

Outrage Rapidly Forces Boston Billboard Denying Armenian Genocide Down

By **Aram Arkun**
Mirror-Spectator Staff

BOSTON — A billboard denying the Armenian Genocide in the North End of Boston on the night of April 5 was quickly removed by the morning of April 7 as a result of widespread outrage reflected in the media. Both non-Armenians and Armenians reacted quickly and decisively.

The billboard has a picture of three hands in the colors of national flags. The Armenian and Russian ones have crossed fingers, symbolizing lying, while the Turkish one has two fingers extended in the symbol for peace. The billboard writes “Truth = Peace,” and gives the website address FactCheckArmenia.com. This website argues that the Armenians were not subject to a genocide, and “counters Armenian misinformation.”

A Turkish group from Istanbul called Turkic Platform sponsored the ad through

the billboard media company Clear Channel Outdoor. According to the Turkish organization’s website, “Turkic Platform is a non-profit, individual initiative established to bring all the Turks and Turkish movements living and operating in different parts of the world together...its mission... is to preserve and protect Turkish national identity and culture while introducing it to the world and cherishing it.” Apparently this mission includes repeated attempts to deny the reality of the Armenian Genocide.

Last year, on the centennial of the start of the Armenian Genocide, the Turkic Platform paid Outfront Media for a similar billboard,



Turkic Platform Billboard Denying Armenian Genocide in the North End of Boston (Photo: David Filipov, *Boston Globe* staff)

which was taken down after great criticism. The billboard was part of a campaign in the US which also included ads in newspapers like the *Boston Globe* and billboards in various cities. During the same period, it organized a performance of dancers waving Turkish flags in front of the Lincoln Memorial in Washington DC on April 24 and in Times Square, New York on April 21.

The placement of the billboard ad this year was particularly egregious, and no doubt deliberate. It was situated across see BILLBOARD, page 9

Sargsyan in Berlin: A Balancing Act

By **Muriel Mirak-Weissbach**

Special to the Mirror-Spectator

BERLIN — The visit had been planned long in advance, but it could not have come at a more delicate moment. When Armenian President Serge Sargsyan (also written as Sargisian) came to Berlin on April 6 for a two-day visit, the conflict between Nagorno-Karabagh and Azerbaijan was raging and German-Turkish relations were still being shaped by concerns regarding the refugee crisis. The government of Chancellor Angela Merkel managed to walk the tightrope successfully. But not everyone cheered. Some media coverage, like a TV commentary by Arnd Henze, complained that in her joint press see GERMANY, page 4



The large atrium inside the Dilijan School

Newest UWC School Puts Dilijan On Map of Global Education

By **Alin K. Gregorian**
Mirror-Spectator Staff

MOSCOW — Philanthropist Veronika Zonabend has a lot on her plate, but for her, the United World Colleges (UWC) Dilijan School, which opened two years ago, is of special importance.

In an interview from her office in the Russian capital, Zonabend, the founding patron and chair of the UWC Dilijan School’s Board of Governors, along with her husband, Ruben Vardanyan, spoke of her passion for the school.

Together, the couple has co-founded the RVVZ Foundation that implements philanthropic sustainable development projects in Russia and Armenia.

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President Serge Sargsyan and President Joachim Gauck

NEWS IN BRIEF

Remarks Force Resignation in Sweden

STOCKHOLM (AP) — The deputy chairman of a Swedish-Turkish association has resigned after derogatory comments he made about Armenians last week.

Barbaros Leylani, who called for “death to Armenian dogs” at a Stockholm rally, apologized Monday, April 11, on the association’s website.

Swedish legal watchdog Juridikfronten said it had reported the speech for incitement to racial hatred to police and an Armenian association says it also plans to make a police report.

President Meets with Religious Leaders

YEREVAN (Armenpress) — President Serzh Sargsyan had a meeting on April 12 with Catholicos of All Armenians Karekin II and Catholicos of the Great House of Cilicia Aram I.

The three discussed the situation in Nagorno Karabagh and the Azerbaijani attacks. They also stressed the importance of joining state-church efforts, in order to solve challenges and issues of national importance.

The Catholicos of All Armenians Karekin II and the Catholicos of the Great House of Cilicia Aram I talked about their upcoming visit to Nagorno Karabagh.

Russia Says It Won’t Halt Arms Sales to Armenia, Azerbaijan

MOSCOW (Reuters) — Russia said it would continue selling arms to both Azerbaijan and Armenia despite the latest flare-up of the conflict, angering the Armenians who consider Moscow a close ally.

Renewed fighting was the most intense since a 1994 ceasefire. A Moscow-brokered ceasefire agreed on Tuesday stopped the outburst of violence.

Russian Prime Minister Dmitry Medvedev, who travelled to both Armenia and Azerbaijan this week said Russia had no intention of halting arms sales to any side of the conflict.

“If we imagine for a minute that Russia has given up this role [of arms seller], we well understand that this place will not stay vacant,” Medvedev said. “They will buy weapons in other countries, and the degree of their deadliness won’t change in any way.”

Armenian Prime Minister Hovik Abrahamyan decried the decision.

“Russia is our strategic partner, and our people take it with pain that Russia sells weapons to aggressor Azerbaijan,” the government press service quoted him as saying after a church funeral service for a soldier killed in clashes with Azeri forces.

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ARMENIA

News From Armenia

NKR President Praises Armenians Worldwide

STEPANAKERT (Armenpress) – Artsakh Republic President Bako Sahakyan received heads of the Armenian National Assembly standing committees and factions on April 12.

Issues concerning the large-scale combat operations launched by Azerbaijan from April 2 to 5 and their consequences were discussed during the meeting.

The president noted that during this ordeal all Armenian people showed exemplary unity and readiness to defend the native land, independence and freedom signifying in this process the role of the Armenian political powers and the parliament too.

President Receives Nobel Laureates

YEREVAN (Armenpress) – President of Armenia Serzh Sargsyan received the five Nobel laureates in Medicine and related fields, Aaron Ciechanover, Ada Yonath, Dan Shechtman, John Robin Warren and Ei-ichi Negishi on April 12.

The scientists arrived in Armenia in the sidelines of “Noble days in Armenia” event organized by Yerevan Mkhitar Heratsi State Medical University.

Issues related to the development of science in Armenia, particularly medicine and related spheres were discussed at the meeting.

Azerbaijan Fires Towards Armenia

YEREVAN (Armenpress) – Azerbaijan fired at Armenian positions in the Armenia Azerbaijan state border, “Armenpress” was informed by the Department of Information and Public Relations of the Ministry of Defense of Armenia. The Defense Ministry said that during the early morning of April 12 Azerbaijan fired shots (16 bursts) from various caliber weapons including large caliber guns at Armenian positions in the northeastern direction of the Armenia-Azerbaijan state border.

The Armenian Armed Forces responded cautiously. According to the Nagorno Karabagh Defense Army, the ceasefire agreement between Nagorno Karabagh-Azerbaijani armed forces was mainly maintained during the night of April 11 -12, however the Azerbaijani side fired mortars and grenade launchers at Armenian positions in the northeastern and south-eastern directions of the line of contact.

In particular, Azerbaijan fired 82mm mortars (3 shells), 60mm mortars (4 shells) and AGS-17 grenade launchers (17 grenades) at Armenian positions in the directions of Martakert and Hadrut.

The Azerbaijani side also used a reconnaissance drone during the night in the southern, eastern and northern directions.

MEPs Call on EU to End Parity on Karabagh Issue

BRUSSELS, Belgium (Armenpress) – Ahead of the debate on Nagorno Karabagh in the European Parliament (EP) on April 12, several European politicians expressed their views on the worrisome situation in the region, calling for different measures of support to Karabagh.

One of them is the Vice-President of the Greens/EFA group in the European Parliament, MEP Josep-Maria Terricabras. He demanded the inclusion of Nagorno Karabagh in the peace negotiations and calling for its full international recognition based on the democratic referendum of 1991.

Likewise, MEP Françoise Grossetête tabled a written question, deploring civilian victims and asking the EU High Representative/Vice-President, Federica Mogherini, for measures to enforce and respect the cease-fire.

Lastly, MEP Jordi Sebastia sent an inquiry to the EU High Representative/Vice-President, underlining atrocities committed by Azerbaijan on Karabagh civilians and asking the EU to stop “calls on both sides” in situations where there is clearly one culprit.

NKR Ceasefire Holds, Dead Transferred

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Nagorno-Karabagh, and an enemy drone was destroyed in the Aghdam direction.

The Defense Army official said that of the 36 killed Armenian servicemen 9 are officers and warrant officers. “The difference in the number as compared to the previous day is due to the fact that the bodies of four soldiers were found on the battlefield, another serviceman was found alive,” he said.

NKR President Bako Sahakyan said that efforts were underway to assist the citizens whose property was affected by Azeri strikes.

Tigran Atanesyan, an NKR government official dealing with local government and re-settlement issues, said that some 200 civilians deprived of shelter applied to the Karabagh authorities. He said among them were many women, children and elderly people, including those with mobility difficulties.

“The number of people is increasing. They are being accommodated in hotels in Stepanakert. They are now in about three-four hotels. We provide them with food three times a day as well as with medical services,” Atanesyan said.

Earlier, NKR Prime Minister Ara Harutyunyan visited Martakert and stated that the damage caused to the local infrastructure will be quickly restored.

Sahakyan, who wore a military uniform as he spoke at a press conference in Stepanakert late on April 7, said that Karabagh’s armed forces were ready to retaliate should Azerbaijan violate the current ceasefire.

“At the same time, we remain committed to a peaceful resolution,” the NKR leader emphasized.

The NKR/Artsakh State Commission on Prisoners of War, Hostages and Missing Persons issued a statement saying that on April 10, in accordance with the arrangement reached earlier, “the State Commission on Prisoners of War, Hostages and Missing Persons of the Nagorno Karabagh Republic, through the mediation of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and the Office of the Personal Representative of the OSCE Chairman in Office, carried out the exchange of bodies of the deceased between the Nagorno Karabagh Republic and Azerbaijan near the Bash Karvend settlement,” the statement reads. “The bodies of 18 servicemen of the NKR Defense Army, fallen as a result of the large scale military aggression unleashed by Azerbaijan in April 2-5, were transferred to the NKR side during the exchange.

According to the statement, there were signs that the bodies had been mutilated.

The statement continued, “Those acts, being a flagrant manifestation of inhumanity, run counter to the laws and customs of war and are in grave violation of the international humanitarian law, in particular, the Convention (I) for the Amelioration of the Condition of the Wounded and Sick in Armed Forces in the Field (1949), Geneva Convention (III) relative to the Treatment of Prisoners of War (1949) and the Additional Protocol to the Geneva Conventions of 12 August 1949 relating to the Protection of Victims of International Armed Conflicts (Protocol I).”

In other news, representatives of the military and political leadership in Nagorno-Karabagh argue that militants that once was trained by or fought along with ISIS and other terrorist groups in Syria and Iraq were involved in atrocities against the Armenian military and civilians during the four-day war with Azerbaijan in early April.

As Azerbaijan renewed hostilities in Nagorno-Karabagh on April 2, its com-

mando units carried out a raid inside the border village of Talish in the north of Nagorno-Karabagh. Evidence that transpired later suggests that they tortured elderly members of a local family whom their children did not manage to evacuate in time. All three, including a 92-year-old woman, were brutally killed and the dead bodies of at least two of the elderly people were mutilated.

This and other crimes committed against Armenians, including the beheading of an ethnic Yezidi serviceman of Nagorno-Karabagh’s Defense Army, has sparked an outrage in the Armenian society against the background of reports that Azerbaijan has been using mercenaries, including possible ISIS-trained militants, in its operations.

“Azerbaijan has brought out to the

frontlines mercenaries who are wanted by different countries. All this shows that Azerbaijan flagrantly violates all international humanitarian norms and conventions, in particular the Geneva Convention, using weapons that have destructive features in targeting civilian facilities, involving mercenaries and international terrorists in its armed forces,” David Babayan, a spokesman for the Nagorno-Karabagh president, said.

Political analyst Aghasi Yenokyan thinks that if allegations that Gray Wolves and ISIS militants fought for Azerbaijan are proved, it will trigger a great international response and will change the configuration and meaning of the conflict as terrorism has become a global threat today.

Remember and Honor: NKR Defense Army Releases Names of Killed Servicemen of Defense Army

STEPANAKERT (Armenpress) – The Defense Ministry of Nagorno Karabagh Republic released the names of killed servicemen of the Defense Army, who were killed for the homeland as a result of military operations conducted in the line of contact of Karabagh-Azerbaijani armed forces from April 2 to April 5.

These servicemen are:

Captain Armenak M. Urfanyan, 1990-2016, Yerevan
 Soldier Kyaram K. Sloyan, 1996-2016, Aragatsotn Province
 Major Rudik B. Movsesyan, 1976-2016, Stepanakert
 Major Hayk V. Torosyan, 1985-2016, Yerevan
 Senior lieutenant Hrach V. Galstyan, 1991-2016, Gumri
 Soldier Gevorg G. Vardanyan, 1996-2016, Gumri
 Junior sergeant Henrik R. Ghahramanyan, 1996-2016, Masis
 Private soldier Hrants S. Gharibyan, 1947-2016, Stepanakert
 Captain Hovsep G. Kirakosyan, 1988-2016, Armavir Province
 Nodarik A. Margaryan, 1963-2016, Martakert region
 Sergeant Yuri A. Paramazyan, 1996-2016, NKR, Martuni
 Senior lieutenant Merujan A. Stepanyan, 1993-2016, Gumri
 Soldier Rafik Kh. Hakobyan, 1996-2016, Aragatsotn Province
 Soldier Aghasi S. Asatryan, 1996-2016, c. Masis
 Soldier Viktor A. Yuzikhovich, 1997-2016, Gumri
 Soldier Narek V. Mkrtchyan, 1996-2016, Syunik Province
 Soldier Sargis A. Sahakyan, 1995-2016, c. Hrazdan
 Soldier David R. Hayrapetyan, 1997-2016, Gegharkunik Province
 Junior sergeant Vladik S. Narinyan, 1996-2016, NKR, Martuni
 Soldier Gor K. Kirakosyan, 1996-2016, Armavir Province
 Senior sergeant Never S. Simonyan, 1990-2016, Hadrut region
 Senior sergeant Gharib H. Sahakyan, 1987-2016, Hadrut region
 Private soldier Aznaur R. Balayan, 1987-2016, Hadrut region,
 Major Hovsep R. Majiljan, 1978-2016, c. Hadrut
 Lieutenant Hayk R. Grigoryan, 1993-2016, NKR Martuni region
 Norik J. Gasparyan, 1996-2016, Kapan
 Soldier Vahe S. Zaqaryan, 1995-2016, c. Hrazdan
 Soldier Aramais G. Mikayelyan, 1996-2016, Armavir Province,
 Soldier Aram A. Abrahamyan, 1996-2016, Armavir Province
 Private soldier Vardan S. Tadevosyan, 1990-2016, Hadrut region
 Junior sergeant Sasha V. Galstyan, 1996-2016
 Senior lieutenant Benyamin N. Yeghoyan, 1992-2016, Yerevan
 Soldier Tigran A. Abgaryan, 1996-2016, Gumri
 Soldier Vladimir V. Alikhanyan, 1996-2016, Dilijan
 Private soldier Gegham R. Mkrtchyan, 1986-2016, Martakert region
 Senior non-commissioned officer David Y. Gasparyan, 1979-2016, Stepanakert
 Junior sergeant Robert A. Abajyan, 1996-2016, Yerevan
 Soldier Andranik A. Zohrabyan, 1996-2016, Ararat Province
 Lieutenant colonel Aleksan G. Arakelyan, 1982-2016, Gumri
 Lieutenant colonel Onik K. Grigoryan, 1978-2016, Askeran region
 Lieutenant colonel Roman V. Poghosyan, 1979-2016, Hadrut region
 Major Suren G. Melkumyan, 1979-2016, Hadrut region
 Senior lieutenant Maksim V. Grigoryan, 1986-2016, Hadrut region
 Lieutenant Ashot K. Shahbazyan, 1993-2016, Shirak Province
 Soldier Jora A. Yesayan, 1996-2016, Ararat Province
 Soldier Bagrat A. Aleksanyan, 1995-2016, Yerevan
 Soldier Baris R. Ozmanyanyan, 1996-2016, Armavir Province
 Sergeant Karen A. Nersisyan, 1997-2016, Kotayk Province
 Soldier Tigran E. Berakchyan, 1997-2016, Yerevan
 Sergeant Adam Kh. Sahakyan, 1996-2016, Yerevan
 Sergeant Arman S. Andriasyan, 1996-2016, Shirak
 Soldier Artur G. Gevorgyan, 1997-2016, c. Abovyan
 Soldier Norik Z. Sargsyan, 1996-2016, Gegharkunik Province
 Soldier Azat Q. Simonyan, 1996-2016, Kotayk Province
 Soldier Grigor G. Harutyunyan, 1997-2016, Yerevan
 Private soldier Andranik M. Grigoryan, 1986-2016, Hadrut region



INTERNATIONAL

Risk of Collapse at Jesus' Tomb Unites Rival Christians

By Diaa Hadid

JERUSALEM (*New York Times*) — It was a typical day at the shrine around what many believe is the tomb of Jesus in Jerusalem's Old City. A Greek Orthodox choir sang inside a room facing the baroque structure. But the voices were drowned out when chanting Armenian priests and monks circling the shrine raised theirs.

"Sometimes they punch each other," Farah Atallah, a church guard wearing a fez, observed with a shrug.

Atallah is a seasoned witness to the rivalries among the Greek Orthodox, Armenian Orthodox and Roman Catholic communities that jealously share — and sometimes spar over — what they consider Christianity's holiest site, inside the Church of the Holy Sepulcher.

Amid the rivalry, the unsteady 206-year-old structure, held together by a 69-year-old iron cage, is an uncomfortable, often embarrassing symbol of Christian divisions, which have periodically erupted into tensions. In 2008, monks and priests brawled near the shrine, throwing punches and pulling one another's hair not far from the tomb where Christians believe Jesus was resurrected.

But in recent weeks, scaffolding has gone up a few feet from the shrine in the gloomy shadows of the Arches of the Virgin, the first step in a rare agreement by the various Christian communities to save the dilapidated shrine, also called the Aedicule, from falling down.

The March 22 agreement calls for a \$3.4-million renovation to begin next month, after Orthodox Easter celebrations. Each religious group will contribute one-third of the costs, and a Greek bank contributed 50,000 euros, or \$57,000, for the scaffolding, in return for having its name emblazoned across the machinery.

The idea is to peel away hundreds of years of the shrine's history, clean it and put it back together. Simple enough, but delayed for decades because of the complicated, centuries-old rules and minute traditions — called the status quo — that define the way Jerusalem's holy sites are governed, in which the very act of repairing something can imply ownership.

"One of the serious issues in the church is that the status quo takes place over every other consideration, and it's not a good thing," said the Rev. Athanasius Macora, a Franciscan friar. "Unity is more important than a turf war."

The inspiration for this unity was the threat of losing the shrine altogether. Alarmed by reports that the shrine was at risk of collapse, the Israeli police barricaded it for several hours on February 17, 2015, throwing out the monks who guard it and preventing hundreds of pilgrims from entering.

The message was clear: Fix it, or else.

So after a year of much study and negotiation, monument conservation experts plan to first remove the iron cage that Jerusalem's colonial British rulers built in 1947 in a prior effort to keep the Aedicule from collapsing, after a 1927 earthquake and rain left the structure cracked, its marble slabs flaking.

They will take apart, slab by slab, the ornate marble shell built in 1810, during Ottoman rule of Jerusalem. The conservationists will then tackle the remains of the 12th-century Crusader shrine that lies underneath. That was erected after the Shiite ruler of Egypt, al-Hakim, destroyed the first Aedicule in 1009. The original was built by Helena, the mother of Emperor Constantine, the Christian

Roman emperor who did much to elevate the status of Christianity through the empire.

Finally, the workers will repair cracks in the remains of the rock-hewed tomb underneath, where most Christians believe Jesus was placed after he was crucified. (There is a rival Tomb of Christ just outside the Old City walls, patronized mainly by Protestants. But that is another story.)

Antonia Moropoulou, the conservation expert heading the project, said the shrine would remain open to visitors during most of the painstaking process.

Hundreds of pilgrims waited to enter one recent day as Catholics said Mass near the Aedicule, blocking the entry with wooden pews. The shrine is topped with a large gray cupola, and it is decorated with gold, icons, pillars, candles, heavy bronze lamps, inscriptions and a large painting of Christ.

"This is a very super experience of my spirit," said Anil Macwan, 30, a lay Catholic preacher from India. "The world cannot give me the feeling I get from this tomb, this place. It is a very sacred place."

Two women from the Eternal Sacred Order of the Cherubim and Seraphim, in Nigeria, wearing matching blue dresses and head scarves, walked shoeless into the Aedicule, crossing the Chapel of the Angel, with its walls of elaborately carved marble and proclamations in Greek. They bent through the low door into the Chapel of the Holy Sepulcher, where, under oil lamps, two white marble slabs denote the location of Jesus' rock tomb.

The two women fell to their knees, raised their arms in supplication and fervently whispered prayers. They wiped their hands and photographs of children on the slabs.

Another day, a line of Indian Muslims squished against South Korean tourists, Indian nuns and Arab-American Christians stretched past the Chapel of the Copts, a room attached to the back of the Aedicule, where a monk guarding the site was engrossed in his smartphone.

The three Christian communities vigilantly guard the property they already control to an extent that can feel baffling

to outsiders coming to the Holy Sepulcher, a cavernous jumble of Byzantine and Crusader architecture, with soaring domes, sunken rooms, gloomy light, heavy bronze lamps, squat buttresses and elegant arches.

In the church entryway is a gaudy gold mosaic on a wall, owned by members of the Greek Orthodox Church, that distracts from the nearby Stone of Unction, the marble slab covering the site where Jesus was anointed.

Beside the mosaic is a ladder owned by Catholics, who will not move it. It is next to an Armenian-controlled walkway of a few feet leading to the Aedicule, where non-Armenian priests in vestments may pass, but not stand, because that would suggest they are challenging Armenian control.

The last significant renovation began in the 1950s, when the Jordanian authorities who controlled East Jerusalem at the time pushed Christian representatives into forming a technical bureau to address the 1927 quake damage. But the process broke down more than a decade later, according to Father Macora.

After the last embarrassing dust-up, in 2008, which was captured on YouTube, the rival communities began trying to fix their relations in earnest, repairing the toilets as a good-will measure. In 2014, Pope Francis met the Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew I of Constantinople, the spiritual leader of Orthodox Christians, at the Aedicule, to promote unity.

Still, "somebody had to push us," said the Rev. Samuel Aghoyan, the Armenian Patriarchate's representative at the Holy Sepulcher, who took to fisticuffs with a previous Greek Orthodox patriarch, Irineos I, inside the Aedicule on Holy Saturday, before Easter, in 2002. "If the Israeli government didn't get involved, nobody would have done anything."

Moropoulou, the conservationist leading the renovation, said she hoped it would maintain the intangible spirit "of a living monument."

"This tomb is the most alive place," Moropoulou said. More so, she added, "than anything I have seen in my life."

She continued, "The greatest challenge is to preserve that."

National Assembly Cooperation Commission Of Nagorno Karabagh and Armenia Discuss Situation Created Post-War

STEPANAKERT (Armenpress) — On April 12, in the great hall of the National Assembly of the Nagorno Karabagh Republic, a meeting was held between the interparliamentary Cooperation Commissions of NKR and the Armenian Republic. During this meeting they discussed the situation created by the Azerbaijani aggression on April 2-5, and the parliamentary actions within the context of Armenia-Artsakh inter-parliamentary cooperation, adding that the parliamentary delegation from Armenia included several presidents of standing committees and representatives of all parliamentary factions.

Parliamentarians observed a minute of silence in memory of the servicemen who protected the borders of their homeland and were killed by Azerbaijani aggression, and of civilians who were killed by the bombardment. By mutual agreement, the agenda was chosen to be "Situation created by the Azerbaijani new aggression on April 2-5, and the parliamentary actions within

the context of Armenia-Artsakh inter-parliamentary cooperation."

Views were exchanged during which nearly two dozen MPs from Nagorno Karabagh and Armenia made their speeches.

A range of issues related to defense, security and foreign policy as well as a range of legislative and other forms of cooperation and issues related to the comprehensive presentation of Artsakh issues in international inter-parliamentary forums were discussed.

The MPs of the two Armenian republics stressed the importance of joint discussions, which allows both peoples to find the necessary tools for effective cooperation in this unusual situation.

Summarizing the results of the discussion, the president of the National Assembly of Nagorno Karabagh, Ashot Ghulian, stated that the proposals will be presented to the NKR and Armenian MPs in a written form, and based on that joint actions plan will be developed.

International News

Jailed RFE/RL Contributor Wins UN Press Prize

BAKU (RFE/RL) — Imprisoned Azerbaijani journalist Khadija Ismayilova has won a UN press award for "her outstanding contribution to press freedom in difficult circumstances."

Ismayilova, an investigative journalist and RFE/RL contributor, was selected to receive the 2016 UNESCO/Guillermo Cano World Press Freedom Prize.

"Khadija Ismayilova highly deserves the prize and I am happy to see that her courage and professionalism are recognized," said Ljiljana Zurovac, president of the UNESCO/Guillermo Cano World Press Freedom Prize 2016 Jury.

The \$25,000 prize is named in honor of Guillermo Cano Isaza, a Colombian journalist who was assassinated in front of the offices of his newspaper, *El Espectador*, in Bogota on December 17, 1986.

Ismayilova is currently in prison on embezzlement and tax-evasion charges widely believed to be retribution for her reports on corruption involving senior government officials.

Armenian Terror Suspect Held in Russia

ASTANA, Kazakhstan (RFE/RL) — A man detained by Russian authorities in July for allegedly trying to join the Islamic State (IS) militant group in Syria has been identified as an ethnic Armenian from Kazakhstan.

Officials at Russia's North Caucasus Regional Military Court said on April 8 that 24-year-old Vazgen Zargarian from Almaty was currently in a pretrial detention center in the city of Rostov-on-Don.

Zargarian has been charged with the intention of joining the extremist group and preparing to take part in terrorism-related activities abroad.

Investigators said Zargarian tried at least twice to join up with IS militants in Syria through the Turkish border.

Ambassador to Sweden Condemns Turkish-Azerbaijani Rallies

STOCKHOLM (Armenpress) — Ambassador of Armenia to Sweden Artak Apitonyan gave an interview to Swedish *Dagen* daily over the anti-Armenian announcements made on April 9 during an Azerbaijani-Turkish initiated rally in Stockholm. (see story on page 1.)

Apitonyan expressed concern with any expression of racial hatred. He announced that dissemination of anti-Armenian hatred is not a new phenomenon; it dated back to the Armenian Genocide. "But it is a new phenomenon to witness this in Sweden. It is a very worrisome development, there are direct calls to kill Armenians," he said, adding that such a call for "death to Armenian dogs" has been heard in the EU for the first time. He added he hoped that the Swedish Government would condemn the incident. Apitonyan added that Armenians living in Sweden need security guarantees.

He stated that the announcement of the vice president of the center co-coordinating Turkish organizations, Barbaros Leylani, should not be taken as the opinion of the majority of Turks living in Sweden.

The Turkish Worker's Union in Sweden in collaboration with Azerbaijanis living in Sweden held an anti-Armenian demonstration with slogans "Turk, wake up" in relation with the military aggression of Azerbaijan against Nagorno Karabagh Republic. The rally took place on April 9.

In the Swedish capital of Stockholm, vice president of the federation Barbaros Leylani announced that "Time for the unification of Turkish republics has arrived, it is already matured." Leylani expressed conviction that their successors will unite "the Turkic world."

Apitonyan highlighted taking lessons from the history, stating that the denial of the Armenian Genocide paves the way for similar hate propaganda. Turkish-Azerbaijani tandem is engaged in racist activities in democratic Europe's heart.



INTERNATIONAL

Sargsyan In Berlin: A Balancing Act

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conference with Sargsyan, Merkel had provided a “big stage for a war lord,” letting him accuse Azerbaijan of attacking the “peace-loving people” of Karabagh, who were fighting for self-determination, “which all colonized peoples have always fought for.” The journalist criticized Merkel for “leaving the tirade without comment,” and for announcing, only in response to a question from the press, that the Azerbaijan president would visit Berlin in June. The commentator was particularly upset with the official photographs of the handshakes between the Armenian guest with Merkel and with President Joachim Gauck, which were “a present” that Sargsyan might be able to exploit as an endorsement in his country. Others noted that the issue of genocide recognition, just weeks before the April 24 date, could exacerbate frictions with Turkey.

Germany Stresses Diplomacy

Even those critical of the visit had to recognize that Germany maintains its commitment to a negotiated solution to the conflict, and is utilizing its position as rotating chair of the OSCE to exert diplomatic pressure in this direction. On April 2 German Foreign Minister Frank-Walter Steinmeier had issued a statement say-

ing he was “very concerned about the military escalation along the Line of Contact ... and about the casualties, including among civilians.” He called on both sides “to end hostilities immediately and to respect the ceasefire in full.” He added that “There is no military solution to the conflict” and urged the two sides to “show the necessary political will to return to the negotiations in the framework of the Minsk Group.” Steinmeier spoke by telephone the same day his Armenian counterpart Eduard Nalbandian and Azerbaijan’s foreign minister the following day. Telephone contacts between Berlin and Moscow occurred on the same days and on April 4, TASS issued a statement on the convergence of views between Russian Foreign Minister Lavrov and Steinmeier in their conversation, a statement which reiterated the German diplomat’s words almost verbatim. When Azerbaijan and Armenia then announced a new ceasefire, Russian President Putin had spoken with his counterparts in the countries as well, demanding they respect the ceasefire and return to negotiations.

Merkel’s public statements reflected the policy of neutrality pursued by the foreign ministry. In her remarks to the press together with Sargsyan, she stressed the “utmost urgency” of efforts to guarantee an “acceptable and lasting ceasefire” and pointed to Germany’s current OSCE Chairmanship as well as its Minsk Group membership, pledging that Steinmeier would play a productive role. Merkel also focused on the economic advantages of regional peace for Armenia’s development. She acknowledged “that a conflict that has been ongoing for 23 years cannot be resolved by one visit or by relaunching efforts to achieve a solution,” but promised her government’s “constructive assistance.”

The economy was a leading issue in the talks. Germany is Armenia’s number one trade part-

ner in the European Union, as Sargsyan was to underline in interviews. However, Berlin is not raising any objections to the decision to join the Eurasian Economic Union. Germany, Merkel said, respects Armenia’s decision. “We do not want an either-or situation,” (perhaps with Ukraine in mind?). She emphasized the need for nurturing good relations within the EU, and also between the EU and Armenia. Merkel noted that her guest had highlighted the significance of the Iran nuclear accord, and its positive repercussions. She expressed interest in and support for the reform process in Armenia. As for relations with Turkey, she said given the Karabagh situation, this was not the best time to launch any new initiatives. Germany, which was among the first countries to recognize Armenian independence, establishing diplomatic relations in January 1992, wants to develop a stable partnership.

During his stay in Germany, Sargsyan gave an extensive interview to Deutsche Welle, which dealt not only with Karabagh but also with such economic issues. He was asked about Armenia’s association with regional organizations: “Armenia has been part of the ‘Eastern Partnership’ program, which implied association prospects with the EU. But you decided in favor of the Eurasian Economic Union. What triggered this decision? Russia’s pressure? Economic calculations? Ukrainian developments?” Sargsyan answered: “I would like to make a correction: We still are a member of the ‘Eastern Partnership.’ The new phase of negotiations began in December of last year. We will sign an agreement with the EU. There was no pressure from the Russian side. We were guided by economic reasons. Russia is our biggest market and our largest trade partner. Russia has offered very favorable conditions for us within the Eurasian

Economic Union, by providing a 30-percent discount on its products. My principle is taking decisions which can be realized.”

To Recognize the Genocide or Not

Last year in the centenary commemorations of the genocide, as reported in this newspaper, Germany’s President broke protocol by proclaiming in a speech following a religious ceremony in Berlin’s cathedral, that it was indeed genocide. And the following day, in a remarkable debate the Bundestag (Parliament) repeated the characterization, in all speeches by all parties. Yet, for reasons linked to the refugee crisis, and the agreements between Germany and Turkey to face it, the issue of a joint resolution being finally voted up officially, has remained on the back burner. Leading Armenian groups, like the Central Council of Armenians and the German-Armenian Society, raised the issue again prior to Sargsyan’s visit.

In his meeting with Gauck, Sargsyan said that the whole Armenian nation had received the German president’s statement with gratitude and that he, Sargsyan, was happy to be able to meet the person “who found the right word” to define the genocide. He also emphasized the importance of finalizing recognition but did not belabor the issue. When queried in his interview with Deutsche Welle how, given the stalemate, he now assessed the German position on the genocide, he answered: “Let me start by saying that the German President used very correct and precise words in his speech last year in April in Berlin Cathedral. We are grateful to him. Besides, I hope that the Bundestag will adopt a resolution prior to summer vacations.”

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

Turkey Asks Germany to Prosecute Comedian over Erdogan Poem

BERLIN (*Guardian*) – In Turkey, Recep Tayyip Erdogan’s inability to take a joke may hardly be news. But after the Turkish government asked for the prosecution of a German comedian for performing a satirical poem about its president, it is now well known in Germany, too.

Coming shortly after the European Union’s “refugee swap” deal with Turkey took effect, the row has not only triggered a debate about the limits of free speech in Germany but also raised questions of whether Europe has made itself too reliant on the moods of Turkey’s strongman president, who is engaged in a crackdown on the media in Turkey.

In a short clip from a late-night program screened on the German state broadcaster ZDF at the end of last month, comedian Jan Böhmermann sits in front of a Turkish flag beneath a small, framed portrait of Erdogan, reading out a poem that accuses the Turkish president of, among other things, “repressing minorities, kicking Kurds and slapping Christians while watching child porn.”

The scene was broadcast shortly after it emerged that Turkey had demanded the deletion of another satirical song from the German comedy show *extra3*, and Böhmermann’s poem was deliberately framed as a test of the boundaries of satire. Throughout his reading the comedian is advised by a “media lawyer” who tells him that this is precisely the sort of thing that does not qualify as satire.

“What could happen now?” Böhmermann asks after finishing the poem. “Potentially they’ll take it off their website,” his sidekick tells him. And so the German state broadcaster did, explaining that the show “didn’t live up to the requirements that ZDF makes for the quality of satire programs.”

On April 6 it emerged that Germany’s state prosecutor was investigating Böhmermann for violation of the little-used paragraph 103 of the criminal code, which concerns insulting organs or representatives of foreign states. At worst the comedian was facing a prison sentence of up to three years – though until the Turkish government filed its formal request for Böhmermann’s prosecution, few seemed to think that the case would go ahead.

Apparently in order to try to appease the Turkish government and discourage it from pursuing the matter via legal challenges, Merkel told Turkey’s prime minister, Ahmet Davutoglu, that the poem was a “deliberately offensive text” that she personally disapproved of. But the Turkish government seems to have read her comments as an invitation.

According to Spiegel magazine, the German foreign ministry, justice ministry and Merkel’s office are in talks over how to respond to Turkey’s request. Merkel’s spokesperson Steffen Seibert said a decision would be reached within days, not weeks.

The affair has divided the German public. The chief executive of the Axel Springer media group, publisher of the bestselling tabloid Bild, has called for solidarity with Böhmermann. In an op-ed in *Die Welt*, Matthias Döpfner praised the poem as a successful attempt “to make us think about how a society deals with satire – and, more importantly, the satire intolerance of non-democrats.”

The veteran German comedian Didi Hallervorden has recorded a song in support of Böhmermann titled *Erdogan, Sue Me*.

Defenders say poetry designed to cause offence, referred to as *Schmähgedicht* in German, has a pedigree that goes back to the invectives of classical writers such as Cicero or Juvenal.

Critics dismiss Böhmermann as an attention-seeker. “There’s a difference between making fun of your own or other people,” wrote the columnist Georg Diez on the website of *Der Spiegel*. “It’s a question of power, style and sensibility – and in his poem Böhmermann is using humor of the coarse and bellowing type.” One journalist, Hakan Tanriverdi, accused the comedian of racism.

In a government press conference on Monday, Seibert said Merkel wanted to make it unequivocally clear that freedom of speech was “naturally the highest good,” irrespective of whether she considered a satirical piece “tasteful or tasteless.”

But senior members in Merkel’s party have sounded far from unequivocal on the matter. “In a constitutional democracy we all have to stick to the rules, and one of these rules is that offending foreign heads of state is punishable by law,” the CDU general secretary,

Peter Tauber, said in an interview with the NTV news channel. “You cannot simply say that’s a legal norm but it doesn’t interest me.”

For Böhmermann, whose boundary-pushing show “Neo Magazin” has won him many young fans in a German comedy scene that can be prone to the formulaic, it is not the first time he has found himself in hot water.

In March 2015 he caused controversy by claiming that he had digitally manipulated a clip in which Greece’s then finance minister Yanis Varoufakis seemed to show the middle finger to the Greek people. It later emerged that the video was real and Böhmermann’s “admission” was a satire on the frenzied media debate on the Greek debt crisis.

Six Soldiers, 30 Militants Killed in Southeast Turkey: Security Sources

DIYARBAKIR, Turkey (Reuters) – Six Turkish soldiers and 30 Kurdish militants have been killed on Monday and Tuesday, April 11 and 12, in attacks and clashes across Turkey’s turbulent southeast region, security sources and the army said on Tuesday.

An estimated 57 people, including eight civilians, were wounded in the attacks, they said.

Thousands of militants and hundreds of civilians and soldiers have been killed since the banned Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK) resumed its insurgency last summer following a 2-1/2-year ceasefire and peace process.

The government has ruled out any return to the negotiating table and has vowed to crush the PKK, which is considered a terrorist organization by Turkey and its Western allies.

The security sources said operations in Sirnak province and in neighboring Iraq and Syria had been stepped up and that gunfire and explosions could be heard in the area where earlier one soldier was killed and three others wounded.

A soldier was also killed and four wounded in an explosion in Daglica, a village in Hakkari province near the Iranian border, during clashes with the PKK, the army said.

Two soldiers were also killed during clashes with the PKK in the border town of Nusaybin near Syria, the army said in a statement later on Tuesday.

Prime Minister Ahmet Davutoglu put the death toll from a car bomb attack overnight that targeted a Turkish gendarmerie base in the town of Hani at two. The army said 47 people, including eight civilians, had been wounded in that attack.

A large vehicle laden with explosives rammed into the gendarmes’ base and the dormitory housing the families of security personnel, shattering windows and wrecking the roofs of buildings.

Following the attack, Turkish gendarmerie and special forces launched an operation with air support in the town center and the countryside around Hani, which is north of Diyarbakir, the largest city in the mainly Kurdish southeast.

Witnesses said vehicles, houses and shops nearby had been damaged by the powerful blast in Hani. Six of the wounded civilians were relatives of the soldiers, the military said.

The military said 30 Kurdish militants had been killed on Monday in clashes in four southeastern towns that are currently under military curfew and are located near to Turkey’s borders with Syria, Iraq and Iran.

Community News

Armenian Caucus Calls On Obama to Condemn Azerbaijani Aggression

Urges Congress to Suspend Military Aid to Baku

WASHINGTON — Speaking on behalf of the Congressional Caucus on Armenian Issues, Co-Chairs Robert Dold (R-Ill.) and Frank Pallone (D-N.J.) on April 7 issued strong, bipartisan calls, asking President Barack Obama to forcefully condemn Azerbaijan's military offensive and urging top US House appropriators to zero-out US military assistance to Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev's armed forces, reported the Armenian National Committee of America (ANCA).

"We echo the powerful, pro-peace message the Armenian Caucus delivered today to President Obama and key US House appropriators," said ANCA Executive Director Aram Hamparian.

"We join with them in supporting a shift in US policy that challenges Aliyev's aggression and protects American taxpayers from subsidizing an Azerbaijan military that is killing innocent Armenians, destabilizing a vital region, undermining US interests, very likely committing war crimes, and risking the outbreak of an even larger regional conflict. Stated simply: Ilham Aliyev doesn't need US military aid, he doesn't deserve US military aid, and he shouldn't get US military aid."

In their letter to the President, in addition to calling for a forthright condemnation of Baku's belligerence, the two co-chairs asked that he "suspend US military aid to Azerbaijan, provide emergency relief aid to Nagorno-Karabagh, and send a State Department fact-finding mission to both evaluate the destruction inflicted by Azerbaijan's aggression and assess the humanitarian relief and reconstruction needs of Nagorno-Karabagh's affected civilian population."

They noted that, "Azerbaijan's attacks represent a dramatic escalation in President Aliyev's destructive pattern of aggression, constant threats of renewed war, ongoing incitement of anti-Armenian hatred, and the military targeting of Armenian civilians in both Nagorno-Karabagh and Armenia. They also reflect his desire to act with international impunity — as so clearly demonstrated by his rejection of common-sense, ceasefire monitoring and other accountability-oriented initiatives — such as the urgently-needed Royce-Engel peace proposals that are supported by your Administration."

In their bipartisan appeal to the leadership of the State-Foreign Operations subcommittee, the panel that writes the foreign aid bill, the co-chairs urged Chairwoman Kay Granger (R-Texas) and Ranking Member Nita Lowey (D-NY) to include a provision in this measure ensuring "the suspension of military aid [to Azerbaijan] until its government ceases cross-border attacks, ends its threats of renewed war, and agrees to a settlement of regional conflicts through peaceful means."

They added, "Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev has made it abundantly clear through his country's escalating aggression that Azerbaijan believes it can continue to receive American military aid no matter its actions. This belief is wrong. While the United States provides military assistance for a number of reasons, our assistance should never be taken for granted, and we should never tolerate its unacceptable misuse by foreign nations." The letter closed with the two legislators stressing that, "In calling for a suspension of military aid to Azerbaijan, we are mindful that Azerbaijan's regional aggression both reflects and reinforces its pattern of domestic abuse, including its brutal crack-down on dissent. Rather than providing military aid to Azerbaijan we should be putting pressure on the country to cease its undemocratic policies."



Ramela Carman's family and friends honor her on her 102nd birthday Thursday: Father Aren Jebejian, (left) great-niece Tamara Doyon, niece Lydia Doyon, great-nephew Kyle Doyon, sister-in-law Rosemary Carman and Deacon Onnig Boyajian.

Armenian Genocide Survivor Celebrates 102nd Birthday

LIVONIA, Mich. (*The Oakland Press*) — At 102 years old, former Pontiac resident Ramela Carman is believed to be the only survivor in Michigan of the Armenian Genocide that began in 1915.

By Anne Runkle

She's one of only about 30 survivors around the world of the event that resulted in the deaths of as many as 2 million people.

Her family and friends gathered at the Manoogian Manor assisted living center in Livonia on April 7 for her birthday.

They admire her strength in light of all she has lived through.

The genocide is regarded by historians as the first mass ethnic cleansing of the 20th century. On April 24, 1915, Ottoman Turks rounded up several hundred Armenians who were considered "intellectuals" or people in positions of leadership and slaughtered them, said Father Aren Jebejian, pastor of St. John Armenian Church in Southfield, where Carman worshipped for decades.

Over the next three years, the Turks, who were mostly Muslim, forced Armenians, who were predominantly Christian, into "death marches" to the Syrian desert. Other Armenians were beaten or tortured, and as many as 1.5 million died, he said. Other ethnic groups that were largely Christian, such as Greeks, were also targeted. When their numbers are added, the total deaths are estimated as high as 2 million, he said.

Carman was too young during the genocide to have horrific memories of it, but relatives told her that her father was one of the people whom the government forced to march off one day.

"He turned back," she said, explaining that he wore disguises, changed his name, went into hiding — did whatever was necessary to stay alive. He later reunited with his family but died of kidney disease after just a short time.

Carman recalled that even after the genocide "ended" in 1918, there was often different treatment for Armenians, who couldn't ever predict how they would be received.

"One day was good, the next day bad," she said.

She remembers that many families carried their belongings with them at all times in case they were forced out of their homes.

Not all Turks participated in the atrocities, Jebejian said. Historians are finding more evidence recently of Turks who hid Armenians and helped them in other ways during the genocide, he said.

Carman remembers that a Turkish woman helped her once when she injured her face as a child.

With her mother and grandmother, Carman relocated from their small village to Istanbul. Her mother worked in a factory and her grandmother worked as a cook. By the time she was 16, both her mother and grandmother became too ill to work and Carman took responsibility for supporting them.

She worked in a factory and later bought a sewing machine and assembled men's shirts.

In 1960, she came to the United States, leaving her mother in the care of a cousin. She hoped to bring her to America but her mother died before the necessary paperwork was approved.

Just a few months after arriving, she married Masa Carman. She taught herself

see BIRTHDAY, page 7

AGBU Hye Geen And Young Circle Hold 10th Annual Conference

By Sona Zeitlian

LOS ANGELES — On March 5, AGBU Hye Geen and AGBU Hye Geen's Young Circle held a conference on the topic of "Armenian Youth and Higher Education: Challenges and Opportunities."

The conference, held at Woodbury University in Burbank, featured presentations by professionals, who addressed a large audience gathered at the Fletcher Jones auditorium. The conference featured the participation of Armenian-American university students who represented nine Armenian Students' Associations (ASA) of area colleges and universities. The conference showcased the careful planning and efficient teamwork of members of Hye Geen, Young Circle and members of the area ASAs.

After opening remarks by Mihran Toumajan of AGBU Young Circle, AGBU Western District Chair Talin Yacoubian, Esq., delivered a welcoming address.

Setting the pattern of having a student presenter for each speaker, the keynote speaker, Dr. Mary A. Papazian, was introduced by Garnik Michael Potlikian, Vice-President of Woodbury Armenian Students' Association Executive Board.

Currently president of Southern Connecticut State University and, from July 1, appointed president of San Jose State University, Papazian's topic was "Pathways to Professional and Cultural Success in Higher Education."

Tracing her own education from Ferrahian School to UCLA to pursue her passion for English literature, Papazian discussed the core humanist traditions of civic engagement. Then came the realization of rapidly evolving changes "spreading cutting-edge technologies to every corner of the country — and indeed the world — and beginning to make innovations, once consigned to the realm of science fiction, a reality for millions of Americans."

Dr. Papazian explained that the global marketplace has created the need to prepare for "global lives" competing for jobs at home and abroad. Then she shared with her rapt listeners, "My advice to you during the course of your college career is: travel, see the world, learn how others live; it will bring you a whole

see CONFERENCE, page 7

Tankian Calls for Support For Families of Killed Armenian Soldiers

LOS ANGELES — American-Armenian rock musician, soloist of "System of a Down" group Serj Tankian calls on supporting the families of victims of the Azerbaijani aggression. On his facebook page, he asked his fans: "I have decided to donate to this amazing non-profit organization called the Paros Foundation, which donates 100 percent of the proceeds directly to the affected families. I encourage those who want to contribute to do so to them. And to all the Azerbaijani trolls paid handsomely by Azerbaijan's Ministry of Offense who have been frequenting my page, I want you to know that I really love my ban and delete buttons. Peace," Serj Tankian wrote.

Paros Foundation has decided to support the families of killed soldiers. "For our part, the Paros Foundation has launched a Hero Support Fund to raise funds and provide them to the families of our deceased heroes. Our goal is to provide a minimum of \$1,000 to every hero's family," reads the website of Paros.



COMMUNITY NEWS

St. Nersess Seminary Expands Staff

ARMONK, N.Y. — Over the past few months, St. Nersess Armenian Seminary has not only grown physically with its new campus, but also in scope: the seminary's expansion of mission has led to the hiring of additional professionals to support its progress. With construction on the new theological center and chapel almost

complete, the St. Nersess Board of Directors has approved the addition of a new controller, administrative assistant, and a development director. "We have hired experienced and credentialed individuals to help take the seminary to new heights," explains Richard Papalian, Board of Directors' treasurer.

Robin Perlmutter, who was recently hired as the new controller, has more than 15 years of accounting experience in both the public and private sector and brings her expertise to help fulfill the mission of St. Nersess Seminary.

Dorothy Bengoian, the new administrative assistant, is enthusiastic about joining the staff at St. Nersess. "It has been an encouraging start to work with the dean, Fr. Mardiros Chevian and other staff, as well as to interact



Dorothy Bengoian with Dn. Levon Altiparmakian



New Development Director, Brian Hagan, with Fr. Mardiros Chevian and Donna Sirounian

with the seminarians. My career, as both a teacher and motivational speaker, has always been not only work, but an opportunity to contribute in a lasting and meaningful way. I think my late father, Siragan Bengoian, a Genocide survivor, would be happy to know I am part of investing in our Armenian community's future through my involvement at St. Nersess Armenian Seminary," remarked Dorothy.

Also joining the staff is Brian Hagan, the new Development Director. "I am delighted to join St. Nersess Seminary at this exciting time of renewal. As the seminary prepares priests and lay leaders for service in the Armenian Church in North America, my many years of development experience will focus on securing new sources of financial support for this important work," stated Hagan.

The new staff joins Dn. Levon Altiparmakian, operations manager, and Donna Sirounian, marketing and public relations manager. Altiparmakian began working at St. Nersess in 2006 and now manages the day-to-day operations of the seminary. He handled the transition of relocating the seminary from New Rochelle to Armonk, and is a key employee with his first-hand knowledge of the Armenian Church and community. Sirounian, who holds an MBA, has been supporting the seminary since 2012 with her 21 years of marketing experience.

Fr. Mardiros Chevian feels the formation of a dynamic, professional team will "further energize the mission of our seminary and will provide greater possibilities to expand our reach and programming." All three new employees will be working part-time at the seminary.

OBITUARY

Artoun Nazareth Festekjian

BEIRUT — Artoun Nazareth Festekjian, 91, passed away peacefully at his home on April 6, in the Jal El Dib suburb of Beirut, Lebanon.

He leaves his wife Alice Guidanian; children Nazareth Kevork Festekjian and Arousiag Kevork Demirdjian, he received his primary and secondary education at Aleppo's Grtasiratz and Freres Maristes school. Upon earning his Baccalaureate with the highest national score in Syria, he attended Ecole Supérieure de

Born on November 10, 1924 in Aleppo, Syria to Nazareth Kevork Festekjian and Arousiag Kevork Demirdjian, he received his primary and secondary education at Aleppo's Grtasiratz and Freres Maristes school. Upon earning his Baccalaureate with the highest national score in Syria, he attended Ecole Supérieure de



Artoun Nazareth Festekjian

carpet manufacturing factory that became the largest carpet factory in the Middle East with more than 1,200 employees. In the midst of the Lebanese civil war, he moved to Canada for three years, returning to Lebanon in 1992. He frequently traveled to the US to visit his children and grandchildren. He returned to Beirut for the last time in July 2015.

As the son of a prominent lawyer, Nazareth Kevork Festekjian, he was proud of his illustrious Armenian heritage and his paternal homeland, Aintab. His father passed away at a relatively young age, which is why he often wondered about what his father would think of his and his family's accomplishments, and hoped he would be proud of all of them.

He was a strong willed man, defined by his sense of honor and his principles. He was also a fiercely loyal man. Above all, he was kind, loving and generous with a golden heart.

He, alongside his brother Shahnour, donated to numerous causes. He was a silent philanthropist who never sought the spotlight. To him, the deed of doing good was far more important than the recognition. He helped the Armenian Church whenever needed, and he valued education and promoted it throughout his life. He assisted Armenian schools and helped students in need.

He was a supporter of the Armenian Red Cross and provided support during difficult times of the Lebanese civil war, when the Armenian neighborhoods desperately needed protection.

He also established the Nazareth Festekjian Hospital to assist the wounded during that civil war. And when the 1989 earthquake struck Armenia, he extended his helping hand as well. Through all of his good deeds, he set an example to his children, which they embrace wholeheartedly as they continue on his legacy.

Most importantly, his priority was his family. He was proud of all his children, their spouses, and his ten grandchildren, and proud of their accomplishments.

In lieu of flowers donations can be sent to: AGBU Humanitarian Emergency Relief Fund for Syrians <https://donate.agbu.org/agbu-urgent-appeal> Or AGBU Educational Funds <https://donate.agbu.org/general-donation>

Tissage in Lyon, France. When he returned to Syria, he collaborated with his brother, Shahnour, and working together, established a successful carpet manufacturing factory in Aleppo, which was nationalized in December 1964.

Along with his young family, he relocated to Beirut in February 1965, where he and his brother Shahnour founded Liban Tapis, a new

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COMMUNITY NEWS

AGBU Hye Geen And Young Circle Hold 10th Annual Conference

CONFERENCE, from page 5

new perspective that will only benefit your future life and career."

Dr. Papazian reminded students of the increasing importance of foreign-language proficiency and an expanded knowledge of economics, history and geography. She recommended a liberal arts education that develops critical thinking, communications skills, ethical judgment, integrity, intercultural knowledge and "the capacity for continued new learning, all in demand in today's marketplace."

The keynote speaker concluded, "As the economy becomes more technology-based, the need and amount of education will rise. My final message to you is... never take for granted the opportunity to think, the privilege to serve, and the opportunity to make a contribution, wherever you may be."

The second speaker was Dr. Albert K. Karnig, president emeritus of California State University, San Bernardino, who was introduced by Lori Pridjian, vice president of the University of Southern California's Armenian Students' Association Executive Board. Karnig's topic was "Educational Strategies to Counter the Challenges of Global Competitiveness and Global Innovation."

He first focused on global competition and the swift pace of technological change, posing challenges for students in pursuit of higher education, career opportunities and well-paying jobs. The new economy should be based on educational flexibility, he argued, whereas previously a high school diploma was enough to find a decent job. He also noted that, since 1982, more women have been attending universities and graduating with the intention of continuing their education and becoming competitive in the job market.

Citing humorous anecdotes from his long experience, Karnig underlined the need to

empower our youth and develop the next generation of leaders with university degrees, insuring skills and success. He further advised assessment tests to focus on career choices. "These choices must engender excitement and commitment with passion. It is also useful to seek internship programs geared toward high school graduating classes, to get involved in community activism and to anchor oneself by becoming a mentor."

The third speaker, Dr. Nelly Titizian-Kazman, senior executive director of La Verne University's San Fernando Valley campus, was introduced by Michael Matossian, chair of All-Armenian Students' Associations. Kazman's topic was "Higher Education as a Doorway to Opportunities for Armenian American Leadership."

She began by affirming that, "to survive and succeed in today's fast-paced globalized world, one must learn to adapt quickly to constantly-changing environments." She explained that the major shift in today's economy, from manufacturing jobs to knowledge-based technical skills, has prompted employers to look for innovative thinking, teamwork readiness, oral and written communications aptitude and cultural competence, to re-invent oneself and stay current in the scheme of global development.

Kazman advised students to find their passion and the motivation to realize "their vision," to identify their strengths and talents, creating values which differentiate them from others and develop leadership skills. This, in turn, she stated, can be achieved by building "a personal capital of self-reliance and confidence and a social capital based on fostering relationships through collaborative efforts."

The afternoon sessions started with Alice Petrossian, past president of the Association of California School Administrators. She was introduced by Edit Martirosyan, a sophomore

from Glendale Community College. Petrossian's topic was "Nurturing the Pursuit of Higher Education Among Armenian Students."

Citing contributing factors to success in higher education, Ms. Petrossian referred to the roles of parents and the extended family in sustaining motivation, in encouraging their children to exceed testing and later college preparatory benchmarks.

She concluded by affirming, "Our goal today is to advocate, to be a role model, a mentor to the next generation so that our community can continue to flourish."

The second speaker of the afternoon was Hasmik Kyureghyan, lead specialist of the Department of Teacher Training and Development at the National Program for Educational Excellence in Armenia and development coordinator at Ayb School. She was introduced by Morris Sarafian, who is a UCLA senior and political activism director of the University's Armenian Students' Association. Kyureghyan's topic was "the Ten-Year Experience of Ayb Educational Foundation, a new Learning Culture in Armenia and Beyond."

Kyureghyan stated that 10 years ago, the Ayb Educational Foundation was established by a group of eight friends, with the intention of integrating various stakeholders into a high-quality educational environment. This was achieved by "launching state-of-the-art science labs, introducing top international contests and building 21st century schools across Armenia."

With the help of a video clip, the speaker demonstrated the foundation's plans for constructing new schools and "developing an internationally recognized high school platform." Their Araratian Baccalaureate is a diploma in high demand, and 51 graduates are

enrolled in the world's 28 top universities. It is also highly valued by the national curriculum it has promoted.

The last speaker was Dr. Armen Mkrtchyan, a specialist of aeronautics and astronautics with a Masters and a PhD from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), and currently teaching at the American University in Armenia and directing its Entrepreneurship and Product Innovation Center. He was introduced by Lilia Kavarian, a senior at California State University, Los Angeles. Mkrtchyan's topic was "Accelerating Entrepreneurship in Armenia."

Referring to the main challenges of a well-defined national strategy for higher education in Armenia, the speaker underlined, "an outdated approach to learning, insufficient resources for human capital development, low level of general managerial staff, a shortage of professionals, and a lack of leaders with long-time vision." He said he is concerned about the high level of unemployment, which affects the drive to emigrate and seek employment opportunities abroad.

Mkrtchyan expressed confidence that education can still become an advantage for Armenia with "lifelong education as a new teaching and learning paradigm, provided research universities can be created with innovative technological labs, when teaching becomes a prominent profession with appropriate levels of compensation and when professionals repatriate, transforming the brain drain into brain circulation."

The conference concluded with a question and answer session with the speakers, which was moderated with great efficiency by the students representing the participating ASAs. The questions were focused on the necessity for changes in our approach to education and the strategies for the creation of new opportunities in the global marketplace.



Memorial Service

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May 26, 1924 – October 27, 2015

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Attention: Marianne Ajemian

For further information, please call Marianne Ajemian
617.439.2891 or email her at majemian@nutter.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.



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COMMUNITY NEWS

Newest UWC School Puts Dilijan on Map of Global Education

SCHOOL, from page 1

For the RVVZ Foundation, Dilijan is the focus of many efforts; the various activities of the foundation and its subsidiaries are synergistic there. The efforts that go into the UWC Dilijan College in turn help the city of Dilijan in the other efforts undertaken by Initiatives for Development of Armenia (IDeA) and Scholae Mundi, all under the umbrella of the couple's foundation.

The school was officially opened in October at a ceremony attended by more than 1,000 people, including Armenia's president, top spiritual leaders and other high-ranking guests, and has been widely hailed as part of Armenia's long-term survival strategy — to set itself apart from its neighbors.

The “college” is not a college as the word is defined in the US, but the last two years of high school.

“Dilijan was selected for having a combination of three factors. It is on the edge of east and west and on the Silk Road. Also, Dilijan is between two capitals, Tbilisi and Yerevan. It has a very nice climate, very mild and beautiful nature,” Zonabend said. “Accessibility is very important. Our vision was that there would be an international school in Armenia as there were no UWC colleges in the CIS.”

An important goal for the Dilijan School is “to make Armenia an educational hub. We wanted to open Armenia to the world and make it more visible.”

There are 15 UWC colleges in Armenia, Canada, India, Italy, Norway, Singapore, Swaziland, the United States, the United Kingdom, Germany, Costa Rica, Bosnia and Herzegovina, China (mainland and Hong Kong), and two will be completed in Japan and Thailand.

This year the first batch of UWC Dilijan College students are graduating in May. “The



Outside the UWC Dilijan campus

Gordonstoun School with much of the structure that eventually would become the UWC schools. The school was based on the four pillars of internationalism, challenge, responsibility and service. He wanted his young charges to learn not only what was needed to get them into a good university, but to become global citizens. His experiments eventually culminated in the UWC movement in 1962 and its first school, Atlantic College, in Wales.

Graduates of the colleges receive an international baccalaureate. That baccalaureate program again takes a holistic approach to educate the young mind not only in the typical rigorous curriculum, but tend to their emotional needs as well as inculcate a sense of internationalism in them.

The tuition varies from country to country; the most expensive is in Singapore, which costs \$108,000 for the two-year course. It is also the most popular. The cheapest is in Bosnia-Herzegovina, costing \$32,000 for the two years. The tuition for Dilijan is about \$70,000.

There is also a scholarship from international human rights attorney (and George's wife) Amal Clooney.

In addition, through a joint venture with 100 Lives (one of whose founders is Ruben Vardanyan), a couple of students from Syria will study at the school each year.

Under the aegis of the IDeA Foundation, the economies of Armenia and Karabagh will be energized, it is hoped. Other plans executed under their umbrella include the Tatev Revival Project.

Second, through the Scholae Mundi foundation, the goal is to get Armenia to a more global level and UWC Dilijan is the “focus of the educational platform.”

Other programs included are Just Dilijan It, an educational summer program for children and young adults aged 10-13 and 14-17 held on the UWC Dilijan College campus.

UWC Dilijan will have students from Dilijan every year as well as from the rest of Armenia.

Zonabend and her husband have four children, ranging in age from 6 to 20. She is an engineer by training, but worked in the financial sector.

She graduated with honors from the Moscow Aviation Institute in 1990 and later studied at the London School of Economics and Political Science specializing in banking and finance.

Zonabend received the Order of Friendship in October 2014 by a directive of the president of Armenia for fostering education-

al development and international collaboration in science and education, as well as for substantial efforts in building the international school in Dilijan and implementing academic programs.

“Ruben and I understand that education can become one of Armenia's priorities. Armenia's main asset will be its people. And its role becomes more and more important future of the country depends on the kind of people we have there. Education is not something theoretical. It helps you and equips you with knowledge and skills for you to find your calling for life.”

“It is too early to talk about the results of the program long-term, but some results are already visible,” Zonabend said. “Six young people for the little town of Dilijan are now in the UWC system.”

“They will come back and change the country,” she said.

“This is only the start,” Zonabend said.



Veronika Zonabend, left, and her husband, Ruben Vardanyan, at the opening of the school in 2014

result is pretty good,” Zonabend said. “There are 96 students from 48 countries. There are already quite good results, with a number of students in top-10 universities worldwide,” including McGill in Montreal, UCLA in Los Angeles, the University of Edinburgh and Imperial College London.

Students from the UWC colleges are eagerly sought out by universities worldwide, she said. “They are very welcomed at top American universities. There is a report from Harvard that the type of students UWC graduates is what Harvard is looking for,” Zonabend said, adding that alumni have attended, other than Harvard, many Ivy League schools, including Princeton, University of Pennsylvania and Brown.

To gain entry into the school, the potential students must apply to a local national committee, which now exists in 150 countries. “The national committee is responsible for the selection and promotion of the UWC in their country,” she said.

The UWC system's founding dates back to another tumultuous time in history, post-World War I Europe. The first school was founded in Germany in 1920 by Kurt Hahn, the son of a wealthy German industrialist. After the Nazi party came to power in Germany, Hahn spoke out against their ideals and was promptly exiled. He relocated to Scotland and founded the

They learn about creativity, service and action, Zonabend said.

As part of the curriculum, she said, students have to complete 200 hours of community service a year. “It is more intellectually balanced,” she said.

The school has a community center in which thousands of local children have interacted with Dilijan students. UWC students teach the local children Spanish and English as part of their community service and the children, of course, benefit by learning.

UWC makes education a force to unite people, nations and cultures for peace and a sustainable future.

Out of the 96 students living on the campus at the time of the opening, only 10 percent were Armenian, 10 percent were Russian, and the remaining 80 percent were recruited from 46 other countries, spanning Swaziland to Australia.

Hahn's ideals are dear to Zonabend as well. “UWC brings social responsibility and the idea to give a chance for good education to people, for young people regardless of their financial situation,” she said.

There are plenty of scholarships for students. The latest one is by Shelby M.C. Davis, who has created a \$15 million scholarship program for students in the UWC program.

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 Cholyan, Eastern Prelacy 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.



COMMUNITY NEWS

Armenian American Organizations Urge Obama Administration to Condemn Azerbaijan’s Aggression, Promote Peace in Karabagh

WASHINGTON – On April 8, 59 Armenian American organizations urged President Obama to “forcefully condemn Azerbaijan’s aggression” and called for the US to lead the way for “peace and long-term regional stability” in the Nagorno Karabagh Republic.

Below is the letter written by the Armenian-American community to President Obama.

Dear Mr. President:

Armenian Americans from across our nation ask you, in light of the worst Azerbaijani attacks since the 1994 Nagorno Karabagh cease-fire, to forcefully condemn Azerbaijan’s aggression and – in light of Baku’s reckless initiation of hostilities only hours after meeting in Washington, DC with senior members of your Administration – call for principled American leadership for peace and long-term regional stability.

In view of the renewed hostilities by Azerbaijan, which undermine our nation’s regional interests, and taking into consideration President Aliyev’s open threats to continue and further expand aggression against Nagorno Karabagh, we express our full support for the courageous efforts of the people and governments of Armenia and Nagorno Karabagh to protect their citizens and encourage the US government to support the self-defense of the Nagorno Karabagh Republic. We commend, as well, the formal recognition of the independence of the Nagorno Karabagh Republic by the US states of California, Georgia, Hawaii, Louisiana, Maine, Massachusetts, and Rhode Island. President Aliyev’s actions, which represent a direct challenge to US leadership for a negotiated resolution and grave threat to the peace of the entire region, require a strong American response.

In the interest of peace, we call upon you to immediately stop all military aid to Azerbaijan, and enforce Section 907 of the FREEDOM Support Act. We also encourage you to work with Armenia and the Nagorno Karabagh Republic on the deployment of gunfire locator and other monitoring systems on the Nagorno Karabagh side of the line-of-contact and the Armenian side of the Armenia-Azerbaijan border.

Mr. President, in keeping with the humanitarian spirit of the American people, we urge you to immediately send

emergency relief aid to Nagorno Karabagh, including medical equipment and other urgently-needed relief supplies. We are reminded, during this dark time, that it was the generosity of the American people, through the noble work of USAID, that helped rebuild Martakert and Martuni following Baku’s 1991-94 aggression, two of the same communities that have come under heavy Azerbaijani fire.

In closing, we encourage you to send a multi-agency fact-finding mission – led by our Department of State –

- All-Armenian Student Association
- American-Armenian Legion
- Americans for Artsakh
- Apostolic Exarchate for Armenian Catholics
- Armenia Artsakh Fund
- Armenia Fund
- Armenia Tree Project
- Armenian Aintabtz Cultural Association
- Armenian American Democratic Leadership Council
- Armenian American Veterans
- Armenian Assembly of America
- Armenian Bar Association
- Armenian Compatriotic Union of Ourfa
- Armenian Council of America
- Armenian Democratic Liberal Party
- Armenian Engineers and Scientists of America
- Armenian Evangelical Union of North America
- Armenian General Athletic Union (HMEM) – Eastern Region
- Armenian General Athletic Union (HMEM) – Western Region
- Armenian General Benevolent Union
- Armenian General Benevolent Union – Western District
- Armenian International Women’s Association
- Armenian Missionary Association of America
- Armenian National Committee of America
- Armenian National Committee of America – Eastern Region
- Armenian National Committee of America – Western Region
- Armenian Relief Society – Eastern Region
- Armenian Relief Society – Western Region
- Armenian Revolutionary Federation – Eastern Region
- Armenian Revolutionary Federation – Western Region
- ARF Shant Student Association
- Armenian Rights Council of America
- Armenian Society of Los Angeles

to thoroughly investigate serious reports of Azerbaijani war crimes and other violations of the Hague Convention, to look into allegations that Azerbaijan has engaged ISIS fighters, to evaluate the destruction inflicted by Azerbaijan’s aggression, and to assess the humanitarian relief and reconstruction needs of Nagorno Karabagh’s civilian population.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.
Sincerely,

- Armenian Youth Federation – Eastern Region
- Armenian Youth Federation – Western Region
- Artsakh Development Group
- Baku Armenians
- Birthright Armenia
- Daughters of Vartan
- Diocese of the Armenian Apostolic Church of America – Eastern Region
- Diocese of the Armenian Apostolic Church of America – Western Region
- Friends of New Julfa
- Hamazkayin Armenian Educational and Cultural Society – Eastern Region
- Hamazkayin Armenian Educational and Cultural Society – Western Region
- Iraqi Armenian Family Association
- Kharpert Cultural Association
- Knights of Vartan
- Memory, Dignity, Justice Association of Armenian Refugees from Azerbaijan
- Mousa Ler Association of California – Los Angeles
- National Association for Armenian Studies and Research
- National Organization of Republican Armenians
- Organization of Istanbul Armenians
- Paros Foundation (Berkeley, California)
- Prelacy of the Armenian Apostolic Church of America – Eastern Region
- Prelacy of the Armenian Apostolic Church of America – Western Region
- Social Democrat Hunchagian Party
- Tekeyan Cultural Association, Inc.
- United Armenian Council of Los Angeles
- United Human Rights Council

Outrage Rapidly Forces Boston Billboard Denying Armenian Genocide Down

BILLBOARD, from page 1
from the Armenian Heritage Park on the Greenway, which honors the victims of the Armenian Genocide. The effect of the location was exacerbated by the timing: it was right after the visit of Armenian President Serge Sargsian to the park on March 29, and before the April 10 reconfiguring of the Armenian Heritage Park sculpture dedicated to the Armenian Genocide victims, and the close of the third annual Walk Against Genocide sponsored by the Massachusetts Coalition to Save Darfur at the park the same afternoon. Furthermore, the annual commemoration of the Armenian Genocide in Boston will take place there on April 24.

James Kalustian, president of the board of directors of the park’s Armenian Heritage Foundation, declared in an interview that with April 24, the anniversary of the Armenian Genocide, “coming up, they were trying to discredit the Genocide – but as they say in Armenian, *amen chariken parik me ga* [there is some good in every misfortune]. We got publicity, and the publicity was all positive.”

The pressure quickly led to Clear Channel replacing the Turkish ad with an innocuous parenting one. According to reports in the media, Clear Channel official Jason King stated that “the ad was placed there in error and has been removed.” The *Mirror-Spectator*, as well as other Boston-area media, attempted contacting Clear Channel and Jason King by telephone and email for further clarification but received no response.

The *Mirror* called the Turkish Cultural Center of Boston to ask for a Turkish perspective on the billboard incident. A spokesman said that as a nonprofit cultural organization, the center did not want to com-

ment on political matters and suggested contacting the Consulate-General of Turkey in Boston for comments. The *Mirror’s* message with the latter remains answered.

Kalustian said, “The most encouraging thing is that it is quite clear that we had broad-based support among non-Armenians. We were able to get an online petition going from some people in the North End – non-Armenians. There was a lot of chatroom and social media statements by non-Armenian individuals, including a number of Jewish people.”

Somerville resident Elizabeth Weinbloom was one of the most active protesters. She tweeted about the billboard on April 6, and her words incited many to contact the mayor of Boston, Marty Walsh, the Department of Transportation, and Clear Channel. She made a powerful parallel when she declared in one tweet, “We’d never allow a Holocaust denial sign at the Holocaust memorial. Or anywhere at all.” After the billboard ad was pulled down, she declared in a newspaper interview, “I guess I’ve never had the privilege to experience social media being so incredibly effective at correcting an injustice.”

Furthermore, the Jewish Community Relations Council of Greater Boston, which includes 42 member organizations in the area, issued a statement which read: “The JCRC of Greater Boston is appalled by the billboard recently posted in Boston’s North End that denies the existence of the Armenian Genocide. This is a disturbing affront to the Armenian community and to all decent people in Boston. As one neighborhood resident rightly says in today’s Boston Globe, this billboard, placed across from the Armenian Heritage Park, is ‘like putting a

Holocaust denial ad right above a Holocaust memorial.’ We are pleased that Clear Channel Outdoors, owners of the billboard, has indicated that the message was put up in error and has removed it.”

Robert O. Trestan, the regional director of the Anti-Defamation League, said, according to Eric Levenson’s April 7 article in Boston.com: “This billboard denying the Armenian Genocide is no different and just as offensive as one denying the Holocaust.”

Naturally, there was a lot of Armenian activity too. The Armenian student associations of the greater Boston area organized phone campaigns, and through the social media many Armenians became aware and contacted Clear Channel. The *Boston Globe*, regional newspapers, and several local television stations, including CBS, covered the issue.

Kalustian related why he thought the reaction succeeded so well and quickly: “We have built such good relations with people. We had built such credibility with the work we had done in the past with the programming such as for the 100th anniversary [of the Genocide], so awareness is growing among these groups.” In fact, other communities facing similar issues in the US are now approaching Kalustian for advice.

Prizewinning *Boston Globe* reporter Stephen Kurkjian declared at an event at the Old State House honoring Moses Gulesian on April 7 that this success was due to “all of those people whom we have touched and told our story for 50 years, and told who we were, and told them the pride we felt ... Our story has finally been heard and reckoned with.”

A number of local politicians commented recently. State Rep. Jonathan Hecht of

Watertown told the *Mirror*, “I think that there is greater awareness, but I think also that this was so outrageous, the placement of it, that anybody who gave it a moment’s thought, knew that it was absolutely beyond the pale. I think everyone, particularly people in public life and members of the community, has to speak out in these sorts of circumstances, and the fact that so many people did explains why it came down so fast.”

State Rep. David Muradian of Worcester, after expressing disappointment with Clear Channel’s impetus to collect money without consideration of the ad message, said, “It is great to see our community come together. While I am a very big champion of first amendment rights, there is human decency, and there is a line that should never be crossed.”

Middlesex County Sheriff Peter Koutoujian concluded, “When that billboard was first put up, I was filled with a mixture of outrage and hurt. It made me feel sad to think that denial still goes on in a public place, and a place not just public but a personal place for Armenians...but then I was heartened because in a matter of hours that billboard was taken down. It was not just because of the actions of the many Armenians who called and advocated but it was because of the actions of our friends, the Jewish community, the immigrant community and so many other groups, who came to our side and stood strong with us, without a moment of hesitation. That made me feel proud because that made me realize that we are an incredible country. We have made our mark in this incredible country and many others truly appreciate and love who we are, and will stand with us in difficult times.”



COMMUNITY NEWS

Staying Healthy to Support The Homeland

WASHINGTON – On Sunday, April 10, the Armenian American Health Association of Greater Washington (AAHAGW) launched its 2016 season with a health fair at the St. Mary's Armenian Apostolic church in Washington DC.

The Armenian American Health

needs of its people.

The most pressing need this month is the C-ARM X-Ray equipment used in orthopedic surgery for the Stepanakert Children's Hospital.

Donations are needed. Donations will also



Many generations at the Armenian American Health Association of Greater Washington program

Professionals provided counseling and health education on diabetes, high blood pressure, cholesterol, bone health, nutrition, age-specific cancer risks and its preventive measures. The event featured oral/dental check-up, glucose and blood pressure screenings, as well as culturally mindful education on healthier eating habits and proportions to the

Washington DC Armenian community. Another health fair is planned at Soorp Khach Armenian Apostolic Church of Washington DC



Alis Marachelian and Varti Marachelian drinking a healthy smoothy

at the end of May.

The health fair was also an opportunity to have one-on-one discussions with the participants on the organization's work both in Armenia and Artsakh, which spans a period of about 25 years and currently concentrates mostly on Nagorno-Karabagh and the health



Checking Rev. Hovsep Karapetyan's bloodpressure

benefit the purchase of high-quality medicines used through Nagorno-Karabagh's mobile clinics that connect the population of the most remote villages in need with the regional hospital medical staff.

Donations can be made through PayPal account: send to aahagw.donations@gmail.com account using the "friends & family mode" to

avoid charges.

Via our Facebook page: find us on Facebook, Armenian American Health Association of Greater Washington and click on "Donate Now!" button (credit cards accepted), or by checks payable to AAHAGW sent to the following address: 745 Potomac River Rd. McLean, VA 22102



Sponsor A Teacher

In Armenia and Karabagh

16th Anniversary

Since its inception in 2001, TCA's Sponsor a Teacher program has raised over \$563,000 and reached out to 5,627 teachers and school workers in Armenia & Karabagh.



☐ Yes, I want to sponsor teachers in Armenia and Karabagh to continue helping them to educate the children, our future leaders. I would like to have the teacher's name and address.

☐ \$160 ☐ \$320 ☐ \$480 ☐ other \$_____

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip code _____

Tel: _____

Make check payable to: Tekeyan Cultural Association - Memo: Sponsor a Teacher
Mail your check with this form to:

TCA Sponsor a Teacher
5326 Valverde, Houston, TX 77056
Your donation is Tax Deductible.

Genocide Survivor Celebrates 102nd Birthday

BIRTHDAY, from page 5

English and was later hired by Hagopian to repair their Oriental rugs. She retired in 1976 and she and her husband enjoyed travel together.

After her husband died in 1995, she traveled to France and Turkey to visit relatives. She visited Turkey again in 2001.

Relatives say she remains fiercely independent, living on her own until about three years ago. Even now, as the oldest resident at Manoogian Manor, they say she looks after others, making sure they eat properly and are getting around well.

Arts & Living

ASA Announces 6th 'Arthur Halvajian Memorial' Armenian Poetry Competition

PROVIDENCE — The Armenian Students Association, Inc. announces the start of its 6th annual poetry competition. Once again, the ASA, Inc. is partnering with the Armenian Poetry Project for the writing competition named in honor of the late Arthur Halvajian, a former trustee who led its Board in sponsoring the first competition. The 2016 competition now open and the deadline for submissions is May 28. The competition winners will be announced by the jury in June.

"Over the past five years we have received hundreds of entries from across North America and continue to be impressed with the creativity, quality, and range of poems. We look forward to reaching out to even more communities in the coming months," said Alice Movsesian, a member of the ASA, Inc. Board of Trustees as well as its liaison to the competition's organizing committee.

ASA national board secretary M. Manoog Kaprielian sees the poetry competition as a particularly meaningful window of expression for Armenians who endured as Azerbaijan refugees out of and survivors of the ongoing war in Syria, who have settled throughout the United States and Canada. "We will do all that we can to reach out wherever they may be," stated Kaprielian.

The Armenian Poetry Project, led by poet Lola Koundakjian, is a research and documentation site for 19th to 21st century Armenian poems and related topics. Currently containing more than 2,500 poems, it is celebrating its 10th anniversary this year. APP has a worldwide following and releases poems through RSS feeds, Twitter and podcasting.

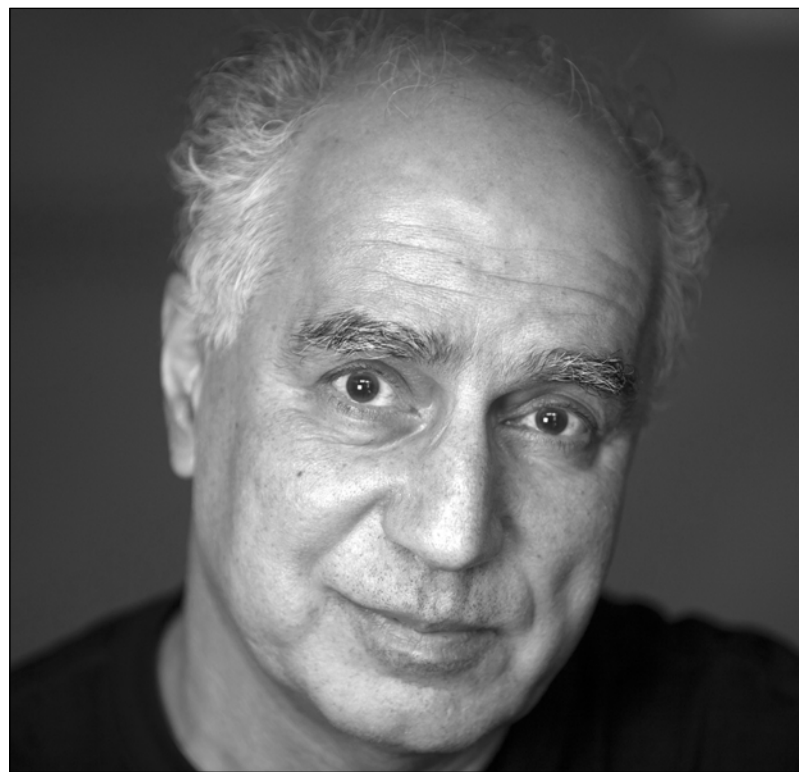
All individuals of Armenian descent, residing in the United States and Canada are invited to submit their work, in English or Armenian for the competition. Entries should be e-mailed by May 28, 2016 to ArmenianPoetryProject@gmail.com with the subject heading "Halvajian ASA/APP Poetry competition." Only one poem per individual may be submitted.

The competition groups submissions into three categories; students (ages 12-17), college age (ages 18-22), and adult (ages 23 and older). A top prize will be awarded for each of the categories in the amounts of US \$75 (students), \$125 (college age), and \$300 (adult).

Each poem submitted for the competition must be accompanied by the author's full name, age, home address/telephone number. Students must include school name and sponsoring teacher's telephone number.

You can learn more about the Armenian Poetry Project by visiting <http://armenian-poetry.blogspot.com>.

The Armenian Students' Association of America, Inc. encourages educational pursuits by Armenians in America and the raising of their intellectual standards, providing financial assistance in the form of scholarships to deserving Armenian students, developing fellowship among them, cultivating in them the spirit of service in the public interest, and acquainting them and the entire American community with Armenian culture.



Author & filmmaker Nubar Alexanian

Nubar Alexanian Explores Histories of Family, Armenians and Gloucester

GLOUCESTER, Mass. — Nubar Alexanian is like a whirling dervish when it comes to making a point. If it's not a genocide film that has occupied his time the past decade or so, then it's books on photography.

By Tom Vartabedian

If it is not getting involved in community affairs, then it is family, friends and community.

His latest book — a just-released coffee table beauty — is called *Gloucester: When the Fish Came First*. It is a compilation of black and white photographs from the city where he resides. If anything, it is a tribute to the unsung heroes of the sea which brought us "The Perfect Storm."

Alexanian has opted to donate part of the proceeds from the sale to the Northeast Seafood Coalition. The book was no easy task.

The author returned for decades to the same location, capturing a historical document that describes Gloucester's way of life. He's been shooting here since 1971 and hasn't stopped, calling it his life's work.

"The sea gives and takes away," it is said. Alexanian noted, "Fishermen and their families look mortality in the face every working day. We cannot say what gives the people of Gloucester their determination and perseverance but photographs capture the spirit when words cannot — and they make time and tide stand still."

The book contains 66 striking images over 113 pages.

The reader might consider the work a pleasant diversion from another project at hand. Over the past 10 years, Alexanian and his daughter Abby have dedicated themselves to producing a film titled "Scars of Silence: Three Generations from Genocide."

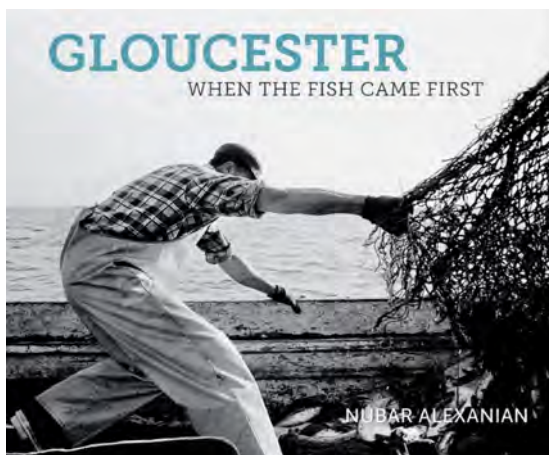
It has been a work in progress that encountered several trips to Historic Armenia in pursuit of their family's history following the Genocide. As expected, the funding continues to remain sporadic but it hasn't deterred from the challenge.

The Alexanians are resolute in their quest to share this film with the outside world, no matter what the consequences. They represent an Armenian-American father-daughter duo which has set out to understand the powerful legacy of genocide and the ways "a century of silence" has shaped their families and themselves.

What does it mean to be a second-generation Armenian-American?

"I was raised speaking Armenian as my first language, surrounded by the haunting sounds of the oud," he explains. "Yet, no one ever spoke of the persecution that

see ALEXANIAN, page 12



Cover of Nubar Alexanian's new coffee table book Gloucester - When the Fish Came First

Pianist Kariné Poghosyan to Perform at Southern Connecticut State University

NEW HAVEN, Conn. — Armenian pianist Kariné Poghosyan will perform a recital on Saturday, April 30, at 7:30 p.m. in Southern Connecticut State University's Charles Garner Recital Hall (Engleman Hall C112).

An avid musician who has been described as "extraordinary" and "larger than life," Poghosyan made her orchestral debut at 14, playing Beethoven's *Piano Concerto No. 1*, and her solo Carnegie Hall debut at 23, and has since gone on to win numerous awards as well as perform in some of the world's most prestigious concert halls.

In the fall of 2007, she organized and performed a three-recital concert series at the Yamaha Piano Salon titled "Twentieth Century Piano Sonata." She also helped organize the "Requiem and Resurrection" concert in commemoration of the 95th Anniversary of the Armenian Genocide at the Saint Vartan Armenian Cathedral in New York, where her performance of the Piano Sonata by Khachaturian received a standing ovation and was described as "jaw-dropping." The



Kariné Poghosyan

Armenian Mirror-Spectator wrote, "The three-movement Khachaturian Sonata — a rarely performed composition — is a real tour-de-force for the virtuoso pianist. Technically pristine, Ms. Poghosyan brought out the driven qualities of the outer movements, and the heart-rending beauty of the middle section."

Poghosyan has appeared as a soloist with numerous orchestras and has participated in the master classes of distinguished artists such as Alicia de Larrocha, Claude Franck, Jon O'Connor, and Jerome Rose. She has won numerous piano competitions and has been the recipient of several prestigious musical scholarships.

Her music studies began in her native Yerevan Armenia in School of the Arts, No. 1, and later in Romanos Melikian College as well as Komitas State Conservatory. Her teachers in Armenia included Irina Gazarian, Vatche Umr-Shat, and Svetlana Dadyan. After moving to the United States in 1998, she received her B.M., summa cum laude, from California State University in Northridge, under Professor Françoise Regnat, and her M.M. and D.M.A. degrees at the Manhattan School of Music, under Dr. Arkady Aronov, completing her D.M.A. in a record-breaking two years with a thesis on Aram Khachaturian for Piano. Poghosyan is currently based in New York, where she teaches at her alma mater, The Manhattan School of Music.

Her solo CD of Aram Khachaturian's piano works and ballet transcriptions was released in 2015, on the NAXOS label.

There is a \$5 admission fee at the door for Poghosyan's performance.

Music of Living Armenian Female Composer Presented at Tsai Center

BOSTON – The Ip Piano School will host its 23rd Annual Concerto Concert at the Boston University Tsai Performance Center on Sunday, April 24, at 3 p.m. The concert will feature the US premiere of a piano concerto composed by 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. Weisman 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 the young performer, 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 (Gumri) 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 US, I will be very happy."

To purchase tickets for the 23rd Annual Concerto Concert, or e-mail Winnie@ippi-anoschool.com. General admission is \$20 and there is free parking at the rear of the Tsai Performance Center.

Chilean-born conductor, Gonzalo Farias, will

Armenian Night at the Pops to Feature Cellist Edvard Pogossian

BOSTON – The Friends of Armenian Culture Society will present the 65th annual Armenian Night at the Pops on Friday, May 27 at 8 p.m. at Symphony Hall. The evening will feature young cellist Edvard Pogossian. A recent winner of the Juilliard Concerto Competition, he will join conductor Keith Lockhart and the Boston Pops Orchestra in performing the Rococo Variations for Cello and Orchestra by Tchaikovsky.

This evening continues the cherished tradition of celebrating Armenian artists alongside exciting selections of Pops favorites; the second half of the program will feature the Broadway star and Tony Award winner Sutton Foster.

Pogossian was born in California and is currently a sophomore at the Juilliard School in New York. He studied with Paul Cohen and Rick Mooney in Los Angeles and has participated in multiple national and international music festivals. He recently performed the Rococo Variations with the Juilliard orchestra under the direction of Itzhak Perlman in New York and Chicago and was the winner of the Los Angeles Philharmonic Young Artists Competition in 2011. He has also performed at Carnegie Hall and on National Public Radio's 'From the Top' radio show.

Pogossian is an enthusiastic chamber musician and is a founding member of the Zelda Piano Quartet, which is currently part of the Juilliard Honors Chamber Music Program.

Tickets for this concert are available for purchase online at www.FACSBoston.org. Students (K-12) qualify for a 50-percent discount on ticket purchases through FACS; details are available on the website.



lead the concert. Performers will include St. Paul's Choir School, Cambridge (directed by John Robinson) as well as Peter Andaloro, Grace Carter, Fiena Chen, Alex Chin, James Delaney, Sara Ho, Yu Yuan Huang, Jay Hui, Cynthia Lau, Sarina Lau, Dalila Lee, John

Mullin, Adrian Tam, Emily Tan, Ethan Kasparian Weisman, Vivian Wong, Sydney Pho, and Thomas Yu. In addition to Chitchyan's work, the program will include works of Berkovich, Chilcott, Cochran, Faure, Grieg, Haydn, Mozart, Scott, Vivaldi and Weston.

Nubar Alexanian Explores Histories of Family, Armenians and Gloucester

ALEXANIAN, from page 11

brought my grandparents to America. Not my grandmother who lost three young daughters on a death march, or my grandfather who fled everything he knew, never to return. When your family's violent past is denied, how do you make sense of the present?"

Alexanian said he felt suffocated by the unspoken suffering and fled as far from his Armenian identity as he could. He rarely talked about his heritage until his daughter asked a simple question.

"Dad, will you come with me to Armenia?"

Thus became the inspiration for the film that sent both of them on an inexplicable journey to understand their shared history.

Alexanian has spent the past 38 years working as a photojournalist and filmmaker. He has traveled to more than 40 countries shooting for magazines such as *Life*, *Newsweek*, *Time* and *National Geographic*. He has published five

books and rubbed elbows with some of the most influential people throughout the musical world.

He has grown involved as a recent board member with Project SAVE Armenian Photograph Archives while producing an eclectic video on the organization's 40-year anniversary last October.

Abby is a graduate of Vassar College. Over the past decade, she has spent considerable time working on her dad's still photography and film sets.

For Abby, the understanding of this past is a generation removed, yet intensely personal.

"It's heart-breaking to see what really happened to them and to us," she says. "But now, I feel like I'm beginning to understand my family and myself."

The film is a feature-length documentary of how a young woman's curiosity propels her reluctant father to join her in finally confronting their family's dark past and discovering

how the denial of the 1915 genocide affects them today.

According to the Alexanians, the project is on firm ground at the moment. Last year they were finalists for a MacArthur Foundation Grant as well as a LEF Foundation Production Grant. They hope to complete production by the end of September.

"Editing will begin in November and proceed as funds are raised to cover final production and post-production expenses," says Alexanian. "We expect to have a complete version of the film by June 2017."

For more information, see: www.whenthefish-camefirst.com or walkercreekmedia.com/gloucester.



Village of Chengiler in Yalova Province where Nubar Alexanian's grandmother was deported with her family in 1917.

FRIENDS OF ARMENIAN CULTURE SOCIETY

PRESENTS

65th ANNUAL ARMENIAN NIGHT AT THE POPS

Edvard Pogossian
CELLO

Boston Pops Orchestra
Keith Lockhart
CONDUCTOR

FRIDAY, MAY 27, 2016 AT 8 PM
SYMPHONY HALL, BOSTON

FOR TICKETS AND INFORMATION,
PLEASE VISIT: WWW.FACSBOSTON.ORG



ARTS & LIVING

AMAA Presents Dr. Markarian's Book, *The Martyred Armenian Writers*

By Taleen Kupelian

PARAMUS, N.J. — With the 101st Anniversary of the Armenian Genocide quickly approaching, now is a more poignant time than ever to celebrate the Armenian culture rather than mourn its loss. Accomplished author, scientist, professor, playwright, poet, translator, actor, literary and theater critic, and director, Dr. Herand M. Markarian does just that with his latest publication, an anthology titled *The Martyred Armenian Writers (1915-1922)*.

All those present at the Armenian Presbyterian Church on March 18, heard the words of the greats brought to life in a moving performance with help from a number of the community's youth — Nick Aynilian Jr., Raffi Aynilian, Vatche Demirjian, Richard Hekemian, Anoush Kalachian, Niree Kaprielian, and Melani

Salibian.

This special event, titled "The Literary Works of 13 Armenian Martyred Writers," began with remarks by AMAA Executive Director/CEO Zaven Khanjian and included a brief biography of the honored guest. Khanjian qualified the literature of the 19th and early 20th centuries "as superb, distinct ... and deserving to be read, enjoyed and spread." Markarian's enlightening slide show that followed these remarks highlighted the accomplishments of the 13 writers featured in his book.

Markarian's anthology is brilliantly segmented into three parts, each one a pertinent background about the time the subject matter was written. The first part contains general introductions to Western Armenian literature of the 19th century. The second part contains a foundation for understanding the Armenian Genocide. In the final section, the readers are provided with short biographies

of 13 of the most beloved Armenian writers of the era along with a bibliography of their writing and excerpts from each author (in English).

While there are certain nuances that may get lost in translation, Markarian's anthology is as good as it gets. Markarian (with skillful help) has translated the works of the 13 featured authors. In his book, the author beautifully records the classic and powerful words of the martyred Armenians during the Armenian Genocide proving that whether it's one or 101 years that have passed, these writings have truly stood the test of time.

The literary program was brought to a moving close by the dynamic aforementioned performance and was followed by a reception organized by Seta Nalbandian, Anita Buchakjian and Berjouhi Gulesserian.

To order Markarian's book, visit AMAA's website at www.amaa.org.



Dr. Herand Markarian

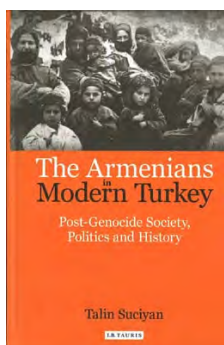


Dr. Herand Markarian signs copies of *The Martyred Armenian Writers*



Some of the young performers flank Dr. Herand Markarian

THE ARMENIANS IN MODERN TURKEY



A DISCUSSION WITH DR. TALIN SUCIYAN

After 1915, Armenians lived and worked in the Turkish state alongside those who had persecuted their communities. Living in the midst of pervasive denial, how did those remaining in Anatolia and Istanbul record their history and cope with subsequent discrimination?

Talin Suciyan explores the life experienced by these communities. Special emphasis is given to the period between 1944 and 1950 and the crisis that surrounded the patriarchal election.

The Armenians in Modern Turkey examines remarkable new primary material: Turkish state archives, minutes of the Armenian National Assembly, a kaleidoscopic of personal diaries, memoirs and oral histories, various newspapers, yearbooks and magazines, as well as statutes and laws which led to continuing persecution.

Join us and meet author **Talin Suciyan** from Ludwig Maximilian University in Munich where she is currently an assistant professor at the **Institute of Near and Middle Eastern Studies**.

FRIDAY, APRIL 22, 2016 @ 7:45 P.M.

St. Leon Armenian Church/Charles & Grace Pinajian Youth Center
12-61 Saddle River Road, Fair Lawn, NJ / For information call 201-791-2862

This event is jointly sponsored by

AGBU Ararat, Armenian Network of America- Greater NY,
Constantinople Armenian Relief Society (C.A.R.S.), Daughters of Vartan Sahaganoush Otyag of NJ,
Esayan-Getronagan Alumni Inc., Knights of Vartan Bakradouny Lodge of NJ,
National Association for Armenian Studies and Research (NAASR),
St. Leon Armenian Church, Tekeyan Cultural Association

THE EVENT IS FREE. A RECEPTION WILL FOLLOW THE DISCUSSION AND BOOK SIGNING.

ADAA Unveils Kondazian Award For Armenian Stories

LOS ANGELES — The Armenian Dramatic Arts Alliance (ADAA) announced this week that in addition to its Saroyan/Paul Playwriting Prize, it has unveiled the Kondazian Playwriting Award for Armenian Stories to specifically honor stage plays on Armenian themes.

ADAA is accepting scripts for this award until April 24, 2016.

In keeping with ADAA's mission to project the Armenian voice on the world stage, the \$2,500 Kondazian Playwriting Award for Armenian Stories ensures that Armenian writers or non-Armenian writers exploring Armenian themes will be given important exposure at this key time in Armenia's modern history. In addition, the \$10,000 Saroyan/Paul Playwriting Prize will honor plays with human rights/social justice themes of all kinds.

The Lillian and Varnum Paul Fund, longtime supporter of ADAA's writing competitions, will fund the prize. Inaugurated by actress and ADAA Board of Directors member Karen Kondazian, who is the daughter of Lillian and Varnum Paul, the Kondazian Playwriting Award for Armenian Stories fills an important need for Armenian and non-Armenian artists and audiences.

"The Kondazian Playwriting Award for Armenian Stories encourages playwrights of any nationality to explore the Armenian heart and soul," says Kondazian. "This is a passion of mine and I am thrilled to see the award helping writers around the world to get their voice heard."

The \$10,000 Saroyan/Paul Prize for Playwriting in Human Rights/Social Justice and the \$2,500 Kondazian Playwriting Award for Armenian Stories will be awarded in December 2016, in honor of Human Rights



Karen Kondazian

Day, at ADAA's annual awards event in Los Angeles.

For submission guidelines, please visit ADAA's newly redesigned website, <http://www.armeniandrama.org>. Submissions for the prize are electronic only to armeniandrama@gmail.com (note new email address) by April 24, 2016.



LIKE US ON FACEBOOK



ARTS & LIVING

Armenian Museum to Present May Musical Programs

WATERTOWN — The Armenian Museum of America (AMA), Direct Help for Armenian People (DHAP), and the Amaras Art Alliance present: Tribute to Armenia on Sunday, May 1, at 2 p.m.

The event, a concert performance by the finalists of the annual Armenian Youth Talent (AYT) competition, is dedicated to the 25th

the reception are free and open to the public.

In addition, the museum and the Composer's Union of Armenia present: "Anmorats Yerker" — Unforgettable Songs" on Sunday, May 22, at 2 p.m. The concert, dedicated to the 90th anniversary of composers Alexander Ajemyan and Khachatur Avetisyan, will feature the voices of Nouné Karapetian, Michael Calmés, Knarik Nerkarian, and Garo Nishanian, with Nuné Hakobyan accompanying them on piano.

Konstantin Petrossian is serving as the music director of the program.

Light refreshments will be served at a reception following the concert. Both the concert and the reception are free and open to the public. This concert is made possible by a generous donation from the Dadourian Foundation.

Both programs will be held on the 3rd floor of the Armenian Museum in the Adele & Haig Der Manuelian Galleries. Both



Nouné Karapetian, Garo Nishanian



anniversary of the independence of the Republic of Armenia.

Light refreshments will be served at a reception following the concert. Both the concert and

events are made possible by donations from the Dadourian Foundation.

The Armenian Museum is located in Watertown Square.

AGBU Sayat Nova International Composition Competition Seeks Submissions from Composers

NEW YORK — The AGBU Performing Arts Departments (PAD) in New York and Paris announce the opening of the submission cycle for the 2016 AGBU Sayat Nova International Composition Competition.

In 2006, AGBU France launched the competition, a biennial event open to composers from

philosopher Grigor Narekatsi, who was named a Doctor of the Church by Pope Francis in 2015. Each year, the competition is judged by a renowned panel of musicians, which has included Alain Altinoglu, Jenny Q. Chai, Michael Jarell, Paul Mefano and Michel Petrossian.

By August 31, composers are invited to submit a seven to ten-minute composition for a chamber ensemble of six musicians, including: a string quartet (two violins, one viola, and one cello), one shvi (traditional Armenian woodwind instrument), and one male vocal tenor (spoken and/or sung). For the second year, the submission process will take place through Vox Novus, a music company that has designed special software to allow all submissions and judging to take place online. "We are grateful for Vox Novus's partnership and devotion to the competition's success. Their generosity and ingenuity helped us to further introduce the competition to composers worldwide, fostering creative love and inspiration from our ancient culture in composers of many different heritages," said Hayk

Arsenyan, the director of PAD New York.

Over the years, the competition has grown to include new and bigger awards. The winners of the competition will receive cash prizes and will be eligible for three special awards, including the new Armusic Publishing House Award. This award allows the top three winners to have their winning works published by the Composers Union of Armenia's Armusic Publishing House in Yerevan. The top winner will receive two additional prizes: the Carnegie Hall Award, which gives the composer the honor of having his/her piece premiered at the AGBU Performing Artists in Concert at the Weill Recital Hall, and the Armenian National Philharmonic Orchestra (ANPO) Award, which offers the composer the opportunity to be commissioned to write a 10-minute piece that will premiere by the ANPO during the 2017/18 season.

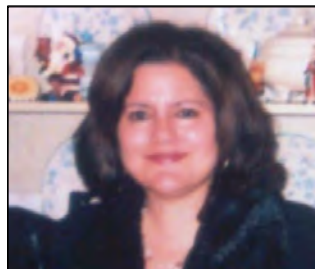
For more information, visit <http://sayatnova.agbueurope.org/>.



Talin Nalbandian (mezzo-soprano) and David Ayriyan (kamancha) at the 2014 Sayat Nova International Composition Competition Gala Concert at Symphony Space in New York.

all backgrounds. Since the start of the competition, submissions have arrived from over thirty countries, including Ghana, Korea, Mexico and Russia, in addition to Armenia and the United States. Winners have been from Argentina, Armenia/Nagorno-Karabagh, France, Hong Kong, Mexico and the United Kingdom and gala concerts have taken place at prestigious venues, such as Symphony Space in New York and Salon d'Opéra and Salle Cortot in Paris.

The competition, which celebrates its tenth anniversary this year, is designed to introduce Armenian music, literature and history to a wider international audience by asking composers to submit compositions for an ensemble of Armenian and Western instruments that integrate Armenian poetry. In past years, composers have been asked to use the works of poets Sayat Nova and Daniel Varoujan. This year, they are asked to draw inspiration from the tenth-century Armenian monk, poet and



Recipe Corner

by Christine Vartanian Datian

Avocado, Eggplant, Shrimp and Feta Tacos With Garlic Lemon Tahini

INGREDIENTS

3 or 4 medium avocados, sliced
1 medium eggplant, sliced,
1 pound medium shrimp, peeled and deveined
2-3 cloves garlic, minced
Diced feta cheese
Juice of one lemon or lime
8-10 corn, flour or whole wheat tortillas
1 teaspoon ground cumin
1/2 teaspoon dried oregano
1/2 teaspoon dried ancho peppers or 1/4 teaspoon red pepper flakes
Sea salt, black or white pepper, cayenne pepper or chili powder to taste
Olive oil, diced tomatoes, sliced white, green or red onions, chopped cilantro, chopped green or red cabbage, chopped jalapeno peppers, chopped radishes, and sliced black or green olives as garnish
Lemon or lime wedges as garnish
Choice of hot sauce as garnish

PREPARATION:

Wash and slice the eggplant and lightly sprinkle slices with sea salt; place slices in a colander and let sit for 10-20 minutes. Pat with a paper towel to remove excess liquid. In a few tablespoons of olive oil, sauté the eggplant (in batches) until medium brown on both sides, for 3-5 minutes. Remove eggplant and drain on paper towels. (Eggplant may also be grilled for this recipe.)

In a skillet, sauté the shrimp in a few tablespoons of olive oil and the garlic until translucent. Do not overcook. Lightly sprinkle shrimp with cumin, oregano, ancho peppers or red pepper flakes to taste. Toss with the lemon or lime juice and a dash of cayenne or chili powder to taste. Remove shrimp to a serving plate and keep warm. (Shrimp may also be grilled, brush them with a little olive oil and some crushed garlic and minced parsley until done.)

Warm the tortillas in a microwave with paper towels for 20-35 seconds, grill, or warm the tortillas in a skillet on both sides in a few tablespoons of olive oil over medium heat until lightly browned, for 30-40 seconds.

Fill tortillas with choice of sliced avocado, eggplant, shrimp, tomatoes, onions, cilantro, cabbage, jalapeno peppers, radishes, and olives; garnish with feta cheese. Plate and serve tacos with lemon or lime wedges and hot sauce with the Garlic Lemon Tahini on the side.

Garlic Lemon Tahini

INGREDIENTS

2-3 cups canned garbanzo beans, washed and drained (reserve about 1/4 cup of liquid)
3-4 tablespoons tahini
2-3 cloves minced garlic
Olive oil and the juice and zest of 2 lemons
Chopped cilantro
Cayenne pepper, Aleppo pepper or paprika

PREPARATION

Cayenne pepper, Aleppo pepper or paprika

In a blender or processor, slowly combine the garbanzo beans, tahini, garlic, lemon juice, and zest; add the reserve liquid a little at a time, and blend a minute longer; drizzle in the olive oil to the desired consistency. Taste and adjust seasonings. Add more lemon juice or olive oil, if desired.

With a small spatula spread tahini on a plate or platter and garnish with olive oil and chopped cilantro; sprinkle with cayenne pepper, Aleppo pepper or paprika.

Serves 4.

Christine's recipes have been published in the Fresno Bee, Sunset and Cooking Light Magazines, and at <http://www.thearmeniankitchen.com/>. For Christine's recipes that have been published in Sunset and Cooking Light Magazines, go to: <http://www.myrecipes.com/search/site/Datian>



Talin Nalbandian (mezzo-soprano), Christian Erbsloh-Papazian (piano), Vasko Dukovski (duduk) and Elizabeth Means (cello) at the 2014 Sayat Nova International Composition Competition Gala Concert at Symphony Space in New York.



ARTS & LIVING

C A L E N D A R

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.

ILLINOIS

APRIL 18 — Peter Balakian, the Donald M. and Constance H. Rebar Professor of the Humanities at Colgate University, will speak at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, Knight Auditorium, Spurlock Museum, 600 South Gregory, Urbana, 4 p.m., Monday. The talk, titled “The Armenian Genocide, Poetry of Witness, and Postmemory,” is hosted by Initiative in Holocaust, Genocide, and Memory Studies as well as several other groups.

MASSACHUSETTS

APRIL 16 — Sainly Women’s Day for the Parishes of Massachusetts and Rhode Island, hosted by Holy Trinity Armenian Church, 145 Brattle St., Cambridge. This year, we honor Saint Mary, the Holy Mother of God (Asdvadzadzin), Queen of Heaven. 10:15 a.m., Welcome & Coffee; 11 a.m., Church Service;12:00 p.m., Lunch and Program. Guest Speaker: Sr. Bridget Haase, OSU. Donation: \$35 per person with RSVP deadline of April 11. Reservations should be made through each parish’s Women’s Guild/Church group. For further information or to make individual reservations, please contact Cathy Minassian atcminassian@hotmail.com, or call 617.947.1795.

APRIL 16 – Centennial Commemoration of the 1916 Consecration of the Sts. Vartanantz Church, Lowell. Worship Service and Program at the original Sts. Vartanantz Church, 60 Lawrence St., Lowell. Outdoor architectural tour of the original Sts. Vartanantz Armenian Church at 60 Lawrence St., Lowell, starting at 5:30 p.m. followed by a prayer service and narrated slide presentation on the formation and early life of the parish at 6:00 p.m. The church is handicap accessible. Reception to follow. Complimentary admission. For further information, please call 978-256-7234, or email office@stsvartanantz.com.

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APRIL 17 — Erevan Choral Society Concert, “In Commemoration of Our Sainted Martyrs of 1915 and Dedicated to His Eminence Archbishop Yeghishe Gizirian of blessed memory.” Sponsored by Holy Trinity Armenian Church, 2:30 p.m., Church Sanctuary, 145 Brattle St., Cambridge. The Concert is under the direction of Composer Konstantin Petrossian, Music Director and Conductor. Guest Soloists are David Ayriyan, Kamancha, and Gohar Manjelian, Mezzo Soprano, with Nune Hakobyan on the organ and piano. We invite the Armenian and non-Armenian community to join us as we commemorate through music and poem the Holy Martyrs of the Armenian Genocide and remember Archbishop Yeghishe Gizirian of blessed memory. The concert is a gift to the community.

APRIL 17 — Concert by Haig Hovsepien, violin and Ani Hovsepien, piano, 12 p.m., Slosberg Recital Hall, Brandeis University, 415 South St., Waltham. The duo will perform selections from Armenian Folk, Classical, and Modern Music: Komitas, Spendarian, Khachaturian, Bagdasarian, Sardarian and Hovhanness. Admission is free and a reception will follow.

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APRIL 19 — Tuesday, at 7 p.m. at the Armenian Cultural Foundation, **Duygu Dalyanoglu, an actor and playwright from Turkey, will speak about her play, “Zabel,”** based on the life and work of Zabel Yessayan. She will discuss the creation of the play and the performance last year in Istanbul and Yerevan. She will also talk about the audience responses to the play. 441 Mystic St., Arlington. For more information contact Armenian International Women’s Association at 617.926.0171 or jasaryan@gmail.com

APRIL 22 — The annual commemoration of the Armenian Genocide at the Massachusetts State House. Friday, 10:30 a.m., State House Chamber, Catered Reception at 12 noon in the Great Hall.

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 commemorationatthepart@gmail.com

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 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 Megighian 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 Nevart 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 — Sayat Nova Dance Company of Boston continues its 30th anniversary celebrations with a night of song and dance with beloved singer Arabo Ispiryan, 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 at7:30 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, Knarik 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.

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE

Zangakner Performing Arts Ensemble Dedicates New Show to Mothers and the Motherland

BELMONT, Mass. —Zangakner Performing Arts Ensemble will present a vocal concert featuring Armenian children from Massachusetts on April 30th at 5:00 p.m. at the Ellsworth Theatre at Pine Minor College in Chestnut Hill.

The new production, intended to pay homage to mothers and to the Motherland – Armenia, will also feature special guest artists from Greece, renowned pianist Jasmin Atabekyan and her daughter violinist Emily Gasparyan, who will join

Germany, Switzerland, Great Britain and Lebanon. In 2002, she founded Luys Zvart Children's Choir and produced her first CD that same year. Subsequently, she was offered the position of Artistic Director and Conductor of the Kantegh Children's Choir. This choir won the Golden Prize at the Children's Art Competition-Festival in 2006. This was followed by her second CD, "Children to the World," produced in Germany in 2007.

In 2009, Konjoyan was awarded the "Leading Teacher" designation in Yerevan. She was the founder and manager of the Luys Vocal Quintet, as well as a singer in it. This group recorded and produced two CDs in Germany, "Light to the World" (2003) and "Come to Light" (2004). In 2009 the CD "Luys" was produced in the United States and nominated as "Best Choral Album of the Year" in numerous competitions around the world.

Atabekyan, with a PhD in Piano Performance, is the winner of several international competitions, including France's prestigious Pierre Lantier – Ober Piano Competition in Paris and the Aram Khachaturian Competition in Yerevan. She has appeared as a featured soloist with the Yerevan Symphony and Thessaloniki Symphony Orchestra on some of the finest stages in France, Greece and Armenia. For the last 10 years Atabekyan has been one of the professors at the New Conservatory of Thessaloniki, Greece and the Drama Municipal Conservatory, Greece. Atabekyan recently moved to New England with her husband and their two children.

Fourteen-year-old violinist Gasparyan was born in Yerevan, Armenia. At the age of five she moved to Greece with her family where began violin lessons with Marina Shelkova at the New Conservatory of Thessaloniki Prep School. Having recently moved to the United States, Emily has continued her musical educational with New England Conservatory professor Andrew Taylor.

Emily has won numerous violin competitions, including the Young Talents with Orchestra competition in Milan, the Rafina competition in Athens, and the Energy for Life competition in Vienna. She has appeared as soloist with Barlassina Symphony Orchestra in Italy, the European Youth Orchestra in Austria and Switzerland, Salem Philharmonic Orchestra, USA and the Thessaloniki Youth Symphony in Greece. She has taken masterclasses from well-known musicians Yuri Bashmet, Alexander Trostiansky, and Ivry Gitlis. Emily speaks 4 languages, plays piano and guitar, and loves drawing.

The address of the concert is 400 Heath St., Chestnut Hill. For tickets (\$25/\$30 per person) and information, contact zankagnerensemble@yahoo.com.



Zangakner at the Armenian Genocide Centennial Commemoration at Armenian Heritage Park

their talents to Zangakner's for the first time.

"The children at Zangakner are so excited to perform and to renew their strong connection with our heritage and our culture! We invite families and friends to share in our excitement and enjoy this experience with us," said Hasmik Konjoyan, artistic director of Zangakner.

Zangakner Performing Arts Ensemble was established in Boston in 2010 by Konjoyan. Its goal is to offer a unique venue for New England children of diverse Armenian backgrounds to preserve their Armenian language, culture and heritage through music and lyrics. At Zangakner, children aged 4 to 13 are trained in voice, movement, improvisation, dance and performance skills. In the process, they learn the value of hard work, dedication and discipline to achieve excellence.

Zangakner's numerous performances, such as the opening act of the Inga and Anush Arshakyan concert, the Children's Planet and 2014: A Musical Odyssey holiday musicals, as well as their Christmas and Easter Concerts in New York in 2014 and 2015, have been enthusiastically received by the public.

The ensemble was also invited to perform as guest singers at many major events in the Armenian community both in Massachusetts and in New York.

Zangakner released their first recording, "Timeless Favorites by Armenian Children," a CD that captures the best of the Armenian song repertoire and helps promote the wealth of the Armenian musical heritage.

Aside from her work with Zangakner, Konjoyan has given concert performances throughout the world, including in Italy, Canada, Austria,



Pianist Anahit Truzyan and harpist Carol McIntyre performing at the Lynnfield Community Church

Spring Concert in Lynnfield by Pianist Anahit Truzyan and Harpist Carol McIntyre

LYNNFIELD, Mass. — Pianist Anahit Truzyan and harpist Carol McIntyre presented Spring Musical Interlude, a concert at the Lynnfield Community Church, on April 10. The concert, in an intimate setting, was an enjoyable and uplifting experience enjoyed by a local audience including many Armenians. Truzyan played two Armenian pieces. The first was a solo piece, *Elegia*, by Arno Babajanian, and the second was a duet by Stepan Nagdian called *Song*. Truzyan also performed Haydn's *Sonata* and two impromptus by Schubert, as well as a Chopin *Waltz* and *Fantasia-Impromptu*. She had two other duets with McIntyre: *Wild Rose of the Mountain*, and *I Vow to Thee*.

Truzyan was associate professor of piano performance at the Komitas State Conservatory in Yerevan before moving to the US in 2000. She has performed in Armenia, Russia and the Middle East, and continues to perform publicly here in New England. She has an active teaching practice in the Boston area and also works as the Church Musician at Lynnfield Community Church.

McIntyre plays traditional and contemporary music on her folk harp with a melodic and improvisational style inspired by her love of Celtic and classical music.

By Aram Arkun

Mirror-Spectator Staff

from previous page

MAY 27 — 65th Annual Armenian Night at the Pops, Featuring Boston Pops Orchestra, Keith Lockhart, Conductor; presenting Edvard Poghosian, 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.

RHODE ISLAND

APRIL 16 — Saints Sahag and Mesrob Armenian Church, Providence, Commemoration of the Armenian Genocide, "Legacy of our Martyrs," Saturday at 7 p.m. Concert of Armenian Patriotic Songs Performed by the Armenian Chorale of Rhode Island, 70 Jefferson St., Providence. Fellowship- Egavian Hall, following concert



COMMENTARY

Mirror Spectator



Established 1932
An ADL Publication

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

Baika Association, Inc.

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Telephone: 617-924-4420

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SUBSCRIPTION RATES:

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

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

ISSN 0004-234X

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

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COMMENTARY

The Fallout from War in Karabagh

By Edmond Y. Azadian

As the consequences of the recent flare-up on the contact line are revealed to the world, the two sides in the conflict are left licking their wounds and counting their casualties. Once again, the awareness sinks in the mind of global leaders that the phrase “frozen conflict” for Karabagh (Artsakh) is a misnomer. Furthermore, the dispute over the enclave is not confined between Armenia and Azerbaijan, but lies right on the fault line of the East-West confrontation and a conflagration may trigger an even broader conflict that the immediate stakeholders can either predict or control

Whatever the reason behind the aborted blitzkrieg by Azerbaijan, the problem is fraught with dangerous implications.

An editorial in London’s Guardian cites a number of reasons for the recent outbreak: “All sorts of local factors could pile extra fuel on the immediate fire: nationalist sentiment and war-mongering slogans on both sides and indeed, revelations from the Panama papers which pile extra pressure on Azerbaijan’s presidency, which could make incendiary talk of reconquering lost territories seem like a welcome diversion.”

War mongering is not in Armenia’s interest, but the foreign press always needs to look un-biased by citing some falsehoods in the guise of presenting both sides of the issue. In addition to the above reasons, Turkey’s intentions and inclinations to incite Moscow must not be discounted. Although President Barack Obama snubbed Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan at Washington’s Nuclear Summit for his self-serving NATO activities, he would certainly welcome the latter’s role as the point man in NATO’s aggressive moves in the region.

During the brief war, Turkish Prime Minister Ahmet Davutoglu announced that Ankara would “stand shoulder-to-shoulder with Azerbaijan in the face of Armenian aggression and occupation until the end of time.” And he added, “until all Azeri territory is recovered, including Nagorno Karabagh.”

Turkey is a member of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) and therefore is supposed to remain impartial. In fact, it was the only country that expressed any sort of enthusiasm for the scary flare-up.

The premature congratulations sent to Azeri President Ilham Aliyev “for his victory” by Turkish President Erdogan and the dispatch of ISIS fighters from Raqqa via Turkey to Azerbaijan demonstrated amply that Turkey was the main instigator of the recent conflict.

Armenia did not receive from any quarter the kind of support that Ankara offered Azerbaijan, not even from its strategic ally, Russia, which at best plays the role of mediator to restore cease-fire. Even bombing the civilian population in Armenia’s Tavoush region did not trigger any clause of Collective Security Treaty with Russia. Instead, adding insult to injury, Prime Minister Dmitry Medvedev, after visiting Yerevan and Baku, announced that Russia will continue to sell arms to both Armenia and Azerbaijan to maintain military parity.

It turns out that even that absurd policy of parity was not sustainable because Armenia was fighting Azeri forces with weaponry from the 1990s. Armenia scarcely has the resources

that the oil-rich Azerbaijan does. That is to say, until recently, when the price of oil globally took a huge hit, sinking with it the Azeri manat.

It is a confirmed fact that 85 percent of Azerbaijan’s arms are supplied by Russia and the rest by Israel and the US. Recent arms contracts with Russia amount to \$4.5 billion and with Israel to \$1.6 billion.

It is ironic that an Israeli Knesset delegation visited Armenia and placed a wreath at the Genocide Memorial while Israeli Defense Forces were manning Kamikaze drones on behalf of Azerbaijan, creating new Armenian martyrs during this solemn month.

A paper published by Frederik Wesslau, the director of the Wider Europe Program, states that “none of the co-chairs of the [OSCE] Minsk Group – Russia, US and France – have demonstrated the sort of political will necessary to find a solution to the conflict. Of the three, Russia has the most leverage over Armenia and Azerbaijan, but also the least interest in seeing an actual resolution to the conflict. The unresolved conflict makes both countries dependent on Moscow and severely limits their options for geopolitical alignment. Russia is able to play the sides against each other, giving it substantial influence over the entire South Caucasus region.”

Moscow’s policy has been duplicitous; while Prime Minister Medvedev points his finger at Turkey, Russia’s Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov apologetically states that “we are not blaming Turkey for the recent war.”

Incidentally, Lavrov is an ethnic Armenian and his contribution to Armenia is no different than Politburo member Anastas Mikoyan before him and several Byzantine emperors of Armenian origin. Indeed, in their zeal to demonstrate their allegiance to Byzantium, they destroyed historic Armenia.

Lavrov has announced that all the elements of a final solution are in place and may be implemented soon. That does not auger well for Armenia, which, at this time, is bracing for the worst.

Last November, during the Russian-Turkish standoff, there were voices heard at the Russian Duma seeking to abrogate the Kars Treaty of 1921, which gave rise to speculations by pundits that a correction of the Armenian-Turkish border was around the corner and that some Turkish-occupied territories may be ceded to Armenia. In addition, the raging civil war in Turkey gave more credence to those speculations.

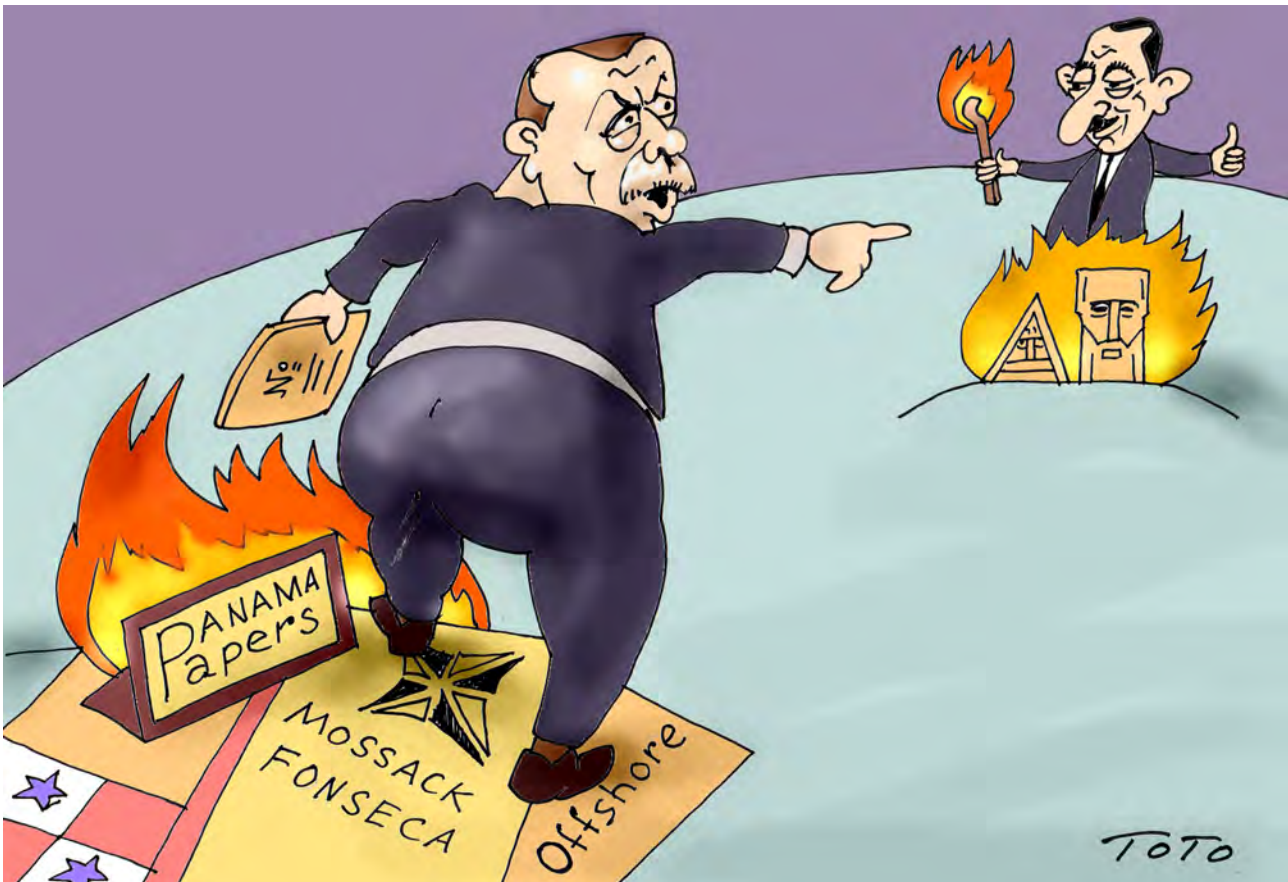
But Turkey is about to solve its internal conflict the way the Sultans, Ittihadists and the Kemalists have done before now: by massive slaughter of the restive Kurds with the collusion of the West.

Now, the political tides are turning and a sense of isolation has descended upon Armenia.

The elements of a settlement to which Lavrov has been referring could not be anything other than the Madrid Principles, which call for territorial concessions by Armenians against some relief to Karabagh for self-rule, projecting a referendum for an as-yet-undetermined date to shape its political future. Russia has always sought to introduce its own peacekeeping forces between the warring factions in order to expand its presence in the Caucasus.

At this point, the sobering facts are falling into place to assess the course of events realistically.

see FALLOUT, page 18





Preventing Deadly Violence in Nagorno-Karabagh

Violent conflict erupted in Nagorno-Karabagh (NK) on April 2, killing hundreds. Azerbaijan violated a cease-fire that had been in place since 1994. The situation remains extremely volatile, despite a temporary truce.

By David L. Phillips and Van Krikorian

The United States and Russia must intensify their mediation. Negotiations should include representatives of the Republic of Nagorno-Karabagh. US law already calls for sanctions on Azerbaijan if it acts aggressively. The Obama administration should implement Section 907 of the Freedom Support Act, imposing economic and diplomatic sanctions on Azerbaijan to punish its aggression.

Nagorno-Karabagh is a disputed territory in the South Caucasus. Joseph Stalin included it in Azerbaijan as part of a broader effort to undermine the national aspirations of minorities in the Soviet Union. The Nagorno-Karabagh population held a referendum in 1991, as the Soviet Union was disintegrating. Christian Armenians voted overwhelmingly for independence from Muslim Azerbaijan. In the ensuing conflict, over 20,000 people died and over 800,000 people were displaced. The war ended with a ceasefire but no peace agreement.

In 1989, the US Senate passed a resolution “[urging] Soviet President Gorbachev to restore order, reestablish unrestricted economic and supply routes to the people of Armenia and Nagorno-Karabagh, secure the physical safety of the people of [NK] from attack, and continue a dialogue with representatives of such region regarding a peaceful settlement of the dispute....” In 1992, President George H.W. Bush signed Section 907 into US law, which prohibits assistance to Azerbaijan if it engages in aggressive military actions against Armenia or Nagorno-Karabagh. Section 907 was an important deterrent, contributing to the cease fire.

In 2008, then-Sen. Barack Obama endorsed a “lasting and durable settlement of the Nagorno Karabagh conflict that is agreeable to all parties, and based upon America’s founding commitment to the principles of democracy and self-determination.” Since the conflict began, every US administration has been committed to a peaceful, negotiated solution.

Starting in 1994, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) spearheaded efforts to find a

peaceful solution to the conflict Nagorno-Karabagh. The OSCE Minsk Group is mandated to mediate. It is co-chaired by France, the Russian Federation, and the United States. Attempts by Azerbaijan to change mediators have been rebuffed.

Tensions in this “frozen conflict” have increased in recent years. Escalating and well-documented ceasefire violations occurred without consequence. Inaction by the international community encouraged Azerbaijan’s coordinated assault. Azerbaijan recently spent \$4 billion buying weapons from Russia. On April 2, Azerbaijan used its upgraded air and land weapons to attack on multiple fronts. Weapons included Smerch rocket systems, Grad missiles, Russian-made T-90 tanks, TOS-1A flamethrowers, modern helicopter gunships, as well as kamikaze drones. All told, over 40 Armenians were killed, including civilians. An ethnic Yezidi/Armenian citizen, was beheaded by Azeri troops. Over 200 Azeri soldiers died in the offensive. No territory was gained.

Azerbaijan did not act on its own. According to eyewitness accounts, Turkish troops and equipment were involved in battles near the Iranian border. The Azerbaijani offensive was immediately endorsed by Turkey’s President Recep Tayyip Erdogan. “Nagorno-Karabagh will be returned to Azerbaijan.” Erdogan added. “We will support Azerbaijan until the end.”

Turkey is already a protagonist in this conflict. It maintained a blockade of Armenia since 1992. Erdogan scuttled the 2009 protocols to open the border and have diplomatic relations with Armenia, which Turkish diplomats negotiated.

Azerbaijan claims that Armenia instigated the recent conflict. However, Chatham House and the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace maintain that Nagorno-Karabagh forces did not instigate attacks on Azeri positions. Armenians consistently proposed monitors and confidence building measures since 1994. Azerbaijan refused, calling for a military solution. Azerbaijan’s Ministry of Defense initially took credit for initiating the offensive.

Azerbaijan’s President Ilham Aliyev relies on a combination of oil revenue, caviar diplomacy, and government crackdowns on fundamental freedoms to maintain power. In the face of the recent oil price crash, Azerbaijan’s economy is in decline and

its currency has plummeted. Azerbaijan’s civil society continues to oppose the regime’s incarceration of journalists and human rights advocates. Igniting a war with Armenia, even a short one, aims at distracting the Azeri people from the regime’s abuses and economic insecurity.

It is no secret that Armenia has a strategic military relationship with Russia. It faces an existential threat from Turkey, as well as Azerbaijani aggression. At the same time, Armenia maintains good relations with the United States and the European Union. Armenia actively participates in NATO’s Partnership for Peace Program. A NATO official called Armenia’s contribution to international security “very impressive.” Armenia accepted more than 20,000 refugees from Syria.

Nagorno-Karabagh is one of the most dangerous places in the world today. With Russia and Turkey at odds in Syria, a proxy fight may be escalating. The US has a national security interest in preventing an all-out war, with regional implications.

The US and Russia have worked together more assiduously on Syria. They should also intensify cooperation through the Minsk Group. Specifically, the OSCE should deploy monitors around Nagorno-Karabagh to deter future aggression. The Armenian side is willing.

There is no military solution in Nagorno-Karabagh. The Minsk Group should rejoin its original configuration, including Nagorno-Karabagh representatives in negotiations. They should be a part of political talks, which affect the peace and security of their constituents.

The US must not soft-pedal Azerbaijan’s aggression. Nor can Washington condone Turkey taking up arms against Armenians. As we observe yet another anniversary of the Armenian Genocide on April 24, the US needs a fact based, principled approach to prevent the escalation of deadly violence in Nagorno-Karabagh.

David L. Phillips Director of the Program on Peace-building and Rights, Columbia University’s Institute for the Study of Human Rights

(David L. Phillips is director of the Program on Peace-building and Rights, Columbia University’s Institute for the Study of Human Rights. Van Krikorian is the co-chairman of the Armenian Assembly of America.)

Echoes of Stalinism Abound in the Very Modern Azerbaijan-Armenia Conflict

By Robert Fisk

The weariness with which the media reported the latest battle for Nagorno-Karabagh was all too evident during al-Jazeera’s first news reports. Blaming Stalin for the Armenian-Azerbaijan war, the satellite channel showed an old news clip which had absolutely nothing to do with the conflict. The poor quality footage actually showed Winston Churchill presenting to Stalin the Sword of Stalingrad – a gift from King George VI to the Soviet people for their courage in defending the city against Hitler’s Germany and defeating the Nazi Sixth Army in 1943.

Stalin has so often been blamed (as Soviet acting Minister of Nationalities in the 1920s) for giving the mountainous Armenian region to Muslim Azerbaijan – on the grounds that he liked to divide nationalities – that a 20-year discrepancy and the unrelated history of the Second World War didn’t seem to matter. The line from reporters, diplomats and pseudo-experts was pretty much the same when the conflict flared up again this month: here they go again.

Now I have to say that I always thought that the current war in Nagorno-Karabagh was a particularly dirty conflict. When it was rekindled with the fall of the Soviet Union in 1988, one of Yerevan’s excuses for “taking it back” was that it contained some of the nation’s oldest churches. True. But there are plenty of Turkic historical roots in Karabagh. In much the same way, eastern Europe contains some of Teutonic Germany’s oldest buildings, and much of the Balkans boasts fine Ottoman Turkish architecture. But the ruins of ancient heritage make a very dodgy excuse for war.

By the time I was covering the Karabagh war in the early 1990s, Armenian militia bands were murdering Azeri villagers in massacres eerily similar – though on a smaller scale – to those which occurred during Turkey’s genocide of the Armenian people in 1915; no wonder the Armenians in the capital of Yerevan denied these well-documented modern killings – those at Khojali in 1992, for example – for they under-

mined the victimhood of the Armenian people.

Yet in Karabagh’s “capital” of Stepanakert, I found little trace of Armenian government troops during the war. What I did see were roving bands of Armenian thugs, some of whom had been involved in the ethnic cleansing of the minority Azeri people. And I fear that for many Armenians in those dramatic days of the Soviet collapse – when Armenian citizens of the Soviet Union were also being slaughtered around Baku – the mountains and old churches of Karabagh became for Armenians a symbol of the equally ancient lands of Ottoman Turkey, from which they were deported in the 20th century’s first industrialized genocide.

The million and a half Armenian dead of 1915 were being avenged in Karabagh – and this is not just mere imagination. I was shocked to discover less than ten years ago that at the great Yerevan shrine to the million and a half martyrs of 1915 – to which Armenians and world leaders flock each April “Genocide Day” – the Armenians have buried the local Karabagh “martyrs” of the 1988-1994 war, men who in some cases may have been war criminals. It was as if the Israelis were to dishonor the Jewish Holocaust memorial at Yad Vashem by burying there the leaders of the Stern Gang of the 1940s.

At the Yerevan shrine stands one of Armenia’s finest research centers into the facts of the 1915 Armenian Holocaust (as The Independent has called it for many years); yet a few hundred meters away are the graves of men who died for Nagorno-Karabagh, a land still recognized by the rest of the world as part of Azerbaijan.

Cynicism only comes to the rescue of hypocrisy when we hear the same old enemies clanking around the black mountains of Karabagh: Russian power, Turkish expansionism and Armenian nationalism. Given his current policies – or medical condition – it’s unclear whether Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan models himself on Mustafa Kemal Ataturk or the last mad rulers of post-First World War Pan-Turkism. In this weird scenario, does Vladimir Putin represent the Tsar who allied himself to the Armenians in the First World War –

or the Bolsheviks who were happy to divide Azeris from Armenians?

In one sense, Putin is playing Putin the “intervener.” He is, after all, the intervener of Georgia and the intervener of Ukraine and the interven-

er of Syria. And now he is the intervener of Karabagh, or Azerbaijan.

(Robert Fisk is the Middle East correspondent for the *Independent*. This column appeared in the April 9 edition of the *Independent*.)

The Fallout from War in Karabagh

FALLOUT, from page 17

War-weary citizens of Armenia sometimes grumble that their miseries stem from the Karabagh conflict.

However, now everyone realizes that an aggression against Armenia by Baku is a necessary element of Azerbaijan’s foreign policy. If there was no Karabagh problem, Aliyev still would claim the territory of Armenia proper itself, based on a manufactured history that Armenians have been recent settlers in “historic Azeri” lands. That claim also jibes well with Ankara’s Ottomanist ambitions to wipe out Armenia from the map of the region, as Armenia has been a tough nut to crack while Georgia is more amenable to major Turkic designs. Christianity does not seem to amount to a political factor for Georgia as they have been coordinating their policies with Azerbaijan and Turkey. Also, prevalent Russophobia in Georgia has proven to be conducive to the internal Turkification of that country.

For the Turkic world, Armenia remains Russophile, deserving a different treatment and different fate. But historically that Russophilia has not always yielded political dividends.

The sudden sense of isolation has sobered up Armenians in the homeland and around the world.

A dramatic initiative was taken by the former President Levon Ter-Petrosian to call on Serge Sargsian for consultation over the grave prospects of Karabagh situation. There is no full report on their discussions but Ter-Petrosian has stated that this is not the time to criticize the government’s mistakes, which is also a positive

signal for all the naysayers around the world. Up until recently, Ter-Petrosian was calling to dismantle or “deconstruct the kleptocracy of Serge Sargsian,” while the latter called his predecessor an “unprincipled politician.” Levon Zurabian, Armenian National Congress Party’s front man in the National Assembly had announced earlier that any territory evacuated by Armenian forces must be filled by peacekeepers, causing some criticism. Now the events seem to veer that way.

The two presidents’ meeting certainly focused on the situation in Karabagh. Despite bravura on the Armenian side, some strategic positions remain in Azeri hands, boosting their morale.

There has been a plethora of spontaneous rallies of Armenians around the world. Volunteer groups are moving to the frontline and a worldwide protest movement has been triggered from Los Angeles to Moscow and from Paris to Buenos Aires. The Supreme Patriarchate of the Armenian Church has arrived in Karabagh, accompanied by Catholicos Aram I of Cilicia. There is a patriotic fever reminiscent of the Sardarapat war in 1918.

It is hoped that this worldwide solidarity results in permanent unity throughout the current crisis and beyond.

There is talk that the two presidents’ meeting will impact the domestic political realignment in Armenia shaping the upcoming elections in 2017.

It is a common adage that peacetime disperses Armenians and crises rallies them around, while survival and victory demand national unity at all times.



COMMENTARY



My Turn

By Harut Sassounian

Leading Jewish Scholar Condemns Israel's Sale of Murderous Weapons To Azerbaijan

In last week's large-scale attack on Artsakh (Karabagh), the Azeri military killed and injured dozens of Armenian soldiers and civilians, using the sophisticated weapons purchased from Israel and Russia for billions of dollars.

The Armenian government and Armenians worldwide accused both Israel and Russia of responsibility for the innocent Armenian lives lost in the recent Azeri invasion.

Prof. Israel Charny, a righteous Jew and a staunch defender of human rights, could not remain silent knowing that his country – Israel – had a bloody role in the Armenian killings. As Executive Director of the Institute on the Holocaust and Genocide in Jerusalem, Dr. Charny sent a scathing commentary to the Israeli newspaper, Haaretz, under the provocative title: “Would Israel Sell a Used Drone to a Hitler?” Here is what he wrote:

“If the Nazis were not at all murdering Jews but ‘only’ were

murdering say hated Slavs, Gypsies, and Jehovah's Witnesses; and if our beloved State of Israel were in existence; would you agree to our selling arms to the Nazis?

“Israel is reported to have sold billions of dollars of arms including to governments that are killing or threatening to attack victim peoples. Last week, there came reports that an Israeli drone in the hands of Azerbaijan – a huge arms customer of ours – was responsible for the deaths of six Armenians in the Armenian enclave Nagorno Karabagh.

“I am ashamed!

“The Armenians were the victims of a major genocide 100 years ago that has even been called the ‘Armenian Shoah’ by some Israeli scholars, including from Bar Ilan University. A great deal of their national and cultural concern continues to focus passionately on the memory of that genocide (does that sound familiar to us Jews?). For many years now, we Israelis – whether led by Labor or Likud – have insulted and hurt the Armenian people by failing to recognize their genocide officially and formally. Would we ourselves tolerate another government – say the U.S. or England – failing to recognize the Holocaust because of their realpolitik interest with the perpetrator government?

“One senior Armenian official has written several of us in Israel to express his deep pain as well as indignation now not only at our cowardly and self-serving denials of the Armenian Genocide, but also at our thick military trade alliance with Azerbaijan. I am reminded of the prophet Nathan crying out to King David for an earlier though more delectable murderous act of self-interest: It's bad enough that you killed him, are you also taking a profit from the sordid affair? The Azeris are a Turkic people who adhere to Turkey's bizarre and fascist tradi-

tion of rewriting history and denying the Armenian Genocide.

“In general, how much do we Israelis want to strengthen our economy by lucrative arms sales? Of course, ‘everyone’ in the world is doing it, but do we have to also? Have we given up the image/dream of Israel as a moral leader of peoples on this planet? Is this idea tiresome, naïve, and childlike in a madly destructive and self-destroying world?

“An alternative concept could be that along with our building arms first and foremost for the defense of Israel, that we sell – or contribute – arms only to underdog peoples who are facing mass destruction, and/or to allies like the U.S., who are essentially committed to shared democratic values and peace. Of course, we will still be making some mistakes, but at least our conscience will be more clear that we have not delivered used arms to the ‘Nazis.’

“To my Armenian colleagues and friends, I can only say that as a Jew and as an Israeli, I am mortified – and angry.”

Prof. Charny's harsh words are fully justified as both Israeli and Russian officials have shamefully pledged to continue shipping more weapons to Azerbaijan!

Dr. Charny has never shied away from expressing his critical views on Israel's immoral policies on Armenian issues. In a scathing letter in 2001, he told Israel's Foreign Minister Shimon Peres: “You have gone beyond a moral boundary that no Jew should allow himself to trespass.... As a Jew and an Israeli, I am ashamed of the extent to which you have now entered into the range of actual denial of the Armenian Genocide, comparable to denials of the Holocaust.”

Prof. Charny should be highly commended for his bold and righteous stand, taking to task the callous leaders of his own country!

LETTERS

Azeri Adventurers Spill Blood Again

To the Editor:

Here we go again. Azeri adventurers, encouraged by their so-called cousins, the Turks, have embarked on a suicide venture by attacking Karabagh, and, according to the news reports, murdering Armenian civilians. Typical of the Turkish criminal mentality, so vividly displayed in the 19th and 20th centuries. It's not only the culture folks, but a serious brain deficiency which is passed on from generation to generation. Instead of employing dialogue to bring about the pacific settlement of disputes, the Turks revert to the primitive method of massacre and mayhem to bring about the conclusion they want.

The most glaring example of this do nothing attitude, is the morally bankrupt position of the

U.S. State department and the silence from the Obama White House. The following two points must be employed if any semblance of peace is to be achieved or not achieved.

1. Azerbaijan must agree to an immediate cease fire, with the view of having meaningful discussions with the government of Karabagh; or

2. Suffer the consequences of possibly having the pipeline from Baku to Ceyhan, including the rail track completely destroyed, possibly leading to an all-out war between Armenia and Azerbaijan. It is hoped that more rational minds will prevail, minds devoid of serious short-circuiting, as yet to be shown by and demonstrated by the Azeri government.

Walter Bandazian
Virginia

Don't Forget the Armenian Government's Trespasses

To The Editor:

This week's Diasporan newspapers have been inundated with photographs of community leaders surrounding President Serge Sargsian and Diasporan Minister Hranoush Hakobyan.

I had hoped that our clergy and lay Diasporan leaders would have offered a less enthusiastic reception for Dr. Hakobyan and President Sargsian in consideration of US Ambassador to Armenia Richard Mills' recent tour and the fraud-ridden constitutional referendum that took place only a few months prior. That vote was by all objective accounts an egregious trespass on Armenia's citizenry. The ambassador acknowledged the disturbing electoral violations and continued predatory behavior of Armenia's political and economic elites.

It is not enough for Ambassador Mills to raise critical issues with the authorities and support civil society. Diasporan leaders need to do the same. Rationalized disengagement on these moral and fundamental issues is no longer appropriate.

We should be deeply concerned that the authorities in Armenia do not seek internal legitimacy or public confidence. While the ruling party's lip service may sound properly righteous in regards to anti-corruption, their actions belie their true contempt for the Armenian people – all the more reason to be troubled at the alarming growth of the country's police force.

Former ambassador and think tank director Ara Papian reported that in 2010 the police force consisted of 15,477 individuals. Just five years earlier, it was 8,875 strong. In 2016, the number swelled to 18,333. Between 2010 and 2016, the

police budget increased by approximately \$50 million.

Many worthy needs could be funded with said money and other uncollected taxes, including helping the malnourished children of Armenia, which is nearly 1 out of 5 according to a timely front-page, article published by the Mirror-Spectator.

A recent article in azatutyun.am sheds light on a government-linked tycoon's tax evasion scheme, which deprives funding for public works, economic development, border protection, health care, education, poverty reduction initiatives, and Syrian relief efforts. <http://www.azatutyun.am/content/article/27619816.html>.

Global Financial Integrity, a Washington, DC-based research organization, reported a nearly 50-percent increase in illicit financial flows from Armenia. The flow increased from \$1.285 billion, in 2012, to \$1.848 billion, in 2013. Taxes must be collected on more of this economic activity. To read the report, go to http://www.gfin.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/12/IFF-Update_2015-Final-1.pdf

Before it's too late, Diasporans should broaden their engagement and support Armenia's non-governmental groups and activists to improve governance, electoral laws, and accountability.

Such initiatives will make it more likely that, one day, Armenia will have ministers and presidents that are worthy of our affection and the love-fest characterizing this week's visit.

Ara Araz
Board Member, Justice Armenia

Melkonian Defends His Story

To the Editor:

As a reporter and a writer, I always write the truth, and nothing but the truth.

Fr. Norayr Kazazian is well known as such within the St. James patriarchate brotherhood and the community.

As a journalist and a writer who has been serving the press and this particular community for several decades, I categorically deny reporting any misconducts and allegations, unless thorough fact checking and authenticating with absolute certainty are complete with the best of my abilities. It is a fact that I met with Fr. Norayr Kazazian in 2013, when he accompanied the Patriarch to Los Angeles to preside over my 40th Jubilee ceremony. Upon the Patriarch's suggestion, Fr. Norayr and I reconciled our differences. In no way, however did I apologize with “tearful eyes” or with a “smile.”

Additionally, his admission that he visited Fr. Khat only once in Bethlehem is his failed machiavellian attempt to dissuade his complicity and disassociate himself from this entire scandal. However, we are absolutely certain and stand behind the very statement we made and published in which we pointed out that he visited Fr. Khat not once but three times. If necessary, we will disclose additional facts to expose his devious acts, wrongdoings and treason.

My obligation and duty to my readers and community has always been and will continue to be reporting, writing and upholding the truth, with credibility.

It is sad to see that such a person is a prince and a servant of the Armenian Apostolic Church, and celebrates the solemn Divine Liturgy before God and the faithful.

Nahabed Melkonian
Jerusalem

“Oh, Armenian People...”

To the Editor:

To those who have answered the calling to holy marriage and have been given the gift of parenthood; to those who remember the 10 Commandments and our (5th) instruction to “honor thy father and they mother; to all clergy brothers who preach on the life of our Lord and Savior; and to those who thankfully answer their inner spiritual calling to go “home” to Holy Echmiadzin or to Antelias, I respectfully offer the following.

If you make it a point to love both mother and father, albeit with different nuances and memories, why not return to the land where Christ walked? Why not make a pilgrimage and see with your own eyes where our Risen Lord preached, taught, healed, performed miracles, was crucified and rose from the dead (for you and for me)?

In a world of (church) politics, Armenian

Jerusalem holds the unique place of belonging fully to all Armenians, not just to this group or to that group. See how your brave and dedicated Armenian clergy defend and represent Armenian traditions in the most holy and sacred locations in Jerusalem, Bethlehem, Jordan and beyond.

Do not fall into the media-driven trap of avoiding Jerusalem and her lands. Go and see with your own eyes how much belongs to us, and in doing so, then honoring both your spiritual mother and your spiritual father.

Not sure? Take a moment to read and take to heart the words of Yeghishe Charents as he advises us, “Oh, Armenian people, your only salvation lies in the power of your unity.”

Let's start our unity where Christianity began: Jerusalem.

Fr. Kapriel Mouradjian
Armenian Church of the Holy Resurrection

The Armenian Mirror-Spectator is now accepting all calendar items for free. All items should be sent to mirrorads@aol.com. Calendar items may be edited to fit the space.



EU Is Giving Armenia its Best Chance Yet to Enact a Domestic-Abuse Law

By Armine Sahakyan

YEREVAN (Huffington Post) – Women’s rights groups have been campaigning for a decade for a domestic-violence law in Armenia. So far all their efforts have failed. Depending on the session of parliament, lawmakers have either refused to take up the legislation or voted it down.

This year, Armenia may finally see a law that protects women from partner violence.

If it happens, it’s likely to be because of a European Union financial inducement rather than any sudden Armenian government and lawmaker enlightenment on domestic abuse.

The EU is making an 11-million-euro grant that it calls the Human Rights Budget Support Program contingent on Armenia adopting a domestic-violence law. The financing covers the years 2016 to 2018.

The European incentive comes on top of the United Nations prodding Armenia a year ago about its lack of a domestic-abuse law. The criticism came in the UN’s Second Universal Periodic Review of Armenia.

As in all former Soviet states that lack domestic-violence legislation – and that’s most of them – Armenia needs a law to protect women from repeat battering.

With rare exceptions, police bring charges against an abuser only when it’s too late – that

is, when the victim has been murdered or crippled.

Current Armenian law allows police to file charges against anyone who commits an assault, whether the injuries are mild, medium or severe.

If a man who batters a woman is not her partner, however – if he’s an acquaintance or stranger, say – police are likely to bring an assault case against him even if the injuries are mild.

If the attacker is a partner, though, police consider the assault a family matter, and lean on the partners to work things out.

It’s hard for police to get their heads around the idea of domestic abuse when Armenian society has long had the axiom that: “A woman is like wool: The more you beat her, the softer she will be.”

In the few instances where a victim insists on police filing charges, if she has suffered only mild or medium injury, they usually refuse.

This means the victim continues to be trapped in the cycle of battering. Since domestic violence often becomes more frequent and more severe over time, she risks debilitating injury or death if she stays in the relationship.

One way out would be to flee the abusive environment, of course – but the odds against a victim doing so are slim.

Most Armenian women give up careers when they marry, or never have them in the first place, and men tightly control the family’s

purse strings. This means that the vast majority of wives and live-in girlfriends have no money to start a life of their own.

In addition, Armenia has only a handful of battered-women’s shelters, and the time that a victim can stay in one is limited.

You might think a sensible option would be a battered woman moving in with her parents. But in Armenia, where divorce is frowned on, many parents would condemn their daughter for not doing enough to save the marriage – and refuse to take her in.

The domestic-abuse legislation that women’s rights groups have been pushing would almost certainly prevent some battered-women deaths and maimings.

That’s because, for the first time, it would give judges the power to issue restraining orders to keep batterers away from victims.

Attackers would think twice against violating such an order because it would lead to jail time.

Those who support an Armenian domestic-abuse law offer some sobering statistics to make their case.

One is that a quarter of all married women have suffered domestic violence at one time or another, according to the National Statistical Service.

Another telling statistic is that a quarter of the 1,759 cases of violence against women that the National Police recorded in the first nine months of 2014 involved domestic abuse.

An even starker statistic is that 30 Armenian

women have been killed by their partners since 2010 – a sizable number for a country of 3 million.

Many of the government leaders who oppose a domestic-violence law have offered as a justification the fact that the legislation would impose additional financial costs on the state.

One provision, for example, would require the government to increase the number of battered-women’s shelters across the country, and pay for their operations.

At the moment, not even one kopek of taxpayer money goes to shelters. The few that are available are funded by non-governmental organizations.

But the main justification that opponents of the legislation use is that a domestic-abuse law is unnecessary because current law covers assault and battery, including domestic violence.

But given the police’s reluctance to file charges in all but the most horrific domestic-battering cases, and the current law’s lack of a restraining-order provision to protect women from continued battering, the argument that a specific domestic-abuse law is unnecessary fails to pass muster.

Studies in a number of countries have shown a direct correlation between enactment of a domestic-abuse law and a decline in partner violence against women.

The European Union’s current financial inducement for Armenia to pass a domestic-violence law does not guarantee it will happen, of course.

But it is the best chance its proponents have ever had to help reduce partner battering.

(Armine Sahakyan is a human rights activist based in Armenia.)

President Sargsyan Visits St. Stephen’s Armenian Elementary School

WATERTOWN – On March 31, President Serzh Sargsyan and his delegation visited St. Stephen’s Armenian Elementary School. The officials accompanying the President were, Vigen Sargsyan, Chief of Staff, Hranoush Hakobyan, Minister of Diaspora, Levon Mkrtchyan, Minister of Education and Science, Grigor Hovhannissian, Ambassador to the United States, Zohrab Mnatsakanyan, Ambassador to the United Nations, and Consul General, Sergey Sarkisov. The president was accompanied also by the Prelate of the Eastern Prelacy, Archbishop Oshagan Choloyan and by the Primate of the Eastern Diocese, Archbishop Khajag Barsamian.

The president and his delegation received a warm welcome by the school administration, board of directors and student body, as well as by St. Stephen’s Armenian Church’s pastor, Antranig Baljian and members of the board of trustees. Two students greeted the president with the traditional bread and salt. The rest of the students with the Armenian flag in hand, sang the Armenian National Anthem.

In her welcoming remarks Principal Houry Boyamian, gave some information about the school, explaining that some of the students come from a dozen nearby towns. In other cases, parents drive long distances to provide Armenian education to their children. She also, explained that in the Greater Boston area, where there are the best public and private schools of the nation, St. Stephen’s always maintains high educational standards. She stated that in addition to providing a quality education, the school passes onto the new generation the Armenian language, culture, history, and instills a sense of identity and love for the Motherland. For this reason, every year, in May, the school organizes the Graduating Class Trip to Armenia.

Then, the president and his delegation met with each grade. First, they heard two songs dedicated to Armenia, sang by the preschoolers. Then they visited all of the classrooms and interacted with the students.

Before leaving, the president presented a magnificent *khatchkar* to the principal, as a gift to the school, while Hakobyan presented books from the Ministry of Diaspora.

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