

THE ARMENIAN Mirror-Spectator

Volume LXXXIV, NO. 8, Issue 4302

\$ 2.00

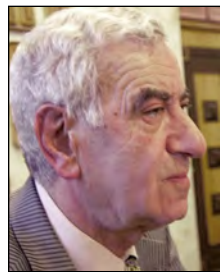
The First English Language Armenian Weekly in the United States Since 1932

Cultural Giant Levon Ananyan Dies in Yerevan

By **Aram Arkun**
Mirror-Spectator Staff

YEREVAN – Levon Ananyan, writer, journalist, translator and chairman for the past 12 years of the Writers Union of Armenia, died from cancer on September 2.

Ananyan had an unmistakable voice, raspy and gravelly, perhaps due to years of smoking. He was not classically handsome,



Levon Ananyan

yet there was something appealing about his visage, which was almost as recognizable as his voice, as it was seen frequently on Armenian television. Dedicated to promoting literature and the love of reading in

Armenia, he strove to make Armenia's culture known abroad.

He also did not shy away from expressing his opinions as an intellectual on public issues. He leavened his insights with humor and wit.

Almost 67 when he passed away, Ananyan was born on October 13, 1946 in the village of Koghb in the province of Tavush. He was proud of his family connection with ancient Armenia, which he see ANANYAN, page 3



Edmond Y. Azadian signs a copy of *A Legacy of Armenian Treasures, Testimony to a People* at NAASR.

Azadian Presents New Book on Michigan's Manoogian Museum

BELMONT, Mass. – Edmond Y. Azadian, the chairman of the Armenian Democratic Liberal (ADL) party Eastern District Committee of US and Canada and vice chair of the Tekeyan Cultural Association (TCA) Board of Directors, presented his new book, *A Legacy of Armenian Treasures: Testimony to a People*, on the Alex and Marie Manoogian Museum in Southfield, Mich., on Saturday, August 24. The program, jointly sponsored by the *Armenian Mirror-Spectator* and the National Association for Armenian Studies and Research (NAASR), was held at NAASR's headquarters.

Azadian is the executive editor of the book.
see TREASURES, page 12



Armenia to Join Customs Union With Russia Rather than EU

MOSCOW (Combined Sources) – Armenian President Serge Sargsian said this week that his country would join the Russia-led Customs Union.

Sargsian made the surprise announcement after talks with his Russian counterpart, Vladimir Putin, in Moscow on September 3.

He said Armenia is also ready to take part in the establishment of the Eurasian economic union. "I confirmed Armenia's intention to join the Customs Union and the process of the formation of the Eurasian Union," he told reporters. "It is a rational decision stemming from the national interests of Armenia. This decision does not constitute a refusal to continue our dialogue with European structures. We intend to continue these reforms in the future."

In remarks posted on his website, Sargsian pointed to Armenia's membership of the Collective Security Treaty Organization, a Russian-led military alliance, as part of the reasoning behind his decision.

"When you are part of one system of military security it is impossible and ineffective to isolate yourself from a corresponding economic space," he said.

Sargsian also vowed to continue communicating with "European structures," adding that his government remains committed to institutional reforms sought by those bodies.

Sargsian made no mention of a planned Association Agreement with the European Union.

see CUSTOMS UNION, page 2



Presidents Serge Sargsian, left, and Vladimir Putin

Kevork Marshlian Retires after 24 Years Of Distinguished Service to TCA, ADL

WATERTOWN – At its general meeting on August 24, the Central Board of Directors of the Tekeyan Cultural Association Inc. (TCA), representing all chapters in the US and Canada, accepted the retirement of Kevork Marshlian from his post as executive secretary, which had been presented to the board six months ago.

Marshlian retires for health reasons after a distinguished career of managing the offices of the Tekeyan Cultural Association Inc., the Armenian Democratic Liberal Party's Eastern District of US and Canada and the *Armenian Mirror-Spectator*.

The board passed a special resolution acknowledging his dedication to the organization and his leadership qualities.

Marshlian will continue his services to the above organizations on a voluntary basis, as his health allows him.

The Central Board of Directors of Tekeyan Cultural Association Inc. acknowledges the selfless devotion of Marshlian beyond the call of duty during his 24 years of services at the premises of Baikar Association in Watertown.

He has also actively participated in joint organizations of a multitude of community events in Massachusetts, as see MARASHLIAN, page 16

NEWS IN BRIEF

Armenia Improves Position in Global Competiveness Report

YEREVAN (Armenpress) – In accordance with the World Competitiveness Report for 2013-2014 issued by the World Economic Forum, Armenia improved its position by three points in three different areas. Manuk Hergnyan, the chairman of the "Economy and Values" Research Center, stated this at a press conference held on September 4.

Hergnyan said, "There are 148 countries involved in the report and the Republic of Armenia occupied the 79th position. Compared with the previous year's report, our country improved its positions for three points."

For the fifth year in a row, Switzerland was ranked the most competitive country in the world.

Number of Armenians Has Decreased in Egypt

CAIRO (Armenpress) – A member of the Armenian Diocesan Council in Egypt, Suren Bayramyan, stated that the number of Armenians in Egypt decreased from 7,000 to 5,000 in the past few years.

Currently there are also more than 400 Armenian citizens residing in Egypt due to dual citizenship. Bayramyan noted, "The Armenians were not hurt in the clashes in Egypt. The Armenian structures and churches were not damaged as well. Notwithstanding, it's noteworthy that there is no negative attitude towards the Armenians in Egypt."

Armenian Foreign Ministry spokesperson Tigran Balayan stated that no Armenian citizens have turned to the Armenian diplomatic representation in Egypt asking for the assistance to leave the country.

Red Cross Officials Visit POW in Baku

BAKU (ArmeniaNow) – An International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) official in Yerevan has confirmed that the organization's representatives visited the Armenian soldier who was taken prisoner in Azerbaijan last month.

Hakob Injighulyan, 22, crossed into the area near Karabagh controlled by Azerbaijani armed forces and was taken prisoner on August 8. Armenia has confirmed that the soldier did not face prosecution at home. ICRC Armenia Delegation Communication Officer Ashot Astabatsyan confirmed that the Committee's Baku office representatives visited the prisoner of war on Monday.

The parents and relatives of Injighulyan staged protests near the ICRC office in Yerevan last month demanding that the Red Cross take action to help repatriate him. Armenian authorities were angered by Azerbaijan's parading the POW on television, which it said constituted a violation of the Geneva Convention on the treatment of POWs.

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ARMENIA

News From Armenia

New Classroom Opens in Sardarapat School

SANDARAPAT, Armenia – A modern classroom opened in a community school with the support of VivaCell-MTS. The creation of the classroom with innovative solutions became possible due to the cooperation between VivaCell-MTS, Children of Armenia Fund and Sardarapat School.

With an electronic smart board as well as six new computers, the classroom is designed for 30 students and special mobile furniture allows students to perform individually, in pairs or groups. Organizers of the renovations hope the advancements will facilitate modern technologies, class discussions and lectures, reading sessions and games.

“If we manage to make the learning environment more attractive, we will get the expected results within the shortest terms. Our nation’s unique approach towards education should be targeted at preparing skilled professionals,” VivaCell-MTS General Manager Ralph Yirikian said.

President Discusses Aviation Issues

YEREVAN (Armenpress) – President Serge Sargsian on September 4 hosted Andre Andonian and Alex Dichter of Mckinsey & Co. Also taking part in the meeting were member of the Board of Trustees of National Competitiveness Foundation, Ruben Vardanyan.

The assembled discussed issues relating to airline reforms in Armenia, state regulation in aviation sphere, necessary conditions for improvement of services in the sphere, existing problems and ways of solving them. Representatives of “Mckinsey & company” which signed agreement with National competitiveness foundation of Armenia in order to develop of program aimed to securing competitive and stable air transport in Armenia introduce to the President the results of their work done in that direction and future plans.

Dilijan School to Offer Armenian Language

DILIJIAN, Armenia (Armenpress) – All students of the Dilijan International School will take classes in Armenian as part of the curriculum. Veronica Zonabend, the wife of benefactor Ruben Vardanyan, announced the decision during a press conference on September 4. “We have made the decision that everyone will be taught the Armenian language. It means that children who have come from Singapore or Argentina can communicate in Armenian,” said Zonabend. Students with Armenian citizenship will have to pass Armenian language and Armenian history subjects according to educational program of the country.

The construction of Dilijan International School began in 2012 and it is set to be completed in 2014. The school will receive pupils beginning in September 2014. There will be 90 pupils in the first educational year, with the hopes of ultimately having a student body of around 650.

NKR FM Hosts Les Pennes-Mirabeau Armenian Union

STEPANAKERT – On September 3, Nagorno Karabagh Minister of Foreign Affairs Karen Mirzoyan received members of the delegation from the Armenian Union of Les Pennes-Mirabeau, France.

Welcoming the guests, Mirzoyan spoke of the importance of the Declaration of Friendship signed on June 11, between the towns of Les Pennes-Mirabeau and Martuni.

The declaration discusses the importance of creating and developing free, democratic society and condemns the unacceptable isolation of the Artsakh people. The document also declares the establishment of friendly relations between the two cities and the implementation of programs in spheres of education, culture, sport and trade.

Syrian Armenians Concerned about the Negative Effect of Possible US Air Strikes

YEREVAN (ArmeniaNow) – Ethnic Armenians who have fled Syria during the last two years of conflict and took refuge in Armenia consider that possible US strikes against the country will prove a futile effort to resolve the crisis, while only causing negative effects.

They acknowledge with regret, however, that Syria is getting continuously plagued by the civil war that has been going on in this Middle Eastern country for more than two years now with no end in sight.

The situation around Syria, where opposition forces are waging armed battles against government forces loyal to President Bashar al-Assad, aggravated in the wake of the alleged use of chemical weapons on August 21. The United States claims to possess conclusive evidence that the Assad regime used sarin gas near Damascus on that day killing 1,429 civilians, including 426 children. Meanwhile, each side in the conflict in Syria blames its opponents for the attack.

Washington has threatened to punish Assad for the use of banned weapons, with a limited military operation and has increased its military presence around Syria in recent days.

While some major US allies in Europe, such as the UK, Germany and other NATO members, have not agreed yet to be part of the military campaign against Syria, others, such as France and Turkey, have supported an even more fierce response to the alleged use of chemical weapons by the Assad regime.

Assad’s key allies, including Iran and Russia, have spoken against the strike,

By Gohar Abrahamyan

alleging that the United States is misleading the international community by putting the blame on the government forces in Syria.

Armenia is following the situation around Syria with particular interest and not only because of the involvement of major regional powers in it, including its top ally Russia, neighbor Iran and historical foe Turkey. Syria is home to an 80,000-strong Armenian community and the civil war in this country has already resulted in thousands of them leaving their homes and relocating to Armenia.

The Armenian government has been neutral on the internal conflict in Syria, but has been concerned about the physical safety of ethnic Armenians as well as the integrity of the community that was established in Aleppo and other major Syrian cities by survivors of the genocide in Ottoman Turkey.

Prime Minister Tigran Sargsian on Sunday said that Armenia should be ready for the worst-case scenario in the Syria crisis.

“A great outflow [of ethnic Armenians] is expected from Aleppo. The problem is that traveling around Syria by land cannot be safe today. It is clear that we should be ready for such developments in order to be able to receive Syrian Armenians who are able to overrun this blockade somehow. We are discussing all scenarios,” he said addressing teachers and students at the Artsakh State

University in Stepanakert, according to the government press office.

Khachik Chozikyan, who moved from Syria to Armenia

a year ago, fears that American strikes against the Assad regime will only make things worse for the entire country.

Chozikyan, who has been a member of the Help Your Brother initiative of the Armenian Revolutionary Federation (Dashnaktsutyun), delivering humanitarian aid to compatriots in Syria, says a possible US intervention may have unpredictable consequences.

“I can’t imagine how Muslim soldiers can embrace Americans. Maybe they will, but maybe they won’t. If they don’t, there will be a situation similar to Iraq, which is dangerous. The people of Syria are tired, they are waiting for peace in whatever way it may come, but launching missile strikes is not a solution,” said Chozikyan.

He urged for the United Nations to post peacekeeping forces there.

Another Syrian-Armenian, who did not want his name to be published (as many young male Syrian Armenians do probably to avoid possible problems with military authorities back in Syria), agreed that he believes that US strikes will only aggravate the situation in the Middle East.

The 25-year-old student at the Yerevan State University said: “I don’t think that the United States will take such a foolish step. It will only result in more human deaths, more destruction, the situation in the Middle East will become more confused, which will not be favorable to anyone.”

Armenia to Join Customs Union Rather than EU

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Putin hailed Sargsian’s announcement, saying Yerevan’s decision to join the “Eurasian integration process” will boost bilateral and mutually profitable ties between the two countries.

“We will be doing our utmost to facilitate this process,” he said. “I am confident that Yerevan’s membership in the structures of Eurasian integration will become a powerful impulse for mutually beneficial economic cooperation.”

Yerevan’s membership of the Customs Union must still be approved by the other union members, Belarus and Kazakhstan.

Armenia had been poised to initiate an association and free trade agreement with the EU at a November summit in Vilnius.

But EU officials have repeatedly made it clear that the agreement is “not compatible” with possible Armenian membership of the Russian-led trade bloc.

Meanwhile, the prospect of such a deal has triggered growing Russian pressure on Yerevan over the past year.

Reacting to Sargsian’s announcement, EU Enlargement Commissioner Stefan Fuele’s spokesman Peter Stano said he was “currently consulting our Armenian partners on the latest developments” and that the “potential implications” would be examined when “all the necessary details” were to hand.

Secretary General of the European Friends of Armenia (EuFoA) Michael Kambeck said he believes that Armenia’s decision to join the Russia-initiated Customs Union “was not a free choice”.

Kambeck urged the EU to “find a new modus operandi with Armenia, which visibly wants to cooperate closely with the EU but apparently is restrict-

ed by a third country.”

EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy Catherine Ashton said she wanted Armenia to explain the decision to join the Russia-initiated Customs Union.

“We expect clarifications from Armenia, and then we will be able to assess the consequences this move may have,” Ashton’s spokesperson Maja Kocijancic said in Brussels.

Linas Linkevicius, the Foreign Minister of Lithuania, which holds the rotating EU presidency, said Armenia “has blocked its chances of signing a free trade deal with the European Union by choosing to join the Russia-led union.”

“We respect any choice of countries but they cannot enter both organizations at the same time because of different tariff requirements,” he said.

In a separate statement, Linkevicius

and seven other ministers from Nordic and Baltic countries warned against Russian pressure on post-Soviet states. “Any economic threat or political pressure directed against Eastern partners because of their European aspirations and engagement with the EU is unacceptable,” they said.

Alexey Malashenko, the co-chair of the Carnegie Moscow Center’s Religion, Society and Security Program, said Armenia’s decision was quite expected, given the country’s strategic partnership with Russia and the Nagorno Karabagh peace process. “With Armenia’s joining the Customs Union, the status quo in the region will not change. Europe will not be criticizing Yerevan for a long time,” he added.

(Stories from RFE/RL and PanArmenian.net were used to compile this report.)

EU Delegation to Armenia Launches Online Civil Society Dialogue

YEREVAN (Public Radio of Armenia) – The European Union (EU) Delegation to Armenia has launched an online civil society dialogue page in an effort to take account of the views of civil society in different policy areas and to help it to conduct more focused consultations, EU Neighborhood Info Center reported.

The main aim of the sit is to give civil society participants the opportunity to exchange their opinions with each other and with the EU delegation to Armenia about important questions for the future development of EU-Armenia relations.

Discussion topics range from draft political and operational documents, consultations on ad hoc initiatives and establishment of priorities of programs. A press release from the EU delegation to Armenia said the new online tool would give a “productive and useful record of interaction between the European Union and civil society.”

Those wishing to participate in the first consultation session should first register their organization online.



ARMENIA

Armenians Celebrate 22nd Anniversary of NKR

STEPANAKERT (Arka, Armenpress) – On September 2, Artsakh, Armenia and members of the global diaspora celebrated the anniversary of Nagorno-Karabagh's independence. Known as Republic Day, the celebration commemorates the 1991 declaration by Nagorno-Karabagh's elected legislative body announcing the formation of the Artsakh Republic.

In his congratulatory address to the people today Karabagh President Bako Sahakyan described the day as a "magnificent state holiday, which we traditionally celebrate with deep pride and responsibility."

"We take pride in the heroic people who gained freedom and independence through the blood of their brave sons and nowadays keep carving their own future. We feel responsibility for strengthening the statehood created through great sacrifices, developing the native land, and leaving a strong and prosperous homeland for the generations to come," said Sahakyan, according to his press service.

Sahakyan also took part in the staging of Andrey Babayev's "Artsvaberd" opera performed at the historical building of the Shushi Intermediate Secondary School. Sahakyan



A military parade took place in Stepanakert in honor of the anniversary celebrations.

noted the significance of holding such events in the town of Shushi considering it valuable both for the development of classical music in Artsakh and the preservation of historical-cultural monuments.

Armenia's Prime Minister Tigran Sargsian, the Primate of the Artsakh Diocese of the Armenian Apostolic Church Archbishop Parkev

Martirosian, the NKR National Assembly Speaker Ashot Ghulyan, the Premier Ara Harutunyan, other officials from the Republic of Armenia and the Nagorno Karabagh Republic, and guest from abroad participated in the event.

"We are full of determination and perseverance to solve together all these issues successfully, to settle them with daily painstaking work, with the active support of our sisters and brothers from Armenia and the Diaspora," Sahakyan stated.

The chairman of the National Assembly of the Republic of Armenia Hovik Abrahamyan likewise noted the importance of the anniversary. Abrahamyan noted, "With their dignified fighting and convincing victory for independence the people of Artsakh proved that they cannot only dream and think of living indepen-

dently, but they have necessary will, strength and spirit to make reality that dream and desire, to be the owner of their rights and historical country."

"The Republic of Nagorno Karabagh created by the people's will during more than 20 years after declaration of independence have overcome the hard historical road of state building full of hardships," he added.

There were also several commemorative events simultaneously held in Yerevan, including a series hosted by the Armenian Revolutionary Federation (ARF) from September 2-7 organizes a series of events dedicated to Nagorno Karabagh independence anniversary. A photo exhibit was opened September 3 to honor the Artsakh liberty war.

"This year is 22nd year of Artsakh independence and the 25 anniversary of the Artsakh movement. On Northern Avenue we will be displaying photos dedicated to liberty fight," said ARF Chief of Staff Artak Aghbalyan.

The scheduled Yerevan events culminate in a September 7 screening of Jivan Avetisyan's film, "Interrupted Childhood."

Cultural Giant Levon Ananyan Dies in Yerevan

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thought was evidenced even in his last name. His ancestors, members of the Bagratuni princely dynasty, emigrated after the 1319 earthquake in Ani.

In 1968 he graduated Yerevan State University Department of Philology and soon found work at a number of periodicals while editing the newspaper *Mankavarzh* (Pedagogue). In 1975 he became an editor for the renowned literary monthly *Garun*, and in 1990 became its editor-in-chief.

During the early post-Soviet period, he founded a publishing house called Apolon (Apollo), which specialized in presenting world literature to Armenians in translation. It had published around 150 books by 2001. Ananyan was elected in May 2001 as president of the Writers Union, and ended his editorship of *Garun* that same year. The Writers Union managed to preserve more of its assets and prestige than some of the other Armenian unions in the creative fields after Armenian independence, and although it was no longer directly a branch of the government, Ananyan continued to adroitly obtain state support for its activities, materially and morally. Ananyan even had been a candidate for Parliament several times, though he did not succeed in winning office.

Ananyan used new methods of fundraising such as telethons successfully, along with finding private patrons of literature. He lowered the average age of union members by some 20 years and made more resources available to the youngest members. In his time, new types of literary contests were instituted, and new periodicals established. He was reelected as president of the union one last time at the end of last July.

Ananyan continued to teach at Yerevan State University's Department of Journalism while representing the Writers Union. As a proud son of Koghb, he served as leader of the Noyemberyan NGO from 2002. He wrote or edited numerous books, and hundreds of articles and forewords. He did translations from Russian and English into Armenian. In 2008, he was awarded the title of Meritorious Cultural Figure (Vastakavor Mshakutayin Gortsich) by the Republic of Armenia.

Among his many activities, Ananyan attempted to bring together writers from the diaspora and Armenia through a series of conferences for Armenian-language and non-Armenian-language writers, and introduced a number of diasporan writers of Armenian origin to Armenian readers.

A number of Armenian public figures, intellectuals and politicians have already expressed their condolences publicly. Literary critic Prof. Suren Danielyan, director of the Diaspora Scientific Educational Center in Yerevan, wrote that Ananyan was a true innovator, sometimes mis-



Levon Ananyan, left, with President Robert Kocharian, center, in 2005 and other guests

understood by those around him. He described his great energy in amazement, likening him in this respect to Arshag Tchobanian, and pointed out how Ananyan made the Writers Union center itself very active. Danielyan praised Ananyan's efforts to unite diaspora and republic, breaking down old stereotypes.

President Serge Sargsian extended his condolences to the Ananyan family and praised Ananyan's contributions to Armenian literary life.

President Bako Sahakyan of Artsakh called Ananyan "a great patriot," who in addition to his work for Armenian literature and culture, in Artsakh is also "known as a man devoted to the national liberation movement who played an active part in the just presentation of the Artsakh issue, making the Republic of Nagorno Karabagh recognizable to international cultural circles."

Vazgen Manukyan, chairman of the Public Council of the Republic of Armenia, declared that "as an intellectual, he was deeply concerned with cultural, public and national issues; [he was] a public figure who contributed to the establishment of our newly independent state."

The mayor of Yerevan, Daron Margaryan, the Forum of Armenian Associations of Europe, and several other organizations have issued statements, and no doubt many more will write about him in the forthcoming weeks.

American and Canadian Armenian writers such as Nancy Kricorian and Alan Whitehorn have also expressed their appreciation of Ananyan. Poet, writer and academic Peter Balakian, the Donald M. and Constance H. Rebar Professor of Humanities at Colgate University, declared: "Levon was an exceptional presence as I knew him – always welcoming to Armenian writers from other countries and lan-

guages and always affirming the connections between literature in Armenian and literature by Armenian writers in other languages. He was a gatherer of the wide global culture that is Armenia in the 21st century."

UCLA's Narekatsi Professor of Armenian Studies Peter Cowe declared: "Journalist, diplomat, smooth communicator and effective fundraiser, committed to Armenian literature and writers' needs, Ananyan will be a hard act to follow."

Novelist and literary critic Peter Sourian, professor emeritus of English at Bard College, wrote: "Our culture is our immortality, and

Levon Ananyan, while mortal, has contributed greatly to it. The president of the Armenian Writers Union was an intelligent and energetic cultural leader – a dynamic Armenian patriot. The loss now of his intelligence, his energy, and his shrewd resourcefulness is going to be severely felt. But his lasting contribution will also be felt. He served Armenia." Several volumes of Sourian's writings were translated into Armenian and published thanks to Ananyan's support. Sourian in the past has expressed his appreciation for the inspiration provided by trips to Armenia to events of the Writers Union.

Sourian ended an essay penned in memory of Ananyan with these words: "We never spoke of friendship, for it seems to have been unnecessary. I am proud to have had the gift of that friendship. I had not thought to realize that the loss of it in this world was going to be so painful. In a peculiar sense I am glad that it is painful because the pain is a measure of my friend's value, a pain I am proud to bear. Finally, and not less important, it is also a measure of his stature that it was fun to be with him. He was a gifted man – gifted with a love of life – and many of those that knew him, knew that he was a gift to them. A large spirit, he will live large in the hearts of those of us who knew and loved him."

Ananyan's funeral was to take place on September 4 at St. Sarkis Church in Yerevan. He leaves three children, Aram (director of Armenpress), Davit and Astghik, and his wife Aghavni, who is a teacher of mathematics at a secondary school and the Khachatur Abovian Pedagogical University.

Mother See Publishes New Titles

ECHMIADZIN – With blessings from Karekin II, Supreme Patriarch and Catholicos of All Armenians, the publishing department of the Mother See of Holy Echmiadzin has published the novel *The Cross of Ashot the Iron* by Anahit Parsamyan; the educational manual *Ancient Armenian Literature* by Varag Nersisyan; the first volume of the textbook, *General Church History* by Father Ervand Ter Minasyan and the Russian monograph *Khrimyan Hayrik's Patriarchate from 1893 to 1907* by Valery Tunyan.

The Cross of Ashot the Iron depicts the life of Ashot the Iron, his struggle for the homeland and the unity of the church and nation during those critical times.

Ancient Armenian Literature is considered one of the greatest accomplishments of Armenian Studies in recent years. The authors not only hope that the work will contribute in providing professional knowledge to University students, but that it will also be helpful for a

wide range of readers interested in Armenian Studies.

The first volume of the textbook *General Church History* provides a factual standardized analysis of rich material, illustrates the establishment of the church, the historical progress of Christianity during the first century, the pragmatic developments as well as the universal issues that arose during the first violation of the dogma.

Khrimyan Hayrik's Patriarchate from 1893 to 1907 examines the pursuits of Mkrtich I Khrimyan from 1983 to 1907. With extensive archival, historical and source material, according to the publishers, this book is intended for all those who are interested in the history of the Armenian people and Church during the late 19th and early 21st centuries.

The works were published through the sponsorship of Gabriel Chemperchyan, benefactor of the Mother See of Holy Echmiadzin.



INTERNATIONAL

International News

'Paradjanov' Considered For Ukraine's Academy Award Entries

KIEV (PanARMENIAN.Net) – Serge Avedikian and Olena Fetisova's "Paradjanov" has been chosen among the films to be nominated as Ukraine's submission for best foreign language film at the Academy Awards, along with Kira Muratova's "Eternal Return" and Akhtem Seitablayev's "Haytarma," Ukrainian media reported. "Paradjanov" stars Avedikian as a brilliant director Sergey Paradjanov, whose nonconformist behavior clashed with the Soviet system. Paradjanov's eccentricities landed him in jail, where his indestructible love for beauty allowed him to withstand the years of imprisonment, isolation and oblivion. "Paradjanov," co-produced with Ukraine, France, Georgia and Armenia, was named the best feature film at Odessa Festival.

Ukraine will announce its official entry for the Academy Awards' foreign language entry on September 12. The Academy Awards will take place on March 2 in Los Angeles.

Czech Footballer Discusses Armenia Team

PRAGUE (Armenpress) – Czech Republic footballer Tomas Sivok recently stated in interview with denik.cz that playing Armenia is always a challenge.

"Our fans want a victory from us but we should not underestimate Armenians. We want to play in an attacking style but playing such football against Armenia will be equal to suicide. It is one of the fastest squads in Europe," said Sivok.

The World Cup 2014 qualifying round match between the Czech Republic and Armenia took place in the city on September 6.

Japan to Open Embassy In Armenia

TOYKO – Japan will open embassies in Armenia, Turkmenistan and four other countries according to the Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Japan officials are also considering opening embassies in Bhutan, Namibia, Barbados, Turkmenistan and the Republic of the Marshall Islands.

Japanese officials stated that they anticipate increased economic activity by Japanese companies in those countries. They also stated that they will increase the number of staff in those countries by 70.

Diplomatic relations between the Republic of Armenia and Japan were established on September 7, 1992. In June 2010, Armenia opened in embassy in Tokyo.

US OSCE Minsk Group Co-Chair to Visit South Caucasus

VIENNA (Armenpress) – Ambassador James Warlick, the new US co-chair of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) Minsk Group, announced on his Twitter page that he would soon make a visit to Armenia, Nagorno Karabagh and Azerbaijan. He stated, "I will travel soon to Armenia, Azerbaijan, and Nagorno-Karabagh to begin my efforts to help bring about a settlement."

Warlick most recently served as deputy special representative for Afghanistan and Pakistan and lead negotiator for the Bilateral Security Agreement with Afghanistan. He served as ambassador to Bulgaria from 2009-2012, principal deputy assistant secretary of state in the Bureau of International Organization Affairs from 2006 to 2009 and director of the Office of European Security and Political Affairs from 2005 to 2006.

Warlick earned a bachelor's degree from Stanford University and holds master's degrees from Wadham College, Oxford University and the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy at Tufts University.

Turkish Armenians Celebrate, Commemorate their Past

DIYARBAKIR, Turkey (The Economist) – A dainty silver slipper, a hand-engraved copper bowl. Silva Ozyerli, an ethnic Armenian, runs a loving finger over these and other family treasures strewn across her dinner table in Istanbul. They are due to go on display at a new museum of Armenian culture in Ozyerli's native city of Diyarbakir at the end of 2013.

The Armenian museum, the first of its kind in Anatolia, will be part of the newly restored Surp Giragos Church complex. Its aim is to chronicle Armenian life in Diyarbakir, in Turkey's mainly Kurdish south-east, before 1915. That was the year when Ottoman troops and their Kurdish accomplices began slaughtering more than one million Armenians and other Christians across the country during what many historians say was the first genocide of the 20th century.

Turkey denies that mass killings took place, insisting that the Armenians had perished from hunger and disease during their forced march to the deserts of Syria. (The Ottoman government deported the Armenians, notionally for their safety, as the empire collapsed. Yet thousands were massacred as they marched, and countless others were killed before they set off.) Local school textbooks perpetuate this myth.

Granting permission to restore Surp Giragos is seen as part of a larger government campaign to placate diaspora Armenians, who have been lobbying governments around the world to recognize the Genocide. When Surp Giragos reopened in 2011, after lying in ruins for more than 20 years, it became Turkey's first church to be revived as a permanent place of worship.

"The museum is a way of showing that thousands of Armenians contributed to the city's wealth and culture," explained Ergun Ayik of the Surp Giragos Foundation, which runs the church. "People will look at the photographs, the objects and wonder where did all these people go?"

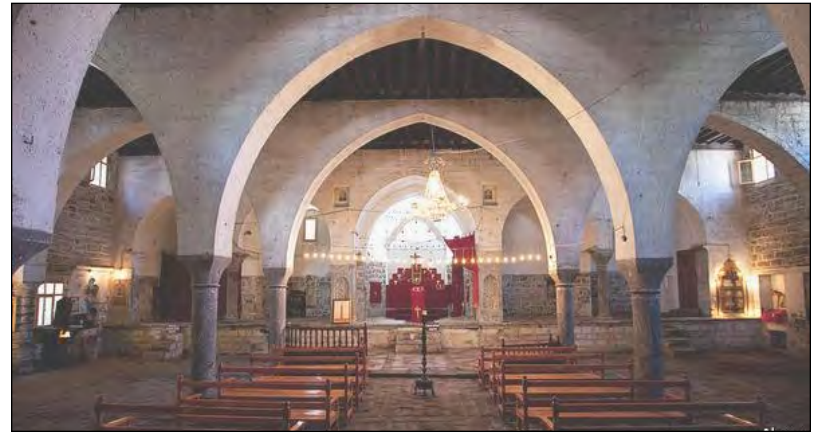
Around two million Armenians lived in Turkey before the Genocide. Now there are about 70,000. Survivors are scattered across the Middle East, Europe, America and Australia. Many more converted to Islam to carry on, but

their numbers remain unknown. Osman Koker, a Turkish historian, reckons that more than half of Diyarbakir's population used to be non-Muslim, mainly Armenian Orthodox, but also Catholic, Syrian Orthodox and Jewish. "Now", said Koker, "there is practically none."

Yet a growing number of Turkish Armenians are reclaiming their heritage.

and short-sighted.

But such worries were pleasantly absent during a recent afternoon in Surp Giragos, as tourists gazed at the church's repaired altars and onion-domed belfry (which had been destroyed by the Ottomans in 1916 because it dwarfed surrounding minarets). The church is drawing hun-



Surp Giragos Church in Diyarbakir

In 2010 hundreds flocked to the island of Akdamar in the eastern province of Van to attend an inaugural mass at the newly restored Church of the Holy Cross. (The church is now a museum, but holds mass on religious holidays.) Turkey's culture ministry has obliged with a list of other ancient churches that it plans to restore, says Osman Kavala, a Turkish philanthropist who is helping to promote Turkish-Armenian reconciliation. And Armenian-language lessons, available since last year in Diyarbakir's historic Sur district, are increasingly popular among Turkey's so-called "invisible Armenians" who had abandoned their culture in order to survive. Abdullah Demirbas, the district's mayor, argues that the Kurds must also make amends for their complicity in the Genocide.

Armenians applaud these efforts, even as they note a persistent strain of Turkish nationalism that perceives non-Muslim minorities as suspect. The government's conversion of several Greek Orthodox churches into mosques, together with its recent espousal of unabashedly Islamist rhetoric, heightens some concerns that efforts to appease Armenians are cynical

dreds of people every day. "Many of them are Islamized Armenians like me," laughs Gafur Turkyay of the Surp Giragos Foundation. "The truth about 1915 cannot be concealed," says Ayik's daughter Pelin Alik. "But as a young Armenian I don't want to be pitied as a victim. I am the proud torchbearer of a rich civilization that not only has survived but continues to thrive."

Turkish Writer Yasar Kemal Gets Grikor Narekatsi Medal

YEREVAN (Public Radio of Armenia) – Acclaimed Turkish writer Yasar Kemal has received the Grikor Narekatsi (Gregory of Narek) Medal from the Armenian Culture Ministry, *Hurriyet Daily News* reports.

Kemal was awarded the medal for his successes and contributions to literature, in addition to his works which have helped preserve Armenian cultural heritage.

"We are here to show our appreciation to Kemal on his contribution to protecting important Armenian architecture such as Akhtamar Church [in Lake Van]," said Culture Ministry representative Seyranuhi Geghamyan during a visit to Kemal's home to present him with the award.

"I am from Van. ... Today I salute you and thank you, and I really would like our societies to communicate again," said the Armenian representatives deputy Aragats Akhoyan, adding that they were determined to build an environment that lends itself to communication.

"On these lands people have gone through pain. The most sacred effort is to fight against hostility," Kemal said, adding that he admired the poetry of Gregory of Narek and that he was honored to receive the medal.

The Armenian representatives also gave Kemal an Armenian translation of one of his most famous works, *Memed, My Hawk*, which was first published in 1975.

Kemal said Anatolia was the land of many civilizations, including the Armenian civilization, which had left a lasting impression in various fields, from architecture to art and music.

Armenian Tourism Poster Wins UNWTO European Nomination

HARARE, Zimbabwe – Armenia was named the winner of the Europe nomination of the 2013 Vettor Giusti tourism poster competition during the 20th General Assembly of the United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) held August 24-29.

Presented by the National Competitiveness Foundation of Armenia and the Ministry of Economy, the "Symphony of Stones" poster was named the best among 44 member-countries of the UNWTO Commission for Europe.

The Vettor Giusti tourism posters competition is held every two years on the occasion of the sessions of the UNWTO General Assembly. This year the Assembly was attended by more than 140 countries.

Armenia's "Symphony of Stones" poster will be displayed at the entrance hall of the UNWTO building in Madrid and will be viewed

on the UNWTO website until the next edition of the Vettor Giusti posters competition in 2015.



Armenia's "Symphony of Stones" poster



Community News

Glendale Hosts Green Armenia Walkathon

GLENDALE – An awareness-building and fundraising walkathon organized by Green Armenia will take place on September 22 at 1 pm.

Participants will gather at City Hall, then proceed to Verdugo Park to join the celebration of Armenia's 22nd Independence Day.

This event is intended to raise awareness in the community of the environmental issues that confront the Republics of Armenia and Artsakh. Information will be available at Green Armenia's booth at the celebration.

Mining has been chosen by the government of Armenia as a path to economic development. Yet, some critics say it is being practiced in a destructive, exploitative fashion. Organizers of the event hope to remedy this problem by supporting projects that promote wise stewardship and sustainable use of the country's natural resources. According to Green Armenia, the objective is not



Flyer for Green Armenia Walkathon

simply to stop all mining, but to provide alternatives and make sure any mining is done in a safe and economically beneficial way.

In addition to focusing attention on the mining problems at hand, the walkathon will serve as a fundraising vehicle to provide the resources needed to make improvements in the homeland.

"Our efforts are starting to get traction already. Green Armenia is receiving requests for support from our compatriots in the homeland for alternative economic development projects – such as beekeeping, activist efforts to build awareness in the affected areas, and even for doing the nitty-gritty legal work that can help prevent the worst abuses," said Alfred Eisaian, one of the organization's founders.

According to its website, Green Armenia is "committed to raising awareness and providing scientific expertise related to environmental issues in the Republics of Armenia and Artsakh." Green Armenia is part of the Armenian Engineers and Scientists of America (AESA), which is a nonprofit 501(c)(3).

As with all walkathons, participants will seek the sponsorship of their friends and relatives. To participate, email info@greenarmenia.net or register at the event.



Dr. Richard Hovannisian at one of the classes

Zoryan Hosts University Students to Study Genocide From Planning to Prevention

TORONTO – The running of the 12th annual Genocide & Human Rights University Program ("GHRUP") couldn't have been timelier considering the atrocities and human rights violations currently taking place in Syria, Egypt, and several countries in the Middle East and Africa.

This year, 22 students came to Toronto from 10 countries to meet and study with 10 distinguished genocide scholars. Many of the students came from backgrounds where gross violations of human rights and genocide are part of their national or personal experience, such as Kurds, Nigerians, Pakistanis, Armenians, Jews, Muslims and Christians. There were several students who work to provide aid to affected communities, such as those of Guatemala and Sudan. Perhaps even more remarkable was the number of students who do not have a direct connection, yet are deeply motivated to understand human rights violations and genocide and how to raise awareness to prevent them around the world.

The course director, Prof. Joyce Apstel of New York University, noted, "Several students who are teachers commented on how much they learned from watching the pedagogy of different instructors, as well as from the course content. Other students consulted me and other instructors about which directions and schools to pursue for graduate education. They proved to be an outstanding group of students, and it was a privilege to have two weeks in and out of the classroom to exchange ideas and interests."

Indeed, the students brought many diverse experiences to the classroom. One student who is a journalist by trade, described to the class, based on a personal visit to North Korea, the importance of maintaining a critical perspective on decades-old yet still ongoing human rights abuses there. Another student presented the current and historical human rights abuses of disabled peoples affected by policies of eugenics in the US, a group she works with in her field of social work and disability studies. Yet another brought the class to tears by discussing her own family's history of having suffered chemical attacks in the Halabja massacre of March 16, 1988. The GHRUP allows students the opportunity to voice these backgrounds, to analyze comparatively how genocides unfold, their immediate and transgenerational effects on people, and to explore how we can stop them.

see ZORYAN, page 16



The faculty and students of the Genocide and Human Rights University Program ("GHRUP")

Group Appeals for Support for Syrian Armenians

LOS ANGELES – The Syrian Armenian Relief Fund released the following statement this week, appealing for support for Armenians in Syria:

For the past two years, Syria and our Armenian community in Syria have been going through a crisis; our once self-sufficient and prosperous community has been thrust into such a disastrous situation, that our people have become in need of basic necessities.

From the early days of the crisis, the Armenian community in the Western US united efforts to collectively provide moral and financial support to meet the needs of our young and old brothers and sisters in Syria. The greater community united under the auspices of the Syrian Armenian Relief Fund (SARF) and the accomplishments of the past year attest to the extent of our community members' care and compassion.

Despite calls for peaceful resolution of the crisis, the situation in Syria is not improving; on the contrary, it is under risk of further deterioration. The Syrian people, including Armenians, are subjected to further threats and innocent civilians and their neighborhoods are being victimized with violence, which trample over every law and principle, that guides humanity.

Just as during the beginning of the crisis, also today, the people of the Western US, along with the rest of the Armenian people worldwide, stand in solidarity of the suffering people of Syria, including the Armenian residents.

We appeal to our compatriots to make tangible expressions of their solidarity by contributing to SARF and raising funds to help alleviate the suffering of our brothers and sisters.

We also invite our community to participate in prayers for their safety on Prayer Day, Sunday, September 15, at all of our churches.

We are still hopeful and we believe that this crisis will be over and the people of Syria will find peace.

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

Visit the SARF website at www.SyrianArmenianReliefFund.org.

Mailing address: Syrian Armenian Relief Fund, PO Box 1948, Glendale, CA 91209-1948.

Fairfield University Faces Additional Lawsuit in Child Sexual Abuse Case

NEW HAVEN, Conn. (AP) – Fairfield University and others that supported a charity designed to help feed and educate boys in Haiti are facing another lawsuit by a man alleging he was sexually abused by a founder of the school.

The federal lawsuit seeks \$20 million in damages.

The university and others reached a \$12 million settlement last month with children sexually abused by Douglas Perlitz, who was sentenced to nearly 20 years in prison for sexually abusing boys who attended Project Pierre Toussaint School in Cap-Haitien.

The victims' attorney, Mitchell Garabedian, said he's investigating another 31 claims of sexual abuse by Perlitz and may file additional lawsuits.

The suit alleges the defendants ignored warning signs and failed to prevent or stop abuse.

Telephone messages left with attorneys and a Jesuit spokeswoman were not immediately returned.



COMMUNITY NEWS

Gala Honors George Clooney for Shoah Foundation Support

LOS ANGELES – The University of Southern California (USC) Shoah Foundation, whose digital archives soon will include the filmed testimonies of 400 Armenian Genocide eyewitnesses and survivors, will honor actor George Clooney at a gala dinner on October 3, in New York City and significant Armenian attendance at the event is expected. The gala, chaired by Shoah founder Steven Spielberg, also will feature special guest Sandra Bullock and a musical performance by Norah Jones.

Armenian Film Foundation Chairman Jerry Papazian said, “We are thrilled to be participating in this event, paving the way for the inclusion of these Armenian Genocide eyewitness testimonies into the Visual History Archive of the USC Shoah Foundation. We are encouraging a large Armenian presence at the event in support of the project.” Papazian confirmed that former US Ambassador to the Republic of Armenia John Marshall Evans will attend the banquet as part of the Armenian contingent.

Jon Stewart will emcee the gala honoring Clooney for his humanitarian work. The gala committee includes a broad spectrum of celebrities and influential people, including Matt Damon, Ralph Lauren, Jerry Seinfeld, William P. Lauder and Andrew Tisch. All of them are committed to helping raise money for the USC Shoah Foundation, whose mission is to overcome prejudice, intolerance and bigotry – and the suffering they cause – through the educational use of the Foundation’s visual history testimonies.

Shoah is actively engaged in an international fund-raising campaign to ensure completion of the integration of the Armenian testimonies so that they can be presented to the world in time for the commemoration of the 100th anniversary of the Armenian

Genocide, in April 2015. “It’s crucial that we take the vital and precious words of those who went through the Armenian Genocide and make their testimonies available for students, educators and scholars so that they can learn directly from these eyewitnesses of history,” said Stephen Smith, executive director of the USC Shoah Foundation.

In April 2010, the Armenian Film Foundation and founder J. Michael Hagopian, along with his wife, Antoinette, entered into an agreement with the USC Shoah Foundation to license the 400 Armenian Genocide testimonies filmed by Hagopian to Shoah’s Visual History Archive. Next month, Shoah will receive the digitized interviews from The Armenian Film Foundation. Upon delivery, Institute staff will incorporate these eyewitness accounts into the USC Shoah Foundation’s Visual History Archive.

Shoah’s Visual History Archive is the largest digital collection of its kind in the world, with 105,000 hours of video testimony. The collection is available at 44 institutions around the world, and approximately one million students, researchers, teachers and lay people view the testimonies every year. In addition, thousands of high school students across the country can view the testimonies through iWitness, the Shoah Foundation Institute’s educational website that makes 1,300 full life histories and testimonies of survivors of genocides from the Visual History Archive available to secondary students so they can create multimedia projects and complete interactive activities.

For additional information about the event and to support this project, contact Sylvia Moskovitz at the USC Shoah Foundation – moskovit@usc.edu.

Steven Spielberg, Founder, USC Shoah Foundation, cordially invites you to

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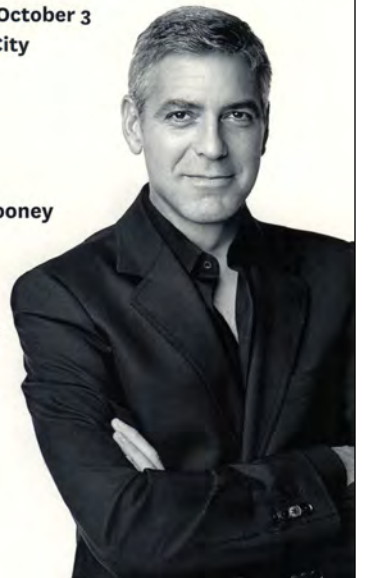
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Fair Lawn Artist Dies after Fall from Roof

FAIR LAWN, N.J. (Patch) – A Fair Lawn man died on August 31 after he fell from the roof of his house while inspecting it for storm-related damage, Fair Lawn Police Sgt. Richard Schultz confirmed.

Rafi Chehirian, 59, of Saddle River Road, had climbed a ladder to his roof to check for storm-related damage when he apparently lost his balance and fell to the ground.

Police arrived to the scene around 1 p.m., where they found Chehirian motionless on the ground in his backyard.

Officers applied first aid with assistance from Valley Hospital paramedics and the Fair Lawn Ambulance Squad.

Despite their efforts, Chehirian succumbed to his injuries.

Chehirian was an accomplished artist who specialized in a process called Verre Eglomise, or reverse painting on glass. Some of his work is displayed on his website.

In November, some of his works will be on display at the 35th Annual Philadelphia Museum of Art Craft Show at the Pennsylvania Convention Center.

Chehirian was chosen as one of “195 of the finest and most dynamic craft artists in the United States, selected from more than 1,400 applicants,” according to the art craft show website.

Zoryan Hosts University Students to Study Genocide from Planning to Prevention

ZORYAN, from page 5

It was remarkable to see descendants of perpetrator and victim groups in the Armenian Genocide – students of Armenian, Kurdish and Turkish background – find common interests with each other, and within the academic environment of the program and based on historical facts, explore issues of stereotypes, memory, denial and reconciliation together and see each other through the prism of humanity.

One student from Pakistan, currently a member of the UNAMID effort in Darfur, Sudan, brought to the course the perspective and the dedication of those who work to prevent genocide in the field.

This year, a business student audited the course. At the end of the course this student made a spontaneous and moving speech in which she said that the course restored her faith in humanity. The GHRUP evokes a powerful sense of enthusiasm and commitment from students and faculty alike, and makes them reflect on their own lives and the lives of all others in the world. This student’s feeling of connectedness to the students and the course was really a beacon of hope.

The sentiments of all the students who attended the course are perhaps best captured in their own words. Explaining their perception of the program’s greatest strength, one student commented, “I think the GHRUP does an amazing job of providing an incredibly comprehensive course in such a short period of time. The quality of the scholars and students, and the incredible range of experiences and backgrounds are unparalleled.” Another student wrote that “This program is life- and

career-changing. It focuses on the history of genocide, the patterns of genocide, the denial and prevention of genocide.”

The Zoryan Institute and its subsidiary, the International Institute for Genocide and Human Rights Studies, is the first non-profit, international center devoted to the research and documentation of contemporary issues with a focus on Genocide, Diaspora and Armenia.

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Donation

In memory of her parents, Oscar and Mary Aranosian, Gladys A. Hays of Pembroke, NH, has donated \$500 to the *Armenian Mirror-Spectator*.



COMMUNITY NEWS

New Priest Ordained in Dallas

By Mary Mukhtarian

DALLAS – Archbishop Khajag Barsamian, Primate of the Diocese of the Armenian Church of America (Eastern), officiated at the ordination of the Rev. Ghevond Ajamian in Dallas-Ft. Worth, Texas, on August 25, in the presence of community, family and guests from around the country.

The Very Rev. Daniel Findikyan was the sponsoring priest. The Very Rev. Simeon Odabashian, Rev. Nersess Jebejian, Rev. Mardiros Chevian and Rev. Mikael Devejian assisted in the ordination in different roles, along with several deacons and altar servers.

For the Armenian community in North Texas, this was a momentous occasion. The Primate had assigned Deacon Justin Ajamian as the deacon-in-charge of the St. Sarkis Armenian Church two years ago, and since then, his ordination has been



The newly-ordained Rev. Fr. Ghevond Ajamian, with his wife Yn. Hasmik and their daughter Noelle Srbouhi

a constant expectation.

The event itself was a long process. For weeks beforehand, the whole community worked together to prepare for the event by forming committees to handle details like seating, videography, printing, food preparation, and musical presentations. All deacons and choir members were brought up to date with the specific hymns of the day. Donations were collected to cover the expenses incurred, and everyone was informed of the festivities surrounding the ordination weekend.

Prior to the ordination weekend the communi-

ty received a training session from Findikyan, who explained the process of the ordination service, and emphasized the role the people would play in it. He encouraged parishioners to memorize the expression: "He is worthy as their consent to the entry of the deacon into priesthood. Diocesan director of music ministry Khoren Mekhanejian trained the choir, organist and deacons in the appropriate hymns.

On the Saturday preceding the ordination, the community had an outstanding reception to meet and greet all the dignitaries, following the dramatic Service of Calling-the prelude to a priestly ordination.

On Sunday, the Primate celebrated the Divine Liturgy, during which the ordination took place. Ajamian was led to the altar by Findikyan, his sponsoring priest. There, the candidate knelt facing the people, while Barsamian asked the faithful whether they found him worthy of becoming a priest. There was a thunderous agreement, as all indicated their assent.

The highlight of the ceremony was the first pronouncement of the name of the new priest: Der Ghevond Ajamian. At the conclusion of the ordination, the parishioners filed past their new priest, kissing his hands, which had been anointed by the Holy Myron.

A banquet followed the ordination, where the new Der Ghevond received a hand cross from his godfathers, his uncles Ara and Vartan Ajamian, and various gifts from the St. Sarkis ACYOA, Parish Council and the Women's Guild. The banquet participants included the youth of St. Sarkis, who danced, sang and expressed their affection for Ajamian.

Ajamian took the podium to thank everyone for their support.

Barsamian reminded everyone that he had been present at every important milestone in the existence of this community, from building the church, to building the adjoining social hall, to the donation of the new church property, and now to this ordination.

He said: "I feel the inspiration in this community, and with such inspiration, what seems impossible becomes possible." He reflected that 98 years ago, when the majority of Armenian clergy were killed in the Genocide, no one could have predicted that in the United States, sometime in the future, there would be Armenians born in America who would become priests of their ancestral church.

The Primate thanked the parents and grandparents who have brought up young people as both Americans and Armenians. He asked everyone to focus on the positive, and to be inspired by the Holy Spirit in order to continue doing miraculous things.



During the ordination service at St. Sarkis Church of Dallas, from left, behind Dn. Justin (now Fr. Ghevond) Ajamian are Fr. Mardiros Chevian and Archbishop Khajag Barsamian.

A Young Man's Journey to the Priesthood

DALLAS – In a centuries-old inspiring ceremony replete with Armenian religious tradition, Archbishop Khajag Barsamian, Primate of the Diocese of the Armenian Church of America (Eastern), ordained Deacon Justin Avedis Ajamian into the holy priesthood, at the St. Sarkis Armenian Church of Dallas on Sunday morning, August 25. Hundreds of parishioners as well as the young priest's family members and several priests took part in the inspiring ritual.

By Florence Avakian

The newly-named Rev. Ghevond Ajamian is now at St. Nersess Armenian Seminary in New York for the traditional 40-day solitary period of introspection, meditation, prayer and fasting.

Ajamian was 15 when he realized that he wanted to be a priest.

"My family had moved to a new town, Waldwick, NJ, which was close to St. Leon Armenian Church [in Fair Lawn]. And I was forced to go to the St. Nersess Summer conferences by my uncle Vartan Ajamian, who was a 1988 seminary graduate and a deacon at Bayside's Holy Martyrs Armenian Church. Once there, though, I enjoyed the priests, participants, morning and evening services, and courses in Armenian history and culture."

Around that time the Rev. Diran Bohajian, pastor of the St. Leon Church, asked Justin to serve on the holy altar-and that's where he received a calling. When he graduated from Waldwick High School, Justin "knew and wanted to go to St. Nersess," where he was greatly encouraged and inspired by the seminary dean, the Very Rev. Daniel Findikyan (who was the sponsoring priest at the August 25 ordination).

The Rev. Stepanos Doudoukjian and the Very Rev. Ghevont Samoorian also took him under their wings.

While attending Ramapo College, where he majored in world history, the young Justin Ajamian attended classes at St. Nersess once a week. Following his college graduation in 2006, he attended classes full-time at both St. Nersess and St. Vladimir's Orthodox Seminary for four years. "My stay at the seminaries helped me to become a better future priest for the American-Armenian community," he said.

In 2003, he made his first pilgrimage to Armenia, which he continued to do through 2005 with the Diocesan ACYOA's Armenian Service Program. There he studied Armenian history and classical Armenian at Yerevan State University and served at Yerevan's Holy Trinity Church.

His studies continued in 2011 with a six-month period at Jerusalem's Armenian Patriarchate where he strengthened his knowledge of liturgics, hymnology, classical and modern Armenian. This was followed with an internship at the St. David Church in Boca Raton, Fla., with the Very Rev. Fr. Nareg Berberian. In 2011, the deacon was assigned to the St. Sarkis Church in Dallas.

In the days prior to his priestly ordination, having already served two years as deacon-in-charge of a parish, and having embarked on life as a husband and father, he still expressed a sense of awe over the next chapter in his ministry.

"I do sometimes feel overwhelmed about serving God in a different capacity-about joining the ranks of the apostles, and the many priests of our church," he said reflectively.

"And St. Sarkis is a special church" he revealed, adding that it was the first church that Barsamian consecrated after becoming Primate.

"With one chapter of my life closing and this new and very significant chapter now beginning, I look forward to ministering to the people, celebrating the Divine Liturgy and preaching God's message. As the head of this parish, it means I will take responsibility. As President Harry Truman once said, "The buck stops here."

Ajamian was born 29 years ago in Akron, Ohio, to an Armenian father and a non-Armenian mother. He was named after his great-grandfather Avedis Koondakjian –the only one of five brothers to escape the Armenian Genocide.

"Ours was not a typical Armenian household, where you have pilaf and dolma every night," he recalled. "I knew I was Armenian when I went to the summer conferences at St. Nersess. My mother, who is of Irish, Sicilian and German heritage, and whose brother was a Roman Catholic priest, was very accepting of my life choice."

During his 13 trips to Armenia he met his future wife, Hasmik, whom he married in 2008. Their daughter, Noelle Srbouhi, was born two years ago.

"This chapter of my life which began at age 15 has come to fruition," he said in conclusion. "We are now in the process of building a new church in Dallas on a four-and-a-half acre property."

Most of the parishioners of St. Sarkis have come from Beirut, Turkey, Iran and Armenia. But their children are born here, he explained. "We needed a larger church to get these two generations involved."

Ajamian says he is happy he grew up in America. "It means that I know what the youth are going through, and might go through in the future."

The new church will have a Sunday school, Armenian school, large hall and gym. "We hope to break ground by 2015, the 100th anniversary of the Genocide, to celebrate a new chapter in our history, in a place I never thought Armenians existed."

"We need this new church for future generations," he said.

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COMMUNITY NEWS

AGBU FOCUS Raises \$80,000 for Generation Next

SAN FRANCISCO – Every two years, AGBU FOCUS brings together young Armenian professionals from around the world to a new city where they share their ideas, expand their networks and spotlight a different AGBU cause. From August 1 to 4, 400 guests gathered to aid the AGBU Generation Next Mentorship Program (GenNext), which pairs at-risk youth with positive mentors.

The seventh biennial AGBU FOCUS weekend had guests flying to San Francisco from across the US and as far as Bahrain, Greece, Israel and Monaco – to name a few of the 18 countries represented. Thursday's kick-off event, Perspectives, opened with welcome remarks by AGBU Central Board Member and AGBU Silicon Valley Chapter Chair Dr. Yervant Zorian.

During Perspectives, panelists Gabriel Armas-Cardona of New York, AGBU Young Professionals (YP) Lebanon Coordinator Sarine Karajerjian, YP Northern California Board Member Rose Nemet and YP London Coordinator Ara Yeromian spoke to more than 160 guests in an open conversation on what it means to be an Armenian. Throughout the discussion, moderator Lara Setrakian, a journalist and founder of SyriaDeeply.org, brought the audience back to one key issue: how the diaspora can preserve traditions in today's rapidly changing world.

The theme prompted many to comment from the floor, including Henri Arslanian, a native of Canada who works in Beijing and pointed to the little-known, but growing, Armenian communities in Asia. He remarked, "I was so



The AGBU Focus attendees

graves to the upcoming opening of their first Armenian community center. Many don't know Asia has a young Armenian community and AGBU FOCUS was a great platform to create that awareness."

Those efforts are already being led by the worldwide network of AGBU YP Groups, which held its biennial assembly earlier that Thursday. The YP assembly provided a forum for the YP Network to convene, brainstorm and exchange ideas, as well as discuss areas of opportunity for cross cooperation and collaboration. More than 30 YP leaders met to discuss new ways to help build capacity for the global organization and strengthen connections with the Armenian community at large. They also took the opportunity to award YP Northern California (YPNC), the local host of

AGBU FOCUS, with a Teamwork Award. Through fundraising and promotional activities, the YP Network helped support FOCUS and GenNext by building momentum in the months preceding the weekend.

At the Saturday night AGBU FOCUS gala, attendees celebrated the impact that their support will have on GenNext. More than 400 guests filled City Hall for the evening, where GenNext Program Director Saro Ayvazians presented the program's plans for the future.

Modeled after the Big Brothers Big Sisters of America program, GenNext was founded by a subcommittee of YP Los Angeles in 1997. It quickly took off, becoming its own program and connecting hundreds of troubled teens with positive mentors. In the coming school year, Ayvazians detailed, they will build on those past successes

with a new curriculum developed in partnership with the Didi Hirsch Community Center, the Glendale Unified School District and Glendale Healthy Kids. That, and more, will be made pos-



From left, FOCUS committee member and YPNC Board member Rose Nemet, Gabriel Armas-Cardona, YP Lebanon Coordinator Sarine Karajerjian and YP London Coordinator Ara Yeromian with moderator Lara Setrakian.



During Perspectives, FOCUS guest from London, Arnaud Attamian, commented on the challenges facing the Armenian diaspora today.

pleased to talk about exciting projects that Armenians in Hong Kong are working on, from the restoration of 19th century Armenian

tions with the Armenian community at large. They also took the opportunity to award YP Northern California (YPNC), the local host of

sible by pre-FOCUS fundraising-which reached a record-breaking total of \$80,000.

Ayvazians thanked the crowd for their generous support, which will allow the program to

continued on next page

Armenia to Host 2014 Division C Europe Basketball Championship

LOS ANGELES and YEREVAN (ArmeniaNow) – Armenia is going to host next year's FIBA Europe Division C Championship, the country's Basketball Federation confirmed last week.

The news first emerged during the training camp of the national men's basketball team in Yerevan last month.

A group of Armenian American players of the team led by US-based coach Carl Bardakian spent 10 days in Armenia at the beginning of August to join some local players in preparation for the major tournament due next June.

Other countries participating in the championship will include Scotland, Wales, Malta, Moldova, San Marino, Gibraltar and Andorra.

Bardakian says Armenia's goal is to successfully compete for a medal.

"Our players are committed and dedicated. The players recognize the great honor they have been granted to play under the tri-colored flag of Armenia. We will be ready to compete from the outset," emphasizes the 42-year-old tactician, who led the Los Angeles Men's Basketball Team to a memorable success at the latest Pan-Armenian Games in Yerevan in 2011.

Yerevan last experienced FIBA basketball in 2009-2010 when a revived Soviet-era women's club, Hatis, successfully competed in club-level European tournaments to the delight of many local fans.

Now the members of the men's national team feel it is their turn to inspire the local fans. But before that, they've borrowed some of the inspiration from the fans themselves. "Our hard work at training camp is going to pay off. The basketball fans we met from Yerevan to Artsakh really inspired us. We can't wait for next summer!" says player Garen Spendjian.

And captain Mike Danielian adds: "We worked really hard... The training camp really united us."



Coach Carl Bardakian with some of the players



COMMUNITY NEWS



AGBU Focus participants mingle.

from previous page

continue serving dozens of GenNext mentees, stating, "Our youth depend on our adult community for all kinds of support: to interact with and encourage them, to listen to and appreciate them, and, most importantly, to show up consistently in their lives as dependable role models. Thank you for stepping up to the plate with a resounding show of support for the future of our community. Thank you for showing our Armenian youth that they have not been overlooked or forgotten."

Building on Ayzazians' remarks, Greg Nemet, who serves as co-chair of YP Northern California (YPNC) as well as FOCUS with Steven Cherezian, commented, "The countless phone calls, thousands of emails and hours of planning for FOCUS 2013 were worth it to bring us to this moment: young Armenian professionals from around the world under one roof for one amazing cause. AGBU's GenNext will produce the next generation of young Armenians who will rise to the challenges facing our global diaspora. We've shown here this weekend that we can help them."

As with previous AGBU FOCUS weekends, FOCUS 2013 brought guests all over the host city. Sold-out events included wine tast-

ing in the northern Sonoma wine country, and a downtown exhibited curated exclusively for FOCUS on Art which featured sculptures, sketches and tapestry designs by celebrated Armenian American artists: the late Haig Patigian, Nadine Takvorian, Jacques Terzian and Leslie Terzian Markoff. Also present were pieces by William Saroyan, which stood alongside that of GenNext's own, 19-year-old Arpa Shirvanyan. Years ago, as a middle school student enrolled in GenNext, Shirvanyan's mentor helped foster her love for drawing. Now an artist in her own right, Shirvanyan is planning to become a GenNext mentor herself.

Cherezian credited the weekend's success to the work of the FOCUS volunteers, YPNC and the AGBU Central Office in New York, remarking, "We made a dynamic team that put together a stellar four-day affair. On behalf of the AGBU FOCUS committee, I want to thank those groups, as well as all the attendees who made San Francisco their playground and GenNext their cause. We left our hearts in the city, and we know everyone else did, too." To learn more about the AGBU Generation Next Mentorship Program, visit: www.agbugennext.org.

Hovannisian to Lecture on Smyrna Catastrophe

WORCESTER, Mass. – Professor Richard G. Hovannisian will present an illustrated lecture, "The Smyrna Catastrophe, 1922-2013," on Thursday, September 12, at 7 p.m., in the Blue Lounge-Student Center at Worcester State University. The program will be co-sponsored by Worcester State University, the Worcester Armenian Book Commemoration Committee and the National Association for Armenian Studies and Research (NAASR), with the support of Holy Trinity Armenian Apostolic Church, Armenian Church Of Our Saviour and the Armenian Church of the Martyrs.

September marks the 91st anniversary of the "Smyrna Catastrophe" when much of the city, the second largest in the Ottoman Empire, was destroyed by fire during the final phase of the Greco-Turkish War. The calamity, a part of the final phase of the Armenian Genocide, marked the end of a strong Christian presence in the historic Aegean coastal regions and turned hundreds of thousands of Greeks and Armenians into refugees.

In this illustrated lecture, Hovannisian will discuss the role of Smyrna (Izmir) in modern Armenian history and the inferno that engulfed the city in September 1922. Hovannisian is the editor of the recently published *Armenian Smyrna/Izmir*, the eleventh volume of proceedings from the UCLA conference series "Historic Armenian Cities and Provinces." He also traveled to Izmir and environs in June 2012 as the historian-guide for a NAASR Armenian Heritage Tour led by Armen Aroyan.

A book signing of *Armenian Smyrna/Izmir* will immediately follow the lecture. The lecture is free and open to the public.

Hovannisian is the author of *Armenia on the Road to Independence*, the four-volume history *The Republic of Armenia* and has edited and contributed to more than 25 books including *The Armenian Genocide in Perspective*, *The Armenian People from Ancient to Modern Times*, *Remembrance and Denial*, *Looking Backward*, *Moving Forward* and *The Armenian Genocide: Cultural and Ethical Legacies*. Hovannisian was the first holder of the Armenian Educational Foundation Chair in Modern Armenian History at UCLA.

For more information about the program contact NAASR at hq@naasr.org.



Prof. Richard G. Hovannisian

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Arts & Living

Donna-Lee Frieze, Editor of Lemkin Autobiography, to Speak at NAASR

BELMONT, Mass. — Dr. Donna-Lee Frieze, genocide scholar and editor of the newly published autobiography of Raphael Lemkin, will give a lecture entitled “Raphael Lemkin: The Armenian Genocide and the Autobiography of the ‘Insistent Prophet,’” on Thursday, September 19, 2013, at 7:30 p.m. at the National Association for Armenian Studies and Research (NAASR), 395 Concord Avenue. The lecture will be cosponsored by Facing History and Ourselves of Brookline, and NAASR.

When Lemkin collapsed at a bus stop on 42nd Street in New York City on August 29, 1959, he had either just visited the Curtis Brown Publishing Agency on Madison Avenue or was on his way there to discuss his autobiography, *Totally Unofficial*. He left behind a near-complete autobiography, which was eventually donated to the New York Public Library 23 years after Lemkin’s death, in August 1982, by Alexander Gabriel from the Transradio News Agency, UN Bureau.

In June 2013, Yale University Press published *Totally Unofficial*, in which Lemkin highlights the Armenian genocide in order to articulate his conceptual understanding of the meaning of genocide. Lemkin’s autobiography clearly underscores the lawyer’s detailed analysis of the crime. It is argued that the events of 1915 provided the framework for Lemkin’s understanding of genocide as a crime of intended group destruction, and not necessarily as mass killing. The long-awaited publication of Lemkin’s autobiography is a watershed event in the ongo-

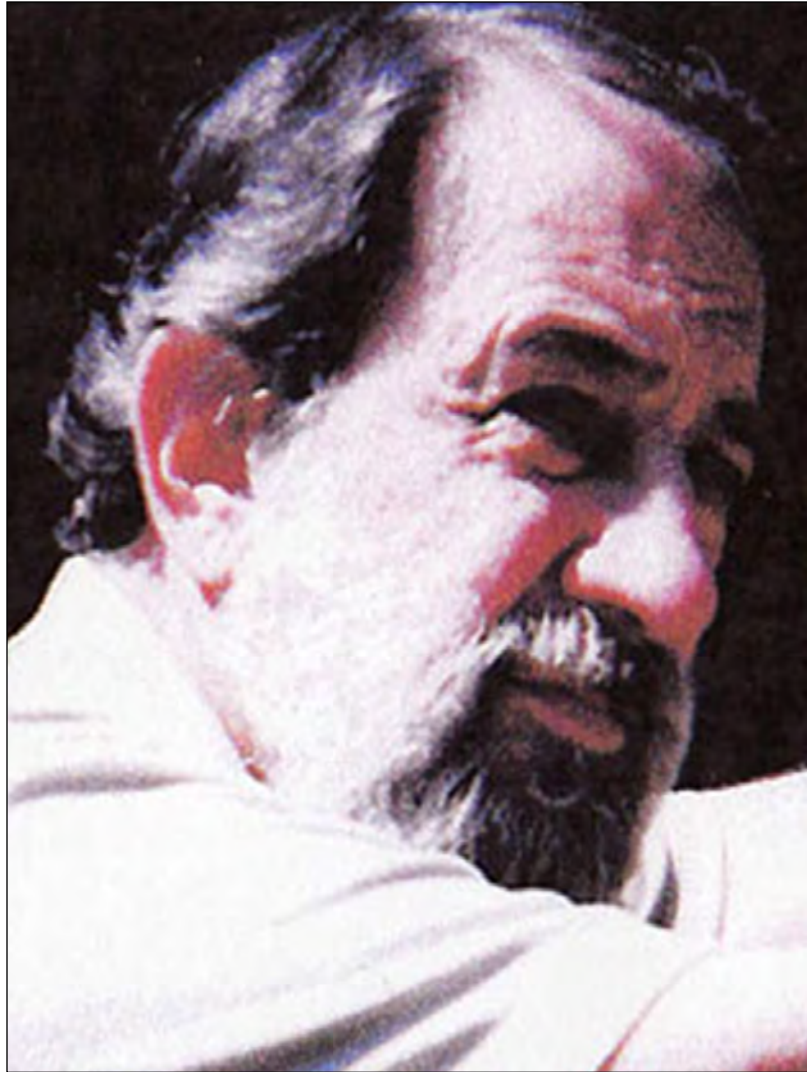


Dr. Donna-Lee Frieze

ing reassessment of his seminal work on genocide.

Frieze is a Prins Senior Fellow at the Center for Jewish History in New York City and a Visiting Fellow at the Alfred Deakin Research Institute in Melbourne. She taught a graduate unit, titled “Genocide,” for more than 10 years at Deakin University, Melbourne, and has published widely on the Armenian genocide, the Holocaust and the Bosnian genocides in relation to testimony, film and philosophy. She is the editor and transcriber of *Totally Unofficial* (Yale University Press) and the first vice president of the International Association of Genocide Scholars.

The NAASR Bookstore will open at 7 p.m. the night of the lecture. *Totally Unofficial: The Autobiography of Raphael Lemkin*, will be available for purchase the night of the lecture.



David Kherdian

David Kherdian: A Life Saved by Writing

NORTHAMPTON, Mass. — A recent interview with David Kherdian felt more like an educational journey through human development than a discussion focused on his latest books and poems.

By Armen Festekjian
Special to the Mirror-Spectator

A lifelong poet, novelist and thinker, Kherdian is living a peaceful life in this quiet Western Massachusetts community. He didn’t always live in such a rural setting; he grew up in an industrial town in Wisconsin, a son

of survivors of the Armenian Genocide at a time when immigrants in the US were not embraced.

Sitting by the window in the living room, his tone deepening as he recalled the past, the innate storyteller began to weave his words into an image of a young, confused, and troubled boy, caught between the two separate worlds of an American future and an ancient, traditional Armenian past.

“There was a great deal in our collective past that was troublesome,” he said. “Then there was discrimination in the school, and there were times I was flunked simply because I was a minority. These things affected my personality, and my attitude towards life, as well as my attitude towards people.”

However, as the young Kherdian matured, he realized that he had to understand for himself the unsettling past he had inherited from his ancestors, as well as the tortured past of his parents. All of this had to be put into order for him to move forward with his life.

“To be inhibited by these [complications] is to become enslaved by them if we do not free ourselves,” he said.

Kherdian was 19, he said, when realized that “if I didn’t get the first 12 years of my life straightened out, I would never become an adult, much less a free man.” With this inner freedom as his goal, Kherdian began looking back on his childhood, and it was only then that he discovered his talent for writing and realized he could use this skill to set himself free from the traumas of his parents’ lives, that is, once he began shaping his identity and controlling his destiny.

Thus, for him, writing became an act of healing, through which he could gain peace with himself.

It was not long before his writing began to expand from being therapeutic into something that could bring meaning and understanding to others. In freeing himself with his stories and poems, he could reach others and allow them to heal.

“If what I had discovered for myself liberated me,” he said, “that meant others could participate in similar pursuits, and not necessarily in writing, but in creative remembering — and in whatever form they found appealing. The important thing is to question, to enquire, to explore, to examine. Art at its best is a liberation from what is to what can be, an opening to a higher dimension of reality, beauty and strength.”

see KHERDIAN, page 11

16th Annual Arpa Film Festival Draws 60 Films from 30 Nations

LOS ANGELES — Arpa Foundation for Film, Music, & Art (AFFMA) will host the 16th anniversary of its signature event, Arpa International Film Festival, which will be held September 26 to 29 at the Egyptian Theatre in Hollywood. This year’s program of 60 films draws from an all-time high of 30 countries, showcasing a global range of artistic vision and thematic concerns.

The 2013 line-up includes a documentary program of 11 feature-length films and six shorts; a narrative program of seven feature films, and 24 shorts and 12 music videos.

According to Alex Kalognomos, Arpa’s director and programmer, “Documentaries always play an important part in opening new vistas for our audience, but this year’s submissions offered such compelling breadth of perspectives we felt this section deserved special emphasis.”

Notable documentaries include “FrackNation” which follows journalist Phelim McAleer’s perilous quest to find the truth about fracking and Rupa Kanade’s “An Eternal Journey” based on Kumbhamela — a festival that started 4,000 years ago and portrays the amalgamation of spiritually inclined people from diverse cultural backgrounds.

Among the recognizable names at Arpa this year, Academy Award-nominee Ethan Hawke narrates the documentary “Welcome Nowhere” actress Camilla Belle (“From Prada to Nada”) stars in the narrative short “Zero Hour;” Grammy-winner Desmond Child, who has written hit songs for a who’s who of acts from Kiss, Bon Jovi and Aerosmith to Michael Bolton, Kelly Clarkson and Joss Stone, is the subject of “TWO: The Story of Roman and Nyro” and euthanasia activist Dr. Jack Kevorkian is featured in the documentary “Orphans of the Genocide.”

The Opening Night Film, on Thursday, September 26 will be the North American premiere of “My Name is Viola” (Armenia, 2013). Featuring two luminous female leads, Lusine Alexanian in the title role and Janet Spitzer as her hero/nemesis, the film tells the story of the emotional journey of a young woman longing for freedom. Rich in visual imagery, the film is a unique, often dream-like take on sexuality, relationships and class. “My Name is Viola” is written and directed by Ruben Kochar, a risk-taking artist whose 30-year career spanning the pre- and post-Soviet eras has brought him renown in his native Armenia and the Russian film industry, along with an impressive list of international awards.

The program includes two centerpiece films. On Friday September 27, the feature is “Abstraction,” (US, 2013) by Los-Angeles indie-director Prince Bagdasarian, an established producer who here makes his feature directorial debut. The intense crime drama stars Korrina Rico (“In Time”), Ken Davitian (“The Artist,” “Borat”), Natalie Victoria (“Deadheads”) and Eric Roberts (“The Dark Knight”). On Saturday, September 28 it is the multiple-perspective urban crime drama “The Power of Few” (US, 2013) by writer/director Leone Marucci and starring Christopher Walken, Christian Slater, Anthony Anderson, Juvenile and executive produced by Roy Kurltuyan. Sunday’s closing night film will be “Masque,” directed by Robert Hatch and starring Lauren Holly and Wilford Brimley.

Arpa founder Sylvia Minassian commented, “We have hosted many notable premiers of films that have gone on to enjoy commercial success. Currently the Jamie Kennedy comedy, ‘Lost and Found In Armenia,’ which had its sold-out US Premier at Arpa last year, is enjoying consecutive sold out screenings nationwide. “We are certain there are many success stories within this year’s program as well.”

Tickets will be available from September 5 through 29 at www.affma.org and www.itsmyseat.com/affma.



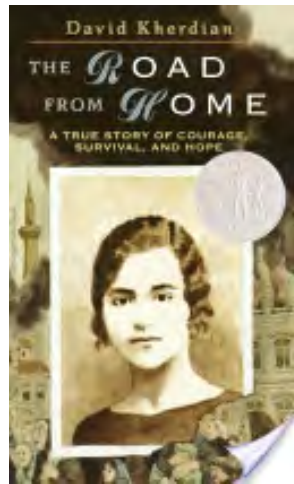
ARTS & LIVING

David Kherdian: A Life Saved by Writing

KHERDIAN, from page 10

Although he considers himself a poet, Kherdian spent much of his time writing novels, autobiographies and anthologies. "I had to make a living in writing, so for me poetry was a luxury," he said. During these 25 years he made a living in writing, he would get up in the morning and work until noon "[writing] anywhere from roughly 500 to 2,000 words a day."

William Saroyan, towards the end of his writing career, became Kherdian's mentor. "I was the only protégé he ever had and I was very proud of that. And one of the questions I asked him was, 'how do you start a story?' And he said, 'Well, you write. And it may start on the fourth page; it may not start on the first page. You may have to write a while and then some day you say, oh this is it.'"



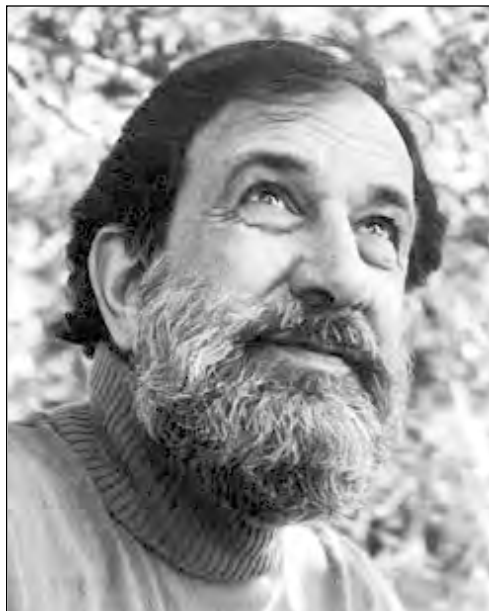
Cover of *Road from Home*

Kherdian has written hundreds of poems and scores of books, including his most famous work, *The Road From Home*, written in 1979. In this Newbery Honor novel, he recreates his mother's voice in telling the true story of a childhood interrupted in 1915 by the Armenian Genocide. "I never called it my book, I called it my mother's book, I did it for her as a gift," he said enthusiastically. He and his wife, Nonny Hogogrian, have collaborated often in children's books. In a new children's book, *Come back, Moon*, Hogogrian provided the illustrations and Kherdian the text.

While writing a novel or an autobiography takes time and determination, "poetry is a very different animal," said Kherdian. "You cannot start a poem; a poem starts in you. And there are moments — maybe once a year — suddenly a power appears inside of you and you have a connection to the unconscious that you don't have ordinarily. And you find that you want to write something, you begin to write something, your being touched by something way beyond you and transmitting this energy."

Kherdian has recently finished writing a retelling of the legend of David of Sassoun.

Insights by David Kherdian



• "The first impressions you take are the strongest and your first coming into life and everything that comes to you is new, real, astonishing and mysterious, and you are just electrified by life but you don't understand it, you don't understand what's happening to you. You have nothing to compare it to because you've never not been that way, but you have the advantage when your older to find out what it all meant, because it had deep meaning and the way you responded to all of the things in your life had huge meaning for you because they told you who you are by what you value, by what you notice. The truth of those experiences is not known to anybody because we just remember it as

incidences, as experiences, as happenings, some of them dreadful, some wonderful, some amazing, but they have no real truth for us because we don't understand them.

"What happens when you write is that you enter that space through this great gift that is given to you and you touch your spirit. There is a part in you that knows everything, there isn't anything about you that isn't known by you, but it isn't necessarily available to you. I think when you die, it becomes available. But the great advantage of being a writer is that you can find that while your still alive, and in finding it, you are transformed."

• "I looked around at all the suffering of my people and made a decision that I would not live an ordinary life, but would do something extraordinary in order to balance our suffering, because this thing could not stand as it was. This was not meant as a condemnation of the Turks, but an attempt to bring order back into the universe because life had gone out of balance for my people. But the remedy was not just for them but for the entire universe. You can ask, how can a child think this big, but it is not how it sounds, it is not about ideas, but just the ordinary, normal need that a young being has for a reasoned balance that will bring an enduring meaning to life."

Seeing that very few Armenian-Americans are familiar with this story, to which Kherdian refers as "a symbol of our Armenian nation," he saw the inspirational potential of putting the tale into his own words.

Kherdian was ahead of his time in discovering that through writing he was able to repair his relationship with his father, who had long since passed from this earth. As a memoirist, working interchangeably with poetry, fiction,

memoir, and creative non-fiction, he found a new method for inner transformation, but he likes to say that these creative discoveries are in the air and come to us for a purpose higher than our own needs. "We are meant to bring what we find into the light of consciousness for the purposes of our planet." Many of Kherdian's works can be found on Amazon as well as his personal website at www.davidkherdian.com.

A Public Conversation With Prof. Hovannisian

By Rabbi Elie Spitz

TUSTIN, Calif. — On August 18, members of the Jewish and Armenian community shared a kosher Armenian dinner mentored by Zov Karardian, a child of survivors of the Armenian Genocide and proprietor of Zov's Bistro. Afterwards, we enjoyed a public conversation with Prof. Richard Hovannisian. Hovannisian taught at UCLA, published extensively on Armenian history and with his students interviewed close to 800 survivors of the Genocide.

As a Jew and a child of survivors of the Holocaust, listening to Hovannisian gave me a wider context for my people's own tragedy. I learned that the nationalist Young Turks in an emerging new nation of Turkey saw the collapse of the Ottoman Empire as a national affront. Christian countries, such as Russia, were taking land away. In crafting the new Turkey, there was a desire to consolidate identity. Christians, Greek and Armenian, were seen as a potential subversives and as lacking a commonality with the Islamic, Turkish majority. Under the cover of World War I, the Turks were able in an organized, centralized fashion to direct the deaths of close to 60 percent of the more than two million Armenians who had lived in Turkey. Men were shot and most women and children died during brutal marches in the desert.

Hovannisian described a parallel with World War II and the Germans. Forced to pay enormous penalties marking the end of World War I and beset by a world economic crisis, German nationalism and scapegoating grew. The Nazis sought to purify Germany of the foreigners, the Jews, as potentially disloyal and different in race and faith than the Aryan. Under cover of war, the Third Reich was able to engage in mass extermination of the Jews.

A key difference between the Jewish and Armenian communities is the aftermath of our respective genocides. The Armenian Genocide meant Armenians lost their historic homeland and were left to define themselves as primarily a diasporan community. The Turkish government made it a crime to claim that the Turks perpetrated mass killings of the Armenians. Instead, the official line was that there were Armenian provocations and a kind of civil war. Turkey used much leverage against governments who were willing to recognize the Genocide. For instance, in 1982 there was the first international gathering on genocide, organized by institutions in Israel and to be held in Tel Aviv. Several hundred scholars from around the world were scheduled to participate. Turkish leaders contacted their counterparts in Israel and said that if the Armenian's participated, Turkey would close its borders to Iran during a time in which many Iranian Jews were fleeing toward freedom. Elie Wiesel, chair of the event, withdrew. He said that he could not deny the Armenian Genocide and would not want to jeopardize Jewish lives. The Israeli sponsors withdrew their names from the conference, which still took place with the Armenian scholars participating, including Hovannisian. Both the US and Israel have failed for political reasons to officially acknowledge the Armenian Genocide.

Jews have had a long history of diaspora and the events of World War II were part of a larger identify of suffering and dispersion. Germany acknowledged its responsibility and reparations were paid. In fact, in the aftermath of the Holocaust, Jews regained a national land in Israel. And Jews have memorialized their story through film, museums and ritual events.

I asked Hovannisian, "How can we as wounded peoples heal?" Hovannisian responded, "We need to make our particular stories universal, so that that they will be meaningful to others, and we need to respond to suffering in the world." As a Jew, I am much identified with his guidance for our people's healing.

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ARTS & LIVING

Azadian Presents New Book on Michigan's Manoogian Museum

TREASURES, from page 1

In his comments, Azadian thanked the *Mirror-Spectator* and NAASR for sponsoring the program, detailing his history with both organizations.

"I have been involved with NAASR since its early years when its pioneering mission began to place Armenian Studies on the academic map of the country, beginning with the Harvard Chair and expanding towards the West Coast. All under the leadership of my old friend, the late Manoog Young, a human dynamo, moving slowly yet inexorably."

The Manoogian Museum was opened in 1992 with Bishop Paren Avedikian, then pastor at St. John's Armenian Church, tasked with collecting artifacts with the support and guidance of the late Alex Manoogian.

"Building the collection itself was an adventure, since Armenian manuscripts, *khachkars* and artifacts are scattered around the world," Azadian said. "Who would have imagined that a copy of the first printed *Bible* in 1666 by Vosgan Yerevantzi would be discovered in Dhaka, Bangladesh, of all places? Also, who could have believed that His Holiness, [Catholicos] Vasken I, of blessed memory, would be able to convince the Soviet authorities to dismantle a 16th-century *khachkar* which took a long voyage from Armenia to Leningrad and over the ocean to Montreal to reach its overland destination in Detroit and find its place on a pedestal at the Manoogian Museum?"

He added, "Each item has a similar saga behind it, very much like the destiny of our creative people, who were uprooted from their 3,000-year native land."

According to Azadian, much thought and care has gone into not only acquiring the collection, but placing it in just the right context.

"A team of historians and scholars have toiled for many years to place the collection in historical perspective. In the museum's galleries, individual artifacts are presented in the broader context of their respective categories," he said. "Over time, as items were acquired or donated, the museum was shaped into eight areas, including paintings, rugs and carpets, sacred vessels, vestments, textiles, household items and early manuscripts.

At any given point, he noted, only about one-third of the museum's 1,500 items is displayed. Its design, he said, has had input from the professionals behind the Detroit Institute of Art, one of the country's most notable museums.

The book – an expertly detailed catalogue of the treasures of the museum – was put together by a team composed of Lucy Ardash, Sylvie Merian and Azadian, and took the better part of a decade to come to fruition. It contains essays by eight scholars, including Alina Ayzazian and Felix Ter-Martirosov, Amy Landau, Theo van Lint, Vahram Tatikian and Peter Cowe. The book covers the treasures of the museum, including illuminated manuscripts and printed books, ceramics, inscribed rugs, ancient coins, fabrics and embroidery, sacred and religious objects and metal objects.

The book also features sharp photographs by Robert Shell Hensleigh and is designed by Mike Savitski.

Azadian praised the efforts of Merian, a librarian at New York's Pierpont-Morgan Library, and Ardash. He said Merian was "the backbone of our team, as she assumed more responsibilities than we originally envisioned. Besides her masterful treatment of the illuminated manuscripts chapter, she also wrote the chapters on embroidery along with entries on metal objects. She proved to be a scholar's scholar."

Also working on the book was the late Dr. Garabed Belian, a dentist by profession but art collector by avocation, who sadly died before his chapter on paintings and sculptures was completed. Azadian stepped in to finish them.

"Because of the eclectic nature of the collection, it was necessary to expand the team of scholars to do justice to the entire book. In selecting items to be featured in the book, each item underwent rigorous academic and scientific study to ensure authenticity," Azadian explained.

He explained, "Sylvie has drafted an imitation colophon in a tongue-in-cheek style and it appears at the end of the book. I encourage every reader to begin the book with scribe Sylvie's colophon."

Opening the program was Marc Mamigonian, NAASR's director of academic affairs. Mamigonian stressed the richness of Armenian

community life in New England, with its plethora of organizations, including three Armenian newspapers and several cultural organizations, including the Armenian Library and Museum of America.

He said, "It may be taken as one of the failures of the community – and that sounds a little more harsh than I intend it – that many of these same publications and institutions and the work they do, which are so vital to maintaining the continuity as well as the mental fiber of the Armenian community, end up being largely taken for granted. This is not, I am sure,

"It is a wonderful book, and a potent reminder of the richness of – of course – this one particular diasporan institution, the Manoogian Museum – but also in a larger sense of the richness of Armenian diaspora culture and institutional life. All a roundabout way of saying: value, participate in, and support these diasporan institutions. They are doing important work and need your help to continue," he concluded.

Alin K. Gregorian, the editor of the *Mirror-Spectator* introduced Azadian, who writes a weekly column for the newspaper, to the packed room. Gregorian praised Azadian for his "intellectual agility," noting "he has an unquenchable desire to learn and can write equally well in French, Armenian or English. The depth and breadth of his political, social and economic analyses are staggering."

She listed some of the books he has written, including *Portraits and Profiles*, *Observations and Criticisms* as well as *History on the Move*.

"He has had a longstanding connection with the Manoogian family, first with Alex Manoogian and later, his son, Richard. It is through this relationship that he has become such an integral part of the Detroit Armenian community, and more specifically, the

organizations founded or supported by the Manoogians, including the Manoogian Museum," said Gregorian.

"The appreciation of art, whether books, theater or music, is part of Mr. Azadian. He is an advisor to the Alex and Marie Manoogian Museum, as well as an advisor from the diaspora to the Ministry of Culture," she said.

Following his talk and a brief video from Armenian television about the museum, Azadian answered questions and signed copies of his book.

A Legacy of Armenian Treasures is available for purchase at NAASR.

– Alin K. Gregorian



From left, Alin K. Gregorian, Marc Mamigonian and Edmond Y. Azadian

a phenomenon unique to Armenian Americans, but for those of us who work for or are involved in Armenian-American institutions, it poses very real challenges, such as: How best to remind the community that the work you do has value and that you need its continued support in order to survive."

He continued, "Then, we have an institution such as the Alex and Marie Manoogian Museum, which is located in Southfield, Michigan, alongside the beautiful St. John Armenian Church. I will wager that few in the Boston community are aware of the museum."

He praised the museum's "remarkable collection of Armenian rugs and [...] silver ecclesiastical pieces," as well as the new book.

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Beast on the Moon
by Richard Kalinoski

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 14, 2013
8:00 PM

ENGLISH SUB-TITLES

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For more information, please call Ani Chatmajian at (201) 965-7785 or Talar Sarafian at 201-240-8541



ARTS & LIVING

CALENDAR

FLORIDA

OCTOBER 26-27 — St. Mary Armenian Church Armenian Food & Music Fest 2013, Saturday, 11 a.m.-10 p.m. and Sunday, 12 noon- 7 p.m. Armenian food and pastries including Mediterranean specialties, arts & crafts vendors, live music and children's area; 4050 NW 100 Ave., Cooper City. For info, call (954)-450-5578 or email: stmaryfl@aol.com

MASSACHUSETTS

SEPTEMBER 8 — Greater Worcester Armenian Chorale 13th Anniversary Gala concert and dinner, 12:30 p.m., Cultural Center of the Armenian Church of Our Saviour, 34 Boynton Street, Worcester. Led by conductor Konstantin Petrossian, soloist Narine Ojakhyan, "Arevig" Armenian Children's Dance Group. Reservations call Elizabeth Orsi 508-865-9432. Tickets \$25.00, \$12.00 children; for program donations call Charles Der Kazarian 508-963-2076.

SEPTEMBER 8 — Annual Husenig Foundation PICNIC. at Husenig Grove, Simmons St., Rehoboth, featuring live music by Gary Kashmanian's New England All Star Band. Delicious Husenig-style shish kebab, losh kebab, khey-ma, chicken, pilaf. Also bake table and raffle. Starts at noon. For more information contact Marc Janigian, 401-942-3477.

SEPTEMBER 8 — Sayat Nova Dance Company performs at Peabody International Festival with favorite dances from their repertory; 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. Members of the Dance Company manning dessert booth featuring homemade delicacies; Peabody Square on Lowell Street. For details, call Peabody Town Hall.

SEPTEMBER 8 — Picnic Festival, St. Gregory Armenian Church, 158 Main St., North Andover, 12:30-5:30 p.m., featuring Armenian music by Leon Janikian, Jason Naroian, Joe Kouyoumjian, John Arzigian, along with Siroun Dance Group; Armenian food and pastries. For more info, visit www.saintgregory.org.

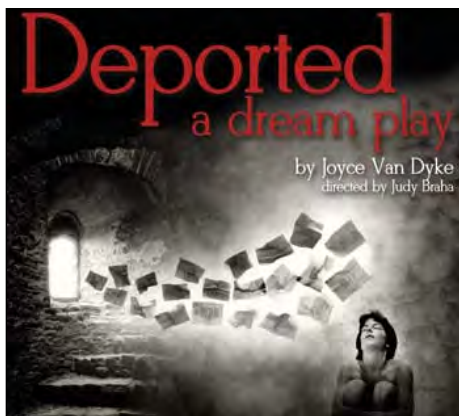
SEPTEMBER 9 — St. James Men's Club Meeting hosts speaker **Shant Mardirossian**, chairman of the Near East Foundation, an international development organization; 6:15 p.m. (social hour) and 7 p.m. (dinner); losh kebab and khey-ma dinner, \$12. Ladies welcome; Charles Mosesian Cultural & Youth Center- Keljik Hall, 465 Mt. Auburn St., Watertown.

SEPTEMBER 10 — Staged reading of Joyce Van Dyke's "Deported/ A Dream Play," 7 p.m. at Clark University, Little Center, 950 Main Street, Worcester. The play tells the story of two friends, the playwright's grandmother and the mother of Dr. H. Martin Deranian during the Armenian Genocide; directed by Judy Braha, featuring a cast from the recent Boston production; Q&A to follow; free. For reservations, email clarkarts@clarku.edu or call 508-793-7356.

SEPTEMBER 15 — Talk by Tom Vartabedian titled, "A 50-year Retrospective into Journalism;" 7 p.m., ALMA, 65 Main St., Watertown. Vartabedian, award-winning writer and photographer, will kick off the fall season at ALMA with a talk about his 50-year career with The Haverhill Gazette and his work as a correspondent with the Armenian Press since the early 1960s.

SEPTEMBER 15 — Trinity Family Festival, 12-5 p.m., Holy Trinity Armenian Church, 145 Brattle St., Cambridge. Delicious food, Armenian music, Children's games, Blessing of Madagh at 4 p.m., raffle drawing and more.

SEPTEMBER 16 — Armenian Church of Our Saviour hosts **20th Annual Golf Tournament** at the Sterling Country Club, Sterling,



On September 10, Clark University will host a staged reading of Joyce Van Dyke's "Deported/ A Dream Play," 7 p.m. at the Little Center, 950 Main Street, Worcester, MA. The play is about the Armenian Genocide and was first produced in Boston in 2012. It tells the story of two friends, the playwright's grandmother and the mother of Dr. H. Martin Deranian during the Armenian Genocide and is directed by Judy Braha, featuring a cast from the recent Boston production. A Q&A will follow. The event is free and open to the public. For reservations, email clarkarts@clarku.edu or call 508-793-7356.

8:30 a.m. registration, 10 a.m. start; sponsorships and golf registrations still available; contact the church office at 508-756-2931.

SEPTEMBER 21 — Armenian Independent Broadcasting of Boston presents Avik Deirmenjian's newly published book of poems, *Khachardzan*, 5 p.m. MC Dr. Ara Ghazarian, book presentation by Khajag Mkrtychian, cultural program and reception to follow; free admission; Armenian Cultural Foundation, 441 Mystic St., Arlington.

SEPTEMBER 22 — Norton Dodge Collection Exhibit Opening: Armenian Art from the Post-Soviet Period, including art by Vartan Gabrielian and Ashot Kazarian; 5 p.m., Guest Nancy Dodge; reception to follow; ALMA's second floor, 65 Main St., Watertown.

SEPTEMBER 28 — Story SLAM workshop with Nora Dooley of Massmouth. 4-6 p.m. at ALMA, 65 Main St., Watertown. Learn to tell a story! Topic will be objects that have special meaning in our lives, so bring an object or heirloom to discuss. \$5 donation appreciated.

SEPTEMBER 28 — Smithsonian Magazine's Annual Museum Day: Free Admission to ALMA. Admission tickets available for download on the Museum Day Live! Website. One ticket admits one person, plus a guest; 65 Main St., Watertown.

SEPTEMBER 28 — Annual "Walk of Life" Walk-a-thon, New England Chapter of the Armenian Bone Marrow Donor Registry (ABMDR), in Watertown. To register or donate, visit <http://www.abmdr.am>.

OCTOBER 5 — "Inheriting the Light:" In Conversation with Diana Der Hovanesian and Nancy Kricorian, 5-7 p.m., ALMA, 65 Main St., Watertown. Poet Diana Der Hovanesian and Novelist Nancy Kricorian will engage in a dialogue about how family and communal history have

inspired and shaped their writings. \$5 donation appreciated.

OCTOBER 18 and 19 — St. James Annual Bazaar! Delicious shish, losh, khey-ma and more! Fabulous pastries, manti, kufte and toorshi! Children's activities, vendors galore, farmer's market - Fun! Friends! Family! 11 a.m. to 9 p.m. daily.

OCTOBER 19 — Hye Kef 5 featuring Leon Janikian, Joe Kouyoumjian, Greg Takvorian, Ken Kalajian, Bob Raphaelian and Jay Baronian, Haverhill, MA, 7:30 p.m., Michael's Function Hall- 12 Alpha Street, Tickets: \$40.00 Each Students \$30, includes individually-served mezza platters. Proceeds to benefit all Armenian churches in Merrimack Valley and New Hampshire. Call either John Arzigian, 603-560-3826; Sandy Boroyan, 978-251-8687; Scott Sahagian, 617-699-3581, or Peter Gulezian, 978-375-1616. Organized by Armenian Friends' of America.

OCTOBER 24 — K. George and Carolann S. Najarian, MD Lecture on Human Rights: In Our Midst: Slavery Unmasked; 7 p.m., Faneuil Hall, Boston, with keynote speaker Siddharth Kara, fellow at the Carr Center Program on Human Trafficking & Modern Slavery, Harvard Kennedy School of Government. Contact Barbara Tellalian for more info: 617-332-1880.

NOVEMBER 16 — Armenian Women's Welfare Association (AWWA) 38th Annual Luncheon/ Auction, 11 a.m. at the Burlington Marriot, 1 Burlington Mall Road. Event kicks off with a silent auction and bidding; Visa and MasterCard accepted, tickets \$60. For reservations, contact awwauction@gmail.com.

NEW JERSEY

SEPTEMBER 14 — Richard Kalinoski's Play "Beast on the Moon," presented by the Tekeyan Cultural Association of Greater New York, adapted by Nancy Issa Torosian. Tickets: \$50, \$35, \$25; English subtitles. For info and tickets call Marie Zokian (201) 745-8850, Helen Misk (347) 368-6993 or Shemavon Atamian (718) 344-7489; Oradell Elementary School, 350 Prospect Ave., Oradell

SEPTEMBER 22 — The Armenian Relief Society of Eastern United States, Agnoui, Pergen, Shake and Spitak Chapters, presents Poet and author Vahan Zanoian, as he launches a tour of the US and Canada for his new book, *A Place Far Away*, 2 p.m., Sts. Vartanatz Church, 461 Bergen Blvd., Ridgefield. Refreshments will be served.

NEW YORK

SEPTEMBER 26 — Vahan Zanoian will speak and sign copies of his new book, A Place Far Away, his new novel on human trafficking in Armenia, 7 p.m., at the Haik and Alice Kavookjian Auditorium, 630 Second Ave. Jointly sponsored by the Armenian Studies program of the Department of Youth and Education, the Krikor and Clara Zohrab Information Center of the Diocese of the Armenian Church of America (Eastern) and the Fund for Armenian Relief. All Proceeds from the book are being donated to organizations devoted to protecting children.

NOVEMBER 23-24 — TCA Mher Megerdchian Theatrical Group celebrates 15th Anniversary with production of Hagop Baronian's "The Perils of Politeness" (Kaghakavaroutyan Vnasneruh) directed by Gagik Karapetyan from Armenia; Dwight Englewood High School, 315 E. Palisade Ave., Englewood, NJ. Nov. 23, Saturday at 8 p.m. and Nov. 24, Sunday at 4 p.m. For tickets; \$50, \$35, \$25; call Marie Zokian (201)745-8850 or Missak Boghosian at (212)819-0097 or (347)365-6985.

ALMA Offers Free Admission for Annual Museum Day

WATERTOWN — The Armenian Library and Museum of America (ALMA) will open its doors free of charge on Saturday, September 28, as part of *Smithsonian* magazine's ninth annual Museum Day Live!

From 12 to 6 p.m., ALMA will grant free access to visitors who present a Museum Day Live! admission ticket, available for free download on

the Museum Day Live! website on www.smithsonianmag.com/museumday. One ticket is permitted per household, per email address.

A nationwide event, Museum Day Live! is expected to attract close to 400,000 participants. Inclusive by design, the event represents *Smithsonian's* commitment to make learning

and the spread of knowledge accessible to everyone, giving museums across all 50 states the opportunity to emulate the admission policy of the Smithsonian museums in Washington DC.

Current exhibits at ALMA include, "Karsh: Celebrating Humanity," which is the permanent collection of portraits by the renowned Armenian-Canadian portrait photographer

Yousuf Karsh, a gift from his wife, Estrellita Karsh. The "Who Are the Armenians?" exhibit spans more than 3,000 years of Armenian history and culture and the "Permanent Genocide Exhibit," provides a visual narrative of the events of the 1915-1923 Genocide, and the continuing aftermath and denial by the Turkish government over generations.



COMMENTARY

THE ARMENIAN Mirror Spectator

Established 1932

An ADL Publication

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The Armenian Mirror-Spectator is published weekly, except two weeks in July, by:

Baikar Association, Inc.

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

Telephone: 617-924-4420

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www.mirrorspectator.com

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SUBSCRIPTION RATES:

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

© 2011 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, P.O. Box 302, Watertown, MA 02471-0302

Other than the editorial, views and opinions expressed in this newspaper do not necessarily reflect the policies of the publisher.

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COMMENTARY

The Historic Price of Individualism

By Edmond Y. Azadian

Why do Armenians gravitate away from their native land and live in far-away countries, overwhelmed with the nostalgia of the ancestral homeland? We seldom pose the question to ourselves and when we do, we always have cop-outs: we blame our neighbors, curse our conquerors and decry our enemies.

It is true, history has treated the Armenian people very harshly, for a number of reasons. As we try to enumerate or analyze those reasons, it never occurs to us to assess our own responsibility in shaping our destiny as one of the oldest nations on the planet. If one day we decide to delve into our own responsibility, perhaps we will begin to soberly plan our future.

The reason Armenians have not been able to become a dominant nation – except during Tigranes II reign in the first century BC – is our individualism. Individualism denotes self-reliance, self definition, independence and all the other positive attributes. But when contrasted with the collective will, catastrophe ensues.

Because of various deprivations, victimizations and constant foreign domination, Armenians have developed a very strong individualist trait, which has always been in conflict with collective discipline, nation-building and focus on a common future. That is how they have survived through all the adversities of history.

During the dark ages, individualism was suppressed especially through religion, where eyes and hopes were diverted away from the individual to the sublime and to heaven, which religious leaders conveniently used to consolidate their hegemony over their subjects. It is no wonder that kings and rulers claimed divine lineage to legitimize their power over the masses.

The lay rulers and the clergy used and abused their absolute power over people, suppressing any expression of individual ideas.

The Inquisition in Europe punished any deviation from the church doctrine harshly. People were denied independent thinking, facing torture and burning at the stake. The famous victims of such intolerance were Galileo and Giordano Bruno.

With the emergence of the Renaissance, society's focus shifted towards the individual. And later, fueled by the Industrial Revolution, the individual came to control his or her destiny and enjoy life's blessings without inhibitions.

Europe eventually came to balance individualism versus collective will, thus developing empires to control the peoples and resources of other continents. As individuals negotiated the limits of their freedoms with the imperatives of national consensus, powerful governments were formed, without compromising individual liberties. Nationalism became the glue to hold together the individuals. The French philosopher Voltaire became the proponent of individual freedoms within the parameters of collective will. He encapsulated that concept succinctly when he said, "Your freedom ends where my nose begins."

Armenians pride themselves that the Renaissance dawned in Armenia before Europe. Gregory of Narek's poetry is considered a watershed in that development. Indeed, the poet, in his supplications to the Supreme Power, dwells on the frailties of the individual, imploring divine forgiveness or help. In the *Book of Lamentations*, Gregory of Narek outlines human desires and forbidden urges within the confines of his prayers, with a poetic craft unsurpassed for many centuries.

This individualism in Armenia always developed within the context of foreign domination, which made the survival of the individual questionable most of the time. Every Armenian developed his individualism at the expense of his fellow Armenians, always losing the collective perspective.

The contrast was stark during the Ottoman years. As the majority of the Armenians suffered in the provinces, Amiras and the privileged class of Armenians lived in affluence in Constantinople and other urban centers. They served the Sultan, who sometimes used them to exploit fellow Armenians in the provinces by assigning them tasks such as tax collection, which was performed most of the time with a whip crashing on the back of the Armenian peasant, to please the Sublime Porte.

The class of Armenian Amiras were completely detached from the aspirations of the Armenian masses living in the hinterlands. Today the Armenian Amiras are remembered in Istanbul because they were able to secure some favors from the Sultan to build churches and schools in Istanbul.

Individualism among the Armenians sometimes is expressed in the form of factionalism. Indeed, with a very primitive concept of patriotism, Armenian volunteers in the Russian army refused to fight under General Antranik, as the Russian army relinquished its conquests, heading home and leaving the fortress of Kars defenseless towards the end of World War I. Food, ammunitions and clothing were abandoned, but the Armenian volunteers refused to defend the fortress of Kars, stating that Kars was not part of their homeland and our national hero left the front, despondent.

After World War I, as Ataturk was able to hold together a defeated country through diplomacy bordering on hypocrisy, Armenians jeopardized their first republic, created after six centuries of foreign domination. Granted, perhaps Armenia's fate was doomed as Ataturk and Lenin were trying to outmatch each other, but our perpetual infighting also contributed to the demise of the First Republic. As a result of the February uprising, tens of thousands of young Armenians killed each other on top of the 1.5 million victims at the hands of the Turks.

The Soviet era proved to be one of the darkest chapters of human history. It was as if the Catholic Inquisition had returned with a vengeance, with an atheistic twist. On top of the loss of the entire leadership and intellectual class of Western Armenians, a new crop of literary talents fell victim to Stalin's atrocities.

The Soviet Union was a huge prison. Personality and individualism were sacrificed for the collective. The new philosophy called for the creation of the new man, the Soviet citizen.

Despite all adversities and casualties, the Soviet system proved to be a blessing in disguise for the Armenians. Travel bans contributed to the development of the demographics in Armenia with immigration from the Balkans and the Middle East. If only forced attachment to land could keep Armenians in the native homeland. That stability in turn contributed to the tremendous development of science, literature and music, beginning a new golden age in Armenian history.

Today, all that was created during the Soviet era is being blown to four winds and Armenians are leaving their country at a rapid pace.

Azeris are waiting at the gate and they have already concocted a history that Armenians are sitting on Azeri land.

If this time around we lose the second republic, that will be the historic price we pay for Armenian individualism.

Nor Gyank Closes Its Doors: Filling the Void of a Legacy Left Behind

By Taleen Babayan

While many newspapers were revered in our household, there was a separate stack that remained on our kitchen countertop, a silent symbol of the significance of these publications in our home.

As a child, I would pick up the *Armenian Mirror-Spectator*, *Armenian Reporter*, *Armenian Observer*, *Baikar* and *Nor Gyank* and look through the photos and intriguing headlines about the presidency of Levon Ter-Petrosian, the conflict in Nagorno Karabagh or the local Armenian dinner-dances and fundraisers. As I matured, I delved into the articles, highlighting blockades and corruption in our homeland, while also touting the advancements in infrastructure and trade. These newspapers became an even more integral part of my life when my own pieces were published in those pages – some weeks my pieces appeared in the same issue as my grandfather's.

So it was with somber acceptance that I heard *Nor Gyank*, a leading Armenian newspaper in our community, had stopped its presses after 35 years. This wasn't the first Armenian newspaper that had ceased publication – nor would it be the last – but the disappearance of *Nor Gyank* into the pages of diasporan history, naturally has me questioning the future of Armenian newspapers and whether my generation – and those following us – have the dedication, interest or will to continue their contributions to our ethnic press.

I saw firsthand the investment and effort that went into *Nor Gyank* by the Shenian family, who were at the helm of the Glendale-based trilingual weekly since 1978. My grandparents were close with Krikor and Arsho Shenian, and whenever we visited Los Angeles, we would see this industrious and patriotic couple. Their dedication to *Nor Gyank* and the dissemination of Armenian news reminded me of the late Eddie Boghosian, the editor of the New York-based *Armenian Reporter*. Similar to

the Shenians, he founded and oversaw the success of a newspaper founded from the grass roots. Both independent publications offered wide platform for others to present their own viewpoints and thoughts on contemporary Armenian issues.

Although I was younger, I was privy to conversations about the happenings in our communities and in our homeland when with the Shenians and Boghosians. When the voices became hushed, I knew a juicy topic was on the table and I would strain my ears just a bit more to hear a sound bite. These were in fact my first lessons in geopolitics, our homeland, the diaspora and above all, journalism.

Both Shenian and Boghosian were bootstrap journalists, who after moving to the US, realized there was a need to fulfill – a thirst for Armenian news. They collected news the old-fashioned way – through on the ground reporting, covering not only local communities but also diasporan happenings and news of our homeland.

continued on next page



COMMENTARY



My Turn

By Harut Sassounian

Japan and Turkey: On 'Comfort Women' and Genocide

The sleepy town of Glendale became the center of a major international controversy on July 9, when the City Council approved a memorial to "comfort women" — a euphemism to describe up to 200,000 young females who were forced into sexual slavery by the Japanese army during its occupation of Korea and neighboring countries before and during World War II.

The City Council, after hearing conflicting testimonies from members of the local Japanese and Korean communities, approved with a 4 to 1 vote the installation of a monument in Glendale in honor of "comfort women." At the unveiling ceremony of the monument, council members Ara Najarian and Zareh Sinanyan expressed sympathy for the plight of "comfort women," as their own Armenian ancestors had suffered from mass atrocities in Turkey.

Concerned by the parallels drawn between the Genocide of Armenians by Turkey during World War I and the Japanese military's sexual enslavement of "comfort women" during World War II, the Consulate of Japan in Los Angeles sought a meeting with the Armenian National Committee of America to present its government's position

on this issue.

During Deputy Consul General Masahiro Suga's meeting with ANCA, it became evident that the Japanese government had been far more forthcoming regarding the crimes committed by the imperial Japanese army than the Turkish government was on the Armenian Genocide. Suga explained that Japan had recognized its responsibility for violating the rights of "comfort women" by issuing an apology and offering compensation to the victims.

Nevertheless, the "comfort women" remain dissatisfied with Japan's acts of "atonement," accusing Japanese officials of making conflicting announcements on this issue. Most "comfort women" have also rejected the offered financial compensation, claiming that it was partially provided by private sources and not the government of Japan. In 2007, the US House of Representatives adopted a resolution in support of "comfort women," urging the Japanese government to "formally acknowledge, apologize and accept historical responsibility in a clear and unequivocal manner for its Imperial Armed Forces' coercion of young women into sexual slavery."

To find out how Japan's reaction to the issue of "comfort women" differed from the Turkish government's denialist stand on the Armenian Genocide, I interviewed Jun Niimi, the Consul General of Japan in Los Angeles. He fondly spoke about his "affinity" toward Armenians developed during his 1995-1998 service at the Japanese Embassy in Tehran, and his subsequent visits to Armenia, while stationed at the Embassy of Japan in Moscow.

Regarding the Japanese government's position on "comfort women," Niimi explained that Prime Minister Tomiichi Murayama issued a statement in 1995, expressing "deep remorse" and "heartfelt apology." Japan also "provided

atonement through the Asian Women's Fund."

Turning to the differences in the reaction of Turkey to the Armenian Genocide and Japan's to the abuse of "comfort women," Consul General Niimi made three points in the following statement:

"The government of Japan is well aware of the tragedy of the Armenian people at the beginning of last century. We would like to express our deepest condolences and sympathy to the victims. It is our strong belief that this kind of tragedy should never be repeated. The second point is regarding the position of the Turkish government. This is about another country's position. Even though we are aware of that atrocity, yet, we are not in a position to grasp the details of precisely what happened a century ago in that area. So we cannot make a comment on the Turkish government's position. But, I would like to repeat that we are aware of the tragedy and would like to express our sympathy and condolences. And the third point is that, regardless of the position of the Turkish government, the Japanese government's position on the issue of "comfort women" is that it expressed apology and remorse and made efforts to extend support to former 'comfort women.'"

I informed the Consul General that Japan's position on the Armenian Genocide is not much different from that of Turkey. I asked Niimi to relay to his country's Foreign Ministry that Japan's lack of acknowledgment of the Armenian Genocide reinforces the skepticism of those who question the Japanese government's sincerity in dealing fairly with the issue of "comfort women."

In response, the Consul General of Japan expressed his understanding that "the word tragedy doesn't sound good to you, because it's Genocide." He promised to convey to his government "the sentiments of the Armenian community" on this issue.

from previous page

were branded as trailblazers and broke new ground in diasporan Armenian journalism.

These journalists stirred the public with their opinionated writing, an element that's not seen as often in today's papers, either because of the apathy of diasporan Armenians or because everyone wants to be "politically correct." But challenging questions need to be asked — editorials that rile people up need to be written. Shenian and Boghossian were not afraid to voice their controversial opinions, regardless of the personal threats those opinions may have engendered.

The closing of *Nor Gyank* is unfortunate for me on a personal level and as a journalist. Of course, many national newspapers are succumbing to the digital era — but to us Armenians, these weeklies were more than a source of news information. They tied us to our republic when it was under Soviet rule and connected us to other diasporan communities who, like us, were trying to keep their language alive, their schools open and their churches vibrant.

While there are different reasons why Armenian publications close — loss of revenue, declining circulation, a family business with no successor — we still mourn the loss of another Armenian-Armenian newspaper that bound us scattered Armenians.

Although we have no control over the extinction of these papers, we, as the next generation of Armenians, can fill this emerging void. We need to write articles, launch websites, become entrenched in our respective communities and use modern means of communication to distribute our news and our message. We also need to be active and alert about posting Armenian-related pieces in non-Armenian media and react promptly and professionally to references there about Armenian issues. Several Armenian news outlets have successfully transitioned to the online world and the potential is there for more people to solidify an Armenian online presence. We have to make sure that potential is not wasted.

While our community may have one less newspaper to sift through on a weekly basis, and one less paper on our kitchen counter-top, we can pay homage to those journalists who came before us, who connected us to our homeland when there was still no real homeland to connect to.

It is now our turn. We need to be active, the way our predecessors were — to be engaged, to be informed, and above all, to be the trailblazers of our generation.

Let's meet at the Pecheneq Monument on September 8

Remember the Van Akhtamar Church which was going to be demolished in 1951 and which later in 2007 was restored? I used to think that it was an Armenian church, yet it turns out to be a Turkish church.

The State has lied to us. Now they will have to account for this. Soon our public prosecutors can start three very important court cases: 1)

Against the Turkish Armed Forces for attempting to demolish a thousand plus year old Turkish monument on June 25, 1951; 2) Against Prime Minister Erdogan's govern-

By Baskin Oran

ment for declaring it as an "Armenian Church" and restoring it as such in 2007; 3) Against all the past Turkish Republic governments for allowing this Turkish monument to almost collapse due to neglect. Of course all three cases will have to be opened under the Turkish Criminal Code Article 301/1, which covers "publicly insulting Turkishness."

I had heard firsthand about these destructions years ago, but this fact has nothing to do with our present subject matter. In the spring of 1999 I had visited the Cappadocia region. Our guide had told us: "I was with a commando unit during my military service. One day, our commanding officer told us to gather a large amount of explosives and to blow up the ruins of two Armenian churches nearby. We flattened both of them." But of course those were completely different from this one. Let us listen to what Göksel Gülbey, the president of ASIMDER (The Association Against International Unfounded Armenian Allegations) has to say:

"The church that the Armenians are alleging as theirs belongs to Pecheneq Turks, Christian Turks. (...) Unfortunately the Armenians have fabricated a myth, claiming the church to be theirs."

The President points also to a very important matter as follows: "This is where in 1915, during the Van massacres, Moslem women from Van had thrown themselves into Lake Van, in order to escape rape, thus saving their honor." No wonder, MHP (Nationalist Movement Party) deputy Prof. Yusuf Halaçoğlu (former president of the official Turkish Historical Society) had mentioned this on April 29th in Salihli and had even given the exact number of women involved by saying: "For the 50 Van women for whom we have not even been able to erect a monument of chastity." Incidentally we heard that MHP has a law proposal for such a monument.

I had heard this "saving their honor" in the past in relation to 1915, but from a totally different perspective which I cannot remember now. Anyway, President Gülbey ends his statement by saying: "As Turks, we will be present here for the September 8 religious service. With a three bus-full crowd, we will participate in these services and tell our side of the story."

The proofs given by Gülbey are rock solid: "There is a relief on the top side of the Akdamar [sic] Church depicting a horseman shooting arrows backwards. All historians agree that only Turks shoot arrows backwards while riding horses and there is no Armenian with slanted eyes. The horse on the relief also has a crescent above its hoof and on its rump. The use of the crescent as symbol by Turks even before Islam is an accepted fact by all historians."

I looked at those pictures from books that I found, and on the East façade of the church there is a relief of a hunting scene where the eyes of the rider who is shooting the arrow is looking backwards. Of course the Armenian propaganda machine can misrepresent this saying: "If the archer is not cross eyed, his eyes would naturally slant towards the back because that is where he is looking. Also the Armenian artist might have shown Central Asian people in a hunt scene."

Armenians might also point to the relief on the right and might even

say: "The relief of the archer on the left depicts the Central Asian people who are still in the hunter-gatherer phase. Whereas the grapes, lamb and human shown on the right depicts the Armenians which have achieved the settled agricultural phase of civilization."

In addition to this misrepresentation, I want to warn my ASIMDER friends to the possibility that the Armenian lobby, which is as malignant as the interest rate lobby, might say: "Pecheneq Turks did not live on the southern shores of the Black Sea but on its north. Furthermore if this is a Turkish church, why are all the inscriptions in the Armenian alphabet? Didn't the Pecheneqs use a Runic alphabet i.e. the Göktürk alphabet?"

The shortest answer to this would be: "There is no such thing as an Armenian alphabet. Like the Kurds, Armenians are also Turks; therefore their alphabet is a copy of the Göktürk alphabet." But if, for some reason or other this does not sound convincing we can make the following claim: "The original inscriptions were written in the Runic alphabet, but in 1915 the so-called Armenians came, they erased the originals, and replaced them with their own writings."

This latter claim might be even more appropriate because when the recent issue of the demolition of ancient Armenian houses in Mush had come to the fore, Irfan Ermis from ASIMDER had said: "There is a monument in the Kurtulus (Independence) Park. (...) We know how they changed the inscriptions on that monument (...) If you look now only the names of the 120 martyred children is written" (The Son Nokta Newspaper, Elazig, August 24, 2013)

If the lobby still insists saying "On the Akhtamar church not only has the Armenian alphabet been used but the architectural style of the church is also Armenian." Based on the principle that you should imitate the smell as the sound(*) we can say: "Just as the Armenian alphabet has been copied from the Göktürk alphabet, the Armenian architectural style has been copied from Seljuk architecture. The dome of the Akhtamar Church is exactly like the dome of the Mevlana Shrine in Konya. As a matter of fact, the Turks also brought their own architects with them on the way from Central Asia." Of course the construction dates of those two monuments (921 AD and 1358 AD, respectively) might cause some controversy, but I am sure that our friends from ASIMDER will think of a scientific answer to that problem.

The whole world is now scared that Turks are becoming too strong, and this has a bearing down on us. 2015 is also getting close. Our own state is collaborating with the Azerbaijanis against the Armenians. The Turks should erect a Chastity Monument on the Akhtamar Island on which ASIMDER is planning to show up on September 8, so that we can proudly prove to the World that we did not commit genocide against the Armenians.

However, as it is difficult to refute all arguments one by one, I propose an all-encompassing strategy. We should firmly stand behind the fact that sometime in the past the Armenians came down from Space and then returned back to Space in 1915.

(*) Translator's Note: This "principle" comes from a Nasreddin Hodja joke which goes as follows: Nasreddin Hodja, a well-known anonymous figure of Anatolian wisdom, invited somebody to dinner, who, while having dinner, accidentally farted, and then made the wooden floor creak to imitate the sound. Upon which the Hodja couldn't help saying: "Now that you have successfully imitated the sound, I wonder how you will imitate the smell?"

(This commentary appeared in both *Agos* and *Radikal-2* in Turkey. Oran has done extensive research on minorities in Turkey.)



The Jewish Holocaust and the Armenian Genocide

It was destiny. During our research trips to Europe my wife,

By Jiri Valenta and Leni Valenta

and I sought only to address the issues of anti-Semitism and the Holocaust as it affected our own families. We toured synagogues, death camps and memorials in numerous countries attesting to the slaughter of six million Jews. But in 2009, we visited the Tsitsernakaberd Armenian Genocide Memorial Complex in Yerevan and came face to face with the history 1.5 million Christian people who perished during the Armenian Genocide. What was so chilling was the fact that the Armenian Genocide and the Holocaust turned out to be linked in some ways. The Armenian Genocide, as Vahakn Dadrian has pointed out, was the first genocide of the 20th century. Dadrian stated, "The Armenian Genocide's relevance to the Holocaust derives from the fact that the concept of 'crimes against humanity' in international law was first introduced publicly, explicitly and formally by the World War I Allies – namely Great Britain, France, and Russia. The occasion for this bold venture was the Ottoman Turkish authorities World War I Genocide against Turkey's Armenian population."

Despite the condemnation and declaration that they would hold the Ottoman authorities respon-

sible, the lesson of the Genocide was soon forgotten – a fact not lost on Hitler. Before the 1939 invasion of Poland he told his Nazi commanders, "Who, after all, speaks today of the annihilation of the Armenians?"

Both the Nazi's and the Turks justified the annihilation of their victims based on a theory of racial superiority. The Germans cited Aryan superiority; the Turks, Muslim pan-Turanianism. In both cases the targets were chosen because of xenophobic hatred of a different racial and religious group. Both aggressors launched the assaults by denying their victims civil and human rights.

Far from being inferior, however both the Jews and the Armenians boasted many brilliant intellectuals. Yet, because of their visible success, Armenians, like Jews, were accused of being disloyal and clannish, of not only being parasites, but actively plotting against the state. The Armenians were thus as useful to the Turkish regime as the Jews were later to the Reich.

Quite possibly, the three Turks involved in the Genocide of the Armenians were partly motivated by their fears of Armenian irredentism in Russia. For centuries Russia was the traditional enemy of Turkey. One of the major goals of Russia was to

occupy and control the Straits of Bosphorus in what is now Istanbul, and to revive the Christian-Byzantine Empire overthrown by the Turks in 1455. During WWI, Germany was arming Turkey to counter the deployment of the Russian fleet in the Black Sea, a measure undertaken by Russia to protect the Ukraine. The Reich was also inciting the Moslem tribes against the Russians. In 1913, partly for this reason, Russia responded to an Armenian petition to guarantee Armenian civil rights in the Western part of Turkey. The Turks, however, viewed this as the first step towards making Turkey a Russian protectorate. Thus, although they signed a 1914 treaty with Russia granting those rights, as with similar treaties in the past, they completely failed to implement it.

The actual mechanics of the both the Holocaust and Armenian Genocide both involved organized state murder; the intention being not to subjugate the victim group, but its deliberate, premeditated elimination. The Turkish form of genocide was nevertheless more brutal, often involving savage torture and mutilation and conducted without the diabolic technology of the Germans. There was no sophisticated registration of the victim population and no building of ghettos to isolate the Armenians. There were no trucks with gas, deadly "showers" with Cyclone B, and furnaces to inciner-

ate the dead.

Yet, the Germans, like the Turks, did at times engage in massive, bloody killing binges. In Kiev in 2009, we visited Babi Yar, a memorial to thousands of Jews but also gypsies and Soviet POWs, who were bludgeoned, raped, battered and slaughtered in a massive Nazi killing spree. Searching for Leni's ancestor's, the large Lubarsky family, in the Odessa and Kiev archives, we were able to find the name of only one.

Differences between the two genocides include their organization, scope and methodology. The genocide of the Jews happened gradually over a period of six years and included all the European countries occupied or invaded by Germany. As confirmed by historical sources and interviews with family members, the German holocaust in occupied Bohemia proceeded in stages from 1939-45. Those who had intermarried with Christians, including my mother, were to be killed last. I recall my grandfather's words, "If your mother had not been pregnant with you, you wouldn't be here." Jews and those of mixed race, as my uncle, Lada, explained, were normally gathered in ghettos and sent by train to concentration camps to perform slave labor.

In Turkey, on the other hand, at least a million Armenians were killed in 1915 alone. Under Jemal Pasha's oversight, many of those who survived the massacres were sent to concentration camps in Syria. Like the Jews, they worked as slave laborers while slowly being starved to death.

As we learned at Tsitsernakaberd, the Armenian Genocide also occurred in specific stages. First the intellectuals were rounded up and murdered. Then young Armenian men were drafted and slaughtered. The remaining men were then rounded up and shot, while their defenseless women and children, driven out to the wilds of Anatolia, were subjected to robbery, rape, starvation, typhus, torture, kidnapping and murder by both Kurds and Turks.

In 1918, the eastern corner of Armenia became an independent republic for two years, but lost half of its land in a 1920 war with Turkey. The remainder was absorbed by the Soviet empire. In 1991, Armenia became independent. The Jews also received a promise of their own state in 1918, but did not receive it until 1948.

The justice given to each victim group was also different. For the Jews, an international tribunal was held at Nuremberg which condemned the German perpetrators of the Holocaust and oversaw their execution. There was no Nuremberg for the Armenians, although in 1919, the three Genocide perpetrators were convicted of war crimes in absentia and sentenced to death by an Istanbul court. It was left to the Armenians, however, to wreak justice on their own. The man who signed the orders for the elimination of the Armenians, Interior Minister Talat Bey, was killed in 1921 by an Armenian assassin in Germany. The assassin was acquitted by a German court. Talat's colleague, Enver, was killed by two other Armenian assassins a year later in Tblisi.

Today there are few states which deny the Jewish holocaust happened. Yet to this day, any mention of the Armenian Genocide in the arena of world politics has always been vehemently denied by Ankara.

The frequently quoted Pastor Martin Neimoller (1892-1984) about the rise of the Nazis is once more apropos: "First they came for the communists, and I did not speak out – because I was not a communist; Then they came for the trade unionists, and I did not speak out – because I was not a trade unionist; Then they came for the Jews, and I did not speak out – because I was not a Jew; then they came for me – and there was no one left to speak for me."

Kevork Marashlian Retires From TCA, ADL

MARASHLIAN, from page 1 well as maintained communications with TCA chapters, cultural institutions, publications and leadership centers in Armenia and throughout the world. Throughout his career, Marashlian proved himself to be a leader in Boston-area community.

The Central Board of Directors of Tekeyan Cultural Association Inc. wishes Marashlian good health and a well-deserved retirement.

– Tekeyan Cultural Association Central Board of Directors

Peter Koutoujian FOR CONGRESS

My family's story, like so many others in Massachusetts and across the nation, reflects the promise of the American Dream.

My parents always believed in the honor and importance of public service. My mom dedicated her life to teaching and my dad was the City Clerk in Waltham for 30 years.

They instilled in me a desire to help people and to try to make a difference in their lives.

They taught me that when you listen to people, empower people, and help them take action – you can change lives for the better.



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