

THE ARMENIAN Mirror-Spectator

Volume LXXXIV, NO. 49, Issue 4343

\$ 2.00

The First English Language Armenian Weekly in the United States Since 1932

Tekeyan Cultural Association Holds 33rd Convention in New Jersey

ENGLEWOOD CLIFFS, NJ. – The Tekeyan Cultural Association (TCA) of US and Canada held its 33rd convention on Friday, June 20 and Saturday, June 21 in New Jersey. Participating were delegates from New York and New Jersey, Boston, Philadelphia, Detroit, Montreal, Toronto, Pasadena/Glendale and Los Angeles.

On behalf of the host New York/New Jersey chapter, Hagop Vartivarian delivered the welcoming address to the delegates. The convention sessions were chaired alternately by Dr. Haroutune Arzoumanian, president, and Edmond



Azadian, vice president. Sebouh Avedikian served as the recording secretary of the convention.

Arzoumanian gave an introductory survey of the organization's activities for the last two years and he also highlighted the challenges facing it.

Reports were presented by the delegates from each chapter. An extensive report was also read by Kevork Keushkerian from the TCA Arshag Dickranian School in Hollywood, Calif. The *Abaka* trilingual weekly of Montreal also submitted a report.

see CONVENTION, page 8



Archbishop Khajag Barsamian presents the encyclical from Catholicos of All Armenians Karekin II to Hagop Vartivarian.

TCA Pays Tribute to Veteran Cultural Ambassador Hagop Vartivarian

By Alin K. Gregorian
Mirror-Spectator Staff

TENAFLY, N.J. – The Tekeyan Cultural Association (TCA) paid tribute to one of its own, Hagop Vartivarian, to mark the 45th anniversary of his activities in the Armenian Diaspora, at a banquet on June 21, to dovetail with the TCA convention.

see VARTIVARIAN, page 8



The delegates to the TCA convention this past weekend

Last Genocide Survivor in Merrimack Valley Dies

By Tom Vartabedian

METHUEN, Mass. – Nazalie “Nellie” Nazarian died on June 12, surrounded by her family. She was the last Armenian Genocide survivor in Merrimack Valley. She was 102.

Just weeks prior to her death, she had attended a Genocide commemoration at North Andover High School, organized by the Armenian Genocide Commemorative Committee of Merrimack Valley.

Then, on May 10, she withstood the rain to preside over the unveiling of a Genocide memorial outside the Lowell City Hall, as the last remaining honorary member, after the death of fellow survivors Thomas Magarian and Ojen Fantazian.

see SURVIVOR, page 16



Merrimack Valley Genocide survivor Nellie Nazarian, 102, helped the region remember the painful history she had lived through.

Lavrov Visits Armenia, Says Russia Seeks Karabagh Settlement

YEREVAN (Public Radio of Armenia and Armenpress) – Russia is interested in the earliest resolution of the Nagorno Karabagh conflict, Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov said at a joint press conference with Armenian Foreign Minister Edward Nalbandian in Yerevan on Monday.

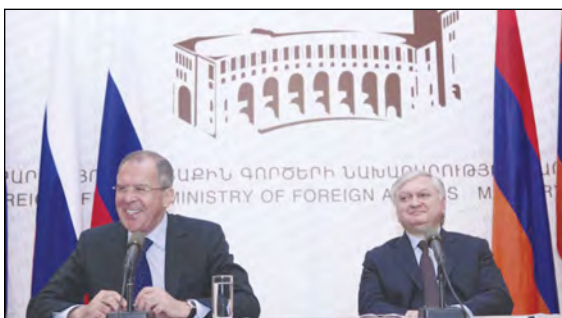
“All bases exist for the resolution of this conflict. I mean the principles incorporated in the statements of the Presidents of Russia, the United States and France. Now it is important to coordinate the parameters of practical realization of these principles and the sequence of steps that should be taken in that direction. Russia, as one of the Minsk Group Co-Chairing countries, will seek to maintain the dialogue between the Armenian and Azerbaijani Presidents re-launched at the end of 2013 and contribute to the settlement of the remaining unsolved issues,” Lavrov said.

French President Francois Hollande, during his visit to Yerevan in May, had spoken about his intention to host a meeting in Paris between the two presidents. Azerbaijani Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov stated in response that Baku was waiting for “concreteness.”

“Within the framework of the visit to Armenia, the president of France made a concrete proposal to organize a summit for the presidents of Armenia and Azerbaijan. Perhaps, Baku is waiting for something different,” Nalbandian said.

“Azerbaijan constantly dislikes the proposals made by the co-chairing countries on behalf of the international community,

including the suggestions on the reinforcement of the ceasefire regime, withdrawal of snipers, creation of mechanisms for investigation of border incidents. There is simply no alternative to the proposal of the co-chairing countries targeted at the resolution of the Karabagh conflict exceptionally in a peaceful way,” Nalbandian added.



Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov and Armenian Foreign Minister Eduard Nalbandian

Speaking about the normalization of Armenian-Turkish relations, Lavrov said “Russia is ready to support the process.”

“Both before and after the signing of the Armenian-Turkish protocols, we have expressed our willingness to make our contribution to the process in the format that will suit Armenia and Turkey. There were ideas to implement infrastructure projects that could unite the nations, countries and adjacent regions. All this remains in force, but the primary role here belongs to the two counties that have signed the protocols. We are ready to provide every support to their implementation,” Lavrov said.

Lavrov also spoke about closer economic cooperation with Armenia. “Russia upholds Armenia’s involvement in Eurasian integration. We have discussed

see LAVROV, page 4

NEWS IN BRIEF

Armenian Mirror-Spectator Annual Summer Break

WATERTOWN – The *Armenian Mirror-Spectator* will close for two weeks in July as part of its annual summer break.

This is the last issue published before the vacation. The first edition back would be that of July 19.

Armenian Leader Concludes Two-Day Visit to Georgia

TBILISI (RFE/RL) – Armenian President Serge Sargisian concluded a two-day official trip to Georgia on June 19 by holding talks with Georgian Parliament speaker Davit Usupashvili and senior lawmakers.

On June 18, Sargisian and his Georgian counterpart, Giorgi Margvelashvili, discussed possibilities for the development of bilateral ties following Yerevan’s plans to join a Russia-led Eurasian Economic Union and Tbilisi’s signing of a free-trade treaty with the European Union next week.

The presidents told journalists after the talks that they had exchanged opinions on ways to turn the two countries’ “different paths” into new opportunities for Georgian and Armenian businesses.

Sargisian said that the “constant strengthening of the Armenian-Georgian partnership” represents one of Armenia’s foreign policy priorities.

Margvelashvili said Tbilisi and Yerevan share the same opinions on many issues concerning bilateral relations and regional cooperation.

Iran Soccer Team Aided by Ace Teymourian in Brazil

SALVADOR, Brazil – Iran has appeared in the finals of the FIFA World Cup on four occasions in 1978, 1998, 2006 and 2014. Andranik Eskandarian was the first Armenian who played for Iran in the 1978 World Cup, and now for 2014 FIFA World Cup, Andranik Teymourian is playing.

In addition, Markar Aghajanian is a member of the coaching staff.

In September 2013 Teymourian a scored a game-winning goal for his team against Birmingham United in the Asian Championship Games, just after rescuing an injured butterfly from the field – which some are equating to being a karmic gift.

So far in the World Cup, Iran has tied against Nigeria and lost to Argentina. It is due to play Bosnia and Herzegovina in Group F on June 25 (after *Mirror-Spectator* press time).

INSIDE

Quirky Parajanov

Page 11

INDEX

| | |
|-----------------|-----|
| Arts and Living | 11 |
| Armenia | 2,3 |
| Community News | 5 |
| Editorial | 14 |
| International | 4 |



ARMENIA

News From Armenia

Weightlifting Champ Appointed Georgia Ambassador

YEREVAN (PanARMENIAN.Net) – The World and European Champion, ex-Minister of Sport Yuri Vardanyan has been appointed Armenia's ambassador to Georgia. President Serge Sargsian signed the decree on June 24.

Vardanyan won a gold medal at the 1980 Summer Olympics, becoming the world's first weightlifter to achieve a 400-kilogram total in the 82.5 kilogram weight category. During his career he set several world records. He earned the title of the Honored Master of Sports of the USSR in 1977 and was awarded the Order of Lenin in 1985. In 1994, he was elected a member of the International Weightlifting Federation Hall of Fame.

In 2009, Vardanyan became a presidential adviser and was appointed Minister of Sport in May 2013.

Senior Judge to Visit Armenia

YEREVAN (Armenpress) – John C. Coughenour, senior United States District Judge for the Western District of Washington, is visiting Armenia June 24-July 3. The US Embassy announced that during his visit, Coughenour will participate in a seminar for Armenian judges and a seminar for law students and recent graduates, sponsored by the US Embassy and the United States Department of Justice, Office of Overseas Prosecutorial Development, Assistance, and Training (OPDAT). He also will meet with various members of the Armenian legal community.

The visit is part of US commitment to assist Armenia with better accountability and rule of law.

Ambassador Visits Calif. At End of Mission

WASHINGTON (Armenpress) – Ambassador Tatoul Markarian, completing his diplomatic mission in the US, visited California and held meetings with the leaders of community organizations of the West Coast.

On June 16, a farewell evening was organized in Los Angeles, which was attended by the Primates of the Western Diocese of the Armenian Apostolic Church of America Archbishop Hovnan Derderian and of the Prelacy, Archbishop Moushegh Mardirossian, more than three dozen community organization leaders and many representatives of the Armenian community.

The community leaders praised Markarian's activities and contribution to the development of the Armenian-American relations.

Armenian-Indian Cooperation Nets Access To Telemedicine

YEREVAN (Armenpress) – The Ministry of Health this week signed an agreement to create a telemedicine network between the governments of India and Armenia. The document was signed by the Deputy Health Minister Sergey Khachatryan and Ambassador of India to Armenia Suresh Babu.

With India's assistance one medical center in Yerevan and nine regional hospitals will have modern telemedicine equipment. This will allow, through telemedicine, establish connection between the above-mentioned hospitals and the leading medical centers of India for mutual professional advice, experience and information exchange. As a result, the level of the diagnosis and treatment will rise in those medical centers of Armenia.

With India's support, educational programs will also be implemented for the Armenian doctors, nurses, technical workers in the field of telemedicine.

This program will operate in 11 medical centers of Armenia located in 11 cities: Yerevan, Alaverdi, Goris, Kapan, Meghri, Yeghegnadzor, Gumri, Gavar, Jambarak, Vanadzor and Stepanavan.

Warlick Hopeful that Armenian, Azeri Presidents Will Meet in France

YEREVAN (Armenpress) – The United States remains committed to moving the peace process forward, and helping the sides overcome the current impasse as soon as possible. The pace of negotiations is a reflection of that commitment, the US Co-Chairs of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) Minsk Group, Ambassador James Warlick, said in this in an interview with Syune Barseghyan of Armenpress.

Armenpress: During your speech on Karabagh at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace on May 7, you outlined six principles and elements that form the basis of US policy toward the Minsk Group and the Nagorno-Karabagh conflict. These principles are on the table of negotiations. On which provisions do not the parties (Armenia and Azerbaijan) come to an agreement?

JW: These principles and elements will serve as the basis of a peace agreement, but there will need to be further negotiations to clarify the details and meet the needs of all stakeholders. Nothing is final until the sides have reached agreement on the whole package. We believe it is important for the presidents of Armenia and Azerbaijan to meet to discuss these elements and agree to begin negotiations that will lead to the conclusion of a peace agreement.

Armenpress: You also said: "When such negotiations commence, the parties should not only reconfirm their commitment to the ceasefire but also undertake much-needed and long-sought security confidence-building measures." What measures did you particularly mean?

JW: There have been a number of ideas discussed in recent years that would reduce tensions and increase transparency on the border and the Line of Contact, and diminish the likelihood of escalation, whether intentional or accidental. What's important is that the sides reach agreement on such measures in order to give peace negotiations the best chance of succeeding.

Armenpress: How do you assess the progress in Track II efforts to build people-to-people contacts between Azerbaijanis and Armenians?

JW: There has been some good work done in Track II in recent years, but we need more. If we truly want a lasting settlement, we need to increase participation and build relationships among people across the region.

Armenpress: What is your stand on the full participation of Nagorno Karabagh as a third party in the negotiation process?

JW: Any enduring peace agreement must reflect the views of all affected parties if it is to succeed. We travel to Nagorno-Karabagh regularly to consult with the de facto authorities, and will continue working to ensure their voice is heard.

Armenpress: As a result of continuous violations of Ceasefire by the Azerbaijani Armed forces, the Armenian side continues to lose citizens and soldiers. In some part, these violations are based on the belligerent rhetoric of Azerbaijani authorities. Does the Minsk Group format have any leverage to pressure Azerbaijan to end its rhetoric? The most recent incident was on the border of Nakhchivan which was something new, wasn't it?

JW: We continue to call on the sides to reduce actions and rhetoric that could raise tensions or damage the



Ambassador James Warlick

peace process, including violence on the Line of Contact and the international borders. There is no military solution to this conflict, and these kind of provocations only slow progress toward our mutual goal – a peaceful, sustainable settlement that will deliver the security and prosperity that the people of this region deserve.

Armenpress: What are the next steps in the Minsk process? When do you plan your next visit to the region?

JW: I remain hopeful that we can organize another summit in the near

future to build on the two presidents' constructive dialogue in Vienna last November. I look forward to continuing our talks as soon as possible, whether in the region or elsewhere, although we're still working to schedule our next engagement. We hope that the Presidents will accept French President Hollande's offer to meet soon in Paris. Swiss President Burkhhalter's call for "structured negotiations" is also an opportunity for the sides to advance the peace process.

Armenpress: High-ranking meetings have intensified in recent year, how did the peace process benefit from it?

JW: The United States remains committed to moving this peace process forward, and helping the sides overcome the current impasse as soon as possible. The pace of negotiations is a reflection of that commitment. Along with the Russian and French co-chairs and the Personal Representative of the OSCE Chairman in Office, I have worked to bring new ideas to the table, seek agreement on the path forward, and build support for a peaceful, negotiated settlement. I look forward to continuing these efforts in the months ahead.

US Senate Appropriations Committee Reaffirms Support for Karabagh Aid

WASHINGTON – The US Senate Appropriations Committee, by a bipartisan vote of 25 to 5, today overwhelmingly adopted a Fiscal Year 2015 (FY15) foreign aid legislative package that, once again, reaffirmed US support for the longstanding US assistance program for Nagorno Karabagh (Artsakh).

"The Committee recommends assistance for victims of the Nagorno-Karabagh conflict in amounts consistent with prior years, and for ongoing needs related to the conflict. The Committee urges a peaceful resolution of the conflict," read the report which accompanies the State-Foreign Operations appropriations bill.

Nagorno Karabagh was one of only seven aid recipients from the entire Europe and South and Central Asia region to be specifically cited by the panel. Others included Afghanistan, Pakistan, Serbia, and Kosovo.

The Committee remained silent on specific US assistance levels to most countries, including the Caucasus countries, thereby essentially approving the broad outlines of President Obama's proposed spending levels of \$20.7 million in Economic Support Funds (ESF) for Armenia, along with \$1.7 in Foreign Military Finance (FMF) aid and \$600,000 in International Military Education and Training (IMET) funds.

The president's proposed budget maintained parity in appropriated US military aid to Armenia and Azerbaijan. The measure also effectively endorsed the President's proposal to allocate \$9.6 million in Economic Support Funds to Azerbaijan, and \$38.2 million in ESF and \$10 million in FMF to Georgia.

The House Appropriations Committee is set to consider its version of the foreign aid bill on June 24. Following the approval of the two measures at the committee level, they will be considered by the full House and Senate. Afterwards, appropriators from the houses will convene a conference to work out differences, prior to sending a reconciled version of the legislation to the President for signature.

In testimony submitted to the House Subcommittee on State-Foreign Operations in April of this year, Armenian National Committee of America (ANCA) Government Affairs Director Kate Nahapetian urged the panel to prioritize a number of provisions, including:

- 1) At least \$5 million in US developmental aid to Nagorno Karabagh, for water and de-mining projects;
- 2) Zero-out US military aid to Azerbaijan until it ceases its aggression, renounces violence, and commits to a purely peaceful resolution of regional conflicts;
- 3) At least \$40 million in US economic assistance to Armenia;
- 4) In light of the recent attacks on Kessab, a special focus on the delivery of humanitarian and resettlement aid to Armenians and other at-risk minorities in Syria, as well as targeted aid to help Armenia settle thousands fleeing from Syria;
- 5) At least 10 percent of US assistance to Georgia to be earmarked for job creation programs in the Samtskhe-Javakheti region of that country;
- 6) Language strengthening Section 907 restrictions on US aid to Azerbaijan and
- 7) Ending the Exclusion of the Republic of Nagorno Karabagh from the peace process.



ARMENIA

US Embassy's Helping Hands & Fuller Center for Housing Armenia Join Forces to Help Music School

YEREVAN – On June 14, the United States Ambassador to Armenia John A. Heffern and members of the Embassy's Helping Hands organization together with the Fuller Center for Housing Armenia (FCHA) helped to reconstruct the floor of the Tsitsikian Music School's recital hall.

The US Embassy and Fuller Center for Housing Armenia have been partnering since 2008. Every year the Embassy's personnel joins the FCHA local and international volunteers to help low income families to build their own homes. This time the partners joined to help the Anahid Tsitsikian Musical School. Helping hands financed the construction materials, and the FCHA organized the construction day. In just one day with the help of 30 volunteers the

new cement floor was laid. From now on the school's recital hall will have a new floor.

The Anahit Tsitsikian Music School was established 25 years ago. Regardless all the financial difficulties, the students and staff have often given concerts in various venue such as orphanages, nursing and retirement homes, in the villages and other places. Last spring students performed a concert at the US Embassy.

On June 14 more than 30



Ambassador John Heffern with the volunteers



Work progresses fast.

people from the US Embassy and Fuller Center gathered at the School.

"I have never seen such a well-organized construction work in a long time! With nice music in the background and cheerful mood the time flew very fast. It took only one day for the floor of the entire hall to be almost repaired. We would like to express our deepest gratitude to Mr. Ambassador John A. Heffern and all those who worked that day. Mr. Ambassador's joining everyone in this hard labor was a truly inspiring and humbling experience," the director of the music school, Nouné Shamakhian, said.

The Fuller Center for Housing Armenia is a non-government, charitable organization that supports community development in the Republic of Armenia by assisting in building



Ambassador Heffern among the volunteers

and renovating simple, decent and affordable homes, as well as advocating the right to a decent shelter as a matter of conscience and action.

Child Nutrition a Key Element of FAR-led International Symposium

YEREVAN – In May, Fund for Armenian Relief (FAR), in cooperation with World Vision and the American University of Armenia (AUA) held a nutrition symposium to analyze the current needs of infant and child nutrition problems in Armenia and lay out the next steps to tackle the issue.

The "Nutrition as a Key to Economic Development: The Case for Armenia" symposium at AUA in Yerevan hosted a number of international experts in the field of health and nutrition from the Columbia University.

During the event, FAR's Health Programs Coordinator Dr. Hambarzum Simonyan shared his experience gained through the "Breaking the Cycle of Poverty" Program (BCPP) in the Tavush region. Simonyan presented the public health component of the program as a model of a comprehensive approach in solving the problem of malnutrition and stunting among children aged 6 months old to 6 years old.

Simonyan showed the BCPP's progress in its first year of implementation. He underlined that the program has already managed to improve childcare and nutrition in preschools, to prescribe treatment and to offer consultations to 127 children diagnosed with anemia and 140 children with intestinal parasite infections, to provide essential equipment and supplies to healthcare institutions, and to provide professional development training courses for nine doctors and 20 nurses.

"Additionally, we provided materials to raise public awareness on health issues that helped to increase the awareness of mothers and guardians by 25 percent," Simonyan told the participants.

This scientific gathering marked the first time in history that Armenia presented its

own experiences about interventions, projects and research relating to the issue of malnutrition. The experience allowed participants to learn from the experience of both local and international organizations in the field.

After the symposium, Columbia University faculty members explored the Tavush region under the guidance of FAR staff. The travelers visited the BCPP target area, preschools, and rural ambulatories where they learned of new and local approaches to battle malnutrition. They saw the reality, performance, results, limitations and risks of the program, which helped them to evaluate its strengths and weaknesses, in turn allowing them to make recommendations for next steps. Another important outcome of the trip was the beginnings of a discussion of the possibility to replicate the BCPP model in other regions of Armenia.

The chronic malnutrition of children is a pressing concern in Armenia, as are the epidemics of diabetes, hypertension and heart disease. Chronic malnutrition leading to stunted growth is reported to affect nearly 20 percent of children under 5 years of age. Stunted growth leads to poor physical health and reduces cognitive potential, as well as future income and productivity.

Another discussion after the symposium with the field's main players – including the Armenian Ministry of Health, FAR, AUA, the World Health Organization, UNICEF, World Vision Armenia, Save the Children, Arabkir Medical Center and the Yerevan State Medical University – led to the creation of the Nutrition Advisory Council (NAC) under the leadership of FAR. This group will coordinate all future initiatives in the area of nutrition and keep close contact with the cooperating team from the Columbia University.



President Serge Sargsisian with world chess champion Magnus Carlsen, who signs a chess board for him.

World Chess Champ Magnus Carlsen Visits Armenia

YEREVAN (Armenpress) – This week, the president of Armenia (and the Chess Federation of Armenia) Serge Sargsisian received the Magnus Carlsen of Norway, the World Chess Federation (FIDE) leader in rankings, who is the reigning World Chess Champion.

Carlsen was on a three-day visit to Armenia at the invitation of the Initiatives for Development of Armenia (IDeA) Foundation and the Acronis information technologies company, as well as the World Cup winner, three-time World Chess Olympiad champion, World Team Chess Championship winner as a member of the Armenian National Team, Grandmaster Levon Aronian.

The president's office reported that Carlsen met with the representatives of a number of successful companies in the IT field, who visited Armenia. The IDeA Foundation has combined chess and information technologies, taking into consideration the fact that great attention is paid to these fields, which have already achieved considerable success in Armenia.



INTERNATIONAL

International News

Argentina Armenians Appeal to Pope Francis To Intervene in Syria

BUENOS AIRES, Argentina (Armenpress) – The Armenian community of Argentina has sent a letter to Pope Francis asking him to intervene in the Syrian conflict. The community is convinced that the pope's intervention can bring peace to the conflicting region of the Middle East and safeguard the return of the refugees to their home.

The letter, posted on the Prensa website, said, in part: "The civil society is living in a disturbing, critical situation. The city of Kessab, a predominantly Armenian populated town, was attacked by al Qaeda-linked armed groups, who crossed the border from Turkey. On March 24, after a weekend of constant attacks, Kessab had to be evacuated to other locations like Basit and Latakia."

Armenian Dies in Aleppo

ALEPPO, Syria – An Armenian died in the Hamidie neighborhood in Aleppo on May 26 as a result of a bomb.

Avetis Kebabjian was 86. His funeral was held in St. Astvatsatsin Church on May 27.

Earlier, on May 24, two rockets made of gas barrels fell in New Village Armenian neighborhood of Aleppo. As a result, resident Karapet Piloyan was injured. He was taken to a hospital.

Since early May, about three dozen Armenians have been injured in Aleppo.

Zohrabyan Urges PACE to Punish Azerbaijan

STRASSBOURG (Armenpress) – In the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE) summer session, Prosperous Armenia Party Deputy Naira Zohrabyan spoke out against hate speech in Azerbaijan toward Armenians.

She urged PACE to apply sanctions against Azerbaijan as punishment.

Navarre Parliament Recognizes Armenian Genocide

PAMPLONA, Navarre (Armenpress) – The Parliament of the Spanish autonomous community of Navarre has adopted a declaration recognizing the Armenian Genocide on June 23, reported the European Friends of Armenia (EuFoA). The adoption of the declaration was the result of several visits organized by EuFoA to Armenia and Nagorno Karabagh with different parliamentarians.

The declaration reads that "in accordance with the resolution of the European Parliament of June 1987, reaffirmed by subsequent resolutions (February 28, 2002 and April 1, 2004), the events suffered by the Armenian people are an authentic genocide."

"As we are nearing the centenary of the Armenian Genocide, such declarations clearly show European solidarity with Armenian people and their suffering" comments EuFoA Director Eduardo Lorenzo Ochoa. "EuFoA is proud that thanks to its extensive network, more and more key European stakeholders are aware of the importance of this issue."

The declaration denounces the policy of the Turkish regime at that time and calls on Turkey "to establish diplomatic relations with Armenia in the spirit of a good and harmonious neighborhood, and to resolve their border dispute peacefully." In addition, the text stresses that given Turkey's status as candidate for EU membership, those two issues (the recognition of the Genocide and the normalization of diplomatic relations) should be urgently addressed.

Navarre is in the north, bordering France with a population of 650,000 inhabitants. It is the fourth region in Spain that has recognized the Armenian Genocide, after the Basque Country, Catalonia and the Balearic Islands.

AGBU Lebanon Hosts Annual Art Exhibit Fundraiser

BEIRUT – The AGBU Lebanon Cultural Committee's Art Exhibition 2014 brought dozens of paintings by world-renowned artists to the AGBU Demirdjian Center in Beirut. The exhibition, the committee's largest fundraiser of the year, also brought in over \$50,000, which is now being directed to local AGBU Lebanon Schools.

The paintings, ranging from impressionism to cubism, surrealism to modern romanticism, and the abstract, were donated by Dr. Movses Herkelian, an art critic and owner of Noah's Ark gallery in Beirut. The event marked AGBU Lebanon's second partnership with Herkelian; in 2011, he also donated paintings to the AGBU Lebanon Cultural Committee's Art Exhibition, which were sold to benefit the AGBU Lebanon Schools.

A past AGBU scholarship recipient,



Gallery owner Dr. Movses Herkelian addresses guests on the opening night

Herkelian has continuously pledged his support to AGBU's educational initiatives to provide Armenian youth with the same opportunities he was given. Anita Lebiar, AGBU Lebanon's executive director, acknowledged his generosity, commenting, "Our collaboration with Dr. Movses Herkelian and his family does not come as a coincidence. We share a commitment to showcasing Armenian talents and to investing in our children's education. We are very grateful for the Herkelian family's philanthropy and are so pleased that, together, we can give back to our community."

Each piece lining the center's walls was signed by an Armenian-born artist who has received international acclaim. Painter Ruben Abovian holds the title of Honorable Artist of the Republic of Armenia and is a member



Paintings by Armenian-born artists line the walls of the AGBU Demirdjian Center in Beirut for the AGBU Lebanon Cultural Committee's Art Exhibition 2014.

of UNSECO's International Association of Arts. He began his career as a teacher in a village in the Lori province and has since presented his work in Asia, Europe and the US.

Edik Pertian was discovered through a chance encounter with a gallery owner from Lebanon while selling his sketches at a Yerevan flea market. Vahram and Suren Vosgianian each studied in Armenia and Russia and have attended numerous art expos around the globe. Yuroz painted two major murals for the United Nations that were turned into postage stamps

that continue to circulate around the world.

In addition to guests from the local community, dozens of members of AGBU were present at the exhibition's opening ceremony, and through its 11-day run. Attendees included Gerard Tufenkjian, chair of the AGBU Lebanon Chapter; AGBU benefactors Sarkis and Seta Demirdjian and Gary Nazarian and Vicken Tchertchian, chair of AGBU-AYA.

To learn more about the AGBU Lebanon District, email agbu@agbu.org.lb.

Top American-Turkish Council Officials Resign over Corruption Probe Row

By Tolga Tanis

WASHINGTON (*Hürriyet*) – Top executives of the main bilateral business association between Turkey and the United States, the Washington-based American-Turkish Council (ATC), announced their resignation June 1, following government pressure in the aftermath of the corruption probe.

The council's president for 11 years and former US ambassador to Turkey, Jim Holmes, Deputy Head Canan Büyükküstün and Executive Manager Ayşe Sümer submitted their resignations following Deputy Prime Minister Ali Babacan's demand.

The main reason behind the rift was a bulletin that only cited news reports from the website of Today's Zaman, which were published after the December 17, 2013 probe that implicated four ex-ministers. Today's Zaman is the English-language arm of the main newspaper outlet affiliated with the US-based Islamic scholar Fethullah Gülen, who is accused by the government of orchestrating the prosecutions.

The bulletin overlooking the investigation drew harsh reactions from Cüneyt Zapsu, an executive member of the Turkish-American Business Council

(TAK) and former adviser to Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan. Zapsu conveyed his disturbance to the highest echelons of the TAK, which is itself affiliated with Turkey's top trade association, the Turkish Union of Chambers and Commodity Exchanges (TOBB).

Following Zapsu's intervention, Holmes' resignation was requested by Babacan, who traveled twice to Washington in the past two months.

The ATC's executive board stood behind Holmes in the beginning, but surrendered to the growing pressure after officials from both Turkey and the US snubbed the council's annual congress this month, leading to Holmes announcing his resignation on June 1, along with Büyükküstün and Sümer. Top figures such as US Vice President Joe Biden and US Army Chief of Staff Martin Dempsey had attended the ATC's congress in previous years, while this year the highest level officials present at the event were the White House's Trade Representative and the Turkish Foreign Ministry deputy undersecretary.

Both Zapsu and the Prime Ministry's press office have declined to comment on the resignations.

The government had responded to the investigation by carrying out massive purges within the judiciary, police and bureaucracy.

Lavrov Visits Armenia, Says Russia Seeks Karabagh Settlement

LAVROV, from page 1

cooperation in different international organizations, including within the UN, the Council of Europe, the Commonwealth of Independent States, the Organization for Security and Cooperation and the Collective Security Treaty Organization," Lavrov said.

"Russia and Armenia maintain a strategic partnership that is based on a centuries-long friendship, mutual assistance and good-neighborliness. This is an important factor for ensuring stability

of our states and maintaining regional stability," Lavrov said.

"This high-level dialogue gives an impetus to our multilateral relations. Today we've discussed the implementation of the agreements, reached in the course of Russian President Vladimir Putin's visit to Yerevan last year and at the meeting between our presidents in Moscow on May 8," he said.

"We praise the work of the intergovernmental commission for trade and economic cooperation. The similar commission for military-technical coopera-

tion operates. Recently the inter-parliamentary commission has met. We expect the Armenian speaker to arrive in Moscow in early July," he said.

"We believe that the strengthening of inter-parliamentary relations will facilitate further development of cooperation," Lavrov said.

Later, Lavrov, accompanied by Nalbandian, visited the Tsitsernakaberd Memorial and laid a wreath at the memorial and honored the memory of the Armenian Genocide victims with a minute of silence.

Community News

Summer Games Kicks Off in Clovis

CLOVIS, Calif. – Richard Demirjian, co-founder of the Armenian Summer Games, invites Armenian athletes of all ages to the games, a program on June 28 that was the first meet of its kind in California.

“Over the years, hundreds of athletes have participated from all over the US,” said Demirjian, who along with the late Ben Morjig co-founded the event in 1969. He goes on to point out that many records have been set over the years, including a world record by Payton Jordan in the 100-yard dash, in the 62-year-old age group. Stellar performer Judy Rejebian of Phoenix, Ariz., also set a world age group record as a 13-year-old in the pentathlon, right after participating in the AAU Nationals.

Current Armenian Summer Games president, Van Der Mugrdchian, adds his welcome to Armenian athletes, “We look forward to everyone joining us in Clovis for this unique event, eligibility is simple, if you have a parent or spouse who are Armenian, you can participate, and competition is in age group categories.”

Demirjian agrees with the uniqueness of this event as evidenced by special guests who have attended, such as the Armenian Bobsled team. This two-man team won second place in the 2003 America’s Cup Race. They beat teams from around the world, including the US team, which came in third.

Along with this rich history, the Armenian Summer Games provides a great opportunity to showcase athletic ability in competition with fellow Armenians, not to mention the extras that come with registration such as Summer Games t-shirts and the traditional post-meet lunch.

Registration for the Armenian Summer Games and more information is available on their website: armeniansummertimegames.com.

Western US Centennial Committee Issues List Of Programs

LOS ANGELES – The Armenian Genocide Centennial Committee - Western US, this week announced a partial list of its planned events in 2015.

- April 14, 2015 – A special ecumenical service at the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Los Angeles with the participation of representatives and interfaith leaders from various churches and religious denominations as well as civic officials from the City of Los Angeles.

- April 23, 2015 – Solemn celebration of the Divine Liturgy at St. Leon Armenian Cathedral with the participation of all Armenian churches.

- April 24, 2015 – Pan-Armenian march of protest that will unite, without exception, the Armenian community in its quest for justice while demonstrating collective strength and spirit.

- An official opening ceremony of a Los Angeles County landmark dedicated to the memory of the innocent victims of the Armenian Genocide.

These community events are organized by the Armenian Genocide Centennial Committee, and therefore, organizers expect a massive showing of residents. Additional details will be forthcoming.



ATP’s Tigran Palazyan carries new tree seedlings for planting on Earth Day.

New Video Explains How ATP Connects Diaspora to Armenia through Trees

WATERTOWN – On the occasion of its 20th anniversary, Armenia Tree Project (ATP) has released an uplifting video highlighting its tree planting, environmental education and poverty reduction programs. The 13-minute film, “Plant a Tree, Plant Hope” features founder Carolyn Mugar who reflects on some of the motivations and challenges of the early years. The film can be viewed on ATP’s YouTube Channel via the following link: www.tinyurl.com/planthope

“I’m sure you’ll agree this video is quite an uplifting message and a much-needed dose of hope and GOOD news,” says Managing Director Tom Garabedian. “Often people don’t realize the magnitude of the work we’ve achieved. Over the past 20 years, we have planted nearly 4.5 million trees! And this is at the grassroots, community level, at more than 900 sites in every region of Armenia including Artsakh.”

Narrator Roffi Petrossian, a diasporan who was an ATP volunteer last year, really hits home when he says: “Each tree [planted by ATP] is a manifestation of human dedication and care. It is bought with an investment made from abroad, planted in Armenia through the hands of an Armenian, and it grows and bears fruit for everyone. Each garden and forest connects Armenians scattered around the world to Armenia.”

The film was produced in Armenia by CivilNet.TV and directed by Seda Grigoryan. CivilNet’s young, vibrant, and multilingual team worked with ATP to create something that is educational, uplifting, and a call to action to support the organization’s environmental programs. The script supervisors were Maria Titizian and Sara Anjargolian.

This production is just one part of ATP’s 20th anniversary outreach. The organization hosted a lively event at the Huntington Library and Botanical Gardens in California in May, and has launched a new logo with a fully rebranded website to follow this summer. The celebration continues on Saturday, November 8, when ATP will host an event at the grand atrium of the John Joseph Moakley Courthouse overlooking Boston Harbor.

Since its inception in 1994, ATP has planted more than 4.4 million trees during 41 seasons of planting, established three nurseries and two environmental education centers, and has greened villages, churches, parks, and open spaces throughout Armenia. In the process, the organization has provided employment for hundreds of people and provided vital resources to thousands of villagers throughout the country.

Jerry Tarkanian Inducted Into Hall of Fame

LAS VEGAS (*Las Vegas Sun*) – Mayor Carolyn Goodman called former University of Nevada at Las Vegas (UNLV) basketball coach Jerry Tarkanian “the most beloved human being in our community,” as he was recognized this week as a senior who has made a difference in Las Vegas.

Two months after suffering a heart attack and being hospitalized with pneumonia, Tark the Shark accepted the city’s Senior of the Quarter award during a meeting of the City Council.

Danny Tarkanian, speaking on his father’s behalf, said his dad had “received some wonderful awards, but nothing



Former UNLV Coach Jerry Tarkanian Recognized with Seniors Award

means more to him than receiving an award from the city of Las Vegas and from seniors, because everyone knows the wisest people in town are the seniors.”

The award program was created by the Senior Citizens Advisory Board to encourage seniors to make life better for others through volunteer work, according to the city’s website.

Jerry Tarkanian’s wife of 57 years, Lois, is a member of the City Council.

A member of the Naismith Memorial Basketball Hall of Fame, Tarkanian led teams from three schools to the NCAA tournament, most famously UNLV teams that four times advanced to the Final Four. The Runnin’ Rebels won the 1990 national title.

Tarkanian also took Long Beach State to the tournament.

After leaving UNLV, he coached with the NBA’s San Antonio Spurs in 1992 and returned to his alma mater, Fresno State, to serve as coach from 1995-2002, leading the Bulldogs to the NCAA tournament twice.

UW Football Coach Sarkisian Top Wash. State Employee for Pay

OLYMPIA, Wash. (*The Olympian*) – The latest list of salaries in state government shows that, as is typical, college athletic officials, investment fund chiefs and medical school researchers lead the league in top pay.

Former University of Washington (UW) coach Steve Sarkisian earned over \$2.6 million in 2013 before quitting late in the year to coach at Southern California. Washington State University (WSU) coach Mike Leach earned over \$2.3 million. Their salaries are paid by athletic department revenues.

The only other state employee listed with a salary over \$1 million was UW basketball Coach see COACH, page 6



COMMUNITY NEWS

Jamestown Foundation Conference Excludes Armenian Representation

Armenian Embassy, NKR Office and Assembly Reps Address Panelists

By Gevorg Shahbazyan

WASHINGTON – On Monday, June 16, the Jamestown Foundation held a conference titled “Repercussions of the Russian-Ukrainian Conflict on Moldova and the South Caucasus,” at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. The two-panel conference featured several policy experts and former US government officials, including Margarita Assenova, director of programs for the Balkans, Caucasus & Central Asia, the Jamestown Foundation; Glen

“Hardly any doubt remains that the violent crises in Ukraine is being fueled by Russia,” stated Illarionov. “Russia will do anything to keep Ukraine pro-Russian.”

According to Socor, Russia is using referendums in Lugansk and Donetsk as “political instruments.” By escalating the situation in Ukraine, following Russia’s illegal annexation of Crimea a few months ago, the panel unanimously agreed that the crises are going to escalate further. If the US does not take necessary steps, then the crisis is sure to worsen, they suggested.

“The US has no foreign policy in the region,” said Courtney.

The first panel concluded that despite the difficulties of enacting sanctions on Russia, the West should be ready to further deepen these sanctions if Russia continues with its aggressive behavior.

OSCE [Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe] negotiations,” citing limited US influence in the region. Despite this handicap, Blank said that the US needs to help countries in the region overcome domestic opposition and help Georgia, Azerbaijan and Moldova move closer to the European Union (EU) by signing Association Agreements (AA) on June 27.

While the panel included “The Georgian Perspective” and “The Azerbaijani Perspective,” it clearly lacked an Armenian perspective. However, representatives of the Armenian Assembly of America, the Embassy of Armenia and the Office of the Nagorno Karabagh Republic (NKR) were present and addressed the various inaccuracies and sometimes outright falsifications presented.

Andranik Hovhannisyian, deputy chief of mission from the Armenian Embassy, asked the panel why the Embassy of Armenia was not invited to participate, Assenova responded, saying at first that they had sent a letter of invitation. When Hovhannisyian informed her that, as the person who receives such correspondence, he had in fact not received an invitation, Assenova then stated that the conference was quickly assembled in only three days. However, the first public notice of the conference was issued on June 11, five days prior to the conference.

Aram Avetisyan, counselor from the NKR office asked the Azeri embassy representative, “Mr. Bakhishov, are you going to celebrate Safarov’s anniversary?” a reference to Ramil Safarov, the Azerbaijani soldier who brutally killed Gurgen Margarian, an Armenian officer, with an axe while he was sleeping, in Hungary during a NATO training course in 2004.

Avetisyan was interrupted numerous times by the moderator, as was Hovhannisyian and the author.

Without proper oversight from the international community, particularly the US and EU, Azerbaijan’s hostile and provocative behavior will continue to be directed against Armenians everywhere. Therefore, it is clear that, given Bakhishov’s statements, Azerbaijan will not stop threatening Armenia with military invasion until a settlement favorable to Baku can be reached.

Today, Georgia and Azerbaijan, with the support of the US and EU, are trying to bypass Russian energy supply lines and create a new Southern Corridor pipeline straight into Europe. Lessening the dependency of Eastern Europe and the Caucasus on Russian oil and gas loosens Moscow’s grip in the process. The Russia-Ukraine conflict, on the other hand, has clearly impacted the South Caucasus. It shows that Russia has many cards to play in the region and it will not hesitate to do so.

The statement by Courtney that “The US has no foreign policy in the region” is troubling. The US is not only in need of a new policy in the region, but a vision for the future of its people; one that helps the countries help themselves to flourish again, develop and grow as democratic societies. It is also important for policy makers to understand that it is crucial that Armenian Americans have a role in formulating such a vision and articulating it through a policy that respects human rights and the rule of law, and opens economies of the region to the rest of the world.

(Gevorg Shahbazyan is a summer intern at the Armenian Assembly of America.)



Members of the panel, including the representative from Azerbaijan

Howard, president, The Jamestown Foundation; Andrei Illarionov, Senior Fellow, CATO Institute; Vladimir Socor, senior fellow, the Jamestown Foundation; Ambassador William Courtney, former US ambassador to Georgia and Kazakhstan; Stephen Blank, senior fellow, American Foreign Policy Council; Giorgi Khelashvili, deputy chief of mission, Embassy of Georgia; Natig Bakhishov, political officer, Embassy of Azerbaijan; Alexander Melikishvili, senior analyst, Europe/CIS Forecasting Team, IHS Country Risk and Janusz Bugajski, a foreign policy analyst.

Howard opened the first panel and discussed the importance of the current crisis in Ukraine, specifically referencing his visit to Kiev last month. “The world is watching what US action will be in the region,” he said. On his trip, he discussed “key issues” with Ukrainian government and emphasized how important it is to work closely with the defense ministry of Ukraine to establish control along the border with Russia. Howard also discussed the importance of US military assistance to Ukraine and countries in the region, particularly Moldova and Georgia.

A second panel of speakers discussed the “South Caucasus Perspectives on the Russia-Ukraine Conflict.” Of particular focus was the settlement of the Nagorno Karabagh dispute. In this context, it was remarkable to hear Bakhishov claim that Azerbaijan is committed to “solve” the conflict by “peaceful means.” A few minutes into his statement he threatened the use of military force. “Military action is valid if negotiations fail” Bakhishov said, contradicting himself in the process.

When asked why he suggested that Azerbaijan is committing to a peaceful solution while continuously shelling Karabagh, Bakhishov declined to comment but repeated that “Azerbaijan is still committed to the peaceful settlement of the conflict.”

One of the speakers on the panel expressed concern over Azerbaijan’s massive military build up and the arms race it has produced with neighboring Armenia. “We are aware of the purchase of \$4 billion worth of military arms by Azerbaijan,” Stephen Blank, senior fellow at the American Foreign Policy Council said, calling it “a measure to destabilize the region.” According to Blank, “The US needs to cherish

Coach Sarkisian Top Wash. State Employee for Pay

COACH, from page 5

Lorenzo Romar, who earned nearly \$1.9 million in 2013. His counterpart at WSU, Ken Bone, who lost his job in 2014, earned \$870,143 in 2013.

UW assistant football coach Justin Wilcox received \$799,259, and UW athletic director Scott Woodward \$692,560.

The top non-sports salary in state government went to Elson Floyd, president of WSU, who ranked No. 7 with \$662,560. UW president Michael Young weighed in at No. 11, earning \$571,380.

Others in the top 10 include Keith Ferguson, chief investment officer for UW, who earned \$623,700, up from \$504,900 in 2012. The UW

says his salary is paid out of investment earnings.

No. 9 was Dr. Christopher Murray, a physician and professor in the UW’s School of Public Health, who earned \$608,008. University spokeswoman Margaret Shepherd describes Murray as “a world-renowned health economist and researcher” who leads the Institute for Health Metrics Evaluation and “was recruited to the UW in partnership with the Gates Foundation.” She said his salary is paid from private grants.

No. 10 was William Moos, athletic director at WSU, earning \$581,092.

Gov. Jay Inslee’s budget office released the data last week, posting it on the state’s budget website, fiscal.wa.gov.

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COMMUNITY NEWS

'From Earth To Mars and Beyond'

A presentation by Jet Propulsion Scientists at AESA July Meeting

PASADENA, Calif. – When the Curiosity rover landed on Mars on August 6, 2012, it captured the world's attention. Find out what is special about our neighboring planet and the future missions to Mars, what the Curiosity rover has been up to since it landed on the red planet, and what the challenges were to build and land her safely on Mars. The presenters of this interesting lecture are three scientists from Jet Propulsion Laboratory (JPL) in La Canada Flintridge, Richard Ohanian, Garen Khanoyan and Alfred Khashaki. This lecture, which is hosted by the Armenian Engineers and Scientists of America (AESA), will be held on Tuesday, July 8, at 7:30 p.m. at Parson Corporation, 100 West Walnut St.

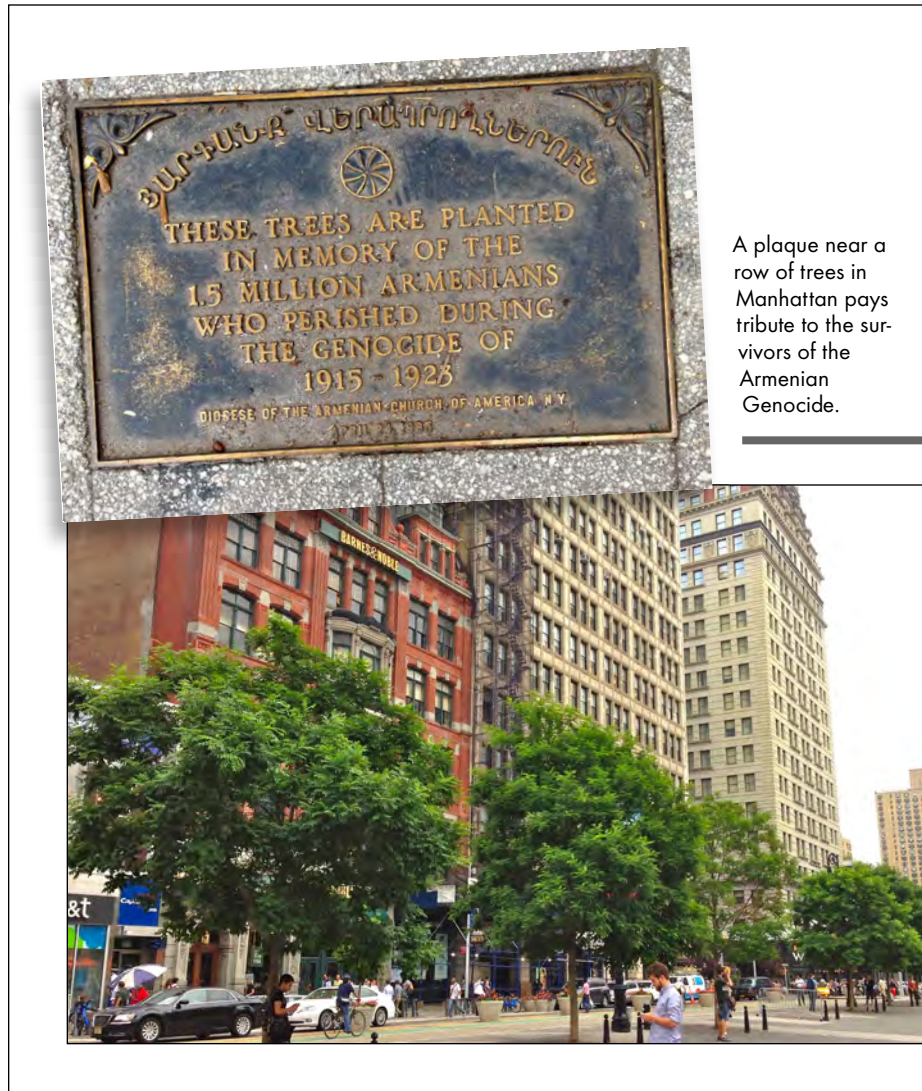
Ohanian holds a BS in applied physics from Azad University, Tehran, Iran, and a BS and MS in electrical and computer engineering from California Institute of Technology. He worked at Axion Microdevices as RFIC designer and helped develop world's first CMOS power amplifier meeting 3GPP standards for GSM/GPRS mobile phones. In 2010, he joined the Flight Communications section at JPL as RF/Microwave engineer where he has worked on electronics hardware for various flight and non-flight projects, including Mars Science Laboratory, Mercury Ion Deep Space Clock, and FINDER. In 1998, he published a physics book for high school students in Iran. In 2004 he founded ArmEngine to promote entrepreneurship among Armenian engineers. As adjunct faculty at Glendale Community College, Richard has helped establishing GCC's Robotics Academy where he has developed and is currently teaching courses in Electronics and Robotics.

Khashaki received a BS in electrical engineering from Cal Poly Pomona. He continued his education in VLSI design at USC and embedded software design at UCI. He joined JPL as a student on the Galileo project and has worked there ever since. Currently he is a member of the Flight Electronics and Software Systems Group and has contributed to several major projects such as Deep Space 1 and Microwave Limb Sounder. He has spent almost a decade either directly or indirectly contributing to the MSL and was the lead on the MSL's Telecom Interface FPGA.

Khanoyan is a member of the Advanced Computer Systems & Technologies Group at the Jet Propulsion Laboratory. He is currently involved with the development of several next generation landing technologies, including Lander Vision System and Low Density Supersonic Decelerators. Garen has worked on multiple rover missions to Mars, built a perception system for autonomous helicopters, and developed methods for simulating the effects of high radiation environments on commercial computers. He joined JPL in 1998 and holds a BS in Electrical Engineering and an MS in computer sciences from the University of Southern California. He also manages all technical aspects of Harsanik.com, a popular Armenian wedding website, which he co-founded in 2006.

"AESAs has planned a series of lectures during this year featuring Armenian engineers and scientists who will share their knowledge, experience, opinions and accomplishments, discussing timely topics," stated AESA President Vasken Yardemian. "We are very pleased to have three scientists from JPL to talk on NASA's Mars Science Laboratory mission."

The lecture series presented by the Armenian Engineers and Scientists of America are open to the public and free of admission charge. The space is limited, so please RSVP by e-mail so your name will be with the guards at the entrance which will expedite your signing in process - Areg.gharabegian@parsons.com.



A plaque near a row of trees in Manhattan pays tribute to the survivors of the Armenian Genocide.

Row of Trees in Union Square Marks Armenian Genocide

NEW YORK (*Ephemeral New York*) – New York is a city of memorials. Some you can't miss: Grand Army Plaza, the Soldiers and Sailors Monument in Riverside Park, and the new 9/11 Memorial and Museum.

Others are so low-key, you might walk past them thousands of times without realizing they exist. That describes this row of trees on the northern border of Union Square Park.

Lovely, yes. But unless you notice this small plaque at the eastern end, you'd never know that they were planted almost 30 years ago to commemorate the Armenian Genocide early last century.

New York's "Little Armenia" community was centered not too far away in the upper 20s at Lexington Avenue.

But there doesn't appear to be any connection between the former Armenian neighborhood and the memorial, which remains understated and little-known on one of the busiest stretches of Manhattan.

UCLA Bruins Great to Keynote Gala Banquet of Armenian Evangelical Union of North America

FRESNO – Ed "Coach K" Kezirian, assistant athletic director of academic services for the UCLA Bruins football team, will keynote the June 28 Gala Banquet of the Armenian Evangelical Union of North America (AEUNA).

The banquet is part of the AEUNA's four-day hemispheric convocation which will take place in Fresno on June 26-29, Pilgrim Armenian Congregational Church.

A native of Fresno, Kezirian lettered in football at Central Union High School in Fresno and spent two seasons at Reedley Junior College. At UCLA, Kezirian earned All-Conference honors

and the Bruins' Kenneth Washington Award for the outstanding senior offensive player. Drafted by the Cincinnati Bengals, Kezirian decided to play instead with the Southern California Sun of the World Football League. After earning a bachelor's degree in sociology, Kezirian returned to Westwood as a graduate assistant to coach the offensive and defensive lines and the scout team players in 1976. Two years later, he was hired by University of Hawaii head coach Dick Tomey, a former Bruin assistant coach. Kezirian devoted the next four years to coaching the Rainbow tight ends, tackles and special

teams players. In 1981, he served as coach of the entire offensive line as well as special teams.

Kezirian served as a member of the Bruin football coaching staff under then-head coach Terry Donahue. From 1982-1988, he tutored the tackles and tight ends and then in 1989, he worked with the centers and guards. His last three seasons, he was in charge of the entire offensive line.

On December 9, 2002, Kezirian was named interim head football coach during the transition period leading up to the beginning of coach Karl Dorrell's tenure. Kezirian and staff helped guide the Bruins to victory in the Sega Las Vegas Bowl game on Christmas Day.

Throughout his coaching career, he worked with many of the top Bruin linemen, including future professional performers Irv Eatman, Duval Love, Robert Cox, David Richards, Frank Cornish, Vaughn Parker, Craig Novitsky, Mike Flanagan and Jonathan Ogden. Kezirian begins his 28th year as a member of the Bruin program and his 15th in his current capacity as an assistant athletic director for academic services. He is responsible for implementing academic services for football team members and tracking the academic progress of the student-athletes. In addition, he is also responsible for interacting with other departments within the athletic administration in the area of student services for the football team.

Kezirian is married to the former Kay Lorraine Hall and they have three children, Blane, a graduate of UCLA and football player, Christine and Jaclyn.

Plans Underway for Michigan Best Fest on July 12

BIRMINGHAM, Mich. – The members of the Metro Detroit Armenia Fest Committee met on Monday, June 16, to firm up plans for what they are calling "The Best Armenian Fest Ever" marks the seventh anniversary for the festival. This year's plans include local vendors and Armenian artisans, Armenian music, Armenian food, Armenian dance performed by the Hamazkayin Dance Troup, fortune telling and special entertainment for the kids; all free and open to the public.

The fest will take place on Saturday, July 12

at the Royal Oak Farmers Market, 316 E. 11 Mile Road from 5-10 p.m.

Proceeds will benefit humanitarian projects.

The Metro Detroit Armenia Fest Committee is composed of local activists, business owners and community leaders who got together seven years ago to put together a community ethnic festival, much like those started in metro Detroit years ago, to highlight their rich Armenian heritage. The fests have drawn crowds of more than 1,000 annually.



From left, are, David Terzibashian, Hagop Alexanian, Pam Coultis, Ray Boujoulian, Shirley Sarkisian, Edward Bedikian, Madeline Thomasian, Ken Khezarijan, Vaughn Masropian. Not pictured are committee members, Paul Kulhanjian and Corinne Khederian.



COMMUNITY NEWS



Tekeyan Cultural Association Holds 33rd Convention In New Jersey

CONVENTION, from page 1

The Central Board presented its biannual financial report.

Elections were held to fill the three rotating positions of the Central Board and the following members were elected: Panig Keshishian and Kevork Keushkerian (California) and Arto Berj Manoukian (Montreal).

The afternoon session was mostly dedicated to the discussion of future prospects and to the prospects of reinvigorating certain structures within the organization.

The role of the Board of Administrators is to coordinate activities between the chapters, to develop new programs and to conduct fundraising for the Sponsor a Teacher Program in Armenia and Karabagh. The TCA sponsors five Tekeyan schools in Armenia and Karabagh. Maro Bedrossian has served as the chair of the Board of Trustees since its inception. The convention expressed its appreciation to Bedrossian for running the board smoothly and achieving impressive amounts of funds for the educational projects. Unanimously, the convention elected Harout Chatmajian from the New York/New Jersey Chapter as the new chair of the Board of Administrators.

One of the major topics discussed was the centennial commemoration of the Armenian Genocide. Plans were laid for local chapter level programs as well as a national program to be developed by the Central Board.

The organization has two very successful theater groups, the Mher Megerdichian Theatrical Group in New York/New Jersey and the Hay Pem Group in Montreal. Both have given successful performances locally. The convention explored the possibility of rotating the groups between the other chapters.

The delegates were elated to hear the news of TCA acquiring a five-story building in Yerevan to house Armenia's TCA, Azg weekly newspaper and the local structures of the ADL in Armenia.

The Appreciation Committee awarded the Simsarian Trophy to the Montreal Chapter as the most active group, which was in competition with the New York/New Jersey chapter.

The convention recognized with gratitude the outstanding achievement of two of its members, Dr. Nubar Berberian, the secretary of the Central Board, and Kevork Marashalian, who retired recently after serving the Central Board as the executive secretary. Both received plaques from the president.

Next year, the 34th convention will be held in Montreal, in October, which will coincide with the 40th anniversary of the weekly Abaka.

After attending the tribute banquet honoring Hagop Vartivarian on Saturday night as well as the Sunday service at St. Thomas Armenian Church of Tenafly in memory of departed members of the TCA and the ADL, the delegates returned home energized by the achievements of the last two years and determined to perform even better next year.

TCA Pays Tribute to Veteran

VARTIVARIAN, from page 1

About 350 people attended the banquet, held at the Clinton Inn, to pay tribute to Vartivarian for his many years of activity within the Armenian Democratic Liberal party, the TCA as well as supporting the Armenian Church and culture at large.

The program felt both like a national-level event and a family reunion. Unity and celebration were the theme, bringing together people from across party lines.

During the program, Vartivarian received the St. Sahag and St. Mesrob medal from the Primate, Archbishop Khajag Barsamian, on behalf of the Catholicos of All Armenians Karekin II. In addition, Armenia's new ambassador to the United Nations, Zohrab Mnatsakanian, presented the Movses Khorenatsi Medal to the honoree on behalf of President Serge Sargisian.

Among those offering remarks about him were his son, Haig Vartivarian, and brother-in-law, Anthony J. Principi, the former secretary of the Veterans Administration, as well as his brother, Dr. Zareh Vartivarian, from California.

His son said, "We are all here to recognize him. He has traveled across North America, South America, Europe and Asia and befriended thousands of Armenians, always meeting Armenians. I am programmed to say, 'Parev, Hay em. Hagopi tghan em.'" (Hello, I am Armenian. I am Hagop's son.)

Dr. Zareh Vartivarian said that the evening was "one of the most memorable nights for me. He and I are far away in terms of distance,



Benefactor of the event Carmen Gulbenkian and Hagop Vartivarian

but together through our souls." He also thanked all those attending for honoring his brother, adding, "Hagop is not a person, he is an institution."



Nazareth Festekjian and Sarkis Jebejian AGBU Board Members with Archbishop Khajag Barsamian



The performers, from left, Alyne Corrigan, Vagharshag Ohanyan, Nicholas Bompert, Dr. Svetlana Amirkhanian and Solange Merdinian



Anthony Principi and Hagop Vartivarian

Principi, the brother of his wife, Maria, said he was delighted to pay tribute to his "brother, Jack."

"My family and I share your pride in his accomplishments. He is the kindest and most intelligent man I have ever met. I have enjoyed the time we sat together over good Cognac to talk about art," he added. "When you visit Jack and Maria's home, you eat well and drink well and they send you home with leftovers."

He paid tribute to the honoree and his wife for taking care of Maria and Anthony Principi's mother until her death. "The Jack I know is all about family. Jack and Maria took care of our mother. Jack was adamant that she belonged at home." He also referred to the traumatic history of the Armenian people, who, like Italians, are family oriented.

Dr. Vaghenag Tarpinian, chair of the Tribute Committee, was the first to speak. He paid tribute to the honoree in both English and Armenian, as someone who had done his utmost to create further cultural ties between Armenia and the diaspora. "I appreciate the person and the talent" of Vartivarian, who is "ready to move mountains to reach his goals."

Edmond Y. Azadian, vice chairman of the TCA Central Committee, offered one of the keynote addresses about Vartivarian. "His stature in the community and his impressive achievements command respect. That is why we are gathered here to extend our tribute to him, thereby recognizing his valuable contributions to the Tekeyan Cultural Association and the Armenian community at large."

He added, "On behalf of the Central Board, it is my distinct pleasure and privilege to congratulate Mr. Vartivarian on the 45th anniversary celebration of his multifaceted activities in the Armenian community. No one on our Central Board needs to be offended when we state that Hagop is the most active member of that Board."

continued on next page



From left: Hagop Kouyoumjian, Nazar Nazarian, Amb. Zohrab Mnatsakanian, Hagop Vartivarian, Dr. Vaghenag Tarpinian



Hagop Vartivarian, Khoren Bandazian and Dr. and Mrs. Tavit Najarian



COMMUNITY NEWS

Cultural Ambassador Hagop Vartivarian

PHOTOS BY HRATCH ZOKIAN AND DIRAN JEBEJIAN

from previous page

Azadian also alluded to the rift in the ADL that for a while had seen him and Vartivarian in opposing camps. "After years of intense cooperation, division in our organization threw us into opposite camps. Hagop even resorted to the extreme. He honored me by publishing a bi-weekly journal targeting my deeds and misdeeds. I never took it personally because I believed what he was doing was out of conviction, for the good of the organization. On the contrary, he was holding my toes to the fire to do the right thing. Perhaps, in a perverse way, I was even gratified for having an adversary as honest as Hagop as I am proud today for having a friend so dedicated."

He concluded, "His energy is unmatched, his imagination is fascinating and his collective success is beyond belief. ... He is an organizer, journalist, scholar and actor. Hagop is a Good Samaritan. He wishes to help everybody, regardless whether those individuals deserve it or not."

Dr. Arshavir Gundjian, former chairman of the ADL Central Committee, spoke in Armenian about Vartivarian's role in the ADL and the importance of the ADL in the diaspora. He spoke about the importance of the Armenian General Benevolent Union, the Church and Tekeyan in Vartivarian's life. "He is a soldier in Armenian community as the leader of the ADL," he said. He praised the honoree for giving of his time, ability and resources in the various communities in which he has lived, including Beirut, Amman, Boston and New York.

Gundjian referred to the "exceptional role of the ADL in our community," adding that the party helped keep "the Mother See. It was the ADL, that thanks to the smart leaders and its influential press, tied Armenian and Armenians to Holy Echimadzin."

He called Vartivarian an "exceptional person" and "one of the leading activists in our press."

Dr. Haroutune Arzoumanian of the TCA Central Board also offered comments praising him.

The event marked the debut of Ambassador Mnatsakanian in the community. He offered, "I did not know Mr. Vartivarian, but I had heard so much about him that when I met him, I felt I knew him. I want to thank you and your colleagues. You have done so much for us and my colleagues. The way you contribute to Armenia is very special."

Playwright and freelance writer (and former staff writer for this newspaper) Taleen Babayan then read a message from her grandfather, veteran ADL member Yervant Babayan. She then added her own comments, praising Vartivarian's patriotism and thanking him for supporting cultural endeavors, including giving free rehearsal space to the troupe that performed her play, "Pesad Oor Eh (Where Is Your Groom?)" at the Tekeyan Center in New Jersey.

The event was not just confined to ADL members. Friend and fellow culture lover, Armenian Revolutionary Federation (ARF) and Hamazkayin Central Executive Board member Dr. Hrant Markarian delivered an impassioned tribute to Vartivarian.



Edward Babayan, Taleen Babayan and Hagop Vartivarian



Ambassador Zohrab Mnatsakanian and Hagop Vartivarian

"Hagop is a *khalis* [pure] Ramgavar and I am *khalis* ARF. But we are in a secret Armenian culture club. He has never laid down his weapon in the fight to preserve Armenian culture," he said.

He received thunderous applause from the audience.

Fellow ARF member, Antranik Kasparian, of the ARF Central Committee of Eastern US, had sent a letter on the occasion, in which he said, "Allow me to join the hundreds, from all walks of Armenian life, who are gathered today in recognition of your service, devotion, and accomplishments. There are few in our community who possess your gifts – as journalist, organizer, literary critic, staunch patriot and partisan; and even fewer who devote these gifts so willingly in the service of our nation and its cause."

"As is well-known in our community, you and I come from 'across the aisle' to one another: You of staunch liberal, Ramgavar background, I of equally staunch Dashnaksakan background. In the past, we have often focused on those issues that separated or divided us. This was perhaps necessary at times – especially during the Soviet era, when ideological divisions continued to affect the functioning of our diasporan communities. But today, more and more, we are bound by those issues that unite us, that bring us together in a spirit of collaboration. It is this spirit that has blossomed between our different groups, and I look forward to working ever more closely with you and your colleagues as we seek justice on the momentous occasion of the 100th anniversary of the Armenian Genocide."



Dr. Zareh Vartivarian, Hagop Vartivarian, Dr. Hagop Gulekjian, Dr. Vaghenag Tarpinian



TCA Chairman Dr. Haroutune Arzoumanian handling lifetime achievement award from TCA Central Board

"Today's tribute is both timely and richly deserved, sireli Hagop. I join my fellow Dashnaksakans in extending our warmest congratulations and best wishes, even though I must extend them from afar."

The honoree himself spoke with visible emotion, thanking his friends and family, as well as expressing his gratitude to the president of Armenia and Catholicos Karekin II for the honors. Welcoming Armenia's new ambassador to the UN, he spoke

see **TRIBUTE**, page 10



Surrounded by some of the Tribute Committee members, from left, Irma Der Stepanian, Harout Chatmajian, Carmen Gulbenkian, Hagop Vartivarian, Olympia Jebejian, Sirvart Demirjian, Vartan Ilanjan, Shoghig Chalian and Dr. Vaghenag Tarpinian



Member of parliament of Republic of Armenia Stepan Demirjian and his family, Arch. Khajag Barsamian and Dr. and Mrs. Raffy Hovanessian



From left, Dr. Hrant Markarian, Dr. Arshavir Gundjian and Nazir Nazarian



TCA Pays Tribute to Hagop Vartivarian

TRIBUTE, from page 9 about the ADL's abiding support for Armenia, regardless of "the color of its flag. ... We are all here to help Armenia. We have always loved our Armenia and want to strengthen ties between Armenia and the diaspora."

He spoke about the importance of the Armenian community and clubs for serving the youth. He recalled how clubs bring the youth together and save the Armenian culture. Referring to his own life, he said that he had lost his mother when he was 16 and his brother 12 and that his involvement in various Armenian clubs provided a home to them.

Vartivarian thanked many of the sponsors and donors, and reserved his deep thanks for Barsamian.

Barsamian, when he spoke, quoted the poet Vahan Tekeyan, who had praised the Armenian Church as the center of the Armenian life. "The first half of this century was a dark time for our people. Thanks to people like Hagop, we have an exceptional younger generation now," he said. He then offered Vartivarian the encyclical from the Catholicos.

In a surprise, he called Nora Azadian, the wife of Edmond Azadian and the recently-retired chair of the Detroit Tekeyan Chapter, to the podium and asked her to recite a poem by Tekeyan. She did, with emotion, thrilling the audience. He then presented to her, as a descendent of ADL founder Mihran Damadian and a disciple of Vahan Tekeyan, a plaque honoring her for her achievements as an artist, actress and educator, on behalf of the Tekeyan Central Board.



Mistress of Ceremonies Olympia Jebejian



Alin Gregorian, editor of the *Armenian Mirror-Spectator*, Hagop Vartivarian, Zaven Torigian, editor of *Hairenik* weekly and Vazken Belehkian



Edmond Y. Azadian

The banquet benefactors were Edward and Carmen Gulbenkian and the patrons were Henri Dimidjian and Nazar and Artemis Nazarian. Every attendee received a 120-page program book created by the tribute committee, featuring letters, reminiscences and photos.

Musical selections were offered by Solange Merdinian, Nicholas Bompert, Alyne Corrigan and Vagharshag Ohanyan.



Arch. Khajag Barsamian gives to Nora Ipekian-Azadian a special award



Maria Vartivarian and Haig Vartivarian



Dr. Vaghenag Tarpinian



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Arts & Living

Conductor Konstantin Petrossian Receives Highest Church Honor

PROVIDENCE, R.I. – The Saint Sahag and Saint Mesrob Medal was presented and awarded to conductor and composer Konstantin Petrossian, accompanied by an encyclical from Karekin II, Supreme Patriarch and Catholicos of All Armenians, by Archbishop Khajag Barsamian, Primate of the Armenian Church of America (Eastern), on Friday, June 13, at the conclusion of a magnificent concert to kick off the Centennial celebrations of Sts. Sahag and Mesrob Armenian Church here.

Petrossian, a composer, director and musicologist who has devoted the past 20 years to service at Sts. Sahag and Mesrob Church and has served not only as the director of music, but of culture and arts, has established and maintained art, music and cultural programs there, which have benefited the church and the faithful during his years of service.

As the musical director also of the Armenian Chorale of Rhode Island and the Erevan Chorale of Holy Trinity Armenian Church of Greater Boston, he has offered many memorable concerts throughout the years throughout the US North East and Canada.

Recently honored by President Serge Sargisian and the Republic of Armenia with the Khorenatsi Award, he now received the highest honor of the Armenian Apostolic Church from the catholicos for his excellence in service to the church and the Armenian nation.

The concert, titled "A Century of Light, Hope and Faith," held at the Sts. Mary and Mena Coptic Orthodox Church, was attended by more than 550 people and nine clergymen from the Rhode Island Orthodox Clergy Fellowship as well as clergy of the Armenian Apostolic Church and Armenian Evangelical Church of Rhode Island and dignitaries from the state of Rhode Island, invited by the pastor, Rev. Shnork Souin.



Archbishop Khajag Barsamian pins the St. Saha and St. Mesrob Medal on Konstantin Petrossian.

Said Souin, "We are so proud that this most prestigious award by His Holiness could be delivered by our primate on the glorious occasion of this magnificent concert in honor and celebration of our church's Centennial. Maestro's talents and services to this church shall forever be memorialized with this very well deserved award."



One of the works by Parajanov that is on display in New York.

Sergey Parajanov's Art Dazzles New York

NEW YORK – Sergey Parajanov, the cinema icon, has bequeathed enough original pieces of art to warrant the construction of a museum in Yerevan. Parajanov creations shook the cinematographic world with their originality when the world saw them in the 1960s.

Parajanov produced masterpieces of cinema with primitive equipment. One can only imagine what his genius could have produced if modern equipment were available when he was at his prime.

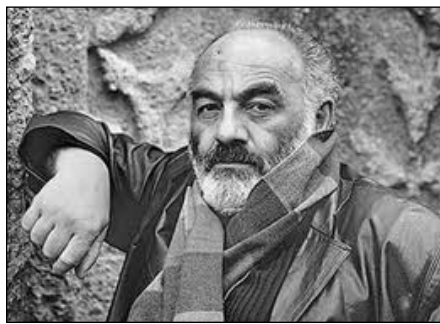
By Hagop Vartivartian
Special to the Mirror-Spectator

His creative life was cut short because he spent his last years in jail, as a result of trumped-up charges by the Soviet authorities.

After creating masterpieces like "The Color of Pomegranates," "Shadows of Our Ancestors" and "Ashugh Kerib," Parajanov dedicated his prison time to creating original art pieces of his very own.

The Parajanov Museum is a tribute to the artist's memory and legacy, comprising some 1,400 items. The collection includes installations, collages, assemblages, drawings, dolls and hats. The museum also showcases unpublished screenplays, libretti and various other pieces mostly created in prison. The museum was founded in 1988 when Parajanov moved to Yerevan. The artist himself selected the location at the Dzoragugh ethnographic center. But the opening of the museum was delayed because of devastating earthquake of Spitak in 1988. It opened in 1991, a year after the artist's death.

On June 16, we attended the opening of Parajanov's exhibition, titled "Parajanov: The Creator," at the Gilbert Albert Gallery (43W 57th street, New York), sponsored by Russian American Foundation in cooperation with the *New York Post*. The exhibition was organized under the auspices of Armenia's First Lady Rita Sargisian, whose remarks were included in the program booklet. The exhibition was part of annual Russian Heritage Month. A large crowd attended the opening, including



Sergey Parajanov

see PARAJANOV, page 13

Re-Considering Zabel Yessayan, An Extraordinary Armenian Literary Figure

By Florence Avakian

NEW YORK – Recognized as one of the leading Western Armenian writers, educators and social activists, Zabel Yessayan and her prolific literary output are little known to readers of English. On Tuesday, May 6, the Krikor and Clara Zohrab Information Center of the Diocese of the Armenian Church of America (Eastern), presented a fascinating talk on Yessayan's life and works by translator, essayist and Columbia University master's degree student Jennifer Manoukian.

Introduced by the Very Rev. Daniel Findikyan, director of the Zohrab Center, Manoukian took her audience on a journey to 1878 Constantinople and the Armenian district of Uskudar, where Yessayan was born and lived until age 17. It was a unique neighborhood shared by Greek, Turkish and Jewish families.

"This close proximity to other groups and nationalities helped to shape a belief in tolerance and humanism that would define her writing and activism later in life," noted Manoukian.

During her formative years, her most fundamental relationship was with her father, a drifter in business ventures, "but to Zabel, no one was wiser or more worthy of respect. He encouraged her to become a writer, to read widely and instilled in her a love of knowledge." His progressive views on women's rights and women's education had a powerful effect on his daughter, whom he encouraged "to not let anything prevent her from doing what she wanted with her life."

Already a fixture in literary salons at age 17, Zabel Yessayan wrote a short story called "Feminine Souls" in the anthology, *My Soul in Exile*, which displayed her "resistance to the social restrictions placed on women and her search for an identity outside of [the role of] wife and mother normally prescribed to women," the speaker said.

By 1895 her father, deeply concerned for her future, as well as the impending massacres against intellectuals, decided to send her to Paris for her safety. Before she left, she visited the first Armenian female novelist, Serpouhi Dussap, who wrote about the struggles of Armenian women. Dussap warned Yessayan: "A male writer is free to be mediocre. A woman writer is not. Carve out a place for yourself in society."

Arriving in Paris in 1895, she was one of the first Armenian women to study abroad. Fluent in both Armenian and French, she began publishing in both languages and studied literature, philosophy and history at the Sorbonne, while living a modest life in the Latin Quarter. Cultivating relationships with French literary figures, she introduced Armenian literature to the French public through translations, reviews and original work.

It was in Paris that she met an Armenian art student from Constantinople, Dikran Yessayan. They married in 1900 and had two children: Sophie (born 1901) and Hrant (born 1910). In 1902 the couple with their 1-year-old daughter moved back to Constantinople, where Zabel had no

see ZABEL, page 12



Mkhitar Gosh Serves as Model of 'Multi-Cultural Living'

By Florence Avakian

NEW YORK – The medieval Armenian monk Mkhitar Gosh could hardly be called a man of the 21st-century globalized world. But in many ways he stands as a model of ideas and ways of living that have only now come into view.

How did this man from the 12th century become a unique example of “multicultural” living? And what lessons can we derive from his experiences? These provocative questions were answered by Prof. Roberta Ervine on Wednesday, June 4, during a fascinating multi-media presentation on Mkhitar Gosh titled, “How to be Armenian in a Multi-cultural World?”

This was the final lecture of the spring season sponsored by the Krikor and Clara Zohrab Information Center of the Diocese of the Armenian Church of America (Eastern), held at the Diocesan Center in New York. It was organized by the Zohrab Center's director, the Very Rev. Daniel Findikyan, who announced that in the fall season the Zohrab Center would be presenting lectures every three weeks.

Ervine, a doctoral graduate of Columbia University's Armenian Studies Department, is a master of medieval Armenia. She spent many years teaching at the Sts. Tarkmanchatz Armenian School of Jerusalem's Armenian Patriarchate and is currently an instructor at St. Nersess Armenian Seminary.

She began her talk by noting that Mkhitar Gosh was born around AD 1130 in Gandzak, located in Armenia's far northeast, one of two regions governed by a Muslim dynasty. However, at the time, there was no “kingdom of Armenia”: that is, a political entity with boundaries. These were “areas under the control of clans whose powers depended on their strength and ability to network with other local players.”

Therefore, Mkhitar did know about living in a shifting cultural landscape. He grew up in a “jumbled area of Christians [Georgians and Armenians], Muslims and probably Jews living with one another in every possible combination of power and

relationship,” said the speaker.

During his childhood, Gosh also witnessed some horrifying results of “inter-cultural disharmony,” the scholar related, including the 1139 earthquake in his hometown of Gandzak where thousands of dwellings disappeared into a huge opening in the earth, and the traumatized survivors were subsequently pillaged and enslaved by Muslim and Christian Georgian armies.

An 'Intra-Cultural' Education

In Mkhitar's day, Armenian monks regarded themselves as the spiritual and physical guardians of the Armenian homeland region, “constituting a kind of ‘energy shield’ and maintaining Armenian faith on Armenia's soil.” This was seen in two of Armenia's “most revered and intellectually powerful monasteries: Haghbat and Sanahin, unsullied by outside influences.”

To protect their region, these northern Armenian monks “cultivated a conservative, inward-focused stance toward Armenian Christianity.” They resisted the habit, taken up by the Cilician Armenians, of compromising and cohabiting with Roman Catholics and Byzantines. Thus a rift developed between Armenians in the homeland and those in Cilicia, noted the scholar.

Training and traveling with the pre-eminent vartabed Yovhannes Tavushetsi for about 10 years, Mkhitar understood his home area's diversity. Though achieving the lofty status of vartabed in his middle 30s, Mkhitar traveled to the Cilician Sev Ler (“Black Mountains”) that housed the monasteries of Syrians, Greeks, Roman Catholics and Armenians, in order to discover the other side of Armenian learning.

“It was the bastion of dangerous compromise,” said Ervine.

Conservative and Cosmopolitan

Putting aside his vartabed degree, Gosh started over, wanting to learn it all from another viewpoint. Later in life, he would call Humility the greatest of what we might call “multi-cultural” values. For years, he repeated the entire vartabed training program, becoming fluent in western Armenian and becoming certified once again to teach the Armenian faith.

“It was almost like having two natures incarnate in a single

being,” Ervine said. Mkhitar Gosh became the “first person to meld in one person the conservative north and the cosmopolitan south,” declared Ervine.

Eventually, Mkhitar got the opportunity to build his own monastery, today known as Goshavank. Its first incarnation was constructed of wood; later it was upgraded and expanded in stone, situated “near a sweet lake and village.” Eventually it gathered enough income-bearing properties to become self-supporting.

In 1213, the 80-year-old Mkhitar Gosh was buried overlooking the complex, “so his spiritual presence could oversee and enjoy its future growth.”

During his noteworthy and exemplary life, Mkhitar Gosh was much in demand as a teacher, spiritual guide, advisor to secular leaders, and as a mediator in controversies between local princes and clergymen.

To sum up her talk, Ervine argued that Gosh's three principles for “multi-cultural living” have passed down through countless generations to our own time.

First, she said, Mkhitar instilled the idea that to live well inter-culturally, you need to live well intra-culturally. “The more harmoniously you live with the people who are like you, the better skills you will have for living with the people who aren't like you,” is how Ervine put it. “Know who you are, and realize that sometimes you may be wrong.”

Secondly, “realize that diversity is divine. It is part of the divine plan that everyone is different. God did not intend for us to strive towards uniformity, only towards harmony. Unity may be out of reach, but harmony never is.”

And thirdly, Ervine channeled Mkhitar Gosh to advise: “Live the life of Christ among your neighbors, whoever they are.”

In concluding her talk, Ervine reiterated that Gosh's message is that “there is room in the kingdom of heaven for us all to be, and to build, and to enjoy all the things we know we have, and to enjoy them as the people we know we are.”

She ended with the happy observation that “The will of God, because He loves harmonious human life, made us need one another.”

Re-Considering Zabel Yessayan

ZABEL, from page 11

trouble reintegrating into community life. Dikran found it difficult, however and returned to Paris permanently in 1905.

During the period between 1902 and 1915, she traveled often between Constantinople and Paris and wrote extensively, producing a number of novels, novellas and journalistic works about the specific experiences of women in Armenian society. She tackled social injustice topics not addressed by other women writers, whom she called “frivolous.” Her subjects included struggles faced by Armenian school teachers in Constantinople, the role of Armenian women after the 1908 revolution, as well as her student years in Paris.

Taking advantage of the optimistic feeling after the 1908 overthrow of the sultan, Yessayan began plans to create an Armenian high school for girls in Constantinople and organized a movement to train women teachers in Armenian schools in Anatolia. These plans abruptly ended in the summer of 1909 when she went with a Patriarchal delegation to Cilicia to document the earlier massacres and to report on the state of the surviving widows and orphans. She worked diligently to prevent the orphans from being taken away from their homeland and also to prevent them from being entrusted to foreign groups, including European, American and Turkish institutions, “in order to prevent their assimilation and the loss of their Armenian identity.”

In a heated argument with Jemal Pasha, she fought desperately, but failed due to lack of support from Armenian organizations, to prevent the use of Turkish by Armenian orphans in Ottoman orphanages set up by the government. She continued the fight after leaving Cilicia and wrote a book on this episode called, *Averagneroun Metch (Amid the Ruins)*, considered by many to be her masterpiece.

Yessayan's life in Constantinople from 1911 to 1915 was devoted to writing novels focusing on the intimate experiences of women, “told from the perspective of female characters that were at their core, in search of human truth that all novelists seek to find. These themes had never before been written [about] in Western

Armenian and haven't been written since,” Manoukian said.

With the onset of the Genocide in 1915, she was one of the intellectuals on the government list to be rounded up on April 24. She managed to hide in a hospital disguised as a Turkish woman, then escaped to Bulgaria, but was forced to leave her son and mother behind. After two months in Bulgaria, she fled to the Caucasus, spending the next two years in Baku and Tiflis. There she assisted Armenian orphans and refugees and published their eyewitness reports in many periodicals.

In 1919, she moved back to France and wrote furiously, but lived hand to mouth. During this time, her writing also veered in a new direction, focusing on exile and its influence on art. By the mid 1920s, she unexpectedly became an unofficial spokesperson of Soviet Armenia in the diaspora. After a 1926 trip to Soviet Armenia, she became the editor of a pro-Soviet journal in France, designed to entice Diasporan Armenians to move to Soviet Armenia. She finally settled in Armenia in 1933.

“Zabel had a very bleak outlook on the future of Armenian art in the diaspora, which is a theme she delves into in *My Soul in Exile*,” related Manoukian. For her, “the best way to contribute to the Armenian nation was to be in Armenia: taking an active role in the socialist reconstruction of the country.”

From 1933 until her imprisonment and eventual disappearance in 1937 during Stalin's purges, “she seemed to be at her happiest,” living near her son and daughter, teaching classes in French literature at Yerevan State University and again writing prolifically. It was at this time that she wrote *The Gardens of Silihdar*, intended to be the first in a three-volume autobiography.

“The book is often celebrated as one of her most beautiful works,” Manoukian said, “in part because of its magnificent imagery and the way she brings the characters of her childhood to life.”

Following an enthusiastic question-and-answer session, copies of Yessayan's books, *The Gardens of Silihdar* and *My Soul in Exile*, were sold out in minutes and discussions among the audience members continued during the reception.

TCA MHER MEGERDCHIAN THEATRICAL GROUP
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ARTS & LIVING

Books

The Pivotal Role of One Woman in Getting Armenian Genocide Recognized

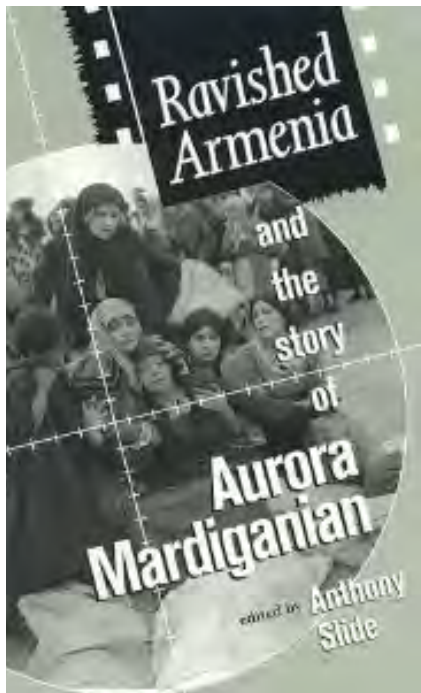
“Ravished Armenia” and the Story of Aurora Mardiganian

Edited by Anthony Slide
Foreword by Atom Egoyan
240 Pages
University Press of Mississippi, \$35

JACKSON, Miss. — “*Ravished Armenia*” and the *Story of Aurora Mardiganian* is the real-life tale of a teenage Armenian girl who was caught up in the 1915 Armenian Genocide, the first genocide in modern history.

Mardiganian (1901-1994) witnessed the murder of her family and the suffering of her people at the hands of the Ottoman Empire. Forced to march over fourteen hundred miles, she was sold into slavery. When she escaped to the United States, Mardiganian was then exploited by the very individuals whom she believed might help. Her story was published in book form and then used as the basis for a 1918 feature film, in which she herself starred.

The film “*Ravished Armenia*,” also known as “*Auction of Souls*,” is a graphic retelling of Aurora Mardiganian’s story,



with the teenager in the central role, supported by Anna Q. Nilsson and Irving Cummings and directed by Oscar Apfel. Only 20 minutes of the film — the first to deal with the Armenian Genocide — is known to survive, but it proves to be a stunning production, presenting its story in newsreel style.

This revised edition of Anthony Slide’s “*Ravished Armenia*” and the *Story of Aurora Mardiganian* also contains an annotated reprint of Mardiganian’s original narrative and, for the first time, the full screenplay. In his introduction, Slide recounts the making of the film and Mardiganian’s life in the United States, involving a cast of characters including Henry Morgenthau, Mrs. George W. Vanderbilt, Mrs. Oliver Harriman and film pioneer William Selig. The introduction also includes original comments by Aurora Mardiganian, whom Slide interviewed before her death. Acclaimed Armenian Canadian filmmaker Atom Egoyan, who created a video art installation about Mardiganian in 2007, provides a foreword.

Anthony Slide of, Studio City, Calif., has published more than 70 books on popular entertainment, including *Inside the Hollywood Fan Magazine: A History of Star Makers, Fabricators, and Gossip Mongers* and *Hollywood Unknowns: A History of Extras, Bit Players, and Stand-Ins* (both published by University Press of Mississippi).

CALENDAR

MASSACHUSETTS

AUGUST 10 — Saints Vartanantz Armenian Church, 180 Old Westford Road, Chelmsford, will hold its annual picnic from noon to 6 p.m., with Jason Naroian and his ensemble. Admission, \$1 per person. For more information, visit www.stsvartanantz.com or call the church office at 978-256-7234.

AUGUST 24 — Armenian Church at Hye Pointe Picnic to be held at American Legion Farm, 1314 Main St., Haverhill MA (take Rte. 495 to Exit 51 B onto Rte. 125 N), noon to 5 p.m. Music by the Jason Naroian Ensemble. Menu includes Shish, Losh, & Chicken Kebab Dinners, Kheyma, Pastries, & Beverages. Raffles for Cash prizes & Gift Certificates. Air Conditioned Hall. Bring your lawn chairs. For more info visit www.hyepointechurch.org or call (978) 372-9227

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

RHODE ISLAND

JULY 19 — SAVE THE DATE. 7 p.m. – 12 a.m. The Providence ARS “Ani” Chapter and the Ladies’ Guild of Sts. Vartanantz Armenian Church will hold its – “A HYE SUMMER NIGHT # 9” dinner dance at the beautiful Alpine Country Club, Pippen Orchard Road, Cranston, RI featuring the sensational music of Hachig Kazarian- clarinet, John Berberian – oud, Ken Kalajian – guitar and Jason Naroian vocals and dumbeg. The dinner-dance is \$50. Dance only after 8:30 p.m. is \$35. Students dance only \$25. ID required. RSVP by June 30. Call Joyce Yeremian at 401- 354-8770, joycey41@cox.net or Joyce Bagdasarian at 401- 434-4467, sweetano6@aol.com. Cash raffle will be held.



The Armenians and Progressive Politics Conference will take place on September 26 and 27, in Cambridge, Mass. This year’s theme will be Armeno-Turkish relations, including a number of panels covering Armenian Genocide denial, reparations, media, Turkish-Armenian exchanges, and Turkish civil society. The opening plenary features a discussion between David Barsamian of Alternative Radio and Noam Chomsky. All activities will take place at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), with the plenary to be held at MIT’s Kresge Auditorium.

Sergey Parajanov’s Art Dazzles New York

PARAJANOV, from page 11

American Armenian and former soviet Armenian artists and art connoisseurs. The curator of the museum, Zaven Sargsyan, delivered brief opening remarks.

The sponsoring committee included Marina Kovalyov, president, Russian American Foundation; Ambassador Garen Nazarian, Armenia’s former representative at the United Nations; Zaven Sargsyan; Zara Migranyan, director of International Cultural Exchange Programs; James Steffen, author of *The Cinema of Sergey Parajanov* and Andranik Migranyan, Institute of Democracy and Cooperation.

The International Cultural Exchange program was founded by Rafael Vartanov in 1988, to support co-operation between Russia and the US in various fields.

The exhibition itself was a testimony to the memory and legacy of a unique talent. Each piece warranted elaborate interpretations. The memorable pieces included “My Father’s Portrait Torn in a Moment of Jealousy” in 1983, made of collage, oil, canvas and photo; “Self Portrait in the Gothic Style” and “The Blue Hat” assemblage, made of silk, feather, velvet and straw.

Parajanov was not content using oil or gouache only; any material

could serve as color, volume or shape in Parajanov’s hands which he then converted into masterpieces.

Parajanov’s art dazzles and puzzles the mind, with the dual purpose of artistic expression and social protest.

The exhibition is also significant in its timing; it comes to mesmerize the American art community on the eve of the Genocide centennial. The show will be open through June 30.





COMMENTARY

Mirror Spectator



Established 1932
An ADL Publication

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The Armenian Mirror-Spectator is published weekly, except two weeks in July and the first week of the year, by:

Baikar Association, Inc.

755 Mt. Auburn St., Watertown, MA 02472-1509

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SUBSCRIPTION RATES:

| | |
|-----------------|--------------|
| U.S.A. | \$80 a year |
| Canada | \$125 a year |
| Other Countries | \$190 a year |

© 2014 The Armenian Mirror-Spectator
Periodical Class Postage Paid at Boston, MA
and additional mailing offices.

ISSN 0004-234X

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to The Armenian Mirror-Spectator, 755 Mount Auburn St., Watertown, MA 02472

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755 Mt. Auburn St., Watertown, MA 02472-1509

COMMENTARY

Reorganization and Rejuvenation

By Edmond Y. Azadian

As tragic as it is, the depopulation of Armenia and the subsequent settlement of those leaving the homeland in the US and other diasporan nations, come to prove how vulnerable maintaining that identity is in the host societies. On the other hand, the diasporan communities have survived in alien lands for centuries and despite their losses to assimilation; they have survived, because they have developed a mechanism of self-preservation.

Armenian organizations in the diaspora have served as sanctuaries of Armenian identity – the churches, the schools, the press and media, the relief and cultural organizations – have interacted with each other to weave a safety net for the preservation of Armenian heritage, which in turn has nourished that identity.

Competition between the organizations has also fueled vitality, as long as it has been kept away from destructive forces.

We have to recognize and give due credit to all organizations which have contributed to the preservation of our heritage. One such organization has been the Tekeyan Cultural Association, which held its 33rd convention in its New Jersey center over the past weekend. Delegates and members congregated representing chapters in the US and Canada. A sense of euphoria permeated the atmosphere, because the participants had waited far too long to come together, to share their experiences and chart the course for future actions.

The TCA conventions traditionally are held biannually, but the June 20-21 convention was held after a three-year hiatus.

It is no secret that the organization experienced some turbulence in the recent past which affected its normal operation.

Where there is smoke, there is fire, as the adage goes, but the organization was able to rise above the malevolent actions of some ill-wishers by continuing its cultural and educational missions relentlessly.

The Tekeyan Cultural Association and the ADL move forward in lockstep, in their realm of activities and structure. Disruption in one organization, however, spills over the other. The ADL is a truly democratic organization and unless a member is a democrat in spirit, he or she can abuse the system very easily. The organization does not exercise militaristic control like some others, to curb internal dissent.

The conspiracy that upset the twin organizations pursued specific goals; one was to neutralize the organization in Armenia as a political force and the other was to seize control its assets. And indeed, the organization's real estate holdings on the West Coast,

Middle East and Armenia was compromised. But the structure of the TCA US and Canada was such that all assets ultimately were kept intact and fiscal responsibility was observed.

The TCA of US and Canada owns and operates centers and schools in North America. Additionally, it sponsors five schools in Armenia and Karabagh through its Sponsor a Teacher Program. Its chapters carry artistic and cultural activities in their respective communities and they have left their indelible mark and impact in those communities as ambassadors of Armenian culture.

The 33rd convention, hosted by the New York/New Jersey Chapter, became a turning point to motivate the chapters and members to embrace even more challenging goals and projects. The host chapter was the most active one throughout the organization through its multifaceted activities. It was also an inspiring guide to other chapters.

The convention also proved that accountability continued to remain the core of its performance and source of public confidence.

The Tekeyan Cultural Association's Central Board is composed of 10 life members and three elective members, elected or re-elected at every convention.

Some had questioned the structure and whether it was democratic enough. But experience proved that it was the most viable system to maintain stability, to assure the safety of its assets and to provide a forum for change.

During the convention, three younger members came to replace the retiring members. In time, those rotating members have the opportunity to replace life members and the process of the rejuvenation of the organization can thus continue smoothly.

The delegates attending the convention were gratified to find out the performance of the organization, despite challenging times. They were inspired and their inspiration will be contagious for the other members in their respective communities.

The convention weekend culminated in an elegant banquet attended by members and friends of the ADL and TCA. The attendance was even broader, to include the representatives of many diverse organizations.

The banquet, with its outstanding program, was a tribute to one of the hardest-working leaders of the organization, Hagop Vartivarian. The attendance and the speeches came to prove that his activities and his leadership extend far beyond the scope of a single organization to have their impact throughout the community.

The impression of the evening will remain for a long time and motivate the members and friends of the organization to strive even higher and reach their cherished goals.

Iraq Dilemma: Ignoring Socio-Political and Ethno-Religious Crucibles in Region Made Current Crises Inevitable

By Dr. Harry Hagopian

Who would have thought it? Well, many people did in fact. The world – and largely our Western world – was so engrossed in the black and white discussions of the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region where we often see-saw in our viewpoints on the good, the bad and the ugly according to the latest development or theory, that we had conveniently overlooked the most glaring fact of all. Politics often finds its highest resolution in the grey areas rather than in certainties or abstracts. And that grey area is also where the humanitarian disasters often breed.

The ISIL factor – since we have sidestepped al-Qaeda with its ignominious excesses – is not something that was created in Tal Afar, Mosul or even at Fallujah and Ramadi. The ISIL factor had been growing ever since 2011 when US forces drew down almost entirely from Iraq.

But let me go back in the annals of history. There is no doubt in my mind that the dismemberment of the Ottoman Empire and the subsequent colonial rule in Iraq played their roles in keeping the citizens of the Tigris and Euphrates subject to the whims of their rulers and by proxy to that of their foreign puppet masters.

It is also quite true that Operation Freedom 2003 and the brutal let alone ill-advised debaathification (de-institutionalisation) of Iraq played its part in rendering the situation

more perilous. Add the fact that the US pull-out in 2011 and the heavy-handed policies of the Nouri al-Maliki government became recruiting sergeants for ISIL.

However, in my opinion, based as much on my own familiarity with the country as on the opinion of regional analysts, there are two key reasons why ISIL has become the new manifestation of a problem infesting many of those MENA societies that are ruled pitilessly top-down.

The first one is the rampant sectarianism exercised by Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki. True, the Shia majority in Iraq had a truly awful time of it with Saddam Hussein but it is inadmissible to turn the tables on the Sunnis so much so that they feel like pariahs in their own country.

As a large community that has suffered discrimination and segregation, the Shia must not act in the same manner. Yet, this is what the current prime minister has done, and in this he has enjoyed a pat on the back from Iran that is trying to consolidate its own geopolitical hold on the whole country.

An equally bad reality in Iraq – as much as in the broader MENA region – is the miserable failure of healthy economic and social benchmarks despite one of the largest oil reserves in the world. Many Iraqis are still poor and such penury, when wedded to rampant corruption, produces anger, divisions and ultimately insurrections. The enemy of my enemy quite easily becomes my friend.

When one places all these factors affecting Iraq into the MENA socio-political and ethno-

religious crucibles, and when one also takes into consideration that neighboring countries such as Syria, Libya, Egypt and even Yemen are also suffering from not-too-dissimilar problems, it becomes evident that closing one's eyes to reality is as helpful as an ostrich hiding its head in the sand. But at least with ostriches, this is instinctive, whereas with us it is much more purposeful.

So who suffers most as a consequence of the abysmal meltdown of many state institutions, the dearth of an inclusive vision and the terrorism unleashed by radical bigots?

The majority of ordinary men, women and children of course who end up turning into refugees in their hundreds of thousands and who become prey to the vultures of society out for a quick profit – or worse.

If Iraq wishes to disengage itself from the spiral of tit-for-tat violence that is beginning to bleed it dry again, as it did few short years ago, the politicians should ensure that there is national cohesion in the country.

But this cannot happen if all the different communities are not dealt with equably, fairly and inclusively. Only then would it be possible to talk of an Iraq of Shia and Sunnis reaching out in partnership to the Kurds or to other numerically "minority" communities.

Otherwise, what we witnessed in Mosul and elsewhere will be no more than the continuation of waves of violence that could increase inexorably and engulf willy-nilly other parts of the country. Just like cancer metastasizes, so does violence, and neither the south nor the north of Iraq would be impervious to a see IRAQ, page 16

OPINION



COMMENTARY



My Turn

By Harut Sassounian

Author of UN Report Confirming The Armenian Genocide Passes Away

Benjamin Whitaker, author of a United Nations report qualifying the Armenian mass killings as genocide, passed away earlier this month at the age of 79 in London. The world lost a great humanitarian and a staunch supporter of minority rights.

I worked closely with Mr. Whitaker at the UN in Geneva, Switzerland, for several years. He served as the British expert on the Sub-Commission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities, while I represented the Indigenous World Association, a Native American non-governmental organization (NGO).

Mr. Whitaker was an activist lawyer, elected to the British Parliament from North London in 1966. He became executive director of the Minority Rights Group in 1971, publishing dozens of studies on minority groups around the world, including a trailblazing report on Armenians.

In 1975, Mr. Whitaker was appointed as British representative on the UN Sub-Commission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities, in the midst of

a major controversy regarding a reference to the Armenian Genocide in a UN study. Rwandan Special Rapporteur Nicodeme Ruhashyankiko, author of the preliminary study, was pressured by Turkey to delete the reference to the Armenian Genocide.

To counter the Turkish pressures, a handful of Armenian activists, including this writer, successfully lobbied the UN Sub-Commission in 1978 to block the report after the reference to the Armenian Genocide was removed. I then asked Mr. Whitaker if he would be interested in becoming a Special Rapporteur to complete Ruhashyankiko's aborted report. Mr. Whitaker agreed on condition that he would not do seek any votes for his appointment.

Given his impeccable reputation as a human rights activist, the Sub-Commission members overwhelmingly voted for Mr. Whitaker as the new Special Rapporteur with a mandate to prepare a "revised and updated report on the question of the prevention and punishment of the crime of genocide." The only unhappy delegate was Turkey's UN representative who knew that his government's intimidating tactics on Mr. Ruhashyankiko would not work on Mr. Whitaker.

In August 1985, Mr. Whitaker presented to the UN Sub-Commission the revised and updated report, qualifying the Armenian Genocide as an example of genocide in the 20th century. After lengthy debates, Turkey failed in pressuring the Sub-Commission to delete the reference to the Armenian Genocide. By a vote of 14 in favor, one against, and four abstentions, the Sub-Commission adopted the report, thus confirming that the Armenian Genocide met the UN criteria for genocide.

Since then, Turkish denialists have engaged in blatant lies, claiming that there was no such vote and no such UN report! They even alleged that Farhan Haq, spokesman for the UN Secretary General, had told Turkish groups back in

2000 that the UN had "never approved nor supported a report that describes the Armenian experience as 'genocide.'" I contacted Mr. Haq who told me that he was indeed aware of the report adopted by the UN human rights body which referred to the Armenian Genocide. He had simply told the Turkish groups that the UN General Assembly had not adopted a report on the Armenian Genocide.

Unfortunately, there has been very little effort by Armenians to publicize this critical UN report which acknowledges the Armenian Genocide. More surprisingly, in his UN General Assembly address in 2000, Pres. Kocharian called upon the UN to recognize the Armenian Genocide. The President's aides had not informed him about the UN Sub-Commission report of 1985!

Since our UN days, I had the distinct pleasure of being in the company of Mr. Whitaker on several occasions. In the late 1980s, we were both invited to Argentina by the local Armenian National Committee to deliver a series of lectures on the UN and the Armenian Genocide. In 2009, Mr. Whitaker kindly attended my presentation at the British Parliament on the Armenian Genocide and made gracious remarks about our past collaboration at the UN.

The Armenian Republic and Armenian communities worldwide should organize a fitting tribute to Mr. Whitaker, as 2015 is not only the Centennial of the Armenian Genocide, but also the 30th anniversary of the adoption of the UN genocide report.

There are three other members of the UN Sub-Commission who were extremely supportive during the adoption of the genocide report and who are still alive: Leandro Despouy of Argentina, Louis Joinet of France, and Mrs. Erica Daes of Greece. Despouy has already been decorated by the President of Armenia. Joinet and Daes deserve similar recognition by Armenia and the Diaspora!

May 19 Is the April 24 of Pontic Greeks

By Raffi Bedrosyan

The annihilation of non-Turk/non-Muslim peoples from Anatolia started on April 24, 1915 with the arrest of Armenian intellectuals in Istanbul. Within a few months, 1.5 million Armenians were wiped from their historic homeland of 4,000 years in what is now eastern Turkey, as well as from northern, southern, central and western Turkey.

About 250,000 Assyrian were also massacred in southeastern Turkey during the same period.

Then, the turn came for the Pontic Greeks to be eliminated from northern Turkey on the Black Sea coast, sporadically from 1916 onward. The ethnic cleansing of the Pontic Greeks got interrupted when the Ottomans ended up on the losing side of World War I, but their real destruction resumed in a well-organized manner on May 19, 1919. This article will summarize the tragic end of the Pontic Greek civilization in northern Turkey, a series of events less researched and documented than the Armenian Genocide, but equally denied and covered up by the Turkish state.

Pontic Greeks continuously inhabited the southern coast of the Black Sea in northern Anatolia from pre-Byzantine times. The ethnic cleansing of the Pontic Greeks followed the same pattern as in the Armenian deportations and massacres. Citing security threats and suspicion of possible cooperation with the Russians, in the spring of 1916 the Ottoman government ordered all Pontic Greeks to be removed from Black Sea coastal towns to 50 kilometers inland. Of course, in the case of Armenians, the deportation orders were not only in the eastern war zone but applied to every region in Turkey.

The Pontic Greek deportations were carried out by the Special Organization (Teskilat-I Mahsusa), the same governmental organization that carried out the Armenian massacres, manned by convicted killers released from prisons. Documents show that the longer the prison term, the higher the rank given by the government for these criminals in carrying out their destructive tasks.

Naturally, the Greek deportations soon transformed from relocation to robbery to mass murders. But because the Pontic Greeks had observed the fate of the Armenians a year ago, they got their defenses organized and resisted the deportations by taking to the mountains wherever they could. As a result, the deportations and massacres in this "First Phase Massacre" resulted in 150,000 deaths, eliminating a third of the Pontic

population until the end of the war.

The "Second and Real Phase of Massacre," the organized destruction of Pontic Greeks, started in earnest with the arrival of Mustafa Kemal Ataturk in Samsun on May 19, 1919. He met with well-known mass murderers of Armenians of the Black Sea region such as Topal (Lame) Osman and Ipsiz Recep, and secured their cooperation in starting a terror campaign to get rid of all Pontic Greeks from northern Turkey. These two murderers, originally smugglers of illegal goods, had gained fame in 1915 in rounding up Armenian men, women and children in large boats, taking them out to sea and dumping them overboard to drown, and then boasting that "smelt season will be bountiful this year with lots of food for them."

As the Pontic Greek men had taken to mountains, these two murderers went after the Greek women and children left behind in the villages. Various methods of mass murder were implemented. It was common to take entire population of villages to caves nearby, seal the entrance of the cave and burn them alive, or use gas to suffocate them inside. Any male Greeks caught were thrown alive into the coal furnaces of steamships through the funnels. Churches became incinerators to burn alive as many Greeks as could be stuffed into the building. The extent of tortures and massacres of Greeks even disturbed the local Moslem population, who petitioned the Ankara government to remove these murderers from the region. Eventually Ataturk brought them to Ankara, where Osman became his personal bodyguard, but when Osman shot a member of parliament for criticizing Ataturk, and then threatened Ataturk himself, he was executed.

There were also so-called "Liberation courts" (Istiklal Mahkemeleri), set up in the cities across the Black Sea region to try arrested Greek rebels. These courts passed arbitrary decisions almost invariably resulting in death sentences, no defense or appeals allowed, with hangings carried out immediately. Among the victims of these courts were hundreds of Greek teachers in American and Greek schools of the region, prominent community leaders, clergymen, and tragically, entire members of the Merzifon Greek high school football team, only because the team was named 'Pontus Club', which was deemed sufficient reason to label them as a rebel terroristic organization. Ataturk then appointed Nurettin Pasha as commander of the Central Army to mop up any resisting Greeks from the entire Black Sea region. This man, also known for his sadistic tendencies, destroyed thousands of defenseless Greek villages. Among his 'accomplishments', he arrested a Turkish opposition journalist criticizing Ataturk and had his soldiers tear him alive limb by limb. He was also at the head of the army units that entered Izmir (Smyrna) in 1922, where he arranged for the lynching of the Greek head of the clergymen in the same manner, and then started the Great Fire which destroyed the entire city.

Between May 19, 1919 and end of 1922, The Pontic Greek population was decimated by 353,000 in the following cities:

134,078 Amasya, Giresun, Samsun

64,582 Tokat

38,434 Trabzon

27,216 Niksar

21,448 Sebinkarahisar

17,479 Macka

There was also a violent campaign to Islamicize the

Greeks and quite a number of them first converted to Islam under threats and torture, followed by Turkification. With the 1924 Lausanne Treaty, any few remaining Pontic Greeks were included in the 1,250,000 Anatolian Greeks 'exchanged' with Moslems in Greece, thereby totally emptying the Black Sea region from its historic Greek civilization. All the names of Greek villages and towns were changed into new Turkish names. Turkish language was forced upon all the converted Greeks, Hamshen Armenians, Laz and Georgian minorities.

And thus began a century long brainwashing campaign of single-state, single-nation, single language, single-religion policy. The May 19, 1919 date of Ataturk's arrival in Samsun as a national holiday celebrating Youth and Sports Day was adopted in 1937, copying from the German Nazis' superior race policies, demonstrating the athleticism and beauty of the Turkish race. The extent of racism is evident in the statement of then Justice Minister Mahmut Esat Bozkurt who said: "Turks are the masters in this country. The remaining peoples have only one right in this country, to be the maids and slaves of the real Turks." As recently as in 2008, then Defense Minister Vecdi Gonul echoed the same racist sentiments in Turkey: "If the Greeks were allowed to exist in the Aegean and Black Sea regions, and the Armenians all over Anatolia, would we be able to have a powerful national state today?"

The chief murderer of Pontic Greeks, Topal (Lame) Osman is still regarded as a hero by racist nationalist Turks. His statue was erected in Giresun recently by one of the Eregenekon leaders, retired general Veli Kucuk, himself responsible for the "mysterious disappearance" of dozens of Kurds, and the assumed mastermind behind the organized assassination of Hrant Dink. He was arrested and sentenced to life imprisonment for plotting the overthrow of the Erdogan government as part of the "deep state" trials, but released from prison recently by Erdogan, after the falling out between Erdogan and the religious leader Fethullah Gulen, whose followers were among the prosecutor team and police forces which had arrested Kucuk.

It has now become obvious that the Turkish state policy to create a single nationalist state with a single religion and language has failed miserably. Within Turkey, Kurds could not be assimilated, and the grandchildren of the hidden Islamicized Armenians and Pontic Greeks are starting to 'come out' to find their roots. Outside Turkey, the Armenians continue demanding justice and restitution for the 1915 Genocide. Assyrians have started to get organized in various European states to demand their rights. In 1994 the Greek Parliament recognized the Pontic Greek Genocide on the 75th anniversary of the 1919 events. There is now a vast body of common knowledge regarding the true facts of the genocidal events that took place in Turkey from 1915 to 1923, which can no longer be covered up by the denialist policies of the Turkish state.

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



Last Genocide Survivor in Merrimack Valley Dies

SURVIVOR, from page 1

In both cases, she was embraced by the crowd, casting a smile its every way and remaining the personified survivor of her generation.

"No doubt, she was a very special woman who kept her guard right to the very end," said Rev. Khachatur Kessablian, pastor, Sts. Vartanantz Armenian Church, in his eulogy. "Her gratitude was manifested in many ways, abounded with the love of God and her family."

At the Lowell monument dedication, Nazarian took her place by the memorial, posing for photos with Middlesex County Sheriff Peter Koutoujian as well as other committee members and the city's political elite.

Those mother's hands on the stone could very well have been her own, symbolizing the miracles of motherhood and dexterity, with her four children, 16 grandchildren and 37 great-grandchildren.

At a unity dance in Haverhill last September, into the hall she came in her

wheelchair, leading three generations of her family. She came for the music, but more importantly, to make sure her children came. In her day, she would have been first to dance.

"Music was her passion ever since she was a child," said a granddaughter, Debbie Nazarian-Kady. "At night, she would sing herself to sleep with the songs she had learned back in the old country. She remained thankful for the mobility of her hands and fingers, crocheting and sewing every day when the mood dictated, blessing her family with afghans and other precious heirlooms."

Nazarian escaped the massacre in her native village of Chimisgazag by taking refuge in the mountains with her family before immigrating to America in the early 1920s. She was the daughter of Elizabeth (Ajemian) and Michael Parnagian.

"She immigrated to America and married another Genocide survivor during the Depression years," said Nazarian-Kady. "That says a lot about her character."

At a time when well-paying jobs were at a premium, she became an entrepreneur, following a stint in Haverhill shoe shops

Throughout her working life, she operated a jewelry store (Nazarian Jewelers) in downtown Lawrence with her husband, Stephen, also a survivor.

Together, they built a profitable venture through diligent work and sacrifice.

Stephen Nazarian died in 1965.

The business has since grown, multiplied and franchised itself throughout the region. Over the years, her handiwork became a staple for the business, whether it was restringing cultured pearl necklaces or creating other jewelry pieces.

Surviving the Genocide ensured that she never forgot it.

"My heritage has always been important to me," she had said. "We faced all those dangers. I consider myself very fortunate to have survived and raised an excellent family."

She enjoyed taking rides to the beach and

dining on fried seafood platters, quite possibly against dietary restrictions imposed by her doctors, but nevertheless a centenarian's occasional privilege.

Cooking was another passion.

The fact that she lived rather independently with the help of two granddaughters and not inside an institution was a credit to her resolute spirit and her devoted family.

She was predeceased by her son, Ara Nazarian, and is survived by his wife Dorothy of Waterville Valley, NH. She is survived by three children, Robert S. Nazarian and his wife Dianna, Salisbury; Marlene Aznoian, Andover, and Raymond Nazarian, Haverhill, along with her extended family. She was also predeceased by her brother, Berge Parnagian, and son-in-law, Harold Aznoian.

Memorial contributions may be made to the Armenian Genocide Commemorative Committee of Merrimack Valley, c/o Armen Jeknavorian, 15 Summit Ave., Chelmsford, MA 01824.

VivaCell-MTS and COAF Join Hands in Bringing New Educational Opportunities to Vanand School

VANAND, Armenia – VivaCell-MTS and the Children of Armenia Fund (COAF)'s continuous collaboration resulted in the opening of the third Creativity Lab. Equipped with a smart board, modern computers, as well as special mobile furniture, the newly opened Creativity Lab will host students from the Vanand Community School in Armavir Marz of Armenia. In addition to the Creativity Lab, a modern Library/Resource Center will be functioning in Vanand.

The concept of Creativity Labs – technologically enhanced centers that encourage creativity – was first introduced in Armenia by COAF. VivaCell-MTS's financial assistance and corporate social responsibility component allows for these programs to create equal development opportunities for rural communities and promote integration of informational and commu-

nication technologies into village schools.

The program that was launched a year ago has also been beneficial for the schoolchildren from Sardarapat community in Armavir Marz and Arteni community in Aragatsotn Marz. Creativity Labs provide a multifunctional environment fit for classes, training sessions, lectures, reading, discussions, projects and games, performances and fun.

"Once given the opportunity to discover, children will exceed all your expectations. It is really important to turn the ordinary learning process into an adventurous creative experience. I would like to believe that the newly created environment will increase the children's interest towards learning and will lead towards expected result," VivaCell-MTS General Manager Ralph Yirikian stated.

Anoush Yedigaryan, COAF Executive Director, attaches great importance to the improved physical infrastructure and learning environment of educational institutions. According to Yedigaryan, "All those programs that COAF initiates and implements serve as a catalyst for youth empowerment and aim at raising the quality of education in rural schools. This wonderful educational facility which includes the creativity lab, library and resource center, will help not only those students who

are eager to learn, but also all the teachers who wish to integrate the use of technologies into the teaching process and make it more interesting and content-rich."

The newly opened library/resource center enables increased access to information with the application of technologies and instills love towards reading among the schoolchildren. The center offers literature and professional development materials for a variety of target groups, such as children, adolescents, teachers/pedagogues and community members at large. One of the distinctive features of the library is the availability of digital versions of textbooks, books and other informational materials.

Parallel to the opening of the Creativity Lab/Library/Resource Center, COAF is also launching "Healthy Nutrition" and "Dental Hygiene" programs in the Vanand School. A tooth-brushing station, Brushodrome, has been built in the school, and the school cafeteria has been equipped with necessary appliances and supplies. In the course of the new academic



Ralph Yirikian, general manager of VivaCell-MTS visits the Vanand School in Armavir.

year, the elementary school students in Vanand will be served with hot and healthy meals, and the elementary school teachers and school nurses will be trained on proper oral and dental hygiene.

Earlier in 2013, as part of COAF's Health Program activities, the Vanand Health Post was renovated and refurbished, in March 2014 a playground was constructed in the schoolyard, and just recently in May 2014 the Vanand School was included in the Schools for Health in Europe (SHE) Network.

Iraq Dilemma

IRAQ, from page 14

proliferation of radicalism, suppression, sectarianism and homicidal violence.

We will then surely witness a dislocated map of Iraq that is in three shades – with the middle part of the country in endemic instability and spawning terrorism, self-murder and more instability.

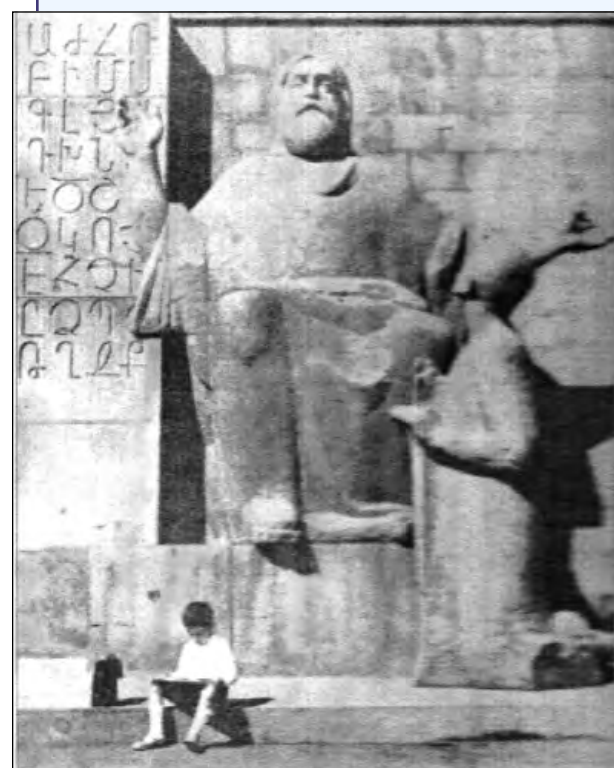
But such a scenario for Iraq will also be the fate of Syria and of other MENA countries teetering on the verge of uncertain and compass-unfriendly collapse. No ruler who dares call himself (and alas it is always a testosterone-driven male in the seat) a patriot should be allowed to cause such mayhem and get away without proper judicial accountability.

Mind you, we in Europe also carry our fair share of burden and guilt about the excesses we committed in centuries past – through our rich history of colonialism, violence, awkward injustice or religious intolerance. Therefore, it is not that I have any right to preach at others. Rather, I would argue that two wrongs do not necessarily make one right. Iraqis and the whole MENA region deserve better – freedom from enslavement to political thugs and religious extremists alike.

And let me be self-interested – and candid – enough. We in Europe have labored so hard within our own EU-friendly institutions to develop painstakingly an imperfect culture of peace in our post-WWII continent. So we do not really need the additional backlash of such radicalism and violence impacting our shores. After all, do we not have enough headaches of our own already?

(Dr. Harry Hagopian is a London-based international lawyer, political adviser and ecumenical consultant on the MENA region. He is also a second-track negotiator and works closely with European institutions. This commentary originally appeared in Al Jazeera).

Sponsor a Teacher in Armenia and Karabagh 2014



Since its inception in 2001, TCA's 'Sponsor a Teacher' program has raised over \$596,000 and reached out to 4,864 teachers and school workers in Armenia and Karabagh.



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