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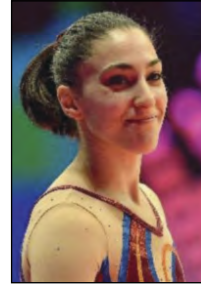
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NEWS IN BRIEF

Gymnast Houry Gebeshian Qualifies for Olympics

RIO DE JANEIRO, Brazil – Armenian-American gymnast Houry Gebeshian will be the first female gymnast to represent Armenia at the Olympics, after placing 21st out of 36 competitors and qualifying at the Pre-Olympic Test Event in Rio on April 17.



Gebeshian was born in Auburndale, Mass. in 1989, but obtained Armenian citizenship in 2010 to be eligible to compete for Armenia. She lives in Cleveland, Ohio.

She was admitted to this final qualifier due to a strong performance at the first round in the 2015 World Championships at Glasgow last October.

Gebeshian has a GoFundMe page (www.Gofundme.com/hootingforhoury) which is already raising funding and getting equipment for the Armenian gymnastic team. She is supporting the existing men's team as well as working towards creating a women's one.

Armenian Official Resigns Over Panama Papers Leak

YEREVAN (RFE/RL) – The head of Armenia's State Bailiffs Service has resigned after local news reports documented his alleged links to offshore companies.

Major General Migran Pogonian said on April 18 that he was stepping down in order to comment on the situation as a private person.

More than 11 million documents known as the Panama Papers have been the basis for dozens of news articles around the world detailing shady financial transactions involving officials around the world.

Armenian investigative website Hetq.am has published documents apparently showing that Pogonian was linked to three Panama-registered companies – Sigtem Real Estates, Hopkinten Trading, and Bango Invest.

Two Armenians Enter Syrian Parliament

DAMASCUS (Armenpress) – The Higher Judicial Committee for Parliamentary Elections of Syria has published the names of the newly-elected 250 MPs. Armenpress, citing the Aleppo-based Gandzasar weekly, reports that Zhirair Reisian and Nora Arisian will represent Armenians in the Syrian parliament.

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Peace in Caucasus

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Armenian Genocide Commemoration Billboards Installed in Massachusetts

WATERTOWN – Peace of Art, Inc. continues its annual Armenian Genocide commemoration campaign in various Massachusetts cities during the month of April with digital billboards dedicated to the 101st anniversary of the Armenian Genocide. “On April 24, 2015 at the Tsitsernakaberd Armenian Genocide memorial in Yerevan, I participated in the 100th anniversary of the Armenian Genocide. I witnessed Armenian children presenting a yellow rose to each of the many foreign

leaders and dignitaries, including French President Francois Hollande, Russian President Vladimir Putin, the presidents of Serbia and Cyprus. Together they placed their roses into the main Centennial wreath. It would have been wonderful to see the U.S. president himself in attendance, placing a rose in memory of the 1.5 million Armenian Christian victims of 1915 to 1923,” Said Daniel Varoujan Hejinian, president and founder of Peace of Art, Inc.

TCA Leaders Meet with Diaspora Minister Hakobyan in Armenia

Mher Megerdichian Theater Group Performs

YEREVAN – On April 15, Minister of Diaspora Hranoush Hakobyan met with special correspondent for the *Armenian Mirror-Spectator* Hagop Vartivarian, former editor of the Beirut-based *Zartok* newspaper Baydzig Kalaydjian, and chairman of the Tekeyan Cultural Association (TCA) Mher Megerdichian Theatrical Group of New York Harout Chatmajian.

Hakobyan stressed how important it was for the Armenian people during crises that all structures and individuals in the diaspora remain determined to place the homeland above all else, with the readiness and will to aid and strengthen the defense army of Mountainous Karabagh. She said, “Our foremost issue is the security of Armenia and Artsakh. We must do everything to strengthen Armenia and the Armenian

army.” Vartivarian, who is also a leader of the Mher Megerdichian Theatrical Group of New York, said that this group has come to Armenia for the performance of Berj Zeytountsian's “All Rise, Court is in Session” during these troubled days in order to support the Armenian people. He declared: “The New York Megerdichian members have come to Armenia with a great

spirit of patriotism to once again be renewed and grow strong through contact with our native soil and homeland – with Sardarabad, Dzidzernagapert and the Mother See of Holy Echmiadzin. They have come to Armenia, in order to renew their oath to serve the homeland, our people, culture and



A group representing the TCA, including Hagop Vartivarian, Harout Chatmajian and Baydzig Kalaydjian met with Minister Hranoush Hakobyan.

national inheritance. They are the heirs of immortals such as Vahan Tekeyan, Arshag Chobanian and Mihran Damadian, who were paragons of true patriotism throughout their lives. This is because patriotism does not recognize ideology, political doctrine or factional propaganda. We will return with renewed patriotism, to inspire the national feelings of New York Armenians with the vision of eternal Ararat.”

see DIASPORA, page 3

Peter Balakian Wins Pulitzer For Poetry

NEW YORK – Prof. Peter Balakian's latest collection of poems, *Ozone Journal*, won the Pulitzer Prize for poetry, it was announced on Monday, April 19.

The 64-year-old's compilation contains “poems that bear witness to the old losses and tragedies that undergird a global age of danger and uncertainty,” according to the Pulitzer board.

Balakian often writes and speaks about the Armenian Genocide in his poems and non-fiction. *Ozone Journal* is no exception. The title poem takes readers through the narrator's memories and pursuit of meaning in life while excavating the remains of Armenian Genocide survivors in the Syrian desert with a TV crew.

Balakian is Donald M. and Constance H. Rebar Professor of the Humanities, see PULITZER, page 20



Old State House Hosts Program On Moses Gulesian

By Aram Arkun
Mirror-Spectator Staff

BOSTON – The Bostonian Society hosted a special evening program, “Becoming Bostonian,” on April 7 in the Old State House to honor the life and works of Moses Gulesian, a Bostonian and Armenian preservationist. The event, cosponsored with the National Association for Armenian Studies and Research (NAASR), was part of a growing wave of attention to Gulesian's philanthropic work, which helped both Boston and Armenians, sometimes simultaneously.

see GULESIAN, page 10



Brian LeMay, president and executive director of the Bostonian Society.





ARMENIA

News From Armenia

Nazik Avdalyan Becomes Europe's Weightlifting Champion

FORDE, Norway (Armenpress) – April 10-16, the European Weightlifting Championships were held here.

In the women's 69-kilogram weightlifting division, Nazik Avdalyan, representing Armenia, title of Champion of Europe.

"I dedicate my victory to our soldiers fighting in Karabagh," Avdalyan said.

Suspect Arrested for Throwing Grenade at Former President Kocharian's House

YEREVAN (Armenpress) – The Investigative Committee said that 32-year-old Hovhannes Muradyan has been arrested on April 18 for throwing a dummy grenade at ex-President Robert Kocharian's house.

Muradyan is a resident of Yerevan city.

On April 15 at 18:25, Muradyan threw the grenade via a drive-by at the backyard entrance of Robert Kocharian's house.

The National Security and the Police have apprehended the suspect on April 18. The car used in the drive-by was found and is currently being examined. Notice: Suspect is considered innocent until proven guilty by the Court of Law.

Body of Armenian soldier to be transferred to Armenian side

YEREVAN (Armenpress) – The Azerbaijani side was scheduled to hand over the body of Armenian soldier killed as a result of Azerbaijani aggression on April 2-5 to the Armenian side on April 20, the head of the NKR State Commission on Prisoners of War, Hostages and Missing Persons Viktor Kocharyan said.

At the same time, Kocharyan said that he cannot state that it is the body of Argishti Gaboyan, who was announced as missing in action.

"The body will be identified after a forensic examination," he said.

Memorial Dedicated to Yazidi Genocide Victims Unveiled

YEREVAN (Public Radio of Armenia) – A memorial dedicated to the victims of the genocide of Yazidis in Sinjar, Iraq, was unveiled in Yerevan on April 21 as part of the events dedicated to the 101st anniversary of the Armenian Genocide.

The monument will stand as a witness to the immortal spirit of the Yazidi people, their will to live and create, President of the Council of the Media – Shangal National Union of Yazidis NGO Amo Sharoyan told reporters.

"We are a nation that has passed through genocide and survived. Although we cannot change the bloody past, we have to create a future void of such crimes," Sharoyan quoted Armenian President Serzh Sargsyan as saying.

Fikret Igrek, President of the exile Council of Sinjar noted that genocide continues in the 21st century. "Islamists massacred and enslaved thousands of Yazidis in August 2014," he said.

Speaking about the recent escalation in the Karabagh conflict zone, Tamaz Mhoi, president of the Federation of Yazidis of France, said they condemn the Azerbaijani policy.

"On behalf of the Federation of Yazidis of France, we have sent a letter to the Azerbaijani Embassy, urging them to stop the war. We sent the letter on April 3, but have not received any response by now," he said.

Armenia Rebukes Kazakhstan over EEU Meeting Postponement

YEREVAN (ArmeniaNow) – Armenia implied it was concerned over Kazakhstan's insufficient level of commitment as an ally in post-Soviet groupings as Foreign Minister Eduard Nalbandian met with his Kazakh counterpart's deputy in Yerevan on Monday.

Armenia is a member of the Eurasian Economic Union (EEU) and the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO) – two Russian-led structures where Kazakhstan is also a key member.

Prime ministers of the EEU, including the head of the Kazakh government, had been expected to gather for a summit in Yerevan on April 8. The venue of the meeting, however, was moved to Moscow following Astana's request.

The Kazakh request came amid an escalation of the Armenian-Azerbaijani conflict in Nagorno-Karabagh. While being a political, economic and military ally of Armenia as part of the EEU and CSTO, Kazakhstan, as a Turkic-speaking nation, is known to have strong cultural and linguistic ties with Azerbaijan. Therefore, its request was widely regarded in Yerevan as an attempt to maintain neutrality in the conflict, if not bolster Azerbaijan's position.

Armenia decided not to skip the summit that was moved to the Russian capital (and was held on April 13), where an agreement was made that the prime ministers of the EEU will again gather in Yerevan on May 20.

Addressing the matter at the meeting with Kazakhstan's Deputy Foreign Minister Galymzhan Koishybayev, Nalbandian reportedly underscored the importance of "implementing the agreements." He also expressed a hope that the May 20 meeting will "rectify this omission."

Nalbandian also briefed the senior Kazakh diplomat on "the situation formed as a result of the Azerbaijani aggression and the harm caused to the negotiation process."

"In this context, the foreign minister stressed the importance of supporting the efforts of the [Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe] OSCE Minsk Group toward the settlement of the Karabagh conflict exclusively by peaceful means, which is enshrined in the documents adopted at the summits of the CSTO and the Council of Foreign Ministers," an MFA press release said.

Nalbandian reportedly added that the positions contradicting the wordings adopted by the OSCE Minsk Group undermine the negotiations.

During the April 2-5 armed clashes with Azerbaijan in Nagorno-Karabagh that left scores of Armenian soldiers dead and wounded politicians and civil society representative in Armenia leveled criticism at a number of formal allies, including Russia, Kazakhstan, Belarus and others, over their marked neutrality or even pro-Azerbaijani positions in the conflict.

Hundreds of citizens marched towards the Russian embassy in Yerevan on April 13 protesting against Russia's sales of offensive weapons to Azerbaijan.

A report by RFE/RL's Armenian Service suggested on Monday that people in the village of Harich, in Armenia's northwestern Shirak province, that has a street named after Kazakhstan's President Nursultan Nazarbayev, have decided to change its name. The decision reportedly reflects the community's frustration over Kazakhstan's position and the recent pro-Azerbaijani rhetoric of its longtime leader.

Armenians Protest Against Russian Arms Sales to Azerbaijan

YEREVAN (RFE/RL) – Hundreds of Armenians have demonstrated in Yerevan on April 13 against Russian weapon sales to Azerbaijan, claiming the sales led to the outbreak of fighting on April 2 in and around Azerbaijan's break-away region of Nagorno-Karabagh.

The protesters, mostly young activists, marched to the Russian Embassy in Yerevan chanting "Shame!" and "Free, independent Armenia!"

Some threw eggs at the embassy, sparking scuffles with riot police.

A petition read out by a protest organizer demanded an immediate end to all deliveries of Russian weapons to Azerbaijan.

The petition also called for Moscow to "fulfill the obligations" stemming from its military alliance with Armenia.

Russia has sold tanks, combat helicopters, artillery, and other offensive weapons valued at a total of \$4 billion to Azerbaijan under contracts signed from 2009 to 2011.

Armenia's government publicly complained about those deliveries to Baku after fighting broke out along Nagorno-Karabagh's "line of contact" front line on April 2.

At least 65 Armenian soldiers were killed in the fighting, which continued until Russia mediated a cease-fire agreement on April 5.

Russian Prime Minister Dmitry Medvedev defended the deals with Azerbaijan after visiting Yerevan last week, saying they boost "the military balance" in the conflict zone.

Medvedev said both warring sides would buy even deadlier weapons from other countries if Moscow stopped its arms deals with them.

Earlier this week, Russian Deputy Prime Minister Dmitry Rogozin denounced Yerevan's criticism of Moscow's weapons sale to Azerbaijan as "demagoguery."

Russia has also been the main source of weapons delivered to Armenia's armed forces.

In 2015, Moscow extended a \$200-million loan to Yerevan for the purpose of buying more Russian arms at discounted prices.

But Yerevan-based political analyst Styopa Safarian says Armenian critics

of the Russian-Azerbaijani weapons deals are angry because Armenia is a member of the Russian-led Collective Security Treaty Organization and Azerbaijan is not.

Speaking at the Yerevan demonstration on April 13, Safarian said that "Russia is a nominal strategic partner" of Armenia, but Armenians see from the latest outbreak of fighting that "when we need military assistance

[from Russia] then Russia is a peacekeeper" and "an arms supplier" to both sides in the conflict, or takes on the role of a mediator as a co-chair of the OSCE Minsk group.

Armenian critics also argue that Russia's weapons deals with Azerbaijan emboldened Baku to launch military operations in and around Nagorno-Karabagh early in April.

Celebrating Yale in Armenia

YEREVAN – The Luys Foundation, the Armenian General Benevolent Union, the American University of Armenia and Yerevan State University came together for "Yale to Yerevan" on April 15-16.

Yale University alumni shared their experiences in running the Yale Alumni Association and also focused on activities focused on giving back to society and the world.

All participants are interested in sharing their experience to engage alumni to come together and learn the many ways of giving back to society. They explore how they can contribute their skills, time, ideas and collective work. Together they are learning how to create programs that make people enjoy coming together and working together.

Workshops explored how to set the structure and governance of an Alumni Association, what the key principles of creating mutual interest for all are so that the mission and programs grow and efforts to create added value for individuals as well as society.

Representing Yale were Katherine Edersheim, Senior Director of International Alumni Relations, Barbara Wagner, member of the Business Law Education Committee and Scott Williamson, attorney with the Commodity Futures Trading Commission.



From left, Kazakhstan's Deputy Foreign Minister Galymzhan Koishybayev and Foreign Minister Eduard Nalbandian



ARMENIA

TCA Mher Megerdichian Theatrical Group Performs in Armenia

DIASPORA, from page 1

On April 16 the TCA Mher Megerdichian Theatrical Group performed "All Rise, Court Is in Session" at Yerevan's Hagop Baronian Musical Comedy Theater. Minister Hakobyan was in the audience, along with the rector of Yerevan's State Pedagogical University Ruben Mirzakhanian, who is also president of the central board of Armenia's TCA, and Berj Zeytuntsian, the author of the play being presented. There were many other government officials, artists and intellectuals in the audience. The guest performances of the theatrical group in Armenia were sponsored by Armenian Prime Minister Hovik Abrahamyan.

The theatrical group was founded in 1977 in New York and includes some 20 different plays in its repertoire. Its artistic director is Gerald Papasian. Among the actors in the present performance are Harout Barsoumian as Soghomon Tehlirian, Karnig Nercessian as Talaat Pasha, Hagop Vartivarian as Johannes Lepsius and Armenag Kroushian as Henry Morgenthau and Fayiz El Huseyn.

Although the theatrical group is not a professional one, the dedication of the actors and their knowledge of the significance of their roles raised the level of their performance to high levels. The presentation took place in a completely full hall and was met with great applause.

Deputy Minister of the Diaspora of the Republic of Armenia Serzh Srapionyan presented Hakobyan's greetings, which included the following words: "The presentation of this drama during these difficult days of trial, when the enemy again attempts to disturb our peace, creates a new meaning. It proves once more that the spirit of the Armenians is unwavering, just, resistant and zealous of protecting their rights. Thanks to the author of the play, our living classic Berj Zeytuntsian, to the director of the production, Gerald Papasian, and to the entire cast of the theatrical group for this wonderful presentation." Srapionyan then read the edict of the minister of the diaspora on bestowing a certificate of thanks to the Mher Megerdichian Theatrical Group of New York, and gave the certificate to the artistic director.

(Translated from the Armenian)



Harout Barsoumian as Soghomon Tehlirian on trial



The audience included Diaspora Minister Hakobyan and other dignitaries.



Deputy Diaspora Minister Serzh Srapionyan at the end of the program with the cast.

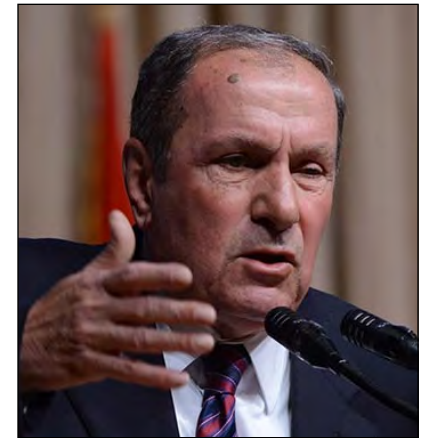
Former President Ter-Petrosian Calls for Support to Sargsyan Administration

YEREVAN (ArmeniaNow) – Armenia's ex-president and current opposition leader Levon Ter-Petrosian believes the Karabagh war will soon shift from the battlefields to a "diplomatic front," in which, he says, President Serzh Sargsyan "should feel strong and have the support of the people."

Ter-Petrosian, who initiated a meeting with Sargsyan over the weekend to discuss the latest escalation of violence in Nagorno-Karabagh, gave an interview to the Ilur.am website, urging the Armenian opposition to put aside its differences with the current administration ahead of what he thinks will be important negotiations with Azerbaijan.

"Now is not the time to accuse the authorities and try to hold them accountable for mistakes and failings," he said.

At the same time, Ter-Petrosian stressed that Sargsyan and his government should also make some positive steps and "turn their face to the people" by "starting to genuinely fight against corruption, per-



Levon Ter-Petrosian

missiveness of law-enforcement bodies, monopolies, electoral fraud and arrogance of officials."

"You can't disregard the opposition and the people in trouble-free times but expect their support at difficult moments," Ter-Petrosian said.

Ter-Petrosian, who served as Armenia's first president from 1991 to 1998, has been a bitter critic of the current administration since making an unsuccessful attempt to be reelected president in 2008 running against Sargsyan. Ten people were killed that year in post-election clashes between riot police and Ter-Petrosian supporters who sought the annulment of a disputed vote.

Unlike Ter-Petrosian, Sargsyan's immediate predecessor, Robert Kocharian, said that he did not plan to initiate a meeting with the current head of state. Speaking to Tert.am, Kocharian said that he did not think that meetings of the current president with ex-presidents can have an impact on solutions to the current tasks.

At the peak of Karabagh clashes earlier this month, however, Kocharian, according to his spokesman, was "in touch" with Karabagh's president, Bako Sahakyan.

Before becoming prime minister and then president in Armenia, Kocharian served as prime minister (1992-94) and president (1994-97) in Nagorno-Karabagh.

Italian MEPs Call on EU High Representative to Impose Sanctions on Azerbaijan

YEREVAN (Armenpress) – Following the debate in the European Parliament, two members of Parliament (MEPs) from two different political groups – Salvatore Pogliese and Remo Sernagiotto – have tabled a written question to Federica Mogherini, EU High Representative/Vice-President. In the document, they underline that the Azerbaijani attacks "are accompanied by gross violations

of international humanitarian law and international human rights law, particularly the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the Geneva Conventions of 1949 and their Additional Protocols of 1977, and the 1989 Convention on the Rights of the Child."

In their statement, they deplored especially the civilian victims of the conflict, saying that "Civilian infrastructures and civilian popula-

tion have been the main targets of the Azerbaijani offensive. In particular, among the first victims was a 12-year-old boy.

In addition, cases of mutilation, execution and torture of civilians have been registered and documented."

They concluded by asking Mogherini "to propose sanctions to be taken against Azerbaijan, given the breaches of the above-

mentioned international law and the very basis of the EU-Azerbaijan Partnership and Cooperation Agreement."

Lastly, they ask for EU's support to "the OSCE Minsk Group proposal on the creation of a cease-fire violations monitoring mechanism, to avoid continuous breaches of this only self-regulated truce in Europe."



INTERNATIONAL

International News

Swedish PM Condemns Anti-Armenian Statements

STOCKHOLM, Sweden (Armenpress) – Swedish Prime Minister Stefan Löfven reacted to the anti-Armenian statements expressed at the demonstration of the Turkish Azerbaijani diaspora in Sergels Square of Stockholm.

The Prime Minister said: “In Sweden, it is completely unacceptable to incite against other groups, be it religious, ethnic or political. Here, all political activities should be conducted democratically and with respect to the values of equality and rights. These principles are not negotiable,” mentioned Löfven in his statement.

The Minister for Culture and Democracy of Sweden Alice Bah Kuhnke also reacted to the incitement to violence by the former Deputy Chairman of the Turkish Association Barbaros Leylani.

“What happened on Saturday and the disgusting statements made are of course unacceptable. They made me feel bad,” said Alice Bah Kuhnke.

Mkhitarian's Transfer Fee Hits Record High

DORTMUND, Germany (Armenpress) – Dortmund Borussia player Henrikh Mkhitarian's transfer price has reached a record high.

The sports “transfermarkt” website, reports that Mkhitarian's current transfer price is valued at 30 million euros.

Back in February, Mkhitarian's transfer value was 28 million, which again was a record high ranking for a footballer. However since this recent update, it has increased to 30 million.

Mkhitarian scored 10 goals and 12 assists in 28 matches of Germany's Bundesliga.

Moscow Court Sentences Hayrapetyan to 4 Years

MOSCOW (Armenpress) – Moscow's Zamoskvoretsky District Court sentenced businessman Levon Hayrapetyan to four years imprisonment, the TASS news agency reported.

The court found Hayrapetyan guilty of embezzling \$700,000.

According to the investigation, along with lawyer Sergei Antonov, Levon Hayrapetyan took the sum from ex-senator Igor Izmaylov's mother, in order to mitigate her son's conviction. However, in any case he could not have influenced the sentence.

'Insult Turkey's Erdogan' Contest in the UK

LONDON (BBC News) – A UK-based magazine has offered a prize to the author of the most offensive poem about Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan, who is suing a German comedian over a satirical verse.

The Spectator is offering £1,000 (1,266 euros, \$1,439), donated by a reader.

It comes after Germany opened the door for a comedian to potentially be prosecuted over a TV broadcast.

Jan Boehmermann had recited a satirical poem on the TV channel ZDF which made sexual references to Erdogan. Boehmermann is now under police protection and Angela Merkel's government has approved a criminal inquiry, under a little-used law concerning insults against foreign heads of state.

Merkel stressed that the courts would have the final word, and it was now up to prosecutors to decide whether to press charges.

Announcing the competition, commentator Douglas Murray wrote: “The fact such a trial could even be contemplated demonstrates that Germany is becoming little more than a satrapy [province] of Erdogan's.”

“I'm a free-born British man... In honour of this fact I have spent the weekend writing rude limericks about Mr. Erdogan.

“And I would hereby like to invite all readers to join me in a grand Erdogan limerick competition.”

Georgia Weighs Karabagh Role

By Giorgi Kupatadze

TBILISI (IWPR) – The recent spike in hostilities between Azerbaijani forces and the Armenian-backed Nagorno Karabagh army has caused serious concern in Georgia.

Tbilisi has close political, economic and energy ties with both Yerevan and Baku, as well as sizeable Armenian and Azerbaijani communities. This makes the country highly sensitive to the fall-out of the worst violence since war in the early 1990s left a local Armenian administration in control of the enclave of about 150,000 people inside Azerbaijan.

The latest outbreak of fighting ended with a fragile ceasefire on April 5 and resulted in a total of 191 people dead and dozens injured on both sides.

It has also left politicians and analysts arguing that Georgia needs to be better prepared for any future escalation and the possible domestic consequences.

A suggestion by the head of the Georgian armed forces that Tbilisi could act as a mediator to avoid future escalation was broadly welcomed.

“We are carefully following the development of events and we have very close ties with our colleagues in Azerbaijan and in Armenia,” said the chief of the general staff Vakhtang Kapanadze.

“I hope the parties will move to a peaceful solution of the conflict. We probably have to assume the role of mediator, as we are one of the countries that have good relations to both neighbours,” he concluded.

David Bakradze, a leader of the opposition United National Movement, agreed, adding, “We, in Georgia, are in a unique position to take on the additional role of mediator for these two nations closest to us.”

Years of negotiations have thus far been mediated by the OSCE's Minsk Group led by three co-chairs – diplomats from Russia, the United States and France – but have had very few results.

However, some experts doubt that Georgia could take on such a role, as it has its own unresolved territorial conflicts in Abkhazia and South Ossetia.

Georgia firmly upholds the principle of territorial integrity, which is contrary to the position of Karabagh and Armenia. Thus, the country might not be seen as fully neutral or balanced.

“In the 1990s, Georgia successfully pursued a policy of so-called active neutrality which suited our two neighboring states,” said Soso Tsiskarishvili, president of the Club of Independent Experts. “Tbilisi hosted meetings of representatives of the conflicting parties, professionals from different areas.”

However, policy changes following the 2003 Rose Revolution meant that this peacekeeping function was lost, he added.

According to Irakli Porchkhidze, vice president of the Georgian Institute for Strategic Studies, the format of any future mediation would be key.

“When it comes to the use of Georgia's territory for talks and mediations, it is necessary to clearly specify the format. Because mediation where Russia will play a leading role will be against the interests of Georgia, which is to keep a balance between the two sides.”

Russia is Armenia's strategic ally, but has been selling weapons to both Armenia and Azerbaijan to keep what Moscow has called parity in the region.

Hundreds of Armenians protested in the Armenian capital Yerevan against Russia's weapon sales to Azerbaijan on April 13, which they claimed were a fac-

tor in the recent outbreak of fighting.

According to Porchkhidze, the events around Karabagh have direct political, economic and military risks for Georgia.

“Turkey and Azerbaijan, like Russia and Armenia, have a close military-political cooperation, where using Georgian airspace or even the land corridor on its territory can become an issue. In this case, there should be a clear position from the start that the Georgian government should strictly uphold. I do not know to what extent the Georgian government is ready to meet these challenges. In this regard, there are certain questions,” he said.

The escalation between Armenia and Azerbaijan has put Georgia in a delicate position. Turkey openly supports Azerbaijan and is one of Georgia's main trade partners. Russia is Armenia's strategic ally, which since the Georgian-Russian war in August 2008 has had military bases in Georgia's breakaway regions of Abkhazia and South Ossetia.

Should escalation continue, Georgia might find it hard to preserve a balance.

According to the state department of statistics, Azerbaijan was the largest foreign investor in Georgia in 2015 and the source of eight per cent of its imports in January-February 2016.

Azerbaijan's main oil and gas export routes go through Georgia via the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan and Baku-Supsa oil pipelines and the Baku-Tbilisi-Erzurum gas pipeline. The parties are implementing a joint project for the opening of a railway route from Baku via Tbilisi to Kars, which will connect Azerbaijan, Georgia and Turkey.

As Armenia's borders with Turkey and Azerbaijan are closed, a significant share of its transport to Armenia also goes through Georgia. Six percent of Georgian exports went to Armenia in January-February 2016.

Porchkhidze said that the Georgian government response to the Karabagh fighting had been too “passive”. An action plan was needed in the event the situation deteriorated, he said, adding that Tbilisi also needed to work actively with its own Armenian and Azerbaijani communities to prevent any domestic turmoil.

Ethnic Azeris and Armenians are Georgia's two largest minorities and make up about 12 percent of the country's population, according to the 2002 census. The final results of the 2014 census have not yet been published.

Many of the nearly 300,000 ethnic Azeris and 250,000 ethnic Armenians live in small towns and villages, often in cultural isolation from Tbilisi and with little knowledge of the Georgian language. The Azeris largely live in the Kvemo Kartli region of southern Georgia, on the border with Azerbaijan. Armenians are predominantly in the Samtskhe-Javakheti region in the southwest of the country, near Armenia.

Natia Kuprashvili, the executive director of the Georgian Regional Broadcasters' Association, warned of potential trouble in Kvemo Kartli and Samtskhe-Javakheti, based on the feedback she has received from television viewers in these regions.

“The situation is tense,” she told IWPR.

Georgia's national broadcasters had not covered the conflict properly, she said, thereby risking trouble amongst their own Armenian and Azerbaijani communities.

“The large national broadcasters of Georgia ... have their own correspondents in Europe, Russia, the United States, but do not have them at a distance of a few hours' drive – in Armenia and Azerbaijan,” Kuprashvili said.

This was evident during the time of the fighting when local media covered

the events citing foreign sources.

“Without receiving balanced information about the events, [ethnic Armenians and Azerbaijanis] were forced to rely only on information from Armenian, Azerbaijani and Russian channels,” said Kuprashvili.

Armenian and Azerbaijani media were biased in their reporting and “covered the events in such a way that it has increased tension among our citizens of Armenian and Azerbaijani nationality,” she said.

Tskiskarishvili agreed, adding, “I would like to hear in the coming days that the Georgian National Security Council is going to meet to discuss this topic.

“To preserve relations we need to constantly discuss the current problems and situation rather than what the tabloid press is publishing, like we do now.”

Porchkhidze also said that the government needed to dedicate more resources to working with the Armenian and Azerbaijani communities in Georgia to prevent further tensions within the country.

“There are forces – frankly, it is Russia – which are interested in the internal destabilization of Georgia and that Georgia remains a fragmented state,” he continued. “It is necessary to keep a finger on the pulse [of tensions] in the locations where the local ethnic minorities live, since those bearing ill-will will certainly try to exploit the situation for internal destabilization.”

(Giorgi Kupatadze is IWPR's editor for Georgia.)

Sharmazanov calls Turkey and Azerbaijan Regional Threats

MOSCOW (Armenpress) – On April 19, the Deputy Speaker of the National Assembly of the Republic of Armenia Eduard Sharmazanov, who is visiting Russia, took part in the first conference of the heads of the parliaments of the Eurasian countries.

Sharmazanov, in his speech, said, “I would like to draw your attention to the NK conflict, where during the night of April 1-2 the Azerbaijani side carried out large-scale provoking military operations along the whole Line of Contact, using the whole complex of armaments, including the banned military equipment, which resulted in numerous casualties also among the civilians.”

He continued, “Such criminal provocation shows that Azerbaijan puts itself out of international law, rejects the calls of the OSCE Minsk Group co-chair countries, as well as the international community on non-use of force and confidence-building measures. Azerbaijan, as an initiator of the growth of this tension and bears the whole responsibility of the escalation of the situation. Here Turkey's one-sided, criminal position, which evidently defends and encourages such inhuman actions is extremely dangerous.”

He added, “All this shows that Turkey continues remaining one of the threats for the regional stability. ... The Republic of Armenia is based on the universal principles and norms of international law, giving priority to the diplomatic methods of conflict settlement and the principles of peaceful settlement of crisis situations. We suppose that our colleagues will raise their voice of protest against the military settlement of the Nagorno Karabagh conflict. We shall realize that the Nagorno Karabagh people have the right to live peacefully, freely and independently.”

Community News

Times Square Commemoration of Armenian Genocide To Take Place on April 24

NEW YORK – The 101st anniversary commemoration of the Armenian Genocide will be held in Times Square (43rd St. & Broadway) on Sunday, April 24 from 2 to 4 p.m. The organizers invite people of all backgrounds to join together to commemorate the Armenian Genocide (Medz Yeghern), Holocaust Remembrance Day (Yom HaShoah) and subsequent genocides during Genocide Awareness Month. This is the 30th gathering in Times Square for the Genocide.

Commemorations of the Armenian Genocide in Times Square have attracted thousands of people to unite and show support for crimes against humanity. The commemoration is free and open to the public. There will be free bus transportation to and from Times Square for New York and New Jersey participants.

R. Armen McOmber of Redbank, NJ, Bryan Ardouny, executive director of the Armenian Assembly of America, and Rachel Goshgarian, PhD, assistant professor of history, Lafayette College, will preside over the ceremonies.

The theme of the Armenian Genocide Commemoration is "Truth, Recognition, and Justice." This historic event will pay tribute to the 1.5 million Armenians who were annihilated by the Young Turk Government of the Ottoman Empire and to the millions of victims of subsequent genocides worldwide.

For more information on the Commemoration and bus transportation visit www.kofv.org, click: Main/April 24, 2016.

Armenian Assembly Calls On Members of Congress To Withdraw from Turkish, Azeri Caucuses

WASHINGTON – This week the Armenian Assembly of America called upon Members of Congress to withdraw from the Congressional Caucus on Turkey and Turkish Americans and the Congressional Azerbaijan Caucus "in light of the pattern of behavior culminating in the military offensive admittedly initiated by Azerbaijan with the support of Turkish military, personnel, and equipment on April 2nd against Armenia and the Nagorno Karabagh Republic."

The Assembly's letter highlights the egregious acts committed by Azerbaijan, including the killing of a 12-year-old boy, the gruesome mutilation of an elderly couple, the use of a kamikaze drone, and the beheading of a young Yezidi Armenian military officer and of two other Christian Armenian soldiers. In addition to this violence, these atrocities were broadcast online in an ISIS-style video to incite further violence against Christian Armenians.

"This brutality is deeply troubling, clearly violates the Geneva Conventions, and is strikingly similar to the tactics employed by ISIS," Assembly Board of Trustees Co-Chairmen Anthony Barsamian and Van Krikorian stated in the letter, pointing out that the Azeri Defense Ministry said that its soldiers "became shahids" or Muslim martyrs.

"Whatever your prior reasons for standing in solidarity with the Azerbaijani and Turkish regimes, we cannot imagine that any American would continue to do so in the face of recent events," The Assembly Co-Chairs said. "To do so would condone such behavior."

The Congressional Azerbaijan Caucus has 42 members, while the Congressional Caucus on Turkey and Turkish Americans has 154 members.



Feminist Hayganush Mark, depicted as a suffragette, with banners of the Armenian Women's Association (left) and Hay Gin (Armenian Woman, right), 1921

Armenian Life in Post-Genocide Turkey Explored in Prof. Ekmekçioğlu's New Book

WATERTOWN – The Armenians of Istanbul faced extraordinary conditions in the 1920s. Reeling from the chaos and losses of the World War I Genocide, they had little to guide them as they looked to the future.

In the first in-depth study of the aftermath of the Genocide among the surviving Armenians remaining in Istanbul, Prof. Lerna Ekmekçioğlu has analyzed publications of the period to trace the process of reconstructing the community. Her new book on the subject, *Recovering Armenia: The Limits of Belonging in Post Genocide Turkey*, recently released by Stanford University Press, explains the central role played by Armenian women in preserving traditions, memory and language.

Ekmekçioğlu will present the book at an illustrated talk on May 5, beginning at 7:30 p.m. at the Armenian Museum of America in Watertown in a program sponsored jointly by the Armenian International Woman's Association, the National Association for Armenian Studies and Research, and the Armenian Museum of America.



Prof. Lerna Ekmekçioğlu

Recovering Armenia gives voice to the Armenian community's prominent figures of the time, notably the activist and feminist Hayganush Mark, editor of the influential journal *Hay Gin* (Armenian Woman). Feminism among the Armenians, Ekmekçioğlu argues, reached its zenith in the immediate aftermath of the Genocide and in the capital of Turkey. The occupation of Istanbul by the victorious Allies in World War I provided an atmosphere conducive for the development of the Armenian press. With the approach of Kemal Atatürk's National forces toward the capital in the fall of 1922, however, many Armenians fled from the city and were

barred subsequently from returning.

Mark managed to continue publication in the face of the declining Armenian population and the increasing hostility of the Turkish government. Ekmekçioğlu examines the dilemma faced by the Armenian community as it sought to accommodate itself to the demands of Turkish society while at the same time preserving its distinct culture and traditions. One approach to this dilemma was to pay extra attention to the Armenian family and home, a domain in which the Turkish government did not intrude aggressively.

In 1933 *Hay Gin* was closed by the government. But during the 1920s Hayganush Mark and her colleagues managed to produce a lively journal, focus see WOMEN, page 8

Prof. Ohanyan Hopes to Build Bridges for Peace In the Caucasus

By Alin K. Gregorian

Mirror-Spectator Staff

EASTON, Mass. – Global conflicts seem a world away from this small town. However, it is just possible that a key to solving the problem facing Artsakh (Nagorno Karabagh) may lie with young students at Stonehill College.

This small Catholic university is dedicated to the ideals of peace and justice and it is in this environment that Anna Ohanyan, the college's chair of the Department of Political Science and International Studies, wants to create ties between Armenia and the West, as well as come up with creative solutions to solve both internal and external problems.

"Coming from conflict region, I always wanted to solve the problems. I didn't want to focus on theory. I am very interested in how policies are made globally," Ohanyan said.

This focus, she said, "drives my work."

Ohanyan noted that she did not always want to work with an eye toward solving Armenia's political problems. She noted that when she was studying for her doctorate, she aimed to veer away from Armenia, toward which she had a natural bias. Now, she says, "I don't believe in bias-free research," meaning that all researchers have an inherent point of view.

Ohanyan, a native of Armenia, graduated with a master's degree from Yerevan State University, before studying for one year at the



Prof. Anna Ohanyan

George Mason Institute for Conflict Analysis in Virginia and later receiving her PhD from Syracuse University. Ohanyan also did a fellowship at the Kennedy School at Harvard.

Ohanyan spent the 2012-2013 academic year as a Fulbright Fellow in Armenia and the South Caucasus, teaching and conducting research on regionalism and conflict management. In addition, she has published widely on international organizations, conflict resolution and peacebuilding in such settings as Kosovo, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Afghanistan. Her research has been supported by organizations including IREX, the Fulbright Commission, the German Marshall Fund, the U.S. State Department, the Eurasia Foundation, the United Nations Foundation, the World Bank, the National Intelligence Council Project, the Carter Center, USAID and Stonehill College.

Her first book, titled *NGOs, IGOs, and the Network Mechanisms of Post-Conflict Global* see PEACE, page 6

COMMUNITY NEWS

Prof. Ohanyan Hopes to Build Bridges for Peace in the Caucasus

PEACE, from page 5

Governance in Microfinance, was on the post-conflict era Bosnia-Herzegovina as well as Afghanistan. It was focused on the use of micro-finance in post-conflict societies in order to revive them.

"Microfinance policies are quite remarkable. Donors have to figure out how to bring in people or to offer training," she explained.

Her new book, which came out earlier this month, *Networked Regionalism as Conflict Management*, is about a region much closer to her heart. "It explores this narrative of whether or not it is possible to utilize regional ties in all kinds" of situations to help bring peace to the region. For example, she said training firefighters or teachers are things that need to happen throughout the Caucasus and the bringing together of these small groups, could make the larger society as a whole safer.

Ohanyan said that she does not believe that the region, even with the presence of adversaries Armenia and Azerbaijan, is doomed to fight forever. If, she said, India and Pakistan

were able to come together on many issues, the two Caucasian enemies will similarly succeed, she said. (This interview took place before the early April attacks by Azerbaijan.)

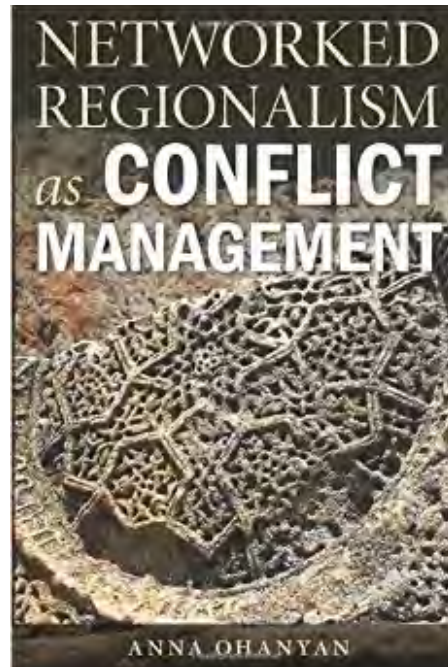
As her press release about the book adds, "only the cultivation and establishment of regional peace systems can provide an effective path toward conflict management in these standoffs in such intractably divided regions."

Another example she brought is how each individual nation in the region is too small to attract major investment. Their interests lie in coming together and presenting a bigger target for investment.

She added, "Conflict by itself is not the only hurdle. There is a lack of civil society and an inability to form links across the region."

Azerbaijan, she said, is slightly different than Armenia and Georgia, in that its leader, Ilham Aliyev, is more focused on "not pushing confidence-building regionally" and instead, his "primary concern is regime survival."

As well, Russia, the US and Europe are all trying to force these smaller states to choose



sides. "My message to the west is to give up control to gain control. There needs to be greater push on Azerbaijan and Georgia to come together regionally," she explained. "Neither the US nor the UN are going to be able to address the security problems in the region. It is figuring out how to use regional hubs and contacts are necessary to solve conflicts around the world."

Stonehill in Armenia, Serbia

Ohanyan said that she is thrilled that Stonehill Students now can work with universities outside the US. The college now offers the LION (Learning Inside Out Network) program, an intensive international internship and research opportunity for students interested in

the theory and practice of global security. The program builds on courses in security studies, conflict analysis and resolution, global crime, international criminal justice, human security, and international development through a semester-long international internship experience with a non-governmental organization (NGO), think tank or media organization in Armenia or Serbia.

In Armenia, she explained, students can learn about global security "and develop in leaps and bounds."

One class is already working this spring with partners in Serbia and Armenia, and another will go to Armenia in the fall.

In Armenia the students will work with NGOs, including the Eurasian Partnership Foundation and Transparency International.

In June, those that are in Serbia will come to Armenia. Ohanyan herself will teach them for two weeks in Armenia.

"We want to create a space for young voices," she said, adding that Stonehill's academic partner in Armenia will be the Eurasian International University in Yerevan.

"I do want in a small way to rebrand Armenia," she said. "There are exciting things happening in Armenia."

The students can then bring their research to the NGOs that are dealing with those very same issues, making the theoretical actual.

And it is not only Armenia that will benefit from this program, she said. "The students can build up their resumes with a very solid avenue for professional development."

The program is open to all social science majors who maintain a GPA of 3.0 and above and have strong writing skills.

For more information, students can contact Ohanyan at atwymanghoshal@stonehill.edu.

OBITUARY

Former *Zartok* Editor Nazaret Topalian Dies

By Hagop Vartivarian

BEIRUT – Nazaret Topalian, former assistant editor of *Zartok* and a prolific writer, passed away in Paris on March 23. Born in Beirut on March 12, 1933, Topalian received his elementary education in the Surp Karasun Mangants Elementary School of the New Marash section of Bourj Hammoud, and then went to the St. Gregory the Illuminator School of the Jesuit Fathers in Ashrafiye, where he mastered the French language and became familiar with French literature. He sat in on Armenological classes offered by Garo Sasuni, Simon Vratsian, Mushegh Ishkhan and the historian Karnig Giuzelian at the Hamazkayin Nshan Palanjan School of Beirut. He went to Brussels, where he followed courses in the Press House there.

He served as editor of the newspaper *Azatar*, which belonged to former Armenian Revolutionary Federation member Khosrov Tiutiunjian and Onnig Topuzian, and Dikran Tosbath's newspaper *Ayk*. In 1958, during the fiercest period of the Lebanese civil war, he joined the *Zartok* daily newspaper as an assistant editor to Kersam Aharonian and remained in this post until the second stage of the civil war in 1975.

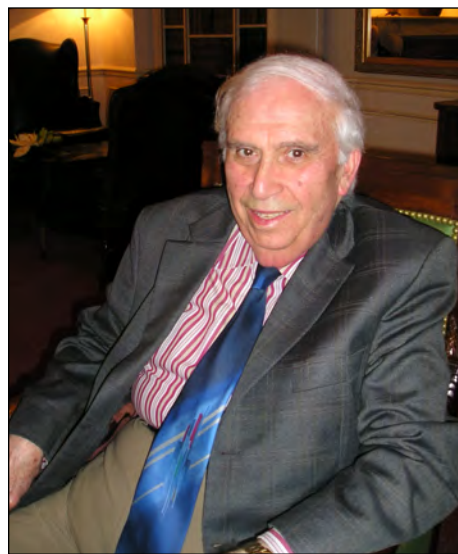
He worked for a series of literary and political periodicals and newspapers, including *Antasdan*, *Shirag*, *Ararad*, *Nor or*, *Baykar*, *Arev*, *Avedis Aliksonian's Ashkharh* of Paris, *Navasart*, and *Arahed*. Aside from this, he worked as a copyeditor in the French language at the large institution of the *Quotidien de Paris*, and then at Paillard, which published the newspaper *La Croix*, and an encyclopedia of religions in two large volumes. Topalian copy-edited the latter, as well as prepared its index.

He participated alongside Kersam Aharonian in the editing and publication of the valuable volume, *Hushamadean Medz Yegherni* [Memorial Volume of the Great Crime].

He was forced in 1976 to move to Paris, where he served as an editor in the French press. In 1988, he became editor of the Armenian Democratic Liberal Party official monthly periodical in France, *La Lettre de l'ADL*, and continued in this post until its first period of publication ended in 1991.

He liked to collect works of art. He was also an art critic in our literary and art magazine. Prior to his compulsory departure from Beirut to France, I bought from him works of the artists Giragosian, Jansem and Dadrian, which awakened the love of collecting art in me. We often were together. He had a wide range of interests. He was different from the others, those who had received an English education; with his French education, he became a continuation of this art-centered atmosphere in our house.

He published the following works: *Garodi namag* [Letter of Longing], Paris, 1979; *Karughiner* [Crossroads], Paris, 1981; *Bantog*



Nazaret Topalian

hiusis-arevelk [Hotel North-West], Paris, 1983; *Dariner*, *Parizi mech* [Years, in Paris], Paris, 1984; *Zkatsaganuteamp meghanchelov* [Sinning through Feeling], Paris, 1985; *Terton - Don Kishot Hrashakordz* [Serialization - Don Quixote the Miracle Worker], Paris, 1987; *Kalik Zhamanagneru Desilk Me* [A Vision of Coming Times], Paris, 1988; *Vahan Tekeyani Namaganiin Knnagan Modetsumi Portz Me* [An Attempt at a Critical Approach to Vahan Tekeyan's Collection of Letters], Paris, 1996; and *Arevakal: Keghon i Badiv Hayasdani* [Dawn: A Ballad in Honor of Armenia], 2009. He published a work dedicated to General Torkom, and a work in the French language, *Au duel au soleil* [To the Duel Under the Sun] (Paris, 2002). He translated from French Georges Bernanos' *Dialogues of the Carmelites*, which appeared in Paris in 1998.

He was a member of the ADL chapter in Paris. For a period of time, he served as secretary of Paris' Association Arménienne d'Aide Sociale (1975-1981), which at that time was known under the name Aghkadakhnam.

Topalian closely collaborated with Kersam Aharonian through all sorts of difficult times, always remaining his faithful assistant, and preserving political party confidentiality when necessary. He declared during a meeting in Paris on April 8, 2009, "Kersam was dedicated heart and soul to the political party. He was a very courageous man. When you read his editorials, you will see that he was uncompromising in his views toward is opponent, [and] in the service of Armenia. I never had the slightest negative impression about Kersam. What was wonderful was this complete dedication of his. His whole life was the political party, school and the Armenians."

There were many opportunists to invite him to the United States, for political party, cultural, literary and other occasions, but unfortunately his fear of flying in an airplane deprived Armenian-Armenians of his presence.

(Translated from the Armenian)

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COMMUNITY NEWS

Armenian International Women's Association Celebrated 25th Anniversary in New Jersey

By Hagop Vartivarian

NORTH BERGEN, N.J. — The Armenian International Women's Association (AIWA) was born together with the proclamation of the third Republic of Armenia. In 1990, three Armenian-American women in Boston devoted to the Armenian people, came up with the idea for this association. The goal was to defend the rights of women in Armenian life, both in the homeland and abroad. The founders were Eva Medzorian; Dr. Barbara Merguerian, a longtime editor of the Armenian Democratic Liberal Party publication the Armenian Mirror-Spectator, the first English-language Armenian weekly paper in the US; and Olga Proudian.

For the last 25 years, the organization that



Dr. Barbara Merguerian and Hagop Vartivarian

they established has allowed Armenian women to confidently and fruitfully accomplish projects in Armenia and Armenian communities abroad.

On March 13, the New Jersey branch celebrated this anniversary of a quarter-century at the Waterside Restaurant of North Bergen on the shores of the Hudson River. Approximately 160 members and supporters filled the hall. Margaret Janikian spoke words of welcome to the guests, while Nvair Beylerian acted as the master of ceremonies.

The ambassador of Armenia to the United Nations (UN), Zohrab Mnatsakanyan, was present, and declared that he had closely followed the activities of this organization even when he was working as an ambassador in Geneva, Switzerland. As it was the international week of women he also was participating in many activities at the UN prepared by Armenian and non-Armenian organizations.

Merguerian had come specially from Boston with other members of the AIWA central executive for this event, and spoke about AIWA's mission. She is the author of several books and a member of the board of the Armenian Museum of America in Watertown, Mass.



AIWA NJ executive cuts the 25th anniversary cake: from left, Ani Chatmajian, Margaret Akian Janikian, Ruth Bedevian, Lisa Stepanian, Rose Yaverian and Elizabeth Akian.



Zohrab Mnatsakanyan, Armenia's Permanent Representative to the United Nations with several AIWA members, including Carolyn Atinjian, Joan Agajanian Quinn, Jennifer Phillips, Judy Sarian, Judy Norsigian and Barbara Merguerian

Vartabedian, Brown to Give Men's Club Talk on May 2

WATERTOWN — On Monday, May 2, Haverhill authors E. Philip Brown and Tom Vartabedian will make a presentation on their book, *The Armenians of Merrimack Valley*, at the St. James Armenian Church's Men's Club.

Brown and Vartabedian's presentation will include images of Armenians covering four generations along the North Shore of Boston, specifically Merrimack Valley, where Armenian immigrants settled prior to the 19th Century.

The book, published by Arcadia Press, details life in eight specific areas including business, culture, education, youth, military, athletics, business, church and community.

Vartabedian is a veteran reporter and photographer, having spent 50 years with the *Haverhill Gazette*, winning numerous awards from United Press International, Associated Press and the New England Press Association. He has been a columnist with the *Armenian Weekly* since 1970 and a contributor to the *Armenian Mirror-Spectator* and serves on the Project SAVE Board of Directors.

Over the past decade, he has provided educational discussions throughout schools in Massachusetts as a member of the Armenian Genocide Education Committee of Merrimack

Valley.

Brown is currently a social studies teacher at Haverhill High School. He received his BA in political science at the University of Massachusetts, a MS in applied management at Lesley University and an MA in Public History through American Public University.

He is a member of the Haverhill Historical Commission and the author of two other books on local history.

He was moved by Armenian history and collaborated with Vartabedian for a thesis.

Despite the Genocide, Armenians have contributed immensely to world civilization, said Brown. Greater Merrimack Valley has shared in that success with many fine accomplishments.

Inscribed and autographed books will be available that evening or by writing Vartabedian at: tommyvart@aol.com.

The social hour starts with mezza, at 6:15 p.m. followed by an Armenian dinner at 7 p.m., \$15 per person. The dinner meeting will be at the St. James Armenian Church, Charles Mosesian Cultural and Youth Center, Keljik Hall.

The program is open to the public. Ladies are welcome.

Lisa Stepanian, one of the five founders of the AIWA NJ affiliate, was the honoree of the day. She introduced to the audience her collaborators and reminisced about early difficulties.

She was born in Yerevan and immigrated to the US in 1978. She began to participate in Armenian community life in the US at Union City, New Jersey's Holy Cross Church by teaching Armenian language classes. After obtaining a degree in chemistry, in 1983 she began working with a large commercial firm. She has been working since 2015 as the executive director of Armenia Fund USA, the East Coast affiliate of the Hayastan All-Armenian Fund. She expressed her thanks to all donors, collaborators and those present, who, believing in the mission of the organization, have participated and worked towards its goals. She thanked the Tekeyan Cultural Association which gladly

opened the doors of its New Jersey center for AIWA meetings and events.

Cellist Ani Kalayjian performed four classical pieces in the musical portion of the program.

At the conclusion of the event, Sossie Dadoyan Arlia spoke about the Jack in the Box Schools, which she founded and expanded in New Jersey. She encouraged women to be confident and take initiatives in life.

A cake commemorating the 25th anniversary, prepared by Serpouhi Vartivarian, was then cut. The members of the AIWA New Jersey executive include chairwoman Margaret Akian Janikian, vice chair Ani Chatmajian, treasurer Rose Yaverian, secretary Elizabeth Akian, and advisors Ruth Bedevian and Lisa Stepanian. A portion of the proceeds of the event went to benefit AIWA's Women's Entrepreneurial Program.

AWWA-Supported Clinic Gives Aid, Medical Care to Artaskh Seniors

BOSTON — For more than 11 years, the Armenian Women's Welfare Association (AWWA) has funded and supported the Hanganak Health Clinic in Stepanakert, Nagorno-Karabagh. This clinic offers medical care and more to mainly women, aged 63 and older, who live alone with no other means of support. Many of these women are alone because they had lost loved ones, husbands or sons, in the war against Azerbaijan in 1992. These beneficiaries receive health care, food and provisions, and an opportunity for communing with others weekly at the Hanganak facilities.

Once again the war between Azerbaijan and Nagorno-Karabagh in early April has resulted in many more deaths and injuries due to enemy aggression. Hanganak is there in Stepanakert to assist those older citizens whose lives have been affected by the war.

To help the clinic, donations may be made and sent to the Armenian Women's Welfare Association, 435 Pond Street, Jamaica Plain, MA 02130.



Beneficiary with Dr. Gohar Hovhannisyan from Hanganak



COMMUNITY NEWS

Four Finalists for Aurora Prize Name Their Choices for Receiving \$1 Million Prize

YEREVAN — The four Aurora Prize finalists, announced last month, have named the organizations they would like to nominate to receive the \$1,000,000 award. The Aurora Prize Laureate and his or her nominated organization(s) will be announced during the inaugural Aurora Prize Ceremony on April 24 in Armenia.

If named the Aurora Prize Laureate, he or she will be granted the opportunity to continue the cycle of giving by allocating the \$1,000,000 award to the nominated organization or organizations.

The four finalists for the inaugural Aurora Prize are:

Marguerite Barankitse of Maison Shalom and REMA Hospital in Burundi: Barankitse saved thousands of lives and cared for orphans and refugees during the years of civil war in Burundi. To date, she has saved an estimated 30,000 children and in 2008, she opened a hospital which has treated more than 80,000 patients thus far.

Organizations chosen by Barankitse:

- Fondation du Grand-Duc et de la Grande-Duchesse du Luxembourg

In her role as UNICEF Eminent Advocate for Children, H.R.H. the Grand-Duchess of Luxembourg visited Burundi in June 2009, where she bore witness to the inhumane detention conditions of children incarcerated in adult prisons. With the assistance of Marguerite Barankitse and her committed staff from the Maison Shalom, the organization has helped to secure the release of 600 children imprisoned throughout Burundi and provided services to aid their rehabilitation and reintegration. A share of the Aurora Prize would enable the Foundation to further assist Maison Shalom in its challenging work, as well as positively respond to the many requests for support that the Foundation regularly receives from emerging countries.

- Fondation Jean-François Peterbroeck (JFP Foundation)

The JFP Foundation combats child poverty, discrimination and injustice - in particular abandoned or displaced children, orphans and victims of child labor, conflicts or social poverty. Since its creation in 2006, the JFP Foundation has supported more than 30 projects around the world. The first of them was Marguerite Barankitse's Maison Shalom in Burundi and the JFP Foundation also helped towards the construction and operation of Marguerite's REMA Hospital. A share of the Aurora Prize could further support Maison Shalom and its work for the children of Burundian refugees, as well as a related project in Democratic Republic of Congo called "INUKA".

- Fondation Bridderlech Deelen Luxembourg

Fondation Bridderlech Deelen is the Catholic aid agency of Luxemburg. For 50 years, Bridderlech Deelen has fought poverty and injustice and stood up for those in need - regardless of their religion, ethnicity or gender. Together with local partners in Latin America, Africa and Asia, Bridderlech Deelen works towards sustainably improving the living conditions of disadvantaged members of society. With a share of the Aurora Prize, Bridderlech Deelen Foundation could extend its support to other projects helping those in need.

Dr. Tom Catena of Mother of Mercy Hospital

in the Nuba Mountains of Sudan: Catena is an American physician and the sole doctor of the Mother of Mercy Hospital in rebel-held territory in the Nuba Mountains, Sudan. Despite several bombings by the Sudanese government, Catena resides on the hospital grounds so that he may be on call at all times.

Organizations Nominated by Catena:

- African Mission Healthcare Foundation (AMHF)

The African Mission Healthcare Foundation supports mission hospitals, which provide approximately one-third of the medical care available on the African continent. Annually, AMHF makes possible 70,000 patient visits and several thousand corrective surgical procedures. Supported activities include HIV care and support, primary care, maternal-child health, and providing general and pediatric surgery. AMHF has been privileged to support Mother of Mercy Hospital since 2013. A share of the Aurora Prize would enable AMHF to assist other unsung heroes working on behalf of the sick and the poor and to deliver the capital improvements necessary to provide quality, sustainable medical care.

- Catholic Medical Mission Board (CMMB)

CMMB is an international, faith-based NGO providing community based, long-term, humanitarian and development aid to communities affected by poverty and especially inequities and unequal access to healthcare. A share from the Aurora Prize would enable CMMB to invest in the Mother of Mercy Hospital's infrastructure and training for staff, as well as deliver more Interagency Emergency Healthcare Kits (IEHKs) to support Dr. Catena's patients. The kits provide significant support as each one contains all of the essential medicines needed to serve a population of 10,000 people for three months. The Aurora Prize award would also be invested in rural, mission hospitals in some of the most remote, underserved areas of Africa.

- Diocese of El Obeid *

The Diocese of El Obeid is one of the largest Catholic Diocese in the world, covering an area of more than 340,000 square miles. The Diocese opened the Mother of Mercy Hospital in March 2008, the hospital has treated more than 200,000 patients since its inception. Catena initially joined the hospital when it opened and has remained despite the outbreak of civil war in June 2011. The Diocese relies on donor funding to run its activities and missions, including the Mother of Mercy Hospital.

Syeda Ghulam Fatima, the General Secretary of the Bonded Labor Liberation Front in Pakistan: Ghulam Fatima has worked tirelessly to eradicate bonded labor, one of the last remaining forms of modern slavery, liberating thousands of Pakistani workers.

Organizations Nominated by Ghulam Fatima:

- Bonded Labour Liberation Front Pakistan (BLLF)

Fatima leads the Bonded Labour Liberation Front Pakistan (BLLF), which has liberated 80,000 Pakistani slaves who were forced to work for brick kiln owners in order to repay debts. The interest rates are too high for workers to pay off, trapping the workers in forced labor and poor - often brutal - conditions. The Aurora Prize award would help BLLF to continue its work to free people, particularly the

next generation, from slavery.

- Human Rights Commission of Pakistan (HRCP)

The Human Rights Commission of Pakistan was established in 1987 and grown into an influential, country-wide human rights body. HRCP works in very challenging situations and faces regular threats from those opposed to its work. Among the wide range of human rights issues that the organization works on, HRCP chooses to focus on those that affect the most vulnerable - including the persecution of religious minorities, extra-judicial killings, bonded labor and the status of women. The Aurora Prize award would greatly help HRCP in institutionalizing its work and improving the rights of vulnerable sections of society.

- Trócaire International

Trócaire, one of Ireland's leading development organizations, has worked internationally for over 40 years providing support to people living in extreme poverty, enabling them to take control over their own lives and live free from injustice and oppression. As the overseas development agency of the Catholic Church in Ireland, Trócaire works in over 20 countries across Africa, Latin America, Asia and the Middle East. Trócaire has supported Fatima to establish Freedom Centers where workers receive healthcare, education, awareness on rights, physical protection and legal services. The Aurora Prize would greatly assist Trócaire in continuing its work to end slavery in Pakistan.

Father Bernard Kinvi, a Catholic priest in Bossemptele in the Central African Republic: Kinvi has provided refuge and health services to those on both sides of the civil war in the Central African Republic through his mission in Bossemptele. He has saved hundreds of people from persecution and death.

Organizations Nominated by Fr. Kinvi:

- The Order of the Ministers of the Sick (ORDRE DES CAMILLIENS)

The Order of the Ministers of the Sick was founded by St. Camillus de Lellis in the year

1586, today the Ministers of the Sick are known throughout the world as the "Camillians." The Camillians is made up of about 1,200 members who work in many countries around the world. Faithful to their mission, they place especial emphasis on care for sick people, even where there is a risk to their own lives. The Aurora Prize award would be used to fund new health facilities and training for local healthcare workers, including projects across Africa.

The four finalists were each asked to shortlist up to three organizations that they would nominate for a share of the \$1,000,000 award if they are named Aurora Prize Laureate later this month. This award will be given in addition to a personal \$100,000 grant for the Laureate.

Selection Committee Co-Chair George Clooney will announce the inaugural Aurora Prize Laureate during a ceremony in Yerevan, Armenia on April 24.

Recipients will be recognized for the exceptional impact their actions have made on preserving human life and advancing humanitarian causes. On behalf of the survivors of the Armenian Genocide and in gratitude to their saviors, an Aurora Prize Laureate will be honored each year with a US\$100,000 grant as well as the unique opportunity to continue the cycle of giving by nominating organizations that inspired their work for a US\$1,000,000 award.

The Aurora Prize Selection Committee includes Nobel Laureates Elie Wiesel, Oscar Arias, Shirin Ebadi and Leymah Gbowee; former President of Ireland Mary Robinson; human rights activist Hina Jilani; former Australian Foreign Minister and President Emeritus of the International Crisis Group Gareth Evans; President of the Carnegie Corporation of New York Vartan Gregorian; and Academy Award-winning actor and humanitarian George Clooney.

The Aurora Prize will be awarded annually on April 24 in Yerevan, Armenia.

Further information is available at www.auro-prize.com.

Armenian Life in Post-Genocide Turkey Explored In Prof. Ekmekçioğlu's Latest Book

WOMEN, from page 5

ing on the issues of the day, emphasizing the woman's duty to family and nation while at the same time calling for equal rights. But their viewpoint raised a basic paradox: could one be an Armenian and a feminist at a time when the key path for Armenians to maintain their identity was through traditionally gendered roles.

Ekmekçioğlu is the McMillan-Stewart Associate Professor of History and an affiliate of the Woman and Gender Study Program at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. A student of the modern Middle East, she specializes in Turkish and Armenian history at the beginning of the 20th century. Her work focus-

es on minority-majority relationships and the ways in which gendered analytical lenses help to better understand coexistence and conflict, including genocide, in the Middle East.

A native of Turkey, she is a graduate of Bogazici University in Istanbul and received her doctorate from New York University. Her first book, co-edited with Melissa Bilal and published in 2006 in Turkish, is titled *A Cry for Justice: Five Armenian Feminist Writers, from the Ottoman Empire to the Turkish Republic (1862-1933)*.

The public is invited to attend this program, which will shed light on a significant but little-known aspect of the Armenian experience in the 20th century.



Programme of Armenian Studies

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COMMUNITY NEWS

TCA of Greater New York Elects Ambitious New Executive

NEW YORK – Through its half century of activity, with its literary, cultural and theatrical programs, the Tekeyan Cultural Association (TCA) of Greater New York has won a prominent place in the Armenian community life of this great metropolis.

From the 1950s, solid relations between the homeland and the Armenians in the diaspora communities kept the latter connected with the advancement of the homeland and proud of its cultural accomplishments. Tekeyan became the organization which, contrary to the political obstacles placed before it, connected the national dreams of the Armenian people in a

“The work of the Tekeyan Cultural Association in strengthening relations between the homeland and the diaspora, educating the new generation, and preserving and disseminating cultural values has been fruitful and worthy of praise,”

- Archbishop Torkom Manoogian

permanent fashion to the homeland and the Mother See of Holy Echmiadzin.

The New York Tekeyan members, with ever-greater confidence after the marking of the centennial of the Armenian Genocide, have once more reformed their structure and plans in order to be able to better reach the new generation of American Armenians. They carry on the fruitful legacy of the past by connecting the latter to our cultural values and traditions and the new achievements of our nation and homeland.

The New York chapter of TCA was founded in 1969 thanks to the initiative of Armenian public figure and editor Antranig L. Poladian. The

first executive committee was formed in New York under the chairmanship of the writer Souren Manuelian. Later, in 1972, thanks to the efforts of Dr. Krikor Maksoudian, its work continued to 1975, when another respected writer, Lucy Piligian, took over the chairmanship until 1979.

Hagop Vartivarian took over with a group of youth after Piligian until 1982. After this, the office was consecutively held by Ara Babayan, Nerses Ingilizian, Missak Boghosian and Norair Meguerditchian. Vartivarian came back in the last decade to again serve as chairman until this year.

On March 23, 2016, a new era began in the life of the New York TCA chapter with a successful young generation taking administrative responsibility for the activities of this large branch. The meeting elected Vartivarian, who remains a member of the Central Board of the TCA of USA and Canada, as honorary chairman of the New York chapter.

The new executive consists of Hilda Hartounian as chair, Diana Mkhitarian as vice chair, Taleen Babayan as secretary, Barkev Kalayjian as treasurer, and Carmen Gulbenkian, Helen Misk, Ani Hovanessian-Kasparian, Marie Zokian, Vartan Ilanjian, Diran Jebejian, Jerry Misk and Harout Chatmajian as board members.

Hilda Hartounian was born in Beirut and as an adolescent was a member of the Armenian General Benevolent Union (AGBU) Armenian



New York TCA new executive. Seated, from left, Taleen Babayan, Diana Mkhitarian, Hilda Hartounian, and Barkev Kalayjian; standing, from left, Hagop Vartivarian, Helen Misk, Carmen Gulbenkian, Jerry Misk, Ani Hovanessian-Kasparian, Harout Chatmajian, Marie Zokian, Vartan Ilanjian and Diran Jebejian.

Youth Association Girl Scout (Arenoushagan) movement. She was chairwoman of the TCA Students Group, and very active in the Armenian Democratic Liberal Party's Portukalian Youth Club. After moving to the United States, she became a member of the Shoushi Dance Group and various AGBU cultural groups in New York. Twice she was a bearer of the ADL message at the Times Square Armenian Genocide commemorations.

She is the daughter of Krikor Kurejian, who for many years was a member of the ADL District Committee of Lebanon, and the daughter-in-law of Garo Hartounian, a member of the

TCA Founders Committee. She married the latter's son, Saro, and is the mother of Nairi, Nanor and Aram.

The new executive will be paying special attention to cultural relations with Armenia, and will organize art exhibitions, literary evenings and concerts. A website is planned for the chapter.

It will continue to maintain its close relations with the various organizations that believe in the mission of Tekeyan and have been friendly in the past, and will together prepare various initiatives for the entire Armenian community.

(Translated from the Armenian)

101 ARMENIAN GENOCIDE COMMEMORATION

FRIDAY, APRIL 22, 2016

ANNUAL STATE HOUSE COMMEMORATION

Massachusetts State House | 24 Beacon Street, Boston
10:30am Commemoration Ceremony | 12n Reception at the Grand Staircase

With a proclamation from the Governor of Massachusetts. Keynote Speaker, Amb. Ray Flynn. Joint Senate/House Resolution recipients Conventures, The Knights of Vartan Ararat Lodge #1 and the Armenian Genocide Education Committee of Merrimack Valley. Musical program provided by Zankagner Performing Arts Ensemble, Pianist Jasmin Atabekyan and violinist Emily Gasparyan and St. Stephen's Armenian School.

Organized by the Armenian Genocide Commemoration Committee of Greater Boston

Buses will be at St. James and St. Stephen's Churches at 8:30 am for 9:00 am departure to the State House and will leave the State House at 1:00 pm to return. Buses are free and generously provided by the Knights of Vartan Ararat Lodge #1

SATURDAY, APRIL 23, 2016

A PRAYER SERVICE FOR THE ARMENIAN COMMUNITY

4:00 pm | Cathedral of the Holy Cross | 1400 Washington Street, Boston

Join us for the first ever Catholic Archdiocese of Boston Commemoration of the Armenian Genocide
Hosted by: Cardinal Sean P. O'Malley, Catholic Archdiocese of Boston

With the Participation of: His Eminence Archbishop Khajag Barsamian, Diocese of the Armenian Church of America (Eastern); His Eminence Archbishop Oshagan Choloyan, Eastern Prefecture of the Armenian Apostolic Church; Armenian Catholic Eparchy of the United States and Canada

This event will be broadcast live online at www.CatholicTVLive.com and on the Catholic TV Network (check local listings).

SUNDAY, APRIL 24, 2016 COMMEMORATION AT THE PARK

3:00 pm | Armenian Heritage Park | 110 Atlantic Avenue, Boston

In a spirit of revival, join us as we communally honor our shared history, celebrate our triumphant survival and illuminate our bright future.

Help us fill the Park with supporters from every church, organization, school and university. With your presence, we will reach our goal of a unified commemoration; with your participation, our message of strength and survivorship will be heard.

For more info, contact: commemorationatthepark@gmail.com

Commemorate the 101st Anniversary of the Armenian Genocide at the Massachusetts State House



April 22, 2016 starting at 10:30 am *

12 noon reception at the Grand Staircase

With a proclamation from the Governor of Massachusetts

Amb. Ray Flynn keynote speaker

Master of ceremonies Rep. Jon Hecht

Prominent Massachusetts officials

Joint Senate/House Resolution recipients Conventures, The Knights of Vartan Ararat Lodge #1 and the Armenian Genocide Education Committee of Merrimack Valley

And musical program provided by Zankagner and St. Stephen's Armenian School

Organized by the Armenian Genocide Commemorative Committee, Boston

* Buses will be at St. James and St. Stephen's Churches at 8:30 am for 9:00 am departure to the State House and will leave the State House at 1:00 pm to return. Buses are free and generously provided by the Knights of Vartan Ararat Lodge #1.



COMMUNITY NEWS

Old State House Hosts Program On Moses Gulesian

GULESIAN, from page 1

Brian LeMay, president and executive director of the nonprofit Bostonian Society, spoke about Gulesian's work as a preservationist, as "somebody who had a deep appreciation for the fundamental ideas that lie at the foundation of this country, that are embodied in many ways in this building." He pointed out that the discovery of the time capsule on top of the Old State House building spurred interest in Gulesian's life and works.

LeMay provided background information about the Bostonian Society's mission and activities, and the importance of the Old State House building itself. He said that Gulesian's historical significance is tied to Boston and the Bostonian Society. Gulesian joined forces with prominent members of the abolitionist and suffragist movements yet until the discovery of the time capsule, the Bostonian Society was not well informed about his activities.

LeMay introduced Dr. Joyce Van Dyke, play-

Stone Blackwell, and William Lloyd Garrison Jr., raising funds for Armenian relief. He turned the top floor of his copperworks factory on Waltham Street into a shelter for hundreds of Armenian refugees.

Van Dyke concluded, "You can see that he had a very large soul, a very large Armenian-American-Bostonian soul. It is a beautiful example of how immigrants can make the greatest patriots in this country."

LeMay then presented Don Tellalian, an accomplished architect who among other things consulted for the Bostonian Society for the Old State House renovations. Tellalian spoke about the discovery of the time capsule inside the Lion above the east façade of the Old State House. He went over the clues that spurred on his research.

During renovations, Skylight Studios was able to confirm the existence of this capsule, and so it was removed and opened up in a controlled environment. The contents, over 113 years old, were in very good condition. Most striking was a large red book which dealt with US foreign relations.

This book was not listed in a contemporary newspaper inventory of the capsule. Tellalian related that his "wife Barbara has in certain circumstances very sharp instincts," and in September 2015, she noticed that the date of 1896 of the documentary collection coincided with the Hamidian massacres of Armenians in the Ottoman Empire.

Indeed, Don Tellalian found that a large section of the book dealt with Turkey and the Armenian massacres. He found that on only one page in the book — page 887 — the corner was turned down deliberately, and this section concerned, among other

things, attacks in Marash, Gulesian's hometown. He concluded that it must have been Gulesian who placed the red book into the time capsule.

Stephen Kurkjian, prizewinning reporter for more than 45 years at the *Boston Globe* and winner of three Pulitzer Prizes, represented NAASR as a longtime board member on the program. He spoke of the pride Armenians felt to see the Armenian flag flying at full mast in front of the State House during the visit of Armenia's President Serzh Sargsyan the week prior to the Gulesian event. He felt this was a turning point for Armenians like himself, who, he said, "would have to say who we were...we had to say that every time, time and again at every class, at every school we went to, and explain ourselves."

Then came the extraordinarily quick removal of a defamatory billboard only a few blocks from the Old State House and Armenian Heritage Park, placed to cast doubt on the Armenian Genocide,



Artifacts from the Old State House time capsule, including the Red Book

through rapid action by friends of the Armenians in Boston as well as Armenians themselves. He said that this was in due to "all of those people who we have touched and told our story for fifty years, and told them who we were, and told them the pride we felt, the Moses Gulesians, the Mugar family, the Nubar Afeyans, for the Armenians back in the 19th century all the way up to the Armenians here in the 21st century." Finally, this evening came about to commemorate Gulesian, showing that the way Armenians played an important role in Bostonian society more than a century ago, was again being recognized by Boston society.

Kurkjian concluded, "Our story has finally been heard and reckoned with, and it is the proudest moment for me, as I hope it is for you, that we are here tonight, together, brothers and sisters of Hayastan, brothers and sisters of old historic Armenia and new Armenia, and Armenia here in the Old State House."

The audience was then invited to go look at a display of the time capsule and its contents in the room next door. Each visitor received a specially prepared program booklet with five articles about the Old State House and Gulesian.

The audience itself in some ways was as interesting as the program, though its size was limited by code restrictions and space limitations to 75 people. A number of the guests had direct connections to Gulesian. Donald Tellalian, who played an important role in restoration of the Old State House, declared afterwards: "We are so pleased that the Bostonian Society in collaboration with NAASR hosted the evening at the Old State House, bringing together extended Gulesian family from New York, Vermont and Maine, and others."

One of these guests was Adrienne Richardson, whose great-grandfather was Moses Gulesian's brother Joseph. The Richardsons have inherited interesting documents concerning the Gulesians, including a property list of the Gulesian family from Marash, and an oil painting by Armand Ishlemeji. The latter, given to them by the wife of the architect Dudley S. Gulesian, is thought to be a portrait of Moses (see



A possible portrait of Moses Gulesian, awaiting final identification, belonging to Gulesian relative Adrienne Richardson (photo courtesy John and Adrienne Richardson)

accompanying image), but the family is looking for confirmation of this.

There were non-Armenians present whose lives had been touched by Gulesian, too. Cameron Peters, chief financial officer of 24M Technologies, Inc., related during the reception for the event that his lithium-ion battery startup company moved into an old building at 130 Brookline Street in Cambridge, that the Massachusetts Institute of Technology had bought and refurbished. Gulesian's name was written on the door. The building was probably initially a workshop garage in the 1920s. Gulesian lost the building to foreclosure during the Depression.

Peters grew interested in the history of the building and Gulesian, and prepared a PowerPoint presentation for the 55 employees of his company. Peters said that among other things Gulesian erected the first electric street lighting along Huntington Avenue in Boston and the first parking garage in Boston.

Dr. Jack Keverian, Professor Emeritus at Drexel University (and brother of the late Speaker of the House of Massachusetts) and his wife Dorothy, Sheriff Peter Koutoujian, members of the Board of Directors of the Bostonian Society and NAASR, and representatives of the Tekeyan Cultural Association were part of the audience that evening.

After the event, Sarah Ignatius, executive director of NAASR, declared: "Part of what was so special for us was partnering with the Bostonian Society in a new setting and talking about how Armenian immigrants had been crucial to Boston's own history and preservation. We hope to follow up with other Armenians who similarly have played a strong role in the development of Boston's history."



Donald Tellalian speaking, with Brian LeMay to his right.

wright and Shakespeare scholar, and a lecturer at the Harvard Extension. Van Dyke managed to make Gulesian's personality and life immediate and accessible through a very lively five-minute presentation. She found Gulesian to be a man with a "romantic soul and an iron will." Born in the Ottoman Empire under Turkish rule, after coming to the US all alone at the age of 17, he was well placed to make Americans understand what Turkish rule really meant in those days.

He became prominent in Boston society after succeeding in business, with a copperworks factory in the South End, and real estate holdings. He made the copper replicas of the statues on top of the Old State House. In 1905, he intervened to try to save the historic ship Old Ironsides, and this turned into a national movement which led to its preservation.

Gulesian helped save many thousands of lives by organizing the Friends of Armenia, working alongside Clara Barton, Julia Ward Howe, Alice

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St. Petersburg, Russia & Armenia

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Arts & Living

Armenian Youth Event Commemorates Armenian Genocide Through Music

NEW MILFORD, N.J. – A youth event in commemoration of the Armenian Genocide, “100 Years and Beyond: Culture. Honor. Celebration,” featuring live Armenian music by Yerakouyn Band and DJ Shant will take place on Saturday, April 23, starting at 8 p.m., at the Hovnanian School, in an event sponsored by the Knights of Vartan Mid Atlantic Lodge and the Hovnanian Alumni Association.

Yerakouyn Band, which is composed of members Shant Massoyan (lead vocals, dumbek, shvi), Raffi Rachdouni (piano, backup vocals) and Raffi Massoyan (oud, backup vocals, dhol), play folk Armenian music to a new generation of Armenians. Citing Onnik Dinkjian, Adiss Harmandian, Ara Dinkjian, John Berberian and Oum Kalthoum as their influences, the trio has made a name for itself on the East Coast since the founding of their band in 2011.

“We are young Armenians trying to keep our culture alive through music,” said members of Yerakouyn.

The organizing committee, including Taleen Babayan, Anoush Gulian, Anahid Kaprielian and Jirayr Khorozian, under the guidance of the Knights of Vartan, felt it was important to host this event for the second year in a row because of the enthusiasm that was sparked during the centennial concert last spring.

“It is important to focus on the youth, who as the next generation of Armenians will carry forward the history, culture and language of our people,” said Khorozian, a member of Knights of Vartan.

“One Hundred Years and Beyond” will take place on Saturday, April 23, 2016 from 8 p.m. to midnight at The Hovnanian School, 817 River Road, New Milford, New Jersey. All those attending must be at least 18, and to drink, 21 and older

Visit www.100yearsandbeyond.ticketbud.com for tickets and more information.

Two Books of Poetry by Helene Pilibosian Published Posthumously

WATERTOWN – Ohan Press of Watertown has just published two books of poetry by the late Helene Pilibosian nearly four months after her death.

Pilibosian was a former editor of the *Armenian Mirror-Spectator*.

The two new collections of poems are *Candor Candy: Global Poems*, and *Planet Tome Reborn*. They have been released on Amazon.

In *Candor Candy: Global Poems*, Pilibosian presents her love for art, music, nature, and travel in poems with an international flavor. Her travels take her readers all over the world, and then across America, stopping at The Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York to admire a khatchkar, an Armenian cross-stone. Her Armenian roots are also evident in poems like “For That Iris”:

I grew up with the minor key,
sharagans in church
the essence of Armenian history
condensed into a few notes,

But she acknowledges being a child of the West in “Midnight Performs”:

I will say
that I am from the East,
my features proof of this.
But often I speak more like
a person of the West
an independent gal
who cultivates her niche.

see POETRY, page 12



Emma Grigoryan b. 1943, “Musicians”, Oil on Canvas, 20 x 16 inches.

Gallery Z Exhibit Features Works by Artist Emma Grigoryan

PROVIDENCE, R.I. – Works by Emma Grigoryan are among pictures exhibited at Gallery Z’s exhibition titled “Armenian Artists: 101 Years.” The exhibit will run through April 30.

One year after the Centennial of the Armenian Genocide, Armenian artists continue to flourish as the Armenian people continue to survive. Last year at this time, Studio Z featured an extensive commemorative multimedia exhibit of not only many works of art by a broad selection of well known Armenian artists but also archival material and historical propaganda affiches and posters, theatrical readings, poetry recitations, live music and theatre, documentary film screenings, artist talks, lectures and continuous video footage. This large undertaking curated by owner Berge Zobian was extremely well attended by both non-Armenian and Armenian members of the community.



Grigorian, Alexander O. b.1927 d. 2007, “Untitled”, Oil on Canvas, 20 x 16 inches.

Fine Arts and Theatrical institute (1969). She became a member of the Union of fine Artists in Armenia in 1971.

Her paintings have been exhibited worldwide in both group and solo in a series of shows: New York, Paris, Moscow, Toronto, Boston, New Mexico, Belgium, Beirut, Iraq, Armenia and Yugoslavia.

“...On her canvases, paints turn to color, a world of hope and vibration...the viewer will see from the early savage beauty of Armenia to today’s sophisticated and refined world...a pubescence of color, line and rhythm.” Rafael Petrosyan, Artist, 1997, New York

In addition, Gallery Z displays an ever-changing extensive and diverse selection in salon style of original Fine Art works (paintings, photographs, drawings, mixed see GALLERY Z, page 12

Uncovering Unknown Masterpieces of Armenia’s First Great Mystic Poet

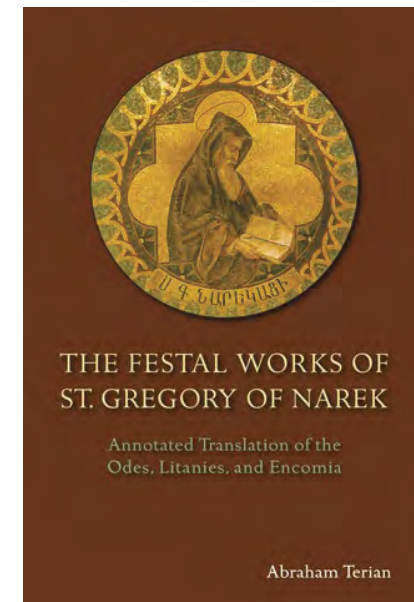
By Arthur Hagopian

JERUSALEM – A thousand years ago, a monk in a distant monastery in the western Armenian province of Reshdunik, picked up a reed pen and began etching out what would later become known as the first great Armenian mystic and liturgical poetry.

Krikor Naregatsi (Gegory of Nareg), who spent his entire life in the monastery, died at the relatively young age of 50, but what he has left behind has outlived his time and age: as long as one Armenian heart beats anywhere in this world, his inspired odes and lamentations will continue to find an echo there.

His writings, described by critics as “literary masterpieces in both lyrical verse and narrative,” have only been known in their original golden *Grapar* (Classical Armenian) to a select cadre of Armenian scholars, an oversight now boldly atoned for by the eminent expert on Medieval Armenian literature, Dr. Abraham Terian.

His “groundbreaking” and “magnificent” new book, *The Festal Works of St Gregory of Narek* (461 pp, the Liturgical Press, Minnesota, 2016) is the first translation (embellished with 54 pages of introduction and an array of explanatory notes) in any language, of the surviving corpus of Naregatsi’s festal works. Terian’s mellifluous



English and his mastery of *Grapar*, have made this onerous task a joy and a celebration.

Like all other Jerusalem Armenians, Terian’s first encounter with Naregatsi occurred at a tender age, when at the graduation ceremony of primary students at the Armenian parish school he, like all his classmates, was handed a copy of a Naregatsi prayer book, the “Aghotamadyan” as a parting gift, to be his guide and inspiration for the days ahead.

The tradition continues to this day. I’ve kept my own copy for half a century, and remember a line from one of Naregatsi’s most poignant odes, his magnificent of God: “The darkness of the night cannot eclipse the glory and grandeur of your dominion” (my translation).

With his new book Terian, who has won plaudits from various parts of the world, the latest his acceptance as a fellow see NAREG, page 14



ARTS & LIVING

Two Books of Poetry by Helene Pilibosian Published Posthumously

POETRY, from page 11

She eventually returns to her native Boston, only to observe the chaos of the Boston Marathon bombing in "Clam Chowder Manners":

But I forgot clam chowder manners
on Boylston street that day
when the marathon exploded.
My memory has dulled
around the edges of the names.

In *Planet Tome Reborn*, Helene Pilibosian continues her sci-fi poetry tale from her previous book, *A New Orchid Myth*, in which the



Helene Pilibosian

Everydream family, Amethyst, Granite, and daughter Taralee, come to Earth from the plan-

et Tome to start a new life in New York City. In this sequel, the Everydreams are in Boston, a grown Taralee meets Ted, whom she later marries, and Granite advises people on Tome to prepare to start a business that grinds sunflower seeds into a powder for bread in anticipation of human immigration. The story is told in a highly metaphorical, surreal way, with an obvious love of art often expressed through clever rhymes, as in "After The Dinner Table":

Green window-sheen
as I perceive red walls.
Black-slack for the servant's blouse.
The chimes of color evolve
in Matisse's Fauve.
Flat perspectives drive
my mind's pith and rind.

Both books are available through Amazon.com in paperback and Kindle versions.

Pilibosian's poems have appeared in many American and Armenian literary journals and anthologies in the US and abroad. Some of her poems were finalists in literary competitions or won first prizes and honorable mentions. Her early work has been cited in the *Greenwood Encyclopedia of Multiethnic American Literature*.

Ohan Press, a private bilingual micropress, has published 14 books of both prose and poetry, including Helene's autobiography *My Literary Profile: A Memoir*, awarded honorable mention by the New England Book Festival.

Gallery Z Exhibit Features Works by Armenian Artists

GALLERY Z, from page 11

media, glass, sculptures, assemblages, etchings, lithographs) from Gallery Z's deep stable of almost 400 Fine Artists, locally, nationally or internationally renowned, along with fine ceramics and pottery, jewelry and Armenian and international handicrafts.

The adjacent "Italy" room expands the vibrant local Federal Hill Italian cultural atmosphere with "Dreamy Venice", filled

with luminous handmade small Murano glass gifts (paperweights, ornaments, vessels, perfume bottles) and Murano glass jewelry (pendants, necklaces, bracelets, rings, earrings, watches, hair clips), all personally chosen and imported from Venice by Gallery Associate Linda Kamajian in a sparkling rainbow of colors. These are set amidst Fine Art paintings and photographs related to Italy or by some of Gallery Z's established Italian-American Fine Artists.



Hagopian, Hagop b.1923 d. 2013, "Landscape #29" Oil on Canvas, 39 x 28 inches

Boston Concert Features U.S. Premiere of Work by Living Armenian Woman Composer

Piano Concerto by Armenian Woman Composer Geghuni Chitchyan



The Ip Piano School will host its 23rd Annual Concerto Concert at the Boston University Tsai Performance Center on Sunday, April 24, 2016, at 3 p.m. The concert will feature the U.S. premiere of a piano concerto composed by living Armenian woman composer Geghuni Chitchyan. Although the concert generally includes students of the Ip Piano School, Founder and Music Director Winnie S.C. Ip invites a few outstanding guests to join the program every year. This year, one of the outside performers will be 10 year old Ethan Kasparian Weisman.

Ethan will perform Chitchyan's Piano Concerto, which he began learning from a handwritten score at age 8. He explains the piece as follows, "If I could use one word to describe this composition it would be 'bouncy.' It goes up and down from major to minor and incorporates the themes in so many 'bouncy' ways." The piece was given to him by his teacher, Arminé Karapetian Donato, who at age 12 presented the first public performance of the piece with the Armenian Symphony Orchestra in Yerevan, Armenia. When asked why she chose this particular piece for Ethan, Karapetian Donato replied, "I knew that Ethan had what it takes to play this piece the way the composer envisioned it. His attention to impeccable technicality, beautiful sonority, and dancing tempos is remarkable!"

Prolific, prize-winning composer, Geghuni Chitchyan, was born in Leninakan (Gyumri) Armenia and published her first piece when she was 10. Fellow Armenian composer Aram Khachaturian praised her work as "worthy of wide recognition both in our country and abroad." Chitchyan's Piano Concerto was written in 1984 and is meant to inspire young performers. "The premiere of my Piano Concerto in the U.S. is a very joyful and exciting event for me," says Chitchyan. When asked what her source of inspiration was for this concerto, Chitchyan replied, "The artist should always keep in mind the next generation, and the spiritual development of growing young people. Besides my hopes that this musical composition will inspire the young performers, I believe it also will perfect their skills, as well as enrich their feelings and attitude." When asked what others can expect to gain from hearing her composition, Chitchyan said, "It has always left a warm, joyful pleasant impression on the listeners. If the audience feels the same this time in the U.S., I will be very happy."

To purchase tickets for the 23rd Annual Concerto Concert, please call 617-542-9129 or email Winnie@ippianoschool.com. General admission is \$20 and there is free parking at the rear of the Tsai Performance Center.

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PRESENTS

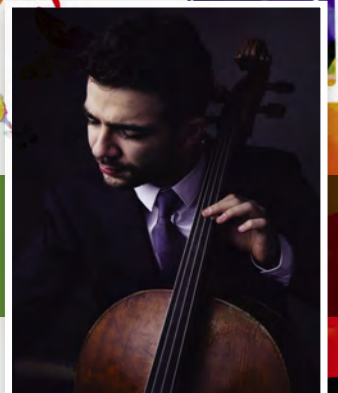
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ARTS & LIVING

Shushi Dance Ensemble Performs in Glendale

By Kevork Keushkerian

GLENDALÉ – When 49 dancers took to the stage for more than two hours on Sunday, April 10, at the John Wayne Performing Arts Center of Glendale High School, they thrilled those gathered. The Armenian folk dances were accompanied by vocal renditions by famous artists from Armenia, New York and Los Angeles. The theme was appropriately chosen to be “Remember 1915 and Rise” on this 101st anniversary of the Armenian Genocide.

The dance and song performance was organized by Tekeyan Cultural Association’s Glendale-Pasadena Chapter and was held under the auspices of Archbishop Hovnan Derderian, the Primate of the Western Diocese of the Armenian Church of North America.

This was the fifth stop of Shushi Dance Ensemble’s tour last year, which included performances in Moscow, Yerevan, Stepanakert and New York City. Shushi Dance Ensemble was founded in 1992, under the auspices of New York’s St. Vartan Cathedral. In 1995, the ensemble adopted the name Shushi, on the occasion of the third anniversary of the liberation of that ancient capital city in Artsakh.

Seta Paskalian-Kantardjian is the dynamic artistic director and choreographer of Shushi Dance Ensemble. Under her visionary leadership, the group has flourished and grown to 110 dancers of all ages, who have sacrificed many precious hours daily, to bring this Dance Ensemble to its current professional level. Andranik Mouradian is the famed musical director of the group.

In 2010, Shushi Dance Ensemble made a historic trip across the Middle East, performing in Amman, Jordan, Beirut, Lebanon and the Syrian cities of Damascus and Aleppo. The performance in Aleppo was especially significant as it took place with spectacular fireworks in the ancient citadel of the city for 4,000 spectators. Just two years later in 2012, Shushi Dance



A dancer is hoisted waving the flag of Artsakh.

Ensemble as vocalists like Artsakh-born Andre, who had just come from Stepanakert a day before, and Armenian-born Leyla Saribekyan, who had just come from Yerevan three days ago, both expressed their solidarity with the heroic fighters on the Artsakh border with Azerbaijan and called for unity on all fronts to defeat the enemy. This is a day of celebration, they added, to evoke the Armenian spirit to confront any obstacle in the path of victory.

Other vocalists participating in the performance were Hasmik Mekhanejian and Anahit Zakaryan from New York City, as well as Salbi

Mailyan, Armen Hovhannisyan, and Ruben Telunts from Los Angeles. Especially impressive were the final two songs, Kilikia and Hayastan, with the participation of all the vocalist and Shushi dancers, which marked the highlight of the evening.

The famed, multi-talented composer Ara Gevorgyan, who had just come from Yerevan three days ago, was the guest of honor that afternoon. The singers and dancers mesmerized the 1,300 spectators with their dazzling perfor-

mances, which resulted in an extended standing ovation from the audience. The 34 dances and songs were augmented with a background video presentation of pictures, appropriately depicting the theme of the song or the dance in progress, so the members of the audience would relate to the story behind that specific item performed.

During the curtain call, Primate Archbishop Hovnan Derderian and Gevorgyan were invited to the stage to express their thoughts. Derderian called the evening performance a volcanic explosion of songs and dances, which made all of us proud of our rich cultural heritage. He called upon Paskalian-Kantardjian to continue her important work of instilling the Armenian spirit in the minds and souls of the young generations of Armenians in this remote part of our Diaspora.

Gevorgyan, who had volunteered to fight in Artsakh and was rejected due to the high number of volunteers, stressed the call for unity by his colleagues and expressed his pleasant surprise to see four of his nephews among the guest dancers of the evening. He was later presented with a plaque of appreciation from the Tekeyan Cultural Association’s Glendale-Pasadena Chapter.

Paskalian-Kantardjian was also presented with a certificate of commendation from Ara Najarian, the former Mayor and current Councilmember of the City of Glendale. It was in recognition of her passion and dedication in promoting the Armenian culture through talented performing arts.

Following the performance, the dancers and the artists were invited for a cast party by the organizing committee, which took place at Tekeyan Cultural Association’s Beshgeturian Center in Altadena. The sponsors of the event were also invited. Kevork Keushkerian introduced the members of the organizing committee, whose hard work and dedication was greatly appreciated.

After food was served, the dancing not only resumed but took to new heights by the guest dancers, as there were no restraints to impress the audience. It was both impromptu and informal, but excited everyone in attendance.



Singer Leyla Saribekyan and two dancers

Ensemble toured South America to perform to packed audiences in Buenos Aires, Argentina and Montevideo, Uruguay.

The Glendale performance on April 10, aside from being a song and dance exhibition of the highest caliber, was a show of determi-



Singer Andre, center, with dancers in traditional costumes



An impressive lineup at the conclusion of the program

Sahan Arzruni: Pianist in Review

By Rorianne Schrade

NEW YORK (*New York Concert Review*) – Those who say all piano recitals are alike these days have certainly not heard Sahan Arzruni, at least not his most recent New York recital to benefit a senior's home in Armenia. One would be hard-pressed to find duplication of such an evening anywhere – from the unusual Armenian repertoire to the scholarly, often humorous, commentary which made the evening almost more lecture-recital than recital.

The concert took place at Merkin Hall, at the Kaufman Music Center, on April 5. It was a benefit for the Fund for Armenian Relief and was titled “Together for Armenia: A Benefit Concert for the Vanadzor Old Age Home.”

Arzruni is a passionate Armenian pianist who has dedicated much of his extensive concertizing to promoting cultural awareness of Armenian music and benefitting Armenian charities. He is a persuasive advocate, and one left the hall marveling that this body of repertoire has remained still so largely untapped.

The concert opened with a short piece by Arno Babadjanian (1921-1983), the composer's doleful *Elegy* (after Sayat Nova), inspired in 1978 by grief over the death of Armenian composer, Aram Khachaturian. It is an accessible, heart-on-sleeve piece, with some of its brooding harmonies reminiscent of Tango composer Astor Piazzolla (and if that seems a stretch from Armenia to Argentina, it isn't – Babadjanian did actually compose a beautiful Tango himself and the two musical traditions have had interesting cross-pollination).

The next work was a set entitled *Yenovk* (in honor of the artist *Yenovk der Hagopian*) by Alan Hovhaness (1911-2000). Hovhaness was known as an eclectic American composer who delighted in many cultures, but he particularly treasured his Armenian heritage on his father's side. He was extremely prolific, so maybe it shouldn't be surprising that we still have not



Sahan Arzruni

exhausted possible premieres of his works sixteen years after his death, but it was still exciting to hear Arzruni, who also performed the World Premiere of *Yenovk* in California in this complete version, now giving the set its New York Premiere. The six movements opened with a *Fantasy*, rather mesmerizing as a chant projected through repeated notes, and followed with *Canzona I*, *Jhala*, *Canzona II*, *Ballata*, and *Fugue*. The set combined folk elements of drone basses, stark unaccompanied solo lines, tremolando effects, and dervish-like frenzies that transported one to an exotic terrain far from Manhattan. Occasionally the journey was interrupted by what seemed some unevenness in the hall piano (which does become a distracting problem with all the balalaika-type repeated notes), but Arzruni held it all together with impressive command and passionate commitment.

Also by Hovhaness were the *Five Invocations to Vahagn* (New York premiere) with Arzruni joined by percussionist Adam Rosenblatt, who played drums, gongs, cymbals, a thunder sheet, and a conch shell (a fittingly noisy assemblage for Vahagn, god of fire and war). Arzruni elicited laughter as he gestured to the instruments asking, “what is that?” – an assortment to wake up the most jaded audience – but all comedy aside, these were colorful and dramatic pieces.

Even more remarkable chronologically than

the Hovhaness premieres was the world premiere of music by Kristapor Kara-Mourza (1853-1902), his *Potpourri on Armenian Songs* (1872). Valuable from a musicological perspective perhaps more than musical, this work of Kara-Mourza was some of the first Armenian music notated for piano. True to a disclaimer by Arzruni that it is “a piece of kitsch,” it was replete with “urban folk” tunes of an adulterated sort. The medley was nonetheless fascinating in the context of the rest of the program, an important piece of the historic picture.

After Intermission came music by a far more famous Armenian composer, Aram Khachaturian (1903-1978). His *Chant-Poème* was given a beautiful performance by 11-year-old violinist Simon Hagopian-Rogers, accompanied by Arzruni at the piano. One expects prodigies today to dazzle with technical facility, but what was impressive here was the young performer's grasp of the rhapsodic feeling of the piece. Already performing internationally, this violinist will certainly be a young artist to watch.

With a child performer, exotic instruments and some comedic touches thrown in, Arzruni was ready for even the most attention-deficit audience – and yet they were all just the right counterbalance to his serious and detailed scholarship. Exemplifying that scholarship, and of greatest weight on the program, were Khachaturian's *Recitatives and Fugues* (world

premiere as a complete set). In 1968 Khachaturian added recitatives to seven fugues he had composed in his younger days and had rediscovered decades later. Similar in format to *Preludes and Fugues* by any number of composers, the resulting set is a valuable addition to Khachaturian's body of piano works. At 25 minutes in duration and rather cerebral listening at times, they demand much from an audience, but one couldn't help observing that Arzruni had drawn a particularly attentive audience. The pieces reflected some influence of Shostakovich (especially in the *giocoso* sections, as in number 3), some of Bach (naturally), and even of Rachmaninoff (more in the Recitative sections, especially in number 2), but these works stand on their own and warrant further playing. Arzruni is to be congratulated for pulling off this very demanding achievement.

To cap off the program Arzruni fittingly presented *Armenian Dances* by Komitas (1869-1935), often regarded as the father of Armenian music. These are what Arzruni called “re-creations” (not compositions exactly, but not arrangements), and they included *Yeranki* (from Yerevan), *Hed ou Arach* (from Garin), and *Shoror* (from Moush). They closed the program with an affirmation of Armenian music's roots, eliciting an encore of the *Nocturne in E-flat, Op. 9, No. 2* by Chopin, an honorary Armenian for the evening. A grateful audience will surely return for more.

Unknown Masterpieces of Armenia's First Mystic Poet

NAREG, from page 11
academician (as an “orientalist”) by the Ambrosian Academy of Milan, escorts us into a new dimension of spirituality.

His skill in penetrating what Harvard professor James Russell calls the “extremely sophisticated content and difficult language” of Nareg is particularly remarkable.

“His work is more than a monument of meticulous scholarship,” Russell says. “The work is of such a high standard that it is unlikely to be equaled, much less superseded.”

Naregatsi, a 10th-century Armenian poet, mystical philosopher, theologian and saint of the Armenian church, was born into a family of writers. He is considered “Armenia's first great poet.” In token of his unique achievements, Pope Francis declared him a Doctor of the Universal Church in February last year.

“Saint Gregory knew how to express the sentiments of your people more than anyone,” he said in a statement addressed to the Armenian Church.

“He gave voice to the cry, which became a prayer of a sinful and sorrowful humanity, oppressed by the anguish of its powerlessness, but illuminated by the splendor of God's love and open to the hope of his salvific intervention, which is capable of transforming all things,” the statement added.

(Commenting on the Pope's momentous ecumenical move, Terian recalls that “while Armenians were about to canonize their martyred saints of a hundred years ago, the Papal declaration reminded them of one of their saints who died a thousand years ago. This should imply that identity and perpetuity for

Armenians lies not only in the collective remembrance of their recent past, however tragic, but also in their centuries-old Christian heritage.”)

The significance of Terian's latest oeuvre, a timely token of that heritage, cannot be understated. Were it not for his polished and inspired translation, the anthology of Naregatsi's unparalleled liturgical masterpieces would have otherwise been lost to us.

As UCLA Professor of Armenian Studies S. Peter Cowe notes, Terian “has placed us in his debt again by transmitting these pearls of mediaeval Armenian poetry from the preserve of a small group of experts into the public domain through his accurate idiomatic translation and helpful notes.”

Theo Maarten van Lint, Calouste Gulbenkian professor of Armenian studies at Oxford University, for whom Terian's book is “magnificent, groundbreaking” goes so far as to describe Naregatsi's work as “an act of Divine grace.”

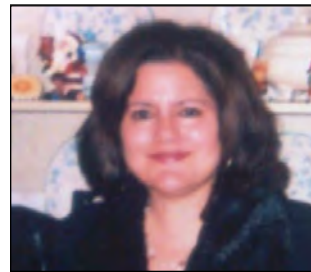
“I go up to Jerusalem

“To that city built by God

“To that beautifully built temple . . .” cries out Naregatsi in one of the odes translated by Terian, giving tongue to a universal yearning for the ethereal.

More than any other geographical or metaphorical entity, Jerusalem remains forever the symbol of that longing.

For Terian, and all the Armenians who grew up in the Old City, trod its cobblestoned alleys and drank its waters, Jerusalem is more than a place in the heart. It is where life begins, where humanity is born and rejuvenated, physically and spiritually.



Recipe Corner

by Christine Vartanian Datian

Beef and Bean Enchiladas

INGREDIENTS

1 1/2 pounds ground beef
1 medium onion, chopped
1 can (1 lb.) vegetarian refried beans
2 large cloves garlic, minced
1 cup green chili salsa (or salsa of your choice)
1/3 cup taco sauce
2 cans (10 oz. each) enchilada sauce
1 teaspoon cumin
1 teaspoon chili powder
1 teaspoon garlic powder
1/2 teaspoon dried red pepper flakes
1/2 teaspoon black pepper
1/2 teaspoon sea salt
Dash of Tabasco or hot sauce (more to taste)
Canola oil
12 corn tortillas
2-3 cups shredded Cheddar cheese or cheese of your choice
Sour cream, chopped black olives, chopped green onions

PREPARATION:

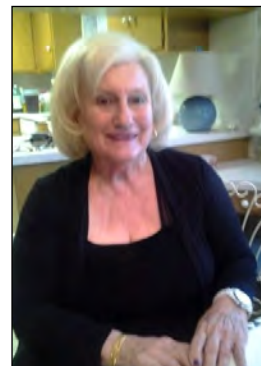
Pre-heat oven to 350 degrees. In a large pan, sauté the beef and onions together until the meat is browned and onions are soft; drain well.

Stir in the refried beans, garlic, green chili salsa, and taco sauce, and heat until bubbly. Add remaining spices and Tabasco or hot sauce to taste and mix until all ingredients are combined.

Pour half the enchilada sauce into an ungreased, shallow 3-quart baking dish. Pour some oil (about a 1/2 inch) into a small frying pan and heat; dip tortillas one at a time in the hot oil for a minute to soften and drain quickly on paper towels.

When ready to assemble, place about 1/3 cup meat and bean mixture on each tortilla; roll to enclose filling and place seam-side down in the sauce in the baking dish. Pour remaining enchilada sauce over all tortillas and top with the cheese. Bake uncovered for 25 minutes or until heated through and the cheese is melted. Serve sour cream, black olives, and chopped green onions on the side or as garnish.

Note: You may cover and refrigerate enchiladas for up to one day before baking; if taken directly from refrigerator, increase baking time up to 45 minutes. Serves 6-8.



(Alice Vartanian is a long-time resident of Fresno, CA, and the mother of three children, including Steven Vartanian and Philip Vartanian of Fresno, Christine Vartanian Datian of Las Vegas, and grandmother to two grandsons, Brian and Justin Vartanian. She was born in Lowell, MA, and is the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Levon Sarkisian. She was happily married to the late Arthur Vartanian of Fresno, and is a member of the Holy Trinity Armenian Apostolic Church and Trinity Guild. She is an accomplished pianist who loves music, traveling, gardening, cooking, reading, and spending time with her beloved family and friends. She has made this delicious enchilada recipe for over 45 years for two generations of Vartanians in Fresno. She is pictured here in her lovely Fresno, CA kitchen.)

Boston Armenians to Host 'United with Artsakh' Program April 29

WATERTOWN – On Friday, April 29, the “United with Artsakh” program, an all-Boston concert to benefit Armenians of Artsakh will take place at the Armenian Cultural and Educational Center, 47 Nichols Ave. The program will start at 7:30 p.m.

Following the recent large-scale act of aggression by the Azeri regime against the citizens of Artsakh (Nagorno-



Jasmin Atabekian

Karabakh or NKR), that republic's armed forces demonstrated their determination and resolve in defending their ancestral homeland. As a result, the enemy suffered hundreds of casualties and approximately \$170 million in military hardware losses.

We all are too familiar with the atrocities committed by Azeri troops on children and the elderly, a pattern that has continued since the Sumgait and Baku pogroms during the fall of the Soviet Union. Unfortunately, the defense of our homeland did not come cheaply. Many young soldiers were lost, as did peaceful, unarmed civilians, during the unprovoked attack.

While far away from the front lines, the Armenians of

Boston, along with other Armenians worldwide, stand united with our brothers and sisters in Artsakh and Armenia. However, we can and should do more. There is an urgent need for financial support to address various medical and humanitarian needs there. The Nagorno-Karabagh Ministry of Finance has set up special bank accounts to solicit donations from across the world. We would like to do our part by contributing to this fund. To that end, we are organizing an all-Boston concert, featuring a number of artists and musicians from the local community. All parties have donated their time and services, and the Armenian Cultural and Educational Center has provided the Hovnanian Hall free of charge for this event.

The list of performers is growing, as is the list of the event sponsors. As of now, the event is co-sponsored by the Armenian Cultural and Educational Center, ARF Sardarabad Gomideh, Leola Sassouni and Shushi chapters of the ARS, the AYF Greater Boston Nejdeh Chapter, Hamazkayin-Boston, Boston Homenetmen, St. Stephen's Armenian Apostolic Church and School and the Tekeyan Cultural Association. The performers' list includes: Jasmine Atabekyan, Arev Ensemble, John Berberian Ensemble, Hamazkayin Erebouni Dance Ensemble, Sevag Khatchadourian, Maroukhian Trio, Gegham Margarian, Meghri Choir, Shahan Necessian, Markos Shahbazyan and Zangakner Children's Choir. We will maintain an up-to-date list of co-sponsors and performers on Facebook.

One hundred percent of the funds collected through this benefit concert will go to the NKR Ministry of Finance's bank account to support fellow Armenians in need. Plan to attend and show your support but if one cannot attend, consider a donation. Better

yet, attend the show and make a donation.

In addition, there will be letters on hand for the families of soldiers to be signed by all in attendance which will be delivered to these families. Visit www.itsmyseat.com/artsakh/ or call Tatul Badalian at (617) 331-0426 to purchase tickets and/or make a donation.



John Berberian Ensemble



Hamazkayin Boston's Erebouni Dance Ensemble

Balakian Speaks about Kazan's Film 'America, America' at Diocese

NEW YORK – More than 100 people attended Prof. Peter Balakian's discussion, titled “Hollywood and the Armenian Genocide,” at the Diocesan Center on Friday, April 8. The event was hosted by the Development department of the Eastern Diocese of the Armenian Church of America.

Central to his talk was the screening of the first part of renowned director Elia Kazan's 1963 film, “America, America,” which portrays the 1890s massacres against the Armenians and the persecution of Greeks in the Ottoman Empire.

The film centers on the journey of Greek protagonist Stavros Topouzoglou, who dreams of leaving his Anatolian village and moving to the United States, and features Armenian characters as part of the milieu of the Ottoman Empire.

“This film is a devastating critique of the Ottoman Empire in its last phase,” said Professor Balakian. “The Greek and Armenian synergy of the characters and their interactions are very touching.”

Balakian noted that according to Kazan, “America, America” was his greatest work. The film, which blends memoir and fiction, is based

on Kazan's Greek uncle, who fled the violence against Christian minorities in the Ottoman Empire and resettled in the United States. Professor Balakian raised the question of why the film never received a modicum of historical context and spoke of the film's revival, led by Oscar-winning director Martin Scorsese.

“‘America, America’ is about Turkish wholesale killings of Christians,” he said. “Kazan has a breakthrough here, and we need to ask why this film hasn't been properly understood because it is a rich piece of cinematic art ripe for scholarship.”

Professor Balakian shared his essay, “The Land of Shame,” from his new book of poetry and essays, *Vise and Shadow*, which reflects on Kazan's film and the Armenian Genocide.

Concluding his discussion, Professor Balakian opened the floor to questions and comments, which stimulated discussion about the Armenian Genocide and its portrayal in film



Professor Balakian during his discussion of “America, America”



Featuring:
Jasmine Atabekyan, Arev Ensemble, John Berberian Ensemble, Hamazkayin Erebouni Dance Ensemble, Sevag Khatchadourian, Gegham Margarian, Meghri Choir, Shahan Necessian, Markos Shahbazyan and Zangakner Children's Choir

UNITED WITH ARTSAKH

An all-Boston Concert to Benefit the Armenians of Artsakh

Friday, April 29, 7:30 PM

ACEC, Hovnanian Hall, 47 Nichols Avenue, Watertown

100% of proceeds to go to support those in need in Artsakh

Sponsored by ARF, ARS, AYF, Hamazkayin, Homenetmen, St. Stephen's School and Church and Tekeyan Cultural Association

Tickets: \$30

Tickets purchased online at
www.itsmyseat.com/artsakh/
or by phone at 617.331.0426

Additional donations strongly encouraged



and the arts in general. Balakian signed copies of his books and conversation continued throughout the evening.

Balakian, the Donald M. and Constance H. Rebar Professor of Humanities at Colgate University, has written widely on the Armenian Genocide. His books include the New York Times bestsellers *Black Dog of Fate* and *The Burning Tigris*. His latest book of poetry and essays, *Vise and Shadow*, was released last year.

“Professor Balakian's discussion was not only timely, but also evoked an important conversation about a piece of cinematic art that has been overlooked until now,” said Taleen Babayan, who leads the Development department. “The Development department is grateful to him in leading such an engaging talk during the month of Armenian Genocide commemorations and shedding insight into the Armenian cultural and literary world with our community.”

ARTS & LIVING

CALENDAR

CONNECTICUT

APRIL 23, 2016 Annual Armenian Genocide Commemoration. Connecticut State Capitol; Flag Raising at 11:00 a.m.; Commemoration in the House Chambers at 11:30 a.m. Keynote Speaker, Shant Mardirossian, Chairman Emeritus, Near East Foundation.

MASSACHUSETTS

APRIL 23 — Procession and flag raising for 101st anniversary of Armenian Genocide at Lowell City Hall, 10 a.m., followed by a reception and cultural program by area schoolchildren at nearby Masonic Center. Sponsored by the Armenian National Committee of Merrimack Valley & Armenian Genocide Commemorative Committee of Merrimack Valley. For the march, gather at corner of Merrimack & John Streets at 9:30 a.m.

APRIL 23 — Saturday, A prayer service for the Armenian Community, 4 p.m., Cathedral of the Holy Cross, 1400 Washington St., Boston. First ever Catholic Archdiocese of Boston Commemoration of the Armenian Genocide. Hosted by Cardinal Sean P. O'Malley, Catholic Archdiocese of Boston. With the participation of Archbishop Khajag Barsamian, Diocese of the Armenian Church of America, Archbishop Oshagan Choloyan, Prelacy of the Armenian Apostolic Church, Armenian Catholic Eparchy of US and Canada. Broadcast live online at www.catholiclive.com and on the Catholic TV Network. (Check local listings.)

APRIL 24 — Sunday, commemoration at the Park, 3 p.m., Armenian Heritage Park, 110 Atlantic Avenue, Boston. We communally honor our shared history, celebrate our triumphant survival and illuminate our bright future. For more info, contact commemorationatthepark@gmail.com

APRIL 29 — United for Artsakh. 7:30 p.m., Armenian Cultural and Educational Center, 47 Nichols Ave., Watertown. The list of performers is growing, as is the list of the event sponsors. As of now, the event is co-sponsored by the Armenian Cultural and Educational Center, ARF Sardarabad Gomideh, Leola Sassouni and Shushi chapters of the ARS, the AYF Greater Boston Nejdeh Chapter, Hamazkayin-Boston, Boston Homenetmen, St. Stephen's Armenian Apostolic Church and School and the Tekeyan Cultural Association. The performers' list includes: Jasmine Atabekyan, Arev Ensemble, John Berberian Ensemble, Hamazkayin Ereboundi Dance Ensemble, Sevag Khatchadourian, Maroukian Trio, Gegham Margarian, Meghri Choir, Shahan Nercessian, Markos Shahbazyan and Zangakner Children's Choir. All proceeds collected through this benefit concert will go to the NKR Ministry of Finance's bank account to support fellow Armenians in need

APRIL 30 — Zangakner Performing Arts Ensemble will present a vocal concert featuring Armenian children at 5 p.m., Ellsworth Theatre, Pine Manor College, Chestnut Hill. New production to pay tribute to mothers and the Motherland. 400 Heath St., Chestnut Hill. Tickets \$25.

APRIL 30 — Armenian / American Dance, Saturday, 7 p.m. - 12 a.m., 1 Market Street, Lawrence, Complimentary Coffee & Dessert, Cash Bar, 50/50 Raffle, Armenian music provided by Jason Naroian Ensemble, American music provided by DJ Kory Sirmaian. Tickets: \$20 in advance; \$25 at the door. Melanee Naroian:(978) 683-0613, Lucy Sirmaian: (978) 683-9121. Sponsored by The Armenian Church at Hye Pointe Women's Guild.

MAY 1 — The Armenian Museum of America (ALMA), 2 p.m., Direct Help for Armenian People (DHAP) and the Amaras Art Alliance are hosting a concert: **"Tribute to Armenia."** Songs will be performed by the finalists of the annual Armenia Youth Talent competition. The concert is dedicated to the 25th anniversary of the independence of the Republic of Armenia. Light refreshments will be served at a reception following the opening. This event is free and open to the public. This event is made possible by a contribution from the Dadourian Foundation.

MAY 2 — St. James Men's Club meeting, with speakers Tom Vartabedian and E. Philip Brown. Vartabedian is a writer and photographer and Brown is a world history teacher and historian. They will speak about their new book, *Armenians of Merrimack Valley*. Social Hour and mezza at 6.15 p.m., Losh Kebab and Kheyma Dinner, 7 p.m. \$15 per person. St. James Armenian Church Charles Mosesian Cultural and Youth Center, Keljik Hall, 465 Mount Auburn St., Watertown, MA. Ladies welcome.

MAY 5 — St. Gregory Armenian Church Avak luncheon, noon, Jaffarian Hall, 158 Main St., North Andover. Speaker, Lisa Kouchakdjian, originator, "Love on a Plate." Come share and appreciate some wonderful Armenian recipes. Public invited.

MAY 5 — "Can Feminists Revive a Nation? Afterlife of Armenians in Post-Genocide Turkey." Reception and illustrated talk with MIT Professor Lerna Ekmekcioglu on her new book, *Recovering Armenia: The Limits of Belonging in Post-Genocide Turkey*. 7:30 p.m. Armenian Museum of America, Watertown. Co-sponsored by the Armenian International Women's Association, National Association for Armenian Studies & Research, and Armenian Museum of America. Info: 617-926-0171 or info@aiwainternational.org; 617-489-1610 or orhq@naasr.org.

MAY 7 — The Armenian Apostolic Church at Hye Pointe in Haverhill will have a one-day food festival on Saturday at the church hall. 12:00 to 7:00 p.m. Armenian Pride Food Festival. Armenian Church at Hye Pointe Hall, 110 Main St., Haverhill. Meal Choice of One: Losh/Chicken/Kheyma, with pilaf, salad, and hot/cold garnish Additional children's meal of hot dog & chips: also available will be pastry, choereg, Armenian cheese, and cold drinks.

MAY 7 — Experience Public Art! during ArtWeek Boston. Armenian Heritage Park on the Greenway, Boston. At 1 p.m. - World Labyrinth Day: Walk As One At 1 Together with people in cities and towns worldwide, walk the labyrinth at 1pm joining this annual international initiative of The Labyrinth Society in collaboration with the Labyrinth Guild of New England and Friends of Armenian Heritage Park. For first-time walkers at 12:45pm, an Introduction to walking a labyrinth with Chiara Meghigian Zenati, Certified Labyrinth Facilitator. At 1:30 pm - Reception to View The 2016 Configuration of the Abstract Sculpture Welcome: Nanore Barsoumian, Editor, *Armenian Weekly*; Public Art: Lucas Cowan, Public Art Curator, Rose Kennedy Greenway Conservancy; Personal Perspective: Alin Gregorian, Editor, *Armenian Mirror Spectator*; Tea & Desserts hosted by MEM Tea Imports and Eastern Lamejun Bakers. All are invited.

MAY 12 — Holy Trinity Armenian Church of Greater Boston Presents the Dr. Michael and Joyce Kolligian Distinguished Speaker Series, with John Prendergast, "Genocide and Crimes Against Humanity: Lessons Learned and Hope for the Future." 7 p.m., Charles and Nevert Talanian Cultural Hall, 145 Brattle Street, Cambridge. John is founder of "The Enough Project," an initiative to end genocide and crimes against humanity and co-founder of "The Sentry," a new investigative initiative focused on dismantling the networks financial conflict and atrocities. Reception and book signing to follow talk. Open and free to the public. For further information, contact the Church Office, 617.354.0632.

MAY 14 — RESCHEDULED — Presentation of a book by Dr. Hagop Martin Deranian on the life and legacy of Armenian American pioneer and philanthropist Hagop Bogigian. Saturday, at 3 p.m. at Armenian Cultural Foundation, 441 Mystic Street (Rte. 3) Arlington.

MAY 14 — Sayat Nova Dance Company of Boston continues its 30th anniversary celebrations with a night of song and dance with beloved singer Arabo Spiryan, direct from Armenia. Don't miss out on this night of pure Armenian entertainment. Come and celebrate with us as we sing and dance all night with Arabo. Generous appetizers (mezze) will be provided. Doors open at 7:30 p.m. To be held at St. James Armenian Church, Charles Mosesian Cultural and Youth Center, 465 Mt, Auburn Street, Watertown. Tickets are available by calling Apo at 339-222-2410 or Hagop at 617-780-6295. VIP table seating at \$100/person (includes 1 free drink/person and a bottle of champagne for the table); Premium table seating at \$75/person (includes a bottle of champagne for the table); General seating: \$65. Please reserve your tickets early.

MAY 18 — Chefs Party for Our Park! Benefit for Armenian Heritage Park's Ongoing Care Royal Sonesta Hotel Boston, Cambridge. Celebrate with Boston's Top Chefs, presenting signature dishes inspired by parents, grandparents or mentors for you to taste while you mix, mingle and support a great cause. Advance Reservations only. To be acknowledged in the Evening Thank You, please respond by May 6. To receive an invitation, please email your name and email address to info@ArmenianHeritagePark.org

MAY 21 — Book Tour Schedule for Armenians of the Merrimack Valley. Authors E. Philip Brown and Tom Vartabedian are embarking on a presentation tour and book signing of their new book. Vermette's Market, 6 Pond St., Amesbury, 10-2, book-signing only

MAY 22 — Sunday, 2 p.m., the Armenian Museum of America (ALMA) and the Composer's Union of Armenia are proud to present a concert: **Anmorats Yerker-Unforgettable Songs.** The concert, dedicated to the 90th anniversary of composers Alexander Ajemyan and Khachatur Avetisyan, will feature the voices of Nouné Karapetian, Michael Calmés, Nnrik Nerkararian, and Garo Nichanian, accompanied by Nuné Hakobyan on piano. Maestro Konstantin Petrossian will serve as Music Director for the concert. Light refreshments will be served at a reception following the opening. This event is free and open to the public. The concert is made possible by a contribution from the Dadourian Foundation.

MAY 27 — 65th Annual Armenian Night at the Pops, Featuring Boston Pops Orchestra, Keith Lockhart, Conductor; presenting Edvard Poghossian, cello. Presented by Friends of Armenian Culture Society. Symphony Hall, 301 Mass. Ave., Boston. For tickets and information, visit facsboston.org

JUNE 20 — The Gregory Hintlian Memorial Golf Tournament sponsored by Holy Trinity Armenian Church of Greater Boston at the Marlborough Country Club, Marlborough; Monday, 9:30 a.m., registration; 11 a.m., "Shot Gun." Join us for a day of golf, as a sponsor or just for dinner. Details to follow. For further information, contact the Church Office, 617.354.0632, or email office@htaac.org.

SEPTEMBER 10 — Sayat Nova Dance Company of Boston 30th anniversary gala.

SEPTEMBER 18 — Sunday Afternoon at the Park. For families and friends. Armenian Heritage Park on the Greenway. Boston. 2-4 p.m. All are invited.

SEPTEMBER 30 — OCTOBER 2 — 25th Anniversary Celebration. Armenian International Women's Association. Charles Hotel, Cambridge.

NOVEMBER 15 — Thank You Reception for All Supporters of Armenian Heritage Park. Armenian Cultural and Educational Center. Watertown. 7:30 p.m. During the evening, supporters will receive the Armenian Heritage Park Commemorative Book, which will acknowledge all supporters in the category of giving that combines all their contributions since the campaign's inception. Deadline for first time supporters and for supporters to increase their contribution is September 22. Contributors are tax-deductible as allowed by law. All supporters are invited.

NOVEMBER 19 — Armenian Women's Welfare Association will hold its 40th annual luncheon/auction. Oakley Country Club, 410 Belmont St., Watertown. Details to follow.

DECEMBER 18 — Candlelit Labyrinth Peace Walk, Armenian Heritage Park on the Greenway, Boston. 5-6:30 p.m. All are invited.

NEW YORK

JUNE 4-5 — Tekeyan Cultural Association's Mher Megerdchian Theatrical Group presents the AGBU Satamian Theater Group from LA, in "Funny Money," (in Western Armenian). Written by Ray Cooney. Translated and Directed by Krikor Satamian. Saturday, June 4th, at 8pm and Sunday, June 5th at 4pm at Oradell Elementary School, 350 Propect Avenue Oradell, NJ 07649. Tickets: \$35 & \$50. For tickets please call: Marie Zokian (201) 745-8850, Talar Sesetyan Sarafian 201-240-8541, or Missak Boghosian 212-819-0097.

Readers can submit items for inclusion in the calendar of the Armenian Mirror-Spectator. Calendar items are free. Entries should not be longer than 5 lines. Items will be edited to fit the space, if need be. Feel free to send a photo with the listing. Items should be sent no later than Mondays at noon. Listings should include contact information. Send items to editor@mirrorspectator.com.

COMMENTARY

COMMENTARY

Armenia in the Cauldron of Caucasian Politics

By Edmond Azadian

PART I

Armenia seems to have been destined by history to be located in a geographic area where major political interests and empires clash and where the local population is destined to be beholden perpetually to the consequences of wars, ethnic cleansing and deportations.

Historic accidents have rendered Armenia a landlocked country and therefore subject to pressures, intimidations and blockades. After World War I, had the Allies made good on their promises, Armenians would have had home rule in Cilicia, with a seaport at Alexandretta (Iskenderun). Also, had the Treaty of Sevres been implemented (1920), Wilsonian Armenia had the Port of Trabizon designated as an entrée to Europe and the rest of the world. But with the loss of those opportunities, Armenia has remained vulnerable to outside threats and isolation.

When Armenia was absorbed into the Soviet Union, those geographic limitations lost their significance as the Republic had access to the advantages to which the Union itself was entitled.

But history came to haunt Armenia as soon as it regained its independence and it restored its sovereignty over a portion of its historic territory.

As if time had frozen for 70 years, the wars, hostilities and conflicts which had plagued Armenia between 1918 and 1920, came back with a vengeance.

We are all familiar with the war in Karabagh, the earthquake and blockade by its neighbors, namely Turkey and Azerbaijan.

For the last 25 years Armenia has lived in a precarious situation, which has led to depression and depopulation.

Armenia's independence was also a test of the Diaspora's pretensions and potentials. During the first years of independence, Armenians in the homeland used to brag to Azeris, "If you have oil, we have our Diaspora." Today, no one in Armenia, to my memory, is bragging any more to the Azeris.

Armenia's relations with its neighbors and the latter's relations with each other have shaped the country's destiny. We can evaluate Armenia's current condition and its future within the parameters of those relations. Armenia's neighbors are Azerbaijan, Turkey, Iran and Georgia. Although Russia does not have territorial borders with Armenia, by the sheer size and geopolitical weight, it has become the most influential neighbor. Turkey and Azerbaijan, which have blockaded Armenia, have been on hostile terms with it. Georgia's relation with Armenia has been best described as a "friendly foe," since successive Tbilisi governments have opted to side with Armenia's enemies, both in politics – voting with Azeris and Turks at the UN and other forums – as well as in economic development projects, designing energy pipelines and railways to by-pass Armenia, with the intention of choking the latter economically.

The factors contributing to the implementation of that kind of hostility, the least being perennial Georgian jealousy which is compounded by the political choices that the Tbilisi government has been making since the country's independence – it is veering to join NATO while Armenia, by necessity has opted to remain in the Russian orbit. Therefore, these two nations are caught in a tug-of-war between Russia and the West.

As far as Iran is concerned, Armenia maintains friendly relations, although those relations have not yielded much because of the scarcity of Armenia's resources, and also because of the international sanctions imposed on Iran. Lifting the sanction may boost trade between the two friendly nations.

The Russian Factor: For a long time Armenia was courting the European Union, but with the emergence of the new cold war, whereby the West decided to prevent the ascendance of Russia to its former status of a superpower, polarization emerged and Moscow decided to build its own fortress to counter the European Union and NATO thus Armenia was pulled into Moscow-centered Eurasian Customs Union and the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO), the military alliance with Russia, Belarus and Kazakhstan. Therefore, the political and eco-

nomics policies of Armenia were heavily influenced by the politics of those entities.

In view of some analysts, that was a positive development, but detractors insisted that Armenia gave much more in terms of its sovereignty and that the rewards were not commensurate.

Whether Armenia likes or not, it is perceived by the west as an accessory to the Russian policy. In a recent article in Washington Times (2/26/16), L. Todd Wood states: "Forbes writes, make no mistake: The Russian military presence in Armenia represents a dagger pointed at the heart of NATO as the Armenia-Russian alliance strengthens."

That logic and the political argument is also used by the Turkish Government to vilify Armenia in the West. Just recently, President Recep Tayyip Erdogan stated that Russia is using Armenia to fight NATO. He also characterized Armenia as the "most dangerous country to the world peace" during a lecture at the Brookings Institution in Washington, D.C.

Russian base No. 102, outside Yerevan, Moscow's recent buildup and military exercises, have proven beyond doubt that Armenia may be the last one to benefit because Moscow's intention is to project its power far beyond into the Middle East, where it has a stake in the Syrian war theater and its standoff with Turkey just crosses Armenia's border. Russia's relations with Iran are many-faceted; while they are partners in the Syria conflict, and Moscow has been supplying heavy weapons to Tehran, it seems that they are competitors in the Caucasus region for political influence, but more pronounced in the energy market, sometimes at Armenia's detriment.

It seems that Moscow and Washington are betting on Iran for stability in the Middle East at the expense of worrying Saudi Arabia and Israel.



Facing Turkey: Turkey has never missed an opportunity to express its hostility towards Armenia. Ankara went out of its way to counter the Centennial Commemoration of the Genocide by staging its Gallipoli Celebration. Turkey has the second-largest standing army in the NATO structure, however Armenia and the issue of the Genocide remain its Achilles heel, since so much capital is invested to fighting them.

Of course, in the Karabagh issue, Ankara supports Azerbaijan's position. Ankara even forfeited its historic opportunity to consolidate its position on the border issue with Armenia, by signing the protocols in 2009. The protocols would have lifted the blockade of Armenia and implicitly forced Armenia to accept the current borders which were defined and finalized by the Treaties of Moscow and Kars in 1921. Ankara pre-conditioned the signing of the protocols with the resolution of the Karabagh conflict in favor of Azerbaijan, although all the negotiations were carried out based on the premise that there would be no pre-conditions.

In the final analysis, the failure of protocols proved to be a blessing in disguise for Armenia, with the resurgence of the calls to abrogate the Treaty of Moscow.

Indeed, recently Russian Duma members Valery Rashkin and Sergei Obakhov of the Russian Communist Party sent a letter to the Russian political leadership and the Foreign Ministry requesting the cancellation of 1921 Treaty of Moscow, which was signed between Soviet Russia and Kemalist Turkey. The Treaty of Moscow recognized Turkish control over Artvin, Ardahan, Kars and Surmalu. The region of Ajaria, with the Port of Batumi, would be retained by Georgia. Turkey withdrew from Alexandropol and a new border was established between Turkey and Soviet Armenia, defined by the Arax and Akhurian Rivers.

see CAULDRON, page 19

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Remembering 100 Years

By Jivan Meguerditchian

ON A RAINY NIGHT last April, I remember going down to the garage and seeing my grandparents sitting on the edge of brown leather chairs watching the Armenian news channels in front of the extra television my family set up as entertainment.

"It's about time!" Dada shouted.

After asking him what was wrong, he told me to look at the bottom of the screen which listed the names of multiple countries. He explained to me that these were some of the new countries which had recently recognized the Armenian Genocide. Looking back at my dada, I noticed his increasingly sad expression. After a few moments of silence, my grandmother became a little emotional as well.

A hundred years ago, violence destroyed the unity of Armenian families, and caused the tears of many children, parents, and grandparents. A hundred years ago my family was affected by events that are still remembered by Armenians scattered worldwide. A hundred years ago my ancestors were victims of what is known today as the Armenian Genocide.

As a boy I came to understand that this period in our culture's history was not easy to talk about with family members because of how the genocide affected them. Growing up, I generally knew the types of gruesome actions most Armenians faced at the time, but I did not know the extent of suffering experienced by my immediate ancestors.

"Those bastards," Dada whispered to himself.

I tried comforting the two of them by hugging them and trying to get their minds off of the topic as they sat there before me in the dimly lit, warm garage. Sensing my concern, dada decided to tell me the story of his grandfather. He recalled the brutal memory of his grandfather having his head severed by Ottoman officials for housing and protecting other Armenians. My nana then described how eight out of twelve members of her mother's family were massacred. Their stories sparked both anger and pride within me. Why were these sick, twisted actions committed? Hearing about these violent actions done to my family, to my ancestors, to my own blood also ignited a feeling that was unexplainable, and one I have never felt

before. Then when my father, or baba, walked in seeing the mood in the room, sat down with us. Though my baba was not directly part of these past events, he talked about a time when he went to Chicago to take part in a rally that spread awareness of genocides past and present. He mentioned the sense of pride he felt during this rally, and how he hoped that someday I could take part in such an event.

"Well, can we go this year?" I immediately responded.

He thought about it for a few moments, and asked me if I would consider missing school to attend the rally. At this point I did not care what I missed. The deep and overwhelming feelings I was experiencing made me not want to do anything else except to go to this rally.

A few weeks later, my father, two sisters and I traveled to Chicago on the weekend of April 24 to commemorate the 100th anniversary of the initiation of the Armenian Genocide.

Upon our arrival, we saw Armenian flags being raised on a couple of Chicago street corners, and masses of people holding signs and posters. As we get out of the car, my sisters and I immediately rushed over to where all of the flags were being raised, and saw a podium with a microphone attached to it. My sister asked my baba why they had this whole setup, and he replied that it was for all the governors and mayors that were going to be speaking about the matter before they actually joined us on the march. This symbolized that even people with authority in the state and in the government recognized and were willing to spread awareness of this event.

One speaker after another approached the stage to speak. Each spoke about the horrors our ancestors had experienced and how the twenty-fourth was a day to remember and honor those who had lost their lives. After looking to the people around me, I saw a certain heaviness on the faces of those protesters, but this was soon replaced with an intense sense of pride. Once the last speaker had said his final words, the gathered rose and started picking up their signs, posters and flags and began to flood the blocked-off streets of Chicago.

About five minutes into the rally, I saw a young man pull a bullhorn from his bag and turn it on. He then pulled out a piece of paper covered in chants that he used to provoke the crowd.

"Nineteen-fifteen never again!" he shouted. "Nineteen-fifteen never again!" the protesters repeated. As we continued our rally, the loud chants gained the attention of more and more people that were not participating in the rally. A few waved to us, some were giving a thumbs-up, and others actually shouting some of the chants with us. It was good to see that some outsiders were becoming more aware and even showing support towards our cause. But as we kept marching through the cold April morning, the chants began to quiet down.

"Nayer!" (which means "look" in Armenian) said a man next to me. As I tried moving more towards the front of the group,

people came to a stop behind a fence that blocked us off. We arrived at the Turkish Embassy, and in front of it was a small group of men and women of Turkish descent holding up their own signs and posters denying the existence of the Armenian Genocide. This was the same genocide they were responsible for, the same genocide that would not be forgotten by future generations, and the same genocide that has left the blood of 1.5 million Christian Armenians on their hands.

"Nineteen-fifteen never again. Nineteen-fifteen never again!" The chants started back up, but louder and filled with more passion.

"Turkey run, Turkey hide, Turkey is guilty of genocide!" we said, our volume increasing. "Turkey is guilty, Turkey is guilty!"

At this point, nobody could hear the other side and what they were chanting. As I was chanting I felt a poke in my back, and I turned to see what it was. It was my baba handing me a large Armenian flag to wave, since I was in the front of everyone else. Feeling the cloth and seeing the red, blue, and orange in my hands gave me a chill that went through my entire body. As I was waving the flag, I looked to my left and saw a woman in between the two sides holding up a sign. The sign mentioned that she was of Turkish descent, but not only this, it said that she was sorry for the gruesome atrocities her ancestors had committed. Since the woman was of Turkish descent, the Turkish men and woman on the other side had no response, and cold looks grew on their faces. As more time went on, small groups of Turks left from the other side until there were none left to chant their lies.

Even a hundred years after the Armenian Genocide our wounds are still open. A hundred years later we still remember this horrible encroachment on human rights. A hundred years later we still continue to sing, dance, and prosper even though the Ottoman Turks had a systematic plan, over an eight-year period, to strip everything away from us. Seeing my little sisters to my sides shouting all of the chants, seeing the passion and fire in my father's eyes during the rally, and seeing the Armenian community in Chicago embracing our culture's history and fighting for what we believed in, gave me a great sense of unity with the Armenian community that was deeper than I previously had felt before. This event ignited a continuous fire of justice to prevail the truthfulness of what actually happened to my ancestors. And on that day my family, the entire Armenian community in Chicago, and I honored, remembered, and spread awareness of what happened 100 years ago to the victims of the Armenian Genocide.

(Jivan Aram Meguerditchian is a 15-year-old student at Saint Ignatius High School in Cleveland, Ohio, and plans to attend a Big Ten or Ivy League school as an undergraduate and to the National Polytechnic University of Armenia as a postgraduate in the future.)

Israel and Azerbaijan: The Odd Couple

By Yossi Melman

Israel's relations with Shi'ite Muslim Azerbaijan are going from strength to strength, as illustrated by the appearance of Israeli weapons in recent clashes over the disputed Nagorno-Karabagh region.

The late Meir Dagan, the former head of the Mossad, was known to be a great traveler. Years ago he went on a trip to central Asia and visited Azerbaijan. Knowing that he was an avid chess player who considered himself to be "not a bad player," his hosts took him to a local chess club and invited him to play simultaneously against a group of teenagers. Dagan was defeated by all of them. His Azeri hosts were embarrassed. They didn't want to humiliate a distinguished guest from a friendly country.

Indeed, relations between the two countries are excellent and getting better against the backdrop of the renewed cycle of hostilities between Azerbaijan and Armenia over the disputed territory of Nagorno-Karabagh. Israeli-made weapons were seen used by the Azeri army in the battlefield. Azeri President Ilham Aliyev sees it as "strategic alliance," and so it is perceived in Israel, too.

Seemingly, Israel and Azerbaijan are an odd couple, not meant to be with each other.

Azerbaijan is a predominantly Shi'ite nation. Though it has elections, it is not really a Western democracy, and since its independence from the former Soviet Union in 1991, it has been run by the same family, the Aliyevs, who are accused of corruption and suppressing free and independent media. Investigative journalists are harassed and jailed.

On the other hand, Israel is not too selective in choosing friends when it comes to weapons sales and national interests. A quick look at the map can explain Israeli priorities.

Azerbaijan borders four counties, including Iran, Israel's sworn enemy. It is a major oil producer and is ready to invest a large portion — 5 percent — of its GDP in the military.

According to foreign reports, the Mossad runs a big station in Azerbaijan, taking advantage of the geography.

Iranian officials have accused their neighbor of allowing Israeli intelligence to carry out from Azeri territory espionage missions which include recruiting and planting agents, communication interception and aerial reconnaissance. More than a year ago Iran claimed to have shot down an Israeli-made drone. Israeli officials have refused to comment on the reports.

Yet it was Aliyev himself who was quoted in a WikiLeaks cable sent from the US Embassy in Baku that "bilateral relations between Azerbaijan and Israel are like an iceberg. Nineteen-tenths are below the surface." Another WikiLeaks document from 2007 showed more frankness and openness expressed by Arthur Lenk, an Israeli ambassador in Baku. He told the US ambassador that the two countries have a security agreement, and that one of Aliyev's assistants during a visit to Israel met with Israel's deputy defense minister and "Mossad officials."

In 2009, Azeri security services exposed a joint plot designed by Iranian intelligence and Hezbollah to target the Israeli Embassy and Jewish sites in Baku. It was part of their attempt to avenge the killing of Imad Mughniyeh, Hezbollah's "defense minister," a

year earlier, which was attributed to the Mossad.

Tips from the Mossad to its Azeri counterpart foiled the conspiracy and helped to arrest a few suspects, while others managed to escape to Iran.

The joint fight against terrorism is just one factor strengthening the relations between the two countries.

Another manifestation of how the alliance is prospering can be seen in the annual trade, which is \$5 billion larger than between Israel and France. Most of the content remains confidential, and consists of Azeri oil sold to Israel and Israeli weapons and intelligence technologies purchased by Azerbaijan. The best promoters of the military sales and ties are Israeli ministers and officials who visit the Caucasian nation.

Most recently it was Defense Minister Moshe Ya'alon who went to Baku in October 2014 and met with his counterpart but also with Aliyev.

The security and intelligence ties began modestly. In the '90s Israel sold light weapons, mortars and ammunition worth only a few million dollars, while Israel Aircraft Industries (now renamed Israel Aerospace Industries) maintained the aircraft fleet of Azerbaijan Airlines. But in recent years, according to foreign reports, the volume of weapons sales has expanded to billions, which would make Azerbaijan the second-biggest market in Asia, after India, for Israeli weapons.

According to the French newsletter Intelligence Online, Israeli sales include drones, ground stations, control and command posts and advanced intelligence equipment.

It was also reported that IAI was the first bid-

der to offer Azerbaijan a spy satellite, worth \$150 million excluding the ground station and the launching cost. Later, American, French and Russian companies joined the bidding, but experts assume that the Israeli company still has the best chance to win the contract, because of the intimate relations between the two countries. The French publication also reported that Haifa-based Israel Shipyards has an advantage over its French and other competitors to win the contract to build 12 light vessels for the Azeri Coast Guard.

This week The Washington Post enabled the world to have a peeping window into the secret relations when it published a photo of an Israeli-made "suicidal drone" exploding itself on a bus leading Armenian combatants to the front lines. Seven people were killed, and the Armenian government protested to Israel. The drone, called Harop, is just one model in a line of drones that can carry cameras and be recalled to ground by their operators but also are equipped with up to 20 kilograms of explosives which the operator can guide to collide with the target and detonate it.

This week, a few days after the incident, Israeli military journalists visited IAI facilities and were briefed on the various products, from drones to satellites, which the company has to offer. An IAI spokeswoman was asked if the company was behind the Washington Post revelation. She refused to answer but openly smiled when one reporter commented that such a photo is good for business and promotes sales of products that can be labeled "battle proven."

(This commentary originally appeared in the *Jerusalem Post*.)



COMMENTARY



My Turn

By Harut Sassounian

Shame on German Chancellor Merkel For Succumbing to Erdogan's Bullying

It is bad enough that Turkish President Erdogan wants to sue a German comic for insulting him; it is much more outrageous for German Chancellor Angela Merkel allowing the lawsuit to go forward, based on a 19th-century law.

Under this archaic law, anyone who offends a foreign leader can be sued in court after obtaining the consent of the German government. Erdogan now joins the dictatorial ranks of Shah Mohammad Reza Pahlavi of Iran and Chilean leader Augusto Pinochet who had filed similar lawsuits in Germany.

Merkel, after initially defending the German citizen's right to freedom of press and opinion, contrary to Turkey's repressive laws, shamefully buckled under Erdogan's threat to flood Europe with Syrian refugees, after accepting several billion dollars to block such migrants.

Merkel, Obama, and others don't seem to understand that appeasing a bully only leads to more bullying. The best way to stop a bully is just to say 'no.' Naturally, Erdogan will throw a temper tantrum like a spoiled brat, make threats,

and probably withdraw his ambassador. But, after a while, he will learn that he can't impose his will outside of Turkey, and that the rest of the world will not meekly kowtow to his Sultanic diktats.

For several decades, American, British and Israeli leaders have made the same humiliating mistake of buckling under threats from Erdogan and his predecessors not to utter the words "Armenian Genocide." Had these foreign leaders just said no on day one, they would have spared themselves years of escalating threats. Unfortunately, they have allowed the tail to wag the dog.

Merkel has now gone down the slippery slope of appeasing the Turkish bully. She has made the gross misjudgment that by allowing the prosecution of the German satirist, she has bought Erdogan's friendship. The German Chancellor will soon face new demands from the Turkish President on Syrian refugees and many other issues, such as next month's scheduled vote in the Bundestag on the Armenian Genocide, which has already been postponed several times under earlier Turkish threats.

Merkel's unwise and undemocratic move may cause a split in her "grand coalition" government. Thomas Oppermann, the parliamentary leader of the center-left Social Democrats, criticized her decision, urging the Chancellor to repeal the antiquated law. Foreign heads of state should not enjoy special rights to sue German citizens, Oppermann warned.

Two influential ministers in Merkel's government also announced their opposition to her decision. Foreign Minister Frank-Walter Steinmeier and Justice Minister Heiko Maas declared: "The freedom of opinion, media and culture are the highest treasures of our Constitution."

Furthermore, two-thirds of the German public opposes Merkel's decision to try the satirist, according to a recent sur-

vey. In the last few days, her popularity fell from 56 percent to 45 percent. According to another survey, 66 percent of the respondents oppose the prosecution of the satirist, while only 22 percent support it. The German newspaper ZDF, which posted the satirist's video on Erdogan, has promised its full legal support during the investigation.

European Commission President Jean-Claude Juncker also criticized Erdogan's unacceptable overreaction. Juncker vowed not to compromise on European values in order to preserve the recently struck deal with Ankara to stem migrant flows, according to the Turkish Hurriyet newspaper. "I cannot understand at all that a German ambassador has been summoned for an admittedly difficult satirical song," Juncker stated on April 13. "That does not bring Turkey closer to us. It will put us farther away from each other."

According to the New York Times, Erdogan has filed almost 2,000 lawsuits in Turkey against those he accuses of insulting him. The Turkish President has already brought a private lawsuit in a German court against the satirist, who could face a three-year jail term or an unspecified fine, if found guilty.

Satirist Jan Bohmermann, in his sarcastic poem, made references to sex with goats and oppressing minorities. He called Erdogan "dumb as a post, cowardly and uptight" and "perverse, lice-ridden... kicking Kurds, beating Christians, all the while watching child porno films." No matter how insulting the poem may be, the writer should have the right to express his opinion freely. It is one thing for Erdogan, the dictatorial leader of a third world country, to repress the media. It is completely a different matter for the head of a major Western European democracy to side with the Sultan of a fascist Middle Eastern state. In this regard, Merkel's transgression is much worse than Erdogan's.

Is Russia Really Armenia's Ally?

By David Boyajian

Azerbaijan's recent military attacks on Artsakh/Karabagh and Armenia call into serious question the Armenian-Russian defense pact and relationship.

Russia has been selling Azerbaijan billions in advanced weapons that Azerbaijan is using against Armenians.

Russia has repeatedly failed to rebuke Azerbaijan for breaking the ceasefire that it agreed to two decades ago.

Russia has done nothing substantive to stop Azerbaijan's frequent shelling of towns within Armenia itself.

In 2013, Col. Andrey Ruzinsky, commander of Russia's 102nd military base in Armenia, said that Russia "may" not permit Azerbaijan "to restore jurisdiction over Nagorno-Karabagh by

force." Russia has yet to take any such actions.

Indeed, Russia may not care whether Azerbaijan overruns Artsakh as that, by itself, would not create a Turkish-Azeri corridor across Armenia that would threaten Russia's position in the Caucasus.

What would Russia do if Azeri soldiers advanced into Armenia and swam in Lake Sevan? We don't know.

More Armenian reaction needed

To their credit, Armenia's top leaders and some MPs have expressed their dismay to Russia. As of this writing, however, Armenian citizens and diasporan organizations have been virtually silent about Russian duplicity. Twelve days after the initial Azeri assaults, there has been but one demonstration at the Russian Embassy in Yerevan. This is incomprehensible. Though Armenians do care deeply, the Kremlin may be concluding the exact opposite.

Armenians often express appreciation for and solidarity with Russia. Similar sentiments, however, are seldom returned by Russians. The popular, flashy Russian TV network, RT.com, staffed by Western and Russian journalists, rarely reports anything – especially anything positive – about Armenians. These should be warning signs to Armenians.

Some Russians and Armenians argue that their defense treaty is only with Armenia, not Artsakh. Yet Russia has not countered Azeri attacks even on Armenia itself. Does the defense pact exempt Russia from acting against Azeri attacks? We don't know. And the belief is widespread that Russia is secretly making deals with Azerbaijan at Armenians' expense.

True, Armenia must be extremely careful because it is highly dependent upon Russian natural gas, the Russian-controlled Metsamor nuclear power plant, advanced weapons, Russian-manned bases near the Armenian-Turkish border, and more. Yet without Armenia, Russia would ultimately be surrounded, and perhaps even destroyed, by NATO.

Armenia Goes NATO, Russia Goes Under

Georgia and Azerbaijan are hostile to Russia, have close relations with the US and Europe, and wish to join NATO. Azerbaijan and NATO member Turkey already call themselves "one nation, two states."

Suppose Armenia, voluntarily or otherwise, left the Russian orbit. Georgia, Azerbaijan, and Armenia would soon be sucked into the NATO alliance. Separating the Muslim north Caucasus from the Russian Federation would become a top NATO priority.

NATO would create a Baku-based navy in the gas and oil-rich Caspian Sea. Reaching across the Caspian, NATO would link up with Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, and Kyrgyzstan. This is Pan-Turkism under a NATO fig-leaf.

Virtually surrounded by NATO and China, Russia would be ripe for destruction. The Kremlin may not totally understand this.

Armenians know that Soviet Russia gifted Armenian territories to Turkey and Azerbaijan in the 1920s. As Armenia once again perceives Russia as unreliable, it will naturally look elsewhere. The West has, however, historically always broken its promises to Armenians and ultimately favored Turkey. So while Armenia's someday joining NATO might be dangerous and improbable, it's not impossible.

Russia can twist Armenia's arm and support its adversaries only up to a point.

Russian Naïveté

Russian strategy is to ingratiate itself with Azerbaijan and pull it back into the Russian orbit.

Throughout the past decade, Russia has tried the same misguided strategy with Turkey.

Predictably, the Russian-Turkish love affair crashed and burned last year when Turkey shot down a Russian jet over Syria. This, declared President Putin, was the "betrayal of a friend." Putin's belief that President Erdogan and Turkey were truly his "friends" is breathtakingly naïve. It tells us that the Kremlin is delusional about Turkey and, by extension, its Azeri kin.

The Putin-Lavrov-Aliyev love-fest will culminate in a similar disaster for Russia, but not before Armenia is damaged, perhaps fatally.

Some Kremlin circles have been influenced by Aleksandr Dugin's Eurasia Movement which espouses a grand union of Slavs/Russians and Turks.

No one, including me, is suggesting that Armenia separate itself from Russia at this time. It is impractical and unwise. But the current relationship lacks symmetry. The people of Armenia, Artsakh, and the Diaspora must not remain silent while Russia implicitly supports Azeri aggression.

Rebalancing Armenia-Russian Relations

Rebalancing Armenian-Russian relations must begin with large and continuing protests against Russian betrayals, similar to the pro-Artsakh demonstrations of the late 1980s. Moscow will respect this.

Moscow does not respect people who, while being kicked in the teeth by a "friend," pretend that they're being kissed on the lips.

Yerevan must take bigger steps towards economic and political independence from Moscow and a more evolved relationship with the West. The Armenian Diaspora could help Armenia and Artsakh immensely more if only Armenia's leaders, including its lethargic "ambassadors," saw diasporans as kindred spirits rather than as interlopers.

The West, too, must confess its own horrendous transgressions against Armenians. The leaders and citizens of Armenia and Artsakh must be blunt about the West's past and present betrayals and sickening Turkophilism. Why no Armenian protests in front of Western embassies? Why the hesitation to speak the plain truth? Yet what is the West offering Armenia? Very little.

A more balanced path involves risks for Yerevan, but so does subservience to Moscow as recent events have shown.

(The author is an Armenian American freelance journalist. Many of his articles are archived at www.armeniapedia.org/wiki/David_B.Boyajian.)

Armenia in the Cauldron of Caucasian Politics

CAULDRON, from page 17

The treaty stipulated that the district of Nakhichevan, historically part of Armenia under Tsarist rule, be transferred to the jurisdiction of Soviet Republic of Azerbaijan. Additionally, Turkey acquired a small strip of territory known as Arax corridor.

Vladimir Zhirinovskiy, the leader of LDPR party in the Duma, proposed, "In response to Turkey's refusal to recognize Crimea's reunion with Russia, we should recognize the Turkish Kurdistan as an independent state and demand Turkey to return the lands of Western Armenia."

The treaty had been earlier challenged by Soviet Foreign Minister W. Molotov in 1945 and later at the UN by Andrei Vishinsky (1948) requesting Kars for Armenia and Ardahan for Georgia.

But a more interesting development took place on December 23, 2015 in Moscow where Turkish opposition parliamentarian, pro-Kurdish Democratic party leader Selahattin Demirtas discussed with Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov the plan of "reshaping" Turkey with the creation of an Anatolian Confederate Republic which would be divided into four autonomous entities – Kurdish, Armenian, Greek and Turkish. The "Republic" will have two official religions, Moslem and Christian, and four languages of the constituent political entities.

That plan suffered a setback with the onslaught of the Turkish Army against the Kurdish population, threatening also Demirtas' parliamentary immunity.

The Georgian parliament has already abrogated the Treaty in 2005 while Armenia is waiting for action.

The annulment of the Treaty would throw into question the status of the Nakhichevan Exclave and the Arax Corridor, which forms the only common frontier between Turkey and Azerbaijan.

The movement created some euphoria in Armenia and many believed that Putin would return Ararat to Armenia. But the Foreign Ministry spokesperson, Maria Zakharova stated that Russia will study the question of annulling the Treaty with Turkey. But, she added – and that is very important – "Russia is developing relations with Azerbaijan and will not do anything that could worsen them. On the contrary, we will focus on what will improve our relations with that country."

It did not take too long to see Zakharova's statement tested. The flare up on April 2, 2016 on the contact line between Azerbaijani Armenian forces undermined the validity of Duma members' proposals, as the Kremlin kept a neutral stand while its strategic ally was being attacked. Of course, we no longer hear any talk about treaty abrogation.

(Part II will appear next week.)



Putin Just Sent Armenia MiG-29 Fighters and Military Aid: Here Is Why

By Samuel Ramani

In February, the Russian air force announced that MiG-29 fighters and other sophisticated aircraft were headed to Armenia, to a Russian base 25 miles from the Turkish border. Moscow promised Yerevan a \$200 million weapons credit and announced talks aimed at making Armenia the host of an essential link in Russia's regional power grid to Iran.

Armenia is a Russian ally and a member of the Russian-led Eurasian

Economic Union (EEU). Since the Soviet Union's collapse, Moscow has funneled substantial military aid to help Armenia support the contested region of Nagorno-Karabagh, where an Armenian majority governs itself as an "island" surrounded by the nation of Azerbaijan.

[Here's what the research reveals about the violence in Nagorno-Karabagh]

But Russia's commitment to Armenia has deepened in recent months. My research into Russia's military policy suggests that Moscow has three goals:

1. Draw a circle around Turkey

Russia's tightening alliance with Armenia is part of its broader strategy of intimidating the Turkish government – and making sure Ankara does not down another Russian plane en route to Syria. The first prong of Vladimir Putin's strategy involves placing Russian troops along Turkey's borders, including the February deploy-

ment near the Turkey-Armenia border.

Turkey considers this encirclement policy hostile. To the north, Moscow's military annexed Crimea in 2014. And Russia stepped up its intervention in Syria, which sits on Turkey's southern border.

The second prong of Russia's destabilization strategy is periodically re-inflaming the Nagorno-Karabagh conflict. Russia has continued to sell arms to both Armenia and Azerbaijan, despite escalating hostilities. Even though Azerbaijan's military capabilities remain vastly superior to Armenia's, expanded Russian military support for Armenia could encourage Yerevan to inflame the Karabagh conflict. In December 2015, the Armenian defense minister claimed that Azerbaijan was provoking violence and undermining the cease-fire. This claim could become a pretext for more Armenian military involvement in Karabagh, and result in worsening violence in the autonomous region.

Here's why this matters. Azerbaijan has close cultural ties and is a vital regional ally for Turkey. Turkey relies on access to Azerbaijan's extensive energy resources on the Caspian Sea. Turkey and Armenia remain chilly because Ankara refuses to acknowledge – much less apologize for – the 1915 Armenian genocide. So Turkey has backed up Azerbaijan's claims to Nagorno-Karabagh, to ensure its main regional ally remains stable and in control of its territory. By increasing military support for Armenia, Russia undercuts Turkey's Caucasus strategy, and strengthens its own regional power.

2. Back a Shared Ally in Syria

Russia's pro-Assad, anti-Islamic State campaign in Syria is another reason Russia decided to boost military aid to Armenia. Russia, Armenia and Baathist Syria are allied against Turkey. Syria-Turkey relations broke down in 2011 when Turkey supported anti-Assad rebel movements.

Shortly after the Soviet Union collapsed, Armenia and Baathist Syria forged a close diplomatic relationship, one that Yerevan regards as vital to securing the rights of 120,000 Armenians living within Syria's borders. It has been a firm partnership, despite fierce international condemnation of President Bashar al-Assad's Syrian civil war atrocities. Like Russia, Armenia considers Assad the legitimate leader of all of Syria.

Armenia's strong ties with Baathist Syria go back a full century. In May 2015, Armenian Foreign Minister Edward Nalbandian visited Syria, praising the Syrian people for helping Armenians during the last phase of the Turkish genocide of the last century. Nalbandian also hailed Assad's tolerance of the Armenian minority and expressed concern that a regime change in Syria could precipitate another genocide against the Armenian diaspora. Assad responded to these diplomatic overtures by officially recognizing the Armenian genocide in a November interview with Agence France-Presse.

This was the first time any Syrian president had commented on this contentious issue – and this marked a radical shift in Syrian policy. Before the war, the Syrian regime censored books on the Armenian genocide and blocked

foreign film crews from visiting the sites of Turkish war crimes.

3. Keep Armenia stable

Russia's tighter relationship with Armenia is closely related to its interest in preventing regime change in Yerevan, a staunch Russian ally. Belarus and Kazakhstan, two other Russian allies in the region, are now increasing their trade with Western countries. Armenia's largest trade partner remains Russia, the destination of 22.6 percent of its exports and source of 24.8 percent of its imports.

Armenia's economic dependence on Russia meant that it followed Russia into recession in 2014. When protests broke out over electricity increases in the summer, the regime mitigated anti-Russian sentiments among the Electric Yerevan protesters by highlighting the domestic origins of the protests.

Armenian President Serzh Sargsyan's loyalty to Russia reflects his skepticism of Western values. But his anti-Western stance has become increasingly unpopular in Armenia. Since the early 2000s, the near-universal consensus on the Russian alignment has broken down as pro-European civil society organizations have inspired young Armenians to push the country on an alternate trajectory.

As Sargsyan has positioned himself as unequivocally pro-Russian, his survival depends on Russian assistance counter-balancing Western aid to liberal groups. Unlike some of its neighbors, Armenia refused to consider the 2013 E.U. association agreement proposal, instead taking up Russia's EEU counteroffer. This decision may make Sargsyan even more dependent on Russian assistance to survive politically.

So maintaining the status quo in Armenia keeps Moscow's EEU alternative viable, as Armenia, along with Kyrgyzstan, is the strongest ally in the union. Moscow has increased its military assistance to Armenia to ensure that Sargsyan has the coercive capacity to repress future mass protests. The Kremlin regarded the Electric Yerevan movement and other "color revolutions" with deep suspicion, claiming that U.S.-backed NGOs inspired the protests, rather than actual popular discontent.

Regime change in Armenia would leave Russia standing solo in the South Caucasus – a major blow to Russians' perceptions of their country's great power status. As my research on Russian foreign policy illustrates, the perception that Russia's sphere of influence is shrinking could potentially affect political stability at home. To keep his high approval ratings during a period of prolonged economic malaise, Putin needs the Russian public to believe that Moscow still holds power over the former Soviet territories.

A stronger Russia-Armenia partnership is a relatively underexplored geopolitical development that has profound implications for the stability and security of the Caucasus, the Middle East and the post-Soviet region. With the Syrian conflict unresolved and Russia's relations with Turkey strained, the Armenian regime stands to benefit from an unprecedented degree of Russian economic and military assistance.

(Samuel Ramani is an MPhil student in Russian and East European Studies at St. Antony's College, University of Oxford, specializing in post-1991 Russian foreign policy. This commentary appeared on April 14 in the *Washington Post*.)

Peter Balakian Wins Pulitzer for Poetry

PULITZER, from page 1

Professor of English and Director of Creative Writing at Colgate University, where he has taught since 1980. He was the first Director of Colgate's Center For Ethics and World Societies.

Born and raised in Teaneck and Tenafly, Balakian holds a bachelor's degree from Bucknell University and a Ph.D. in American civilization from Brown University.

He is the director of creative writing at Colgate, and has taught at Colgate since 1980.

He is a prolific author among whose works of non-fiction, history as well as poetry, include *Black Dog of Fate* (1997), *The Burning Tigris* (2003), *June Tree* (2001) and *Ziggurat* (2010).

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