

# THE ARMENIAN Mirror-Spectator

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## Euromaidan's Armenian Face: Kiev Protests Turn Deadly

YEREVAN and KIEV (Combined Sources) – Armenia may not be directly affected by the current protests in Ukraine, but it certainly felt the vibrations of the events unfolding there earlier this week as Kiev's Euromaidan suddenly got an "Armenian face."

Sergey Nikhoyan, a 20-year-old ethnic Armenian from a small village near Dnipropetrovsk in southeastern Ukraine, became one of the first victims of the protests as he was shot dead under still-unclear circumstances in Kiev on January 22. Nikhoyan, whose parents are reportedly from Karabagh, was a citizen of Ukraine, but his death due to involvement in political protests once again reminded of the fact that Ukraine has a large Armenian community see UKRAINE, page 3

PHOTOLURE PHOTO



In memory of Sergey Nikhoyan in front of the Embassy of Ukraine in Yerevan.

## Power of Art to Move Mind and Heart: Dink Remembered in Frankfurt

By Muriel Mirak-Weissbach  
Special to the Mirror-Spectator

FRANKFURT – Anyone who doubts the existence of a growing movement in Turkey committed to profound political reforms,

emphatically including the recognition of the 1915 genocide, should reflect on the mass turnout in Istanbul on January 19, reported by the *Mirror-Spectator* last week. Films circulating on the Internet (such as [www.youtube.com/watch?v=\\_RuZDt6wj4k](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_RuZDt6wj4k) and [www.youtube.com/watch?v=ELFOe-lvZ5Q](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ELFOe-lvZ5Q)) transmit a sense of the potential that this Turkish civil society movement represents, not the least because it has increasingly woven the strands of several related political demands together into one fabric. Thus, those calling for "justice" are demanding not only that Hrant Dink's assassins be identified and prosecuted but also that the rule of law replace a system fraught with politically motivated rulings, corruption, violation of human rights and willful distortion of historical fact. From the Gezi Park protests to the ongoing upheavals triggered by the corruption scandals, a new process has been unfolding which may put the country on a course toward fundamental change. This is one of the mes-see DINK, page 4

Poster for the play "Anne's Silence" by Dogan Akhanli

**ANNES SCHWEIGEN**

Ein deutsch-türkisch-armenisches Gemeinschaftsprojekt  
 - THEATERSPIEL VON DOĞAN AKHANLI  
 - SCHAUSPIEL - BEA EHLERS-KERBEKIAN  
 - BÜHNE - MICHAEL GRESSNER  
 - REGIE - RON ROSENBERG

Freitag, 17. Januar 2014  
20:00 Uhr  
 Samstag, 18. Januar 2014  
21:00 Uhr

Günes Theater  
Rebstöcker Straße 41-53  
60326 Frankfurt am Main

Eintritt 12 Euro  
 Tickets:  
 Frankfurt Ticket RheinMain  
Tickethotline: 069 - 1340 400  
www.frankfurt-ticket.de



Grandmaster Levon Aronian

## Aronian Wins Tata Steel Chess Championship

WIJK AAN ZEE, Holland (Armenpress) – The leader of the Armenian national men's chess team, Levon Aronian, this week celebrated his victory in the Tata Steel Tournament.

Aronian won the elite Dutch tournament for the fourth time.

Aronian is an Armenian chess Grandmaster. On the May 2012 FIDE list, he was ranked number two in the world and had an Elo rating of 2825, making him the third highest rated player in history. Aronian won the Chess World Cup 2005. He led the Armenian national team to the Gold medals in the 2006 (Turin), 2008 (Dresden) and 2012 (Istanbul) Chess Olympics and at the World Team Chess Championship in Ningbo 2011. He won the FIDE Grand Prix 2008-2010, qualifying him for the Candidates tournament for the World Chess Championship 2012, where he was knocked out in the first round. He was also World Chess960 Champion in 2006 and 2007, World Rapid Chess Champion in 2009, and World Blitz Chess Champion in 2010.

see CHESS, page 16

## France's Hollande Cautiously Backs Turkey's EU Membership Bid

ANKARA (Combined Sources) – French President Francois Hollande, on a first visit by a French head of state to Turkey in 22 years, made it clear that France's fundamental stance on the Armenian Genocide was unchanged.

At a joint press conference on January 27 with Turkish President Abdullah Gul this week, both sides stuck to their positions in a row over France's official recognition of a genocide by Ottoman Turks of Armenians in World War I, AFP reports.

An attempt by French lawmakers in 2011 to declare it a crime to deny the genocide was struck down in February last year.

But Hollande made it clear that France's fundamental stance was unchanged.

"Uncovering history is always painful, but must be done," he said.

see TURKEY, page 16



French President Francois Hollande with Turkish President Abdullah Gul

## NEWS IN BRIEF

### LA City Council Recognizes Artsakh

LOS ANGELES (Armenpress) – The Los Angeles City Council unanimously recognized the Republic of Nagorno-Karabagh as an independent and sovereign state this week.

The resolution notes that the Republic of Nagorno-Karabagh contributes to the stability in the region of the Caucasus and conducts free and fair elections. A case is also made regarding Karabagh inspiring people in the region as well.

The author of the resolution is Los Angeles Council member Paul Krekorian.

### Azerbaijani, Armenian FMs Meet in Paris

PARIS (Panorama.am) – The foreign ministers of Armenia and Azerbaijan, Eduard Nalbandian and Elmar Mammadyarov, met in Paris on Friday, January 25, to continue negotiations on the resolution of the Karabagh conflict.

The meeting comes following a month of Azeri efforts to escalate tensions, with Azeri forces having made several violations of the ceasefire, resulting in the death and injury of Armenian troops and citizens.

The co-chairs of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) Minsk Group, Ambassadors Igor Popov of Russia, Jacques Faure of France and James Warlick of the United States, also met with the foreign ministers of Armenia and Azerbaijan in Paris.

The co-chairs expressed deep concern over "continued violence" along the border of Azerbaijan and Armenia, but failed to condemn Baku.

### Sherman Decries Killing of Armenian Soldier by Azeris

WASHINGTON – US Rep. Brad Sherman (D-CA) released the following statement on the killing of an Armenian soldier, Armen Hovannisyan, by Azeri forces along the border of Nagorno-Karabagh.

"Just four days before a meeting scheduled between Azerbaijan's and Armenia's foreign ministers to discuss a peaceful resolution to the conflict between Azerbaijan and the Republic of Nagorno-Karabakh, Azeri forces have tragically killed yet another Armenian soldier in an unprovoked attack on the Artsakh and Azerbaijan border. As I stated last December when an Armenian soldier was killed, Azerbaijan continues to show it is not serious about establishing peaceful relations with Artsakh.

"Azerbaijan and its forces must be held accountable for these ruthless displays of violence. I have been a longtime advocate for a peaceful resolution of the conflict between Azerbaijan and Karabagh and the recognition of the independent Republic of Karabagh."

## INSIDE

# Ayo! We Can!

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## News From Armenia

### Two Documentaries on Armenian Genocide to Be Produced

YEREVAN (Public Radio of Armenia) – Two documentaries on the Armenian Genocide, titled the “The Arrested Souls” and “The Memory Wall,” will be produced in 2014, Director of the Armenian National Cinema Center Gevorg Gevorgyan told reporters this week. The films will be ready for release by 2015.

There are plans to shoot a feature film, as well. “We have submitted six projects to the state commission, but no decision has been made so far,” Gevorgyan said.

Before that the National Cinema Center will present director Hovhannes Galstyan’s film “Light Era,” a joint Armenian-Norwegian production.

The center intends to complete 12 films in 2014. A total of \$500,000 has been provided to the field of cinema in the current year.

“No country in the world except Armenia produces films with such scarce resources,” he said, adding that the center dedicates a considerable part of that financing to the efforts of young directors.

### Police Examine Video Showing Former Mayor’s Son Allegedly Threatening New Mayor

GUMRI (ArmeniaNow) –Armenian Police on Thursday issued a clarification in connection with media alleging that former Gumri mayor Vardan Ghukasyan’s son, Spartak, and his friends, drove to the house of current mayor Samvel Balasanyan, swore and made threats against him.

A video allegedly taken by surveillance cameras near Balasanyan’s house on January 21 has been released by a number of media outlets, showing two cars with Ghukasyan and his friends allegedly inside driving past the Balasanyan house.

Police confirmed that the incident was filmed by the cameras installed in the area and added that the Shirak regional investigation department is preparing materials in connection with the publication.

“Instructions have been given to the investigatory body to undertake operative-investigative measures to ascertain the real facts as well as the veracity of the information published by the media. An examination of the crime scene has been conducted. The presence of cameras was established there. The room with video-filming and storage devices has been sealed,” the police said. “Explanations were taken from persons living and working in the vicinity of the area. The preparation of materials continues.”

Spartak Ghukasyan has been in trouble frequently for his violent behavior and involvement in family feud-related gang fights. He was under criminal investigation over one such instance in 2012 shortly after his father, a member of the ruling Republican Party, resigned as mayor and was succeeded by Balasanyan, who enjoyed the backing of the Republicans in the subsequent mayoral elections.

### Artsakh’s Freedom Is Above All Else, President Says

YEREVAN (Armenpress) – A solemn award ceremony was held at the Presidential residence on January 28 during which President Serge Sargsian congratulated the servicemen and veterans of the Artsakh liberation war on the occasion of Army Day and bestowed upon them medals. He also sent a congratulatory message to compatriots on the occasion of Army Day.

Among those who were given named as medal recipients were Levon Hohannisyan, who was killed during an Azeri incursion into Karabagh the night of January 19-20, “for services delivered to homeland.” His parents picked up his medal during the somber ceremony.

### International Photo Exhibit at Tekeyan Centre in Yerevan

YEREVAN – Sponsored by Tekeyan Centre Fund (TCF) and Rossotrudnichestvo and initiated by PhotoPodium.com, a site for professionals and amateurs, the international photo exhibition “Window to the World” opened at Tekeyan Centre on January 15.

At the opening, the TCF Director Armen Tsulikyan welcomed and thanked all the participants. He also mentioned that the TCF was proud to start its 2014 activity with such a great event and promised to arrange photo exhibitions regularly since photography nowadays is no longer just documentation, but art that has so many admirers.

“Window to the World” will be at the Tekeyan Centre till February 15, and then the pictures will be displayed in other towns in Armenia.

The exhibition features works by 41 photographers from different countries: Russia, the US, the Netherlands, Australia, Germany, the Ukraine, Georgia and Armenia. The aim of the show is to introduce photographers whose pictures have never been displayed in Armenia, to the Armenian public.

More than 80 photos are displayed.



Tekeyan Centre Fund’s Armen Tsulikyan at the opening



Viewers gathered to look at the more than 80 photos.

## Manana Youth Center Wins Major UN Democracy Fund Grant in 2013

### Multimedia Education Program Expands Countrywide

YEREVAN – The Manana Youth Center won a major two-year grant from the United Nation’s Democracy Fund, which enables the Manana Youth Center to conduct a dozens of weeklong multimedia workshops for children throughout Armenia.

“We have been working towards the goal of enabling all of country’s young people to benefit from our proven educational programs,” said Ruzan Baghdasaryan, executive director of the Manana Youth Center. “Our workshops will introduce basic skills in the areas of journalism, photojournalism and filmmaking.”

Participants, under the supervision of our expert instructors, produced films, shot photos and conducted interviews. An exhibition and film screening was held in Gumri in the fall to feature Manana student’s works from the various regions. In 2014, these workshops will continue and a curated final exhibition will be held in Yerevan.

In August, Manana Youth Center organized a crowd funding campaign on Indiegogo and raised \$5,000 for Sand Animals. The students of the Manana Animation Studio are currently implementing this animation project.

“This is the seventh year The Paros Foundation is providing support to the Manana Youth Center in the form of a grant for operational funding and

Vanity Fair Italy were both well received by audiences. “Hit The Road: India” is now being successfully distributed via major digital platforms and will be broadcasted by several TV channels in 2014. The Manana film “Everyone, who will meet me,” won the Highlight Award at Young Filmmaker International Festival in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil.

The Manana Youth Center is located



Manana Youth Center prepares for a regional exhibition in Gumri.

### Correction

Due to a typing error, the states for four donors to the Tekeyan Cultural Association’s Sponsor a Teacher Program were listed incorrectly in the January 11 issue of the *Armenian Mirror-Spectator*. Alice Norsigian, Jack and Raya Arisian, Dr. and Mrs. Edmond Gorek and Haige J. Garabedian are residents of Connecticut.

quality program and office space. Said Peter Abajian, executive director of the Paros Foundation. “It is inspiring that the Manana team has attracted prestigious funding for their training and the development of specific creative projects. Providing these opportunities for Armenia’s children encourages a young persons curiosity and his or her ability to express themselves.”

Other 2013 milestones included the presentation of two feature film documentaries at the Golden Apricot International Film Festival by Manana Films, the film production division of Manana Youth Center.

“The Beginnings,” a co-production documentary with Turkey, directed by Somnur Vardar, and “Hit The Road: India,” a travel adventure documentary, recognized later as an amazing adventure film of 2013 by Vimeo and

in Yerevan, Armenia and provides multimedia training and afterschool education to 75 students ages 8 to 18 in the areas of filmmaking, journalism, photography and animation. Children engage in these hands-on activities, but most importantly, the skills they learn greatly improve their critical thinking.

In 2014 funding is needed to upgrade their equipment and to expand the program for an additional 20 children. The Manana Youth Center depends on support from the community and donors to meet its important mission. To contribute, visit [www.mananayouth.org](http://www.mananayouth.org). Support from The Paros Foundation underwrites all administrative expenses allowing donor contributions to be allocated directly to Manana’s student programs.



## INTERNATIONAL



Armenian President Serge Sargsian (seated) talks to medical staff at Chaum Center in Gangnam on Jan. 9. /Courtesy of Chaum

## President Sargsian Gets Tune up in Korea

SEOUL (Eurasianet) – To make it through a frigid winter, the Armenian government recently advised citizens to economize. But that advice apparently does not extend to Armenian President Serge Sargsian and a few pals, who, according to the national South Korean news outlet Chosun Ibo, spent a week in mid-January undergoing a 200-million-wong (\$184,391) “rejuvenation treatment” at the Chaum spa in Seoul’s fashionable Gangnam district.

The Armenian president is known as a military man but apparently he decid-

ed that his looks do require maintenance. Chosun.com claims that Sargsian during his stay had stem cell therapy, spa and anti-aging therapy, also a body scrub and massage.

Sargsian’s monthly salary is 400,000 drams, or \$979.

But presidential spokesperson Arman Sagatelian asserted to Epress.am that the cited 200-million-wong price tag was the overall price for the services used on Sargsian’s party, and that the president paid for his own treatment. The true grand total was “many times less” than

what was reported, Sagatelian added.

Costs aside, there’s also the question of health. After the news broke, RFE/RL’s Armenian service inquired whether or not Sargsian, who, according to his press office, had left on January 7 for “a short vacation . . . abroad,” was feeling quite himself. Eduard Sharmazanov, spokesperson for the Republican Party of Armenia, which Sargsian heads, angrily retorted that the president is in perfect health and that those who doubt this should get a check-up themselves.

## Euromaidan’s Armenian Face: Kiev Protests Turn Deadly

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numbering more than 100,000.

Ukraine’s opposition movement gained ground Tuesday in its efforts to remake the country, with the resignation of the prime minister and his cabinet and the repeal of harsh new laws restricting freedom of speech and assembly.

Ukraine’s parliament, the Verkhovna Rada, invalidated the anti-demonstration laws hours after Prime Minister Mykola Azarov resigned. Passage of the legislation on January 16 had triggered street clashes in the capital, Kiev, following months of protests against government corruption and the closer ties to Russia favored by President Viktor Yanukovich.

The unraveling of the government has the potential to become a severe blow to Russian President Vladimir Putin, who strove to prop up Yanukovich and keep Ukraine from drawing closer to the West.

Parliament passed an amnesty bill Tuesday that would drop criminal liability for protesters who agree to leave the government buildings they have occupied during the demonstrations – but the opposition objected to its terms, and it is to be reconsidered Wednesday. Vacating public buildings has been a key government demand, but Oleh Tiahnybok, head of the opposition Svoboda party, said protesters would not leave the buildings they hold until Yanukovich’s Party of Regions also moves out – of the government.

The events in Ukraine have been called differently – some call it a national-liberation movement, others consider it to be a civil war, struggle for

European integration, a provocation of Western forces and even an attempt to split the large Eastern European country with a population of about 45 million people. Perhaps all of these mentioned elements are present in the protests, but it is obvious that the struggle in Ukraine became more acute after President Viktor Yanukovich, for a loan of \$15 billion and reduced Russian gas prices, refused to sign an association agreement with the European Union and announced plans for closer integration with Russia.

The results of the current struggle in Ukraine will certainly be reflected on Armenia as well. Yerevan gave up its EU association deal without putting up a fight: even government officials admit that Armenia had to make a choice in favor of the Russian-led Customs Union for security reasons and not because of economic or other benefits. In Armenia demonstrations against joining the Customs Union do not gather many people and it is largely because the main political forces are in favor of closer ties with Russia. In Ukraine, however, there are many opponents of integration with Russia, especially in the western parts of the country.

Kiev’s main Independent Square, called Maidan Nezalezhnosti, which has become the main point of pro-EU protests since late November (hence references to Euromaidan) now admittedly has an Armenian face as the killed ethnic Armenian activist had managed to become its recognizable fixture well before his tragic death. In this connection, some media began to speculate about Nkhoyan’s alleged ties with the Armenian Secret Army for the

Liberation of Armenia (ASALA) based on photographs and posts on his account in Vkontakte where he sometimes appears in combat fatigues. But his parents said he decided to join the protests in Kiev in early December after a breakup with his girlfriend, apparently as a means to get over his heartbreak.

On January 23, people in some western regions of Ukraine, which stand for European integration, began storming their regional administrations, demanding the resignations of governors. The western areas of the country can easily get out of the central government’s control. At the same time, the official Ukrainian opposition does not conceal the fact that it has no control over people who resort to violent actions in the center of Kiev. According to RFE/RL, these are members of nationalist parties and groups that demand Ukraine’s independence from the Kremlin.

The Interior Ministry said Tuesday that more than 30 protesters had been detained and 119 police officers injured since Sunday afternoon, when the clashes began.

The city health care department reported 122 injured and 50 hospitalized. The number injured is probably higher, as many people reportedly turn to medical volunteers for help rather than official services for fear of consequences. Protest organizers said those treated in hospitals are questioned by police and registered as participants of mass protests, which may lead to arrest and criminal charges.

(ArmeniaNow, Armenpress and the Washington Post contributed to this report.)

## International News

### Lebanon Stamp to Honor Martyrs of Armenian Genocide

BEIRUT (Armenpress) – Lebanon is going to launch a stamp to honor the martyrs of the Armenian Genocide in 1915, the Caretaker Minister of Telecommunications Nicolas Sehnaoui announced on Tuesday. Referring to a story in the Lebanese publication, the Daily Star, the stamp will be in circulation in a month’s time. It depicts a drawing of a statue honoring Armenian martyrs found in Bikfaya.

Lebanon has around 200,000 citizens of Armenian origin, a result of forced displacement after the partition of the Ottoman Empire at the end of the World War I.

### Palestinian Armenian Community Celebrates Christmas

BETHLEHEM (Ma’an) – Armenian Christians in Palestine celebrated Christmas on Saturday with a procession through the streets of Jesus Christ’s birthplace.

Armenian Patriarch of Jerusalem Nourhan Manougian arrived before noon in Bethlehem and marched to the Church of the Nativity, the site in the city’s historic center where Jesus is believed to have been born.

In anticipation of the event, streets were decorated and locals came out to watch. Bethlehem police director Luay Zreiqat told Ma’an that 150 police officers were deployed along the route of the march, and dozens of police officers were stationed in Manger Square as well.

Palestinian Armenian Christians who follow the Armenian Patriarchate of Jerusalem mark Christmas nearly two weeks after the majority of Armenian and Eastern Orthodox denominations, who mark the holiday on January 6 or 7, and more than three weeks after Western Christians mark Christmas, who celebrate on December 25.

The differences in dates of celebration are due to the use of different calendars, as Western Christians mark the holiday using the Gregorian calendar, Orthodox Christians and most Armenian denominations mark the holiday using the Julian calendar, and the Armenian patriarch of Jerusalem marks Christmas using the Julian calendar but with a different date.

Groups of Armenians began moving to Palestine beginning in the fourth century and mainly settled in Jerusalem, where, in the seventh century, they established a Patriarchate Complex which has since attracted Armenian pilgrims.

Thousands of Armenians also arrived fleeing the Armenian Genocide in the Ottoman Empire, after which many settled in Palestine.

According to Armenian sources, some 7,500 Armenians today live across the Holy Land. About 300 live in Bethlehem, 2,100 in Jerusalem and the rest live in Acre, Ramle, Nazareth, and Beersheba. There are a small number of Armenians in the Gaza Strip as well.

### Russian Airline to Launch Krasnodar-Yerevan Flights

KRASNODAR (News.am) – UTair Aviation JSC of Russia will start new flights between Krasnodar, Russia, and Yerevan, Armenia, the company press service informed Armenian News-NEWS.am.

The flights will commence on February 2, and they will be conducted four times a week.

The minimum price for a one-way ticket will be €49, whereas a round-trip ticket will start from €98.

The flights will be conducted with a Boeing 737-500-model aircraft, and the flight duration will be 1.5 hours.



# Power of Art to Move Mind and Heart: Dink Remembered in Frankfurt

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sages that Dogan Akhanli, a Turkish-German writer, delivered in an exchange with a capacity crowd that had come to see his dramatic monologue, “Anne’s Silence,” performed in Frankfurt as part of nationwide events that weekend. Himself a victim of judicial harassment for his works on the Genocide theme, Akhanli expressed optimism that the open discussion around 1915 which is affecting ever-broader layers of the population will succeed in catalyzing a breakthrough even at the official level. Highlighting Dink’s death as the turning point in a nationwide process, he said the guilt factor had been important; “people felt guilty,” he explained, “because they had not protected him.” He added that it was significant that the murder contractors had



Dogan Akhanli

chosen to kill not a dissident Turkish intellectual, like himself, but rather an Armenian.

Akhanli’s play deals directly with this complex. It treats the case of a Turkish girl named Sabiha

who has grown up in Germany with her mother, and, though assimilated, becomes attracted to Turkish nationalist rhetoric even to the point of embracing the official version of the Genocide and speaking at a rally commemorating Talaat Pasha. When her mother dies, she discovers an Armenian cross tattooed on her chest and falls into a profound identity crisis. Hrant Dink is the figure who allows her to work through the crisis: she makes brief telephone contact with him at *Agos* and not long thereafter, follows live coverage of his funeral on Turkish television. The play develops Sabiha’s personal drama (which was inspired by a real-life story) and integrates documentary material around Dink, his life’s work and his untimely death. Thus the audience vicariously lives through the traumatic process, in a sense re-experiencing what hundreds of thousands of citizens in Turkey and abroad underwent in late January 2007.

The play has been performed many times in different German cities (and also in Yerevan) by Armenian-German actress Bea Ehlers-Kerbekian and has been received with enthusiasm. But in Frankfurt it detonated a minor psychological-emotional explosion, due to the fact that the overwhelming majority of the audience was of Turkish descent. The venue itself was special; the Günes Theater is a group of avant-garde artists who began as an alternative ensemble of students in Ankara in 1991. They sought to introduce new forms of communication between actors and viewers; as members of a collective, actors were at the same time authors, directors and theater owners, something utterly new in Turkey. They also performed in unconventional locations, like villages, slums, ghettos and streets of major cities, and addressed political and social themes in contemporary Turkey. By combing aspects of Western theatre tradition with Eastern elements, including Anatolian dance, they have attracted visitors from different cultural circles.

In 1995 they began to perform in Europe

while their plays were coming under increasing attack at home. Due to their critical political views, their members found themselves ever more frequently under arrest and in court. In 1998 they adopted the name Günes (for Anatolia, in Byzantine times known as ‘the land of the rising sun’) and worked both at home and in

Turkey that her mother (i.e. the girl’s great-grandmother) had been Armenian. Like countless others who have made such discoveries in the recent period, she wants to research her family history now, to find out the truth. According to the grandmother’s account, some survivors in the family had migrated to America, but she did



Protestors mark the seventh anniversary of Dink’s death in Istanbul.

Europe until political pressures forced them to emigrate in 2002 to their current home in Frankfurt.

It was this Günes Theater that hosted “Anne’s Silence” on January 17 and 18, and at both performances, the audience had a chance to engage in discussion with the protagonists; the play’s author joined actress Ehlers-Kerbekian the first night for a free-wheeling dialogue with viewers and on the second a round table brought three Armenians together, journalist Yetvard Danzikyan from *Agos* in Istanbul, intellectual Nazaret Vartanyan, originally from Malatya now based in Brussels, and myself. The two guests from abroad presented in-depth reports on the current state of developments in the Hrant Dink case, from a legal as well as political point of view, and insisted that the full truth behind the Dink affair be brought to light. This means pursuing investigations into the political forces behind the scenes, those who planned, instigated and orchestrated the material crime. References were made to the “deep state” known as Ergenekon, but also to possible complicity on the part of persons linked to Prime Minister Erdogan’s own AKP.

This, to be sure, is the stuff of heated political debate. But the issue taken up by the panel on “Identity, Guilt, and Reconciliation in the Diaspora” is also highly personal and emotionally charged. In the session following the first night’s performance, three young Turkish women living in Germany immediately drew parallels to their own experience. The first, a college graduate who is married and works as a teacher, said the whole point about the play is identity. “I grew up here in Germany as a Turk,” she said, “and had to be German, but at one point I realized I was not fully accepted by Germans.” Then, she tended to “become more Turkish,” she said, “but that didn’t work either.” What she saw in the play about Sabiha was that it is all a question of identity: who am I really? Finally she came to see herself as someone who “is Turkish and lives in Germany.”

A friend of hers intervened to say that she, too, had been deeply moved, indeed shocked by the play. This was the first time, she said, that she had been “in an Armenian environment” — although the theatre was run by a Turkish group and most of the audience were Turkish. The presentation of the Genocide through the story of Sabiha posed a challenge to her previous views. She wondered how best to present the issue and suggested that one might be able to produce empathy on the part of Turkish viewers, if one also referred to massacres victimizing Muslims, for example in Srebrenica. (This, the moderator noted, was not comparable to the Armenian case, because the Srebrenica genocide has been recognized as such.) Yet another aspect emerged when she reported that just six months ago, she learned from her 91-year-old grandmother in

n’t know their names or where they had landed. Yet another young Turkish girl spoke of the need for empathy, and raised the question: is forgiveness also possible?

For Bea Ehlers-Kerbekian, such candid, spontaneous reactions were proof positive that the play had delivered its message and had its desired impact. “They have taught me even more about who Sabiha in the play really is,” she later remarked, “and what her life in Germany is like.”

Author Akhanli was positively surprised to witness such genuine reactions. Another passionate intervention came from a woman who had discovered her Armenian roots just some years back and had been traumatized by the social problems she encountered as a result: Turkish friends who no longer considered her one of their own and Armenians who rejected her as a Turk. All these and many more observations drove the point home: In the current juncture, Turkey — its political elite as well as its population — is going through a healthy and unprecedented crisis, a crisis of identity for the nation and for each individual.

One participant put it this way: “If what the play presents is true, if the Turkish Republic was founded on a lie, if ‘Turkishness’ is a false ideology, what then can our identity be?” This raises the fundamental question: what is identity? Is it based on language, or ethnicity? On “blood-and-soil” ideology or territorial domains? On religion or history? On gender? Or something more?

Akhanli’s play is a brilliant work of art which, in a highly condensed form, thrusts the identity issue to the forefront. It succeeds in presenting the Armenian Genocide as historical fact, mediated through the subjective experiences of multiple actors — the perpetrators and their progeny among the denials, the victims among the Islamized survivors, the unknowing descendants of the hidden Armenians, the uninformed neighbors and friends, and the courageous individuals like Hrant Dink inside Turkey and abroad who have dared break the taboos reigning since the founding of the Republic.

All relevant political and psychological issues are touched upon in the play, not as dogma but as art. And therein lies its secret power. In response to one questioner who asked why drama should be the vehicle, Ehlers-Kerbekian explained that it is uniquely through art that one can address such profound matters, because art — in this case, drama — appeals not only to the intellect but to the emotions, the heart. In this case she spoke of catharsis. During the second performance, the actress achieved such an intensity of intellectual-emotional tension that very few in the audience — whether men or women, Turkish, German or Armenian — could hold back their tears.

(For a full review of the play, see “German-Turkish-Armenian Project Dramatizes Search For Identity,” *Armenian Mirror-Spectator*, December 22, 2012, p. 14 (<http://www.mirror-spectator.com/pdf/122212.pdf>))

## Turkey PM Erdogan Gives New Push to EU Membership Bid

BRUSSELS (BBC) — Turkey’s Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan visited Brussels in January for talks on his country’s European Union (EU) membership bid, amid EU concerns over a purge of senior Turkish officials.

The negotiations were beset by problems.

EU politicians have voiced concern about the state of Turkey’s democracy, including the independence of its courts and media freedom.

Several of Erdogan’s allies have been arrested over a corruption scandal. He blamed a “foreign plot” and sacked prosecutors and police chiefs.

The scandal has pitted Erdogan against a former ally, US-based Islamic scholar Fethullah Gulen, who has many supporters in the police and judiciary.

Erdogan’s trip to Brussels is his first in five years.

He will meet European Council President Herman Van Rompuy, who chairs EU summits, and EU Commission President Jose Manuel Barroso.

The BBC’s James Reynolds in Istanbul says the Turkish government is fed up with the slow pace of membership talks and wants a formal timetable for accession.

### Slow progress

Turkey’s accession talks resumed in November, after being suspended for nearly three-and-a-half years. The negotiations were launched in 2005.

However, several EU countries,

notably Germany, France and Austria, have deep reservations about Turkey joining the EU. Critics believe it is culturally far-removed from Europe, and that because of its sheer size it could change the nature of the EU.

Supporters say it would be a dynamic addition to the bloc.

There are 35 policy areas, or chapters, in which candidate-states must meet EU standards in order to join the 28-member bloc. So far Turkey and the EU have only opened 14 chapters, and just one has been provisionally closed.

Eight chapters remain frozen because of a long-running trade dispute between Turkey and Cyprus.

The EU’s 2013 progress report on Turkey criticized “excessive force” used by police against demonstrators, along with other human rights violations.

Last week Turkey adopted a law making it a crime for doctors to provide emergency first aid without government authorization.

Some medical professionals see it as a tool to prevent doctors and other medics from treating protesters injured in clashes with police. The US-based Physicians for Human Rights (PHR) says action was taken against medics during anti-government protests last June.

The PHR condemned the new law in a statement, saying “this kind of targeting of the medical community is not only repugnant, but puts everyone’s health at risk.”

# Community News

## Bay State Pastor Called to Pulpit of California's Oldest Armenian Church

FRESNO – A Bay State pastor with roots in Central California has been named senior pastor of California's oldest Armenian Congregation.

On September 15, the communicant membership of the First Armenian Presbyterian Church of Fresno, elected Rev. Gregory Vahack Haroutunian of Belmont, Mass. as the 12th senior pastor of the congregation in the heartland of the Golden State. Haroutunian's first Sunday in the FAPC pulpit will be February 2.

A native of San Francisco, Haroutunian grew up in the community of Easton in rural Fresno County, earned his diploma at Washington Union High School and graduated with honors from Stanford University in 1982. An undergraduate in political science, Haroutunian worked in Washington for several years as a legislative assistant.

After his tenure in Washington, DC, Haroutunian moved to the Chicago area where he earned a Master of Divinity degree from Trinity Evangelical Divinity School in Evanston in 1989. Upon graduation, he served as associate pastor of FAPC from August 1989 through March 2001. He then served as interim pastor of the Armenian Evangelical Church of Chicago from April 2001 through April 2002. From October 2002 through November 2003, Haroutunian was director of Outreach and Discipleship at Dinuba Presbyterian Church in Tulare County, Calif. Since December 2003, he has served as senior pastor of First Armenian Church in Belmont, Mass.

During his tenure in the Commonwealth, Haroutunian served as an officer of the Armenian Evangelical Union of North America (AEUNA), an ecclesiastical confederation of Armenian Protestant churches, missions, and fellowships in the United States and Dominion of Canada. He chaired the Minister to the Union Search Committee, Committee on Personnel, and Committee on Evangelism and Church Planting (2004-2006). He has been vice moderator of the AEUNA since 2012. For a decade he has been a member of the committee that plans the Annual Massachusetts Statehouse Commemoration of the Armenian Genocide. From 1998 through 2009, he was a member of the Board of Directors of John Stott Ministries.

While serving in Belmont, Haroutunian furthered his education by completing Arrow Leadership International's leadership training program (2003-2004), received a three-month



Rev. Gregory Haroutunian, his wife Sossi and their children

sabbatical grant from the Louisville Institute to strengthen his Armenian language skills in Anjar, Lebanon (2011), and participated in monitored learning programs of the Praxis Center for Church Development (2013-2014).

Haroutunian met his wife, the former Sossi Tumberian, in 1997 when he was on a one-year sabbatical from FAPC, teaching world history and studying the Armenian language at  
see FRESNO, page 7



Paros Chamber Choir at AYO fundraiser at the Gavar Special School

## Ayo! Saying Yes in Armenia And the Diaspora

NEW YORK – Legendary poet Yeghishe Charents has written, "Oh, Armenian people, your salvation lies only in your collective power."

Following this inspiring directive, Ayo! (Yes) is a new innovative project endorsed by the Fund for Armenian Relief (FAR), devised by young adults working together in both Armenia and the diaspora. Its goal is to create and bring to fruition local challenges for local problems, and by doing so, also take responsibility for making Armenia a better country to live in.

By Florence Avakian

Ayo! is an invitation to the diaspora from local Armenians to participate in nation-building of Armenia through the support of basic, simple projects. Unique and manageable solutions for local challenges which are proposed by young Armenians, can be found on the Ayo! website. Diasporans can browse current Ayo! projects and choose the ones they wish to support. Funds for all projects are raised on the website through crowd-funding (similar to Kickstarter and Indiegogo). Although large donations are welcome, donors are encouraged to donate small amounts (\$5, \$10, \$25, \$50), with the idea being that everyone can make a huge difference without having to make a great financial investment.

The message is that the word can be spread, and big things can be achieved through the small efforts of many. Donors are always updated on the status of their projects through social media like Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and YouTube, and also through e-mail messages, so that they may directly see the impact their support is making. Follow-up videos will also be shared with followers and supporters during implementation and post-implementation stages of the project.

FAR Board member and donor Marta Batmasian has stepped forward and made Ayo! possible with the guarantee that 100 percent of the contributions will go for the benefit of implementing each Ayo! project directly, with no deductions for administrative or processing fees.

Ayo! Creative Director Armen Anmeghikyan, 28, with a master's degree in linguistics and political science, recently gave an interview through Skype from Yerevan this week. "We young people have to take responsibility for the future of our homeland," he said with emphasis, and explained that he was motivated to make use of his skills after being involved in youth work and travelling around Europe, the Middle East, the US and Russia for about four years. During this period, he set up a motivational NGO in Armenia which had the goal of motivating young people to take an active part in civil society through youth trainings, exchanges and seminars in Armenia and abroad. "I have the potential to change things," he said with enthusiasm and confidence.

"At this stage in Armenia, changing the mindset of young people to take part in civil society is necessary and crucial. There are many challenges – political, social, cultural in the preservation of our national identity," Anmeghikyan noted. "The number of people becoming active in civil society is not enough. We need more, because much more is needed to be done."

Working with Anmeghikyan is 25-year-old Tatevik Khoja-Eynatyan, the project manager of Ayo! Khoja-Eynatyan was born in Yerevan, came to America at age 10 with her parents, and currently lives in Brussels. A graduate of the Peabody Music Conservatory at Johns Hopkins University where she specialized in percussion

see AYO, page 6

## Armenian Assembly Rings in the New Year at Southern California Gathering

PASADENA, Calif. – Earlier this month, the Armenian Assembly of America held its annual New Year Gathering at the home of David and Margaret Mgrublian. Organized by the Assembly's Southern California Regional Council (SCRC), more than one hundred Assembly members, supporters and friends from across southern California were in attendance to discuss Assembly successes over the past year, as well as share the Assembly's outlook for the year ahead.

Assembly board and SCRC member Lisa Kalustian opened the program by welcoming guests and thanking hosts David and Margaret Mgrublian. "This event is a celebration of the amazing work done throughout the year by the Armenian Assembly of America," stated SCRC Member Margaret Mgrublian. "Against all odds, the Assembly is steadfast in making sure that the survival of Armenia and Karabagh are safeguarded. It's a pleasure to host this event, where we can get together in a fun, relaxed atmosphere and enjoy the accomplishments of the past year."

Executive Director Bryan Ardouny provided a recap of the Armenian Assembly's activities over the past year, such as testimony before three different congressional

**"Against all odds, the Assembly is steadfast in making sure that the survival of Armenia and Karabagh are safeguarded."**

–Margaret Mgrublian

committees that focused on US policies in the South Caucasus, aid to Armenia and Artsakh, Turkey and Azerbaijan's ongoing blockades, and Armenians at risk in the Middle East, among other key issues.

Ardouny emphasized the Assembly's Terjenian-Thomas Summer Internship in Washington, DC and the importance the Assembly places on training the next generation of community leaders. He then recognized several intern alumni in attendance and asked them to connect and reengage the alumni network through the Assembly's Intern Alumni Facebook page.

Then, Ardouny talked about the Assembly's efforts with respect to the Armenian Orphan Rug and announced that Sen. Edward Markey (D-MA) recently sent a letter to President Barack Obama on this matter at the Assembly's urging. Last month, the Assembly displayed the Armenian Orphan "Sister Rug" at the Armenian Cultural Foundation in Boston, Massachusetts. Markey's letter comes as more than 30 Members of Congress also weighed in with the White House urging release of the iconic carpet.

Finally, Ardouny discussed a new project the Assembly has been working on regarding the upcoming centennial of the Armenian Genocide and shared the contents with those present.



## COMMUNITY NEWS

# Saying Yes in Armenia And the Diaspora

Ayo, from page 5

instruments and musicology, she is the daughter of Rev. Hovhan Khoja-Eynatyan, pastor of the St. James Armenian Church in Evanston, Ill., and the founder and director of the NAREK Handbell Choir. Her mother was a diplomat in Armenia's Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Khoja-Eynatyan became involved with a FAR volunteer program during her experience in 2011 with Birthright Armenia. "That experience opened my ravenous hunger to learn more about the current realities of my homeland," she related. She volunteered at Yerevan's Children's Center, an exceptional and unique FAR project where she taught music for two months.

"My musical life and my 'other' life in Ayo! are driven by the same passion – to make deep connections that matter with others. Both definitely seek to make a tangible difference in the lives of the most vulnerable members of Armenian society, and to empower youth in Armenia to strive for the future that they deserve," Khoja-Eynatyan said with obvious emotion.

Anmeghikyan pointed out that one of the most severe problems facing Armenia for several years now has been the large number of people leaving the country for opportunities abroad. "We must overcome this, not only for the future of our country, but also because of the 'brain drain' which is depleting the country of its most able and skilled," said Anmeghikyan, whose father is an engineer and his mother a painter and director of the Cultural Center in Gumri. "Even in countries much worse off than Armenia, this problem is not so serious. We

must show that we choose to stay in Armenia and make positive changes. Our kids must grow up here. We see our future in Armenia and with Armenia," he emphasized.

Like Anmeghikyan, Khoja-Eynatyan is also upset about the number of people who leave Armenia every year. "There are many young people who are staying in Armenia, but are not given needed opportunities," she pointed out. "It is essential that they give themselves the chance to excel by creating the country that they deserve – with the help of the diaspora."

Anmeghikyan explained that one of the reasons for this massive emigration might be that people have lost trust in the future. "There is very slow development – politically, economically and regionally. In order to make small changes, one doesn't have to be a superhero."

As an example, he noted that buying a Braille printer for a school where 100 youngsters study with visual impairments, can help future generations to become literate. "This is a small change that can result in a huge benefit. Our aim is to find local solutions for local challenges in Armenia, by young people in Armenia with the help of the Fund for Armenian Relief."

And some of these local solutions can go a long way. Book and poetry readings and dance performances presented by enthusiastic young people have brought about remarkable results. A fundraiser held at the offices of the Armenian NGO Prkutyun, which works with young and handicapped children, helped to raise 30,000 drams towards installing an elevator in the Gavar Special School for 70 disabled children near Lake Sevan. Currently, teachers and vol-



Students at Special School for visually impaired children which will receive a Braille printer.

unteers have to carry some of the wheelchair-bound students and those with other special needs, up and down the two flights several times a day. There are many such schools in Armenia with similar circumstances.

Another Ayo! event was held at the Bureaucrat Bookstore in Yerevan to raise awareness about Ayo!'s campaign for equal education. Young people and children, as well as poets and artists, read their poems during the event to help raise money to purchase a Braille printer for a special school in Yerevan, which serves 100 blind or visually impaired children.

With a curriculum that changes frequently, many children fall behind without proper access to the proper materials. This printer will enable the school to produce its own books at little or no cost.

It is through FAR that these and other projects which also include the purchase of defibrillators for hospitals in the Tavush Marz, will be actually realized. FAR handles the budgeting, shipping and installation of these necessities with donors making it possible.

For more information or to help a project, visit the Ayo! website ([www.weareayo.org](http://www.weareayo.org)).

## AGBU YP of Boston Christmas Party Sets Fundraising Record

CAMBRIDGE, Mass. – On Friday, January 10, the AGBU Young Professionals of Boston held the fourth annual Armenian Christmas Party Fundraiser at Nubar in Cambridge's historic Sheraton Commander Hotel.

The event is now known as AGBU YP Boston's signature event and Armenian young professionals from Boston as well as other parts of the northeast attended the holiday festivities.

ceeds benefiting Syrian Armenian relief as well.

The Christmas party was officially YP Boston's most successful event for a number of reasons. The fundraiser was the group's best attended event to date and, thanks to everyone who donated, YP Boston set a new fundraising record, pledging \$1,500 to AGBU's Syria Emergency Relief Fund.

The current AGBU YP Boston Steering Committee is composed of Chairperson Irina Nanagoulian, Vice Chair Laura Michael, Secretary Charlie Larkin, Treasurer Haik Diloyan and committee members Areg Bagdasarian, Julie Fabbrucci, Narine Karepetyan, Chris Mensoian, Alex Merian and Nicole Meregian. YP Boston is also recruiting new committee members and interested parties should email [ypboston@gmail.com](mailto:ypboston@gmail.com).

The group is in the midst of planning several upcoming events as well.

There will be a networking happy hour scheduled for 7:30 p.m. on Thursday, February 6 at Beat Hotel in Cambridge.

For more information about the chapter, volunteer opportunities or donations find AGBU YP Boston on Facebook or contact the committee directly via email or at <http://agbuypboston.webs.com>. For further information regarding AGBU's Syria Emergency Fund, visit <http://www.agbu.org/syriahumanitarianrelief/>.



AGBU Young Professionals of Boston Steering Committee

Guests enjoyed appetizers and cocktails in the bar and lounge area of Nubar, all while supporting an urgent cause.

This year, given the dire circumstances in Syria, the young professionals chose to raise funds for AGBU's Syria Emergency Relief Fund. This is not the first time YP Boston has fundraised for such an important cause. Last year the group partnered with the Armenian American Social Club in Watertown to hold a charity dinner with pro-

### Donation

Alice Nigoghosian of Dearborn, Mich., has donated \$100 to the *Armenian Mirror-Spectator* in support of its work.

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## COMMUNITY NEWS

## Dr. Razmik Panossian to Discuss Gulbenkian Foundation's Future Plans in Talk at NAASR

BELMONT, Mass. — Members of the community are invited to a special presentation by Dr. Razmik Panossian on Thursday, February 13, at 7:30 p.m. at the National Association for Armenian Studies and Research (NAASR), 395 Concord Ave. The lecture is co-sponsored by the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation and NAASR.

Panossian's talk will center on the Armenian Communities Department of the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation's plan for 2014-2018. Launched in December 2013, the plan is based on the department's mission "to create a viable future for the Armenian people in which its culture and language are preserved and valued." It is structured around the four priority areas which are crucial in fulfilling that mission: promoting the preservation of Armenian language and culture through education, supporting Armenia by investing in its youth and civil society, helping to improve Armenian-Turkish relations and preserving the Armenian literary heritage.

Panossian is director of the Armenian Communities Department at the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation, headquartered in Lisbon, Portugal. He is the author of the critically-acclaimed book, *The Armenians: From Kings and Priests to Merchants and Commissars* (Columbia University Press, 2006) and various other academic publications on Armenian identity, politics, and diaspora. He was the director of Policy, Programmes and Planning at the Montreal-based International Centre for Human Rights and Democratic Development (2004-2010), and has worked for UNDP in New York as an international consultant (2011-12). He obtained his PhD from the London School of Economics and Political Science in 2000, where he also taught.



Dr. Razmik Panossian

More information about Panossian's talk may be had by e-mailing [hq@naasr.org](mailto:hq@naasr.org), or writing to NAASR, 395 Concord Ave., Belmont, MA 02478.

## AESA President Yardemian Appointed To LA County Vector Control District

LOS ANGELES — On the recommendation of Supervisor Michael D. Antonovich, the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors appointed Armenian Engineers and Scientists' Association (AESA) President Vasken Yardemian a member of the Greater Los Angeles County Vector Control District at its meeting held December 10, 2013. He was sworn in by taking the oath of office at his first meeting on January 9.

The Greater Los Angeles County Vector Control District (GLACVCD) is an independent special district, enabled and empowered to act as a public health agency as a result of legislation incorporated in the California State Health and Safety Code. The District serves approximately 6 million residents in a 1,330-square-mile area making GLACVCD the largest vector control district in Los Angeles County.

The District's governing power is vested in the Board of Trustees, which is comprised of 35 members. One trustee is appointed by each of the 34 cities and the County Board of Supervisors appoints one to represent unincorporated areas of Los Angeles County. As a board member, Yardemian's responsibilities will include setting policy, establishing the budget, approving expenditures, and retaining legal counsel. He will serve a two-year term without compensation representing Los Angeles County. "I am honored and excited to have been appointed by Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors to serve this Board" Yardemian said. "I believe my educational background and professional experience will enable me to make a genuine contribution to GLACVCD".

Yardemian is the incoming President of the Armenian Engineers and Scientists of America (AESA) for the year 2014. He is a Senior Environmental Engineer with the South Coast Air Quality Management District, one of the nation's premier environmental agencies.



Vasken Yardemian

## Bay State Pastor Called to Pulpit of California's Oldest Armenian Church

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Haigazian University in Beirut. She was teaching kindergarten in the Bekaa Valley town of Anjar and helping lead her church's youth ministry. Haroutunian and Sossi were married in Anjar in July 1999 and they now have three children, Mark, Ani and Alexan.

On April 15, 2013, the Haroutunian Family was situated across Boylston Street when bombs detonated at the finish line of the Boston Marathon. Haroutunian later wrote: "Peace in the midst of terror and trauma is inexplicable, however, we experienced the assurance of the Holy Spirit, that He, the Sovereign One, not a bomber decides when we 'come home.' We were absolutely safe in His hands."

Founded on July 25, 1897, First Armenian Presbyterian Church is the boyhood congregation of authors William Saroyan and A.I. Bezzerides. FAPC is a member congregation of the Evangelical Presbyterian Church and Armenian Evangelical Union of North America.


## Reporter Wanted

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## COMMUNITY NEWS

# AGBU Scholarship Program Distributes Over \$1.1 Million in 2013-2014 Academic Year

## FUNDS SUPPORT HUNDREDS OF PERFORMING ARTS, RELIGIOUS STUDIES AND INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS AROUND THE WORLD

NEW YORK – As the fall semester comes to a close, university students worldwide are enjoying the benefits of the AGBU scholarships that help to make their educations possible. For the 2013-2014 academic year, the AGBU Scholarship Program distributed more than \$1.1 million internationally, of which \$400,000 was awarded to 100 students studying in the US. These scholarships are supporting more than 400 undergraduate and graduate students at top-ranking schools in nearly 35 countries, including those focusing on performing arts and religious studies.

An AGBU scholarship provides students with more than financial assistance. It signals they are part of a global community that recognizes their talents. For Monika Manisak, a Turkish citizen in



After completing her bachelor's degree at Ege University in Turkey, Monika Manisak hopes to one day teach at her Armenian high school in Istanbul.

her senior year at Izmir's Ege University, this is especially significant. She noted, "What I appreciate most is that AGBU awards aid to all Armenians irrespective of their nationality. With my scholarship, I can put aside funds to take summer courses at the Armenian Association for Academic Partnership and Support in Yerevan and collaborate with academics from around the globe who share my passion for our cultural identity." After obtaining her BA in American Culture and Literature, Manisak hopes to teach at her alma mater, the Getronagan Armenian High School in Istanbul.

Rima Karapetyan, a law student at Leiden University in the Netherlands, intends to join Armenia's Ministry of Foreign Affairs after she completes her Public International Law Program. Karapetyan was accepted to the program in 2012, but was forced to decline due to financial constraints. This year, with her AGBU scholarship, she was able to take advantage of the opportunity.



An AGBU scholarship allows Rima Karapetyan to attend Leiden University in the Netherlands, where she is receiving her LL.M before returning to Armenia to work for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Next year, she, along with a select few graduates of the Diplomatic School of Armenia, plans to begin working at the ministry.

As some students prepare to enter public service, recipients of the AGBU Performing Arts Fellowship are finding themselves in the spotlight. Aram Ohanian, an opera singer studying at the Bern University of Arts in Switzerland, will soon perform with the renowned La Cetra vocal ensemble in the city of Basel, as well as in Amsterdam. Ohanian began collaborating with the group two years ago at the Schola Cantorum Basiliensis, where he first received AGBU funding. Producing and singing in operas "requires a great degree of discipline and a very strict and organized schedule," Ohanian noted. "If I didn't have my AGBU scholarship, I don't know how I would meet those demands. With AGBU's assistance, I'm able to pursue my MA in specialized music performance while making a name for myself in this field."

On the other side of the globe, Vardan Gasparyan, a Yerevan native and student at The Colburn Conservatory in California, is another rising artist who has caught the attention of industry leaders. For two consecutive summers, Gasparyan has attended the Kneisel Hall Music Festival in Maine, which is led by teachers from the Juilliard School. At those festivals, and others, he plays the cello that the conservatory has loaned him while he saves up to purchase his own instrument – something he says he could never do without AGBU's assistance. In 2012, the young cellist joined fellow AGBU scholarship recipients on stage at Carnegie



A Swiss production of "Le Huron" stars opera singer Aram Ohanian, who is pursuing an MA in Specialized Music Performance with an AGBU scholarship.

Hall's Weill Recital Hall for the AGBU New York Special Events Committee's Annual Performing Artists in Concert, which benefits performing arts initiatives.

Whether the AGBU is supporting their work on stage or on the silver screen, all scholarship recipients are committed to keeping the Armenian culture alive. Martiros Vartanov, a film and television master's student at the University of California, Los Angeles, is currently producing a short documentary in Armenian, a rarity in his department. His AGBU scholarship allows him to focus more deeply on his studies and immediately had a positive impact on the quality of his projects. In recent years, Vartanov organized a tribute to William Saroyan at the Beverly Hills Film Festival in California, and curated the world's first joint retrospective of Armenian masters Sergei Paradjanov and Mikhail Vartanov at Korea's Busan International Film Festival, the largest in Asia.

Award-winning composer Arpine Kalinina is also introducing Armenian artists to diverse audiences. Now a master's student at the London Royal Academy of Music, for several years Kalinina was the artistic director of the classical ensemble she founded, Kantegh, which performs within and outside of Armenia. During that time, she earned a number of honors, notably the Russian Federation's "Triumph" award for highest achievement in art. This year, many of Kalinina's compositions will premiere across London, including a choir piece inspired by the Armenian poet Yeghishe Charents.



Martiros Vartanov, a Film and Television MFA student at the University of California, Los Angeles, joins William Saroyan's granddaughter Cream Kate Saroyan and actor Jon Voight during the Beverly Hills Film Festival. Vartanov organized a tribute to William Saroyan at the festival.

The AGBU Scholarship Program, along with other institutions, has played a critical role in allowing Kalinina to showcase her work. "For the past two years, I was offered a spot at the academy but didn't have the financial means to attend," she remarks. "Now, I am training under world-renowned professionals and honing my skills in conducting and orchestration, as well as compositions rooted in traditional Armenian music."

While Kalinina preserves Armenia's musical heritage, religious studies students are examining ways the Christian Armenian faith has endured throughout history. AGBU Religious Studies Fellowship recipient Donna Rizk is a PhD candidate at the King's College London Department of Theology and Religious Studies. She is studying a Christian text that has been dated to the 10th century, but which she believes is actually from as early as the fifth century and has influenced the Armenian creed. Rizk has her sights set on using her AGBU scholarship to conduct future research at the St. Nersess Armenian Seminary in New York.

Rizk would be able to share ideas with a number of AGBU scholarship recipients who are already enrolled at St. Nersess. They are the future leaders of the Armenian Church, though for now they are enjoying their studies and expressing gratitude to those who have contributed to the AGBU Scholarship Program. Kathryn Ashbahian, who is working toward her MA in Theology



AGBU Performing Arts Fellowship recipient Vardan Gasparyan plays a 1926 Carl Becker cello that was lent to him by The Colburn Conservatory. With AGBU's support, he is saving funds to purchase his own instrument.

and Youth Ministry, reflected, "I feel fortunate every day because I can focus exclusively on my studies and my work at the Diocese [of the Armenian Church of America (Eastern)] without worrying about how I will cover tuition and support myself. The individuals who so graciously give these financial gifts have lifted a huge weight off my shoulders. The generosity of the AGBU community, and the Armenian American community as a whole, is a blessing – one that is simply unparalleled."

For almost a century, the AGBU Scholarship Program has championed the higher education of thousands of promising young Armenians enrolled in leading college and universities around the world. Financed through endowment funds established by generous AGBU donors since the 1920s, the AGBU Scholarship Program has contributed to the academic achievements of gifted young Armenians, offering financial assistance to full-time students of Armenian descent from close to 40 countries across six continents.





## COMMUNITY NEWS

# Armenian Volunteer Corps Expands Volunteer Possibilities

YEREVAN – For 14 years, Armenian Volunteer Corps (AVC) has been customizing job placements for some 550 global volunteers aged 21 and up in Armenia. AVC volunteers have hailed from the four corners of the world – 34 countries to date – with the oldest so far a dynamic 72 years old.

AVC and Birthright Armenia are sister organizations, housed within the same office suite in downtown Yerevan, both steadfast on casting a wide net to attract as many volunteers to Armenia as

serve in a job placement of their own choosing. Internships are available in a wide variety of sectors and organizations, including business, education, environment, arts and culture, finance, health, governmental and non-governmental agencies. In addition to internship placements, AVC provides all logistical support from airport pick-up, to host-family living arrangements, Armenian language classes and more.

• AVC's Professional Corps program is designed for more

mature, working professionals, over the age of 32, with a minimum of five years' work experience and a desire to share their expertise and make a difference in Armenia. Professional Corps allows for a minimum stay of two weeks accommodating those with tight vacation schedules, with the option to stay on for up to one year. Volunteers work in their designated field of expertise for 20 hours per week, which allows time for in-country exploration, excursions, and socializing during their stay.

• For the more adventurous traveler looking for an alternative to yet another beach vacation, AVC is set to launch a Voluntourism program, a new initiative designed to attract more international tourists to experience the hidden Armenia. Starting this summer, AVC will offer a 10-14 day, all-inclusive, packaged trip to Armenia that combines unique tourism activities with

rewarding volunteer community service projects. There are so many still untouched areas in Armenia that offer great ecotourism within walking distance to historic sites, in rural areas with unique opportunities to do rewarding volunteer work. Please stay tuned, as the combo packages will be advertised later this winter on global internet sites and the AVC web site.

To learn more about Armenian Volunteer Corp visit [www.armenianvolunteer.org](http://www.armenianvolunteer.org).



I passed the bar and wanted international law experience. I did it in Armenia.

Volunteer Gabe Armas

possible. Whereas Birthright Armenia's mission is designed for the 20-32 age bracket and only those of Armenian heritage, the eligibility criteria to volunteer through AVC is much broader. In fact, AVC runs three programs, none of which require participants to be Armenian:

• AVC's Volunteer Corps invites volunteers 21 and older, of all backgrounds from across the globe, to volunteer in Armenia for a minimum stay of one month up to a maximum of one year, to

## Armenian National Institute Website Sees One Million More Hits in 2013

WASHINGTON – With the continuing expansion of the information on the Armenian Genocide available on the Armenian National Institute (ANI) website, a marked increase in the number of visitors was registered this past year, jumping by one million hits, and growing the site from two million to close to three million hits in 2013.

Public and scholarly interest is clearly registering with ever growing utilization of ANI materials. Both in anticipation of heightened worldwide interest as the centennial approaches in 2015 and as a result of increasing Turkish openness on the subject of the Armenian Genocide, ANI has been preparing major resources and making them available to the public, to support educators, to encourage researchers, and to assist Armenian community efforts.

In March 2013, ANI, along with, the Armenian Genocide Museum of America (AGMA), and the Armenian Assembly of America, issued a digital exhibit titled "Witness to the Armenian Genocide: Photographs of the Perpetrators' German and Austro-Hungarian Allies." The 10-poster set included an introductory page, a detailed timeline, a color-coded map geographically matching the photographs with their location, and seven pages displaying 34 captioned historic photographs depicting the deportations, massacres, and concentration camps. Since its release, more than 75,000 copies have been downloaded. Additional downloadable exhibits will be made available, and as with the 2013 digital and printable exhibit, they will be distributed free of charge.

As part of its ongoing program to promote the teaching of genocide and human rights and the lessons of the Armenian Genocide, in early 2013 ANI announced the release by Routledge publishers of the fourth edition of *Centuries of Genocide: Essays and Eyewitness Accounts*, the genocide and human rights studies textbook widely used in college and high school courses. This new edition addresses examples of genocides perpetrated in the 19th, 20th and 21st centuries. The chapter on the Armenian Genocide, which has appeared since the first edition of the publication, is authored by ANI Director Dr. Rouben Adalian. More than 50,000 copies of the publication have been sold over the years.

This publication was followed by the release of the online and print versions of the second edition of the *Encyclopedia of Race and Racism* issued by Macmillan Reference, a major publisher of educational materials, to which Adalian contributed an entry on the Armenian Genocide. The article appears in a section dedicated to Genocide and Crimes Against Humanity that includes entries, among others, on the Assyrian Massacre, Bosnia, Cambodia, Japanese Occupation, Mayan Genocide in Guatemala, Rwanda and Sudan.

As part of its continuing service to educators and to coincide with the release of *Centuries of Genocide*, ANI expanded its "Resource Guide" and other sections of the "Education" component of the ANI website. Dozens of resources were selected for their instructional value and are listed for the benefit of students and teachers. ANI also expanded the database it maintains on Armenian Genocide memorials.

ANI also introduced a new section to its website documenting the extent of "Press Coverage" and discussion of the Armenian Genocide over the course of the past decade. As part of this expansion, the section documenting the growing trend of international affirmation of the Armenian Genocide was also updated.

The "Affirmation" section of the website reflects municipal, state, and federal level recognitions from around the world. With 174 official documents posted supporting the record of affirmation by 43 of the United States, another 50 posted official enactments attest to the extent of international affirmation of the Armenian Genocide with 21 countries formally on record. To facilitate navigation of the growing list of international recognitions, a summary page listing the countries in alphabetical order is provided.

Continuing its services, ANI, in coordination with AGMA and the Assembly, is preparing to issue by April 2014 a major new online exhibit on the Armenian Genocide featuring extensive new photographic and documentary evidence.

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American University of Armenia

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For more information, visit [summer2014.aua.am](http://summer2014.aua.am)

# Arts & Living

## Jazz Star Datevik Dazzles in Concert At Diocesan Center

By Florence Avakian

NEW YORK – It was a performance to remember and relish, as renowned jazz artist Datevik Hovanesian thrilled the more than 400 members of the audience gathered for her concert sponsored by St. Vartan Armenian Cathedral on Friday, January 17.

Welcoming the crowd, Angela Kazarian briefly detailed the background of the singer, who also is a well-known educator, recording artist and arranger specializing in ethnic and folk music. As the band members – musicians Bob Albanese on piano, Joe Fitzgerald on bass, and David Meade on drums – started the evening with a catchy Brazilian Bossa Nova number, the large audience was already moving to the beat.

Albanese, in his introduction, paid tribute to the universal language of music, and called Datevik, “a profound, inimitable artist who changes you,” as she entered the stage to thunderous applause. Acknowledging the warm reception, she emotionally announced: “I’m going to share my heart to the very last drop,” which brought on another ovation.

Renowned for her unique way of melding Armenian folk songs with jazz, Datevik offered a group of memorable ethno-jazz numbers, including Sayat Nova’s reflective *Oosdi goo kas*, the caressing *Hovarek* and the lilting *Es aroon* (The Creek). In a duet with drummer David Meade, she sang a rousing Armenian dance song that Meade called “Afro-Armenian,” which had the audience moving in time to the distinctive rhythms.

In addition to the ethno-jazz numbers, Datevik sang Bossa Nova compositions by the great Antonio Carlos Jobim, and the popular standard *It Don’t Mean a Thing (If It Ain’t Got That Swing)*. In a duet with the pianist, she performed one of her signature songs, the pensive and romantic *You Must Believe in Spring*, which brought down the house. For her last number, *Arevelyan bar*, her movements flowed to the nuances of the music, and the audience clapped in unison to the beat.

With the audience cheering and clapping rhythmically for several minutes, she presented an encore, *Chem gernah khaghah*, to a standing ovation lasting several minutes.

At times during her performance, her tonal inflections resembled orchestral instruments. Datevik showed herself to be a seasoned professional in every sense, with seamless phrasing and timing, singing in perfect harmony with her masterful band.

Bernard and Claudia Perreto, two of many non-Armenians in the audience, commented: “It was an unforgettable musical experience. Datevik’s persona exudes vibrant, intoxicatingly rhythmic energy. Her vocal acuity and scat see DATEVIK, page 11



Datevik Hovanesian performs at the Diocesan Center.



reddit co-founder Alexis Ohanian’s entrepreneurial advice? Be tenacious.

## Internet Pioneer Ohanian Has New Book

TORONTO (*Globe and Mail*) – Alexis Ohanian’s resumé reads a bit differently from that of most 30-year-olds.

He was a dishwasher at Pizza Hut. He was a parking booth attendant.

And then, fresh out of university, he co-founded a website which made him a millionaire at age 23.

By Joel Eastwood

“I’m the first to admit that an amount of serendipity goes into that,” said Ohanian, reflecting on his success.

Ohanian started social news site reddit.com with his University of Virginia roommate Steve Huffman in 2005. Sixteen months later, the pair sold the site to media giant Condé Naste for a reported \$20 million.

But Ohanian doesn’t chalk his success up to pure luck.

“Another significant part of it is the kind of work that goes into dealing with the setbacks, dealing with the failures – the kind of tenacity, the sort of relentlessness, that really, I feel, makes up a lot of what makes a company successful or not,” Ohanian said.

The Internet entrepreneur imparted his wisdom to a packed auditorium at the University of Toronto Monday night. The event marked the start of the second leg of a North American tour promoting Ohanian’s new book, *Without Their Permission: How the 21st Century Will Be Made, Not Managed*.

Part-autobiography, part-pep-talk, the book charts reddit’s rise from a dorm-room idea to the self-proclaimed front page of the Internet.

Readers on the social news site vote on the articles, photos and videos they like, creating aggregate lists of the most popular content on the web. In the last month alone, more than 100 million people visited reddit from around the world, viewing more than five billion pages on the site.

Celebrities and politicians, including US President Barack Obama and Canadian astronaut Chris Hadfield, have hosted crowd-sourced interviews on the site’s popular “Ask Me Anything” section, answering questions posed by the community.

Ohanian pointed to charity drives conducted on reddit and crowd-funding campaigns on websites like Kickstarter as examples of how the Internet empowers individuals to reach a massive audience.

“You don’t need anyone’s permission to start doing this stuff,” Ohanian said Monday night to the roughly 300-strong crowd.

His advice to the fledgling entrepreneurs in the audience was wide and varied.

Learn to write computer code, Ohanian said, calling it “the most valuable skill of the century.”

“Ideas are totally worthless,” he said, stressing instead that execution is everything.

Don’t be afraid to fail, Ohanian said, and don’t feel like you have to know every see OHANIAN, page 11



## Arthur Halvajian Memorial Poetry Competition Accepts Entries

WARWICK, R.I. – With just over one month left to the entry deadline, the Armenian Students Association of America, Inc. (ASA Inc.) is looking forward to announcing the winners of the fourth annual Arthur Halvajian Memorial Armenian Poetry Competition. The competition is sponsored by the ASA Inc. and is being organized in collaboration with the Armenian Poetry Project.

“We are happy to continue our support of the Armenian Poetry Project in honor of Arthur Halvajian who first built our relationship with the Project,” said Brian Assadourian, chairman of the ASA, Inc. Board of Trustees. “We are encouraged by the hundreds of individuals from elementary and high school students to college students and post-graduates who participate in the competition. Their involvement shows that the Armenian community continues to value and promote the creative writing which has been a hallmark of the rich cultural tradition of the Armenian nation throughout the centuries.”

Halvajian was a longtime member and trustee of the ASA, Inc., and passed away in 2010.

The Armenian Poetry Project, led by Lola Koundakjian, is a research and documentation site of 19th- to 21st-century Armenian poets and poetry. Whether it is through its website/blog, Facebook, or iTunes presence – which features podcasts of recited works – the project brings together writers.

All residents of the United States and Canada are invited to submit their work, in English or Armenian (preferred) for the competition. Entries should be e-mailed to [ArmenianPoetryProject@gmail.com](mailto:ArmenianPoetryProject@gmail.com) with the subject heading “Halvajian ASA/APP Poetry competition.” Individuals may only submit one poem for the competition.

The competition groups submissions into three categories; students (ages 12-17), college age (ages 18-22), and adult (ages 23 and older). A top prize will be awarded for each of the categories in the amounts of \$50 (students), \$100 (college age) and \$250 (adult).

Each poem submitted must be accompanied by the authors full name, age, home address/telephone number, school name, and sponsoring teacher’s telephone number. Those in the college age category need not include a sponsoring teacher. Those in the adult category need not include school information.

To learn more about the Armenian Poetry Project visit <http://armenian-poetry.blogspot.com>.

The deadline for submissions is February 28. Competition winners will be announced in March.

## Documentary on Ararat Climb to Be Shown at Ararat-Eskijian Museum

MISSION HILLS, Calif. – The documentary “Ararat Dream Team 2013,” will be presented at Ararat-Eskijian Museum-Sheen Chapel on February 2, at 4 p.m.

A talk and reception will follow the program.

Mount Ararat is the tallest mountain located in historical Armenia.

An inactive volcano capped year round with ice and snow, reaches 5,165 meters. Mount Ararat has fascinated mountaineers ever since Khachadour Abovian climbed it in 1829. The film captures the team’s spectacular climb to Mount Ararat, their pilgrimage to Ani, Akhtamar and will share their challenges and rewarding experience.

For more information contact the Ararat-Eskijian Museum at [ararat-eskijian-museum@netzero.net](mailto:ararat-eskijian-museum@netzero.net)



## ARTS &amp; LIVING

# Toronto Symphony Offers New Treats for 2014-15 Season

By Robert Harris

TORONTO (*Globe and Mail*) – The financial fortunes of major contemporary arts institutions are like phases of the moon, constantly waxing and waning. These days, the Toronto Symphony Orchestra is somewhat on the wane. With capacity at its concerts last season below 80 percent, ticket revenue down 10 percent or so (although fundraising is up), the TSO feels like an organization that needs a shot in the arm to move it out of its current trajectory.

It's possible the TSO's 2014-15 season, announced Thursday, may be the beginning of that turnaround.

The problem in recent years has not been the quality of the orchestra – it keeps getting better and better. If there is an identifiable lack, it's been the imaginative brio behind the orchestra's programming. Too many warhorses, not enough originality in presentation, too much of the same old, same old – even when it's beautifully offered.

To be fair, the TSO presents between 40 and 50 different concert programs over a season (more than 100 performing occasions in all), so not everything can be original. But along with the old standbys of Rachmaninoff symphonies and Berlioz's *Roman Carnival Overtures*, the 2014-15 season will also offer some tasty, unfamiliar treats.

In February, the orchestra will be presenting a two-week Piano Extravaganza hosted/curated by famed pianist Emanuel Ax (which will spill over to the Royal Conservatory's Koerner Hall as well). Over eight concerts (and assorted free events), we will see Ax and Canadian wunderkind Jan Lisiecki perform a Mozart double concerto, for instance. Or Ax and Stewart Goodyear and Anagnoson & Kinton performing the piano originals of famous pieces eventually transcribed for orchestra, along with the orchestral versions – such as Brahms's *Haydn Variations* and Ravel's *La Valse*. Clever, interesting, different.

The orchestra's annual Mozart@whenever Festival will be given a new twist, being guest curated by Les Violons du Roy's Bernard Labadie. We'll be hearing fragments of pieces Mozart wrote over his short life but long career. We'll hear a concert of works by Leopold Mozart and Peter Schickele. We'll hear Mozart's *A Musical Joke* – a fresh stroll over familiar territory. The annual New Creations Festival has a true contemporary star at its heart – British composer George Benjamin,



Soprano Isabel Bayrakdarian

bringing his acclaimed chamber opera "Written on Skin" with him, starring famed Canadian soprano Barbara Hannigan (who will be performing at each New Creations concert). There will be a series of five concerts featuring a local

favorite visitor, conductor Thomas Dausgaard, along with Jan Lisiecki again, pairing the music of Danish composer Carl Nielsen with that of Beethoven and Mozart. Lisiecki will play the final three Beethoven concertos as part of the series.

These are just the kind of concerts that pull a night at the symphony out of the ordinary and into the charmed circle of "events."

And there are other highlights in the TSO season. The orchestra will embark on its first European tour in a decade, to several summer festivals this August. It's getting a new Steinway piano (a bigger deal for an orchestra than you might suspect). Canadian soloists from Ben Heppner to Isabel Bayrakdarian will be appearing with the orchestra (Heppner in Elgar's *Dream of Gerontius*, Bayrakdarian in an Armenian program). Andrew Davis will present a three-concert series celebrating his 40th consecutive year on a TSO stage. Superstar pianist Valentina Lisitsa (probably the first classical artist to make her reputation, Bieber-style, on YouTube)

will be playing Rachmaninoff. Joshua Bell will highlight the opening gala. The score to *Fantasia* will be played live as the movie is shown in HD.

Will all this be enough to change the phases of the artistic moon for the TSO and move it back to the positive? Hard to say. But this much is clear. In today's competitive, frenzied hunt for the entertainment consumer's dollar, it's not enough to create fine music. You have to create buzz.



Toronto Symphony conductor Peter Oundjian

## Jazz Star Datevik Dazzles in Concert at Diocesan Center in NY

DATEVIK, from page 10

singing are sublime, and lend perfectly to her ethnic jazz style. Above all, it's Datevik's love of music that sent us home feeling that she gave us a memorable musical gift."

Another attendee gushed: "A recording of the show would be worth having for the ages."

Born in Yerevan, Datevik comes from a family of musicians. Her mother, Ophelia Hambartsumian, is a legendary master of folk songs. Her father, Norair Hovanesian, is a renowned *kemancha* player. And her elder brother, Hovanes, is a classical violinist and devotee of jazz.

"He was always listening to Brazilian jazz tunes, which were hits at the time," she said in an interview. "The Bossa Nova moved me. It was a big challenge for me since I like dealing with difficulties. In fact, Armenia has always been big on jazz, with Armenia's first jazz band performing in 1930," she said.

Making her first recording at age 11 with Harold Arlen's *It's Only a Paper Moon*, Datevik

continued her musical education in conducting, and at age 19 went on performance tours in Europe, Asia, Africa and the US – always making sure that she was recognized as an Armenian.

"It didn't take long for me to feel and understand that jazz music would become my lifelong companion," she said.

By 1979, she had earned the title of "First Lady of Jazz in the Soviet Union," a title she kept for nine years. Coming to America to expand her knowledge of jazz and to work on creating her unique style of Armenian ethnic jazz, Datevik forged an illustrious career, becoming a celebrated jazz performer.

Collaborating with Larry Willis, she made her first US recording, "Ballads from the Black Sea." In the liner notes Datevik remarked: "The group of songs on this CD are an eruption of my soul, caused by my cup filling up drop by drop, and finally running over. Although I am a jazz singer, I have not forgotten or become detached from my Armenian roots for one

minute. The Armenian folk song has always been a major influence on me." In fact, it was Datevik who introduced Armenian folk music to the great jazz pianist Armen Donelian, with whom she often performs.

Datevik's impressive background includes five solo albums, performances in the most celebrated concert halls in more than 30 countries on every continent, with accolades pouring forth in the most prestigious American and international newspapers and magazines.

Pierre Sprey, president of Mapleshade Record Productions, has called Datevik "a rich new jazz voice of superb musicianship – earthy and passionate and swinging – which proves that soul and jazz know no boundaries."

George Avakian, the legendary jazz producer, who produced Datevik's "Listen to My Heart" compact disc, has called her the "finest voice I've heard in a quarter of a century." And famed French-Armenian composer and pianist Michel Le Grande has said: "Listen to the heart of Armenia. Listen to Datevik."

## Internet Pioneer Ohanian Has New Book

OHANIAN, from page 10

thing. He said when they started reddit, he had no idea what he was doing – and said he still doesn't. If someone tells you they have it all figured out, Ohanian said, "they're either lying or delusional."

Since selling reddit, Ohanian has been involved with a number of other Internet companies, including travel planner Hipmunk and self-publishing enterprise Breadpig.

As he signed books after his talk at U of T, Ohanian said he was inundated with pitches from students.

"They are telling me about the companies, not just that they want to start, but that they've already started," he said.

Joseph Orozco, executive director of U of T's Entrepreneurship Hatchery, a program devoted to encouraging campus start-ups, said Ohanian was an example for students to aspire to.

"Entrepreneurship is not about the genius. Entrepreneurship is about taking a decision and taking the risks now, when you're young," he said.

Orozco said the Hatchery was dedicated to providing engineering students with the tools and support to launch their own companies.

"We're also redefining entrepreneurship," Orozco said. "It's that individual that can acknowledge limited resources – and also uncertainty – and work in any organization."

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# Genocide Memoirs of Aram and Dirouhi Avedian Published

LOS ANGELES – *Defying Fate*, the fifth volume of The Genocide Library, was published this month in Los Angeles. It presents the memoirs of the late Aram and Dirouhi Avedian, who were survivors of the 1915 Genocide.

Dirouhi Cheomlekjian (later Avedian) was born circa 1907 in Izmit. In 1915, she and her family were deported by the Turkish government and marched to Der-Zor, Syria, “the mass grave of the Armenian people.” The only one to survive her family’s massacre in Al-Shaddadeh, Dirouhi was adopted by local Arabs. She grew up in the Syrian desert, where years later she met Aram Avedian, her future husband. After spending 13 years in near captivity, she escaped to Aleppo.

Aram Avedian was also born circa 1907, in the Armenian village of Tsitogh, near Erzurum. In 1914, his father froze

Aram and Dirouhi Avedian eventually moved to Los Angeles, where, in the late 1970s, they wrote down their individual memoirs, wishing to document their experiences of the Genocide and survival as testaments for future generations. The couple died within less than three months of each other: Dirouhi passed away in 1987; Aram in 1988.

The Avedians’ handwritten memoirs were later collected and edited by their daughter, Knar Manjikian, who also annotated the resulting volume, *Defying Fate*, and wrote its introduction. The text was translated into English by Ishkhan Jinbashian. “Whenever my mother spoke of the family members she had lost, she said all she wished was to see them in her dreams,” Manjikian writes.

Manjikian adds that after having lived among Arabs for so long and all but forgotten how to speak and write in Armenian, her parents relearned their mother tongue after the age of 20. They achieved this, she writes, by becoming avid readers of Armenian literature and Aleppo’s *Arevelk Daily*, while her mother further honed her Armenian by corresponding with her brother, who lived in Istanbul, and also thanks to her public service, as she went on to become a life-long member of the Armenian Relief Society.

In the foreword to *Defying Fate*, Hagop Manjikian writes: “Despite the sparseness

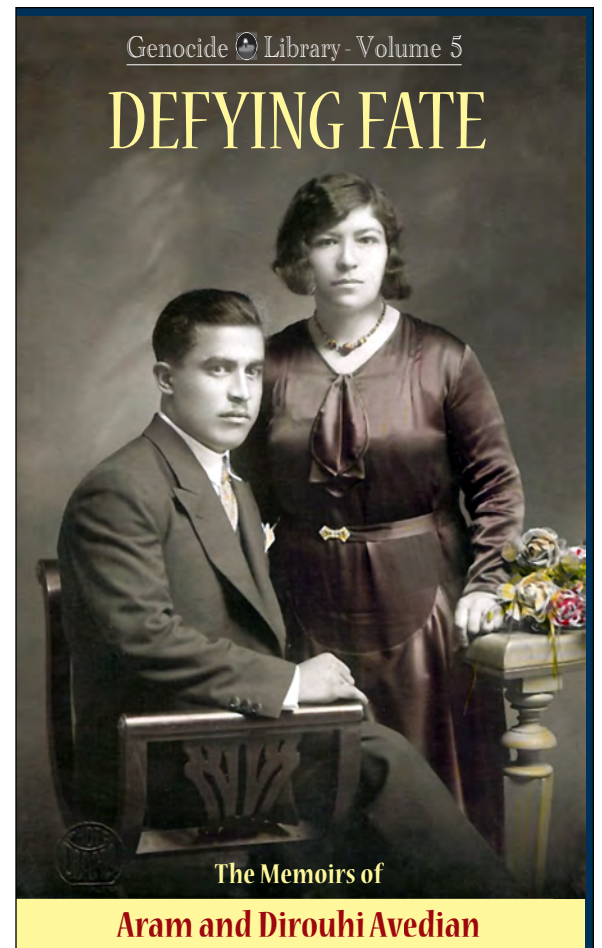
of [the Avedians’] writings and their humble designation by the authors as a ‘notebook’ and a ‘journal,’ respectively, we had no doubt that they deserved to be published as a full-fledged book, in keeping with our principle of favoring quality over quantity, substance over size, and depth over appearance.”

Copies of *Defying Fate* can be ordered in the United States by mailing a check to H. and K. Manjikian, 10844



The Avedian family in 1938, Aleppo

to death while serving in the Turkish army. At the onset of the Genocide, Aram and his family were exiled to the Syrian desert. After being marched for almost a year and witnessing the horrors of the deportation and massacres, Aram and his family reached Al-Raqqah, Syria, where the young boy was kidnapped by an Arab horseman. Aram, too, spent the next 13 years in the Syrian desert, among various Arab families, and he, too, ended up escaping to Aleppo.



Wrightwood Lane, Studio City, CA 91604.

The price of each copy, including shipping, is \$15.

#### About The Genocide Library

A project of H. and K. Manjikian Publications, The Genocide Library was established in 2005 by Hagop and Knar Manjikian with the goal of publishing key chronicles of the 1915 Genocide. Titles published to date include *Passage through Hell* by Armen Anush (first and second editions), *The Fatal Night* by Mikayel Shamtanchian, *Death March* by Shahen Derderian, *The Crime of the Ages* by Sebuhan Aguni, and *Defying Fate* by Aram and Dirouhi Avedian.

The Genocide Library’s next title is *Our Cross*, by M. Salpi (Aram Sahakian), slated to be published this year.

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## ARTS &amp; LIVING

## George Mouradian's New Book Focuses On Christianity's History in Armenia

DETROIT – MAG and Associates announce the publication of George Mouradian's latest book, *The First Crusade*, a historic account of Armenia becoming the first nation to endorse Christianity in the world and her position in defending that faith. The book covers the problems and jubilation of accepting the new religion and struggles Armenia had in defending herself from foreign forces that wished to impose their heathen religions.

The narration starts with Saints Thaddeus and Bartholomew introducing Christianity into the country, then with Armenians living in a half-religious state, Christian and idol worshipping, for nearly three centuries.

The account of St. Gregory the Illuminator is covered as is the story in dramatic involvement with King Tiridates III (Drtd) and the nation and how the monarch initiated the remarkable acceptance of Christianity into Armenia.

About 100 years after the conversion to Christianity, Mesrop Mashtots invented the Armenian alphabet and the *Holy Bible* was translated into Armenian. However even with this triumphant achievement, the unfolding continued with the problems Armenia had with her

neighbors. The country had to defend her new faith. Wars with the Eastern Roman Empire, Persia and other countries are dealt with in an exciting manner. The Vartanantz Wars are covered in detail and how Vartan Mamigonian was able to rouse and build up an army to fight the Persians with overwhelming odds – 66,000 Armenians versus 300,000 Persians plus 20,000 apostate Armenians. Armenia lost the Battle of Avarayr but won the war to retain her love of Jesus Christ. The unassailable patriotism and loyalty displayed during this turbulent period demonstrated the love of God and the continuity of the nation's Christian commitment. The book was written primarily to portray how Armenia became the first nation to accept Christianity and how difficult it was to maintain that faith. The book elaborates on the characters who were involved in the transformation

*The First Crusade* is a continuation of other books Mouradian has written on Armenian subjects such as *Armenian InfoText*, a mini-encyclopedia; *Never to Die: A Historical Novel About Armenia and the Quest for Noah's Ark*; *Your Journey Into Armenia*; *Evils of the World*, and *Notable Armenian Sayings and Family Relations* in addition to two engineering texts and a book on marriage.

*The First Crusade* is available through Amazon or by sending \$14 plus \$4 S & H to George Mouradian, 4489 Marcello Drive, Commerce Township, MI 48382.

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# CALENDAR

## MASSACHUSETTS

**FEBRUARY 6 – Avak luncheon**, noon, St. Gregory Armenian Church, 158 Main St., North Andover; program, Joe Almasian's 20th anniversary representing Armenia in World Olympic Games at Lillehammer, Norway.

**FEBRUARY 6 – Chocolate Demonstration: Part Deux: Truffles.** Join renowned Boston-based Pastry Chef Nathan Kibarian for a special encore chocolate demonstration. Learn how truffles are made and sample these delicious sweets with a pairing of wine. 7:30 p.m. Donation: \$20. Free for Students (Under 18 or with College ID), AGBU New England District, 247 Mount Auburn St., Watertown. Phone: 617-926-1373, e-mail: newenglandagbu@gmail.com

**MARCH 8 – Revolt of February 18 anniversary** by Lowell "Aharonian" Gomideh, 6:30, ARS Community Center, 142 Liberty St., Lowell. Buffet dinner and program, "More Unknown Sites of Armenia" by Joe Dagdigian. Admission, \$20 adults; \$10 students.

**MARCH 29 – Saturday, 7:30 p.m., Armenian Independent Broadcasting of Boston presents a Musical Evening** featuring Janet Khalarian, with the participation of the Hamazkayin Erebuni Dance Ensemble, St. James Armenian Church, Mosesian Cultural Hall, 465 Mount Auburn St., Watertown. Donation \$20. For tickets, call (617) 926-6268 or Meri Memirjian at (781) 273-2770.

**MAY 14 – NEW DATE: Chefs Party for Our Park!** Benefit for the Fund to Care for Armenian Heritage Park, Wednesday, 6:30 p.m., Royal Sonesta Hotel Boston, Cambridge. Celebrate with Boston's Top Chefs presenting signature dishes inspired by parents, grandparents or mentors for you to taste while you mix and mingle. Advanced Reservations required. To receive the e-invite, email info@ArmenianHeritagePark.org

## NEW YORK

**FEBRUARY 6 – AGBU Young Professionals of Greater New York and the Kololian Foundation present a program on the Depopulation Crisis in Armenia**, by the DEPOP Research Group. Panelists include Vahan Kololian, chairman of the Kololian Foundation; Ramo Mailyan, DEPOP chief editor and Lena Muradyan and Ani Avetisyan, DEPOP research coordina-



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tors. 7 p.m. AGBU Central Office, 55 East 59th St., New York. To RSVP, email rsvp@agbu.org with full name or phone (212) 319-6383 ext. 140. Free and open to the public. Light refreshments.

**FEBRUARY 9 – Tribute to the Late Abp. Torkom Manoogian, at St. Vartan Cathedral, 630 Second Ave. (corner 34th St.), New York City.** Following Sunday Divine Liturgy and Requiem (services start at 10:30 a.m.) in sanctuary. Luncheon & program – "Patriarch, Primate, Poet: The Legacy of Abp. Torkom Manoogian" – begins at 1 p.m. in Haik & Alice Kavookjian Auditorium. Donation is \$50 per person. For information or to reserve, contact Lynn Beylerian at (201) 848-7984 (lynnbeylerian@gmail.com) or Andrea Halejian at (201) 445-6882 (halejian@hotmail.com). RSVP by Feb. 2.

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## COMMENTARY

## COMMENTARY

## Shinzo Abe Is Not Alone

By Edmond Y. Azadian

Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, who was elected last year with a strong mandate, has assumed the responsibility of reforming his country's sagging economy and in the process he has determined to harken back to its imperialist history much to the chagrin of Japan's World War II victims, namely China and Korea.

This aggressive posture, with its militaristic overtones, worries Washington's policy planners, eager to maintain stability in the region and to contain North Korea's unpredictable behavior.

Abe's revisionist policy has relevance and also a bearing on other historic relations, especially German-Jewish and Turkish-Armenian relations. Should the world remain silent, other revisionist politicians may emulate Abe by victimizing once more history's victims.

President Eisenhower, before leaving office, had warned the US public against the domination of the military-industrial complex. It is well known that military buildup is a lucrative business that generates wealth for a certain segment of society. Therefore, the Japanese prime minister is taking up the recovery of his country's economy where Eisenhower had left off. In order to achieve this goal, he has to create the right atmosphere and excuses to embark upon his militaristic path. Tensions are already flaring between Tokyo and Beijing over some islands in the East China Sea, claimed by both parties.

To exacerbate the situation, Mr. Abe has taken some calculated and provocative steps. First, he has plans to revise Japan's constitution drafted under US occupation after Japan's unconditional surrender at the end of World War II. General McArthur saw to it that Japan can never rearm itself to wage a war of aggression. That is why Article 9 of its constitution renounces warfare and the threat or use of force and that unlike other countries, it has a pacifist aim written into the constitution. The prime minister is planning to "reinterpret" that article to pave the way for Japan's militarization, although the US has 16 military bases in that country and has extended its nuclear umbrella over it.

Since militarization needs an excuse, Abe has undertaken the most audacious initiative to provoke China and South Korea, by visiting the Yasukuni Shrine, adjacent to the revisionist war museum. Japan's barbaric actions during WWII in China and Korea are well documented, especially its enslavement of Korean women as "comfort women" in its military brothels and brutal assaults in China, the most famous case known as the Rape of Nanking, where systematic rape and murder was the order of the day in that Chinese city by the Japanese Imperial Army.

Abe's predecessors have made halfhearted apologies for these crimes, which have satisfied neither China nor South Korea.

After the war, the Tokyo Tribunal, similar to the Nuremberg Trials, took place between May 1946 and November 1948 and condemned 28 political and military leaders as Class A war criminals. Of those, 14 were executed and buried at Yasukuni Shrine, where Mr. Abe visited to honor them. He defiantly justified his actions, maintaining that "the 14 Class A war criminals honored at Yasukuni Shrine are not war criminals under Japanese law, but the country had to accept the outcome of the Tokyo Tribunal to become an independent nation."

The Chinese and South Korean governments are outraged and they have expressed their indignation in no uncertain terms. The US government has been trying to warn Mr. Abe against a repeat performance. Western media also pointed to it as a self-inflicted act as the Economist of London wrote, "Morally, it is as if Angela Merkel were to pay her respects at a monument that, among other things, honors the Third Reich. Politically, it is self-defeating...China and South Korea, that suffered under Japanese imperialism, are understandably horrified. Step-by-step, they fear, Japan is shedding the restraints that bound it after the war without having ever faced up to its crimes."

Mr. Abe can defy his country's old victims and challenge world public opinion safely sheltered under the umbrella of the world's most powerful nation: the US.

Another nation – under the farcical title of trusted ally – is Turkey, which continues its denialist policy, unrepentant. Talaat Pasha, the Grand Vizier of the Ottoman Empire and the architect of the Armenian Genocide, confided to the Turkish feminist Halide

Ediv: "I have the conviction that as long as a nation does its best for its own interests, and succeeds, the world admires it and thinks it moral. I am ready to die for what I have done and I know I shall die for it."

What he had done was boastfully described in Ambassador Morgenthau's Story. Talaat is quoted as saying, "I have done more toward solving the Armenian problem in three months than Abdul Hamid II accomplished in 30 years."

The precursor of Nuremberg Trials, the Istanbul Trials of 1919, under Ottoman Sultan Mahmoud VI, accused 130 suspects of committing war crimes and the "massacre and destruction of Armenians." On July 5, 1919, the court released its verdict: Talaat, Enver, Jemal and Dr. Nazim were condemned to death in absentia. The criminals had fled the country and the administration of justice was left to a group of young avengers.

Talaat had found refuge in Germany and he was planning to return to Ankara, where, according to his confession to a British intelligence officer, Aubrey Herbert, "the Turkish national movement was forming." The reference is to Mustafa Kemal's Milli movement, which eventually built the present-day Turkish Republic out of the ruins of the Ottoman Empire.

Talaat's life was cut short when he was assassinated by Soghomon Tehlirian in Berlin in 1921. He had pinned his hopes on Kemal's nationalist movement, which turned out to be the extension of the criminal Ittihadist policy. Many rank-and-file members of that government who had Armenian blood on their hands joined the Kemalist government, as it has been fully documented by Turkish historian Taner Akçam.

The Republic of Turkey was cooperating with Hitler during World War II by providing raw materials to the German war machine. That is how it was able to repatriate Talaat's remains from Berlin to Istanbul in 1943. The remains were reburied in the Sisli district of Istanbul. A monument was also erected in his memory on Hurriet Tepe (Freedom Hill) for the Turkish people to honor that war criminal. It is believed that as of 2012, Mehmet Talaat Pasha has had many prominent streets named after him in the modern state of Turkey.

Far from apologizing for the crime of genocide, Turkish leaders have continued to threaten Armenia and the Armenians. Still fresh in our memories is the threat by then Turkish President Turgut Ozal, at the outset of Armenia's independence, who asked rhetorically whether 1915 had not taught a lesson to Armenians and if they are itching for Turkey to drop a few bombs over Yerevan.

As we can see, Shinzo Abe is not alone. He has also cohorts in Turkey.

Yet many politicians play politics with our own Genocide monument and the measure of their friendship with Armenia is revealed by their treatment of Tsitsernakabert in Yerevan. Pope John Paul II politicized his trip to Armenia by avoiding the use of the "g" word. Hillary Clinton made a mockery of her official trip to Armenia, when she announced that her visit to the Genocide museum was a private one and that she had left her political mantle of secretary of state at the US embassy, where she was staying. In her calculation, she signaled to Turkey that the US government's representative was not honoring the Armenian martyrs. On the other hand, Armenians felt very honored that she was at the monument, whether in a private or official capacity.

Even the heads of our friendly countries, fearful of antagonizing Turkey, have shunned the monument. Iran's President Ahmadinejad cut short his visit to Armenia to skip his planned visit to the monument, under the pretext of tending to an urgent matter in his country. President Bashar Al-Assad, with the same precautions, did not include a visit to the monument when he came to Armenia.

The majority of the Armenians in the Middle East sympathize with the Palestinian cause and they are thrilled when the head of the Palestinian Authority Mahmoud Abbas visits the manger in Bethlehem on Armenian Christmas. But when he visited Baku the last time, he shamelessly announced that as Palestinians, whose land is occupied, "we understand Azerbaijan's predicament" as some of its territory "remains under occupation."

Major and minor powers play politics with symbols. If we expect support from the world to expose our case and to oblige them to respect our martyrs, we need to deplore the abominable sacrilege of politicians like Shinzo Abe who want to rewrite history and to absolve the sins of history's murderers.

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## COMMENTARY



My Turn

By Harut Sassounian

## Syrian President Finally Recognizes The Armenian Genocide

In a lengthy interview last week with Agence France Presse (AFP) on the tragic situation in Syria, President Bashar al-Assad made an unexpected reference to the massacres of 1.5 million Armenians. This is the first time that any Syrian head of state has acknowledged the Armenian mass murders and identified the perpetrator as Ottoman Turkey. [The interview was reprinted in the January 25 edition of the *Mirror-Spectator*.]

During the interview, President Assad compared the Armenian Genocide of 1915 to the brutal killings of civilians by foreign fighters nowadays in Syria: "The degree of savagery and inhumanity that the terrorists have reached reminds us of what happened in the Middle Ages in Europe over 500 years ago. In more recent modern times, it reminds us of the massacres perpetrated by the Ottomans against the Armenians when they killed a million and a half Armenians and half a million Orthodox Syrians in Syria and in Turkish territory."

Not surprisingly, two days later, Bashar Jaafari, Syria's ambassador to the United Nations in Geneva, made a simi-

lar remark: "How about the Armenian Genocide where 1.5 million people were killed?"

The only other high ranking Syrian official who has acknowledged the Armenian Genocide was Abd al-Qader Qaddura, speaker of the Syrian Parliament, when he inscribed a poignant statement in the Book of Remembrance of the Armenian Genocide Monument and Museum in Yerevan on July 16, 2001: "As we visit the Memorial and Museum of the Genocide that the Armenian nation suffered in 1915, we stand in full admiration and respect in front of those heroes that faced death with courage and heroism. Their children and grandchildren continued after them to immortalize their courage and struggle.... With great respect we bow our heads in memory of the martyrs of the Armenian nation – our friends – and hail their ability for resoluteness and triumph. We will work together to liberate every human being from aggression and oppression."

While the Parliament Speaker's 2001 statement was a candid and heartfelt message with no political overtones, the same cannot be said about President Assad's words on the Armenian Genocide as he clearly intended to lash back at the Turkish government's hostile actions against the Syrian regime. It is well known that Turkey has played a major role in the concerted international effort to topple President Assad, by dispatching heavy weapons and arranging the infiltration of foreign radical Islamist fighters into Syria.

Relations between Syria and Turkey were not always hostile. Before the start of the Syrian crisis in 2011, the two countries were such close political and economic allies that the Assad regime banned the sale of books on the Armenian Genocide and did not permit foreign film crews to visit Der Zor, the killing fields of thousands of Armenians during the Genocide. Mindful of possible Turkish backlash, President Assad's staff cancelled my

courtesy meeting with the president in 2009 after they discovered on the Internet my countless critical articles on Turkey. Moreover, during the honeymoon period between the Syrian and Turkish governments, President Assad advised the visiting Catholicos Aram I that Armenians should maintain good relations with Turkey and not dwell on the past.

In his recent interview with AFP, President Assad also complained about the failure of Western leaders to comprehend developments in the Middle East: "They are always very late in realizing things, sometimes even after the situation has been overtaken by a new reality that is completely different." Frankly, one could make the same criticism about President Assad for realizing at his own detriment only too late the dishonesty and duplicity of Turkey's leadership.

Regrettably, the Syrian President is not the only head of state who has failed to decipher the scheming mindset of Turkey's rulers. Countless Middle Eastern, European and American leaders have made the same mistake, trusting Turkey's feigned friendship, only to be let down when the time came for Turkey to keep its end of the bargain.

In recent months, with the increasing dissatisfaction of the international community with Prime Minister Erdogan's autocratic policies and belligerent statements, it has become crystal clear that no one knows the true face of Turkey better than Armenians, Assyrians, Greeks and Kurds, who have suffered countless brutalities, massacres and even genocide under despotic Turkish rule.

Despite President Assad's political motivations, Armenians should welcome his belated statement on the Armenian Genocide. After refraining from acknowledging the Genocide for all the wrong reasons for so long, at least now the Syrian President is on record telling the truth about past and present Turkish atrocities!

# Dialogue Can Lead to Acknowledgment

By Raffi Bedrosyan

In a previous article (December 28, 2013 – "Emulate Zoryan Institute and Bring Armenian History in Turkish to Turks") about the approaching 2015 centennial of the Armenian Genocide, I had argued about the necessity of focusing the Armenians' limited resources to support independent academic research, continuing to bring out the truth and facts of 1915 toward establishing a "common body of knowledge" between the Turks and Armenians. In this article, I will elaborate on the necessity to deliver those 1915 facts and truth directly to the Turkish people, will outline some of the obstacles created by the denialist policies of the Turkish state, and finally, will provide a few suggestions for the Turkish state to consider by 2015.

Meaningful dialogue between two conflicting parties can only happen if both parties are aware of the facts and the truth. Even though the Turkish state has not allowed the truth and the facts of 1915 to come out until recently, there are now clear signs that the taboos about 1915 are finally broken and that there is a "common body of knowledge" emerging among the Turkish opinion makers and ordinary citizens. For four generations, the Turkish citizens were brainwashed about 1915 by the state education system and the media. However, Turkish people can no longer be defined as a homogeneous, uniform group. Clashes between the Turkish state and the sizable Kurdish/Alevi population, as well as the prosecution and punishment of the "deep state" leaders who ruled Turkey until a few years ago, have become recent factors in questioning the state version of history regarding the 1915 events. A few bright personalities in politics, academia, media and literature, i.e. opinion makers, have advocated increased democratization, freedom of speech and minority rights; moreover, they have acknowledged the truth about 1915 and demanded that the state also do so. There is now a small but fast increasing segment of the population which wants the state to face the past about the 1915 events.

To date, there have been few attempts of dialogue between the Armenian world and this liberalized segment of the Turkish population and

opinion makers. Apart from the activities of the Hrant Dink Foundation based in Istanbul, the only contacts by Armenians have been through a few individuals in academia, film, media, music and culture, and organizationally by the Zoryan Institute in the academic field, by the Armenian NGO Civiltas through its recently opened office in Istanbul, and some recent political exchanges between Kurdish political parties and representatives of the Armenian Revolutionary Federation. Armenian academia, NGOs and opinion makers should aim at direct contact with their Turkish counterparts in conveying the truth in Turkish, through jointly organized conferences, seminars, TV programs, films and translated publications. For example, ordinary Turks should find out about the courageous Turkish government officials who resisted the inhumane government decisions to annihilate the Armenian population in 1915. They should learn about the fate of the properties left behind by the annihilated Armenians, including hundreds of thousands of houses, fields, shops, warehouses, factories, mines, churches and schools, all confiscated by the state, Ittihat ve Terakki leaders or local Moslem notables. They should understand that most of the Ataturk House Museums scattered all over Anatolia belonged to deported or murdered Armenian citizens of the Ottoman state. They should be reminded that the very residence where the Turkish President sits today in Ankara, was once owned by an Armenian family.

Of course, the Turkish state will continue using all its resources to prevent its citizens from finding out the truth. Notwithstanding the boasts of the Turkish Prime Minister Erdogan that their archives are open and they have nothing to hide, the reality is that their archives are not entirely open and have gone through two major cleanups. The first cleanup and destruction of files was back in 1918, when the Ittihat Terakki leaders escaped from Istanbul in a German warship in order to avoid prosecution as war criminals, carrying several trunkloads of documents with them. At the same time, the main planner of the Armenian deportations and massacres, Special Organization Chief Bahattin Shakir also burned rooms full of documents related to their activities. The second purging was in the 1990s when the Ottoman Archives were reorganized,

translated into modern Turkish and digitized. A team of diplomats, historians, retired ambassadors and military officers sifted through millions of documents with the objective of eliminating any incriminating reference to the Armenians. Recent Wikileaks documents indicate that the Ottoman archival documents, initially estimated at 50 million records, turned out to be more like 200 million and therefore, the intended purge could not be carried out effectively. Obviously, several thousand documents escaped scrutiny and a few prominent Turkish scholars like Taner Akcam, Umit Kurt and Ugur Ungor have been able to produce significant historic facts about the intended annihilation of the Armenians and confiscation of their properties, based only on the Ottoman archives. It was recently revealed that all researchers delving into the Armenian issue in the Ottoman archives were being tracked and monitored. If their work was deemed to be against the state version, there would be harassment and funding repercussions against them and the institutions where they worked/studied. Meanwhile, researchers who produce/falsify/create documents minimizing Armenian losses are encouraged and rewarded. In 2005, Murat Bardakci, an investigative journalist, published Talaat Pasha's diary revealing that Talaat had kept detailed records about the numbers and destination of the deported Armenians, had tallied the loss of Armenians at 972,000, but had also stated that the total missing could exceed 1.2 million due to unaccounted relocations. During a recent TV talk show about history called Rear Window of History, Bardakci had invited a history professor from Sakarya University, a state sponsored 'expert' on the Armenian issue, where this expert announced that the archives show the Ottoman government took all precautions to care for the 300,000 Armenians temporarily deported 'only' from the eastern war front, that 'only' a few thousand died from illness, but most of them safely returned home after the war. Bardakci then confronted him by producing Talaat Pasha's diary and the numbers that Talaat himself had quoted; the expert said he can only work with whatever is available in the state archives. He also announced that Turkish historians have now "proven" that all the genocide allegations are "fiction," based on American Ambassador Morgenthau's book, which was

specifically produced as a propaganda tool to drum up support for the United States to enter the war. Even Bardakci found this expert's comments embarrassing for Turkey, which would result in more ridicule internationally and weaken Turkey's hand further in the eve of 2015.

If Prime Minister Erdogan really wants to prove that Turkey has nothing to hide in the Armenian issue, all he has to do is order the release of two sets of critical documents - the deportation books and the deeds. First set of documents is the 33 dossiers of the Deportation and Liquidation Commissions formed in 1915-16 in various Ottoman Anatolian provinces, recording, listing, appraising, and holding on deposit the assets of the deported Armenians for their eventual return, but also selling or distributing some of the Armenian assets to Moslem refugees. The whereabouts of these dossiers is a mystery but speculated that they are still intact and kept in the Prime Ministry offices. The second set of documents is the Ottoman land registry and property deeds records. In 2005, when the government attempted to comply with European Union (EU) modernization initiatives by translating and opening up these records to the public, it was prevented from doing so by a stern warning – dated August 26, 2005 – from the National Security Committee of the Turkish Armed Forces, which stated that "The Ottoman records kept at the Land Register and Cadaster Surveys General Directorate offices must be sealed and not available to the public, as they have the potential to be exploited by alleged genocide claims and property claims against the State Charitable Foundation assets. Opening them to general public use is against state interests"...

Recently, it came to light that a former prime minister had come close to taking a positive step toward the Armenian issue. Being a very pragmatic politician, in the early 1990s Turgut Ozal had wished the issue to be resolved by ending the Turkish denialist policy, and he had commissioned a study to quantify the amount of compensation needed to be paid to the Armenians worldwide. It is reported that the study did come up with a monetary figure but no further steps were taken, either because the cost would be exorbitant, or because Ozal suddenly and mysteriously died in 1993. His  
see DIALOGUE, page 16



# Dialogue Can Lead to Acknowledgment

DIALOGUE, from page 15

sudden death is still subject of speculation today after 20 years, with his body recently exhumed and examined for presence of poisons. It is said that he was severely criticized by the military and the deep state, not only for this Armenian episode, but more critically, for his desire to end the separatist Kurdish issue by giving concessions to them.

Based on feedback and comments on my past articles, there seems to be significantly wide readership in Turkey and within their government circles. A recurring theme I hear is that the present government, unlike the previous ones, has taken a lot of positive steps toward the Armenians, and yet, there is no acknowledgment or reciprocating goodwill from the Armenian side. The positive examples cited include the restoration of Akhtamar Holy Cross Church (note: still known as Akdamar Museum in Turkey), return of several confiscated properties belonging to the Armenian church and charitable foundations (note: returns still less than 10 percent of properties seized after 1930's, none from before 1915 and none of the private properties), increased freedom of speech with utterance of the term 'Armenian Genocide' no longer a punishable offense (note: but still people like Hrant Dink can get killed for uttering it and still the real murderers can remain hidden), and so on. I do acknowledge that these are positive steps in the right direction, but only a few steps toward a mile long journey. Perhaps the mile long journey cannot be completed by 2015, but several concrete and specific steps need to be taken by Turkey in order to achieve some credibility and respectability. Instead of diversionary tactical steps like Foreign Minister Davutoglu's recent visit to Armenia, which achieved nothing, I will humbly offer a few suggestions for the consideration of my Turkish government acquaintances:

1. open the border with Armenia without any preconditions, re-name the Alica border

crossing as the Hrant Dink Gate, honoring the heroic advocate of dialogue between the two peoples

2. grant citizenship to all living descendants of the deported Ottoman citizen Armenians

3. clean up the textbooks at all levels of the educational system by eliminating the falsifications, hatemongering and discrimination toward Armenians (and other minorities)

4. initiate a state program by the Ministry of Culture and Tourism to restore the more than 2000 destroyed or deteriorating Armenian monasteries and churches, and return them to the rightful owner, the Armenian Church (Istanbul Armenian Patriarchate)

5. offer a symbolic but meaningful apology to the Armenian people for all the crimes of 1915, by returning Mount Ararat and Ani to Armenia, perhaps as part of a territorial exchange based on equivalent land area

6. open up to the public the aforementioned documents related to the deportation/liquidation records and the Ottoman property deeds related to the deported Armenians

7. allow personal compensation cases by the descendants of the Ottoman citizen Armenians related to their confiscated properties to proceed in Turkish and international courts

8. offer free transit and duty free port facilities for Armenia at a Black Sea city such as Trabzon and Rize, as partial compensation toward past economic losses of the Ottoman citizen Armenians

Turkish acquaintances in government circles complain that the Armenians' insistence in using the word Genocide is a barrier to any progress toward dialogue about 1915. None of the suggestions above refer to that word, and all of them are do-able by 2015, if there really is goodwill. Once there is knowledge of the facts followed by dialogue about the truth of 1915 among the Turkish opinion makers and ordi-

nary citizens, the far-reaching result would be the creation of voters aware of the truth. Knowledgeable voters would then vote in knowledgeable parliament members and eventually governments, which would set policies and decisions according to the voters' preferences. I would suggest that decisions taken in the Turkish Parliament respecting the truth of 1915 would be far more effective than any decision taken in the parliaments of third party states.

Sources:

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Internethaber news online, December 12, 2013, 'Turkiye'de skandal: Ermeni meselesini calisan ogrenciler fislendi' (Scandal in Turkey: Students researching the Armenian issue are being monitored)

Murat Bardakci, Talaat Pasaniin Evrak-i Metrukesi (Talaat Pasha's Black Book), 2005, Everest Yayinlari (Everest Publishing House)

(Raffi Bedrosyan is a civil engineer and concert pianist, living in Toronto, Canada. He has donated concert and CD proceedings to infrastructure projects in Armenia and Karabagh, in which he has also participated as an engineer. He helped organize the reconstruction of the Surp Giragos Diyarbakir/Dikranagerd Church and the first Armenian reclaim of church properties in Anatolia after 1915. He gave the first piano concert in the Surp Giragos Church since 1915.)

## France's Hollande Cautiously Backs Turkey's EU Membership Bid

TURKEY, from page 1

Gul, for his part, said that "woes of 100 years ago are our common woes.... It is not right to pass these woes from generation to generation."

"What should be done, instead of reviving these woes, is to leave these to historians. This issue can not be tackled unilaterally," he said.

In 2000, France recognized the Armenian Genocide. In 2011 both branches of the French legislature approved bill to criminalize the denial of the Armenian Genocide in France. The French Constitutional Court deemed elements of the bill unconstitutional.

Hollande was asked if he would pursue the passage of such a bill, to which the French president said: "We will do what is right and only what is right."

In addition, Hollande cautiously backed Turkey's aim to join the European Union on Monday despite its recent crackdown on police and judiciary and earlier French reservations about the idea.

The long-planned state visit marks Hollande's efforts to mend frayed ties and smooth the way for French companies angling for contracts in Turkey.

But the visit has been overshadowed by Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan's efforts to tighten controls on the court system in response to a corruption probe. European leaders criticized the AK Party leader in Brussels last week, saying democratic principles needed to be upheld.

Hollande said Turkey should continue to negotiate in view of joining the EU despite the criticism as such talks would allow it to address issues such as rule of law, judicial independence, separation of powers and respect of fundamental liberties.

"The (membership) process must be carried forward with the most difficult subjects, subjects that are necessarily the hardest," he said during a joint news conference with Turkish President Abdullah Gul, enumerating a series of negotiation points still to be covered.

Of 35 membership "chapters" to be checked off before Turkey can join the EU, 14 have so far been completed. If all the chapters are completed, France and Austria will put Turkey's EU membership to a referendum, as will the Turkish government.

"The negotiation process must allow Turkey to develop and show what it's capable of achieving... That is the answer that the Turks must provide," added Hollande.

Hollande's predecessor Nicolas Sarkozy favored association status for Turkey over full accession, saying the country was too big, too poor and too culturally different to join the EU.

European Commission President Jose Manuel Barroso told Erdogan during the Turkish leader's first visit to Brussels in five years that respect for rule of law and independence of the judiciary were essential conditions for EU membership.

Gul, avoiding any mention of tension in Ankara except for two references to a "vigorous debate," said the negotiation was a technical process whose outcome would not be known until all outstanding issues had been laid to rest.

"We respect that the accession process is one to adopt legal and democratic criteria and judicial norms," he said. "We would not like this to become hostage to politics."

France and Turkey's relationship remains frayed two years after full diplomatic ties were restored after a falling out over a law which made it illegal to deny that the killing of Armenians by Ottoman Turks in 1915 was genocide.

Between 2009 and 2012, when France's Constitutional Court struck down the Armenian genocide law, French firms' share of foreign investment in Turkey shrank to 3 percent from 6 percent previously, French officials said.

Leaders of French infrastructure companies travelling with Hollande are eyeing Turkish markets for nuclear security and rail infrastructure expected to be worth \$40 and \$50 billion, respectively, by 2020, they added.

Hollande was scheduled to meet with Raket Dink, the widow of Armenian-Turkish journalist Hrant Dink, who was assassinated seven years ago.

He is expected to deliver a speech at Galatasaray University, and bestow a French state award on Candan Erçetin, a famous singer and deputy chair of the Galatasaray sports club.

(Stories from Public Radio of Armenia, Turkish Daily News and Reuters were used to compiled this report.)

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## Aronian Wins Tata Steel Chess Championship

CHESS from page 1

Aronian was declared the best sportsman of Armenia in 2005 and was awarded the title of "Honored Master of Sport of the Republic of Armenia" in 2009.

Aronian learned to play chess from his sister Lilit at the age of 9. His first coach was the Grandmaster Melikset Khachiyan.

Armenpress reports that Aronian wrote in his Twitter feed: "We are celebrating my victory in the Tournament with my Armenian friends, who have come from different parts of Europe to support me."