in order to cope with such unforeseen circumstances. On occasions important opportunities related to the Department's mission but not necessarily programmed in its budget will be financed.

Conclusion: Working through Partners

To realize its objectives, the ACD needs to work with partners around the world, be they organizations or individuals. The first group of partners are its grantees. The department is eager to work much more closely with partners to ensure results. Funds will not simply be distributed to organizations and individuals. Collaborative work will continue on an ongoing basis.

Second, further partnership opportunities will be explored between the Department and other organizations that have an interest in supporting Armenia and Armenian initiatives. Joint programs will be sought with organizations

whereby the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation will be one funder among several others.

The ACD's vision of the Armenian world of the early 2020s is a world in which Western Armenian is more secure as a living language, sustained through a network of young qualified teachers and intellectuals using innovative teaching and communication methods, as well as a youthful generation in diaspora that continues to speak it and create in it. It is hoped that in a few years Armenians will reap the rewards of the Foundation's scholarship programs, as hundreds of university educated men and women assume leadership positions in their respective fields, and that Armenian Studies, as an academic field, gains a number of new graduates not only researching issues and problems currently facing the Armenian nation but also offering evidence-based solutions.

The ACD hopes for a much stronger civil society in Armenia, with an engaged youth that contributes to the country's democratic development, and an academic community that is globally connected and participating in international debates using the latest research methods and approaches in the social sciences. It also hopes to see engagement between Armenians and Turks advance to such a degree that the dialogue between the two peoples – and the issues it deals with – becomes part of the mainstream of the two societies instead of being confined to the sidelines. Finally, it will be a source of pride for the Department to see at the end of the five-year plan a younger generation using scores of IT-based applications, books, journals, newspapers and other electronic initiatives that either use Western Armenian or enhance Armenian culture and learning in the digital world.

In short, through the activities of this Plan, the Armenian Communities Department strives to create a more viable future for the Armenian people in which its culture and language are preserved and valued. That, after all, is its mission.

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Pastor Honored in White Plains

WHITE PLAINS, N.Y. — The occasion was billed as a “triple celebration” for the Armenian community here. It marked 40 years since the birth of an Armenian parish — then dubbed “St. James” — in Westchester. It also marked the 15th anniversary of the consecration of the parish sanctuary, the St. Gregory the Enlightener Church of White Plains.

But most of all, the gala banquet at the Hilton Westchester Hotel in Rye Brook, NY, on Saturday, December 7, was an occasion to celebrate the 40th anniversary of the Rev. Karekin Kasparian’s pastoral ministry to the community.

The hotel’s ballroom was filled with 425 people who had come out to pay homage to a great pastor, leader, teacher and friend. Friends and family from near and far came to the event to reunite in a spirit of love and admiration for Kasparian.

Notable among the guests were Archbishop Khajag Barsamian, Primate of the Eastern Diocese; Archbishop Yeghishe Gizirian, long-time friend and mentor to Kasparian, and nine clergymen.

Parish Council Chair Gregory Sahagian offered a toast to begin the program. Gala Chair Maria Stepanian welcomed the well-wishers and spoke on how Kasparian had made an impact on her life.

A special congratulatory message from Karekin II, Supreme Patriarch and Catholicos of All Armenians, was read by Diocesan Vicar General, the Very Rev. Simeon Odabashian. The Catholicos’ laudatory words echoed throughout the evening.

After dinner, the Rev. Untzag Nalbandian, pastor of Holy Ascension Church in Trumbull, Conn., spoke on behalf of the clergy of the Diocese.

The Rev. Mardiros Chevian, dean of St. Nersess Seminary, conveyed congratulatory sentiments from the seminary board, staff and seminarians. He reminisced about former days, when he attended his first summer conference at the time Deacon Hovhanness — Fr. Karekin prior to his priestly ordination — was seminary dean.

The Rev. Hakob Gevorgyan, pastor of the Holy Trinity Church in Cheltenham, Penn., spoke on behalf of the seven pastoral interns that Kasparian has mentored over the years. He recalled his personal internship experiences in a loving and humorous manner, and told how Kasparian tutelage prepared him for the challenges of parish life.

One other clerical guest was the Rev. Kevork Arakelian, Kasparian’s first student at St. Nersess Seminary, who had flown in from California just for the occasion. His presence surprised and delighted the honoree.

Zaven Tachdjian, former Parish Council chair of 10 years in White Plains, credited Kasparian with helping develop his personal spirituality. He called the pastor a “great uni-

fier in the parish and community.”

Meliné and Lori — the two daughters of Kasparian and Yeretzhin Dawn Kasparian — entertained the gathering with loving anecdotes about growing up as the children of a parish priest and told how they were fortunate to have a father who had a flexible schedule, which allowed him to be a “hands-on dad.”

Master of Ceremonies John Wolohojian managed to keep the program briskly moving forward. When he introduced the guest of honor, Fr. Karekin Kasparian began his message with an outpouring of gratitude, thanking all those present as well as those departed who had contributed to the foundation and growth of the St. Gregory parish.

Fr. Kasparian expressed heartfelt thanks to the Suren Fesjian family — the parish’s benefactor and “godfather,” and also to the Simon and Hayik Tutak families, likewise early and crucial parish benefactors.

Fr. Karekin recalled several poignant episodes from his pastoral life, and expressed gratitude for being included in significant moments in his parishioners’ lives.

He also paid tribute to his wife, Yeretzhin Dawn, who has been a source of strength and inspiration throughout his life and ministry.

He concluded by saying: “No pastor can truly say, ‘My work is completed.’ The work of the church goes on and on, eternally. We are unworthy servants, who have only done what was our duty.”

Archbishop Khajag Barsamian addressed the gathering and acknowledged Fr. Karekin for being a true leader of the Armenian community, a great communicator, and a teacher who has led his flock to a better understanding of each other and of God.

“I admire the virtues Der Karekin brings to his ministry,” the Primate said. “He is a man of deep faith, and his love for his people and heritage is profound. He is a true gentleman, with great compassion for his fellow human beings, who is always willing to listen, to



From left are Dawn Kasparian, Fr. Karekin Kasparian, Archbishop Khajag Barsamian, and Archbishop Yeghishe Gizirian.

answer a question, to lend a sympathetic ear or a helping hand to the members of his flock.

“Der Karekin’s tenure in this parish has been extremely fruitful,” he continued. “And he means a great deal to our Diocese, as well. For Der Karekin has been a true pioneer, leading our church in America into greener pastures, and new ways of implementing our mission.”

A benediction by Archbishop Yeghishe Gizirian concluded the evening with a feeling of joy and unity.

ly members, church organizations, and booklet donors, whose sentiments were summed up in the words: “We will forever be grateful for the Kasparians’ boundless spiritual love and support.”

The booklet concluded with the following inscription: “We honor with love our senior generation for their foresight and sacrifice. We delight with faith in the enthusiasm of our present generation for their zeal to continue the torch of our heritage. We wait with hope for the future generation to carry forth the flame



The White Plains community honored Fr. Karekin Kasparian on his 40th anniversary.



Archbishop Barsamian ordains Saro Kalayjian and Andrew Kayaian to the sub-diaconate.

Violinist Sami Merdianin, accompanied by Sofya Meilkayan on piano, provided the musical entertainment for the evening, entrancing the audience with their selection of Armenian melodies.

A video montage chronicling the life of the master of ceremonies and the growth of his flock over the past 40 years was viewed by the appreciative crowd. The montage was prepared by Sylvia Kruizenga, and DVD copies of it were included in the celebration booklet as a keepsake.

A commemorative booklet was prepared by Maria Bedonian and dedicated to both Fr. Karekin and Yeretzhin Dawn. It captured the effect of Fr. Karekin’s and Yeretzhin’s beneficial influence on the community. Throughout the booklet were heartfelt messages from clergymen, supporters, benefactors, friends, fami-

of our legacy.”

The weekend culminated with the Divine Liturgy on Sunday, December 8, at the St. Gregory Church. Archbishop Khajag Barsamian celebrated the *badarak*, with the parish deacons, altar servers, and choir performing their offices with dignity.

As part of the service, the rank of subdeacon was conferred on St. Nersess seminarian Saro Kalayjian, and on St. Gregory’s own faithful young servant Andrew Kayaian.

Solemn requiem service was held for the founders and benefactors of the St. Gregory parish, and for the victims of the earthquake in Armenia (which occurred 25 years ago), with requiem prayers said for the late president of South Africa, Nelson Mandela. A fellowship hour followed in the church’s Tutak Hall.

Arts & Living

Turkish Writer Kemal Yalçın Receives Humanitarian Award

BOCHUM, Germany — Turkish author Kemal Yalçın has been one of the Turkish intellectuals who has been tortured, jailed and subjected to death threats, because he has dared to break some taboos in his own country: he had taken the initiative to tour Anatolia in search of Armenian, Assyrian and Greek survivors of the 1915 Genocide and their descendants to record their stories and eyewitness accounts.

His first book was based on a story with many personal and family implications. It was called *The Dowry*, based on a true story. Indeed, before the exile a Greek family had entrusted the dowry of their daughter in the hopes of receiving it back after returning to their native land — a dream not realized for two generations. Kemal Yalçın himself engaged in the saga to find the survivors of the Greek family in Greece and return the cherished treasure.

His next book was called *My Heart Rejoices with You*, capturing the stories of hidden Armenians in Anatolia. After the publication of the book, Yalçın had witnessed the shredding of



Kemal Yalçın receives the plaque from Herman Hintiryan

the book by the Turkish Censorship Board, with further death threats and jail prospects which forced the author to flee to Germany in 1981, where he taught for a time at the University of Essen and more recently at a high school in Bochum.

My Heart Rejoices with You was published again in Turkish and distributed in Germany, with its German translation. Archbishop Karekin Bekdjian, the Primate of the Armenians in Germany, had also translated the book into Armenian, that is how the Tekeyan Cultural Association of the US and Canada became aware of the publication and undertook the translation of the book into English. The project was directed by the TCA Central Board Member Maro Bedrosian and sponsored by Detroit-area benefactor Herman Hintiryan, with a generous grant of \$10,000.

Following the publication of the book, a tour was organized in the US and Canada, where Yalçın presented the book, spoke about this ordeal in compiling his materials and the persecutions experienced in the wake of publishing his books in Turkey. At the end of each presentation, he publicly apologized to the Armenian survivors of the Genocide on behalf of all Turkish people.

During his trip to the US and Canada, Yalçın met and interviewed more survivors of the Genocide and their family members to publish two more books: *Kardaslarim Var Uzakda* (I Have Brothers Far away) and *Andalou Evlatlari* (Children of Anatolia). Currently, he is working on a series on the genocide of the Assyrians (Seyfo, as they call it), to be published in 2015, in three volumes.

see AWARD, page 16



Yaverin Konagi

Coming Face to Face with Family History in Visit to Sis

It is because of my interest a house, located in Sis, today's Kozan in Turkey, that I came across the story I am about to tell you, which became the primary purpose of my trip to Turkey in June 2010.

During my 2008 visit to Sis, I came across this beautiful house, which had the same characteristics as my grandfather's house. It was newly restored and the neighbors confirmed it once belonged to an Armenian, who was murdered in 1918. I was told the City of Kozan bought and restored the house, but no one knew what their future plans were.

By Linda Aintablian

For a year and a half, I kept on persistently searching on the Internet, convinced that eventually I was going to find something about this house.

Finally in February 2010, I found pictures of the house on the website of a Dutch traveler and photographer, Dick Osseman. On his website, Dick mentioned that this house was a new bed and breakfast hotel, and its name was "Yaverin Konagi," which means, the "Mansion of the Partner." I then found the website of the hotel. To my amazement, the hotel had a history section on their web, where they mentioned that the house used to belong to Krikor Mkrkjian, who was also known as "Yaver



At yaverin konagi, seated, Fr. Krikor, Diramayr Shoushan, Osman Chamurdan's granddaughter, Duru's wife; standing: Ishkhan Tchifjian, Linda Aintablian, Anahid Aintablian and Maro Khatchigian

Effendi." Therefore, the hotel was named after its original Armenian owner.

Happy to have discovered this information but at the same time being a little disappointed, I e-mailed a letter to Dick Osseman, asking him if he knew anyone in Sis, who could help me find my grandfather's house.

He put me in touch with Fatin Kara, a Turkishman who was born in Sis, but lived in Washington State. His relative, Duru, was responsible for the restoration of Krikor's house. In his first e-mail, Fatin asked me if

I had ever heard of the Chamurdan family of Sis. He said Hafiz Osman Chamurdan was his great grandfather, who in 1920, had saved the life of an Armenian family, by hiding the family in his house.

Fatin then e-mailed a 1943 photo of the Armenian family's son, Markarios with his wife. The families had lost touch with each other after the passing off the elders

see REVELATIONS, page 17

Audiences Brave Storm to Attend Erevan Choral Society And Orchestra Concert

CAMBRIDGE, Mass. — According to the traditional story, at the first performance of composer Franz Josef Haydn's Farewell Symphony, as each musician concluded his part in the final movement, he snuffed out the candle on his music stand and left the hall, until at the end of the symphony only two violinists remained. Thanks to snow and ice earlier in the day, the audience at the Erevan Choral Society and Orchestra's 46th annual Christmas Holiday Concert, held on December 15, staged something of a reversed version of Haydn's musicians' departure. At the opening of the concert, the pews of Cambridge's Holy Trinity Armenian Apostolic Church were more than half empty, but by the close of the concert, the church was very nearly full.

The difficulty in travel may have been in a small way symbolic of one of the concert's commemorations: December 7 marked the 25th anniversary of the devastating 1988 earth-



Archbishop Khajag Barsamian



Armenia's Ambassador to the United Nations
Garen Nazarian

quake that centered on Spitak in the Republic of Armenia and severely damaged the entire region, including the city of Gumri. Introducing the concert, Holy Trinity's pastor Fr. Vazken Kouzouian recollected his experience as a seminarian at Holy Echiadzin in that difficult year for the nation, and, at the conclusion of the concert, Garen Nazarian, ambassador of the Republic of Armenia to the United Nations, spoke movingly of the examples of endurance

see CONCERT, page 16



ARTS & LIVING

The Avon Marks 75 Star-Struck Years

By Molly Lederer

PROVIDENCE (*Providence Monthly*) — “Cinema should make you forget you are sitting in a theater,” director Roman Polanski declared. But then, Polanski had yet to see a film at the Avon Cinema. From the neon marquee to the art deco lobby, red velvet seats and dramatic curtain over the screen, the theater itself is part of the joy. Add some smiling staff, a bucket of buttered popcorn and a roomful of enthusiastic moviegoers, and a world of enchantment awaits you. All that before the lights dim and the film begins.

Given the Avon’s lineup of independent and foreign films handpicked “for the discerning movie lover,” you still may forget where you are once the opening credits start rolling. Though, the communal experience of giggling and gasping in the dark is half the fun of seeing things at a theater. As the Avon Cinema celebrates its 75th anniversary, the time is ripe to step away from the TV, DVDs, Hulu, Netflix and what’s-its in your living room and wax sentimental over this single-screen, neighborhood art house.

“When you come into the Avon, you’re walking into a time capsule,” suggests Richard Dulgarian, whose family has owned the theater for three generations. “I’m not saying nothing has ever changed, but basically it’s the way it would have looked back in 1938. We don’t introduce things that would be in conflict with the building.”

Accordingly, at the Avon, there is no track lighting. There aren’t even plastic wastebaskets. Swing music plays softly between shows. Narrow spotlights on the walls create atmospheric shadows. The marquee letters get changed manually, one at a time. The corn is popped fresh daily. The butter is real. Other retro touches include \$2 bills and 50-cent pieces for change, and sweet snipes like “Let’s All Go to the Lobby,” a ‘50s concessions ad that runs before the trailer reel. While the ticket prices have gone up a bit since 1938, when you could catch a matinee for a quarter, they remain more reasonable than most.

Another famous director, Alfred Hitchcock, once proposed that, “The length of a film should be directly related to the endurance of the human bladder.” Barring that, the Avon pipes the soundtrack directly into the powder rooms — so, if you must excuse yourself from the film, you won’t miss much. When sad movies play, the staff stocks extra tissues by the doors to the lobby. Considerations like these add to the appeal. Dulgarian hopes that it’s a place wherein “you walk through the doors and you can feel what maybe our parents and grandparents felt, during the golden age of Hollywood, when people would go to the cinema for their entertainment and their education.”

Dulgarian’s grandfather Krikor came to America “with pennies in his pocket” during the time of the Armenian Genocide. He lived with his family on Glendale Street and ran a successful haberdashery on North Main. He saw potential in an old, unoccupied building, a silent film theater called the Toy on Thayer Street, and decided to buy and renovate it as a place to showcase European films. The opening day ad proclaimed, “The insistent demand of cultured cinema goes has finally culminated in the erection of a new deluxe theater... Dedicated to the exclusive showing of unusual pictures.”

The Avon held its first screening, “The Life and Loves of Beethoven,” in February of 1938. Of the many movie theaters in Providence at

the time, most were downtown, and the Avon’s East Side location served it well. Eventually Krikor Dulgarian’s son, Earl Dulgarian, a businessman who owned the now-defunct (and sorely missed) College Hill Bookstore on Thayer, took over. The European films shown then were considered racier than their American counterparts. So Earl’s son Richard Dulgarian didn’t get a chance to see a film at the Avon himself until he turned 18.

Both Krikor and Earl Dulgarian hired management companies to handle the day-to-day operations of the Avon. But Richard Dulgarian was always fascinated by the place, and asked his father for a part-time job there while attending Rhode Island College. He started as a doorman, ripping tickets, and gradually took on responsibilities like assistant managing and advertising, sharing the work with his brother Kenneth and learning the business from top to bottom.

When the Blizzard of 1978 hit, the Avon retained power. So Kenneth Dulgarian kept the heat on, popped extra corn and allowed stranded patrons and neighbors to spend the night. The next day, Richard Dulgarian walked over from his apartment across town. He’d never run the old carbon arc projectors before, but had a general sense of their functioning — and in the unplanned absence of projectionists that week,



Richard Dulgarian, owner of the Avon Cinema

he learned by doing. He recalls wishing that the film there at the time, “McCabe and Mrs. Miller,” didn’t involve a character freezing to death in the snow.

Kenneth and Richard Dulgarian co-own the Avon now, with the latter in charge of daily business. “I do think I have the world’s best job,” Richard Dulgarian admits. “Every week or two, there’s a new film with a new cast, a new idea, a new concept. So there’s always that excitement.” He also appreciates that the customers arrive in good moods (it’s the movies, not the DMV), and that the staff is pleasant and passionate about the arts. He thinks there is nothing like a crowded theater in which you could hear a pin drop, and loves how an audience can help you tune in to the emotional content of a scene. Sometimes, late at night, he’ll pop some corn and settle in for a private screening of “Casablanca” or “The Wizard of Oz.”

Since opening, the Avon’s programming has shifted from a focus on European films to classic films in repertory (“That lasted a long time, and then some idiot invented the VCR,” Dulgarian jokes) and on to the first-run foreign and independent films shown today. Dulgarian credits a big part of the theater’s longevity to film booker George Mansour of Boston, who has selected the lineup for over 40 years. Dulgarian points out how often Mansour seems to intuit Academy Award winners, and how well he predicts which films will do best at which theaters. He notes, “He’s very good at spotting a film that has artistic merit, has the ability to draw a crowd and would play well at the Avon.”

With the exception of a lobby restoration back in ‘88, the biggest change to the Avon has been the recent, pricey transition to a digital

projection system. With most film studios no longer producing 35-mm prints, the options were to make the switch or close (the sad fate of some other art houses around the country). But Dulgarian has retained the original carbon arc projectors for showing archive films. He’s also adding a satellite dish to broadcast the National Theater Live presentation of the play “Coriolanus,” in real time from London, on January 30 at 2 p.m. Other National Theater Live engagements include a broadcast of “Hamlet” January 16 at 7 p.m. and a reprise of Coriolanus on January 30 at 7 p.m.

Keeping the Avon open is a labor of love for Dulgarian, who admits that the single-screen model doesn’t work terrifically well financially. He feels grateful that the community continues to support it, and hopes that the films shown there — and the discussions they provoke — provide an important service. He asks his staff not to hurry patrons out when the curtain closes after a show, allowing them instead the time and space to linger a few moments, digesting it and talking about it. He explained, “To me, that’s part of the movie. Thinking about what you’ve seen.”

His wife, for example, began frequenting it back in the theater’s double feature days. A regular ESM contributor, Fowler has reviewed movies for the Warwick Beacon and Cranston Herald since 1977. He noted, “When the lineup evolved to mostly foreign and independent films, the Avon became my ‘busman’s holiday’ from the terrible action movies and teenage coming-of-age stuff that I had to endure at the multiplexes.”

Fowler continues, “Today, with the Avon showing the best of the foreign and independent films, winners of prestigious film festivals, the intimate movie house has become my refuge. The staff is friendly, the audience is more sophisticated and the snack bar has the best popcorn in the state.” Another thing Fowler enjoys? “People actually clap at the end of an especially good film, and the sidewalk in front of the theater is usually filled with people discussing the film.”

“The Avon has always been a warm beacon of old-school welcome and charm on an otherwise sometimes intimidating and jostling Thayer Street,” thinks Susan Leach DeBlasio, a long-time patron and East Side resident. “It’s a place where you feel equally comfortable catching a movie with friends... or going by yourself. You’ll always bump into someone (maybe even some well-known famous or ‘infamous’ Rhode Island figure) you know under that great marquee. And the popcorn is worth ducking into the lobby for even if you are not able to stay for the show! Just classic.”

Gerald A. DeLuca, once a director of the former Italian Film Society of Rhode Island, has been going to the Avon since the late 1940s. His parents, both from Italy, first brought him along to see the Italian opera films. He recalls, “Though they always scheduled an eclectic group of foreign and domestic films, many of the films they would show at that time were of interest to Italians in the Providence area.”

DeLuca cites many highlights from his Avon patronage over the years — films of artistic and cultural import, both first-run and revival, not generally shown elsewhere in the state. His fondest memory is seeing “The Bicycle Thief” there; other standouts include “Nights of Cabiria,” “Diabolique,” “L’Aventura,” “Jules and Jim” and the Academy Award-winning “Marty.” The theater had no concession stand back then, and he recalls popping into Rexall Drugstore next door (now Andreas Restaurant) for snacks.

DeLuca also remembered, “There were lots of naughty movies with Brigitte Bardot that I used to go to. When I was a seminarian at Our Lady of Providence, we were warned by the rector not to go to the Avon, because they showed movies condemned by the Legion of Decency. That didn’t deter us! We knew it was Rhode Island’s best movie house.”

Taylor Umphenour projected films at the

Avon for close to a decade, starting while an undergrad at the Rhode Island School of Design, until the transition to digital equipment rendered the projectionist’s role obsolete. In the process, he saw scores of midnight show classics like “Some Like It Hot,” “2001: A Space Odyssey” and “Rear Window,” as well as contemporary works like “Bowling for Columbine,” “The Royal Tenenbaums” and “Brokeback Mountain.” He noted, “I got to run these films multiple times a week and study them closely. It was like taking an extended and comprehensive film history, cinematography and editing class all rolled into one. I started to notice story-telling patterns common among certain film genres, figured out where certain plot points would fall, what reels the major reversals would happen in and how much time was spent telling certain parts of the story. I found the experience fascinating.”

Umphenour continued, “The magic of the Avon’s booth was unique in that much of the original equipment from when the theater first opened was there and remained fully operational for decades. I spent long nights up in that booth just thinking about the amount of cinematic history that had reeled its way through those projectors. They still had the lever that was once used to switch the system from running film sound to disc sound, a feature used in the early days to set silent films to non-synchronized music sent on records.”

Filmmaker Raber Umphenour also projected at the Avon for nearly 10 years. He even married his wife Jenni there, in a ceremony preceded by a private screening. (Three weddings have been held at the Avon thus far, with more in the works.) He suggested, “If you think of the 75 years the Avon Cinema has been open — and continuously running — and how many thousands and thousands of people have been there over the years, you realize what a special treasure it is for Providence. I hope it’s there for another 75 years to come!”

Gilly Cantor worked at the Avon from 2001-2005, while a student at Brown University and for a year after graduating. In addition to fond memories of the Sunday matinee shift’s weekly attempt to complete the *New York Times* crossword puzzle, Cantor remembers researching the Avon itself for ProvidenceArchitecture.org. She learned that, when the building originally opened in 1915, it was the first theater on the East Side. And she discovered a mysterious period between then and 1937, when Krikor Dulgarian purchased it, with reports suggesting an amateur theater, a gymnasium with a pool and/or a garage may have been housed in the space.

Cantor also recalled a rather loud promotional t-shirt that Avon staff wore during the long 2003 run of “Lost in Translation.” “I was working so much at that time that my friends began associating me with that shirt. One of my housemates even made me a shirt for Secret Santa that year that said ‘Lost in the Avon.’ That sort of sounds like a bad memory, but really it’s not. It reminds me that so much of my Providence identity is linked to the Avon, and how I met the best people there and got to watch some amazing movies and eat choice popcorn for so many years. I imagine a lot of East Siders feel that way, and they didn’t even have to wear that t-shirt.”

As you may have gleaned already, I am an Avon devotee myself. Growing up on the East Side, it seemed that every fridge in every kitchen had the upcoming Avon schedule pinned to it. It was a theater I could walk to, cozy in the winter, air conditioned in the summer and always a treat to visit. Working at the Avon was my first job in high school, and one I held with glee for years afterward. In addition to learning the secret to the best popcorn (I can’t tell you), the Avon made me a cinephile. “The English Patient” showed me in lush, romantic colors why film is best viewed on the big screen. “Everyone Says I Love You” introduced me to Woody Allen, and taught me how much a laughing audience can enrich a movie.

In a song written for the 1982 movie musical of “Annie” (not an “Avon”-type film, but indulge me), the character Grace sings *Let’s Go to the Movies*. One lyric reminds me of the Avon, and why its 75th anniversary is such cause for celebration: “Sitting in the darkness, what a world to see!” Thanks for 75 years of brave new worlds, Avon Cinema. As someone by the name of Rick Blaine once said, “Here’s looking at you, kid.”



ARTS & LIVING



The members of the Erevan Choral Society and Orchestra perform.

Audiences Brave Storm to Attend Erevan Choral Society And Orchestra Concert

CONCERT, from page 14

and the fellowship of nations that the international rescue efforts exemplified. The concert itself also featured two musical commemorations of the sad events: the world premiere of *Azk Haygazyan* ("The Armenian Nation") by composer and current conductor-director of the Erevan Choral Society, Konstantin Petrossian, sung by operatic tenor Yeghishe Manucharyan and mezzo-soprano Victoria Avetisyan, accompanied by the chorale and orchestra; and a rendering of Alexander Haroutunian's moving *Kta Der* ("Requiem"). Rounding out the commemoration of "sad occasions dear," Avetisyan also sang movingly in Petrossian's *Vocalise*, dedicated to the memory of Erevan Choral Society founder, the Very Rev. Oshagan Minassian and his mother, Diramayr Sirvart Minassian.

Yet Christmas is of course also a commemoration of more joyous events. The concert opened with the traditional candle-lit choral entrance *O Come All Ye Faithful*, followed by a selection of Christmas favorites, including Avetisyan's and Manucharyan's compelling respective reprises of Giulio Caccini's *Ave Maria* and Pietro Yon's *Gesu Bambino*. At the center of the concert, a selection of choral music from the Armenian tradition ranged from arrangements of the *Park I Partzoon*s of *Moses Kertogh* (sixth century) and the *Aravod Luso* of Nerses Shnorhali (12th century) to Vahan Bedelian's *Yegheghetzin Haygagan* ("The Armenian Church") and Parsegh Ganachian's *Khaghagh Kisher* ("Peaceful Night"). Manucharyan also offered a moving performance of César Franck's *Panis Angelicus*, the words of which links the events of the Nativity to the blessings of the Eucharist. A selection of New Year's favorites, including Irving Berlin's *White Christmas* and George Frederick Handel's *Hallelujah Chorus* from *Messiah* rounded out the evening.

Archbishop Khajag Barsamian, Primate of the Eastern Diocese of the Armenian Apostolic Church in the United States was on hand to deliver the final blessing, assisted by

Kouzouian and Fr. Shnork Souin, pastor of the Sts. Sahag and Mesrob Armenian Apostolic Church of Providence, which had sponsored the Erevan Choral Society and Orchestra's December 1 concert in Cranston. Also present was Emeritus Pastor of Holy Trinity Armenian Apostolic Church, Fr. Mampre Kouzouian, whose work as a priest to mission parishes testifies to the indomitable spirit of the Armenian Church and people.

All in all, the example of the clergy, the talents of the soloists and musicians, the stirring words of the speakers, and, not least, the determination of the audience to brave the elements in pursuit of music, faith and Armenian culture, must give us all firm hope that the concert's stirring close represented not a "farewell," but "until next year."

— Robert Dulgarian

Writer Kemal Yalçın Receives Humanitarian Award

AWARD, from page 14

On November 23, a testimonial was held in Bochum to celebrate the 40th anniversary of Yalçın's literacy activities with the participation of fellow professors and representatives from the Kurdish and Assyrian communities. Primate Bekdjian was one of the honorary sponsors along with Cornelius Bischoff and Can Dunder.

Hintiryan flew especially to Germany to present the humanitarian award on behalf of the Tekeyan Cultural Association Central Board. A citation, which was translated into Turkish by Hintiryan, said partially, "This humanitarian award is being bestowed upon Kemal Yalçın for his relentless endeavors to explore the painful past in search of a brighter, just and peaceful future."

After reading the citation, Hintiryan also spoke of his personal gratitude to the writer and presented the black granite plaque to Yalçın.

Among the guest speakers was Turkey's consul general in Essen, who tried to put a damper on the issue of the Genocide, but was booed and silenced by the audience composed of German intellectuals, Kurdish writers, Turkish and Assyrian community leaders.

The program was interspersed with Armenian, Kurdish and Turkish music by expatriate artists in Germany.

Upon his return, Hintiryan delivered a letter from Yalçın, in which the latter expressed his sincere gratitude to the TCA Central Board.



From left, Herman Hintiryan, with Mr. and Mrs. Yalçın and guest

CALENDAR

MASSACHUSETTS

JANUARY 6, 2014 — Armenian Christmas celebration, St. Gregory Church, 158 Main St., North Andover. Special program, "First-time impressions of Armenia," presented by students Victoria Kulungian and Nairi Hovsepian, following Badarak and luncheon. All are invited.

JANUARY 6, 2014 — St. James Men's Club will feature Judith A. Saryan, CFA, of Eaton Vance Management, on "Wealth Management," Losh Kebab and Kheyma Dinner, Social Hour (mezza) 6:15 p.m. Dinner 7 p.m. \$14 per person, St. James Armenian Church, Charles Mosesian Cultural & Youth Center - Keljik Hall, 465 Mt. Auburn St., Watertown. Ladies are welcome.

NEW JERSEY

DECEMBER 31 — St. Thomas Armenian Church New Year's Eve Celebration, 8 p.m., featuring DJ Shant. Serving extensive appetizers, full course dinner, Viennese table at 12 a.m. and free champagne! Donation: \$65 for adults, children 7-12 \$20, children 6 & under free, please reserve early, space is limited. Additional entertainment for children and gifts from Santa. For reservation contact Tanya 201-941-6764, Talar 201-240-8541 or Jacklyn 201-266-4830, Rt. 9W & E. Clinton Avenue, Tenafly.

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ARTS & LIVING

Coming Face to Face with Family History in Visit to Sis

REVELATIONS, from page 14

of each family. He said that the family had either left for Cyprus or Lebanon. He did not have any further information about the family, nor did he know their last name.

Fatin also mentioned that Duru's plan was to restore the Armenian Church of Saint Sophia in Sis, and asked if I could help him by finding old photos of the church. He mentioned that in the 1940's, by the advice of the Germans, the church was dismantled and the stones were used to build a school. Their plan is to build a new school and use the church stones to restore the Armenian Church.

One night I was going through the pages of *Sis Madian*. This is a book that was published in 1949 by Misak Keleshian about the history and people of Sis. To my surprise, I found a chapter titled "Chamurdan Family's Love for the Armenians" and "the Story of the Last Armenian Family to Leave Sis." The author was Markarios Faradjian, one of the sons of the Armenian family rescued by Hafiz Osman Chamurdan. As a result, I finally knew what his last name was.

The following is a brief summary of Markarios Faradjian's article in *Sis Madian*:

Based on the agreement between the Kemalist Movement and the French, on May 31, 1920, the Turkish authorities of Sis announced that Armenians of Sis would have to evacuate the city on June 1. Their destination was Adana and they were to be assisted by the French. The Armenians were forced out of the city on June 1st, at 10 p.m.

The Faradjian family, consisting of Garabed and Hripsime, and their four children – Abraham, Markarios, Sevkul and Siranoush – lived in the Turkish Arslan Pasha neighborhood of Sis, and somehow, misunderstood the date as



The Faradjian Family before they left Turkey in 1923

June 2.

Therefore, in the morning of June 2, when the Faradjian family opened their door to leave their house and join the Armenian convoy, they witnessed total chaos in the City. Members of the Turkish mob were yelling that the infidels had left Sis, and were breaking into Armenian shops and houses, stealing their property and killing the Armenians who had stayed behind. A Turkish friend advised the family to see Hafiz Osman Chamurdan, the highest Muslim priest of the city. Hafiz means the one who knows the Kuran-i-Kerim by heart, remembers every line and verse and knows what it means. He also taught at Edirne University. Therefore he was a teacher or "hoja" as well.

When the family went to see him, Hafiz Osman Chamurdan decided to hide this family of six, in one of his properties next to his residence. Of course, the Turks later found out that he was hiding an Armenian family, and tried many times breaking into the house to kill the family, but Hafiz Osman Chamurdan managed to protect the family for three-and-a-half years.

In 1923, Hafiz Osman Chamurdan realizing that the family could no longer be kept in hiding wrote a letter to Mustafa Kemal Ataturk asking for permission to safely transport them out of Turkey. Kemal Ataturk granted him per-

mission and on December 17, 1923, the Faradjians were escorted out of Sis, first to Iskenderoun, and then to Tripoli in Lebanon. As they were leaving Sis, Hafiz Osman Chamurdan gave the family 30 gold coins.

In Sis Madian, Markarios mentioned that the Chamurdan family was of Armenian origin but had converted to Muslim some generations before. Historically the Chamurdan family was very sympathetic to the Armenians of Sis. There was even a church near Sis that was named after the Chamurdan family. When I mentioned this to Fatin, he stated that although there were some mixed marriages in the family, the Chamurdan family did not have an Armenian origin. As for the church, he stated that it was a resting stop, not a church.

A Side Trip to Antelias in Lebanon

Encouraged by this new relationship with Fatin, I decided to go back to Turkey to revisit Sis and fulfill my dream of climbing Cilician Armenian castles. Fatin made arrangements for me to meet with his relative Duru Ciftji, who is a board member of Kozvak Foundation (www.kozvak.org), responsible for restoring Krikor Mjrjian's house. I was also going to meet with Abdurrahman Kutuk, a certified Osman reader, an expert on Sis history and the editor of Kozan Sevdasi quarterly magazine. He would help us find my grandfather's house from our property deeds. This was an opportunity I did not want to miss.

I first went to Cyprus to visit my family. My mother and my cousin were to join me on this trip. While in Cyprus, I decided to visit Antelias in Lebanon to obtain information for the restoration of the Saint Sophia Armenian Church in Sis. Before I left for Antelias, I called Fr. Krikor, the priest I was told to see in Antelias, to schedule an appointment. Just before hanging up the phone, I decided to tell him about my relationship with the Turkish family and their story, and asked him if he happened to know any Faradjians in Lebanon. I almost fell down from my chair, when he told me that Markarios Faradjian, was his grandfather.

On May 31, exactly 90 years from the date of the order for Armenians to evacuate Sis, I met Fr. Krikor in Antelias. He gave me a tour of the Antelias museum, and showed me all the treasures that were rescued from the Sis Monastery in 1915. Then he took me to his mother's house to meet Diramayr Shoushan Chiftjian. She is the daughter of Markarios Faradjian. As I was entering her house, she broke a plate at my feet according to Sis tradition, for a special visi-

tor. The Faradjians always remained very grateful to the brave Chamurdan family for saving their family.

Fr. Krikor decided that he and his family would be meeting us in Sis in exactly one week. I contacted Fatin and informed him, that I had found the Faradjian family, and that they were meeting us in Sis on June 8. Needless to say, Fatin started making arrangements at his end, for a great reunion in Sis.

Fr. Krikor decided that he and his family would be meeting us in Sis in exactly one week. I contacted Fatin and informed him, that I had found the Faradjian family, and that they were meeting us in Sis on June 8th. Needless to say, Fatin started making arrangements at his end, for a great reunion in Sis.

Brief History of Sis

After the devastating raids of Seljuks, thousands of Armenians moved toward Cilicia. In 1080, Prince Ruben, who is believed to be descendant of the Bagradouni and Ardzrouni dynasties, asserted authority over the local Armenian and Greek princes. Ruben became founder of a new glorious royal House of Rubenids that ruled over Cilicia for more than 300 years.

In 1292 A.D. after the Egyptian Mamluks

seized the fortress of Hromkla, Sis became the residence of Catholicos of All Armenians until 1441. From 1441 to 1920, Sis was the seat of the Catholicosate of the Great House of Cilicia. On June 1, 1920, when the French forces evacuated Sis, the Armenian population was forced to leave as well. The Catholicosate in Sis was robbed and ruined by the Turks. Before 1920, there were 28 Armenian churches in the city, none of which remain today!

Catholicos Sahag II, followed his flock to exile. After wandering in Syria and Lebanon, in 1930, he established the Catholicosate of the Great House of Cilicia in Antelias, Lebanon.

Reunion in Sis

On June 8 when my mother, my cousin and I arrived at Yaverin Konagi in Sis, where we were going to spend the next three days, Fr. Krikor, Diramayr Shoushan, and her youngest son, Ishkhan from Germany, along with a German couple, were already there and waiting for us. Later that morning, Duru and his wife Nihan, Fatin's mother Nihal and his brother Kemal, arrived from Adana to greet us at Yaverin Konagi.

We were the guests of Duru for lunch at Yaverin Konagi. After lunch we all went to see Hafiz Osman Chamurdan's old residence and the place where the Faradjian family stayed in hiding for three and a half years. That particular house was demolished. We then visited a 97 year old woman whose father was Hafiz Osman Chamurdan's son-in-law, who in 1920 told Garabed Faradjian to see Hafiz Osman Chamurdan when he realized he and his family had missed the Armenian convoy for exodus and therefore were in danger. Afterwards we went to the Turkish cemetery to pay our respects to this brave Turk.

Later that afternoon Duru took me on a walking tour of the Sis old town. Most Armenians lived in the "Tash" (Stone) neighborhood of Sis which was around the Armenian Monastery. He pointed out some of the houses that once belonged to prominent Armenians. These once beautiful houses were in terrible condition due to neglect and vandalism by gold diggers. Duru had great appreciation for these houses and through the city's Kozvak non-profit foundation tried to purchase some of these houses to restore them. However, he said when you approach the current owner to see if he would sell, they immediately assume the reason you want to buy it is because the original Armenian owner buried gold somewhere on the property, and therefore, they refuse to sell it. Those homes in slightly better condition are now occupied by the refugees from the Balkans.

We also visited the Saint Sophia Armenian Church. Basically all that is left is a small portion of a wall.

That evening again we were the guests of Duru for dinner at the Fermanoglu Restaurant. This was one of the old mills in Sis that belonged to the Fermanian family. Duru acquired this mill, restored it and turned it into a restaurant. Next to the mill used to be the Fermanian family house which was destroyed few years ago. Duru showed me a picture of the house and said he tried to acquire it but the owner decided to demolish the house instead.

On our last day in Sis we visited the Sis Fortress, which is one of the 112 Armenian fortresses that existed during the Armenian Kingdom of Cilicia.

Sis is one of those places like Van, where you really feel the pain of having lost our Armenian homeland! The views from Yaverin Konagi, the Armenian Monastery and especially from the Fortress are spectacular.

During the reign of King Levon I (1198-1219), the capital of the Cilician Armenian Kingdom was transferred from Tarsus to Sis. Some sources claim that King Levon I was buried at St. Asdvatsatsin Church in Sis. His daughter, Queen Zabel who married Hetoum I

(1226-1270), built a hospital in the Fortress, the remains of which still exist to this day.

After the decline of the Armenian Kingdom of Cilicia, Sis was conquered by the Egyptian Mamluk Sultanate.

The last Armenian king of Cilician Armenia, Levon V (1374-1375), was arrested in Sis fortress in 1375 AD by the Mamluks, and taken to Egypt. In 1379 he was set free and left for Paris where he died in 1393. His tomb is at Saint Denis Basilica in Paris.

In the 16th century, Cilicia was conquered by the Ottoman Turks and remains under Turkish occupation until today.

The End of a Great Story

Staying at Yaverin Konagi was very emotional knowing that the house belonged to an Armenian who was murdered. Abdurrahman told me that Krikor Mjrjian was murdered because he was going to reveal corruption within the city's government. Sis Madian mentions



Reunion of Diramayr Shoushan with Osman Chamurdan's granddaughter

that a Turk murdered Krikor in cold blood, as he was entering the deported Yanikian's house for a meeting on March 31, 1918. The book also mentions that there were plans to also murder Garabed Nalbandian but at the time he was in Adana on business. Garabed was married to my great-grandfather's sister. His brother, Matheos Nalbandian, was a Speaker of the Parliament and his close friendship with Talaat Pasha enabled him to save the deportation and massacre of 40 Armenian families from Sis in 1915, including my grandfather's family.

Knowing this story, I had reservations staying at Yaverin Konagi but Fatin convinced me to stay there, because he said, it was the only way I would feel how my grandparents lived and felt. He was right!

Sis is one of those places like Van, where you really feel the pain of having lost our Armenia homeland. The views from Yaverin Konagi, the Armenian Monastery and especially from the Fortress are spectacular.

By chance in 2011, I found Krikor Mkrkjian's great-grandson, Vahe Tashjian, in Berlin. He had found out about the restoration of his great-grandfather's house from Ishkhan and had written an article about it both in Armenian and in Turkish which he shared it with me. To this day the siblings of Krikor are still upset about his murder by his Turkish "friends" who escaped punishment. Vahe confirmed that Krikor was murdered because of his intent to bring the corrupt Turkish politicians of Sis to justice.

At the end, I did not find my grandfather's house although I found out it was in the Mah Mutlu neighborhood of Sis, not too far away from Hafiz Osman Chamurdan's house. I am sure my family knew the Faradjian and the Chamurdan families, and it was destiny that brought us together after 90 years.

I feel honored to be the person who was able to bring these two families together. If it were not for the pictures, I would believe it was a dream.



COMMENTARY

COMMENTARY

A Boost to Western Armenian Language and Culture

By Edmond Y. Azadian

The Genocide was not only directed at the indigenous people of Historic Armenia, but also against its intellectuals – its creators of culture and preservers of its language – to make sure that Armenians would never rise again as a civilized group deserving a homeland.

To counter that nation-destroying policy, Diaspora Armenians built their schools, cultural centers, churches and institutions around the world to preserve their identity by perpetuating the Western Armenian language and heritage.

The rise of Soviet Armenia and the undeniable development of language, literature and culture in the homeland impacted the diaspora only tangentially, as there was no distinct policy to contribute to the development of Western Armenian language nor any concern about the loss of its valuable heritage. The diaspora was left mostly to its own devices to shape its destiny.

But globalization, along with its many benefits, basically undercut all the efforts in the diaspora to contain the momentum for the preservation of the Western Armenian language and culture. We witnessed the gradual demise of the schools, the bastions of the preservation and development of language and heritage.

Armenia's independence did not produce a dramatic change to help the diaspora. There is no state plan to salvage the Western Armenian language and literature. There are only half-hearted efforts – sometimes self-serving – to extend help to the Western Armenian heritage. Even the Armenian constitution does not have a specific provision to save the endangered Western Armenian language, although the recognition of Genocide has an important place in the constitution, which claims that the official state language is the literary Armenian language, without any distinction in the two branches of the language.

Under the influence of European Culture, Western Armenian has enjoyed full development, with a vast treasure of distinct vocabulary, style and tradition, which are destined, at this point, to be ossified, because of a lack of use.

Ironically, Armenia's news media, literature and the political discourse liberally borrow from Russian and other foreign sources, ignoring completely the wealth of Western Armenian.

Only a few institutions and intellectuals are engaged seriously in evaluating, preserving and developing the Western Armenian language and literature. One is the Sarkis Khachentz Publishing House, mostly through the efforts of erudite literary historian Yervant Ter Khachatryan. Another is the Spurk Center at the State Pedagogical University, headed by Suren Danielian, and third, there are some programs at Yerevan State University, which amount to little more than lip service to Western Armenian intellectual heritage.

Defeatism reigns in the diaspora; since the language and literature are in quick decline, it is easier to ride with the tide and accept the demise of a heritage as an unavoidable consequence of modern trends. But no general is in his place who believes that a necessary war is not winnable, therefore we have to let destiny take its course.

But some valiant institutions and individuals have taken the challenge and are fighting that necessary war. One such institution is the Catholicosate of Antelias under the leadership of the learned Pontiff Aram I. Antelias has assumed the role of the monas-

teries of Venice, Vienna and Jerusalem, where a tremendous amount of research was conducted, educational programs were developed and a network of schools was developed around the world. Old and new literature is published, textbooks are developed, seminars are organized and in general there is an intellectual movement fueled by the determination to preserve and disseminate the Western Armenian language and heritage.

The Dikran Tchouhadjian Research Institute in Paris also dedicated to preserving and breathing life into the treasures of Western Armenian culture, with an additional dimension of introducing that heritage on the world stage. The AGBU's virtual college is a global approach using modern technology for the instruction of the Armenian language.

Enter the Gulbenkian Foundation's Armenian Communities Plan, introducing a new approach and a new optimistic view to the entire endeavor vis-à-vis the Western Armenian language and heritage. Since its inception the Foundation has supported many worthy projects around the globe, but its new five-year plan, published on December 11, 2013, brings an entirely new approach to charity with its focus on the orphaned Western Armenian language and culture.

The vision, the detailed plan and the reliance on modern technologies to implement the plan, are the brainchild of its new leader, Dr. Razmik Panossian. The published plan states its mission as: "to create a viable future for the Armenian people in which its culture and language are preserved and valued." And then under six segments the implementation of the plans are detailed.

The five-year plan is motivated by a deep concern over the danger hanging over the Western Armenian language and education as well as the recognition of the historic timing to react. Indeed, it is stated that, "Western Armenian is an endangered language," according to UNESCO, under the threat of disappearing if serious initiatives are not undertaken to reinforce it. This generation is probably the last generation that can help or possibly reverse this process of not-so-gradual loss of a language that was a vibrant source of Armenian culture only half a century ago."

As we go through the plan we realize that it is proactive and interactive. It does not have a confrontational approach nor does it try to underestimate other efforts towards the realization of the same goals. On the contrary, it paves the way for broader cooperation with other projects and institutions striving along with the same concerns.

The plan also addresses a very sensitive issue of Armenian-Turkish relations in its third part, with the following careful statement: "Improve Armenian-Turkish relations by sponsoring projects that encourage a common understanding of their shared history."

The prudent approach indicates here that Armenians, through their meager resources are not in a position to force the Turkish state to recognize the Genocide nor consider any compensation; that leaves the only alternative of cooperating with honest and progressive Turkish historians and human rights activists to bring about quantitative and qualitative changes in public awareness in the Turkish population, which eventually can influence the political direction of the state.

This is a welcome plan by a major institution which combines its funding resources with strategic vision for maximum impact. It is more realistic than optimistic and it brings with it not only a distinct course of action but also a source of thinking in diasporan guiding principles.

(Readers can look at the Gulbenkian plan on page 6)

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The Old Harpist's Christmas Wish

By Baydzig Kalaydjian

On that mystical day, the church bells were ringing loudly, bringing news of the coming New Year. Sometimes with dull sound and other times with pulsing beauty, it pierced the Armenian soul of the listeners. And what a miracle, creating a beautiful bond in between the family members, from the past to present...

And there, in a cozy corner of the house, in front of a warm hearth, the old "mayrig" was telling her family story in a unique style, which was the story of her nation, too, and interpreting a song of the earth while plucking the strings of her harp.

With deep feelings, I relished the supplication of their enamored soul, which sometimes had the velvety touch of love and, at other times, extolled the pain from the loss of pater-

nal soil. That day, the old mayrig wasn't her usual cheerful self. In her mysterious solitude, she was anxiously playing the beautiful harp inherited from her father. She was exerting herself so much that the torment was visible on her face, and the longing for her paternal soil was evident.

That day, at that moment, she wished to perform her best, to make it the best of all her performances ever. She knew that her life were numbered. She knew that there wasn't a musician among all her big family who was worthy of replacing her. Those listening to her, especially the pregnant young bride or "hars," also shared her distress.

Therefore, the old mayrig's hope was focused on those who were to be born. While still in their mother's womb, they had to hear the master's music. Hear and be inspired by it. Hear it and come into the world. Hear it and play it. Hear it and take

the place of the old harpist.

The old mayrig believed in this.

Fifty years ago, we would have interpreted this belief as naiveté and perhaps a benign yet sarcastic smile would have appeared on our faces. In our scheme of things, it would have been incomprehensible to logically accept a fetus as an individual entity, as a being having developed into a being that could feel us. However, in these past 50 years, science came forth and proved the mayrig's philosophy was correct in her wisdom, albeit unformulated and unexplained, accepted rather on the basis of deeply felt life's experience. Yes, even a fetus is an individual entity. Each medical, psychological and biological discovery emerged to prove this and revolutionize our perceptions about that being, which is a part of our body and which one day will be born and become an individual.

continued on next page



COMMENTARY



My Turn

By Harut Sassounian

Turkey Returned Some Church Effects After the Genocide: We Demand the Rest

This is the amazing tale of the Turkish government handing over to Istanbul's Armenian Patriarchate in the 1920s some of the church effects looted during the Genocide.

According to attorney Loutfig Kouyoumjian's book, *Hay Hamankayin Antsoutartser: 1927-1950* [Armenian Community Happenings: 1927-1950], published in Istanbul in 1950, the Turkish government had turned over to the Armenian Patriarchate 64 large crates full of church effects. Kouyoumjian was a member of the Patriarchate's Finance Committee.

The returned items included crowns inlaid with diamonds and pearls, vestments, garments with gold threads and silver crosses, a belt buckle from the famous Abousheikh Church with golden latches decorated by diamonds, emeralds and rubies, 72 rugs belonging to Sourp Garabed Monastery and Sourp Krikor Lousavorich Church of Gesaria, and churches in Talas and other regions, and a gold box covered with precious stones containing several saints' relics. Another crate had the vestments of Gomidias Vartabed, his gold fountain pen, and valuable manuscripts

of his musical arrangements of church liturgy. The Locum Tenens Archbishop Kevork Arslanian signed a receipt acknowledging his acceptance of these items and appointed Archpriest Drtd Boyajian as their guardian.

The list of the returned items prepared by the Patriarchate included "scrolls, manuscripts, and antique books. In keeping with the laws on antiquities, the books were delivered to the Istanbul Museum."

These revelations raise several important questions. What happened to the returned church effects? Our investigation indicates that none of these items are currently in the custody of the Armenian Patriarchate. A few of them were handed to Armenian clergymen of Istanbul, while others were sent to Echmiadzin. The overwhelming majority simply vanished several decades ago, most probably stolen and sold.

Mr. Kouyoumjian reported in his book that in the late 1920s, Judge Haroutioun Mosdichian, chairman of the Patriarchate's Executive Committee, informed the Finance Committee that he had solid evidence that several of the returned silver pieces were sold at the Istanbul jewelry market. Mosdichian was a highly respected individual who had occupied important positions in the Turkish government.

The Finance Committee immediately sealed the room where the returned items were stored. The next day, Archbishop Arslanian broke the seal and left the door of the storage room open. The Archbishop then dismissed the Committee members.

A special investigative committee, including Mr. Kouyoumjian, then conducted a thorough search and transmitted its findings to the Executive Committee. The latter blamed not only Mosdichian but also Archbishop Arslanian of wrongdoings regarding the returned church effects. Archbishop Arslanian in turn accused Patriarch Mesrob Naroyan of being responsible for the missing items.

After Patriarch Naroyan formed a committee to update the list of the remaining church effects, he discovered that almost nothing was left of the contents of the 64 crates delivered earlier to the Patriarchate.

In his book, Kouyoumjian relates another strange tale regarding the rugs delivered to the Patriarchate by the Turkish government. On March 8, 1924, two Turks – Haje Ismail, the son of Molla Khalil of Gesaria, and Mehmet of Talas – presented to Archbishop Arslanian a written demand, claiming that nine of the rugs had nothing to do with the Armenian Church and must be returned to them. When the Patriarchate rejected their request, the Turks filed a lawsuit against Archbishop Arslanian, claiming that the nine rugs were worth 1,975 Ottoman gold pieces.

On January 26, 1924, attorney Kouyoumjian defended the Patriarchate's interests in court. Strangely, the Patriarchate agreed to settle the lawsuit by paying 500 gold pieces to the two Turks. Several years later, when Mr. Kouyoumjian inquired about the disposition of those rugs, he was told that there were no such rugs at the Patriarchate.

In light of this newly found reference to the Turkish government's return of church effects, the Armenian Patriarchate must now conduct a thorough investigation of its archives to review its records of the missing items.

More importantly, by having returned the 64 crates, the Turkish government had in effect admitted the theft of Armenian Church properties during the Genocide. A lawsuit must be filed not only against the Istanbul Museum for the antique books it improperly received in the 1920s, but also against museums and libraries throughout Turkey for the return to the Armenian Patriarchate of the vast number of religious effects looted from several thousand Armenian churches!

The Old Harpist's Christmas Wish

from previous page

Our relations with it start as early as the first day of conception. We communicate with it. It develops according to the quality of the relationship we have with it. It feels us, it shares our joy. Its little heart beats in harmony with our feelings.

Our communication is a transmission. The transmission is a responsibility, which will continue a new and in a conscious manner after birth. Our responsibility is great, very great, and even definitive.

As parents, what we transmit will prepare our children for life, the external world, also abroad. In this fast-moving, ever-changing world, they must present themselves as distinct persons. They must be ready to perceive not only the world, but also the place of the Armenians and Armenia in that world.

Here is where our history, our past, our life experience, with its inimitable richness, must present itself before them, and be interpreted with all its variety. That history must shape the personal character of our children. Our life experience, without exaggeration, must shed light to create a more accurate perception of the realities of the world.

Our past, whose experience still hasn't been fully evaluated, is not a series of past events having become anachronistic. Our history is a treasury full of events leading to constructive, rich conclusions for all of mankind.

It is only in this way that we will be able to transport the remains of our martyrs to the soft ancestral soil. Leaning over their burial mound, it is only then that we will whisper "May you rest in peace..."

Finally, our appeal to mankind is not for mercy and justice. The Calvary experienced by our parents is man's indifference toward man. Furthermore, this indifference is man's denial by man himself.

We and the generations succeeding us shall shout this matter in the face of indifference. We shall remind mankind that the pursuit of our cause has no connection whatsoever with revenge. Our cause of humanizing man is a struggle being waged in the pursuit of justice and for its triumph. Our cause of humanizing man is a struggle being waged for the triumph of the voice of conscience.

And this was the wish of the old mayrig.

And she continued to reverberate her old harp more sweet than before, because she realized that her mission was accomplished.

The atmosphere of that old Armenian house was different than other days and mayrig knew that the transmission was ensured.

The old and sweet mayrig continued to play her harp urgently, but this time with a smile on her face...

It was such a beautiful Christmas!

Emulate Zoryan Institute and Bring Armenian History in Turkish to Turks

By Raffi Bedrosyan

As we approach 2015, the 100th anniversary of the 1915 annihilation of Armenian presence from their historic homeland of four thousand years, we see diverging activities being planned by Turkey and Armenians.

When Turkish acquaintances ask me what the Armenians, especially the "evil Diaspora," are planning to do in 2015, I answer that they are planning programs to assert historical facts about the vanishing of Armenians from Anatolia in 1915. Then I turn around with a question of my own: "What are the Turks doing?" Their short answer is that the Turks will continue to dismiss the "misinformation" that the Armenians are disseminating. Thus, the Armenians in Armenia and the diaspora redouble their efforts to have Genocide recognition more widespread worldwide, and the Turks continue pouring more money and resources to entrench the official Genocide denialist policy both within and outside Turkey. In an attempt to divert global attention from the 1915 Armenian Genocide commemoration, Turkey has decided to promote the 100th anniversary of the World War I Gallipoli campaign, to be showcased as a historic event through government-supported activities worldwide and hailed as the "heroic resistance of the Turkish forces against the onslaught of the imperialistic powers at the Dardanelles Strait."

One can easily deduce from these opposing strategies and efforts that the main stumbling block for Turkey and Armenia, as neighbors, in normalizing their relationship and the reconciliation of their respective civil societies, is the divergence of interpretation and understanding of their shared history. The result is an impasse. By this time next year, I doubt there will be much change and the impasse will go on. The issue will continue to be treated as a political match with points scored for Turkey if Obama continues saying "Medz Yeghern," or points for Armenia if he says "Genocide." There are geopolitical, military and economic reasons for the status quo to continue. Armenia may not be influential enough to overcome any of these reasons at present. Be that as it may, I believe Armenians can be more effective if they re-channel their resources, which are extremely limited in comparison to Turkey, in this struggle.

I see two target areas for Armenians to make any headway on this issue, and in my humble opinion, neither one is addressed properly by Armenia and Armenians.

The first target in dealing with the Genocide issue is the academic field. It is supposed to arrive at indisputable historic facts, after thorough and objective research of a multitude of state archives, documents, communication records and oral history findings. The struggle in this field regarding

the 1915 Armenian Genocide can be best summarized as forces of truth versus money and power. On one side there is truth defended by almost all of the international academia, and on the other side, falsification of truth by a handful of scholars generously rewarded by the Turkish state.

The second target in dealing with the Genocide issue is the general population of Turkey, with the objective of conveying to them the historical truth of the 1915 events and all the consequences until today. This truth is best served when delivered to the people of Turkey, in Turkish, based on archival materials and historic facts directly from Turkish sources and their allies, covering the period from the 1880s to 1922, as well as the factual consequences of the on-going state cover-up and denial.

Academically, the only organization which spearheads and organizes objective research by independent scholars on this topic is the Zoryan Institute with its subsidiary, the International Institute for Genocide and Human Rights Studies. For the past 30-plus years, it has provided the highest standards of scholarship and objectivity in undertaking multi-disciplinary research and analysis. This includes documentation, lectures, conferences and publications in seven languages related to human rights and genocide studies. The publications include some 41 books, some of which in several languages and two major periodicals, one dealing with genocide studies and the other with diaspora. In addition, the institute provides research assistance to scholars, writers, journalists, filmmakers, government agencies and other organizations. It is noteworthy that when Zoryan published the Wolfgang Gust book titled *The Armenian Genocide 1915/16: Documents from the Diplomatic Archives of the German Office*, in German, English and Turkish, prominent Turkish journalist Mehmet Ali Birand could only reflect: "When you read and study these documents, even if this is your first venture into this subject, there is no way you will deny the Genocide and disagree with the Armenians."

Even though the Turkish state defines Zoryan as a "propaganda centre," there have been several scholars from Turkey who have attended the Genocide and Human Rights University Program run by the Zoryan Institute at the University of Toronto, many of them becoming outspoken advocates of historic truth within Turkey and the rest of the world, regarding the 1915 Armenian Genocide.

To best describe Zoryan's contribution to scholarship is to quote from *A Plea from International Scholars of Genocide and Human Rights Studies* made last year in support of fundraising activities of the Institute:

"For the past 30 years, the Institute has maintained an ambitious program to collect archival documentation, conduct original research, and publish books and periodicals. It also conducts university-level educational programs in the see HISTORY, page 20



Armenian Genocide Survivor Receives Proclamation and Citation

NAHIKIAN, from page 1

"It is an incredible experience to me to meet with Genocide survivors. I look through their eyes and feel that I can see all the horrors those eyes have seen. I can almost hear the echoes of cries for help which never came. And when those eyes are still able to smile and look beyond the pain. I am humbled by the strength and power of the human spirit," Musserian said of the gathering for Vahram Nahikian.

That experience was told vividly by Nahikian's granddaughter Anaide Nahikian, as she recounted the family's story, "A survivor himself, Vahram Nahikian also represents the persecution and sacrifice of two generations before him: his father, Dr. Nechan Nahiguan, an intellectual and leader who was killed during his resistance in the 1915 Genocide, along with most of his family members, and his grandfather, Priest Der Vahram Nahiguan, Martyr for his faith and killed with his family in the 1895 Hamidian Massacres."

"An example of our Armenian forefathers' resilience and tenacity, Vahram Nahikian illustrates the determination that gave strength and hope through the darkness of the Genocide," said Anaide Nahikian. "The legacy

and memory of our past lives in all of us today. We continue to rebuild, to contribute to our communities, and to exemplify the enduring power of our Christian faith, family values, and persistence of our Armenian heritage."

Brownsberger of Belmont presented the proclamation from Gov. Deval Patrick. "It is very meaningful to show respect to the survivors and always uplifting for me to do so, said Brownsberger, "It reminds us how fortunate we are and helps us to keep in the front of our minds the goal of preventing future genocide."

Koutoujian, a parishioner at Holy Cross and actively involved in the Armenian-American community, presented a citation. "I was honored to join Mr. Nahikian and his family as our community gathered to celebrate his birthday and his contribution to our shared heritage," Sheriff Peter Koutoujian said. "His personal account of the extreme hardships suffered by our ancestors allows us to remain connected to the events that changed the destiny of our people."

The commemoration committee is already planning the 99th State House Commemoration that will take place on Friday, April 11, 2014.

Australian Parliamentarians Condemn Visit of Genocide Denier McCarthy

AUSTRALIA, from page 1

"Australian POWs recorded the marches, the massacres and the complete destruction of Armenian churches, villages and city quarters. ANZAC servicemen also rescued survivors across the Middle East."

"Today I acknowledge the tragic events of 1915 and affirm my commitment to never forget what happened to the Armenian people who were effectively eliminated from the homeland they had occupied for nearly 3,000 years."

She added: "This week I noted a humanitarian plea to assist people in the Philippines who were the victims of natural disaster, and I want to end this speech by noting that Australia's first major international humanitarian relief effort was in fact to help Armenian orphans from the genocide."

ANC Australia extended their appreciation to Alexander and Rowland for bringing to light that Armenian Genocide denial, like Holocaust denial, is unacceptable.

Executive Director Vache Kahramanian said: "Mr. Alexander and Ms. Rowland are champions of human rights and champions

of just recognition of the Armenian Genocide. We once again appreciate their support."

Meanwhile, to ensure the support against Armenian Genocide denialism is truly bipartisan, Greens spokesman on multiculturalism Richard Di Natale told the Sydney Morning Herald that the event should not have been held in Parliament.

"Justin McCarthy is a rallying point for those who deny the Armenian Genocide," the senator said. "The Australian Parliament should not be providing Professor McCarthy with a platform because that just lends legitimacy those views."

"To deny the fact that genocide occurred is to disrespect those people who lost their lives and to cause further pain for those who lost loved ones."

During McCarthy's visit, the cancellations of certain events followed mass media coverage by the ABC, Fairfax, News Limited, Macquarie and SBS.

The Executive Council of Australian Jewry also released a powerful statement expressing their deep concerns of McCarthy's visit and denialist views.

Emulate Zoryan Institute and Bring Armenian History in Turkish to Turks

HISTORY, from page 19

field of Genocide and Human Rights Studies, taking a comparative and interdisciplinary approach in its examination of the Jewish Holocaust, the Cambodian Genocide and the Rwandan Genocide, among others, using the Armenian Genocide as a point of reference. In the process, using the highest academic standards, the Institute has strived to understand the phenomenon of genocide, establish the incontestable, historical truth of the Armenian Genocide and raise awareness of it among academics and opinion-makers. In the face of the continuing problem of genocide in the 21st century, the Institute is to be commended for its service to the academic community and is recognized by scholars for providing leadership and a support structure in promoting the cause of universal human rights and

the prevention of genocide."

Despite the herculean effort and outstanding results, Zoryan Institute receives no appreciable financial support or acknowledgment from major Armenian organizations, parties or the state. The institute is supported entirely by private donations. Against it, there exist the full power and unlimited funds of the Turkish state, and more recently Azerbaijan, which attempt to lure scholars to rewrite history according to their versions. As a result, the Turkish State Historic Society reduces the number of 1915 Armenian victims with every new publication; at last count, a few thousand Armenians died of illness and hunger, while the number of Turkish victims of "genocide" perpetrated by the Armenians increases every year and is now more than two million. By the same strategy,

the number of Azeri dead in the Khojalu "genocide" keeps increasing with every publication.

Dialogue between two conflicting parties can be meaningful only after both parties are aware of the truth and the facts. Even though the Turkish state has not allowed the truth and the facts of 1915 to come out until recently, there are now clear signs that the taboos about 1915 are finally broken and that there is an emerging "common body of knowledge" among the Turkish citizens and more importantly, among the opinion makers. Zoryan contributed immensely to the development of this "common body of knowledge" through conferences, seminars, and the books it helped publish, by authors such as Yair Aeron, Taner Akçam, Wolfgang Gust, Roger Smith, Vahakn Dadrian, Rifat Bali and many others.

Given all this, I submit that Armenians should support the Zoryan Institute so that it can continue its work developing the common body of knowledge to be shared by the Armenians and Turks. Hopefully, shared history will help these neighboring people reconcile with their pasts and such reconciliation will help secure a future for generations to come.

I will elaborate on the second target of how to convey the truth to the general population of Turkey, and its challenges, in a separate article.

(Raffi Bedrosyan is the director of port lands & civil infrastructure at Waterfront Toronto and can be contacted at rbedrosyan@waterfronttoronto.com.)



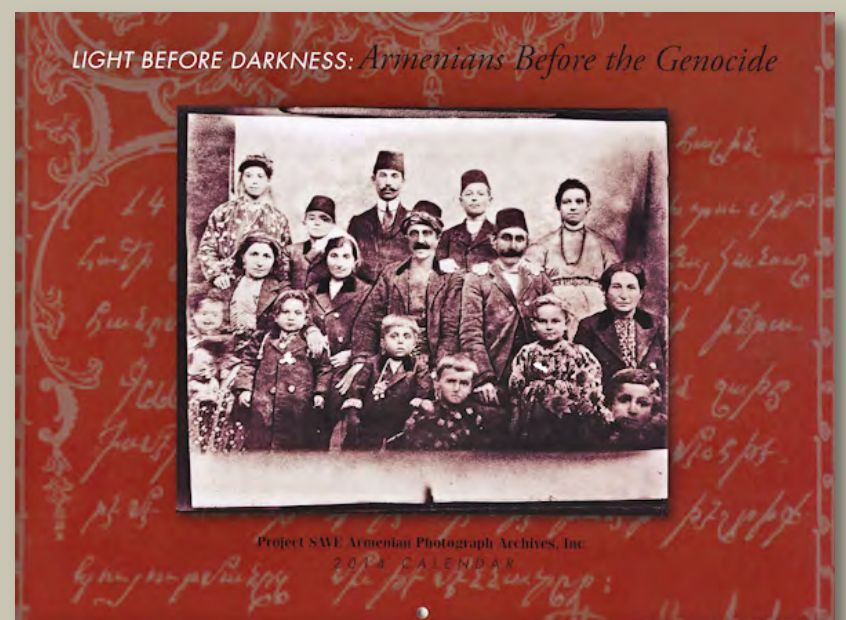
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We wish our readers a Happy New Year and a Merry Armenian Christmas.

See you in 2014!



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LIGHT BEFORE DARKNESS:
Armenians Before the Genocide

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