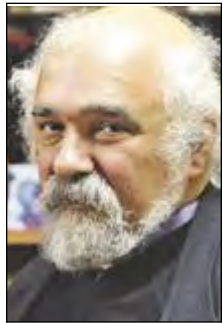


Arrested Publisher Applies To ECHR

ISTANBUL (*Hürriyet Daily News*) – Arrested publisher Ragip Zarakolu's lawyers have filed a suit at the European Court of Human Rights to challenge the prosecutor's orders that led to his arrest on



Ragip Zarakolu

November 1, 2011, as part of the Kurdistan Communities Union (KCK) trials.

"[The KCK probe] is a politically [motivated] case filed by the AKP [Justice and Development Party] government, and the combination of

the prosecutors' and judges' lack of independence and impartiality makes it difficult for a just and lawful verdict to be reached," Zarakolu's lawyer Özcan Kiliç said.

The suit filed at the European court pertains to such matters as treatment in detention, the legal and material basis for the arrest and access to case files and evidence, rather than the trial process itself, in accordance with the requirements prescribed in the fifth article of the European Convention on Human Rights, which established the court, according to Kiliç.

"The KCK trial is going to be the case with the largest number of suspects in Istanbul since the military coup of 1980. It is still too early to comment on the course of the trial," Kiliç said.

Tuncay Özkan, another suspect in the ongoing Ergenekon trials, had already applied to the European court last week on

see ZARAKOLU, page 4

Administration Reduces Aid for Armenia, Region

WASHINGTON (RFE/RL) – The administration of President Barack Obama has called for a nearly 18 percent reduction in annual US government assistance to Armenia, which has steadily decreased over the past decade.

The administration's draft budget for the fiscal year 2013 unveiled on Monday would allocate \$32.5 million in economic aid and \$3.3 million in separate military funding to the country, down from a total of \$43.5 million that was approved by the US Congress for this year.

The proposed reduction seems to stem from a further cut in overall US aid to Europe, the South Caucasus and Central Asia sought by the administration. The budget proposal attributes that to the "achievement of a number of assistance goals" in the region.

Nevertheless, the two main Armenian-American advocacy groups criticized the

see BUDGET, page 20



Elmas Boyajian (Joyce Van Dyke's grandmother, called Victoria in the play) with her husband Harry (Haroutoun), who is the playwright's grandfather, and daughter Rose, Providence. All three are characters in the play.

'Deported/a dream play' Is Culmination of Long Creative Process

BOSTON – When "Deported/ a dream play" by Joyce Van Dyke opens on March 8 at the Modern Theatre in Boston, it will mark the culmination of a five-year creative process for the playwright.

Said Van Dyke in a recent interview, "It's very intense. I started working on the material in 2007. The first thing I did was to go to ALMA [the Armenian Library and Museum of America] and listen to interviews done with survivors of the Genocide. Many of them were done by Bethel Bilezikian Charkoudian."

The play is the story of two women, Van Dyke's grandmother, Elmas Sarajian Boyajian, and her close friend, Varter Deranian. Both women lived through the Genocide and lost their first families but managed to come to the United States to start new lives and to have new families. In the play, Van Dyke explores her own history as a descendant of Genocide survivors and interweaves the memories and dreams of the two women, whose friendship and history binds them.

"I had to do a lot of research," said Van Dyke, "because my grandmother never talked about what had happened to her."

see DEPORTED, page 15

Turkish Court Acquits Another Defendant in Dink Murder Case

ANKARA (PanARMENIAN.Net) – A court has acquitted Coskun Igci, one of 19 defendants in the murder case of Hrant Dink, the founder and former editor-in-chief of the Armenian-Turkish *Agos* weekly who was assassinated in 2007 in front of his office in Istanbul, after forgetting to include him in the final verdict in January, *Today's Zaman* reported.

Igci, who presumably called on Yasin Hayal to buy a gun with which to shoot Dink, was accidentally left out of the final verdict and the judge issued a ruling separately for him on Monday, February 13.

On September 19, 2011, the prosecution recommended his acquittal on the grounds that "there was no substantial evidence to suggest he took part in the crime."

Igci's lawyer said at the court on Monday that his client has no ties to the murder except for being the uncle of Hayal, one of the main suspects.

Igci said to the court that he had informed gendarmerie intelligence officers in Trabzon that a plan to assassinate Dink was in place four months prior to the murder.

"I am not guilty. The people I reported about were tried in Trabzon and they were

punished because they neglected their duties. Those people are Col. Ali Öz, Capt. Metin Yildiz, non-commissioned officer Orhan Simsek and Sgt. Veysel Sahin," he said.

When a judge at the court asked Igci if he had been in contact with those four people, Igci replied that he had contacted Simsek and Sahin.

The Istanbul 14th High Criminal Court issued its ruling on January 17 in the 25th hearing of the case. Hayal and Erhan Tuncel, the main suspects, who were accused of being instigators, and all other suspects, were cleared of charges of membership in a terrorist organization.

The prosecutor and the Dink family's lawyers accused them of acting under the orders of a clandestine criminal network suspected of having ties with senior state officials and military and police officers.

The court handed down a life sentence to Hayal, while Tuncel was given 10 years and six months in prison for his involvement in the bombing of a McDonald's restaurant in 2004. Gunman Ogün Samast was sentenced last July to nearly 23 years in prison by a separate juvenile court. Tuncel was released.

Armenian Driver Helps Georgian Police Disarm Bomb

TBILISI (PanARMENIAN.Net) – Police in Georgia disarmed a bomb concealed in a vehicle used by Israeli embassy staff, local media reported Monday, February 13.

The personal driver of Itzhak Gernberg, Israel's ambassador to Georgia, Roman Khachaturyan discovered the hand grenade taped to the bottom of the vehicle during a morning check.

Georgian bomb squads were called to the scene and safely disarmed the device, M&C reported, citing DPA.

Armenian Killed in Syria

ALEPPO (news.am) – Two explosions took place here on Friday and as a result, an Armenian man died, the spokesperson of the Armenian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Tigran Balayan, said.

"As the Armenian Consulate in Aleppo has been informed, Armenian Vigen Hayrapetyan died in an explosion in Aleppo," he said.

Two explosions occurred on Friday, resulting in the deaths of 28 and injuring 175.

The target was a the military investigation office, but civilians also died, including children, who were playing in a nearby park.

The opposition Syrian Free Army took the responsibility for the explosions.

Next Hearing on Soldier Death Scheduled for April 6

DIYARBAKIR, Turkey (PanARMENIAN.Net) – A military court here has ruled to take the testimonies of 19 village guards who presumably witnessed the murder of a Turkish soldier of Armenian origin under dubious circumstances while he was performing his military service in 2011.

In the fifth hearing of the Sevag Sahin Balıkcı case, a lieutenant commander and a forensic science expert were appointed as experts.

The military judge overseeing the case is reported to have said that it is "his duty to make sure the case is completed in the fairest way."

Meanwhile, Ismail Cem Halavurt, Balıkcı's lawyer, said he has also demanded taped records of the incident.

The next hearing of the case is scheduled for April 6, *Hürriyet Daily News* reported.

Balıkcı was shot on April 24, 2011, in a gendarmerie station of Batman province by another soldier, Kivanç Agaoglu.

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Muradian Memories

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ARMENIA

News From Armenia

Belarus Parliamentary Delegates Pay Tribute to Genocide Victims

YEREVAN (Armenpress) – Deputy chairman of the House of Representatives of the National Assembly of Belarus Victor Guminski and members of the Armenian-Belarus inter-parliamentary cooperation commission visited memorial to the victims of the Armenian Genocide February 14. They put a wreath at the Tsitsernakaberd memorial and paid tribute to the memory of the victims.

Deputy Director of the Armenian Genocide Museum-Institute Suren Manukyan presented the history of the greatest crime committed against humanity in early 20 century. Accompanied with Manukyan, the guests got acquainted with the samples presented in the museum.

“It is very painful to speak about this fact. I think the day will come when the Republic of Belarus will also discuss the issue demanding serious and accomplished approach,” Victor Guminski said.

More than 20 countries have recognized and condemned the Armenian Genocide.

Armenian Grandmasters Open Elite Chess School

YEREVAN (news.am) – With the assistance of the Chess Federation of Armenia, grandmasters Levon Aronian and Gabriel Sargsyan have opened the Grandmasters School, where they will conduct trainings for the gifted chess players ranging between the ages of 10 and 18.

World and European champions, as well as gold and silver medalists at Armenia’s championships will be eligible to enroll in the school.

The two-week trainings will be held two to three times per year, Armchess.am reports.

Hambartsumyan’s Films To Be Shown in Yerevan

YEREVAN (Tert.am) – From February 13 to 17, films by the Russian-based filmmaker Eduard Hambartsumyan will be shown here, with the sponsorship of the Rossotrudnichestvo office in Armenia.

The film festival has been organized by the Arno Babajanyan Remembrance International Foundation, Russian Science and Culture Center in Yerevan and First Russian-Armenian TV channel (www.tvarm.ru).

Hambartsumyan graduated from the Department of Culture, Yerevan Teachers Training Institute, with honors. As a student, he worked for the Mir interstate TV and shot films for the Internews NGO.

In 2004, after moving to Moscow, Russia, Hambartsumyan took an in-depth training course at Mosfilm. He also took a post-graduate course under the direction of film expert Armen Medvedev.

Opening of Armenian Branch of Goethe University Anticipated

YEREVAN (Armenpress) – The number of Armenian students wishing to study in Germany through different scholarship programs increased almost three-fold times during the last three years, Education and Science Minister Armen Ashotyan said at a news conference, on February 14. The minister said the number of students studying in Germany through scholarship programs has reached 140. The development of Armenology is also an important topic in the relations between Armenia and Germany. “A number of German universities have good Armenology traditions,” the minister said, adding that relations in the sphere of higher education are also improving.

The minister said an important issue between the two countries remains the opening of a branch of Goethe University in Armenia. “We need it very much,” the minister said.

US Envoy Content with Armenian Local Poll

By Naira Bulghadarian

YEREVAN (RFE/RL) – John Heffern, the US ambassador to Armenia, on Tuesday expressed his overall satisfaction with the Armenian authorities’ handling of a weekend local election in Hrazdan denounced as fraudulent by the country’s leading opposition force.

Heffern, who personally watched voting in the central Armenian town, said it should have positive implications for the conduct of the parliamentary elections due in May.

“It was exciting to see strong political competition, and it was exciting to see in Hrazdan that there were two strong candidates,” he said. “It was a hard-fought campaign and the results were close. So it was exciting to me ... to see real political competition there, which I think is critical to the upcoming elections as well.”

“I was pleased to see that within the polling places it was orderly. Both sides confirmed, that the election procedures were being followed in a transparent and orderly way,” Heffern said.

“The other thing that worked pretty well – again according to both sides – was the early release of the voter lists ... So there were several good, positive signs from the elections yesterday,” he added.

Official vote results showed Hrazdan’s incumbent pro-government mayor, Aram Danielian, narrowly defeating his sole challenger, Sasun Mikaelian of the opposition Armenian National Congress (HAK). Mikaelian refused to concede defeat, however, saying that the election outcome was essentially decided by widespread vote buying by the Danielyan campaign.

The HAK echoed these allegations in a statement issued late on Monday. It said the government-controlled election commissions in Hrazdan also flouted an Electoral Code provision that requires them to put seals on the passports of local residents taking part in the election. The HAK said the local polls held on Sunday in Hrazdan and 38 other local communities should be annulled for that reason alone.

However, the governor of Kotayk Province, of which Hrazdan is the capital, insisted on Tuesday that the ballot was free and fair. Kovalenko Shahgaldian claimed that this is why Mikaelian did not challenge the official results at the Central Election Commission in Yerevan or in courts.

Heffern urged the Armenian authorities to investigate all fraud allegations reported by the media. “I’ve seen in the press and I heard some talk of some violations and I would just hope that anybody who has information on any violations inside or outside the polling sta-

tions would take that information to the authorities and I would expect that the authorities would follow up on any of those reports,” he said.

The diplomat also reiterated that the United States will do “whatever we can to contribute” to the freedom and fairness of the Armenian parliamentary elections. “The international community is very interested in Armenia’s democracy and we’re working with the Central Election Commission and the parties and the civil society and the press to make this election free and fare,” he said.

The US State Department criticized the last Armenian parliamentary and presidential elections as “significantly flawed.” Heffern said last October that Washington expects Yerevan to make the May 2012 vote as well as a presidential ballot due in 2013 “the best elections ever.” Armenian leaders have since publicly promised that the upcoming vote will be the most democratic in the country’s post-Soviet history.

Eric Rubin, a US deputy assistant secretary of state, said in November that the Armenian government is serious about this pledge. “We think the government is not just saying all the right things, but we believe is committed to an open, free and fair process and to a real contest in the elections,” Rubin told a conference in Washington.

Oskanian Makes Political Comeback As Elections Loom

YEREVAN (RFE/RL) – Vartan Oskanian, Armenia’s former longtime foreign minister, announced on Tuesday his decision to return to the political arena by joining the country’s second most important governing party three months before crucial parliamentary elections.

In a written statement, Oskanian said he has formally applied for membership in the Prosperous Armenia Party (BHK) of Gagik Tsarukian, a millionaire businessman believed to be close to former President Robert Kocharian.

“I make this decision convinced that the Prosperous Armenia Party, together with other political parties, is able to, through political competition, secure free and fair elections, and thus, a new National Assembly with a new configura-

tion of political forces,” he said.

“As chairman of the board of the Civitas Foundation, I had, on various occasions, expressed my views on events and developments in Armenia. Today, I believe it is time to become more actively involved in our political processes,” he added.

Oskanian already signaled his desire to run for parliament on the BHK ticket in a statement issued on January 30. It followed months of reported tensions between Tsarukian and President Serge Sargsian. Commentators have linked them with Kocharian’s alleged desire to return to power. They have speculated that Kocharian might rely not only on the BHK but also former government figures such as Oskanian, who served as

foreign minister throughout his 1998-2008 presidency.

Naira Zohrabian, a senior BHK figure, confirmed that the party has received a membership application from Oskanian. “The party chairman, Gagik Tsarukian, is not in the country right now,” she said. “He will return to the country tomorrow or the day after and Mr. Oskanian’s application will naturally be discussed in accordance with all procedures.”

“Mr. Tsarukian has always said that Prosperous Armenia’s doors are open to all those figures who are ready to work with us for the sake of building a better and more prosperous Armenia, who share our programs and aims ... In his recent interviews Mr. Oskanian said that Prosperous Armenia’s goals are dear to his heart and he wants to go down the same path with us,” Zohrabian said.

Zohrabian agreed that Oskanian’s involvement with the BHK would give it a boost ahead of the parliamentary elections slated for May. She also denied that the membership request is connected with a possible Kocharian comeback.

“I absolutely don’t see a connection here with the second president of the republic because Mr. Oskanian also worked with the first president [Levon Ter-Petrosian] and even the current president when the latter was prime minister [in 2007-2008,]” Zohrabian said.

In his January 30 statement, Oskanian spoke of “politically motivated pressures” exerted on Tsarukian’s party and, in a clear reference to Sargsian’s Republican Party of Armenia (HHK), “the utilization of administrative resources this early in the pre-electoral period.”

Sargsian, Tsarukian and Artur Baghdasarian, the leader of a third party represented in the Armenian government, discussed the upcoming elections at a meeting on Monday. They reportedly pledged not to undermine each other’s parties during the parliamentary race.

First Film about Narekatsi To Be Presented Abroad

YEREVAN (Armenpress) – The first film shot about Grigor Narekatsi, called “Pastor,” will be shown February 15. The film was shot in two years in Western and Eastern Armenia.

“Our goal was to present Narekatsi, to make him known all over the world. He was a saint living one thousand years ago. His character, his face has been forgotten,” producer of the film Archbishop Rafael Minasyan said at a news conference Tuesday. He said the film is neither theological but aims to present Narekatsi as he was.

“We have very little information but there are traditions among the people connected with him, commented in different ways,” director and screenwriter Artak Avdalyan said.

He said though Narekavank no longer exists in Western Armenia, the

set designers of the film managed to find caves in Eastern and Western Armenia where the majority of shooting took place. He confessed that they faced a number of difficulties, including financial ones, but a hand from above was guiding the group helping it overcome all the undesirable obstacles, he said.

The title role is played by actor Arthur Karapetyan, who confessed that the role was so difficult and unusual that there were moments when he even refused to participate in the shootings.

“It was a very responsible role for me. I cannot give any assessment to the work I have done, I was guided by the dictation of our Saint,” Karapetyan said.

In near future the film is expected to be shown in the United States, Lebanon and a number of European countries.



ARMENIA

Former Soviet Boxing Champ, Duped by Notary, Now Lives in Homeless Shelter

YEREVAN (Hetq) – Armen Khaloyan, a former boxing champion of Armenia and the USSR, now lives in a homeless shelter.

In the 1990s, Khaloyan left for Latvia and returned to Armenia in 2003. He can't find his family and doesn't know if his wife and two daughters are waiting for him...somewhere.

"I returned to Armenia in 2003 to get the necessary documents in order to lengthen my residency status in Latvia. I needed to be locally registered but it turns out I no longer had a permanent address in Armenia," says the Soviet master sportsman.

It turns out that Khaloyan's brother had bribed a notary public, Emma Shaboyan, who in turn facilitated the sale of Armen's apartment to a Georgian citizen.

Khaloyan says the sale contract was written up to make it seem that his mother had sold the apartment. He says that at the time, 1998, his mother was bed-ridden and died of cancer a year later. He added that the apartment was jointly owned by him and his mother and that he would have had to agree to the sale as well.

In 2004, we took the matter to the Shengavit Court. At the trial, Shaboyan feigned ignorance and claimed that an office fire in 2000 had destroyed most of the files.

Shaboyan said that it would be up to the court to decide her fate.

The court ruled in favor of Khaloyan and voided the apartment sale to the Georgian



Armen Khaloyan with his medals

buyer, Donara Davtyan.

Months later, out of the blue, the Appeals Court overturned the verdict. It remains a mystery why the Appeals Court even reviewed the lower court's ruling.

Khaloyan claims that at the start of the Appeals Court session his lawyer told him that the judge, Levon Grigoryan, wanted to see him. Khaloyan says that the judge asked him for a bribe. "Your apartment is worth \$15,000. Give me \$3,000 and you get



Armen Khaloyan now

to keep it."

Khaloyan says he refused the offer and took the case to the Court of Cassation. He says Judge Varuzhan Abelyan made a similar offer. "A 20-percent kick-back on the price of the apartment is the going rate," said the judge according to Khaloyan.

He says that when he told the judge he didn't have the money the judge threw him out of the office.

Khaloyan took the matter to the police and

Prosecutor's Office. The Arabkir district prosecutor launched a criminal case in 2005. Charges were dropped four times in the following five years. Each time a new investigation has been ordered.

In November 2010, the Prosecutor General directed the Police Department's Central Department of Investigations to take charge.

Investigator Mangoyan concluded from his findings that notary Emma Shaboyan did indeed violate the law stemming from personal interests by selling the apartment without the consent of Khaloyan. Mangoyan made a note saying that the statute of limitations of five years had passed since Shaboyan violated the law. He subsequently dropped the charges against the notary saying her offense was of medium level seriousness.

Khaloyan says he has lost all hope in the judicial system – the judges, prosecutors, everyone.

"All these years I have been pursuing justice and for what? To see the guilty get off scott free?"

Even his petitions to different tribunals and the RA Special Investigative Service regarding the bribe offers by judges, have been for naught.

"No one even responds to my complaints anymore, not the police or prosecutors. They say they've heard it all before. Even the Human Rights Ombudsman says it's not in his jurisdiction. So who do I turn to?"

Armenia's Parliament Deputy Speaker Meets with German Journalists

YEREVAN (Armenpress) – Deputy Speaker of the National Assembly Eduard Sharmazanov received German journalists Richard Kisler and Knut Teske, who have arrived in Armenia to get acquainted with the position of the Armenian party on the Nagorno Karabagh (NK) conflict settlement, the causes of the conflict, the possible ways for solution and the social, economic and political state of the country.

The press service for the National Assembly of Armenia said Sharmazanov praised the German journalists for visiting the region personally, in contrast to those who make illusory judgments about the things they do not know.

He expressed hope that after the visit to Armenia and Nagorno Karabagh, they will make a full assessment of the NK conflict, its causes and possible solutions, as both Armenia and Artsakh are ready to partake in open and healthy discussions; journalists, for their part, should take responsibility in presenting the facts impartially.

The German journalists said last year they visited Azerbaijan, and that after Armenia, they were to visit Nagorno Karabagh. They write for well-known German newspapers and conduct Internet forums. The goal is that the Germans understand why NK conflict is difficult to resolve. According to them, the significance of this region is big for Europe and the conflict sit-

uation – explosive.

Simultaneously, they understand Armenia has "difficult" neighbors, but they think it is possible to disseminate mutual trust through economic cooperation. According to them the Azerbaijani have stood up for economic cooperation.

Sharmazanov said the contradiction of speech and deed is typical of Azerbaijan. They "play policy," while he will speak with facts.

In response to German journalists' questions of what must be done if Azerbaijan does not recognize the independence of Karabagh, Sharmazanov said: "Karabagh has already gained independence, it is not Azerbaijan that must recognize the independence of Karabagh but [the] international community, which the latter has done in a number of cases."

During the meeting the parties referred to Armenian-Turkish relations, the Armenian Genocide and issues related to its recognition.

The German journalists thanked Sharmazanov for his sincerity, and the latter assured that after the visit to NK they will gain further understanding. "In that newly-independent country you will see a mature generation with free way of thinking, who have not seen and do not want to know what the Azerbaijani leadership means. They always look forward and move forward," said Sharmazanov.



Deputy Speaker of the National Assembly Eduard Sharmazanov meets with German journalists Richard Kisler and Knut Teske.

Heavy Snow Disrupts Air, Road Traffic In Armenia

YEREVAN (RFE/RL) – An unusually heavy snowfall temporarily closed Armenia's main international airport, blocked highways across the country and disrupted public transportation in Yerevan on Friday.

The snowfall, which began on Thursday evening and intensified overnight, forced the administration of Yerevan's Zvartnots airport to cancel or delay all flights early in the morning. The flight service with the outside world partly resumed late in the afternoon. Similar disruptions were reported at the much smaller airport of Armenia's second largest city of Gumri.

According to the Armenian Ministry of Emergency Situations, several mountain passes and highway sections across the country were impassable as of early afternoon. The min-



Snow hampers traffic in Yerevan.

istry warned of blizzard dangers on other roads, including a section of the Yerevan-Gumri highway. It said authorities are doing their best to reopen all roads to traffic.

The snowfall, which meteorologists said will continue at least until Saturday morning, also caused major disruptions in Yerevan. It particularly complicated transport communication between downtown Yerevan and the city's northern districts located at higher altitudes.

There were chaotic scenes in the morning on one major street leading to the Nor Nork district, with hundreds of cars stuck in a thick layer of snow. Driving uphill was practically impossible in those circumstances. "They are probably waiting for the snowfall to stop before cleaning up the road," one driver said, referring to the municipal authorities.

The heavy snow also affected public transportation, with significantly fewer buses and minibuses ferrying passengers throughout the day. Scores of commuters were left stranded at busy stops as a result.

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INTERNATIONAL

International News

Pope Receives Diaspora Minister of Armenia

YEREVAN (Armenpress) — Pope Benedict XVI received Minister of Diaspora of Armenia Hranush Hakobian, who was in Italy and the Vatican for a working visit, February 7-12. The press office of the ministry said that accompanying Hakobian were Armenian ambassador to Italy Ruben Karapetyan and founder-chairman of Pyunik charity foundation, Gabriel Jemberji.

The minister visited Rome's Levonian Armenian college, met with the representatives of the Armenian community and the staff of Radio Vatican Armenian programs.

Karabagh President Visits Greece

ATHENS (Noyan Tapan) — Karabagh (Artsakh) Republic President Bako Sahakyan was in Greece last week on a working visit.

On February 12, the president visited Armenian churches in Athens. Sahakyan partook in a Sunday mass serviced by Primate of the Artsakh Diocese of the Armenian Apostolic Church Archbishop Pargév Martirosyan at St. Mary Church.

Thereafter, according to the central information department of the Artsakh president, Sahakyan met at the Embassy of the Republic of Armenia in Greece with members of the ARF Greece Central Committee, Greece Regional Committee of the Ramkavar Azatakan Party, Armenian People's Movement, Greek-Armenian Chamber of Commerce and Industry.

Sahakyan also met with representatives of the Armenian mass media of Greece.

Bryza Praises Azerbaijan, Turkish Progress

ISTANBUL (PanARMENIAN.Net) — Former US Co-chair of the OSCE Minsk Group and former US ambassador to Azerbaijan, Matthew Bryza, does not link the US Senate's failure to endorse his nomination to Baku to the influence of the Armenian lobby.

"Look what President [Barack] Obama did last year; he used his constitutional powers to go around that blockage. He understood the strategic interest of Azerbaijan and pressed ahead," Bryza said told *Hurriyet Daily News*.

"This time, his decision may be based on factors that go beyond factors related to Baku. Obviously we are in an electoral year," he said.

Addressing the Armenian Genocide, Bryza noted that there has been progress in Turkish society's approach to the issue. There is, he said, "an open discussion of what happened. I think the Hrant Dink murder was a huge awakening for millions of Turks. It's not just the government, it's society that has moved forward to consider that terrible killings were committed by Ottoman troops. But what has not changed at all for legitimate reasons is the firm Turkish view that this should not be recognized politically as genocide; it's not the business of any politician in any country to characterize these events as genocide or not as genocide. It has to be up to societies, not others, to have a decision based on a political calendar. To me that's dishonest [otherwise]," he said.

Seven Chess Players in Moscow Open

MOSCOW (PanARMENIAN.Net) — On January 28, the Moscow Open 2012 chess tournament kicked off, with seven Armenian chess players participating. Avetik Grigoryan faced off against Ray Robson (US) in the second round of RSSU International Chess Cup.

The men's chess line-up for Russian Cup has been announced as follows: David Shahinyan, Arthur Karagezyan, Tigran Harutyunyan and Manuel Petrosyan.

The women's line-up is as follows: Lilit Galoian, Evgeniya Doluhanova and Karina Ambartsumova.

AGBU's GORIZ Program Holds Third Annual Leadership Event

BRUSSELS, Belgium — AGBU Europe's GORIZ Program held its third annual event December 3-6, 2011, here. Previously held in Venice and Yerevan with the support of the European Commission, the most recent leadership program took place in the heart of the European Union, with 13 young diasporans from seven countries — Armenia, Bulgaria, France, Germany, Greece, Romania and the Ukraine. The gathering of new talent and leaders from different communities around Europe enabled the participants to network, discuss current topics and issues, and share ideas and project initiatives for Europe and the Armenian community.

"I was happy to participate. The highlights of the seminar were meeting and getting to know the participants and exchanging ideas with shared enthusiasm," said a participant from Bulgaria.

Several individuals from the business world were invited to speak to the new generation of leaders and share their experiences. President of the Chamber of Commerce of Belgium Valéry Safarian spoke to the group. A technical meeting within the European Parliament also presented the different funding mechanisms for budgets provided by the European Union for projects aimed at cultural and political causes. The issues of human rights and the fight against corruption were extensively discussed during the seminar.

Two young leaders and former members of the AGBU seminars — Aurélie

Deyirmendjian, former chairwoman of the Young Professionals (YP) of Paris, and Gor Abgaryan, founder of AGBU-ACAB (Spain) and AGBU Europe Board member — also spoke, explaining their role in the community, and provided advice to the participants on how to be effective in their actions going forward.

Along with the meetings and seminars, several tours were organized to familiarize the group with the presence of Armenian culture in Belgium. Participants visited the Villa Empain, a landmark of architectural heritage in Brussels, which has become a center of art and dialogue between East and West, as well as the seat of the Boghossian Foundation. Since 1992, this Armenian family foundation has been supporting social, educational, artistic and environmental projects in Armenia and Lebanon. The group also attended the opening exhibition of AGBU's program ARMENIACA, a culmination of continued dedication to the preservation, digitization and development of archives concerning the Armenian architectural heritage.

As a result of the positive outcomes and partnerships generated during both the 2006 and 2007 AGBU Project Exchange and Development Seminars for Young European Armenians sponsored by the Council of Europe that took place in Brussels and Valence respectively, GORIZ was established in 2009 to cultivate future Armenian leaders in Europe. Young Armenian professionals are selected for participation according to their academic achievement and professional background,

as well as their leadership qualities and involvement in their local Armenian community. Over the course of annual week-end-long gatherings, informative lectures and debates take place on subjects related to leadership on a long-term basis among young Armenians in Europe and the promotion of Armenian issues in Europe at civic and government levels, in addition to presentations on diverse topics and issues relating to Armenia and current events.

Throughout the year, GORIZ participants work on joint projects, such as the creation of a structure fostering foreign investments in Armenia, while getting advice and feedback from AGBU Europe members. This year, the teams with the most developed projects will have the opportunity to present them to AGBU Europe Board members during the AGBU Europe Board meeting scheduled for April in Milan. The next GORIZ seminar is expected to take place in October during the AGBU General Assembly in Yerevan.

Azerbaijan in Row With Iran over 'Israeli Spies'

TEHRAN (BBC) — Azerbaijan has angrily denied an Iranian claim that it has been helping Israeli spies plotting against Iran.

Iran says agents of the Israeli secret service Mossad were behind recent killings of Iranian nuclear scientists.

The latest victim was Mostafa Ahmadi-Roshan, killed by a car bomb in north Tehran on January 11.

Azerbaijan's foreign ministry called Iran's claim "slander." On Sunday Iran had summoned the Azeri ambassador and given him a protest note.

An Azeri foreign ministry spokesman, Elman Abdullayev, said the Iranian protest was an "absurd reaction" to Azerbaijan's protest last month over an alleged plot by Iranian agents to kill Israelis in Azerbaijan.

Energy-rich Azerbaijan, a mainly Muslim country, has a secular government and borders on Iran. Azerbaijan has friendly ties with Israel and the US, who accuse Tehran of trying to develop nuclear weapons.

Azeri-Iranian relations have long been strained over the large ethnic Azeri minority in northern Iran.

The Iranian protest note to Azerbaijan on Sunday asked the Azeri government to "stop the activities of the Mossad intelligence services in that country against Iran," Iran's Irna news agency said.

Azeri ambassador Cavansir Akhundov was told that "some of the terrorists linked with the terror of Iranian scientists" had travelled to Azerbaijan and then on to Israel "for co-operation with the spying network of the Zionist regime," Irna reported.

The Azeri spokesman insisted on Monday that Azerbaijan "will not permit any external interference or any terrorist activity on its territory."

Iran refuses to negotiate over its uranium enrichment program, which it says is purely civilian in nature.

Western countries have tightened sanctions against Iran, amid widespread suspicions that Tehran is trying to build nuclear weapons.

In November, the UN's International Atomic Energy Agency said it had information suggesting Iran had carried out tests "relevant to the development of a nuclear explosive device."



Turkish Foreign Minister Ahmet Davutoglu and Secretary of State Hillary Clinton discuss the situation in the South Caucasus.

Davutoglu, Clinton Discuss Situation in South Caucasus

WASHINGTON (PanARMENIAN.Net) — Turkish Foreign Minister Ahmet Davutoglu and US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton discussed on Tuesday, February 14, the situation in the South Caucasus, as well as Armenian-Azerbaijani relations, Anadolu agency reports.

Davutoglu was quoted as saying that such discussions can strengthen the US-Turkish ties, as well as promote stabilization of the South Caucasus.

Arrested Publisher Applies to ECHR

ZARAKOLU, from page 1
the grounds that his right to a fair trial had been violated and that he had been detained for an extensive period. The European court, however, rejected his complaint regarding the right to a fair trial but gave an interim decision addressing claims regarding the period of his arrest, indicating that the charge would be examined later.

"We are going to cite as the preamble our inability to access the documents and information in the file due to the

'order of secrecy,' the basing of the evidence and the accusations on [slippery] facts, the refusal of objections to the arrest without citing any serious and reasonable justification and the fact that no suit has yet been filed despite the passage of more than three months," Kiliç said.

Cem Halavurt, one of the lawyers in the high-profile case of Hrant Dink, murdered in 2007, also said the European court's ruling on Özkan did not constitute a precedent because the court examines each file separately.

Community News

St. Sarkis Church of Dallas Marks 20 Years

By Mary Mukhtarian

DALLAS – The 20th anniversary of the consecration of the St. Sarkis Armenian Church was marked on Saturday, February 4, with a banquet at the Hilton Lincoln Centre Ballroom.

Diocesan Primate Archbishop Khajag Barsamian presided over the festivities honoring the Armenian community of Dallas-Fort Worth.

Mistress of Ceremonies Maral Aznavourian introduced the evening's cultural program, which included performances by young local talent. Njeh Keleshian sang an affecting *Giligia*; Lucine Dayian skillfully performed *Erevan Erepouni* on a grand piano; Maggie Aznavourian and Lena Ohanian recited poetry in Armenian and English, conveying the pride all Armenians feel through the words, "We are. We shall be. And we will multiply." Bedig Bozigian sang *Hayrenik* accompanied on piano by Stefan Sarokhanian.

The young dancers of St. Sarkis Church performed "Sardarabad" and "Vartavar." Aznavourian thanked Kristina Kheshvadjan for coming from California to train the St. Sarkis youth in all the dances, in preparation for the local ArmeniaFest.

The Parish Council chair and vice chair, respectively, Raffi Ohanian and Dr. Vahe Dayian, expressed the community's apprecia-



Elie and Ella Akilian received the St. Vartan Award

tion for the presence of the dignitaries. They listed significant parish accomplishments, including its 40 students enrolled in Armenian School, its 50 members in the ACYOA and the many others who make up the St. Sarkis Sunday School, Women's Guild, Seniors' Program and Social Committee.

Parishioner Zovig Koulian was named as this year's "Steward of the Church," to everyone's delight.

Barsamian paid tribute to two parishioners who have purchased and donated a plot of land, on which the future, larger St. Sarkis Church will stand. "It is a joy and pleasure to present the 'St. Vartan Award,' which is given for exemplary leadership in the Armenian Church, to Mr. and Mrs. Elie and Ella Akilian," he said.

On behalf of the couple, Elie Akilian thanked the Primate and the community for the honor, accepting the award on behalf of "all the kind deeds that people did for us through the years."

Elie Akilian, his wife Ella, and children Natalie and Michael, have always been supportive
see DALLAS, page 8



Lighting a candle at St. Gregory Icon at Khor Virab

Reconnecting with Armenia after 38 Years

CHELMSFORD and YEREVAN – Thanks to the universal use of concrete as a common construction material, my wife, Milka, and I were able to enjoy a wonderful week in Armenia, some 38 years after our first visit to Armenia.

As a result of invitations to present several papers for two separate international scientific conferences on the latest developments in concrete technology – one in the frigid Russian capital of Moscow, November 29-30, and the second in warm balmy Dubai, December 12-14, we were able to insert a one-week visit to our Armenian Homeland. While in Moscow, we found a brief opportunity to visit two Armenian churches – the very small Soorp

Haroutiun Chapel and the soon-to-be-completed new cathedral complex. To our very good fortune, we entered the courtyard of the cathedral complex only to find the Primate of New Nakhichevan and Russia, Archbishop Yezras Nersissian. He provided us an hour tour of what will truly be a magnificent structure. Included among the many extravagant design features is a 200-car parking garage under the cultural hall in anticipation of the long, cold, snowy Moscow winters. We were deeply touched by his strong commitment to the spiritual growth of the million strong Armenian community in Moscow.

Though the timing was clearly off season for touring Armenia, we experienced an intense surge of adrenaline upon touchdown at the new, modern Zvartnotz airport in Yerevan. Our last trip to Armenia in 1973, organized under the ACYOA Summer Studies Program and guided by Rev. Nersess Jebejian and the late Rev. Paree Metjian, was truly a life-changing experience. For both of us, it was our first encounter with our Motherland, which became a "match maker" as one of the fruits of this first visit was our introduction and subsequent. The cold temperatures did not keep us catching many of the key sights – such as Khor Virab and the Noravank Monastery, which we had missed during our month-long stay in 1973. Without question, the past 38 years has brought many changes to Armenia, especially Yerevan, which has become a modern metropolitan city. The Hotel Europe, recommended by friends, was very comfortable, well located in the heart of Yerevan, and employed a very pleasant, multi-lingual staff. Walking along the wide city boulevards, one encountered a wide range of shopping opportunities – the Vernissage, upscale stores and the "shopping alleys" between buildings – which called for a diverse set of bargaining skills. Just hearing and speaking our beautiful Armenian language everywhere we traveled – from the countryside to the heart of Yerevan – was perhaps the single most inspiring and unique experience for any Armenian.

Our daily excursions, with the aid of local guides arranged through friends, helped us become re-acquainted with key historic and cultural sites including Lake Sevan, Garni and Geghart. At Echmiadzin, we had a great pleasure meeting Vardgess Kesablyan, the father of our pastor at Sts. Vartanantz, Chelmsford. Another very unexpected and special experience was witnessing the ordination of

see RECONNECTING, page 7

Recent Gift Adds \$500,000 to Villanova's Hovnanian Scholarship Fund

VILLANOVA, Penn. – The Hirair and Anna Hovnanian Foundation has contributed an additional \$500,000 to the existing endowed Hovnanian Scholarship at Villanova University, which is now valued at \$1.7 million. The Hovnanian Scholarship provides opportunities for academically-talented students of Armenian descent. The scholarship covers recipients' tuition and room and board, and is renewable annually.

Originally established in 1990, the Hovnanian Scholarship has benefited 79 Villanova students to date through full or partial scholarships.

"My motivation for this additional gift is two-fold," said Hirair Hovnanian, a 1956 engineering alumnus of Villanova. "There are so many gifted Armenian students throughout the globe and I am so proud of what a fine institution Villanova is today. As a result, I want as many young Armenian adults as possible – both within the United States and abroad – to have an opportunity to receive the excellent education that Villanova offers."

"We are thrilled that the Hovnanian Foundation is continuing to support Villanova and its students with this additional gift," said Michael J. O'Neill, vice president for University Advancement. "Villanova is committed to attracting students of diverse intellectual, social, racial and economic backgrounds who will serve as academic, civic and cultural leaders today and after graduation. The foundation's generosity and ongoing support of this mission is greatly appreciated."

Students interested in being considered for the Hovnanian Scholarship for the 2012-13 academic year should contact Marykay Klara, associate director of financial assistance. Current Villanova students or those who have been accepted to the University for the 2012-13 academic year are eligible to apply. The Hovnanian Scholarship application will be available online beginning with the 2013-14 academic year.

For more than 25 years, the Hirair and Anna Hovnanian Foundation has been supporting Armenian culture and education, health organizations and the arts, among other areas of interest. Hirair and Anna Hovnanian serve as chairman and president of the Foundation, respectively. Established in 1986, it is headquartered in Tinton Falls, NJ.

In 1963, Hirair S. Hovnanian founded Hovsons Inc., which has built tens of thousands of homes throughout the decades and developed thousands of acres of land. He also has ownership and managerial interests in companies that oversee significant portfolios of properties in the health care industry and commercial construction industry, with a focus on shopping centers and office buildings.

The couple has five children and several grandchildren. Their son, Armen G. Hovnanian, a 1987 alumnus of Villanova's College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, is treasurer of the foundation. The couple's daughters are Siran Sahakian, Edele Hovnanian (who serves as vice president of the foundation), Tanya Hovnanian-Bagdassarian and Leela Hovnanian. In addition, Gorr T. Sahakian, son of Siran Sahakian and grandson of Hirair and Anna Hovnanian, is a first-year student enrolled in the Villanova School of Business.



COMMUNITY NEWS

In Memoriam:

Rich Serabian Remembered for Quiet Deeds

By Tom Vartabedian

HAVERHILL, Mass. — Every Armenian church community needs an activist like Richard Serabian — one who leads by example and answers every call whether it was his or the other guy's.

The irony behind this is the bell. It never stopped ringing, whether it was a church supper, Parish Council meeting or something bigger like the construction of a new church.

Truth be told, the Armenian Church at Hye Pointe was his home away from home and Serabian catered to its every demand.

"He was like an ambassador," said his brother, Robert. "There wasn't a thing he wouldn't do for his church or community. My brother touched all parameters. In so doing, he made life a little bit better for those around him. We miss him already."

Richard Serabian died suddenly on January 28 at his home, leaving behind a legacy of good will and impeccable devotion toward faith and heritage — qualities he had derived

from his parents Charles and Beatrice who blazed their own trail in this city. He was 70.

You wouldn't find a photograph of Rich Serabian anywhere. The last picture taken of the man was at his college graduation from Suffolk University where he secured both an undergraduate and master's degree in business administration.

"He never drew attention to himself," his brother added. "Richard preferred the background. It's just the way he was when newspapers showed up at church. He let the spotlight shine on others."

He was usually the first guy you met on the scene and the last to leave. In between, he was the consummate host, making his rounds with hand extended and a broad smile on his face. His glass was always half filled, never half empty. More than anything, he wallowed in delight when the newer generation carried on the tradition set forth by his predecessors.

"The immigrants built this church," he once told me. "Generations have come and gone but the heritage continues to remain firm. They gave this community life and inspiration. We owe them a debt of gratitude."

Throughout his life, Serabian was involved in different religious, charitable and educational organizations which provided opportunities for those in need. He served as Parish Council chairman and advisor. He was on the building and finance committees for the current church project.

His work outside the church posed a stiff challenge. After working for various CPA firms, he launched a 30-year career as an internal staff auditor with the US Defense Contract Audit Agency.

I remember him walking into the *Haverhill Gazette* office one afternoon with a picnic notice in hand. The place was in chaos as a bank holdup was taking place and the day's edition was being held up for a spot news break.

It didn't bother Serabian in the least. He took a seat and waited for the delirium to end before politely asking for a church picnic notice in the social section of the paper.

"I'm in no rush," he told the editor.

To him, getting that notice into print as the self-designated church publicist was the most important item on his agenda. And God for-

bid if it didn't appear or some cub reporter accidentally misplaced his release. Back he would come with a rebuttal.

You often found him in Watertown caring for the elderly and infirm. Or making a visit to someone's home in the city who needed a helping hand. He was a friend in need and a friend indeed.

In his spare time, he loved walking the shoreline at Salisbury Beach or gardening. In his more active days, he was pounding the ball for different softball leagues in the city.

I first met the man patrolling the sidelines of a Haverhill High football game back in the late 1960s. You would have thought he was a coaching assistant the way he carried on and lashed out at some errant official.

Serabian knew every player by name — as well as every play before it was exercised. His Hillies were his mantra and they would never be denied a call. His love for football cannot be denied, extending all the way to his beloved New England Patriots.

Make no mistake about it. He would have been on the edge of his easy chair on Super Bowl Sunday the week after his death.

"He watched them play in a different venue," his brother said.

OBITUARY

Arpine Khatchadourian

MILWAUKEE, Wis. — When she talked about her long career as a teacher, Arpine Khatchadourian's eyes lit up. As she described the rewards of her profession, her hands waved in the air and a gentle smile reflected a lifetime of happy memories.

"The best thing about teaching is to inspire young students, to encourage them to become lifetime learners," she said. "It is not just one semester. I have always tried to help them see the relation between the courses they take, so I refer to the music, art and art history of a culture. A teacher must stimulate their interest and lead them towards knowledge of self," she said.

She died on January 21.

She was born in the Armenian Quarter of the Old City of Jerusalem, Palestine, in 1925, of parents who escaped the Genocide. She received

her elementary education at the Soorp Tarkmanchats Parochial School and received her secondary education at the British Girls' College in Jerusalem, graduating at the age of 17 and passing the tough Palestine Matriculation Examinations with Distinctions in several subjects, including Armenian.

Right after graduation, she was offered a teaching position at Soorp Tarkmanchats School, where she taught English and was the girls' supervisor for eight years. (Her mentor was the then-Rev. Torkom Manoogian, presently the Armenian Patriarch of Jerusalem.) After her marriage in 1950 to Haig Khatchadourian, she taught English, for one year, at the Melkonian Educational Institute in Nicosia, Cyprus, where her husband also taught.

In Beirut, Lebanon, where the family then settled, she raised three children, and at the same time, taught English at the AGBU Tarouhie Hagopian Secondary School.

In 1967, the family moved to the United States, settling where her husband joined the philosophy faculty at the University of Wisconsin at Milwaukee (UWM). After a year in Los Angeles, where he taught at the University of Southern California, she studied comparative literature at UWM, earning a BA summa cum laude, and received a university fellowship to continue her graduate studies in that field. She was also inducted into Phi Kappa Phi, a national academic honor society.

Returning with her family from Honolulu, where her husband was a visiting professor for a semester, she began work on her master's thesis in comparative literature. The family next spent a year in Albuquerque, NM. "The Zimmermann Library at the university there was an unlikely place to look for sources for my thesis on the Armenian heroic epic, David of Sassoon," she explained. "However, many of the original sources I needed had found their way there through the efforts of a philologist who had bought the estate of a professor at Marburg, Germany. For me, it was true serendipity to find that these works that were brought at the end of the 19th century were brought all the way...to the middle of the desert.

During her stay in Albuquerque, she volunteered to teach the Armenian language to interested Armenian community members; and before she and her family left, she was honored by her students and community. The friendships she formed with a number of community members lasted decades after. Meanwhile she continued to work on her master's thesis on the *Heroic Epic of David of Sassoon*, which she completed and received her master's degree in comparative literature with honors.

In the fall of 1979, she began teaching Armenian in the UWM Linguistics Department.

In addition to invited talks at St. John Armenian Church, Greenfield, she taught a special invited literature course at the University of Connecticut.

In 1982, she enrolled in the PhD program in English, took coursework and wrote three preliminary exams. She also was a teaching assistant in the English Department and taught several freshman honors courses.

In 1988, Prof. Rachel Skalitzky of the Comparative Literature Department gave her the opportunity to teach the course "Masterpieces of Western Literature in Translation," now called "World Literature in Translation."

She retired after 47 years as a teacher.

Although she missed the classroom, she was "glad to have more time to spend with her two grandchildren.

Shake Charlotte Ajamian

WYNNEWOOD, Penn. — Shake Charlotte (Derderian) Ajamian died on January 30. She was the wife of Chuck Ajamian and had four children, 10 grandchildren and one great-grandchild.



She also leaves her brother, Albert, and wife Marilyn.

The funeral was held on Saturday, February 4, St. Sahag and St. Mesrob Armenian Apostolic Church, 630 Clothier Road, Wynnewood. Interment was in Edgewood Memorial Park.

In lieu of flowers, memorial contributions may be made to the church or St. Nersess Armenian Seminary, 150 Stratton Road, New Rochelle NY 10804.

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COMMUNITY NEWS

Reconnecting with Armenia

RECONNECTING, page 6

four priests during a Sunday Badarak in Holy Echmiadzin, which filled my wife's heart with deep emotion as she reflected on the life of her late father, Rev. Bedros Feredjian.

Of course a trip to Armenia means connecting with many friends and relatives — planned and unplanned. In Yerevan, Milka was able to embrace first cousins, Mariam, Manoushag and Haroutiun, which she had not seen since 1973. Enjoyable evenings were shared with the parents of our Sts. Vartanantz parishioners,

Doctors Aram and Anna Adourian, as well as

down the long walkway back to the main thoroughfare to catch a van back to Republic Square, to our good fortune, a young lady, an employee of the Genocide Museum next to the monument, offered to show us the way. Of course, a conversation developed whereby the young woman asked where we were from. Upon indicating Boston, "Oh," she replied. "My name is Angel Tevekelian, and you may know my great uncle, Kevork Tevekelian, who is from the Boston area."

Indeed, Kevork Tevekelian happens to be a member of Sts. Vartanantz, Chelmsford and a



Ara and Milka Jeknavorian with Archbishop Yezras Nercesian

our extended *khunamees*, Vahakn and Hasmig Hovnanian. We were also able to connect with Garen Hovanyanian, one of Armenia's growing golf enthusiasts, with whom I had the pleasure of playing golf at the Fresh Pond Golf Course in Cambridge this past summer. Thanks to the efforts of Dr. Aram Adourian and the warm reception of Prof. Artashes Tadevosyan, one of the most rewarding highlights of our Armenia re-connection was the opportunity to give a lecture at the State Engineering University on my field of expertise — chemical admixtures for concrete. The lecture was given in Armenian with the assistance of two translators — my wife and a technology student, who helped with certain technical terms. To this day, I kiss my mother's hands, who with tremendous patience taught me to read, write and especially converse in

Parish Council member. What an incredible surprise for all of us!

Many conversations confirmed the difficult conditions in Armenia, especially the struggling economy highlighted by high unemployment, with little hope for improving conditions. And there were few incidents where we, being categorized as tourists, were taken advantage of. Withstanding such situations, our re-connection with Armenia allowed us to reminisce about our good fortune in 1973 and the opportunity to experience the tremendous pride of those Armenians determined to maintain a safe and hopefully re-invigorated Homeland.

Our last stop on this three-week adventure was Dubai, a most welcome change from the cold temperatures in Moscow and Armenia. It felt great shedding the heavy coats, gloves and



Ara and Milka visit with Vartgess Kesablyan.

Armenian — all very valuable skills in maneuvering throughout Armenia. I hope this first lecture will help establish a lasting connection with the university for further collaboration.

A one-in-a million connection was made during a visit to the Armenian Genocide Monument (Dzidzernagapert) on a cold, cloudy afternoon. We climbed aboard one of the mini-vans in Yerevan tightly packed with a crowd of passengers for a 15-minute ride to Dzidrenagapert to offer a prayer. On our return as we proceeded

hats, and enjoying a dip in the warm waters of the Arabian Gulf. The scale of construction and creative architecture, highlighted by the world's tallest building Burj Khalifa, its indoor downhill ski slope and the Gold Souk help make Dubai a truly mind-boggling city.

I encourage everyone who has yet to make a personal pilgrimage to our *Mayr Haiastan* not to delay. It will be the best trip of your life.

(Ara Jeknavorian is a resident of Chelmsford.)

Wisconsin Hye Notes

BY NAOMI ZEYTOONIAN

Merry Christmas, Armenian Christmas and a Happy, Healthy and Productive New Year

Last year sped on by and now January went as quickly in this new year.

The St. Mesrob Women's Guild had a successful fundraising year after the annual festival, which is always so very popular. The ladies held a huge rummage sale followed by their Bible Study groups, this year on the Book of Esther.

Congratulations to Michael Sheridan on his recent marriage in November. Michael and his bride, Anjhelika, currently reside in North Carolina, where he is serving with the Marine Corps. God's blessings on the newly weds and their families.

The annual Diocesan Appeal and the reception for Archbishop Khajag Barsamian was held at the Naha Restaurant in Chicago. The following day the Primate celebrated Badarak at St. Johachim and Anna Church in Palos Park. The church celebrated its 53rd anniversary of its consecration and that afternoon there were performances by the children of the parish and the presentation of the "lay minister of the year" awards to Robert Koshkarian and my dear friend, Pearl Gopoian. Pearl has been an active member of St. Joachim and also at St. David in Boca Raton, where she is an avid choir member in the winter months in Florida.

On December 3, our local band, the Mideast Beat, performed at George's Grill in Racine. George and his wife, Suzan, hosted a great Persian buffet. George is Macedonian and Suzan is from Iran. Wonderful couple and fabulous hosts.

St. Hagop Armenian Church in Racine welcomes their new priest and his yeretzgin who arrived in time for their annual "Armenian Holiday Food Sale" on December 10. Fr. Hrant and Yn. Tamar Kevoorian are originally from Beirut, Lebanon. Welcome to Racine, Der Hayr and Yeretzgin. We look forward to your presence.

Big first birthday celebration from sweet baby Natalya Topalian. Proud parents, Anita and Mike, hosted a fabulous event in their lovely home honoring baby Natalya.

On December 18, the Sunday School students presented their annual Christmas Pagaent, followed by a fellowship prepared by the Sunday School parents and the Grigorian and Zeytoonians families in memory of Carl Zeytoonians' one-year anniversary.

Sympathies are extended to Aykaz and Joyce Manucharyan and their children, Alexandria and Gregory, and to Aykaz's mother, on the passing of his father in Russia. Aykaz's mother has returned to Russia indefinitely. Our prayers and sympathy also to Corrinne Topalian and her family, on the passing of her husband, Jean Pierre (Avak) Topalian. Corinne is an active member of the seniors group and the St. Mesrob Choir. Get-well wishes go to our choir director, Terry Peterson. May she return to us soon in the best of health.

Armenians in the news include Doug and Robyn Kalajian of Boynton Beach and members of St. David on their recent formation of ArmenianKitchen.com. Robyn was a former educator and Doug was a reporter and member of the editorial staff of the *Palm Beach News*. They have since both retired and combined their efforts producing wonderful Armenian recipes. Another Florida chef is John Minas. John adds Armenian dishes to the Florida governor's mansion in Tallahassee. John grew up in Watertown, Mass. to Armenian and Assyrian parents, and received his culinary training at the Culinary Institute of America in Hyde Park, NY. He holds the prestigious position of executive chef to Gov. Rick Scott and First Lady Ann Scott.

There is so much creativity in this small mid-Western town and so much of it is yet unknown, but our ladies enjoyed a taste of it when Chairlady Carol Boehlke hosted a festive holiday social at her tastefully-decorated house. Carol is an avid antiquer and loves to rummage. She collects such beautiful pieces and displays them so artistically, that it is a pleasure to view. Her holiday house included a huge Christmas village set on two levels and it certainly must have taken her days to set it up, and not to mention taking it all down at the end of the season.

Danny Mantis, Alex Ouzounian, represented the ACYOA Central Council and Ani and Alina Grigorian represented St. Mesrob on January 14 and 15 weekend at the ACYOA Annual Forum held at St. David in Boca Raton. Approximately, 35-40 young people from the Eastern Diocese participated in this event. The weather was balmy and quite pleasant the entire weekend. Great sailing weather also for the Armenian Heritage Cruise, which set sail from the port of Fort Lauderdale the same weekend.

Maybe we will make it next year!

Have a wonderfully fulfilling 2012!

Breakfast Reception for Agricultural Development Specialist Christina Schirinian

BOSTON — Ana Christina Schirinian, who spearheads agricultural development projects in Armenia and in other nations, will be the special guest at a breakfast reception on Saturday, February 25, beginning at 10 a.m., at the Armenian Cultural Foundation in Arlington.

In an informal, illustrated program sponsored by the Armenian International Women's Association, Schirinian will describe her experiences, and the lessons learned, in her work as president of Tierras de Armenia and executive director of Fruitful Armenia.

The emphasis in these projects is to introduce the latest technology into agricultural activity in order to maximize efficiency and quality. Tierras de Armenia, for example, has taken a large arid expanse of land in Armavir province and turned it into a productive fruit-bearing area, benefitting from state-of-the-art

irrigation provided by a newly-constructed reservoir.

Experience from similar agricultural development projects in other nations, notably Argentina, Morocco and Italy, will be included in the program.

A native of Buenos Aires, Schirinian serves as special assistant to businessman Eduardo Eurnekian, head of the Argentine holding company Corporación América, who is especially known by Armenians for his activities in rebuilding Zvartnots airport in Yerevan.

Schirinian is coming to the United States in order to participate in the annual session of the Commission on the Status of Women at the United Nations headquarters in New York City.

The breakfast reception is open to the public, free of charge.

For further information email: aiwainc@aol.com; web: aiwainternational.org.



COMMUNITY NEWS

New Board Installation, Initiatives Announced at Meeting of APS

STUDIO CITY, Calif. — The Armenian Professional Society (APS) installed its new Executive Board and announced a line up of initiatives for 2012. The annual installation of the Executive Board was held on Saturday, January 28, at the Bistro Garden.

An array of professionals and dignitaries were in attendance. Guests included former Executive Board representatives, past presidents as well as various members of APS.

Angelo Ghailian, president-elect of the board, started the evening's program by welcoming the supporters and recognized all past presidents of the APS who were in attendance. The year 2011 marked a successful year for the APS as membership increased, the organization was able to reconnect with many of its past supporters and hosted successful events, none of which would have been possible without the leadership of Shahan Minassian, the 2011 president. Minassian was welcomed with applause.

Minassian recapped a successful 2011 marked by the Professional of the Year Banquet honoring Dr. Frieda Jordan and featuring Mark Geragos as the master of ceremonies. Minassian also highlighted other successful events, such as the evening at the Hollywood Bowl and Disney Concert Hall, the Santa Barbara event featuring a museum trip to view artwork by Charles Garabedian, as well as the past president's luau. Minassian thanked the Executive Board of 2011 and encouraged guests to continue their support of the APS and cited the significance the APS invokes on professionals in the Armenian community.

Joe Mehrabian, a talented saxophone player, performed an exceptional musical piece. As dinner came to an end, former APS President Stephan Bagboudarian took to the stage to present candidates for the Executive Board of 2012. Each member's outstanding accomplishments in their studies and professional careers were outlined as cheers rang



From left, Lara Yacoubian (event coordinator), Ani Petrossian (treasurer), Shahan Minassian (president 2011), Taline Hanna (first vice president), Seta Khajarian (scholarship chair), Angelo Ghailian (president 2012) and Lily Kazarians (second vice president)

from guests. The Executive Board of 2012, who were nominated by the council and approved in accordance with APS by-laws, comprises Ghailian as president, Taline Hanna as first vice president, Lily Kazarians as second vice president and Ani Petrossian as treasurer. Seta Khajarian was selected as scholarship chair, and Lara Yacoubian was selected as event coordinator.

Dr. Vaughn Gregor, one of the founding members of the APS, outlined the focus of fellowship amongst the APS. Gregor welcomed Minassian back to the stage to thank him for the great service provided to the APS. Minassian was presented with an honorary pin.

The evening came to a close as Ghailian outlined the initiatives of enhancing the APS

and offered a template of activities for 2012. Proposed activities for 2012 are Disney and Hollywood Bowl concerts, mixers and membership drives at happy hour venues and col-

leges, guest speakers on topics such as medicine, engineering, green energy and the arts, the popular past President's luau party, the traditional Professional of the Year Banquet and a Christmas party to finish off the year.

The APS will also focus its efforts to coordinate with the other Armenian organizations in order to develop stronger ties with the community in pursuit of increased visibility and esteem. The APS will also concentrate on a mentoring program that will be instrumental in fostering young graduates with contacts and skills sets to excel in their desired professions.

The APS is an independent, non-partisan organization founded in 1958 to promote fellowship among Armenian professionals and to encourage and foster higher education in young Armenians. APS activities include annual grants and scholarships to universities in Armenia, and to graduate students in the United States; conducting regularly scheduled meetings that cover a range of professional, cultural and other topics of interest to its membership; sponsoring social events; and holding an annual banquet to honor a Professional of the Year who has provided outstanding service to the Armenian community.

For information about the APS, write to apsla@apsla.org or visit www.apsla.org.

St. Sarkis Church of Dallas Marks 20 Years

DALLAS, from page 5

members of the community. From humble beginnings in Lebanon, Elie Akilian became a resident of Dallas in the early 1970s. After years of working as an engineer for local electronics companies, he co-founded Inet Technologies with friend Sam Simonian, a successful telecom company that was eventually sold to industry giant Tektronix. He later founded the company that produces the popular Wizard 101 video game.

The new church property was purchased in October of last year, out of the community's desire to build a church with traditional Armenian architecture, and spacious enough to include classrooms, sports facilities and a hall.

To conclude the evening, the Primate remi-

nised about the day 20 years earlier when he consecrated the St. Sarkis Church, and he praised the parish godfather, Dr. Sarkis Kechejian. He noted that the Dallas church held a special place in his heart, for it was the first one he consecrated as a bishop.

On Sunday, February 5, the Primate celebrated the Divine Liturgy at St. Sarkis Church, accompanied by the parish's deacon-in-charge, Justin Ajamian.

Diocesan Music Ministry Director Khoren Mekanejian played the organ and directed the choir.

Following services, the Women's Guild served a luncheon in Kechejian Hall, after which the Primate and others toured the new 4.5-acre church property in nearby Hebron.



Zovig Koulian (holding plaque) was named as this year's Steward of the Church.

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Robert Serabian, of Haverhill, Mass. donates \$75 to the *Armenian Mirror-Spectator* in memory of his late brother Richard Serabian.



COMMUNITY NEWS

20th Anniversary of Armenian Armed Forces Celebrated

TAMPA, Fla. (FloridaArmenians) — On February 1, a reception on the occasion of the 20th anniversary of the establishment of the Republic of Armenia's Armed Forces was organized at the US Central Command Coalition Coordination Center (CCC), Mac Dill Air Force Base.

The event brought together high-ranking officers and civilian officials from more than 60 countries, including top US Armed Forces representatives of US CENTCOM.

Lt. Col. A. Mkrtchyan, Armenian Armed Forces representative for US Central Command, delivered opening remarks and presented the Armenian army's history.

Also, US Central Command Chief of Staff, Lt. Gen. Karl

Horst extended his well wishes to Armenia's Armed Forces, and praised the Armenian military contingent's participation in the security and stability operations in Afghanistan.

Fr. Hovnan Demerjian, pastor of St. Hagop Armenian Church in Pinellas Park, offered

remarks on the common strengths of Armenia's Army and its partners based on protecting freedoms of religion, conscience and human rights.

Fr. Abraham Malkhasyan, visiting pastor of St. Haroutiun Church in Orlando, offered the traditional prayer before meals and blessing for all who serve and protect in the armed forces.

Twenty years have passed from the memorable days when the Armed Forces of the newly-independent Republic of Armenia were created.

During those years the Armed Forces performed a multifold task. While in the process of creation, the Armed Forces both defended the Armenian borders and people and had to combat and win a major war.

As of today, the Armed Forces of the Republic of Armenia is actively involved in international military cooperation, including peacekeeping and stabilizing operations in Kosovo and Afghanistan. Armenia proudly accomplished the task, with US and Polish troops, in Iraq in 2008.

The Armenian Armed Forces will spare no effort to preserve peace and security for themselves and for its allies and partners around the world.



Fr. Hovnan Demerjian and Lt. Col. A. Mkrtchyan

St. David Church Hosts Charity Golf Tournament in March

BOCA RATON, Fla. — St. David Armenian Church 20th Anniversary Charity Golf Tournament will be held on March 26, at the Via Mizner Golf and Country Club. The tournament will begin at 10:30 a.m. registration, move onto a buffet lunch at noon and a "shot-gun start" at 1 p.m. Cocktails will be at 5:30 p.m. and an awards banquet at 6:30 p.m.

Proceeds from this tournament will be used for spiritual, educational, cultural and educational programs of the church.

The committee is working hard to make this event an enjoyable place to rekindle friendship.

James Kalustian will be master of ceremonies. There will be many expensive items for the live auction, including tickets to the Red Sox and the New England Patriots, along with rounds of golf, and more.

For further information, contact this year's chairperson, Sonia Janian, (soniajanian@yahoo.com) or St. David Armenian Church at stdavoff@att.net.



From left, Alice Bogdasarian, Sonia Janian, Beatrice Babgouni, Carol Norigian, Virginia Higgins, Zaven Kazandjian, (second row) Judy Khachadourian, Edward Shooshanian, Berj Tashjian

Genocide Museum Director to Speak at Glendale Library

GLENDALE, Calif. — Dr. Hayk Demoyan, director of the Armenian Genocide Museum-Institute in Yerevan, Armenia, will present an illustrated lecture in Armenian on Sunday, March 11, at 2 p.m. at the Glendale Central Library



Dr. Hayk Demoyan

Auditorium, 222 East Harvard St. Admission is free and seating is limited.

Demoyan will discuss some of the Armenian Genocide Museum-Institute's exhibits, including survivor memoirs, eyewitness accounts, research on Armenian social life before the Genocide, reprinted editions of rare primary sources, collections of newly-discovered documents and works on the Cilicia massacres of 1909.

The Armenian Genocide Museum-Institute is a nonprofit organization based in Yerevan. The mission of the museum is both to promote the collection of visual textual materials related to the daily life of Western Armenians in the Ottoman Empire before and during the Genocide, and to develop more effective cooperation and collaboration among organizations worldwide involved in the research of genocide, particularly the Armenian Genocide.

The program is sponsored by the Armenian Genocide Museum-Institute in Yerevan, the Ararat-Eskijian Museum, and the National Association for Armenian Studies and Research and Glendale Public Library.

Library visitors receive three hours free parking across the street at The Market Place parking structure with validation at the Loan Desk.

Armenian Bar Association Accepts Applications for Scholarship Program

LOS ANGELES — The Armenian Bar Association is accepting applications for its seventh annual Scholarship Program. The program is designed to support meritorious students of Armenian descent attending or accepted for admission to an approved law school in the United States, Armenia or elsewhere. Recipients must demonstrate an outstanding academic record as well as a strong commitment to the Armenian community, particularly in humanitarian and/or law-related endeavors. The Scholarship Program is primarily funded by donations and by fundraising events hosted by the Armenian Bar Association. In addition to the Scholarship Program, the Armenian Bar Association supports Armenian law students through its varied programs and events including the mentorship and internship programs and presentations by legal scholars.

Students interested in applying for an Armenian Bar Association scholarship should obtain an application at the group's website (www.armenianbar.org).

The application deadline is April 30. The application must either be postmarked by April 30 or if e-mailed, it should be received no later than midnight (PST) of April 30.

From May 17 to 19, the Armenian Bar Association will hold its 23rd annual meeting in Glendale. For information on how to register for this meeting, visit the group's website.

Sponsor a Teacher in Armenia and Karabagh 2012



Since its inception in 2001, TCA's 'Sponsor a Teacher' program has raised over \$518,000 and reached out to 4,064 teachers and school workers in Armenia and Karabagh.



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New York
METRO

AIWA to Present Workshop at UN on the Status of Women

NEW YORK — The United Nations Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) will hold its 56th session this year on the theme “The Empowerment of Rural Women and Their Role in Poverty and Hunger Eradication: Development and Current Challenges.”

The Armenian International Women’s Association will participate in the meeting by sponsoring a workshop on the opening day of the session, Monday, February 27, beginning at 6:15 p.m. CSW sessions attract hundreds of women annually to New York from all parts of the world.

The AIWA workshop will focus on issues relating to the position of rural women in Armenia, enhanced by perspectives gained from programs developed in other nations.

Illustrated presentations by two professionals experienced in working with rural women will evaluate various strategies used to address the empowerment of women.

The first presenter, Sara Anjargolian, is a photographer and attorney in Los Angeles who has documented the lives of the Zulu people in South Africa, the plight of the extreme poor in Armenia, and the status of refugees living along the border with Azerbaijan in Armenia’s rural areas. She will speak about the power of images to inform and inspire social change and about her personal transformation while spending time with these groups of people.

Anjargolian will also address the benefits of partnering documentary photographers and media professionals with aid organizations, focusing specifically on how narrative imagery can empower the individuals depicted and help contextualize their unique challenges and triumphs.

The second presenter, Ana Cristina Schirinian, divides her time between Buenos Aires, Argentina, and Yerevan, Armenia (and often places in between). An attorney by profession, she is special assistant to Eduardo



©SaraAnjargolian

Armenian women in the village of Shatvan, Gegharkunik Province

Eurnekian, head of Corporación América, an Argentine holding company active in a number of diverse industries, including airport construction and management.

As president of Tierras de Armenia, an agricultural project in Armavir province that specializes in offering the latest technology for growing fruit, and as executive director of

Fruitful Armenia, Shirinian is familiar with the life of rural women in Armenia. She will compare her observations regarding agricultural conditions in Armenia with her experiences stemming from similar programs in Argentina, Morocco and Italy.

The workshop will take place in the Drew Room on the first floor of the Church Center across the street from the United Nations building in New York from 6:15 to 7:45 p.m. It is open to the public free of charge.

AIWA has participated in the United Nations

as a Non-Governmental Organization for over a decade and is affiliated with the Economic and Social Council as well as the Department of Public Information. AIWA’s Main UN Representative, Mary V. Toumayan, heads a delegation including Joan Agajanian Quinn, Hasmig Torossian, Joy Renjilian-Burgy, Barbara Merguerian and Lily Ring Balian.

Further information about AIWA’s workshop at the United Nations is available from the AIWA office, 65 Main St., Watertown, MA 02472 or its website, aiwainternational.org.



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A Zulu woman waits at a tuberculosis clinic in Greytown, South Africa.

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The Significance of the Trials of the Perpetrators of the Armenian Genocide

A lecture by
PROF. VAHAKN N. DADRAN

The post-World War I Ottoman Special Military Tribunal showed clearly, in a legal setting, the genocidal intent of the Young Turk leaders perpetrated against their Armenian citizens. Prof. Dadrian will present his analysis and the significance of the trials. The new book, *Judgment at Istanbul: The Armenian Genocide Trials*, the first on the Armenian Genocide jointly written by an Armenian and a Turkish scholar, will be on sale at a specially reduced price, and the author will be pleased to sign copies.

Eleven years in the making, *Judgment at Istanbul* marks the first time the complete known documentation of the trial proceedings is being provided in English. The study is based on authentic Turkish documentation, which the Ottoman government was forced to release during the trials. It includes the personal, eyewitness testimony of high-ranking Ottoman officials, given under oath, on the magnitude of the crimes against the Armenians.

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8:00 pm

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New York METRO

Gala Benefit Concert Marks 45th Anniversary for HMADS

By Lana Kazangian

OAKLAND GARDENS, N.Y. — The 45th anniversary of Holy Martyrs Armenian Day School (HMADS) was celebrated with music and champagne on Saturday, January 28. A musical concert featuring well-known artists from the local community as well as the HMADS Student Choir and alumni, took place at the Armenian Church of the Holy Martyrs. About 300 attended the sold-out Saturday night event. Among the special guests were Armenia's Ambassador to the UN Garen

tically synonymous with the school. "We are celebrating not only what HMADS has achieved through the years, but also the efforts of the parents, students, alumni, teachers, volunteers and friends that have participated in its life for the past 45 years."

The concert featured international prize-winning pianist Tania Gabrielian, area vocalists lyric soprano Anoush Barclay, baritone Vagharshag Ohanyan, mezzo-soprano Hasmik Meikhanedjian and contemporary artist Hooshere. A true highlight was a culminating trio performance of *Non Ti scordar di me* by *Ernesto de Curtis*, sung by Barclay, Ohanyan and Meikhanedjian. Instrumental musicians fea-



Special guests with participants

Nazarian, Barbara Peters, Mr. and Mrs. Noubar Mahdessian, benefactors and representatives of organizations from the New York/New Jersey area.

The event was attended by Archbishop Yeghishe Gizirian, former Primate of UK Armenians. Other guest clergies included Fr. Bedros Kadehjian, interim pastor of the Armenian Church of the Holy Martyrs and Fr. Nareg Terterian, pastor of St. Sarkis Armenian Church of Douglaston, NY.

"Our school's anniversary is a community milestone," said Zarminé Boghosian, the long-time principal of HMADS, whose name is prac-

ture were Violinist Diana Vasilyan, who performed a moving trio Gomidas's *Dsirani Dsar* with two HMADS young alumni violinists — Zovinar Aghavian and Nicole Mark — and accompanist Janet Marcarian.

At the conclusion of the program, the entire audience, HMADS choir, alumni and guest performers joined in singing *Hayr Mer* led by Gizirian, who gave a moving speech congratulating the HMADS Family.

"The concert was beautiful to listen to, but was also meaningful and reflective considering the occasion," said Mina Hovsepien, 45th Anniversary Committee member, HMADS



Grace Kechian, honorary chair, cuts the cake.

Friends Committee member and past chairperson of the HMADS-PTO. Hovsepien's daughter, Talar, is a recent alumna of the school and participated in the concert as well. "So much hard work by the 45th anniversary committee was involved," she said "months of preparation leading up to the event, but it all paid off." Literally too — as the function raised \$18,000 in net profit for the school.

"The event was a true success," said Hovannes Malikyan, HMADS Board member and Friends Committee chairperson. "It met all of our goals, and was an ideal way to commemorate this important achievement in the school's history."

The concert also reminded the community that a school like HMADS can't keep its doors open, serving the community year after year, without the sponsorship and support of the community. "The school needs each and every one of us," says HMADS Board Member Lolita Babikian, "to keep the wheels turning and mak-

program. Nevart Zeronian, a piano accompanist in the concert, has been the principal organist of the Armenian Church of the Holy Martyrs for the last 18 years.

A reception followed the concert in HMADS' Kalustyan Hall. One of the highlights of the reception was the cutting of an original cake donated for the event by artistic New Jersey-based bakers Keremo Cakes. The cake featured the school's Ararat mountain logo on a multi-tier cake surrounded by small individual cupcakes with the letters of the Armenian Alphabet. The clergy, past and current chairs of the School Board joined in cutting the cake as HMADS Students sang the school's song and *Happy Birthday*.

While HMADS' style is more humble, it could — if it wanted to — boast its 265-plus students that have graduated, empowered with a competitive American education and supplemented by intense study of Armenian language, history and culture.



The performers are thanked by Principal Zarminé Boghosian.



Andy Torigian introduces Archbishop Khajag Barsamian, the Primate of the Eastern Diocese of the Armenian Church, and the clergy to the residents of the ANRC.

Archbishop Barsamian, Clergy, Visit New Jersey Armenian Nursing and Rehabilitation Center

EMERSON, N.J. — Archbishop Khajag Barsamian, the Primate of the Eastern Diocese of the Armenian church, visited the Armenian Nursing and Rehabilitation Center (ANRC) in January to help celebrate Armenian Christmas. Accompany him were Fr. Diran Bohajian, pastor of St. Leon Armenian Church of Fairlawn; Deacon Sebu Oscherician of St. Vartan Cathedral, New York City; Deacon Hacik Sariminyan of St. Leon Armenian Church and Arthur Petrosyan from the Diocese Communication Department.

The Primate and the other members of the clergy conducted a short mass and gave communion to each of the 60 residents in attendance. Barsamian told them that he was praying for their recovery and that God loves them.

Andy Torigian, the president and chairman of the board of ANRC, thanked Barsamian and the clergy for their attention to the ANRC. After the service, a luncheon was served.

ing HMADS better, stronger and most importantly, of highest quality in education and discipline. No wonder that this school was ranked number one in Queens private schools based on their state tests."

The event began and ended with a candlelight procession of 45 HMADS alumni and students. The program included both Armenian and Western classical compositions.

HMADS has a talented collection of parents and teachers. Mezzo-Soprano Hasmik Meikhanedjian, who gave a powerful performance of Verdi's *Il Troubadore*, has two children in the school, Ani and Levon, and finds time to serve on the PTO of the school, and consequently, was a driving force in spearheading the concert. Barclay, is the parent of Shushan, a current student, and Zovinar, who just graduated. Both Meikhanedjian and Barclay consequently sing in the St. Vartan Armenian Cathedral Choir every Sunday.

Hooshere, a new parent of Hye Bardez toddler Araxi, is also an alumna of the school. Anahid Boghossian and Nevart Z. Dadourian are regular music teachers of the school; Diana Vasilyan is a visiting violin teacher and Janet Marcarian is the retired HMADS sixth-grade teacher who accompanied all the artists of the

If 45 is the new 25, then HMADS is true to form, trying to stay ahead of the times—it has web presence at www.hmads.org and it is on Facebook to help it explore different ways of reaching out to the community and especially to the alumni and attract new students.

"The school's Open House for Nursery and Kindergarten shouldn't be missed by any local new parents," said Liza Andreopoulos, HMADS PTO co-chair. "HMADS provides an excellent nursery school program, and continues K-6 with a solid private school education." The Open House for the year 2012-2013 is set for Wednesday, February 29; those interested in attending should RSVP with the school office.

HMADS was founded in 1967 as the Hye Bardez Nursery School, and then grew from only a nursery program to a comprehensive nursery through sixth-grade elementary school, fully accredited by the New York State Board of Education.

Housed in the community center wing of the Armenian Church of the Holy Martyrs, HMADS is non-affiliated and is supported by various organizations, as well as individual benefactors. This year marks 45 years of its inception and the 30th graduating class. The HMADS 30th graduation will be held on Friday, June 15.



Arts & Living

Spilling The Beans

Fastachi: There Is No
Other Nut!

By Rachel Travers

WATERTOWN (*edible boston*) – If you are a nut lover, there is nothing better than a plump and perfect roasted nut, sometimes salted, sometimes not, but always fresh, fresh, fresh – whether popped in your mouth, added to a salad, laid out for company or given as a present. Which is why Souren and Susan Etyemezians chose the name “Fastachi” for their hand-crafted nuts and dark chocolate barks: Translated from a Native American language, that is just what it means – “little gift” or “little giver.”

Their brochure reads: “Ah, the Fastachi nut. Born and bred in all the best places, hand-picked for sublime perfection, and under our careful guise, hand-roasted, in small batches, in steel drums. No fancy seasonings, only pure sea salt to bring out the true essence of our thoroughbreds...Pampered, over-protected and spoiled? Perhaps.”

But the fact is, if you love nuts, once you try them from Fastachi, you will probably never pick up packaged nuts at a convenience mart again, or make your holiday nut purchase from big-box retailers. You might actually admit being a nut snob.

Etyemezians thought he was on the road to becoming an engineer, and bounced through five colleges – ending up with an MBA in business, enamored with branding and packaging. “Then a friend of mine in California asked me if I’d like to learn how to roast nuts,” says Etyemezians, who took his friend up on the offer and has been pursuing this path ever since. His first shop was Mixed Nuts on Belmont Street, in Belmont, opened in 1990.

Four years later, he met and married Susan, who had gone to Parsons The New School for Design and worked in the fashion industry.

They make a great couple, with an even measure of both style and savvy. Susan Etyemezians is very organized and efficient; Souren Etyemezians has an eye for detail and is a very visual person. The couple never steps on the other’s words.

“We complement one another, that’s why it works so well. And we learned how to work together,” explains Susan Etyemezians, who says it was a very natural transition. There is a definite pride in their partnership.

In 1999 the couple expanded, changed their name from Mixed Nuts (which was too generic) and opened Fastachi in the Seaport District. They successfully created a brand; however, they were a few years ahead of the times by turning to this yet-to-be-developed area of Boston. So this store closed and in 2003 they moved to their current site on Mt. Auburn Street in Watertown.

Watertown was good for the Armenian couple; however, they didn’t want to be in the ethnic business. They wanted to have a nut store, and that’s what they created. Fastachi is a very appealing shop. Front and center are their hand-roasted nuts – perfect sizes, never a broken piece and offered either their plain or some with sea salt. They buy their products as well, and all but the pepitas and cashews from India are grown in the United States: hazelnuts are from Oregon; pistachios, almonds and walnuts from California; pecans from the South and peanuts from the Southwest.

“It’s all done lovingly,” explains Souren Etyemezians, who says their nuts are handled with great care.

To the left of the shop are the confections – notably the chocolate nut bark with Fastachi’s see NUTS, page 13



Kim Kashkashian

Violist Kim Kashkashian in Peak Form

PHILADELPHIA (*Philadelphia Inquirer*) – The music world is crawling with hot young violists (Maxim Rysanov, Lawrence Power and David Aaron Carpenter), but they all have a ways to go before they are as interesting as Kim Kashkashian. At age 59, she is playing in peak form and more than most, expanding the viola repertoire in numerous directions. But rather than probing some meditative new works by Baltic Republic composers or exploring her Armenian roots, Kashkashian played nothing but her own Schumann adaptations Friday at her Philadelphia Chamber Music Society recital.

Why not?

Adagio and Allegro Op. 70, *Fünf Stücke im Volkston* Op. 102, *Fantasiestücke*, Op. 73 were refitted with success. *Violin Sonata in D minor* Op. 121 was not – an enterprise that told you a lot about what was right with the other transcriptions and why such things aren’t widely attempted.

Though the sonata was composed in 1851 and only two years after the rest of the works on the program (all were written within weeks of one another in 1849), it is from a different creative period: The composer was knocking out works faster (and perhaps more carelessly) than before, often spending little more than a week on each one, almost as if he knew that, amid encroaching mental illness, his creative days were numbered.

The sonata’s third movement is among the composer’s most original, with an Italianate melody that is plucked out of the instrument with charmingly rustic effect, in what feels like Schumann’s answer to the Act II serenade in Mozart’s “Don Giovanni.” But the final movement shows the composer at his most obsessive, with a five-note motif arriving somewhere about 50 times in less than eight minutes. Much of the rest feels dense to the point of claustrophobia.

Without the brighter sound of the violin, such passages became murkier. Accompanist Robert D. Levin seemed to compensate by bringing a Bach-like sense of definition to the piano part, but the effect felt relentless in stretches where the music so energetically goes nowhere.

Elsewhere, the recital was fairly magical – and attracted a full house at the American Philosophical Society – if only because Kashkashian was so immersed in the music world that it did not really matter what instrument she was playing. Schumann’s songful brand of lyricism emerged as if she was drawing on some secret text as the inspiration for her color and phrasing. And that is important, since all of the 1849 works are considered to be minor, but through Kashkashian’s depth of empathy and Levin’s sense of what the music needed, seemed as major as can be. In the *adagio* and *allegro*, pianist Levin produced some mesmerizing colors I had not previously heard from him. And in the opening of *Fünf Stücke*, Kashkashian’s vibrant viola tone was such a pleasure, the music seemed made for her. So it seemed, too, in the encore, a transcription of the song *Widmung* with its famously soaring melody – that was much needed after going round in circles with the sonata. No surprise that in this transcription, the words were not missed. That is the highest compliment to be paid – when a transcription feels thoroughly right and not secondhand. Then again, the skill of the transcription is in this case, inseparable from the charisma of the performers.

(David Patrick Stearns is the *Inquirer’s* classical music critic.)

Library of Congress Marks the 500th Anniversary of the Armenian Literary Tradition

WASHINGTON – In 1512, Hakob Meghapart (Jacob the Sinner) opened an Armenian Press in Venice, Italy, and published an Armenian religious book, *Urbatagirk* (the Book of Fridays). The era of Armenian printing had begun.

To mark the quinqucentenary of this event and UNESCO’s designation of Yerevan, the capital of the Republic of Armenia, as its Book Capital of the World, 2012, the Library of Congress will open an exhibition, “To Know Wisdom and Instruction: The Armenian Literary Tradition at the Library of Congress” on April 19, in the South Gallery of the Thomas Jefferson Memorial Building. The exhibition will remain on view from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Monday through Saturday, through September 17.

Drawing from the Armenian collections of the Library of Congress, the exhibition will display the varieties of the Armenian literary tradition from the era of manuscripts through the early periods of print and on to contemporary publishing.

Manuscripts in the exhibition will range from 14th- and 15th-century gospel books hand-copied by monks to 19th-century works on palmistry (Constantinople, 1894), fire-fighting (Venice, 1832), cotton production (Paris, 1859) and the first modern Armenian novel, *Armenia’s Wounds*, by Khachadour Abovyan (1848). The first complete Armenian-language printed *Bible* from Amsterdam in 1666 will be soon along with a richly-illuminated missal copied in 1722 for the use of the celebrant of the Armenian liturgy and a rare 19th-century musical manuscript by Pietro Bianchini, who was the first to transcribe the Armenian liturgy using European musical notation. A 20th-century Soviet edition of the Armenian national epic, *David of Sasoun* (1962) will also be on display.

In conjunction with the exhibition, the Library of Congress will publish an exhibition catalog titled *To Know Wisdom and Instruction: A Visual Survey of the Armenian Literary Tradition from the Library of Congress*. The catalog was compiled by exhibition curator Levon Avdoyan, the library’s Armenian and Georgian area specialist in the Near East Section of the African and Middle Eastern Division. This 100-page softcover book with 75 images is available for \$25 in bookstores nationwide and through the Library of Congress Shop, www.loc.gov/shop/.

The exhibition and catalog have been made possible through grants from the Dolores Zohrab Leibmann Fund, the Dadian Fund of the Library of Congress, Roger Strauch and Julie Kulhanjian Strauch, the Vartkess and Rita Balian Family Foundation and the Sami and Annie Totah Family Foundation.

The library will also present a concert in conjunction with the exhibition. Armenian cellist Narek Hakhnazaryan will perform at 2 p.m. on Saturday, May 19, in the Coolidge Auditorium of the Thomas Jefferson Building, located at 10 First Street SE.

Hakhnazaryan is a Young Concert Artists laureate who captured the First Prize and Gold Medal at the 14th International Tchaikovsky Competition in June 2011. The concert is free and open to the public, but tickets are required and are available through Ticketmaster.



ARTS & LIVING

Armenian Singer from Turkey, Sibil, to Make Metropolitan New York Debut

Shushi Dance Ensemble Will Interpret Sibil's Songs Through Dance

HACKENSACK, N.J. — In 2010, a young singer in an Armenian Church choir named Sibil captured the attention and hearts of Turkey's population. The headlines read "For the first time an Armenian singer is being heard in the streets of Istanbul."

Sibil and her sister, Garin, were born in Istanbul with a family name that was changed from Torosyan to Pektorosoglu. She was named after the well-known Armenian writer Zabelle Asadour, whose penname was Sibil. Her father, Garbis, a goldsmith, was born in Istanbul while her mother, Mari, has a Sepastatsi/Tokatsi background.

The first music notes that Sibil was exposed to were the prayers and hymns of the Armenian Church, since her father would take her to church every Sunday morning as a child. Her talent and love for music were discovered by her parents when Sibil would come home and sing and recite the prayers she had just heard during the church services. However, the opportunities were not there for young Sibil to develop a strong foundation in music.

Sibil attended Mihitaryan elementary school in Istanbul and then studied finance. Currently, she works in a financial institution. But her passion for music never faded. Since 1991 she has been a member and lead soloist of St. Vartanantz Choir in Istanbul. Her break came in 1999 when she appeared on stage in the production of Dikran Chookhajian's musical comedy "Leblebiji," which was sponsored at the time by the Istanbul Esayan Alumni. It was in that production that she met one of Istanbul's most respected modern-day composers and musicians, Majak Tosikyan. Tosikyan composed several songs and Sibil sang these songs in such inspiring ways that she became his best Armenian music interpreter.



Sibil

In 2010, Sibil realized her lifelong dream — her CD was released with 11 songs, produced with the help of Armenian, Greek and Turkish artists. The songs *Namag, Desnem Ani'n oo Nor Mernem, Giligya, Im Anoush Davigh, Oror, Hisus, Der Voghormia, Tzarav Seri, Gyanki mi Hamar, Siro Tzayni* and *Nayem* were echoed through the streets of Istanbul. People liked what they heard.

Sibil's voice continued to ring on the Armenian stage in Istanbul, in the Armenian churches as well as in the Holy Cross Armenian Church on the Island of Akhtamar. Some of Sibil's songs were released as videos and attracted thousands of Turkish and Armenian fans. Turkey's leading private TV channels as well as the country's state-run broadcaster have broken new ground in airing Armenian music videos on popular stations for the first time in

Turkey's history. Sibil's videos appeared also on YouTube exposing her unique voice and style to

a larger audience all over the world.

In summer 2011, Sibil was invited to Armenia to sing at the opening and closing ceremonies of the Pan Armenian Games. That performance was carried live on Armenian TV and was watched throughout the communities of the Armenian Diaspora.

On March 31, Sibil will make her debut in the New York Metropolitan Area. She will perform at the Bergen County Academies in Hackensack. The evening is being sponsored by Constantinople Armenian Relief Society (CARS). Co-chairs of the event are Tamar Kayserian and Hilda Nisanyan. "It is a major undertaking that requires a lot of organization and planning. That evening, Sibil will be accompanied on stage by musicians both from Turkey and the United States. "Members of the Shushi Dance Ensemble will also appear on the stage to interpret the songs through dance and to enrich the evening's program," said Kayserian, president of CARS. "Bergen County Academies' Auditorium has 1,192 seats and we are confident that we will have a sold-out evening."

Tickets are priced at \$50, \$35 and \$25 and can be secured by calling members of the organizing committee.



Members of the Shushi Dance Ensemble

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Fastachi: There Is No Other Nut!

NUTS, from page 12

proprietary blend of dark chocolate. Since the nuts are the stars, the uneven sheets are thin enough to highlight their taste, but the chocolate offers a formidable balance.

Since they don't do seasoned nuts, "new products" are few and far between — it's more about creating and maintaining the Fastachi quality. But their latest offering is nut butters. New this year, the nut butters are always out for sampling, and then are basically made to order, they are that fresh. Pistachio butter, salted pecan butter and their amazing mixed nut butter, which is a mélange of seven nuts that they grind together: cashews, almonds, hazelnuts, peanuts, pecans, walnuts and pistachios. This puts a brand new twist on peanut butter, and your favorite jarred spreadable may fall by the wayside. If you wonder what you might do with a special delectable liked mixed nut butter, think outside of the PB&J sandwich.

Souren Etyemezians is a font of ideas for the nut butter: "Use it in a pasta instead of pesto; put it on a bagel with tomato, cucumber and sea salt; or on toast with honey and sliced bananas. It can be used as a binder for veggie

burgers, in a smoothie, or simple: almond butter, cheese and crackers; or pecan butter with Honeycrisp apples." Susan Etyemezians calls this a "a caramel apple without the caramel."

"And then there's always the finger," suggests Souren Etyemezians — any fanatic of nut butters knows this method.

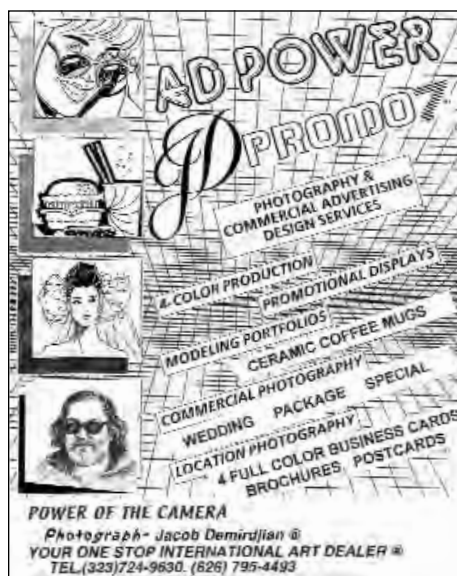
They are known for their dried cranberry and nuts mixture, but this year they are offering a new mixture: a chocolate nut mix with almonds, pistachios, sesame peanuts, hazelnuts, cranberries and dark raisins — all tucked together with 70-percent bittersweet chocolate chips. When you eat this mixture, it will become evident that this nut business is an art, a real craft. Perfect ratios of ingredients, perfect mix.

Always keeping the business and market in mind, Souren and Susan Etyemezians met last year with a business coach. The outcome was that they would cut back on their wholesaling, just wholesaling regionally, as far as New York. The second prong of the plan was to expand their product locally.

To accomplish this, Souren and Susan Etyemezians began participating in local farmers markets. They started out last winter at the Wayland Winter Farmers Market for two days, and have been in 10 markets, five days a week, during this market season. They are starting to plan their winter market schedule for this year, which is harder because they are all on Saturdays. Says Susan, "It's been a wonderful experience," while Souren Etyemezians admits "It's not an easy thing. It takes a lot out of you." But he is quick to second his wife's comment about being a wonderful experience to be in.

"At the farmer's markets, it's all about selling good product to good people and everyone's enjoying it. People are either finding out about us, or people are looking for us. It's an amazing way of putting your product directly in the consumer's mouth," says Souren Etyemezians. He may be all about the nuts, but he is clearly a people person as well.

"I enjoy selling gifts. It completes the contact between two people." After you have tried Fastachi, there is no other nut.





ARTS & LIVING

Yeghiazar Muradian

The Intellectual Knight

By Dr. Artur Andranikian

Yeghiazar Muradian is one of the names regrettably forgotten in both Armenia and the diaspora of that generation – the generation of Khachatur Misakian, Minas Cheras, Nigoghos Zorayan, Nahabed Rusinian, Sdepan Vosgan, Krikor Chilingirian and Krikor Odian. This is a name especially sacred to me. It was not only a generation which formed the Armenian national school and press, aiding in the awakening of the Armenian literary, cultural and public intellect. This was the reason for it to be called the Zartonk generation. It also, during the cruel period of the Ottoman sultans, took the first blessed steps toward the rediscovery of Armenian identity. Its members were called eastern aristocrats. They spread enlightenment through their far-ranging activities in various spheres of Armenian life, imparting wisdom to their people living in the most indescribable conditions.

Yeghiazar Muradian (1841-1891) has left a multifaceted legacy through his literary, cultural and pedagogical work as a poet, literary theorist, pedagogue, linguist, lexicographer, translator, historian and dramaturge and most importantly as a result of his dedicated attitude of an Armenian intellectual. I am sure that this not only can cause wonder but also has an instructive significance. This legacy would fill three or four volumes. It seems as if it has become customary for us not to recognize, or, what comes to the same thing, not to appreciate our national values. We must seek the recognition of Armenian identity precisely in these up until now for us “undiscoverable” values.

He was born in the Aykesdan quarter of Van on, according to my research, Norashen Street. Still an adolescent, Yeghiazar, thirsty for knowledge, departed for Constantinople. During the 1850s, he studied at the Holy Savior National School in Constantinople's Yedi Kule suburb and even then evinced exceptional ability in the fields of pedagogy, history, Armenian language and literature, bibliography and French. In 1862, leaving school without graduating, he obtained positions in a number of notable Armenian schools such as those of Kuzguncuk, Üsküdar and Beshigtash, as a teacher utilizing new approaches. Such famous Armenian figures of the time as Nerses Varzhabedian, Madteos Mamurian and Krikor Odian had confidence in him. One of Muradian's students in the Ortaköy school was a future great poet of Western Armenian, Vahan Tekeyan.

Pedagogy was Yeghiazar Muradian's element in the most meaningful sense of the word; teaching, arduous creative work, was a means to newly interpret his knowledge. It is not coincidence that the textbook that he authored titled *Artzern krakidutiwn* [Portable Literacy] (1872) was considered to be one of the first for Western and Eastern Armenian. This is also attested to by the fact that the 27-year-old young pedagogue, who already had won the fame of being a principal, founded a private school in the Üsküdar neighborhood of Constantinople. He probably was not able to endure various caprices in teaching and related issues of the 19th century. His exceptional textbooks, *Dzaghigh arti hay madenakrutean* [Flower of Contemporary Armenian Literature] (volumes 1-2, 1884-85, Constantinople), with grammatical and literary explanations and historical and geographical notations, were the fruit of similar dissatisfaction. Through their approximately 400 pages of Armenian and international literary creations, Muradian awakened love towards the homeland and Armenian language. In his foreword to the first volume, he wrote, “I know that other conditions are also necessary for the complete development of a language. Like plants and animals, languages too have their homeland. When they are distant from it, many things are changed from their archetype...but the writers from whose works I included select sections in my book have



Yeghiazar Muradian

offered jewels to the nation which will always shine on its literary crown” (p. iii).

The existence of literature from the perspective of the progress of the national intellect not only has its distinct place in Yeghiazar Muradian's literary and pedagogical viewpoints, but it also, according to him, represents a civilizing significance. What is completely amazing is that he as a public cultural figure considered this important in the 19th century (though it is possible to say it is characteristic of all periods and especially ours). Perhaps it is not all that amazing since Muradian not only possessed the distinguished character of the Armenians and was an oracle of national precepts and commandments but was also a dedicated person with a spiritual and cultural legacy and exceptional cognitive ability.

In the foreword to the second volume, Muradian said, “Literature is the accurate portrayal of a people's civilization, so that if it were possible to destroy a nation's political history, its entire lost life can be brought forth [again] from its literature. For literature step by step follows a nation's intellectual, moral and material progress...political history can lie...only the product of the intellect is beyond all envy, all pusillanimous passions...Our literature is still in an embryonic state...Consequently, great care must be taken in the selection of leaders of adolescent taste among us...” (pp. iii-v).

Being devoted to Armenian education and upbringing, Muradian as a very erudite and broadminded pedagogue considered teaching an art and demonstrated creative approaches to it. The evidence is not only the abovementioned textbooks but also the following books which he authored and which were used as textbooks in the schools of Constantinople: *Hayeren krpar keraganutiwn* [Grammar of Classical Armenian], *Badmutiwn enthanur azkayin* [General National History] and *Hamarod dramapanutiwn ew jardasanutiwn* [Concise Logic and Rhetoric]. In addition to these textbooks which helped not only students but also the pedagogues teaching in schools and academies, Muradian often gave what was for those years extremely indispensable pedagogical lectures. In the pedagogical lecture and meditation *Usutsanelu arvesde* [The Art of Teaching], (*Arewelean mamul*, May 1881, vol. 11, pp. 172-177, 374, 393, Smyrna), while reflecting upon the essential circumstance that upbringing and education are different, Muradian remarked, “The goal of good teaching for boys is intellectual activity and that is also the touchstone for its success. The degree of intellectual exertion depends partly on the topic to be taught and partly on the method of teaching. Sometimes the topic of the class becomes very difficult and it demands skill and oratory from the teacher so that it can become understandable through explanation and the provision of examples so that it is imprinted in the minds of the students. It is not sufficient for the teacher to adopt this behavior. He must also evade a danger – that is, he must not turn the class into a literal instruction in memory, but rather bequeath its true knowledge to the students.”

see MURADIAN, page 16



Հայկական Բարեգործական Ընդհանուր Միության
Նիւ Ինկլընտի Մասնաճիւղը կը ներկայացնէ՝

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Հ.Բ.Ա.Մ.-է կրթաթօշակ ստացող դասական երաժիշտներու
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ARTS & LIVING

'Deported/a dream play:' The Creative Process

DEPORTED, from page 1

The actual writing of the play was a true collaborative effort.

"We met as a group," said Van Dyke, "with the director Judy Braha and the actors. We brought in all sorts of materials, oral histories from ALMA and photographs from Project SAVE. One of the original items we had was Martin Deranian's mother's passport."

Braha challenged the actors to improvise lines on the basis of these primary sources.

"There are scenes and lines in the play that came directly out of the actors' improvisations. Of course, I still had to sort it all out and actually write the play. It was a huge challenge,



Playwright Joyce Van Dyke

the 100th anniversary of the Genocide approaching in 2015, we are in the right place and the right time. We hope to reach out to the widest possible public, to non-Armenians as well as Armenian audiences. Both Judy Braha and I have a long history of collaboration with Boston Playwrights' Theatre, known for its award productions of new plays. We are thrilled to launch this play with a world premiere production by Boston Playwright's Theatre in association with Suffolk University, at the beautiful, new-renovated Modern Theater in the heart of Boston's theater district."

Said Van Dyke, "Miraculously, the same actors have stayed with the production since the beginning, so they have a real intimacy with the play and all the material."

The Modern Theater, at 545 Washington St., Boston, is a perfect venue for the play, said Van Dyke.

"It's owned by Suffolk University and is a gem of a small theater with 185 seats. The whole neighborhood has been revitalized and there are lots of new restaurants and shops," she noted.

Van Dyke credited Deranian with much of the inspiration for the play.

"He is really the godfather of this whole creation. I met him in 2003 at one of the performances of my play, 'A Girl's War.' From him, I learned that his mother and my grandmother were close friends, deported together from the same city, Mezireh, in 1915. I am such a reviser of my work, I'm sure I'll make more changes, but I feel very good about the script. Through a lifetime of research, Martin had acquired insider information about both women's experiences, including things I'd never heard from my own grandmother. Once he began passing this material on to me — stories, letters, photos, artifacts — I couldn't stop thinking about these two women and the way their story could give focus to this huge cultural cataclysm. He has been a huge moral support to me."

Is the play likely to change even more after the upcoming production? Said Van Dyke, "A new play is almost always still evolving. Many things change when you see the complete work on the stage for the first time. I'm such a reviser of my work. I'm sure I'll make changes, but I



ABOVE LEFT: Varter and her first husband, Mr. Nazarian, Mezireh. ABOVE RIGHT: Varter Nazarian Deranian and her son, Martin, Worcester



feel very good about the script going into this production."

She added, "I want people to know that this is not a play about death. It's about life, and how you go on. There is a lot of humor in it and

a lot of hope."

In fact, Van Dyke is inviting more collaborative feedback in a series of post show talks that will be held in different locales between March 10 and March 29.

"We have a lot of people to thank for their assistance in making this happen, not just ALMA and Project SAVE but AIWA [Armenian International Women's Association], of course Sayat Nova and NAASR [National Association for Armenian Studies and Research]. All of these organizations have been involved," said Van Dyke.

Van Dyke's next work will be about the historic production of Shakespeare's "Othello," starring Paul Robeson, which took place in 1942.

"It had a mixed cast and at first the producers couldn't raise money for a Broadway production. When it finally opened, starring Robeson, Uta Hagen, Jose Ferrer and Margaret Webster, it knocked everyone out. I'll be dealing with some of the reactions to a production with an integrated cast," said Van Dyke.

"Deported/ a dream play" will run from March 8 to April 1, playing on Thursdays at 7:30 p.m., on Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays at 8 p.m. with a matinee performance on Sundays at 2 p.m.

For tickets, visit www.bostonplaywrights.org.



Actress Bobbie Steinbach

ARMENIANS IN THE NEWS

In an article of the *Boston Globe*, titled "Island Cooking," Lydon of Straight Wharf, appears again as was one of the many guests who attended Nantucket's American Seasons-hosted Hogtober fest.

In the October 21 issue of the same paper is a story about an 82-year-old antique shop owner who chases a robber through three different towns before the man is caught. **Armen Amerigian** defended his eponymous antiques shop by getting in his car and chasing the robber until reaching Stoughton when he decided it was too dangerous to continue. Giving the police a partial license plate number, he enabled authorities to track the suspect in Easton.

In a December 18 *Boston Globe* article, **Terry Abdalian** is mentioned in an article about heading a festive project via the

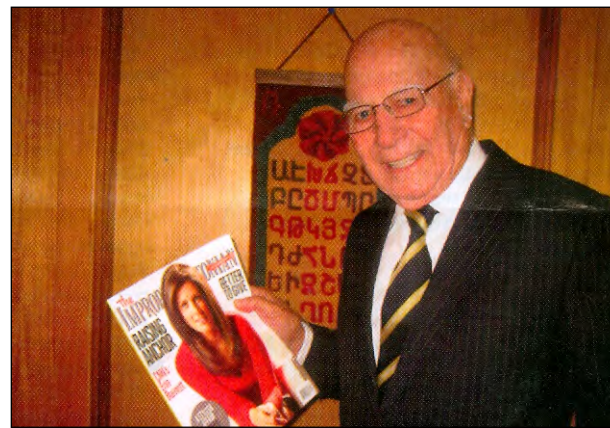
Concord Council on Aging. The workshop was on how to make boxwood displays, which are like mini hand-crafted Christmas trees. As the recently-hired activities director, Abdalian wants the council to promote more crafts projects and encourage people to use their hands and not feel the need to be perfect. She respected each participant's individual approach, and had decorations for them to place afterwards, but advised everyone not to remove a branch from the dense soil once they had inserted it or it would create a whole in the soil and their project would crumble.

Ira Stepanian, a prominent figure in the banking world, is featured in an issue of *Improper Bostonian's* "Last Scene Here," for having attended Massachusetts General Hospital's 200th anniversary party, along

with Henry Kissinger and MIT President Susan Hockfield.

In another issue of the *Improper*, also on the "Last Scene Here" page, **Amanda Lydon**, daughter of **Cindy Arakelian**, is mentioned as one of the prominent chefs who contributed to what sounded like a great celebration, titled "Ultimate Tailgate Party," a benefit for "Lov'n Spoonfuls," held at South Boston popular spot, Sam's, but the party was held outdoors, between the restaurant and the water. On the *Improper Sightings* page is Former Secretary of the Navy and Washington Post President **Paul R. Ignatius**.

In the October issue of *Vogue* is an article by **Dodie Kazanjian** commenting on the impressive number of women in senior posi-



Paul R. Ignatius.

tions at Gagosian Gallery, which has three locations in New York and eight others around the world. The ratio is almost two to one, the article states, which is a surprise to the owner, **Larry Gagosian**. Despite his outward machismo, Gagosian doesn't consider gender an issue, as evidenced by the fact that women run all the major branches of the gallery, from Paris to Los Angeles.



ARTS & LIVING

Yeghiazar Muradian, The Intellectual Knight

MURADIAN, from page 14

Muradian’s art of teaching achieves universal depth and significance. This becomes more evident when we read the preface of his work *Keraganutiwn kaghieren lezvi* [Grammar of the French Language]: “We do not understand the study of a language to be dry and desiccated lexicology and irregular and a baseless discussion without the mastery of the spirit and rules of the language. Grammar, which is the key to a language and one branch of its philosophy, must be taught methodically and flawlessly, with a style which will neither scare away nor bore students.”

As the possessor of an exceptional intellect and the master of various languages (Turkish, Kurdish, French, English and, I am sure, Greek), Yeghiazar Muradian through his extensive activity could not but have engendered admiration and enthusiasm in Krikor Odian, the “master of the public” and one of the founders of the National Constitution. *Nor jashag thrutean gam hamarod jardasanutiwn* [New Taste in Literature or Concise Rhetoric] is a work he dedicated to “the soaring to heaven and majestic Kr[ikor]. Odian.” It is a work also founded on profound intellectual knowledge. For example, in the section called “Discovery or Idea,” after talking about the universality of speaking and writing or their interdependency, he concluded, “Before speaking and writing it is necessary that we know what we are going to say. We call this Discovery or Idea. Or, in what order are we going to explain our idea and this is called Proposition; or, how must we explain our idea so that it is elegant and this is called Style. Therefore there are three things to observe in speech: Creation, Proposition and Style.”

The philosophical nature of the work is quite clear (various stories from the *Bible*, or from French authors such as Racine). Muradian’s goal is again the same: “to serve the nation, the cherished generation,” and awaken the slumbering consciousness of progress in it. National conser-

vatism gave primary significance to the new generation, to whose education and progressive development he dedicated his life and tried in every way to aid it, keeping the burning flame kindled in the nation’s youth. However he was dissatisfied with the language, confessing that instead of it progressing daily, “it is in retreat...what is the reason for this? Are the youth devoid of taste, of education?...they must not be blamed...our youth need leadership; we lack teachers and textbooks. How can we correct these deficiencies which damage our nation? The answer is clear: the youth must be solidly educated; they must be introduced to political, education and literary realms; and only by obtaining knowledge will they serve the advancement of the Armenian nation and will fulfill their responsibility.”

The journalistic meditation *Barsgagan namagani ar zhoghovrtn* [Persian Letters to the People] (Constantinople, 1880) most persuasively underscores the daring infallibility of Muradian’s method of work. While he appreciated the clearly amelioratory role of the National Constitution, he was not one of its silent admirers. He wrote, “The constitutional Education Council has not succeeded in over twenty years in giving direction to at least one national school in a practical manner...yes, if one day this nation will become something, it will owe its persecuted, oppressed and needy class – its teachers and not the Education Council of 1854. It will owe to them the lifting of the bowed down forehead of its oppressed nation...” (p. 17). Muradian saw national life and the national school in a broad manner on the same plane, interdependent and nourishing one another. And he was in favor of Nerses Varzhabedian, Armenian Patriarch of Constantinople, being given broad assignments, the freedom to expand activities in nearly all spheres of Armenian public life. Of course, he did not underestimate the human and national values of the founders of the Constitution. He saw

the matter in the light of the real and concrete changes necessary to make the Constitution fully serve the nation.

Muradian’s public proposal was in its nature and extent not only strange for many, but extremely unacceptable. A small number of national figures were in favor of his proposal, including his friend, the great Armenian satirist Hagop Baronian. This issue was discussed in the National Assembly and the fierce arguments and differences of opinion led many to once more reflect on Armenian national and educational issues.

Was it not the result of speaking openly that the extremely occupied Muradian, endlessly zealous to reform the educational system, at the end of the 1860s started the most purposeful communications with the Armenian public and wrote the plays Vartan and Aghasi? They were staged at the time in Constantinople and enjoyed great popularity (The texts of these plays have not been preserved. We think that they were composed in verse.) His turning to dramaturgy was not at all coincidental. On the one hand, there is the insatiable desire to directly be in communication with the public and on the other hand the turning point created by Mikayel Nalpandian’s visit to Constantinople in the fall of 1861. When the latter was returning from India, he stayed approximately one month in Constantinople and most likely became acquainted with Muradian. Nalpandian also saw progress in Armenian literary and cultural life and wrote in the periodical *Meghu*, “Long live the youth, who are launching theatric performances in Constantinople; the stage of a theater has a great symbolic meaning.”

No matter how nightmarish this life was being presented as (chiefly by historians and historical novelists), the intellectuals of Constantinople were living a national life and the Armenian creative mind did not stop creating. It is not a coincidence that many, including Muradian, turned to ancient times to attempt to restore ties

between the past and the period they lived in, not only by citing episodes from the heroic past, but also exposing the flaws of our ancestors from those times, i.e. their way of acting that was not favorable to Armenians, to put it mildly. In the foreword of his work *Knnagan badmutiwn Arshag Yergroti ev anor Bab vortvoyn* [Critical History of Arshag the Second and His Son Bab] (Alexandria, 1900), Muradian wrote, “Historical personages are the property of mankind at large; historical truths are the right of peoples. Consequently, it is not the monopoly of this or that historian, or of this or that people, to make historical conclusions as he pleases, to judge, condemn, crown or whistle at great historical personages without review and as an unconditional verdict. Criticism comes early or late and with Nemesis’ scales in hand gives to each one in accordance to his merit.”

Subjecting Arshag the Second’s “wise policy, his efforts directed toward domestic beneficence for the country” to a general examination, Muradian concluded, “desiring to carry out a small service to scholarship and in particular with the conviction of carrying out a sweet patriotic obligation, I wrote the true story of Arshag II and his son Bab...about which the nation definitely can be proud.” Generally, this historical period has been very unjustly criticized by our historians and historical novelists, primarily by taking Buzand’s *History* as a reliable basis. Muradian expresses a completely different opinion, very courageous for his time, by naming things by their names with unconcealed emphases.

Muradian died in 1891, in Constantinople’s Pera quarter, leaving unfinished numerous projects which only he would have been able to bring to life. In his words of farewell, Muradian’s friend, the famous principal Reteos Berberian, with infinite pain remarked, “Brothers, he around whose coffin we have the misfortune to gather today was not an insignificant person. He was one of the most able members of this national teachers’ body. He was a mystery, he was a writer...the worthy one rests, blessed be his memory, but let us think about those beings which he leaves behind him, who still need him and who are worthy of our compassion and protection.”

Yeghiazar Muradian’s soul, I assure you, today has been reincorporated in the essence of generations of Armenians.

P.S. Now, as I write, it is as if these lines are born from the explosion of my condemning the silence of years without end, perhaps in order to satisfy my patrimonial self-esteem? And I involuntarily draw near and touch Yeghiazar Muradian’s work *Critical History of Arshag the Second and His Son Bab*, noticing what is written in pencil on the last page: “After finding this book with difficulty I copied it in 1992. I am grateful to the great descendant of the Armenians Y. Muradian, whose blood flows in my veins.”

My grandmother Armenuhi (on my maternal side, born on Norashen Street of Van’s Aykesdan), is the granddaughter of Yeghiazar Muradian’s sister Yeranuhi. When her mother died during childbirth, Yeranuhi took care of her. She only learned about this in 1916 in the American orphanage in Alexandropol (Gyumri) from elderly Armenians of Van.

Later, my mother passed on to me what my grandmother had related about her family’s famous teacher Yeghiazar. His picture has been preserved along with a leather-bound small *New Testament* bearing Yeghiazar Muradian’s signature (Constantinople, 1891). I remember as if it were today that my grandmother would always say, “This holy book saved me.” Grandmother Yeranuhi hid the book during the time of migration under 14-year-old Armenuhi’s clothing.

Now extremely confused but with the feelings of my internal “guiding spirit” I have listened to the call of my blood in publishing this article, which I could have written years ago but was not able to do so. I don’t know whether this was due to the complete absence of internal motivation or because, as they say, “everything has its time.” Perhaps it is the latter. It remains to “know in detail the biography of each of our generations” (Hagop Oshagan).

In this particular case, it is the biography of Yeghiazar Muradian.

(The author is the son of Yeghiazar Muradian’s sister’s great-grandson. The article was translated from Armenian by Aram Arkun.)

CALENDAR

MASSACHUSETTS

MARCH 31 — AGBU New England District Presents: Performing Artists in Concert, 8 p.m. Under the artistic direction of mezzo-soprano Solange Merdinian and conductor Aram Demirjian, the inaugural program will feature young Armenian artists who are recipients of scholarships from AGBU in the performing arts. They will perform the works of both Armenian and non-Armenian classical composers. Details to follow.

MAY 24 — Celebrating 80 and Beyond, Benefit for the Armenian Mirror-Spectator. Royal Sonesta Hotel. Details to follow.

NEW JERSEY

FEBRUARY 22 — Holy Cross Armenian Church Women’s Guild is hosting a Lenten Luncheon at 12:30 p.m. Holy Cross Armenian Church Center, 27th Street and Bergenline Avenue, Union City. RSVP by February 25. Donation, \$20. For info, call Diana Burgraff (201) 868-0520.

MARCH 8 — Hovnanian School Open houses The doors of your child’s future are open, come see for yourself from 10 a.m.-12 p.m. at Hovnanian School, 817 River Road, New Milford. For information: (201) 967-5940.

MARCH 31 — CARS presents Armenian singer Sibil from Istanbul at 7 p.m. Special guest performance by Shushi Armenian Dance Ensemble. Bergen County Academics, 200 Hackensack Ave., Hackensack. For information, call Hilda (516) 496-0248, Margit (914) 686-0840, Adi (973) 761-1544. Tickets, depending on seats: \$50, \$30 and \$25.

MAY 19, 2012 — HMADS Gala Dinner Dance. Details to follow, June 25. HMADS 30th Commencement Exercise at 8 p.m., Kalustyan Hall.

NEW YORK

FEBRUARY 29 — HMADS Hye Bardez. Nursery and Kindergarten, Grades 1-6, open house 9:15 a.m.-11 a.m. RSVP (718) 225-4826. HMADS 209-15 Horace Harding Expressway, Oakland Gardens.



On March 31, singer Sibil, will perform, along with the Shushi Armenian Dance Ensemble, at 200 Hackensack Ave., Hackensack, NJ, presented by CARS. For information, call Hilda (516) 496-0248, Margit (914) 686-0840, Adi (973) 761-1544. Tickets, depending on seats: \$50, \$30 and \$25.



COMMENTARY

COMMENTARY

Dreaming of a 'Greater Azerbaijan'

'By Edmond Y. Azadian

If modern Turkey is permitted to dream of – and design – a new Ottoman Empire extending all the way to Central Asia, and if the modern state of Israel is permitted to claim Eretz Israel (described in Genesis 15 and Exodus 23), why not allow Azerbaijan to dream of a plan for a “greater Azerbaijan,” covering almost the entirety of the Caucasus region? Only Armenians are forbidden from harboring such plans, apparently. As one extremist Turkish writer stated recently, “the dream of Greater Armenia will only remain a dream.”

Azerbaijan, which had never been a sovereign state before 1918, now has begun to concoct a history to justify its claims over its neighbors, since the collapse of the Soviet Union. However, with all its faults of being an “Evil Empire,” the Soviet system had imposed a forced brotherhood between constituent nationalities to forbid any interethnic conflicts. Now that the system no longer exists, the “brotherhood” has also evaporated, giving rise to conflicts and bloody clashes.

Since the Karabagh war, Azerbaijan has made outrageous claims against Armenia. The late Azeri president, Abulfaz Elchibey, was planning to occupy the entire territory of Armenia, to wash his feet in Sevan’s water and to drink tea on its shores. He also threatened to “liberate” Iranian Azerbaijan, or Northern Azerbaijan, and join it with the present Republic of Azerbaijan. Elchibey was perceived as a quixotic figure in the Caucasian politics and was dismissed as such.

But today, as the clouds begin to gather over Iran, Azeri leaders find a renewed chance of achieving those ambitious goals at the expense of a partitioned Iran, with the fallout extending over Armenia.

Indeed, until recently, President Ilham Aliyev’s bellicose rhetoric was directed against Karabagh. But, in a speech given recently to his armed forces, he indicated that Armenians had not existed in the Caucasus region and that they appeared in the area in the 18th century to be tolerated as they lived on Azeri lands. And this outlandish claim was made not withstanding Tigranes II’s empire, well before Christ, or Echmiadzin’s founding in 301 AD.

But the Azeri plans are not just rhetoric; they are based on recent developments in the region. As the Arab Spring approaches Iran, Azeris believe they can be an accessory to the Western plan and become the first beneficiary of a potential Iranian disintegration. Former government advisor Vafa Guluzadeh has stated recently that “had there been a single US military base on our territory, our neighbors would not dare to use the language that they are talking to us with.”

However, Israel has been fulfilling that void through its military advisors and selling of weapons, including unmanned drones, which are not only directed at Karabagh, but also at Iran in case of a major confrontation in the region. The “Arab Awakening” or regime change in countries hostile to Israel, are being achieved by imploding those countries internally using sectarian fault lines. Shiites, Kurds and Sunnis were pitted against each other to destroy Iraq. In Libya, tribal differences became handy for the plan and these days the Sunni majority in Syria is being armed and organized by surrogate Turkey against the ruling Alevis to topple Bashar al Assad’s regime.

Since the pattern of this plan is obvious, there is no doubt that Iranian Azerbaijan will be used to destabilize the Iranian regime and achieve its eventual demise. That is why appetites are being whetted to benefit from a potential collapse of neighboring Iran. The Baku leadership is a willing partner in the designs to bring regime change in Iran, with the resulting dismemberment of its territory.

Recently a nuclear scientist, Mostafa Ahmadi Roshan, was assassinated in Iran, as an extension of Western designs to disqualify Tehran as a nuclear power. The Iranian government was accusing Israel of committing that terrorist act, but now it turns out that the culprit was from Azerbaijan, according to a government statement.

Recently, the US government aid to Armenia was announced to be \$35.843 million, down from last year’s \$43.430 (an 18-percent cut). The irony is that military parity has been maintained between Armenia and Azerbaijan, despite section 907 of the Freedom Support Act forbidding direct US aid to Azerbaijan. Using his executive privilege, President George Bush had suspended the ban, a policy still sustained by the Obama administration, contrary to President Aliyev’s war mongering and perhaps for Baku’s participation in anti-Iranian adventures.

Historically, a number of opportunities have arisen in the past to dismember Iran; the first attempt was undertaken by Ottoman Turkey at the turn of the last century, the second opportunity came in 1944-45 when Soviet occupation forces declared the formation of “Azerbaijani Democratic Republic,” a vassal state to Moscow and the third attempt came in 1989 when the border between Azerbaijan and Iran was wiped out.

These precedents inspire hope to Baku rulers that they are on the first line of the beneficiaries, should Iran fall.

The government circles, the media and academia have zeroed in on February 21, the anniversary of the Treaty of Turkmenchay of 1828 between Iran and Russia. The logic behind this renewed interest in the treaty is that it supposedly dismembered “historic Azerbaijan,” ceding it to Russia. Therefore, another treaty may restore Azerbaijan’s sovereignty on those lands, which they call Northern Azerbaijan. The master plan is to unite Iranian Azerbaijan with the present Republic of Azerbaijan, and while doing that gobble up Mountainous Karabagh, the entire territory of Armenia, Southern Dagestan, Akhalkalak and Akhaltzkha (the latter two regions in Georgia). This plan should worry not only Armenia, but also Russia and Georgia, whose territories are being compromised.

The Treaty of Turkmenchay is celebrated by Armenians as a historical event liberating Armenia from Muslim rule and transferring the territory under the supposedly more tolerant Christian rulers, the Russians.

The first Eastern Armenian novelist, Khatchadour Abovian, hails the event in his book, *Wounds of Armenia*, stating “blessed be the moment when Russian foot was set on Armenian land.” Indeed Armenians had much to celebrate. The treaty was signed at the conclusion of the 1826-28 war between the Russian Empire and Qajar Empire (modern Iran). Earlier, the Iranians had ceded some territories to Russia by the Treaty of Gulistan (1813). Later on Iranians reneged on their commitments, which led to a new conflict to be settled at Turkmenchay.

By the article 4 of the treaty, Iran renounced all claims over the Erivan Khanate (most of the present-day Central Armenia), the Nakhichevan Khanate (most of the present-day Nakhichevan autonomous Republic of Azerbaijan), the Talysh Khanate, the Ourdubad and Mughan regions (now also part of Azerbaijan), in addition to all the lands annexed to Russia by the Gulistan Treaty.

What is important for the Armenians is that the treaty also stipulated the resettlement of Armenians from Persia to the Caucasus, which also included an outright liberation of Armenian captives who were brought and had been living in Iran since 1804 and as far back as 1795. In addition, the resettlement permitted compensation for the loss of 20,000 Armenians who moved to Georgia.

The Treaty of Turkmenchay has become a tool in the hands of Baku leaders to claim territories transferred by one empire to the other in the year 1828. In this design, the Azeris have become willing partners and participants of a conspiracy to destroy Iran with enormous damage to Armenia. This is why Aliyev is tolerated in his unbridled war mongering and that is why the Azeri regime is compensated by suspending the Freedom Support Act.

If Elchibay’s claims were being laughed off, this time around Azerbaijan means business. It is the inherent law of politics that small nations have to line up their interests with those of major ones.

And today, that is Baku’s realpolitik in pursuing this design of a “Greater Azerbaijan.”

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EDITOR

Alin K. Gregorian

ASSOCIATE EDITOR

Aram Arkun

ART DIRECTOR

Marc Mgrditchian

PRODUCTION

Dilani Yogaratnam

SENIOR EDITORIAL COLUMNIST:

Edmond Azadian

CONTRIBUTORS:

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

CORRESPONDENTS:

Armenia - Hagop Avedikian

Boston - Nancy Kalajian

Philadelphia - Lisa Manookian

Contributing Photographers:

Jacob Demirdjian, Harry Koundakjian, Jirair Hovsepian

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For advertising: mirrorads@aol.com

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COMMENTARY

Memories Dim of Armenia's Soviet Past

By Gayane Mkrtchyan, Naira Melkumyan

While younger people have little conception of life under communist rule, some Armenians miss the positive things lost after the Soviet collapse.

Two decades have passed since the Soviet flag was lowered over Armenia, but Sedrak Mkhitarian's hands still shake when he brings out the red flags and Lenin medals he treasures from the glory days of communism.

Like many elderly Armenians, he never managed to adapt to the demands of an independent state.

"For Armenia, the period of Soviet rule was a golden age. I was against the collapse of the [Soviet] Union, and I was against the protests and strikes that ended up with most of the population permanently on strike," Mkhitarian, 85, said.

Before the end of the Soviet Union, which officially took place on December 25, 1991, Mkhitarian was chairman of the regional council of Echmiadzin region. He had been a high-flier in the communist system, serving as a deputy minister at one point.

Asked about the fruits of independence, Mkhitarian scoffed, "The only independent countries are great powers. Countries like ours only exist under someone else's wing. They said then that we were slaves of the Soviet Union. Now whose slaves are we? Nagorno Karabagh is our only achievement, and if the Soviet Union hadn't collapsed, I am sure that issue would have been resolved without bloodshed."

Twenty years ago, views like Mkhitarian's were definitely in the minority in Armenia. In a September 1991 referendum, a month after hardliners in Moscow staged an unsuccessful coup against Mikhail Gorbachev, 95 percent of Armenians backed independence.

The years since then have not been easy. Armenia was already reeling from the terrible Spitak earthquake of 1988, which killed 25,000 people and devastated much of the country, when it went to war with Azerbaijan over the future of Nagorno Karabagh.

Karabagh was a part of Soviet Azerbaijan whose mainly Armenian population pressed for the region to become separate. The ensuing war, combined with the effects of conflict in neighboring Georgia, left Armenia almost totally isolated economically.

Before 1991, Armenia was industrialized, but after independence, the authorities struggled just to keep the lights on. Residents of the capital Yerevan had just an hour of electricity a day.

According to the International Monetary Fund (IMF) Armenia's economy shrank by 75 percent between 1990 and 1993.

Economic decline meant the views of old communists like Aram Sargsyan, the final head of the Armenian Communist Party, came back into vogue.

"We were like oxen that jump for joy when they're released from the yoke," he said. "The moral foundations of society have been destroyed, everything is permitted. Why did we have to destroy everything? We have reserves of gold, copper and molybdenum — these are riches for a small country."

Sargsyan says Armenia is now reliant on the IMF and World Bank, which he accused of imposing their own demands as a condition for bailing out the economy.

"These international institutions decided that Armenia had nothing to contribute in terms of industry or science, so it should become a service centre for the region. So they gave money for roads, infrastructure and banks," he said.

Sargsyan blames these policies for making Armenia's human capital "surplus to requirements" and thus contributing to mass emigration.

According to official figures, 1.2 million people have left Armenia in the last 20 years, many of them going to Russia to find work. Arthur Atanesyan, head of the Sociology Department of the Yerevan State University, says these people have voted with their feet against independence.

"Any independence process entails destabilization. If the status quo changes, it leads to.... emigration. People have to go abroad where they can live much better and more secure lives. That isn't a great assessment of what has happened, because you become nostalgic for the old Soviet Union again," he said.

Atanesyan concluded, "Destroying things is easy. They should have kept and developed everything that was positive and valuable in the Soviet Union. There are many families who lost not just their stable lifestyles but their savings, too."

Araik Petrosyan's parents had saved 80,000 roubles by the time the Soviet Union came to an end. That was a lot of money in those days, but its value vanished with the end of communism.

"First my mother died, then my father, without living long enough to get their money back," Petrosian said. "The state is treating these savings as part of the national debt; once there's enough money, all these savings will be returned. But it remains uncertain whether any of the account holders will live long enough to see their money. Their descendants don't have rights to the money."

Soviet citizens had limited access to consumer goods like clothes, which came from the same shops and were made in the same factories, but Atanesyan said that "despite their uninteresting lives, people stood firmly on their own two feet, received free healthcare, they got an education, they had jobs and they were confident about the future."

"In Soviet times there was a shortage of clothing, now there's a shortage of trust. We don't trust the government and we don't trust one another," he added.

Analysts say this mistrust is a consequence of Armenia's failure to build a democratic system and a competitive market economy.

"We rejected the planned economy, and then basically created the same kind of system where property is controlled if not by the state, then by the highest tiers of government," Andranik Tevanyan, director of the Politeconomia research centre, said. "We got rid of Bolshevism, but we weren't able to abandon the Soviet legacy. In Armenia we see sections of the economy centralized around individual oligarchs. It's basically a recreation of the Soviet Union, only with no oil or gas."

Tevanyan sees corruption, protectionism, and the lack of transparent laws as other legacies of the Soviet period.

Corruption is endemic in Armenia, as in almost all other former Soviet republics. The corruption watchdog Transparency International ranks Armenia 129 out of 183 states for honesty in public life.

Fortunately, however, many young Armenians have adapted to the changes, and have few regrets about the passing of the Soviet Union.

Suren Musaelyan, now 35, was a teenager when Armenia became independent. He had an opportunity to study journalism in Britain and is now deputy editor of ArmeniaNow, a leading online news source.

"If the Soviet Union hadn't collapsed, I wouldn't have had a chance to be educated abroad," he said. "I think that's one of the bonuses of independence. In earlier years I wouldn't have been able to dream of it," he said.

Older Armenians are often amazed at how young adults can barely comprehend the difficulties of life in the Soviet Union.

"Young Armenians no longer understand that there was a time when Moscow decided how many pieces of soap were to be used a week in some town's public toilet," Alexander Iskandaryan, director of the Caucasus Institute in Yerevan, said. "Because of the sheer scale of collapse here, Armenia has traveled a lot further away from the Soviet past than a lot of other states have done."

(Gayane Mkrtchyan is a reporter for ArmeniaNow. Naira Melkumyan is a freelance journalist in Armenia. This commentary originally appeared in the January 4 issue of the Institute for War and Peace Reporting.)

LETTERS

Environmentalists in Armenia Need a Boost

To the Editor:

Kudos to the activists who protested the cutting down of trees at a mine in northern Armenia according to your news article. A recent satellite photo reveals that the country has only 8 percent covered by forests. Without mature trees, water can run off and erode dangerously as well as strip off fertile topsoil. Water needs to be slowly absorbed by tree roots in order to become available for drinking. Wildlife is gone there when the trees are gone. Also, Armenia is a flyway for major bird migrations. What is their fate? And the fate of such a land is a dry one indeed.

John Muir, the father of America's national parks and the founder of the Sierra Club, said "God has cared for these trees, saved them from drought, disease, avalanches and a thousand tempests and floods. But he cannot save them from fools." Armenia needs a John Murian!

I am a member/supporter of the Sierra Club and its legal arm Earthjustice, which is the largest non-profit environmental law firm

in the world, which helps citizen groups. Please check them out.

Second, I saw a live "Armenian rock viper" for sale among other reptiles in King of Prussia, Penn. in the TV news. The red label in black handwriting was pasted on a clear plastic sealed container, which the video camera zoomed in on. On Yahoo news, about a month later it was reported that a Czech national was arrested at the airport in Argentina headed for Madrid. Security found 247 South American pit vipers in a suitcase housed in the same type containers that showed the venomous Armenian rock viper in Pennsylvania. The scanners showed movement inside the suitcase. Is it time for the airport in Armenia to screen more carefully? Who is to investigate the individual or individuals who are capturing the local fauna for profit? Incidentally, selling reptiles, many endangered species, is a world-wide, billion-dollar industry.

— Sonia Hagopian
Havertown, Penn.

Genocide Victims' Toll Needs to Be More Precise

To the Editor:

Aram Arkun's recent article (Mirror-Spectator February 11) about the work of Ugur Ungor, a young Dutch-educated genocide specialist of Turkish descent, presents a particularly interesting issue. The basis of the Turkish denial can be attributed to the way the Turks regard moral offenses. "The Armenians," says Ugur Ungor, "want to remember what the Turks want to forget."

This denial can be attributed to the way the Turks regard moral offenses. Western cultures have a deep sense of guilt which will, by itself, often compel a spontaneous confession for a moral transgression. Islam does not seem to work that way, for instead of a "guilt culture" they have a "shame culture." As long as the crime can be denied, there is no shame.

And this the Turkish State does, even though, as Ugur Ungor points out, the Turkish people, especially in eastern Anatolia, have strong collective memories of the Armenians being destroyed during the final Ottoman period. Part of the problem is that there is no close count, either on the whole or vilayet by vilayet,

of the number massacred. Estimates, in Armenian-friendly research, run from as low as 700,000 to as high as 1,500,000. This, to a scholar, is little more than a wild guess, which the Turkish government is quick to point out, and for which Armenologists have no concrete response. I know of, in modern times, no serious studies done of this by Armenian scholars in our well-developed centers for Armenian research. This allows the Turkish government to say that not only was there no genocide, but the number who died is grossly exaggerated.

Certainly abundant sums should be made available, through our various Armenian foundations, to fund two or three post-doctoral fellowships to focus on this task. The Turkish population studies, according to Ugur Ungor, are still available to those who read Turkish and the Armenian Church also has fairly complete records of the Armenian population in Ottoman times. A few years should make good headway and it is a vital task.

— John Greppin
Cleveland, Ohio



COMMENTARY



My Turn

By Harut Sassounian

Bryza Confesses his Love for Turkey, Confirming his anti-Armenian Bias

It appears that my prediction about Matt Bryza leaving the State Department and working as a lobbyist is coming true. After his brief stint as ambassador to Azerbaijan came to a premature end, Bryza disclosed to the Turkish *Hurriyet* newspaper last week that he will be “advising people, government and private sector on major investment projects.”

It remains to be seen whether Bryza’s planned activities fall within the legal definition of “lobbying” and “advocacy” on behalf of third parties, such as Turkish and Azeri entities, given the restrictions imposed by US law on former government officials. Depending on the specific type of activity, there is either a one- or two-year ban. However, in the case of “very senior officials” such as Bryza, a former deputy assistant secretary of state, there is a lifetime ban. He would certainly be prohibited from having contact with former State Department colleagues on behalf of other parties, regarding official matters with which he was involved as a government employee.

In his interview with *Hurriyet*, Bryza validates in his own words the accusation that he was biased and unprofessional, while acting as the American co-chair of OSCE’s Minsk Group of mediators on the Karabagh (Artsakh) conflict. At the time, he was repeatedly criticized for being anti-Armenian, pro-Azerbaijani and pro-Turkish. Senators Barbara Boxer and Robert Menendez, who placed a hold on his nomination as ambassador to Azerbaijan, and the Armenian National Committee of America (ANCA), which objected to President Barack Obama’s ill-advised decision to send Bryza to Baku without Senate confirmation, are now fully vindicated.

In the past, Bryza’s apologists used the convenient excuse that as a government official, he had no choice but to support the president’s position on the Armenian Genocide and related issues. Yet, now that he is a free man, why does he continue to parrot those same Turkish-inspired, anti-Armenian slogans? Could it be that Bryza, in and out of government, has been trying to ingratiate himself to his future paymasters? Otherwise, why would he give *Hurriyet* the standard Turkish line that politicians and parliaments should not get involved in acknowledging the Armenian Genocide? To score points with Turkish and Azeri officials, Bryza angrily lashes out at the ANCA: “The organization that blocked me will keep bringing up this issue forever. But it’s not up to governments but to people to make their own determination on how to characterize it.... Turkey has the ability to influence that debate in a significant way.... The radicals that blocked me hate that. They don’t want to have an open debate; an open dialogue is their enemy.”

While applauding the more open attitude among some Turks toward a discussion of the Armenian Genocide,

Bryza finds as “legitimate” the Turkish official view that “this should not be recognized politically as genocide. It’s not the business of any politician in any country to characterize these events as genocide or not as genocide. It has to be up to societies – not to others – to have a decision taken based on a political calendar. To me, that’s dishonest.”

Bryza then takes his pro-Turkish bias a little too far by revealing his denialist views: “Truth is on everyone’s side, especially on Turkey’s side. The debate about this [Armenian Genocide] issue is really one-sided right now. Anybody who voices a different view is attacked as a genocide-denier, which immediately means you are against human rights. If you believe there was a genocide committed, you can equally argue looking from a narrow definition of the word that genocide was committed to many others, against Turks or Muslims in eastern Anatolia. Let’s have a dialogue of the multiple atrocities [against] many groups. Let’s talk about it all. Let’s be fair and not forget the suffering of others.”

Finally, Bryza seems to have fulfilled his life-long dream of living in Istanbul. During his 2005 visit to Ankara, after a US Embassy official introduced him to local journalists as “an old friend of Turkey,” Bryza unabashedly declared: “I am thrilled to be back in Turkey. Turkey in many ways feels for me like a second home.... I can’t spend enough time in your beautiful country. I hope to be back soon and often.” In a column I wrote at the time, I expressed the hope that “Bryza would soon realize his wish and retire in Turkey permanently.” Now, his wish has come true! *Hurriyet* reported last week that after leaving Baku last month he had settled in Istanbul. “You can’t imagine how happy I am to be in Istanbul.... Look at me, I am married to a Turkish woman,” Bryza exclaimed.

Disappointment with Dink Verdict

By Raffi Bedrossian

When Hrant Dink was assassinated in front of the *Agos* newspaper’s offices in Istanbul, Turkey, five years ago on January 19, 2007, the significance of this heinous act was not immediately understood. Neither the Turkish people nor the Turkish state, deep or otherwise, realized that this was not another murder of a journalist, so tragically common in Turkey. No one in Turkey could predict that this murder would become a turning point for Turkey about many far reaching issues such as democratization, freedom of speech, deep state and Turkish-Armenian relations from the present all the way back to 1915. Although the assassin was caught almost immediately by the police, perhaps even leading one to wonder as to prior knowledge by police, the question: who ordered the assassination?, could not be answered five years ago, and cannot be answered now, after five long years of a trial completed just two days before the fifth anniversary of the shooting. But it seems that the end of the trial is not the end of this case. The spontaneous support and protests of several hundred thousands of ordinary people taking to the streets during Hrant’s funeral, is now repeated after five years, with outrage at the trial verdict, and people demand the truth.

Why was this trial deemed unfair by the people, by civil society? First, we need to provide some context as to the general situation in Turkey.

For five years, the government leaders had made statements that the Dink murder was one of many attempts by Ergenekon, the “deep state” organization, with attacks on minorities, both Muslim and Christian religious institutions, to create an atmosphere of anarchy and terror, so that all conditions will be ripe for a coup d’etat by the military to overthrow the present government. The murder of Catholic priest Santoro in Trabzon, the murder of three Christian missionaries in Malatya, uncovered plans of mosque and museum bombings, hidden cache of arms, thousands of communications toward the planning of a coup d’etat were all used as incriminating evidence to arrest and imprison

several hundred retired and active military leaders, bureaucrats, professors, lawyers, journalists and businessmen as Ergenekon members. The Prime Minister Erdogan himself had admitted to the Dink family after the assassination that “They are after me as well.”

The police had arrested three and charged 16 other suspects in connection with the murder. The trial had proceeded at a crawling pace, with the lawyers of the Dink family stonewalled at every session, and a determined group of supporters called Hrant’s Friends, attending every session demanding justice. Discouraged by the pace of the trial, the Dink family took the case to the European Human Rights Court (EHRC), which promptly assessed and passed judgment in December 2010 that ‘the state had neglected to provide protection for Hrant Dink despite known threats and that the state officials must share responsibility in the assassination for ignoring the known threats. The EHRC also targeted the Istanbul and Trabzon Security Departments as the negligent government offices, for failing to prevent the assassination, despite being made aware of an imminent plan for the murder. Following the EHRC verdict, the lawyers for the Dink family demanded that 30 bureaucrats from the Istanbul and Trabzon government offices, as well as the National intelligence Organization, also be questioned and charged. The court turned down the request.

The lawyers for the Dink family produced massive amounts of indisputable evidence, demonstrating the presence of a plan for the murder, several persons communicating before, during and after the murder, and, more critically, several government officials being informed of the planned murder, who either ignored, consented or praised and then deliberately covered up their involvement. Destroyed evidence included several tapped telephone conversations between police officials and informers, sworn evidence of several police officers against their superiors who knew about the planned murder. Evidence refused by the court included footage of the actual murderer and accomplices captured by a store security camera, cellular conversations immediately before, during and after the murder between the murderer and at least four other persons. Evidence ignored by the court

also included obvious relationships and communications between the Dink murder suspects and military leaders already imprisoned for belonging to the Ergenekon deep state terrorist organization. Another example of scandalous treatment of evidence included deliberate tampering, forging or concealing of past communications by police officials, such that notification of the impending murder was transformed into informing of the murder after the event. The evidence showed that Trabzon Police had tapped the phone lines of some suspects and had even physically trailed them, but when the court asked for the records, Trabzon Police responded that they had done no such thing. When the truth was revealed that the Trabzon Police indeed had the records, the court was given an explanation that the records were deleted. The evidence also showed that Istanbul police had obtained the video footage of the crime scene on the day of the murder and had destroyed part of it. The Telecommunications Directorate, regulator of cellular telephone operators, resisted to provide to the court records of phone conversations of the suspects, either among them or with police officials, until two weeks before the verdict. Ironically, all of these facts were widely covered by the media, including the transcript of several tapped conversations between the suspects and the police officials. One of these conversations is disgustingly clear, immediately after the murder when a Trabzon informer asks: “Is the (shooter) one of us?,” the Trabzon police officer responds: “Yes, but he was not supposed to run away after the shooting.”

So, why did the trial verdict cause an uproar?

As stated previously, in addition to the assassin already sentenced, a total of 19 people were charged in Hrant’s murder, for belonging to a terrorist organization planning the murder, for providing logistics, training and aiding in the murder and for arranging the murder weapon. In some unexplained confusion, the court “forgot” to pass any sentence at all against one suspect. All the remaining 18 suspects were acquitted from the charge of belonging to a terrorist organization planning the murder. Only one person was charged with planning the murder and helping the

assassin. None of the 30 bureaucrats or police officials were even brought to trial for questioning. All of these “Untouchables” kept their jobs and some of them even rewarded with promotions. The then governor of Istanbul ran for parliament and got elected as a member of Erdogan’s party. The then Istanbul Police Chief, who had stated immediately after the murder that this was the work of a couple of fanatical nationalist youths, got appointed Governor of the Osmaniye province. The then Trabzon Police Chief got promoted to head of the General Security Directorate. In short, the government managed to achieve something unbelievable, from being a target of the “deep state,” to becoming an accomplice of the ‘deep state’ in the murder of Hrant Dink. In another twist of irony, the government went a step further, and jailed a journalist author, who had published a book exposing the role of bureaucrats in the Dink murder, on charges of abetting the Ergenekon terrorist organization. The presiding judge said that just because he acquitted the suspects from belonging to a terrorist organization, this does not mean that they do not belong to a terrorist organization, but that there was no evidence. The government officials said that they did everything the judiciary demanded of them. Prime Minister Erdogan and President Gul tried to convince the protesting masses that there is always the appeal process and not to worry.

During the initial trials, Hrant’s son had said that “the court was making fun of us.” Upon hearing the verdict, Hrant’s lawyer said: “But they kept the biggest joke to the end.”

As Hrant’s friends, it is very difficult not to be discouraged; however, one has to realize why the state had to align with the “deep state” when its judiciary system came to this verdict in the assassination of Hrant Dink, the first Armenian in Turkey who dared the Turkish state to face its past and stop denying the truth about 1915: Any admission of guilt by the Turkish state in this murder would go all the way back to admission of guilt in 1915, a very long chain of dominoes, which have already started moving, judging by the reaction of a growing number of people in Turkey demanding the truth.

(Raffi Bedrossian is a resident of Toronto.)



Speakers Selected for AGBU Conference on ‘Symbolism in Art, Architecture and Design’

GLENDALÉ, Calif. – The AGBU Hye Geen has selected its speakers for their upcoming conference titled “Symbolism in Art, Architecture and Design.” This year’s conference continues to focus on the status of the Armenian Diaspora living in the US, with a particular focus on symbolism as a means of expression.

The topic for the seventh annual conference explores the meaning of the many images incorporated into our lives, from the images woven into rugs, to the details incorporated in the structures that surround us, to the items we use every day.

The goal of the conference is to educate the broader community, both students and non-students alike, on design as a concept and the use of symbols to convey thoughts and ideas.

This year’s four speakers have decades of experience between them. They bring their knowledge and expertise to translate and explain the meanings of the images and details that may have lost their significance to our present day society. They will examine the symbols and themes that have emerged and have been expressed in the designs produced by Armenians throughout history to the present.

Opening remarks will be done by Narineh Mirzaeian, a Los Angeles-based designer and an associate at Gehry Partners, LLC, an architec-

tural firm with a global reach. She will discuss the elements of design and its various permutations in the objects we see and use on a daily basis, from utensils to textiles.

Aram Alajajian is an award-winning architect and principal of Alajajian-Marcoosi Architects, Inc. His topic, “Symbolism in Armenian Architecture: Past and Present,” will be about the symbols used in architecture throughout history from historical churches and public buildings to present structures.

Peter Frank is an associate editor at Fabrik magazine, an art critic for the Huffington Post curator at the Riverside Museum. The subject, “Caucasian Standard Time: Armenian-Americans and California Art in the Postwar Era,” will tackle the work of the artists and their importance.

Hratch Koziyeyokian is a master weaver, carpet designer and a textile restorer and conservator with many years of experience. Understanding its long-standing tradition throughout the world, he will present “Iconography in Armenian Woven Art” and explore their use and meaning.

The conference will take place on Saturday, March 10, at Woodbury University, Burbank, in the Ahmanson Main Space. The conference is open to the public.

Continuing in its conviction of collaborating with other groups for the overall good of the community, the Young Circle is partnering with the Woodbury Armenian Student Association (ASA) for the production of the conference.

The conference will be held, for the first time, at Woodbury University, a leading institution specializing in architecture. As such, Armenian students at the campus will be presenting their architectural designs for a prize sponsored by the Woodbury Armenian Student Association.

AGBU Hye Geen focuses on empowering Armenian women as agents for change while preserving and honoring their achievements. The AGBU Hye Geen Young Circle helps the organization stay relevant by exploring different issues facing the current generation of Armenians now living in the United States. The AGBU Hye Geen organizes an annual conference to explore the potential of the diasporan community in the various aspects of its development. Most recent topics have included “Music as a Mirror” and “The Power of Broadcast Media on Ethnic Communities.”

The conference is from 10:30 a.m. to 2 p.m. Lunch will be provided.

For additional information, contact agbuhyegeen.youngcircle@gmail.com or visit www.facebook.com/AGBU.HyeGeen.YoungCircle.

Pupils’ Film Used in Holocaust Remembrance

CARIFF, Wales (South Wales Echo) – A film made by school pupils will take center stage in a ceremony last week to remember victims of the Holocaust and other genocides since the end of World War II.

Students from Maesteg Comprehensive interpreted the famous Holocaust poem, “First They Came,” as part of their peer mentoring project.

It builds on the council’s Speak Up Speak Out campaign which urges communities and individuals to express their opposition to discrimination.

The ceremony was staged in the council chamber on Holocaust Memorial Day.

A candle was lit and a minute’s silence held to remember all those lost in the Holocaust and in genocide, including Armenia, Cambodia, Rwanda, Bosnia and Darfur.

Council leader Councilor Mel Nott, who will speak at the event, said: “This is about learning lessons from the Holocaust and applying them to the present day.”

Administration Reduces Aid for Armenia, Region

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proposed aid cut for Armenia, suggesting that they will lobby Congress to reject it.

“While we appreciate the Administration’s decision to maintain military [aid] parity between Armenia and Azerbaijan, given Turkey’s nearly 20-year blockade of Armenia and the security threat in the region due to Azerbaijan’s ongoing war rhetoric against Armenia and Nagorno-Karabakh, funding at the FY 2012 level should at least be maintained,” Bryan Ardouny, executive director of the Armenian Assembly of America, said in a statement.

Aram Hamparian, executive director of the Armenian National Committee of America (ANCA), was even more critical. “Sadly, President Obama has chosen to neither keep his commitment to maintain assistance to Armenia, nor taken any meaningful steps to honor his pledge to foster Armenia’s growth and development through expanded trade,” an ANCA statement quoted Hamparian as saying.

The Assembly and the ANCA were instrumental in making Armenia a leading per-capita recipient of US economic assistance in the 1990s. Its total volume has exceeded \$1.7 billion since 1992. The money has been spent on humanitarian aid, infrastructure upgrades, equipment supplies, counseling

and other projects mainly administered by the US Agency for International Development (USAID).

Armenia also received \$177 million in separate assistance from the US Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC) to refurbish its rural irrigation networks. The four-year project was completed in September.

Both lobbying groups also criticized the Obama administration for proposing no direct assistance to Nagorno-Karabagh that has long been resented by Azerbaijan.

The Armenian Assembly statement quoted Adam Schiff, a California representative serving on the US House Appropriations Committee and a member of the Congressional Caucus on Armenia, as saying that that he will strive to ensure that Congress continues to allocate “robust funding” to the Armenian-controlled territory.

The ANCA, for its part, complained that the USAID has financed only \$2 million worth of development projects in Karabagh annually in recent years. “This level of Nagorno-Karabagh funding is considerably less than the intent expressed by Congress over the course of many years, reflecting a pattern of under-spending that has left many developmental and confidence-building needs unmet,” it said.

Bournoutian to Discuss Key Source on Karabagh in Early 1800s at NAASR

BELMONT, Mass. – Prof. George Bournoutian will give a lecture, titled “The 1823 Russian Survey of the Karabagh Province: A Primary Source on Karabagh in the Early 19th Century,” on Thursday, March 1, at 8 p.m., at the National Association for Armenian Studies and Research (NAASR) Center, 395 Concord Ave. The lecture will be co-sponsored by the Armenian General Benevolent Union (AGBU), New England District, and NAASR.

Bournoutian’s newest publication is The 1823 Russian Survey of the Karabagh Province: A Primary Source on the Demography and Economy of Karabagh in the Early 19th Century (Mazda, 2011). The first translation of an extremely rare Russian publication, the survey provides a wealth of information about the demography and economy of Karabagh prior to its annexation by Russia.

The survey establishes definitively that Armenians formed the overwhelming majority (97 percent) of the population of Karabagh in 1822. The heavily-annotated translation was published with a grant from NAASR. The first printing has sold out and a second printing has just been released. The book will be on sale the night of the lecture.

Bournoutian is a professor of Eastern European and Middle Eastern History at Iona College, as well as a recipient of the IREX, NDEA and Mellon Fellowships. He has taught Armenian and Iranian history at UCLA and Columbia University. Moreover, he organized and taught the first Armenian history courses at the University of Connecticut, Glendale Community College, New York University, Ramapo College, Rutgers University and Tufts University.

Bournoutian is also the author of more than a dozen other volumes consisting of annotated English translations of primary sources in Armenian, Russian and Persian, with introductions, glossaries and indexes.

For more information, e-mail hq@naasr.org, or write to NAASR, 395 Concord Ave., Belmont, MA 02478.

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