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NEWS IN BRIEF

First-Ever Message by Turkish Leader on ‘Shared Pain’ Gets Mixed Reactions

ISTANBUL (Combined Sources) – Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan’s speech on April 23 in which he expressed his condolences to those who “shared pain,” was interpreted by many in the West and Europe as a softening of Turkey’s staunch denial. Armenians in Armenia and the diaspora, however, disagreed with that interpretation.

Stefan Fule, Commissioner for Enlargement and European Neighbourhood Policy wrote on his Twitter page, “We encourage Turkish PM Recep Tayyip Erdogan’s announcement about Armenians. Reconciliation is a key value to EU. We hope this spirit will take a continuous nature.”
US Department of State spokesperson

Jen Psaki noted: “We encourage PM Erdogan’s historical recognition of Armenians’ sufferings of 1915. We are assured that this is a positive sign towards the possibility of achieving recognition of complete, honest and just facts which, we hope, will enable improvement of Turkish-Armenian relations.”
see ERDOGAN, page 4

Hollande Pays Tribute To Victims of Genocide

PARIS (PanArmenian.net) – On April 24, the French President, François Hollande, made a speech to honor the 1.5 million victims of the Armenian Genocide at the monument of Komitas.

He promised to visit Armenia on April 24, 2015, the day that will mark the centennial of the Genocide. He also confirmed his visit to Yerevan on May 12 this year and said he is ready to continue working towards the international recognition of the Armenian Genocide.

Commenting on the recent statement by Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan, Hollande described it as “insufficient, although showing some progress.”

“It’s what we wanted to hear, but it’s not enough,” Hollande said. “This tragedy has one name and it’s Genocide.”

During a joint press conference with Turkish President Abdullah Gul early this year, Hollande noted that “uncovering history is always painful, but must be done.”

On January 23, 2012, the French Senate passed the bill making it a crime to deny the Armenian Genocide. The bill envisaged a 45,000-euro fine and a year in prison for anyone in France who denies this crime against humanity committed by the Ottoman Empire.

However, the French Constitutional Council ruled the bill as unconstitutional. Hollande pledged on April 24 to redraft the law criminalizing the Armenian Genocide denial in France, stressing the need to ensure the legal framework to avoid censorship by the Constitutional Council.

Israeli Politician Seeks Genocide Recognition

TEL AVIV, Israel (news.am) – Zahava Gal-On, chairperson of Meretz party in Israel, believes that the Armenian Genocide’s formal recognition is Israel’s moral obligation.

“Israel’s parliament needs to formulate a clear position on this matter. This is especially important against the backdrop of the long silence of the country’s government,” the politician wrote on mnenia.zahav.ru.

According to Gal-On, the recognition of the Armenian Genocide is not a political matter but rather an ethical one.

“The tragedy of the Armenian people has served as a tool for Israel’s foreign policy for many long years. Our governments have preferred to sacrifice the memory of the dead to petty and cynical interests.

“Given this whole cynicism, I, as the daughter of Holocaust survivors, cannot remain silent. I believe that the Jewish people, who have lived a mass destruction, who fully understand the implications of Holocaust denial, should be sensitive toward other peoples’ tragedy. We have to say: ‘Israel will no longer participate in the denial of the Armenian Genocide,’” she wrote.

Obama Stops Short Of ‘Genocide’ in April 24 Message

WASHINGTON – On April 24, President Barack Obama released a statement commemorating the “Medz Yeghern,” but stopping short of using the word “genocide.”

Reacting to the statement, Armenian Assembly of America issued a statement praising Obama for including the phrase “a full, frank, and just acknowledgement of the facts is in all of our interests.”

President Obama used an Armenian phrase Medz Yeghern for the Armenian Genocide and referenced his prior acknowledgement of the Armenian Genocide, but fell short of fulfilling his 2008 presidential campaign pledge wherein he stated: “America deserves a leader who speaks truthfully about the Armenian Genocide and responds forcefully to all genocides. I intend to be that President.”

The President’s statement invoked America’s record of providing humanitarian relief in helping to save the survivors of the first genocide of the 20th century: “And we recall with pride the humanitarian efforts undertaken by the American
see OBAMA, page 20

AP Photo Legend Harry Koundakjian Dies

NEW YORK (AP) – Harry Koundakjian, a former photographer and photo editor for the Associated Press in the Middle East and New York City, has died. He was 83.



Koundakjian died Monday at a Manhattan hospital, from complications of open heart surgery, his daughter, Lola Koundakjian, said.

see KOUNDAKJIAN, page 8



NERSES BABAYAN PHOTO

A young child waves the Armenian flag at the commemoration in Times Square

Armenian ‘Rap’ on Times Square

The 99th Commemoration of the Armenian Genocide Brings Out Thousands to Times Square

NEW YORK – From the proclamations of staunch support by high-ranking US politicians to the touching lyrics of a talented Armenian-American rapper’s tribute to the millions of lives lost, the 99th commemoration of the Armenian Genocide in Times Square paid homage to the victims of 1915 and sent a resounding message that denial will not be tolerated as the centennial memorial approaches.

By Taleen Babayan

An all-encompassing event organized by the Knights of Vartan for the past quarter of a century in one of the world’s most visible and attractive locations, an impressive crowd gathered at this year’s commemoration. While the missing survivors in the audience were a stark reminder that witnesses are succumbing to time, this year’s sizeable group of Armenian youth, from the Homenetmen Scouts who held the Armenian flag throughout the program to the members of the Areni Choir and the Higher Brass Band to those draped in Armenian flags, an emphatic statement was made that the 1.5 million victims will not be forgotten.
see TIMES SQUARE, page 11

Kurkjian Photo Research Brings Genocide into Focus

BELMONT, Mass. – A single photo for journalist Stephen Kurkjian has been the means to tie together the shredded history of martyred Armenians on their ancestral lands, whose descendants, as a result of the Armenian Genocide, are scattered around the globe now.

By Alin K. Gregorian
Mirror-Spectator Staff

Kurkjian stumbled upon a photo taken in Gesaria (Kayseri) of Armenian men who had been found guilty by Ottoman military courts on a variety of trumped-up charges. It is the fate of those 50-odd men in the photo that sums up neatly the lives shattered by the Genocide.

“Our story was made real by this photo,” Kurkjian said.
see KURKJIAN, page 20



GONCA SONMEZ-POOLE PHOTO

Stephen Kurkjian at NAASR (Gonca Sonmez-Poole photo)

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ARMENIA

News From Armenia

Galust Sahakyan Elected New Speaker

YEREVAN (Armenpress) – In a secret ballot held in Parliament this week, the head of the Republican Party of Armenia faction, the Deputy-Chairman of the party, Galust Sahakyan, was elected the speaker of Parliament. Sahakyan received 101 votes, while Hrant Bagratyan receive three.

The Supreme Body and the Council of the Republican Party of Armenia at a session on April 26 decided to nominate Sahakyan as a candidate for speaker.

US Supports Programs to Build Trust between Armenia and Azerbaijan

YEREVAN (Armenpress) – The US supports people-to-people and track-two programs to build trust and understanding between the people of Armenia and Azerbaijan. The US Co-Chair of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) Minsk Group Ambassador James Warlick tweeted. He stated: “The US supports people-to-people and track two programs to build trust and understanding between the people of Armenia and Azerbaijan.”

Previously it was reported that Warlick would discuss the Nagorno Karabagh (Artsakh) conflict with the representatives of the Armenian and Azerbaijani communities in the United States.

Doctors Help Reduce Threat of Blindness in Infants

YEREVAN (Armenpress) – From now on newborns with the diagnosis of retinopathy of prematurity can get a sight-saving operation in Armenia. The Center of Excellence for Prevention of Childhood Blindness program, implemented by the Armenian EyeCare Project and the US Agency for International Development, teamed up to fight against childhood blindness by preventing retinopathy of prematurity. For this matter the Ministry of Healthcare of Armenia turned to Dr. Sui Chen Wong in the UK, who readily agreed to visit Armenia and carry out special operations, as well as train the specialists. Wong noted at a press conference this week that the first successful operation was performed on April 28.

Metropolitan of Helsinki Visits Mother See

ECHMIADZIN – On April 27, Karekin II, Supreme Patriarch and Catholicos of All Armenians, welcomed Metropolitan Ambrosios, Bishop of the Diocese of Helsinki and Holy Synod member of the Orthodox Church of Finland; who is visiting Armenia at the invitation of His Holiness. Accompanying him were Antti Heikinheimo, attorney; and Timo Kiteveyne, Deputy Head of the Union of the Finnish Municipality.

Welcoming the guests' visit to the Mother See, the catholicos extended his appreciation and blessings to them, highlighting the importance of the meeting in further reinforcing the inter-church relations and partnership between the Armenian Apostolic and the Finnish Orthodox Churches.

During the meeting, Karekin II reflected on the warm relations of the Armenian Church with the Orthodox and Sister Churches. He also presented the achievements in ecumenism and discussed the challenges that overwhelm and disturb the atmosphere of love in the church life, advising to overcome all obstacles and endure all trials and tribulations with united prayers.

Ambrosios noted that this meeting was of great significance for the Armenian and Finnish Churches in terms of theological dialogue.

He fondly recalled their years of study at the Spiritual Academy in Zagorsk.

Present at the meeting was also Bishop Hovakim Manoukyan, director of the Inter-Church Relations Department of the Mother See.

President Pays Tribute to Genocide Victims

YEREVAN (Armenpress, Reuters) – On April 24, President Serge Sargisian, along with many dignitaries and citizens of Armenia, visited Tsitsernakaberd Genocide Monument and paid tribute to the memory of the victims of the Armenian Genocide. He laid a wreath at the memorial and placed flowers near the eternal flame.

Sargisian, in a speech accused Turkey of “utter denial” of the Genocide.

The “Armenian Genocide ... is alive as long as the successor of the Ottoman Turkey continues its policy of utter denial,” Sargisian said in an address on April 24.

“We are convinced that the denial of a crime constitutes the direct continuation of that very crime. Only recognition and condemnation can prevent the repetition of such crimes in the future,” he said, calling on Turkey to “repent.”

Sargisian did not mention the com-



From left, Catholicos of All Armenians Karekin II accompanied President Serge Sargisian and his wife, Rita, to the Armenian Genocide Monument in Yerevan on April 24.

ments of Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan and made clear Armenia believes it is up to Turkey to “set aside the historical stigma” and “set free their state’s future from this heavy burden.”

“At the same time, I publicly reaffirm: we do not consider the Turkish society our enemy,” he said. “Bow-

ing to the memory of the innocent victims we remember all those Turks, Turkish families who lent a helping hand to their Armenian neighbors.”

“God bless the memories of those who gave our compatriots a helping hand by risking their and their families’ lives,” he said, according to the text posted on the presidential website.

ATP Kicks Off 20th Anniversary with Tree Plantings in Armenia and Artsakh

YEREVAN – Armenia Tree Project has beautified 110 communities by planting 22,000 trees through its Community Tree Planting (CTP) program. The first project took place in Artsakh where Syrian-Armenian refugees planted ATP fruit trees in Kovsakan. Each year hundreds of com-

munities are given fruit and decorative trees through the CTP program. This year, seeking to provide fruit to soldiers in Artsakh, the program included plantings at six military bases.

A second component is forestry. In a bittersweet launch of this year’s forestry planting, hundreds ojoined

forces in Stepanavan to plant the first seedlings in a memorial forest for Sose Thomassian and Allen Yekikian. Friends and family of the young couple, whose lives were tragically cut short last year, joined with volunteers from Birthright Armenia and Armenian Volunteer Corps to plant the initial 20,000 trees in the forest.

“The planting of these 42,000 trees this spring has brought the total number of trees planted by ATP to 4,497,869 since 1994,” reported ATP Managing Director Tom Garabedian. “Throughout our 20 years of planting, ATP has forged invaluable partnerships with people along with dozens of organizations, businesses, and institutions to advance projects that beautify the environment.”

Collaboration with KPMG Armenia helped to green the Kentavr hippotherapy center in Ushi village this season. Byblos Bank facilitated planting at Poqr Mher military educational center for children, and the Ararat Cultural Center joined ATP to conduct a planting adjacent to Zvartnots Temple. As in previous years, ATP provided trees for the Paros Foundation that supports mothers and children, orphans, and needy families.

Plantings at schools included Yerevan State University and the State Engineering University of Armenia and in a partnership with the Foundation for the Preservation of Wildlife and Cultural Assets (FPWC), a planting at their new Eco-Training Center in Urtsador.

In a relaunch of a program designed to restore trees and create new jobs, ATP hired 35 residents from Gumri and Azatan to conduct coppicing, a traditional method of woodland management to regenerate tree stumps.

A third component of ATP initiatives is to provide environmental education. The Michael and Virginia Ohanian Center for Environmental Studies, which sits at the foot of ATP’s Hrant Dink Memorial Forest in Margahovit, houses classrooms and conference space, along with a small dormitory.

Last month, the center opened its doors to a two-week training on waste management organized by the German Society for International Cooperation. ATP’s staff members Nvard Gevorgyan and Gayane Margaryan supported the training. More than 60 people participated in the conference activities.

President Meets with Visiting Congressional Delegation

YEREVAN (Public Radio of Armenia) – President Serge Sargisian last week received the delegation of the US congressmen led by the Chairman of the United States House Committee on Foreign Affairs Rep. Ed Royce (R-Calif.).

The president welcomed the delegation and underscored that the US congressmen’s visit to Armenia on the remembrance day of the Armenian Genocide and the meeting at the Genocide victims’ memorial were of special importance. According to Sargisian that was the striking illustration of the fact that the Armenian people were not alone in their national tragedy. The President of Armenia

Representatives Eliot Engel (D-NY), David Cicilline (D-RI) and Lois Frankel (D-Fla).

The president expressed his gratitude to Armenia’s friends in the US Congress, including the delegation members having visited Armenia for sharing the Armenian people’s grief on the 99th anniversary of the Armenian Genocide and paying tribute to the memory of the victims of the 20th century’s first genocide.

Royce and the delegation members thanked the president of Armenia for his appreciation and kind words and noted that it was important for both Democrats and Republicans to be pre-



Rep. Ed Royce (R-Calif.) with President Serge Sargisian

expressed his gratitude to Armenia’s friends in the US Congress, including the delegation members having visited Armenia for sharing the Armenian people’s grief on the 99th anniversary of the Armenian Genocide and paying tribute to the memory of the victims of the 20th century’s first genocide at the Genocide memorial at Tsitsernakabert.

The delegation, led by the Chairman of the United States House Committee on Foreign Affairs Royce, included

sent in Armenia on April 24.

The president also expressed his appreciation to the United States for contributing to Armenia’s economic development, the implementation of reforms, the promotion and consolidation of democracy, regional stability, as well as for its active engagement in issues which were of vital importance for Armenia. Sargisian assured that Armenia was committed to further advance and promote the Armenian-US bilateral relations.



INTERNATIONAL

London TCA, Nor Serount Hold Reception In Honor of Armenia's UK Ambassador

LONDON – On March 28, at Tara Hotel, London, the London Tekeyan Cultural Association (TCA) and “Nor Serount” Cultural Association organized a reception in honor of Dr. Armen Sarkissian, ambassador of the Republic of Armenia to the UK and Northern Ireland.

The event was held in the presence of Bishop Vahan Hovhannessian, Primate of the Armenian Apostolic Church of the UK and Ireland, other members of the clergy, diplomats, including those from the Russian Federation, Turkmenistan, Kirgizstan, Uzbekistan, Georgia, councilors as well as Lords, members of Parliament and other dignitaries.

Garoy Boyadjian, chairman of the London TCA, was the first to welcome Armen Sarkissian and his wife, Nouneh. He also acknowledged Sarkissian's striv-

ing for improving Armenia's standing in the world. Wishing the Ambassador every success, Boyadjian assured him of the ongoing support of the UK Armenian community.

On behalf of the most active cultural organizations in the Armenian community in the UK and Armenia, Vartan Ouzounian, president of the London TCA, chairman of Tekeyan Centre Fund Armenia (TCFA) and honorary secretary of the London Tekeyan Trust (LTT) extended warmest congratulations and wishes to Sarkissian on his third time appointment as Ambassador to the UK. Ouzounian remembered their first meeting in 1984 when a young University professor of Astrophysics from the former Soviet Union visited London. And that was the TCA that organized Sarkissian's first lecture for the Armenian community. Now having known Ambassador Sarkissian for so many years, Ouzounian doubtlessly noted that his experience and skills would enhance Armenian national and cultural existence strengthening the Motherland and making friendly relations across the world.

Ouzounian read the welcoming address of Baroness Caroline Cox who was unable to be present but passed on her good wishes to Sarkissian and her appreciation to the TCA, LTT and TCF Armenia for the work done, particularly connected with the renovation of the heating system of the Lord Byron School in Gumri, Armenia.

She visited the school soon after it had been opened by the later premier, Margaret Thatcher, in 1990 and now she was delighted to see the school transformation after so many difficulties.

As Vasken Kassemjdian, chairman of Nor Serount Cultural Association, noted at the reception, it very rarely happens to find a person appointed as

an ambassador representing his country for three times and more over being appointed Prime Minister of the same country as well as possessing successful academic, business and worldwide philanthropic and economic developer's profile. All this was achieved by Sarkissian during the last 20 years. Kassemjdian recalled the year 1992 when Sarkissian started his diplomatic career and for the first time ever in the UK the flag of independent Armenia was raised in the presence of large crowd of Armenians. That significant day started a new era for the Armenian Community. Now, after 22 years, although there were a lot of new responsibilities and difficult tasks on the shoulders of the Ambassador, Nor Serount assured him of strong cooperation with the embassy for achieving mutual goals for the

rial mistakes which resulted in instabilities and big conflicts that up to now have not been resolved, like Karabagh, the Crimea, Abkhazia, Ossetia, etc. Therefore, he said, the task of next generations is to do much better than it was done in the Soviet period, especially now when it is not safe or stable in the world any more.

He touched upon the crisis in Syria, bemoaning the fate of Armenians from Kessab. He said he hoped that the Armenian delegation would manage to settle the matter with the President of Syria so that Armenians could return to the historic place of the last Armenian Kingdom of Cilicia.

He spoke also about his decision to become Armenia's ambassador to the UK for the third time. First, he said, the former ambassador, Karine Kazinian, was a dear friend whose untimely death left a vacuum. He said he had seen much progress in relations between Armenia and the UK and while the situation in Armenia and Karabagh had improved, much still needed to be done and he realized he could best help his country through diplomacy. He has lived in Britain and has been in politics long enough that he knows how important it is for Armenia to deepen relations with Britain.

Sarkissian, in his speech, said that for him, 2015 marked not only the 100th anniversary of the Genocide, but also 100 years of survival of a great nation. And for this anniversary he has a new project which is to create a “Hay Park” (Armenian Park) around the Genocide monument as the 100 hectares around it are abandoned at the moment.

“Each of us should contribute to our beloved motherland because although as a nation we are much bigger than the state, we cannot be united and strong without a strong state and a strong church that unites us worldwide. And I'm here to work with you for the brighter future of our nation,” concluded Sarkissian.

There was a personal tribute to Sarkissian from Odette Bazil, co-founder and executive secretary of the British Armenian All Party Parliamentary Group, the founder of The Chiltern's Armenian Society, as well as leader and active member of a couple of other organizations. Bazil praised the ambassador's vigor and contribution to the development of Armenian-British relations as well as dedicated activities for the benefit of Armenia and the Armenian Embassy in London.

While speaking about Sarkissian, Hovhannessian stated that Armenians are sons of a great nation; a nation that had contributed to the world politics, history, culture and science. But the recent path of Armenian people had been blackened by some unfortunate politics of neighbors and the superpowers of the land. And on the threshold of the third decade of independent Armenia, the nation was in desperate need of leaders who were aware of the bright civilization, culture and heritage of Armenians.

At the end of the reception, Sarkissian was invited to the podium to be presented with a silver plate, a souvenir from the TCA and Nor Serount, as an appreciation for his dedication and contribution to Armenian people and the Motherland.

The evening was concluded with a dinner reception and a beautiful concert program which included performances of Nor Serount Violin Ensemble, the TCA Mezzo-soprano Anna Movsesyan and Tenor Sipan Hagobyan, artistic director and conductor of Komitas Choir of the London Tekeyan Trust.



From left, Garoy Boyadjian, Bishop Vahan Hovhannessian, Ambassador Armen Sarkissian, Vasken Kassemjdian and Vartan Ouzounian (while presenting the Ambassador with a silver plate)

International News

Genocide Monument Unveiled in Vancouver

VANCOUVER, Canada (Armenpress) – In Vancouver, on April 27, a monument was dedicated to the Armenian Genocide, according to the Armenian Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The official unveiling ceremony was attended by the Ambassador of Armenia to Canada Armen Yeganyan as well as federal and local Canadian officials and community leaders.

The sculptor of the monument, which depicts the archived fingerprint of a victim of the Armenian Genocide, is Matilda Aslizadeh.

UN Human Rights Official Responds to Foreign Minister Plea

YEREVAN (Armenpress) – The UN High commissioner for Human Rights Navi Pillay responded to a letter of Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Armenia Eduard Nalbandian this week. In the letter, Nalbandian had expressed deep concern about the situation created in the Armenian-populated city of Kessab, Syria, and the surrounding villages as a result of terrorist attacks.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs reported that in her letter Pillay informed him that her team of human rights officers located in the region is following the situation closely and has already had a conversation with a series of families displaced as a result of the attacks.

She assured Nalbandian that the human rights situation in Kessab and the surrounding villages will be included in the upcoming report of the UN Secretary-General.

12 Killed, 50 Injured in Damascus Blast

DAMASCUS, Syria (Armenpress) – Mortar shelling of central Damascus killed 12 people and injured at least 50 last week, Syrian state media reported.

The barrage of four mortar rounds hit Shaghour neighborhood of the Syrian capital, the SANA news agency said. Two of them hit the Badr al-Din al-Hussein technical institute.

Armenpress, citing Russia Times, reported that the shelling came a day after President Bashar Assad submitted papers for the upcoming presidential election.

He is the seventh person running for the election scheduled on June 3 and is the favorite in the race. If re-elected, he would have to step down after serving the new term under the new Syrian constitution adopted in 2012.

The fighting has been going on for four years, making it one of the worst humanitarian disasters.

ACPJ Condemns Azeri Treason Charges

BAKU (RFE/RL) – The Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ) has condemned authorities in Baku for charging a prominent journalist with high treason over allegations he spied for Azerbaijan's rival, Armenia.

The Prosecutor-General's Office said on April 21 that Rauf Mirqadirov “was recruited by the Armenian secret services in 2008 and supplied Yerevan with information on Azerbaijan's state secrets.”

In a statement, the CPJ's Europe and Central Asia program coordinator, Nina Ognianova, called on Azerbaijani authorities “to drop these trumped-up charges and stop abusing the law to silence independent reporting on the country.”

She said Azerbaijan was “quickly becoming one of the leading jailers of journalists in the Eurasia region.”

Mirqadirov has been ordered to stay in pretrial custody for the next three months as investigators pursue the case.

He is a correspondent for the Russian-language newspaper *Zerkalo*, which is published in Azerbaijan.



Zarakolu: 'In Turkey Denialism Is a State Security Issue'

BUENOS AIRES (Prensa Armenia) – Ragıp Zarakolu was born in 1948 in Buyukada, Turkey. He was imprisoned and persecuted for his publications dating back to the 1970s. Zarakolu founded the Belge publishing house, the *Demokrat* newspaper and the Human Rights Association of Turkey, in Ankara, and devoted much of his life to fill the empty spaces on the shelves of libraries. Recently, specifically, as he says, since the murder of Hrant Dink, he has become one of the most influential authors in the revisionist movement in Turkey that challenges the official story and touch taboo issues, especially the Armenian Genocide. In this interview Zarakolu shows his views about current affairs regarding Armenian issues.

Prensa Armenia: What is your opinion on Erdogan's statement?

Ragıp Zarakolu: It's an important declaration, but it's not enough. We must express that too. But when we look at the general attitude of the Turkish state and government, it's a partial development. But it's not enough. Also, this declaration is a result of your struggle and our struggle for the acknowledgement of the Armenian Genocide. For example, we are working for the Armenian Genocide issue in the last twenty years. In our society, especially after the assassination of Hrant Dink, there are a lot of people beginning to reason that what we said about Armenian Genocide is true.

PA: Do you think that this statement was forced by civil society that is changing their minds?

RZ: Sure. We are a minority in Turkey now, but we began to change the minds of the elite, of the intellectual part of Turkish society. This is important as a beginning. We had to struggle during last ten years to huge sponsored state denialism. The Turkish state gave huge funding for denialist education, denialist publications, denialist conferences, denialist courses. Also there is a high commission of coordination committee struggle with genocide claims. In Turkey, this is a state security issue.

PA: Denialism is institutionalized.

RZ: Yes. It's worse that in the '90s and 2000, with the nationalist government of Ecevit and Bahçeli: they organized this kind of struggle directly connected with the state security. Devlet Bahçeli, from the MHP ultranationalist party of Turkey, was the first chair of that coordination committee. Later, the chief of this committee was Abdullah Gül, who was foreign minister. And now, it's Davutoglu. It's a contradiction, Davutoglu signs the Protocols with the Armenian government in Switzerland, and on the other hand this commission is going on. Sure, it's not as active as during the Bahçeli government, but is a potential, an apparatus inside the Turkish state. So today they may be more passive, but that doesn't mean that next year they couldn't be more active. Turkey's government first step should be to dissolve that committee.

Then Turkey proposed to build up a common historians committee so they decide what it is. But that's absurd. It's not an issue of historians; the Genocide is a human rights issue. It can't be an issue of historians, because they can select and montage the facts. So it's a political, not an historical issue. Sure, it's a very important part of Turkey and Armenian history, but historians can't solve this problem. Only politicians can solve this problem. The Armenian and Turkish politicians can solve this problem, like Israel and German solved the Holocaust problem. And this cannot be only an Armenian and Turkish states problem. There is also a very important Diaspora section. In the decision, Diaspora must have the right to say something. The descendants must have the right to say and demand something. So, there is a triangle: Armenia, Diaspora and Turkey. They can decide for the future.

For example, why can't Turkey give Mount Ararat to Armenia, as a gesture? It is a mountain; there is no population change problem. Why can't Turkey give Ani? It's a historical area, there is nobody living. Turkish government can make a first gesture to show the good intentions with something.

PA: Do you think returning Mount Ararat could be the first step, and not the last?

RZ: Yes. For me, it can be a first step. They can discuss it later. It's an interstate problem, a border problem. Before, the borders were unchangeable; but after Kosovo, Iraqi Kurdistan and now the Ukraine question...

PA: If we are talking about self-determination, why nobody officially accepts the existence of Karabagh Republic? What's the difference between Kosovo and Karabagh?

RZ: It's a typical double standard. Turkey, like United States, is one of the most double standard countries. "I can do what I want, but you can't do it. Because I'm a bigger country and I have a bigger army." This is a "bandit" policy.

PA: What's your opinion about Obama's last statement, where he didn't use the word genocide?

RZ: I have worked for years for freedom of expression. It shows how important freedom of expression is, because the President of United States made the censorship on his own real ideas. What is the place of ethics? What is the place of self-respect? The same with Madame Pelosi, Chair of the Democrats in the Congress. She also accepted the Armenian Genocide, but when she got a position in the state... If you are a part of state you aren't part of an elite, you are part of the citizens, of American citizens. This shows that there is a double standard in United States.

United States may criticize Turkey for banning Twitter, but the same United States censor its own ideas, without using the word "genocide." If he didn't use it before, I could understand it, but it's not ethical to take de votes of the Armenian electors saying "genocide" and later, to make interests with Turkey state, you don't use the word "genocide." Which is your real idea? Do you think it is a genocide or not? I'm now suspicious about Mr. Obama's expression about accepting genocide also. *Meds Yeghern* is an important concept, but together with genocide.

PA: There has been some discussions in the

Perinçek v. Switzerland ruling about freedom of expression...

RZ: I have a very clear mind on this question. I'm a human rights activist. Genocide is a crime against the humanity. To defend genocide is also a crime against humanity. It's not about freedom of expression, this is out of freedom of expression. The hate speech can be a part of freedom of expression? I can defame you, I can be a racist? No, that's not a kind of freedom of expression.

PA: Do you have any information about the Turkish government role in Kessab attacks?

RZ: I wrote an article about this. In the last Kessab attacks there was also responsibility of Turkish government, because the Turkish government is tolerant with the passing of radical Islamists Falangist groups in the border. There are rules of war, the Geneva Conventions, and they don't even respect the rules of war. It is a crime against humanity to kill people because of their beliefs or their race or ethnic origins. We cannot be tolerant to help that kind of groups. It's a very unacceptable situation for states diplomacy and also for the rules of NATO.

PA: How was your trip to United States and the Capitol Hill? Did you meet the Armenian community?

RZ: Yes, the American community is very anxious for the future of Christians Armenians in the Middle East. They are very anxious because the old history is coming back again. The same problems with deportations, mass killings, emigration; many Armenians had to leave Syria to Armenia. These are sometimes forced emigrations.

PA: They also leave Karabagh...

RZ: Yes. It's a double standard policy. On one side, Turkish government demands rights for Turkish minorities but they didn't respect the rights of Armenians in Middle East, or the rights of Karabagh Armenians. Why did the Karabagh Armenians decide the self-determination? Because there was a danger of a second genocide by Azeris.

– Matias Romero

First-Ever Message by Turkish Leader on 'Shared Pain' Gets Mixed Reactions

ERDOGAN, from page 1

The Armenian National Committee of America (ANCA) took a different stance, saying, "Being more and more internationally isolated Ankara 're-wraps' Genocide rejection."

Catholicos Aram I of the Great House of Cilicia said of Erdogan's statement: "What took place in 1915 in Turkey wasn't a result of war, Mr. PM, rather it was a genocide carried out upon the Armenian nation, in the legal and political meaning of the word. A genocide organized and realized by your ancestors, by Taleat and Enver Pashas. Therefore, the Armenian nation doesn't expect Turkish condolence and morality; it expects recognition and compensation of the Armenian Genocide."

Thomas de Waal, a senior associate at the Carnegie Endowment specializing primarily in the South Caucasus wrote on Carnegie.ru: "Is Erdogan's announcement a sign of change in Turkey, or a calculated political move? Both. The ruling Justice and Development party representing Erdogan has done more for Armenia than any other Turkish government during the last 50 years. It has abolished the ban on open discussion of the 1915 issue, allowed common Turkish people to use the word genocide and to see Armenian churches re-opened in Turkey. Although this is only the start towards the recognition of the great tragedy of all Armenian population under Ottoman Empire, the tone of the PM's announcement makes us believe that he wants this to become the end of the issue. And of course, Armenian-Turkish land-border remains closed."

President Serge Sargsian, on a trip to the Czech Republic marking the fifth anniversary of Eastern Partnership, mentioned in his speech that Turkey continues to try to escape its own past, by distorting history by its denial.

The president pointed out that, as Turkey seeks membership in the European Union, it paradoxically maintains the only closed border

(with Armenia) in the European sphere.

Hayk Demoyan, director of the Genocide Museum in Yerevan sent a letter to the Turkish premier, in which he wrote, "Unfortunately, your announcement contains components expressing Turkey's official position, which doesn't reflect reality. Let me say that nowadays many Turks don't even believe in what you call '1915 events'. Judging from Turkish visitors' impressions written in the guestbook of our Genocide museum, they all want to know the truth which was distorted and hidden from them during all Turkish history. There is a clear and powerful expression: Truth gives freedom. However with such an announcement you are attempting to mislead the Turkish youth," wrote Demoyan.

Orhan Dink, a Turkish Armenian whose brother, journalist Hrant Dink, was assassinated in 2007 by ultra-nationalists for holding Turkey responsible for the Genocide, said: "For the prime minister of the Turkish Republic to make such a statement is far-reaching for the Armenians who live in Turkey, and for myself."

Erdogan's Full Statement

"The 24th of April carries a particular significance for our Armenian citizens and for all Armenians around the world, and provides a valuable opportunity to share opinions freely on a historical matter.

It is indisputable that the last years of the Ottoman Empire were a difficult period, full of suffering for Turkish, Kurdish, Arab, Armenian and millions of other Ottoman citizens, regardless of their religion or ethnic origin.

Any conscientious, fair and humanistic approach to these issues requires an understanding of all the sufferings endured in this period, without discriminating as to religion or ethnicity.

Certainly, neither constructing hierarchies of pain nor comparing and contrasting suffering carries any meaning for those who experienced this pain themselves.

As a Turkish proverb goes, "fire burns the place where it falls."

It is a duty of humanity to acknowledge that Armenians remember the suffering experienced in that period, just like every other citizen of the Ottoman Empire.

In Turkey, expressing different opinions and thoughts freely on the events of 1915 is the requirement of a pluralistic perspective as well as of a culture of democracy and modernity.

Some may perceive this climate of freedom in Turkey as an opportunity to express accusatory, offensive and even provocative assertions and allegations.

Even so, if this will enable us to better understand historical issues with their legal aspects and to transform resentment to friendship again, it is natural to approach different discourses with empathy and tolerance and expect a similar attitude from all sides.

The Republic of Turkey will continue to approach every idea with dignity in line with the universal values of law.

Nevertheless, using the events of 1915 as an excuse for hostility against Turkey and turning this issue into a matter of political conflict is inadmissible.

The incidents of the First World War are our shared pain. To evaluate this painful period of history through a perspective of just memory is a humane and scholarly responsibility.

Millions of people of all religions and ethnicities lost their lives in the First World War. Having experienced events which had inhumane consequences – such as relocation – during the First World War, should not prevent Turks and Armenians from establishing compassion and mutually humane attitudes among towards one another.

In today's world, deriving enmity from history and creating new antagonisms are neither acceptable nor useful for building a common future.

The spirit of the age necessitates dialogue

despite differences, understanding by heeding others, evaluating means for compromise, denouncing hatred, and praising respect and tolerance.

With this understanding, we, as the Turkish Republic, have called for the establishment of a joint historical commission in order to study the events of 1915 in a scholarly manner. This call remains valid. Scholarly research to be carried out by Turkish, Armenian and international historians would play a significant role in shedding light on the events of 1915 and an accurate understanding of history.

It is with this understanding that we have opened our archives to all researchers. Today, hundreds of thousands of documents in our archives are at the service of historians.

Looking to the future with confidence, Turkey has always supported scholarly and comprehensive studies for an accurate understanding of history. The people of Anatolia, who lived together for centuries regardless of their different ethnic and religious origins, have established common values in every field from art to diplomacy, from state administration to commerce. Today they continue to have the same ability to create a new future.

It is our hope and belief that the peoples of an ancient and unique geography, who share similar customs and manners will be able to talk to each other about the past with maturity and to remember together their losses in a decent manner. And it is with this hope and belief that we wish that the Armenians who lost their lives in the context of the early twentieth century rest in peace, and we convey our condolences to their grandchildren.

Regardless of their ethnic or religious origins, we pay tribute, with compassion and respect, to all Ottoman citizens who lost their lives in the same period and under similar conditions."

(ArmeniaNow and *Haaretz* contributed to this report.)



Community News

Members of Congress Issue Statements of Support on April 24

WASHINGTON — Many members of the House and Senate expressed their support for the Armenian Community on April 24. Below are comments from some of the officials.

• Rep. Adam Schiff (D-Calif.):

“Ninety-nine years ago, the Ottoman Empire launched an all-out assault on its Armenian population. In a brutal campaign of massacres, forced marches, looting, and rape the Ottoman Turks sought to destroy an entire people. They did so in full view of American diplomats and journalists, who reported the details of the fate of the Armenians to a shocked public back home.

“The monstrosity of the crime was so terrible that an entirely new word had to be invented to describe it — genocide.

“The horrors of the Armenian genocide have been compounded by decades of denial by the government of Turkey, which even today stands by its absurd claim that historians are divided over what happened to the Armenians and that the issue must be studied further. No study is needed — the facts are plain and evidence is abundant, including that in our own national archives and back issues of the world’s newspapers. What is needed is an unequivocal acknowledgment of the truth by Turkey and a commitment to educate its own people on the facts of the genocide after nearly a century of denial and obfuscation.”

• Rep. Frank Pallone Jr. (NJ-06):

“Today, we commemorate the 99th anniversary of the Armenian Genocide, and remember the lives of the one and a half million Armenians who were slaughtered by Ottoman Turks nearly a century ago. As we remember the victims, we pay homage to the Armenian people who, for thousands of years, have shown their perseverance and strength in the face of great challenges.

“While, the Armenian Genocide has been recognized by scholars all over the world and has been widely documented as a historical fact, we are reminded today that Turkey refuses to come to terms with its own history and recognize the atrocities as genocide. However, I will not stand idly by as the truth of the murder of one and half million Armenians is distorted.

“It is time for the United States government to do the right thing, the moral thing, and recognize the atrocities committed against the Armenian people for exactly what it was—genocide. This is long overdue, and I am as committed today, as I was when I founded the Congressional Caucus on Armenian Issues more than 18 years ago, to push for that formal recognition.

“I am proud that the Senate Foreign Relations Committee acted so decisively earlier this month to pass a resolution calling upon the Senate to officially recognize this crime against humanity. It is time now for the House to act on H. Res. 227, calling on the President to acknowledge the facts and ongoing consequences of the Armenian Genocide and ensure that the foreign policy of the U.S. reflects an accurate account of history.

“Armenia stands as a resilient ally of the United States and a nation dedicated to democracy and regional stability. On this somber day, we stand in support of Armenia and commemorate the bravery of those who perished in and survived the genocide.”

• Sen. Edward Markey (D-Mass.):

“Mr. President, the Armenian Genocide is sometimes called the “forgotten genocide.” But every April, we come together to remember and commemorate the Armenian Genocide and to declare that we will never forget.

“In order to prevent future genocides, we must clearly acknowledge and remember those of the past. For many years the Congress has had before it a resolution which clearly affirms the factual reality that the Armenian Genocide
see SCHIFF, page 7



Ambassador John Heffern with Principal Dr. Hosesep Torossian

Ambassador Heffern and Students of AGBU Alex and Marie Manoogian School Meet

SOUTHFIELD, Mich. and YEREVAN — Inspired by watching the United States Ambassador John Heffern’s participation in a “flash mob” on Northern Boulevard in Yerevan, AGBU Alex and Marie Manoogian School High School Principal Dr. Hosesep Torossian took the initiative of writing the ambassador, requesting a meeting with Manoogian School students during its biennial visit to Armenia.

On April 14, the ambassador accepted and warmly greeted the students and accompanying faculty at the attractive US Embassy. Heffern, in his affable manner, made everyone feel at home. Though he hails from Missouri, the ambassador talked about his fondness for Michigan, having graduated from Michigan State University on his way to a distinguished career in the US Foreign Service. From the very beginning he stated that students could ask any questions and that he would not shy away from providing candid answers.

In his introductory remarks the ambassador stressed the urgency of establishing a democratic country with respect for human rights and the rule of law, the need to increase investment and trade, the enviable growth in the IT sector, while facing the troubling trend of emigration of Armenians to Russia. The Ambassador praised the unique history and countless archaeological sites of Armenia, which he described as a boon to tourism from all over the world. He advocated “crowdfunding” programs to help local governments, farms, schools, and orphanages. He pointed out how Armenians in Armenia are entrepreneurial, industrious and hard-working, but that there was still a need to encourage them to become more self-reliant.

During the question-and-answer session, Heffern addressed the Karabagh conflict, discussing the hardened positions of the Armenian and Azeri sides involved in a zero-sum game, and the difficult conversations which the American, French
see HEFFERN, page 6



Ambassador John Heffern with the Alex and Marie Manoogian students

Assembly Submits Testimony to Congress Supporting Added Assistance to Armenia, Safeguarding Kessab Armenians

WASHINGTON — Last week, the Armenian Assembly of America submitted testimony to the House Appropriations Subcommittee on State-Foreign Operations and Related Programs on the proposed Fiscal Year (FY) 2015 US budget, reported the Assembly. Also last week, the Assembly reported that the Congressional Caucus on Armenian Issues, led by Co-Chairs Rep. Frank Pallone Jr. (D-NJ) and Rep. Michael Grimm (R-NY), sent a letter to Subcommittee Chairwoman Rep. Kay Granger (R-KY) and Committee Ranking Member Nita Lowey (D-NY) highlighting US foreign aid priorities for Armenia and Artsakh.

“The Armenian Assembly urges the Subcommittee to allocate not less than \$40 million in assistance to Armenia, including at least \$1.7 million in Foreign Military Financing, and \$600,000 in International Military Education Training assistance to Armenia,” the Assembly testimony reads in part. “In addition, the Assembly requests at least \$5 million in assistance to Nagorno Karabagh as well as directing funds to the largely Armenian populated Samtskhe-Javakheti region of Georgia and ensuring assistance to Christian and other minority communities at risk in the Middle East, and especially given the recent developments in Kessab, Syria.”

Emphasizing the recent crisis in Kessab, and following through on its letter to



Bryan Ardouny.

President Obama and meeting with the US Department of State, the Assembly reported to Congress: “Further, given the troubling reports that Turkey allowed Al-Qaeda linked fighters to cross its border into Syria, a consequence of which residents of the predominantly Armenian populated town of Kessab fled for their lives, we call upon Congress to take immediate action to safeguard the Armenian community there.”

The testimony touches on nine key areas where the Assembly believes the United States can and should play a pivotal role in advancing American and Armenian-American interests in the region: assistance to Armenia; assistance to Nagorno Karabagh; assistance to the Samtskhe-Javakheti region of Georgia; assistance to Christian minorities at risk in the Middle East; Section 907 of the Freedom Support Act; the Nagorno Karabagh peace process; US military assistance; energy security and the importance of reaffirming the US record on the Armenian Genocide.

“The Assembly looks forward to working with Members of Congress regarding these critically important issues and renews its call for the urgent need to take concrete measures to safeguard the Armenians of Kessab, and all minority communities at risk in Syria and elsewhere in the Middle East,” said Assembly Executive Director Bryan Ardouny.



COMMUNITY NEWS

NAASR to Hold 60th Annual Assembly May 17

BELMONT, Mass. — The National Association for Armenian Studies and Research (NAASR) will hold its 60th Annual Assembly of Members on Saturday, May 17, at the NAASR Headquarters, 395 Concord Ave. The Assembly will convene at noon and lunch will be served at 12:15 p.m.

Following lunch, there will be a presentation by NAASR Board Member Shushan Yeni-Komshian Teager, who will give a talk titled “The Krajians of Aintab: A Family Story and a Slice of Armenian History.”

Teager, born in Beirut, Lebanon, and a longtime resident of Belmont, has researched, written and published a book chronicling her family history. According to NAASR Director of Academic Affairs Marc A. Mamigonian, she “has paid an affectionate tribute to her ancestors and done an admirable work of historiography. Readers will encounter information and anecdotes touching on many fascinating and under-examined aspects of late Ottoman commercial, social, and political life. It is a wonderful instance of a family history opening up windows into the larger history through which the family lived.”

Following the luncheon and lecture, those attending the 60th Assembly of Members will be informed about NAASR’s ongoing efforts to further Armenian studies, research and publication. Reports will be presented by the Board of Directors on organizational, informational, academic and financial matters; and the election of Directors will be held. In addition, there will be reports by the Assembly’s special committees on Nominations, Constitution and Rules, New Business and Resolutions, and Auditing.

The Assembly will be chaired by NAASR Board Chairman Raffi P. Yeghiayan of Lexington, and Stephen Kurkjian of Manomet will serve as secretary of the Assembly.

The Assembly sessions are open to all NAASR members in good standing (with dues paid for the current calendar year), who “have the right to attend, be heard, and vote.” Non-members may attend as observers.

The luncheon and subsequent program are open to the general public. However, luncheon reservations should be made by May 14 by calling NAASR or e-mailing hq@naasr.org.

Peabody Commemorates Genocide with Solemn Program

PEABODY, Mass. — On Friday, April 25, a flag-raising ceremony was held for the 99th commemoration of the Armenian Genocide, led by Mayor Edward A. Bettencourt in front of the Peabody City Hall.

After the Armenian National Anthem and the American National Anthem, the ceremony continued inside.

Bettencourt said, “The Armenian Genocide ceremony has been held in Peabody for the past 26 years. I remember one day during my senior year at Peabody High School, Mayor Peter Torigian came and spoke to my history class. It was the first time I had heard about the Armenian Genocide. His stories of family tragedy and incredible courage in the face of such evil were so moving, and he spoke with such passion and emotion. It left a mark on me.”

He also spoke about last year’s Boston



Rep. John Tierney

Marathon bombing, as well as the need to keep those victims in mind, as well as those of the Armenian Genocide and Holocaust.

Father Vasken A. Kouzouian of Holy Trinity Armenian Church of Cambridge and Rev. Father Stephan Baljian and Deacon Avedis Garavanian, of North Andover’s St. Gregory Armenian Apostolic Church gave the blessing and performed the requiem service to memorialize the victims of the Armenian Genocide.

Rep. John Tierney (D-Mass.), one of the speakers, said, “The Armenian Genocide was a premeditated, deliberate, systematic murder of 1.5 million innocent people which created fear and intimidation with the intent to destroy generations of Armenian families. This was not a war, but an armed government. This was a brutal crime against humanity. These events should not be forgotten, but they were not captured on film,

cell phones or shown over the Internet by news media for the entire world to see. Division and hatred can only lead to more division and hatred as the genocides proved. Although the atrocities of the past cannot be erased, we must take the opportunity to reaffirm our commitment to the achievement of liberty and peace worldwide.”

Then Bettencourt invited the representative’s Armenian-American wife, the keynote speaker, Patrice (Eremian) Tierney. “This is a personal issue to me and my family, as you have learned over the years. Although I was not raised with any knowledge of ancestors lost or that the horrific events of 1915 took place. Maybe my grandfather remained silent until he died because, according to my aunt who attended this commemoration with me two years ago, there were never any discussions as to what happened to my grandfather or his parents. Never would she ask about the scars on his back. My aunt is 87 years old, and until accompanying me here two years ago, had not known much about the Genocide and she was very moved by what she heard,” she said.

Then she added how she learnt from a Christmas card that received from her father’s first cousin, George Yeremian who lives in Newburyport, her grandfather had dropped the “Y” from his name.

“Why? I will never know. Again, a fact that I never knew about but had always wondered why there were Yeremians buried in a Medford cemetery but our family grave did not have the Y on the name. Or that a second cousin existed and living close by, except for his introductory Christmas card.”

She said when she married her husband and was introduced by him to the Torigian family, she learned about the Armenian Genocide.

“My gratitude is to Mayor Peter Torigian who thoughtfully included me in his annual commemoration. My knowledge of the horror was enhanced over the last 17 years, not by members of my own family, but by Mayor Torigian’s dedication to a genocide that was not in the history books for me to learn about as a child,” she said.

She shared moments that touch her feelings “Several years ago, at this event, a woman in attendance approached me with a type-written introduction of her husband, Sarkis Saryan, who was 86 at the time and a witness to the events of 1915. He escaped after several attempts at climbing down from a donkey that his mother had repeatedly placed him on, on his grandmother’s back. For seven-and-a-half decades he remained



Outside the Peabody City Hall, with Mayor Edward Bettencourt raising the Armenian flag

silent until his wife asked him to break the silence and tell his story in his own words. His story is very compelling. One thing that Sarkis and Mayor Torigian both continued to do was to keep a loaf of bread in their freezers as their mother’s had done because their mother’s memories of hunger could not be forgotten because bread was always at a premium when there was no wheat or flour available to them for long periods of time.”

She concluded, “I know that in remembering the Armenian Genocide we are also mindful of what’s happening in the world today. The violence that is happening in South Sudan, and elsewhere around the globe... There must be hope for peaceful and just resolutions, although the atrocities of the past cannot be erased.”

Bettencourt read the Proclamation and gave it to Former Mayor Late Peter Torigian’s wife Jackie Torigian.

Bettencourt in his closing remarks said that Peabody will continue this tradition of commemoration and next year will have special ceremony for the centennial of the Armenian Genocide.

After the ceremony, a light luncheon was served in the Wiggin Auditorium sponsored by the City Hall and the Mardiros Family.

— Ani Babaian

Hai Guin Scholarship Association Holds Annual Luncheon, Fashion Show

NEWTON, Mass. — The Hai Guin Scholarship Association of Boston, a non-profit organization that has been dedicated to providing educational and charitable assistance to Armenian students for 79 years, will host its Annual Luncheon and Fashion Show at the Boston Marriott Newton on Saturday, May 10, beginning at 11:30 a.m.

This year’s event will showcase exquisite red carpet fashions from Lorraine Roy at Bella Sera of Danvers. Voted “Best of the North Shore” for five years running, the boutique features an unmatched collection of special occasion gowns for women of every size.

Co-chairs for the event are Christine Berberian, Vanessa Ovia and Debbie Saryan. Committee members include Linda Abkarian, Sandra Aghababian, Margaret Atamian, Isabel Der Avedesian, Lisa Dorian, Andrea Garabedian, Joyce Guleserian, Ida Kolligian, Mary Kupjian and Marilyn Takvorian.

The Hai Guin Scholarship Association of Boston provides annual awards to Armenian students who are permanent residents of Massachusetts attending college within the continental United States. In a time when

the cost of education continues to soar out of sight, the awards have always been a welcome source of assistance to a stellar group of students. Undergrad and graduate students are eligible for consideration and recipients are chosen based on academic performance, financial need and Armenian community involvement.

Annual charitable gifts have also been presented by the organization to the Armenian Sisters’ Academy, the St. Stephen’s Armenian Elementary School and the Soorp Tarkmanchatz School (Jerusalem). Additionally, each year a student from Watertown High School is presented an award for excellence in Armenian studies. Finally, the Hai Guin Scholarship Association has added the Armenian Heritage Park (Boston) and Mer Doon (Yerevan) to its list of recent beneficiaries.

For more information regarding tickets or to request a 2014-2015 academic year application, visit their Facebook page, Hai Guin Scholarship Association of Boston. Requests for applications may also be sent by mail to Hai Guin Scholarship Association, PO Box 509, Belmont, MA, 02178.

Ambassador Heffern and Students of AGBU Alex and Marie Manoogian School Meet

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and Russian-led Organization for Security and Cooperation Minsk Group are conducting. Regarding the pressing issue of emigration, the Ambassador pointed out the lack of jobs, the big divide between the wealthy and the poor, and unfairness in the economy and society, leading to frustration and the desire to leave. To stem the tide, he suggested establishing more political space and less dominance of the economic system by the oligarchs. He mentioned that repatriation should be seriously considered in order to bring back skills and values to the homeland. When asked how he gets along with his fellow ambassadors in Azerbaijan and Turkey, Ambassador Heffern candidly remarked that while they do not always agree, that they work together on reconciliation issues. He expressed disappointment that the 2009 Armenian-Turkish Protocols were not ratified. He commended President Serge Sargsian for signing it, despite the widespread criticism he received from Armenians in the homeland and in the diaspora. He emphasized the importance of opening the border between Armenia and Turkey.

On the Genocide issue, Heffern stated that the Obama Administration knows and is listening to the voices emanating from Armenians regarding the 100th anniversary of the

Genocide, adding that there are many other political factors involved, and that Obama has made his position clear on this issue. Thus the priority has been placed on reconciliation. He stressed that Armenia is a friend of the United States and conducts military exercises and training with NATO, but that it remains an ally of Russia.

When asked how Michigan State University had shaped his future, the Ambassador spoke about his interest in history, political science, and diplomacy, as an undergraduate student at MSU’s James Madison College. He also shared some personal information - that his mother was from India, that his family had lived in India and China, that he had learned Chinese, and that he had served in the US Embassy in Tokyo, Japan. It’s worth mentioning that five of the 2014 Manoogian School graduates have been offered the opportunity to matriculate at MSU.

Torossian presented Heffern, a Spartan basketball and football (2014 Rose Bowl champion) fan, with a MSU cap and cup, and a Manoogian School sweatshirt. He also gave the Ambassador a copy of A Legacy of Armenian Treasures from the Alex and Marie Manoogian Museum in Southfield. Torossian thanked Heffern for taking time from his busy schedule to meet with the eager Manoogian School students; a group picture was taken for posterity.



COMMUNITY NEWS

Armenian Assembly Welcomes AJC Statement Urging Turkey to Address Armenian Genocide

WASHINGTON – The Armenian Assembly of America welcomed this week the statement by David Harris, executive director of the American Jewish Committee (AJC), calling on Turkey to “address the realities” of the Armenian Genocide.

“In a month of solemn remembrance of the atrocities of the last century – from the 20th anniversary of the start of the Rwandan geno-

and Jewish peoples in the last century, reminding us today that the failure to address genocide and its denial is to condone it. We all deeply appreciate it and look forward to the trend continuing with other groups, governments, and increasingly among Turks and their government,” Krikorian remarked.

The full AJC statement appears below:

In a month of solemn remembrance of the atrocities of the last century – from the 20th anniversary of the start of the Rwandan genocide to the annual commemoration in Israel and the United States of the Holocaust – we pause in mournful tribute to the memories of the estimated 1.5 million victims of the Meds Yeghern, the Genocide of Armenians, committed in the final years of the Ottoman Empire.

AJC calls on the government of Turkey, a republic founded years after the empire’s dissolution, to not only provide at long last full

access, as the government has pledged, to the historical record of that dark period of mass murder, forced relocation, death marches, sundering of families, and other abuses – but to address the realities the records reveal. The process of healing of this nearly century-old wound can only begin when the truth of that sorrowful era is confronted.

“As our organization has testified and written on various occasions, the atrocities committed against ethnic Armenians under Ottoman rule were an unspeakable crime against humanity,” said AJC Executive Director David Harris. “For the often-invoked but too-seldom-fulfilled phrase ‘Never again’ to have real meaning, the full details of that period must be acknowledged.”



David Harris, executive director of the American Jewish Committee

cide to the annual commemoration in Israel and the United States of the Holocaust – we pause in mournful tribute to the memories of the estimated 1.5 million victims of the Meds Yeghern, the Genocide of Armenians, committed in the final years of the Ottoman Empire,” the AJC statement reads in part.

“On behalf of the Armenian American community, we welcome the significant statement by David Harris and the AJC,” said Assembly Board Member Van Krikorian. “This is not the first time David has publicly used the term ‘Armenian Genocide’ as he has not only been a friend but a principled voice for universal values for decades now. This statement is truly significant considering the timing, and reflects the painful experience shared by the Armenian



BOSTON – On April 24, Armenians from around the state gathered at the Armenian Heritage Park for a candlelight vigil in commemoration of the 99th anniversary of the Armenian Genocide. (Photo by Matt Conti/NorthEnd Waterfront Newsletter)

“We identify with the core message of the 2002 Pulitzer Prize-winning book, *A Problem from Hell: America and the Age of Genocide*, by then-Harvard University Professor, and now US Ambassador to the United Nations, Samantha Power, that history must be faced, the dictates of conscience heeded – or we are doomed to endless brutalities by the powerful against the weak,” Harris added.

“As successive horrors painfully remind us,” Harris concluded, “we each bear the obligation of remembrance as a necessary step toward preventing such acts in the future. We stand in solidarity with people of good will everywhere in marking the 99th anniversary of the onset of the Meds Yeghern – the first, and not the last, instance of ethnic massacre and genocide of the 20th century.”

Fresno Board of Supervisors Passes Genocide Resolution

FRESNO – On Thursday, April 22, the Fresno County Board of Supervisors unanimously passed a resolution sponsored by Supervisor Henry Perea and Supervisor Debbie Poochigian proclaiming “the 24th Day of April 2014 as the 99th commemoration of the Armenian Genocide, a day known as the Remembrance of the Armenian Genocide.” Poochigian has joined Perea in sponsoring similar resolutions every year since being elected to the Fresno County Board of Supervisors in 2008. Accepting the resolution was Dr. Sergio La Porta, professor of Armenian Studies at California State University, Fresno.



Above, from left, are: Supervisor Henry Perea, Dr. Sergio La Porta and Supervisor Debbie Poochigian.

New York City Radio Interviews Mark Momjian about Armenian Genocide

WASHINGTON – Earlier this month, former Armenian Assembly of America board member Mark Momjian, Esq. discussed the Armenian Genocide on WBAI/NYC 99.5 FM Radio, reported the Assembly. On Sunday, April 13, Momjian appeared on the show “Beyond the Pale,” which explores cutting edge Jewish culture and offers local, national, and international political debate and analysis from a Jewish perspective.

A native of Philadelphia, Momjian is a lawyer in private practice for over 25 years. An advocate for social justice and civil rights on behalf of numerous communities, including the indigent and homeless, Momjian is the current chair of the Armenian Center at his alma mater, Columbia University. He previously served on the Board of Directors of the Armenian Assembly of America.

Adam Sacks, host of “Beyond the Pale,” provided a compelling introduction of the Armenian Genocide before welcoming Momjian. He began with a compilation of audio testimony from then-presidential candidate Barack Obama, Senate Foreign Relations Chairman Robert Menendez (D-NJ), former US Ambassadors, Holocaust scholars and academics attesting to the Armenian Genocide, alongside Ankara’s genocide denialism. Sacks also drew parallels between the Armenian and Jewish experiences of the last century. “The 1.5 million Armenian victims of World War One constituted the same percentage of casualties of that conflict as did the Jewish victims in the Second World War, between 10-15 percent. Furthermore, one-third of the worldwide Armenian population was murdered, the same percentage as the worldwide Jewish population during the Holocaust,” Sacks said. “And what was unique, what one can claim as similar to the Holocaust, is that it was the culmination of centuries-long persecution.”

Sacks told the Assembly: “Perhaps no two peoples mirror each other as Jews and Armenians. Claimed poetically both as people of dreams long with imagination, faithful to their distinct religious traditions in which they

were brave pioneers. They faced the challenge of living as minorities in a 20th Century where their great gifts in many endeavors enriched their surrounding worlds. Rather than inaugurating an unprecedented period of prosperity, the greatest calamity in their long histories of suffering: planned, systematic genocide befell both groups leaving the surviving communities and the world as a whole racked with incomprehension, trauma and sadness. It is my sincere belief that whatever sway temporary geostrategic realities hold, the deeper truths and affinities of the Armenian and Jewish experience will fully persevere and reveal themselves in both history and memory.”



Mark Momjian

Members of Congress Issue Statements of Support on April 24

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did occur. I was a strong and vocal supporter of the genocide resolution for my entire tenure in the House and I am proud to have joined Senator Menendez and Senator Kirk in introducing the Armenian Genocide resolution in the Senate.

“This is the 99th anniversary of the Armenian Genocide, yet the suffering will continue for Armenians and non-Armenians alike as long as the world allows denial to exist and prevail. It is long overdue for the United States to join the many other nations that have formally recognized the Armenian Genocide.

“That is why today’s passage by the Senate Foreign Relations Committee of the genocide resolution in advance of the 99th anniversary is so historic. I was proud to vote for this important resolution today in Committee, and I will keep fighting to ensure its passage by the full Senate. I will continue to work with the Armenian-American community to build a prosperous and bright future for the Armenian people.

“We must continue to stand with our ally

Armenia to address the challenges they face. Armenia is confronted with blockades by Turkey and Azerbaijan – one of the longest lasting blockades in modern history. The United States must provide increased assistance to Armenia, work to promote trade with Armenia, and work to reestablish the Turkish government’s commitment to normalized relations. And the United States should work to facilitate a closer relationship between Armenia and Europe.

“The Armenian people are true survivors. Despite repeated invasions, loss of land and the loss of between one-half and three-quarters of their population in the genocide, the people of Armenia have prevailed.

“We have a shared responsibility to ensure that the Armenian people are able to build their own independent and prosperous future. Together we can continue to build an Armenia that is respected and honored by its allies and neighbors. But for this to happen, there needs to be universal acknowledgement of the horror that was the Armenian Genocide.”



OBITUARY

AP Photo Legend Harry Koundakjian Dies

KOUNDAKJIAN, from page 1

Born in Syria, Koundakjian finished high school in Lebanon. He began work there for the Associated Press in the 1960s, first as a freelancer and then as a staffer in 1969.



Harry Koundakjian

He photographed news events throughout the Middle East and Europe, including war in Lebanon, the Olympics in Germany and the 1978 wedding of King Hussein of Jordan to his fourth wife, Queen Noor.

In 1979, he and his family moved to New

York City, where he was a photo editor for the AP until his retirement in 2006.

Project SAVE Armenian Photograph Archives and the Armenian Library and Museum of America (ALMA) held a 50-photograph exhibition of his photographs in 2005.

He tenaciously fought for his pictures, even if that meant evading bullets.

He was nicknamed Harry the Horse by his British bodyguard and fellow British soldiers when he was in Aden, South Yemen, because of his propensity for hard work.

A longtime advocate for Armenian issues, Koundakjian recounted many colorful anecdotes from the years he covered the Lebanese Civil War (1975-1991), various natural disasters in Asia, as well as, a slew of Armenian events and commemorations around the world.

"There is no doubt in my mind that press photography is one of the most important [fields] in modern times. You cover events from beginning to end. From the happiest to the most harrowing days in someone's life-you see all. Nothing can escape your eyes. You click the shutter and you make history," Koundakjian told an audience in 2005.

Koundakjian's career was his life and his colleagues became close family friends, his daughter said.

"He brought his career home in a positive way," she said.

Survivors also include his wife and a son.

Lola Koundakjian said a celebration of her father's life and a funeral are being planned.



Associated Press Beirut photographer Harry Koundakjian at work

Onnic Marashian

NEW YORK — Archbishop Oshagan Choloyan and the Religious and Executive Councils of the Prelacy of the Armenian Church of America announced this week the death of Onnic Marashian. He was 90.

He was awarded the Prince of Cilicia insignia in recognition of his many years of service to the Armenian Church and the Eastern Prelacy. He died on April 22, after a short illness.

A National Funeral (Azkayin Taghoum) took place at Sts. Vartanantz Church, 461 Bergen Boulevard, Ridgefield, NJ, on Saturday, April 26. Interment followed at George Washington Memorial Park in Paramus, NJ.

Marashian is survived by his wife, Vergine, his daughter Hera and her husband John Williams; son Mardic and his wife Carol; and five grandchildren. A son, Asbed, and daughter-in-law, Sosa, and a brother, Joseph, predeceased him.

Marashian served on the Prelacy's Executive Council for many years, beginning in 1979 and continuing on until 1999. During his tenure he

served as the council's secretary for a number of years and as its chairman from 1994 to 1999. He served as a delegate to the World General Assembly in Antelias, was elected to the Central Executive in Antelias, and served as a delegate to the Prelacy's National Representative Assembly. The Prince of Cilicia medal, the highest civilian award offered by the Holy See of Cilicia, was presented to him in May 1996.

Marashian was a specialist in the energy industry and was employed for many years by the McGraw-Hill Company, where he served as editor-in-chief of the publication Platt's Oilgram. Following his retirement, McGraw-Hill retained him as a consultant for many years. He wrote numerous articles in his field of expertise where he was an internationally recognized, respected, and honored colleague.

In lieu-of-flowers donations may be made to the Eastern Prelacy of the Armenian Apostolic Church of America and to Sts. Vartanantz Armenian Apostolic Church.

Kenneth K. Kazanjian

BEDFORD, Mass. — Kenneth K. Kazanjian, of Bedford, formerly of Watertown, died on April 23.

He was the husband of the late Alice Kehaian of Binghamton, NY and the late Margaret Kevorkian of Waukegan, Ill., and dear friend of Jacqueline Hacinli of Jupiter, Fla. He leaves his children, Gail Crews and her husband, Paul, of Macclenny, Fla. He was the father of the late Peter Kazanjian and his wife, Anne, of Burlington, Mass. He leaves also his grandchildren Derrick Holian and Daniel and Kristen Kazanjian. He was the brother of Joyce Telian and the late Evelyn Artinian; brother-in-law of Harry Telian and the late Vartan Artinian, Gyzak Kehaian and George Kevorkian.

He also leaves many nieces and nephews.

He was the proprietor of Kazanjian Tailors and Cleaners in Arlington for 47 years. He was a life-long member of Saint Stephen's Armenian Church, having served as chairman and member of its Board of Trustees for several years. He also served as a delegate to its National Representative Assembly for 16 years and he was on the first Steering Committee for the Armenian Cultural and Educational Center in Watertown.

He was a member and past Commander of Corporal Paul S. Marsoubian Amvets Post 41. He served with the 26th Infantry Division in France during World War II and received the Bronze Star, Purple Heart and Prisoner of War medals.

Funeral service will be at Saint Stephen's

Armenian Church, on Friday, May 2 at 11 a.m. Visiting hours at the Aram Bedrosian Funeral Home, 558 Mount Auburn Street, Watertown on Thursday from 6 - 9 p.m. Memorial gifts may be made Saint Stephen's Armenian Church. Interment will be at Ridgelawn Cemetery in Watertown.

Reporter Wanted

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40th Day Observance for Very Rev. Raphael Andonian

BELMONT, Mass. — A special 40th-day commemoration will be held for the Very Rev. Raphael Andonian, the late pastor of Holy Cross Armenian Catholic Church, on Sunday, May 11, at the church. The solemn High Mass will take place at 10:30 a.m. A luncheon will follow at the church hall.

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OBITUARY

Lucy Ishkanian Tankian

NEW YORK – Lucy Ishkanian Tankian, a prominent pianist and benefactor of the arts, died on April 20. She was 80.

She was a dedicated supporter of the Eastern Prelacy.

An accomplished concert pianist, she was recognized internationally. She generously gave her time and expertise to the artistic community through her support of the education and careers of young artists. In 1992 she founded the Juilliard-Komitas friendship program that offers gifted students from the Komitas Conservatory in Yerevan, Armenia, the opportunity to study at The Juilliard School in New York.

The Wake/Homecoming service took place

Thursday, April 24, at St. Illuminator's Cathedral, with the Funeral service, officiated by Archbishop Oshagan, on Friday, April 25, at St. Illuminator's Cathedral. Interment was at Cedar Grove Cemetery in Queens.

Ishkanian is survived by her husband, Hagop Tankian. A brother, Vahe, predeceased her.

She was a member of the Prelacy's Musical Armenia committee that each year selected an artist or artists to be featured at the annual Musical Armenia concert in Carnegie Hall's Weill Recital Hall.

In appreciation of her life-long dedication to the Prelacy and the arts, the Prelacy honored her at a luncheon on May 2, 2011,



Lucy Ishkanian Tankian receiving an award from Archbishop Oshagan Cholyan.



Lucy Ishkanian Tankian

where Choloyan decorated her with the Queen Zabel Award, one of two high honors awarded by the Eastern Prelacy.

She gave her first recital at age 7, two years after becoming the youngest student ever accepted to the Juilliard Preparatory Division. She continued her education in the college division of Juilliard, graduating with both a bachelor's and master's degrees. She also went on to complete requirements for a PhD degree at Columbia University.

In lieu-of-flowers donations may be made to St. Illuminator's Cathedral or to the Juilliard Armenian Scholarship Fund.

Music Great Konstantin Orbelian Dies

LOS ANGELES – Konstantin Aghaparoni Orbelyan, an Armenian pianist, composer, head of the State Estrada Orchestra of Armenia, died on April 24. He was 85.

He was a People's Artist of USSR (1979), Union of Soviet Composers Board member, Armenian Composer's Union secretary since 1983, Vice-President of All-Soviet Musical Society of the USSR. He was the uncle of his namesake Constantine Orbelian.

A talented composer of classical music (symphony, ballet, chamber ensemble), jazz, and popular songs, Orbelian was one of the brightest phenomena of Soviet and post-Soviet musical culture. He received many awards in the former Soviet Union, the Armenian Republic and the international musical community. He received the highest accolades from the three Soviet presidents: the award "For Services to Labor" from Khrushchev; the title "People's Artist of the USSR" from Brezhnev, and, finally and the "Friendship of Peoples" prize from Gorbachev in 1989.

Orbelian was acknowledged as a pianist and improviser since he was in his teens. At age 15,



Konstantin Orbelian

he was invited to perform with the Armenian State Pop Orchestra and subsequently became its conductor. Under his able direction for 36 years, the orchestra rose to become one of the most accomplished of its kind. As a result, it came to represent Soviet jazz in more than 30 countries in Eastern and Western Europe, the Near East, Africa and Southeast Asia. One of the Orchestra's highlights was its American tour in 1975, which included 25 concerts in major cities from coast to coast.

Graduating in composition and piano from Edward Mirzoyan's class of composition at Yerevan's Komitas Conservatory in 1963, Orbelian achieved early recognition for his String Quartet, winning the coveted First Prize at the International Competition in Moscow, where the chairman of the Competition's panel of judges was the composer Dmitri Shostakovich.

As a result, Orbelian's rising talent and success were noted with great appreciation by the doyen of Armenian music of the time, Aram Khachaturian. Next followed the premiere of Orbelian's *First Symphony* in Moscow's Tchaikovsky Hall by the USSR State Symphony Orchestra. For this symphony, Orbelian was awarded the title "Laureate of the All-Union Competition." His subsequent *Celebration Overture* achieved the same acclaim. His ballet symphony *Immortality* was composed in 1975 and performed by the Yerevan Opera and Ballet Theater. This work, too, won First Prize in an All-Union Competition devoted to music for the stage.

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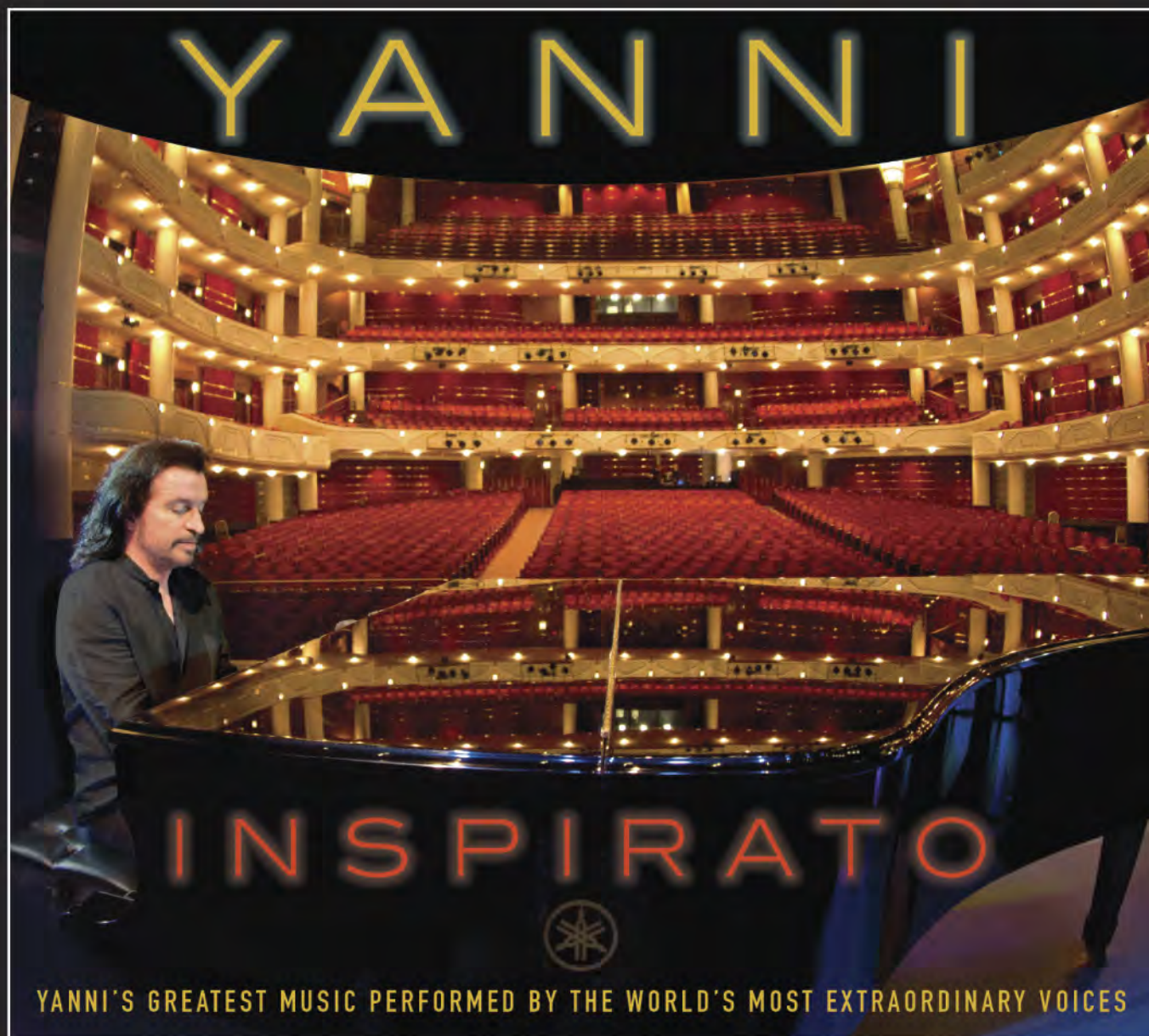
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New York
METRO

The 99th Commemoration of the Armenian Genocide Brings Out Thousands to Times Square

TIMES SQUARE, from page 1

Appearing year after year, key US politicians took to the stage once again to reaffirm their commitment to the Armenian cause and did not fail the community in expressing their firm support of genocide recognition, most recently in the US Senate Foreign Relations Committee, which this month passed Resolution 410, demanding that Turkey acknowledge the Armenian massacres in 1915 as “genocide.”

Sen. Robert Menendez (D-NJ), the committee’s chair, said the resolution was passed in “undisputed terms” and described the Armenian Genocide as “one of the darkest events in human history.”

“We must not make it the policy of the United States to turn our back on man’s inhumanity to man,” said Menendez. “And anyone who tries to create a nuanced approach serves only to empower those around the world who would use genocide as a weapon of war.”

Commending the Armenians for building a strong community in America, Sen. Chuck Schumer (D-NY), recalled the founder of the



Senator Chuck Schumer speaking at the Times Square commemoration

Armenian Genocide Times Square commemoration. Sam Azadian, who introduced the senator to the history of the Armenian Genocide when he was a newly elected assemblyman.

“I come here because I believe from the bottom of my heart it is our sacred duty to speak out against the terrors of the past,” said Schumer. “Remembering the innocent victims of the *Medz Yeghern* helps as we strive to shine the full light of day on this historic tragedy to ensure it never happens again.”

Rep. Frank Pallone Jr. (D-NJ) praised the Armenians on their relentless efforts towards Armenian Genocide recognition and noted the movement’s success worldwide and in Turkey, where scholars and human rights advocates are opening sincere dialogue about the Armenian Genocide. He spoke of continued commitment not only towards genocide recognition, but humanitarian aid to the Republic of Armenia and Nagorno-Karabagh as well.

“Continue to do all of your hard work,” said Pallone. “Even though it’s the 99th year, we will not stop until we see Genocide recognition.”

Following in the footsteps of his father, former Councilman Peter Vallone, Paul Vallone (D-NY) said he was proud to support the commemoration in Times Square every year. Vallone greeted the crowd in Armenian and asserted his commitment to working with Albany and Congress to make sure the Armenian Genocide is recognized.

“Armenia is our family,” said Vallone. “It’s our faith, our culture, our language and as we stand here in the middle of the greatest city of the world, we see that the Armenian Genocide has not been forgotten.”

Traveling straight from Armenia, where he attended Armenian Genocide commemorations there, Rep. Eliot Engel (D-NY) said that Turkey needs to publicly accept the atrocities without the use of convoluted statements. “A genocide is a genocide and the sooner Turkey recognizes and apologizes for it, the better off everyone will be.”

Rep. Carolyn Maloney (D-NY) also expressed her efforts in Congress for US recognition of the genocide and the importance of stating it by

its factual name. “Genocide is genocide is genocide,” said Maloney. “Ninety-nine years is enough. We must join the world community in recognizing the genocide and the atrocious actions of Turkey.”

Remarking that it is the “responsibility” of

Papazian. “We are winning the battle and we shall persist until our martyrs are properly recognized.”

The program culminated in an emotional performance by R-Mean that brought all of Times Square to its feet as members of the audience



Areni Choir and the Higher Brass Band singing the Armenian National Anthem

the US to recognize the Armenian Genocide, former New York City Comptroller, John Liu, said to continue the fight until an apology is achieved. “Whether it has been one hundred or two hundred years, this gathering will continue to take place because we know the truth and the rest of the world has to do so as well.”

“We have been here for a quarter of a century,” said Dr. Dennis Papazian, professor emeritus of history at the University of Michigan and past grand commander of the Knights of Vartan, as he looked out onto the crowd in front of him in Times Square. “And we will come back for another quarter of a century until justice is done for the Armenian people.”

Also in his remarks, Papazian provided a response to the unprecedented statement of Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan, issued on April 23, in nine languages, in which the politician encouraged Turks and Armenians to talk to one another about the past and once again ignored the truth of the Armenian Genocide. Papazian, who has worked towards genocide recognition for decades, said he remains hopeful.

“I have witnessed a change in Turkish society where people can discuss the Armenian Genocide without being thrown in jail,” he said. “Honest Turkish scholars are now organizing



R-Mean encourages the crowd to wave peace signs during his song *Open Wounds*

conferences to shed light on the truth.”

Dr. Papazian also commented on President Barack Obama’s April 24 message, which he considered his “strongest statement” yet, despite the fact that the president continues to insist on referring to the Armenian Genocide as *medz yeghern*.

“Our efforts haven’t been in vain,” asserted

as well as passersby waved peace signs in the air to the lyrics of his song, *Open Wounds*. Hailing from Los Angeles, the young Armenian-American rapper has been an active supporter of Genocide recognition and in spreading awareness outside of the Armenian community, in particular with reputable individuals in the music and entertainment industry. He hopes to educate the masses through hip-hop music, which he considers to be the “voice of the oppressed, the voice of the struggle and the voice of the youth.”

“The goal of the song *Open Wounds* and the Open Wounds 1915 Movement is to raise awareness for the youth who are our future and the non-Armenians who enjoy listening to good music with a positive message,” said R-Mean. “In a sense, this is doing the exact opposite of what the Turkish government has been trying to do all these years by erasing it from the history books.”

Archbishop Oshagan Choloyan, Prelate of Armenian Church of America (Eastern), gave the invocation and Archbishop Khajag Barsamian, Primate of the Diocese of the Armenian Church of America (Eastern), delivered the benediction. Other clergy in attendance included Very Rev. Thomas Garabedian of the Armenian Catholic Eparchy of the United States and Canada and Rev. Haig Kherlopian of the Armenian Evangelical Church of New York.

Susan Rosenblatt from the *Jewish Press* delivered remarks as well as Lisa Kradjian, grand matron of the Daughters of Vartan. Delivering remarks on behalf of the co-sponsors of the commemoration were Kim Yacoubian (AGBU), Alex Karapetian (Armenian Assembly), Hagop Ajemian (Hunchakian Party), Dr. Vagheanag Tarpinian (ADL) and Anahid Urguluyan (ANCA).

In his speech, Tarpinian said, “Without exception, every village, city or country, where Armenians reside, feel the effects of uprooting and dispersal from a homeland where we lived before the perpetrators. This premeditated and orchestrated act remains to be acknowledged by subsequent Turkish governments despite a wealth of evidence. Some suggest dialogue and reconciliation. We also have met Turkish intellectuals suggesting rapprochement. Dialogue and eventual understanding is possible only if

the starting point is based on the acceptance of the Genocide and not the questioning of its occurrence. How do you enter into a dialogue with a government that pursues an agenda of continued persecution in Aleppo, and most recently in Kessab?”

He added, “We are also waiting for the day when the Turkish Government and the nay sayers release themselves from the burden of history. Armenians everywhere, with one voice, fists clenched and raised, ask for justice and acknowledgment, not only from the Turkish government, who continues to adopt the policy of denial, but also demand from all other governments who to this day deny the reality of the Armenian Genocide. And in the same vein, it is incumbent upon the parties to respectfully cooperate for the common holy pursuit. The Armenian Democratic Liberal Party will stay faithful to its vow, and devotion, in keeping the current generation vigilant towards our claims, and to continue in our inherent path of our Great Dream.

The winners of this year’s Knights of Vartan essay contest were announced at the program: Alina Toporas, 1st place (Drexel University, Philadelphia resident), Elizabeth Ray, 2nd place (St. Agnes Academy, Memphis resident), and Christopher Artun, 3rd place (Townsend Harris High School, Little Neck, NY resident).

The Areni Choir, under the direction of Dr. Armine Vardanian, sang the national anthems of the United States and Armenia, as well as God Bless America while the Higher Brass Band, under the direction of Samuel Nersesian, accompanied the singers.

The Armenian Radio Hour of New Jersey, led by director Vartan Abdo, streamed the event live in video format worldwide, reaching over



A large crowd gathers in Times Square to commemorate the Genocide

20,000 people, with the assistance of his dedicated volunteer staff.

The 99th Armenian Genocide commemoration in Times Square was organized by the Mid-Atlantic chapters of the Knights and Daughters of Vartan, and was co-sponsored by the Armenian General Benevolent Union, the Armenian Assembly of America, the Armenian National Committee of America, the ADL-Ramgavars, and the Armenian Council of America. Participating organizations included the Diocese of the Armenian Church of America (Eastern), Prelacy of the Armenian Church, Armenian Missionary Association of America, Armenian Presbyterian Church, the Armenian Evangelical Church, the Armenian Catholic Eparchy for US and Canada and numerous Armenian youth organizations, including the Armenian Church Youth Organization of America, the Armenian Youth Federation, the Tekeyan Cultural Association, Homenetmen Scouts, Hamazkayin Cultural Association, Noyan Tapan of Brooklyn, NY, Rutgers University Armenian Club, Columbia University Armenian Club and the Armenian Students Association.

Dr. Mary Papazian, President of Southern Connecticut State University and Armen McOmber, New Jersey attorney, served as MCs.

Easter Celebrated at St. Vartan Cathedral

NEW YORK — Worshippers gathered at St. Vartan Armenian Cathedral on Easter Sunday greeted one another with the joyous words, “Krisdos haryav ee merelotz! Orhnyal eh harootiunun Krisdoseel!”

More than 2,000 people participated in services at the cathedral on April 20. Archbishop Khajag Barsamian, Primate of the Diocese of the Armenian Church of America (Eastern), celebrated the Divine Liturgy and delivered the

Dr. Kevork Niksarli was the godfather of the dove-releasing ceremony. Niksarli and his wife, Alvina, recently made possible the renovation of classrooms at the St. Vartan Armenian School, where their daughter is a student.

“We are proud to have been a part of this Easter celebration,” Kevork Niksarli said. “It was wonderful to be out there on this beautiful spring day, to release the doves, and to see them fly freely like the Armenian spirit.”

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

Students of the Vanush Khanamiryan Dance Academy, established by Tovmas Harutyunyan, performed. Also performing were young members of the Armin String ensemble, under the direction of Diana Vasilyan.

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



Young dancers perform following services on Easter Sunday.

Easter homily.

“With the beginning of spring, we see renewal in nature,” Barsamian said. “And today, when we are gathered to celebrate the Resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ, we feel spiritually renewed.”

He went on to speak about the Christ’s victory over death, and how the miracle of the Resurrection brought new hope and life to humanity.

“We are called to live our Lord’s Resurrection in our own lives—as individuals, as a people, as the Armenian Church,” Barsamian said. “And we can do this by opening our hearts to Christ and following His example.”

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

Easter was preceded by Holy Week.

At St. Vartan Cathedral on Palm Sunday, April 13, the Very Rev. Mamigon Kiledjian, dean of St. Vartan Cathedral, celebrated the Divine Liturgy and conducted the Turun-Patzek or “Door Opening” service.

On April 17, Great and Holy Thursday, the Divine Liturgy was celebrated in the morning. In the evening, the “Washing of the Feet” ceremony was held, which reenacts Christ’s humble service to his disciples during the Last Supper.

The Order of the Crucifixion of Christ and the Order of the Entombment of the Lord (or Taghoom Service) were held on Great and Holy Friday, April 18.

On Easter Eve, Saturday, April 19, Kiledjian celebrated the Divine Liturgy. Students from the Diocesan Khrimian Lyceum read scriptures and sang in the choir.



Dr. Kevork Niksarli and Archbishop Khajag Barsamian release doves on the cathedral plaza on Easter.

St. Peter Women’s Guild Marks Centennial

Dinner Dance Celebration Set to Commemorate Century of Service

WATERVLIET, N.Y. — Described in the past as the strongest, most organized and active group in the parish, the St. Peter Women’s Guild, is celebrating its centennial.

Then called the Ladies’ Aid Society of St. Peter, it was formed on May 4, 1914, 15 years after the establishment of the parish in Green Island, NY, with Maritza Doumanian serving as the first chairwoman of this newly-organized church auxiliary. Today, Sharon Foley takes the helm leading the now “Women’s Guild” into another century of service.

“It is an honor to be serving as Chairwoman of the Women’s Guild as it observes its 100th Anniversary. It is a testament to the dedication,

itage to strengthen the Armenian Church and community and the greater community in which the Guild serves. With that in mind, the dinner dance celebration will also kick off a 100-member campaign that will conclude at year’s end. Currently, the St. Peter Women’s Guild has more than 60 members. The year-end goal is to reach 100 members strong from 18 and older.

“May the Guild have many wonderful years ahead as we serve our church and remember our cultural heritage through our Armenian sisterhood,” expressed Foley.

All proceeds for the evening will benefit “Mer Doon,” an organization formed in 2005 to help break the cycle of dependency for impoverished young women in Armenia by providing education, job training, a family environment and instilling leadership skills all while teaching self-



St. Peter Ladies’ Aid Society during its initial years of establishment in the Capital District community of upstate New York.

strength and love of our predecessors that the Guild has remained strong and serves the needs of our St Peter Armenian Apostolic Church,” stated Foley.

This May 17, the St. Peter Women’s Guild will commemorate this milestone with a dinner dance. This event will be held at the Desmond Hotel & Conference Center in Albany, with dinner followed by dancing to the big band sounds of the local Greg Nazarian ensemble.

The mission of the Women’s Guild is to nurture the souls and minds of women of the Armenian Church by linking generations together through faith, service and cultural her-

sufficiency.

“We invite you to participate in this evening of our community coming together to celebrate the 100 years of proud accomplishments and dedicated service by the Women’s Guild of the past and present,” encouraged parish priest, Fr. Stepanos Doudoukjian. He added, “I personally congratulate and thank each and every present day member for their ongoing commitment to this inspiring organization, while remembering and honoring those who helped to lay the solid foundation for the St. Peter Women’s Guild.”

Contact the Church office to find out more about ticket prices and reserving seats.



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ARTS & LIVING

Arts & Living

ACF Announces the Completion of Phase V Of Armenian Periodicals Microfilms Project

ARLINGTON, Mass. — Ever since its founding in 1945, the Armenian Cultural Foundation (ACF) has been recognized as one of the major repositories of invaluable literary treasures in Armenian, English, Farsi, French, German, Italian, and Russian. The Foundation library houses a unique collection of both the Old and New Worlds Armenian periodicals. In April 2000 the Foundation released Bibliography of the Armenian Periodicals, Monographic Series and Reference Materials (in Armenian). This resource book (out of print) includes detailed information about 144 periodicals titles, 35 yearbooks, 193 monographic series; and reference materials comprising 51 dictionaries, 44 bibliographies, chronologies, encyclopedias, and atlases.

In October 2002 the ACF embarked on a major project: microfilming its extensive Armenian periodicals collection. The purpose was two-fold: to preserve the rich cultural heritage and history embedded in its late 19th- and early 20th-century Armenian periodicals, and to share this rich resource with the scholarly and lay community.

To date the foundation has undertaken and completed five phases of the project, 150 reels in all as follows:

Phase I: included Biwzandion (Constantinople, 1896-1915) vols. 1-19, Azatamart [Freedom Battle] (Constantinople, 1909-1915), vols. 1-7; Dzayn Hayreneats' [Voice of the Fatherland] (New York, 1899-1907), vols. 1-7; Azg [Nation] (Boston, 1908-1920), vols. 2-14; Azg-Pahak [Nation-Guard] (Boston, 1921-1922), vol. 1: a total of 47 reels.

Phase II: Arewelk' [East] (Constantinople, 1884-93, 1898-1912), Chakatamart [Combat] (Constantinople, 1920-1923), Surhandak [Messenger] (Constantinople, 1889, 1900, 1910) Hayrenik' [Fatherland] (Constantinople, 1891-1896, 1909-1910), Masis (Constantinople, 1878-1884, 1896-1898), Arawot [Morning] (Constantinople, 1924), Armenia (Marseille, France, 1904-1923), and Marmara (Constantinople, 1924-1925); a total of 52 reels.

Phase III: Lusaber [Bearer of Light] (Cairo, 12/1/1904 - 11/28/1908), Pahak [Guard] (Boston 1915-1921), Martkots (Paris 1932-1934), Tsaghik [Flower] (Constantinople 1899-1902), Razmik [Warrior] (Bulgaria 1905-1908), and Bamber [Herald] (Istanbul 1933), a total of 9 reels.

Phase IV: Hayreniki Dzayn (Yerevan) [1981-1991] Dzayn Hayreneats (Constantinople), v. 10-11; Hayk' (New York), v. 1-5; Nor Keank' (London), v. 1-5; Vem (Paris), v. 1-6; Tsaghik (Constantinople), v. 2, 4, 16-17; and Amrots' (Paris, 1936-37), v. 2 (total of 12 reels) was completed in October of this year. The microfilmed titles are available for purchase from the ACF office as single reels, by periodical title, individual phase package or the entire collection. Complete sets of the microfilms are also available at the several major academic institutions holding Armenian studies chairs.

Phase V of the project, a total of 21 reels including Nayiri (Beirut) vol. 2-25 (1953-54 to 1980-83); P'aros (Cairo, Egypt) vol. 2 (1901); Azat Bem (Alexandria, Egypt) vol. 1-3 (1903-1904); Arew (Alexandria, Egypt) vol. 1 (1908); and Azat Mitk' (Cairo, Egypt) vol. 1, (1936-37), was released last week.

Complete (150 reels) or partial sets of microfilms of all five phases are available for sale to individual scholars and students of Armenian Studies. Academic institutions with Armenian programs in particular are invited to contact the Foundation regarding the procurement policies.

For more information and details contact the ACF office Monday-Friday 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. or write to the Armenian Cultural Foundation, 441 Mystic Street, Arlington, MA 02474-1108.



Peter Balakian, master of ceremonies for the 2014 Anahid Literary Award Ceremony

Anahid Award Ceremony Celebrates Armenian-American Writers

NEW YORK — Five writers of Armenian descent were honored at the Anahid Literary Awards ceremony in an event hosted by the Armenian Center at Columbia University and held on Friday, April 4, at Faculty House.

Welcoming remarks were made by master of ceremonies Peter Balakian, Rebar Professor of Humanities, Colgate University, who touched on the significance of the Anahid Literary Prize, which was established 25 years ago by an anonymous donor who valued the literary tradition in relation to the continuity of Armenian culture and history.

"[The donor] must have had a sense that Armenian-American culture in the 20th century was a force of revitalization after the catastrophic events of genocide, dispersion, exile, and resettlement," said Balakian, chair of the Anahid Award Committee and the award-winning author of many books, including his memoir *Black Dog of Fate*.

He spoke about novels by Armenian-American writers during the mid-century, as well as a new generation of Armenian-American writers who emerged after World War II, including novelist Laura Kalpakian, who was the first writer to receive the Anahid Award.

"The Anahid Award continues to be an occasion for the Armenian community to be self-aware, to take note of the works of literature that are being written now, to ingest those works, and to make them part of a culture's vitality and legacy," said Balakian.

This year's recipients, including Aris Janigian, Arthur Nersesian, Patricia Sarrafian Ward, Lydia Peelle (in absentia) and Michael Zadoorian, were introduced by Balakian and author Nancy Kricorian, both of whom are prior recipients of the Anahid Literary Award. Each of the authors, who are writers of novels or short fiction, read selections of their works, including *The Bullet Collection*, by Sarrafian Ward, who was born and raised in Beirut and is of American-Armenian-Danish heritage; Nersesian, a native New Yorker who is the author of nine novels, including *The Swing Voter of Staten Island*, *Suicide Casanova*, *Manhattan* and the cult-classic *The F\$#k-Up*; Janigian, who was born in Fresno and is the author of two novels *Bloodvine* and *Riverbig* and co-author of *Something From Nothing*; and Zadoorian, born in Detroit and is the author of *Second Hand* and *The Lost Tiki Palaces of Detroit*. Balakian read excerpts from Lydia Peelle's *Mule Killers* and *Reasons for and Advantages of Breathing*.

A reception and book-signing followed, where guests had the opportunity to meet with the prize-winners.

"The Armenian Center is very proud to host the winners of the Anahid Literary Award," said Mark Momjian, Esq. (CC'83, L '86), chair of the Armenian Center at Columbia University. "Columbia University is a place that celebrates poetry and literature, and the list of Columbia alumni is quite remarkable—Garcia Lorca, Welty, Kerouac, Ginsberg, Wouk, as well as two Columbians who served as U.S. Poet Laureate (Louise Gluck and the late Anthony Hecht). The Armenian Center is honored to play a role in recognizing writers of Armenian ancestry who build on this tradition."



Past winners authors Peter Balakian and Nancy Kricorian with the 2014 Anahid Literary Award recipients (from left: Peter Balakian, Patricia Sarrafian Ward, Arthur Nersesian, Nancy Kricorian, Michael Zadoorian and Aris Janigian; Lydia Peelle in absentia).

New Book Recounts Lifelong Struggle to Learn about Author's Father after Genocide

BOYNTON BEACH, Fla. — Author Douglas Kalajian believes the title of his new book conveys a dilemma that will be familiar to many Armenian-Americans born after the tumult that dislodged their parents and grandparents from their homeland.

BOOKS

Stories My Father Never Finished Telling

Me: Living With The Armenian Legacy of Loss And Silence, recounts Kalajian's attempts to draw out his father's story as a survivor of the Armenian Genocide.

The author's father, Nishan Kalajian, was born in Dikranagerd (Diyarbakir) in 1912. For him, the Genocide was not a distant, historic event but the defining reality of his life. He lost his mother, his home and everything familiar before being cast into the world alone.

"I knew that much from an early age," the author said. "But I desperately wanted to know more: How he survived, how he kept his wits and his faith, how he moved forward without being consumed by bitterness and hate."

His father volunteered none of it. "He dealt with his most painful memories in a most Armenian way, by pushing them aside," Kalajian said. "My mother warned me never to ask him about any of it, and I never did — at least, not directly."

But whenever an opportunity presented itself, he would approach the topic obliquely and with great caution. The results were often frustrating but occasionally fascinating.

"When he responded at all, my father often shared only a scrap or two before changing the subject or retreating to his books," Kalajian said. "It was left to me to figure out the importance of each scrap, and to connect it to whatever had come before or that came after."

This is how the life-long conversation between father and son continued, in fits and starts, yielding scattered pieces of a puzzle that the author is still trying to complete more than 20 years after his father's death.

"As a writer, I felt compelled to tell as much of my father's story as I could because I believe it holds important lessons," Kalajian said. "But I also wanted to tell my own story about growing up in the shadow of a great cataclysm with a father who would not speak about what he had experienced."

The book's subtitle "conveys my challenge in learning to appreciate a complex cultural inheritance that is rich and wondrous but also dark and painful to contemplate."

Most important, Kalajian stressed that he wrote the book for his daughter and her generation in hopes that they'll figure out "how to celebrate the best parts of that inheritance while finally vanquishing the pain."

A retired journalist, Kalajian worked as an editor and writer for the *Palm Beach Post*, the *Miami Herald* and the *New York Daily News*. He lives in Boynton Beach, Fla., with his wife, Robyn. They produce *TheArmenianKitchen.com*, a web site devoted to Armenian cooking.

Kalajian is also author of the nonfiction book *Snow Blind*, and co-author of *They Had No Voice: My Fight For Alabama's Forgotten Children*.

Stories My Father Never Finished Telling Me is his first book with an Armenian theme, and also the first book Kalajian has published independently. It is available from Amazon.com and other online book vendors, or it can be ordered from any bookstore.



Dickranian School Choir Performs at St. John Armenian Church's Palm Sunday Mass

LOS ANGELES – On Sunday, April 13, the School Choir of TCA Arshag Dickranian School (ADS) performed during the Divine Liturgy at St. John Armenian Apostolic Church in celebration of Palm Sunday. The Mass was led by Rev. Manoug Markarian.

Accompanied by fourth-grade teacher Violet Tatoian, and junior high math teacher Maria Melkumyan, ADS Choir Members, who ranged from fourth through seventh grade levels, prepared themselves as attendants filled the church. School Principal Dr. Manoug Seraydarian, and Board Chairman George K. Mandossian, and parents of many students, were among attendants of the Mass as well, and were all excited to see ADS students perform in the ceremony.

The Mass started with the prayers and blessings of Fr. Manoug Markarian, which was then followed by hymns and songs performed by the Church Choir and the School Choir. The ADS students were excited to finally sing the hymns they had put a lot of effort to learn in school at church. Next, Markarian initiated

the traditional walk around the church and the students of Arshag Dickranian School participated in the walk by following him with beautifully decorated candles as they sang and chanted prayers. Church attendants were impressed with the impeccable performance of the hymns by the ADS Choir since they are very difficult chants to learn, especially for children. They looked at the ADS students with awe and astonishment.

After gathering inside the church once again, Markarian offered attendants his final blessings and thanked the choir for their participation in the Mass, praising the students for their flawless recitation of Armenian Church hymns. He continued by inviting the School Choir to perform at every last Sunday of each month. The school was pleased to positively respond to the pastor's invitation.

After Mass, ADS students, parents, teachers, school staff and churchgoers gathered in the church courtyard wishing each other a Happy Palm Sunday. The ADS choir members were showered with compliments.



TCA Arshag Dickranian School Choir

Philadelphia 'Walks Thru' the Bible

PHILADELPHIA – On Saturday, March 29, more than 80 people gathered at Holy Trinity Church in Cheltenham to attend the second part of a journey begun a year ago when "Walk Thru the *Old Testament*" attracted a similarly large crowd.

Back by popular demand, last month's program invited participants to explore the *New Testament* with the help of mime, memory words, spiritual reflection, group reviews and – despite the grandeur and beauty of the subject – just plain fun.

"Walk Thru the *New Testament*" was co-sponsored by the Diocesan Department of Christian Education and Holy Trinity Church. Thanks to the leadership of Holy Trinity's pastor, Rev. Hakob Gevorgyan; the Parish Council; Parish Council vice chair Jeanette Der Hagopian and Adult Christian Education director Nancy Basmajian, the parish helped plan

and promote the event, hosted breakfast and lunch and financially underwrote more than half the costs.

"This was such a beautiful and gratifying partnership of parish and Diocese working together," noted Diocesan Christian Education Director Elise Antreassian.

Parishioners arrived full of energy and anticipation and were checked in, handed their name tags and textbooks and guided to a breakfast buffet. Gevorgyan opened the program with a prayer for "Christ's enlightening guidance and empowering spirit... help us not only be listeners and hearers of the Word, but enthusiastic doers as we go home from the joy and learning of this one single day to live the *Gospel* each day, day after day."

Instructor Roger Petersen, a professor at Cairn University in Langhorne, Penn., for more than 30 years and a teacher for the Walk Thru

the *Bible* organization for 35, mesmerized the audience from the first moment. Between brief explanations of content, he led participants through gestures and catch phrases to help them learn and remember the major events in Jesus' life as told in the four Gospels and in the early church drawn from the Book of Acts. Petersen called on a host of talents, assuming different voices and even employing ventriloquism. At one point he had one of the youngest participants Jonah Manoukian, 11, designated as the city of Capernaum as others were assigned the job of impersonating the Sea of Galilee, the towns of Nazareth and Bethlehem, the twisting Jordan River and the Dead Sea (actors were appropriately deadpan).

Petersen would pause at times in prayerful

reflection and apply biblical lessons to daily life. As a result, many people discovered connections between the Gospel and life that were instructive, comforting and inspiring.

The seminar drew the participation of an ecumenical group: parishioners from four Armenian congregations, visitors from local Catholic and Protestant churches, Parish Council members, Sunday School staffers and pastors from the region.

The enthusiasm of the audience, their glowing evaluations and pledges of spiritual commitment at day's end, affirmed not only the Diocesan vision of Christian education as a never-ending, life-long process, but Holy Trinity's.

Gevorgyan is already preparing for a special parish retreat scheduled for May 17, the last of several programs he has organized with Basmajian on "Living the Gospel of Christ." The Diocese is planning four more "Walk Thru"



The seminar allowed parishioners to explore the *New Testament* through mime and gesture.



Seminar participants pose for a group photo.

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ARTS & LIVING

Ararat-Eskijian Lecture To Focus on Armenians, Assyrians in Iran's Urmia Region

MISSION HILLS, Calif. – On Sunday, May 4, Dr. Nicholas Al-Jeloo will give a lecture titled, "Armenian and Assyrian Cooperation and Co-Habitation in Iran's Urmia Region," at 4 p.m. at Ararat-Eskijian Museum-Sheen Chapel 15105 Mission Hills Road.

Al-Jeloo's illustrated lecture represents a rare opportunity to learn about the intertwined history of the Armenians and Assyrians of the Urmia region. A great deal of information and research has enlightened understanding of Armenians from Isfahan, Iran; however, little information exists in English about Armenians living in other parts of Iran, including Armenians in Tabriz, a prosperous and important urban community. Much of the information about Armenians on the Urmia plain comes from Assyrian memoirs and histories.

Like the Assyrians, who were largely based in villages throughout the Middle East, the Armenians of the Urmia plain led agrarian lives for much of the 19th century. While the church institutions remained separate and the communities maintained separate languages, there was considerable intermarriage, dual language understanding, and cooperation on many fronts – commercial as well as political. The Minassian family, for example, who held the wheat wholesale market, married into an Assyrian family from Golphashan, one of the richest towns of the Urmia plain.

Al-Jeloo is an Australian-Assyrian whose high-quality photographs have been used in art and history books about the Middle East, such as in Christoph Baumer's *The Church of the East: An Illustrated History of Assyrian Christianity* (I.B. Tauris, 2006). He received his PhD in Assyrian/Syriac studies from the University of Sydney this year and holds an MA from Leiden University.

For more information about the event, e-mail Ararat-eskijian-museum.netzero.net. Admission free; donations are welcome.

Cher Dazzles At TD Garden

By Brenda Tavitian

Special to the Mirror-Spectator

BOSTON – Nice Armenian girl Cherilyn Sarkisian, also known as Cher, performed for a sold-out crowd on April 9 at TD Garden. She had last performed in this venue 10 years ago.

She opened up to a cheering crowd with her latest hit, *Woman's World*. Next came *Strong Enough*.

She looked great at 67 and told the audience that she could still fit into her skimpy *Turn Back Time* outfit. She joked that she is almost 100 percent and let the audience know this was to be her farewell tour. With Cher, we will have to see what her next move is as she is still going strong.

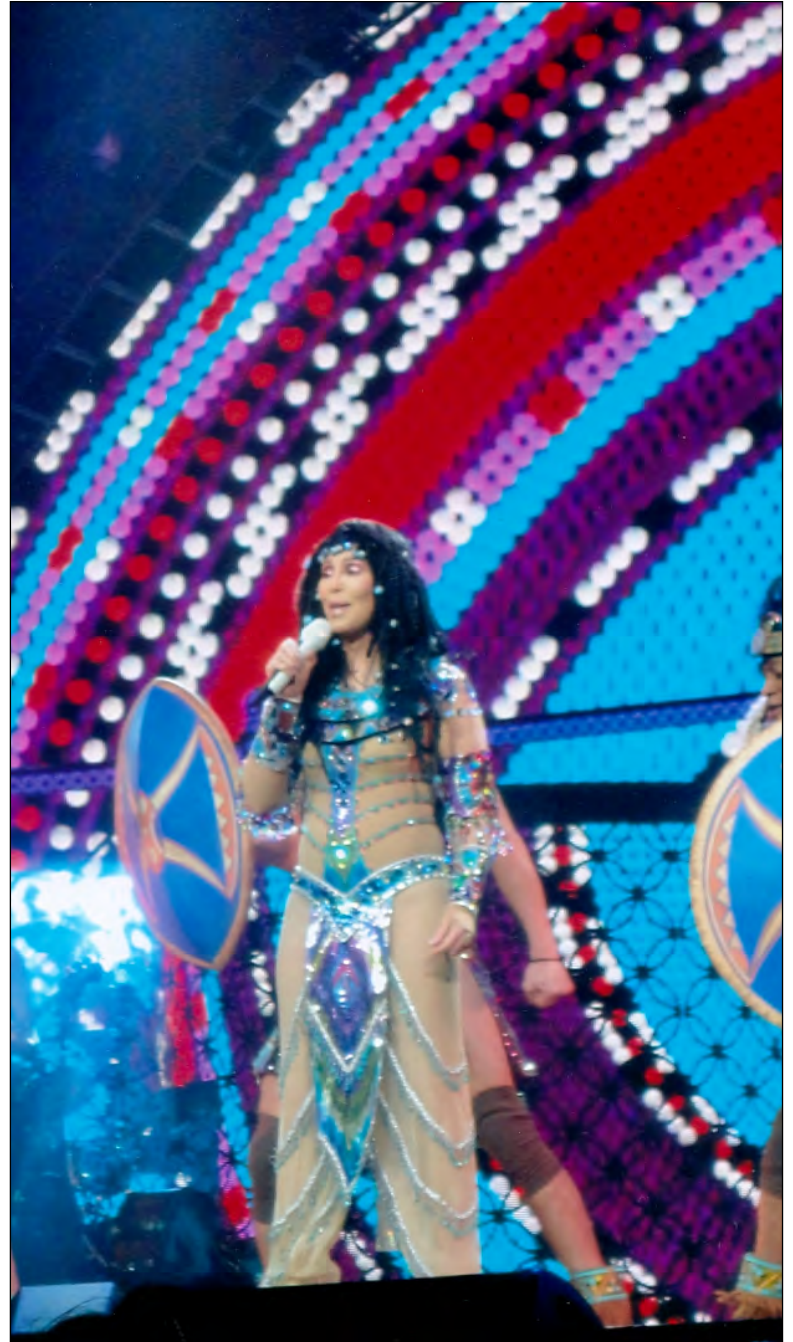
Then she sang, *Dressed to Kill*, changing her outfits as many as 10 times during the evening. Videos and dancers entertained the audience between sets.

Coming out in a 1960s outfit, she sang *The Beat Goes On* and *I Got You Babe*, with a touching video of the late Sonny Bono, carrying his share of the duet. This brought back many memories for the audience. Then came her 1970s hits, *Half-breed* and *Gypsies, Tramps and Thieves*, sung with strong force and appropriate costumes.

From her hit movie, "Burlesque," she performed *Welcome to Burlesque*, followed by cameras going off to capture her elaborate set. After that, she invited the audience to join her in singing *If I Could Turn Back Time*.

She ended the evening singing *Believe* and the Miley Cyrus song, *I Hope You Find It*.

After a successful 50-year career, Cher continues to be a class act that can entertain and enchant her audience.



For Cher, age is only a number.

TCA MHER MEGERDCHIAN THEATRICAL GROUP
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ALL RISE,
COURT
IS NOW
IN SESSION

JUSTICE WILL BE SERVED
OCTOBER 2014

AIWA San Francisco Affiliate Supports Armenian Women Veterans

SAN FRANCISCO – Many Armenian women fought in the Artsakh Liberation War in Nagorno-Karabagh years ago. Some of them served as nurses and saved lives. Others simply joined to fight in the front-line for their country. A few miraculously survived and returned home to a future threatened by poverty, unemployment, and loneliness. The once-courageous fighters are vulnerable and shattered human beings today, barely making ends meet, living in extreme poverty, devastated, neglected and with no hope for a better future. They do not receive any support from the Armenian government, no recognition for their contributions to the war, and continually struggle to create stability for themselves and their families.

With the assistance of a local news agency in Yerevan and Sona Manukyan, acting on behalf of Armenian International Women's

Association San Francisco (AIWA-SF) in Armenia, the affiliate was able to locate some of the mistreated veterans to provide immediate financial support for their basic needs, with a longer-term objective in mind, to help them and their families in a more meaningful way in the future.

Manushak Abgaryan, among the survivors, raised her twin daughters, Arusyak and Suzanna, without any support after losing her husband. The vivacious teenagers have music aspirations, attending Avet Gabrielyan's Art School in Yerevan, with a big dream to have their own music studio one day. The mother continually struggles to pay for their tuition at the art school, and reached out to AIWA-SF to give the girls the opportunity to complete their music education.

With the contribution of long-standing supporters of AIWA-SF, Rouben and Sofia Amirbekians, the organization was able to provide tuition assistance to the disadvantaged teenage girls, who will now be able to continue their music education, and graduate next year, with the hope of realizing their dreams.

These heroes have a perspective that is outside of the accepted role of an Armenian woman, and the AIWA-SF team is proud to be able to help them, reviving the hope that was lost long ago.

To meet these brave and at the same time vulnerable women, and listen to their stories in this short video, produced by an Armenian teenager, Max Gouchian, who has been a tremendous support to AIWA-SF in this undertaking: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uuTabGrWg2Y>.

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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 Road, San Marino. Reception to star at 6 p.m.; Dinner at 7 p.m. For further information contact: Maral Habeshian, maral@armeniatree.org, (818) 913-2563, visit www.ArmeniaTree.org.

MASSACHUSETTS

MAY 3 – Spring Food Festival, Armenian Church at Hye Pointe, 110 Main St., Haverhill. Dinner served noon to 7 p.m., choice of losh or Kheyma with pilaf, salad and bread. Adults \$15, children \$7. String cheese, choreg, cheers boereg, spinach pie, Armenian pastries and more for sale. For information, call the church at (978) 372-9227.

MAY 5 – St. James Men's Club, Monday, Speaker: Dr. Rojeh Melikian, chief resident in orthopedic surgery, Mass. General Hospital, Topic: "The Practice of Orthopedic Surgery: Overview And Surgical Examples." Losh Kebab and Kheyma 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.

MAY 8 – Cocktails & Conversation, sponsored by Project SAVE Armenian Photograph Archives, Inc., 6:30-8:30 p.m., Karoun Restaurant, 839 Washington St., Newton; mezza & cash bar, free and open to public; RSVP: 617-923-4542 or archives@projectsave.org, paving the way toward 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 Murgditchian 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

MAY 24 – 96th anniversary celebration of Armenian Independence sponsored by Lowell "Aharonian" ARF, 6 p.m., St. Gregory Church, 158 Main St., North Andover; dinner, entertainment and speaker, Baku pogrom survivor Anna Turcotte, author, Nowhere, a Story of Exile. \$20 adults, \$10 students.

MAY 29 – Friends of Holy Trinity 1000 Club Spring Dinner and Drawing, 6:30 p.m., Charles and Nevart Talanian Cultural Hall, Holy Trinity Armenian Church, 145 Brattle St., Cambridge. Everyone is invited to a losh kebab and pilaf dinner followed by the monthly drawing at 8 p.m., plus five additional cash prizes. "One-time" numbers will be sold the night of the dinner. Special offer: purchase five "One-time" numbers for \$20 and save \$5. Chance to win a One-Year 1000 Club Membership for those attending dinner. Dinner tickets on sale at the door; donation, \$7.99. For further information, contact the Church Office at 617.354.0632, or email office@htaac.org.

JUNE 6, 7 – Armenian Memorial Church Annual Fair, open Friday from 5 to 8 p.m., serving kebab meals, entire fair open Saturday from 11 a.m. to 7 p.m. Armenian meals served all day. Armenian delicacies bake sale, silent auction, craft fair, indoor yard sale. Armenian Memorial Church, 32 Bigelow Ave., Watertown, wheelchair accessible. Admission free. For information, call 617-923-0498.

JUNE 16 – The Gregory Hintlian Memorial Golf Tournament sponsored by Holy Trinity Armenian Church at Marlborough Country Club, Marlborough; 9:30 a.m., registration; 11 a.m., "Shot Gun." Join us for a day of golf - player's fee: \$175 (includes hospitality, lunch, dinner, green & cart fees, prizes and gifts) or just dinner and a social evening (\$50 per person). Limited to 128 players. Tournament and tee sponsorships available. RSVP deadline, June 9. To register or for further information, contact the Holy Trinity Church Office, 617.354.0632, or email office@htaac.org

SEPTEMBER 26, 27 – Armenians and Progressive Politics Conference returns to Boston. Keynote speaker will be Noam Chomsky. Details to follow.

NOVEMBER 8 – Armenia Tree Project's 20th Anniversary Celebration. Reception and dinner at the Grand Atrium of the John Joseph Moakley United States Courthouse overlooking the Boston Harbor. Reserve the date, additional details to follow. For information about ATP's programs, visit www.ArmeniaTree.org

Cartoonish, Crudely Staged Dramatization of Disturbing Crime

By Dennis Harvey

LOS ANGELES (*Variety*) – Ineffectual and cartoonish, the movie "Perfect Sisters" dramatizes a case that shocked Canada a decade ago, when two teenage girls killed their alcoholic mother in order to be free of the chaos wrought by her perpetual irresponsibility – a well-planned crime that several of their classmates knew about before it happened. TV producer Stan Brooks' first directorial feature provides scant psychological depth, drawing its characters and staging their incidents in crude fashion, despite superficial production gloss. A limited U.S. theatrical launch April 11 is unlikely to significantly heighten visibility for a pic already available on demand and destined primarily for small-screen sales.

Based on *Toronto Star* reporter Bob Mitchell's true-crime tome (which is purportedly far less sympathetic toward the protagonists), Fabrizio Filippo and Adam Till's script introduces us to high schoolers Sandra (Abigail Breslin) and Beth (Georgie Henley of "The Chronicles of Narnia" films) as they, along with a little brother, suffer yet another move to new digs. The cause is, once again, their divorced mom Linda (Mira Sorvino) and her penchant for the bottle, which inevitably causes her to lose jobs and get them evicted. When she acquires a new boyfriend (James

Russo) to pay the bills, his abuse and general creepiness hardly improve the family's lot beyond the realm of rent.

Figuring they might actually be better off without Mom – but with an insurance settlement – the sisters hash out potential matricidal scenarios with best friends Justin (Jeffrey Ballard) and Ashley (Zoe Belkin), though whispers quickly spread beyond that close circle. Nonetheless, the real-life figures (whose names aren't used here, since they were still minors when convicted) managed to pass the deed off as an accidental death for a time. They remain controversial figures in Canada, since they were incarcerated for only a few years each and subsequently attended universities on scholarship.

The unimaginative telepic tenor is varied – but not improved – by broad bits in which Sorvino plays various caricatured "ideal" mother figures. Mixing the heroines' puerile fantasies with their much-less-than-ideal reality is a potentially interesting idea, but "Perfect Sisters" is no

"Heavenly Creatures," to say the least. Nor does the cliched dialogue or just-OK cast (in which Henley comes closest to creating a rounded character) help ground disturbing events in a credible everyday milieu a la "Razor's Edge" and other fact-inspired tales of teen homicide. Still, the pic somewhat improves in its last third,



Abigail Breslin, left, and Georgie Henley

when the deed is done and the girls prove very poorly equipped to keep their secret.

Shot in Winnipeg (the actual events took place in Mississauga, Ontario), the picture is competent but rather flavorless in all tech/design departments.

The film is produced by Juliette Hagopian and Damian Ganczewski.

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COMMENTARY

COMMENTARY

Erdogan's Condolences: Bombshell or Misfire?

By Edmond Y. Azadian

Knee-jerk discounting is not the answer to Turkish Prime Minister Erdogan's condolence to the survivors and the decedents of the Armenian Genocide, because his overture comes to break the ice on the silence of an entire century. However, before the Turkish prime minister's message reaches the Armenian martyrs, offering them a well-deserved "peace," it has to resonate in the dark annals of Turkish history. The Turks have concocted their own narrative of the Genocide to comfort their conscience and to obfuscate the truth in the world community.

Over the years, they have constructed a monstrous castle of lies and fiction, inhabited by a dormant demons of the "deep state," which feed on the spirit of their warrior ancestors, such as Genghis Khan, Tamerlane and Fatih Sultan Muhammed – with a killer instinct bent on destroying civilizations in order to enjoy the treasures left behind by vanquished and vanished nations. That killer instinct has survived feeding on history textbooks indoctrinating the perpetrators' version of history to justify the desecration of the houses of worship and the distribution of the victims' wealth as "abandoned property."

Before rejecting outright the apology, it is important to analyze the message, to highlight what he said and especially what he did not say, and above all, why his statement was released on the eve of the 99th anniversary of the Genocide.

One of the Turkish commentators stated that Erdogan is a man of surprises, but reviewing his record, we would agree that the expression of condolence to the Armenians is perfectly in line with his past policies.

When Mr. Erdogan's back is against the wall, he can act predictably, like when he apologized to the Dersim Kurds who were massacred after the 1937 revolt. By apologizing to the Kurds, he tried to kill a few political birds at the same time: to reassure the Kurds that he is serious in bringing a negotiated settlement to the long-festering Kurdish grievances, while at the same time delivering an oblique rebuke to the opposition Republic Party which was in power when the atrocities were committed. Although a long way from apologizing to the Armenians, he is up to solving some burning political issues with his appeal to the Armenians.

Commenting in the April 24, 2014 issue of *Today's Zaman*, columnist Bulent Kenes states: "[In Turkey] usually a thing is done out of necessity or taken but not because of our principles or attachment to moral or official values or our respect on ability to have empathy for others entail it or because we are democrats. And more often than not, what needs to be done is done at the eleventh hour. Moreover, and worse still, sometimes what needs to be done is not done with sincerity but the pretense of sincerity."

This statement pretty much defines the true value of Erdogan's actions. But others explore Turkey's predicament further to come to absolute conclusions. One such statement has appeared in a commentary on Al-Jazeera by Cengiz Aktan, a senior scholar at Istanbul Policy Center and a former director at United Nations. Mr. Aktan believes that Erdogan has come up with the statement because "Turkey has long lost the battle of truth."

Continuing his biting statement, Mr. Aktan further states: "In Turkey, thorough knowledge of what really happened and the consequences of a countrywide disaster is cruelly lacking. The memory was scrupulously distorted and minimized by the state. For the sake of comparison, there are more than 26,000 volumes published abroad against less than 20 serious accounts in Turkey."

That statement also answers Erdogan's persistence in calling for the formation of a joint committee of scholars to "find out" the historic truth, like reinventing the wheel.

The prime minister almost achieved his intended results by triggering a barrage of commentaries in the media, ranging from the sublime to the ridiculous. (Certainly he did not expect a very receptive reaction from the Armenians.) The sublime is French President Francois Hollande's courageous statement and the ridiculous being an Istanbul-Armenian, subservient-minded community leader, Bedros Siringolu's statement, which after rehashing the

official Turkish line about the Genocide "nominates" Erdogan for a Nobel Peace Prize.

Mr. Hollande said in a speech on the 99th anniversary commemoration in France: "This tragedy has a name, just one name and that is Genocide." He further made a solemn commitment to attend the centennial in Armenia, to create a memory center for Armenian history in France, to restore the law on Genocide struck down by the French Constitutional Court last year and support the Swiss government's fight in the European Court of Human Rights against the Perincek verdict. While commenting on Erdogan's condolences, he said, "This was an advance, but not enough."

Our own secretary of state, John Kerry, said he was "stunned" by Erdogan's pronouncement and he seemed to be speechless, since he refrained from further comments.

Thomas DeWaal, an expert on the region, stated: "So, is Erdogan's statement a sign of change in Turkey or a calculated political maneuver? It is both."

Turkish society is living in a paradoxical state: the more repression is demonstrated by the Islamist party, the more liberals are coming out with daring expressions of liberty. And despite his adamant denials of the Genocide, Erdogan has given more to minorities than any of his predecessors.

One of the main reasons which compelled Erdogan to take the first step on this issue was that quantitative changes in Turkish civil society were forcing qualitative changes. Those changes were compounded by Turkey's other unresolved problems to move the Turkish leader to an exercise in letting off some steam.

The Turkish-Israeli relations are not fully restored. The Kurdish problem is still around and Kurdish militias are infiltrating back into Turkey to force Erdogan to make good on his pledge.

The EU doors are still shut for Ankara, waiting for further progress on a number of issues, such as freedom of speech, intransigence in the Cyprus crisis and yes, the recognition of the Armenian Genocide. Also Erdogan's Arab policy blew up in his fact. It seems that his appeal did not go beyond the Arab street. His policy in Egypt failed, triggering a barrage of Genocide coverage in the Egyptian media, which until recently had been Erdogan's turf.

There is no doubt that Erdogan's initiative was orchestrated with Washington. US Ambassador to Armenia John Heffern's message that President Obama would come out with a stronger statement on the Genocide was in the making when Erdogan agreed to take the lead and deflect world attention from Mr. Obama's run-of-the-mill statement.

The self-contradictory condolence does not offer much in itself, at best it illustrates Turkey's denialist policy without any substantive change. The novelty is it's being the first step in the right direction. But above all, the reactions in the media and in diplomatic circles are mostly favoring the Armenian side. A week later, Mr. Erdogan's denial in an interview with PBS's Charlie Rose is meant to generate further reactions against the Prime Minister. His lame excuse in that interview is laughable when he states, "This is not possible. Because if there was a Genocide [there would not be] Armenians still living in Turkey." The extermination of 90 percent of the people is not apparently enough for Mr. Erdogan to qualify as a genocide. Only a 100-percent elimination would make it a genocide. If Hitler had survived, he could have learned to apply the same logic on the issue of the Jewish Holocaust.

On his own, Mr. Erdogan will not move further than this first step, but if conditions warrant, he will keep up in step not to relapse in history. People are getting bolder in their demands. For example, recently Turkish scholar and human rights activist Ragip Zarakolu challenged the Turkish government to return Mr. Ararat and Ani to the Armenians as a good-will gesture.

There still remains a seed of subtle message in Erdogan's statement as there was a counter message in President Serge Sargsisian's message when he paid tribute to righteous Turks who had saved Armenians during the Genocide.

If we need to determine Erdogan's initiative appropriately, we have to resort to a Chinese proverb, which says, persistent drops of water will eventually pierce the rock.

Mr. Erdogan's statement constitutes the first drop.

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COMMENTARY



ADL COMMUNIQUÉ

ADL Statement on Prime Minister Erdogan's Condolences

Turkey's Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan released a statement on the eve of the 99th anniversary of the Armenian Genocide expressing his condolences, on behalf of the Turkish state, to the grandchildren of the 1.5 million Armenian martyrs murdered during World War I, constituting the first genocide of the 20th century.

Although Turkey's move was hailed as a positive step from some political quarters, for Armenians around the world, the statement meant a cynical move by the Turkish government compelled by political expedience rather than a genuine desire for reconciliation.

Except for the condolences, which at best have a symbolic value, the prime minister continues to follow the persistent line of denial of the Turkish government, which has frustrated equally Armenians and civic-minded Turks.

An apology and a proper compensation for the victims of the Genocide will not only bring justice to the Armenian people but also will help Turkey to reckon with its dark past and qualify it to join the family of civilized nations.

Other than being a first expression on this wound festering for almost a full century, Mr. Erdogan's words fall short of anyone's expectations.

The continued denial, the blockade of Armenia, destruction of monuments in historic Armenia and atrocities against Armenians in Kessab constitute the continuation of the extermination policies of Sultan Abdul Hamid, the Ittihadists, the Kemalists and the Deep State in Turkey.

As human rights activist and scholars in Turkey become aware of the heinous nature of the crime perpetrated against the Armenian people, they demand their leaders to relieve their nation of its bloody burden.

That is the expectation of the "grandchildren" of the Genocide victims who still demand justice.

Mr. Erdogan, your words of condolence will sound hollow unless you stop making a travesty of historic truth.

-ADL District Committee of US and Canada

I Am the Grandson of a Genocide Survivor and I Have a Dream

Everybody who has ever met an Armenian may have been told about the Armenian genocide and the story about parents or grandparents who were killed by Turks.

I am also an Armenian and my roots are from Western Armenia. My grandfather's father, Karapet, twice survived from massacres. He was forced to leave Adana during the massacres taking place there in April of 1909 and moved to Constantinople. During the Armenian Genocide in 1915 he escaped to Greece and then with his wife Ester came to what is now Armenia in 1931. My grandmother's mother, Zaruhi, was from Kharpert. Her father, with his brothers, possessed a factory of silk production, which had a great reputation not only in the Ottoman Turkey, but also in the European markets. The Armenian Genocide put an end to their peaceful work. Zaruhi's father and uncles were killed in front of her eyes, and the Turks took their property and houses.

Since she was a beautiful girl, her grandmother scraped mud on her face and dressed her in shabby clothes so as to prevent her from catching the eye of any Turks. She hardly reached the American orphanage, from there moving on to Beirut. She married Vahan from Karin (Erzurum) and came to Armenia in 1947. While she had a tattoo on her hand, "Armenian" so that she would not forget about her roots when she is older, I was born with a "tattoo" on my heart carrying the pain of my ancestors.

The mass slaughter of over one and half million Armenians was something beyond human imagination. Shamefully, the political and economic interests of the international community transcended morality, never condemning Turkey for the Armenian Genocide to prevent other similar crimes against humanity. This led to the Adolf Hitler saying, "who, after all, speaks today of the annihilation of the Armenians?" while implementing the invasion of Poland, massacre of Poles and the Holocaust.

The "more speeches than actions" behavior of the international community brought other genocides and continuation of anti-Semitism and persecutions against Christians in the Middle East and other parts of the world. Despite all this, the Armenians and Jews continue to live and create with their indomitable will to survive and having a strong faith in the future. Every year, on the day of commemoration of the Armenian Genocide, April 24th, I feel this with a great conjugation to my ancestors. And, just as the Jews walked through a difficult ladder of their collective life, overcoming various sufferings, before reaching their desired motherland, Armenians having a similar historical path, should aspire to do the same. This is what all Armenians in the world keep in their genes and this is what my dream is about.

(Vahan Dilanyan, PhD is an expert on regional security and conflict resolution. He serves as the chairman of the Political Developments Research Center [PDRC], a think-tank based in Yerevan. This column originally appeared in the *Jerusalem Post*.)

By Vahan Dilanyan, PhD

The Armenian Genocide: Not Just for Once a Year

By George Shirinian

Many Armenians express their interest and concern in the genocide once a year, around April 24. They feel the need to participate in commemorative events because some feel obligated because of guilt, some do it once a year because they don't want to visit the trauma the rest of the year, and some dread the past altogether and stay away from it throughout the year, but for the sake of keeping the memory alive they feel compelled to attend these commemorative events. There are those who don't commemorate even once a year because they are so divorced from the history. But there is so much more to be done. The Armenian Genocide is a subject vital to Armenians that must be thought about and acted upon every day. Here are some critical reasons.

It is a mass crime that demands recognition and restorative justice for the international criminal justice system to have any credibility for punishment, deterrence, or prevention.

To bring a measure of comfort and closure to the victims and their descendants, who must endure tremendous psychological pain, not only for the loss of life, land, and property, but also for the threat to the sustainability of Armenian culture and civilization.

To search for truth and understanding of the Genocide, what happened, how it happened, and its ongoing impact. This is still aggressively denied by the Government of Turkey and its supporters, who treat the Armenians as unworthy of consideration as human beings and perpetuates the effects of the Genocide, as Prof. Roger W. Smith has written so eloquently.

The Genocide is the main obstacle to normal relations between Armenia and Turkey today. Turkey has unilaterally closed their mutual border and imposed an economic blockade on Armenia. Ostensibly this is over the Karabagh issue. But, clearly the Genocide is a major aspect of it, as Turkey continues to insist on a historical commission to review the subject. Thus, the 1915 Genocide is national security for Armenia's existence today.

Turkey's denial of the Armenian Genocide is an assault not only on Armenians, but also on truth, on world history, and thus on humanity, itself.

The deniers are at work every day. Prof. Vahakn Dadrian has described there being an "industry of denial." They are supported by the Turkish government in various ways with all the political and economic leverage that a powerful state has at its disposal. They organize conferences, give public lectures, publish books and articles using the forms of scholarship, with appropriate academic language and footnotes, but what they produce is not scholarship; it is anti-Armenian propaganda. Real scholarship follows the evidence—all the evidence—to arrive at conclusions. Real scholarship takes account of the arguments of other scholars and builds on them with new evidence or serious arguments. It does not hide, ignore, or dismiss information or ideas that do not fit a preconceived model. Recently, they have also been active in the courts, seeking legal validation in various ways for their denialist position.

Therefore, it is necessary for us to deal with this issue more than once a year. We must be active in working energetically every day in promoting education and awareness of the Armenian Genocide at every level and to combat its pervasive, well funded denial, racism and hostility towards Armenians.

There is at least one organization that has been doing just that successfully for the past 32 years, the Zoryan Institute.

Zoryan has excelled at bringing the key Armenian issues to prominent international settings and publishing groundbreaking

books on critical subjects, using original research based on archival materials. It collected original archival documentation, including some 3,000 hours of oral history testimony of Armenian Genocide survivors on video, providing raw data for future researchers, as well as a link to the eyewitness experience of the survivors for future generations. It was behind such significant international public events as the Permanent Peoples Tribunal in Paris in 1984, the first judicial hearing of the Armenian Genocide. Its verdict found that genocide had been committed against the Armenian people and that the modern republic of Turkey inherited the legal responsibilities for dealing with the consequences.

Among the more than forty books and two journals fundamental to the field that Zoryan has produced, let me mention just a few examples. A Shameful Act is the first account by a Turkish historian which documents that the mass killings of Armenians during WWI was a deliberate, centralized program of state-sponsored extermination. Judgment at Istanbul (in Turkish and English) provides the scholarly documentation and analysis of the Ottoman Military Tribunals prosecuting the perpetrators of the Armenian Genocide. The Armenian Genocide: Evidence from the German Foreign Office Archives, 1915-1916 (in German, Turkish and English), pioneering work fourteen years in the making, which led the German Parliament to pass a unanimous resolution acknowledging Germany's role in the Genocide. It also prompted one of Turkey's leading journalists to write, "...if you read the book and look at the documents, if you are a person who is introduced to the subject through this book, then there is no way that you would not believe in the genocide and justify the Armenians." He called it "an extremely important and expensive study."

Zoryan has also been engaged in court cases, participating as an academic amicus curiae, along with other distinguished organizations, to help defend Massachusetts from having to include denial literature in its high school curriculum on the Armenian Genocide. It was involved as an amicus curiae in helping to defend California's law on extending the deadline for payment of life insurance policies for victims of the Genocide. And as recently as a month ago, Zoryan was instrumental in organizing a coalition of major Armenian organizations in Europe and North America in a successful endeavor to persuade Switzerland to appeal the European Court of Human Rights' ruling absolving Dogu Perinçek of Armenian Genocide denial.

This work needs professionals, trained academics and experts involving huge financial resources for identifying, collecting, analyzing, transliterating, translating, editing and publishing, authoritative, universally recognized original archival documents on the history of the events surrounding 1915. This material must be distributed worldwide, especially in Turkey.

No one expects the average person to devote him or herself to such specialized and labor intensive work. But, the denial and as a result, the racism and the threat of security to the Armenians must be resisted by everyone. The only way this can be done is through a professional, successful, highly acclaimed research center such as Zoryan Institute and with the generous financial support of every Armenian.

In this month of April, the world commemorates the genocide not only of the Armenian, but also the Jewish and Rwandan peoples. We naturally focus on these issues at this time, but the work on the Armenian Genocide is not for just once a year.

(George Shirinian is the Executive Director of the Zoryan Institute.)
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COMMENTARY



My Turn

By Harut Sassounian

Armenians Should Thank Erdogan for... NOT Recognizing The Genocide

Turkish Prime Minister Erdogan's statement on the "events of 1915" released in nine languages last week was a major propaganda coup for Turkey, generating worldwide publicity. The announcement was so cleverly crafted that it fooled many in the international community – and regretfully, some Armenians – into believing that he came close to recognizing the Armenian Genocide or at least took "an historic" step in the right direction.

In reality, Erdogan's statement was nothing more than rephrased denial or old wine in a new bottle. Carefully avoiding the term "Armenian Genocide," he conveniently borrowed Foreign Minister Ahmet Davutoglu's deceptive terminology of "shared pain" and "just memory," words that sound conciliatory, but actually equate the murderers with the victims. The Turkish Prime Minister's reference to millions of Turks and others who also died during World War I is an insult to the memory of the 1.5 million victims of the Armenian Genocide. Millions of Germans also perished in World War II, but no one in their right mind and

good conscience would equate their deaths with the extermination of six million Jews.

Erdogan's call for a "joint historical commission to study the events of 1915" is another worn out and shrewd delay tactic. If Turkish officials are sincere in wanting to learn the facts of the Armenian Genocide, all they have to do is review the extensive documentation available in their own archives as well as studies conducted by countless historians and genocide scholars around the world. Why did the Turkish government wait for almost 100 years to show an interest in researching this topic? Why are some of the most sensitive Ottoman archives still kept under lock and key, not to mention those that were shredded long ago?

I have written many times for several years that:

1) Despite Turkish denials, the Armenian Genocide is a recognized fact by the international community and there is no need to wait for President Obama, Prime Minister Erdogan or anyone else to acknowledge it.

2) Genocide recognition cannot right the wrongs committed by uprooting and decimating the Armenian people. A more appropriate objective would be to seek justice through legal channels, demanding restitution, both financial and territorial.

3) The Turkish offer for "reconciliation" is nothing but a sinister ploy to bury the past with a meaningless acknowledgment and apology. True reconciliation is achieved by undoing the enormous damage inflicted on the Armenian nation.

It is imperative that Armenians remain vigilant and not be deceived by fake Turkish offers of reconciliation. Between now and April 24, 2015, the Turkish government will probably announce many more publicity stunts to win over the sympathy of the international community and minimize the damage to Turkey's already tarnished repu-

tation by accusations of genocide.

One such Turkish plan is Davutoglu's cynical statement that the Armenian Diaspora is also Turkey's Diaspora! There have been media reports that the Turkish government is preparing to grant citizenship to the descendants of former Ottoman subjects, including Armenians. Surprisingly, some naïve Armenians are fooled into thinking that this is a positive step! Just imagine settling in one of the towns of Turkish-occupied Western Armenia or Cilicia as a citizen of Turkey, and having your sons drafted into the Turkish military to "defend the Turkish nation" and take part in the invasion of Kessab or Aleppo or even Armenia! How about being jailed, under article 301 of the Turkish Penal Code, because you made the mistake of speaking about the Armenian Genocide to one of your Turkish neighbors!

Erdogan's real intent in issuing his April 23, 2014 statement is to undermine the worldwide Armenian efforts to seek justice as they prepare for the Centennial of the Armenian Genocide.

The fact that the State Department and some European officials reacted positively to Erdogan's statement is an indication that this was a coordinated attempt to provide cover for the Obama administration and European countries not to deal with the Armenian demands on the genocide issue, using the excuse that Turkey's leaders are in the process of reconciling with Armenians.

Armenians should resist the pressures by third parties to abandon the pursuit of their historic claims. The views of the US government or the EU on Armenian demands from Turkey should be irrelevant. Armenians should be the masters of their own fate and not allow other nations to dictate what is acceptable or unacceptable to them in the pursuit of their national interest.

Towards Centenary of Genocide: Stop Denialism

(Editor's note: the Turkish Human Rights Association released the following statement on the occasion of the annual commemoration of the Armenian Genocide.)

On the eve of World War I, around 2 million Armenians lived in the Ottoman Empire in 2,925 settlements including cities, towns, neighborhoods and villages all over the Asia Minor from West to East, North to South. They had 1,996 schools with 173,000 students, both boys and girls, and 2,538 churches and monasteries.

The Genocide as well as the policies pursued by the Turkish government during the Republican period put an end to these communities. The villages and neighborhoods after the annihilation of their inhabitants were no longer Armenian settlements. Today's Armenian population in

Turkey, estimated to be around 60,000, live dispersed mainly in three major cities, primarily Istanbul. The state did not only exterminate Armenians but erased their traces. You will not find any indication of Armenian life in places which were once Armenians' hometowns. Churches were not only left to become ruins due to the forces of nature, but they were destroyed by cannon balls and dynamite. There is not a single Armenian school today all over the Anatolian peninsula. Armenians were not only killed en masse but also their whole civilization with their schools, churches, cemeteries, monasteries, businesses was wiped out.

During this process, other Christian peoples of the Asia Minor, Assyrians/Syriacs and Greeks also fell victims to the Genocide orchestrated by the central government. At the beginning of the 20th century every one out of 5 people; in other words, 20 percent of the total population in Asia Minor was non-Muslim. Now this ratio has fallen below 0.01 percent. Under normal conditions, taking as basis the rate of increase in population, the Christian population in what is Turkey today would have been around 17 million. This simple mathematics is clear enough to conceive the magnitude of the annihilation.

Genocide is not only unimaginable atrocities, mass murders, dead bodies floating on rivers, valleys filled with mutilated human bodies. Nor is it only the fatal march where death becomes a salvation, as compared to the horrors, robbery, rape, illness, or being forced to leave behind the dead bodies of your loved ones, the deep, incurable injury passed from one generation to the other, an indescribable, irreparable, unforgivable evil in action.

Genocide is also an enormous robbery. And it is not only limited to the Armenians' countless immovables seized by the state and the local notables, that are worth amounts beyond calculation.

In addition to this well-known version of the plunder, the robbery also included confiscation of the Genocide victims' money and jewelry deposited in Ottoman Bank branches across the country, totaling some \$22 million at 1915 rates. Furthermore, starting from the beginning of the 20th century American and French insurance companies had started to sell life

insurance policies in Anatolian provinces to tens of thousands of Christians, worth, again at 1915 rates, more than \$20 million. The Ittihadists, right after the Genocide, tried to collect this money from the insurance companies, by writing numerous official letters and also trying to persuade the American Ambassador Morgenthau, saying "the owners are dead with no heirs to make any claims, so this amount should be transferred to the Ottoman treasury".

This immeasurable robbery is one of the major reasons for the denial of the Genocide for 99 years and today's corruption in Turkey has its roots in the Genocide theft.

Denial is not just saying "I didn't do it". Denial means to say "we did it because they deserved it".

The shameless denialists on TV channels, those "reputable" academics and intellectuals are legitimizing and justifying the Genocide. They are encouraged by the fact that the majority of the Turkish public are ready to believe them, even expect them to reinforce in this manner what they already believe in - i.e. the official theses. Denial means to insult the victims, their memory and their descendants. Denial means criminalizing and antagonizing the descendants of the victims. Denial means the continuation of the Genocide, this biggest crime against humanity. What is worse, it means creating and winning the support of a society which chooses to be a bystander and keep silent.

We, as human rights defenders, insist that the Genocide should not be reduced to a political and diplomatic agenda item of negotiations, a tool to be used in international relations. It can't and it should never be forgotten that Genocide is before anything else and more than anything else a mass human rights violation committed by the state itself - a crime against humanity.

Denial is the most comprehensive, most effective and most widespread human rights violation, due to the simple fact that it becomes the source of, furthermore an encouragement for a wide variety of many more current and future human rights violations.

The Turkish state should hear and respond to the demands, requests and wishes expressed by the Armenians who are uprooted from their homeland and dispersed throughout the world for the restitution of the incalculable losses their ancestors and they themselves have suffered and continue to suffer because of the Genocide and its denial. Denialism is also an obstacle to the process of restitution of losses, to any step for alleviating the continued sufferings and to the achievement of justice.

Therefore we, on the 99th anniversary of the Genocide, on 24th April 2014 raise our demand from all the branches and representation offices of our Human Rights Association throughout the country at the same time of the day:

That's enough! Put an end to denial of the Armenian Genocide for justice and truth!

Human Rights Association, Turkey

(The Human Rights Association (HRA; Turkish: İnsan Hakları Derneği is an NGO for advancing Human rights in Turkey, founded in 1986 and headquartered in Ankara.

"At the beginning of the 20th century every one out of 5 people; in other words, 20 percent of the total population in Asia Minor was non-Muslim. Now this ratio has fallen below 0.01 percent. Under normal conditions, taking as basis the rate of increase in population, the Christian population in what is Turkey today would have been around 17 million."



Kurkjian Photo Research Brings Genocide into Focus

KURKJIAN, from page 1

The photograph is unique in showing a group of identified men rounded up by the authorities, many of whose fates are known.

Speaking at the National Association for Armenian Studies and Research (NAASR) on April 23, Kurkjian noted the message of condolence offered by Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan that day, calling on him to “give those of us to whom he offers condolences for the killing of our grandparents free passage to the villages of our birthrights for proper Armenian services for those who were killed.”

Kurkjian has spent about a decade researching the Gesaria photo, finding out the fate of the men as well as contacting descendants.

“It was not an easy story to do,” he said, as every name led to “death, deprivation, defeat

and denial.”

He added, “I keep things at an arm’s length when dealing with tragedy,” but the distance evaporated quickly when doing this very special story, as his own family hails from Gesaria.

Kurkjian spoke about how Belmont resident Elaine Patapanian contacted him about the photo, as her grandfather, Varteres Armenyan, was in it.

“I spent a lot of time trying to find the secrets behind this photograph,” he said, crediting NAASR’s Marc Mamigonian for helping steer him right as well as Arpie Davis for providing translations. Patapanian’s grandfather been taken to prison in July 1915 and then on to a long march outside Gesaria, toward Sivas. In a final letter to his wife, realizing that he should expect the worst, he had written, “Kiss my children’s eyes for me.”

It was this phrase that caught Kurkjian’s imagination and would not release him. “Perhaps it was because I had recently become a grandfather but the connection that it made for me was real. And I felt perhaps a sense of obligation to tell their story, of what had happened to them,” he explained.

Armenyan was one of 1,100 Armenian men in Gesaria who were tried by a military court from mid to late May 1915. In June, the hangings began. Most were charged with possession of weapons or membership in one of two banned Armenian political parties, the Hunchagian or the Armenian Revolutionary Federation.

Interestingly, of all those men, only two were acquitted and one was Armenian. But acquittal did not mean freedom; it meant a death march.

All in all, of the 1,100 men arrested in Gesaria during this period, 900 were either hanged or killed during marches.

Kurkjian explained that this specific photo kept popping up, in a Damascus wall calendar. He found the photo also in the archives of Vahan Elmayan who was a witness to the killings in Gesaria and wrote an account of it in 1920 in an Armenian newspaper published in Chicago, called Yeritasard Hayastan. Elmayan also wrote of the events in Gesaria in 1965 in a large volume written in Armenian whose title, loosely translated, is Fifty Years Since the Great Catastrophe.

Kurkjian said that his search for answers showed that despite the tremendous work of people like Vahagn Dadrian, Taner Akçam and Mamigonian, there is still not a “cohesive archive that contains the relevant documents that would answer definitively the questions of what happened here, and why.”

He added, “Except for Armenia, no other government has ever supported through manpower or finances a comprehensive research effort, like we saw with the Nuremberg Trials and related investigations on how the Holocaust took place, and who was responsible.”

The photo, he noted, had survived because of the efforts of Haratoun Nakashian, and his daughter, Alice, who had preserved his papers and shared them with Kurkjian, helping him piece together much of their story.

Kurkjian said that in Gesaria, Salih Zeki, a regional executive, was filled with exceptional bloodlust toward Armenians. An explosion at the home of an Armenian gave him the pretext to round up all the Armenian men in the district. After the men were arrested and/or killed immediately, he went after the women, children and the elderly from Gesaria, forcing them on a long death march into the desert. The photo, he said, was taken in order for Zeki to ingratiate himself with the Enver, Talaat and Cemal triumvirate to prove his zeal in the extermination efforts.

“The Armenian Genocide shredded the tenuous tissue that bonds one person to another, families together. With so many villages destroyed and people killed, who your neighbor was or who may have been related to you by blood or marriage has been lost for most Armenians alive today. Certainly lost is the feeling of attachment to the land. Because of Turkey’s refusal to acknowledge the genocide or apologize for what took place, many of the 10 million Armenians in the worldwide diaspora are reluctant to go back and visit the villages of their ancestors,” Kurkjian said.

Kurkjian is an acclaimed journalist formerly with the *Boston Globe*. He has won three Pulitzer Prizes for his investigative work with the *Globe*. He is also a NAASR board member.

Obama Stops Short of ‘Genocide’ in April 24 Message

OBAMA, from page 1

Committee for Syrian and Armenian Relief [ACSAR], funded by donations from Americans, which saved the lives of countless Armenians and others from vulnerable communities displaced in 1915.” ACSAR was the predecessor to the congressionally-chartered Near East Relief organization that raised and delivered over \$100 million in humanitarian aid.

“In 1981 President Ronald Reagan squarely acknowledged the Armenian Genocide stating that ‘Like the genocide of the Armenians before it, and the genocide of the Cambodians which followed it – and like too many other such persecutions of too many other peoples – the lessons of the Holocaust must never be forgotten.’ This accurately reflects America’s values and record of speaking out against genocide, and I welcome this approach,” stated Assembly Board of Trustees Chairman Hirair Hovnanian. “We appreciate the recent bipartisan majority vote in the Senate Foreign Relations Committee in approving a resolution on the Armenian Genocide as well as our friends in the House of Representatives and the congressional delegation currently in Armenia for speaking clearly on this matter. This is America at its best.”

“While we have made progress in confronting the Turkish government’s denial of the Armenian Genocide and reversing its impact, that progress is not enough. It was only last month that the specter of genocide raised its ugly head when the Turkish government allowed Al-Qaeda linked fighters to cross its border into Syria and attack Kessab, a predominantly Armenian populated region,” added Hovnanian.

“We cannot allow another genocide to take place. With the centennial approaching next year, we must redouble our efforts to ensure that the consequences of the Armenian Genocide are addressed,” Hovnanian concluded.

The Armenian National Committee of America in a release expressed its displeasure with the statement.

“It’s a sad spectacle to see our President, who came into office having promised to recognize the Armenian Genocide, reduced to enforcing a foreign government’s gag-rule on what our country can say about a genocide so very thoroughly documented in our own nation’s archives,” said Aram Hamparian, the group’s executive director.

“The fact remains that any durable improvement in Armenian-Turkish relations will require that Ankara end its denials, accept its moral and material responsibilities, and agree to a truthful and just international resolution of this still unpunished crime against all humanity,” stated Hamparian.

“While we do note that the President chose to join in today’s national remembrance, we remain profoundly disappointed that he has, once again, retreated from his own promises and fallen short of the principled stand taken by previous presidents. For our part, we remain committed to aligning U.S. policy on the Armenian Genocide – and all genocides – with the core values and humanitarian spirit of the American people,” he concluded.

White House statement

Today we commemorate the *Meds Yeghern* and honor those who perished in one of the worst atrocities of the 20th century. We recall the horror of what happened ninety-nine years ago, when 1.5 million Armenians were massacred or marched to their deaths in the final days of the Ottoman Empire, and we grieve for the lives lost and the suffering endured by those men, women, and children. We are joined in solemn commemoration by millions in the United States and across the world. In so doing, we remind ourselves of our shared commitment to ensure that such dark chapters of human history are never again repeated.

I have consistently stated my own view of what occurred in 1915, and my view has not changed. A full, frank, and just acknowledgement of the facts is in all of our interests. Peoples and nations grow stronger, and build a foundation for a more just and tolerant future, by acknowledging and reckoning with painful elements of the past. We continue to learn this lesson in the United States, as we strive to reconcile some of the darkest moments in our own history. We recognize and commend the growing number of courageous Armenians and Turks who have already taken this path, and encourage more to do so, with the backing of their governments, and mine. And we recall with pride the humanitarian efforts undertaken by the American Committee for Syrian and Armenian Relief, funded by donations from Americans, which saved the lives of countless Armenians and others from vulnerable communities displaced in 1915.

As we honor through remembrance those Armenian lives that were unjustly taken in 1915, we are inspired by the extraordinary courage and great resiliency of the Armenian people in the face of such tremendous adversity and suffering. I applaud the countless contributions that Armenian-Americans have made to American society, culture, and communities. We share a common commitment to supporting the Armenian people as they work to build a democratic, peaceful, and prosperous nation.

Today, our thoughts and prayers are with Armenians everywhere, as we recall the horror of the *Meds Yeghern*, honor the memory of those lost, and reaffirm our enduring commitment to the people of Armenia and to the principle that such atrocities must always be remembered if we are to prevent them from occurring ever again.

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The *Armenian Mirror-Spectator* is offering a special deal this spring to new readers. The offer, valid now through May 31, 2014, will give new subscribers a chance to get the newspaper for the reduced price of \$60 for one year, instead of the regular \$80. If a new subscriber gets two new subscriptions, the price for one year will be reduced to \$55 for each new subscription.

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