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International Indignation on the Rise as Kessab Armenians Flee

WASHINGTON and YEREVAN (Combined Sources) – The United States and Russia issued statements this week expressing concern over the fate of Kessab, the Armenian-populated town in Syria that has been under attack by Islamic militants in recent days.

During a daily briefing in Washington on Friday, March 28, US Department of State deputy spokesperson Marie Harf said the United States is “deeply troubled by recent fighting and violence that is endangering the Armenian community in Kessab, Syria and has forced many to flee.”

More than 600 ethnic Armenian families had to flee their homes in the town situated in the northwest of Syria after armed bands reportedly affiliated with al-Qaeda penetrated from across the Turkish border and seized control of the town after clashes with Syrian government troops. The Armenians took refuge in Latakia, some 60 kilometers to the south.

“There are far too many innocent civilians suffering as a result of the war. All civilians, as well as their places of worship, must be protected. As we have said throughout this conflict, we deplore continued threats against Christians and other minorities in Syria,” she said. “And as you may have seen from the readout of President Obama’s conversation with Pope Francis



Armenian lawmakers speak upon their return from Kessab.

yesterday, they discussed among other things the plight of minorities, especially Christians, inside Syria today.”

Harf also referred to some statements issued by groups fighting in Kessab saying that they will not target civilians and will respect minorities and holy places. “We expect those commitments to be upheld. The United States

will continue its steadfast support to those affected by violence in Syria and throughout the region, including Syrian Armenians. We have long had concerns

about the threat posed by violent extremists, and this latest threat to the Armenian community in Syria only underscores this further,” Harf said.

This statement by the US official was followed by a remarkable exchange with a reporter attending the daily briefing.

Meanwhile, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Russia also disseminated a statement on Friday expressing concern over the attacks on Kessab. It strongly condemned the acts of terrorism and other crimes against civilians, clearly stating that tank guns were applied from the territory of Turkey.

“The seizure by extremists of the town of Kessab elicited a broad response in Armenian communities throughout the world. A demonstration took place in front of the UN office in Yerevan with the demand for the persecution against ethno-confessional minorities by illegal armed units to be put an end to in Syria.

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“...you may have seen from the readout of President Obama’s conversation with Pope Francis yesterday, they discussed among other things the plight of minorities, especially Christians, inside Syria today.”

—US Department of State deputy spokesperson Marie Harf

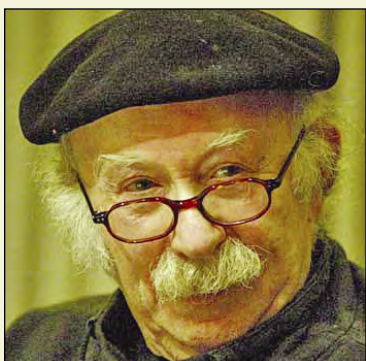


A scene from “The Story of the Last Thought”

The Play’s the Thing... Dissent, Denial and Artistic Freedom

By Muriel Mirak-Weissbach
Special to the Mirror-Spectator

KONSTANZ, Germany – At one point in Shakespeare’s play “Hamlet,” the young prince stages a pantomime play, which features a murder scene: Gonzago is poisoned and the murderer gets his wife. Hamlet’s strategy is a masterpiece of psychological insight: he knows that his uncle Claudius, the king, who will be among the audience, see PLAY, page 7



Edgar Hilsenrath

Prof. Richard Frye, Armenian Studies Pioneer, Dies

BOSTON – Prof. Richard Nelson Frye, who helped establish the field of Armenian studies and the National Association for Armenian Studies and Research (NAASR), died on March 27. He was 94.

Frye was the seminal figure in the establishment of Iranian Studies in the United States. He joined the Harvard faculty in 1948, was the founder of the university’s Center for Middle Eastern Studies, and served as the Aga Khan Professor of Iranian Studies from 1957 until 1990. He published countless important articles, chapters, and books on Iranian history and culture.

Frye, who studied under the pioneering Armenologist Robert P. Blake at Harvard, was also an early and lifelong advocate of Armenian Studies, and it was he who was the catalyst for the establishment of NAASR and the creation of permanent programs in Armenian Studies in the US.

see FRYE, page 6



Prof. Richard N. Frye

NEWS IN BRIEF

COMMUNIQUE

ADL District Committee Condemns Kessab Atrocities

We were appalled by the atrocities perpetrated by terrorist gangs against Armenians in Kessab, Syria, this past month. Ninety nine years after the Turkish government launched its genocide against its Armenian population, the survivors and victims of that crime once again have become homeless refugees because the same bloody hands are using mercenaries and criminals to achieve their political goals.

We share Senate Foreign Relations Committee Chairman Robert Menendez’s concern and initiative to sensitize US legislators and the State Department about the crimes being committed against the Armenian residents of the historic region of Kessab.

The avowed principles of democracy and human rights advocated by our US government around the world will sound hollow unless concrete action is taken to stop the rampage perpetrated by terrorists and the government of Turkey, which is clearly the instigator of those crimes, is called to account for its activities.

Whatever the political objectives behind the crisis in Syria, the carnage in Kessab, as well as Aleppo, will not justify any legitimate political goal.

We call upon the world community of Armenians to support our brothers and sisters finding refuge in Latakia, Syria.

We also urge the US government to intervene with Turkey’s leaders in order to curb their genocidal intents and allow the Armenian population of Kessab to return to their ravaged homes and desecrated churches in order to piece their lives back together and live in peace in that troubled region of the world.

The pictures from Kessab are a reminder to the world that justice for Armenians has yet to be achieved.

– ADL District Committee of US and Canada

Armenian Serviceman Receives Posthumous Award

YEREVAN (Armenpress) – On April 1, President of the Nagorno Karabagh Republic (Artsakh) Bako Sahakyan signed a decree posthumously awarding commander of the N military unit, senior lieutenant of the NKR Defense Army Harutyun Safaryan with the “For Service in Battle” medal for courage shown during the defense of the Nagorno Karabagh border.

An Armenian army lieutenant was killed in a mine blast on the Nagorno Karabagh – Azerbaijan Contact Line on Monday. According to a press release of the army, serviceman, Safaryan, born in 1987, was fatally wounded in action.

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Goudsouzian Book

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ARMENIA

News From Armenia

Armenia's Brandy, Vodka Production Up

YEREVAN (Armenpress) – The production of brandy and wine has been increased in the Republic of Armenia in January-February of the current year. The brandy production has been increased by 1.8 percent during January-February of the current year in comparison with the same period of the previous year, thus reaching 2.2 million liters, while the vodka production was increased by 1.6 percent and reached 1.4 million liters.

In accordance with the data of the National Statistical Service of the Republic of Armenia, the wine production volume in our country was increased by 3.4 percent, thus reaching 678,000 liters.

Armenia's PM Attends Funeral of Suárez

YEREVAN (Armenpress) – A state funeral was held in Madrid on the death of Adolfo Suárez González, who occupied the post of the Prime Minister of Spain in 1976-1981. Upon the invitation of Juan Carlos I of Spain, the Prime Minister of the Republic of Armenia Tigran Sargsian left for Madrid on March 31 to participate in the ceremony. Leaders and head of governments from a number of European countries attended the ceremony.

Suarez, who helped guide Spain from dictatorship to democracy as the first elected prime minister after the decades-long rule of Francisco Franco, died March 23 at a hospital in Madrid. He was 81.

FM Nalbandian Receives Honorary Doctorate

YEREVAN (Armenpress) – The Moscow State Institute of International Relations (MGIMO) granted an honorary doctorate to the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Armenia Eduard Nalbandian.

A ceremony was held on April 2 in the Moscow State Institute of International Relations, during which the doctorate was conferred upon Nalbandian.

NATO to Expand Cooperation

BERN (Armenpress) – Frosty relations between the West and Russia considerably increased the significance of the North Atlantic Treaty Alliance (NATO). The organization now intends to expand its presence in Eastern Europe and particularly in Armenia, Azerbaijan and Moldova. According to the website of the German newspaper, Spiegel, the so-called Partnership Committee along with the abovementioned three countries adopted the catalogue on "making practical steps to foster relations."

Among other things, the paper said, through different programs the three countries will be encouraged to expand military cooperation with NATO, which intends to hold joint drills and trainings

New Publication on Embodied Wisdom

ECHMIADZIN – With the blessings of Karekin II, Supreme Patriarch and Catholicos of All Armenians, the Mother See of Holy Echmiadzin has published a work titled *From Ancient Near East to Christian Armenia: Origin and Progress of the Concept of Embodied Wisdom According to Proverbs 1-9* by Rev. Shahe Ananyan, director of the *Echmiadzin Monthly Journal* and a teacher at the Gevorkian Theological Seminary.

The work aims to identify and pinpoint the philosophical and fundamental roots of the concept of wisdom as a possible and clear example of Christian philosophy. It not only refers to Biblical events and concepts, but also tries to observe them in the light of the perceptions of the philosophical and theological schools of the Ancient world and during the early Christian period.

Angeghakot and its Poet

By Joseph Dagdigian

ANGEHEKOT – Angeghakot, a village of about 2,000 – 3,000 people is in Southern Armenia, about 10 kilometers from Sisian, the regional capital of Syunik province. Travelers from Yerevan on their way to Karabagh pass by Angeghakot, then Sisian and Goris before entering the Lachin Corridor. The drive from Yerevan to Angeghakot takes roughly four hours. With an altitude of about 6,000 feet, summer days are hot but evenings can be quite cool. Thus, unlike some other regions of Armenia, little fruit is grown here. Agriculture consists primarily of raising livestock and planting grains.

Upon entering Angeghakot, we asked a few people for directions to some historical sites. In each instance we were advised to find Mayolis Karapetyan – the repository of Angeghakot's history and culture.

We found him, and learned that Angeghakot's history dates to the stone and bronze ages. In or near the village are monuments attributed to the Vartanantz War against Persia for the defense of Armenian Christianity against paganism.

Karapetyan took us to the small Soorp Vartan church, half built into the side of a hill in back of some stone cutting machinery. It is said that this site was visited by Saint Vartan's surviving soldiers returning from the battle of Avarayr (451 AD), though the sign on the church indicates it was built in the 13th century. Some believe that Saint Vartan may be buried there, though there are a number of such sites purporting to contain Vartan's

remains. Karapetyan believes he has evidence that Vartan Mamikonian is buried in the valley below under what appears to be a large man-made hill. In a cemetery in Angeghakot is a tomb said to have been constructed by Vartan Mamikonian's daughter, Shushanik, for her father. Instead, Shushanik is the one who was buried there. Also in the cemetery are pre-Christian monuments converted into Christian tomb stones after the adoption of Armenian Christianity. Indeed, the medieval historian Stepanos Orbelian



Angeghakot village scene

(1250-1305), indicates that Christianity was first brought to Armenia in Syunik by Saint Bartholomew.

In 1699 Israel Ori (1658-1711), born in nearby Sisian, but spent a couple of decades in Europe learning European military science. He returned to Armenia to help liberate the country

Joseph Emin (1726-1809) to enlist foreign help to liberate Armenia, but this too failed. According to Karapetyan, Ori's meeting with the Meliks took place at Melik Safraz's home in the outskirts of Angeghakot. He adds that the house no longer stands.

This region was a battleground for other revolutionaries who fought to preserve the region's independence. In the 1720s, David Beg defended this region and his commander, Mkhitar Sparabed, who was assassinated, is buried in the valley of Khnsoresk less than an hour from Angeghakot.

Besides the Soorp Vartan Church, there are three other medieval churches in the village: Soorp Astvatsatsin, Soorp Stepanos, and Soorp Hazaraprkich. Next to Soorp Astvatsatsin are buried officers who served under General Antranig while defending this region in the late 1800s or the early 1900s. Elsewhere in the village is a small cemetery with graves of Armenian Fedayees (freedom fighters) from the same era, possibly serving under General Keri (or one of the other military leaders who helped the villagers defend this territory).

Near a WWII memorial are the graves of Angeghakot's martyrs who died fighting for Artsakh's liberation. Every village in Armenia has such a cemetery.

While Angeghakot does not have huge cathedrals and fortresses, it boasts an extremely rich and ancient history. While there are no tourist amenities, hotels, restaurants etc. in the village, Angeghakot does offer a window into Armenian history, current village life and Armenia's constant struggle for independence.

While enjoying refreshments at the end of a visit, Karapetyan's young granddaughter recited, from memory, some of Karapetyan's poetry while two older grandsons were splitting wood in preparation for the coming winter. With no means to get his poetry published, my wife Lisa and I offered to publish a limited number of copies upon our return to the US. Our friend, Berge Jololian, who makes annually to donate computers to schools in the region (www.facebook.com/techedarmenia), acted as an intermediary bringing manuscripts back and forth. We have printed a limited number of Mayolis Karapetyan's poetry booklets at no expense to the author. The booklets, in Armenian and including a photograph of the author with his granddaughter, contain 35 poems. The booklets are available for \$10 plus \$2 shipping and handling. All proceeds will go to the author. For more information call Joseph Dagdigian or the National Association of Armenian Studies and Research in Belmont, Mass.



Angeghakot poet Mayolis Karapetyan with granddaughter

from the Persians and Ottoman Turks. He visited Angeghakot to meet Melik Safraz. Meliks were local princes who ruled their regions but often vied with each other for control. Ori succeeded in getting the meliks to put aside their differences to present a united petition to Russian Czar Peter the Great and the pope to intervene militarily in Armenia to save Armenia's Christians. Unfortunately, Ori died without implementing his plan. Ori's efforts inspired a Persian-Armenian revolutionary



Tomb of Shushanik - daughter of Vartan Mamikonian



INTERNATIONAL

Indignation on the Rise as Kessab Armenians Flee

KESSAB, from page 1

Simultaneously, the leadership of the Republic of Armenia expressed its gratitude to the Syrian government for the defense of the Armenian population," the statement of the Russian Foreign Ministry said.

"The impression is that more vigorous activities by extremists are aimed at preventing the resumption of intra-Syrian negotiations, depriving the Syrians of the possibility of a political and diplomatic settlement, thwarting the process of Syria's chemical demilitarization. Such a scenario is inadmissible," it added.

Armenian-Americans Raise Their Voices

Earlier this week, a delegation of Armenian-American organizations, including the Armenian National Committee of America and the Armenian Assembly of America, as well as religious representatives held meetings at the US Department of State, urging the government to take immediate action "to end the vicious onslaught on the historically Armenian town of Kessab."

The delegation said "the United States has a unique responsibility to protect the citizens of Kessab especially since a large proportion of them have American families desperately seeking to provide protection and refuge for them." It submitted a series of requests for prompt US action.

A number of pro-Armenian senators and congressmen also sent letters with similar contents to the US Department of State and President Obama.

Armenian Caucus Co-Chairs Representatives Frank Pallone Jr. (D-NJ) and Michael Grimm (R-NY), along with Armenian Genocide resolution lead sponsors Representatives David Valadao (R-CA) and Adam Schiff (D-CA), in their letter, wrote in part, "We are writing to express our serious concerns regarding credible reports that Islamist rebels entering from Turkey this past weekend were involved in attacks in the Latakia region of Syria, specifically the town of Kessab, which is a predominately Armenian-populated area. Such actions shock the conscious and must be resoundingly condemned."

In addition to the Caucus letter, Rep. James McGovern (D-MA), who co-chairs the Tom Lantos Human Rights Commission, issued a strongly-worded statement condemning the attacks and called for an investigation into reports of Turkish involvement. "I am deeply concerned by the reports that these attacks allegedly originated in Turkey and demand that the United States and international community conduct a thorough and critical investigation of these claims," McGovern said.

Schiff, who sits on the House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence, said that "The vicious attacks by al Qaeda affiliated terrorists against Armenians and other Christians in the Syrian town of Kessab in northern Syria are beyond appalling."

On March 24, the Assembly sent a letter to Obama which called on the administration "to take all steps necessary to not only safeguard the Christian Armenian community of Kessab, but to increase efforts in coordination with the United Nations to ensure that all minority communities are afforded greater protection. In addition, we urge President Obama to make it publicly clear that the United States will not tolerate its NATO ally's policy of providing support to extremist groups."

"We applaud the action of the Armenian Caucus and welcome the statements of Congressmen Schiff and McGovern," stated Assembly executive director Bryan Ardouny. "Given the urgency of the matter, we must press forward to ensure that the Christian Armenian community in Syria is safe-

guarded," Ardouny said.

The Assembly's letter went on to say, "We are writing to express our serious concerns regarding credible reports that Islamist rebels entering from Turkey this past weekend were involved in attacks in the Latakia region of Syria, specifically the town of Kessab, which is a predominately Armenian populated area. Such actions shock the conscious and must be resoundingly condemned.

"At the beginning of the 20th century, nearly 6,000 Armenians lived in Kessab. However, the July 1915 deportation of the Armenian population at the hands of the Ottoman Turks resulted in the loss of nearly 5,000 lives. Now, ninety-nine years after their initial deportation, another expulsion of Armenians is a telling reminder about the dangers of genocide denial and Turkey's failure to address its genocidal legacy.

"With the Christian Armenian community being uprooted from its homeland, yet again, we strongly urge you to take all necessary measures without delay to safeguard the Christian Armenian community of Kessab. We also believe that now is the time to redouble America's efforts to ensure that all minority communities at risk in the Middle East are afforded greater protection."

A Save Kessab movement has been launched online, with many famous Armenian Americans lending their support, including Cher and Kim Kardashian.

Armenian Delegation Returns

Meanwhile, a delegation from Armenia returning from Kessab and Latakia, presented their bleak report.

"The visit to Kessab was a fact-finding mission aimed at developing a package of suggestions on how we can help our compatriots in Syria," Secretary of the Heritage Party Tevan Poghosyan told reporters. He assured those assembled that support for Kessab Armenians is vital and called on intellectuals, businessmen, politicians, and representatives of mass media to visit Latakia.

Another lawmaker, Edmon Marukyan, said the people he met in Latakia told him that on March 21, at dawn, Armenian guards noticed how Turkish border guards drew back and an advancement of certain groups started.

"The attack was very unexpected, nobody could have imagined the neighbor country would open its border, grant its premises to some military to attack the village, and it was due to the Syrian army forces that both the Armenians and the Alevis populating Kessab were able to flee to Latakia," says Marukyan, adding that the 320 families, who have their IDs and have found shelter at Latakia's St Mariam Church, are given food and necessary items there, while the others are staying in private houses with Armenian families living in Latakia.

The witnesses told the Armenian parliamentarian the rebels received \$400 a day. The financing has now been stopped, but they are provided with an opportunity to rob the Armenian houses.

About 320 Armenian families found refuge at St. Astvatsatsin Church of Latakia after they fled Kessab. Many of them have now moved in with relatives and friends. All of them are confident Syria will liberate Kessab and they will have an opportunity to return. "First of all, the Kessab Armenians need financial assistance," Marukyan said.

Expert Artak Shakaryan said that in reference to the Save Kessab hashtag being Tweeted in recent days and the pictures that have flooded the web and social networks, that it is a commendable trend and Armenians used this fact to once again remind about the Armenian genocide prior to its 100th anniversary, however, it has had its adverse effect as well.

The Defender of Human Rights of Armenia Karen Andreasyan sent an urgent message to the UN Human Rights Commissioner, Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights, International Institute of Human Rights Defenders, European Institute of Ombudsmen, International Committee of the Red Cross, Human Rights Watch and Freedom House on the occasion of the events taking place in the Armenian-populated Kessab of Syria.

Andreasyan's letter read, "Dear partners, On March 22-25 horrifying events took place in the Armenian-populated town of Kessab and its surrounding villages in Syria. The civilians were the targets of a three-day brutal attacks, assumed to be committed by Al Qaeda-affiliated bands. It has been reported that there have been already 80 civilian casualties, 670 Armenian families and the majority of the population of Kessab, were evacuated to safer areas in neighboring Basit and Latakia. We are highly troubled not only for the Kessab but for the Syrian population in general, as the issues in Syria have always been of paramount importance for us.

"In the years 1909 and 1915, as a result of the Armenian Genocide by Turkish legions, Armenians were forced to leave Kessab, and today's killings and forced deportation of Kessab Armenians are the third in their history, as again the intent behind those events is to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnic, racial or religious group. These actions must be considered a serious challenge and threat to the international community and to the fundamental principles of human rights law recognized by all civilized nations.

"Taking into account that the Kessab events have the elements of the crime of Genocide as established by the 1948 Genocide convention, the Rome statute and also that the prevention of Genocide is considered as an erga omnes norm recognized by the UN International Court of Justice, now more than ever, we call on the international society and international organizations to undertake thorough inquiries aimed at establishing whether neighboring countries such as Turkey, or other states had effective control of the operations and gross human rights violations committed in Kessab and to safeguard the Syrian population of Armenian or other origin."

Donations Sought

In the light of the latest developments in the Kessab region of Syria, which subjected the Armenian families to surprise attacks and looting, and forced them to flee for their lives, the Executive Committee of the Syrian Armenian Relief Fund (SARF) held an emergency session and decided to immediately transfer \$100,000 in direct financial assistance to reach compatriots to provide a degree of physical subsistence and financial relief.

The following churches, charities and organizations came together to form the Syrian Armenian Relief Fund in August 2012: Armenian Catholic Eparchy in North America; Armenian Evangelical Union of North America; Western Diocese of the Armenian Church; Western Prelacy of the Armenian Apostolic Church of America; Armenian General Benevolent Union; Armenian Missionary Association of America; Armenian Relief Society of Western USA.; Armenian Democratic Liberal Party; Armenian Revolutionary Federation-Western USA.; and Social Democrat Hunchakian Party-Western USA. The web site address follows: www.SyrianArmenianReliefFund.org.

(Reports from Armenpress, ArmeniaNow and Public Radio of Armenia were used to compile this story.)

International News

ANC Austria Calls on OSCE to Support Kessab Armenians

VIENNA, Austria (Armenpress) – The Armenian National Committee (ANC) of Austria sent a letter to the Secretary General of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), Ambassador Lamberto Zannier, President of the Swiss Confederation Didier Burkhalter and the Chairman-in-Office of the OSCE Permanent Council, the Swiss Ambassador Thomas Greminger, bringing to their attention the attacks on the Armenian-populated Kessab.

The members of the ANC Austria asked the OSCE officials to support Kessab Armenians.

"Turkey supported the destruction of the Armenian-populated Kessab and for the third time made the local population leave their homes and properties. OSCE has the moral authority to bring to the attention of the international community the issue and openly criticize Turkey for the destruction of Kessab, read the letter, in part.

Armenian, Azerbaijani Presidents 'Spoke' in the Hague

HAGUE (RFE/RL) – The presidents of Armenia and Azerbaijan reportedly met on the sidelines of the March 24-25 Nuclear Security Summit in The Hague.

James Warlick, the US co-chair of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe's (OSCE) Minsk Group on the Nagorno-Karabagh conflict, wrote on Twitter on March 27 that Serge Sargisyan and Ilham Aliyev "spoke together" at the summit.

The mediator wondered whether the two leaders were "really committed to finding a way to [Nagorno-Karabagh peace]?" He did not give more details.

Neither the Armenian nor the Azerbaijani presidency has made any official statement on the reported meeting.

Diplomatic efforts to settle the conflict have brought little progress.

Terrorists Who Attacked Kessab Don't Represent Islam: Ramzan Kadyrov

YEREVAN (Armenpress) – Terrorists who attacked the Syrian town of Kessab do not do so in accordance with Islam, Chechnya's President Ramzan Kadyrov wrote Monday on one of his official pages in the social networks. Itar-Tass reported that he expressed his condolences to the families of those who had died in Kessab, a mostly Armenian-populated town in Syria.

"About a hundred people died in Kessab as a result of an attack by the militants who, as it is stressed by the Syrian authorities, had come from Turkey," Kadyrov said. "The victims were ethnic Armenians."

"The official data says the attack on Kessab was carried out by Al Qaeda militants affiliated with the so-called Al-Nusra Front and Islamic Front," he said. "I am stating herein bindingly that these terrorists have nothing in common with Islam and cannot be called Moslems."

Kadyrov complained over the silence about the tragedy by officials in European countries and the US. "These terrorists have been reared, fostered and armed by the West and trained by secret services of NATO countries," he said. "They are fulfilling a task to ruin Syria and weaken the Islamic countries. And where're the European and American democracies and why are they keeping their mouths shut? Why are they pumping hundreds of millions of dollars, weaponry and specialized to the thugs, who oppose the legitimate government in Syria and kill women, the elderly, and children?"

Community News

Huntington Library Grounds Setting of Armenia Tree Project Los Angeles Gala on May 4

LOS ANGELES – Armenia Tree Project's 20th anniversary committee is organizing a gala at the Huntington Library, Art Collection, and Botanical Gardens in San Marino on May 4.

The venue was founded in 1919 by Henry E. Huntington, an exceptional businessman and a man of vision – with a special interest in books, art and gardens. During his lifetime, Huntington amassed one of the finest research libraries in the world, established a splendid art collection and created an array of botanical gardens with plants from a geographic range that spans the globe.

Originally the Huntington family residence, the Huntington Art Gallery contains one of the most comprehensive collections in this country of 18th and 19th century British and French art and is home to Gainsborough's "Blue Boy" and Lawrence's "Pinkie."

During cocktail hour on the Gallery Loggia, guests will have the opportunity to walk through the gallery and enjoy cocktails and appetizers, followed by dinner on the South Terrace to celebrate ATP's 20 years of



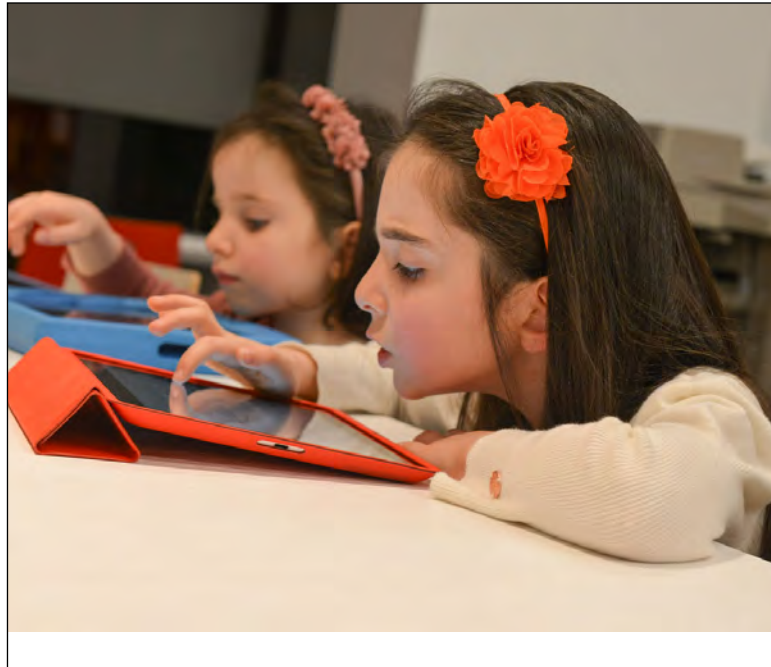
ATP's 20th Anniversary Committee at the Huntington's Gallery Loggia where celebrations will kick off on May 4, from left, Ani Kenderian, Anahit Gharibyan, Arax Mansourian, Margaret Mgrublian, Elizabeth Agbabian, Flora Dunaian, Savye Tufenkian, Haig Manjikian, Salpi Mankerian, Aleen Oruncakciel, Maral Habeshian, Zarmig Kazarian and Hilda Manjikian (Photo by Richard Chambers)

greening Armenia.

ATP has planted more than 4.4 million trees during 40 seasons of planting, established three nurseries and two environmental education centers and has greened villages, churches, parks and open spaces throughout Armenia. In the process, the organization has provided employment for hundreds of people and provided vital resources to thousands of villagers throughout the country.

The 20th anniversary committee in Los Angeles consists of Elizabeth and Mihran Agbabian, Flora and George Dunaian, Sabine and Al Eiasian, Arax Mansourian and Shahen Hairapetian, Zarmig and Garo Kazarian, Ani and Shant Kenderian, Hilda and Haig Manjikian, Salpi and Viken Mankerian, Margaret and David Mgrublian, Aleen and Mardik Oruncakciel, and Savye and Ralph Tufenkian.

For more information or sponsorship opportunities, contact Western Region Development Director Maral Habeshian at maral@armeniatree.org.



The Manuel Keusseyan Library is filled with dozens of iPads, advancing the AGBU Alex Manoogian School's mission to put the mobile device into students' hands.

Alumni and Community Support Brings State-of-the-Art Facilities to Hundreds of Montréal Students

MONTREAL – The AGBU Alex Manoogian School in Montréal has officially unveiled its new, state-of-the-art library. More than 200 alumni and faculty gathered for the library's recent ribbon-cutting ceremony, representing a school – and a community – that is only growing stronger almost 45 years after its founding.

The new facilities pay tribute to one of the school's educators, the late Manuel Keusseyan, a renowned intellectual whose memory lives on today among his family, students and faculty. When plans for the library were first proposed last spring, alumnus and benefactor Kevin Torudag agreed to support the project on one condition: it honored his favorite teacher. At the inaugural event, Torudag, who grew up under the AGBU umbrella, participating in scouts groups and Camp Nubar, spoke of the positive impact that Keusseyan and the school had on his life.

Standing alongside the Keusseyan family, Torudag, stated, "Manuel Keusseyan was much more than an Armenian teacher to me. He was a role model and a friend who helped shape me as a student and as a person. The lessons he taught us within and outside of the classroom stay with me to this day. I am so pleased we can celebrate Manuel Keusseyan's legacy with this library and that I could help ensure that this institution continues to offer the highest standard of education and life-long mentoring that he embodied."

Vice Principal Chahé Tanachian applauded Torudag and the many young donors who gave back to their alma mater in support of the library project. "The young professionals who contributed to this cause understand that education lies at the heart of our community, and that we're creating the next generation of leaders with our focus on Armenian culture, history, language and new technologies," he remarked. "We were proud to become Quebec's first wireless school, now committed to putting iPads into the hands of students. With the continuous support of our graduates, we'll remain at the forefront of innovation."

The library will allow students to create and learn while taking advantage of the latest technologies. Already outfitted with dozens of iPads, it will soon house

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Herag Keusseyan and his family officially inaugurate the AGBU Alex Manoogian School's brand new Manuel Keusseyan Library in honor of his father, the renowned intellectual and educator. Over 200 guests, including city officials, alumni and friends attended the opening in Montréal.

Fresno Valley Prays at Service for Armenians Fleeing Kessab

By Ron Orozco

FRESNO (*Fresno Bee*) – Armenians across the central San Joaquin Valley united in prayer Sunday in support of their Christian brothers and sisters recently forced to flee their homes in Kessab, Syria.

News sources confirmed an onslaught on Kessab was launched from Turkey by foreign fighters affiliated with an extremist wing of the al-Qaeda terrorist group. About 1,500 Armenians were forced to flee to nearby Latakia and Bassit. Homes were looted and Christian churches were desecrated. No casualties have been reported, according to reports.

In Fresno, Armenian leaders called attention to the situation at a meeting Friday. Some Valley Armenians have family and friends in Kessab. On Sunday, more than 200 people came together in solidarity at a service at Holy Trinity Armenian Apostolic Church in downtown Fresno.

During the service, deacon Garo Poladian asked worshippers to pray for the people of Kessab. Then, parishioners dedicated a hymn – *Der Voghormya* or Lord Have Mercy – to them. As people sang, smoke from burning incense wafted near the altar, symbolizing prayers being lifted up to heaven.

Then, the Rev. Vahan Gosdanian, parish priest at Holy Trinity, gave a homily with sharp words aimed at the Turkish government.

"What they are trying to do is wipe out whatever is Armenian, but they will not win," he said. "God won't let them. God will punish them. God is with us, believe me."

Gosdanian also called for action. He urged people to pray constantly about the situation, ask their elected officials to speak out on the situation and help financially. About \$4,800 was collected at the service for those displaced from their homes.

People at the service said it is important the Valley comes together in support of the Armenians in Syria.

"We believe we're standing with them in solidarity, as fellow Christians, because their city has been overrun by Turkish-led terrorists groups," said Barret Arakelian. "We believe it is a continual attack on our Christian faith, on Armenian people – same as it was in 1915 (the Armenian Genocide)."

"We believe this is a spiritual attack on defenseless, peace-loving Christian people."

Vahe Keshishian, who sings in the Holy Trinity choir, has a brother who fled Kessab. Keshishian's wife, Arpy, also has four sisters who were displaced. All are safe.

"It's heart-breaking because we are living a relatively good life in America," Keshishian said. "It's a human tragedy there. We're praying. How can we do anything else?"

Jackie Chekerdemian also lit prayer candles in the Holy Trinity sanctuary for the Armenians in Syria.

"I prayed for God to comfort all the families in the devastation, to bring peace to the world and the Middle East and to calm all the hate," she said. "The Middle East has gone through so much."

Long-time Holy Trinity member Lucy Ohanian said she came to the service just wanting to help the people of Kessab.

"They have suffered so much," she said. "We're not hearing everything that's going on. This has upset me."

"I'm just praying. I can't do anything but pray. That's all we can do."



COMMUNITY NEWS

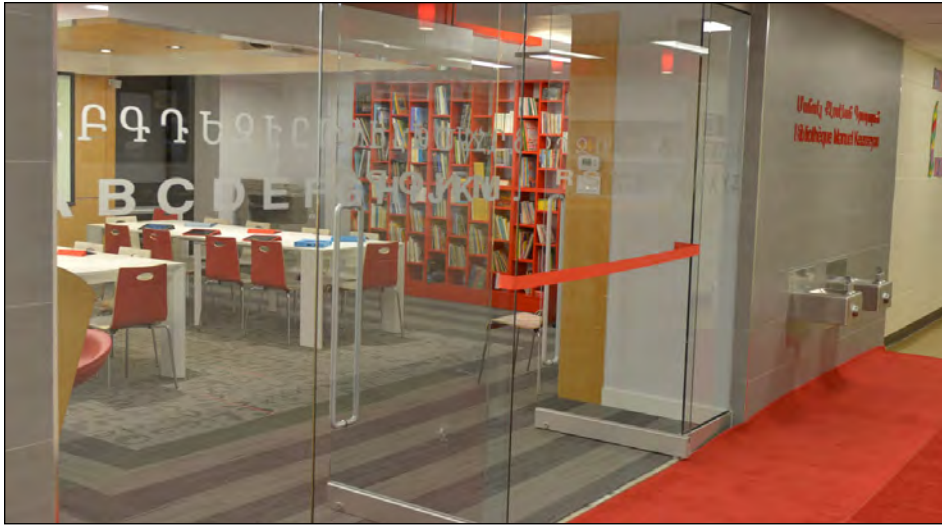
Community Support Brings State-of-the-Art Facilities to Montréal Students

SCHOOL, from page 4
countless digital books and databases in Armenian, English and French. The multipurpose design – retractable screens and tables easily transform the room into a conference hall – was envisioned by Houry Avedissian, founder of Ha2 Architecture Design. Avedissian, also an alumna, worked alongside Raffi Chitilian, a retired civil engineer and volunteer project manager whose grandchildren, students at the school, are already enjoying the new space.

Once the ribbon was cut by Manuel

Keusseyan's son, Herag, the library filled with guests, including a number of local officials. Archbishop Nathan Hovhannissian; Mary Deros, City Councillor, Ville de Montréal; and Harout Chitilian, vice president of the Executive Committee, Ville de Montréal and an AGBU Alex Manoogian School alumnus, were among the attendees. Parents, many of whom kicked off the fundraising efforts with a Parents' Committee gala that brought in over \$40,000, were also present.

The Manuel Keusseyan Library is part of the



The Manuel Keusseyan Library



In the fall, the Manoogian School daycare center completed construction on the Dervishian Playground.

AGBU Alex Manoogian School's broader efforts to expand. In the fall, the school's daycare center completed renovations of its playground with equipment donated by the AGBU Toronto Chapter. The Dervishian Playground was funded by the Dervishian family, Evik Asatoorian, and Armen and Ketty Kazandjian. Serving children 18 months to 4-years-old, the space is now

larger and safer – and enrollment is already on the rise.

As the school approaches its 45th anniversary, it is celebrating current students and the many alumni who are making valuable contributions to their communities. Since the school first opened in 1970, it has grown rapidly, with more than 2,000 graduates to date.

Merrimack Valley Commemorates Genocide with Traditional Music

By Tom Vartabedian

NORTH ANDOVER, Mass. – Authentic Armenian music will fill the air during a 99th anniversary commemoration of the Armenian Genocide.

The event is being sponsored by the Armenian Genocide Commemorative Committee of Merrimack Valley and will take place Sunday, April 27, at 3 p.m. inside North Andover High School.

Performing artists will be the Arev Armenian Folk Ensemble, a musical troupe that presents Armenia's traditions through traditional instruments such as the duduk, zurna, dhol and oud.

Titled "Weaving Armenia's Story through Music," the program will be dedicated to the memory of 1.5 million victims of the Armenian Genocide at the hands of the Ottoman Turkish government.

"Music has been a very prominent part of our culture and history," said Chairwoman Sossy Jeknavorian. "Through this venue, we hope to remind the gathering of the peace and tran-

quility that inhabited our country before the genocide. The Arev Ensemble transmits a powerful and authentic sound that must be heard to be truly appreciated."

Since 1989, the group has performed to the world community. Diverging from the traditional avenues once sought for artist relationships.

Admission is complimentary and open to the public. A reception will follow in the school cafeteria. A crowd spanning four generations is expected to attend as momentum continues to build toward next year's centennial milestone.

Over the past two decades, more than

\$70,000 has been donated to Armenian charities abroad, including \$3,300 this year to Syrian relief, battered Armenian women and the Fuller Center for Housing in Armenia which benefits needy residents.

Funds have been raised through voluntary contributions and sponsorships. The group owes its allegiance to commitment and service throughout a unified church and organizational community.

Winners of a student essay contest will be presented with awards after reading their papers. A memorial service concelebrated by pastors from different churches throughout the Merrimack Valley will introduce the program, accompanied by a combined choir led by Paul Ketchoyian.

An appearance by Nellie Nazarian of Haverhill as the lone survivor in Merrimack Valley is expected to highlight the moment. The 103-year-old has attended previous commemorations and has outlived her peers.

Communities throughout Greater Haverhill, Lawrence and Lowell will commemorate the genocide throughout the week with proclamation signings, meetings and flag-raising ceremonies with their respective city legislators.

An imposing memorial will be unveiled May 10 in downtown Lowell, attracting interest throughout New England.

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COMMUNITY NEWS

Donor Fund Established for Pasadena Armenian Genocide Memorial

PASADENA, Calif. – A special fund has been established through the Community Foundation of the Verdugos to receive donations for the Pasadena Armenian Genocide Memorial.

Funding raised for the project will help pay for construction and ongoing maintenance of the memorial, for which a ground blessing ceremony will take place Sunday, April 27, at 6 p.m. at Memorial Park in Pasadena.

"I believe it is the calling of corporations,

nonprofits, individuals, accountants and financial advisors to work together in making this memorial a reality," said David George Gevorkyan, chief financial officer for the Pasadena Armenian Genocide Memorial Committee. "Each of us, in our way and capacity, can bring about the change we would like to see for us and for future generations."

Approved by the City Council in September 2013, the Pasadena Armenian Genocide Memorial will be completed and dedicated in

April 2015 to mark the 100th anniversary of the killing of 1.5 million Armenians over a three-year period beginning in 1915.

Checks made payable to Community Foundation of the Verdugos, with "PASAGMC" written on the memo line, may be mailed to 272 S. Los Robles Ave., Pasadena CA 91101. Donations may also be made at www.PASAGMC.org (click on How to Help/Donate).

The Pasadena Armenian Genocide

Memorial Committee is an independent, non-profit organization. Donations are tax-deductible to the full extent of the law.

"This unique memorial pays tribute to the fallen martyrs and their descendants in the diaspora," said Bernard K. Melekian, a member of the committee and former Pasadena Police Chief. "It will stand as a testament to faith, courage and perseverance."

For more information about the memorial visit www.PASAGMC.org.

OBITUARY

Prof. Richard Frye, Armenian Studies Pioneer, Dies

FRYE, from page 1

NAASR's Board Chairman Raffi P. Yeghiayan said, "Professor Frye was a force majeure in promoting Armenian Studies and urging the Armenian community to establish it in academia by endowing a chair at a world-recognized institution of higher learning. The Armenian community owes a large debt of gratitude for his vision and continuing support for the establishment of Armenian Studies as a recognized discipline nationwide."

NAASR's Director of Academic Affairs Marc A. Mamigonian added, "Richard Frye provided the necessary impetus to the group who became NAASR's founders to take action. It is no exaggeration to say that there is not a more important figure in the creation of the field of Armenian Studies in the US than Richard Frye, and he remained a passionate and eloquent advocate of the importance and the inherent value of Armenian Studies for the rest of his life, and continued his close ties with NAASR, serving as a key advisor until his death. We are all in his debt. He was a giant in every sense, and we will miss him as a person and as a repository of knowledge and wisdom."

In April 1954, future NAASR Founding Chairman Manoog S. Young, then a graduate student, invited Frye to address the Armenian Students' Association in Boston. Frye's talk was titled "The Study of Armenian History, Language, and Culture – Its Need and Importance," and in it he famously declared: "The Armenians have a long and rich heritage that is deserving of world recognition...yet this is unknown to most of the world...Armenian needs to be an established and respected discipline in the universities and should receive the same status and recognition as Arabic and Persian ...Armenia and the Armenians are a part of world history, not separate from it, and Armenian literature, history and culture is worthy of study."

He remained a passionate and eloquent advocate of the importance and the inherent value of Armenian Studies for the rest of his life, and

continued his close ties with NAASR, serving as a key advisor until his death.

Since the age of 12, Frye had pursued his fascination with subjects related to the world area he called "Greater Iran:" Persianate and Iranian languages. Ever since seeing a book in his hometown Danville, Ill. store about Tamerlane, he collected objects and books from the region ranging from Turkey to western China. A prolific traveler, he resided for long periods abroad, knew ancient languages, spoke contemporary languages of Turks, Iranians, Afghans, Tajiks, Uzbeks as well as Russian, German, French. He learned his parents' tongue, Swedish, later in life since they as immigrants during the early part of the 20th century, followed the pattern of discouraging native language usage in American-born generations.

Frye's last book, *Greater Iran: A 20th Century Odyssey*, a memoir documenting his long academic career to 2005, maps the course of modern Middle Eastern studies' evolution at US campuses, his initiatives to create endowed university chairs at Columbia, Harvard and through NAASR, at many other universities. His graduate students range from academics such as Richard Bulliet at Columbia University, Jamsheed Choksey at Indiana University, and others in the foreign service or federal administration.

Graduating secondary school at 14, college at 19, and starting his graduate work at Harvard in the pre-WWI period, he joined the war effort, spent two years in Kabul, then Istanbul, with the Office of Strategic Services (precursor to the CIA), then returned to Harvard to complete his PhD in 1949. By 1957, he was established in the position he held until his retirement in 1990. Since then he published two books to add to 13 earlier titles, one of which, served as the basis of Michael Crichton's *Eaters of the Dead* (film "The Thirteenth Warrior"). Nearly all his books have appeared in other language translations and many have gained the status of classics in their field, been reprinted many times and continue to be in print. His personal library of some 25,000 items is housed at

Boston University as part of their special collection. His archives are at Harvard and BU.

Of Frye's many media interviews, the most recent came in 2008 on CNN when he voiced his wish for burial in Iran at a time when Iran-US relations were particularly rocky. But his devotion to Iran's rich ancient and medieval culture endured political turmoil and he accepted honors from Reza Shah Pahlavi as well as former President Ahmadinejad. His dedication to

the enduring values of culture and civilization trumped political vicissitudes that have torn the Middle East and particularly the Iranian world.

NAASR will present further tributes and remembrances of Frye in the days ahead.

Frye is survived by three of his four children, Nels Mishael Naby Frye, his son with his second wife, Eden Naby, and Gurprasad Khalsa, and Robert G. Frye from a previous marriage, six grandchildren and one great-grandchild.

The funeral service was on Tuesday, April 1, at Memorial Church at Harvard University. Arrangements were made by the Giragosian Funeral Home in Watertown.

Kevork Panoyan

GLENDALE – Deacon Kevork Panoyan died on March 27. He was 89.

Panoyan was born in Aleppo, Syria, in June 1924. He was three weeks old when his family



Kevork Panoyan

moved to Alexandria, Egypt. He was 10 when he began serving in the Armenian Church. Later, in 1941, he graduated from the Boghossian Armenian National School, and in June of the same year, his family moved to Cairo.

In November 1943, Panoyan began working as an assistant secretary at the Armenian Diocese of Egypt in Cairo. During his 19 years of service there, he occupied various positions, the last being the chancellor of the Armenian Diocese of Egypt. He served as chancellor during the most difficult times of the Nasser Revolution. While working, he took courses in psychology and pedagogy at the American University, the British Institute and the Franco-Egyptian Lycée. Panoyan spoke many languages.

While in Cairo, he married Lucy Kantarjian. They had two sons, Haig in 1951 and Ara in

1958. In 1962, the Panoyan family repatriated to Armenia, first settling in Gumri and later Yerevan in 1973. He lectured at institutions of higher education including the Charentz English School, as well as the Academy of Science. In 1978, Panoyan relocated his family to the Los Angeles area, where he worked for the Department of Social Services.

Panoyan had many works published on pedagogy, the function of the brain and intellectually disabled and left-handed children. Additionally, he had many titles, among them the title of honorary professor. Dn. Kevork received numerous awards and medals, including the St. Nersess Shnorhali Medal and an encyclical (gontak) of the Catholicos of All Armenians.

In addition to his extended service in the Armenian Church covering the span of nine decades, Panoyan enjoyed teaching the complex and beautiful liturgical hymns (sharagans) and rituals of his beloved Armenian Church, and had several books published on these hymns. He knew them all very well and his pupils of deacons and altar servers over three generations were enriched with the enormous amount of knowledge from this true giant in his field. Among his published books were the *Classification of Hymns of the Armenian Church* in 2009 and the *Authors of the Hymns of the Armenian Church* in 2011.

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COMMUNITY NEWS

Age Is no Concern for Sophie Tolajian



Sophie Tolajian, 87, keeps active through various volunteer projects.

By Tom Vartabedian

WATERTOWN – When Sophie Tolajian isn't volunteering at the Armenian Nursing and Rehabilitation Center (ANRC) in Jamaica Plain, she is doing the same at Project SAVE.

You will even catch her doing a myriad of activities at the Armenian Memorial Church and the Armenian Women's Welfare Association (AWAA) to which she is indebted for all the good it does.

All this on top of maintaining an independent lifestyle at home, chauffeuring others around and spending quality time with family and friends.

She is 87 but she considers herself in the prime of life and could not live without all these activities.

"Sophie's a gem," said Ruth Thomasian, executive director of Project SAVE. "We are thrilled that she has included our organization among her volunteer activities. She has a natural sense of organization which remains an essential skill for working in an archives."

Tolajian assists with some of the initial stages of the intake registration process inside the photo collections, numbering and recording these images with pertinent data while making them accessible for public use.

"We can't forget our history and what's happened to our people," Tolajian said. "Pictures are a very important part of our heritage. Being a photo donor myself, it's been a work in

progress for me."

Tolajian came aboard to address a need after helping with the mailings. She decided to take more of a hands-on approach. Little did she realize the unique experience that awaited her.

One day she picked up a photograph of a soldier in World War II whom she recognized. The soldier happened to be Ed Ayzavian, a family friend, who had been stationed in Germany.

"I was affected by that image," she noted. "The picture brought me back to reality and the role our Armenian men and women played in the war. I had lost touch with him until seeing that picture."

At the ANRC, one can see Tolajian keeping the residents entertained and amused.

"When you sit and talk with them, they become happy," she said. "I have friends in there now. At my age, I could be one of them and would want the same companionship."

Tolajian was born and raised in Watertown, lived here all her life, and wouldn't have wanted it any other way. She graduated from Watertown High in 1944, did office work for a while but spent most of her life as a mother and homemaker.

She lost her husband, Aram, after 45 years of marriage. The two traveled throughout the world. Two children and five grandchildren give her all the added comfort and joy she needs.

"I haven't been to Armenia and would love to visit there," she smiles. "You never know."

If she goes to Armenia, who knows, she may find a way to volunteer there too.

The Play's the Thing... Dissent, Denial and Artistic Freedom

PLAY, from page 1

will be overcome by guilt when he witnesses the scene, because he had killed Hamlet's father, and then married his widow. Hamlet explains:

"I have heard

That guilty creatures sitting at a play
Have by the very cunning of the scene
Been so struck to the soul that presently
They have proclaim'd their malefactions..."

And he concludes:

"The play's the thing

Wherein I'll catch the conscience of the King."

Such is the power of theatre. Viewers in the city of Konstanz in Germany had the chance to witness that power on March 21 at the state theatre. The play performed that night was a dramatic rendering of a famous novel about the Armenian Genocide, "The Story of the Last Thought," written by German-Jewish prize-winning author Edgar Hilsenrath. Days before the premiere, members of the local Turkish community had sent emails to the theatre expressing their outrage at the project. Three days before the opening, the Turkish Honorary Consul Serhat Aksen faxed a letter to the theatre protesting the use of the term "Armenian Genocide" in the play to characterize the events of 1915. He argued that the term depicts an "evident criminal act" but that no legal verdict to that effect existed. "In the face of our full respect for art," he wrote, according to press reports in German, "we are of the opinion that theatergoers also have the right to receive correct information, and in this respect to learn that the events of 1915 are a theme for legitimate academic debate."

He went on to demand that his letter be read to the audience or handed out in printed form to them, and also be posted on the website of the theatre.

On the evening of the premiere, a group of about 100 protestors came together to stage a demonstration, waving Turkish flags and raising posters.

What triggered the protest initially and what the demonstrators objected to was the poster that had circulated to advertise the event. It showed the photograph of a corpse on the ground, seen from the shoes and covered with a cloth. Above it was the red Turkish flag, with a quote from Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan superimposed, "No genocide was committed in our history." The consul and citizens of Turkish descent considered this an attack; Armenian actress Bea Ehlers Kerbekian remarked that the poster was in poor taste, and certainly disrespectful towards the victim and his

family.

The theatre's artistic director, Christoph Nix, moved quickly to defuse the situation. He visited the Imam of the Mevlana Mosque in the city, to assure him that no one had intended to offend Muslims or Islam, and said he would pull the poster as well as read the consul's letter prior to the performance. As one commentator noted, in this way he succeeded in driving a wedge between a hardliner faction (which stayed away) and a moderate group (which demonstrated only against the poster). This was important, given a dangerous precedent: in March 2011 a Social Democratic political candidate of Kurdish and Alewife background, had been brutally beaten and the aggressor never identified. She had proposed political initiatives against a well-known Salafist extremist, considered by the German authorities to be a "hate preacher." Nix is also a lawyer who has defended Turkish opposition figures, a professor of law and the author of a book on political trials in Turkey – i.e. not an artist who is unaware of political realities. His action served also to protect his actors and theatre.

As a result, the play did go on, albeit under police protection. Needless to say, the house was packed. Among those attending were local politicians, including the city's mayor, Andreas Osner, responsible for culture and education, and Peter Friedrich, Baden-Württemberg State Minister for the Bundesrat, Europe and International Affairs, both from the Social Democratic Party (SPD). On Facebook, Friedrich praised the performance, extolling the excellence of the "superb acting achievement and the ability to draw a large arc, using very simple means, to span cultural characters, political conflicts and personal destinies." He went on to present his view that "We cannot leave the discussion about the murder, systematic elimination and deportation of hundreds of thousands of Armenians beginning in 1915 to historians alone or to a disposition of punishment according to international law. What is required is society's active examination of history. This is the only way to develop a good and open democratic culture." Another State official, Jürgen Walter, lamented the fact that it has become increasingly difficult in Germany to openly discuss such issues, and raised the question, "Who should lead these debates for society then, if even art and culture are no longer allowed to do so?"

The response from the Armenian side was harsher. Father Diradur Sardaryan, head of the 5,000-member Baden-Württemberg Armenian Community, who had attended the performance, stated that the "fact of the Ottoman genocide against the Armenians is completely irrefutable

internationally. If Turkey continues to deny this crime to the present day, that is a sign of ignorance; if it now, however, demands that history should be falsified also in Germany, then that is simple madness. What we are experiencing here in Konstanz is an absurd battle against history and against artistic freedom." He thanked Nix for his courage, and said the play was a "sign of hope." In a statement issued as part of a joint declaration with the community, Dr. Tessa Hofmann, genocide researcher and chairwoman of the Working Group for Recognition, noted that "for forty years" she has witnessed "how Turkish diplomacy in Germany and other states has made massive interventions into artistic, scientific and press freedom." This occurs, she wrote, by mobilizing "popular rage" in an attempt to intimidate organizers, sabotage events or use them for denialist propaganda. She regretted the fact that often organizers compromise with such pressure.

Both Christoph Nix and Thomas Spiekermann, the dramaturg of the theatre, reasserted their commitment to defend artistic freedom against such intrusions. Accordingly, performances of the play will continue in the next weeks as scheduled. At the same time, they have insisted on maintaining their theatre's tradition of openness to dialogue. On April 13, they will host a round table discussion with leading German, Turkish and Armenian intellectuals, including Dr. Raffi Kantian of the German-Armenian Society, and Patrak Estukyan from Agos.

And, one might ask, what about the author? What does Hilsenrath, whose novel provided the inspiration for the play, think about all this? Referring to the honorary consul's attempt to relativize the genocide, he was quoted as saying bluntly, "There is no discussion. It was a genocide."

Hilsenrath knows whereof he speaks. Born in 1926 in Leipzig, the son of a German-Jewish merchant, he was forced to flee with his mother and brothers in 1938 and seek safety with grandparents in Rumania. In 1941 he was deported to a ghetto in Ukraine, but survived. In 1945 Hilsenrath migrated to Palestine where he stayed until 1947, when he moved to Lyon. In the 1950s he was in New York and in 1975 returned to Germany, where he now resides in Berlin.

His novel, which has been translated into many languages, including Armenian, Russian, French, Italian, English and Turkish, tells the story of the suffering of the Armenians in the form of an oriental fairy tale. It comes as the last thought of Thovma, the dying son of Wartan Khatisian, an Armenian from an Anatolian village destroyed by Turks, who knows nothing of his family history. Then, in accordance with the oriental tradition of storytelling, a Meddah

appears to relate his past. He reveals in his tale how Thovma was born the son of an Armenian woman during the deportations. She left him behind in hopes he would survive. The work has won numerous awards, including the Prize from the President of the Republic of Armenia and an honorary doctorate from the State University of Yerevan, which Hilsenrath received in 2006.

The performance in Konstanz, though dubbed a premiere, was actually not the first adaptation of the work for the stage. It was performed in Yerevan in September 2006 and then went on a very successful tour throughout the country. This was a bilingual production, German and Armenian. In November 2006, this version by Andreas Jungwirth held its German premiere in Berlin. A co-production of Bea Ehlers Kerbekian and Gayane Apinyan, directed by Rolf Krieg and ensemble, and with a set designed by artist Archi Galentz, the play was presented at the Theater unterm Dach (Loft Theatre) under police protection. The Armenian archbishop travelled from Cologne for the opening night. When the play was to be revived in March 2007, visa problems prevented the actors from Armenia from coming. Turkish actors were difficult to recruit given the tense atmosphere. One Turkish actor dropped out and Recai Hallaç, who also worked as a translator for the German Foreign Ministry, risked his job to play. He was a personal friend of Hrant Dink, assassinated in January 2007, and he therefore agreed to take the role. He in fact filled the two parts himself. Author Hilsenrath attended almost all the performances. In 2009, the play again went on in Berlin, at the Balhaus Naunynstrasse theatre, this time directed by film maker Miraz Bezar a Kurd. Bea Ehlers Kerbekian again played the role of the Meddah storyteller and two Turkish actors participated. This time, there was no need for police protection; by then, Turkish intellectuals and artists had decided to refuse the denialist policy and to speak out about the genocide. In short, to put on this play has required courage and dedication. In every case, it has had major impact.

In Shakespeare's drama, Hamlet has his troupe of actors put on his play, which he entitled, "The Mousetrap." The character Lucianus pours poison into the ear of the sleeping Gonzago, and Hamlet tells the audience that they will soon see how the murderer will get his victim's wife. "The King rises," Ophelia says in astonishment, and Claudius, the King, leaves the company in haste, exclaiming, "Give me some light. Away!" In fact: the play's the thing.

(Muriel Mirak-Weissbach can be reached at mirak.weissbach@googlemail.com)



COMMUNITY NEWS

Church in Ashnak, Armenia Renovated in Memory of Armenian Martyrs of Amasia

BOSTON AND ASHNAK, Armenia – On August 22, 2013 the consecration service of the Sourp Asdvadzadzin Church of Ashnak Village (Talin Region, Armenia) took place. The service was presided over by the Primate of the Diocese of Aragatsotn, Bishop Mkrtych Proshyan who was assisted by Rev. Hayk Sahakyan, Deacon Arman Aharonyan and Deacon Varoujan Hachikian of Grater Boston.

At the conclusion of the consecration service, the clergy, members of the choir and the congregation gathered in the courtyard of the church where the blessing of the newly-built khachkar took place. During the requiem service, prayers were offered for the souls of the Armenian martyrs of Pontic Amasia and Sasoun, the late Archbishop Mesrob Ashjian and departed members of the Hachikian family of Amasia.

Hundreds of villagers along with local government officials attended the church services as well as the banquet that followed. On this joyous occasion, a traditional blessing of madagh service also took place. Festivities of the day ended with a cultural program during which the villagers presented samples of traditional dances from the Sasoun region of Western Armenia. Both Proshyan and Hachikian addressed the villagers and thanked all who played a vital role in the realization of this church renovation project.

The village of Ashnak, which is located seven miles south of the regional capital Talin, was established on a hilltop in the fifth century. The current population of the village is approximately 600 people. Most of the villagers are the descendants of those Genocide survivors who came from Sassoon, Khnous and other parts of Daron.

It was Ashjian who envisioned the restoration of the 1,500-year-



Sourp Asdvadzadzin Church of Ashnak



Archbishop Mesrob Ashjian and some villagers in front of the ruins of the Ashnak church.(2002)

ry of all those Armenians who were martyred by Turkey in the province of Amasia between 1894 and 1923. Per the directive of His Holiness Karekin II, the Catholicos and Supreme Patriarch of All Armenians, this khachkar was built as a replica of one of the thousands of khachkars that were destroyed by Azerbaijan in the old Armenian cemetery of Joulfa (Nakhichevan) about a decade ago.

Besides its rich history, due to the uniqueness of its architectural style, the Sourp Asdvadzadzin church is considered as one of the jewels of the early Armenian church architecture. Centuries ago, a small fortress was built all around the church for the purpose of protecting it against invaders. During the construction work, both inside of the sanctuary and in the courtyard some ancient khachkars were discovered. In addition, under the roof, a secret storage area was discovered by the construction crew. This storage area was utilized to hide valuable liturgical items.



From left, Der Yeprem, Deacon Varoujan Hachikian, Bishop Mkrtych Proshyan and Deacon Arman Hachikian in front of the khachkar



Khachkar dedicated to the memory of martyrs of Amasia

old Sourp Asdvadzadzin Church, which was in ruins at the time. The late archbishop had asked Deacons Zakar and Varoujan Hachikian of Greater Boston to finance the project. Accordingly, led by architect Hrachia Gasparyan, the construction project officially started in 2002. By December 2003, the construction work was nearing completion. Unfortunately, with the untimely passing of the archbishop, all construction activity came to a halt.

Several months ago, under the guidance of Proshyan, the Hachikian brothers were able to conclude this renovation project just in time for the 10th anniversary of Ashjian's passing. In this process, a new ornamental cross was placed on the roof of the church while a new door made up of carved wood was installed at the entrance. Meanwhile, a new khachkar was built in the courtyard. This monument was dedicated to the memo-

The fortress of the Ashnak church also had an observation post. Similarly, Sourp Krisdapor Church in one of the neighboring villages had an observation post as well. The soldiers in both posts were in constant communication in order to alert each other in times of foreign invasion.

In the absence of a functioning church building, the villagers of Ashnak had to travel to Talin in order to attend church services and receive sacraments. The extremely difficult socioeconomic conditions of the entire region were making it harder for the general population to make such trips. Fortunately, Rev. Hayk Sahakyan has been appointed by Proshyan as the new pastor of Ashnak, and since the official opening ceremony, sacraments and the Divine Liturgy have been performed at Sourp Asdvadzadzin on a regular basis.

New York METRO

St. Leon Church to Host Lecture on Seizure of Armenian Assets in Aintab

FAIR LAWN, N.J. – Ümit Kurt, PhD candidate in the Department of History at Clark University in Worcester, Mass., will present a lecture titled "The Emergence of the New Wealthy Class, 1915-1922: The Seizure of Armenian Property by Local Elites in Aintab," on Thursday, April 10, at 7:45 p.m. at St. Leon Armenian Church, Abajian Hall, 12-61 Saddle River Road.

The lecture is jointly sponsored by AGBU Ararat, Armenian Network of America- Greater NY, Hye Doon: Armenian-American Support & Education Center, Knights of Vartan Bakradouny Lodge of New Jersey, the National Association for Armenian Studies and Research (NAASR), NY Armenian Students Association, St. Leon Armenian Church, Tekeyan Cultural Association- Greater NY Chapter, and Tibrevank Alumni. A reception will follow the lecture.

The genocide and deportation of Aintab's Armenians were carried out by local notables and provincial elites. These local actors prospered and became a new wealthy social class through the appropriation of Armenian property and wealth. By examining the carefully planned confiscation of Armenian property as an integral part of the genocide, Kurt sheds light on how the property of massacred and deported Armenians changed hands.

Kurt will also discuss the Abandoned Properties Laws that dealt with the administra-



Ümit Kurt

tion of property "left behind" by Armenians. He argues that these laws are not only a structural element of the genocide in 1915 but today's legal system in Turkey. As such, they could continue, to this very day, to preserve the rights of Armenians to their properties.

Kurt, a native of Aintab, holds a bachelor's degree in political science and public administration from Middle East Technical University and a master's in European studies from Sabanci University. He is currently an instructor at Sabanci University. He is the author of numerous articles and several books, including most recently *Kanunların Ruhü: Emval-i Metruke Kanunlarında Soykırımın İzlerini Aramak* (The Spirit of Laws: Seeking for the Traces of Armenian Genocide in the Laws of Abandoned Property, 2012), with Taner Akçam, an English-language translation of which is forthcoming. His main area of interest is confiscation of the Armenian properties and the role of local elites/notables in Aintab during the Armenian Genocide.

Lecture Discusses How Armenians Pray

NEW YORK – What are the spirit, ethos and peculiarities of Armenian prayer? What do these qualities tell us about the distinctive Christian witness of this ancient church? What insights might Armenian Christianity offer to others who seek meaningful faith today?

The public is invited to learn more about ancient Christian spirituality from Very Rev. Daniel Findikyan, who will present this topic on April 23 at the General Theological Seminary, located at 440 W. 21st Street (9th & 10th Ave) in New York. This St. Nersess sponsored lecture begins at 7 p.m. and is followed by a wine and cheese reception.

For more info, go to www.stnersess.edu.



**New York
METRO**

HMADS Gala Dinner Dance: A Platinum Anniversary

By Jennifer Chelebi

OAKLAND GARDENS, N.Y. — Strong, resilient and precious are a few of the words people use to describe platinum metal, and they happen to also befit Holy Martyrs Armenian Day School (HMADS).

On the occasion of its 20th year of service, the Friends of HMADS committee invites the members of the community to join them for their Annual Gala Dinner Dance, on Saturday, May 3 at Woodbury Country Club in Woodbury, Long Island.

Founded in 1994, the all-volunteer Friends group has been working to raise funds to support HMADS in its goal of providing a quality education with an emphasis on preserving Armenian language, history and culture. Perhaps more importantly, the school strives to give students a foundation built on the power of giving back, while instilling in its community a true sense of family.

And it is in fact the love of family that has brought us this year's honorary booklet chairperson, the late Harold Edward Hekimian, a man who lived by the motto, "It's better to give than to receive." Virginia Hekimian — herself a devoted high school educator — sponsored this year's gala dinner dance on her brother's behalf, describing him as a kind-hearted and modest individual.

The more one learns about Harold Hekimian, the clearer it becomes that his ties to Holy Martyrs Church and HMADS were born out of a longing for a deeper connection to his Armenian heritage. He took Armenian language lessons from the school's principal,

Zarminé Boghosian, and greatly enjoyed spending time with HMADS students and attending their school productions. On Tuesdays, he could be found joining the other church seniors for games and conversation.

Born on May 24, 1935 in the Bronx, to parents Puzant Roupén Hekimian and Armenouhie Jamakordzian, Harold traveled the world serving his country as part of US Navy Search and Rescue. Even from a young age, his



The late Harold Edward Hekimian

generosity and humility were evident. After returning from overseas and attending college, he worked for the New York Telephone Company, as an installer and draftsman. His sister affectionately remembers how his service was commemorated by a plaque dedicat-

ed in his name, a fact he humbly kept secret...even from his family.

In June 2011, Hekimian passed away after a long battle with lung cancer.

This year's festivities will commence at 7:30 p.m. Musical entertainment will be provided by international singer Elie Berberian and his band.

For further information about this event, or to find out how to become a part of the Friends of HMADS, contact the school office.



High School Summer Conference B, 2013

St. Nersess Summer Conferences

NEW ROCHELLE, N.Y. — St. Nersess Armenian Seminary is continuing its long history of hosting summer conferences for high school and post-high school students. This year, an extra day has been added to each conference. Applications are now being accepted for all four sessions. The Deacons' Training Program will be held in Jerusalem this summer, at the invitation of Archbishop Nourhan Manougian, Armenian Patriarch of Jerusalem, and with the blessing of Archbishop Khajag Barsamian.

— Deacons' Training Program in Jerusalem: June 25–July 7, directed by V. Rev. Fr. Daniel Findikyan

— High School Summer Conference A: July 14 – 23, directed by Rev. Fr. Tavit Boyajian

— High School Summer Conference B: July 26 - August 4, directed by Rev. Ghevond Ajamian

— Post High-School Summer Conference: August 6 – 12, directed by Rev. Mardiros Chevian

Space is filling fast, as each session is limited to 25 participants. For more information and to download an application and brochure, visit www.stnersess.edu or email info@stnersess.edu.

Commemoration of the Armenian Genocide Massachusetts State House

APRIL 11

Beginning at 10:30 a.m



A joint House and Senate resolution will be presented to architect Donald Tellalian, who designed the Armenian Heritage Park in Boston.



Keynote Speaker
Attorney
Mark Geragos



Catered reception in the Great Hall

Complimentary bus service, provided by the Knights of Vartan, will be available from the St. Stephens and the St. James Churches for the round trip transportation. This is a free event. For more information, contact Lalg Musserian at 617-319-2651 or lalig@musserian.com

**99th ANNIVERSARY
COMMEMORATION
ARMENIAN GENOCIDE**
ՀԱՅԿԱԿԱՆ ՑԵՂԱՄՊԱՆՈՒԹԻՒՆ
TURKEY IS GUILTY OF GENOCIDE • DENYING THE UNDENIABLE IS A CRIME

TIMES SQUARE
43rd Street & Broadway
New York City
Sunday, April 27, 2014
2:00-4:00 PM

Sponsored by the Knights & Daughters of Vartan
Co-sponsored by AGBU, Armenian Assembly of America, Armenian National Committee of America, ADL-Ramgavars, and Armenian Council of America
With the participation of the Diocese of the Armenian Church of America, Prelacy of the Armenian Church of America, Armenian Missionary Association of America, Armenian Catholic Eparchy for US and Canada, Mid-Atlantic ACYOA, AYF-YOARF, Armenian Youth Organizations, and University Armenian Clubs

FREE BUS TRANSPORTATION TO & FROM TIMES SQUARE

New Jersey Churches

- Sts. Vartanantz Armenian Apostolic Church
461 Bergen Blvd., Ridgeland, NJ
Church Office (201) 943-2950
Kostan Charkhutian (201) 741-9789
- St. Thomas Armenian Church
Highway 9 & E. Clinton Ave., Tenafly, NJ
and
St. Leon Armenian Church
12-61 Saddle River Rd., Fair Lawn, NJ
Sona Manuelian (551) 427-8763
- Armenian Presbyterian Church
140 Forest Ave., Paramus, NJ
Andrew Torigian (201) 368-2791

New York Churches

- St. Sarkis Armenian Apostolic Church
38 65 234th St., Douglaston, NY
Edward Barsamian (917) 885-9729
- Armenian Church of the Holy Martyrs
209 15 Horace Harding Expwy., Oakland Gardens, NY
John Kasarjian (718) 631-2247
- St. Vartan Cathedral
630 2nd Ave., New York, NY
Church Office (212) 686-0710
- Brooklyn**
Chase Bank (@ Coney Island Ave.)
1002 Brighton Beach Ave., Brooklyn, NY
Tigran (718) 891-8486 (347) 291-7765

For more information about the commemoration, please visit <http://kofv.org> and click April 24 or <http://www.facebook.com/events/TBD-in-2014>
To learn more about the Armenian Genocide, please visit www.theforgotten.org, www.armenian-genocide.org, www.twentyvoices.com

Arts & Living

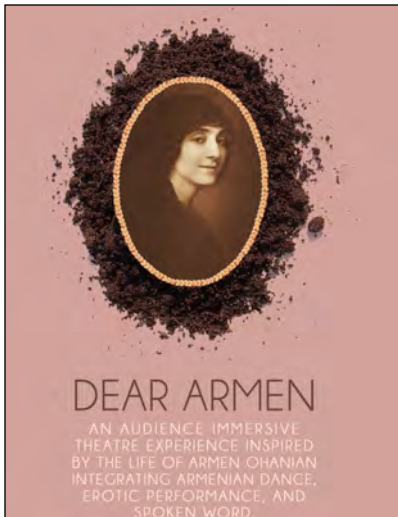
'Dear Armen' Interactive Play Comes to New York City

NEW YORK – "Dear Armen," the international immersive theater hit, is going to be performed May 7, 8, 10, 13, 15 and 16 at Alwan for the Arts, 16 Beaver St.

There will be a reception at 7:30 p.m., with the show starting at 8 p.m.

This audience-immersive theater experience starring Kamee Abrahamian and D. Lee Williams Boudakian was inspired by Armen Ohanian, an enigmatic performer and poet who survived early 20th century anti-Armenian pogroms in Baku. Integrating traditional Armenian dance, erotic performance and spoken word, "Dear Armen" follows young Garineh, who has been delving into the life and art of Ohanian in search of a role model and mentor. Garineh begins unraveling questions about her own gender, sexuality, ethnicity, family and the role of the artist in modern life.

Ohanian's story serves as a means to uncover and explore the powerful and



Poster for "Dear Armen"

complex "femininity" of modern Armenian women. Ohanian was not only a performer, but also a producer, choreographer and director – thus claiming roles that have been traditionally assigned to men. Through experimental, interdisciplinary performance, Saboteur Productions reincarnates Ohanian's life and spirit – demonstrating her ability to transform herself and the audience's perception of theatre and the erotic. The play's narrative bridges a century of women and artists determined to live life on their own terms. The play was written by D. Lee Williams Boudakian and is directed by Abrahamian and Boudakian.

Saboteur Productions was founded in 2013 by long-time collaborators Abrahamian and Tiffany Golarz. This audience-interactive, site-specific theater company blends dance, circus, physical theater and spoken word. Beginning with "The Blood Ballet" in 2010, the two producers spearheaded the growth of Montreal's cabaret scene and has toured around the globe, including Tokyo, Berlin and Tel Aviv and also mounted the production of Panama City's inaugural burlesque show.

Independent producers Christopher Atamian and Kathleen Minogue Keagy are co-producing this New York premiere.

For more information visit www.deararmen.com, see a trailer at <https://vimeo.com/75593828>.



Nora Armani with Ambassador Simona Miculescu at the festival

Socially Relevant Film Festival Features Armenian Themes

NEW YORK – The first-ever Rated SR Socially Relevant Film Festival debuted at the Quad Cinema March 14 to 20, featuring more than 55 films from 18 countries, including six Armenian-themed works. "This festival is an alternative to the violence-

By Florence Avakian
Special to the Mirror-Spectator

fueled films which glamorize crime that are flooding the popular market," said actress and filmmaker Nora Armani who founded this unique festival. She added that it was also in memory of her cousin and uncle who 10 years ago were victims of hate crimes. "Our goal is to provide a platform, and raise awareness about important social issues, which will hopefully make a change."

Three of the Armenian-themed documentaries and features were shown on Sunday, March 16 for maximum Armenian attendance. For this writer, the most powerful of the Armenian films was "Orphans of the Genocide," a searing one and a half hour expose of secret documents and archival material on the fate of the Armenian orphans after the Genocide. The material was meticulously researched for three and a half years by Florida four-time Emmy Award winning filmmaker Bared Maronian, and his Armenoid Productions in Coconut Creek, Fla.

It relates the tragic experiences of a sizeable number of the more than 150,000 surviving Armenian orphans who were subjected to kidnappings, rape, torture, and were forced to become laborers and concubines at the hands of their Ottoman and Kurdish abductors. It also relates the herculean efforts of many non-Armenian missionaries and relief workers who risked their lives to rescue and help these innocent victims in orphanages in the Middle East and Greece.

In one unforgettable scene, it shows a young Armenian woman who had been tattooed on her head, chin and mouth by her captors, and she, later in life with great pains has these marks of her slavery removed. In another scene, the unveiling of commemoration stones are finally placed at the Antoura cemetery near Beirut, Lebanon where 300 young orphans were killed and are buried. The Antoura orphanage was operated by Ahmad Jemal Pasha, and was a Turkification center where 1,000 young orphan boys were systematically deprived of their Armenian identity, given new Turkish names, forced to become Muslims, and severely beaten if they spoke Armenian.

Among the notable people featured in the film are Turkish historian and sociologist Taner Akçam, and pathologist Dr. Jack Kevorkian whose parents' tragic experiences are brought to life in grotesque paintings. Following the screening, Bared Maronian mentioned that the film had been inspired by an article, titled "Living Proof of the Armenian Genocide" by The Independent's celebrated columnist Robert Fisk. He noted it has been distributed by PBS-TV in Fresno, Troy, Miami and Toronto, with plans for further venues.

"Hamshen Community at the Crossroads of Past and Present," a one-hour documentary by Lucine Sahakyan who went to Turkey and filmed the descendants of Hamshen Armenians from 2010 to 2012. The film received the Armin T. Wegner Humanitarian Award. These Hamshens, today numbering more than 100,000, were forced to convert to Islam in the 18th century by the Ottoman authorities, and today live mostly in the provinces of Rizeh, Artvin, Erzerum as well as Istanbul.

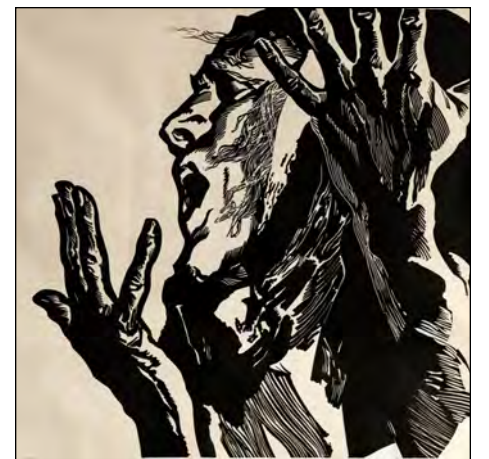
A valuable insight into the Hamshens' way of life, these unaffected people are seen singing, dancing, eating their traditional foods and speaking in their unique dialect. They say that they consider themselves neither Turkish nor Armenian. They are integrated in the Turkish world, and many of the younger Hamshens are gravitating to the urban areas of Turkey.

see FILM, page 11

Armenian Museum To Hold Joint Genocide Commemoration

WATERTOWN – On Sunday, April 27 at 2 p.m., the Armenian Museum of America will present a joint commemoration of the Armenian Genocide, the Tibetan Genocide and the genocide in the Democratic Republic of Congo.

As has been the museum's custom in recent years, each April a commemoration is held with other victim groups. Armenian-Americans understandably focus each April on commemorating the Armenian Genocide, which provided a blueprint for the other genocides in the 20th century. Sadly, genocides continue; only the victims change.



"Anguish" by Krikor Khandjian (1926-2000)

This year's joint commemoration will feature talks by Tenzin Dorjee, former executive director of Students for a Free Tibet; Anthony Kasongo, executive Director of Congolese Genocide Awareness, Inc. and Khatchig Mouradian, editor of the Armenian Weekly newspaper. Photographic exhibitions on Tibet and Congo, and the museum's traveling Armenian Genocide Exhibit will be on display in the third floor galleries. The museum's permanent Armenian Genocide exhibition is on display on the 2nd floor.

The program is free and open to the public. A reception will follow the program.

Armenian Museum Hosts Talk on Rug Expert Arthur Gregorian

WATERTOWN – On Sunday, April 6, from 2 to 4 p.m., the Armenian Museum of America will host a talk titled "Arthur T. Gregorian: A Yankee from the Middle East." The exhibition and gallery talk will celebrate the life and works of Gregorian, a prominent businessman and author.

Born Armenag, in rural Iran, his family fled the Armenian Genocide and immigrated to America. An astute businessman, generous philanthropist, champion of education, prolific author, world traveler, skilled storyteller and public speaker, and family man, he personified the multifaceted interests and leadership found in the best old Yankee families of New England. His family business, Arthur T. Gregorian Oriental Rugs, is still active today. He was the founding chairman of the Armenian Library and Museum of America, known today as the Armenian Museum of America. He donated Armenian rugs to the museum, some of which are on display.

His son, John, and grandson, Scott, will discuss the Gregorian family business and the changing role of oriental rugs in today's world.



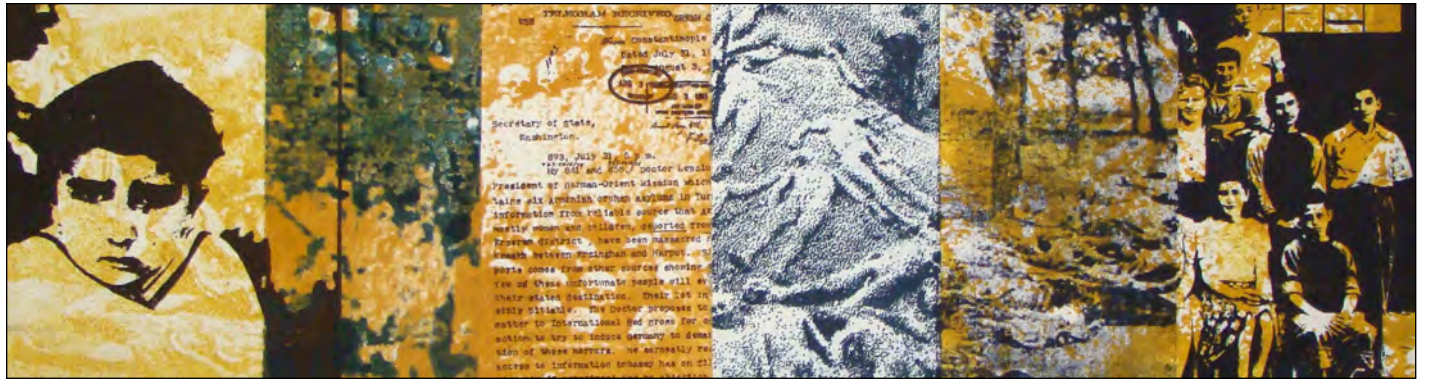
ARTS & LIVING

Artist John Avakian's 'Personal Legacy' Series at Attleboro Arts Museum

ATTLEBORO, Mass. – A selection of John Avakian's Personal Legacy series of Monoprints will be shown at the Attleboro Arts Museum Community Gallery, April 2-29. A reception will be held on Wednesday, April 9, 7-9 p.m. The reception is open to the public.

Avakian is the child of Armenian Genocide survivors. His childhood and his adult life have been and continue to be impacted by the painful legacy of his parents. He has dedicated a major part of his artistic journey to elevate the Genocide to the consciousness of a society that for political reasons chooses to deny its existence.

His passion for the visual arts began at a very young age. As an only child at the age of 5, Avakian asked his mother to ask his often-distant father, to make a drawing for him. His interest in art – drawing, coloring – never ceased from that time on. While in high school, he received Gold Keys Awards for excellence in the media of photography and drawing.



"Family Bio 37"

In the "Personal Legacy" series, these dark richly beautiful prints, and unbelievable historical photographs taken during the 1915 Armenian Genocide are combined with his personal photos and drawings, to form a collective voice for his parents and for the decency and

spirit all humanity.

Avakian's artistic career spans many decades. He received a BFA and an MFA in painting from Yale University. For more than 20 years his medium of choice has been monotypes and monoprints. He is the recipient of many awards

for his monoprints, and his work is in many private and public collections, including the Boston Public Library, the Fogg Museum, the New York Public Library, and most recently, the New Haven Paint and Clay Club, in New Haven, Conn.

Socially Relevant Film Festival Features Armenian Themes

FILM, from page 10

As the viewer was reading the English captions, the emotional impact of the film was diluted by the filmmaker's very loud narration in Armenian. And there were definite mixed feelings as one saw these Armenians ostracized from their ethnic roots and history. However, the openness and honesty of the people, their own local identity, and yes, their joyous way of life in the mountains, pastures and the natural world were inescapable.

The film "If Only Everyone..." by Natalia Belyauskene, and produced by Michael Pogolian, received its New York premiere at this festival. It is a poignant story of a young woman who travels to Armenia to find the grave of her father who was killed in the Nagorno-Karabagh war, and plant a shrub at his gravesite. She befriends an older Armenian veteran of this devastating conflict and together,

with many humorous adventures, they travel together. At the end of the trip they encounter an Azeri father who has also lost his son in the war, and their meeting results in powerful feelings of emotion and understanding between people who have experienced the tragedy of war.

Also included in the festival was the short film, "Bavakan" by Adrineh Gregorian, which tells the heartbreaking story of aborting female fetuses in Armenia, a harrowing fact which former President Jimmy Carter has included in his most recent book, *A Call to Action: Women, Religion, Violence and Power*. Also screened were two other Armenian-themed films – "Armenian Activists Now" by Robert Davidian and "Later Than Usual" by David Hovan. Both shorts brought to light controversial events that Armenia is facing currently.

Several prizes were awarded at the conclu-



The audience at the first showing

sion of the festival. The Grand Prize, the highest honor, was given to the award-winning documentary "Small Small Thing" by Jessica Vale, which focused on the harrowing case of a 7-year-old Liberian child, Olivia Zinnah, who was raped and died of her injuries despite heroic attempts by the Liberian government and the medical establishment to save her.

Included among the 25 partners and sponsors of the Rated SR Socially Relevant Film Festival were Cinema Libre Studio, the Village Voice, indieflix, the French Embassy in the US, french institute:alliance francaise, Michael Aram, uniFrancefilms, cineuropa, Center for Remembering & Sharing, and the School of Visual Arts.

Author Vahan Zanoian to Speak at Holy Trinity, Cambridge, on April 10

CAMBRIDGE, Mass. – In *A Place Far Away*, author Vahan Zanoian crafts a powerful portrayal of the heartbreaking realities of human trafficking in Armenia, and on Thursday, April 10, he will speak on this issue at the Holy Trinity Armenian Church, 145 Brattle St. The event will be held in the Charles and Nevart Talanian Cultural Hall, at 7:30 p.m.



Vahan Zanoian

In a review of the novel, *Kirkus Reviews* writes: "The rarely-discussed subject of human trafficking from Armenia to Dubai makes for a compelling storyline, and the strong-willed, seemingly forgotten people help set it apart . . . With his deft handling of personalities and the atmosphere of village life, Zanoian gives depth to the narrative . . ."

In addition to authoring his first novel, Zanoian is also a poet, having published two volumes of poetry in Armenian and he is a

global energy expert. He has served as a consultant to numerous international and national oil companies, banks, government agencies and other public and private organizations. He has graduate degrees in economics and political science from the American University of Beirut and University of Pennsylvania. Traveling extensively throughout the world in both his professional and personal life, he stumbled upon the horrific world of human trafficking which ultimately transformed him into an anti-trafficking advocate. All proceeds from the sale of his book are donated to organizations devoted to protecting children and fighting human trafficking.

Fr. Vasken A. Kouzouian, pastor of Holy Trinity Armenian Church, said, "This is indeed a difficult topic, but we must all be made aware of the heartbreaking realities of human trafficking not only in Armenia, but worldwide." He is also encouraging everyone to read the book prior to April 10. Copies are available for purchase from the Holy Trinity Church office. Signed books will also be available for purchase that evening. A Reception will follow. This event is free and open to the public.



TEKEYAN CULTURAL ASSOCIATION OF GREATER NY



90 Minute Documentary Presented By
FOUR-TIME REGIONAL EMMY® AWARD WINNER
BARED MARONIAN

Sunday, April 6th, 2014
2:00pm
TCA Center
560 Sylan Avenue
Englewood Cliffs, NJ 07632



\$10 admission fee should be sent to TCA by April 2nd.
Space is limited. No tickets will be sold at the door.
For information, please call Hilda at (201) 405-1702

Tax-Deductible Donations are Strongly Encouraged
All Proceeds Will Be Used for the Promotion of this Project

Search "**Orphans of the Genocide**" on YouTube for trailer



ARTS & LIVING

Arsenal Center Presents the Charles Mosesian Award to Watertown Savings Bank

WATERTOWN – The Arsenal Center for the Arts hosts its annual benefit, “Celebrating the Arts,” an evening of entertainment, with an awards ceremony honoring Watertown Savings Bank with the 2014 Charles Mosesian Award for Support of the Arts. This evening of music, art, dance and theatre will be emceed by WGBH’s Jared Bowen and includes a reception beginning at 6 p.m. on Tuesday, April 8. Proceeds from the evening support the Arsenal Center for the Arts and its programs.

Each year the Arsenal Center hosts a benefit to raise funds for its programs and to honor an individual or organization that represents the late Charles Mosesian’s commitment to his community, to the arts and to the Arsenal Center. This year’s honoree, Watertown Savings Bank, exemplifies the mission of this award in its acknowledgment of the importance of the arts in the lives of Watertown’s citizens. Chairman and CEO Ronald D. Dean will accept the award on the bank’s behalf.

Celebrating the Arts will showcase performances from the very arts organizations that Watertown Savings Bank has impacted with its support: New Repertory Theatre, Watertown Children’s Theatre, The Arsenal Center’s American Songbook: The Jazz View Series, Sayat Nova Dance Company and Solar Winds Trio.

“We are incredibly fortunate to have

Watertown Savings Bank’s support, from their initial contribution to the Capital Campaign, to their ongoing commitment to the Center,” said Executive Director Sharon Glennon. “Their dedication to our community has inspired us beyond measure.”

The late Mosesian’s \$1-million gift played a



pivotal role in launching the Arsenal Center’s building campaign, and his leadership inspired others to lend their support to create what is now a flourishing arts center. The 380-seat theatre, named in his honor, offers nearly 200 performances annually in a variety of genres.

“The Arsenal Center for the Arts was a critical piece of the process of turning this former government site over to the community,” said Dean. “We are proud to be a part of that process and very pleased to see the great numbers

of people taking advantage of this wonderful facility.” A model corporate “citizen,” Watertown Savings Bank is rated “Outstanding” by the federal government for its support of low- and moderate-income members of the community. Over the past 10 years it has contributed almost \$750,000 to arts organiza-

tion. Critic’s Association, the Boston Online Film Critics Association and he serves on the Board of Governors for the Boston/New England Chapter of the National Academy of Television Arts and Sciences among others honors and associations.

The Arsenal Center for the Arts, in only eight years, has become a vital part of the economic and cultural fabric of the community. This past year it provided the venue for more than 100 theater, music and dance performances and visual art exhibitions, and more than 150 classes and workshops. Last July, it merged with the popular Watertown Children’s Theatre – celebrating its 30th anniversary – to better facilitate collaboration. 15 new art and writing classes were added to the curriculum for both adults and children. Other accomplishments include Free Family Fun Saturdays which are regularly drawing 150 people, many new, to the Center each session. With a membership of more than 500, the center welcomes nearly 100,000 visitors/year to its own offerings as well as the productions of local theater, dance and music organizations held in one of the two theaters on the premises. More information may be found below.

Tickets are \$75 and may be purchased at www.arsenalarts.org or by calling the box office.

Aram Goudsouzian Releases New Book on Civil Rights

MEMPHIS, Tenn. – In the new book, *Down to the Crossroads: Civil Rights, Black Power, and the Meredith March Against Fear* (Farrar, Straus and Giroux), released in February, Prof. Aram Goudsouzian explores a decisive moment in the African-American experience.

His latest book, as he explained in his website, aims to provide a concise history of the civil rights movement. It is the story of a key march in the civil rights movement. James Meredith left Memphis, on foot, on June 5, 1966, and headed to Jackson, Miss., to promote black voter registration and put the spotlight on the treatment of African-Americans. The following day, he was shot by a white man, and was subsequently hospitalized. As a result of the shooting, many activists from around the country, including Martin Luther King, descended upon Mississippi for an explosive showdown with the authorities.

Asked how this book came about, Goudsouzian said in a recent interview, “On some level it began when a friend called me from a bookstore, wondering what book he should read about the civil rights movement – a book

that told a good story, was a manageable length, was geared to a general audience, and introduced the major themes and characters of the civil rights movement. I think the book is valuable to scholars of the civil rights movement, but it is geared for the person who wants to learn about the movement and what it meant.

“More specifically, the book has grown out of living and teaching in Memphis. I teach both undergraduate and graduate courses on the civil rights movement, which opened up the idea of telling the story of the Meredith March against Fear, but also incorporating the fresh approaches of recent historians. Plus, the history is right here, outside my front door. The march started right here in downtown Memphis.”

Goudsouzian is the chair of the History Department at the University of Memphis, where he has taught courses on the civil rights movement, the modern United States and the history of American sports, as well as survey courses on African-American history and the United States since 1877. Along with Randy Roberts, he is the editor of the “Sport and

Society” series published by the University of Illinois Press.

Goudsouzian grew up in Winchester, Mass., the son of Dr. Nishan and Mary Goudsouzian, with brothers Steve and Haig. After graduating from Winchester High School, he attended Colby College in Maine. He got his master’s in history from UMass-Amherst in 1997 and then his PhD in history from Purdue University in 2002. After teaching courses at Suffolk University and UMass-Boston, he joined the staff of the University of Memphis in 2004. There he teaches courses on US history and the civil rights movement and American culture.

In addition, from 2011 to 2013, he was the director of the Marcus W. Orr Center for the Humanities.

For Goudsouzian, the history of Armenians and African-Americans are not that far apart.

“There are parallels, even if the historical circumstances are quite different. Both are people who were rendered diasporic due to traumatic upheavals: the African Slave Trade, and the Armenian Genocide,” he said.

Goudsouzian explained that his interest in

African-American history was a direct result of his interest in American popular culture. “I was always interested in how sports, movies, music and other forms of entertainment sent cultural messages that not only reflected how we think about important issues, but also shaped those ideas. This interest led me toward African-American history. Sports, for instance, reveal a great deal about the patterns of the African American experience. More generally, I believe that you cannot understand the central institutions of American life – democratic government, a dynamic capitalist economy, a global cultural influence – without understanding African American culture and history.”

While the civil rights era has resulted in many gains, there are still problems facing the African-American community. “The primary accomplishment of the civil rights movement has been to smash the legal barriers to black citizenship: it ended the practice of legalized segregated spaces and protected the black right to vote. Furthermore, overt racism in public life is now illegitimate, and the civil rights movement has been an inspiration to other movements for social justice, both in the United States and abroad. We can also point to various signs of racial progress since the civil rights era, from the growth of the black middle class to the rise of black elected officials (including our president). Yet these elements of progress should not obscure that a disproportionate number of African Americans live below the poverty line, have less access to good health care and schools, and face institutional barriers in jobs, housing, and education – these problems all have roots in the very recent past.”

Goudsouzian lives in Memphis with his wife, Chrystal, and two young sons, Leo and Oscar. While he said he loves the city and its people, he misses his family and old friends.

Down to the Crossroads has received very good reviews. According to the *Washington Post*, *Down to the Crossroads* is “an estimably well-researched and pitch-perfect work of history . . . Goudsouzian’s well-written book is a model of authoritative and jargon-free scholarship.”

And the *Wall Street Journal* says the book “provides a nuanced and engaging look at what was one of the last major marches of the civil-rights movement.”

Down to the Crossroads is Goudsouzian’s fourth book. His previous works were *King of the Court: Bill Russell and the Basketball Revolution*, *Sidney Poitier* and the Hurricane of 1938.

Down to the Crossroads is available at all major bookstores and online outlets.

For more information on the book, visit the author’s website, www.aramgoudsouzian.com – Alin K. Gregorian

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CALENDAR

CALIFORNIA

MAY 4 – Sunday, Armenia Tree Project 20th Anniversary Celebration at the historic Huntington Library and Botanical Gardens, 1151 Oxford Rd., San Marino. Reception 6 p.m.; Dinner 7 p.m. For information contact: Maral Habeshian, maral@armeniatree.org, 818 913-2563, visit www.ArmeniaTree.org.

MASSACHUSETTS

APRIL 5 – Daughters of Vartan, Santoukht Otyag, Worcester, present "First Ladies of the White House: Ida McKinley to Michelle Obama." Elegant Afternoon Tea and Light refreshments to follow. 2 p.m., First Baptist Church, Gordon Hall 111 Park Ave., Worcester. Tickets \$20. Checks payable to: Daughters of Vartan. Mail checks to: Janet Monroy, 57 Cedar Road, Holden MA 01520 or email janetmon57@hotmail.com. Reservation deadline is March 29.

APRIL 7 – St. James Men's Club, Monday, Speaker Jacqueline Karaaslanian, executive director of Luys Educational Foundation, speaking on "Luys Empowers Transformation in Armenia." Vosbov Kheyima & Imam Bayeldi Dinner. Social Hour (mezza) 6:15 p.m. Dinner 7 p.m. \$14 per person, St. James Armenian Church, Charles Mosesian Cultural & Youth Center - Keljik Hall, 465 Mt. Auburn St., Watertown. Ladies welcome.

APRIL 10 – A Place Far Away – Book Talk with Author Vahan Zanoian, 7:30 p.m., Charles and Nevert Talanian Cultural Hall, Holy Trinity Armenian Church, 145 Brattle Street, Cambridge. The Greater Boston area community is invited to a compelling book talk with Vahan Zanoian on his new novel, *A Place Far Away*, a powerful portrayal of the heart-breaking realities of human trafficking in Armenia. Reception to follow talk. Signed books will be available for purchase that evening. All proceeds from the sale of the book are being donated to organizations devoted to protecting children and fighting human trafficking. For further info, contact the church office, 617.354.0632, or email office@htaac.org.

APRIL 11 – The Armenian community is cordially invited to "A Shabbat of Remembrance and Empowerment: Commemorating the 99th Anniversary of the Armenian Genocide," starting at 5:45 p.m. Speaker: Dr. Dikran Kaligian, Temple Israel, 477 Longwood Ave., Boston. Following the service, there will be an opportunity for discussion over refreshments.

APRIL 11 – Beginning at 10:30 a.m., for the annual commemoration of the Armenian Genocide, which will take place at the Massachusetts State House, at the House Chamber. Keynote speaker will be attorney Mark Geragos. A joint House and Senate resolution will be presented to architect Donald Tellalian, who designed the Armenian Heritage Park in Boston. In addition, Anahis Kechejian will help lead young people remembering their ancestors who are genocide victims, as part of Stand up for Your Survivor. Also, children from St. Stephen's Armenian Elementary School and the Armenian Sisters' Academy will sing America the Beautiful and the Armenian National Anthem. The program will end by noon, followed by a catered reception in the Great Hall. Complimentary bus service, provided by the Knights of Vartan, will be available from the St. Stephen's and the St. James Churches for the round trip transportation. This is a free event and open to everyone. For more information, contact Lalig Musserian at 617-319-2651 or lalig@musserian.com

APRIL 27 – Armenian Genocide Commemorative Committee of Merrimack Valley observance, 3 p.m., North Andover High School, 430 Osgood St., Arev Armenian Folk Ensemble performing; joint requiem service by MV Armenian churches; reception to follow; complimentary admission.

APRIL 27 – The Armenian Museum of America, Inc., will present "Genocide: A Joint Commemoration," on the Armenian Genocide, the Tibetan Genocide and the Genocide in the Democratic Republic of Congo. Sunday, 2 p.m., Armenian Museum of America, 65 Main St., Watertown, 3rd Floor Gallery. Admission: Free and open to the public. Reception following program.

APRIL 27 – "Make it Count" Luncheon, book talk and signing with Celtics' great JoJo White, Holy Trinity Armenian Church of Greater Boston, noon, Charles and Nevert Talanian



Vahan Zanoian, author of *A Place Far Away*, will be speaking at Holy Trinity Armenian Church's Charles and Nevert Talanian Cultural Hall, on Thursday, April 10 at 7:30 p.m. The book draws a powerful portrait of the realities of human trafficking in Armenia. A reception will follow the talk. All proceeds from the sale of the book are being donated to organization devoted to protecting children and fighting trafficking. For further information, call the church office.

Cultural Hall, 145 Brattle St., Cambridge. Luncheon donation: \$12 for adults and \$8 for children under 12. RSVP required by April 23 to Church office, 617-354-0632 or email office@htaac.org

MAY 1 – Avak luncheon, noon, St. Gregory Armenian Apostolic Church, 158 Main St., North Andover, MA. Speaker, Tom Vartabedian, A 50-year Retrospect into Armenian-American Journalism, with stories and photos.

MAY 8 – Cocktails and Conversation, sponsored by Project SAVE Armenian Photograph Archives, 6:30 p.m., Karoun Restaurant, 839 Washington St., Newton, complimentary mezza & cash bar; free and open to the public; prelude to 40th anniversary next year.

MAY 10 – The Armenian Churches of Worcester County (Holy Trinity Armenian Apostolic, Armenian Church of Our Saviour and Soorp Asdvadzadin) present the Third annual benefit dance, 7 p.m. to midnight, Armenian Church of Our Saviour Cultural Center, 34 Boynton St., Worcester. Live music featuring Der Mugrditchian Ensemble with special guest appearance by Miss Massachusetts Outstanding Teen Kristina Ayanian. Music, Mezza, cash bar, raffle. Donation \$30, students \$25. All proceeds to Mrgashen Village School, Akhourian Mother and Child Clinic and Armenians in Syria. For tickets contact Dr. Robert Babigian (508) 842-7231.

MAY 10 – Unveiling of a new genocide memorial by Lowell City Hall, sponsored by the Armenian Genocide Monument Committee of Merrimack Valley; 10 a.m., downtown procession, followed by program at City Hall and reception in St. Ann's Church Hall at noon. Musical interlude by soloist Sevan Dulgarian; Sheriff Peter Koutoujian, MC.

MAY 21 – Chefs Party for Our Park! Benefit for the Armenian Heritage Park's Ongoing Care., Wednesday, 6:30 p.m., Royal Sonesta Hotel Boston, Cambridge. Celebrate with Boston's Top Chefs presenting signature dishes inspired by parents, grandparents or mentors for you to taste while you mix, mingle and enjoy. and mingle. Advanced Reservations required. To receive the invite, email info@ArmenianHeritagePark.org

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COMMENTARY

COMMENTARY

Kessab on the Chessboard of International Politics

By Edmond Y. Azadian

On March 21, the occupation of the Armenian town of Kessab in Syria by Al Nusra terrorists was simply another episode for the world media watchers. But for the 2,000 Armenian residents of the town who were evacuated to Latakia, 50 kilometers south of Kessab, it was a repeat performance of the Armenian Genocide, which had started 99 years ago.

Turkish leaders are frustrated that the first genocide could not fully accomplish its goal, allowing survivors to scatter around the world and tell their stories and thus give a black eye to Turkey, which is striving to prove to the world its democratic and human rights credentials.

One expression of the Turkish frustration is the two-decade-long blockade of Armenia, aiming for the latter's extinction.

To complement its genocidal policy, Turkey has been using the war in neighboring Syria to settle scores with the Armenians, within its broader policy of serving Israel's regional ambitions.

The attack on Kessab is nothing less than genocidal. The mercenaries hired, trained and fed by Turkey are modern-day barbarians whose atrocities equal those perpetrated by the Ottoman Turks and Nazis against Armenians and Jews.

Of all the American media personalities, the most conservative, Glen Beck, was so outraged that he shouted, "We are backing cannibals!"

The Armenian news media provided the detailed coverage of Kessab aggression, but except some sparse information provided by the BBC in London, Liberation in France and Russian TV RT, there was a unanimous blockade of news about Kessab; an organized silence which is tantamount to a blatant collusion with the criminals.

No one needs to be a high government official or a news analyst to figure out that the occupation of Kessab by terrorists was organized by Turkey, despite Turkish Foreign Minister Ahmet Davutoglu's denial that the news was manufactured by "evil-minded" media people.

Consider this: without Turkey's cooperation and direct involvement, a group of mercenaries, perched on American tanks and armed with anti-aircraft rockets could not freely cross the border to invade the town of Kessab while a Turkish air force plane shot down a Syrian Mig-34, which had been trying to block the invasion.

"It looks like Turkey has deliberately brought down that Mig-34," said a NATO source to Al-Monitor. "We doubt that there was any threat to Turkey. It looks like Turkey took down this Syrian jet to help the radical groups."

While Turkish leaders were in blanket denial mode, a leak uncovered the entire plot. On March 27, 2014, Information Clearinghouse reported that access to YouTube had been cut off in Turkey after an explosive leak of audiotapes that appeared to show ministers talking about provoking military intervention in Syria, using the protection of the Tomb of Soleyman Shah, grandfather of the founder of the Ottoman Empire, as a pretext. This is very much in line with the modus operandi of the Turkish state, which created similar incidents in 1955 by dispatching a terrorist to Salonika, Greece, to plant a bomb at Atatürk House, to provoke the September 6 atrocities against Armenians, Greeks and Jews in Istanbul.

Of course, no one can match Turkish cynicism, when the Turkish Foreign Ministry is offering to provide loving care to 2,000 Armenians, whom it had dislodged from their homes dating back 500 years. Indeed, Turkey's Foreign Ministry has released a communiqué which says, in part, "The Turkish Foreign Ministry had notified the relevant UN bodies that 'Syrian Armenians residing in Kessab region could be admitted in Turkey too and protection could be provided to them.' Also, the representatives of the Armenian community were informed of the matter through official channels."

The Kessab attack was a disaster waiting to happen and certain factors coincided and conspired in its making; the corruption-riddled Erdogan's image needed a revamp, especially during the municipal elections in Turkey – to make or break the Islamic

party's future – that domestic bravado certainly paid off handsomely when the Turkish raid on Kessab was accompanied by the shooting down of the Syrian jet, under trumped-up charges that it had violated Turkish airspace.

Another factor was that for Davutoglu, this attack served as a reminder that Turkey was still capable of committing genocide with impunity, thus blunting the impact of the centennial.

Turkey's relations have been improving with Israel after Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's apology to Erdogan and a package deal worked out between Turkey and Israel to compensate the victims of the Mavi Marmara incident. Thus, the ground has been paved for reviving hegemonic prospects in the Middle East through a three-way cooperation between Turkey, Saudi Arabia and Israel.

On the international scene, the US had two main reasons to prod Turkey into action. The first was driven by domestic considerations to placate the hawks at home who were clamoring for Washington to set up a no-fly zone in Syria to help the advance of terrorists against the Damascus regime. For a reluctant Obama administration, the Turkish incursion into Syrian airspace was an effective substitute to a no-fly zone, which could involve putting US personnel in harm's way.

The second reason was of a more global nature. Despite all the rhetoric, the Crimean crisis has been a diplomatic defeat for Washington, requiring a powerful response to Russian advances in the world's troubled regions. Therefore, Syria's main ally, Moscow, had to sustain a defeat to compensate for its gain in Crimea. Western and Turkish surrogates succeeded in their drive to occupy Kessab on the Mediterranean, despite the presence of the Russian fleet next door in Tartous.

As far as Al-Nusra and Ahrar Al-Sham Al-Qaeda terrorists are concerned, they needed a victory after a series of defeats at the hands of the Syrian Army and Hezbollah volunteers. Kessab being the closest region to Assad's power base on the Mediterranean was considered a strategic prize.

The looting, beheadings and burning down of churches are continuing in the area, therefore no one with a straight face can claim that these Turkish surrogates are there to bring peace and democracy to Syria.

The reaction of Armenians has been weak and inadequate, primarily because a miniscule country in the Caucasus and a dispersed and disorganized diaspora are no match for the powers behind the war in Syria and the consequent attack on Kessab.

In the first place, the Armenian government has reacted very cautiously by sending a parliamentary delegation in an unofficial capacity. The news media in Armenia was caught off guard because of its endemic introverted nature and because of its general ignorance about basic facts on Diaspora Armenians. Many journalists there just found out where Kessab was and why it was important to Armenians.

The relief effort is underway to help the refugees huddled in Latakia, and Catholicos Aram I of the Great See of Cilicia has been able to mobilize all segments of the Armenian community in the region.

No similar coordination seems to be in the works in the western countries, where challenges and opportunities are great in rallying support for Kessab Armenians. It is just and proper to decry Turkey's sinister actions but those alone do not help the victims nor do they steer the West into a different course in Syria. Appeals and letters of protest are necessary elements to sensitize the world public opinion, but they would be more effective if the entire community mobilized as one when approaching this outrageous tragedy.

Armenians have been demonstrating in front of the Turkish embassy and consular offices in Paris and Los Angeles, respectively, but that movement has to be amplified to drown out the unified message from all Turkish legations around the world.

All of a sudden, a historic Armenian region has appeared on the chessboard of world politics and we have yet to wake up and get organized for a proper response. With the flux of political tides, all Armenians the world over need to coordinate for contingency plans with the government of Armenia to be able to face similar calamities which are bound to happen again in that volatile region.

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- All articles submitted should be typed, double (or triple) spaced and printed in a type size large enough to be clearly legible (10 point or larger). Submissions that do not conform to these specifications will be assigned lowest priority.
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- All submissions should include the name of a contact person and a daytime

telephone number.

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COMMENTARY



My Turn

By Harut Sassounian

Text of Swiss Appeal to European Court On Armenian Genocide Disclosed

Two weeks ago – on the last day of the three-month deadline – the Swiss government decided to file an appeal with the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR) on the Perincek vs. Switzerland lawsuit.

Even though the text of the Swiss appeal has been kept under seal pending ECHR's consideration, I was able to obtain a copy in French. This is the first time that the content of the Swiss appeal appears in the media.

The ECHR ruled on December 17, 2013, that Swiss courts had violated the rights of Dogu Perincek, a minor Turkish party leader, who had traveled to Switzerland in 2005 with the explicit purpose of denying the Armenian Genocide. He had dared the Swiss authorities to arrest him for calling the Genocide “an international lie.”

Following his conviction for violating a Swiss law on racial discrimination, denial of genocide, and other crimes against humanity, Perincek appealed his sentence all the way to the Federal Tribunal, the highest court in Switzerland, which confirmed his guilt. He then applied to

the European Court of Human Rights, accusing Switzerland of violating many of his rights, including that of free speech. Surprisingly, five of the seven ECHR judges exonerated Perincek, finding that Switzerland violated certain provisions of the European Convention.

If left unchallenged, ECHR's ruling would have been a major setback for recognition of the Armenian Genocide, particularly before the worldwide commemoration of the Centennial of the Genocide to be held on April 24, 2015. Even more importantly, by exceeding their mandate on the alleged infringements of Perincek's rights, the majority of the ECHR judges raised questions about the validity of the Armenian Genocide. They also drew unwarranted and superfluous distinctions between the Armenian Genocide and the Jewish Holocaust, ruling that punishing the deniers of the former is illegal, while convicting those denying the latter is proper.

Given the detrimental consequences of this unjustified ruling on the Armenian Cause, the government of Armenia, Armenian communities worldwide, and Swiss-Armenians in particular, lobbied Switzerland to make sure that it appeals ECHR's decision in the Perincek case. In reality, the Swiss authorities should not have needed any prodding from Armenians, since they had an obligation to defend the judgments of their own courts, including the Federal Tribunal, and the integrity of their country's legal system!

The six-page Swiss appeal, filed on March 17, 2014, asserted that ECHR's ruling raised “serious questions regarding the interpretation and application” of the European Convention on Human Rights for the following three reasons:

- The ruling involves an issue – the Armenian Genocide – that has never been considered by ECHR. This case rais-

es two fundamental juridical questions that the court has not dealt with: The juridical qualification of the Genocide and the scope of freedom of expression, when a state party to the Convention, in the framework of fighting racism, criminalizes the denial of genocide.

- The ruling reduces in an undue manner “the margin of appreciation” available to Switzerland under the jurisprudence of ECHR. Perincek had repeatedly stated that he would never change his mind on the Armenian Genocide. His denialist position is “particularly offensive.” The Court's contention that such a person would bring any value to “the debate and historical research” on this issue “is a departure from ECHR's established and balanced jurisprudence.”

- The ruling creates “artificial distinctions.” Perincek does not simply contest the use of the term genocide, but qualifies the Armenian mass killings as an “international lie.” Furthermore, even though there has not been an international verdict in the case of the Armenian Genocide, the Turkish Court's 1919 verdict against the masterminds of the Armenian Genocide “constituted an element of reliable evidence, acknowledging the facts or unfavorable conduct” relative to the World Court's jurisprudence. Furthermore, even “the Nuremberg Tribunal did not mention the term genocide and did not convict the Nazi perpetrators for committing genocide, but crimes against peace, war crimes, and crimes against humanity.”

The Swiss appeal has provided compelling arguments and convincing evidence that five of the seven ECHR judges made serious judgmental and factual errors in delivering a ruling in favor of Perincek and against Switzerland.

A panel of five new ECHR judges will now decide whether to refer Switzerland's appeal to the 17-judge Grand Chamber for a final determination.

Anti-Defamation League's Deceit Helps Sink a Judgeship

After two fair and lengthy hearings, the eight elected members of the Massachusetts Governor's Council, in a 4-4 tie vote on March 5, refused to confirm attorney Joseph

Berman to be a Superior Court judge. It was a defeat for Governor Deval Patrick, who had nominated Mr.

By David Boyajian

Berman. But the Council took its responsibilities seriously and rendered a well-considered judgment.

Councilors voiced many concerns about the nominee. Foremost was a lack of truthfulness.

Berman, under oath, was asked three times whether he had requested anyone to lobby the Council to advance his nomination. Each time, he replied no.

Later, after some stumbling, he admitted to another Councilor that he had phoned State Senator now Congresswoman Katherine Clark to lobby Councilors.

Mr. Berman's meager criminal trial experience also troubled Councilors. Another concern was Berman's scant knowledge of drug abuse. And some worried that Berman, politically active and a national leader in the heavily political Anti-Defamation League (ADL), would promote those viewpoints as a judge.

Another issue was his trip to Guantanamo prison to represent a suspected terrorist detained after 9/11. It's “one of the cases I am most proud of,” declared Berman. This made one Councilor wonder about the nominee's moral priorities.

Several Councilors questioned Berman's \$100,000 in campaign contributions, including to Governor Patrick, since being turned down for a judgeship in 2004. They saw this as a possible attempt to advance his judicial ambitions.

At his second hearing, Mr. Berman tried to deflect these criticisms. He claimed, for example, to have misunderstood the Councilors' questions about lobbying them. He also said he had been studying up on drug addiction and criminal law.

Berman's being a 19-year member, and since 2006 a National Commissioner, of the ADL also caught the attention of some Councilors and media.

Recall the ADL scandal that broke out in mid-2007. It exposed that organization's decades-old hypocrisy in denying the Armenian Genocide and colluding directly with Turkey, a major human rights violator, to defeat US Congressional resolutions on that genocide.

Shocked at the ADL's stance, the Massachusetts Municipal Association, which represents every city and town, then dropped its sponsorship of the ADL's so-called “No Place for Hate” anti-bias program. So did Arlington, Bedford, Belmont, see ADL, page 16

The Extraordinary Story Of Genocide Survivor Yevnigie Salibian

By Robert Fisk

She was a child of the Great War, born on a far-away killing field of which we know little, one of the very last witnesses to the last century's first genocide, sitting in her wheelchair, smiling at us, talking of Jesus and the Armenian children whipped by the Turkish police whom she saw through the cracks in her wooden front door. It's not every day you get to meet so finite

an observer of human history, and soon, alas, we will not see her like again in our lifetime. They took me to meet Yevnigie Salibian last week up in the Mission Hills of California, whose warm breezes and palm trees are not unlike the town of Aintab in which she was born more than a hundred years ago. She is an old lady now in a home for the elderly but with a still impeccable memory and an equally sharp and brutal scar on her thigh – which she displays without embarrassment – where a horse's reins suspended her above a ravine until she almost bled to death in her final flight from her Armenian homeland. “Hushhhhhh,” she says. “That's how the blood sounded when it poured out of me. “I still remember it: ‘hushhhhhh,’ ‘hushhhhhh.’”

The facts of the Armenian Holocaust are as clear and real as those of the later Jewish Holocaust. But they must be repeated because the state of Turkey remains a holocaust denier, still insisting that the Ottoman government did not indulge in the genocide which destroyed a million and a half of its Armenian Christian population almost a century ago. The Armenians were axed and knifed and shot in their tens of thousands, the women and children sent on death marches into the deserts of northern Syria where they were starved and raped and slaughtered. The Turks used trains and a primitive gas chamber, a lesson the Germans learned well. Very soon, there will be no more Yevnigues to tell their story.

She was born on 14 January 1914, the daughter of Aposh Aposhian, an Aintab copper merchant who taught his five children the story of Jesus from a large Bible which he held on his lap as he sat with them on a carpet on the floor of their home. They were – like so many Armenians – a middle-class family, and Aposh had Turkish friends and, although Yevnigie does not say so, it appears he traded with the Ottoman army; which probably saved their lives. When the first deportations began, the Salibians were left in their home, but the genocide lasted till the very last months of the Great War – it had begun within weeks of the Allied landings at Gallipoli – and in 1917, the Turks were still emptying Aintab of its Armenians. That's when the sound of crying led three-year-old Yevnigie to the front door of her home.

“It was an old wooden door and there were cracks in it and I looked through the cracks,” she says. “There were many chil-

dren outside without shoes and the Turkish gendarmes were using whips to drive them down the street. A few had parents. We were forbidden to take food to them. The police were using whips on the children and big sticks to beat them with. The sounds of the children screaming on the deportation – still I hear them as I look through the cracked door.”

So many parents were killed in the first year of the Armenian genocide that the orphans – tens of thousands of feral children who swarmed through the land in their absence – were only later driven out by the Turks: these were tiny deportees whom Yevnigie saw. The Aposhians, however, were able to cling on until the French army arrived in eastern Turkey after the Ottoman surrender. But when Mustafa Kemal Atatürk launched a guerrilla war against the French occupiers of his land, the French retreated – and in 1921 the surviving Armenians fled with them to Syria, among them Yevnigie and her family, packed into two horse-drawn carts. She was among the very last Christians to leave her Armenian homeland.

“My family was divided between the two carts. I changed places with an old lady. It was at night and over a ravine, our horses panicked and the cart overturned and an iron bar killed the old lady and I was thrown over the edge of a bridge and only the horse's reins saved me when they got wrapped around my leg. Jesus saved me. I hung there and there was the ‘hushhhhhh’ sound of my blood pouring out of me.” Yevnigie shows the harsh scar on her leg. It has bitten deeply into the muscle. She was unconscious for two days, slowly recovering in Aleppo, and then Damascus and finally in the sanctuary of Beirut.

The remainder of her life – as she tells it – was given to God, her husband and the tragedy of losing one of her sons in a Lebanese road accident in 1953. A photograph taken on her arrival in Beirut shows Yevnigie to have been an extraordinarily pretty young woman and she had, she says, many suitors. She eventually chose a bald-headed Evangelical preacher, an older man called Vahran Salibian who had a big smile and whose name – Salibi – means crusader. “He had no hair on his head but he had Jesus in his heart,” Yevnigie announces to me. Vahran died in 1995 after 60 years of marriage and Yevnigie has lost count of her great grandchildren – there are at least 22 so far – but she is happy in her cheerful Armenian nursing home.

“It's not a good thing to be away from your family – but I like this place. Here, it is my extended family.” She loves America, Yevnigie says. Her family fled there when the civil war began in Lebanon in 1976. “It is a free place. All people come from everywhere to America. But why is our President a Muslim?” I try to convince her this is untrue. She reads the New Testament every day and she talks constantly of her love for Jesus – this is an old lady who will be happy to die, I think – and when I ask her how she feels today about the Turks who tried to destroy the Armenians, she replies immediately. “I pray for Turkey. I pray for the Turkish officials that they may see Jesus. All that is left of the Prophet Mohamed is dust. But Jesus is alive in heaven.” And I am taken aback by this, until I suddenly realize that I am not hearing the voice of a 100-year-old lady. I am listening to a 3-year old Armenian girl whose father is reading the Bible on the floor of a house in Aintab and who is looking through the cracks of her wooden front door and witnessing her people's persecution.



Mass. State House to Hold Armenian Genocide Commemoration, April 11

BOSTON – This year marks the 99th anniversary of the Armenian Genocide. In recognition of the occasion, the annual State House Commemoration to honor and remember those who suffered through these tragic events will be held in the House of Representatives Chamber on Friday, April 11 beginning at 10:30 a.m. All are invited to attend.

Mark Geraġos, an attorney and leading voice in the Armenian-American community, will deliver a keynote address on genocide and justice, and Armenian Heritage Park architect Donald Tellalian will receive a Joint House and Senate Resolution.

Following the ceremony, there will be an informal catered reception in the Great Hall of the State House.

Lalig Musserian, chair of the Armenian Genocide Commemoration Planning Committee, said of the event: “Our genocide is still an open wound and history will judge the people who perpetuated this crime against Armenians. I am hopeful that someday, the political cynicism ends and we can finally recognize the truth about the Armenian geno-

cide.” State Rep. Jon Hecht (D-Watertown) said, “It’s a tremendous honor to work with the Armenian community of Massachusetts to commemorate the genocide against the Armenian people starting in 1915. Speaking the truth of these events from the State House is simple justice for the victims of the Armenian Genocide as well as a powerful deterrent to future atrocities.”

“The approach of the 100th anniversary of the Armenian Genocide is all the more poignant in light of the human rights violations committed – even today – against Armenians and so many other groups,” said state Sen. Will Brownsberger (D-Belmont). “The pursuit of recognition and justice for survivors endures, and we look forward to the commemoration of the 99th anniversary of the Armenian Genocide in that spirit.”

State Rep. David Rogers (D-Cambridge) commented that, “The 99th Armenian Genocide Commemoration is an important event for the Armenian-American community, but also for everyone in Massachusetts. Reflecting on the



2014 State House Commemoration Committee

Armenian Genocide is a valuable chance for us all to remember that human rights abuses persist and to pledge once more to honor the memory of those who perished in part by working to make our society a more just and peaceful one.” Buses to the State House will leave at 9 a.m.

from St. James and St. Stephen’s Churches (465 Mount Auburn St., Watertown, and 38 Elton Ave., Watertown, respectively). The bus service is donated by the Knights of Vartan, Ararat Lodge No. 1, and is free. Buses will leave the State House at 1:30 p.m.

Anti-Defamation League’s Deceit Helps Sink a Judgeship

ADL, from page 15
Lexington, Medford, Needham, Newburyport, Newton, Northampton, Peabody, Somerville, Watertown, and Westwood. The ADL scandal quickly became national and international news. Naturally, the Governor’s Council quizzed Berman about his ADL leadership role. He claimed that after the scandal erupted in 2007 he and some New England ADL members tried to convince the National ADL to change its position on the Armenian genocide. But there is no hard proof of that. And surely Berman knew long before 2007 of the ADL’s anti-Armenian stance. Yet he never spoke out publicly or resigned. Even after 2007, Mr. Berman

remained publicly silent about the ADL’s indefensible assault on Armenian Americans. Alongside the Council’s other concerns, Berman’s ADL record raised doubts about his worthiness to be a judge. On August 21, 2007, the National ADL tried to squirm out of the scandal with a press release that used deceptive and legalistic wording about the Armenian genocide. It implied that the Armenian genocide was a mere “consequence” of wartime events, which meant it wouldn’t qualify as genocide under the United Nation’s official definition. The dishonest ADL declaration was widely rejected. Nearly 20 countries, such as Canada, France

and Argentina, the European Union Parliament, the International Association of Genocide Scholars and the Polish Jewish lawyer who coined the word “genocide” in the 1940s, Raphael Lemkin, have recognized the Armenian genocide of 1915-23 committed by Turkey. Many American human rights, ethnic and church organizations have supported the Armenian Genocide resolution. These include the American Jewish World Service and the Jewish War Veterans of the USA. But not the ADL nor, reports the Jewish media, the American Jewish Committee, AIPAC and B’nai B’rith. They adhere to a long-standing arrangement among themselves, Turkey

and Israel to deny the Armenian genocide. The ADL professes to defend the human rights of all ethnic groups, not just Jews. It insists that the American people acknowledge and pass legislation on the Holocaust. Yet the ADL tries to prevent recognition of a Christian genocide. The hypocrisy is astonishing. Meanwhile, a significant precedent has been created: Members of the ADL, or similar organizations, who aspire to a higher post, particularly in government, may now be asked what they knew of their organization’s genocide hypocrisy, when they knew it and what they did about it. Such are the bitter fruits of deceit. (David Boyajian is a freelance journalist.)

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