

# THE ARMENIAN Mirror-Spectator

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## Putin Faces Protests in Armenia

### Agreements Signed with Government

GUMRI (Combined Sources) – Hundreds of people marched in Yerevan on Monday to denounce visiting Russian

Some of the estimated crowd of 500 in central Yerevan held up banners declaring “Putin, go home” or “No to the USSR,” a reference to the Russian leader’s efforts to bind former Soviet republics together more closely in economic and security alliances.

Police in Yerevan said they detained 110 protesters, the local news agency Arminfo reported.

Putin flew to Gumri on Monday for talks on Armenia’s decision in September to join Russia, Belarus and Kazakhstan in a Customs Union, which he touted as having already brought “tangible dividends.” He went to the capital later in the day.

Putin has made clear Moscow wants to increase its influence in the strategic region sandwiched between Russia, Turkey, Iran and the oil and gas deposits of the Caspian Sea basin.

“We are going to strengthen our position in the South Caucasus, drawing on the best of what we have inherited from ancestors and good relations with all countries in the region,”

Putin told a Russian-Armenian regional forum. “Participation in the Customs Union ... already is bringing Russia, Kazakhstan and Belarus tangible dividends.”

see PUTIN, page 2

### Armenia Fund 2013 Telethon Raises more than \$22.6 Million

LOS ANGELES – The 16th annual Hayastan All-Armenian Fund Telethon on Thanksgiving Day raised more than \$22.6 million. The telethon this year was dedicated to “En Route Artsakh,” to raise funds for the construction of the Vardenis-Martakert Highway, which is expected to be a boon to the further socio-economic development of



Students from the Arshag Dickranian School presented a check at the Armenia Fund Telethon, above, with Mark Geragos.

Artsakh and Armenia alike. The highway will be of 116 kilometers in length.

Last year the telethon “Our Village” of the Hayastan All-Armenian Fund collected \$21.4 million.

see TELETHON, page 16

### Vartivarian, Kalaydjian Receive Journalism Awards from the Diaspora Ministry

YEREVAN – The Armenian Ministry of Diaspora awarded journalists from various Diasporan communities for their contributions to Diasporan newspapers and online multilingual magazines by covering community materials and also for contributing to the Ministry of Diaspora’s online newspaper *Hayern Aysor*.

On the fifth anniversary of the establishment of the ministry, Minister of Diaspora Hranush Hagopian named this year’s 14 recipients, among whom were Baydzig Kalaydjian, the executive director of the Tekeyan Cultural Association in Boston, and Hagop Vartivarian, the co-chairman of the three-person editorial board of the ADL.

Before coming to Boston, Kalaydjian was the editor of the ADL’s *Zartonk* newspaper in Beirut.

Vartivarian is a member of the Central Board of the Tekeyan Cultural Association.

The other winners are: Ararat Ghugasian (Spain); Susanna Khachatryan (Georgia); Nectar Balian-Harutyunyan (Egypt); George Sahagov (Uzbekistan); Narine Gonchayan (Aleppo); Anna Karapetyan (Denmark); Donara Mkrtchyan (Russia); Amalia Isayan (Moscow); Yeranush Tahmazian (Iran); Yerazig Harutyunyan (Krasnodar) and Narine Mooradian (Ukraine).



Vladimir Putin and Serge Sargsisian visited the Russian military base in Gumri.

President Vladimir Putin on Monday, December 2, and protest against plans to join a Moscow-led customs union.



Prof. Taner Akcam, left, with Dr. Rolf Hosfeld of Lepsiushaus

### Taner Akcam Teaches ‘Genocide 101’ in Germany

BERLIN – Two classes of high school students in northern Germany had the rare opportunity to learn about the Armenian Genocide from one of the most authoritative researchers on the topic, Prof. Taner Akcam from Clark University in Worcester, Mass.

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

During his brief visit to Germany over the Thanksgiving holidays November 26-29, Akcam also lectured for adults, among them a seminar group at the Free University in Berlin, and a broader general public at the Potsdam University and the Lepsiushaus in Potsdam. For Akcam it was not foreign territory. As the dean of the philosophy department of the Potsdam University noted in introducing him, Akcam had found political asylum in Germany after his escape from prison in Turkey, where he had been sentenced for articles he had written about the Kurds. In 1996, he took a degree from Hannover University with a thesis on the Armenian Genocide and then worked at the Hamburg Institute for Social Research, before moving the US, where he studied at the University of Minnesota and Michigan, and went on to a position at Clark University.

see GERMANY, page 12

## NEWS IN BRIEF

### President Hosts Iraqi Foreign Affairs Minister

YEREVAN (Armenpress) – Armenian President Serge Sargsian hosted the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Iraq, Hoshiyar Zebari, this week.

Sargsian welcomed the guest and stated that this was a follow-up to a visit by Deputy Prime Minister of Iraq Rowsch Nuri Shaways to Yerevan to participate in the second session of the Intergovernmental Commission.

During the meeting, the two parties discussed how they can strengthen the Armenian-Iraqi political dialogue and further develop economic cooperation between the two nations.

### Armenia Defeats Turkey at Chess Tournament

ANTAYLA, Turkey (Armenpress) – The Armenian men’s chess team defeated the Turkish nation team with a score of 3-1 on Tuesday.

Vladimir Hakobyan finished the first game. He played to a draw with Dragan Solak. The match ended in the 36th step. Team leader Levon Aronyan forced his rival Alexander Ipatov to surrender in the 39th step. Tigran Petrosyan also played to a draw with the Turkish competitor Emre Kani. Gabriel Sargsyan finished the last game. The Armenian grandmaster achieved a victory against Mustafa Yilmaz after the 4th step.

### Delegation Led by Armenia’s Parliament Speaker to Visit India

YEREVAN (Armenpress) – At the invitation of the speaker of the House of the People of the Parliament of the Republic of India, Meira Kumar, the delegation led by the Speaker of the National Assembly of the Republic of Armenia Hovik Abrahamyan left for India on an official visit on December 4. The delegation comprises the Chairman of the National Assembly Standing Committee on Foreign Relations Artak Zakaryan, the Chairman of the Standing Committee on Territorial Management and Local Self-Government Stepan Margaryan, the head of Armenia-India Friendship Group Araik Hovhannisyian, as well as National Assembly deputies Lyudmila Sargsyan, Armen Rustamyan, Ishkhan Khachatryan and Tevan Poghosyan.

During the official visit the speaker of the National Assembly of the Republic of Armenia will have meetings with the President Pranab Mukerjee, Foreign Minister Salman Khurshid and Kumar.

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# Thanks, Nora!

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## ARMENIA

## News From Armenia

## Iraqi FM Pays Tribute to Genocide Victims

YEREVAN (Armenpress) – The Minister of Foreign Affairs of Iraq Hoshiyar Zebari on December 3 visited the Tsitsernakaberd Memorial and laid a wreath at the Eternal Flame.

Zebari was hosted by the President Serge Sargsisian.

Iraq has not yet officially recognized the Armenian Genocide, which was recognized and condemned by about 20 countries of the world.

## Armenia Improves in Corruption Index

YEREVAN (Armenpress) – A global civil society organization leading the fight against corruption, Transparency International, recently published its 2013 Corruption Perception Index (CPI). Armenia ranked 94th among 177 countries. Armenia improved its position by 11 spots.

The Corruption Perceptions Index scores countries on a scale from 0 (highly corrupt) to 100 (very transparent). While no country has a perfect score, two-thirds of countries score below 50, indicating a serious corruption problem.

The Corruption Perceptions Index ranks countries and territories based on how corrupt their public sector is perceived to be. A country or territory's score indicates the perceived level of public sector corruption on a scale of 0-100, where 0 means that a country is perceived as highly corrupt and 100 means it is perceived as very clean. A country's rank indicates its position relative to the other countries and territories included in the index.

## Conductor Presents Khachaturian Letter

YEREVAN (Arminfo) – The Philharmonic Orchestra of Russia conducted by Vladimir Spivakov presented a concert in November within the framework of the International Festival celebrating Aram Khachaturian. Soprano Hasmik Papyan, mezzo-soprano Juliet Galstyan and baritone Vasily Ladyuk performed at the concert.

The concert was dedicated to the 80th anniversary of the founder of the chamber orchestra of Armenia, Zare Sahakyants.

After the concert, Spivakov presented Armenia's culture minister with Aram Khachaturian's original letter to the physician Khodorov written in 1975.

A second concert took place on November in Gumri within as part of the "Gumri Cultural Center of the CIS 2013" campaign. Spivakov was among those who extended a helping hand to Armenia after the Spitak earthquake in 1988.

## Unified Cross Memorial Unveiled in Yerevan

YEREVAN (Public Radio of Armenia) – President Serge Sargsisian attended on Monday the opening ceremony of the Unified Cross Memorial in Yerevan which symbolizes the centuries-long friendship of the Armenian and Russian peoples. The memorial was unveiled by the co-chairs of the Armenian-Russian intergovernmental commission, the Prime Minister of Armenia Tigran Sargsisian and Russian Minister of Transportation Maxim Sokolov.

The replica of the Memorial, which bears the inscription "Blessed is the centuries-long friendship of the Armenian and Russian peoples," was installed in 1997 on the occasion of the 850th anniversary of Moscow in the center of the city, at the Nikitski Gates Park. The Memorial was created by a group of authors headed by Frid Soghoian and architects Razmik and Tigran Manoukians.

The memorial is made of white and grey granite: it depicts two women who represent the Armenian and Russian nations. They bow to the cross – the symbol of their common faith – and protect it at the same time. The choice of color and material for the Memorial is consonant to its meaning, while the size of the Memorial serves to provide a sense of monumentality.

# Putin Faces Protests in Armenia

PUTIN, from page 1

"Despite the unfavorable external economic conjuncture in the latest years, the GDP of the trio grew by 1.3 percent in the first half of 2013. The elimination of the customs and administrative obstacles contributes to the growth of trade circle," Putin noted.

Putin said that within the frameworks of the Customs Union the volumes of the trade have grown by 2 percent in January-August of this year without taking into account the fuel-energy sector.

Putin said that under an agreement signed Monday to regulate natural gas deliveries to Armenia, Moscow will forgo 30-percent export duties. Russia will supply Armenia gas at a price of \$189 per 1,000 cubic meters, he said.

Russian state gas export monopoly Gazprom also said on Monday it would take over full ownership of its subsidiary ArmRosgazprom, by acquiring the remaining 20 percent of shares from Armenia.

Russia is the biggest foreign investor in Armenia and its largest trading partner. Bilateral trade grew 22 percent to \$1.2 billion last year. Most trade has been imports to Armenia.

In 2010 Russia extended its lease on a military base in Gumri. The presidents visited the base on Monday.

After the official welcome ceremony at Gumri's Shirak Airport, Sargsisian and Putin attended the opening ceremony of the second Armenian-Russian Inter-Regional Forum on "Russia-Armenia: The Customs Union." Both offered opening remarks.

Before that Sargsisian and Putin attended an exhibition presenting the



Vladimir Putin and his Armenian counterpart Serge Sargsisian signed agreements.

regions of Armenia and Russia.

At the State Drama Theatre of Gumri the presidents followed the ceremony of putting on line the fifth energy unit of the Hrazdan Thermal Power Plant.

The presidents laid a wreath at the memorial to the victims of the 1988 devastating earthquake in Spitak. The memorial is dedicated also to the rescuers, to all countries and peoples that lent a helping hand to Armenia after the disaster. December 7 will mark the 25th anniversary of the earthquake.

As Sargsisian told a news conference, this week, parliament will ratify a military cooperation agreement, enabling Armenia to purchase Russian weapons at domestic prices. The Armenian leader also informed Putin on Armenia's activities ahead of joining the CU and unified economic space, with the Russian President pledging Moscow's assistance.

Also, the parties agreed to continue efforts to boost trade and Russian

investments in Armenia, create joint enterprises and promote scientific and hi-tech cooperation.

The Karabagh conflict settlement was also on the agenda, with Russia welcoming the renewal of direct talks between Armenian and Azerbaijani leaders. Putin further vowed to continue efforts to promote political settlement of the issue.

Asked about Russia's actions in case of a possible Azeri aggression, Putin noted that even hypothetical discussion of the matter would be counterproductive: "the more often we repeat those words, the less chances we have for peaceful settlement." "We hope for both sides to show common sense and will to solve the conflict," Putin concluded, yet again urging a political and diplomatic solution to the issue.

(Reuters, Armenpress, Armenian Radio and PanArmenian.net contributed to this report.)

## Alaverdi: Mining Town Facing Employment Versus Environment Conundrum

By Gohar Abrahamyan

ALAVERDI (ArmeniaNow) – Alaverdi, a small industrial town spread on the hillsides of the narrow Debed river canyon, holds a copper-smelting giant in its claws.

Situated about 160 kilometers north of Yerevan, in Armenia's Lori province, Alaverdi is one of the largest industrial centers of the country, as well as an 'apple of discord' between environmentalists and mining companies.

In the 18th century Greek miners built a plant in Alaverdi, then in 1887 it was developed by the French, and in the 1960s Alaverdi joined the ranks of Soviet towns as a major ferrous metallurgy and chemical industry centers. Alaverdi's copper-smelting plant is the only full-cycle plant in the entire South Caucasus, but only the lower floors used for ore extraction and enrichment are operated today, which is done to preserve the environment of the Debed river valley.

Only tumbledown, plundered and empty production facilities occupying a vast territory in the town are testimony today to the town's once industrial glory. The current image of the town is reflected in the sky in the form of a thick layer of dust formed out of copper smelting plant emissions and waste.

Despite warnings by environmentalists that the situation in the town is critical, that it is the cause of respiratory diseases, tumors, the folks in Alaverdi skillfully circumvent these views and have their own justification.

"It was worse in the Soviet times, there was no air to breathe, now it has become a bit better. But what should we do? This is our job. Should we work?

If the factory closes down and 600-700 people have to leave Armenia, what will be then?" said 53-year-old resident Suren Sargsyan, who also works at the local plant.

Manes & Vallex CJSC, which is part of the Vallex Group Companies, in 1997 revitalized the copper smelting plant after it idled for several post-Soviet years. In 2002 Manes & Vallex was renamed Armenian Copper Program (ACP).

Vallex Group Companies spokesman Vahran Avagyan said that as of late October 2013 the ACP company had 663 employees, whose average monthly wages as of the same month was about 180,000 drams (about \$450).

Alaverdi deputy mayor Artur Varosyan said that the town has about 14,000 residents, and the main employer in the town is the ACP plant providing job to 80 percent of local workers. Some 400-500 Alaverdi residents are employed in the nearby Teghut mine.

According to Varosyan, as a result of concerns voiced by the town authorities and environmental for years in 2012 the company relocated the main source of emissions, the chimney, from the height of 780 meters to that of 1,078 meters, and according to industry officials, the air pollution in the town has been substantially reduced.

Still, Ecolur NGO head Inga Zarafyan told ArmeniaNow that while there is a positive difference in the emission data for 2008 and 2012, the situation in general is far from being good.

"If in 2008, the situation was critical, then in 2012 it quite normalized, but in order to overcome the 2008 critical situation they only relocated the pipe, transferring the situation to another place, the forest. Now the forest is virtually disappearing, as it can't stand these emissions," said Zarafaryan,

adding that the company should install filters and use new technology.

People in Alaverdi do not like talking about public health in their town, meanwhile many diseases there may have been caused by the level of air pollution. Doctors also prefer not to speak about problems. They give assurances that no abnormal births have happened in the town in recent years.

Roza Machkalyan, who has worked at the Alaverdi Medical Center's maternity ward for more than 30 years and is now head of the maternity welfare clinic, said that in the 1980s, when 900-1,000 were born annually that had up to nine such cases, whereas today when the number of annual births reaches 400 they have two or three cases, while defects incompatible with life are diagnosed and prevented.

"This year there were two cases of a fetal abdominal cyst, but the mothers preferred to give birth. We mostly blame ecology, but today a lot of efforts are made to improve it. Social conditions have also improved. Alaverdi's municipality provides food to our pregnant women," said the doctor.

Varosyan said the Alaverdi community receives funding from the Ministry of Nature Protection which in 2013 amounted to 110 million drams (about \$272,000), in 2014 it is planned to be at the level of 120 million drams (about \$296,000), of which 40 million drams will be provided for the construction of a park, 10 million drams for purchasing new trash cans for household wastes. The funding will also be used for providing vitamins for 425 children attending kindergartens, food for pregnant women, other activities.

(The visit of journalists to the town of Alaverdi was organized by the United Nations Population Fund in Armenia.)



## INTERNATIONAL

## International News

## Armenia Seeks Karabagh Breakthrough

YEREVAN (Arminfo) – According to Foreign Minister of Armenia Eduard Nalbandian, the meeting of the Armenian and Azerbaijani presidents in Vienna on November 19 was constructive.

During a press conference, Nalbandian said that the two countries' presidents charged their foreign ministers to use every opportunity to meet and continue the negotiations to foster the Karabagh peace process.

Minister Nalbandian recalled that it was the first meeting of the presidents since January 2012, since then, the Azeri side had cancelled all meetings. The last time Azerbaijan broke the scheduled meeting was June 2013.

"Hopefully, the Vienna meeting will open new opportunities and the first opportunity will open already tomorrow. Foreign Ministers of Armenia and Azerbaijan are expected to meet in Kyev on sidelines of the OSCE Ministerial Meeting," Nalbandian said. He assured reporters that everything will be done for a possible breakthrough in the negotiation process.

"The willingness of the conflicting parties to resolve the conflict is important, of course, but their willingness to display a realistic approach to settlement of the problem is also important," the minister said.

He said that the proposals published in the five statements of the foreign ministers of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) co-chair countries may become a basis of such realistic approach.

"Armenia supports those approaches. If Azerbaijan does the same, we will get an opportunity to foster the peace process," the minister said.

## EU Delegation Calls Vilnius Summit 'A Success'

BRUSSELS (Armenpress) – Though the main event did not take place and Ukraine did not sign the Association Agreement, representatives of the European Union said they regarded the summit of Vilnius as a success and that the goals set at the start of the first conference of the "Eastern Partnership" were fulfilled.

The head of the delegation of the European Union, Ambassador Traian Hristea, stated confirmed this sentiment at a press conference convened at the center of the European Union on December 3. Hristea added that the Declaration was the most important document adopted during the summit.

## Body of Victim in Latvia Returned to Armenia

KAPAN, Armenia (Armenpress) – Citizen of Armenia, 39-year-old Naira Grigoryan, died as a result of the roof collapse in the Maxima trade center in Riga, Latvia, was born in Kapan. She had lived in Riga with her husband and twin girls for more than 17 years. A few minutes before the tragedy, Grigoryan called her relatives informing that she was returning home. When the roof collapsed, she was at the entrance of the center.

Grigoryan will be buried in her native Kapan. There was a funeral service for her at the Armenian church of Riga on November 25 before her body was sent to Armenia.

## Inaugural Gathering of Hye Behavioral Scientists

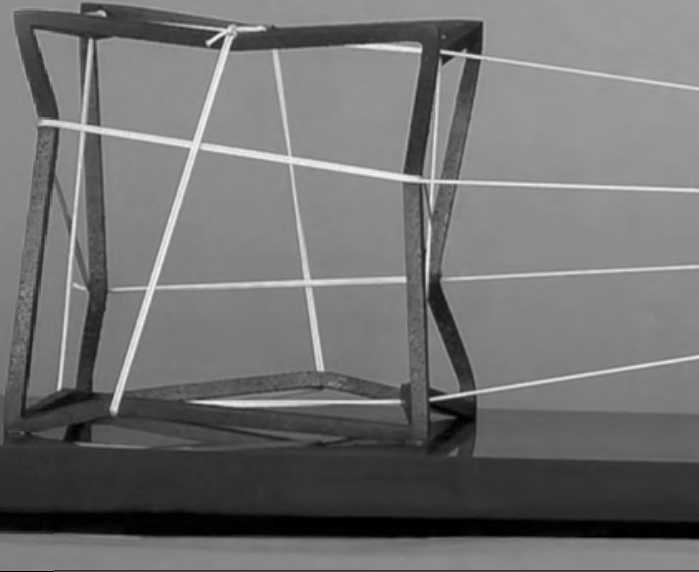
MOSCOW – On November 15, 10 Armenian behavioral scientists convened at the Faculty House of the Higher School of Economics for the inaugural meeting of the Armenian Behavioral Science Association (ABSA) in Russia. Three of these 10 participants were from other nations: Drs. Andranik Tangian from Dusseldorf, Liliya Sultanova from Tashkent and Harold Takooshian from New York City, United States.

BERLIN — Armenian-born sculptor Mikayel Ohanjanyan, on the far right, is having a show at a gallery owned by artist Archi Galentz, pictured standing to his left. Galentz is a member of a prominent family of Armenian artists, with both grandfathers and parents sculptors and painters.



Ohanjanyan was born in 1976 in Yerevan and has been living and working in Florence, Italy, since 2000. He has won many international art competitions.

The exhibit at the Archi Galentz Atelier, titled "Equilibri," opened on November 29 and will go through January 19, 2014.



## Book Launch and Presentation by Katia Peltekian

LONDON – On Friday, November 22, the Tekeyan Cultural Association (TCA) in London organized a gathering at Hye Doon ("Armenian House") in Kensington to launch the newly-published book, *The Times of the Armenian Genocide: Reports in the British Press (1914-1923)*, compiled and edited by Katia Minas Peltekian.

The evening began with an introduction by the TCA of their activities in London, with a background to the activities of the Armenian Genocide Centenary Commemoration Committee (AGCCC) in the lead-up to centenary of the Genocide in 2015. After welcoming the audience and highlighting the obvious relevance of the book especially from a British perspective, the TCA welcomed Peltekian who had independently worked on the compilation and publication of her two-volume work over several years.

Peltekian began her presentation with a brief introduction of her work which compiles more than 1,000 items from British newspapers, stating that not much research is done on the British reaction to the on-going massacres of the Armenians perpetrated by the Turks, although the British were more involved in the region than the US at the time. *The Blue Book* by Lord James Bryce and Arnold Toynbee, published at the end of 1916, is perhaps the only British book that is referred to extensively. She said that although history is not a subject she liked or even studied, she learned much by reading old newspapers.

Peltekian then presented a series of

samples of the more than 1,000 items she had located in the British press, specifically in *The Times* and *The Guardian*. These items included reports written by correspondents of the newspapers with such headlines as "The Extermination of Armenians," "Destroying a Nation," "Torture of Armenian Women," "The Murder of a Race," "Murder of Armenian Children" and "20,000 Armenian Women and Children Massacred in Baku."

However, what was more interesting to the audience was that the British Parliament had debated and discussed the Armenian situation some 70 times during the 10 years between 1914 and 1923 in both the Houses of Lords and Commons. Peltekian said that for most Armenians, Bryce is well-known for his interest in the Armenian Question; however, upon reading the proceedings of the Parliamentary discussions, it comes to light that there were a number of British lords and MPs who continually demanded action from the British government to help the Armenians during and after World War I.

The audience was surprised to learn that the Labor Party had sent a proposal in which it demanded to never let Turkey rule the Armenians again, insisting that the provinces where Armenians constituted the majority of the population before the War would be released from Turkish rule; or that Gandhi himself spoke against the partitioning of the Ottoman Empire and threatened insubordination by the Muslims of the British Empire if Britain ever contemplated the idea of

partitioning of Constantinople from Turkey; or the fact that the Armenians in the city of Manchester had raised enough money to buy two airplanes for the small Republic of Armenia or that Mustapha Kemal Ataturk had ordered his troops to "hate the British and the French with all their might, and instead respect and serve the sacred Turco-German-Bolshevik alliance of 1920."

The presentation also included samples of editorials and letters to the editor written by British and non-British individuals, both from the official and non-official circles, demanding that Britain do the "honorable duty" towards the Armenians. Finally, Peltekian demonstrated some of the appeals that were published in the papers to help the Armenian refugees and orphans. Most of these appeals came from the Lord Mayors of the cities of London and Manchester who had both established funds to help the destitute Armenians. Some of these ads took up one whole page or half page of the newspaper. These ads were published in poster forms as well.

After the presentation, Peltekian answered some questions from the audience after which she signed copies of her book.

The Tekeyan Cultural Association, London Chapter, was established in 1975 and is affiliated with the Tekeyan Trust, a registered charity in the UK. It is dedicated to the preservation and promotion of Armenian cultural identity and to furthering links between the Armenian Diaspora and Armenia.

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# Community News

## US-Armenia Joint Economic Task Force Concludes Successful Meeting in DC

WASHINGTON — Last Friday, the US-Armenia Economic Task Force (USATF) met to discuss a range of issues including mechanisms to deepen economic ties, increasing trade and investment opportunities and advancing market reforms in Armenia, reported the Armenian Assembly of America. Several key announcements were made at the conclusion of the meeting:

- A \$180-million investment by the US firm Contour Global in Armenia's hydropower sector, the largest US private investment in Armenia since its independence in 1991, and the first US investment in Armenia's energy sector;
- The launch of a new visa-free regime for Americans traveling to Armenia, and 10-year multiple entry visas for Armenians; and
- The selection of Armenia as one of 20 focus countries in the US Agency for International Development's (USAID) Science, Technology, Innovation, and Partnerships program with a focus on the areas of clean water and energy.

Additionally, Armenia met all the indicators required by the Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC) to be eligible for a second compact. The MCC Board will meet next month to review the candidate countries up for consideration and make its selections.

Prior to the USATF meeting, USAID Armenia Mission Director Dr. Karen Hilliard and her team sat down with Assembly Executive Director Bryan Ardouny to discuss US assistance to Armenia, areas for economic development and opportunities for growth, good governance, Armenia's expanding IT industry, tourism, agriculture and more. Ardouny also met with US Ambassador to Armenia John Heffern at the State Department.

"We congratulate the members of the Task Force and the results they have achieved together to further strengthen US-Armenia relations," stated Ardouny, adding "We especially appreciate the dedicated efforts of US Ambassador John Heffern and Armenia's Ambassador Tatoul Markarian in the positive outcome."



Assembly Executive Director Bryan Ardouny and US Ambassador to Armenia John Heffern at the US Department of State



Dr. Rox Anderson treats a patient with the laser while Dr. Argine Azatyan and Dr. Lilit Garibyan observe.

## Medical Team Takes State-of-the-Art Lasers To Armenia

### Group Hopes to Raise Funds to Help Locals

BOSTON — On October 24, a team of three dermatology laser specialists from the US arrived in Yerevan. Their mission was to establish a laser clinic, educate local physicians on laser surgery and treat patients with scars. The ultimate goal of the project is to establish a state-of-the-art treatment center in Armenia where



Dr. Rox Anderson, Dr. Lilit Garibyan and Dr. Ray Jalian in front of Geghard Monastery in Armenia

patients of all walks of life can get affordable or free effective treatment for vascular anomalies such as port-wine stains and scars. In order to make this mission successful, our main focus is to establish an educational program to train local Armenian dermatologists and plastic surgeons on the appropriate use of lasers in order to provide continued care to patients in the future.

The team of US physicians consisted of R. Rox Anderson MD, Lilit Garibyan, MD, PhD, and H. Ray Jalian, MD.

Anderson is a professor of dermatology at Harvard Medical School and the director of the Wellman Center for Photomedicine at Massachusetts General Hospital (MGH). He is a world renowned expert on lasers and is the inventor of the many of the current technologies used in cutaneous laser surgery.

Garibyan, an instructor at Harvard Medical School, MGH Dermatology and secretary of the Armenian-American Medical Association in Boston, organized this mission trip. She worked closely with Dr. Gevorg Yaghjian, an associate professor in Department of Plastic Reconstructive Microsurgery in Yerevan, to make this trip possible. Dr. H. Ray Jalian, a clinical instructor at UCLA and visiting scientist at the Wellman Center of Photomedicine, was also a member of the team from the US. Both Garibyan and Jalian are experts in the use of lasers in dermatology and were trained by Anderson at Harvard Medical School. In addition, they are both Armenian and were excited about the opportunity to visit their homeland and give back to the people.

While in Armenia, Anderson gave a lecture on the use of lasers for treatment of scars at the Fourth International Congress of Plastic, Reconstructive and Aesthetic Surgeons. In addition, Garibyan and Jalian gave lectures on the role of laser treatments in dermatology, the use of lasers for vascular anomalies and

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## Illinois Church Marks 55 Years

PALOS HEIGHTS, Ill. — On Sunday, November 17, Archbishop Khajag Barsamian, Primate of the Diocese of the Armenian Church of America (Eastern), visited the Sts. Joachim and Anne Church of Palos Heights, Ill., to mark the parish's 55th anniversary.

Archbishop Barsamian celebrated the Divine Liturgy and afterwards led a veneration prayer for the "Relic of St. Vartan the Brave," which he had brought from the Diocesan Center in New York. The relic — a gift of Karekin II, the Catholicos of All Armenians — was presented to the Eastern Diocese to honor the 45th anniversary of New York's St. Vartan Armenian Cathedral.

As part of the service, the Primate presented parish pastor the Rev. Tavit Boyajian with a floral cape in honor of the 20th anniversary of his ordination into the holy priesthood. Archbishop Barsamian congratulated Boyajian on this milestone.

Later that afternoon, the community gathered for an anniversary banquet at the Hilton hotel in nearby Oak Lawn. Master of ceremonies Rob Koshkarian welcomed guests and introduced the afternoon's program. Sunday School students offered a joyful rendition of the sharagan, Kohanamk ("We give thanks"), in Armenian and English.

The parish presented its "Lay Ministry Award" to community leaders Jack Cholakian and Janna Simonian.

"It is always a joy for me to visit this community," said Barsamian. "The foundation of Sts. Joachim and Anne Church was laid long ago, and it is through the hard work and dedicated service of generations of parishioners that this community has grown over the years. Today, it is the task of the new generation to take up the responsibility of continuing this rich legacy in Palos Heights, and I am confident that this



Archbishop Barsamian leads a veneration prayer for the "Relic of St. Vartan the Brave."

parish is blessed with leaders of that caliber."

The Sts. Joachim and Anne Church was first consecrated in West Pullman on November 30, 1958, and was re-consecrated in Palos Heights in 1983. The church serves a community that extends from Chicago's Southwest suburbs to all of Northern Indiana.

Sts. Joachim and Anne's history began in the early 1880s when young men, mainly from the province of Kharpert and its villages of Peri, Mazgerd and Pertad, arrived in West Pullman, where they settled and started families. Their numbers grew dramatically after the 1915 Armenian Genocide.

In 1957, a suitable building was bought and renovated. The first Sts. Joachim and Anne parish sanctuary was consecrated in 1958. Soon afterwards, an existing property adjacent to the building was purchased and through the dedication and generosity of its members, all the remaining debts were paid. By 1965, it was

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## COMMUNITY NEWS

## 'Our Mission in Motion' Highlights AMAA Annual Meeting Banquet and Concert

WALTHAM, Mass. — The 94th Annual Meeting Banquet and Concert of the Armenian Missionary Association of America (AMAA) was held at the Westin Waltham-Boston Hotel, on Saturday October 12.

More than 165 guests attended the dinner and concert which featured Grace Kelly, a renowned saxophonist, singer, composer and lyricist.

The theme of the evening was "Our Mission in Motion - Celebrating our Precious Children." Ken Kevorkian, AMAA Board Member and co-chair of the Development Committee, welcomed the guests and thanked all who participated in the success of the event. A group from the Watertown, MA Armenian Memorial Church Choir, under the leadership of Choir Director June Baboyan, sang the American and Armenian National Anthems with the participation from the attendees. Rev. Avedis Boynerian, pastor of the church, offered the Prayer of Invocation.

Master of Ceremonies Carol Ishkhanian welcomed the guests and introduced the program's participants. Attending the event were guest members of the clergy Rev. Vasken Kouzouian, Holy Trinity Armenian Apostolic Church, Cambridge; Rev. Antranig Baljian and his wife Arpineh, St. Stephen's Armenian Apostolic Church, Watertown and the Very Rev. Raphael Andonian, Holy Cross Armenian Catholic Church, Belmont.

AMAA President Dr. Joseph Zeronian

thanked the guests for their presence and support. He highlighted the major achievements of the AMAA during the year, which included the construction of the Bilezikian Elementary and Avedisian Middle and High Schools in Yerevan, Armenia, the opening of Shogh Day Centers in Yerevan and Vanadzor, and the strong and unprecedented financial status of the AMAA.

A video presentation was shown about the Precious Children of Armenia and how the AMAA with its supporters makes a significant change in the physical, social and spiritual needs of these children.

AMAA Board Member Anita Buchakjian introduced the Our Mission in Motion Brochure, highlighting the major construction projects and the AMAA's day-to-day operation projects in 24 countries around the world.

Levon Filian, executive director of the AMAA, in recognition of Armenian cultural month, recited a poem "The Great," by famous Armenian poet Rafael Badgarian. Filian dedicated the poem to our brothers and sisters in Syria and challenged each and every one to make a difference by praying and making a donation to help our community in Syria.

On this occasion, Filian recognized Lucienne Aynilian and Anita Buchakjian for their many years of dedicated service to the AMAA as co-chairs of the Banquet Coordinating and Public Affairs Committees; Tigran Melkonian (US) and Christine Simonyan (Armenia) for their 10 years of faithful service to the AMAA's Child

Sponsorship Program; Lusine Ohanian, coordinator of external relations of the AMAA-Armenia, for her dedicated service to the association; Louisa Janbazian, currently associate editor of the AMAA News and coordinator of the Armenian version of *Our Daily Bread* (Zhatz Mer Hanabazort) which has been published since 1991, for her dedication and service to the AMAA since the early eighties which included the computerization of the AMAA News in the mid-1990s; and Harout Nercessian, AMAA's representative in Armenia, who has served the

AMAA in various capacities for the past 17 years, such as heading the Christian Education department, as operations director and as the AMAA representative since 2011.

The dinner was followed with a musical program featuring Grace Kelly and her band. Kelly

mesmerized the audience with her vocal and musical talents, offering a selection of Jazz pieces such as *Bye Bye Black Bird* and



From left, Lucienne Aynilian, Louisa Janbazian, Lusine Ohanian, Levon Filian, Harout Nercessian, Tigran Melkonian, Anita Buchakjian and Christine Simonyan

*Summer Time* with her improvisations, her own vocal and sax compositions, and Gospel Music featuring her version of *Amazing Grace*.

To support the AMAA's mission for supporting "Our Precious Children," visit the website to make a gift to the AMAA's General Fund.

## Medical Team Takes State-of-the-Art Lasers to Armenia

LASERS, from page 4

updated medical treatments for vascular lesions to an audience of dermatologists and plastic surgeons at Arabkir Medical Center.

In addition to the educational activities, the team evaluated 76 patients in consultation for a variety of scars and vascular malformations. After careful evaluation and discussion of each case, digital photographs were taken and a treatment plan was devised for 44 patients. These 44 patients who were candidates for treatment were treated with a fractional carbon dioxide laser (Lumenis Inc.; Ultrapulse laser system) loaned for this mission by Lumenis Inc. Treatments were performed with the assistance of Dr. Argine Azatyan a plastic surgeon in

Armenia, at the Avangard Medical Center, which is under the direction of Dr. Gagik Stamboltzian. The patients with vascular anomalies, such as port-wine stains, were not treated on this trip because the team did not have the vascular laser in Armenia for proper treatment of these patients. During the evaluations of patients with port-wine stain, it became apparent that several of them had been treated in Armenia with an inappropriate laser that gave these patients hypertrophic facial burn scars. The members of the team said they were confident that with the correct vascular lasers these patients could be treated appropriately.

In light of the success of this trip, the next goal is to develop a long-term plan to obtain

modern, appropriate lasers for permanent placement in a sustainable clinic environment in Yerevan. There is a definite need for lasers to appropriately treat vascular anomalies. There is also a need for fractional lasers to continue to treat the scars on the patient already treated. Scars need laser treatment every two to three months and some patients will need six treatments or more to achieve good results. A long-term goal of the mission is to train local physicians to provide these services on a routine basis to Armenian patients.

This trip was sentimental and emotional for Garibyan, who was born in Yerevan and spent the first 12 years of her life there before moving to Glendale, Calif., in 1991. Her family had to

start from scratch in learning the language and getting acclimated to their new life. The road ahead was not easy but she was determined to take advantage of what this country had to offer. Starting from ESL (English as a Second Language) level zero, she worked her way up to graduating with honors with a bachelor's degree from UCLA in microbiology and molecular genetics. Because of her exceptional academic accomplishments and promising future, she was accepted to the prestigious MD/PhD training program at Harvard Medical School in 2002. She graduated from the program in 2009 after which she started her dermatology residency at the MGH/Harvard Combined Dermatology Program.

It was here that she met Anderson, who became her mentor and led her into joining his laboratory to work on translational research involving devices and lasers. At the time Anderson, in addition to his leadership roles and clinical responsibilities at MGH, was volunteering his time once a year in Vietnam to help start a vascular anomalies clinic there. He had helped bring different types of lasers to Vietnam and trained the doctors there to treat kids with vascular lesions. The clinic had become very successful in reaching out and successfully treating hundreds of needy children. After seeing this, Garibyan thought a program like the Vietnam one could be executed in Armenia, especially when she found out that there are no such lasers or treatment options for kids or adults there. Therefore, she worked closely with Dr. Gevorg Yaghjian to organize this trip and recruited her mentor, Anderson, and close friend, Jalian, to join her.

"It was so great to go back to Armenia after being away for more than 21 years and to have something to give back to the people. This trip was one of the most rewarding and gratifying experiences I have had in my life time. And I hope we can continue doing this every year," Garibyan said after her trip. "Despite the success of our first trip, we are not stopping here. The plan is to continue doing this every year until we have reached our goal in establishing a state-of-the-art laser center in Armenia and have trained the doctors there on how to do laser treatments for all patients regardless of their financial status."

Garibyan and Jalian plan to start a foundation to raise money for obtaining the necessary lasers as well as funding for these trips and they welcome any help that the Armenian community is willing to give. Those interested in helping can contact Dr. Lilit Garibyan at lgaribyan@partners.org

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## COMMUNITY NEWS

# Former BYU Quarterback Sarkisian Hired as Next USC Football Coach

SALT LAKE CITY, Utah (Deseret News) — Steve Sarkisian, the former Brigham Young University quarterback and current Washington Huskies head coach, has been hired to become the next head coach at the University of Southern California (USC), according to multiple sources.

ESPN reported the news Monday, citing multiple sources, and the Associated Press announced the news as well, though neither Washington nor USC have made an announcement.

Sarkisian is in his fifth year as head coach of



Steve Sarkisian

the Huskies program. During that time, he has amassed a 34-29 record, including 24-21 during Pac-12 play.

The former Cougar was on the UCLA Trojans' coaching staff from 2001-03, then again from 2005-08. He worked with two Heisman Trophy winners — Carson Palmer and Matt Leinart. During Sarkisian's time as the team's offensive coordinator in 2007 and '08, USC went 22-3.

Sarkisian will replace Ed Orgeron, who led the Trojans to a 6-2 record after Lane Kiffin was

fired in late September.

According to the *Los Angeles Times*, Sarkisian interviewed for the position over the weekend. Boise State's Chris Petersen and Vanderbilt's James Franklin were also strong candidates, according to ESPN, but Petersen

withdrew himself from consideration.

Sarkisian played at BYU in 1995 and '96 and finished his Cougar career with 7,464 passing yards and 53 touchdown passes. He also led BYU to a victory in the Cotton Bowl over Kansas State his senior season.

## OBITUARY

### Vedat Arkun: In Memoriam

HENRICO, Va. — Vedat Arkun died on November 3, 2013 here, at the age of 89. He had been struggling with heart and lung disease, as well as diabetes and other medical complications. He was born on June 6, 1924 in Yevtogia/Tokat in the aftermath of the Armenian Genocide.

His father, Yesayi Karagueuzian, and his mother, Baidzar Tashjian, were both born in Sepasdia/Sivas. His mother was an Armenian teacher in the American missionary high school in the city before World War I. Yesayi Karagueuzian, a physician, was able to save his own life and that of his immediate family while serving in the Ottoman army, but had to adopt a new name and identity as Dr. Shevket Arkun (while sounding Turkish, Arkun is derived from the Classical Armenian "arkuni"). Vedat's paternal uncles were executed in Sivas, while their large families were deported and killed, with only one child known to have survived from each uncle. His maternal grandmother died during the deportations, and his aunt committed suicide by throwing herself in a well in order to

influenced by the knowledge of what happened to most of his family during the Genocide, decided to desert and escape to Soviet Armenia via Greece. Unbeknownst to him, Greece was in a period of détente with Turkey and sent him back to the Turkish military along with a dossier relating everything he had said about his Armenian background. This led to a period in a Turkish military dungeon, until his father and older brother intervened through bribes and connections. In prison, he met the famous writer Aziz Nesin.

In 1951 he finally was released from military service, and was able to return to Tokat, where he opened a shoe store. He stayed there several years. He then moved to Istanbul, where he joined his maternal first cousin once removed, Ohannes Timaksian, chief accountant for the Park Hotel, to also work as an accountant at this luxurious establishment. In Istanbul he became an eyewitness to the September 6-7, 1955 anti-Greek and anti-Armenian riots. What he saw convinced him that Turkey was not a place for Armenians and therefore he left for the United States, where his older brother, Suren/Süreyya Naci Arkun, had already settled.

He soon met and married Adrienne (Adriné) Nazaretian, a New Jersey-born librarian, in 1957. At first in the US he worked at a number of difficult jobs involving heavy labor. One of these was at the Sterling Last Factory, where he inhaled metallic dust and this eventually is thought to have caused pulmonary scarring and inflammation. He managed a number of restaurants, including Horn and Hardarts and Howard Johnsons, but eventually found a job with United Parcel Service as an accounting clerk. He worked there until he retired, and afterwards enjoyed extensive travels with his wife to many countries, including to Turkey.

Except for the first few years, Vedat Arkun and his family lived in Forest Hills, NY, where his in-laws had already settled. He moved with his wife to Henrico in 2012 to be close to his son Aram and his family.

Vedat Arkun was an extraordinarily generous person with a kind heart. He privately helped many acquaintances and relatives in need, even those who at one time may have caused him pain, as

well as contributed to various humanitarian and Armenian causes as much as his means permitted.

Survivors include his wife Adrienne, son Aram (with his wife Knarik and children Mark Antranig and Raffi Vedat), and daughter Susan Baidzar Arkun, as well as his older sister Varsen Alpian (Naciye Alptekin), her children and grandchildren, and the spouses, children and grandchildren of his previously deceased brother and sister Suren/Süreyya Naci Arkun and Pervin Kizak. Donations in memoriam in lieu of flowers are requested to be sent to Doctors Without Borders USA (P.O. Box 5030 Hagerstown, MD 21741-5030), or Project Save (PO Box 236, (65 Main Street, 3rd Floor), Watertown, MA 02471-0236), the Armenian photography archive.



Vedat Arkun

avoid rape at the hands of Turks or Kurds.

Growing up in Tokat, though his father was a respected doctor, there still was the prejudice against Armenians. His older brother and sister bore both Armenian and Turkish names, but he and his younger sister were only given Turkish/Arabic names. The death of his mother while Vedat was still a teenager was a great blow.

Vedat attended St. Georg, an Austrian school in Istanbul, which was closed as a result of the war. He went to visit his older brother, who was serving in the army in Diyarbakir, and then returned to Tokat. He was called to serve in the army in 1947. There, among other things, he served as a military secretary for Behçet Türkmen, and tutored his two young sons, including one who was later to become a foreign minister of Turkey. Later Vedat Arkun,

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## COMMUNITY NEWS

# With Obama in Glendale, Armenians Press Genocide Issues

By Nicole Charky

GLENDALE (*Los Angeles Times*) – Local Armenian leaders on Tuesday used an appearance by President Obama at the DreamWorks Animation studio to request that the White House allow a Smithsonian display of a rug handmade by refugee orphans of the mass genocide about a century ago.

It took about 10 months for Armenian Genocide survivors living at an American-sponsored orphanage to weave and knot the 12-foot-by-18-foot rug, which was scheduled to be displayed at the Smithsonian Castle in Washington, DC, on December 16. However, organizers canceled the exhibit on September 12, saying the White House had declined to loan it.

At a news conference Tuesday, students from the Chamlian Armenian School, representatives from the Armenian National Committee of America and area clergy signed a letter extolling the historical importance of the rug, the Glendale News-Press reported.

A bipartisan group of lawmakers who also support releasing the rug have called it a “pivotal icon related to the Armenian Genocide,” in which an estimated 1.5 million Armenians were killed by Ottoman Turks as the empire was dissolving during World War I.

Historians have concluded the episode was a Genocide, but Turkey – a key US ally in the Middle East – has contended that Turks and



People take pictures of President Obama as he speaks at the DreamWorks Animation studio Tuesday in Glendale.

Armenians were casualties of war, famine and disease.

The White House should simply come clean,” said Armenian National Committee of America Executive Director Aram Hamparian in a statement. “It’s time for the White House to open up about Turkey’s role, and lay out all the facts

about its decision to block the Smithsonian’s exhibit of the Armenian Orphan Rug – a historic, Armenian Genocide-era work of art that speaks powerfully to the common values and shared experiences of the American and Armenian peoples.”

In a pattern common to the last three presi-

dents, Obama pledged, as a candidate stumping for Armenian-American votes in the 2008 campaign, that he would recognize the genocide if he became president. But since taking office, he has resisted labeling the episode as a “genocide,” a move which would anger NATO ally Turkey.

“All we’re seeking is that a piece of American history be exhibited at the Smithsonian. I certainly hope that President Obama will take the right step in this direction and allow for the rug to be exhibited,” Glendale Councilman Zareh Sinanyan said.

The rug, presented in 1925 to President Calvin Coolidge, is in storage as part of the White House collection.

“The rug was a gracious gesture symbolizing the friendship between the American and Armenian peoples. It is part of American history,” said Archbishop Moushegh Mardirossian, prelate of the Western Prelacy of the Armenian Apostolic Church.

Rep. Adam Schiff (D-Burbank) said he intends to host an event in the Capitol featuring the rug and the history of American diplomats and charitable organizations that provided relief for the Genocide victims.

“I will be urging the administration to make the rug available for display at that time and hope for a favorable response,” he said in a statement. “The Armenian Orphan Rug should once again be seen by the American people and the world – as a testament to what happened nearly a century ago, and as part of our commitment to the survivors that we will never forget.”

## Illinois Church Marks 55 Years

ANNIVERSARY, from page 4

time to move the parish from what had been a converted storefront sanctuary to a new home that was specifically Armenian in architecture.

The second location of Sts. Joachim and Anne Church was just next door to the first, and had its groundbreaking on May 30, 1965. Work on the building was completed in less than a year. On April 17, 1966, then Primate Archbishop Sion Manooogian consecrated the church and the hall. The new hall was named after benefactor George Garabedian.

During this period, membership continued to grow with renewed immigration of Armenians from the Middle East. Also, during this era, demographic changes sweeping through Chicago were compelling enough to consider relocation to a suburban site. Accordingly, the West Pullman property was sold in 1974. A new building committee was formed to execute plans for yet another church sanctuary, this time in suburban Palos Heights.

During this third phase, the community built the Hovanessian Cultural Hall, named after benefactors Dr. Raffy and Vicky Hovanessian. Services were held there until the formal sanctuary was built and consecrated in the spring of 1983.



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## COMMUNITY NEWS

# Knights of Vartan Ararat Lodge Holds Annual Awards Gala

## Noubar Afeyan, Sarkis Gennetian and Medzorians Honored

CAMBRIDGE – The Knights of Vartan Ararat Lodge No. 1 of Boston held its 2013 Awards Gala on November 8 and paid tribute to four people who have made a difference in the Knights, Daughters and the community at large. They are former commander Sarkis Gennetian (Faithful Knight Award), Noubar Afeyan (Community Leader Award), former chairwoman Eva Medzorian (Woman of the Year) and her husband, former commander Jack Medzorian (Man of the Year).

This marked the first time that a husband and wife were honored jointly as Man and Woman of the Year by the Knights and Daughters.

Afeyan is managing partner and CEO of Flagship Ventures, a venture capital firm he founded in 1999. During his 25-year career as an inventor, entrepreneur, CEO and venture capitalist, he has co-founded and helped build 25 life science and technology start-ups. He is also a senior lecturer at MIT's Sloan School of Management, where, since 2000, he has been teaching a course on technology entrepreneurship, innovation and leadership. A frequent guest speaker at technology forums throughout the US, he has written numerous scientific publications and patents since earning his PhD in biochemical engineering from MIT in 1987.

In addition to serving on several public and private company boards, he is a member of the Board of Overseers of the Boston Symphony Orchestra as well as the Board of Trustees of the Skolkovo Institute of Science and Technology in Moscow and serves on several



From left, Jirair Demirchian, Dr. Noubar Afeyan and Ara Balikian

advisory boards including the World Economic Forum's Emerging Technology Council.

He is active in several projects related to Armenia, including Armenia 20/20, a board member of its National Competitiveness Foundation and the Armenian General Benevolent Union (AGBU), as well as serving on the board of AmeriaBank.

In 2013 he received the Armenian Prime Minister's commemorative medal for patriotic activities and in 2012 the Order of St. Gregory the Illuminator and in 2008 the Ellis Island Medal of Honor. Afeyan has contributed financially to St. Stephen's Armenian Elementary School, the Armenian Heritage Foundation, the Armenian Assembly of America, Sayat Nova Dance Company, YerazArt and many community organizations.

Afeyan, said, "I am aware of the charitable projects that the Knights undertake and the volunteer activism they have shown in the community for a long time. We have supported many of the same projects and at the local and national level and many of my friends are active members of the Knights."

Gennetian was born and raised in Istanbul. His family eventually moved to the US after being besieged by the riots of 1955 in their hometown, facing blatant discrimination and danger. He settled in Springfield, Mass., in 1956. He was drafted into the army in 1960 and eventually, showing the same tenacity that he has in everything else, he was named Soldier of the Year in 1961.

He met his wife, Jeanette, when serving as a deacon at St. John's Armenian Church in



From left, Dr. Noubar Afeyan, Nelson Stepanian, Nigoghos Atinizian, Sarkis Gennetian, Eva Medzorian, Jack Medzorian, Jirair Demirchian, Ara Balikian and Paul Boghosian

Springfield, where she was a member of the choir. The couple married in 1965 and moved to Boston, where he embarked upon his career and the young couple raised their two children, Lisa, who now lives in New York and has three children and Arpie, who lives in New Jersey and also has three children, and son Ari, who contributes much to the Knights of Vartan and joined Ararat Lodge last year.

In 1965 he started working for the Silverman Floor Covering distribution business. Eventually, he became vice president of marketing for the company. When his company was sold in 1989, he joined another, Bornstein Floor Covering, retiring in 1998, one of its top sales managers in the country.

He joined the Ararat Lodge in the 1990s when he was approached by Commander Jack Medzorian. He has often served as a delegate to the Knights' national conventions and has often been consulted because of his precision in explaining protocol issues. He and Medzorian have collaborated to provide assistance to the Knights' Armenian School Support Program that has benefited more than 200 schools in Armenia.

Gennetian has also provided support to the Armenian medical aid programs to shift critical medical supplies and equipment to dozens of hospitals and clinics in Armenia and Karabagh.

He is a regular volunteer at the Perkins School for the Blind in Watertown. He is in charge of the school's plant nursery and was responsible for the plantings on the school grounds. He also helps the students.

Honoree Eva Medzorian was born in 1931 to Avedis and Hripsima Ahigian, both Genocide survivors from Chmishgzsark, arriving in Boston in 1920. She has three siblings, Edward, Alice and Christine. She grew up in Somerville, where she attended public schools, graduating in 1949. She studied voice and then art at the Fine Arts Museum School in Boston.

At an early age, she became a human rights activist, supporting the causes of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., Native American rights as well as those of her countrymen in Armenia.

In the Armenian community, she has been active in numerous organizations, including being a member of the St. James Armenian Church Choir and later chairing the St. James St. Sahag and St. Mesrob Armenian School for several years. As a member of the AGBU she formed two new chapters. In 1988 she was appointed New England District Chair and in 1989 organized the 100-person Armenia State Choir performance at Symphony Hall.

In 1987 she joined the Cambridge Yerevan Sister City Association (CYSCA) and is a member of its board of directors. In 1989, she organized the first Armenian Film Festival at Harvard's Carpenter Center. Organizing its first youth exchange in 1994, she won an award from Sister Cities International. She has organized programs to raise awareness about TB in Armenia. She also visits Armenia regularly to personally assess the needs of various communities. In 1990, she, along with Barbara Merguerian and Olga Proudian, founded the Armenian International Women's Association (AIWA).

She is a member of the Daughters of Vartan

Arpi Otyag. She has received many awards, some with her husband and some on her own, from the Armenian Student Association, the AGBU and the New England Women in Cable TV for the numerous documentaries on Armenia she has put together.

Jack Medzorian was born in Somerville in 1926, to Marshall and Skynig Medzorian, who immigrated to the US in the early 1900s from their native Kharpert. He had one sister, Alma, who died in 2004. The family eventually moved to Arlington. After graduating from high school as class valedictorian, he enlisted in the US Army, serving until 1946. He received his bachelor's degree in business administration and accounting from Boston University.

He married Eva Ahigian in 1955 and together they have raised four children, Ruth, David, John and Mark, and now have five grandchildren.

He and his wife have traveled to Armenia more than 75 times since 1972.

He has been a member of the AGBU in its New England District Committee and has, along with his wife, received AGBU's Outstanding Service Award in 1984. He is a member of the CYSCA Board of Directors, the National Association for Armenian Studies and Research (NAASR) Board of Directors and commander of the Ararat Lodge and twice member of the Knights' National Grand Lodge.

He is also past president of the Council of Armenian Executives.

He initiated CYSCA's government-funded youth exchanges, directing 10 exchange projects for more than 225 students and teachers as well as for professionals from Armenia. Most recently, CYSCA received notice of a new grant from the Open World program funded by Congress, to train young women from Armenia in politics, which is slated to begin in March 2014.

Jack Medzorian initiated the Knights' School Support Program in 1995 and directed a team of volunteers for the Knights' Medical Aid Program that has shipped nine, 40-foot containers to 10 hospitals and 20 clinics in Armenia and Karabagh.

Master of ceremonies for the evening was Ara Balikian, with remarks from Jirair Demirchian, commander of Ararat Lodge. Entertainment was provided by DJ Ram.

Advisors to the tivan are Nageeb Diarbakerly, Armen Mahserjean and Nelson Stepanian.

The program was organized by the Ararat Lodge Executive Committee, Jirair Demirchian (Commander), Hagop Kouyoumjian (Lieutenant Commander), Armen Bogossian (Chaplain), Ervant Kibarian (Secretary), Argishty Chaparian (Treasurer), Aleksan Yildizyan (Master of Ceremonies) and Eric Markarian (Sentinel).

Also included on the gala committee were Hagop Kouyoumjian, Karnig Ostayan and Arakel Yacubian.

— Alin K. Gregorian

# 2014

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# Celebrating 15 Years of Armenian Theater

By Yeghishe Hajakian

ENGLEWOOD, N.J. — The theater has been an integral part of the Armenian culture throughout history. Some 2,000 years ago, Armenian King Ardavazt the Second invited Greek actors to his palace for theatrical performances, and he himself wrote tragedies in the Greek style. The 19th century witnessed actors such as Bedross Atamian and Siranoush. The theater shined in the 20th century in Tiflis, Constantinople and Soviet Armenia, with playwrights such as Yervant Odian and Shirvanzadeh as well as actors including Hratchia Nersessian, Vahram Papazian and many more.

The Mher Megerdchian Theatrical Group of the Greater New York Tekeyan Cultural Association was formed 15 years ago to continue this tradition by presenting Armenian plays on the American stage. The Armenian theater was always welcome by the Armenian Americans and this Tekeyan group has presented theatrical productions continuously, creating much enthusiasm.

Many of Hagop Baronian's works were staged by Mher Megerdchian Group, such as "Once Again Baronian," "The Eastern Dentist" and "Shoghkorkutuh." William Saroyan was summoned to our stage with his "My Heart is in the Highlands," "Comedy of Errors" by Shakespeare, "Servant of Two Masters" by Carlo Goldoni, "Filumena Marturano" by Eduardo de Filippo, "The Trap" by Robert Toma, "Love and laughter" by Krikor Odian and many more.

On November 23 and 24 The Greater New York Armenians had yet another rendezvous at the Dwight Englewood auditorium with the Mher Megerdchian Group for the staging of



All the actors of "The Perils of Politeness" production

Baronian's "Kaghakavaroutian Venasneruh" (The Perils of Politeness).

Baronian wrote this work as a satirical piece published in serial form in Constantinople, poking fun of the Armenian society in general. The manners and mores of the nouveau rich were satirized, without holding back his stinging pen.

Krikor Satamian was instrumental in turning this work in prose into a play and staged it a few years ago in California.

Gagik Garabedian was invited from Armenia as the director of this comedy. He is known as a multi talented director in Armenia. He has been the choreographer of the AGBU Antranig dance group for almost 30 years.



Actors, including Mher Megerdchian Theatrical Group founder Hagop Vartivarian, on stage



Director Gagik Garabedian



A scene from "Perils of Politeness"

This staging included veteran actors Harout Chatmajian, Missak Boghossian, Talar Zokian, Harout Takvorian, Harout Barsoumian, Talin Karagulleian and Diran Jebejian, among others. This comedy had music, singing and dancing. Smiles and laughter were in the air. Some in the audience even joined in singing the songs performed on stage.

This is the culmination of the 15th year of the founding of The Mher Megerdchian Theatrical Group of the Greater New York Tekeyan Cultural Association. It started with Baronian and today again it celebrates with Baronian. It has travelled to Boston,

Philadelphia, Montreal, Chicago, Los Angeles, New York and even Yerevan.

The brainchild responsible for founding the group is Hagop Vartivarian, who has also been the chairman of the Mher Megerdchian group since its inception.

He has dedicated his endless energy for many years as well as his financial support. His greatest desire was to see that our efforts should blossom into the great success of the Armenian theater which he loves with a great passion. As a result, the organizing committee honored him with a recognition plaque during the cast party on Sunday, November 24.

## St. Peter Armenian Church in Upstate NY Sponsors Weekend Holiday Event

WATERVLIET, N.Y. — The women of St. Peter Armenian Church have been working tirelessly for weeks preparing for the annual Holiday Bazaar over the weekend of December 7 and 8.

This two-day event will feature a variety of popular Armenian foods to stock up on, as well as musical entertainment, local vendors and a cash and children's raffle.

Many traditional Armenian foods will be available, including to-go, as will traditional dessert items along with California dried fruits and homemade jams.

Santa will be on hand for photo opportunities the entire weekend. In addition, Victor the Clown will provide free balloon art creations for the children, and Phil Singer will offer black and white caricature sketches for \$5.

A variety of vendors will display their handiwork while the St. Peter Bookstore

will feature Armenian-made items in time for the gift-giving season. And to help prepare those gifts to be placed under the tree, there will be a "Wrap a Gift, Give a Gift" free gift-wrapping station offered. Just leave a donation that will be put towards assisting families in need during the Holiday season.

The Women's Guild of the St. Peter Armenian Church sponsors this Bazaar, and this year they are excited to present a newly-published Armenian Cookbook that will be on sale. "There is so much offered over the course of two exciting days at St. Peter Armenian Church," said Sharon Foley, Women's Guild chairwoman "We hope all of you plan to join us for the festivities that will be sure to put you into the holiday spirit."

The event is open to the public with free parking and admission. For more information, contact the Church office.

# Arts & Living

## AGBU NYSEC to Host Sixth Annual Concert

NEW YORK – The AGBU New York Special Events Committee's (NYSEC) signature Performing Artists in Concert is quickly approaching and tickets are available. The sixth annual event will take place on Saturday, December 7 at Weill Recital Hall at Carnegie Hall.

This year's NYSEC concert will be dedicated to the 25th anniversary of the 1988 earthquake that devastated Armenia. The commemorative event will bring together young talents from Bulgaria, France, Mexico and the US. Included in that international ensemble are: Tomas Barreiro (composer and conductor); Pierre Bedrossian (oboe, duduk and English horn); Ani Kalayjian (cello); Henrik Karapetyan (violin and viola); Solange Merdianian (mezzo-soprano); Nazig Tchakarian (violin/artistic director); Varta Tchakarian (piano) and Adam Tendler (piano).

Through the AGBU Scholarship Program, each artist has received an AGBU Performing Arts Fellowship that supported his or her training at some of the world's finest institutions, such as the National Music Conservatory of Paris, the Juilliard School of Music, Yerevan State Komitas Conservatory and the Royal Northern College of Music in Manchester. Their influences are diverse: Tomas Barreiro's *Rossignol Mecanique*, which will make its world premiere at the event, is inspired by the sounds of his native Mexico City, as well as New York and Paris. It is a variation of *The Death of the Nightingale*, the piece that made Barreiro a winner in AGBU's 2012 Sayat Nova International Composition Competition and earned him the prize to showcase his work at Carnegie Hall.

AGBU Performing Arts Department Director Hayk Arsenyan awarded Barreiro the Carnegie Hall Special Prize at the competition gala concert last year, which was organized by AGBU France and paid tribute to Sayat Nova. He commented, "Everyone who was present for that performance in Paris was amazed by the organic way *The Death of the Nightingale* wove together Armenian and Mexican traditional art. I am immensely excited to hear this new piece and share it with our New York audience." The program will also feature works by Aram Khachaturian, in honor of the 110th anniversary of his birth, as well as the late Alexander Arutiunian and Edward Mirzoyan. Supporting young musicians as they preserve the legacy of those artists and pursue their own careers, is a key objective of AGBU performing arts initiatives, according to its creators.

Committee member Nila Festekjian, who is co-chairing the event with Sossy Setrakian, remarked on NYSEC's work, stating, "As Armenians it is our responsibility to support each other as we preserve our cultural heritage. NYSEC is proud to help put on stage talented young Armenians who are pushing the boundaries, creating exciting new pieces while keeping the music of our past alive. We're looking forward to a great evening celebrating these performers and our culture."

Tickets for this benefit concert are on sale now. To order tickets or for more info, contact AGBU Events Coordinator Sharis Boghossian at the AGBU office, Carnegie Hall Box Office or visit [www.carnegiehall.org](http://www.carnegiehall.org).

Donors who contribute \$1,000 or more will be recognized in the NYSEC Concert Booklet and will receive two complimentary tickets as well as two invitations for dinner with the evening's performers immediately following the concert.



Nora Azadian and Diana Alexanian, the retiring and current chairs, respectively, of the Detroit Tekeyan chapter

## Nora Azadian Honored for 20 Years of Service as Detroit Tekeyan Chairperson

DETROIT – "A woman of culture, a prolific artist, actress, inspiring teacher and Armenian activist" are the words Dr. Raffi Belian used to describe Nora Azadian, who was honored for her 20 years of service as chairman of Detroit's Tekeyan Cultural Association (TCA) on Sunday, November 24. A reception at the Belian Art Center hosted by the TCA and the Belian family, brought

By Lucy Ardash

together a diverse group of Tekeyan members and long-time friends on the occasion of her retirement as chairman of the TCA.

Guests mingled as they casually strolled through the gallery during the cocktail hour and viewed the special exhibition of her paintings.

Belian welcomed the attendees and spoke of his admiration for Nora Azadian, who although has always exhibited an aristocratic flair, has been able to relate to individuals of all ages and backgrounds. "She has enriched the lives of all who know her," he said.

Throughout the evening, friends and colleagues shared memories and praised Azadian for her integrity and principles. While at the helm of the organization, in addition to exposing the community to Armenian art and culture, she was a strong advocate for the Sponsor a Teacher Program and the Orphans' Higher Education Program. Her efforts to help these causes will continue.

The musical interlude included pianist, Arsho Avedikian, a graduate of the Komitas Conservatory in Yerevan and violinist Harry Hovakimian who played an old romantic piece, Garmeer Varter. A recitation of Vahan Tekayan's "Ode to the Armenian Language" was movingly recited by Anahid Toumajan. Later in the evening an impromptu performance was given by violinist Henrik Karapetian following which Mike Arzoumanian surprised the guests by playing a number of popular pieces on the piano.

Prof. Kevork Bardakjian, who holds the Marie Manoogian Chair in Armenian Language and Literature at the University of Michigan, and is a close friend of the Azadians, remarked that Nora Azadian's retirement was merely the end of one phase and the beginning of another. He pointed out that she is always ready for new challenges.

see AZADIAN, page 11



Edmond Azadian speaks about his wife.

## Chobanian Visits Christopher Newport University

NEWPORT NEWS, Va. – Loris Ohannes Chobanian, professor emeritus of composition and guitar and composer-in-residence at Baldwin Wallace University, was invited as guest composer at Christopher Newport University (CNU). The week-long residency included preparations and rehearsals for the performance and premiere of several of his compositions in a concert scheduled at the end of the week. The composer met with university composition students and presented a lecture titled "The Influence of Life Experiences on the Creative Process."

Dr. Lauren Fowler-Calisto conducted the 50-member CNU Women's Chorus premiering Chobanian's *Vocalise for Women's Choir and Guitar*. The composer noted this combination in the program, stating, "The female human voice has a remarkably beautiful timbre. The velvety soothing quality of the female voice cannot be reproduced, outdone or matched by any of the orchestral instruments. The female voices become especially unique when they are presented without lyrics. *Vocalise* could be performed either by a choir of two high female voices or by two female soloists. The voices in *Vocalise* are accompanied by the classical guitar, an instrument that sounds an octave below its written notes and because of its low range becomes an ideal instrument to support and highlight the higher overtones of the female voice" he said. Guitarist John Boyles accompanied the Women's Chorus expertly.

*Tango Fantasy for Guitar and Symphonic Wind Ensemble* was conducted by Dr. Mark Reimer with John Boyles, guitar. The composition combines the characteristic qualities of both the Argentinean Tango and the Flamenco Tango of Andalusia. Over the years, continents apart, these two dances of the same name have pursued their own individual paths and have developed their own distinct personalities. However, there are noticeable characteristics that hint at their common ancestry. In both dances, for example, we witness a compulsive need for the phrases to end in resolute and excited pulsation. Regardless of the many theories and studies that have traced the history of the two dances, the aim of *Tango Fantasy* was to create something new and that it does. The composition is dedicated to the composer's granddaughter, Sosi Lyudmilla Swisher. *Vocalise* will be performed again in January 2014.

The composer conducted a lively rendition of his composition *Bouquet – Four Armenian Melodies for Symphonic Wind Ensemble*. Originally for three guitars, *Bouquet* was composed for and received its first performance on the occasion of Armenian Patriarch of Jerusalem Archbishop Torkom Manoogian's visit to St. Gregory of Narek Armenian Church in the early 1980s. Years earlier in Baghdad, the composer was a family friend of the archbishop.

Ever since his retirement in 2010, Chobanian has created more than 15 new compositions, many of which are receiving their first performances in the US and abroad during the 2013-2014 academic year. *The Soldier Returns for Viola and Piano* will be premiered by Cleveland Orchestra violist Jeffrey Irvine and pianist Javier Gonzales at a Cleveland Composers' Guild concert on December 8 at the West Shore Unitarian Church in Ricky River. *The Soldier Returns* condemns frivolous wars, and is sympathetic to the dedicated soldier who is ready to make the ultimate sacrifice. On January 17, 2014, *The Soldier Returns* will receive a repeat performance by Baldwin Wallace University professor of viola, Louise Zeitlin with pianist James Howsmon. On January 28, 2014, the solo version of *Vocalise* will be performed by professors of voice, Tracy Grady, soprano and Cynthia O'Connell, soprano. They will be accompanied by Bryan Reichert, guitar.



## ARTS &amp; LIVING

# Nora Azadian Honored for 20 Years of Service as Detroit Tekeyan Chairperson

AZADIAN, from page 10

Raised in Cairo where the leading intellectuals gathered at her home, Azadian learned firsthand about politics and the cultural events of the times. This exposure shaped her life.

Surprise guest Nora Armani, internationally known actress and film director, arrived from New York for the tribute. With deep emotion, she spoke of her close relationship with Nora Azadian, after whom she was named. Through the years they have shared many fond memories and to this day are like mother and daughter.

Of the many accolades given to the guest of honor, the most personal one was given by her husband, prominent writer Edmond Azadian, who reflected upon their initial meetings in Cairo.

At the time, Nora was a bright star of the theatre as well as a talented artist whose work was featured at an abstract painting exhibition. Edmond Azadian was editor of the *Arev* daily and was covering events in the art world for the newspaper. He amusingly recalled that his first encounter with Nora heightened his interest in



Prof. Kevork Bardakjian delivers the keynote address.



Actress Nora Armani pays tribute and recites poetry in tribute to her namesake



Nora Azadian, left, and Zabel Belian

art. To a significant degree, Nora Azadian has left a mark on her art students, one of whom is Shant Avedisian, who has become an internationally-acclaimed artist; the other one is her son, actor/director Gerald Papasian.

Newly-elected TCA Chairman Diana Alexanian expressed her appreciation to Nora Azadian for her trailblazing efforts on behalf of the organization and stated that "she will be a hard act to follow." Alexanian then presented an inscribed crystal plaque to Azadian recognizing her outstanding leadership and tireless efforts for 20 years.

Visibly moved by the tributes, Nora Azadian took the podium and thanked each of the TCA members for their continued support which made her job easier, she said, and all of the speakers for their kind words. She especially thanked her husband for his encouragement, Hagop Alexanian and Garine Koundakjian for their efforts and Zabel Belian for opening her gallery to the TCA throughout the years. She remarked, "When a person dies, friends

speak of the accomplishments of the deceased. How nice it is to hear their sentiments while one is still living."



Dr. Raffi Belian welcomes the guests.

## The U.N. Genocide Convention and the 2015 Centennial of Armenian Genocide

a presentation by

**Taner Akçam, Ph.D.**

Chair, Armenian Genocide Studies  
Department of History  
Clark University



with moderator

**Pamela Steiner, Ed.D.**

Trauma Psychologist;  
Fellow, FXB Center for Health and Human Rights  
Harvard School of Public Health

When lawyer and Holocaust survivor, Raphael Lemkin, coined the word genocide in 1944 he cited the 1915 annihilation of Armenians as a seminal example of genocide. The passage of the Convention on Genocide by the U.N. General Assembly on Dec 9, 1948 was a tribute to his determination. Though the U.S. supported his draft resolution, it did not ratify the Convention until 1988. Senator William Proxmire made a speech urging its ratification every day that the U.S. Senate was in session between 1967 and 1986. Historian and sociologist Dr. Taner Akçam will discuss the trajectory of this Convention, its failures, its hopes, as well as its relationship to the 100th anniversary of the Armenian Genocide being planned in Turkey next year.

Monday, December 9, 2013

6:30 - 8:00 pm

Starr Auditorium (Belfer Building, floor 2)



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Nora Azadian and Hagop Alexanian

In honor of Nora Azadian, the following donations were received for TCA's Sponsor a Teacher Program:

Mr. & Mrs. Herman Hintiryan \$1,000  
Mr. & Mrs. Sirop Bedrossian \$500  
Mr. & Mrs. Osep Sarafian \$250  
Mr. & Mrs. Hagop Alexanian \$100  
Ms. Elizabeth Aprahamian \$100  
Mrs. Lucy Ardash \$100  
Mrs. Vrejuhi Darian \$100

Mrs. Emma Sogioian \$100  
Dr. & Mrs. Vahagn Agababian \$50  
Ms. Pamela Coultis \$50  
Ms. Dyana Kezelian \$50  
Mrs. Nennete Merametdjian \$50  
Ms. Makrouhy Civelek \$25  
Mr. Razmik Gharibian \$20



## ARTS &amp; LIVING

# Taner Akçam Teaches 'Genocide 101' in Germany

GERMANY, from page 1

In his public appearances, Akçam spoke on themes he has developed in several books. In his two university lectures in Berlin and Potsdam, he dealt with "The Armenian Genocide in Ottoman Documents: A Gradual Radicalization in the Decision-Making Process" and spoke at the Lepsiusshaus on "Genocide as a Political Security Concept." The first lectures drew on material published in his most recent book, *The Young Turks' Crime Against Humanity. The Armenian Genocide and Ethnic Cleansing in the Ottoman Empire*, which received the Albert Hourani Award for the best book of the year.

## Opening the Ottoman Archives

Akçam addressed two basic questions: what happened and why did it happen?

Although the fact of the Armenian Genocide has been firmly established (though more can be documented through local histories), the why and how are still subjects of discussion. Rejecting the notion that it was the expression of some "ahistorical, genocidal, barbaric Turks" or simply a pan-Turkic, pan-Turanist expansionism, or war-time exigencies, the researcher presented the developments as documented in Ottoman archives. Those of the Interior Ministry General Directorate of Security and the Cipher Office, for example, established in 1913, contain encoded messages from the center to the regions, with orders for deportations that show the intent to commit genocide. The strategic reasons behind the decision-making process he identified in the Ottoman government's fear that Russian-backed reform moves would lead to an independent Armenia, thus the circulars issued by Interior Minister Talaat Pasha in September-October 1914 ordering that Armenians be disarmed. The dates are important, because these orders, as well as those for deportations of women and children, are before the entry into war in November. Then, following the catastrophic Ottoman losses at Sankamis in January 1915, and later Russian advances, the decision to commit genocide took shape. As a leitmotif in his lecture, he noted how moves towards reforms for the Armenians, supported by foreign powers, were answered with massacres, in the Hamidian period as later.

Those listening to Akçam's presentation were struck by the quality of his source material and asked about access to these archives. The Ottoman Empire archives are now open and are even catalogued, whereas the military archives in Ankara are closed. The Committee of Unity and Progress Central Committee documents and those relating to the Special Operations, however, are gone. He estimated that what is available may represent perhaps 30 per cent of the actual documents.

## Behind the Policy of Denial

Speaking in German to a capacity crowd at the Lepsiusshaus Akçam explored the reasons why the Turkish establishment has embraced a policy of denial regarding historical facts that have been so scrupulously documented. He began by noting that among the documents found in 2009 pertaining to the Ergenekon case, his name was on a hit list, along with those of Orhan Pamuk and Hrant Dink, who were all designated as "traitors to national security." The argument was (and is) that anyone who raises the accusation of genocide is threatening national security, because of the threat to change borders and destroy the state. Echoes of similar thinking are found in the reluctance on the part of US presidents (with the exception of Reagan) to utter the G-word, who claim they must protect national security interests in the Middle East and not jeopardize them for a moral issue related to the past. Others argue that recognition is the only moral choice. For Akçam the solution lies in the idea that asserting moral issues is necessary precisely to safeguard national security, and that refusal to acknowledge the past is the source of regional insecurity. Here, in reviewing the history, Akçam showed how the willingness or refusal of Turkish leaders (including Kemal Atatürk) to acknowledge the atrocities and even agree to punishing perpetrators, was directly related to their perception of how the foreign powers

would treat Turkey. Atatürk uttered his famous phrase about "a shameful act" in expectation of guarantees of national sovereignty and territorial concessions. Since the continuing Armenian-Turkish conflict is seen in relation to territorial issues, the speaker urged a revision of the concept of "national security." By the same token, due to the denial of historic facts, many ethnic and religious groups continue to view the world from the perspective of the past and the region, thus traumatized, remains insecure. If the refusal to face the past generates insecurity, then recognition leads to trust, he said. In the lively question-and-answer session, the critical issue of Turkey's national identity arose. The speaker summarized the dilemma faced in Turkey, due to the fact that it is difficult to identify the founding fathers as "thieves and murderers." For such to occur, he stressed the need for a new ruling elite to emerge in Turkey, one with a democratic identity and in this context underlined the importance of Turkey's bid for European Union membership. He also urged Armenian Diaspora groups to seek contact and collaboration with democratic grass roots movements in Turkey who are critically assessing the past.

## 'Armenian Genocide 101'

The highpoint of Akçam's visit was undoubtedly his session with German students, in which I also participated. They came from two prestigious Gymnasien, high-school level institutions for study of the humanities and natural sciences. Students in German schools receive instruction in Holocaust studies but, with the exception of one federal state, they do not learn about the Armenian Genocide in their history classes. These two classes had prepared for their special workshop by reading background material and discussing it with their teachers. The visiting professor decided to treat them to an introductory course, "Armenian Genocide 101." With the aid of a huge map of Ottoman Turkey, which showed the deportation routes and concentration camps, he summarized the phases of the genocide, from the "re-settlement" to the extermination. He placed special emphasis on the mathematical precision with which the operation was organized and executed, explaining how Armenians would be deported, and could not make up more than 5-10 percent, and how Anatolia, with its massive Armenian population, was to be emptied, also in light of the Russia factor. Referring to documents from the Office of Statistics, he cited the figure of 180,000 Armenians to be left. When, after the removal of 1.3 million, it appeared that a half million still survived, they were subjected



Prof. Taner Akçam

to killing in the second phase, to reach the desired number.

Throughout the discussion, comparisons to the Holocaust were made – from the Nazis' "Eastern Plan" to their pursuit of "Lebensraum" for a purely German (or "Aryan") population. Here he noted that in the Armenian case one difference concerned religion. Those who converted to Islam could save their lives (until he number became too large), whereas in the Holocaust this was not the case. Regarding the perspectives for Genocide recognition, both Rolf Hosfeld, scientific director of the Lepsiusshaus, and Akçam pointed out the importance of the military-strategic context. Had Nazi Germany won the war, and a Nazi-successor elite established post-war Germany, the attitude towards the Holocaust would have been different. But Germany was occupied, the Nuremberg trials took place. Similarly, in Turkey after it lost the war and was under occupation, trials against the CUP leaders responsible for the massacres took place. However, following Atatürk's later military victories, the scene changed. Thus, the need for a new generation in Turkey to assume leadership and responsibility for facing the past and establishing justice. He noted several encouraging steps in this direction on the part of the current government, which broke the continuity of the elites when it assumed power over a decade

ago; for example, Prime Minister Erdogan's apology for the Dersim massacres of Kurds.

The students listened with fascination to his brief account of his own life in Turkey. As a student leader, he had written about the Kurds and paid for it with a nine-year prison sentence. After one year, he managed with fellow prisoners to break out of prison and flee to Germany, where he was again arrested, because he carried a false passport, and held until Amnesty International succeeded in freeing him. It was while working with a social research center in Hamburg on a project about "universalizing Nuremberg" that he first started reading about the Armenians. In Turkey, he had had no idea of what had happened. That was the beginning of his work as the leading Turkish researcher of the Genocide. Following up on this biographical profile, I sketched out my family background, to give an example of how individual Armenians – my parents – experienced the Genocide and survived. With the aid of pictures of former Armenian villages in eastern Anatolia, I showed how the denial policy has involved attempts to eradicate traces of the culture and civilization of the Armenians on the soil of current-day Turkey.

## National Identity or Nationalism?

In a final session, a former school director Ulrich Rosenau moderated discussion, drawing the lessons of the Genocide for the present. Here students shared their views of racism, as they have experienced it against non-ethnic German immigrants, for example, and also in the wider European Union context, with reference to rightwing extremist movements in some eastern European countries. They asked what the role of the Turkish population had been during the Genocide and heard how the governing CUP leaders in Ottoman mobilized their base with religious propaganda against the "infidels," while providing economic incentives to plunder the Armenians. As in the Holocaust, it was crucial to dehumanize the targeted victim population, identifying them as foreign, alien, tumors to be removed. He provided interesting insights from his own experience as a Turk in Germany, where he did experience discrimination, and in America, where he has not. This prompted reflection on the nature of national identities: is the identity of a nation its ethnicity? Or are citizens in the US, for instance, first Americans, and then Armenians, Italians, Hispanics, etc.? He also remarked that in the case of the US, it has been possible to face the implications of slavery and the fate of Native Americans, without eradicating the positive contributions of the founding fathers.

## Sponsor a Teacher in Armenia and Karabagh 2013



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



Yes, I want to sponsor teachers in Armenia and Karabagh to continue helping them to educate the children, our future leaders. I would like to have the teacher's name and address.

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## ARTS &amp; LIVING

## CALENDAR

## CONNECTICUT

**DECEMBER 19 — New Britain High School Madrigal Concert**, 7 p.m., Holy Resurrection Armenian Church, 1910 Stanley St., New Britain. NBHS Madrigal Singers will perform in the Sanctuary with musical selections from their Boar's Head Feast along with other madrigal tunes, and concluding the concert with a sing-a-long to traditional Christmas carols. Admission is free; for more info, contact the church office at 860-223-7875.

## MASSACHUSETTS

**DECEMBER 7 — St. Asdvadzadzin Armenian Church of Whitinsville Annual Bazaar**, hosted at the Pleasant Street Christian Reformed Church, 25 Cross St., 10 a.m.-4:30 p.m.; dinner served from 11:30 a.m. onward and ample parking available.

**DECEMBER 8 — Taline, Friends and Santa Armenian Christmas Concert for Children**, 3 p.m., Regent Theatre, 7 Medford St., Arlington. Advance \$27. Visit [www.talinemusic.com](http://www.talinemusic.com) or call (818) 730-3487 for more info.

**DECEMBER 14 — Musaner (Armenian Jazz Ensemble)** concert and reception, Emmanuel Center, 15 Newbury St., Boston-8 pm. Critically acclaimed nine-piece orchestra enjoyed by sold out audiences in Boston, New York and Italy, cabaret setting of candle-lit tables. \$30 fee includes wine, snacks during show and a post-performance dessert reception. Limited seating, expected to sell out. Call Armand (617) 962-0049 for tickets and info.

**DECEMBER 15 — Erevan Choral Society and Orchestra, Christmas Holiday Concert**, 7 p.m., Holy Trinity Armenian Church, 145 Brattle St., Cambridge. Commemorating the 25th Anniversary of the Earthquake in Armenia. Composer Konstantin Petrossian, conductor. featured soloists: Victoria Avetisyan, mezzo-soprano, and Yeghishe Manucharyan, tenor. The public is warmly invited to attend this complimentary concert.

## 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



**On December 15, the Erevan Choral Society and Orchestra will perform a Christmas Holiday Concert at 7 p.m. at Holy Trinity Armenian Church, 145 Brattle St., Cambridge, Mass. The concert will commemorate the 25th Anniversary of the Earthquake in Armenia. Composer Konstantin Petrossian will conduct with featured soloists: Victoria Avetisyan, mezzo-soprano, and Yeghishe Manucharyan, tenor. The public is warmly invited to attend this complimentary concert.**

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.

## NEW YORK

**DECEMBER 7 — The Sixth Annual AGBU Performing Artists in Concert**, 8 p.m., Weill Recital Hall at Carnegie Hall, 154 West 57th St., presented by the AGBU New York Special Events Committee to benefit its performing arts programs in commemoration of the 1998 earthquake in Armenia. Under the direction of violinist Nazig Tchakarian, the event will feature arts fellows from Bulgaria, France, Mexico and the US. Tickets: \$35, \$65, for more info, contact 212-319-6383

**DECEMBER 7 AND 8 — St. Peter Armenian Church Annual Bazaar**, 11 a.m., 100 Troy-Schenectady Rd. Albany, 12189. Vendors, raffles, photos with Santa, caricaturist Phil Singer and musical entertainment. Sponsorship opportunities available. For more information, contact the church office at [stpeter.armch@prodigy.net](mailto:stpeter.armch@prodigy.net).

**DECEMBER 13 — The Children of Armenia Fund (COAF) 10th Annual Holiday Gala**, Cipriani 42nd Street, 110 E. 42nd St., New York City, titled "The Next 10 Is 100," looking back on 10 years of accomplishments. Special Guests, youth from Armenia, Master of Ceremonies Andrea Martin, Emmy and Tony Award winning actress. Cocktails and auction at 7 pm.. and dinner at 8, with dancing at 10 p.m. For more information, visit [www.coafkids.org/](http://www.coafkids.org/)

## Musaner to Perform at Boston's Emmanuel Center

**BOSTON** — The popular and critically-acclaimed nine-member jazz ensemble Musaner will perform on December 14 at Emmanuel Center at 15 Newbury St.

the Beehive in Boston and New York City and even in Milan, Italy, where they performed and have been invited to return.

The orchestra also features Martin Haroutunian, who plays folk instruments, as well as some of the most highly recognized names in the music industry in the Northeast. Other musicians performing that night will be saxophonists Todd Brunel, Ken Field, Mario Cerra, bass player Blake Newman, accordion-



Musaner

ist, Roberto Cassan, drummer, Gary Fieldman, and percussionist Fabio Pirozzolo. These talented performers have their own regular groups with which they perform but truly enjoy getting together as Musaner to perform the magic they create on stage with this special genre of music. Their love of being a part of this ensemble manifests itself in the enthusiasm and energy that is part of their show.

Presented by the Andreassian Music Fund (AMF), the event will start at 8 p.m. in the elegant room which will be transformed into a nightclub ambience, with candlelit tables. Ticket prices will include wine and snacks during the show and a post-performance dessert reception.

Musaner, founded by Ara Sarkisian, pianist and composer, performs traditional Armenian folk songs and gives them a fresh sound, which one New York critic labeled "hauntingly beautiful." They frequently perform at top jazz venues such as Regattabar, Ryles and

Seating is limited and a sold-out event is anticipated. For more information and to purchase space please see calendar listing and call Armand Andreassian.

## Author Ahnert Speaks at University of South Florida

**TAMPA, Fla.** — Margaret Ajemian Ahnert, author of *The Knock at the Door: A Mother's Survival of the Armenian Genocide*, spoke at the University of South Florida (USF) Tampa Library on November 14. Her lecture was part of the USF Libraries Holocaust and Genocide Studies Center's annual slate of Armenian studies programming.

Ahnert's lecture was unique in that it explored the Armenian Genocide from the perspective of the generation who lived with their parents' memories of the traumatic period, and illustrated the emotional burden that can sometimes be handed down. The audience, comprised of both

USF participants and community members, found the talk fascinating and engaged the author with thoughtful questions and dialogue.

Ahnert's talk was filmed and will be available on the USF Libraries Holocaust and Genocide Studies Center website this winter: <http://lib.usf.edu/hgsc/category/events/>.

The USF Libraries Holocaust and Genocide Studies Center is committed to Armenian studies, with annual programming that is free and open to the public and a growing collection of works on Armenian culture and history. This commitment is strengthened in part by the generous Boyadjian Family Endowment.



Margaret Ajemian Ahnert, center, with some of the USF Libraries Holocaust and Genocide Studies Center's staff



## COMMENTARY

## COMMENTARY

# Peace Seems to Trump War in the Middle East

By Edmond Y. Azadian

The Middle East is a tinderbox ready for a conflagration when hit by any spark. The Bush-Cheney administration not only failed to avoid triggering that spark but it deliberately and recklessly began a war against Iraq which continues to be a bloodbath to this day. We have yet to see the day Mr. Cheney's prediction comes true – that Iraqi people would embrace the aggressors with flowers.

All in all, the war initiated on a lie by the above-named warmongers, murdered more civilians than the dictator Saddam Hussein could have ever slain.

Additionally, that war cost the lives of 4,500 young Americans, besides the 50,000 injured and maimed veterans, suffering from physical and mental ailments who have become dependent on US taxpayers for a living.

The war in Iraq cost \$3 trillion, bringing the US economy to its knees.

The war hatched by Paul Wolfowitz and his neocon allies was waged primarily to eliminate a threat to Israel. Saddam Hussein had not threatened – nor was he in the position to threaten – the US.

It is believed that Mr. Cheney's plan was to expand the war to Iran and Syria had the Iraqi adventure proved to be a success, as he imagined.

While awaiting the flowers to shower his way, Mr. Cheney vacated his bunker at the White House.

It was left to President Obama to clean up the mess. President Obama has been trying to make good on his campaign pledge to create more peaceful situations in the troubled regions of the world. Yet almost halfway in his second term, he has yet to claim victories in his domestic policies: Obamacare is in trouble, the immigration bill is still fuzzy and the rest of the domestic agenda still in the works.

Reneging on his campaign promise to recognize the A Genocide will not impact on his image of a peacemaker, though it will disillusion the Armenian community.

Mark Laudler writes in the *New York Times*: "Deep war wariness of the Americans has reinforced Mr. Obama's instinct for negotiated settlements over unilateral action. While the White House officials suggest that the president always planned to arrive at this moment and that everything that came before it – from troop surge in Afghanistan to the commando raid that killed Osama Bin Laden was cleaning up after his predecessors."

Through intense shuttle diplomacy, Secretary of State John Kerry was able to bring the Israelis and Palestinians to the negotiation table, while West Bank settlements are continuing inexorably, contrary to his admonition to Israelis to freeze the settlement expansion. No one knows where these negotiations could lead, but at least parties are talking to each other, after a long and fruitless hiatus.

Jodi Rudoren writes in his "Memo from Jerusalem" (*New York Times*, November 25): "Benjamin Netanyahu's self image first and foremost is shaped by wanting to lead Israel out of the shadow of the Iranian bomb. His image is not driven by being the peacemaker, creating two states and dividing Jerusalem," which means that negotiators can spin their wheels endlessly to no avail.

But on the other hand the US administration has ceased two opportunities to bring breakthroughs to two intractable problems, which could cause region wide devastation, if left unchecked: one is negotiations on Iran's nuclear facilities and the other convening a conference on the war in Syria. These two issues vitally impact Armenians in the Middle East.

President Ruhani of Iran launched a charm offensive when he attended the UN General Assembly last September, and after a series of dramatic sorties, he finally talked to President Obama over the phone and that conversation kept the diplomatic ball rolling until an interim agreement was reached between Iran and five major countries of the UN Security Council. After a six-month period, the parties will negotiate a final deal, which, if successful, will give a clear foreign policy victory to the Obama administration.

This agreement calls for Iran to keep its uranium enrichment to no more than 5 percent and convert its stock of nearly 20-percent-enriched uranium to 5 percent, halt construction at a planned heavy water reactor and also allow intrusive international inspections, which can detect any cheating or non-compliance of the

agreement at an early stage.

The international community, in return, will ease some sanctions on Iran, allowing the use of \$4 billion in frozen assets and \$30 billion from the sale of oil and petrochemical products, which will boost Iran's sagging economy.

The agreement has worried Israel, which wants to settle for nothing less than bombing Iran's nuclear facilities.

Prime Minister Netanyahu himself has been leading a campaign against the agreement, calling President Obama naïve and weak against a wily Iran. Of course, the Israeli lobby is in action to derail the deal. The Wall Street Journal even had published a picture of Neville Chamberlain signing his agreement with Hitler in 1938, an appeasement policy that led nowhere at that time and allowed Hitler precious time to prepare his strategic plans.

Anyone questioning Mr. Obama's resolve should bear in mind that he just ordered B-52 bombers to the area disputed between Japan and China – and China is a world power, not a regional one.

It is ironic that while the Obama administration was negotiating the deal, the US congress was drafting a bill for stricter sanctions against Iran. And there was a bipartisan coalition supporting the bill, with Democratic Sen. Chuck Schumer spearheading the movement with the cooperation of Harry Reid, Senate majority leader, also a Democrat.

While the debate is raging about the merits or the dangers of the deal, the *Economist* states: "Bombing would probably set Iran back by only a few years but it would certainly remake the Middle East in a very different way. Nobody knows whether the gamble with Iran will pay off. But it is already clear that the risks are low, the prize is potentially vast and the alternative is dire."

The other breakthrough came about the war in Syria.

After the debacles of Iraq and Libya – under the nose of Russia and China – Syria proved to be a tough nut to crack. President Obama was pushed into a corner to bomb Syria, accusing the Assad regime of using chemical weapons against its population.

As a reluctant warrior, he referred the issue to the US Congress, while losing the support of a close ally, Britain, which had been badly burnt previously in Iraq, falling prey to former Prime Minister Tony Blair's lies and verbal gymnastics in support of the Bush-Cheney line. Russia provided the fig leaf the Obama administration needed, by proposing to dismantle Syria's chemical weapons stockpile, which has since been carried out successfully.

While international negotiations were moving forward, Assad's forces gained ground in the battlefield with outright support from Russia and Iran. The factions fighting Assad's government sometimes neutralized each other but they mostly raised the specter of another extremist Islamist regime in the region, alarming the West.

The opposition was mostly composed of mercenaries, hired by Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Turkey and Jordan, the same concoction which had been sent to Libya to overthrow Col. Muammar Qaddafi.

Now a meeting is scheduled for January 22 in Geneva. The *New York Times* says, "Regime change in Iran and even in Syria is out; cutting deals with former adversaries is in."

Under Hafez Al-Assad and his son, Bashar Al-Assad, Syria has been one of the countries in the Middle East – along with Iraq – where politics and religion have been separate. Besides, Assad has been extremely benevolent toward Christian minorities, including Armenians. Aleppo has been the last bastion of Armenian culture and literature, even in recent years. Besieged Armenians in Aleppo today enjoy the government's protection and receive food supplies. His opponents have already destroyed Armenian churches, or have replaced the crosses with their black flags.

In peacetime, Syria has been a friendly nation to Armenia.

In Iran, the stakes were even higher for the Armenians. Had Iran been bombed, Armenia would have lost one of its reliable lifelines to the outside world. Besides, the West always harbors plans to use any occasion to compromise Iran's territorial integrity, by gifting northern Iran to Azerbaijan, which would increase the population of the Aliyev dynasty-led Azerbaijan by 20 million, spewing words of hate, on Armenia's border.

The peace prospect is beneficial for the region and in particular, for Armenia. On the other hand, US businesses are gearing up for hefty deals with Iran.

After suffering so much from wars, extremism, terrorism and colonialism, the nations in the region deserve peaceful and safe times, which after all, will deliver a well-deserved diplomatic and economic victory to the US.

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## COMMENTARY



## My Turn

By Harut Sassounian

## WikiLeaks Discloses Confidential US Report on Armenian-Americans

It is always interesting to see how the Armenian community is viewed by outsiders. That perspective becomes more fascinating when the assessment is made by a US diplomat in an internal report.

The large number of classified US government documents released by WikiLeaks include cables sent by the American Embassy in Armenia to the State Department. One of those dispatches, dated November 17, 2009, is a 'Confidential' report by Ambassador Marie L. Yovanovitch covering her 2009 tour of Los Angeles, Boston, New York City and Washington, DC

Here are highlights of the ambassador's report, titled: "Experience Engaging Diaspora Communities – Armenia."

1) The Diocese of the Armenian Apostolic Church "is under the authority of the Holy See of Etchmiadzin," while the Prelacy "recognizes the jurisdictional authority of the Armenian Catholicos (head of the Armenian Church) based in Antelias, Lebanon. This is only for administrative purposes though, as, doctrinally, the Prelacy recognizes the theological supremacy of the Catholicos in Echmiadzin in Armenia. The Prelacy is associated with the Armenian Revolutionary Federation (ARF)/Dashnaks, founded in 1890, and constitutes one of the three largest sectors of the Armenian-American community and are considered conservative in nature." The

report explains that "the ARF/Dashnaks have two goals: recognition that the massacres of Armenians in Turkey in 1915 constitute genocide, and the recovery of the traditional Armenian lands in eastern Turkey." In all certainty, the Turkish government would not be pleased that a US diplomat has described parts of Turkey as "traditional Armenian lands." Furthermore, the report states that the ARF "supports a ladies auxiliary association...known as the Armenian Relief Society (ARS), in addition to youth and cultural associations and a large media operation in the United States including newspapers, radio, and television."

2) The report describes US Armenian Catholics as "the smallest religious denomination.... The Armenian Catholic Church supports a small number of schools and orphanages but has almost no activities in Armenia."

3) "The Armenian Protestant community is considered the oldest Armenian community in the United States and is very active through their Armenian Missionary Association of America (AMAA)."

4) "The Armenian General Benevolent Union (AGBU), established in 1906, is the second major sector and is the largest charitable organization in the Armenian community.... They are affiliated with the Armenian Democratic Liberal Party (ADL), also known as Ramkavars, which is active (but marginal) in Armenia, the American Diaspora community, and in the Middle East, such as Lebanon."

5) "The Hnchag, or Armenian Social Democrat Party, is the third of the politically based Armenian community cluster of organizations and the smallest Armenian-community based political party. It functions as a political club in California and publishes a weekly paper."

6) The report also lists "independent organizations that are non-partisan in character," such as the Armenian Assembly of America [AAA], Lincy Foundation, Cafesjian Foundation, and Tufenkian Foundation. Interestingly, the Armenian National Committee of America (ANCA) is placed in this category even though the report acknowledges that ANCA is "generally recognized as the lobbying organization of the Dashnaks."

7) In the humanitarian group, the report includes the Fund for Armenian Relief, Hayastan All Armenian Fund, Children of Armenia Fund, Jinishian Foundation, Armenian EyeCare Project, and Armenia Tree Project, but fails to mention the United Armenian Fund which has delivered close to \$700 million of humanitarian aid to Armenia since the earthquake of 1988.

8) Yovanovitch described the Ministry of Diaspora and the National Competitiveness Foundation as examples of the Armenian government's outreach efforts to the Diaspora.

9) The report criticizes the Armenian Diaspora for not supporting "the promotion of democracy, electoral reform and civil society development in Armenia." However, it states that Armenian-Americans provide financial support to two think tanks: the Armenian Center for National and International Studies, and Civilitas Foundation.

The most interesting aspect of Yovanovitch's report is the section on the Armenian-Turkish Protocols. She asserts that Armenian-American groups "pay close attention to Armenia's foreign policy decisions and are quick to mobilize their supporters against the Armenian government if the Diaspora groups believe the government is not acting in Armenia's best interests. Many groups oppose the government's regional reconciliation efforts on the grounds that such reconciliation does not include resolution of the simmering conflict in Nagorno-Karabagh or recognition that the Ottoman Empire engaged in genocide in 1915. Other groups though, such as the Armenian Assembly of America and AGBU, have publicly supported the government's policies of regional cooperation and an end to Armenia's isolation in the Caucasus. In September [2009], AAA, AGBU, the Eastern and Western Diocese Churches and the Ramkavars issued a public statement supporting President Sargisian's foreign policy to normalize relations with Turkey."

Although the ambassador's report is informative, it does not accurately and comprehensively cover the full spectrum of the Armenian-American community.

## A Century after the Genocide, Armenians still Slaughtered in Syria

By Robert Fisk

Just over 30 years ago, I dug the bones and skulls of Armenian Genocide victims out of a hillside above the Khabur River in Syria. They were young people – the teeth were not decayed – and they were just a few of the million-and-a-half Armenian Christians slaughtered in the first Holocaust of the 20th century, the deliberate, planned mass destruction of a people by the Ottoman Turks in 1915.

It was difficult to find these bones because the Khabur River – north of the Syrian city of Deir ez-Zour – had changed. So many were the bodies heaped in its flow that the waters moved to the east. The very river had altered its course. But Armenian friends who were with me took the remains and placed them in the crypt of the great Armenian church at Deir ez-

Zour, which is dedicated to the memory of those Armenians who were killed – and shame upon the "modern" Turkish state which still denies this Holocaust – in that industrial mass murder.

And now, almost unmentioned in the media, these ghastly killing fields have become the killing fields of a new war. Upon the bones of the dead Armenians, the Syrian conflict is being fought. And the descendants of the Armenian Christian survivors who found sanctuary in the old Syrian lands have been forced to flee again – to Lebanon, to Europe, to America. The very church in which the bones of the murdered Armenians found their supposedly final resting place has been damaged in the new war, although no one knows the culprits.

Yesterday, I called Bishop Armash Nalbandian of Damascus, who told me that while the church at Deir ez-Zour was indeed damaged, the shrine remained untouched. The

church itself, he said, was less important than the memory of the Armenian Genocide – and it is this memory which might be destroyed. He is right. But the church – not a very beautiful building, I have to say – is nonetheless a witness, a memorial to the Holocaust of Armenians every bit as sacred as the Yad Vashem memorial to the victims of the Jewish Holocaust in Israel. And although the Israeli state, with a shame equal to the Turks, claims that the Armenian genocide was not a genocide, Israelis themselves use the word Shoah – Holocaust – for the Armenian killings.

In Aleppo, an Armenian church has been vandalized by the Free Syrian Army, the "good" rebels fighting Bashar al-Assad's regime, funded and armed by the Americans as well as the Gulf Sunni Arabs. But in Raqqa, the only regional capital to be totally captured by the opposition in Syria, Salafist fighters trashed the Armenian Catholic Church of the Martyrs and set fire to its furnishings. And – God spare us the thought – many hundreds of Turkish fighters, descendants of the same Turks who tried to destroy the Armenian race in 1915, have now joined the al-Qa'ida-affiliated fighters who attacked the Armenian church. The cross on top of the clock tower was destroyed, to be replaced by the flag of the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant.

Nor is that all. On November 11, when the world honored the dead of the Great War, which did not give the Armenians the state they deserved, a mortar shell fell outside the Holy Translators Armenian National School in Damascus and two other shells fell on school buses. Hovhannes Atokanian and Vanessa Bedros, both Armenian schoolchildren, died. A day later, a bus load of Armenians travelling from Beirut to Aleppo were robbed at gunpoint. Two days later, Kevork Bogasian was killed by a mortar shell in Aleppo. The Armenian death toll in Syria is a mere 65; but I suppose we might make that 1,500,065. More than a hundred Armenians have been kidnapped. The Armenians, of course, like many other Christians in Syria, do not support the revolution against the Assad regime – although they could hardly be called Assad supporters.

Two years from now, they will commemorate

the 100th anniversary of their Holocaust. I have met many survivors, all now dead. But the Turkish state, supporting the present revolution in Syria, will be memorialising its victory at Gallipoli that same year, a heroic battle in which Mustafa Kemal Ataturk saved his country from Allied occupation. Armenians also fought in that battle – in the uniform of the Turkish army, of course – but I will wager as many dollars as you want that they will not be remembered in 2015 by the Turkish state which was so soon to destroy their families.

While we all bask in the glow of happy relations with Iran, it might be well to read – in four months' time, unless their publishers have the common sense to bring it forward – a remarkable book by Shane Bauer, Josh Fattal and Sarah Shourd.

They – and you may not remember this – were the hitchhikers who "strayed" into Iran in 2009 from Iraqi Kurdistan. Shourd was released first and she called me on the phone to talk about her fiancé, Bauer, and to ask if *The Independent* could help secure the two men's release. We published some of Bauer's journalism – I made a point of telling the Iranian ambassador in Beirut to read it – and, with or without *The Independent's* help, they were both released. I was delighted.

They had been arrested during the presidency of the lunatic Ahmadinejad, and it's clear from their book that they were lured over the border by Iranian frontier guards. One of them eventually emailed Shourd that this was the case.

But their incarceration, their vicious solitary confinement – a form of torture if ever there was one – and their relations, not just with their fellow condemned prisoners but with their guards, is a remarkable story.

Shourd quickly worked out, back in freedom, that the US government was not their natural friend; there are some sharp words about the "peacemaker" Dennis Ross. A good book – which I rarely say – and it's called *A Sliver of Light*. A Fisk read.

(This column by Robert Fisk originally appeared in *The Independent* newspaper's December 1 edition. Fisk is the Middle East correspondent for *The Independent*.)

## LETTERS

## Given ADL Ties, Patrick's Pick Is Wrong Choice

To the Editor:

I appreciated the report of the backlash against Governor Patrick's nomination of Joseph Berman to the Superior Court ("Ethnic tensions flare at judicial meeting," Boston Globe Metro, November 21). Marilyn M. Petitto Devaney's objection to the nominee reflects her strength, resolve and integrity. Berman is not a responsible choice, as I believe he bends his morals to expediency.

Berman was an official in the Anti-Defamation League when the organization fired its regional director, Andrew Tarsy, after Tarsy had said the ADL should acknowledge as genocide the slaughter of Armenians by Ottoman Turks.

To support an organization that describes the massacre of Armenians only as "tantamount to genocide" is not only immoral, but historically ignorant. In fact, the word "genocide" was coined in 1943 by Raphael Lemkin, a Polish legal scholar who was Jewish, to describe what the Turkish government perpetrated against the Armenian people between about 1915 and 1918.

Should Hitler's murder of Jews be described as "tantamount to genocide"?

For Patrick to postpone the vote in the face of defeat, in order to "work hard to get the votes," is just another example of back-room politics.

– June Hatfield  
Lexington

(This letter originally appeared in the Boston Globe's November 29 edition.)



# Haigazian University Receives \$250,000 Scholarship Donation

BEIRUT – The establishment of the Armen and Salpi Haroutunian Scholarship Fund was announced at Haigazian University on December 2. Armen and Salpi Haroutunian donated \$250,000 to be used for scholarship assistance for Armenian students on the graduate and the undergraduate levels. The university celebrated the establishment of this fund as it approaches the celebration of its 60th anniversary.

The event started with President Paul Haidostian expressing his gratitude on behalf of Haigazian University for receiving this gen-

erous donation. He noted that it shows the trust the Haroutunians have in Haigazian University's mission. The president highlighted that the substantial gift will be used for Armenian students who maintain good academic standards and are in need of financial assistance. He underlined the fact that the university's greatest needs are and will continue to be in the area of raising funds in order to enable students attain a higher education, especially those with limited financial resources. In addition, Haidostian spoke about the long years of service that the spon-

sor, Armen Haroutunian, has already given to the Armenian community and in particular to Haigazian University in the form of financial assistance which has benefited numerous students.

A short power point was presented to give a

hoped that such events would be repeated often. He explained that, alongside non-Armenians, Haigazian University brings together Armenian youth of all backgrounds and offers them a variety of academic programs of study in an atmosphere that also nurtures the

## Armenia Fund 2013 Telethon Raises More than \$22.6 Million

TELETHON, from page 1

By functioning as a direct road link, the Vardenis-Martakert highway will become a second lifeline between northern Armenia and northern Artsakh, significantly cutting down travel times, boosting the economies of scores of Artsakh communities along its path, stimulating inter-community ties and vastly improving geographic access for implementing local development initiatives. Currently the only land-travel link between Artsakh and Armenia is in Berdzor.

The highway's construction will include, in addition to paving and the painting of pavement markings, the installation of water-removal and snowdrift-control systems as well as protective barriers and road signs.

Villages that lie within two to three kilometers of the future highway include Drmbon, Kochoghut, Verin Horatagh, Vaghuhas, Haterk, Getavan, Chapar, Khnkavan, Charektar, Nor Erkej, Davivank, Nor Getashen, Knaravan, and Yeghegnut. Outlying villages, located five or more kilometers from the highway, include Karvachar, Nor Gharachinar, Harutagomer, Zardakhach, Hamshak, Chapni, Chinavan, Nor Kharkhapur, Shigkar, Nor Brajur, Yeghtsin, Zovk, Nor Vernashen, Msheni and Nor Manashid.

The Hayastan All-Armenian Fund was found-

ed by a presidential decree in 1992. It is a unique institution whose mission is "to unite Armenians in Armenia and overseas to overcome the country's difficulties and to help establish sustainable development in Armenia and Artsakh." In addition to those problems associated with the break-up of the Soviet Union, the government had to find solutions to the aftermath of the 1988 Spitak earthquake, an economic blockade and the rehabilitation of areas that had suffered from the Artsakh conflict.

Under the Fund's charter, the Armenian president serves as president of its Board of Trustees. The Board comprises the Catholicos of All-Armenians, the Catholicos of the Great House of Cilicia, the Catholicos Patriarch of the Armenian Catholic Church, the president of Nagorno Karabagh, the prime ministers of Armenia and Nagorno Karabagh, the chairman of the Constitutional Court of the Republic of Armenia and the Central Bank, the speaker of the National Assembly, the heads of the three main Armenian political parties and of major benevolent institutions such as the AGBU, ARF, the Armenian Assembly of America and other benefactors and public figures from Armenia, Artsakh and Diaspora.

Donations, which are still accepted, can be sent via their website, [www.armenianfund.org/](http://www.armenianfund.org/)



Haigazian President Paul Haidostian welcomes benefactors Armen and Salpi Haroutunian.

glimpse of the life of Armen Haroutunian and the different contributions he has made through publications and various cultural and charitable initiatives.

Lastly, Armen Haroutunian expressed his sense of satisfaction and fulfillment and said he

Armenian spirit. He noted that Haigazian helps elevate the educational and social standards of Lebanon and encouraged others to also share their financial resources supporting the growth and prosperity of a unique institution of the Armenian diaspora.

## St. Kevork Church to Be Renovated in Turkey

ISTANBUL (Armenpress) – St. Kevork Armenian Church, located in the city of Sivas, will soon be renovated. The ancient Armenian Church was previously used as an armory after the Armenian Genocide of 1915.

Agos newspaper quoted Minister of Defense Ismet Yilmaz, who said he instructed the government to launch the renovation of the church.

Among other things, the official issued an assistance request to the city administration. Work is due to start next spring.

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