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Orit Noked, center, accompanied by Minister of Agriculture Sergio Karapetyan (left) and Director of Armenian Genocide Museum-Institute Hayk Demoyan (right)

Israeli Minister of Agriculture Speaks About Similarities Between Histories of Armenians and Jews

YEREVAN (Armenpress) – A delegation, headed by Israeli Minister of Agriculture Orit Noked, visited Tsitsernakaberd Memorial Complex, where the minister laid a wreath and paid tribute to the memory of the innocent victims. Noked, accompanied by Armenian Minister of Agriculture Sergio Karapetyan and see VISIT, page 2

Lili Chookasian, 90, Exhilarating American Contralto Who Found Acclaim on Concert and Opera Stages, Dies

By Brian Kellow

NEW YORK (*Opera News*) – Lili Chookasian, an American contralto who became a prominent presence on postwar concert and opera stages, died on April 10 at her home in Branford, Conn. She was 90.

NBC Correspondent Shamlian to Receive Award at *Mirror-Spectator* Banquet

By Alin K. Gregorian
Mirror-Spectator Staff

HOUSTON, Texas – As Armenians, we all have been guilty of name-checking fellow Armenians in the media. Sitting high on that list is the name of Janet Shamlian, an NBC News national correspondent. Shamlian can be seen on any number of NBC programs, from the “Nightly News with Brian Williams,” to the “Today Show,” “Dateline” and news programs on MSNBC and CNBC.

Shamlian is as kind and gentle off-camera as she comes across on television. She is polite to a fault and thoughtful and deliberate with her choice of words.

On any given day, she gets her assignment and hops on a plane heading away from her home in Houston. However, one see SHAMLIAN, page 16



Janet Shamlian

Physically, Chookasian was a woman of small stature, but the sound that emerged from that body was enormous – dark, with a power and cut that were exhilarating and, when she sang Menotti’s “The Medium” or Ulrica in “Un Ballo in Maschera,” quite terrifying.

Chookasian was a genuine contralto. She possessed the kind of gutsy, dramatic sound that has always been rare and has – with a few exceptions, such as Ewa Podle, practically disappeared today. Chookasian performed in an era when contraltos were not normally given opportunities to sing expansive *coloratura*, as Podle later would be. She specialized in the great concert contralto repertoire – Mahler’s *Second Symphony*, *Das Lied von der Erde* and *Kindertotenlieder*, Verdi’s *Requiem*, Prokofiev’s *Alexander Nevsky* – and secondary contralto roles in opera, such as Ulrica, La Cieca in “La Gioconda” and Madelon in “Andrea Chénier.”



Lili Chookasian earlier in her career

Chookasian was born to Armenian parents, and her ethnicity remained a strong see CHOOKASIAN, page 13

Godine Publishes New, Complete Translation of Franz Werfel’s *Forty Days of Musa Dagh*

BOSTON – The publication on April 24 of a new, expanded and complete translation of *The Forty Days of Musa Dagh* by Franz Werfel demands recognition as a major literary and cultural event.

By Daphne Abeel
Special to the *Mirror-Spectator*

It is a historic irony, given the dialectic between the Holocaust and the Genocide, that it fell to an Austrian Jew, Werfel, to write the iconic novel of the Armenian Genocide – many of those Armenian writers and intellectuals who might have penned it having been slaughtered on April 24, 1915.

Nineteen thirty-three, the date of its first publication in Austria, is of significance, given that this was the year that Adolf Hitler and his Nazi Party solidified their grip on the Third Reich. The book, first issued by Paul Zsolnay Verlag in Vienna, although read in Nazi Germany, was eventually banned and burned there but that first German edition achieved major international attention and was snapped up at the time of its publication, particularly in Austria and Switzerland. It brought an immediate focus on the events of the Armenian Genocide, which had, hitherto, received scant attention from the international community.

In 1934, Viking Publishers issued an abbreviated version of the novel in an English translation by Geoffrey Dunlop. It immediately became a bestseller in see WERFEL, page 15



Musa Dagh

NEWS IN BRIEF

Netherlands Observes 97th Anniversary of Armenian Genocide

AMSTERDAM – The Netherlands-based Abovyan Cultural Center hosted on April 13 an event dedicated to the 97th anniversary of the Armenian Genocide.

Armenia’s Ambassador to the Netherlands Dzyunik Aghajanyan delivered a speech about the consequences of genocide and the international recognition process.

He recalled that the Turkish archives are still closed, while official Ankara spares no effort to push forward its denialist policy and political pressure to stop the international recognition of the Armenian Genocide.

Dr. Ugur Umit Ungor, professor at the Center for Holocaust and Genocide Studies, gave a lecture, titled “Armenian Genocide and the Making of Modern Turkey.”

French-German TV Airs Program on Genocide, Karabagh

YEREVAN (Armenpress) – The French-German ARTE channel broadcast this past week a program about Armenia, Armenian history, the Armenian Genocide and the Nagorno Karabagh (NKR) conflict.

Referring to a later period of Armenian history, the program presented the history of the NKR conflict. The hosts of the TV program noted that NKR is an historical part of Armenia and it was only in 1921 that Stalin annexed it forcefully to Azerbaijan. In 1923, Azerbaijan became an autonomous region with 94 percent of its population being Armenians.

Christie’s to Auction 1879 Armenian ‘Ghazakh’ Carpet

LONDON (PanARMENIAN.Net) – On April 24, an Armenian carpet will be sold at Christie’s auction house.

“The carpet was woven in Armenia’s Berdavan village (formerly called Ghalacha) of historical Gugark province in 1879. Exclusively natural organic paints were used. The yarn is brilliant. The date woven in the carpet proves that it was intended for laying out during celebrations,” carpet expert Vahram Tatikian said.

The item has been given the name “Armenian Ghazakh” at the auction house.

“If not [for] the Armenian letters on the carpet it would be called simply ‘Ghazakh’ and would be attributed to Azerbaijanis,” Tatikian said.

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ARMENIA

News From Armenia

State Focuses on Revival Of Shushi

STEPANAKERT (Arminfo) – In Nagorno Karabagh (NKR), authorities are preparing to celebrate a triple holiday on May 9: Victory in the Great Patriotic War, the 20th Anniversary of Liberation of Shushi and the establishment of the NKR Defense Army.

On occasion of the holiday, a large-scale military parade will be held in the Revival Square in Stepanakert.

Shushi Mayor Karen Avagimyan said the main event, titled “Wedding in the Mountains,” will be held on May 8 near the fortification walls of Shushi.

Prime Minister Ara Harutunian said he is sure that in five years Shushi will become a modern town. A number of state establishments and judicial structures will be moved to Shushi in the near future, while the Agrarian University of Armenia and professional technical colleges will open branches there. All these efforts are aimed to revive the historical, educational and culture glory of Shushi.

Sirusho Writes Theme For Yerevan World Book Capital 2012

YEREVAN (Armenpress) – Yerevan, which has been proclaimed World Book Capital 2012 by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), will have a special theme for the celebrations, written by singer Sirusho.

“I was entrusted the idea of writing the music of the theme,” the singer said. She has tentatively called the song *Book*. It will be performed by Armenian singers, accompanied by an orchestra. Avet Barseghyan is writing the lyrics of the song.

Sirusho said that she has been writing a variety of songs for foreign artists.

In the upcoming weeks, she will leave for a tour of Saint Petersburg. The singer has no intention of giving a solo concert in the near future, but says “never say never.”

Sirusho came in fourth place with the song, *Qele qele*, during the Eurovision Song Concert in 2008 in Belgrade – the highest position ever for Armenia.

Armenia, Grenada Establish Diplomatic Relations

YEREVAN (armradio.am) – The permanent representatives of Armenia and Grenada at the United Nations (UN), Karen Nazaryan and Desima Williams, signed an agreement on the establishment of diplomatic relations between the countries.

During a meeting at the Permanent Representation of the Republic of Armenia in New York the ambassadors stressed the importance of promoting bilateral cooperation and agreed to intensify their efforts within the framework of the UN and other international organizations.

Grenada is an island and Commonwealth consisting of the island of Grenada and six smaller islands at the southern end of the Grenadines in the south-eastern Caribbean Sea.

Grenada, located northwest of Trinidad and Tobago, northeast of Venezuela and southwest of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, is 344 square kilometers (133 sq mi), with an estimated population of 110,000.

Melikyan Appointed Armenia's Ambassador To Argentina

YEREVAN (Armenpress) – Through a decree by President of Armenia Serge Sargsian, Vladimir Karmirshalyan has been dismissed as ambassador to Uruguay and Chile, the president's press reported.

With another decree of the president, Vahagn Melikyan was appointed Armenia's ambassador to Argentina.

LCO Unearths Ancient Sites

PASADENA and YEREVAN – In its 35th year, the Land and Culture Organization (LCO) is returning to Armenia again this summer to continue restoration work on historical Armenian sites.

Last year, more than 60 volunteers from Armenia, Canada, England, France, Nagorno-Karabagh, Syria and the United States came through the summer restoring their Armenian legacy. This summer's campaign is gearing up, and volunteers have already submitted applications.

This upcoming summer, LCO campaigns will be conducted at two locations. LCO will be returning to the village of Yeghvard located in the southern Syunik Province on the border of Armenia and the liberated areas surrounding Artsakh. This summer, volunteers will unearth archaeological excavations on the village outskirts. This ancient site was discovered in 2011 and dates from the first century BC pre-Christian Hellenic period. Last summer, LCO completed the restoration and consecrated the 17th-century Astvatzatzin Church in Yeghvard.

To the north, volunteers will continue work on the seventh-century Tchitchkhanavank Monastery in the Shirakamut village in the Shirak Region near Spitak. The 2011 group uncovered an ancient fire pit adjacent to the church grounds along with jewelry and artifacts. Construction of Tchitchkhanavank's foundation walls will continue to be rebuilt. This project began in 2008 and will continue for the next few years. Architects, historical experts, skilled craftsmen and LCO Board members oversee all restoration projects.

This summer's Land and Culture campaign will be from July 9 until August 3. In addition to the work, volunteers will enjoy weekend excursions throughout Armenia. To participate, applications must be received on-line at www.lcousa.org by May 15.



LCO Unearths Ancient Gravestones in Yeghvard

Azerbaijani Film Festival Cancelled after Protests

GUMRI (RFE/RL) – A crowd of protesters rallied here to voice their anger over a plan to hold an Azerbaijani film festival, scheduled to open on April 12. The signs read: “No Azerbaijani Film Festival!” Mayor Vardan Ghukasian can also be seen exhorting the crowd.

The festival of Azerbaijani films was canceled in Armenia's second-largest city, Gumri, following protests.

The event was organized by the Armenia-based Caucasus Center for Peace-Making Initiatives and also had the support of the US and British embassies in Yerevan.

Giorgi Vanyan, the chairman of the

center, was allowed to leave the festival venue only after announcing that the event would be called off. One video posted on YouTube shows Vanyan being physically assaulted on the street outside the festival venue. As festival organizers noted on their website: “The Azerbaijani Film Festival in Armenia has been blocked as a result of a terror and blackmailing [campaign] carried out by pressure groups that try to disguise their actions by an alleged ‘wave of public outrage.’ The organizers and potential viewers of the festival received threats of physical revenge through the Internet and phone.”

Vanyan apologized for the cancellation and said organizers will try to reschedule the festival:

“In particular, we will continue to create an atmosphere of open and direct communication in spite of the current propaganda and terror aimed at distorting human values and denying healthy civilized relations.”

Vanyan has accused Gumri Mayor Vardan Ghukasian of having a hand in

exacerbating the protests and tension surrounding the festival.

A similar initiative to hold a festival of Azerbaijani films in 2010 in Yerevan also failed.

A total of four short films shot in Azerbaijan in 2007 and 2008 – three feature films and one documentary – were to be shown.

Vanyan reported on his Facebook page that the films were eventually screened for a few dozen audience members at a venue outside the city. Another showing is scheduled for April 17 in Vanadzor.

Armenia and Yerevan remain locked in a dispute over the breakaway Azerbaijani region of Nagorno-Karabagh, which is populated almost entirely by ethnic Armenians. The region was the site of a 1988-94 war that killed tens of thousands and displaced hundreds of thousands. An uneasy cease-fire is in effect. The region declared unilateral independence in 1991 and has maintained de facto autonomy.

Israeli Minister of Agriculture Speaks About Similarities Between Histories of Armenians and Jews

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Director of Armenian Genocide Museum-Institute Hayk Demoyan, also visited the museum-institute and familiarized herself with the exhibits.

“As a woman, as a Jew and as a human being, I am shocked at what I see in the photos, I am shocked at the murders of innocent Armenian families,” Noked wrote in the Commemoration Book of the museum-institute. The minister of agriculture watered the fir-tree she had already planted in the Memorial Park.

Noked sees similarities between the destinies of the Armenians and the Jews. “We are like each other with our history, character, with our small number of population and having communities abroad,” she said.

There is an Armenian community of about 15,000 in Israel.

More than 20 countries have recognized and condemned the Armenian Genocide committed by the Ottoman Turkey in early 20th century. Israel is not yet among those countries. The issue of the Armenian Genocide was first raised in Knesset in 2007. Parallels are very often drawn between the Armenian Genocide and Holocaust.



YEREVAN (ArmeniaNow) – A monument to prominent Armenian oil magnate, industrialist, financier and philanthropist Alexander Mantashyants (1842-1911), better known as Mantashev, has been installed on Abovyan Street. The statue was created by sculptor Tigran Arzumanyan and funded by the Mantashyants family. It depicts him as the dignified and modest man he was despite being one of the richest men of his time. The official unveiling was on Wednesday, April 18, with the participation of his grandson, Alexander Mantashev.



INTERNATIONAL

Cypriot FM Calls on Aram I to Condemn Turkey's Illegal Actions

NICOSIA, Cyprus (PanARMENIAN.Net) – On April 11, Catholicos of Cilicia Aram I received a letter from the foreign minister of the Republic of Cyprus, Dr. Erato Kozakou-Marcoullis, which stated, “the illegal regime in the Turkish-occupied area of Cyprus had placed Bishop of Karpasia, Christoforos, on their “stop” list, an act that denies his fundamental human right of freedom of movement and the right of the Greek Cypriot Citizens in the occupied enclave to live in dignity and practice their Christian

faith (Universal Declaration on Human Rights, articles 13 and 18 respectively).”

In the letter, the foreign minister also states that this new decision to prevent Greek Orthodox Christians to celebrate the Divine Liturgy on Easter Sunday in the Karpasia is another example of Turkey's constant breach of the fundamental human rights and the judgment passed by the European Court of Human Rights (2001). At the end of the letter, Kozakou-Marcoullis asked Aram I to condemn this act publicly.

In response to the foreign minister's letter, Aram I wrote, “As the spiritual head of the Armenian community in Cyprus, which also has churches and a monastery under the illegal occupation, I am aware of all the breaches of the provisions of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights that have taken place since 1974. This experience with the illegal occupation of our church property by Turkey is the continuation of the denial policy of Turkey's past and present authorities.”

He added, “By not allowing Greek Orthodox believers in the Karpasia region to celebrate religious ceremonies, despite the European Court of Human Rights' judgment of the Fourth interstate Application of Cyprus v. Turkey (May 10, 2001) and by limiting the number of priests to spiritually accompany the Orthodox faithful in the enclave under occupation (report of the visit of UN special rapporteur on the Freedom of Religion or Belief, Heiner Bielefeldt, April 5, 2012), Turkey has once again demonstrated its double standard politics. On the one hand, Turkish authorities present themselves as defenders of human rights in the Arab World by their August 28, 2011 decision to compensate non-Muslim minorities and return property lost since 1936 to Greek, Jewish and Armenian communities. On the other hand, they deny publicly any responsibility for the Armenian Genocide and its consequences, and they ignore all international declarations and court decisions regarding the rights of Greek Cypriot citizens and Greek Orthodox faithful under their illegal occupying regime.”

At the end of his letter, Aram I told the foreign minister that he had written to the general secretaries of the World Council of Churches and the Middle East Council of Churches as well as to the leaderships of the Armenian communities in the Middle East, Europe and North America asking them to condemn the denial of Turkey of the fundamental human rights of the Greek Cypriots under the illegal regime of its occupied northern Cyprus.

Former Judge in Dink Murder Case to Be Tried for Bribery

ISTANBUL (PanARMENIAN.Net) – Turkey's Supreme Board of Judges and Prosecutors (HSYK) has permitted an investigation of Erkan Canak – a former judge presiding over the case of the assassination of Turkish-Armenian journalist Hrant Dink – for allegations of corruption and bribery, Today's Zaman reported.

Canak, former judge of the Istanbul 14th High Criminal Court, who now presides over a court in Sakarya, will be tried at the 5th Criminal Chamber of the Supreme Court of Appeals in Istanbul.

If the court finds him guilty, Canak will be forced to resign. Canak is accused of “acting in a way that has shaken the trust and respect required by his position, engaging in corruption and taking bribes,” according to the HSYK.

In 2010 Canak's telephone conversation with another judge, Ali Hadi Emre, was wiretapped. In the conversation, Canak complained that he had received threats from Kudbettin Avci, a lawyer, over the release of a drug baron from prison. Canak told Emre that Avci threatened to spread rumors about him if he refused to release the drug baron.

“If he continues to threaten me, I

will go to the Justice Ministry and tell them about everything. The baron was captured with 200 kilograms of drugs. How can I release him?” Canak asked, adding: “I have known him for years. He is my friend. But he says he will complain to the [Justice Ministry] inspector about me. I have nothing to be afraid of.

But why does he keep harassing me?”

Emre, in response, advised the judge to calm down and promised everything would be better in the future.

It was later revealed that Canak agreed to accept a bribe from the drug baron's men to acquit the drug trafficker of the charges. The men also arranged hotel rooms for Canak and hired prostitutes for him.

On December 13, 2010, the HSYK removed Canak from the Istanbul 14th High Criminal Court, which was hearing the Dink case, on the grounds that an earlier Ministry of Justice report alleged that he had close contacts with suspects in the Ergenekon case, a clandestine underground network accused of plotting to overthrow the government.

'Holy Fire' Lights up Jerusalem Church for Easter

JERUSALEM (AFP) – Thousands of Orthodox Christians filled the ancient Church of the Holy Sepulchre and spilled out into the narrow streets last week for the Holy Fire ceremony on the eve of Orthodox Easter.

Believers hold that the fire is miraculously sent from heaven to ignite candles held by the Greek Orthodox patriarch in an annual rite dating back to the fourth century that symbolizes the resurrection of Jesus.

Israeli police spokeswoman Luba Samri said around 10,000 people packed into the church, with thousands more outside in the streets of the surrounding Old City. She said there were about 20,000 people last year.

Some 3,000 police were deployed in the church and around it to keep the jubilation from getting out of hand. No major incidents were reported, but there was some pushing and shoving at barricades that had been set up.

As is the case every year, Israel restricted the number of Christians from the West Bank and Gaza Strip, overwhelmingly Orthodox, who could attend.

Patriarch Theophilos III traditionally makes his grand entry at the head of a pro-

cession of monks, chanters, dignitaries and red-and-gold banners bearing icons.

After circling an ornate shrine in the heart of the church three times amid chants of “Axios” (“He is worthy”), he enters what Orthodox, Roman Catholics and many other Christians believe is Jesus's burial site, emerging minutes later with several lit candles.

The patriarch is always searched beforehand to ensure that he is carrying nothing, such as matches or a lighter, that could be used to light the candles.

As joyous people press in on him, the patriarch passes on the flames to their outstretched candles. The fire makes its way through the crowd, casting a flickering orange glow on the grey walls and towering stone columns, and filling the air with smoke.

Pilgrims claim the Holy Fire does not burn their hair, faces, clothes or anything else during the first 33 minutes of its appearance and one website (<http://www.holyfire.org>) offers videos claiming to show worshippers in prolonged contact with the flames without being hurt.

The Holy Fire, which quickly makes its way outside to the crowds waiting there, is also carried to nearby

Bethlehem's Church of the Nativity, where Jesus is believed to have been born, and also much farther afield.

It will be flown to Athens and to the capitals of other predominantly Orthodox countries to be shared.

The church, which the Orthodox call the Church of Resurrection, also encloses what is widely believed to be Calvary, the site on which Jesus was crucified.

While it is therefore one of Christianity's holiest sites, it is shared uneasily by six denominations – the Greek Orthodox, Roman Catholics, Armenian Orthodox, Egyptian Copts, Syrian Orthodox and Ethiopian Orthodox.

Past ceremonies have been marred by violence, with fist fights breaking out among monks from the different denominations over perceived changes to a status quo hammered out over several centuries.

The date of Orthodox Easter is calculated differently than by the Roman Catholics and other churches, so the most important feast of the Christian year is frequently celebrated on different Sundays.

Most Christians celebrated Easter last week.

International News

Armenian Genocide Commemoration Events Take Place in Batumi

TBILISI (Armenpress) – On April 14, the Batumi State Conservatory hosted the first event dedicated to the Armenian Genocide within the framework of the Armenian Genocide commemoration days in Georgia.

The Armenian Ministry of Foreign Affairs said that Republic of Armenia Consul General in Batumi Garik Israyelyan, the vicar of Batumi's Surb Prkich Church, Rev. Ararat Gumbelyan and the Press Secretary of the Union of Armenians of Ajaria Artur Hovhannisyanyan highlighted in their speeches the importance of the universal recognition and condemnation of the Armenian Genocide.

The pupils of the Sunday school staged a performance of tragic scenes portraying the first genocide of the 20th century for an audience of roughly 300.

The performance, which included patriotic poems, songs and dances, was covered by local TV channels.

Grandmaster Movsesian Wins Medals in Russia, Germany

BADEN-BADEN, Germany (Panorama.am) – Armenian Chess Grandmaster Sergei Movsesian participated in both the German and Russian Team Championships.

The Armenian chess player won gold in the Baden-Baden Club and silver in the Saint Petersburg Club, armchess.am reported.

Movsesian took four victories in a row at the Russian Team Championship, including against Peter Leko in the last round.

Zarakolu Receives Award In Ankara

ANKARA (Armenpress) – Publisher Ragip Zarakolu was honored with the “Struggle against Discrimination” award of Ankara University, according to Agos newspaper.

Zarakolu recently announced that he will not speak to the Turkish media any more since human rights are violated in the country. Esma Yilmaz, a student of Ankara University, having read aloud the letter of the Turkish intellectual, answered with the following words: “We won't forget anything.”

Zarakolu, keeping his word, was not present at the award ceremony. The award was accepted on his behalf by his sister.

China, Armenia Pledge To Promote Ties

BEIJING (Xinhua) – Chinese President Hu Jintao and his Armenian counterpart, Serge Sargsian, exchanged congratulatory messages earlier this month as the two nations celebrated the 20th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations.

The China-Armenia relationship has maintained a sound and smooth development over the past 20 years with ever deepening mutual understanding, as well as cooperation in trade, investment, communication, agriculture, technology and culture, said Jintao.

The two nations have also actively engaged in consultation and coordination on international and regional affairs, which has substantially protected their common interests, he added.

Jintao also said China would like to take the anniversary as an opportunity to further consolidate the foundation for bilateral cooperation, strengthen political exchanges and promote pragmatic cooperation so as to further step up bilateral ties.

For his part, Sargsian said that with the joint efforts of the two countries for the past two decades, bilateral cooperation has been constantly increased in politics, trade, industry, technology, defense, culture, education and sports.



ARMENIA

As Iran Tensions Grow, Azerbaijan Becomes Den of Spies

BAKU (msnbc.com) – A secular dictatorship with a long border with Iran, Azerbaijan is one of the few remaining countries that can act as a reliable listening post for America and Israel.

A Soviet-legacy oil nation is emerging as a hotbed of global espionage as tension escalates between Israel and Iran.

Azerbaijan, which links Russia to the Middle East, has strategic importance as a bridgehead for the West in its war of diplomacy with Tehran, turning its capital, Baku, into a hotbed of intelligence activity.

“Like Casablanca in World War II, Baku is now also a center of monitoring Iranian mischief,” Ariel Cohen, senior research fellow at the Washington-based Kathryn and Shelby Cullom Davis Institute for International Studies, part of the Heritage Foundation, said. “This is understandable taking into account visa-free regime of travel between the two countries and aggressive Iranian intelligence tactics.”

Recent events have lifted the lid on some of the international maneuvering in Baku. In March, Azeri security services arrested 22 people they say were trained by Iran to carry out terrorist attacks against the US and Israeli embassies.

In January, two accused of plotting to kill teachers at a Jewish school were also held.

‘The Israelis Are More Subtle’

Most experts agree there are many Mossad agents in Azerbaijan working for Israel.

“The Iranians act in the open, they want everyone to know that they are here,” Dr. Arastun Orujl, director of the East-West Research Center in Baku told Britain’s *Times* newspaper. “The Israelis are more subtle, like the Americans. But in the end everyone knows they are here, too.”

So why does Azerbaijan matter? Not only does its geography make it an ideal place for the US and its allies to face down Tehran, but its political history entangles it in the current tensions with Israel.

Millions living in northern Iran are ethnic Azeris, theoretically binding the two nations. But Azerbaijan has allied itself increasingly with Israel and the West as it uses its oil wealth to leverage its global standing.

“It was one of the first countries to back America after 9/11,” Gerald Frost, director of the Paris-based Caspian Information Center said. “It is as politically helpful to the West as its position close to the Middle East will allow. America needs to pay it close attention.”

While the country has made concessions to the West, it remains a dynastic dictatorship under the rule of Ilham Aliyev, who inherited power from his father, Heydar Aliyev, a former Soviet leader who reinvented himself as a nationalist during the collapse of the Soviet Union. Ilham Aliyev took over in a 2003 election described by Human Rights Watch as “fraudulent” and which it said was “followed by protests that turned violent, plunging Azerbaijan into a human rights crisis from which it has not recovered.”

Israel last year established a factory in Azerbaijan making parts for its military drones, and has supplied the country with \$1.6 billion worth of military equipment.

The BBC reported that Russian President Vladimir Putin “surprised Western leaders” in 2007 by offering to let America use its radar base in Azerbaijan to defend Europe against any missile attack from Iran.

Cohen says Iran has been trying to undermine Azerbaijan’s secular position in the hopes of turning it from a dictatorship into a theocracy, echoing the transition of countries such as Libya and Egypt that now appear destined to be ruled by conservative Islamists.

Mark Perry, in a *Foreign Policy* article, titled “Israel’s Secret Staging Ground,” claimed Barack Obama administration officials now believe that the security cooperation between Azerbaijan and Israel is actually “heightening the risks of an Israeli strike on Iran.”

Azerbaijan has denied it would allow the US or Israel to launch airstrikes, although Frost noted that it could provide associated support since it already allows the US military into its airspace to reach Afghanistan and to evacuate injured troops.

While ties with Israel deepen, the future relationship with the United States is less clear because Washington does not currently have an ambassador in Baku. The last holder of the post, Matthew Bryza, left last year after his appoint-



Eurovision Song Contest 2011 winners Eldar Gasimov (second from left) and Nigar Jamal (second from right), who are known as Ell-Nikki, are greeted by fans in Baku. Their victory means Baku will host this year’s competition.

ment was not confirmed by Congress, a decision Frost believes is likely to have been influenced by America’s powerful Armenian lobby.

Cultural Boom

Meanwhile, its strategic importance is being echoed in a cultural boom. Baku is enjoying a Dubai-style explosion of luxury hotels and designer fashion stores. “It is all very glitzy, very much reflecting the way Azeris want to be seen as an establish European-style country rather than a backwater,” said Ben Illis, co-author of a new *Time Out* guide to Baku, which is due to be published next month.

It has launched a major tourism advertising campaign, and its ambitious bid to host the 2020 Olympic games found its way onto the IOC shortlist.

This spring is expected to see the unveiling of the \$350-million Flame Towers – three glass-sided skyscrapers up to 620-feet in height

inspired by the country’s ancient association with fire. Human Rights Watch says “thousands of residents” have been forcibly evicted to make way for some of these projects.

However, billing itself as tourism destination may be a challenge for a country that still has a very poor human rights record and still is often confused with Kazakhstan, home of comic creation Borat.

An unlikely litmus test of its political ambitions will come next month when it hosts the Eurovision Song Contest, a live music competition beamed across Europe that is a byword for kitsch (it was once won by a transsexual representing Israel). Baku’s bitter enemy, neighboring Armenia, pulled out of the contest in disgust when an Azeri duo won last year.

“This will perhaps be a good indication of how far the regime is prepared to go to further its relationship with the west,” said James Nixey, of British think tank Chatham House.

Toronto’s Youth Impress Community and Yerevan Artist at this Year’s Musical Talent Show

TORONTO – Aspiring Armenian musicians from the area recently had their moment in the spotlight at the city’s annual Armenian General Benevolent Union (AGBU) Talent Show. On Sunday, March 11, 25 local youths, ages 6 to 18, shared the stage at the Alex Manoogian Cultural Center.

Seated among the 100 parents, friends and teachers that filled the center’s Babayan Ballroom was one special guest who had inspired many of the acts – pianist Jirayr Shahrmanyan from Yerevan. The children were excited to have Shahrmanyan in the audience – and the feeling was mutual. As



Toronto’s youth share the stage for the annual AGBU Musical Talent Show at the Alex Manoogian Cultural Center.

Shahrmanyan commented after the show, “It is a great pleasure for me to meet the Armenian youth within AGBU Toronto. Working with them is one of the highlights of my stay here.” In addition to his compositions, the show featured guitarists and the AGBU youth vocal group, which Hripsime Demirdjian directs.

While the show’s performances varied, the positive energy remained constant. AGBU

Toronto’s Executive Director Salpi Der Ghazarian remarked, “It was a treat to feel the confidence and enthusiasm of the young performers, as well as the pride of the parents watching their children perform.”

They already look forward to next year’s event. Until then, these talented youth will enjoy tokens from the evening, which included a certificate acknowledging their achievements.



Talent Show participants perform classic Armenian piano compositions.

Community News

Philadelphia to Hold Armenian Genocide Walk

PHILADELPHIA – On Saturday, April 28, for the fifth consecutive year, the Armenian Genocide Walk will take place, providing an opportunity for the entire Philadelphia community to gather to commemorate the 97th anniversary of the Genocide and educate the public on Turkish denial of the atrocities committed against the Armenians by the Ottoman Empire from 1915 to 1918.

Hundreds will gather at the Mher Statue by the Philadelphia Museum of Art and will walk through the streets of Philadelphia to rally and bring exposure to the cause. At the conclusion of the walk, a program will be held on the lawn of the Independence Hall Visitor's Center featuring keynote speaker Turkish scholar, Dr. Taner Akçam. The program will also include participation by local dignitaries, community leaders and clergymen with performances by the Jampa Band and Hamazkayin Meghri Dance Group.

Akçam is a Turkish historian and professor who is considered one of the leading international experts on the Armenian Genocide. He recently authored the book, *The Young Turks' Crime Against Humanity: The Armenian Genocide and Ethnic Cleansing in the Ottoman Empire*, which is scheduled for release this month and will be available for purchase at a discounted price the day of the walk. Introducing new evidence from more than 600 secret Ottoman documents, the book demonstrates in unprecedented detail that the Armenian Genocide and the expulsion of Greeks from the late Ottoman Empire resulted from an official effort to rid the empire of its Christian subjects. Presenting previously inaccessible documents along with expert context and analysis, Akçam's most authoritative work to date goes deep inside the bureaucratic machinery of Ottoman Turkey to show how a dying empire embraced genocide and ethnic cleansing.

With support from the Philadelphia Armenian Inter-Communal Committee, the Philadelphia Armenian Genocide Walk is sponsored by youth representatives from area churches and organizations, who have worked tirelessly to develop a meaningful and special opportunity for the Philadelphia-Armenian community to come together to make an appeal for justice. For registration, program information as well as individual and business ad opportunities, visit www.armeniangenocidewalk.com.

In addition, on April 24, the Philadelphia Armenian Inter-Communal Committee is sponsoring a requiem service, wreath-laying and cultural program at Holy Trinity Armenian Apostolic Church, 101 Ashmead Road, Cheltenham, at 7 p.m. Free and open to the public, the evening is organized by all five Philadelphia-Armenian churches and will feature students of the Armenian Sisters' Academy performing songs and recitations, as well as an address by Armenian Genocide Walk Co-chair Vicken Bazarbashian.



Dr. Taner Akçam



Noubar Manoogian

Arizona's First Armenian Eagle Scout Creates Armenian Genocide Memorial Walkway

SCOTTSDALE, Ariz. – Noubar Armen Manoogian, 17, has become the first Boy Scout of Armenian descent to achieve the rank of Eagle Scout in the state. His completed project was approved by the Grand Canyon Council and the rank of Eagle was conferred on April 12, at the Eagle Board of Review. Nationally, the Eagle Scout rank is achieved by only 5 percent of Boy Scouts.

For his project, Manoogian created a Memorial Walkway for the Armenian Genocide, which is the first of its kind in the United States. The walkway is bordered with the words "Martyred For Our Faith In These Places, Here We Worship Still." The 68-foot-long, five-foot-wide concrete path has stamped into it 113 names of towns where the Armenian Genocides of 1896 and 1915 occurred. It is located at St. Apkar Armenian Apostolic Church, 8849 East Cholla St.

The walkway took 320 hours to complete.

After many stages of planning, fundraising, work and approvals, it was completed over three weekends in January of this year.

The purpose of an Eagle Project is for a Boy Scout to show leadership in the planning and execution of a service project that is the culmination of his years of training in the Scouts. Manoogian led the Boy Scouts from his Troop 869 and also from Scottsdale's Troop 411, in the execution of his project.



The Memorial Walkway for the Armenian Genocide

see WALKWAY, page 7

Armenian Studies Program Banquet Celebrates 35th Anniversary

Dr. Richard Hovannisian Honored for More than 50 Years Of Teaching, Research and Service in Armenian Studies

FRESNO – The Armenian Studies Program at California State University, Fresno, held its gala 24th anniversary banquet, on Sunday, March 11, in the banquet hall of the Fort Washington Golf and Country Club.

More than 260 community members joined with Fresno State President Dr. John Welty, College of Arts and Humanities Dean Dr. Vida Samiian and faculty, students and friends of the Armenian Studies Program to mark the special occasion.

Prof. Barlow Der Mugrdchian, director of the Armenian Studies Program, welcomed guests on behalf of the program and gave a brief message on the program's activities in the 2011-2012 academic year. This year marked the 35th anniversary of the establishment of the Armenian Studies Program at Fresno State.

Prof. Sergio La Porta, Berberian Professor of Armenian Studies, spoke about the program and about its growth in recent years.

Dr. Richard Hovannisian, AEF Professor Emeritus of Modern Armenian History at UCLA, was the honored guest at the banquet and the keynote speaker for the evening. He was recognized with several proclamations, including one from the Fresno County Board of Supervisors, bestowed in person by Debbie



Dr. Richard Hovannisian

Poochigian, chairman of the Board of Supervisors. The Fresno City Council also declared March 11 as "Dr. Richard Hovannisian Day" in Fresno, thanks to the efforts of Councilman Andreas Borgeas. Valley legislators recognized Hovannisian with a proclamation lauding his years of teaching and research, due to Mary Alice Kaloostian, district director for California state Sen. Tom Berryhill.

Welty awarded Hovannisian with the President's Medal of Distinction, the highest non-degree award presented by California State University, Fresno. It is presented to citizens of the region, state or nation whose contribution in the area of professional achievements or public service are of national or international significance or represent a contribution of great significance to the university.

Hovannisian, gave an inspiring speech as he reflected on a long academic career. He was the first to teach Armenian courses at Fresno State in 1960-1962, when he taught several extension courses. While teaching those Armenian courses, he also learned more about Armenian history, rediscovering his own roots.

Hovannisian reflected on his childhood and the role his grandparents and parents had in shaping his life. His childhood on the family

see FRESNO, page 6



COMMUNITY NEWS

ACYOA Day Observed across Diocese

FRAMINGHAM, Mass. — Parishes throughout the Eastern Diocese observed the Armenian Church Youth Organization of America (ACYOA) Day as part of their traditional Palm Sunday celebrations on April 1. Members of the ACYOA Central Council visited local communities across the Diocese, where they gave presentations about the organization's recent projects and met with youth leaders.

Central Council Chair Danny Mantis gave a presentation at the Church of the Holy Translators in Framingham, where he reflected on the longstanding tradition of observing ACYOA Day on Palm Sunday. Following his talk, the local ACYOA chapter organized a church trivia game called "Are You Smarter than a Sunday School Student?"

Karen Dardarian, Central Council vice chair, visited Sts. Vartanantz Church in Chelmsford, where she met with the local ACYOA Juniors — the subgroup for middle school students. She spoke to the young people about her involvement with the

organization, described programs run by the ACYOA and encouraged them to make the transition to the ACYOA Seniors once they reach high school. Dardarian later addressed the entire parish on how her experience in the ACYOA has impacted her personal growth.

At the Church of the Holy Resurrection in New Britain, Conn., Central Council Secretary Armen Terjimanian also began his visit with a meeting with the local ACYOA Juniors. He later gave a presentation to the parish on the importance of the ACYOA to future generations of young Armenians and urged everyone to support the organization's mission.

Olivia Derderian, programming coordinator, spoke at the Church of the Holy Martyrs in Bayside, NY. In addition to a personal reflection on her involvement in the ACYOA, Derderian gave an overview of the Central Council's recent accomplishments and highlighted upcoming programs.

Alex Ouzounian, public relations coordinator, visited St. Sarkis Church in Dallas, Texas, where he gave a presentation on the history of the ACYOA, its current structure and its programming objectives.

George Macarian, treasurer, spoke at his home parish of St. David Church in Boca Raton, Fla.,



Alex Ouzounian (second from right), public relations coordinator on the ACYOA Central Council, with ACYOA members at St. Sarkis Church in Dallas, Texas

where he gave a brief overview of the history of the ACYOA and went on to highlight this year's programming successes.

At St. James Church of Watertown, Mass., Adrienne Ashbahian spoke about her spiritual journey and encouraged ACYOA members to

seek God's guidance in their daily lives. The program also included remarks by ACYOA Juniors Chair Allen Ackan and ACYOA Seniors Chair Karina Bekelian. A Palm Sunday dinner was prepared and served by the ACYOA to some 350 parishioners.

Women's Health Issues on Agenda Of AIWA Meeting

WINCHESTER, Mass. — Judy Norsigian, a prominent voice on a range of women's health concerns, will be the luncheon speaker at the annual meeting of the Armenian International Women's Association on April 28 at the Winchester Country Club.

Norsigian is executive director and primary spokesperson for the Boston Women's Health Book Collective, a non-profit women's health education, advocacy and consulting organization. She also serves on the Board of Public Responsibility in Medicine and Research and on numerous other advisory and editorial boards.



Judy Norsigian

Norsigian has been an author and editor of all editions of the organization's landmark book on women's health and sexuality, *Our Bodies, Ourselves*.

The ninth and most recent edition of the book was published by Simon & Schuster in October. The organization has also produced single-topic books on menopause (*Our Bodies, Ourselves: Menopause*) and pregnancy/birth (*Our Bodies, Ourselves: Pregnancy and Birth*).

The Boston Women's Health Book Collective is widely known for its reliable, evidence-based information (both in its books and blogs) as well as its extensive advocacy of midwives and safe choices in childbearing. *Our Bodies, Ourselves* has appeared in 26 foreign languages, with about 4.5 million copies in print worldwide. The second edition of the Armenian-language translation was issued last fall.

A graduate of Radcliffe College, Norsigian has received numerous awards, including an honorary doctorate from Boston University. She appears regularly on national television and radio programs in discussions about various aspects of women's health. She has been seen on "Oprah," the "Today Show," "Good Morning America," "The Early Show" and "NBC Nightly News."

AIWA's annual meeting will open with coffee at 9:30 a.m., and the business meeting will begin at 10 a.m. Reports on the association's various activities (including scholarships, programs in Armenia, presence as a non-governmental organization at the United Nations in New York, sixth international conference in San Francisco and publications) will be reviewed. A luncheon with Norsigian will follow at noon.

The public is welcome to attend. For reservations, contact www.aiwainternational.org, aiwainc@aol.com or 65 Main St., Watertown, MA 02472.



Judge Chuck Poochigian, Dr. Richard Hovannisian, Prof. Barlow Der Mugdechian and Fresno County Board of Supervisors Chairman Debbie Poochigian

Armenian Studies Program Banquet Celebrates 35th Anniversary

FRESNO, from page 5

farm affected him greatly and he emphasized the most important lesson he had gained, which was the idea that change was possible for everyone, slowly but surely.

Following the keynote address, student recipients of Armenian Studies Program scholarships received a congratulatory letter from Sen. Dianne Feinstein (D-CA), and a gift of the book, *Follow*, written by William Saroyan, from the Armenian Studies Program. More than 40 students were recognized for receiving the scholarships and for graduating with a minor in Armenian Studies.

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COMMUNITY NEWS

Lisa Mardigian Is Honored for 20 Years of Service to Church Youth

SOUTHFIELD, Mich. — On Sunday, April 1, the members of St. John Armenian Church celebrated more than just Palm Sunday. Hundreds of parishioners came to honor Lisa Mardigian, the longest serving youth coordinator in the Eastern Diocese.

For more than 20 years, Mardigian has been in charge of all youth activities including Armenian Church Youth Organization of America (ACYOA) Seniors and Juniors and Orthodox Youth Athletic Association (OYAA) basketball. It would be nearly impossible to list the contributions Mardigian has made to the youth, both at St. John's parish and in the greater Detroit community. From heading up Lenten fish dinners, St. John's Day

show their appreciation.

Mardigian adds this honor to her induction last year into the OYAA Hall of Fame. She is the first woman to receive this acclaim and this induction was even more special as it is one she and her father have both earned.

A committee spent months planning this event and the time and love they gave was evident in every detail. The tables were decorated with spring flowers and splashes of color and cookies with photos of Mardigian, both as a child and an adult, adorned an overflowing sweet table. Lunch and desserts were prepared and served by the hands of those whose lives Mardigian has touched. While dining, guests were treated to a slide show with two decades



Lisa Mardigian, second from right, with event organizers Laura Leacock, Anita Arslanian and Marilyn Dadian



A stage full of Lisa Mardigian's present and former youth participants wearing "We Love Lisa!" shirts

Camp and Hye Camp and the White Cross Project, Mardigian has guided more than two decades of children, and on Palm Sunday more than 450 church members came to

of pictures of the honoree and the children. Finally, the afternoon was highlighted by a stage full of Mardigian's present and former youth participants, all surrounding the guest of

honor, wearing shirts that said, "We Love Lisa!"

The program was emceed by Raffi ElChemmas, who grew up under Mardigian's care. In addition, several others shared special memories and stories as they spoke words of praise and gratitude for her. Among these speakers were Jennifer Morris, youth outreach coordinator for the Eastern Diocese, and Danny Dardarian, chairman of the Detroit ACYOA Seniors. Mardigian was also honored by the city of Southfield and received a commendation on the city's behalf from Southfield City Clerk Nancy Malkasian Banks. A message was offered by St. John's pastor, Fr. Garabed Kochakian, who also read a message from Bishop Paren Avedikian, who was responsible for launching Mardigian's youth ministry 20 years ago. A special commendation from the Diocesan Primate

Archbishop Khajag Barsamian was read congratulating Mardigian on this milestone, her longevity of diverse service to the parish and the Armenian Church. Also sharing words of praise were Mardigian's nephew, Armen Mardigian, and Alberta Godoshian, principal of St. John Church School. In addition to those present, several Diocesan clergy sent words of admiration for Mardigian's two decades of service. At the conclusion of the program, Mardigian was given a diamond cross to commemorate the occasion.

She accepted the many accolades given her, and true to her character, shared the praise with everyone she has worked with over the years.

Mardigian's influence has been, and continues to be, a gift to the Armenian community.

State House Commemoration of the Armenian Genocide

10:30 a.m.

Friday, April 20

Proclamations for
Former State Sen. Steven Tolman and
Playwright Joyce Van Dyke

Marking the 97th Anniversary of the Genocide

Keynote Speaker
Khatchig Mouradian

Hosted by State Rep. Jonathan Hecht
State Rep. John Lawn
State Sen. William Brownsberger

Free buses will leave St. James and St. Stephen's
Churches at
9 a.m.

(Courtesy of Knights of Vartan)



Arizona's First Armenian Eagle Scout Creates Armenian Genocide Memorial Walkway

WALKWAY, from page 5

2012 is the 100th anniversary of the Eagle Scout rank. Manoogian's Eagle rank patch will be a special centennial edition that will only be conferred on those scouts who achieve Eagle in 2012.

The Armenian Genocide Memorial Walkway will be blessed on Sunday, April 22, by Rev. Zacharia Saribekyan. The blessing will take place after the church services when the congregation follows the priest in a vigil *Tapor* for the Genocide Martyrs. The Primate of the Western Diocese, Archbishop Hovnan Derderian, will lead a short ceremony at the Memorial Walkway when he visits the St. Apkar Parish, May 3 to 5, for the Annual General Assembly of the Western Diocese. It is being

held this year in Arizona for the first time in its 85-year history.

Manoogian is the son of, Deacon Berj and Victoria Manoogian, and the brother of Rossleen. He has been in the Boy Scouts since age 6 as a Tiger Scout, then as a Cub Scout when he earned every Arrow Point and the St. Gregory Religious Medal for Cub Scouts from the Eastern Diocese. He has earned 51 Merit Badges and the St. Vartan Religious Medal for Boy Scouts, and he is a member of the Boy Scout Honor Fraternity, the Order of the Arrow. He has been an ordained acolyte of the Armenian Apostolic Church since age 8 and is currently the junior executive for the Hye-Ways Group and a member of the ACYO.



Boy Scouts from Troop 869 and also from Scottsdale's Troop 411 helped with the project.



COMMUNITY NEWS

Dr. Seta Dadoyan 'Rethinks' Armenian History At Ararat-Eskijian Museum

MISSION HILLS, Calif. – Dr. Seta B. Dadoyan will give a lecture titled, "On The Armenians and Islam: Images for a Brighter History of the Armenians," on the occasion of the publication of her book, *The Armenians in the Medieval Islamic World – Paradigms of Interaction Seventh to Fourteenth Centuries*, on Sunday, April 22, at 4 p.m., at the Ararat-Eskijian Museum.

The Armenian experience in the medieval Near East, as well as the modern Middle East and the world in general, is too diverse and complicated to respond to quasi-epic narratives or "objective" accounts. There is a brighter and braver Armenian history that seems to have escaped most historic approaches, even the other literary genres. Dadoyan believes that for contemporary Armenian scholarship, the identification of well-grounded paradigmatic cases and connecting the dots, so to speak, must be the essence of historical writing. Rethinking Armenian history through specific cases and episodes of interaction with the environment – such as the Islamic World for the past 14 centuries – for her was a personal intellectual journey, which after two decades of research and the publication two books, many papers, culminated in a three-volume massive work, titled *The Armenians in the Medieval Islamic World Paradigms of Interaction Seventh - Fourteenth Centuries* in three volumes. The first volume on the *Arab Period in Armenia* was out in October 2011 (New Brunswick, NJ & London, UK: Transaction Publishers, 2011). The second and third are due this year and the next.

Dadoyan has a doctorate in philosophy. She was a professor at the American University of Beirut from 1986 to 2005. Previously, she taught at numerous universities worldwide and was a visiting professor of various Armenian institutions. The focus of her research and publications is the study of Armenian social-political and intellectual cultures in their interactive aspects, both medieval and modern. In addition to many lectures in various universities and institutions, she is the author of more than 50 papers in scholarly journals and six books.

For more information contact the Ararat-Eskijian Museum, ararat-eskijian-museum@netzero.net.



Billboards to Promote Genocide Awareness in Watertown

WATERTOWN – Recently, billboards have been erected in Watertown and Foxboro commemorating the Armenian Genocide, by Peace of Art, Inc.

The first billboard went up on Route 1 near Gillette Stadium and Patriot Place, Foxboro, on April 9, with the message "Honoring the Memory of 1.5 million Lives. Recognize the Armenian Genocide."

The second billboard went up on Arsenal Street, Watertown, on Thursday, April 12, with the message, "Mr. President, Don't Turn Your Back! Recognize the Armenian Genocide."

A third billboard is scheduled to go up on Mount Auburn Street in Watertown, Monday, April 16, with the message, "Mr. President, Don't Turn Your Back! Recognize the Armenian Genocide."

Jury Sides with Officer, Awards Him \$150K

BURBANK, Calif. (*Burbank Leader*) – A jury, earlier this month, awarded an Armenian-American police detective \$150,000 for claims that he faced on-the-job discrimination and harassment because of his ethnicity, his attorney said.

The detective who filed the lawsuit, Steve Karagiosian, testified in Los Angeles County Superior Court that detectives and sergeants in the Police Department regularly used derogatory terms – such as "towel heads," in referring to Armenians.

The decision comes two weeks after a jury awarded former Burbank Police Deputy Chief William Taylor nearly \$1.3 million based on claims that he was fired in retaliation for refusing to sign off on the terminations of minority officers and for raising concerns about how a sexual harassment incident was being handled.

"The Burbank Police Department has been proven to have ethnic harassment within its department," said Karagiosian's attorney, Solomon Gresen, after the jury's verdict was announced. "Detective Karagiosian had complained for years, and the jury's verdict should demonstrate to the city that this is a problem that needs to be immediately addressed."

Named "Officer of the Year" in 2007, Karagiosian is still employed with the department. Even with the jury coming down on his side, Gresen said his client feared the verdict would create a whole new set of problems back at the department.

"Mr. Karagiosian is gratified that the jury found in his favor, but fears retaliation from the city attorney's office and the Burbank Police Department," Gresen said.

While the jury must still make determinations on more specific questions, Burbank City Atty. Amy Albano said the city was disappointed with the verdict.

"What was interesting in the verdict is that the amount awarded was reduced," Albano said, noting that the amount was lower than the suggested \$225,000 because the jury felt Karagiosian could have avoided some of the damages because some of the incidents were not reported to the city.

"The city takes issues of harassment very seriously," Albano said. "When we are informed, we take appropriate action. That was done in this case. If not informed about an issue of harassment, the city is not able to take an action."

Jurors deliberated Karagiosian's case for about a day before delivering its verdict.

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COMMUNITY NEWS

Strategic Business Leader to Speak at St. James Men's Club

WATERTOWN – On Monday, May 7, Hagop “Jack” Antounian, vice president of manufacturing (US and China operations) at BTU International, and founder/president of the Armenian Business Network (ABN), will be the speaker at the dinner meeting of the St. James Armenian Church Men's Club. The topic will be “Armenian Business Network and Networking.”

Antounian is a strategic business leader with more than 20 years of demonstrated success in high-tech manufacturing companies and supply chains serving semiconductor, robotics, medical and telecommunications industries.

A native of Massachusetts, Antounian is a LEAN Sigma and DFX expert and two-time recipient of the Shingo Prize for operational excellence. He is a change agent who has spent his career reengineering and transforming companies into high-performing, world-class competitors. He has extensive experience in developing and managing global supply chains, particularly in Asia and China, to achieve strategic advantages. He is a catalyst for positive change, infusing organizations with customer-centric policies, which have consistently resulted in increased revenue.

Antounian has held various leadership posi-

tions in manufacturing operations and currently is the vice president of manufacturing North American and China operations at BTU International – a leading global supplier of advanced thermal processing equipment for the alternative energy and electronics assembly markets. Prior to BTU, Antounian was the vice president of operations at SEEGRID, a producer of vision-guided mobile robots.

He has a bachelor's in electrical engineering with a minor in computer engineering from Northeastern University, an MBA from Boston University and an executive education program certificate from Harvard Business School.

He founded the ABN in November 2010 and the group has quickly grown to more than 3,100 members – a testament to the need for an organization focused entirely on business advancement for Armenians, with no political or religious affiliations.

The group's focus is to provide a forum for Armenian professionals, business owners, service providers, students and organizations to support each other, their businesses, humanitarian causes and community, by expanding and sharing their contact base, to increase opportunities for employment, education, networking, mentoring, financing and entrepreneurship, both locally and globally.

ABN plans business workshops with expert speakers, provides online job postings, organizes networking events at Armenian-owned venues and provides an online platform for members to promote their businesses, services, local causes and events. Recently they have launched a new program, “Champion an Armenian.” This program is composed entirely of member volunteers who have an expertise or knowledge in a particular field that they share with other members who are seeking guidance, mentoring, career advice or employment within the same field. In the coming months, ABN will publish an Armenian Business e-Directory. This tool will enable members to easily identify Armenian entities and individuals to support. All the programs instituted by ABN are to facilitate the primary vision for the group – Armenians supporting Armenians, first.

For more information and to join the ABN, visit: www.linkedin.com/home or go to www.facebook.com and search for ABN.

The social hour starts at 6:15 p.m. followed by an Armenian dinner at 7 p.m. Tickets are \$12 per person. The dinner meeting will be at the Charles Mosesian Cultural & Youth Center, Keljik Hall, 465 Mt. Auburn St., Watertown.

Women are welcome.

Simon Payaslian to Speak at NAASR on Armenia's Political Economy of Human Rights

BELMONT – Prof. Simon Payaslian, the Charles K. and Elisabeth M. Kenosian Chair in Modern Armenian History and Literature at Boston University, will give a lecture, titled “The Political Economy of Human Rights in Armenia,” on Thursday, May 10, at 8 p.m., at the National Association for Armenian Studies and Research (NAASR) Center, 395 Concord Ave. The lecture is co-sponsored by the Zoryan Institute for Contemporary Armenian Research and Documentation and NAASR.

Since its independence from the Soviet Union in 1991, Armenia has experienced a reversal from its earlier efforts to establish a democratic system to an authoritarian regime, continuing the Soviet repressive approaches to human rights. Payaslian will juxtapose Armenian history with the evolution of international human rights standards and survey Armenian history from the 19th-century under Ottoman and Russian rule to the current situation in the post-Soviet republic. He will examine political, civil, social and economic rights while highlighting the clash between sovereignty and human rights.

Payaslian has held the Kenosian Chair in Modern Armenian History and Literature at Boston University since 2007. His most recent book is *The Political Economy of Human Rights in Armenia: Authoritarianism and Democracy in a Former Soviet Republic* (I.B. Tauris, 2011). Earlier publications include: *The History of Armenia: From the Origins to the Present* (2007); *United States Policy toward the Armenian Question and the Armenian Genocide* (2005); *The Armenian Genocide, 1915-1923: A Handbook for Students and Teachers* (2001); *International Political Economy: Conflict and Cooperation in the Global System* (co-authored with Frederic S. Pearson) (1999) and *US Foreign Economic and Military Aid: The Reagan and Bush Administrations* (1996). He has co-edited (with Richard G. Hovannisian) two volumes, *Armenian Constantinople* (2010) and *Armenian Cilicia* (2008).

The Political Economy of Human Rights in Armenia will be available for purchase and signing the night of the lecture.

Admission to the event is free.

More information about the lecture is available by e-mailing hq@naasr.org.



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For information and registration materials, please contact:

Sonya Bekarian
Club America Travel, N.J. Branch
(201) 313-1285 (business) / (201) 315-5916 (cell)
sonyabekarian@aol.com

You can also contact your local parish pastor for information on the trip and the application packet. Space is limited; the deposit and application form must be received no later June 1, 2012.



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Merrimack Valley Sponsors Genocide Essay Contest

NORTH ANDOVER, Mass. – In an effort to get the youth of the community better acquainted with the Genocide and offer an opportunity to express their feelings, the Armenian Genocide Commemorative Committee of Merrimack Valley sponsored an essay contest, where students were asked to respond to a cartoon of a passive Turk at a coffee house asking, “What genocide?”

The contest was open to students between the ages of 13-18, in area Armenian churches.

The first-prize winner was Nairi Hovsepian, a sophomore at Westford Academy. She is the daughter of Vartkes and Nina Hovsepian and great-granddaughter of Gen. Dro Kanayan.

Second place went to Matthew Kochakian, followed by Mary Frounjan in third. All are Armenian school students at St. Gregory Church of North Andover, where Sossy Jeknavorian is superintendent, and shared \$350 in prize money.



COMMUNITY NEWS

Paros 'Lighthouse' Foundation Raises \$25,000 to Help Victims of Domestic Violence in Armenia

SEAL BEACH, Calif. – More than 200 supporters of Paros "Lighthouse" Charitable Foundation USA raised \$25,000 at a fundraising event on March 11, at Zov's Bistro in Tustin. The event benefited Paros "Lighthouse" Foundation's work assisting victims of domestic violence and other critical outreach services in Armenia. Guests enjoyed appetizers and wines,



Mark Geragos, Esq. encouraged guests to take a stand against domestic violence and support Paros "Lighthouse" Foundation's outreach in Armenia.



Attorney Craig Missakian, longtime supporter of Paros "Lighthouse" Foundation, introduces guest of honor Mark Geragos, Esq.



Paros "Lighthouse" Foundation supporters (from left) Zuhra Ghazarian, Charlie Zaher, Appo Jabarian, Bedig Fermanian, Talin Karamardian, and Garbis Karamardian



Members of Paros "Lighthouse" Foundation's Board of Directors and event organizing committee

all underwritten by Zov's Bistro. Highlighting the event was renowned attorney Mark Geragos as guest speaker.

The event was a call to action for Armenian communities worldwide to take a stand against domestic abuse. Speaking to the guests, Geragos said that in the past 20 years he has observed an increase in spousal abuse cases in California courts among Armenian families. He stated that violence against women anywhere is unacceptable. He encouraged everyone to donate to Paros "Lighthouse" Foundation to help women in crisis in Armenia.

Co-Founder Seta Ghazarian stated, "We serve pregnant and parenting young women in the secure environment of our 13,000-square-foot shelter/women's center in the village of Bdgounk. Our core services focus on keeping both mother and child healthy and safe, while teaching the mothers important skills like child development, parenting and health and nutrition. For women in immediate danger, we have an emergency hotline number, 20-80, which can be called from anywhere in Armenia free of charge. Our goal is to help young Armenian women realize their full potential, despite the danger and adversity they face."

In addition to aiding victims of domestic violence, Paros "Lighthouse" Foundation also offers needed services to the local community including vocational training, psychological counseling and therapy, sewing and cooking classes, women's health services with an on-site OBGYN physician, dental health services with an on-site dentist, feeding the poor and elderly, supporting a local kindergarten, weekly Bible study and donations of essential goods to the needy in Armenia and Artsakh.

Zuhra and Seta Ghazarian have been engaged in charity work and community outreach for underprivileged and underserved Armenians since 1999. The idea of "Paros" (meaning lighthouse in Armenian) was established by friends and supporters of the Ghazarian family and grew out of their concern for Armenian women and children as well as the integrity of the Armenian family. Paros "Lighthouse" Armenian Charitable Foundation USA is a 501(c)(3) non-profit, public benefit corporation registered in the State of California and Republic of Armenia.

For more information, visit www.parosfoundation.org.



Paros "Lighthouse" Foundation supporters, from left, Andy Andonian, Betty Gulezian, Seta Ghazarian, Appo Jabarian and Diane Hekimian.



New York METRO

Hundreds Gather for Easter Services at St. Vartan Cathedral

NEW YORK — More than 2,000 people participated in Easter services on April 8 at St. Vartan Cathedral, to celebrate the most important day of the year in the church calendar. Early on pews began to be filled and when

Liturgy and delivered the homily. He spoke about the three women who were the first to witness the miracle of Christ's Resurrection.

They had come to Jesus' tomb to anoint his body, but they found instead "an angel who called out to them: 'Do not be afraid, for I know that you are looking for Jesus, who was crucified. He is not here. He has risen, just as he said.'"

This episode is remembered in the Armenian Church through the *Yughaperitz Ganaykh*, or the Oil-bearing Women, service — an ancient tradition that is performed every Sunday before the start of the Divine Liturgy.

"The Good News of Easter is not just a relic of centuries long past," Barsamian said. "It is a living message of hope and joy, of victory over sin and

death, which is directed to each and every one of us today."

"We see that even in our own darkest moments, when we are afraid that all is lost — Jesus Christ is with us," he continued. "That is the promise of his resurrection...Our Lord is not remote or distant from us — to the contrary, he is standing close by, waiting for us to see him."

Release of Doves

After the Divine Liturgy, the Primate led a procession to the cathedral plaza, where 12 doves were released, symbolizing the dispatching of the 12 apostles.



After the Divine Liturgy, the Primate led a procession to the cathedral plaza, where 12 doves were released, symbolizing the dispatching of the 12 apostles.



Archbishop Khajag Barsamian participated in the Washing of the Feet ceremony on Holy Thursday.

seats had become scarce, many stood at the back or spilled onto the plaza, where audio speakers broadcast the *badarak* from the sanctuary.

Archbishop Khajag Barsamian, Primate of the Diocese of the Armenian Church of America (Eastern), celebrated the Divine

works by prominent Yerevan-based painters as well as by prolific Armenian artists based in America.

The St. Vartan Cathedral Choir sang the Divine Liturgy on Easter Sunday under the direction of Khoren Mekanejian. Florence Avakian accompanied on the organ.

Holy Week Services

Similar celebrations were underway at parishes across the Diocese. Easter was preceded by Holy Week, which commemorates the dramatic events leading to the Resurrection of Jesus Christ.

At St. Vartan Cathedral on Palm Sunday, April 1, Rev. Mardiros Chevian, cathedral dean, celebrated the Divine Liturgy and conducted the *Turun-Patzek* or Door Opening Service. At the conclusion of services, people walked from the cathedral plaza to the western entrance of the building, carrying palms in commemoration of Jesus' triumphal entry into Jerusalem.

On April 5, Great and Holy Thursday, Rev. Bedros Kadehjian celebrated the Divine Liturgy in the morning. In the evening, Barsamian officiated at the Washing of the Feet ceremony, which commemorates Christ washing the feet of the 12 apostles after the Last Supper. The 12 were selected from students of the cathedral Armenian School. The Washing of the Feet ceremony was followed by a *Khavaroom* or Vigil Service.

The Order of the Crucifixion of Christ and the Order of the Entombment of the Lord (or *Taghoom* Service) were commemorated with services on Great and Holy Friday, April 6.

On Easter Eve, Saturday, April 7, Chevian celebrated the Divine Liturgy. Students from the Diocesan Khrimian Lyceum read scriptures and sang in the choir.

Armen A. Avanesians Joins FAR Board of Directors

NEW YORK — Armen A. Avanesians, a partner at Goldman Sachs and Company and a member of Columbia University's Board of Trustees, has joined the Fund for Armenian Relief (FAR) as the newest member of its Board of Directors.

"Mr. Avanesians has been one of the visionary supporters of FAR, for years sponsoring one of our most effective programs in Armenia — ANSEF," said Randy Sapah-Gulian, FAR's chairman. "He is

very familiar with our mission, values and purpose. We are excited about him joining the FAR Board of Directors and look forward to working with him and using his experience and talents to advance FAR's strategic priorities in promoting education and innova-



Armen A. Avanesians

tion in Armenia. This work is not only about assisting the younger generation of Armenia in achieving their career goals, but is also critical to the nation's ability to become competitive in the global marketplace."

Avanesians has always been keen on supporting education and science. He provided an endowment to the Alexander and Hermine Avanesians Professorship in Industrial Engineering and Operations Research in memory of his parents. In 2006, he created the Janette and Armen Avanesians Diversity Award to enhance diversity in departmental, school and university programs at Columbia University.

"Armenia still needs the encouragement of the diaspora to know that people out here care about their future," Avanesians said. "They can build up their country themselves. They have the brainpower and the knowledge. They just need a slight boost from us. I am honored to join the FAR Board and look forward to working with my colleagues in serving the people of Armenia."



An art exhibit, titled "Behold, All Things Have Become New: Armenian Artists Celebrate Easter," was on display in the cathedral complex.

Zaven Dadekian of St. Leon Church of Fair Lawn, NJ, was the godfather of the Release of Doves ceremony. Dadekian, the recipient of the Diocese's Armenian of the Year award in 2009, has been involved in the Armenian Church on both the parish and Diocesan levels. He was also instrumental in forming the Friends of Echmiadzin organization to support projects of the worldwide Armenian Church.

Also taking part in the Release of Doves ceremony was Ambassador Garen Nazarian, Armenia's representative to the UN, along with his family.

The Shushi Dance Ensemble of St. Vartan Cathedral, wearing traditional Armenian costumes, performed several dances on the plaza following the releasing-of-doves ceremony.

A reception followed in Haik and Alice Kavookjian Auditorium, where Barsamian officiated over a home-blessing service. The faithful received nshkharks to take home.

Concurrent with the Easter observances, a special art exhibit was on display in the cathedral complex. In "Behold, All Things Have Become New: Armenian Artists Celebrate Easter," curator Vasken Kalajjian assembled



The Shushi Dance Ensemble of St. Vartan Cathedral performed several dances on the cathedral plaza.

Arts & Living

Poet, Novelist Krikor Beledian to Receive UCLA Friends' Narekatsi Medal

LOS ANGELES – The Friends of UCLA Armenian Language and Culture Studies organization announced recently that poet, novelist and critic Krikor Beledian will be this year's recipient of the Friends' Grigor Narekatsi Medal for his achievements in Armenian literature.

The Narekatsi medal is bestowed upon individuals who have enriched the Armenian cultural treasury in their fields of specialization. Other recipients have been Michael Hagopian (California), Berj Zeituntsian (Armenia), Nina Garsoian (New York), Arusyak Sahakian (Armenia), Antonia Arslan (Italy) and Vatsche Barsoumian (California) to name a few.

Beledian, who lives in Paris, will be honored on Sunday, April 29, during the Friends' annual banquet at the banquet hall of the Organization of Istanbul Armenians, 19726 Sherman Way, Winnetka, beginning at 6 p.m. At this event, the man and his work will be presented by Dr. Hagop Gulludjian, himself a literary critic and specialist of the work of Grigor Narekatsi and currently instructor of West Armenian within the Armenian Studies program at UCLA. Excerpts from Beledian's poetry will be read by students. There will also be a musical program presented by UCLA students.

Beledian has agreed to extend his stay in Los Angeles and give one public lecture, in



Dr. Krikor Beledian

Armenian, on Thursday, May 1, at 7 p.m. at the Glendale Public Library. His theme will be "Issues in Contemporary Literature." He will, of course, dwell extensively on Armenian lit-

erature today. He holds two doctorates from the Sorbonne: one in philosophy (1975) and one in comparative literature (1995). The corpus of Beledian's work includes more than 30 volumes of poetry collections, novels and critical works in Armenian and French, several volumes of translations from Armenian into French and several dozen articles. He has also contributed extensively to the Armenian press. His first published collection of poetry was in 1976, titled *Teghagrut'iwn k'anduogh k'aghak'I me hamar*, which caught the immediate attention of literati and poetry lovers.

Beledian published his first novel, *Semer*, in 1997, followed by several others.

Alongside his creative work, his critical studies were many, including studies on Grigor Narekatsi, Daniel Varuzhan, Armenian futurism and others. A study on Armenian symbolism is in progress. He has also published a study on French-Armenian literature titled *Cinquante ans de littérature arménienne en France* (2001).

Beledian was born in Beirut, where he received his early education, including attending the Jemaran. Beledian taught briefly at Haigazian College (1972-73), has taught ancient Armenian literature, Classical Armenian language and theology at the Theological Institute of Lyon (1987-2006) and is lecturer in Armenian language and literature at the Institut national des langues et civilisations orientales in Paris (1978-present). Beledian is also well-known in the US, where he was first introduced in the early 1980s as visiting scholar at UCLA at the invitation of Prof. Avedis Sanjian, who then held the Narekatsi Chair. He gave a number of public lectures and developed a large circle of admirers. Since then, he has been invited to give lectures not only by UCLA's Friends of Armenian Language and Culture Studies but also by other groups such as Bats' Namak and the Hamazkaine Cultural Association.

The Friends group is a university-approved support group, which, in conjunction with the Narekatsi Chair whose current holder is Prof. Peter Cowe, promotes Armenian Studies in language, literature and culture.



A magical scroll

Armenian Books on Display in Harvard's Lamont Library

CAMBRIDGE, Mass. – Mashtots Professor of Armenian Studies James R. Russell expressed justifiable satisfaction as he oversaw the final details of an exhibit of Armenian books that opened at Harvard University's Lamont Library on Monday, April 9.

Said Russell, "We started planning this about a year ago. Our core group included Marc Mamigonian from NAASR [National Association of Armenian Research and Studies], Barbara Merguerian from ALMA [the Armenian Library and Museum of America] and Michael Grossman from Widener Library. Grossman is chief cataloguer for Armenian and Georgian books. We didn't have a designer but Mark

McKertich and Todd Pattison, who is in charge of conservation for the entire Harvard library system, organized the space and set up the exhibit."

Russell says he was moved to mount the exhibit out of the knowledge that few

Harvard students know very much about Armenian history and culture.

Said Russell, "Harvard is a place where students come to study large things in the world. Most Armenian students here are involved in that endeavor. Few people are interested in language and history and I wanted to undertake this exhibit to display the scope of Armenian culture and history."

The exhibit itself is mounted on the third floor of Lamont Library and consists of two horizontal cases of books, periodicals and scrolls and one large vertical glass case that contains a copy of Russell's text, "The Armenians and the Book," and additional materials.

The display contains a range of materials ranging from the ancient and precious to the more modern. To name just a few, there is a facsimile of the *Friday Book*, the first text to be actually printed in Armenian in 1512 by the Mekhitarist monks in Venice. There are also tiny, delicate, intricately-illustrated books of Aesop's fables, a copy of the first edition of *Hairenik*, texts by the poet Yeghishe Charents and more contemporary works such as the novels of William Saroyan and the new edition of *The Forty Days of Musa Dagh* by Franz Werfel. There are also magical scrolls with the explanatory text written and illustrated by Russell.

see HARVARD, page 14

Armenian Genocide Museum of America Presents Capitol Hill Exhibit on 'Witnesses to The Armenian Genocide'

WASHINGTON – The Armenian Genocide Museum of America announced the opening on April 5 of an exhibit, titled "Witnesses to the Armenian Genocide." The exhibit brings together the surviving photographic record of the Armenian Genocide produced by German witnesses. The exhibit is being presented with the Armenian Assembly of America and the Armenian National Institute.

The "Witnesses to the Armenian Genocide" exhibit is hosted by the Lutheran Church of the Reformation. The church has been serving the Capitol Hill community since 1869 and its congregation strongly supports ecumenical activities. Situated between 2nd and 3rd Streets, the church also sits across from the Folger Shakespeare Library and the Library of Congress.

Photographic evidence on the Armenian Genocide is extremely rare. Although Imperial Germany and the Ottoman Empire were military allies during World War I, the Ottoman Turkish authorities responsible for the Armenian Genocide prohibited taking pictures and closely watched anyone suspected of owning a camera. Despite the threat of a court martial, several German civilians and other German military officials assigned to the Ottoman Empire during the war disregarded the ban and secretly photographed the mistreatment of the Armenian population.

The exhibit is the product of years of research in European archives. Many of the photographs in the exhibit were uncovered for the first time after decades of neglect. The photographs showing Armenian deportees are matched with diary entries, reports and memoirs of the photographers, documenting their authenticity. The creation of the panel exhibit was sponsored by the Armenian Assembly of America.

For viewing information or to arrange for a group tour, contact Dr. Rouben Adalian at ani@agmm.org.

The Armenian Genocide Museum of America is an outgrowth of the Armenian Assembly of America and the Armenian National Institute (ANI), catalyzed by the initial pledge of Anoush Mathevosian toward building such a museum in Washington, DC.

Joint Commemoration Of Three Genocides at ALMA

WATERTOWN – On Sunday, April 22, at 3:15 p.m., the Armenian Library and Museum of America (ALMA) will commemorate the Armenian Genocide along with the Ukrainian Genocide of the 1930s, largely forgotten today, and the Great Hunger of the Irish people in the 1840s, resulting from the deliberate Potato Famine, each one of them causing millions of deaths.

The event will take place in the third-floor gallery and consist of brief talks by Dr. Joseph Downes on the Irish Great Hunger, Dr. Dikran Kaligian on the aftermath of the Armenian Genocide and Attorney Paul Rabchenuk on the Ukrainian Genocide. The commemoration will be followed by a brief Ukrainian religious service, with priest and choir.

ALMA has arranged for a traveling exhibition on the Ukrainian Holodomor to be on display in the Terjenian-Thomas Gallery, courtesy of the Connecticut Holodomor Awareness Committee.

The event is free and open to the public.



ARTS & LIVING

Fleeing the Turks and Running Headlong into Disaster aboard the Titanic

TORONTO (RFE/RL) — Neshan Krekorian was barely in his 20s when his father urged him to emigrate from western Armenia and start a new life far away across the Atlantic Ocean.

Thousands of Armenians were doing the same, in a bid to escape rising violence and persecution at the hands of Ottoman-era Turks.

Thus, Krekorian fled, making his way across Europe and purchasing a third-class ticket for what would prove a fateful ocean journey.

"His father told him to leave the country and seek a new life in Canada and hopefully bring his brothers over," said Krekorian's grandson, Van Solomonian.

"He had two younger brothers who stayed



Neshan Krekorian as a young man

behind. My grandfather gathered four other compatriots from Turkish Armenia in the area that he lived in, which was Keghi. And they got to France in Cherbourg, and by pure fate got on the Titanic."

Krekorian was one of over 700 third-class passengers on board the maiden voyage of the celebrated ocean liner.

Immigrants from across the British Isles, Scandinavia, Eastern Europe and the Middle East paid the equivalent of \$1,000 for a steerage-class ticket entitling them to modest sleeping quarters and meals in the third-class dining hall for the duration of what was meant to be a weeklong voyage.

Solomonian remembers his grandfather describing the quarters as cramped, but comfortable. But things took a turn for the worse five nights into the journey. Close to midnight on April 14, the ship hit a massive iceberg in the North Atlantic and slowly began to sink. According to Solomonian, his grandfather and some of his fellow third-class passengers had just settled in for a game of cards when they heard "a shudder" and "a dull thud."

"He knew something had happened, but he didn't quite know what," Solomonian said. "The problem with the third-class passengers was that they were actually locked down on their decks, because at the time regulations required that steerage passengers be isolated from first and second class."

"He and a few other men had to break a chain lock to get up to the upper decks. My grandfather ended up on boat 10. The boat was being lowered and he literally just jumped over the side and basically got away with it."

Many steerage-class passengers were not nearly so lucky. More than two-thirds of the third-class ticket holders went down with the ship, many because they were unable to reach the upper decks.

Of the approximately 2,200 people on board,



Armenian Titanic survivor Neshan Krekorian (seated left) with his wife, Persape (seated right), daughter Angie (center), son George (left) and daughter Alice (right)

only 700 survived, most of them first- and second-class travelers.

Krekorian eventually made his way to Canada, ultimately settling in the town of St. Catherine's in Ontario.

A foundry worker in the local General Motors plant, he earned enough money to honor his father's wish to bring his younger brothers to Canada, and helped found the town's Armenian Church, the first of its kind in the country.

Solomonian said it is possible his grandfather's brothers only learned of his ordeal on the Titanic once they had arrived in Canada.

When Krekorian died, at the age of 89, one of his brothers lingered at his tombstone, whispering his gratitude for his help in getting them out of Keghi.

Solomonian, who grew up in St. Catherine's

and now lives in Toronto, remembers his grandfather as a quiet man who spoke little English and frequently clutched a string of traditional Armenian worry beads.

Krekorian rarely spoke of his experiences on the ill-fated Titanic. Solomonian recalls hearing only brief snippets of his grandfather's memories of desperate passengers screaming for help and plunging to their death in the icy waters. But he is certain Krekorian never forgot the horror of that day:

"He never went on a boat again in his life," he says. "He wouldn't swim. In St. Catherine's they had a nice beach on Lake Ontario, and when the family would go there for Sunday picnics, he would never, ever go in. I guess that speaks to the trauma that he experienced. He never got over that fear."

Lili Chookasian, Exhilarating American Contralto, 90, Dies

CHOOKASIAN, from page 1

part of her life, always. Her grandparents had perished in the 1915 Armenian Genocide perpetrated by the Young Turk Party of the

Ottoman Empire. Chookasian was born in Chicago in 1921 and grew up speaking Armenian at home. She sang in the Armenian Church and in her teens found a voice teacher,

Philip Manuel, with whom she remained for nearly two decades. In 1941, she married George Gavejian and she spent the rest of the decade-plus singing extensively in Chicago. (She performed in church with future pop star Kay Armen, who became a close friend.) She also taught at Northwestern University. In 1955, she made a breakthrough when she was engaged by Bruno Walter to sing Mahler's *Resurrection Symphony* with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra. Walter accompanied her at her audition, and Chookasian later said, "It was almost a mystical experience to sing with him at the piano and then with the orchestra. I felt honored and humbled." Conductor Peter Herman Adler brought her to the attention of Rosa Ponselle, who coached her extensively in the roles of Amneris and Azucena. Bit by bit, Chookasian strengthened the already impressive solid core to her voice.

In 1956, she suffered her first bout with cancer. She received a terminal diagnosis but opted for a radical mastectomy and fought her way back to health. In 1959, she made her long-delayed opera debut when she sang Adalgisa opposite the Norma of Barbara Stevenson, in Bellini's "Norma," at an out-of-the-way Arkansas State Opera. The conductor was future artist manager Sheldon Soffer, and two years later, he recommended Chookasian to Thomas Schippers, who was in search of a soloist for his upcoming performances of Nevsky with the New York Philharmonic. It took some time, but Schippers located Chookasian in Baltimore, where she was singing, and invited her to audition. It was essentially a courtesy, as he had all but decided to give the role to another artist, who reportedly burst into tears the moment Chookasian finished her audition, knowing that Schippers would engage her on the spot — which he did.


In 1961, after her successful debut with the Philharmonic and a European debut as Herodias at Gian Carlo Menotti's *Festival of Two Worlds*, Chookasian was offered a Met contract, but she declined it because she feared it would leave her little time with her family. (By now, she and Gavejian had a daughter, Valerie, and two sons, John and Paul.) She had a recurrence of cancer that year, but it was

easily excised, and this time she had a quick recovery. When a Met contract was offered again, in 1962, she accepted, making her company debut as La Cieca in "La Gioconda," with Zinka Milanov, Franco Corelli and Nell Rankin. Around this time, she became more closely linked with Menotti: she made her New York City Opera debut in 1963 in "The Medium" and recorded the composer's *Death of the Bishop of Brindisi* in 1964. Also that year, she sang in the Met world premiere of Menotti's "The Last Savage," in a cast that included George London, Roberta Peters and Teresa Stratas. Stratas later recalled Chookasian as a favorite colleague whose voice was "gorgeous — gold with streaks of black, like molten lava. One got lost in that sound, no matter what she was singing."

Many of Chookasian's colleagues treasured her not only for her talent but for her warmth and sense of humor. Eileen Farrell, who sang Santuzza to Chookasian's Mamma Lucia at the Met, remembered that during *Voi lo sapete*, when Santuzza pours out her heart about Turiddu's maltreatment of her, Chookasian would often lean across the table and whisper, "You're kidding.... He said that?"

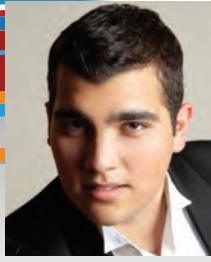
By the mid-1980s, Chookasian could still perform at an uncommonly high level; in the summer of 1984, she sang a Verdi *Requiem* at New Jersey's Waterloo Festival that was remarkable for both her powerful sound and her superb diction. From 1985, she began teaching at Yale University's School of Music, where she worked hard to build the core of her pupils' voices. She lamented that most voice teachers didn't have a grasp of chest voice, which she considered essential for low-voiced singers. "Can you imagine doing Ulrica without chest register? Or Dame Quickly? Erda?" she had asked in 2003. "You will not be heard!" In 2002, Yale awarded her the Samuel Simon Sanford Medal.

In the 1990s, Chookasian was escorted backstage at Carnegie Hall to meet Jessye Norman, who had just sung a performance. When Norman opened the door of her dressing room and saw Chookasian standing before her, she gasped, "I should be on my knees!" It was a sentiment that few of Chookasian's colleagues and students would have disagreed with.




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ARTS & LIVING

Armenian Books on Display in Harvard's Lamont Library

HARVARD, from page 12

The contents of the exhibit have come from a number of different sources including NAASR, ALMA, Widener Library and Russell's private collection. Funds were provided by the Mashtots chair, Tufts University, Boston University, NAASR, ALMA and the Armenian Cultural Foundation (ACF).

"This is the 500th anniversary of the start of Armenian printing, so this seemed the right moment to put this exhibit up," said Russell.

Extended captions, which in some cases, are short essays, help to explain and amplify the

University, Merguerian and Mamigonian.

Russell, whose multi-lingual interests and mastery extend to both Western and Eastern Armenian, provides a brief history of the Armenian language noting that, "... it is related to Phrygian, an Indo-European tongue like Greek or Persian, that was spoken by the defenders of Troy. It is possible that the first bearers of Armenian migrated east into the highlands of Urartu, Biblical Ararat; and Armenian contains a number of Urartean words..."

Russell also notes several important milestones. As mentioned above, the first Armenian printed books appeared in Venice in 1512; and further, the first printed Bible was issued in Amsterdam a century-and-a-half later. The first Armenian newspaper was published in Madras, India in the late 18th century.

While survivors of the Armenian Genocide wrote privately-published Memorial Books (hushamatyan) many of those who might have written more widely distributed works were massacred. Russell comments, "Armenian writing was permanently shadowed by the disaster..."

The breakup of the Soviet Union has freed the Armenian press in many ways, and Russell notes that many texts are now far more available on the Internet. Included in the exhibit is a 19th-century Western Armenian translation of Edgar Allan Poe's *Narrative of Arthur Gordon Pym of Nantucket*, taken from Baudelaire's French.

Maranci's caption focuses on the importance of manuscripts in the history of Armenian literature. She notes that the largest collection of Armenian manuscripts is housed in the Matenadaran, the manuscript library in Armenia's capital, Yerevan. Other important collections are preserved in the Monastery of St. James in Jerusalem and the Mekhitarist Monasteries of Venice and Vienna.

Grossman has contributed commentary on the availability of Armenian language and related collections held in the Harvard libraries. The supervision of Harvard's Armenian collections — acquisitions, cataloging, preservation and reference — falls at present to Widener's Middle Eastern Division, as it has done since 1954. The earliest catalogued item dates back to the 1700s, while Houghton Library today is the holder of Harvard's earliest Armenian items. Grossman pays tribute to the Boston-area Armenian community for establishing a lasting home for Armenian studies at Harvard. In 1959, the Mashtots Chair, now held by Russell, was created at Harvard.

Payaslian of Boston University contributes an



Two rare histories of Armenia from Widener library's collection at Harvard



Prof. James R. Russell at the Lamont Library exhibit of Armenian books

visual materials. In addition to Russell, others who contributed their knowledge and research include Prof. Christina Maranci of Tufts University, Michael Grossman of Widener Library, Prof. Simon Payaslian of Boston



An original edition of Franz Werfel's *Forty Days of Musa Dagh* and an autographed copy of a William Saroyan novel

essay on modern Armenian history, noting especially the publication in the 18th century of Mik'ayel Ch'amch'ian's *History of Armenia* and Fr. Ghevond Alishan's *Memories of the Armenian Fatherland*. Said Payaslian, "Their works encouraged a new generation of intellectuals in the 19th century to engage in the modernization of their nation, its culture, and its institutions to bring about an Armenian enlightenment."

In a commentary titled "Armenian Women and the Book," Merguerian notes that in the 19th and 20th centuries, "The role of women in a rapidly changing society became a controversial question explored extensively in the constantly growing number of publications appearing in the vernacular Armenian literary language...Circumstances have changed radically, but the role of women in Armenian society still remains a much debated topic."

Mamigonian, in a piece titled "The Armenians in America," writes that the Armenian presence in the United States dates to around 1618, "when one Martin the Armenian came to Colonial Virginia." There was, of course, increased immigration after the massacres in Ottoman Turkey under Sultan Abdul Hamid in 1894-96, and after the Genocide, nearly 100,000 Armenians had arrived in the US by 1924. These immigrants opened libraries and bookstores and eventually established newspa-

pers such as the *Hairenik* and the *Baïkar*. The Armenian-American Diaspora has since produced its own writers such as William Saroyan, Peter Balakian and Peter Sourian, amongst many others, who have reached a broader reading public.

The Lamont Library exhibit, open only to



The main panel at the "Armenians and the Book" exhibit at Harvard

holders of Harvard University identification, will be up until April 25, but negotiations are under way to bring the exhibit to ALMA so that it may be viewed by the Armenian community and others not affiliated with Harvard. Further details will be announced in the future.

Russell hopes, with reason, that the exhibit will increase the interest in the Armenian language at Harvard.

"Right now, I am shifting my attention to the teaching of Western Armenian because it is a language in danger of disappearing. Without some speakers in the Middle East, we would truly lose it," he said.

Loris Chobanian Premieres *In Search of Global Harmony*

BEREA, Ohio — Baldwin-Wallace College (BW) professor emeritus and composer-in-residence Loris Ohannes Chobanian's composition, *In Search of Global Harmony*, was premiered by the BW Symphonic Wind Ensemble, conducted by Dwight Oltman, on January 27. The seven movements of the composition represent the music of seven countries, China, India, Russia, Zimbabwe, Iraq, Ireland and Spain.

The premiere was well received by a capacity audience that represented the many different nationalities in Cleveland. The last few measures of the composition gave special recognition to the United States national anthem. In the program notes, the composer states: "The challenge was to compose individual movements that could be recognizable before knowing the title of the country they represented. Although these countries have their exclusive musical languages, there is a hidden universal

expression shared in spite of their boundaries."

Since his retirement from teaching at Baldwin-Wallace Conservatory in 2010, Chobanian has remained active, producing many new compositions. *The Soldier Returns for Viola and Piano* was composed for BW Conservatory professor of viola, Louize Zeitlin. The inspiration for the piece is explained in the program notes: "The sight of rows of flag-covered coffins always delivers a dauntingly tragic message. Brave men and women have made the ultimate sacrifice and have given their lives for their country. Many will join others who came before them and will be known as the Unknown Soldier. These brave soldiers were taught to obey orders and they did. They did not question why they were asked to go to war. War is a curious exercise, and at times it is necessary for deterring the dangers of malevolence and for the defense against evil

aggressors. And then there are times when a self-serving egomaniac wants to prove his importance and to acquire a place in history by sending his troops to battle. He will somehow find a justification for his actions. Many of his soldiers, as well as those of his enemy, will perish. But, he will join the ranks of the celebrated and admired warriors. History is replete with names such as Hannibal, Alexander the Great, Julius Caesar, Napoleon and a long list of others. Rarely do we hear about the individual soldier who made the ultimate sacrifice. Defensive wars should have a clear cut objective and not continue aimlessly and waste human life unnecessarily."

Other new compositions include *Just Violins for Six Violins* that present the performers an opportunity to execute diverse combinations of string textures; *Rhapsodic Variations for Violoncello and Piano* has a unique form in

which the main themes are continuously superimposed. A dramatic aria, *The Traveler for Baritone Voice and Piano*, utilizes an Armenian poem by Haigouhi Seropian. A new *Der Voghormia* was especially composed for the Baghdad St. Gregory the Illuminator Armenian Church. Saturday Morning for String Orchestra was composed for the BW Outreach String Orchestra. In progress is *Fantasia in Three Movements for Two Saxophones and Piano*, commissioned by the Florida State University Trio Bel Canto ensemble.

On April 27, the BW Guitar Trio, Adam Bilchik, Bryan Reichert and Chobanian, will present a special program "Remembering April 24," at St. Gregory of Narek Armenian Church, Richmond Heights. The program will include Chobanian's *Songs of Ararat*. The composer will also present "Yedvart, Jesus and Talaat," a short story based on his family history.



ARTS & LIVING

Godine Publishes New, Complete Translation of Werfel's *Forty Days of Musa Dagh*

WERFEL, from page 1

the United States and was picked up for distribution by Book-of-the-Month-Club, where it remained one of their most popular titles for decades after its original publication. It was offered as an alternate selection as recently as the 1970s.

David Godine, well known in the publishing world for his interest in the production of books of high quality, described in a recent interview how he happened to acquire the rights to Werfel's work.

Said the Boston-based publisher, "I was in at the Frankfurt Book Fair in 2008 and went to visit Fischer Verlag, which held the rights. I had known about this book and knew that it dealt with the ethnic cleansing of the Armenians. The agent for the book, Barbara Perlmutter, told me that the rights had reverted. I was really interested in acquiring the rights to Werfel's unpublished novel, *Pale Blue Ink*, but when I found that *Forty Days* was available, I decided to acquire both books."

At the time that he purchased the rights, Godine says he had been unaware that the English version of the novel had been cut.

"What had happened was that Viking trimmed the novel down to satisfy Book-of-the-Month Club, which said it could not sell the longer two-volume version. We were going to do a simple reprint of Viking's 1934 translation when we heard from James Reidel, who wrote to one of our editors, Susan Barba, to tell her that the book had been cut in the original English version and that he wanted to do a new translation to make the book complete."

Added Godine, "Werfel clearly intended his novel as a message to the Jews in Germany. He accurately saw the fate of the Armenians at the hand of the Turks as a precursor to the slaughter of the Jews by the Nazis."

Barba, who is descended from an Armenian grandmother, was already working with Reidel on the translation of the Werfel's *Pale Blue Ink* when he told her that the original English translation of *Forty Days* had been cut.

Said Barba, "The book has had such a long life. We felt that it was important to add the missing 150 pages and that we could afford it if we used a light-weight paper and put the book out in paperback. James did the knitting together of the Dunlop translation and his additions. Also, his new translations go some way towards Americanizing the text."

It was also Barba who persuaded Vartan Gregorian to provide an introduction to the new translation. Gregorian, too, remarks about the alarm the novel raised for Germany's Jews. He comments, "... the novel serves as an allegory, a not-so-veiled warning about the virulent racialism, chauvinism, anti-Semitism and amoral realpolitik that were about to be unleashed by the Nazis. It was a wake-up call for Jews and non-Jews alike about the impending calamity that was soon to engulf the Jews of Germany and German-speaking lands."

Reidel, a poet and translator, became interested in Werfel through studying and translating his poetry.

In an interview from his Cincinnati home, he said, "I came across Werfel as part of a larger research project that involved the translation of poetry. I began to read his poems and more of his work and read the German version and then the English version of *Forty Days*. It was perfectly clear that the English version had been cut. I would say about 20 percent of Werfel's novel had been dropped in the Dunlop translation."

According to Reidel, the missing material deals primarily with what was "idiosyncratic to the Armenian people, much of the color of their culture. The cut version also left out passages that might be considered especially offensive to the Turks, although I believe the Turks would have been offended by anything that portrayed them in a negative way. I would have liked to retranslate the entire book, but unfortunately that route was cost prohibitive, so the additions have been worked into the previous translation by Dunlop."

Added Reidel, "Werfel had a keen sense of eternity and he knew what was happening. What he dealt with in *Forty Days* is what was haunting Europe at the time."

Werfel was moved to write the story of the Armenians thanks to a trip he took through

Palestine, Syria and Lebanon in the winter and spring of 1929-30. He knew the horrors of war well, having served as a corporal and telephone operator in the military corps of the Austro-Hungarian army during World War I on the Russian front.

In a prefatory note to the novel he wrote, "The book was conceived in March of the year 1929, during the course of a stay in Damascus. The miserable sight of maimed and famished looking refugee children, working in a carpet factory, gave me the final impulse to snatch the incomprehensible destiny of the Armenian people from the Hell of all that had taken place."

The novel, at 900 pages, is a challenge to any reader, but like its literary cousin, Leo Tolstoy's *War and Peace*, it remains one of the most significant and compelling works of 20th-century literature.

In bare outline, the novel focuses on the defense of a small community of Armenians living in the mountainous region of Hatay Province of the former Ottoman Empire – as well as on events in Istanbul and provincial capitals where the Young Turk government orchestrated the deportation, concentration camps and massacres of the Ottoman Empire's Armenian citizens.

The novel's protagonist, Gabriel Bagradian, is a wealthy Armenian from Paris who has returned to his native village of Yoghonoluk. The area is dominated by the presence of a great mountain, Musa Dagh, or Mt. Moses, as it would be in translation. Although Bagradian listens to the rumors of the killings of Armenians in nearby areas, he considers himself a loyal citizen of the Ottoman Empire and at first does not believe the stories. But he soon overhears a Turkish district governor discussing the "Armenian problem" and the trickle of refugees with their tales of brutal suppression becomes undeniable.

Bagradian rallies the villagers to take up positions on Musa Dagh and to prepare to fight to the death. At first, they mount a fierce and successful defense, but eventually, the better-equipped and more numerous Turkish troops overwhelm the Armenian forces and they are forced to disperse.

The book stands as a tribute to a courageous resistance by a minority against superior forces and the message could not have been lost on Jewish and German readers at the time of its publication. Werfel, whose previous novels had been banned because he was a Jew, was pilloried in the press in Nazi Germany as an enemy agent and propagandist.

In 1934, upon the occasion of the novel's American publication, one critic, Louis Kronenberger, wrote in the *New York Times*, "If Hollywood does not mar and mishandle it, it should make a magnificent movie."

Against the advice of his legal department, which feared Turkish objections, Irving Thalberg of Metro-Goldwyn Mayer acquired the film rights for the novel from the Austrian publisher, and in the same year as its publication, began production on the film, which was to star Clark Gable as Gabriel Bagradian.

Despite the fact that the English version had been abridged and many of its most controversial passages omitted, the idea of a film that would dramatize the cruelties inflicted on the Armenians by the Turks, was indeed an anathema to the Turkish government of Mustafa Kemal Ataturk.

The Turkish ambassador to the United States, Mehmed Munir Ertegun, was charged with putting a stop to the film. He was quoted as saying to an MGM official, "If the movie is made, Turkey will launch a worldwide campaign against it. It rekindles the Armenian Question. The Armenian Question is settled." The Turkish objections received a great deal of publicity and eventually MGM backed down.

In the 1970s, MGM sold the film rights to *Forty Days* and a low-budget, poorly-distributed film was made, directed by Sarkis Mouradian.

Thus, Werfel's great novel has yet to receive the cinematic treatment it deserves. Still, it is not impossible to imagine that Godine's decision to publish the complete text will renew interest in the making of a major movie.

The significance of Werfel's achievement cannot be underestimated, because while there have been a number of privately published eyewitness accounts of the Armenian Genocide and several valuable non-fiction books that deal

intelligently with the subject, no other work of fiction exists that has done literary and dramatic justice to the events of the Genocide. Werfel's mammoth achievement stands alone as fully imagined testimony to terrible events still not fully acknowledged by modern Turkey, or, for that matter, the United States.

Perhaps a new reading of *The Forty Days of Musa Dagh* can bring about the rightful and universal recognition of the facts of history.

Werfel, like so many Jewish and German intellectuals – Thomas Mann and many others – was unable to remain in Germany, and in 1938 he fled with his wife, Alma Mahler, through Spain and France, eventually making his way to California where he lived until his death in 1945. His remains were interred in Rosedale Cemetery in Los Angeles, until, somewhat coin-

identally, Gregorian mounted a campaign to have them returned to his native Austria in 1975.

Although *Forty Days* is, without doubt Werfel's greatest literary achievement, he is perhaps best known for *The Song of Bernadette*, the story of a religious peasant girl, which was made into a film. In spite of his Jewish background, Werfel was much drawn to Catholicism and spiritual and religious themes run through all his works. Traces of his interest in Sufi Islam may be detected in *Forty Days*.

Godine will publish Werfel's novel, *Pale Blue Ink in a Lady's Hand* later this year. And there is at least one additional title with an Armenian connection on Godine's upcoming list – a collection of Youssef Karsh's photographs, titled *Karsh: Beyond the Camera*.

New Setian Book Looks at Finding Sparks Of Humanity amid Horrors of Genocide

BARNSTABLE, Mass. – In her first book, *Humanity in the Midst of Inhumanity*, author Shahkeh Yaylaian Setian suggests that in addition to the Armenian Genocide, the Jewish Holocaust and subsequent genocides should be forever be remembered in the annals of history. Despite this dark period, we can be inspired in knowing that one can still find humanity in the midst of inhumanity. As the daughter of Armenian Genocide survivors, Setian feels the need to record the stories of brave Muslims who saved Armenians during the 1915 Armenian Genocide and she shares them in her new book.

While growing up, she did not viscerally understand her connection with the catastrophe of the Genocide because her parents did not talk about the Genocide in her younger years. The Genocide was an accepted part of who they were as Armenians. She scoured books and articles about the Genocide hoping some clarity would emerge from the research and writings by scholars. Later, her mother and her parents began to share with Setian some glimpses of the extent of their suffering and grieving for their loved ones and others lost in the Genocide. Thus, the real understanding of the Genocide began with the ability to integrate the Genocide with the core of her identity.

The Genocide and subsequent events are prelude to the passion that Armenians feel to preserve the culture that the Ottoman Turks tried to take away in their goal of Turkification. (Turkification, Turkey only for Turks.) Assyrians, Greeks and Jews were also targeted for destruction. Woven throughout Armenian history from its birth as a nation in ancient times to its struggles for growth and survival to its demise and to its rebirth as the modern Republic of Armenia in 1991, a story is told that personifies love of country, love of land and love of one's culture.

Humanity in the Midst of Inhumanity features many stories about missionaries, other organizations, Muslims and other individuals who came to the aid of the suffering Armenians, which illustrates the many faces of humanity. Despite the threat by the government that anyone who helped an Armenian would have their house burned down, their family killed in front of them and then he/she would be killed, brave Muslims acted humanely. Lives were saved, but a country was lost.

Humanitarian aid continued in ensuing years. Setian sheds light on how Armenians in America reconstructed their shattered lives in the face of prejudice and discrimination. She describes the after effects of the Armenian Genocide in its manifestations on individual lives, the Armenian community and the political structures and actions of world powers, especially in America. She also explains the predicament of Armenians living in Turkey today.

Setian describes the geopolitical issues of the Genocide times and other issues of interest with commentary, such as the betrayal of Armenians in the 1923 Lausanne Peace Treaty which did not mention Armenia nor the Armenian massacres. The omission of settling the Armenian issue fairly in order for allies to control the oil wealth in the region. "He who owns the oil

will rule the world." (M. Henry Berenger, French senate, 12-12-1919).

She graphically describes the vicious treatment of victims in order to convey the horrors committed by out-of-control citizens, instigated and committed by government officials. She illustrates that those who were tortured and murdered were not simply numbers reported in statistics, but were living, breathing children, women and men. Sadly, it also illustrates the inhumanity of man. Inhumanity became the perverted norm.

Setian explains Turkey's multi-million dollar lobbying efforts to this day to deny the Genocide. Historian Eli Weisel calls denial, "a second death." Two trips to historic Armenia (today's Turkey), the cemetery of Genocide victims, created a passion that called for justice. She was able to see that the Turkish government had relentlessly tried to eradicate all evidence of the presence of historic Armenia on the land.

The voices Setian has gathered vary in pitch but unite in remembrance. Glendale's Haroot Pushian tells how his then-teenaged father, the only survivor in a family of nine, swam across the Euphrates River to Iraq, was adopted by a Muslim family and later thrived in Baghdad. We learn of a woman who fled for weeks carrying her crippled son on her back. The author relates the day soldiers herded her father, Mourad Yaylaian, and the other Armenians in the village into their churchyard – and promptly shot Mourad's fiancée to death before his eyes. He was spared when a Turkish farmer said he "looked like a strong boy" and took him off to the fields where he severely abused him. (Her father escaped after a year and worked for a friendly Turkish family on their farm. He called one of the women in the family, "Aunt.")

Setian hopes this book will illuminate "the dynamics...of ethnic conflict and genocide" and, in the wake of 9/11, "mitigate the prejudice against innocent Muslims" around the world. She has done her part.

Setian has three children and five grandchildren and lives in Cape Cod, Mass. She is sensitive to injustice and human rights and is dedicated to helping create a just and peaceful world. She lived for a year, traveling alone, without guarantee for living quarters, as an independent volunteer in solidarity with the people that she wanted to help and whom she came to love in Nagorno Karabagh (Artsakh), a country that was recovering from war and attempted ethnic cleansing.

She taught at Springfield College, Mass., Cape Cod Community College and Artsakh State University and has facilitated workshops and presented talks about genocide, injustice and values. She has earned awards for short stories, has had several articles published, including photo essays and co-edited two volumes for the Values Realization Institute.

She earned a doctorate in education from the University of Massachusetts, Amherst, and completed an intensive course in Armenian history and language in Venice, Italy, at Università degli Studi Ca Foscari di Venezia

Books



ARTS & LIVING

NBC Correspondent Shamlian to Receive Award at *Mirror-Spectator* Banquet

SHAMLIAN, from page 1

factor that makes her career more challenging – and makes her more unique in her field – is that she has five children. She never knows where the next story takes her and for how long. For example, she said, the Trayvon Martin case took her away from home for two weeks.

"It's a very competitive business. A thousand people want my job," she said in a recent interview. A relief for her, however, has been that "NBC is very family friendly."

Her children range in age from 9 to 16 and they have slowly adjusted to her being away so often. She said it is hard when she has to miss parent-teacher conferences, nightly rituals or family meals.

"It's always acceptable when a man is doing it," she said.

She noted, "Being home full time is the hardest job." However, she said, with her husband being self-employed, he can be there for the children on a regular basis and thus allow her to pursue her career.

"The hardest thing is that they [the children] go to my husband for their needs. It makes me question my decision sometimes, but I love what I am doing," she added.

Shamlian's stories can run the gamut from hard (the Trayvon Martin murder case and the Tulsa shootings) to soft (Prince William and Kate Middleton's first royal engagements in Britain). Some of the stories she does she pitches herself to the news desk, while others are assigned to her. One story that she pitched successfully was on super-commuters, people who drive far beyond a typical commute to jobs, rather than relocate closer. "They know the jobs are not forever," she said.

Shamlian was born and raised in Chicago, to an Irish-American mother and an Armenian-American father. Her interest in becoming a newscaster germinated when she started watching Jane Pauley on NBC. She attended the University of Missouri to study broadcast journalism, one of the very few public universities in the US that owns a television station, in this case the NBC affiliate in Columbia, Mo., KOMU-TV. The advantage of going there, she said, was that upon graduation at age 22, she and her fellow grads all had a tape which they could send around.

Shamlian did not always have a high-profile position. Fresh out of school, she got a job at Grand Rapids, Mich., on WOOD-TV. After three to four years, she moved to Houston, "where I knew no one, [at] KHOU-TV. It is a very highly regarded TV station. [At that point] my ultimate goal was to work in local TV in Chicago."

However, fate had something different in mind for her. While in Houston, she met and married LeRoy Melcher III and together they moved back to Chicago, where Shamlian started to work at WBBM, the local CBS affiliate. While she thought she had reached her goals, she got pregnant and she and her husband decided to move back to Houston, where he had family. Sadly, by this point, both of Shamlian's parents had passed away.

Shamlian's mother died when the young



Sgt. Clay Rankin, right, with service dog Archie and NBC's Janet Shamlian

Janet was 14 and her sister, 12. "My father raised two little girls," she said. "He really believed in me."

Shamlian lost him when she was 22. "After all he put into me, he didn't see it or his grandchildren," she said. "He gave me a good launch."

She continued, "I was working part-time for the NBC station in Houston. I was pregnant with my second child when I got out of TV." She went on to have five children eventually and was a stay-at-home mom for seven years.

Then, "I just had the bug to get back in," she

recalled. And against all odds, she succeeded. "I got very, very lucky."

It helped that her work ethic had impressed a couple of powerful players, Robert Brandel and Williams. Brandel, a news producer at the NBC News desk in New York, agreed to give Shamlian a shot as a freelancer in 2004, something that does not often happen to those who have left the business.

"NBC would hire me for days and I would go to MSNBC all day covering hurricanes. I was a day hire, but I fell in love with it," she said. After doing it for about 18 months, in 2005, "with a very, very young family and a great

husband," she was able to become a full-fledged national correspondent. Steve Capus, the president of NBC news, took a chance with her and gave her a job.

Shamlian works out of Houston, but she does not have an office there. "I travel all over the country and all over the world, from the White House to Buckingham Palace." Aside from glamorous locations, she has to file stories from difficult places, such as an oilrig off the Atlantic coast or climbing atop a tall wind turbine in New Mexico.

Shamlian was happy to note that the reports predicting the demise of broadcast television news have been premature. "They predicted network news is dead but the audience is up. It is still a large and significant market for an impartial recounting of the day's events."

By contrast, she said, much of cable news is "very opinionated."

Shamlian's goal is to do more long-term reporting for programs such as "Dateline" and "Rock Center." She expressed her fondness for and gratitude to Williams for being "a big supporter of me." She credited him with understanding that the audience for a typical news program is mostly female who can relate to another female. "He is very supportive of his people," she said.

When asked for advice to young reporters starting out, Shamlian said: learn how to write. "Writing is very important. People need to learn how to write. Local news is a great training ground. You need to get local news experience and get yourself in front of the camera."

Shamlian credits her husband of 21 years as the person who has made her career and family possible. "He is the best thing that ever happened to me."

Shamlian will receive one of the two Awards of Excellence to be given out at the *Armenian Mirror-Spectator's* celebration on Thursday, May 24, at the Royal Sonesta Hotel. For tickets and more information, call (617) 359-0413.

CALENDAR

MASSACHUSETTS

MAY 24 – Celebrating 80 years and beyond, Benefit Gala of the Armenian Mirror-Spectator. Thursday, reception, 6:30 p.m.; dinner 7:30 p.m., Boston Royal Sonesta, Cambridge. Keynote speaker, Vigen Sargsyan, chief of staff of the President of the Republic of Armenia. 2012 Lifetime Achievement Award will be bestowed upon Dr. Gregory H. Adamian, chancellor and president emeritus of Bentley University; 2012 Award of Excellence will be bestowed upon Janet Shamlian, national correspondent for "NBC News" from Texas, and Charles Mahtesian, Politico national policy editor, Washington, DC. For information, call (617) 359-0413.

APRIL 27 – St. Stephen's Armenian Elementary School, 9th Annual Wine Tasting Fundraiser, Springstep Medford. \$75. (617) 750-2498.

APRIL 28 – Annual Meeting and Luncheon, Armenian International Women's Association, speaker Judy Norsigian, executive director, Boston Women's Health Book Collective. 9:30 a.m.-2 p.m., Winchester Country Club. Members, \$35; non-members, \$45. Info and reservations, (617) 926-0171, aiwainc@aol.com or www.aiwaincinternational.com.

NEW JERSEY

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

OCTOBER 28 – Save the date. The Armenian American Support and Educational Center, Hye Doon, celebrates its 35th anniversary. Felician College, Lodi. With the participation of Akh'tamar Dance Ensemble and other talented guest performances. Details to follow.

NEW YORK

APRIL 22 – "Turkey is Guilty of Genocide, Denying the Undeniable is A Crime," Armenian Genocide Commemoration at Times Square. 2 p.m., 43rd and Broadway, New York City. Sponsored by Knights and Daughters of Vartan, Inc. Co-sponsored by AGBU, Armenian Assembly of America, Armenian National Committee of America, ADL-Ramgavars, Armenian Council of America with the participation of: Diocese of the Armenian Church of America (Eastern), Prelacy of the Armenian Church of America (Eastern), Armenian Missionary Association of America, Armenian Catholic Eparchy for US and Canada, ACYOA, AYF, Armenian youth organizations, Armenian university and college clubs. For free bus transportation to and from Times Square, call: Diocese (212) 686-0710; Prelacy (212) 689-7810, NJ; Sona (551) 427-8763; Holy Martyrs, John, (718) 631-2247; St. Sarkis, Eddy, (917) 885-9729; St.



On April 28, the Armenian International Women's Association will host their annual meeting and luncheon, featuring speaker Judy Norsigian, executive director, Boston Women's Health Book Collective, pictured above. The event will be from 9:30 a.m. to 2 p.m., Winchester Country Club. Tickets are \$35 for members and \$45 for non-members. For info and reservations, visit aiwaincinternational.com.

Vartanantz, NJ, Kostan, (201) 741-9789; Paramus, Andy (201) 368-2791; Holy Cross, NJ, Very Rev. Vazken Karayan (201) 865-2790, Queens Armenian Center, Sako, (516) 805-5816 and Brooklyn, Tigran, (374) 291-7765 or visit www.knightsofvartan.org, click April 24, <http://april24nyc.com>, www.armenianradionj.com or www.theforgotten.org.

APRIL 28 – Rebirth Concert: dedicated to the 20th anniversary of both the Armenian National Military and Armenia's membership to the United Nations. Organized by the Tekeyan Cultural Association of NY/NJ. With the participation of renowned artists from Armenia and the Philharmonic Symphonic Orchestra of Rhode Island, to take place at 8 p.m.; the Merkin Concert Hall of Kaufman center, 129 West 67th St., New York City. Save the date. Details to follow.

MAY 12 – Shushi hosts a Gala Dinner Dance for an evening of "Celebration," 20th anniversary of Shushi's liberation, Mother's Day. Anniversary of Shushi Dance Ensemble, Kavookjian Hall, 630 Second Ave., New York City. Details to follow.

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COMMENTARY

THE ARMENIAN Mirror- Spectator

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COMMENTARY

The Skeletons Are Dancing...

By Edmond Y. Azadian

Sometimes I wake up in the middle of the night agitated by a nightmare where I see a million-and-a-half skeletons dancing restlessly and seeking a peaceful place to rest. An entire nation was doomed to extermination and believed to have been buried in 1915. But the skeletons are still dancing and they are still seeking closure for their brutal deaths.

While the world turns a deaf ear to the pleas of those unburied bones and while Mr. Erdogan complains to Mr. Obama during their March meeting in South Korea that he is "bored" by the continuing attempts of the Armenians to have the Genocide recognized, we were hoping against hope that finally a resting place for the memory of those restless souls had found its place at a Genocide museum, within the walking distance of the White House at the nation's capital.

The story was too good to be true. A few selfless benefactors had come together, pledged millions of dollars, bought a historic bank building to convert into a museum dedicated to the Armenian Genocide, thumbing their noses at the Turkish government and sending a political message to the world – standing for justice, truth and commemoration of the martyrs.

It was indeed a historic moment as the centennial of the Genocide was around the corner and Turkey was already planning its pre-emptive strike to blunt the political impact of Armenian activism, in the most visible spot in the world.

The initiative itself was significant in the sense that it presumed some political maturity on the part of Armenians, as a few well-meaning individuals had come forth to realize this most challenging project. Many similar major projects in this arena in the past were stillborn when left to languish in committees who could not carry out the work.

The Turkish government would have given an arm and a leg to destroy the project, or at least derail it until the Genocide centennial tsunami was over.

Little did we know that the Turks did not need to raise a finger to defeat the project. The self-destructive Armenian tradition was there to do the job. While the responsible parties were at each other's throats, the Genocide museum project was on hold.

To raise questions about the issue has become such a political hot potato that one cannot approach the issue without ruffling some feathers, to mix metaphors. As the lawsuits have become so prevalent, a healthy dose of caution is warranted here.

Little is being filtered to the press and most of it extremely partisan and self-serving. Incidentally, no one can blame the political parties for adhering to partisan views after reading the incriminating releases about the ongoing legal battles.

News came out that Gerald Cafesjian had sued the Armenian

Assembly and had won the case, with John Waters, his assistant, blaming the Assembly. Now, it seems the tables have been turned and Mr. Waters is no less vitriolic in his attacks against his former employer.

This tragedy reminds us of another one which triggered the disintegration of the French-Armenian community in Paris, in the 1960s, when Armenians had a collective home, a very rare feat for the community. It was a former palace belonging to a French count named Trevisse on an eponymous street. All Armenian organizations – regardless of their political affiliation or leaning – owned space in that building and the majority of the company shares belonged to the Armenian Apostolic church. However, a man named Tossounian, who belonged to a French-Turkish club (a rare species, indeed) was able to undermine the legal foundations of the holding company, take over the property and expel all the organizations.

Ever since, Paris Armenians have never been able to come under one roof collectively.

Where the museum project stands at this time is anybody's guess. The parties have been keeping their respective truths too close to their chests and anyone who tries to speculate about the issue, either does not know the truth or does not understand the issues. Yes, indeed, I don't understand it and I am issuing a challenge to any other party that understands these shenanigans to explain them. It is incomprehensible that this despicable spectacle is going on in full view of the community (for that matter, the world) on the eve of the Genocide centennial.

Of course, the money belongs to the parties involved and no one has the right to question who wins and who loses that money. But the martyrs belong to everybody and everybody is entitled to know how the memory of the martyrs is being honored or exploited.

The Genocide Museum was meant to bring all Armenians together in a show of force. But its first step has already divided its initiators, before reaching the rank and file.

Can it be that truly the major players were incompetent enough to set off this disastrous chain of events? One assumes that individuals who have been able to amass so many resources must have enough judgment and intelligence to anticipate utter disaster far earlier than the conclusion of the legal battles.

The martyrs gave their own lives to maintain their faith and some people have to emulate them by compromising a portion of their egos.

Today, the legitimate question is: are we going to witness the dedication of the Genocide Museum on April 24, 2015? The answer is imperative and it has to come now.

The nightmare is continuing; the 1.5 million skeletons are dancing around the White House, seeking their resting place, but the parties are in court, settling personal scores while the Turks are laughing.

Turkey's Foreign Policy Growing Less Mild

In the early hours of April 9, a group of Syrian civilians fled to the Turkish border as clashes between insurgents from the Free Syrian Army (FSA) and Syrian government forces raged. Two Syrians died and several others, including two Turks, were wounded when Syrian troops fired on the civilians' destination, a refugee camp located in the Turkish province of Kilis.

The incident has unleashed much speculation that Turkey will at last act on its many veiled threats to move against Syria. For several months the prime minister, Recep Tayyip Erdogan (pictured above), has been muttering about taking unspecified measures against Bashar Assad, Syria's president, once a friend and ally. Since last summer Turkey has hosted FSA leaders on its soil amid claims that it is (modestly) arming the rebels. Officials deny this but acknowledge that regime change in Syria is a priority. Only America's reluctance to become entangled in a fresh conflict stands in the way of some form of direct Turkish intervention. For how long?

Until recently the question would have been unthinkable. Turkey's foreign policy has long been guided by Ataturk's dictum "peace at home, peace in the world." Only last year Mr Erdogan was railing against "imperialist designs" in Libya. NATO (of which Turkey has been a member since

1952) had "no business there" he said, before belatedly joining its operations. Even then Turkish forces stayed out of combat.

Over the past decade, under Mr Erdogan's government, Turkey embarked on an activist foreign policy, courting Iran and long-forgotten Arab neighbors as the European Union cooled on Turkey's aspirations to join. With one foot in the West and the other in the Middle East, Turkey was able to mediate between Lebanon's rival factions, between Iraq's Shias and Sunnis, and between Israel and Syria (until Israel's 2009 assault against Gaza). "It was this ability to talk to all sides that made Turkey an effective player," says Nikolaos van Dam, a former Dutch ambassador to Turkey. But "now it has chosen sides."

This shift could have far-reaching consequences. What lies behind it? When unrest erupted in Syria last spring, Ahmet Davutoglu, the foreign minister, spent hours pleading with Assad to stop the violence and begin reforms. Yet the slaughter went on and Syrian refugees poured into Turkey – some 25,000 at the last count.

By August Erdogan had executed a 180-degree turn, declaring that Assad would "end up like Qaddafi." Turkey's Western friends are delighted that Erdogan has dumped Assad. Yet some fail to understand why Turkey did not first seek to continue the role of mediator in Syria.

One explanation is simply that Turkey,

like so many, believed that Assad's end was nigh. A more worrying possibility is hubris. Increasingly authoritarian and rarely challenged by his circle of sycophants, Erdogan is used to getting his own way. Assad dared to defy him. Erdogan's party has "extraordinary neo-Ottoman ambitions", wrote Timothy Garton Ash, a British historian, in a Turkish daily. But it "should be careful not to overestimate its possibilities."

Mr Erdogan's secular critics argue that his behavior points to another troubling impulse: to lead an arc of Sunni Muslim countries spanning Africa, Asia, the Balkans and the Middle East. As evidence they point to Turkey's coddling of Syria's Muslim Brotherhood. "They want to counter Iran, and America is encouraging this," says Faruk Logoglu, a deputy for the opposition Republican People's Party (CHP). Erdogan's AK party, he adds, has also begun to embrace Islam more firmly at home, suggesting some influence of religious ideology over foreign policy.

Since AK won a third consecutive term last summer, Erdogan has been pandering to his pious base. He recently rammed through controversial legislation allowing middle-school students to enroll in imam hatip schools, where Muslim clerics are trained, and to study the Koran in state schools. These days, when Erdogan attacks Kemal Kilicdaroglu, the CHP leader, he

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COMMENTARY

Analysis: In Iraq, Oil Majors Play North versus South

In the weeks before Iraqi Kurdistan revealed that Exxon Mobil had signed up to explore for oil there, executives at rival Shell faced a dilemma over whether or not to join the US oil major in its foray north and risk angering Baghdad.

The fields in the autonomous region offered rich potential, an easier working environment, better security and attractive contracts. That seemed a winning combination for smaller oil companies already working there, such as Norway's DNO, even though they struggled to collect profits.

But at the 11th hour, industry sources say, Royal Dutch Shell backed out and decided to focus on a \$17-billion gas deal in the south rather than sign exploration contracts with the Kurdish Regional Government, which the central government could dismiss as illegal and could prompt reprisals.

Shell's caution, Exxon's silence on its deals and this week's renewed dispute between Baghdad and Kurdistan over export payments reveal how delicate is the balance companies must manage between a central government and a Kurdish authority locked in a struggle over who controls Iraq's vast oil wealth.

The dispute over oil is at the heart of a wider disagreement between Iraq's central government in Baghdad and the Kurdish region, which are also increasingly at odds over regional autonomy, land and political influence.

Iraq has ambitious plans to develop its huge southern oilfields – potentially the world's biggest source of new oil over the next few years – and few oil firms dare risk being barred from such a bonanza by angering Baghdad.

But increasingly, some executives say, Kurdistan's potential is also coming up in boardroom discussions, as sluggish output, red tape and infrastructure bottlenecks in the south take some of the shine off the central government's oil program.

Oil majors are now waiting on the sidelines, watching the outcome of Exxon's balancing act between Baghdad and Arbil, the northern capital. France's Total is the latest company to provoke Baghdad's ire by acknowledging interest in Kurdistan.

"What companies are trying to do is get to the point where they are investing in the north and the south," said one industry source working in Iraq. "But at the moment they cannot do that. And that is what you have to build in when you decide whether to move in or not. You balance the risks."

After decades of war and sanctions, Iraq has

By Patrick Markey and Peg Mackey

signed multi-billion dollar agreements with Exxon, Shell and BP to develop fields in the south where most of its crude is pumped, hoping to become a major global oil exporter with output targets of around 8-8.5 million bpd.

But two years on, only modest gains have so far been notched up in production by companies frustrated by infrastructure constraints, payment disputes and logistical hurdles. Output last year averaged 2.7 million barrels per day versus about 2.4 million bpd in 2009, the year of Iraq's oil tenders.

The government in Baghdad has driven a tough bargain with foreign companies, offering fee-for-service contracts with tightly controlled profit margins and little chance to benefit from high energy prices.

Firms have experienced problems getting visas for contractors and security staff, delays in bringing in armored vehicles and holdups securing operating licenses. Such hassles make Kurdistan's offerings look more tempting by comparison.

"Every delay we face cuts off a significant part of the internal rate of return," said one oil company source. "Sometimes I wonder if we picked the wrong region."

This year Norway's Statoil became the first major company to abandon one of Iraq's lucrative new oil deals, selling its stake in West Qurna Phase-2 field to Lukoil.

The renewed stand-off between Baghdad and Arbil over oil is playing out against the background of a political crisis in Baghdad that jeopardized the shaky power-sharing agreement intended to prevent a return to ethnic and sectarian warfare.

Prime Minister Nuri al-Maliki, a Shi'ite, heads a coalition that also includes Kurds and Sunnis. Just as the last US troops left the country in December, Maliki's government issued an arrest warrant for the country's most senior Sunni Arab politician, Vice President Tareq al-Hashemi.

Hashemi fled to the Kurdish region, and Kurdish regional President Masoud Barzani refused to turn him over for trial, infuriating Baghdad.

Barzani has since given speeches increasingly antagonistic to a central government he says is trying to undermine Kurdish autonomy. He

has accused Maliki of concentrating power in his own hands, and has warned in vague terms that Kurdistan may reconsider its relations with Baghdad.

Iraq's central government is also being challenged by other regions like oil hub Basra in the south and Sunni-dominated Anbar who see Kurdistan's autonomous status as a model for their own drives for more freedom from Baghdad's control.

Autonomous since 1991, Iraqi Kurdistan runs its own internal government and armed forces, and escaped the sectarian warfare that saw the rest of Iraq hit by suicide attacks and car bombs since the 2003 US-led invasion.

Kurdistan's stability proved an attractive draw to oil explorers, and its government has offered production-sharing deals, which allow firms to profit directly from oil sales rather than just taking a negotiated fee for their work.

Small and medium-sized companies like DNO, British oil company Afren, Gulf Keystone Petroleum and Canada's Talisman Energy, are pushing ahead with exploration in Kurdish oil fields.

Peter Wells of geological consultancy Neftex Petroleum said Baghdad's service contracts make sense for developing existing, discovered oilfields with only small technical risk attached. Arbil's production-sharing contracts encourage exploration, by offering greater potential gains for greater risk.

Big Oil prefers the production sharing deals, which let firms count reserves on their books, make more money per barrel and gain if the oil price rises. They get operational control and an easily tradeable asset.

"Put it this way: they want us in Kurdistan," says one oil executive. "But it doesn't feel that way in the south."

But however attractive Kurdistan may seem, companies operating there face one fundamental challenge: getting paid.

The Kurds receive 17 percent of Iraq's total oil export revenue – a huge sum that has fuelled an economic boom in the region – but in return, Kurdish oil can be legally exported only by the central government.

As long as the legal status of Kurdish oil deals is disputed in Baghdad, companies operating in Kurdistan have had no way to bring oil

to market and collect a profit.

Under the Iraqi constitution, the central and regional governments should work together on ways to manage oil and gas reserves and distribute revenues. But Kurdish and Arab lawmakers in Baghdad have been at loggerheads for years over an oil and gas law to sort those issues out.

Exports from the north to a pipeline through Turkey began flowing last year under an interim agreement. Baghdad promised to collect revenue and pay companies their costs, leaving the question of firms' profits to be decided later.

But Baghdad and Arbil argued over the outset over how much oil was being pumped and how much money was owed.

This week, Kurdistan said it had halted those exports because Baghdad had failed to pay the companies for their oil. Iraqi government officials said Kurdistan was failing to meet its export obligations and illegally smuggling oil abroad.

Oil firms may have hoped that Exxon's push into Kurdistan would act as a catalyst to force the two sides to work together and enact an oil law. But for now, the increasingly shrill rhetoric on both sides hardly inspires confidence that a solution is growing closer.

When Kurdistan's government announced last year that Exxon had agreed to exploration deals for six Kurdish fields, Baghdad responded with outrage. Deputy Prime Minister Hussain al-Shahristani – architect of Baghdad's oil program – said the US firm could forfeit the contract on its huge West Qurna-1 oilfield in the south if it did not halt work with the Kurds.

Baghdad has since barred Exxon from bidding in the next round of oil deals, although it says the decision is not final. Exxon was also removed from its lead role in a water injection project in the south, although Iraqi officials denied the move was linked to the Kurdish deal.

The central government now says that Exxon has written to it twice since early March to say that its deals with the Kurds have been suspended. The Kurds say Exxon has not halted work in Kurdistan and have challenged Baghdad to publish Exxon's letters.

Total Chief Executive Christophe de Margerie, long a critic of Iraq's service contracts, said Total will not seek deals in the central government's next bidding round.

The conditions on offer from Baghdad, he says, are not attractive enough.

(This piece was originally written for Reuters.)

Armenia's 'Virtual' Media: Free, but Not Influential

By Armen Arakelyan

After the 2008 presidential elections in Armenia, a large number of new media outlets burst upon the scene.

We're talking about the "virtual" scene – the Internet. These sites have become the prime source of news and information for a growing number of Armenian citizens that have access to a computer and the web.

The main factor for this attraction is that these "virtual" sites are less prone to censorship and monitoring than the traditional print media.

There are three main tendencies of the internet-based media in Armenia – news distribution, commentary/analysis, and communicative.

There is a serious and healthy competition going on amongst outlets in the first category. This has led to a fall in the overall quality of the news being reported. These information sites are pushing the traditional news agencies out of the market and are forcing them to change their objectives.

There is much more opinion and less objectivity in the second category. These sites are in direct competition with the print media in Armenia. These sites are frequented less than the information sites mentioned above. Internet users are looking for

objective information, first and foremost, rather than opinion. But the opinion sites possess a great potential when it comes to shaping public opinion. It all depends on the quality and creativity of the commentators.

If people have something new and interesting to say, others will listen.

The third category basically deals with the so-called blogosphere and other social websites like Facebook, YouTube and Twitter. It's a field of instantaneous information exchange that is practically impossible to monitor or supervise.

These sites use the entire array of media forms (text, visual, etc) and issues like objectivity and information sources are placed on the backburner.

In the context of the upcoming May parliamentary elections, the Internet resources of Armenia will be playing three main functions – informational, propagandizing and mobilization.

Information Function

The internet affords an unparalleled source of diverse and complete information regarding the elections. Even a cursory look at the sites, their news briefs and articles, will give the reader a fairly full picture about the election campaign and its consequences.

Citizens connected to the web can not only follow the process on a minute-by-minute basis, but has a wide variety of news and information

to pick and choose from. With these resources at hand, citizens are able to directly participate in the process itself.

On the other hand, such a constant and quick flow of information also increases the risk that one can be the subject of manipulation.

Like the political forces contesting the elections, the "producers" of information are equally represented in the virtual world of the Internet.

The web is increasingly being viewed as an effective tool for campaigning. This is especially true for the opposition given its restricted access to TV, where the ruling regime holds sway.

The opposition Armenian National Congress and the Heritage Party are the most active in using the internet for campaigning out of the nine political parties and organizations contesting the elections.

The Republican Party and Prosperous Armenia Party, the two main government coalition members, view the Internet and social websites mostly as venues to quickly respond to their critics in the press and elsewhere.

Mobilization Function

Given that social Internet sites played a major role in the organization of the revolutions that have shaken the Arab world of later, their effectiveness as mobilizing tools cannot be underestimated.

Election developments, infractions large and small and major violations very quickly wind up in the internet and spread uncontrollably. This unrestricted dispersion, by itself, without added analysis or commentary, goes a long way in shaping public opinion on the ground regarding the quality of the elections and the quantity of violations.

They are capable of forming a huge wave of resistance when the virtual mechanisms of information and action are intertwined.

Today, in Armenia, a main subject of discussion and debate on the Internet is the huge increase in the number of officially registered voters despite the large numbers of Armenians who have left the country.

But there is a lack of internal public debate in Armenia, and this shows up in the social media websites. There is more attack than rational discussion.

Much of this can be credited to the recent increase of scammers/impostors whose main aim is to neutralize and discredit the mobilization possibilities of the truly active segments of the public.

Put another way, what we are seeing in the run-up to the election in the social sites is more a process of manipulation than initiatives to monitor the electoral process.

(This analysis was originally posted by Hetq on April 18.)



COMMENTARY



My Turn

By Harut Sassounian

Two Faces of Turkey: Veneer of Gentility Masking Ruthlessness

When Turkey's foreign minister met secretly with a group of Armenians in Washington last month, he wooed them with his sly smile and sugar-coated words. This was the fake facade of traditional Turkish diplomacy.

Last week, Turkey's UN ambassador in New York revealed the nasty and aggressive face of his government. Upon learning that a symposium on the Armenian Genocide was going to be held at the UN on April 12, Turkey's permanent representative filed a protest with the secretary general's office, trying to disrupt the event.

Organized by the Association for Trauma Outreach and Prevention (ATOP), the event was titled: "Toward Preventing Genocide, Nations Acknowledging their Dark History: Psychosocial, Economic and Cultural Perspectives." Following the screening of Dr. J. Michael Hagopian's documentary, "The River Ran Red," the attendees heard addresses from filmmaker Carla Garapedian, Dr. Dennis Papazian, Prof. Ervin Staub and Garen Nazarian, Armenia's UN ambassador.

Encouraged by Turkey's 2007 success in obstructing a reference to the Armenian Genocide in a UN exhibit on

Rwanda, the Turkish ambassador tried to force the UN to cancel last week's Armenian Genocide symposium. Fortunately, Armenia's UN Mission, official sponsor of the event, stood its ground and the symposium took place as planned, albeit with some minor disturbances.

At the start of the event, two Turkish diplomats entered the meeting room without an invitation and repeatedly attempted to disrupt the proceedings. They kept on shouting, accusing the speakers of defaming Turkey, and refused to comply with the organizer's request to submit all comments and questions in writing. As the commotion continued, UN security officers were called in, and the two undiplomatic Turkish diplomats left the hall, inanelly shouting: "we are the security, we own the security and we pay for the security!"

In his introductory remarks, Ambassador Nazarian observed that "97 years ago, a state-devised plan unleashed a crime whose magnitude and consequences were unparalleled not only in the history of the Armenian nation but also in the history of the world. The plan of extermination of the Armenians was implemented by the Ottoman Empire's state machine through all its structures and carried out with exact instructions."

Professor Papazian's remarks were titled: "Sovereignty, Nationalism, Racism vs. Humanism and Intellectual Freedom: The Causes and Cures of Genocide." He expressed his discontent "that the Armenian Genocide is not recognized by the present day Turkish government as a crime committed by its predecessor government under the dictatorship of the Committee for Union and Progress"; "that the people of Turkey are denied free access to accurate sources because of Article 301 of the Turkish Criminal Code which makes it a crime to insult Turkishness" and "that such [Ottoman] collections as the confiscated prop-

erties archives and the military archives are not open to inspection by objective scholars."

Professor Staub spoke about "Overcoming Evil: Preventing Genocide and Creating Peaceful Societies." He stated that "acknowledgement by perpetrators, bystanders, and the world in general of a group's suffering has great value for both healing and reconciliation." However, "perpetrators rarely, and only with great difficulty, acknowledge their acts and show regret," because of "their profound devaluation of the victims, their ideology and their unacknowledged shame."

Carla Garapedian explored the "Economic Consequences of Acknowledging the Genocide." She related that J. Michael Hagopian had recorded the testimonies of Genocide survivors so that their voices would be heard someday at an international tribunal deciding what restitution Turkey would have to pay to heirs of the victims.

Not counting the value of the properties, lands and other assets confiscated from Armenian victims of the Genocide perpetrated by the Turkish government, Garapedian assessed as \$15 billion the restitution value of the 1.5 million Armenians who had perished. Her estimate is based on Germany's \$60-billion restitution payment for the six million Jewish victims of the Holocaust since 1952. Garapedian concluded by suggesting that no state should profit from violating the law and unjustly enrich itself, asserting that a criminal state should not be allowed to keep the fruits of its crime.

This week, Dr. Ani Kalayjian, president of ATOP, sent a letter to UN Secretary General Ban Ki-Moon, complaining about the "disruptive, unprofessional and arrogant behavior" of the two Turkish diplomats. She wondered how the UN could bring peace to the world, when it cannot establish order at an event held at its own headquarters!

Analysis: Government Promises 'New Armenia' As Vote Nears

"Let us believe in change!" seems like a strange campaign slogan for a party that has dominated Armenia's political landscape since 2007 and whose leader, Serge Sargisian, has been president since 2008.

But the incumbent president is leading his Republican Party (HHK) into the May 6 legislative elections by promising "a completely new Armenia" within a few years. And that "new Armenia," Sargisian says, will begin with next month's voting, which the government vows will be substantially cleaner and more competitive than past efforts.

The opposition, too, is cautiously optimistic that this time around the country will be able to produce a legislature that truly reflects the political spectrum of society. The former president and leader of the opposition Armenian National Congress, Levon Ter-Petrosian, says the tide of both domestic and international opinion is pushing Armenia toward greater democratization.

"Today the international environment has changed," Ter-Petrosian says. "The world would no longer put up with the kind of abuses that were committed in Armenia in the past. The events in Arab countries...have taught the world a lesson, and I'm sure the world will be looking at our elections with totally different eyes."

Ter-Petrosian is urging all Armenians to participate in the May voting.

The international community – and particularly the European Union – is watching the current campaign intently, waiting to see if Armenia can make a qualitative breakthrough in governance that could signal the time is ripe for more intense engagement.

"The European Union will be watching very carefully what happens in the Armenian elections," says Michael Mann, the spokesman for EU foreign policy chief, Catherine Ashton. "Obviously, depending upon what happens, it really shows how seriously they are taking reforms in that country and, of course, as far as the European Union is concerned, the degree to which a country has reformed itself determines the sort of relationship we have with that country."

In addition, Yerevan-based political analyst Richard Giragosian says the Armenian campaign kicks off a regional election cycle and could thus become a bellwether.

"It has broader regional significance because it is within a framework of a broader regional election cycle, in that we have elections coming

in Georgia and Azerbaijan," Giragosian says. "In this sense, the performance, the conduct, and the aftermath of the Armenian elections will hold direct implications for both Georgia and Azerbaijan."

The current campaign comes very much under the political shadow of the 2008 presidential election, which opposition candidates claim fraudulently brought Sargisian to power and which were followed by demonstrations and clashes that left 10 people dead.

That crisis also left a deep divide between the government and the opposition, which asserted it was effectively locked out of the political process by the ruling party's monopoly of state institutions. This divide has contributed to the lack of progress on key issues, including economic development, political, and legal reform, and the dispute over Azerbaijan's Nagorno-Karabakh region – although Sargisian has been praised internationally for his efforts to reach out to his political opponents.

Although the current campaign is an important test for the government, it has not gone off entirely smoothly so far. Independent candidate Meruzhan Mkhoyan pulled out of the race after he was abducted from his home on April 6 and beaten by a group of unknown assailants. Mkhoyan's supporters blame the attack on supporters of his HHK rival, Aleksan Petrosian. Petrosian has denied all involvement.

Earlier this month, a bloc of four major political parties agreed to form the joint Inter-Party Center for the Public Oversight of Elections, which is intended to detect and prevent attempts to illegally influence the voting, including the illegal use of "administrative resources" by government officials.

The ruling Republican Party has refused to join the initiative and countered with its own voluntary "code of conduct" for all parties and candidates. Republican parliament member Davit Harutunian says that the proposal is intended to create a sense of "common responsibility" for the elections.

"The essence of the proposal was that all parties that will take part in the election process voluntarily take certain responsibilities," Harutunian says. "At some point, we all have to feel a common responsibility for political processes and for political environment that the

country is in now. I am deeply convinced that everyone shares the burden of responsibility be it the representatives of the authorities or the opposition."

However, in what seems a sign of the lingering mistrust between the authorities and the opposition, Armenian National Congress (HAK) coordinator Levon Zurabian immediately rejected the ruling party's plan.

"The main organizer and perpetrator of vote falsifications in Armenia is Serzh Sargisian's regime embodied by the Republican Party, and naturally such initiatives by that force are unacceptable," Zurabian says.

Zurabian charges that, instead of engaging with the opposition, the ruling Republican Party will continue to muddy the political waters.

"The authorities are very worried about the creation by the four political forces of a joint coordinating center to fight against fraud,"

By Sargis Harutyunyan and Irina Hovhannisyan

Zurabian says. "Now they will come up with one initiative after another."

Another issue that has caused concern as the campaigning has gotten under way is the voting rolls. The government's official tally shows 2,485,000 eligible voters, some 165,000 more than were on the rolls in the 2007 elections. In the meantime, the October 2011 census showed the country's population at about 2,870,000, a decline of more than 400,000 people over the last decade.

President Sargisian explains the expanded rolls by saying that many Armenians living abroad have been added.

"Being absent from the country is not sufficient grounds from removing people from the voter lists, and this is the reason why the number of citizens on those lists is growing," Sargisian says. "But being included on the list does not necessarily mean taking part in elections."

(RFE/RL correspondent Robert Coalson contributed to this report from Prague, and RFE/RL correspondent Rikard Jozwiak contributed from Brussels.)

Turkey's Foreign Policy Growing Less Mild

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draws attention to his membership of the minority Alevi faith.

He has even suggested that Kilicdaroglu opposes intervention in Syria out of a sense of kinship with Assad, who belongs to the Alawite sect, often seen as a close cousin to Turkey's 15m-20m Alevis. The Alevis practice a liberal form of Shia Islam and have long faced discrimination. Although their rituals differ from the Alawites in Syria, they feel some solidarity with them. Van Dam warns that any war against Syria could "further polarize Sunnis and Alevis within Turkey."

The Syrian crisis has exposed another long-running Turkish sore: its Kurdish minority. Selahattin Demirtas, leader of Turkey's mainly Kurdish Peace and Democracy Party (BDP), insists that Turkey is seeking regime change in Syria "to ensure that the Syrian Kurds don't get any more rights than Turkey is prepared to grant its own Kurds, which is hardly any at all."

The AK government has done more than any of its predecessors to address Kurdish griev-

ances. It has even conducted secret talks with rebels from the separatist PKK. Last year Davutoglu pressed Assad to be kinder to his Kurds. But the conciliatory mood in Turkey has faded. Thousands of BDP officials have been arrested on dubious charges of PKK membership. AK portrays the crackdown as a response to PKK attacks. Demirtas says it was never sincere about reconciliation.

The PKK considered Syria a mentor until Turkey threatened war against the country in 1998. A frightened Syria booted out the PKK leader, Abdullah Ocalan, who was captured in Kenya and then imprisoned in Turkey. But in those days, pilots in the Israeli air force were allowed to train in Turkish skies. If Israel and Turkey were still friends Assad might feel every bit as shaky as his father did when the Turks last clenched their fists. Then again, if Israel and Turkey were still friends, Turkey might not need to shake its fists at all.

(This analysis appeared in April 14 edition of *The Economist*)



The Armenian Mirror-Spectator

Celebrating 80 Years & Beyond



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CHIEF OF STAFF FOR
THE PRESIDENT OF THE
REPUBLIC OF ARMENIA

2012 AWARD OF EXCELLENCE RECIPIENTS



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NATIONAL CORRESPONDENT FOR NBC NEWS



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