

France's Genocide Law Put On Hold

By Suzette Bloch

PARIS (AFP) — France's new law punishing denial of the Armenian Genocide was put on hold Tuesday after politicians opposed to the legislation demanded that its constitutionality be examined.

Turkey reacted furiously last week when the Senate approved the law, which threatens with jail anyone in France who denies that the 1915 massacre of Armenians by Ottoman Turk forces amounted to genocide.

President Nicolas Sarkozy's office brushed off angry threats of retaliation by Turkey and vowed to enforce the law within a fortnight.

But on Tuesday two separate groups of French politicians who oppose the legislation — from both the Senate and the lower house of parliament — said they had formally requested the constitutional council to examine the law.

The groups said they each had gathered more than the minimum 60 signatures required to ask the council to test the law's constitutionality.

"This is an atomic bomb for the Elysee [presidential residence] which didn't see it coming," said deputy Lionel Tardy, who said that most of the 65 signatories from the lower house were, like him, from Sarkozy's UMP party.

The council is obliged to deliver its judgment within a month, but this can be reduced to eight days if the government deems the matter urgent.

Turkey's President Abdullah Gul and Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan immediately welcomed the development.

"I hope the constitutional council will do what is necessary," said Erdogan, while Gul said he was "not expecting the French from the very beginning to let their country be overshadowed" by the Genocide law.

France has already officially recognized the killings as a genocide, but the new law would go further by punishing anyone who denies this with up to a year in jail and a fine of 45,000 euros (\$57,000).

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Ahmet Altan at the Armenian Library and Museum of America

Altan Captivates Large Audience With Message of Hope at ALMA

WATERTOWN, Mass. — Turkish journalist Ahmet Altan was not sure what reception he would receive at the Armenian Library and Museum of America (ALMA), where he spoke on Saturday at a program organized by the Friends of Hrant Dink. He

By Alin K. Gregorian

Mirror-Spectator Staff

need not have worried, as the exchange was one that was mellow and positive.

Altan, the founding editor of *Taraf*, a leading left-wing publication in Turkey, has picked up the mantle of getting recognition for the Armenian Genocide within Turkey, one of many reasons that he and the staff of *Taraf* are routinely hauled into court.

In fact, during most of his time at the podium, a picture of a *Taraf* front page with the headline "1915 is a Genocide" was projected on a large screen.

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Armenian Army Modernization 'on Track'

By Sargis Harutyunyan

YEREVAN (RFE/RL) — Armenia is successfully implementing a five-year government plan to modernize its armed forces with long-range weapons and other hardware, the country's two top military officials insisted over the weekend.

"We have been enhancing our military capacity with arms acquisitions in recent years," said Defense Minister Seyran Ohanian. "One of the main directions of our reforms is a switch to strategic defense planning, which includes a program of developing weapons and military equipment."

"According to that development program, every year until 2015 we will be acquiring

new weapons that will be long-range and very precise. They will enable us to achieve the objectives set for the army," he told journalists.

The still unpublicized program was approved by President Serge Sargsian's National Security Council in December 2010. Officials said at the time that it envisages, among other things, the acquisition of long-range precision-guided weapons. The types, quantity and source of those weapons remain unknown.

Col-Gen. Yuri Khachaturov, chief of the Armenian army's General Staff, also spoke of an ongoing military build-up in separate comments to journalists at the Yerablur military cemetery in Yerevan. He said the military is planning more arms acquisitions for the coming years but did not elaborate.

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Levon Aronian with his Azeri opponent Teymour Radjabov

Aronian Wins Tata Steel Chess Championship

WIJK aan ZEE, Netherlands (ArmeniaNow) — Armenian grandmaster Levon Aronian has won the top prize at an international competition that ended on Sunday, January 29.

In the 13th and final round of the annual Tata Steel tournament here, Aronian earned a draw against Azeri grandmaster Teimour Radjabov to score nine points overall and finish on top among 14 competitors.

Norway's Magnus Carlsen, Italy's Fabiano Caruana and Radjabov shared second-fourth places, each scoring eight points.

This year Tata Steel stood out for Aronian in terms of the impressive record of victories that he had. The Armenian grandmaster

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NEWS IN BRIEF

Yerevan-Moscow Train Planned for 2015

YEREVAN (arminfo) — The South Caucasus Railway is planning to enlarge its lines into Russia and the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), the head of the company's Passenger Traffic Department, Gagim Movsisyan, said in an interview.

"By 2015 we are planning to launch a Yerevan-Moscow train. We are planning to have as many as 150 wagons," Movsisyan said.

Turkey Tops List of Human Right Violators

STRASBOURG (PanARMENIAN.Net) — In an annual report released on Thursday, January 26, the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR), the top judicial body to rule on human rights violations in Europe, once again found that Turkey is by far the worst violator of human rights among the 47 signatory states of the European Convention on Human Rights.

In statistical data for the last year, Turkey once more topped the chart with 18.55 percent of all violation judgments, practically the same as last year's figure of 18.81, followed by Russia with 14.48 percent and Romania 9.54 percent.

In 2010, a total of 278 judgments were entered for Turkey and only in nine cases did the court find no violations. The most common human rights violation committed by Turkey was against Article 6 of the European Convention on Human Rights, which concerns the right to a fair trial (42 cases) and lengthy proceedings (83 cases).

Genocide Testimonies To Be Added to Holocaust Archive

LONDON (PanARMENIAN.Net) — The arrival in Britain of an archive of Holocaust testimonies will give historical weight to the experiences of survivors, according to a leading scholar.

David Cesarani, of the Holocaust Research Centre at the University of London, believes that the US video archive, set up 18 years ago by Steven Spielberg, will help to rebalance a picture that has been dominated by the study of the perpetrators of the atrocities of World War II.

The catalogue, collected by the Shoah Foundation Institute since 1993, is housed at the University of Southern California (USC), but on Friday, January 27, it was formally shared with academics and students at the research center at Royal Holloway to mark Holocaust Memorial Day.

The institute is broadening its archive to incorporate testimony from survivors of other genocides. It is collecting testimony Rwandan and Armenian testimony should be added to the visual history archive.

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Coach Bardakian

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ARMENIA

News From Armenia

New Hospital under Construction in Gumri

GUMRI (news.am) – The construction of the new hospital in Gumri is approaching its end, Health Minister Harutyun Kushkanyan said last Friday, while touring the construction site, within the framework of his working visit to Gumri.

The hospital is planned to start operations this April, but the weather conditions are hampering construction to a great extent.

The 200-bed capacity hospital will incorporate Gumri's three other hospitals, and it is being constructed through a credit program signed between the government of Armenia and the World Bank.

Fund for Protection of Diaspora Investors' Rights to Be Created

YEREVAN (Arminfo) – A fund for the protection of diaspora investors' rights will be created in Armenia, the head of the initiative group for creation of the fund, Nikolay Bagdasaryan said.

He said that such an idea arose when his and his friends' lawyer's offices started receiving cases from investors of the Armenian Diaspora, which were stifled in Armenia. "We are aware of several dozens of cases when investors from diaspora were stifled in Armenia. There are cases when their funds were misappropriated," Bagdasaryan said. He also added that he knows investors, which are ready to invest big funds in Armenia for fulfillment of interesting programs, but they have no guarantee they will not be deceived.

Bagdasaryan thinks that several noisy cases in favor of investors may give hope to investors to have guarantees. The legal field of Armenia is enough to protect investors, but the latter do not have all the needed information and functionaries make use of it and break the law sometimes. "If we manage to win several cases, I think investors will trust in the situation that they may be protected from in this country," Bagdasaryan said.

Armenian Baby Named After French President

GUMRI (RFE/RL) – A couple in Armenia named their firstborn child after France's president, Nicolas Sarkozy, last Wednesday, in recognition of his role in the passage of a French law criminalizing the denial of the Armenian Genocide.

The baby, named Sarkozy, was born here. The father of the baby, Karapet Avetisyan, said he followed the debate in the French Senate last week and decided to change the original choice of his newborn son's name, Gevorg.

"On behalf of all Armenian people and myself, I thank Sarkozy for this step. And the name of my child is in his honor," Avetisyan said.

The director of a maternity hospital in Gumri, Armen Isahakian, said the little Sarkozy was born at 2:30 p.m. and is a healthy child: the newborn weighs three kilograms (about 106 ounces) and is 50 centimeters tall.

In a similar situation in 2001, another Armenian couple named their newborn twin sons, Jacques and Chirac, shortly after France officially recognized the 1915 mass killings of Armenians in Ottoman Turkey as genocide. Jacques Chirac was the French president at the time.

Justice Minister of Armenia in Germany for Working Visit

YEREVAN (RFE/RL) – The delegation led by Minister of Justice of Armenia Hrayr Tovmasyan was in Germany from January 29 to February 2, for a working visit.

The press office of the ministry reported that the minister and members of his entourage met with high-ranking officials of the German justice system and got acquainted with the German bar chamber, courts and criminal-executive service.

Former FM Vartan Oskanian Signals Political Comeback, Urges Clean Vote

YEREVAN (RFE/RL) – Vartan Oskanian, Armenia's former longtime foreign minister, on Monday hinted at the possibility of running for parliament on the Prosperous Armenia Party's ticket and called for a broad-based "civic movement" for the freedom and fairness of the May elections.

"Talk about my involvement with the Prosperous Armenia Party (BHK) is not without basis," Oskanian said in a written statement circulated by his Civiltas Foundation. "I have had such discussions with the Prosperous Armenia party as well as with other political forces."

"At this time, I have still not made a decision, and believe there is still time to do so. Political processes, however, may accelerate my decision," he added.

The BHK is a junior partner in Armenia's governing coalition. It is led by Gagik Tsarukian, a millionaire businessman believed to be close to former President Robert Kocharian.

Relations between the BHK and President Serzh Sargsyan appear to have deteriorated since Kocharian gave last September the strongest indication yet that he would like to return to active politics. Political commentators 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.

Oskanian has made no public statements in support of a Kocharian comeback, however. He has also distanced himself from some controversial episodes of the ex-president's decade-long rule. "As foreign minister, I often disagreed with many internal political

developments, phenomena," Oskanian said in a 2009 interview.

The Syrian-born former US national has been far more critical of the Sargsyan administration. In particular, he has strongly disapproved of Sargsyan's Western-backed policy of rapprochement with Turkey.

Oskanian.

In that regard, the former minister backed opposition calls for the elections to be held only on the party-list basis. The ruling HHK has rejected those calls, saying that the Armenian authorities are committed to making the contest the most democratic in the country's history



Vartan Oskanian

Oskanian spoke on Monday of "politically motivated pressures" exerted on Tsarukian's party and, in a clear reference to Sargsyan's Republican Party of Armenia (HHK), "the utilization of administrative resources this early in the pre-electoral period." He also said the proper conduct of the upcoming vote will be of "utmost importance" to Armenia.

"Reforms and change can only happen when there is a new political configuration in the National Assembly. And such political balance can only be assured through free and fair elections," said

under the existing electoral system.

Oskanian said that Armenia's three main opposition forces as well as the BHK should step up the pressure on the authorities by launching a "civic movement" that would strive to prevent electoral fraud. They should also "think about the possibility of deeper cooperation during the May parliamentary election," he said.

The opposition has already pledged to close ranks on the voting reform openly backed by some senior BHK figures. But Tsarukian's party has not yet formulated an official position on the issue.

US Official Discusses Elections, Karabagh in Yerevan

YEREVAN (RFE/RL) – A senior US State Department official met with President Serge Sargsyan on Friday at the end of a two-day visit to Armenia that reportedly focused on bilateral relations, regional security and the upcoming Armenian parliamentary elections.

Deputy Assistant Secretary of State Eric Rubin arrived in Yerevan Thursday on the final leg of a regional tour that also took him to neighboring Azerbaijan and Turkey. The US Embassy in Armenia said earlier this week that the May elections would be among the issues on the agenda of his talks.

"In Armenia, Deputy Assistant Secretary Rubin will discuss US-Armenian bilateral relations, the upcoming parliamentary elections, as well as our shared interests underlying cooperation in economic development and democratic reform," the embassy said in a statement.

Rubin made no public statements in the Armenian capital, and the US mission issued no further press releases on his visit.



Deputy Assistant Secretary of State Eric Rubin, left, and President Serge Sargsyan

The Armenian presidential press service did not mention the elections in a statement on Sargsyan's meeting with the visiting US official. It said the two discussed US-Armenian ties and "regional problems."

Sargsyan was quoted as reaffirming his desire to deepen those ties "in all areas." Rubin, for his part, spoke of Washington's unwavering commitment to "Armenia's independence, prosperity and success," according to the statement.

Making his first trip to Armenia in his current capacity, Rubin met late on Thursday with Levon Ter-Petrosian, the leader of the main opposition Armenian National Congress (HAK). A short HAK statement issued after the meeting said they discussed Turkish-Armenian relations and the Nagorno-Karabagh conflict "in the context of current geopolitical developments."

"They then addressed the internal political situation in Armenia, notably ways of ensuring the legitimacy and

transparency of the elections," according to the statement. It also said the HAK leader called for the deployment of a large number of international vote monitors.

Rubin sounded very positive about the Armenian government's pledges to make the vote free and fair when he spoke at a conference on the South Caucasus held in Washington in late November. "Going into this election, we're encouraged by what we see," he said. "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 also suggested during the Washington forum, organized by the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, that "things are much better [in Armenia] than they were a year ago."

The HAK and other Armenian opposition groups dismiss the government assurances, alleging that vote rigging will take place.

Correction

The editorial in last week's *Mirror-Spectator* incorrectly suggested that Friton Dovtan was the deputy speaker of the Azerbaijani Parliament. In fact, he is the Georgian Parliament's deputy speaker, but he was in Azerbaijan for a visit.

We regret the error.



ARMENIA

ATP Joins Effort to Rebuild Spitak by Planting Trees

By Jordan Takvorian

SPITAK – Just 100 kilometers northeast of Yerevan is one of Armenia's best-known cities. Spitak is the southern gateway to Lori, a sparsely-populated but ruggedly-beautiful region of Armenia. As early as 1800, migrants from Iran began to settle on the hills of Spitak but it has only officially been a city for the past 75 years.

In Soviet times, Spitak was a large industrial city. The city and nearby villages were home to up to 20 factories producing a variety of products from sugar and flour to clothes, cheese and even elevators. Over 21,000 inhabitants lived in the city. The government enticed many people to move to Spitak to work in the industrial plants or on collective farms by offering free apartments to individuals who moved to the city.

The history of Spitak, however, will forever revolve around one day. On December 7, 1988, an earthquake with a magnitude of 6.9 struck the city. The epicenter of the earthquake was a mere 2.5 kilometers away. Various factors contributed to the widespread destruction and loss of life. These include the time of day, freezing winter temperatures and poorly-constructed high-rise buildings. Some estimates put the death toll at 4,085 in Spitak, where every building was destroyed. Initially it was illegal to rebuild homes on the same site as the broken buildings so the whole town shifted and new homes were built on farmland.

Reconstruction of Spitak has been a long and painfully slow process that continues to this day, some 23 years after the earthquake. The collapse of the Soviet Union led to the demise of the initial reconstruction efforts and the young republic was too cash strapped to oversee construction on its own. The population of Spitak has not fully recovered



Armenia Tree Project has joined the effort to rebuild the city of Spitak including Glendale City by planting new trees along city streets, in front of homes and on a playground in the center of town.

although the city continues to grow. Currently, there are 15,500 people living in the city. After the government put reconstruction out to bid, the Glendale Hills construction company won the right to develop new residences for the city.

The new housing has been dubbed "Little Glendale" as a tribute to Glendale, Calif., home to America's largest

Armenian population. In Spitak, 220 private homes have been built including both one and two bedroom homes. Each home is surrounded by 400 square meters of property that is private, and each family can use it as they like. Much of the money for the new development was provided by the Lincy Foundation.

Although there is still a lot of work to do, much has already been accomplished. The city has largely been rebuilt. City administrator Vartan Sahakian points out that every new home and office has drinking water, heating, gas and electricity. Just outside the city, irrigation water is pumped from the Chichkhan River into storage ponds. The ponds serve as swimming pools for the children during the hot summers before the water is eventually used for irrigation.

Armenia Tree Project (ATP) has also joined the effort to rebuild the city of Spitak. In 2011, ATP specialists toured the city and selected several appropriate tree-planting sites. It was decided that the city urgently needed new trees and the community expressed an interest in collaborating with ATP. After several meetings with the city administrators, the urban greening plan was put into action.

In spring 2011, a total 465 decorative trees including arborvitae were planted throughout Spitak including in Glendale City. Trees were planted along city streets, in front of homes, and on a playground in the center of town. In autumn, an additional 1,000 trees were provided to the city. ATP plans to expand its planting activities in Spitak in 2012.

"ATP is excited to work in Spitak and Glendale City," stated ATP Community Tree Planting Program Monitor Navasard Dadyan. "After we evaluate the success of these initial plantings, we will provide fruit trees to families in Spitak in the coming months."

For more information about ATP, visit www.armeniatree.org.

Refuge: Women in Trouble Look to Lighthouse

By Gayane Mkrtchyan

YEREVAN (ArmeniaNow) – Life became hell for 25-year-old Armine Sargisian the day when her mother made her marry her own (the mother's) lover, who was 18 years older than Armine.

"He [her husband] used to throw me on the sofa and beat me with a metal pipe, and to kick me wearing rubber boots. He used to pull his 80-year-old mother by her hair, hitting her head on the walls and shouting, 'Go and bring my vodka,'" recalls Sargisian, mother of three sons from Stepanavan, Lori province.

After a recurrent beating Sargisian was not taken back into her parent's house. The young woman eventually turned to the orphanage in Stepanavan with her children. One of the employees of the orphanage advised her to call the hotline of Paros "Lighthouse" Armenian Charitable Foundation's Abused Women Shelter in Armenia and tell her story. (The hotline number 20-80 of the foundation is registered in all departments of the Republic of Armenia Police, as well as in women resource centers in provinces).

The shelter receives women who are either pregnant or have children under two-years old with them. The women live here up to two years.

Head of the foundation, Naira Muradian, says that their foundation is the only center where women are sheltered with their children. The foundation has made an exception for Sargisian allowing her to bring two of her children to the shelter with her. One of her children is 3, the other is 2 years old. Her eldest son lives in Stepanavan's orphanage.

Her story is not unique. The violence, beating and humiliation run all through the life stories of the shelter's women. Six women and eight children reside in the center (which has been running since last June), some 15 kilometers from Yerevan. Lighthouse Foundation was established in 2006, by American-Armenian benefactors Zuhrah and Seta Ghazarian, who before the establishment of the foundation had realized a number of charitable programs in Armenia.

The building of the shelter is provided with a security system. Women here are taught computer skills, knitting and English language courses are held for them. Sessions with a psychologist is mandatory. The women are allowed to go out, however only after they are registered in the special records book.

Another shelter for women is offered by Women's Rights Center non-governmental organization (NGO) in Armenia. There is no government-funded shelter in Armenia, nor is there is not a law on family violence either. Such cases are examined under the Republic of Armenia Criminal Code.

Susanna Vardanyan, head of Women's Rights Center NGO, says that in 2007-2009 corresponding experts and their center drafted a law on family violence, which was submitted to the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs of Armenia, however, it is not adopted by now.

Last month, a big clamor was raised over Davit Ziroyan (who severely beat his two wives – the first from whom he was divorced, and his second) and his mother Haykanush Mikaelyan. The mother and son were constantly severely beating, torturing and threatening Ziroyan's first and second wives in Saint Petersburg, Russia.

"I want them to be punished, but as of now our law does nothing [in this respect]. I even do not know what to expect from our law," says Ziroyan's second wife, Mariam Gevorgyan.

A lawsuit has been filed against Ziroyan,

however, he has not been sentenced. The prosecution was followed by an amnesty. The mother-in-law (Haykanush Mikaelyan) was detained in Saint Petersburg and brought to Armenia. The case is in the process of preliminary investigation.

A 24-hour national hotline is set up at the Women's Rights Center. Hotlines are in Gavar, Vanadzor, Ijevan and Kapan, too.

There were 2,302 calls to the National Hotline in 2011. In January-September of last year, 1,325 visits were registered in the Sexual Assault Crisis Center of Yerevan.

Police Col. Nelly Duryan, deputy head of the Police's third Investigation Department (of Juvenile Affairs) in Armenia, says that statistical data cannot present the whole picture of violence properly. Violence committed in families usually is not reported.

In 2010, Zaruhi Petrosyan's criminal case got attention. The young woman was subjected to violence by her husband and mother-in-law. On October 1, 2010, after a particularly severe beat-

ing, Petrosyan died in a hospital.

After this incident the Coalition to Stop Violence Against Women in Armenia, consisting of seven non-governmental organizations, was founded, aiming to make the public aware of family violence and its consequences, trying to prevent new cases of violence in the future.

Muradian said that they also teach their women to be good mothers, to be responsible for their own children.

"Most of our beneficiaries are orphanage alumnae. Their mothers were also from orphanages. And now their children are about to end up in an orphanage. There is an open chain, which must be solved," Muradian added.

The Lighthouse Foundation improves these women's lives and enables them a more secure future after they leave the shelter.

"Very often we rent an apartment for them, or we give them money for each month, starting with \$50. By the time, they find a job, they stand on their own feet and try to start a new life," she said.

Armenia to Have First Tae Kwon Do at Olympics

YEREVAN (ArmeniaNow) – Arman Yeremyan has become the first Armenian tae kwon do athlete to qualify for the London Olympic Games.

According to the Armenian National Olympic Committee, he secured his participation in the 2012 London Olympics after winning a gold medal at the European Qualification Tournament (under 80-kilogram weight class) in Kazan, Russia.

Yeremyan, 26, was also the first tae kwon do representing Armenia to become a European champion in 2008.

So far, 12 athletes from Armenia have secured their participation in the Olympics to be held from July 27 to August 12.

Armenian Army Modernization 'on Track'

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Armenia demonstrated at least some of its long-range weapons for the first time during a military parade in Yerevan last September. Those included Russian-made 9K72 surface-to-surface ballistic missiles, known in the West as Scud-B, and S-300 surface-to-air missiles.

Designed for the Soviet army in the 1960s, Scud-Bs have a firing range of up to 300 kilometers, putting virtually all strategic facilities in Armenia's arch-foe Azerbaijan within their reach. The Armenian military was thought to have possessed them since the late 1990s.

The parade also confirmed its possession of more short-range but precise Tochka-U ballistic missiles with a NATO reporting name of SS-21 Scarab-B. Azerbaijan also demonstrated Scarab-Bs during its own military parade held in June.

The shows of force highlighted an intensifying arms race between the two nations. Over the past decade Azerbaijan has spent billions of dollars in oil revenues on a massive military build-up, which it hopes will eventually help it to win back Nagorno-Karabagh.

Armenia is seeking to stay in the race with close military ties with Russia that entitle it to receiving Russian weapons at discount prices or even free of charge. A new Russian-Armenian defense agreement signed in August 2010 commits Moscow to helping Yerevan obtain "modern and compatible weaponry and (special) military hardware."

In February 2011, Ohanian said that his forces received "unprecedented" quantities of modern weaponry in 2010 and will continue the build-up in 2011.

Ohanian and Khachaturov, who both played major roles in the 1991-1994 war with Azerbaijan, laid flowers at Yerablur on Saturday as part of official ceremonies marking the 20th anniversary of the official establishment of the Armenian Armed Forces.

"I'm very happy that we have held on to what we gained 20 years ago and we keep doing that well," said Khachaturov. "We have changed. We have become a tough army. We have gained a lot of new weaponry. But our main wealth is our young officers."



INTERNATIONAL

International News

Man Injured at Church Construction Site

MOSCOW (PanARMENIAN.Net) — A man was injured when a wall collapsed during the construction of the Armenian Church in Moscow's Trifonov Street, on January 28.

The man, who suffered severe injuries, was taken to the hospital. An investigation is under way.

Norway Apologizes for Deporting Jews

YEREVAN (Armenpress) — The Norwegian prime minister has apologized for the role his country played in deporting its own Jews as Europe marks Holocaust Remembrance Day, according to the BBC.

"Norwegians carried out the arrests, Norwegians drove the trucks and it happened in Norway," Jens Stoltenberg said in a speech.

It is believed to be the first time a Norwegian leader has been so explicit about collusion under Nazi occupation.

More than a third of Norway's 2,100 Jews were deported to death camps.

Others fled to neighboring Sweden, which remained neutral during World War II.

Norway acknowledged its role in the Holocaust in 1998 and paid some \$60 million to Norwegian Jews and Jewish organizations in compensation for property seized.

Poltava Hosts Armenian Youth Meeting

POLTOVA, Ukraine (PanARMENIAN.Net) — On January 5, the Ukrainian city hosted a meeting of Armenian young representatives, followed by a concert with talented community members participating, according to analitika.at.ua.

The event aimed to promote Armenian community values, fostering unity among the young members.

Ladik Kostandyan was elected a new chairman of the youth organization, with a mission to make improvements to the Urartu Sunday school.

The head of the Armenian community of Poltava, Arthur Hovakimyan, thanked the Union of Armenians of Ukraine for their contribution to the event.

Armenian Ambassador Meets Ottawa Mayor

OTTAWA, Canada (armradio.am) — Armenian Ambassador to Canada Armen Yeganyan met with the mayor of Ottawa, Jim Watson.

The ambassador discussed Armenian-Canadian cooperation in the political, trade-economic and cultural fields, as well as the development of ties.

The mayor, in turn, briefed Yeganyan on the activities of City Hall, particularly in the cultural field regarding programs promoting young artists.

The two stressed the importance of deepening and expanding relations in the fields of trade, economy and culture.

Armenian Ambassador Visits Malta

VALETTA, Malta (News.am) — Armenian Ambassador to Italy Ruben Karapetyan visited Malta January 25-28 to present his credentials to President George Abela.

During the first day of the visit Karapetyan presented his credentials to Malta's Ambassador to Germany John Paul Grech and discussed Armenian-Maltese cooperation, Armenia's Foreign Ministry announced.

On January 26, Karapetyan met with Abela and presented his credentials during an official ceremony at the president's official residence.

Abela welcomed the Armenian ambassador's appointment to Malta, expressing hope that it will contribute to further cooperation between the two countries.

Karapetyan invited Abela to visit Armenia.

During his visit, Karapetyan also met with members of the local Armenian community.

Haigazian University Launches Diaspora Research Center

BEIRUT, Lebanon — On Wednesday, January 25, Haigazian University held the inaugural ceremony of its Armenian Diaspora Research Center with the unveiling of a plaque in the new Heritage Building by University President Rev. Dr. Paul Haidostian and Yercho Samuelian, whose donation made the launching of the center possible.

Established to study the diverse aspects of the Armenian Diaspora in the Middle East and throughout the world, using the most advanced research techniques, the center aims to conduct and publish primary research — while holding annual academic conferences, public lectures, and internship programs — that will further the understanding of Armenian culture.

Announced on September 5, 2011, the center officially opened at Haigazian's Conte Hall in the presence of the president of the Lebanese University, Former Minister Dr. Adnan El Sayed Hussein, the center's benefactor, Yercho Samuelian, Archbishop Keghan Khatcherian; Armenian Ambassador Ashod Kotcharian, Members of Parliament (MP) Jean Oghasabian, Hagop Pakradouni, Bassem Shabb and Shant Chinchinian, former MP Dr. Yeghia Jerejian, Vice Governor of the Central Bank Haroutioun Samuelian, Head of the Bourj Hammoud Municipality Antranig Messerlian, political party and cultural association leaders, media representatives, intellectuals, and Haigazian Board of Trustees, staff and faculty members.

After welcome remarks by Dean of Arts and Sciences Arda Ekmekji, who expressed her gratitude for this long-awaited project, the president of Haigazian University, Haidostian, out-



Haigazian University President Rev. Dr. Paul Haidostian delivering remarks during the inaugural ceremony

lined the significance of the Armenian Diaspora Research Center and the results that its research will undoubtedly produce.

Characterizing the diaspora as a "vast world of people, symbols, dynamics and relationships," Haidostian emphasized the importance of researching these communities, which will take us "deeper into revisiting what we thought we knew."

"We present our research to the academic community so that future generations may be reconciled with their past," he said.

Haidostian then expressed his appreciation for Samuelian's generous financial support and announced the appointment of Dr. Antranik Dakessian as center's director.

Hussein spoke next, and praised Haigazian's role as a leading university in the country, and particularly its importance as a center for the Armenian Diaspora. He also emphasized the memorandum of understanding between Haigazian and the

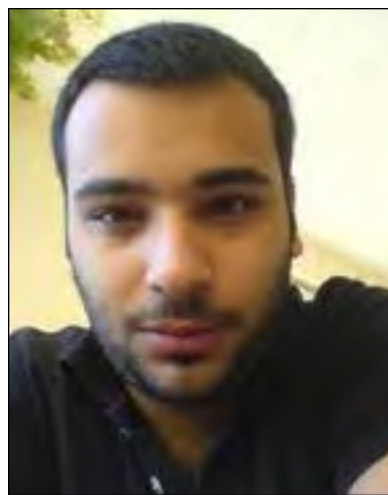
Lebanese University, and related their upcoming projects.

Dakessian then elaborated on the extended contact between Lebanon and Armenia, which can be traced back several hundred years, but has been particularly prominent within the last century, he said. "It is the story of the intermingling of the Armenians and the local populations, and it is of immense cultural value." Dakessian emphasized the planned collaboration of the research center "with local and international relevant centers," and expressed his appreciation for all those who contributed to its realization.

Ambassador of Armenia to Lebanon Ashod Kocharian read a letter from the Armenian Minister of Diaspora, Hranoush Hagopian, who offered her congratulations to Haigazian University and its dedicated staff and faculty. She said she hopes the center tackles the challenges and issues facing Armenian communities worldwide and greatly contributes to the cooperation between Armenians and the diaspora.

Armenian Soldier Serving in Turkish Army Killed Intentionally, Testimony Shows

ISTANBUL (armradio) — A young man of Armenian descent who was killed while serving in the Turkish Armed Forces (TSK) as a conscripted private, in what was initially believed to be an accident, however it was likely a hate crime because of the victim's eth-



Private Sevag Sahin Balikçi

nic background, new testimony from another private indicates, Today's Zaman reports.

Private Sevag Sahin Balikçi was shot dead on April 24, 2011 — the date of commemoration of the Armenian Genocide victims. The other soldiers in his unit, stationed in the Batman

province, and other officer, testified that Balikçi was shot accidentally when he was "joking around" with a close friend, Kivanç Agaoglu. However, according to a report published in the *Sabah* daily on Friday, one of the soldiers who witnessed the incident changed his testimony, which will likely change the course of the trial of Agaoglu.

The revised testimony was given in late December, according to *Sabah's* report. Halil Eksi, who served in the military during the same period as Balikçi, in his new testimony said, "Kivanç pointed his rifle at Sevag and pulled the trigger. His family had asked me to testify in

his favor," indicating that Agaoglu's family pressured him into not describing what really happened.

In his latest account, Eksi told the judge hearing his testimony: "I was told by suspect Kivanç and his family, especially his uncle, to testify in his favor. On the day of the incident, we were installing chain-link fencing around the station under orders from our commanders. As we did our work, at some point, Kivanç Agaoglu unlocked his rifle's safety and directed it at our other friend Sevag Sahin. And he fired the rifle. This way, Sevag Sahin was wounded. I do not know why Kivanç fired at Sevag."

US Author Refuses to Visit Turkey

ANKARA (PanARMENIAN.Net) — US author Paul Auster said he refuses to visit Turkey due to the number of journalists and writers that have been jailed there, *Hurriyet Daily News* reported.

"I refuse to come to Turkey because of imprisoned journalists and writers. How many are jailed now? Over 100?" Auster said, adding that Turkey was the country he was most worried about.

"US democrats got rid of the Bushes. We got rid of [former Vice President Dick] Cheney who should have been put on trial for war crimes," the author said. "What is going on in Turkey?"

Auster said he refused to travel to countries such as Turkey and China that lacked democratic laws even if he was invited.

Auster's latest book, *Winter Journal*, was first published in Turkey. The reason for this, Auster said, was because the publishing house acted quickly and added that the book was to be published in the US in August.



INTERNATIONAL

Christians Fear Losing Freedoms in Arab Spring

By Oren Dorell and Sarah Lynch

CAIRO (*USA Today*) — From her home in a labyrinth of stonewalled alleyways, Samia Ramsis holds a key chain bearing the face of the Virgin Mary as she sits in her yellow pajamas on the morning of Orthodox Christmas.

Sunlight pours in through a window. Outside, visitors come to look upon the spot where Egypt's Christians — most known as Copts — believe the Holy Family found refuge after fleeing Bethlehem and assassins were sent by King Herod to kill the baby Jesus.

Once crowded with Christians, Cairo's Coptic quarter where Samia lives with her husband, Mounir, and two children is home to fewer than 50 Christian families.

"We know many Christians have left," says Mounir Ramsis, speaking not only about this quarter but about all of Egypt. "But we love this country and will stay until death."

The Arab Spring uprisings that have toppled secular dictatorships in the Middle East and North Africa have unleashed long-suppressed freedoms that have allowed Islamic parties to gain a share of political power they have been denied for decades. Their rise is creating near-panic among ancient Christian communities that dot the Muslim world and predate Islam by centuries.

• In Tunisia, where the regime of President Zine El Abidine Ben Ali was ousted last year after 32 years in power, the dominant political party, Ennahda, has worried some of Tunis' 22,000 Catholics by vowing to tilt the country's yet-to-be-written constitution toward sharia, or the detailed and often harsh system of Muslim theocratic laws.

• In Libya, Christians are uneasy as the powerful head of the Tripoli Military Council, Abdul Hakim Belhaj, who once led an Islamic militia with links to al-Qaeda, has said he plans to run for office in elections scheduled for April.

• In Afghanistan, no new building permits have been issued for churches, and the last church open to the public was demolished over the summer. In Iraq, the Christian community has decreased by two-thirds since 2003 amid bombings of churches and assassinations of priests.

• And Christians in Syria, where Muslims have risen up against President Bashar Assad, have been subjected to murder, rape and kidnappings in Damascus and rebellious towns, according to Christian rights groups, including Open Doors, which helps Christians facing persecution.

Many had hoped for better in an Arab movement that proponents said was about replacing tyrannies with democracies.

"The outlook is grim," says John Eibner, CEO of the California-based human rights group Christian Solidarity International.

"If the current trajectory continues, it's reasonable to think that within a generation these (Christian) communities will not look like functioning communities," Eibner says. "They'll look more like the once-flourishing Jewish communities" across the Arab world that are all but gone.

Nowhere is the irony more profound than in Egypt, where an estimated 8 million Christians live with more than 70 million Muslims.

Christians demonstrated alongside Muslims early last year to oust Hosni Mubarak. Before Mubarak's overthrow, Christians had suffered from years of church burnings and murders at the hands of radical Muslims who want an Islamic state free of religious minorities. And after the ouster, the military regime that has been running the country has refused to make any arrests in attacks on Christians.

Mina Bous, 25, a Copt who fled to Philadelphia, recalls cowering with his mother in 1997 as a mob stoned the family home and chanted anti-Christian slogans. But the difference then was that Mubarak ordered the military to protect Christian communities and jail extremists, Bous says.

In October, Copts organized a protest in downtown Cairo over the authorities' failure to investigate attacks, including the bombing of a church in Alexandria on New Year's Day 2011 that killed 20 people. The military attacked the demonstrators and 17 Christians were run down and killed by military vehicles, according to Human Rights Watch.

Bous wants to bring his family to the United States because he says he is petrified by the new society forming in Egypt. The first free elections

in decades held in the past two months handed power not to moderates but to members of the Muslim Brotherhood and radical Salafi candidates, who combined took nearly 70 percent of seats.

"If people try to rule the country with the Koran, with sharia law, that means they look to us as second-class people," Bous says.

Small Share of Population

Christianity has existed in Egypt since the second century. The Muslim Brotherhood, a political movement that seeks a nation run according to Koranic law, has said Egypt would respect the rights of religious minorities to worship and dress as they please. Muslim Brotherhood executive member Abd Al-Rahman Al-Barr says Israel is to blame for clashes between Coptic protestors and security forces.

The Salafis, Muslim fundamentalists who want a complete application of sharia law that generally denies equal rights to women and religious minorities, also say Copts are safe in Egypt.

"Even if there are Salafi leaders who proclaim Copts to be heretics, this does not mean that [the Copts] must be subjected to any religious [or legal] sanctions," says Imad Abd Al-Ghaffour, head of the al-Nour party that won 25 percent so far in parliamentary elections.

Abanob Magdi lives near Egypt's largest pyramid and says he is not optimistic about what lies ahead. "I saw on TV the other day a Salafi saying that if they get in power, beaches will be divided for men and women and women will have to be veiled," Magdi says as he walks through Coptic Cairo with friends.

Christians account for 4 percent of the people of the Middle East and North Africa. Despite being the birthplace of Christianity, the region now has the fewest number of Christians (13 million) and the smallest share of its population that is Christian of any other major geographic region, according to the Pew Center on Religion and Public Life.

The future of minorities in the emerging democracies of the Middle East "is a huge issue

most vividly seen in Egypt and the Copts," says California Rep. Howard Berman, ranking Democrat on the House Foreign Affairs Committee. "It's on our agenda as we figure out how to help these countries," and their treatment of Christians and other minorities is a "red line" that will affect future aid.

President Barack Obama has said Christians must have the right to worship freely, and he has spoken on behalf of persecuted individuals such as pastor Youcef Nadarkhani, who was sentenced to death in Iran for converting himself and others to Christianity, says Joshua Dubois, director of the White House Office for Faith-Based and Neighborhood Partnerships.

Some say stronger action is needed. Eibner wants Obama to urge the United Nations secretary-general to declare a genocide warning for Christians across the Middle East and a policy for preserving religious pluralism in the region.

Rep. Chris Smith of New Jersey, Republican chairman of the human rights subcommittee of the House Foreign Affairs Committee, says the Obama administration "has been AWOL" on the issue. Smith says Obama should designate Egypt "a country of particular concern," which allows the State Department to impose sanctions. He could also make \$1.3 billion in annual US aid to the Egyptian military conditional on fair treatment of minorities, Smith says.

Rep. Gary Ackerman, D-NY, warns that threatening to withhold US aid could prompt a "backlash" in the region. "These situations are delicate but the case has to be made and the president has to make it," he says.

Historian Habib Malik of American University of Beirut in Byblos, Lebanon, says Western nations can improve the situation by shifting from promoting democratic rule to emphasizing "minority rights, checks and balances, freedoms and the substance side of democracy."

Growing wave of restrictions

Some Middle Eastern countries remain relatively safe for Christians, says Carl Moeller, president of Open Doors. Jordan accepted thousands of Iraqi refugees, including Christians, who are allowed to practice their faith. Armenian Christians in Iran, while monitored by the government, can worship unhindered, though con-

version is illegal, Moeller says.

But Christians in Tunisia, where the Arab Spring movement began, have faced a growing number of restrictions since the dictatorship fell, he says.

"Foreign Christians have been called into the police in Tunisia, (and) they've had their phones tapped," he says. "There's definitely growing restrictions on Christians in Tunisia."

In Syria, where Christians have lived since the Apostle Peter established the first church in the now-Turkish city of Antioch 2,000 years ago, cities that are strongholds of the Muslim Brotherhood have risen up against Bashar Assad. Christians make up more than 2 million of the country's 22 million people, and they fear that the uprising will bring Islamists to power, rights groups say.

In Afghanistan, Western nations that are spending billions of dollars on reconstruction and maintaining security have failed to get the government to protect Christians.

One of Jesus's own apostles, St. Thomas, brought Christianity to Afghanistan in the first century, and today there are 8,000 Christians there. But the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan does not recognize Afghan citizens as being Christians, and converting to Christianity is illegal.

Not a single public church remains. The last Christian church was destroyed by its landowner in March after the Afghan courts refused to uphold the legality of the congregation's lease.

In Iraq, after the United States ousted military dictator Saddam Hussein in 2003, the Christian population has gone from 1.5 million to a half million today.

The exodus came amid 60 church bombings and the deaths of 900 Christians, says William Warda, chairman of the Hammurabi Human Rights Organization in Baghdad.

"We consider that genocide," he says.

Malik says Western nations must stand up for the rights of Christians, who he says may be cleansed from lands where democratic elections are used to oppress minorities rather than empower them.

Malik says it must be done "in a way that is not misperceived on the other end." However, "the West should not be cowed."



The Armenian mountaineering team

Mountaineering Team Aims to Conquer Iran's Highest Peak

TEHRAN (*ArmenianNow*) — The Armenian mountaineering team took part in the International Mountaineering Championship held here from January 25-28. The team visited Iran's Mountain Tourism Federation to get acquainted with the winter conditions of the highest peak — Mount Demavend (5,671 meters) prior to the actual competition, Armenian Mountaineering and Mountain Tourism Federation Deputy Chairman Suren Danielyan told Panorama.am.

Two hundred alpinists from 25 countries took part in the tournament. Thursday the Armenian team climbed to the camp at an altitude of 4,100 meters and on Friday and Saturday they tried to reach the peak. The temperature in the mountain ranges from -30 celsius to -40 celsius (-22 fahrenheit to -40 fahrenheit), making the climb much more challenging.

The Armenian alpinists qualified for the championship after conquering several mountains in 2011, among them Mount Ararat (5,165 meters) and Mount Kazbek (5,033 meters). The seven-member team climbed Demavend in the summer, after which it was invited to take part in the winter championship.



Community News

South Florida Armenians Celebrate Very Rev. Dr. Nareg Berberian's 20th Anniversary of Ordination

BOCA RATON, Fla. — On Saturday, January 21, around 250 members of the south Florida Armenian-American community gathered in Mardigian Hall at St. David Armenian Church to celebrate the 20th anniversary of Very Rev. Dr. Nareg Berberian's ordination to the Holy priesthood. The celebratory banquet was widely attended by hundreds of Florida Armenians from across the state and many religious dignitaries from around the United States.

Presiding over the banquet was Archbishop Khajag Barsamian, Primate of the Eastern Diocese of the Armenian Church of America. Joining him was Archbishop Vicken Aykazian, diocesan legate of the Armenian Church of America in Washington, DC, Rev. Mardiros Chebian, dean of St. Vartan Cathedral in New York City, Rev. Membre Kouzouian from Boston, Rev. Vartan Joulfyan of St. Mary Armenian Church in Cooper City, Fla., Rev. Nerses Jebejian, Rabbi Robert Silvers of B'nai Israel Synagogue in Boca Raton and local clergy. Taniel Koushakjian, founder of Florida Armenians, served as master of ceremonies.

Kicking off the program was Carol Norigian, Banquet Commemorative Committee chair, who expressed her deep appreciation to Berberian and noted his hard work and many achievements over his decade-long tenure in the south Florida parish. Norigian presented Berberian with a replica of Noah's Ark, sent by Armenian artist and designer Michael Aram, for his many accomplishments at St. David Armenian Church.

Several local talents performed for the packed hall to celebrate Berberian's 20 years of service in the Holy priesthood. St. David ACYOA talents Alique Mazmanian and Ani Manvelyan each sang Armenian songs and Mazmanian joined Alex Crossley for a duet. Arman Avedyan, also from St. David ACYOA, inspired the crowd with his powerful performance of the classic Italian aria *Nessun Dorma*. Later in the evening, St. Mary ACYOA violinist Sage McBride performed Aram Khachadourian's *Groong*. Following that was local award-winning pianist Hratch Boghossian, who brought the crowd to its feet.

Highlighting the banquet was Berberian, who stated, "Today, I feel elated to have such a wonderful community, all of whom I value as my friends. It is unbelievable that 20 years have passed since my ordination into the Holy Order of Priesthood and 10 years since you embraced me as your spiritual leader, your pastor, here at St. David Armenian Church." He continued, "You are the church, you are the mission, you are the ministry. Without you there would be no priesthood, without you there would be no vision. Thank you for making a positive difference in my life. God is working through each and every one of us. Let's glorify His name and thank Him for bringing us closer to Him through the ministry of His Church."

Berberian was also joined by his family who flew all the way from California. His niece, Joelle Awad, spoke eloquently about Berberian on behalf of his family. In addition, a special video message and film, showcasing photos of his early life, was featured.

Concluding the banquet's program was remarks from Barsamian, Primate of the Eastern Diocese of the Armenian Church. He spoke warmly about his friendly and professional relationship with Berberian and reflected on his many years of service, having himself ordained Berberian 20 years ago. On behalf of the Armenian Church, Barsamian presented him with an award for his service to God and the Armenian-American community. Barsamian's remarks and uplifting spirit was a wonderful conclusion to the evening's celebration.

Then, on Sunday, January 22, Barsamian led the visiting clergy and Berberian in celebrating Divine Liturgy. During the mass, Barsamian ordained two young St. David altar servers, Arlen Avedyan as a deacon, and Gregory Merjian as sub-deacon, in the Armenian Church.



Carl Bardakian in Michigan

Bardakian Named Head Coach of Armenian Men's National Basketball Team

LOS ANGELES — The Basketball Federation of Armenia announced Carl Bardakian as the new head coach of the soon-to-be established men's Armenian national basketball team. Armenia will apply to compete in the International Basketball Federation (FIBA) Europe Division C Men's Basketball Championship, July 2-7. Upon acceptance by FIBA Europe, Armenia will compete against Scotland, Wales, Malta, Moldova, Andorra, Gibraltar and host country San Marino.

"We will open our first training camp this spring. A strong foundation must be set in order for Armenia to compete internationally in men's basketball. Carl Bardakian has the coaching background and recruiting experience to assemble the best team to represent Armenia this July," said Hrachya Rostomyan, president of the Basketball Federation of Armenia.

Bardakian is head coach of the champion Los Angeles men's basketball team, gold medalists of the fifth Pan Armenian Games in Armenia in 2011. He was twice a gold medal winner with Valley AGBU as a player. Bardakian is the United States representative to the Basketball Federation of Armenia. He has served as an international scout for both the 2010 FIBA Europe Div. C silver medal Armenian women's national basketball team and the Hatis Yerevan women's professional

see BASKETBALL, page 9



Carl Bardakian coaching in Armenia

CYSCA Adopts Shengavit Preserve Project

CAMBRIDGE, Mass. — The Cambridge Yerevan Sister City Association (CYSCA) at a recent meeting of its Board of Directors voted unanimously to adopt a program to help preserve and renovate the Shengavit Historical and Archaeological Culture Preserve here.

The Shengavit Preserve includes an archaeological site dating to the fourth millennium BC, which was continually occupied between 1,000 to 2,000 years; archaeologists differ on the duration of occupancy. There is a small museum next to the archaeological excavation site containing some of the artifacts recovered from the site. Other Shengavit artifacts are on display at other museums within Armenia.

The Shengavit settlement was part of the so-called Kura-Arax culture, which had trade relations with cultures far beyond Armenia's borders. This culture is believed to have played an important role in the formation of the Armenian people.

The director of the Shengavit Preserve is Vladimir Tshagharyan, an architect and archaeologist with extensive experience managing archaeological sites in Armenia. He was also a participant in a US State Department-funded Community Connections training project sponsored by CYSCA for Cultural and Historical Preservation specialists from Armenia in the greater Boston area in May/June 2003.

Shengavit was initially excavated in 1936 by Joseph Orbeli (1887-1961) and Eugeni Bayburtyan (1898-1938). Orbeli was the director of the Hermitage Museum in St. Petersburg, Russia. Bayburtyan, an Armenian archaeologist, was arrested by the Soviet secret police in 1938 for being too nationalistic. Most recently, in 2011, a team of Armenians and archaeologists from the US led by Dr. Mitchell Rothman, professor of anthropology and archaeology at Widener University in Pennsylvania, examined the site. The following is a partial quote by Rothman:

"The site of Shengavit in the hills above the Ararat Plain is one set of remains of an ancient culture called variously Kura Araxes, Early Transcaucasian, Karaz, Pulur, Shengavitian, etc. Its full time period is still much under debate, but probably it starts somewhere around 3500 BC and ends 2500-2200 BC. The homeland of this culture is in the Southern Caucasus, the current countries of Georgia, Armenia and Azerbaijan, along with a section of current northeastern Turkey from Erzurum through Kars provinces. To fully understand the importance of this culture, its place in its contemporary world is essential to comprehend. Its beginning is co-terminus with the establishment of the first states in southern Mesopotamia and the founding of the first international trading system, which covered an area from the Persian Gulf to the North Caucasus from modern western Iran to the Mediterranean Sea..."

The Shengavit site has three employees, including its director, all of whom receive token salaries. There is, however, no budget for the preservation, maintenance and enhancement of the site. Immediate needs include visitor amenities such as bathrooms, running water and a pavilion to provide shade from the glare of the hot summer sun. Next are required fencing and security for the site and repair, and ultimately replacement, of the museum building which dates to 1920. The site also needs landscaping appropriate for an archaeological site and most importantly preservation of the site's archaeological structures and artifacts.

For more information about CYSCA, visit www.cysca.org or contact Cheryl Shushan, president, cherylhasmail@gmail.com, or Jack Medzorian, jmedzorian@aol.com.



COMMUNITY NEWS

Armenian Sisters' Academy Celebrates 30th Anniversary

By Alin K. Gregorian

Mirror-Spectator Staff

LEXINGTON, Mass. — The Armenian Sisters' Academy (ASA) is gearing up to celebrate its 30th anniversary with a gala at the Fairmont Copley Plaza in Boston on February 11.

During a recent interview, Sister Cecile Keghiayan, the ASA's principal, spoke about her dedication to the education of children. "My goal is to raise Armenian and Christian children, whether they are Catholic or not," she said.

Keghiayan, who hails from Athens, was in Beirut for 40 years as principal of the Hripsimiantz Varjarian, a Catholic-Armenian K-12 school, with 1,200 students, before moving to the US.

"We want to prepare an Armenian genera-

tion," she said.

The ASA is operated by the Armenian Sisters of the Immaculate Conception, an order founded in Constantinople (Istanbul) in 1847. The school's founder, Sister Alphonsa Bedrosian, moved to the US in 1978 from Iran, where she was the principal of Institut Mariam K-12 School in Tehran.

"Sister Alphonsa came and the Iranian-Armenians here encouraged her to start a school here," Keghiayan said. "There was no other Armenian school."

In fact, Keghiayan said that she came to the founding of the school in 1982.

Keghiayan credited Bedrosian for laying the foundation of the school. "To Sister Alphonsa we give all credit. She bought a house in Watertown and started a nursery school. Then she found this property and heard that the sisters here wanted to sell the house."

According to parent and ASA Board of Advisors Chair Katrina Menzigan, the property belonged to the Grey Nuns who wanted to sell the property and leave. "She first bought the convent and then heard that they were selling the school too."

"She was a businesswoman and a capable person," Keghiayan said about Bedrosian.

The school currently has 90 students in nursery through fifth grade. The ASA is planning to relaunch its middle school.

"Children should not be sent to public school at a very early age," Keghiayan said, noting that a small school such as this one would instill more discipline in them. She added that if she could, she would add grades through high school.

When she was in Beirut, she said, it was easier to get students to attend Armenian schools, as few parents considered sending their children to public schools.

The ASA in Lexington has sister schools in Philadelphia (Armenian Sisters' Academy of Radnor) and Los Angeles (Armenian Sisters' Academy of Montrose).

For Menzigan, whose two sons are enrolled at the school, the ASA offered something more than an Armenian school. "It was a new thing for me, how much the congregation, the order, and Sister Cecile are part of an international network," she said. "They consider themselves sisters [with the nuns who run the other schools] and regularly visit Los Angeles and Philadelphia."

The sisters' order is based in Rome, where it is headed by Mother Superior Edoxia.

"That is where our center is and where they decide where the sisters go," Keghiayan said.

Michelle Minasian, another parent with three children in the school and the chair of the Parents' Committee for the past five years, said that even though she herself is not Armenian, the school dovetails what she and her husband want for their children. "I grew up going to a Catholic school. The school gives me values that I want to instill in my children. The Catholic religion is important to me. My husband was born in Armenia but here we lose the notion of where we are from. We want [our children] to understand their country and where they are from. This is a nice compromise."

Menzigan said that Minasian's situation is not a unique one; there are many families with one non-Armenian parent who choose the school. "There are even parents who are not Armenian who want a small Catholic school for their children," she added.



Sister Cecile Keghiayan and Mayda Melkonian

Armenian. Melkonian spoke about the school's science program in collaboration with the MIT Media Lab, with the lab's Jacqueline Karaaslanian, for the fifth graders. The ASA students, along with students from a school in the village of Gargar in Lori, Armenia, compose music. When completed, the music will be performed by professional musicians.

In addition, there are parents at the school who were once students themselves. Many of the students have gone on to become professionals, including physicians, attorneys, phar-



Founder Sister Alphonsa Bedrosian

The Armenian Sisters' Academy, Lexington, MA

30th Anniversary Gala Event



Saturday, February 11, 2012, 6:30 pm
Fairmont Copley Plaza Hotel, Boston

Keynote Speaker, His Excellency,
Rouben Shugarian,
former Ambassador of the Republic of Armenia

Musical Entertainment by:
Elie Berberian

For tickets and table reservations,
please contact the school office at (781) 861-8303



From left, Katrina Menzigan, Sister Cecile Keghiayan and Michelle Minasian

Macists and engineers. Minasian stressed that in terms of religion, the Catholic and Armenian Apostolic churches are very close. "They are both a more traditional service," she said. She noted, however, that the school does not push Catholicism on students or parents, rather Christianity.

Vice Principal Mayda Melkonian said that the school instills in the students a desire to excel. "We tell them that 'one day, you are going to be a leader in the community.' They use their experiences, for example performing on stage, to be speakers at events," she said.

The school stresses science as well as

macists and engineers.

The ASA has been elected to institutional membership and granted accreditation by the New England Association of Schools and Colleges, Inc. (NEASC) and the Association of Independent Schools of New England (AISNE).

The school will have an open house on March 18. The banquet on February 11 will have as keynote speaker former Armenian ambassador to the US, Rouben Shugarian. For tickets to the gala or information on the open house, call the school or visit its website, www.asalexington.org.





OBITUARY

Altan Captivates Large Audience with Message of Hope at ALMA

ALTAN, from page 1

Altan, in a humorous yet authoritative manner, said that Armenians can indeed teach Turks to do the right thing and recognize the Armenian Genocide, but that they have to appeal to the Turks' hearts, rather than minds, in order to succeed.

Speaking English fluently, Altan was also intent on making it clear to the Armenians in attendance that the views of Turks are changing, though perhaps not as fast as Armenians would like.

"If you want Turkey to accept it, doing it by force is very hard. Only one man [the late Hrant Dink] managed to touch millions of Turks. Forget the state; go to the people. When they understand, they will force the state to change," he said.

The late *Agos* editor's assassination changed Turkish people, he explained. "They couldn't understand what had happened. Two hundred thousand shouted, 'we are Armenian, we are Hrant.' They showed Hrant's funeral live on television. Millions of Turks watched that funeral and they started to talk and discuss the Armenian issue."

He also spoke at length about Dink, both in life and in death, and what both have meant — and mean and will mean.

"He was so gentle, so courageous. When he spoke about his childhood on television, millions of people cried. Turks have hearts and consciences, believe me. We need to proceed to overcome the bloody line of 1915," he said.

"Now there is a lot of debate on TV about the Genocide," Altan said, referring to the post-Dink period. "It was unthinkable 10 years ago to write this," he added, referring to the headline "1915 is a genocide" on the front page of *Taraf*.

"I hope and wish that Turkey would accept and apologize for what happened. Once we start to talk, they will accept it. You must change your perception of Turkey. Maybe you can help Turkey change," he said. One way for Armenians to enable that change is to visit Turkey often and tell the ordinary Turks about their family histories, he said.

Altan stressed that Turks and Turkey should accept and admit committing the Armenian Genocide not only to help the Armenians, but themselves. "If we confess our great sin, we could become a better race, a better people. We must suffer [as a result of the recognition of the past] the way that you suffered. If you tell them the stories of your families, the killed babies, women and old people, they will understand with their hearts," Altan said. "The way

between Armenians and Turks is through emotions."

Armenian and Turkish pasts, he noted, including culture, are intertwined. "As far as I am concerned, Armenian culture was a huge part of Ottoman culture. I don't believe there was a Turkish architect in the Ottoman Empire."

He said he realized that many Armenians hated Turks but stressed often that many Turks simply do not know their country's past. The current generation of Turks, he said, "think they should protect their butcher ancestors. I am ready to help you let them learn."

He continued, "Turks must understand what [Armenian] families suffered. I offer every Armenian I meet the chance to tell their stories. Our newspaper is willing to publish their stories."

Altan said that he did not necessarily favor the resolution passed in France making the denial of the Armenian Genocide punishable by law. "These kinds of resolutions help only the Turkish military and the Turkish government. They believe the world hates them and then [as a result of the adoption of such laws] they come together."

Prof. Taner Akçam, who holds the Robert Aram, Marianne Kaloosdian and Stephen and Marion Mugar Chair in Armenian Genocide Studies at Clark University, introduced Altan at the ALMA program. The two are not simply friends who are ideologically similar, but both were close friends of Dink.

Said Akçam in his introduction, "My friend Ahmet is one of the really best literary minds in Turkey. However, it is his journalistic activity that is important for us." He added that Altan is "one of the leading journalists in Turkey. There have been more than 100 cases against him [in the courts]."

In fact, on Saturday, there was another case filed against him by Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan because of an article in *Taraf*.

Akçam said that *Taraf* is more than a newspaper; "it is a movement in itself." Since Turkey lacks a serious political opposition, *Taraf* is able to fill that role, he explained. "It is the leading



Harry Parsekian of Friends of Hrant Dink

opinion maker," he said, noting that the current Ergenekon [deep state] trials that have sent hundreds of military officials to jail have been mostly due to the efforts of Altan and *Taraf*.

"*Taraf* revealed a lot of secret journals and information from the military, Ergenekon," he added.

Altan has been a strong defender of Akçam himself, the scholar said, when the later faced threats because of his tireless work to get recognition for the Armenian Genocide.

Altan was born 1950 in Ankara, Turkey to the journalist and writer Çetin Altan. In addition to having written columns in several Turkish newspapers, including *Hürriyet*, *Milliyet* and *Radikal*, Altan has produced news programming for television. He was fired from *Milliyet* after writing a column on April 17, 1995, titled "Atakurd," which presented an alternate history of Turkey in which he imagined what would have happened had Atatürk been a Kurd.

In September 2008, when Altan published an article titled "Oh, My Brother," dedicated to the victims of the Armenian Genocide, he was charged under Article 301 of the Turkish Penal Code for "denigrating Turkishness."

OBITUARY

Fr. Artoon Sempadian Pastor of San Francisco Church

SAN FRANCISCO — Fr. Artoon Sempadian, the former priest of St. John Armenian Church, died on January 15. He was 83.

He was born on February 22, 1928 in Beirut, Lebanon. His parents, Arsen and Paylik Sempadian, gave him the name Manoug, at baptism.

After a long illness, he died on January 15 at home with his family by his side.

At age 12, he was admitted to the St. James Seminary of the Armenian Patriarchate in Jerusalem. Upon graduation he entered the Theological School and was ordained deacon by Patriarch Cyril I.

He was invited to the United States in 1950 by Bishop Tiran Nersoyan to study at Seabury Western Episcopal Seminary in Evanston, Ill.

He also served as deacon at that time in Racine, Wis., where he met and married Betty Borian, and where he was ordained into the priesthood of the Armenian Church and served at St. Mesrob Church for five years.

In 1955, he was called by Bishop Shnork Kaloustian to assume the pastorate of St. John Armenian Church in San Francisco. There he undertook the planning and supervision of the construction of a new church complex and served for 14 years as pastor.

He then accepted the position of first executive director of the newly-established Armenian Church Endowment Fund based in New York City, traveling extensively throughout the United States.

He returned to California in 1977. He continued his service as visiting priest at St. James parish in Sacramento. Later he assumed the position of executive director of the newly-established Western Diocese Endowment Fund. He retired in 1993 after three years as parish priest of St. Mary in Ytterb. He was a contributor to several publications, writing especially about the Armenian Church.

He is survived by his wife of 61 years, Betty; his son, John, as well as grandchildren, Kimo, Tarani and Sara, three great-grand children and many cousins; nephews, Yeznig Palayan, Zohrab Palayan and George Chalekian; nieces, Ani Telloian, Ankine Gulian and Hally Warburton, and his sister-in-law, Ellie, whom he united in marriage to Suran Chalekian, a deacon at his first parish. He was predeceased by sons Michael and Tiran; his sisters, Nevere and Knar; and brother Joseph.

On Saturday, January 21, parishioners and friends gathered to capacity in the Sanctuary of St. John to pay their final respects to their faithful and caring former pastor. Fr. Yeghia



Fr. Artoon Sempadian

Hairabedian, regional vicar of the San Joaquin Valley of the Western Diocese and pastor of St. Gregory Armenian Church of Fowler, presided over the funeral services. He was assisted by Fr. Kevork Arakelian, visiting priest to the Mission Parish of Ventura County and Sts. Sahag Mesrob Armenian Church of Reedley. Participating were Deacon Matthew Ash, pastor of St. John; Deacon Allan Y. Jendian of Fresno; Deacon Martin Kildarian of Clovis; Deacon Sarkis Kestekyan, Deacon Anthony Catchatoorian and Sub-deacon Arthur Bedikian, all of San Francisco. The church choir, accompanied on the organ by Naiyry Sarkiss, sang the requiem hymns.

Services for him were also held in Fresno with Hairabedian presiding, assisted by Arakelian and Deacons Jendian and Barlow Der Mugrdechian, in the chapel of Whitehurst Funeral Home on Thursday, January 19.

Preceding the graveside service at Cypress Lawn Memorial Park Cemetery in Colman, a memorial meal was served in the Parish Hall where family and friends shared memories of Sempadian. While viewing the on-going slide photos and video of Sempadian's vitality, especially during the building phase of the new complex of St. John on Olympia Way, future parish priest Deacon Ash's remarks reflected the love and admiration of Sempadian's parishioners.

Remembrances may be made to The Fr. Artoon Sempadian Library Memorial Fund of St. John Armenian Church, 275 Olympia Way, San Francisco, CA 94131 or the St. Agnes Hospice team, 6729 Willow, Suite 103, Fresno, CA 93710.

Giragosian

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COMMUNITY NEWS

AGBU's Chicago Chapter Celebrates its Centennial

CHICAGO — Serving Chicago's Armenian community for more than a century, the AGBU Chicago Chapter held its Centennial Celebration on Saturday, December 10, 2011, at the Onnig Norehad Center, the chapter's headquarters. A private reception welcomed members and lead donors prior to the festive program, which was attended by 200 people.

Armand Norehad, whose father, Onnig, is the namesake of the Chicago Center, opened the evening. "My connection to AGBU through my family goes back to 1920 when my dad joined AGBU after a year here as a refugee. It's remarkable that this organization was conceived long before the Genocide, but then what did we live through? World War I, the Depression, World War II. And this chapter continued to grow through more refugees. They were the gift given to Chicago, people who came from Turkey, Syria and all sorts of countries where they'd been abused and decimated as families. This evening represents 100 years of successes, and I hope and pray that we will be able to continue the success, and feel we have carried the torch forward from all of those people over the decades," said Norehad.

The chapter's former chairman, Haig Pedian, also gave heartfelt remarks, followed by AGBU Central Board member Carol Aslanian, who talked about the current relevance and role of AGBU both in the United States and abroad. Aslanian went on to discuss the organization's recent successes and accomplishments and stressed the importance of staying connected to one another as a community. "I am so very pleased to represent the

Central Board of AGBU as we celebrate the Chicago AGBU Chapter's Centennial. The Chapter's 100 years of service and dedication to the Armenian community in greater Chicago have been exceptional. The Chapter has sponsored countless cultural, humanitarian and educational projects and programs over the years and has been instrumental in sharing its ideas with other chapters throughout the world. For that, we are greatly indebted to the thousands of volunteers who have come to honor their heritage and culture," said Aslanian. She continued, "We all need to remain connected and share what we as individuals and as members of groups can offer so as to tie our communities together and to inspire ourselves as well as the communities of which we are contributing members."

The Zulal Trio of New York, a female cappella group who perform Armenian folk music, took the stage next for a nearly two-hour concert. Introducing the singers, AGBU Chicago Board member and program director of the Kooyumjian-AGBU Chicago Armenian Humanities Festival, Gary Rejebian, said, "It would be selling tonight's concert far short to regard this performance as merely faded postcards of a bygone era. While the melodies hail from another time and place, the music of Zulal is very much a vibrant example of the mosaic, which is Armenian culture today. Listen carefully and you will recognize that the emotions and experiences related in their lyrics are both timeless and universal. Such is the gift of Zulal — and the Armenians — to humankind."

Chicago Chapter Chairwoman Sona

Boghosian Diorio, who has worked to maintain the Chicago Center and is a passionate advocate for AGBU's presence in the community, delivered closing remarks. The chapter's anniversary celebration followed for all in attendance.

As part of the Chicago Chapter's centennial celebration, the Kooyumjian-AGBU/Chicago Armenian Humanities Festival had a series of cultural events lined up during fall 2010, which included a lecture, titled "Resistance and Rescue During the Armenian Genocide: The Story Behind a Photograph: Marsovan, 1915-1918," a violin and piano concert and a presentation, titled "Memories of a Lost Armenian home: Photography, Anatolia College and the Story of an Armenian Family in Anatolia." One more event took place on January 14 — a production of the renowned Michael Fosberg play, "Incognito."

The festival debuted in May 2010 with the premiere of Chicago composer Eric Hachikian's film, "Voyage to Amasia," which won Best Documentary at the 2011 Pomegranate Film Festival in Toronto. Festival events have been made possible by the joint efforts of AGBU's Chicago Chapter and the support of the Kooyumjian Foundation.

AGBU Chicago, established just five years after the founding of AGBU in Egypt, has played an important role in the philanthropic, educational, cultural and social life of the Chicago-Armenian community over the last 100 years. Generating strong support for various causes through years of fundraisers, and local subchapters for men, women and youth,

the AGBU Chicago Chapter has been a core focus of the organization in the community. The Chapter's center was established nearly 20 years ago through funds raised from the Armenian community in and around Chicago, and is named after the late Onnig Norehad, a former chairman of AGBU Chicago. The center takes great pride in the growing number of activities that are a part its operations, as well as the ongoing services that it offers.

Armenian Council of America Urges Lawmakers to Reaffirm Genocide Recognition

LOS ANGELES — In light of the historic legislation recently championed by the French Senate, the Armenian Council of America is urging Congressional leaders in the United States to honor their pledge in supporting the Armenian-American citizenry by reaffirming recognition of the Armenian Genocide, including support for H.R. 304.

The French bill, drafted by Valerie Boyer, a legislator from President Nicolas Sarkozy's party, has criminalized denial of the Armenian Genocide with a punishable fine of 45,000 euros and one year of incarceration. It was passed on January 23, by the French Senate with an overwhelming majority support of 127 votes.

"As we celebrate this momentous milestone as a nation, as a people, as proponents of human rights, we call upon our legislators in the House of Representatives to reaffirm their support for recognition of the Armenian Genocide," said Sevak Khatchadorian, chairman of the Armenian Council of America.

"The French government has taken a stand against Turkish leaders, who for years, have succeeded at dictating their personal interests at the expense of violating human rights and advocating denial of genocide. This time around, Turkey's geopolitics and economic threats has not been able to jeopardize doing the right thing," said Khatchadorian.

"We also call upon President Obama to honor his pledge to support recognition of the Armenian Genocide. With more nations supporting legislation officially recognizing the Armenian Genocide and the courageous step taken by the French government, it is about time that the leader of the free world and the members of Congress fight for justice and represent the United States as a shining example of democracy and good will," added Khatchadorian.

Andreas Borgeas Seeks Armenian Consul for Valley

By Alex Tavlian

FRESNO (*Fresno Bee*) — Fresno City Council Member Andreas Borgeas wants the Armenian government to appoint an honorary consul as a link between the Central Valley's large Armenian-American community and the Middle Eastern country.

Borgeas sent a letter Tuesday to Los Angeles-based Armenian Consul General Grigor Hovhannissian requesting that the Republic of Armenia appoint a Fresnan to the ceremonial position.

The position, albeit ceremonial compared to a consul general, could provide important administrative services, such as processing visas, for Valley Armenians.

Armenians currently get visas and other diplomatic services through the Armenian Consulate in Los Angeles. "With [the honorary consul] we wouldn't need to go to Los Angeles," Borgeas said. "That would be really neat to have here."

Fresno currently has one honorary consul, Ed Fanucchi, who was appointed by Italy, and one official consul, Reyna Torres Mendivil of Mexico.

"Given the rich history of our Armenian com-

munity in the Valley, it's worth exploring the possibility of having an honorary consul serve the community," Borgeas said.

Borgeas placed one stipulation: the position would be nonpartisan and apolitical, and the honorary consul could not advance specific cultural affiliation or political and religious partisanship.

It's important to choose someone who would avoid serving special interests in the local Armenian community, he said.

The honorary consul request received full support from Borgeas' colleagues on the City Council and Mayor Ashley Swearengin, along with Armenian community leaders.

The idea for an honorary consul, Borgeas said, came up when he was spearheading the Fresno-Armenia Sister City exploratory committee in 2009. Since then, the city of Fresno has increased relations with the Republic of Armenia and its US-based officials, he said.

Representatives from the Armenian Consulate in Los Angeles said the process of appointing an honorary consul would need to be instigated by Hovhannissian, who was unavailable for comment.

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Bardakian Named Head Coach of Armenian Men's National Basketball Team

BASKETBALL, from page 6

basketball team of EuroCup. Bardakian was a student manager at the University of Michigan under Coach Steve Fisher for five years. During that period, Michigan appeared in the NCAA Final Four championship game in 1992 and 1993. Bardakian was also an assistant coach at Cleveland State University and Chaffey College. His numerous coaching responsibilities included recruiting, scouting, game preparation, player workouts and strength and condition.

"A men's national team will further the growth of basketball in Armenia. This is a key part of our long-term strategic goal of developing basketball throughout the country," said Souren Zohrabian, vice president of the Basketball Federation of Armenia.

Bardakian stated "I am honored and grateful

for the opportunity the Basketball Federation of Armenia has granted me. President Hrachya Rostomyan and Vice President Souren Zohrabian have been tremendously supportive. Together, we have entered new groundbreaking territory. Our goal of uniting the best players from Armenia and the diaspora to compete in FIBA Europe is on the verge of becoming a reality. There is no turning back."

Assistant Coach Zorik Isajani of Glendale College and Assistant Coach Vardan Khatchatrian of Hatis Yerevan and the Armenian women's national team will serve as assistant coaches.

Born in New York, Bardakian holds a bachelor's degree in communication (1993) and a master's degree in kinesiology (1994), both from the University of Michigan.



COMMUNITY NEWS

Kevork Atinizian Celebrates His 70th Birthday

BELMONT, Mass. — “Supporting my community to succeed is the main motivation of my life,” stated entrepreneur Kevork Atinizian, who celebrated his 70th birthday among family members and friends here on Sunday, January 29.

Born and raised in Dikranagerd, Atinizian came to the United States in 1980 from Istanbul, where he and his brother, Nishan, owned and operated a metal and enamel factory employing more than 200 people. Two years later, in 1982, the brothers purchased the Fresh Pond Mall Shopping Center in Cambridge and delved into real estate. Since then, they have developed businesses in the United States and Armenia. Among businesses in Armenia in which they are partners, is the Armenia Marriott Hotel in Yerevan, which opened in 2004.

In 1988, Atinizian married Jacqueline Kerimian. The Atinizians have three children: Nigoghos, Ari and Lori and three grandchildren, Kevork, Antranik and Haig.

Atinizian is devoted to supporting Armenian education because he believes in perpetuating the Armenian culture and language. Since

childhood, he has also been dedicated to the Armenian Church, contributing his time, talents and financial resources.

Kevork and Jacqueline Atinizian are active members and supporters of Holy Trinity Armenian Church in Cambridge, having established a Holy Trinity Trust Fund in their name. They have also supported causes both locally, nationally and internationally, including the Fund For Armenian Relief (FAR), the Patriarchate of Constantinople, Our Savior Armenian Hospital of Istanbul, Habitat for Humanity in Armenia, the Armenian Nursing and Rehabilitation Center in Jamaica Plain, Armenian day schools in the Greater Boston area, the *Armenian Mirror-Spectator* and the United Nations’ Children’s Fund (UNICEF) and many other organizations. They are also members of the Armenian Assembly of America.

In 1998, the late Catholicos of All Armenians, Karekin I, bestowed the highest order of the Armenian Church, the St. Gregory the Illuminator Medal and the Pontifical Encyclical, upon the couple.

Atinizian visited Jerusalem in January 2000 and contributed funds to renovate the Grand



Kevork Atinizian surrounded by his family

Prayers for the Health of Patriarch Torkom Manoogian

NEW YORK — Staff members and clergy gathered in St. Vartan Armenian Cathedral on Wednesday, January 25, for a brief service, to pray for the health and recovery of Archbishop Torkom Manoogian, the Armenian Patriarch of Jerusalem.

Manoogian, the former Primate of the Eastern Diocese, was admitted on January 19 to a hospital in Jerusalem, where he is resting comfortably but has been drifting in and out of consciousness.

Manoogian will turn 93 next month.

In a quiet reflection at the service, Diocesan Primate Archbishop Khajag Barsamian spoke of the patriarch as a great spiritual leader of the Armenian Church, and a figure of enduring stature in the worldwide community of Christian churches.

He said that the well-being of the patriarch has a special importance to Armenians in America, where he is respected and loved as the Primate who led the Eastern Diocese for 24 years.

Many current members of the Diocesan staff worked with him during that time, and hold Manoogian especially close to their hearts.

Barsamian led the noontime prayer service, alongside other participating clergy: Fr. Sooren Chinchian, Fr. Simeon Odabashian, Fr. Mardiros Chevian and Fr. Tateos Abdalian.

Diocesan staff members and several friends of the Diocese from the surrounding neighborhood in midtown Manhattan offered prayers for the patriarch.

Manoogian was originally admitted to Jerusalem’s Hadassah Medical Center two weeks ago, but was released after two days. He became critically ill and was re-admitted on January 19 and has been under observation by the medical staff for pneumonia. Members of the Jerusalem brotherhood, as well as family members, have been by the patriarch’s side throughout his hospitalization.

Barsamian is asking all pastors and parishioners to keep Manoogian in their thoughts and to pray for his health and recovery.



Archbishop Khajag Barsamian offered prayers at St. Vartan Cathedral for the health of Jerusalem Patriarch Torkom Manoogian.

Sacrist’s residence at the Armenian patriarchate. In November 2000, he was invited to be part of the entourage of Catholicos of All Armenians Karekin II during the catholicos’ visit to the Vatican to meet with the late Pope John Paul II.

The 106th Diocesan Assembly of the Armenian Church of America gave Kevork Atinizian and Nishan Atinizian in 2008 the Armenian of the Year Award for their long-time assistance to the Armenian Church and to many Armenian organizations in the US, Turkey and Armenia.

Having been an immigrant himself, and there-

fore understanding the difficulties of those who move to a new country, Kevork Atinizian and his wife have supported and assisted others newly arrived from Armenia, the Middle East and other countries to the United States.

“Providing financial assistance, housing and employment, or assisting them to find jobs is my way of expressing my gratitude to this country and giving back to my people,” said Atinizian.

Last October, Atinizian participated in the official opening of the reconstructed St. Giragos Armenian Church in Diyarbakir, Turkey.

Joe Zeronian to Lead the Armenian Missionary Association of America

PARAMUS, N.J. — In accordance with its policies and procedures, the Armenian Missionary Association of America (AMAA) has elected its new Board members, president and officers.

On October 15, 2011, at the Annual Meeting of the association, held in Los Angeles, Calif., the names of the following nine individuals were announced, who were elected by the general membership to serve on the Board of Directors as the Class of 2014: Bryan Bedrosian, Anita Buchakjian, Nazareth Darakjian, MD, Robert Hekemian Sr., Louis Kurkjian, Kenneth Kevorkian, Lori Muncherian, Harold Nahigian and Arsine Bedrosian Phillips, Esq.

The new Board members were installed on

Sunday, October 16, during the AMAA Annual Meeting Worship Service, which was held at the United Armenian Congregational Church of Los Angeles.

On December 3, the Board of Directors elected its officers and approved the Executive Committee as follows: Joseph Zeronian, EdD, president; Nazareth Darakjian, MD and Peter Kougasian, Esq., vice presidents; Thomas Momjian Esq., and Arsine Phillips, Esq., secretaries; Nurhan Helvacian, PhD, treasurer; Anita Buchakjian, assistant treasurer; Berjouhy Gulesserian, advisor; Levon Filian, executive director; Albert Momjian, Esq., solicitor, and Joyce Stein, representative of the Stephen Philibosian Foundation.



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New York METRO

500 Years of Armenian Printing Celebrated

NEW YORK — On Tuesday, January 24, a special presentation honoring the 500th anniversary of Armenian printing was held at the Diocesan Center in New York City. Archbishop Khajag Barsamian, Diocesan Primate, presided.

The program opened with remarks by Arto Khrimian, who introduced the master of ceremonies Hagop Vartivarian, chair of the Tekeyan Cultural Association of New York and New Jersey.

Vartivarian gave an overview of the history of Armenian printing, which dates to 1512 when Hakob Meghapart printed the first Armenian book in Venice. Vartivarian went on to discuss how printing came to Istanbul in 1567, and later to Armenia, India and other parts of the diaspora.

The evening's guest speaker was Zakaria Miltanoghlan, a columnist for Istanbul's *Agos* newspaper. An architect by training, Miltanoghlan has spent years studying the history of the Armenian press and is com-

in Turkish but with Armenian orthography. He noted that of the 250 Armenian newspapers once active in Turkey, only five survive today.

Krikor Markarian, an antiques collector, exhibited five books printed in Armenia and Cilicia.

Barsamian, a classmate of Miltanoghlan at Istanbul's Sourp Khach Tibrevank, spoke about the Armenian literary heritage and the role of the Armenian press in unifying the Armenian people across the diaspora.

"Through events like this we honor our culture and heritage," Barsamian said. "It is our responsibility to pass on our rich heritage to new generations so that it can flourish for centuries to come."

The Primate also expressed his appreciation to all the organization involved in Tuesday's event, and to Miltanoghlan for his presentation.

A reception followed the presentations.

The evening was hosted in collaboration



Archbishop Khajag Barsamian



Tekeyan Cultural Association of New York and New Jersey Chair Hagop Vartivarian



From left, special guest Zakaria Miltanoghlan of *Agos* newspaper, Archbishop Khajag Barsamian and Tekeyan Cultural Association of New York and New Jersey Chair Hagop Vartivarian

pleting a book on the subject.

Miltanoghlan focused his remarks on the Armenian printing press in the Ottoman Empire. He highlighted Ottoman Armenian publications in the fields of literature, politics, medicine, education and journalism, among others. Miltanoghlan also pointed out the accomplishments of Armenian publishers who issued publications printed in Turkish, as well as newspapers and pamphlets printed

with the following organizations: the Eastern Diocese's Krikor and Clara Zohrab Information Center; the Armenian-American Support and Educational Center; the Constantinople Armenian Relief Society Inc.; Esayan Getronagan Alumni, Inc.; the Gomidas Choir of the Diocese; Hamazkayin of New York; Tekeyan Cultural Association of New York and New Jersey and Tibrevank Alumni, Inc.

The Power of Mentoring

By Gerald Chertavian

NEW YORK (*New York Times*) — I was born in Lowell, Mass., where my father, a child of Armenian immigrants, was a dentist. He went to dental school on the G.I. Bill and later met my mother when she was working as a dental hygienist.

Starting at around age 13, I had a series of weekend and summer jobs — everything from scooping ice cream, making doughnuts and pumping gas to working at the local golf course, where I had to line up carts for the players by 5 a.m.

One of my high school teachers recruited my older brother, then me, to attend his alma mater, Bowdoin College, in Maine. I volunteered for the Big Brothers Big Sisters program and was matched with a local student. The experience opened my eyes to the joys of mentoring.

After I graduated with an economics degree in 1987, I moved to New York as a trainee at Chemical Bank. I signed up again as a Big



Gerald Chertavian

Brother, and was matched with David Heredia, a 10-year-old Dominican who lived with his mother and brothers on the Lower East Side.

I spent every Saturday with David, who had a gift for drawing, and I saw how hard it was for him to realize his dreams without outside support. That experience planted the idea that I

wanted to create a program to equip talented and motivated youth with support, training and job opportunities. I remain close to this day with David, who now has a career in animation.

I decided to get an MBA, and in my application to Harvard Business School, I outlined my vision for a youth program. That same year, I met my future wife, Kate, who is English, at a party.

We married in October 1992, after I graduated, and we moved to London. My first job was with an affinity credit card company. Then, a year later, I was a co-founder of a technology and software company, Conduit Communications. In 1999, we sold the company and the next year, we moved to the United States with our two children — a third was born in 2003 — so I could pursue my idea of helping low-income, at-risk youth.

In 2000, we started Year Up in Boston. It's been a family project. Kate, who has returned to her profession as an art dealer, volunteered in the office in the early years and she continues to mentor students. Many nights, we have young adults around our dinner table.

By July 2001, we had enrolled 22 young people for our yearlong program, which includes six months of training and six months in an internship. Our students, who are from 18 to 24 years old, learn middle-skill jobs like desktop and help-desk support.

With companies like Bain & Company and

Fidelity as partners, the first internships began in January 2002. Later that year, our program received its first big grant, \$1 million, and in May 2005, we expanded to Providence, RI. The next year, we opened an office in the Washington area, then in New York and, over time, seven more cities.

Despite our expansion, we have had our ups and downs. When the financial crisis hit, Wall Street firms were among our largest clients, so we had to scramble to help our interns find new jobs.

And sometimes our students "fire themselves." They sign a contract with us and expect consequences if they don't fulfill their end of the deal. We help them work on their confidence, voice and identity, but we are not in the business of accepting excuses. They are capable of owning their futures. We provide them a year to move up in their lives, and so far, about 5,000 have taken advantage of it.

For me, this is a matter of social justice. I believe that young adults deserve opportunity — and that the country needs to better utilize its human capital. This has been my dream for decades, and I feel lucky to be able to help it come true.

(Gerald Chertavian is the chief executive of Year Up, a training program for young adults. This first-person account, as told to Elizabeth Olson, appeared in the *New York Times* on January 21.).



Fresno Businessman’s Widow Told to Pay \$114.5m in Ponzi Scheme

By Pablo Lopez

FRESNO (*Fresno Bee*) – The widow of a Fresno businessman who committed suicide after authorities began investigating his alleged Ponzi scheme must pay \$114.5 million in damages to hundreds of victims throughout California, a judge has ruled.

Fresno County Superior Court Judge Donald S. Black reasoned that since Kathleen Otto benefited from her dead husband’s fraud, “she stood in the shoes of John Otto for the purpose of the lawsuit,” said Ara Jabagchourian, one of the attorneys who represented an estimated 800 California victims, including 250 to 350 in Fresno.

Before Black’s ruling, Jabagchourian said, there was little chance for the victims to recover their losses, even though a jury last summer found two of John Otto’s senior officers liable for \$47.22 million in damages. The two men said then they had little or no money left.

With Black’s ruling, the victims now have high hopes of seizing 70-year-old Kathleen Otto’s assets, which include a collection of expensive cars, a corporate jet, more than \$1.2 million in jewelry, a \$2-million home in Palm Desert and a membership to an exclusive country club, Jabagchourian said.

“This Ponzi scheme has destroyed the lives of many individuals in California including hundreds in Fresno, many of whom lost their entire life savings,” Jabagchourian said.

“The victims can rest assured that justice has been done and they can begin the process of being made as whole as possible from the loss-

es they have suffered,” he said.

But Kathleen Otto’s attorney, Marc Miles, said Tuesday that he plans to appeal Black’s ruling, partly because the jury in August found she had done nothing wrong.

The victims also are legally barred from collecting any judgment because they did not file a claim in Probate Court within a year of John Otto’s death in May 2009, Miles said.

John Otto founded HL Leasing at Shaw and Valentine avenues in northwest Fresno in 2001. Jabagchourian said that Otto and his employees for years had been fraudulently enticing investors to loan HL Leasing money by telling them that he was buying American Express lease agreements at a discount. In return, the investors would get monthly profits on their loans, Jabagchourian said.

But there were no legitimate lease agreements between HL Leasing and American Express, and therefore no collateral protection, he said.

The HL Leasing office closed and the alleged Ponzi scheme ended when Otto, 67, shot himself in the head on May 11, 2009, near his Palm Desert home.

During the trial, Black ruled that John Otto’s HL Leasing Inc., Heritage Pacific Leasing and Air Fred LLC defrauded the victims.

In the trial, Jabagchourian contended that Dan Ramirez, president of HL Leasing Inc., Andy Fernandez, the company’s chief financial officer, and Kathleen Otto knew about the scheme and also committed fraud, but kept it quiet to finance their lavish lifestyles.

Ramirez, for example, made nearly \$5 million between 2004 and 2008, Jabagchourian told the jury. Fernandez made as much as \$126,000

a year plus bonuses as chief financial officer, he said.

On August 5, a jury found Ramirez and Fernandez had aided and abetted the fraud and found them liable for \$47.22 million in damages, Jabagchourian said.

But the jury found Kathleen Otto not liable for damages because her actions didn’t cause financial harm to the victims. Because of

that, Jabagchourian predicted then that any payout to victims would be “pennies on the dollar.”

But Jabagchourian also appealed to the trial judge, arguing that as a key shareholder of her husband’s three companies, Kathleen Otto was liable for damages.

Black agreed in a written ruling issued last week but not made public until this week.

St. James Armenian Church Men’s Club

WATERTOWN – On Monday, February 6, Dr. Setrag Khoshafian, vice president of BPM Technology, Pegasystems Inc., will be the speaker at the dinner meeting of the St. James Armenian Church Men’s Club. The topic will be “2012: The Year of Doing More with Less.”

For the past 25 years, Khoshafian invented, marketed, designed and led the development of several BPM products, solutions, as well as advanced DBMS projects. Areas of expertise span BPM, case management and decision management. Previously at Savvion, as senior technologist, he invented and led the implementation of the world’s first Web Centric BPM product. He is the presenter, writer and lead author of 10 books. His latest book is titled, *BPM: The Next Wave for Business Applications*. He is also the author of *Service Oriented Enterprises*.

Khoshafian holds a PhD a computer science from the University of Wisconsin-Madison. He also holds an MSin mathematics from the American University of Beirut.

His blog can be found at <http://www.pegacomcommunity/pegablog/33684>. He is a BPM professor. For more information, visit <http://www.pegacomproducts/bpm/bpm-professor>. His Twitter account is @setrag.

The social hour starts with mezza at 6:15



Dr. Setrag Khoshafian

p.m. followed by a complete Armenian dinner at 7 p.m. Tickets are \$12 per person. The dinner meeting will be at St. James Armenian Church, Charles Mosesian Cultural & Youth Center, Keljik Hall 465 Mt. Auburn St. Ladies are welcome.

Carnegie Corporation Awards \$5 Million Grant To New York City’s Public Library Systems

NEW YORK – Vartan Gregorian, president of Carnegie Corporation of New York, this week announced a grant of \$5 million to the three New York City public library systems: the New York Public Library, Queens Library and Brooklyn Public Library. The grant will enhance the libraries’ ability to serve the public in general and the city’s 1.1 million public school children in particular.

The grant will help to enrich and expand the library systems’ resources for all New Yorkers, including hundreds of thousands of immigrants to the city, who depend on the library for free access to information and knowledge. It will also strengthen the long-standing collaboration between New York City’s public libraries and its public schools. The more than 200 branch libraries throughout the city’s five boroughs provide invaluable learning resources – not to mention access to computers and other technology – that offer educational opportunities to a diverse and ever-growing student population beyond what may be available to them in the classroom.

“Our city’s libraries are vital to learning and literacy, and they serve as anchors of our communities,” said Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg. “This generous gift is an investment in New York City’s intellectual capital, and it will allow our libraries to further their important work and continue serving as an invaluable resource for all New Yorkers.”

Today’s grant brings to approximately \$15 million the amount of funding provided by Carnegie Corporation to the city’s public library systems over the past 14 years.

Commenting on the special grant made during the Corporation’s Centennial year, Vartan Gregorian, who led the New York Public Library from 1981-1989, said, “New York City is truly the crossroads of the world. At this intersection of education, experience and learning stands the city’s great libraries, which provide equal and free access to knowledge for all. There is no greater expression of democracy than a library and no stronger signifier of the potential of our nation to succeed in today’s challenging times. Carnegie Corporation is proud to support New York City’s libraries, which embody Andrew Carnegie’s deep belief in the power of books

and learning to change the world.”

Further, said Gregorian, “It is essential that New York City strive for excellence in its public education and in its library systems. Democracy and excellence are not mutually exclusive; public institutions like our libraries can have both high visibility and high standards. The library’s cause is and must be everybody’s cause.”

“This grant is yet another dramatic step to keep alive the legacy of Andrew Carnegie and one of his greatest gifts, as well as the leadership legacy of Carnegie’s current president, Vartan Gregorian,” said NYPL President Anthony Marx. “This critical funding brings all of New York together behind a great goal – to ensure and project learning in our communities, a fundamental purpose of the library is as a bedrock of democracy.”

Commenting on the Corporation’s grant, Thomas W. Galante, president and CEO, Queens Library said, “Queens Library is an anchor of lifelong learning for children and adults, supporting schools and education in and out of the classroom. Future generations will be grateful for the Carnegie Corporation’s vision and support, as they have been since Andrew Carnegie created the Queens Library more than a century ago.”

Linda E. Johnson, president and CEO of Brooklyn Public Library, said, “Carnegie is synonymous with public libraries; the gift announced today will enable Brooklyn Public Library to enhance its educational and literacy programs to help all New Yorkers unlock the mystery and wonders of the worlds around them. It will help them build a foundation to succeed in school and in their careers and to contribute to society as citizens and leaders in every conceivable way.”

Carnegie Corporation of New York is a philanthropic foundation created by Andrew Carnegie in 1911 to do “real and permanent good in this world.”

The New York Public Library was created in 1895 with the consolidation of the private libraries of John Jacob Astor and James Lenox with the Samuel Jones Tilden Trust. The Library provides free and open access to its physical and electronic collections and information, as well as to its services.

The Armenian Mirror-Spectator

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Arts & Living

A Man Called Hrayr:

The Artist behind
The Camera

By Betty Apigian-Kessel

DETROIT — His name is Hrayr (Peter) Toukhanian, and he is the producer, director and editor of Muse Pictures, Inc., producers of film, digital video, HD video and DVD's. To locals he is the man behind the camera taping any number of events taking place in the Armenian community.

You may know Toukhanian as the person responsible for the making of "Assignment Berlin," an historical courtroom drama taking place in Berlin in 1921, when Soghomon Tehlirian, part of "Operation Nemesis," located the whereabouts of Talaat Pasha, one of the architects of the Armenian Genocide and gunned him down in the streets of Berlin in retaliation. Tehlirian was tried by an all-German jury and declared "not guilty." Toukhanian's late wife, Sona, was the film's scriptwriter.

"Assignment Berlin" was one of 20 films showcased at the Florence Film Festival. In 1982, then-Michigan Gov. William Milliken issued an executive declaration recognizing



Hrayr (Peter) Toukhanian

Toukhanian for the film and in honor of his status as Goodwill Emissary of the Michigan Film and Television Services Council.

"We were lucky to have the full cooperation from the Office of Michigan State Film Commission and the City of Detroit," Toukhanian says. "All the production steps were accomplished right here in the City of Detroit, including replicating the City of Berlin."

The Beirut-born filmmaker got the cinema bug by observing his photographer father in the studio; as a teenager he always dreamed of someday making movies. He graduated from the College Armenian N. Palandjian and later attended Syracuse University. He has been in Detroit since 1960, labeling his hometown as "probably the most friendly and warm."

He got an early start photographing the famous in the Middle East. He is seen with the see HRAYR, page 15



"King and Queen Ashtarimus," acrylic and mixed media on canvas

A Pastiche of Styles in Heritage, Human Rights

BEIRUT (*Daily Star*) — Arthur K. is a contemporary Lebanese-Armenian self-made painter. Born in 1945, he is a doctor by profession, as well as a poet and an essayist. In addition to working in multiple fields, in the last 20 years of his artistic career Arthur K. has gone by many names: Arthur, Nicolian, Nakoul and more recently Arthur K., which stands for Harout Kapriel Nicolian. In his latest exhibition at the Hamazkayin Gallery, "Heritage and Human Rights," the artist employs acrylic and print on canvas to form a series of collages that the introductory material states "express the artist's position and struggle against the greed and difficulties that produce human injustice and give commentary to his political views." Each canvas has the words "human rights" embossed across it, and each carries a different assemblage of script, old photos, newspaper and magazine cutouts.

"I employ [the] letterism of the Armenian alphabet to express my message," Arthur K. says. "Due to the Armenian massacre there is something of human rights in our alphabet, [that is] if there are human rights."

The dominant colors are black, red, blue and gold. Classical images stand juxtaposed with modern icons of famous and familiar faces such as Leonardo da Vinci, Giorgio de Chirico, Lucien Freud, Sergei Paradjanov and Bertolt Brecht. Violent and romantic images harmonize into an ascetically pleasing bricolage, whose intertextuality is obscure. This disturbs the observer trying to weave the disparate parts into a cohesive narrative that seems hauntingly absent.

One canvas has the late Italian tenor Luciano Pavarotti placed centrally, arms outstretched. "Pavarotti is a pillar of human rights because he is happy," he explained with a total sincerity that rendered all irony and sarcasm obsolete.

Intermingled with and interrupting these series of collages are a couple of canvases titled "Golden Houses," painted with mixed media on canvas, as well as a number of naive paintings of Phoenician icons.

"Golden Houses" depict old, red roofed Lebanese houses, checkered with brown deterioration and golden wisps that rise like smoke or thin branches into blossoming flames of golds, reds and blues. The windows are black and hollowed and the houses stand crowded together. "The houses are about memory. This exhibition is about lost heritage too."

A painting titled "King and Queen Ashtarimus" depicts simplistic icons of a male and female, and the use of acrylic and mixed media on canvas gives it an appearance of being on painted wood. Their naive faces emerge from a tapestry of colored squares and swirls. Soft blues are scarred by red paint that drips from mouth and skull.

Arthur K. has exhibited his works internationally through Noah's Ark Art Gallery in Beirut, New York, Sao Paulo, Las Vegas and Los Angeles and recently in the 12th International Art Exhibition in Beijing, China.

He says his greatest influence is the philosophy of the author Zekharia Sitchin, who wrote about the birth of civilization in the areas where the people of Sumer, Mari, Urartu and Phoenicia lived, and about a missing 12th planet in the sky. Sitchin was an Azerbaijani-born American author (1920-2010), whose books propose an explanation for human origins involving ancient astronauts.

Sitchin attributes the creation of ancient Sumerian culture to the Anunnaki, which he postulates was a race of extraterrestrials from a planet beyond Neptune called Nibiru. He believed this hypothetical planet of Nibiru to be in an elongated, elliptical orbit in the Earth's own solar system, asserting that Sumerian mythology reflects this view.

Arthur K.'s early works depict rocket-like structures with the concept of Mesopotamian, Phoenician and Egyptian figurines. "If you look at Baalbek, the Pyramids and other ancient temples you can see how much more evolved they were. Even ... in England today you don't know how Stonehenge was built."

A dark image of Picasso with black hollow eyes stares out from one canvas. Beneath it the word "Dolly" is inscribed across an image of a semi-naked Indian man at work. The artist has embossed the word "pollution" into Picasso's brain "to see HERITAGE, page 15

Sixth Annual Hudson Jazz Workshop

NEW YORK — Hudson Jazzworks (HJW), Inc. presents the sixth Annual Hudson Jazz Workshop Thursday to Sunday, August 9-12, and "Meet the Artists" Symposium and Concert at the Hudson Opera House on Sunday, August 12 at 3 p.m. The workshop is limited to 10 participants. They offer a weekend immersion in jazz improvisation and composition in a supportive atmosphere conducive to intensive study and mutual encouragement.

The special guest artist/clinician this year is the renowned vibraphonist Joe Locke. Past guests have included saxophonist David Liebman, pianist Jim McNeely and guitarist Vic Juris.

The guest clinic, symposium and concert are all open to the public.

This year HJW has two new academic partnerships with the Manhattan School of Music and the Conservatory of Amsterdam, as well as their continuing partner, The Rhythmic Music Conservatory (Denmark). Each school will send one musician to HJW on scholarship. In addition, there is the new Borgani-HJW Scholarship, courtesy of a new sponsor, Borgani Saxophones (Italy), to a talented saxophonist.

Another priority is to strengthen the HJW Scholarship Fund. For the second consecutive year, Hudson Jazzworks, Inc. has been awarded a 2012 grant from the Decentralization Program of the New York State Council on the Arts, administered in Columbia County by the Columbia County Council on the Arts through the Twin Cities Cultural Fund. They also enjoy the support of The Bank of Greene County Charitable Foundation, Ton Kooiman Woodwind Ergonomics and corporate and private sponsors.

Jazz is "America's National Treasure" (as declared by US Congress) and a locally-underserved art form in the Hudson Valley region. Through their work, they hope to raise jazz awareness in each neighborhood and, as the message reverberates, throughout the world.

Hudson Jazzworks, Inc. is a 501(c)3 not-for-profit organization.

On the board of Hudson Jazzworks, Inc. are Armen Donelian, Marc Mommaas and Rose Caldwell.

For more information, visit <http://www.hudsonjazzworks.org>.



Armen Donelian



ARTS & LIVING

Atom Egoyan Returns to Theater with 'Cruel and Tender'

TORONTO (CBC News) — For his latest project, the stars aligned for Atom Egoyan, who is directing a new production of Martin Crimp's drama, "Cruel and Tender" in Toronto.

Thanks to a generous pocket of time between films, the Toronto director got the chance to mount the "brilliant" British playwright's work for the Canadian Stage Company. It gave him the opportunity to return to his theatre roots and, though he has previously collaborated with his wife — actress Arsinée Khanjian — on film, it is the first time the couple has teamed up on a stage production.

"This is a perfect play. When I read it, I just thought 'This is something we can do together and this is an incredible opportunity,'" Egoyan said.

"Cruel and Tender," a taut family drama set against war and genocide — is "a really amazing reinvention" of the Greek tragedy *The Women of Trachis* by Sophocles, he said.



Atom Egoyan, left, in rehearsal for *Cruel and Tender* with Arsinée Khanjian and Jeff Lillico

"It is provocative. It's really engaging. It's emotional. It's dealing with family dynamics, but it's also setting that against some-

thing that has a much broader international perspective."

Egoyan started his career as a playwright

and recalled that Toronto's strong theatre scene of the late 1970s and early 1980s was one of the key things that drew him to the city. Though best known as the Oscar-nominated filmmaker behind "Exotica," "The Sweet Hereafter," "Ararat" and "Chloe," he has occasionally found time to dabble in other forms, from the TV movie "Gross Misconduct" to a production of Samuel Beckett's "Eh Joe" to the opera "Salome" (which he will revive with the Canadian Opera Company next season).

The time preparing "Cruel and Tender" has provided a welcome reminder of the communal nature of theatre — a stark difference from the disjointed, sometimes lonely nature of directing films, he said.

"What you're seeing on the stage is that incredible alchemy that exists between the performer and the audience. I'm there to facilitate it," he said.

"Honestly, it's not as fun, it's just not as pleasurable to shoot a film as it is to create a play."

Review: Tigran Hamasyan Has Something Urgent to Say

By Ivan Hewett

LONDON — Being a virtuoso art, jazz produces prodigies just as miraculous as those in classical music. The Armenian pianist Tigran Hamasyan is one of them. At the age of 3, he was picking out his father's favorite rock songs at the piano and at 9 had moved on to his uncle's passion for Miles Davis and Duke Ellington. By the age of 19, he had moved with his family to California, won the Thelonious Monk competition and inspired awe in senior pianists such as Chick Corea.

As is often the way, this musical emigre has found that distance lends an unexpected enchantment to his native roots. You could feel them pulling right from the start of this gig, which drew on material from his recent album, "A Fable." Hamasyan has become fascinated by the folk music of Armenia, which in his hands sounds more Balkan than Near Eastern, turning round and round a plangent modal note with folk-like obsessiveness.

Hamasyan is a slight, narrow-shouldered, darkly intense figure, who often sings as he bends low over the keyboard. Much of the time he focuses on the mid-range of the piano, as if unconsciously echoing the limitations of folk



Tigran Hamasyan

instruments. Then he remembers he is actually playing the piano and the hands shoot away into Bud-Powell like flares of virtuosity or freeze on sudden moments of luminous still-

ness where the piano rings like a bell.

This evocation of a distance from something longed-for is sharpened by his subtle harmonic sense, which often gestures towards Chopin's mazurka-melancholy and Bartok's folk arrangements. He loves to suck the marrow from a particular interval, placing it in different contexts to reveal its many implications. The sense of fixity this brings is hard to escape.

Hamasyan was some minutes into *My Prince Will Come* before he found a jazz-like flexibility.

At moments like this it becomes clear that Hamasyan does have a real jazz sensibility after all, something, which until that point, you

might have doubted (as some of the disgruntled jazz fans here clearly did). In his efforts to catch something wild he sometimes pushes those circling folkish patterns too far, and the awkward join between the two halves of his musical persona sometimes shows.

But the occasional discomforts are a price well worth paying. There are many brilliant and perfectly finished young jazz pianists around, but Hamasyan stands out because he has something important and urgent to say.

"A Fable" is out now on Verve. He appears at St. George's, Bristol, on March 1.

(This review appeared in the January 30 issue of *The Telegraph*.)

Photographer Hrair 'Hawk' Khatcherian to Speak at ALMA



Photographer Hrair "Hawk" Khatcherian

WATERTOWN, Mass. — On Sunday, February 12, at 2 p.m., Canadian-Armenian photographer Hrair "Hawk" Khatcherian will give an illustrated presentation at the Armenian Library and Museum of America (ALMA) on his latest book, *Yergir 2 Yergir* (2011), a journey through Western Armenia, today considered part of Turkey. A globetrotter and a pilgrim, Khatcherian dedicated himself to photographing the Armenian heritage after surviving lung cancer in 1993. He has been to 44 countries in the last 17 years, documenting Armenian churches around the world.

A renowned photographer, he has published several books of photography, including *Artsakh: a Photographic Journey* (1997), *Karabagh: 100 Photos* (2002), *Yergir: Pilgrimage Through Western Armenia 1997-2002* (2004) and *Armenian Ornamental Art* (2010, in collaboration with Armen Kyurkchyan).

All attendants are invited to the closing reception of Martin Barooshian's paintings exhibit that will take place after Khatcherian's talk.

Admission to the lecture, which will take place at the third floor gallery, is free and open to the public. A reception will follow.

For directions and more information about the program and current exhibits on display, visit www.almainc.org.

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ARTS & LIVING

Tekeyan Sponsors Michigan Premiere Screening of ‘Gariné’

By Lucy Ardash

BLOOMFIELD, Mich. — Wonderful music, comedy and satire delighted the audience at Michigan’s premiere screening of Dikran Tchouhadjian’s “Gariné” opera buffo at the capacity-filled auditorium of the Bloomfield Township Library on January 24. Sponsored by the Tekeyan Cultural Association, the highly-anticipated event was received with enthusiasm. Originally called “Leblebiji Hor Hor Agha,” the opera was created in 1875 in Turkish and later translated into Armenian and finally into Greek, French, Russian and German. The new adaptation was the massive undertaking of artistic director and actor, Gerald Papasian, who rewrote the entire libretto in Western Armenian and translated it into French and English for modern audiences. The stage production of “Gariné” premiered in Paris last year to great critical acclaim, the final dress rehearsal of which

was filmed and completed with English subtitles. Papasian, already well-known to Michigan theater goers, was on hand to outline the new story line. Also present was Dr. David DiChiera, general director of the Michigan Opera Theatre, with whom Papasian collaborated during the North American premiere of “Anoush” opera in 1981 and again in 2001. Following the film, a gala afterglow reception at Hogan’s Restaurant enabled guests to toast Papasian on his accomplishments. Karen DiChiera, director of community programs of the Michigan Opera Theatre, congratulated Papasian on the modern version of the opera because of its international flavor and universal appeal. Papasian was visibly moved by the accolades accorded him and spoke briefly of the difficulties encountered since Tchouhadjian’s original score had been lost. He recently discovered orchestrated scores in Paris, which he pieced together and after researching various versions of the opera, Papasian was able to make revisions for a new script.



From left, Pam Coultis, Karen DiChiera, Gerald Papasian and Gayene Khachadourian at the afterglow



Gerald Papasian explains how he discovered the Tchouhadjian work.

A Man Called Hrayr: The Artist Behind the Camera

HRAYR, from page 13
early president of Lebanon, Camille Chamoun, discussing the president’s new Bell and Howell camera. He is being congratulated by Prime Minister Sami Solh for his documentary on Lebanon. Another photo shows Toukhanian at the first meeting of King Saud of Saudi Arabia and the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan’s King Hussein. He has traveled the world extensively, camera in hand. The *American Cinematographer* magazine called him a “highly original filmmaker.” *Vue Magazine* called him a “maestro.” Detroiters call him indispensable. A proud *Vanetzi*, Toukhanian has served as the compatriotic association’s national president and currently serves on its executive board as corresponding secretary. He has over 1,000 productions to his credit and 34 awards, including the coveted Gold Medal award of New York International Film Festival for his “Heart of a Nation” documentary. His Muse Pictures produces industrial training, promotional, marketing, advertising, public relations, educational and documentary films. Toukhanian has been a member of the Adcraft Club of Detroit — a marketing and advertising club, the oldest in the nation — for over 30 years and is currently their official videographer.

He expresses a great deal of respect for his Beirut teachers Levon Shant, the first principal of the Jemaran; Moushegh Ishkhan, the great writer; Simon Vratzian and his English teacher Antoine Keheyann. For more information about Toukhanian, visit www.vasbouragan.com. He is the webmaster. Or e-mail him at hlayr@musepictures.com. It will be well worth your time. “In the diaspora, we Armenians have to work very hard to keep our nationality and culture,” he told me. “The only way an Armenian can remain as such is in his own country, Armenia.”

A Pastiche of Styles in Heritage, Human Rights

HERITAGE, from page 13
show that the consciousnesses of geniuses are deformed today.” “Human Rights and Heritage” is an interesting commentary on the devolution of our species from ancient times to the present. The artist’s work is a pastiche of styles from three different epochs: naive icons, expressionism and postmodernist bricolage. The bricolage collages, by their very nature, present a blank parody of their own self-reflexivity and textual references and render the political message of human rights null and void. Rather than undermine the artist’s political views, however, this serves to emphasize his view of our current degradation, juxtaposed with the more idealized epochs of our lost heritage. “Heritage and Human Rights” is at the Hamazkayin Gallery in Bourj Hammoud’s Shaghzyan Center until February. 6.

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ARTS & LIVING

In Focus: Jim Kazanjian

LOS ANGELES (*Archinect*) – In Focus is *Archinect's* series of features dedicated to profiling the photographers who help make the work of architects look that much better. What has attracted them to architecture? How do they work? What type of equipment do they use? What do they think about see-

JK: My technique could be considered “hyper-collage.” I cobble together pieces from photographs found online and feed them into Photoshop. Through a palimpsest-like layering process of adding and subtracting, I eventually merge these various parts together. I am basically manipulating and assembling a

disparate array of multiple photographs to produce a single homogenized image. Right now, I am using around 50 photos to create one of my pieces.

In the past, I have done commercial work (as a CGI artist) on projects for Nike, Adidas, Hewlett-Packard, NASA, HBO, NBC, CBS and Intel. My current body of images, which you see here, is strictly “non-client.”

Archinect: Do you mostly work in a specific region? What is your travel schedule like?

JK: Everything is done in the computer. I never have to

leave the studio.

Archinect: What is your goal when capturing buildings in photographs?

JK: With my work, I am using architecture as a phenomenological device to reinforce and distort the viewer’s perception of time and space. This results in a visual tension which I feel is key to creating a successful image.

Archinect: What are your thoughts about including people in your photos? Is it important to photograph a building in use, or by itself?



untitled, (c) Jim Kazanjian



untitled (low tide), 2009 (c) Jim Kazanjian

JK: My focus is on the space inside the photograph. It is all about the ambiance and getting it to resonate. I think once you introduce people, they have the potential to become “characters.” The ambiance then becomes secondary, as it gives way to the characters’ narrative.

Archinect: What are your favorite pieces of equipment?

JK: Photoshop. It is the best. I give Adobe credit for not screwing it up after all these years.

Archinect: Do you work alone?

JK: Always.

Archinect: How do you feel about seeing your photographs on blogs and websites?

JK: I think it’s great. Most people will actually credit my work and even link back to my



Jim Kazanjian

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.

NEW JERSEY

FEBRUARY 11 – St. Leon Armenian School Valentine Dinner Dance at St. Leon Abajian Hall at 7 p.m. Entertainment by DJ Shant. BYOB. Reservations a must by February 4: Barbara Hovsepian (973) 839-1417. Tickets, \$35 per person; \$15, for children 16 and under. Table of 10, \$300.

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.

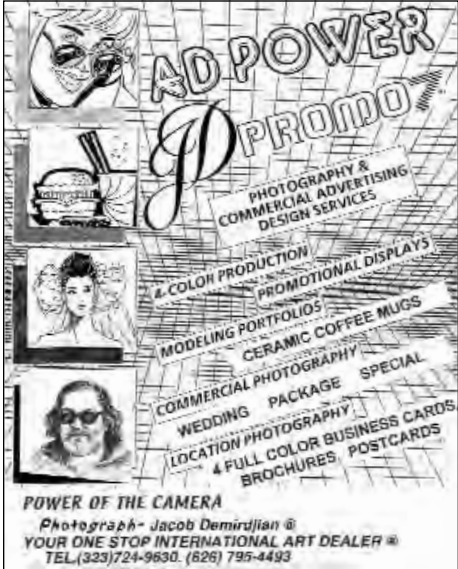
MAY 19, 2012 – HMADS Gala Dinner Dance. Details to follow, June 25. HMADS 30th Commencement Exercise at 8 p.m., Kalustyan Hall.



On February 11, St. Leon Armenian School will have their Valentine Dinner Dance at Abajian Hall at 7 p.m., at the church, pictured here, in Fair Lawn, NJ. Entertainment will be provided by DJ Shant. Reservations must be made by February 4. For reservations, contact Barbara Hovsepian (973) 839-1417. Tickets are \$35 per person; \$15, for children 16 and under.

site. The majority of my print sales are the result of someone finding the work on a blog and tracing it back to my gallery.

Jim Kazanjian received his MFA from the Art Center College of Design in 1992. His BFA was completed at the Kansas City Art Institute in 1990. He has worked professionally as a commercial CGI artist for the past 18 years in television and game production. He currently lives in Portland, Ore.





COMMENTARY

COMMENTARY

Profiling 'Righteous Turks'

By Edmond Y. Azadian

The Jews have come up with the definition of the "Righteous Gentile" to honor those non-Jews who have saved Jews during the Holocaust. One such towering person was Raoul Wallenberg, a Swedish humanitarian, stationed at the Swedish embassy in Hungary, who extended protection to hundreds of thousands of Jews marked to be dispatched to the concentration camps in Auschwitz, and thus he saved tens of thousands among them.

He became the pre-eminent "Righteous Gentile," who ended his life in a Soviet concentration camp, after being captured by the Soviet troops occupying Hungary at the end of World War II. By the way, 2012 marks the centennial of Wallenberg's birth, which is being celebrated worldwide.

Has the time arrived for Armenians to profile "Righteous Turks" who have helped some Armenians to survive during the Genocide? Is it time to honor Turkish scholars, journalists and political activists who have been struggling courageously for the recognition of the Armenian Genocide by Turkey?

Many apologists and some credulous Armenians rush to the conclusion that Armenians have to recognize these acts of courage by individual Turks.

The Genocide was planned to devastate the Armenian nation, to scatter the survivors around the world and desecrate its historic homeland. After almost a century, Armenia's survival remains a big question mark and Turkey's continual blockade is nothing but its age-old genocidal policy implemented by successive regimes in Turkey.

Humanitarian acts were rather the exception than the rule, as the entire Turkish nation participated in the perpetration of the Genocide motivated by greed.

Therefore, only a careful analysis of history, of Armenian-Turkish relations may provide the answer whether it is time to profile the "Righteous Turk" while we are still licking our wounds as a nation.

Turkish society is undergoing a tremendous transformation for its own good. The Armenian Genocide has become a topic of national discourse and many publications are promoting the awareness of bloody Turkish history. The emergence of scholars and journalists — seeking the objective truth in Armenian-Turkish relations — have become a compelling reason for Armenians to revise their views of Turks and Turkey.

Taner Akçam was the first Turkish historian to challenge the government-sanctioned official view of the Armenian Genocide in many of his books, especially, A Shameful Act, and recently compiling and translating with Vahakn Dadrian, a seminal legal documentation titled Judgment at Istanbul, on the major indictments and verdicts of the Turkish military tribunals on the crimes perpetrated against the Armenians during World War I. Kemal Yalcin published two volumes interviewing the survivors and their families. Muge Goçek co-authored with Prof. Ronald Grigor Suny, A Question of Genocide.

Journalist Hassan Jemal, grandson of Jemal Pasha made a visit to the Genocide Memorial in Armenia. Halil Berkay, Murat Belge and many scholars have published authoritative volumes, undermining Yusuf Halacoglu's official view (i.e. distortion) of the Genocide. Publisher Recep Zarakolu is still in jail for having published incriminating books on the Genocide, including Turkish translations by Dadrian and Akçam.

Scholars aside, Kemal Yalcin and Hassan Jemal were reaching out to the Armenians on a human level to build bridges of understanding between the two nations at odds.

Most recently, Ahmet Altan has joined the chorus. Altan, the editor of the liberal paper, Taraf, made an emotional plea during an appearance in Boston: "Something has changed in Turkey and I hope and wish that Turkey would accept and apologize for what happened" he appealed to his mostly Armenian audience, and he continued: "Turks have hearts and consciences, believe me... If we confess our great sin, we could become a better race, a better people."

The thrust of this entire movement is in the last sentence.

Turkey and the Turks would like to join the civilized family of nations, and in order to achieve that goal they have to face their history. And in this process Armenians become the unintended beneficiary, because the major concern of the patriotic Turks is to cleanse their history from its bloody past.

Armenian-Turkish relations have been very complex and continue to be so. There have been many cycles, when relations seemed to be improving but they have also deteriorated precipitously, with devastating results. To begin with, the Ottoman constitution of 1876, engineered by Mithad Pasha, was intended to limit Sultan Abdulhamid II's absolute rule. But it lasted only two years, and Mithad Pasha became its sacrificial lamb, being executed by the Sultan.

For many years the Armenian National Constitution was in the works through the efforts of Krikor Odian. It was adopted in 1860 and was ratified by the Sultan in 1863. The Armenian community (*millet*) was governed by that constitution until 1914, but the rights conceded by the Superior Port did not prevent Sultan Abdulhamid from organizing the massacres of 1894-96, claiming 300,000 Armenian lives.

The period from 1908 to 1914 seemed an idyllic period in Armenian-Turkish relations, marred only by the Adana massacres of 1909. Armenian culture flourished and the Ittihadist government encouraged Armenian representatives to be elected to the parliament, deceiving them into surrendering their arms. The motto of the day was, "We are all Ottomans." The only political realist was General Antranik, who insisted that "Turks cannot be trusted" and he had a fall-out with the Dashnak party. And, indeed, Talaat Pasha, after spending an intimate evening dinner with the parliamentarian Krikor Zohrab, the next day had sent him on his death march with 250 prominent Armenian intellectuals.

Mustafa Kemal began his *Milli* movement, enlisting many Ittihadist criminals in his government and became the father of modern Turkish Republic. Since the founding of the Republic in 1923, when Ataturk was hailed as a reformer both by the West and the East, many instances of mass killing have occurred. In 1937 the Kurds in the city of Dersim were massacred, the Armenian community in the country was decimated and the minorities that were not out-and-out killed, saw their communities crushed under the wealth tax. The 1960s enjoyed some liberalization, but the price was paid by its architect Adnan Menderes on the gallows, while his friend and only Armenian member of the Turkish parliament, Mugurdich Shellefian, ended his life in exile.

Gen. Kenan Evren staged a coup in 1980 executing all the politicians who pretended to introduce democracy and liberalism in Turkey.

Today, Erdogan's rise to power has brought prominence to Turkey, but its policies are contradictory, complex and full of duplicity. While shedding tears for Gaza victims, Erdogan's government continues murdering Kurds. While blaming France for muzzling freedom of speech for making denial of the Armenian Genocide a punishable offense, he maintains Article 301 of the penal code, keeping more than 100 journalists in jail.

These are certainly tremendous changes in Turkey.

That is what Hrant Dink wanted the world to believe but his mission was cut short by an assassin's bullet.

In response to Mr. Altan's insistence that the Turks also have a heart, I have to offer my mother's eyewitness story: there was a blind Turkish beggar at the entrance of the Adana Armenian Church. The parishioners always gave food and money in return for the blessings of the blind beggar. But during the 1909 Adana Massacres, this blind beggar was pleading the murderers to bring one favour to him, so that he could slit his throat and gain entry to heaven. My mother was not a statesman, but her story corroborates General Antranik's policy.

Turkey has certainly undergone a transformation. The journalists, scholars, activists are sincere in their struggle to have the Armenian Genocide recognized, but this time, that drive remains still self serving.

As to the question of whether we should begin honoring "Righteous Turks," the answer is: only time will tell. As they say, the proof of the pudding is in its eating.

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COMMENTARY

The Minority Report of the Republic

By Ayse Hur

The verdict reached in the trial of Hrant Dink's murder did not surprise me. Because I know the depth of the roots and the breadth of the branches of the enmity towards the non-Muslims in this country, I also can imagine the outcome of the appeal process undertaken by the party in power to calm the reaction to the verdict. Because I am aware of how The Justice and Progress Party (AKP) is gradually adopting an Ergenekon mentality and I know how the Appeals Court decided the cases of Pinar Selek, Ugur Kaymaz, Baskin Oran and many others. This week, I will summarize the crimes committed by the state throughout the Republican period so that we can realize how difficult the situation is and be prepared.

*March 16, 1923. In his speech to the businessmen in Adana, Mustapha Kemal said "The country at the end remained in the hands of its true owners. The Armenians and the others have no rights here. These fertile lands are wholly Turkish." Thus, the policy of the Republic towards the minorities was framed.

*June 1923. The Jewish, Armenian and Greek officials were fired and replaced by Muslims. The free travel of non-Muslims in Anatolia was curtailed. This decision was such that because of the curtailment many people could not return to their homes and had to remain where they were at the time. If this wasn't enough the return of Jews to Palestine was prohibited.

*January 1924. A law was enacted concerning pharmacists and provided that only a Turk could start a pharmacy business.

*March 3 1924. A law was enacted concerning unification of education and about 40 French and Italian schools were closed. Restrictions were placed on the repair, enlargement or construction of new minority schools. The school curricula became subject to the control of the National Education Ministry.

*April 3, 1924. In accordance with the law concerning the legal profession, 960 lawyers were evaluated for their morality, and the work permits of 460 lawyers were revoked. As a result 57 percent of the Jewish lawyers and three-fourths of the Greek and Armenian lawyers lost their jobs.

*Night of January 29, 1925. Constantinos Araboghlu, who had been elected the Greek Patriarch at Fener, was put on a train and sent to Salonica in Greece. His crime was being a person disliked by the government. Greece considered this action a violation of the Lausanne Treaty and appealed to The Hague Court of Justice and the League of the Nations. However it withdrew its suit when Turkey threatened to "expel the Patriarchate from Turkey" and the dispute was covered up by pretending that "the Patriarch had resigned on his own volition."

*April 22, 1926. As a result of the law ordering the exclusive use of the Turkish language in commercial correspondence, non-Muslims who had not mastered the written Turkish language began to be discharged. Five thousand Greeks lost their jobs because of it.

*February 17, 1926. After the passage of the Civil Law, the Armenian, Jewish and Greek communities, one after the other, were forced to relinquish the rights recognized for them by the Lausanne Treaty.

*August 1, 1926. It was declared that the State has the right to confiscate all properties acquired by non-Muslims prior to August 23, 1924, the date the Lausanne Peace Treaty took effect.

* August 17, 1927. A 22-year-old Jewish girl named Elza Niyego, was murdered by Osman Ratip Bey, a married man and a grandfather, who had fallen in love with her and had harassed her for many years. When the Jewish community, seeing that the State was trying to cover up the incident, dared for once to raise its voice, an intensive campaign started in the newspapers against the Jews. Some Jews were taken to court on excuse of "insulting Turkishness."

* January 13, 1928. A group of law students in Istanbul University, to curry favor with the government, made a decision to hang posters in ferries, street cars and other public transports

stating "Countryman, Speak Turkish." In the newspapers of the period there were complaints about "So-called countrymen" who could not tolerate the "Speak Turkish" call. From this date on, many non-Muslims were taken to court for insulting Turkishness by not complying with the requirements of the campaign.

* April 11, 1928. The practice of medicine was given exclusively to the "Turks" by a law passed on this date. Therefore, non-Muslims could no longer be doctors.

*September 1929. The Treasury decided to tax Jewish schools, the Ahayim Hospital and the Ortakoy Orphanage as commercial institutions for the grants and donations they received. The enforcement was retroactive to the beginning of 1925. The Chief Rabbinate was foreclosed for inability to pay the high taxes. The government continued its oppression and monetary contributions were closely watched.

*1929-1930. In this period 6,737 Armenians were forced to emigrate to Syria.

* September 18, 1930. The Minister of Justice, Mahmut Esat Bozkurt, voiced his famous aphorism in the Highlands of Odemis: "My thought and my belief is that this land itself is Turkish. Those that are not real Turks have only one right in the Turkish homeland, to be servants, to be slaves."

* October 1930. During the municipal elections, when the Free Republican Party (SCF) placed the names of six Greeks, four Armenians and three Jews on the ballot, the ruling Republican People's Party (CHF) reacted and began a powerful anti-non-Muslim campaign, forcing SCF to abolish itself 99 days after its formation. However, anger towards non-Muslims did not diminish.

*June 11, 1932. On this date a law came into force that restricted some professions and services to Turkish citizens only, forbidding the participation of foreigners in these occupations. The law was directed against Greeks with foreign citizenship engaged in free enterprise, small businesses and street vendors.

* November 1932. All Jews in Smyrna were made to sign a declaration that promised that they would speak Turkish and adopt Turkish culture. The Jews of Bursa, Kirklareli, Edirne, Adana, Diyarbakir and Adana followed suit.

*1933. The Assyrian Patriarchate in Mardin, unable to suffer the open and secret oppressions the Assyrians were subjected to and in accordance with the "wishes of the community," because of the "necessity recognized" and "temporarily" moved to Humus in Syria. However, its return never became possible.

* June 14, 1934. The Law of Resettlement divided the nation to three classes. Those having "Turkish culture and speaking Turkish," those having "Turkish culture but not speaking" (The Kurds) and those "Not of Turkish culture and not speaking Turkish" (non-Muslims and others). Accordingly, the Greeks and Armenians of Anatolia were exiled to regions that were deemed suitable for them.

* June 21 to July 4, 1934. Mobs incited by the racist writings of anti-Semitic authors like Cevat Rifat Atilhan and Nihal Atsiz, attacked Jews in Canakkale, Gelibolu, Edirne, Kirklareli, Luleburgaz and Babaeski. The homes and businesses of the Jews were looted, the women were raped and a rabbi was killed. The events, which were understood to be orchestrated by the Thracian branch of CHF, resulted in the hasty emigration of 15,000 Jews to other cities and countries to save their lives, leaving behind their goods and properties. When calm returned, the results became evident. According to a report prepared by CHF, of the 15,000 Jews living in Thrace and Canakkale, 3,000 had moved to Istanbul, many had lost their possessions because of looting or selling for next to nothing.

* July 24, 1937. According to a notice published in Cumhuriyet newspaper, one of the requirements for the students applying to the Military Veterinary School was to be from the "Turkish Race."

* September 6, 1938. Again in Cumhuriyet newspaper, teachers applying to the flight school in the Turkish Bird Institution, in the refined wording of the notice, had to be of "Turkish Ancestry."

*August 1938. The Government decreed that "Jews who had been subjected to living and travel restrictions in the countries where they were citizens, were prohibited from entering and living in Turkey no matter what their religion was at present." Twenty-six Jews working in the Anatolia Agency, the only official news agency in the country, were fired. In the newspapers and magazines, articles and cartoons began to appear, ascribing the difficulties facing the nation to the minorities and in particular to the Jews.

*1938-39. With the approaching threat of war, fearing that they would threaten national security, non-Muslims living in the rural areas of Anatolia were moved to the cities. Those who could not adapt to city living were obliged to emigrate from the country.

*July 1939. During the annexation of Hatay to Turkey, the Armenians were subjected to oppression and they emigrated to Syria.

*August 8, 1939. In transporting 860 Jews from various places in Europe to Palestine, the ship "Parita" ran into trouble and took refuge in Smyrna. Despite the cries of the passengers "kill us but don't send us back," the ship was escorted by two police crafts out from the harbor. As the ship was being led away, Ulus newspaper, which was friendly with CHP, ran a headline, "The crazy Jews left Smyrna"

*December 28, 1939. On hearing about a major earthquake in Erzincan, which had killed tens of thousands of people, the Jews of Tel Aviv, Haifa, Buenos Aires, New York, Geneva, Cairo and Alexandria sent money and clothing to Turkey. However, articles and cartoons appeared in Turkish newspapers mocking the humanitarian initiative of the Jews and sought hidden evil intentions behind their act.

*December 12, 1940. The ship, Salvador, nicknamed the "floating coffin," with a total capacity of 40 passengers, took 342 Jewish immigrants from the Costanta Harbor in Romania to Istanbul. Unable to sail even a mile, it was forced by Turkish authorities to continue sailing to its destination. The end was tragic. On January 13, 219 dead were recovered from the wreck of the Salvador which was caught in a fierce storm in the open sea near Silivri.

*April 22, 1941. Gendarmes appeared on that date to escort 12,000 non-Muslims to camps in swamps infected with mosquitoes and malaria, to face lack of drinking water, full of humidity, mud and oppressive heat. The voice of sergeants and officers crying "Forget Istanbul" was engraved in the memory of the minority population who lived through this period. These "soldiers" named the "20 anniversaries group" were put to hard labor to dig tunnels in Zonguldak, to build the "Youth Park" in Ankara and to break stones for building roads in Afion, Karabuk, Konya and Kutahya. They were finally discharged on July 27, 1942.

*December 15, 1941 The ship Struma, with 769 Romanian Jews aboard left Costanta Harbor in Romania for Palestine to escape Nazi persecution. Not permitted by the authorities to disembark in Istanbul, the ship laid in anchor at Sarayburnu for two-and-a-half months, with the passengers struggling with death and disease. The ship was forced back to the Black Sea, 23 miles off the coast. With no power, fuel, food, water or medicine, left to its fate, Struma was sunk on February 24, 1942 by an unidentified submarine. Only one person survived the tragedy. The attitude shown to the refugee ships like, Parita, Salvador and Struma was also a message to the Turkish Jewry.

*November 11, 1942. The government of Sukru Saracoglu, to overcome the financial difficulties that had arisen because of the war, instituted the Wealth Tax. Eighty-seven percent of the taxpayers were non-Muslims. The Armenian merchants were taxed for 232 percent of their total capital, the Jews for 179 percent, Greeks for 156 percent and Muslim Turks for less than 5 percent. Those unable to pay were sent to camps in Askale, Sivrihisar and Karanlikdere. During the "Wealth Tax Tragedy," which lasted until March 1944, some lost their possessions, some their lives, some their honor and some their faith in Turkey.

*1946. For the first time, it was permitted to allow non-Muslim university graduates to serve in the military as reserve officers. Before this time venue had been closed to them. However, ever since there has been no non-Muslim high rank officer in the Turkish Armed Forces.

*1946. From the "Minority Report" of the 9th Bureau of the Republican Peoples Party (CHP): "We must take serious measures especially against Greeks. On this matter only one thing can be said: 'On the 500th year anniversary of the conquest of Istanbul, not one Greek should remain in this city.'" According to the report, before solving this problem, the remaining areas of Anatolia must be purged of non-Muslims.

*1948. When Jews wanted to emigrate to the newly-founded State of Israel and Armenians wanted to emigrate to the Armenian Soviet Socialist Republic. The state which had for years done everything in its power to make them leave, had now the state-controlled press publish articles calling those wanting to leave "traitors."

*September 6-7, 1955. "To strengthen the hand" of Turkey in the upcoming tripartite conference in London concerning Cyprus, a looting action was organized directed primarily to the Greeks of Istanbul. However, the event spread also to Smyrna, Adana, Trabzon and other population centers and not only the Greeks but also the Armenians and the Jews got their share of the attacks. According to some sources, three see MINORITIES, page 20

LETTERS

Following Threads of Grammar in Artsakh

To the Editor:

There was an article in last week's *Mirror-Spectator* that, among other things, discussed George Bournoutian's recent detailing of the Armenians' claim to pre-Soviet Karabagh. Bournoutian, now certainly the most productive and original scholar working on the history of Armenia from the 17th through the 19th centuries, rediscovered the Russian bureaucratic records detailing the Armenian habitation of the Karabagh region through those centuries. Clearly, and as a surprise to no one, the Armenians were the principal population of the region. But we also have, from a source not mentioned by the Russians, solid evidence for Armenian suzerainty from before the 13th century. Then the Armenian grammarian Hovhannes Yerznkatsi discussed the dialect of that region known at that time as Artsakh.

In ancient and medieval Armenia, grammar was central to Armenian scholarship. The Armenians, following the Greek model, studied a quadrivium, which included arithmetic, astrology, geometry and music; this was followed by a trivium of grammar, rhetoric and logic. In the *Grammar of Yerznkatsi* (ca. 1250), the dialect of Artsakh is specifically mentioned; this is certainly before the arrival of the Seljuk Turks, much less the Azeris, who did not yet exist by any name. In the *Grammar of Yerznkatsi* we learn that even in the 13th century, the people of Artsakh spoke a noticeably distinct dialect, as they still do. Such a unique dialect does not come rapidly into bloom. It is likely that the people of Artsakh had spoken a distinct dialect for centuries, easily by 800 AD. This gives further support to Professor Bournoutian's thesis, pushing back the date of the Armenian inhabitation by a full millennium. We have this in writing by the 13th century.

— John A.C. Greppin
Cleveland, Ohio



COMMENTARY



My Turn

By Harut Sassounian

France Shouldn't Allow Turkey To Meddle in its Domestic Affairs

For nearly a century, Turkey's leaders have tried to hide the monstrous crime of the Armenian Genocide by covering up what really took place in the killing fields of the Syrian desert, then part of the Ottoman Empire. The powerful Turkish state has committed its considerable financial and diplomatic resources to the nefarious cause of Genocide denial.

Turkish leaders do not seem to realize that as they deny and lie, and vainly proclaim their innocence, they actually help publicize their dastardly act to an incredulous world-wide audience.

Furthermore, even though today's Turkish officials were not the ones who committed the Genocide of 1915, they foolishly associate themselves with their criminal predecessors, thus making themselves accessories-after-the-fact by lying about it and concealing the evidence.

With each passing day, the Turkish leadership is further submerging itself in a mire of its own making. Let us take a closer look at its sordid behavior in the French government's decision-making process.

Over 10 years ago, when the French legislature was

adopting a law recognizing the Armenian Genocide, the Turkish government used its usual bag of tricks in a failed attempt to undermine that effort. After the Parliament and Senate recognized the Genocide, President Jacques Chirac and Prime Minister Lionel Jospin on January 29, 2001, signed the following law: "France publicly recognizes the Armenian Genocide of 1915."

Even though the French law had made no mention of Turkey or the Ottoman Empire as perpetrator of the Genocide, Turkish officials exhibited a guilty conscience by their exaggerated claims of innocence; hence identifying themselves as the culprits in this heinous crime, while no one was pointing a finger at them.

The long arm of the Turkish state interfered in French domestic affairs once again in 2006, when lawmakers in Paris attempted to establish a penalty for those violating the law passed in 2001, applying the same sanctions to those denying the Holocaust. Regrettably, the French government succumbed to Turkish threats and hysterics and blocked the measure, until the Senate finally approved it on January 23, 2012.

The French public is now facing yet another egregious attempt of foreign interference in their domestic issues. The Turkish Union of Chambers of Commerce and Commodity Exchanges hired a French lobbying firm last week to pressure legislators into filing a legal challenge to the law banning denial of genocides recognized by French law – the Holocaust and the Armenian Genocide. So much for Turkish threats to boycott French companies.

President Nicolas Sarkozy has 15 days from January 23 to sign the new law, unless 60 members of the French Parliament and Senate act first by petitioning the Constitutional Court to rule on its legality. The Turkish ambassador, contravening a foreign diplomat's mandate not to meddle in French domestic matters, has used all possible means of pressure and "inducement" in a desperate

attempt to secure the necessary 60 signatures.

The Turkish government may be making a serious mistake by assuming that the court will necessarily find the new law to be unconstitutional. Turkish officials could be undermining their own interests should the court decide that the law is constitutional, thereby precluding any future legal challenges from Turkish denialists who would be arrested for denying the Armenian Genocide, once the law goes into effect.

In recent days, Turkey's leaders have made utterly ridiculous statements about the new law. Prime Minister Erdogan accused France of following "the footsteps of fascism." How can the leader of a country that is one of the biggest violators of human rights dare to blame France for fascism? President Abdullah Gul jumped into the fray by accusing France of "limiting freedom of expression." Has the Turkish president checked his own country's jails where dozens of journalists are languishing for months without trial for simply writing articles critical of the government? Has he read Article 301 of the Turkish Penal Code – "insulting Turkishness" – which bans all public references to the Armenian Genocide? Foreign Minister Davutoglu may have gotten it right when he complained that the French law is an attempt to "Nazify Turkey," except that this is being done not by France but by his own government, which continues to associate itself with the crimes of a now defunct Ottoman Empire.

The most laughable statement, however, was made by Turkey's brash Minister of European Affairs Egemen Bagis during his recent visit to Switzerland. He dared Swiss authorities to arrest him for denying the Armenian Genocide, since Switzerland, similar to France, has a law banning genocide denial. Minister Bagis is fortunate that he cannot be arrested or prosecuted because of his diplomatic immunity. Nevertheless, he could and should be expelled from Switzerland as *persona non grata*!

Is the 'Deep State' Still in Business?

The Turkish Riddle

By Patrick Cockburn

In the teahouses of Istanbul the mood is generally optimistic as customers listen to the news of the European economic crisis. "Turkey doesn't need Europe," says one tea drinker.

"Look at Greece – it was inside the European Union and they're going bankrupt." Osman, a middle-aged estate agent, adds that "when you compare Turkey today with Turkey 20 years ago, everything has got better."

Not everybody in the teahouse is quite so positive. Its manager says: "I think the economy is going well for those with money. But talk to somebody on the minimum wage and see how they feel." There is some *schadenfreude* over the problems facing the EU, given that it has so far rejected Turkey as a member. But one customer, looking up from his card game, says, "I have just been to Germany and it is still better abroad."

Turkey has been one of the world's great political and economic success stories of the last decade. Over 70 million people under quasi-military rule of great brutality for 80 years appeared at last to be coming under civilian control. Torture stopped in the prisons. Elections not army coups d'état – four in Turkey since 1960 – determined who held power in Ankara. The Justice and Development Party (AKP) led by the prime minister, Recep Tayyip Erdogan, first elected in 2002, was just the sort of moderate, democratic pro-capitalist Islamic party that the West wanted to encourage. The foreign media boosted Turkey uncritically last year as a model for the Arab world as police states started tumbling.

There is more substance to the Turkish "miracle" than there was to most of the over-hyped booms in Europe, from Ireland to Greece. Political and economic changes here were real. The AKP outmaneuvered the military leadership and its powerful allies in the state bureaucracy and appeared to break their long tutelage. In 2001 the economy had been

a barely floating wreck as inflation touched 80 per cent a year and the Turkish lira halved in value. Banks closed and tens of thousands of enterprises went bankrupt. All these disasters became a distant memory as Turkey acquired a "tiger" economy. In a decade Turkey's GDP and exports both doubled in value. Small and medium-sized manufacturers became energetic exporters. Foreign investment, the key to growth in Turkey, poured in and the economy became the 15th largest in the world. It is these gains that are now under threat. Political reforms stalled two years ago. One foreign observer says, "Erdogan decided not to use his political capital to resolve the conflict with the Kurds, the dispute over Cyprus and relations with Armenia." Overconfidence in Turkey's newfound strength diverted attention from crucial questions, the most important of which is bringing an end to the Kurdish insurgency.

Some Turkish liberals suspect that, after being in power for almost a decade, the AKP has found it convenient to adopt the mechanisms of repression used by its predecessors. "The AKP had been on the periphery of political life and is now at the centre," says Cengiz Aktar, professor of political science at Bahcesehir University in Istanbul. "They decided to stop the reformist process and enjoy life."

The clamp down has been severe. This month Reporters Without Borders (RSF) demoted Turkey to 148th place out of 178 countries in its annual World Press Freedom Index. Its report said: "The judicial system launched a wave of arrests on journalists without precedent since the military dictatorship." Some 99 journalists are in jail, about 60 per cent of whom are Kurdish. "It is a sort of political cleansing by the judiciary and the police," says Erol Onderoglu, the RSF representative for Turkey.

Often journalists are held for more than a year without knowing the charges against them, and an editor can be jailed for any article appearing in his paper critical of government policy. In one case a Kurdish editor was sentenced to 166 years in prison, later reduced to 20 years by the High Court, for such a piece. Osman Kovala of Anadolu Kultur, a

human rights organization in Istanbul, says there is "still no clear distinction between expression of an opinion and membership of a terrorist organization."

Liberals fear that the so-called "deep state", a secret cabal of soldiers, police and bureaucrats dealing in assassination and disappearances, is still in business, stalking its enemies and protecting its hitmen. Government critics suspect the AKP is no longer interested in rooting out these sinister agents.

In 2007 the murder of the Armenian-Turkish journalist Hrant Dink was widely believed to be their work and became a cause célèbre. Shot in the back by a 17-year-old student, his murder had all the marks of a well-organized plot. But, in January, a court in Istanbul appalled a broad swathe of Turkish opinion by finding the gunman had largely acted alone. Convinced of state connivance in Dink's death thousands of marchers commemorated it by shouting the slogan, "The killer state will pay".

The AKP government could argue that its most important struggle has been to end the military's grip on the state. "I was amazed last year to see the ex-Chief of General Staff in prison," says Murat Belge, professor of comparative literature at Bilgi University. "This is a miracle for Turkey." Suggesting that civilian control is not as deeply rooted as many Turks assume, he believes the reason why the army has not overthrown the AKP government has been that the US does not want it to.

Erdogan, a pious, populist nationalist of great political skill, is sounding and acting more and more like an autocrat. His belligerent personality may make him averse to seeking a compromise with the Kurds, but his intransigence is attractive to Turks who like the idea of a powerful state. "The Turks are childish about being powerful," Belge says. "Power is a magic word for them."

A further cause of the faltering impetus of reform in Turkey is its failure to enter the EU. Expectations of EU membership in 2004-9 played a central role in promoting liberal democracy. Realization that accession is unlikely to happen soon is having a reverse effect. Atilla Yesilada, an economic consultant at Istanbul Analytics, says "the fact that

Europe no longer has the energy to absorb Turkey is a blow to hopes of creating a liberal democratic society".

Rejection by Europe has been compensated for, at least psychologically, by Turkey's expanded role in the Middle East but this intervention is beginning to sour. A couple of years ago, Turkey had developed good relations with most of its neighbors, particularly governments in Tehran, Baghdad and Damascus. Turkish trade to the Middle East expanded fast. Come the Arab Spring, Turkey adeptly changed horses, abandoned old allies and backed protesters and insurgents in Libya and Syria.

A foreign observer said: "The European leaders might behave to Erdogan as if he was something the cat dragged in, but in Egypt he was treated like a demi-god." But the advantages of this popularity can be exaggerated. Egyptians may like Erdogan, but they are not asking him to rule them. At the start of this year Turkey is having to pay a price for an overconfidence that has provoked hostility on the part of the Syrian and Iraqi governments.

Will the Turkish boom turn out to be a bubble? Previous recessions have all seen outflows of foreign capital. The European banks investing here are themselves fragile. But Turks still make things like ships and cars. The outskirts of Istanbul are filled with workshops producing furniture, textiles and shoes alongside more technical products.

Mehmet Tuysuz employs 33 people making valves for medical equipment. He speaks well of the government, saying that it "helps small and medium-sized plants like us. They got rid of the mafia in the municipality, fire and tax departments." He says in the 1990s he was frustrated by officials extracting bribes as the price for removing bureaucratic obstacles.

The next year should tell if Turkey is going to join the sick men of Europe. The year may also tell if Turkey has at last escaped the legacy of an autocratic state.

(Patrick Cockburn is the author of *Muqtada: Muqtada Al-Sadr, the Shia Revival, and the Struggle for Iraq*. This commentary originally appeared in the January 30 issue of *Counterpunch*.)



Pilot Flame Flickers on Gas Pipeline Project

By Guy Chazan and Gerrit Wiesmann

LONDON (*Financial Times*) – The consortium behind one of Europe's most ambitious infrastructure projects – the Nabucco gas pipeline – is considering ways of scaling back the venture after recent moves by Turkey and Azerbaijan raised questions about its viability.

The reassessment of the project comes as a BP-led consortium prepares to choose a transport route to bring gas from Azerbaijan to European markets, with Nabucco as one of the candidates.

Named after the Verdi opera, Nabucco was first mooted 10 years ago as a means of reducing the European Union's dependence on Russian energy imports by bringing gas from the Caspian Basin into the heart of Europe via a new southern corridor.

But its 8-billion-euro price tag is high, and its investors, which include Austria's OMV and German utility RWE, have so far failed to sign any supply contracts. Some critics wonder if

they will ever have enough gas to fill the pipeline.

Nabucco's fate is wrapped up in a big gas field in Azerbaijan's sector of the Caspian Sea called Shah Deniz. A consortium of oil producers that includes BP, Statoil, Total and the Azeri state energy company SOCAR is spending up to \$22 billion to develop the second phase of the field, which will produce 16 billion cubic meters of gas a year from 2017.

Some 6 billion cubic meters a year of that will go to Turkey and the rest will go to Europe.

If the Nabucco project is rejected, it could deal a hefty blow to the European Union's energy plans according to analysts, writes Guy Chazan.

The EU originally backed Nabucco because it proposed a "superhighway" to deliver large volumes of gas from Azerbaijan, the wider Caspian region and the Middle East, including

Turkmenistan and Iraq. If the Shah Deniz consortium opts for a small-scale pipeline, that could close off the more ambitious option.

Günther Oettinger, the EU's energy commissioner, has stressed that whichever pipeline is chosen, there must be mechanisms to allow gas from Turkmenistan to enter Europe. Nabucco's rivals – ITGI and TAP – insist they can be "scaled up" to take in extra volumes from Turkmenistan and elsewhere.

But some analysts say only Nabucco is large enough to handle the vast quantities of Caspian and Middle Eastern gas.

There are also concerns that choosing an option other than Nabucco or the BP South-East Europe Pipeline could undermine the EU's priority of finding new sources of gas for the Balkans and eastern Europe.

Last year, the Shah Deniz partners launched a tendering process to select a transport option for moving their gas to Europe. Three pipeline projects submitted their final tariff offers – Nabucco, ITGI, and the Trans-Adriatic Pipeline (TAP). BP and its partners were supposed to choose a winner by the end of 2011, but the decision was put off until the first quarter of this year.

In recent months, the outcome of the tender has become more unpredictable. Late last year, Turkey and Azerbaijan injected a new variable into the equation by launching the Trans-Anatolian gas pipeline project (Tanap), which would run from Turkey's eastern border with Azerbaijan to its western border with Bulgaria – effectively copying the Turkish section of Nabucco.

Tanap, which is backed by the US, will be able to take volumes from Shah Deniz 2 and could be expanded to take additional Azeri

production in the future.

BP has also put forward its own solution – the South-East Europe Pipeline – which would start in western Turkey and cross Bulgaria and Romania to reach Hungary's eastern frontier.

A person close to the Nabucco consortium says the partners could pitch a slimmed-down version of the pipeline, provisionally called "Nabucco West," which would form an extension to Tanap and would cost 60 percent less than the full project.

That would suit RWE, which is burdened by the cost of Germany's exit from nuclear power and has been divesting assets to reduce its debt and protect its credit ratings.

The company has hinted as much. Judisch has said that RWE appreciates the opportunity that Tanap creates to "substantially lower our capital commitment".

However, many analysts think the Shah Deniz partners could ultimately eschew Nabucco altogether and instead choose a combination of Tanap and ITGI, TAP or the BP South-East Europe Pipeline.

TAP, backed by Norway's Statoil, Germany's Eon Ruhrgas and Switzerland's EGL says its advantage is that its capacity can be expanded to take in more gas from other sources as and when it becomes available.

ITGI, backed by Edison of Italy and the Greek gas company DESFA, also thinks its smaller scale is a selling point. "Between now and 2020, Europe doesn't need that much additional gas, so a medium-sized project that serves southern Europe and the Balkans is a good pitch," says Ruggeri.

(Additional reporting by Joshua Chaffin)

The Minority Report of the Republic

MINORITIES, from page 18

and according to others 11 people died. Nearly 300 were wounded and hundreds of women were raped. According to the official numbers 5,300 and according to non-official numbers 7,000 buildings were attacked. The cost of the damage was at least 150 million lira on that date, and the highest estimate was 1 billion lira.

*1964. When events in Cyprus strained the Turkish-Greek relationship and Johnson's famous letter drove Turkey into a corner, the "Friendship Accord," signed by Ataturk and Venizelos, was unilaterally canceled by the Turkish government. Tens of thousands of Greeks, who although Greek citizens were born and raised in Turkey, and had worked there as shop owners and small businessmen, were deported. They were allowed to carry only one suitcase and 200 lira. With the departure of their Greek spouses who were Turkish citizens, the Greek community all but disappeared from the country.

*1974. In a court case between the trustees of the Greek Hospital in Balikli and the Turkish Treasury, the Appeals Legal Council reached a decision that non-Muslim citizens in Turkey could be called non-Turks.

*1984. The Greek Patriarchate in Fener requested permission to close the Seminary in Heybeliada because it could not meet its expenses. However, the government who until

then had done everything in its power to close the seminary, denied the request citing the Lausanne Peace Treaty, other bilateral agreements and the "reciprocity principle." Today, even though it has no students, the Turkish administrator appointed by the Ministry of Education goes to the school to his office and the Patriarchate continues to spend money to keep the school open.

*1985-1990. Because they refused to become guards against PKK, the Yezidis who worship Angel Taus lost their lands and were forced to immigrate to western countries.

*2000s. "Struggle against missionaries" was the most discussed subject in the meetings of the National Security Council.

*November 15, 2003. In a suicide attack two Muslim Turkish terrorists killed 25 people (including themselves) and wounded more than 300 in the Beth Israel Synagogue of Sisli and Neve Shalom Synagogue of Galata.

*February 5, 2006. Andrea Santoro, the priest of Santa Maria Catholic Church in Trabzon, was stabbed to death by a 16-year-old boy.

*January 19, 2007. The editor of the Agos newspaper, Hrant Dink, is killed.

*April 18, 2007. In Malatya, seven "nationalist" youths invaded Zirve Publishing, a publisher of Christian literature, and killed three office workers.

Having seen this history, is the verdict in the Hrant Dink trial surprising? I don't know about you, but as I said in the beginning it was no surprise to me.

(Ayse Hur is a Turkish historian living in Istanbul, who writes a weekly history column for *Taraf* newspaper. Translated by A.

France's Genocide Law Put On Hold

FRANCE, from page 1

Erdogan last week denounced the law as "tantamount to discrimination and racism" and warned that his Islamist-rooted government would punish Paris with unspecified retaliatory measures if Sarkozy signed it into law.

Ankara has already halted political and military cooperation with France and was threatening to cut off economic and cultural ties.

Trade between the two states was worth 12 billion euros (\$15.5 billion) in 2010, with several hundred French businesses operating in Turkey.

Armenia hailed the passage of the bill through the French Senate, with President Serge Sargsian writing in a letter to Sarkozy: "France has reaffirmed its greatness and power, its devotion to universal human values."

Around 20 countries have officially recognized the killings as genocide.

Amnesty International has criticized the French law, saying it would violate freedom of expression.

Aronian Wins Tata Steel Chess Championship

CHESS, from page 1

scored seven wins in 13 games, tying four and losing two. One of those two defeats for Aronian came early on from Carslen, the leader of FIDE's current classification and the other favorite to win the tournament. But Aronian recovered quickly and managed to reach the finish line first despite an unfortunate Round 11 defeat to less experienced Czech grandmaster David Navara.

Among Aronian's victories were those against players such as Israel's Boris Gelfand, who is the challenger at the next FIDE World Championship later this year, Russian Sergey Karjakin, Hikaru Nakamura from the United States and others. Aronian's win over American Gata Kamsky was recognized as the best win of the tournament's round four.

The other Armenian player, Elina Danielian, who took part in the tournament's grandmaster Group C, finished ninth.

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