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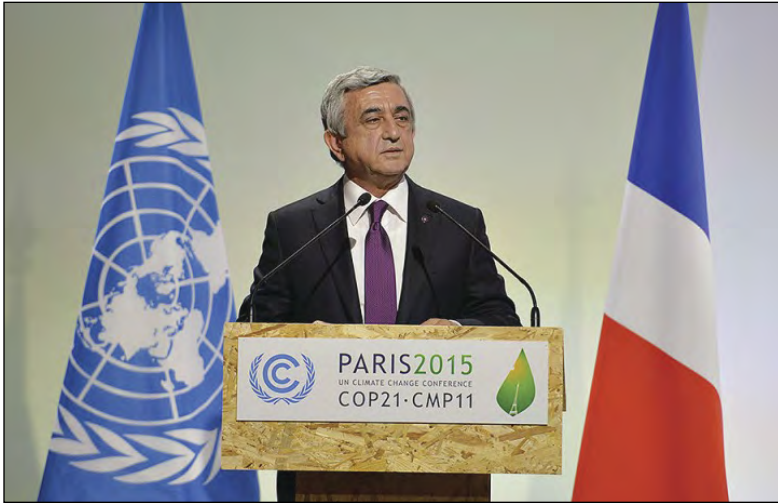
The First English Language Armenian Weekly in the United States Since 1932

## Armenia's President Attends Paris Climate Summit

PARIS (Public Radio of Armenia) – On Monday, November 30, President Serge Sargsisian participated at the 21st Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. The conference, which is presided over by France, is being attended by the heads of state and representatives from 150 countries and by thousands of delegates.

At the beginning of the meeting, delegates observed a minute of silence in tribute to the memory of the victims of the November 13 terrorist attacks in Paris. According to the organizers, the presence of numerous world leaders at the Paris Conference in the wake of these tragic events proves that when it comes to confronting challenges presented to the entire humankind, civilization and solidarity are stronger than barbarity.

In their opening remarks the President of France Francois Hollande, the Minister of Foreign Affairs of France Laurent Fabius, who is presiding over the meeting, UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon, Prince Charles of Great Britain and other speakers stressed the importance of the 21st Conference for the future of planet Earth and humanity and noted that today people from all over the world are looking at Paris, expecting that as a result of the delibera-



President Serge Sargsisian addresses the Climate Change Convention in Paris.

tions on the gravest challenge faced by the human kind – disastrous change of climate, with no delay there will be adopted a groundbreaking decision.

The Final Agreement of the Conference will be adopted on December 11, with

members suggesting that it should not be simply about good intentions but clear-cut and strong political messages to ensure that safe future of the humanity has no alternative.

During his speech, Sargsisian stressed that climate change threatens all states equally, regardless of their size or level of development. Even though Armenia's share in global emissions is not large and does not exceed two hundredth of a percent, according to the Sargsisian Armenia

attaches great importance to the need for combining the efforts of all countries to address this issue and as a developing nation has committed herself to contribute to this global endeavor.

see SUMMIT, page 2

## 100 Lives, NEF Come Together for Scholarships for 100 Students from Middle East

NEW YORK – The coming together of two likeminded organizations, including the Near East Foundation and 100 Lives, has led to the recently

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

announced plans for a \$7 million scholarship program which will benefit 100 students from the Middle East.

Both parties are happy with the collaboration, which according to Shant Mardirossian, chairman of the Near East Foundation, is the first time that the two groups, born 100 years apart as a result of the same events – the Armenian Genocide – will collaborate.

“Our hope is to continue the collaboration with 100 Lives,” Mardirossian said.

The third party to this collaboration is United World Colleges (UWC), which has 15 schools across the world, including its latest one in Dilijan, Armenia.

see SCHOLARSHIPS, page 6

## United Armenian Fund Ends Humanitarian Shipments to Armenia

GLENDALE – The Board of Directors of the United Armenian Fund (UAF) announced that the non-profit organization was ending its operations on November 30, following the death in June of its main benefactor, Kirk Kerkorian, preceded by the closing down of his Lincy Foundation.

After 26 years of providing humanitarian aid to Armenia and Artsakh, the five major Armenian-American religious and charitable organizations that formed the UAF have decided to concentrate their attention and resources on other projects that they sponsor and fund in Armenia and the Diaspora.

The leaders of UAF member organizations expressed their gratitude to Kerkorian for his generosity, who through his Lincy Foundation, contributed tens of millions of dollars over the past quarter century to fund the UAF's operations, including the shipment of hundreds of millions of dollars of relief supplies to Armenia and Artsakh by air and sea.

see UAF, page 6

## NEWS IN BRIEF

### Hayastan All-Armenian Fund's 18th Telethon Raised \$10,378,465

YEREVAN – Hayastan All-Armenian Fund's worldwide Telethon 2015 raised \$10,378,465 in pledges and donations. The amounts raised at the telethon, with the theme “Our Home,” will be used to construct single-family homes for families in Nagorno Karabagh who have five or more children and lack adequate housing, as well as to implement special projects adopted by the benefactors.

Toward the realization of the projects, the worldwide affiliates of the fund have been carrying out a multitude of public-awareness and fundraising campaigns during the year, including phone-a-thons, radio-thons, a charity concert and fundraising dinners.

The Hayastan All-Armenian Fund continues to accept donations and pledges.

### Russian Lawmakers Propose Bill Criminalizing Genocide Denial

MOSCOW (RFE/RL) – A group of Russian lawmakers have submitted a bill to parliament on holding to account anyone who denies that the 1915 killings of Armenians by Ottoman Turkish forces was a “genocide.”

The leader of Russia's opposition, A Just Russia Party, Sergei Mironov, said on November 25 that the bill proposes a fine of up to 500,000 rubles (more than \$7,500) for any denial of the Genocide.

The move by Russian lawmakers was made a day after the Turkish air force shot down a Russian jet near the Syrian-Turkish border.

### Gephardt Signs Capitol Counsel Deal for Turkey

WASHINGTON (Politico) – Capitol Counsel has a rich new deal to represent Turkey, as a subcontractor for Gephardt Group Government Affairs. At a \$32,000 monthly rate, Capitol Counsel's tasks include to “develop and utilize contacts at the State and Defense Departments, and the National Security Council to convey the seriousness of the genocide issue and the potential threat it poses to the US/Turkey relationship,” according to newly filed Justice Department documents. The addition of Capitol Counsel appears to boost Turkey's bench on the Republican side: Former Rep. Jim McCrery (R-La.) leads the account. Turkey hired Gephardt Group, led by former Majority Leader Dick Gephardt (D-Mo.), in March for \$1.7 million, with subcontractors getting monthly fees of \$32,000 for Dickstein Shaprio, \$7,500 for Brian Forni, \$15,000 for Lydia Borland, and \$40,000 for Greenberg Taurig.

## INSIDE

### All that Jazz

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Soprano Tigranuhi Howhannisyanyan performing with Diana Sahakyan

## Germans Celebrate Paruyr Sevak

WIESBADEN, Germany – The saying goes that “there is no more beautiful woman than the Armenian language.” If that is the case, German author Jochen

Mangelsen writes, then the two women who have just published a new German translation of poems by Paruyr Sevak “have tackled a really audacious task.” It is an adventure, he goes on, not only for the translators

but for the reader who encounters this language “full of secrets, surrealistic images, dreams and dreamlike playfulness.” Mandelsen, who has published on the Armenian Genocide, made these remarks in his introduction, or rather, “greetings,” to the new book.

Indeed the slim volume, *Paruyr Sevak: And It Pierces My Soul: 24 and 4 Poems Armenian-German* published by Schiler Verlag in Berlin, is a huge achievement. The sub-title symbolically recalls the tragic date of 24.4, or April 24, 1915, when the leading members of the intelligentsia were rounded up in Constantinople, arrested and almost all put to death. Heide Rieck, a prize-winning German author

see GERMANY, page 16

**By Muriel Mirak-Weissbach**  
Special to the Mirror-Spectator



## ARMENIA

## News From Armenia

## Actress Varduhi Varderesyan Dies

YEREVAN (Panorama.am) – Armenian actress Varduhi Varderesyan died aged 87, Panorama.am learned from Armenian Culture Ministry.

A government commission will be set up for organization of the funeral of the actress.

Varderesyan was born in 1928 in Bucharest. In 1946 she moved to her historic homeland – Armenia. She studied at the studio of Leninakan Drama Theatre after Mravyan (now Vardan Ajemyan Drama Theatre in Gumri).

In 1958 Varderesyan started to perform on the stage of Sundukyan Theatre in Yerevan.

## Chronic Hepatitis B and C Affects Armenia's Population

YEREVAN (Armenpress) – Armenian Republic is considered a medium prevalence area in terms of hepatitis B and C. 2-3 percent of Armenian population Chronic Hepatitis B carrier and about 4 percent carries hepatitis C virus. Armenian Youth Fund passed “Get tested, treated and prevent it” titled project in the frames of European Research Initiative over HIV and hepatitis. Manager of the project Narine Mezhlumyan informs that Europe declares HIV Research Week for already several years which purpose is to provide the people with message that informs about the necessity of researching over HIV, to learn about the condition, to prevent it is possible and if one is a virus carrier, he/she must get treatment and prolong his/her life.

The Department of Armenian Youth Fund reported in the frames of “Get tested, treated and prevent it” project AYF regional centers passed awareness events in all regions from November 20-27 in local educational institutions.

## Azerbaijan Fires 6,000 Shells Towards Armenia

YEREVAN (Armenpress) – In accordance with the operative data of the Defense Army of the Nagorno Karabagh Republic, within November 22-28 the adversary violated the ceasefire regime around 300 times in the line of contact of Karabagh with Azerbaijan.

During this period, more than 6,000 shots were fired from different caliber weapons including HAN-17 grenade launchers in the direction of the Armenian frontier troops. As “Armenpress” was informed by the Press Service of the Defense Ministry of the Nagorno Karabagh Republic, the frontier troops of the Defense Army are in complete control of the situation along the entire frontline and confidently carry out their combat duty.

## Armenia Ready to Deepen Ties with Denmark

YERVAN (Armenpress) – Ambassador of Denmark to Armenia Christian Dons Christensen (residence in Kiev) presented his credentials to President of Armenia Serge Sargsian on November 27.

Sargsian congratulated the ambassador on assuming the office and wished him a successful stint.

Sargsian stressed that Armenia is ready to deepen its relations with Denmark both in bilateral and multilateral formats. He praised the expansion of the legal framework in different sectors of the two countries, mutual high level visits, deepening of interparliamentary relations as well as close cooperation in the framework of international structures.

Sargsian thanked Denmark for the assistance it provided in the implementation of democratic reforms. He also emphasized that the Armenian people appreciated Denmark's support in the organization of the ecumenical service dedicated to the centennial of the Armenian Genocide held in Copenhagen Cathedral on April 19, as well as the statement adopted by Denmark parliament. The latter, as Sargsyan is convinced, is a serious step toward recognition process of the Armenian Genocide.

# Armenia Hosts Thunderstorms and Elementary Particle

YEREVAN – Understanding how lightning is initiated within thunderclouds is probably one of the biggest mysteries in atmospheric science. The relationship between thundercloud electrification, lightning activity, and the generation of radio waves is not completely understood. A promising window into this area of research is the study of the interaction of thunderstorms, lightning, and cosmic radiation (so-called Thunderstorm ground enhancements – TGEs).

To discuss these high-energy atmospheric phenomena, a conference on Thunderstorms and Elementary Particle Acceleration (TEPA) was held at the Nor Amberd International Conference Center of the Yerevan Physics Institute (YerPhi) in Armenia in October. The Cosmic Ray Division (CRD) of YerPhi and Skobeltsyn Institute of Nuclear Physics of Moscow State University organized the workshop; YerPhi and the Armenian State Committee of Science sponsored the conference. Thirty scientists and students from the United States, Japan, France, Germany, Israel, Russia and Armenia attended.

Discussions included the effects of cosmic radiation on lightning initiation, the emission of radio waves, and fluxes of subatomic particles from thunderclouds. Scientists analyzed and debated the results of experimental observations and computer models of these and other phenomena.

The workshop participants agreed that it would be useful to compare the vast amount of experimental data collected by laboratories in Armenia, Japan, Slovakia and the USA under dif-



TEPA 2015 guests touring CRD Aragats research station cosmic ray particle detector array

ferent conditions and with different instruments. Armenian physicists suggested that sensors developed by other groups be installed at Armenia's Aragats high altitude research station where intense thunderstorms occur during spring and autumn.

The Cosmic Ray Division of YerPhi has installed new electronic systems on Mt. Aragats, including electric field monitors and particle detectors. These instruments are synchronized with GPS systems to correlate the timing of

events within a few tens of nanoseconds. On October 7, for the first time, TGE particle fluxes and lightning were captured on a millisecond time scale on the CRD particle detectors on Mt. Aragats, allowing researchers and conference attendees to look at the fine details of thunderstorm activity.

Young scientists and graduate students studying at Armenia's Cosmic Ray Division conducted much of this research. Also these young scientists played a major role in organizing this conference.



Some of the participants at the TEPA 2015 conference in front of CRD's Nor Amberd research station

## Armenia's President Attends Paris Climate Change Summit

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He said, “The Armenian national position was reflected in the ‘Plan of Actions defined at the National Level’ adopted by our Government. It is built upon the following principles:

“First, global emissions of the greenhouse gases shall be limited at the threshold, which would keep the temperature increase below the two degrees Celsius.

“Second, we shall adopt an approach that is “general but differentiated,” and take into account the varying degree of the current and historical responsibility of the numerous countries.

“Third, the responsibility and burden-sharing for limiting the emissions of greenhouse gases shall be distributed by taking into account the rights of the contemporary and future generations to utilize the climate resources.

“And, finally, not to do anything that would make the developing countries to slide back,” Sargsian said.

“Armenia stands ready to undertake a commitment of a quantitative limitation to the increase of the emissions of greenhouse gases,” he concluded.

## Correction

A letter by Mary Ann Kibarian which appeared in the November 21 issue of the *Armenian Mirror-Spectator* “Where Do We Go From Here?” responded to Nubar Afeyan's open letter to the community and not to the UN Secretary General.

## Armenian Assembly Presents Armenia And NKR with 6 Mine Detecting Dogs

YEREVAN – Armenian Assembly of America presented Armenia and the Nagorno Karabagh Republic with six mine detecting dogs (MMD).

Armenian Assembly of America board member Annie Totah and executive director Bryan Ardouny attended the Marshall Legacy Institute's (MLI) 18th Annual Clearing the Path Gala where they met with officers, supporters, and activists for the K9 Demining Corps Campaign. MLI's K9 Demining Corps Campaign seeks to improve the quantity and quality of mine detection dogs (MDDs) in countries all over the world. “As a lifetime partner of the Marshall Legacy Institute's demining project, and our decades-long support of HALO Trust initiatives in Armenia and Nagorno Karabakh, the Assembly is pleased with the results achieved to date and is committed to seeing current projects completed in the years to come,” stated Assembly Board Member Annie Totah.

In 2002, the Assembly became one of the first participants of MLI's K9 Demining Corps Campaign and sponsored six MDDs for Armenia. The accomplishments of the Assembly-sponsored MDDs include clearing landmine areas in Armenia along its border with Azerbaijan that is today used for farming, grazing and other agricultural initiatives, as well as transportation and

infrastructure projects.

Also last month, HALO Trust director Andrew Moore and HALO Trust USA executive director Tom Faust sat down with Assembly staff in their headquarters to discuss current projects and accomplishments on the ground in Armenia and Nagorno Karabagh.

“Most Armenian Americans are unaware that there is a landmine problem in Nagorno Karabagh and that the per capita accident rate is among the highest in the world – higher even than Cambodia and Afghanistan,” stated HALO USA executive director Tom Faust. “We are grateful for the Armenian Assembly's help to raise awareness of this important humanitarian issue. HALO's aim is to clear all minefields in Karabakh so that the people who are most affected by the landmine threat can leave behind this deadly and forgotten legacy of war and live safer and more productive lives,” Faust said.

Since 2000, HALO Trust staff has cleared almost 90 percent of all landmines in Nagorno Karabagh, resulting in 66,718 acres of cleared land to be used by local residents.

In 2013 alone, HALO Trust employed 175 staff in Karabagh and cleared more than 370 acres of land as part of their “Landmine Free Artsakh” initiative.



## INTERNATIONAL

## Thousands Mourn Murdered Kurdish Lawyer Tahir Elci, Funerals Held for 2 Policemen Also Killed

DIYARBAKIR, Turkey (Reuters) – Thousands of people have gathered for the funeral of Tahir Elci, a Kurdish lawyer and human rights activist gunned down in Diyarbakir, which has been at the center of months of violence. Funerals were also held for the two policemen killed in the attack on November 28.

The Turkish prime minister, Ahmet Davutoglu, said on November 29 that the gun found next to Elci's body was the same weapon used in the attack on the police officers, as he vowed to catch the killers.

But Selahattin Demirtas, co-chair of the pro-Kurdish People's Democratic party (HDP), cast doubt on whether those responsible would be exposed.

"Our skepticism is fair as so many similar sufferings have taken place on our land in this past," he said at the funeral. "We were never able to say goodbye to them with our minds at ease thinking those responsible will be caught."

Police surveillance footage released

on November 28 showed officers being shot at from inside a cab. Another video shows plainclothes police shooting at two men running in the direction where Elci was believed to be.

Elci, who died after speaking to journalists, was facing trial for saying the banned Kurdistan Workers party (PKK) was not a terrorist organization, as the government describes it. He had, however, denounced PKK violence.

Hundreds of people have been killed since a ceasefire between the PKK and Turkish security forces collapsed in July, reigniting a conflict in which 40,000 people have died since it began in 1984.

Elci's killing was likely to fuel further unrest in Turkey's mostly Kurdish southeast.

A curfew had been called in the Sur district of Diyarbakir where the killing took place. Security forces continued operations to drive back the youth wing of the PKK, removing barricades and trenches, with occa-

sional gunfire and explosions heard.

HDP deputies and leaders of Turkey's local bar associations gathered at the funeral, where a casket draped in red and adorned bright yellow flowers was carried by a dense crowd.

Members of the Diyarbakir Bar Association stood in front of the hospital from where the body was taken holding a banner stating: "We will not forget you," in Turkish and Kurdish.

Four investigators have begun work to determine whether the death was an assassination or the result of crossfire.

Elci's brother Ahmet was convinced that the lawyer had been a target: "My brother is not our first martyr and neither will he be the last," he said at the funeral. "As a Kurdish intellectual, he was slain by the state. We have seen this state murdering Kurdish intellectuals throughout the history. But we will not give up and we will win."

## Russia Says Turkey 'Shot Down Plane For IS Oil'

MOSCOW (AFP) – Russia has accused Turkey of shooting down its warplane near the border with Syria in order to protect its oil trade with the Islamic State (IS) group.

Speaking at international talks on climate change in Paris, Russian President Vladimir Putin called the downing of the plane a "huge mistake".

Turkey has denied any ties to IS and is part of a US-led coalition carrying out air strikes against the militant group.

The Turkish government has refused to apologize for the incident.

One Russian pilot was killed and the other rescued following the crash on 24 November. Turkey says the jet entered its air space – an accusation Russia denies.

Russia has been carrying out air strikes in Syria, targeting rebels against Syrian President Bashar al-Assad, including IS.

Turkey is a vehement opponent of Assad and has been accused of turning a blind eye to jihadist fighters crossing from its territory into Syria.

Until a few months ago, Turkey was reluctant to play an active role in the coalition against IS. However, in August it allowed the US-led coalition to begin using its airbase at Incirlik.

Russia has imposed sanctions on Turkey over the downing of the plane, including restrictions on imports of Turkish food and an end to visa-free travel.

IS earns much of its money from illegal sales of oil – however, Turkey has staunchly denied that it is involved in the trade.

"We have every reason to think that the decision to shoot down our plane was dictated by the desire to protect the oil supply lines to Turkish territory," Putin said at a news conference in Paris on Monday.

He said Russia had received more information to show that IS oil was passing through Turkish territory.

## Cork Hosts Photographic Exhibition Commemorating Armenian Genocide

CORK, Ireland (*Irish Times*) – It was described by US President Theodore Roosevelt as "the greatest crime of the war" and now the Armenian genocide which began in 1915 has been commemorated with a special exhibition of photographs at Cork City Library.

"The Iconic Images of the Armenian Genocide" – officially opened by Lord Mayor of Cork, Cllr Chris O'Leary – features a series of old photographs which depict the genocide of 1.5 million Armenians living in what is now present day Turkey.

One of the organizers, Jimmy Lynch explained that the exhibition has been put together by the Armenian community in Ireland to mark the centenary of the genocide and it is based on an original project by the Armenian National Institute and Armenian organizations in the US.

"In Ireland we rightly remember what happened in World War I in places such as Gallipoli and Suvla Bay where many Irish suffered and died but we should also be aware of what happened in Armenia – this is an important and emotional year for the Armenian community in Ireland and worldwide.

"They will be remembering and com-

memorating what happened to their family antecedents in those dark times from 1915 to 1918 and the people of Cork can share in that remembrance by visiting and viewing the exhibition in Cork City Library," he said.

According to Lynch, the panels of photographs depict the various aspects of the genocide, including executions, massacres, deportations and starvation of Armenians within the Ottoman Empire by the Young Turk movement.

"Together these photographs recreate a sense of the terror exercised by the Young Turk regime and reveal the extent of the dispossession and decimation of the Armenian people in their historic homeland," said Lynch.

"With panels displaying photographs of survivors, rescued women, homeless children and refugees, the scale and depth of the uprooting of the Armenian people is revealed," said Lynch.

Many of the images were taken in the teeth of a strictly enforced ban on photography by the Ottoman authorities and the collection represents photographs that survived and were scattered across several continents before being brought together, he added.

## Russia Bans Soros' Open Society Group

MOSCOW (Public Radio of Armenia) – The Russian Prosecutor General's Office has recognized George Soros's Open Society Institute and another affiliated organization as undesirable groups, banning Russian citizens and organizations from participation in any of their projects, Russia Today reports.

In a statement released on November 30, prosecutors said the activities of the Open Society Institute and the Open Society Institute Assistance Foundation were a threat to the foundations of Russia's Constitutional order and national security. They added that the Justice Ministry would be duly informed about these conclusions

and would add the two groups to Russia's list of undesirable foreign organizations.

Prosecutors launched a probe into the activities of the two organizations – both sponsored by the well-known US financier George Soros – in July of this year, after Russian senators approved the so-called "patriotic stop-list" of 12 groups that required immediate attention over their supposed anti-Russian activities. Other groups on the list included the National Endowment for Democracy; the International Republican Institute; the National Democratic Institute; the MacArthur Foundation and Freedom House.

## International News

### Istanbul Hosts Book Presentation on German Role in Genocide

ISTANBUL (PanARMENIAN.Net) – Istanbul hosted on December 2 a presentation of the book *Genocide Complicity: Germany's role in the Armenian Genocide*, by German journalist and writer Jurgen Gottschlich.

The volume unveils the story of how Germany – which wanted to establish a strong presence in the East during the WWI – lured Turkey into the war. The German officers who served in the Ottoman army, characterized Armenians as spies and traitors. And when the forced deportations of Armenians turned into genocide, the German government thought it was a "harsh, but productive measure." According to the author, Germany turned a blind eye to the diplomats and clergy members' concerns about the atrocities perpetrated against the Armenians.

### Armenia Participating in Mexico Book Fair

MEXICO CITY (PanARMENIAN.Net) – For the first time, Armenia will participate in the Guadalajara International Book Fair, which this year is being held November 28 through December 6. Armenia's participation was made possible through cooperation between the Ministry of Culture and Armenian Embassy in Mexico.

At the event, the country is represented with more than 180 books, published not only in Armenia, but also Argentina, Uruguay, Spain, the United States and France.

Dedicated to the centennial of the 1915's massacres, Armenia's pavilion introduced a number of Genocide-themed books to the Mexican readers, public and university libraries, the Foreign Ministry press office reports.

Guadalajara Book Fair has been held since 1987 and is considered to be the biggest South American and world's second largest event of its kind.

### Genocide Centennial Marked in Baghdad

BAGHDAD (PanArmenian.net) – In commemoration of the Armenian Genocide, Baghdad hosted on November 26 a performance in Arabic, titled "The Armenian Genocide before the Court."

Based on the play "All Rise, Court Is in Session" by Perch Zeytuntsyan, the event was organized by Homenetmen (Armenian General Athletic Union and Scouts) and the Armenian Mixed Youth Association, Armenian Foreign Ministry's press office reports.

Armenia's Ambassador to Iraq Karen Grigoryan, representatives of political and public circles, clergy members attended the event, which was covered by local media outlets.

### Pope Francis 'Hopes to Visit' Armenia Next Year

PARIS (PanARMENIAN.Net) – Speaking at the UN climate summit in Paris, Pope Francis said he planned to visit Mexico and hoped to be able to visit Armenia in the coming year. Francis said he has promised the patriarchs of Armenia that he would visit, no date has been discussed though.

"But I am old and these trips are heavy," he said.

The UN climate conference in Paris is most likely humanity's last chance to thwart global environmental disaster, the Pope Francis said on Monday, November 30, warning the world was "at the limits of suicide," Reuters reports.

Francis, who visited Kenya, Uganda and the Central African Republic, also said the continent was "a martyr of exploitation" by wealthy countries who want its natural resources and try to impose Western values instead of concentrating on development.

The pope's last stop in Africa was the Central African Republic, one of the continent's poorest nations. He made an unscheduled stop at the country's only pediatric hospital, where doctors told him that they did not have oxygen and that most of the children there were destined to die of malnutrition or malaria.

# Community News

## Provocative Talk by Dr. Roberta Ervine On Gregory of Narek Romantic Poems

By Florence Avakian

NEW YORK – The erotic love poem, Song of Songs was the subject of a fascinating and provocative lecture by Dr. Roberta Ervine, on Tuesday evening November 3. It was sponsored by the Krikor and Clara Zohrab Information Center of the Diocese of the Armenian Church (eastern).

The Armenian scholar was introduced by the Zohrab Center Executive Director, the Very Rev. Daniel Findikyan, as “an unparalleled specialist of the Cilician period.” Ervine, he said, has studied for several years in Jerusalem with Archbishop Norayr Bogharian, late curator of manuscripts for Jerusalem’s St. James Monastery, and with the late Bishop Guregh Kapikian, Armenian Overseer of the Status Quo in the Holy Places. While there, she taught Armenian studies at both Jerusalem’s Holy Translators’ Academy, and the Hebrew University. Currently, she is professor of Armenian Studies at St. Nersess Armenian Seminary, and concentrates on the history of the Armenians in Jerusalem and medieval Armenian literature and spirituality.

In her talk, Ervine presented her recent English translation from the Armenian of St. Gregory’s commentary in her new book, *The Blessing of Blessings*, and focused on how the monk from Narek urges the reader to “rethink



Dr. Roberta Ervine

how we imagine God, love, sex, and the divine intimacy into which he invites his creatures.” It was the object of intrigue and intense study by the early church fathers East and West, she said, including the great 10th century Armenian mystic, St. Gregory of Narek.

Opening her talk with the poetry of graphic love, she read, “How fair and pleasant you have become, O Lover, delectable maiden! You are stately as a palm tree, and your breasts are like its clusters. I say I will climb the palm tree and lay hold of its branches. Oh, your breasts are like clusters of the vine, and the scent of your breath like apples, and your throat is like the best wine that goes down smoothly, gliding over lips and teeth. . .”

“This tenth century mystic, St. Gregory of Narek, now declared a doctor of the Church by Rome, is one of the most beloved and revered figures in all of Armenian spiritual and literary history,” she noted. So what place does a piece of love-poetry, “replete with sensual and erotic imagery, have in Scripture. Surprised inquiry is an underlying principle of all Armenian interactions with Scripture.”

see POEMS, page 5



Robert Aram Kaloosdian signing his book

## Armenian Assembly Features Author Robert Aram Kaloosdian at Boston Holiday Reception

ARLINGTON, Mass. – Earlier this month, the New England Regional Council of the Armenian Assembly of America hosted the Annual Holiday Reception featuring a book presentation and signing by Assembly board of trustees vice chairman and counselor Robert Aram Kaloosdian, author of *Tadem My Father’s Village, Extinguished During the 1915 Armenian Genocide* at the Armenian Cultural Foundation.

The program began with opening remarks by Assembly board member Lu Ann Ohanian who welcomed the audience to the event. Following Ohanian, Assembly board president Carolyn Mugar introduced Kaloosdian commending his tireless dedication and work on behalf of the Armenian people.

Kaloosdian’s work, which differs from other Armenian Genocide narratives, serves as a microanalysis of a specific village named *Tadem*. Kaloosdian’s non-fiction book is about real people and events that occurred during the Armenian Genocide throughout the Armenian provinces of eastern Turkey. His work comprises a collective history of eyewitnesses told with extraordinary detail in order to preserve the memory of *Tadem*. This particular village may not have been in a war zone, but its disappearance stands as a testament that religious hatred and racial prejudice can be more destructive than weapons of war.

“Originally I chose *Day Is Done*, as the title of the book, which invokes the lyrics of Taps performed at military funerals. At the very end of my writing I shared the title with my family, and my granddaughter turned to me and said ‘but grandpa, it’s not done.’ She said ‘for me you have made *Tadem* come alive and I will forever know *Tadem*.’ She had a sort of reverse analysis and that was truly inspiring for me,” Kaloosdian said during his presentation.

Assembly board co-chairman Van Krikorian concluded the presentation by acknowledging members and supporters in the audience. He thanked them for their steadfast support and for helping the Assembly advocate on behalf of the Armenian American community.

Following the presentation Kaloosdian provided and signed copies of his books for the guests.



From left, Armenian Assembly Massachusetts State Chair Herman Purutyian, Board Co-Chair Anthony Barsamian, Board President Carolyn Mugar, Board Co-Chair Van Krikorian, and Executive Director Bryan Ardouny, with Assembly vice chairman and counselor Robert Aram Kaloosdian

## Sisters, Educators Honored by AIWA Chicago Chapter

CHICAGO – On Saturday, September 26, the Chicago Affiliate of the Armenian International Women’s Association (AIWA) hosted a luncheon at the historic Union League Club to celebrate the accomplishments of Prof. Ann Lousin and Prof. Leona Mirza. The two educators are sisters and lifetime members of AIWA. They have been leaders in their respective professional fields as well as in the Armenian community for many years.

Lousin teaches commercial law and Illinois constitutional law at the John Marshall Law School in Chicago. She has served on the staff of the Speaker of the Illinois House of Representatives, including two years as Parliamentarian of the House. She is a founding member of the Armenian Bar Association and has served it in several capacities, including three years as Chair from 1995 to 1998. Mirza is a professor of mathematics education at North Park University. For several years, she was also the director of the Institute for International and Cultural Studies at the University. Mirza served as the president of the Chicago Chapter of The Armenian General Benevolent Union from 2006 to 2009.

One hundred and fifty people were in attendance to honor the two. Before the commencement of the program, guests enjoyed several musical selections by professional oud player Mark Gavoor. Following welcoming remarks from AIWA Chicago President Greta Doumanian-Harley, Samuel Der-Yeghiayan, a federal judge of the US District Court for the Northern District of Illinois, reflected on the history of the Armenian community and commended the honorees for their achievements. Shortly afterward, Lousin and Mirza each took the stage and spoke fondly about growing up in an Armenian-American family in post-World War II Chicago. They praised their parents’ emphasis on education, which led each of them to pursue graduate studies and subsequently, careers in academia. Before the conclusion of the program, Chicago Affiliate Founder and Advisor Sonya Doumanian presented the honorees with ceramic artwork made by Armenian artisans in Jerusalem.

The luncheon was a tremendous success for the Chicago Affiliate. The luncheon committee members included Greta Doumanian-Harley and Houry Gueyikian (co-chairs), Svetlana Arakelyan, Sonya Doumanian, Shaghig Danielle Galian, Gloria Hachikian, Samantha Kyrkostas, Christina Markarian, Ruzanna Tantushyan, Mariam Tatosian, and Tamar Wasoian. Through its efforts, the committee raised \$5,500 for the Women’s Support Center in Yerevan, Armenia.



From left, Mariam Tatosian, Sonya Doumanian, Houry Gueyikian, Prof. Ann Lousin, Professor Leona Mirza, Greta Doumanian-Harley, Christina Markarian, Gloria Hachikian and Shaghig Danielle Galian



## COMMUNITY NEWS

## ASA Annual Journalism Program Accepts Applications for 2016

WARWICK, RI – At its annual convention in June 2015, the Board of Trustees of the Armenian Students' Association of America, Inc. (ASA Inc.) announced it is again sponsoring two journalism internships in partnership with the Armenian Weekly and the Armenian Mirror-Spectator.

In making the announcement, Brian Assadourian, Chairman of the ASA Inc Board of Trustees remarked that "The ASA is proud to once again make these internships available and to continue our mission begun 105 years ago of providing financial assistance and professional mentoring to qualified students of Armenian heritage."

Participants in the six week internship program will receive a weekly stipend of \$150. Interns will work either under the supervision of Nanore Barsoumian, editor of the Armenian Weekly or Alin K. Gregorian, editor of the Armenian Mirror-Spectator. The offices of both newspapers are located in Watertown, Massachusetts.

"The Internship provides a valuable opportunity for students of Armenian heritage to have hands-on experience as a member of the editorial staff" noted

Dr. Michael G. Mensoian, a member of the ASA Inc Board of Trustees who oversees the program.

"The Armenian Weekly and the Armenian Mirror-Spectator are two of the leading English-language newspapers in the United States and Canada keeping our community informed of developments locally as well as in Armenia and the Diaspora through their print and online editions."

Applications for the ASA Inc Journalism Internship are now available and may be downloaded at <http://www.asainc.org>. Applications must be submitted no later than Friday May 20, 2016. Candidates must have completed at least their sophomore year of college by May 2016. Currently enrolled graduate students are also eligible.

Since its establishment 105 years ago the Armenian Students' Association of America, Inc has encouraged the educational pursuits of Armenians in the United States by providing financial assistance in the form of scholarship grants, professional opportunities through internships, and fellowship through social and educational activities.

## St. Thomas Food Holiday Bazaar December 5 and 6

TENAFLY, N.J. – The St. Thomas Armenian Food festival and Holiday Bazaar will take place this year on Saturday, December 5, from noon to 8 p.m., and Sunday, December 6, from noon to 6 p.m. The Food Festival and Bazaar will take place on church premises located at the corner of East Clinton Avenue and Route 9W, in Tenafly, NJ. The Bazaar is held indoors; admission and parking are free.

Authentic Armenian and Middle Eastern foods will be available continuously. In addition, the gourmet booth will offer homemade, scrumptious delicacies and pastries. All foods may be enjoyed on premises or packaged for "take-out" convenience. You can also enjoy your dining experience in our spacious halls while listening or dancing to Armenian & a variety of music provided by our DJ.

A variety of vendor booths, including jewelry, toys, books, handcrafts and boutique gift items for pre-Christmas shopping will present a wide selection of exciting merchandise. For interest-

ed vendors, some booths are still available by calling the church office.

Entertainment will include a children's clown performing fun magic tricks with a live rabbit and face painting at 4 p.m. followed by Santa Claus at 5:30 p.m. on Saturday, December 5. On Sunday, December 6, the well-known Antranig Dance Ensemble will perform traditional Armenian and International Folk Dances

There is also a "White Elephant" booth for those who like exploring vintage and non-vintage treasures and value-priced merchandise.

A variety of valuable raffle prizes such as hand-made Oriental Rug, 32" TV's, Notebook Computer, Apple iPod, etc., will add to the excitement of the two-day event. The winners will be announced at the raffle drawing on Sunday afternoon during the bazaar.

For more information or directions call the church office or visit the church website at [www.stthomasarmenianchurch.com](http://www.stthomasarmenianchurch.com).

## Movember: Fundraising for Syrian Armenians

BELMONT, Mass. – Ari Janessian of Ani Catering tried a different way to raise money for Armenians in Syria. It may not be the typical way, but it seems to work. He grew a mustache, and adopted

a retro look. He called his campaign, "Stash for Syria," and followed the example of people who have grown mustaches for men's health and other causes in November (which consequently is called Movember).

Janessian has a personal connection to the cause. Though born elsewhere, Janessian was baptized in Aleppo, and both his parents are Aleppo natives. As of the morning of December 1, he has raised \$5,635 from 128 people in 26 days through a fundraising website. The majority of the donors have been under 30 years old.

The website is <https://www.gofundme.com/StashForSyria>.

– Aram Arkun



## Provocative Talk by Dr. Roberta Ervine On Gregory of Narek Romantic Poems

POEMS, from page 4

She revealed that it is the only work he wrote that used none of the "justly famous inexpressible emotional experience he had of the Divine. It is the only work he wrote involving no original poetry. And it is his earliest written work," she explained.

It was Prince (later, King) Gurgen-Khachik of Vaspurakan, "the highly ambitious scion of a ruthless, highly ambitious dynasty" which on one hand, built a religious complex, but also "instigated more than one bloody, treacherous and fratricidal Armenian civil war. And a brother of Gurgen gave away half of Armenia's traditional territory to the Byzantine empire, because of a verse he read in the Bible one day."

Gregory, who like Gurgen was in his 20s, must have had a considerable reputation as a scholar and a sober-minded monastic for Gurgen to ask him "What does all this erotic effusiveness mean, and why is it in the Bible? And why is it called the Song of Songs?"

This pinnacle of Songs "expresses something about the God of gods, the Lord of lords, the King of kings, the Blessing of blessings; it is his Holy of holies in some way," Ervine related. "So the Blessing of Blessings – the Song of Songs, is their summation. It tops them all, singly and together, the essence of all of them. In Gregory's estimation, the Song of songs IS the Holy of biblical holies that both contains and gives access to the Lord of lords. The love it depicts with a capital L is more loving than all other loves, and more holy than the holiest of all imaginable things."

Being groomed to become king, Gurgen was a military and political being, and married. Gregory told him to enjoy the literal meaning of the Song of Songs which is a "celebration of marital and sexual love, of the miraculous and awesome warmth that a couple feels towards each other, transforming the two into one. The Song of Songs can be read and identified by people in love everywhere," the Armenian scholar declared, adding, "As a universal experience, romantic love is one of the most readily accessible paths to a deeper knowledge of God, and the finest, deepest realities of human nature."

Married love, she continued, is "one of life's greatest, and potentially most divine, myster-

ies," Gregory told Gurgen. "There is nothing more honorable on earth than the love of a man and a woman." This is high praise, Ervine commented, for the married state of sexual union, in a time when clerics, and monastics especially, are commonly supposed to have spurned the joys and the ties of human love.

But there is more to the Song of Songs than even the most "sublime human love. It is the Love of loves, the love to God, a passion that our emotionally impoverished culture today might find inappropriate."

Though it is beautiful to have an emotional relationship with God, Ervine said, "there is yet a greater love." Gregory says to Gurgen, "live into your relationship with all your heart and soul and mind and strength – be the Bride, and then listen with all your soul's ears to what God, the Groom says to you because God's love



St. Gregory of Narek

takes us higher and higher forever. The Song of Songs not only belongs in the Bible, it is the pinnacle of the Old Testament." It is a reminder that humans are made to "be passionately loved and to love passionately in return with all their heart, soul, mind and strength."

Therefore, Gregory informed Gurgen that there was nothing strange for the idea that married love should be enshrined in the pages of sacred scripture. This was a commentary not to just look on the display of love, but to dare to grow in love, an invitation to experience loving and being loved by God as fully and completely as possible.

*The Blessing of Blessings, Gregory of Narek's Commentary on the Song of Songs*, translated into English by Ervine, is available for purchase in the bookstore of the Diocese of the Armenian Church, 630 Second Ave.

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## COMMUNITY NEWS

# 100 Lives, NEF Come Together for Scholarships for 100 Students

SCHOLARSHIPS, from page 1

The 100 students that will be selected for scholarships go through a process where the local UWC college committee, composed of a core of alumni from five countries – Lebanon, Iraq, Egypt, Palestine and Syria – select students from a pool of applicants. The committees will assess the financial need of the students as well as their capabilities.

The program, which will begin in 2016, will be administered by the Scholae Mundi Foundation.

UWC Dilijan College, a collaborative project of individuals and organizations, has been implemented by the educational initiatives foundation Scholae Mundi and Initiatives for Development of Armenia (IDeA) Charitable Foundation. Among the school's Founding Patrons are the Co-Founder of RVVZ Foundation, entrepreneur and philanthropist Ruben Vardanyan, who is Chairman of the Board of Founding Patrons of UWC Dilijan College, Co-Founder of RVVZ Foundation and Chair of the Board of Governors of UWC Dilijan College Veronika Zonabend, Deputy Chairman of the Executive Board at Rusnano Management Company LLC Vladimir Avetissian and his wife Anna Avetissian, President of RD Group Gagik Adibekyan, Managing Partner and CEO at Flagship Ventures Nouraf Afeyan and his wife Anna Afeyan, and Director General at ISD Corporation Oleg Mkrtchan.

Armine Afeyan, daughter of 100 Lives co-founder Nouraf Afeyan, said that the UWC educational program is "unparalleled." The students who would be lucky enough to be accepted in the program will be able to have access to

sent to any country the committee feels would suit the student or give him or her the most exposure to something new.

Afeyan initially announced the scholarship program at the NEF Centennial event on October 28.

"By providing crucial access to education, we

ing relatives or funds.

"Many were able to succeed in life because Near East Relief gave them the skills to read and wrote or vocational training such as carpet weaving," Mardirossian said.

The organization changed its name to Near East Foundation when the work with the

including the State Department. "They will absolutely continue funding it so that the people in the region will stay" and receive the help.

"Our supporters have been very loyal. You now have to double down and not pull back," he added.

"Syrian refugees are victims twice over. They are fleeing from danger and treated as if they are part of it," he explained. "We in the Armenian community have to remember that we were accepted as Christians in Muslim countries and that our diaspora started there, through the generosity and support of these Muslim communities."

Afeyan concurred, adding that the "community in the Middle East when we had nowhere else to go. The kids in these countries would not have a range of education opening their eyes to people with completely different experiences. It is an intellectual exchange that fits our message. It is the perfect partnership [with NEF]."

He stressed that NEF is trying to help the stricken stay in their home countries and not leave. He added that the group does not work with refugees in the US or Europe.

Afeyan is based in Armenia now, working for 100 Lives. With a bachelor's from Yale in 2012, she worked in marketing before focusing exclusively on the Armenian Genocide commemoration this spring. She joined the IDEA Foundation and works for 100 Lives. This coming spring, the organization will host the awards ceremony for the three nominated individuals or groups. They will come to Yerevan, she said, where the final decision will be made.

"100 Lives initiative is all about giving thanks in a big way," Armine Afeyan said.



The UWC Dilijan College

truly hope to be able to provide these children opportunities to have the successful future they deserve-much like the extraordinary work the NEF has been committed to these past hundred years," she said at the program.

The first recipients of the scholarship will be enrolled in UWC schools in 2016.

The minor details for the collaboration are still under discussion, Mardirossian said. "The objective is for the NEF through local offices, to work with refugees and to provide candidates."

The students selected will be ages 16 to 18, and thus attend the last two years of high school in one of the UWC schools around the world, maybe even Armenia. Thus, 10 to 12 students a year will be enrolled.

According to Mardirossian, with having two years of such an international education under their belts, the students would have a pretty good shot at getting into elite colleges of their choosing.

NEF is operating in countries where there is a dire need. On the day of the interview on November 20, an attack on Mali had just happened, a country where NEF has its largest operation,

Mardirossian said.

"NEF was founded in 1915 by a group of American business, religious and civic leaders as a response to the [Armenian] Genocide," Mardirossian said.

The organization was founded to help Armenians and during its first 15 years, while it was known as Near East Relief, it helped Armenians as well as Greeks and Assyrians during the final days of the Ottoman Empire. He noted that the organization built many orphanages to house the children left bereft of any liv-

Armenians concluded in 1930. NEF now has operations in Lebanon, Egypt, Morocco, West Bank, Mali, Armenia and Jordan, Sudan and Syria.

"We are continuing work in terms of developmental work within these nine countries," Mardirossian said. In particular, he added, micro-economic development is encouraged especially for women, as well as helping vulnerable populations deal with healthcare.

About 35 percent of the funding for NEF comes from various US governmental agencies,



Shant Mardirossian

an education level that is exceptional, she added.

As for the UWC School in Dilijan, she said that this year the school will have its inaugural graduating class. The school, she said, is part of the "holistic effort to develop the entire region."

"It is an interesting world class education in an area they might not have seen" on their own, she said.

Part of the education is to "mix everyone together," meaning that if you apply, you can be

## United Armenian Fund Ends Its Humanitarian Shipments to Armenia

UAF, from page 1

The UAF was formed shortly after the devastating 1988 earthquake in Armenia to provide much needed humanitarian aid to the destitute survivors in the earthquake zone. But, after the collapse of the Soviet Union and the blockade of Armenia by Turkey and Azerbaijan, the UAF decided to expand its mission to include the entire population of Armenia and Artsakh.

Over the years the UAF acquired, shipped and distributed all types of relief supplies, including medicines and medical equipment, agricultural equipment, seeds, computers, books, toys, winter clothing and shoes to hospitals, clinics, schools, orphanages and hundreds of charitable organizations throughout Armenia and Artsakh.

The UAF Board of Directors thanked the

many generous donors who contributed large quantities of vital goods and supplies to the UAF ever since 1989. The Board also commended the UAF staff – President Harut Sassounian and Administrative Assistant Nouritza Abujamra – for their dedicated service to the organization and the needs of the people in Armenia and Artsakh.

In the past 26 years, the UAF has delivered to Armenia and Artsakh a total of \$720 million worth of relief supplies on board 159 airlifts and 2,260 sea containers.

The UAF is the collective effort of the Armenian General Benevolent Union, Armenian Missionary Association of America, Armenian Relief Society, Diocese of the Armenian Church of America, and Prelacy of the Armenian Apostolic Church of America.

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COMMUNITY NEWS

# AGBU Holds Film Screening by Young Filmmakers at Lincoln Center

NEW YORK – On November 20, the AGBU Performing Arts Department and the AGBU Young Professionals of Greater New York (YPCNY) held a film screening titled “6 Short Films” at the Amphitheater at the Elinor Bunin Munroe Film Center at Lincoln Center. The sold-out event featured films by six recipients of the AGBU Performing Arts Fellowship.

The films included “The Frame” by Ophelia



AGBU Performing Arts Department Director Hayk Arsenyan at 6 Short Films



Post-screening question and answer session with (left to right) Alik Barsoumian, Ophelia Harutyunian, Jesse Soursourian, Marge Kyrkostas-Tellelian, Martiros Vartanov and John Joseph Gallagher

Harutyunyan, “Adrift” by Alik Barsoumian, “They Were Afraid Of Us” by Jesse Soursourian, “After Water There Is Sand” by Saro Varjabedian, “Caregivers” by Viktorya Aleksanyan and “The Last Film” by Martiros Vartanov.

Harutyunyan, a filmmaker based in New York and Armenia, presented a short film about acceptance and letting go: “Being born and raised in Armenia, I couldn’t even dream about studying at an institution like Columbia. Even

when I got the acceptance letter, I still wasn’t sure I could find enough money to attend the school. The AGBU Performing Arts Fellowship helped me realize my dream and get where I am

right now. It is a great pleasure to present one of the first films I made at Columbia at the great Lincoln Center.”

The screening was followed by a question and answer session moderated by actor John Joseph Gallagher, best known for his work in “Meet the Parents,” “Darjeeling Limited” and “Law and Order.” In his opening remarks, Gallagher commented on the essence of filmmaking: “You can never lose when you express the honesty of your heart. And if you spend your life expressing the honesty of your heart, it really doesn’t matter what Universal Studios thinks of you. It matters what you think of you. If you find that

vision, and you live honestly inside that poetry, and do your best to share that with the world, you cannot lose.”

The AGBU Performing Arts Department (PAD) introduces Armenian art to diverse audiences and connects young Armenian artists worldwide: “All these years we have been showcasing the musicians who have received the AGBU Performing Arts Fellowships in music, but we also have filmmakers who receive these same grants, so we decided we need to not only support, but promote their work in a non-Armenian venue,” said Hayk Arsenyan, director of the AGBU Performing Arts Department.

**ՆԵՂՆՆԵՐԻ 6-ԻՆ ԱՍՍԱՎՅՈՒՄ**

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Special thanks to Matthew Karanian for donating copies of his book, “Historic Armenia After 100 Years: Ani, Kars and the Six Provinces of Western Armenia,” which we are offering as a gift for donations of \$200 or more. Matthew also provided photographs of historic Armenia for our calendar. Please give generously in this holiday season!

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## COMMUNITY NEWS

# Near East Foundation Celebrates Centennial

By Florence Avakian

NEW YORK – The Near East Foundation (NEF) is the oldest nonsectarian international development organization in the United States and it celebrated its hundred years of existence in grand style on October 28, at the elegant Cipriani, before a sold out crowd of nearly 400.

NEF started as a temporary committee, the American Committee for Armenian and Syrian Relief, known later as the Near East Relief. This organization was created to assist the millions of refugees who had survived the Ottoman Empire's atrocities during and after the First World War. One such refugee was 8-year-old Mari Libarian of Aintab, who had lost her parents in 1915, and was left an orphan with her six siblings, ages 2 to 15.

As the Libarian children wandered in the Syrian desert, without food, water or shelter, they survived by eating grass and selling their parents' jewelry for food. With Turkish soldiers hunting for pretty girls, they marched from village to village, facing disease, frostbite and starvation.

Meanwhile in New York City, thousands of miles away from the Armenian Genocide, in the offices of Cleveland H. Dodge, a group of concerned American business, religious and civic leaders, at the urging of US Ambassador to Constantinople Henry Morgenthau, and President Woodrow Wilson, sprang into action.

On October 28, the descendants of Armenian Genocide survivors honored the families of the philanthropists who organized to save, protect and educate thousands like Mari Libarian and her siblings. Mari found refuge and protection in an American orphanage in Kilis, later settling in Aleppo, Syria and eventually immigrating to Queens.

And one of those proud grandchildren of Mari Libarian was Shant Mardirossian who is currently the Chairman of the Near East Foundation's Board of Directors, and the Centennial Gala's



NEF Chairman Shant Mardirossian presenting the Centennial Founders Award to William Rueckert, President of the Cleveland H. Dodge Foundation.

Co-Chair, who welcomed the large crowd, and related the heart-warming story of his family's profound link to this organization.

Echoing the words of Armenian writer and Near East Relief orphan Antranig Zarougian, Mr. Mardirossian referred to a generation of survivors, as "people without a childhood". He then paid tribute to other organizations which had also helped, including the AGBU, Armenian Relief Society (then the Armenian Red Cross), the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation, the Howard Karagheusian Commemorative Corporation, the Armenian Missionary Association of America, the Cilician See in Antelias, Lebanon and the Echmiadzin Mother See in Armenia.

A highlight of the evening was the presentation of medals of gratitude to the family members of the Near East Relief heroes, by descendants of those rescued by this noble organization.

Honorees included Jessie Maeck, great-granddaughter of President Woodrow Wilson; Alan Hoover, great-grandson of NER member President Herbert Hoover; Robert Morgenthau, great-grandson, and Pam Steiner, great-granddaughter of US Ambassador Henry Morgenthau; Ron Miller, grandson of 20-year NEF Director E.C. Miller; and, John Kerr, grandson of Stanley and Elsa Kerr, and great-grandnephew of Marion Kerr. John Kerr was accompanied by his cousins Dorothy and Margie Jessup.

Presenting the medals in memory of their family members who were rescued by the NER were NEF Board member Carol Aslanian and her daughter Leslie Aslanian Williams; NEF Board member Haig Mardikian and his son John Mardikian; NEF legal counsel Arman Kuyumjian and his father Dr. Jirair Kuyumjian; Leslie and Steven Malott; and this journalist, Florence Avakian.

The special Centennial Founders Award was presented to the Cleveland H. Dodge Foundation and accepted by William R. Rueckert. In September 1915, Cleveland Dodge created a committee to help the Armenian people who were being massacred. The group became the Near East Relief, and as its treasurer, he covered all the committee's operating expenses so that every dollar raised would go directly to relief. This led to the first movement of citizen philanthropy, aiding the Armenian, Greek and



NEF Country Directors receiving a standing ovation from the audience.

Assyrian people. Since then, the Near East Foundation has always had a Dodge family member on its Board of Directors, including the current Vice Chairman Johnson Garrett.

The evening also included a trailer from the soon-to-be-released documentary titled, "They Shall Not Perish: The Story of Near East Relief" and a short video presentation which related the century of service that the NEF has rendered in nearly 50 countries. Dedicated NEF President Dr. Charles Benjamin explained that in 1930, the organization changed its emphasis from relief towards long-term social and economic development. Today, he noted, the NEF works with the most disadvantaged and vulnerable people in Armenia, Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Mali, Morocco, the Palestinian Territories, Senegal and Sudan.

He explained that the four-year brutal conflict in Syria has resulted in four million men, women and children fleeing Syria's borders, with 1.1 million in Lebanon and 600,000 in Jordan. "To survive, these refugees resort to harmful strategies such as begging, survival sex and child labor," he stated. Currently NEF is helping 5000 Syrian, Iraqi, Lebanese and Jordanian families rebuild their economic security and restore their livelihoods.

"Through the generosity of the Dodge Foundation and other donor agencies, we are now halfway toward our goal of raising \$4 million to fund this relief effort," Benjamin said. NEF is also working with the Armenian Assembly to "extend refugee resettlement programs for Syrian-Armenians fleeing the Syrian war and those who are taking refuge in Armenia."

Servicing this gallant effort, Dr. Benjamin paid tribute to the work of 20-year NEF President Chuck Roberts; former NEF president Alex Papachristou; Arpine Baghdoyan who works against



NEF President Dr. Charlie Benjamin along with NEF Board member Linda Jacobs and Andrew Hapke after having accepted the Citizen Philanthropy Award on behalf of the late Violet Jabara Jacobs.

domestic violence in Armenia; Anis Tarabey who helps refugees in Jordan and Lebanon; Yacoub Deme who daily with his staff confronted Al Qaeda and Touareg jihadists; Mahmoud Bchini who created youth councils in Morocco; Salah Abu Eisheh who with a team brought Palestinians and Israelis together in an NEF olive oil project; and Musa Gismalla who brought together communities in Darfur to increase economic productivity. (Musa was prohibited to travel to the US by the Sudanese Government).

## New Venture with 100 Lives

As an expression of deep gratitude to the people of the Middle

East who offered food and shelter to the refugees of the Armenian Genocide a century ago, a \$7 million Scholarship Fund to benefit 100 at-risk children from the Arab Middle East was announced. It was proudly presented by Armine Afeyan, daughter of 100 LIVES co-founder Noubar Afeyan. NEF will facilitate this scholarship as a part of its larger mission to deliver education, community organization and economic develop-



Armine Afeyan announcing the 100 Lives - Near East Foundation Scholarship Initiative.

ment throughout the Middle East and Africa. (See related story on Page 1.)

NEF Centennial Gala Co-Chair Linda K. Jacobs who has been a 30-year devoted worker for the NEF, emphasized the "unique nature of the NEF and what it does for people." She and Andrew Hapke accepted the "Citizen Philanthropy Award for the late Violet Jabara Jacobs, a first generation Lebanese-American, who gifted the NEF with a very generous donation, "a turning point for the NEF."

Closing the inspirational evening, United Nations Senior Advisor Gillian Sorensen extolled the vision of the NEF founders. "They set a high bar at the UN for one of thousands of NGO's in the world body. We were all refugees once," she noted, and was critical that the US is taking in so few of the suffering Syrian refugees. Reflecting the feelings of so many gala attendees, she declared, "The NEF for one hundred years has led by example. I look forward to the next hundred years," she said to a standing ovation.

A bottle of olive oil made together by Palestinians and Israelis through the NEF flagship "Olive Oil Without Borders Project" was given to all attendees of the NEF Centennial Gala.

Dignitaries attending the Gala included Armenia's Ambassador to the US, Tigran Sargsyan, Mali's Ambassador to the US Tiena Coulibaly, Armenia's Ambassador to the UN Zohrab Mnatsakanian, Mali's Ambassador to the UN Sekou Kasse, Egypt's Ambassador and Consul General Ahmed Farouk Mohamed Tawfik, Jordan's First Secretary to the US Sonia Sughayar, Armenia's Genocide Museum Executive Director Hayk Demoyan, NEF's President Council members Frank Wisner, former US Ambassador to Zambia, Egypt, India and the Philippines, and James Steinberg, former Deputy Secretary of State under President Obama.

Members of the clergy present included Primate of the Armenian Diocese (Eastern) Archbishop Khajag Barsamian, Prelate of the Armenian Prelacy (Eastern) Archbishop Oshagan Choloyan, Executive Director of the Diocesan Krikor and Clara Zohrab Center Very Rev. Fr. Daniel Findikyan and retired pastor of the White Plains St. Gregory the Enlightener Armenian Church Rev. Fr. Karekin Kasparian.



# Arts & Living

## Gracie Terzian

### New Jazz Vocalist Makes Her Mark

By Aram Arkun  
Mirror-Spectator Staff

NEW YORK – Romance is on Gracie Terzian's mind, or at least in her songs. Her sinuously sensuous singing takes listeners through poetry and music to a world of love and heartbreak. The young, talented songstress and performer has made her mark in the world of jazz with her first EP (extended play recording), "Saints and Poets." It quickly became the number 3 jazz album on iTunes and the number 23 jazz album on the Billboard jazz charts, and has garnered excellent reviews. Terzian wrote or co-wrote all six songs.

She lives in the Astoria section of New York City, and says that it feels like home now, perhaps due to a retro feel, and with all the modern jazz music being created there. A product of a northern Virginian childhood, her father, journalist and writer Philip Terzian, provided her with a first exposure to jazz. She danced and acted from a young age, and at the end of high school learned acrobatics, which was useful for theater.

She studied at the University of Virginia at Charlottesville, where she acted, sang with a jazz group and began writing jazz lyrics. She started a collaboration with Wells Hanley, her jazz piano teacher, and soon became a master of the harp ukulele. She said, "I think it was when I started having a desire to write music that I got more serious about practicing instruments."

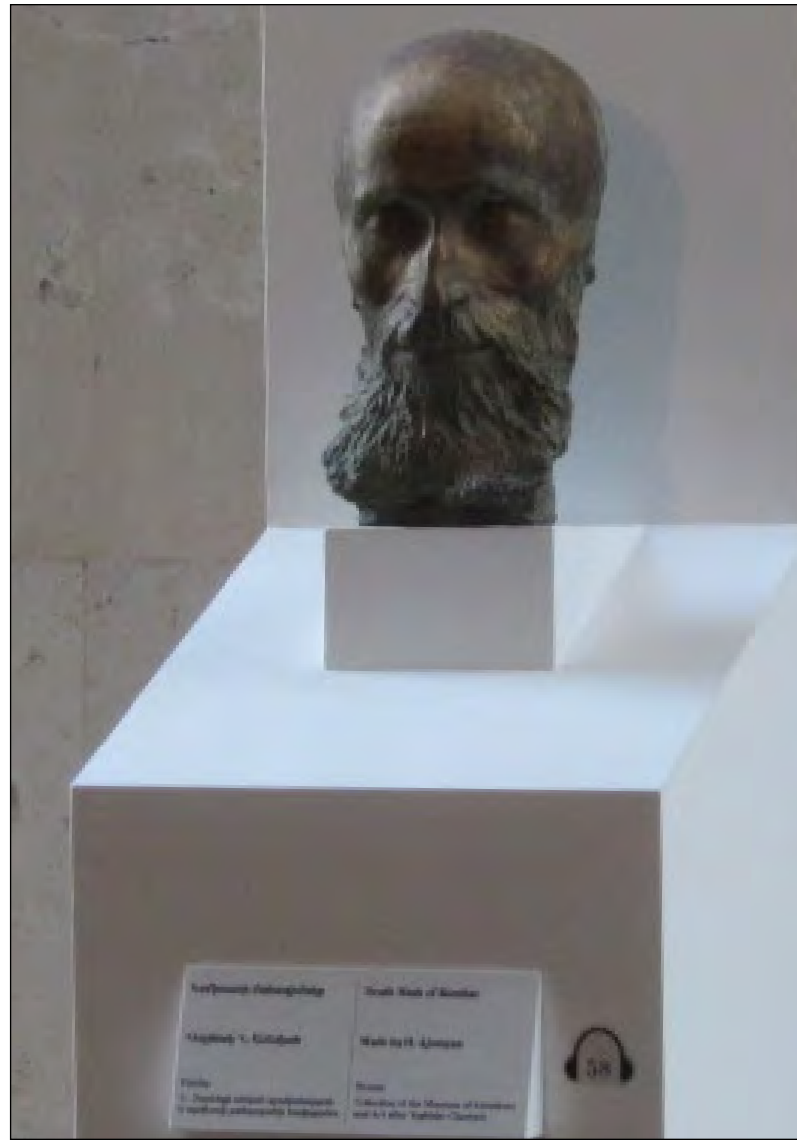
Terzian often accompanies herself while singing. She related that "it can be a little difficult. It depends on how comfortable I am with the song and how much I've sung it and played it. I do have to practice when I do it."

Terzian does not mind occasionally performing jazz standards, putting her own stamp on them, but ultimately she wants to present her own creations. If she cannot come up with a new arrangement, or add something different to a standard, she feels there is no point in doing it since people will prefer the original. She said, "I definitely am far more interested in writing new music and doing new compositions."

Writing a song each time can be different. She explained that "Sometimes I will write a song see TERZIAN, page 11



Gracie Terzian



Komitas' death mask

## Komitas Vartabed (1869-1935)

### His Eternal Legacy Beckons from The Homeland

By Ruth Bedevian

YEREVAN – As our group approached the entrance to the recently established (January 29, 2015) Komitas Museum-Institute in Yerevan, Armenia, I immediately recalled Serouj Kradjian's poignant observation. The museum, located in Komitas Park across from the Pantheon where Komitas' remains were the first to be buried in 1936, truly celebrates this 19th-20th century composer, singer, ethnomusicologist, choir conductor, and clergyman's life, talent and priceless gift to the Armenian people and ultimately to the world. When we count from the time of his arrival at Gevorkyan Seminary in Echmiadzin in 1881 until his arrest, victimization and subsequent trauma in 1915 by Turkish authorities at the onset of the Armenian Genocide, we stand in awe at his abundant 34-year period of prolific work which transcends the Armenian homeland and resonates throughout the entire world of music – a universal language that touches all hearts and souls.

Designer/Artist Alberto Torsello and Project Coordinator Vardan Karapetyan have created an impressive permanent collection professionally and thematically organized that is displayed throughout eight rooms on two stories. It contains a concert hall and enough room to hold temporary exhibitions. The permanent memorabilia, spaciouly designed to encompass the life and work of Komitas, his inner emotional life and music theory, also interweaves a rich Armenian folklore heritage. Captions and wall descriptions are in both Armenian and English languages. Technology has enhanced carefully preserved photos from the archives of the Charents Museum of Literature and Arts and displays them in slideshows on large see KOMITAS, page 10

"Komitas never composed an opera, symphony, oratorio, or concerto, yet he accomplished something much greater. He laid the foundations of a national music culture, purifying Armenian music of all foreign influences. Komitas has thus been rightfully recognized as the "father of Armenian classical music." After the Genocide, nothing was left to compile or compare, let alone preserve for future generations; Komitas had come forward in the 11th hour to redeem a vital characteristic of a 4,000-year-old civilization that was eventually uprooted from its cradle."

(Carnegie Hall Playbill, October 2008  
"Reverend Gomidas" by Serouj Kradjian)

## Pianist Kariné Poghosyan To Perform in Benefit for Tchaikovsky Music School

NEW YORK – The Armenian-American pianist Kariné Poghosyan will be paying tribute to Ludwig van Beethoven with a birthday celebration that will also benefit the Armenia Fund USA's Tchaikovsky School Renovation in Yerevan, Armenia. This celebration will take place on Beethoven's birthday, Wednesday, December 16 at 7 p.m. at the Armenian Evangelical Church located at 152 East 34th Street. Poghosyan will be performing Beethoven's 32 Variations in C minor, Woo 80, and his Piano Concerto No. 5 in E-flat Major, Op. 73 ("Emperor") with the Anahit Chamber Players, an ensemble comprising current and former Manhattan School of Music students, conducted by Kyle Ritenauer.

Opening remarks will be given by Ambassador Zohrab Mnatsakanyan of the Permanent Mission of Armenia to the United Nations.

Poghosyan said, "As an Armenian-American artist, I find that it is my duty to lend support to this vital cause to rebuild the Tchaikovsky Music School in Yerevan. This school, where so many young Armenian musicians begin to learn their art, is responsible for classical music to not only survive in Armenia, but for it to thrive as well."

This concert is being made possible by Armenia Fund USA, Eastern Region Affiliate; the Armenian Evangelical Church of New York; as well as support from an anonymous donor.

Musical talent abounds in Armenia where the Arts are revered and important to daily life, especially classical music. The country is home to just one government-funded classical music school, the Tchaikovsky Music School. This institution, which is Armenia's mecca for young musicians and their musical education, is in desperate need of funding. Renovation is vital to meet the state-of-the-art demands required to train a new generation of musically gifted Armenian youth. For classical music to survive in Armenia, it is essential for this institution to be on par with other world-class music schools in Europe and the United States.

The estimated date of completion for the reconstruction of the Tchaikovsky Music School is for September 2016. Following, Armenia Fund USA plans to invest in new musical instruments, master classes and international student exchange programs.

Lisa Stepanian, Armenia Fund USA's executive director, points out that, "Armenia Fund USA believes that this one-of-a-kind institution is well worth the large-scale investment – reason enough why the project is and will be the focus of many fundraising appeals while this dilapidated structure transforms into a gleaming contemporary landmark. We are very excited to collaborate with the Armenian Evangelical Church and the Permanent Mission of Armenia to the UN presenting this beautiful evening of classical music with Kariné Poghosyan. "The piano keys are black and white, but they sound like a million colors in your mind," a quote by Maria Crista Mena. Kariné Poghosyan, a well-known Armenian pianist, brings the quote into reality with her exquisite performance."

Poghosyan has been praised for her ability to get to the heart of the works she performs. She made her orchestral debut at fourteen 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 performing in some of the world's most prestigious concert halls. Recently, she 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. During the 2014-15 season, Poghosyan made her Washington, DC, debut, in addition to her Toronto, Canada debut where she gave the see BENEFIT, page 12

# Komitas Vartabed Legacy Beckons from the Homeland

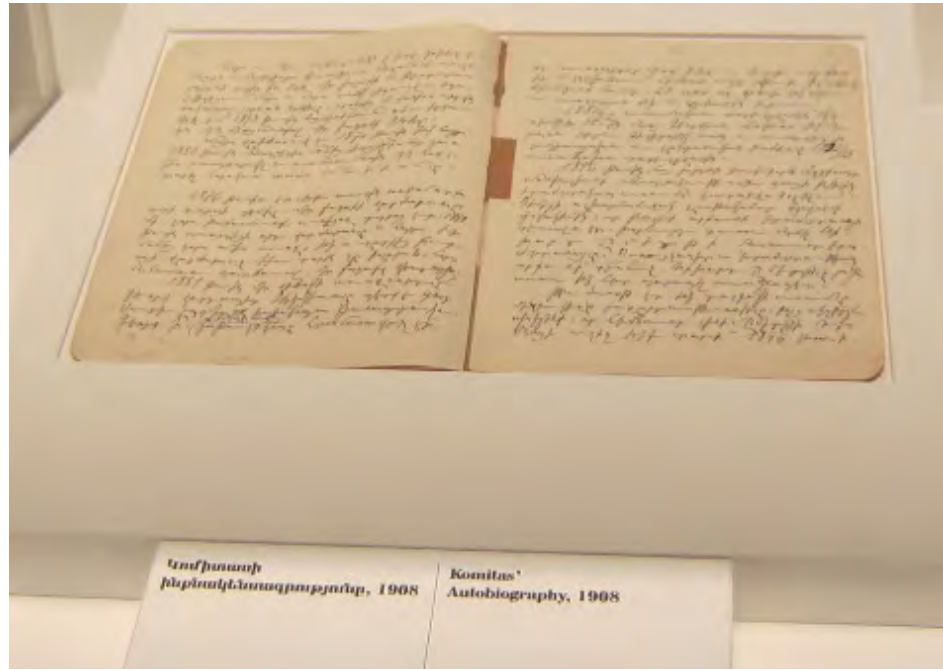
KOMITAS, from page 9

flat screens. There are photos of the teachers at Gevorkyan, choir groups of students that Komitas taught and a moving display of photographs from his travels throughout the rural areas where he collected and documented ancient folk songs. After first performing concerts in the Caucasus, he later took his choirs to Paris, Berlin, Berne, Geneva, Venice and other European centers, where he gave lectures and performances. Komitas became the first non-European member of the International Music Society of his time. An illustrated map showing his extensive travel is digitally displayed.

Komitas graduated with a doctorate degree in musicology from the Friedrich-Wilhelm University in Berlin (present-day Humboldt University of Berlin – Berlin’s oldest university, founded in 1810). His diploma is on display as is a handwritten one from Richard Schmidt, with whom he studied at the conservatory. It was Schmidt who encouraged him to both cultivate his interest in folk music and continue his studies of Western music.

As we viewed concert programs, personal belongings and correspondence, and art rendered to share the culture from which Komitas was bred, I felt him beside me, imparting his dreams, feelings. Strains of familiar Komitas’ melodies softly enhanced the ambience. The museum generates a genuine personal touch. Two years ago I had the privilege to view a very small collection of memorabilia at the Charents Museum of Literature and Arts. It was interesting, but here in this newest museum that graces the city of Yerevan, with the sounds of his music echoing through the halls, Komitas came alive to me!

Our guide, Nairi Khatchadourian, informed



The tortured Vartabed’s autobiography

developments which are likely to have a significant influence in the national and international museum field.” It is impressive to know that it has been visited as recently as August 2015 by one of the jury members, Dr. Jan Gerchow, a historian from Germany and is a possible consideration.

Khatchadourian continued: “Concerts and educational programs [of which I am in charge] are regularly scheduled. The concert department has chosen Tuesdays to schedule concerts. So every Tuesday we have classical,

feast and taught hymns from Mesrop Mashtots and Sahak Partev. We have monthly lectures and Saturday singing workshops. Other workshops include lullaby singing for couples and parents, music improvisation, and so on.”

It was a heart-warming sight to hear the chatter of schoolchildren as groups as young as 8 years old were filing through the rooms. In these rooms present and future generations will grow up with physical images and opportunity to acquaint themselves with their national heroes. No dust will cover the past for them!

Upon entering the first room, we viewed a timeline which put into perspective Komitas’ life and activity. We moved on to many displays, including Komitas’ handwritten autobiography dated 1908 and viewed his personal flutes and the grand piano that the philanthropist, Alexander Mantashian, gifted him. (He also underwrote his tuition for his studies in Berlin.)

An unforgettable display of artwork by Grigor Khandjyan, illustrating scenes from verses in Paruyr Sevak’s emotive ode to Komitas, “The Unsilenceable Belfry” (Anreli Zangakatoun), intrigued me. A search for an English translation was in vain, however. According to scholar, educator and translator, Dr. Vartan Matioossian, “The poem follows Komitas’ life from his birth to his death, and intertwines it with the historical destiny of the Armenian people.” A copy of Komitas’ death mask (the original is in Venice) and a belfry suspended numerous feet above was the last exhibit to view and tied into the theme of Paruyr Sevak’s poem.

In 2013, President of Armenia Serge Sargsian made the decision to establish the Komitas Museum-Institute, the Board of Trustees of the Hayastan All Armenian Fund transmitted the building to the state and by 2015 with funding from the Pyunik and Luyv Foundations, the dream was realized.

Today a state-of-the-art museum and institute emerges as a gem among the museums of Armenia to make known to all the world the contributions of the father of Armenian music! Our visit was fortuitous as we caught an outstanding performance by the Geghard Vocal Ensemble in the concert hall which was a fitting climax to the afternoon’s experience, sending us off with echoes in our hearts. The essence of the dearly beloved Vardapet is now unveiled for visitors from every walk of life to see, touch and feel.

\*\*\*

The melody from the Hymn of National Blessing – *Amen Hayee* – which Komitas composed as a first-year student at Gevorkyan Seminary (1891) and whose classmate, Arshak Tashjian, created the lyrics, continues to fill the Armenian faithful. “Hear the voice that pours forth from every Armenian’s heart, O God. Give long life to our Patriarch, long days to the Father of the Armenians. Lord, always keep unshaken the Mother See which you yourself have established.”

(This article was originally published at the Armenian News Network [www.groong.org].)



The front entrance of the museum

uus in fluent English that Komitas Museum-Institute participated in the European Museum of the Year (EMF) Award 2016. “The EMF Judging Panel is looking for enterprise and innovation that enhances the public quality of the museum. The judges seek to identify new

sacred or folk music concerts with local and international artists. The concerts start at 7 p.m. As for the educational programs, we schedule them on Fridays or Saturdays at 5 pm. In October we had an educational program on the Holy Translators Feast where we discussed the



The exhibition dedicated to Paruyr Sevak and his poem for Komitas



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## ARTS &amp; LIVING

# New Jazz Vocalist Makes Her Mark

TERZIAN, from page 9

really quickly and it will take me one day. Sometimes it will take me months going through different lyrics, seeing it is not right."

Though many people think of jazz as a field like classical music, with most of the famous compositions written by people who are no longer alive, Terzian said, "I think there is a lot of room for new jazz to be made and there are a lot of jazz artists making new work." Furthermore, she continued, "you can hear jazz influences on a lot of modern day music, especially in hip hop. I think jazz is alive and well. You just have to seek it out and find it."

She observes that there are a lot of new forms or subgenres of jazz that are currently being born or have yet to be born. Though she is not herself consciously trying to create such a subgenre, she said, "I do think about making music that sounds new, and coming up with things that people have not heard before, with a new quality to them. I think that a lot of times when people do create a new subgenre of music they don't do it intentionally."

She composes and writes in a spontaneous manner. She said, "The melodies come into my head, and I just write them down. It naturally happens. Sometimes I start playing around with a chord progression I hear in my head, and then a melody comes out of that chord progression."

Her lyrics, she said, are usually drawn from real life experiences. She explained, "I do think

about the words a lot. I jot down interesting phrases or words on my cell phone or paper. I jot notes in my journal everywhere I go, so that when I am ready to sit down and write lyrics I have material to pull from. I find sometimes reading or watching plays are good sources of inspiration." She watches at least one or two plays a week, and mines the dialogue.

She uses a lot of rhyming and alliteration. As she writes lyrics, she said, "I will sing it out loud to see how it sounds without thinking what it means." She also thinks about how the meaning will come across.

"I'm not trying to necessarily teach people any obvious lessons from my lyrics intentionally," she stated. "I may share lessons that I have learned for myself in my music...I hope that my music helps people or that they do learn things through it...The most important thing is that it speaks to them in some capacity."

She listens to a lot of different genres of music, which, she thought, all contribute something to her work. She said, "On a day to day basis, I listen most to jazz and hip hop, but I also listen to some rock music and folk music. I listen to some electronic music as well. I'd say for the stuff I am writing, pop and jazz and maybe folk music influenced me the most." She does write music that is not jazz, and, she said, "I am definitely interested in experimenting with other genres and cross-blending them, and singing in different ways as well."

Terzian looks to jazz artists not only for their ability to make good music. She said, "I also really look up to people who have a reputation for being good and kind. ... I also admire people who work hard. People who are nice and hard-working are the people I admire the most."

She performs at a lot of events and parties now, and often sings jazz standards or cover songs. While she has temporarily created various bands or backup groups, she often plays with a lot of different people. Sometimes she also does backup singing for other musicians.

Terzian occasionally has sung songs in Spanish, French and Portuguese (for Brazilian jazz music). She studied Spanish in high school and college, but for the other languages usually finds a friend fluent in them to correct her pronunciation.

She used to pick and choose online when she listened to music, and accepts that it is an era for musicians of releasing singles. Nevertheless as a musician, she now hopes people will buy whole albums. She prefers to present her original music on her albums, not to perform music that she herself did not write. For her EP, Terzian said, "I wanted it to flow like an album, so that if you put it on at the beginning, it would just play through...It is nice to have a consistent feel or story which does not change the mood too much. The people who take the time to listen from start to finish will have an experience into which there was some thought placed."

Terzian is Armenian on her father's side, with his ancestors originally from Sepasdia (Sivas). There are some relatives who ended up in Syria with whom her father has kept touch. She has learned about Armenian history, and said that "at the very least, I would like to learn basic conversational Armenian." In the realm of music, while not that familiar with the corpus of Armenian folk or jazz music, she knows the work of some individual musicians, and has been listening recently a lot to jazz pianist Tigran Hamasyan's work.

As a child, Terzian recalls, her family went to a limited number of Armenian events or gatherings, periodically visiting to the Armenian Church and an Armenian bazaar in Washington, DC. However, the last name Terzian always led Armenians to start up conversations with her and ask if she is Armenian. Furthermore, she said, there is a "camaraderie" of sorts because of the shared dark history of the Armenian Genocide. Terzian declared, "I feel connected to my ancestors and family, and what they went through. I pay respect to them. Even though I live a very American life, I would really like to go to Armenia soon and spend some time there."

Terzian said that she really enjoys recording her work, as well as doing live performances. She interned in a recording studio in New York while in college, and worked there a while afterwards as an engineer.

She finds that unlike pop music, where youth is a great advantage, in jazz good music stands out so that there are also successful artists who emerged later in life. Nonetheless, she said that there is an advantage to being youthful in your image, particularly for a female singer.

So far, Terzian has been performing individual shows up and down the East Coast. She said, "I really want to tour because there are a lot of cities where people online say, come to San Francisco, or whatever, and I want to go to San Francisco soon." However, it is complicated logistically and financially must be well planned, so it may take a year or two to arrange.

Recently, she has been able to support herself through music and composing, though sometimes she still has to supplement this with odd jobs on the side. She gets commissions to compose songs for shows, films or individuals, as well as payment for performing shows.

She gets paid a small fee when people download her songs online, but it is true that if you look for it, almost anything can be gotten for free online. With the digital revolution in music distribution, Terzian said that "you have to come up with more creative ways to make money. I am not exactly sure of all the ways yet. I think that musicians do have to accept that this is the way things are going now unless stricter laws are set." Some possibilities might be advertisements, sponsorship and writing music for shows.

She enjoys both making music and marketing it afterwards, but added, "The marketing and business side can get tiring. It is a distraction from creating. There is a reason why artists have managers who handle the business side for them." Nevertheless, at present, she has a publicist but not a manager.

She responds to fans on social media as quickly as possible, though it can be all-consuming. She said, "If I don't respond, it is because I don't have the time or didn't see it. I am appreciative any time somebody reaches out to me."

Terzian recognizes that jazz is a risky choice as a career, and is constantly reevaluating her goals for the present, near future, and the long run. One day she may wish to do more acting in the theater again. However, her next immediate goal is a new album. She said, "I usually set everything aside to focus on one [project] at a time. It is ... what I want to be thinking about all day and all night, and it requires that much time." She is writing a lot of new songs from which she will pick out what works best for the album. In comparison with her first one, she wanted to try a different approach. She said, "I think I want to have more of a dynamic story line and arrangements in my songs, and have it be a little more of a journey going to different places, but still in a cohesive way."

Terzian has an upcoming performance at Club Bonafide in New York City on December 17 at 10 pm. Clips of her songs are posted on YouTube, and she has her own website, [graciterzian.com](http://graciterzian.com).



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## Mary Balian Releases New CD, 'Hooysus Es'

LOS ANGELES – Singer/songwriter Mary Balian has released her second CD of Armenian Christian contemporary music. *Hooysus Es* (You Are My Hope) is now available on CD. Digital downloads on iTunes will be available in December.

The album is a compilation of modern worship songs and hymns, as well as original songs written by Balian and her colleagues. *Hooysus Es* was produced by Gilbert Hovsepian and sponsored by the Armenian ministry organization, *Bashde.org*, with additional support by individual donors and participating artists.

Mary Balian is an Armenian-American singer/songwriter whose repertoire includes pop, world, dance, and contemporary Christian music. She is a graduate of UCLA and CSUN and is involved in ministry in the Los Angeles Armenian Evangelical community with her husband, Manny Saghbazarian, with whom she has two daughters. In her album dedication, Balian expresses her deepest gratitude for her family and friends who have made her music ministry possible.

Balian's first album, *Bashdenk*, was a powerful release, which saw thousands of copies used for Armenian youth ministries around the

world, to great impact.

Balian has performed internationally, including in Armenia and across California, most



recently in a November concert in Los Angeles with her producer and songwriting partner, Gilbert Hovsepian, who is recently and miraculously recovered from a severe motorcycle accident. Completing this album was a blessing and victory for both artists.

For more information visit [www.mary-balian.com](http://www.mary-balian.com) or [info@marybalian.com](mailto:info@marybalian.com).

## Erevan Choral Society's Christmas Holiday Concert on December 13

CAMBRIDGE, Mass. – Ushering in the Christmas season, the Erevan Choral Society and Orchestra of the Holy Trinity Armenian Church of Greater Boston will celebrate its 48th year with their annual Christmas Holiday Concert on December 13, at 7 p.m., in the

With composer and Erevan music director Konstantin Petrossian conducting, this year's concert will feature the vocal quartet from The Bostonians, and soprano Knarik Nerkararyan. In attendance that evening will be Ambassador Zohrab Mnatsakanayn, Armenia's Ambassador to the United Nations.

Nouné Karapetian, Roselin Osser, Michael Calmés and Philip Lima are four members of The Bostonians, a repertory company of outstanding vocal and instrumental artists founded in 2003 by singer and impresario Richard Conrad.

The concert is a gift to the community, but those interested in supporting the Erevan Choral Society may make contributions to Holy Trinity Armenian Church

with a direction that the contribution is to benefit the Erevan Choral Society.



Church Sanctuary of Holy Trinity Armenian Church, 145 Brattle St.



## Recipe Corner

by Christine Vartanian Datian

### Lamb and Eggplant Meatball Pita Sandwiches

Eggplant always seems to have a love-it-or-hate-it audience. But "even people who claim they don't like eggplant love these easy meatballs," says Christine Vartanian Datian. You can use a small ice cream scoop to shape these meatballs quickly.

#### INGREDIENTS

2 cups chopped eggplant  
1 1/2 pounds ground lean lamb or beef  
1 egg, lightly beaten  
1/2 cup chopped white onion  
1/3 cup minced flat-leaf parsley  
1/4 cup pine nuts  
1/4 cup Italian-style dried bread crumbs  
1/4 cup grated parmesan cheese  
1 tablespoon fresh minced garlic  
3/4 teaspoon sea salt  
3/4 teaspoon fresh-ground pepper  
3/4 teaspoon dried basil and 3/4 teaspoon dried oregano  
2 cups marinara sauce  
1 teaspoon Worcestershire  
6 pocket pita breads (5 in. wide), cut in half  
Bell pepper rings and red onion rings (optional)

#### PREPARATION:

1. In a large bowl, mix the egg, lamb, eggplant, onion, parsley, pine nuts, bread crumbs, parmesan cheese, garlic, salt, pepper, basil, and oregano.
2. Shape the mixture into 1 1/2-inch balls and place them 1-inch apart in an oiled 12- by 17-inch baking pan.
3. Bake meatballs in a 425° oven until they are well browned, about 20 to 25 minutes.
4. Spoon out and discard any fat from pan. Stir in the marinara sauce and Worcestershire, scraping up browned bits from bottom of pan and turning meatballs to coat. Bake until sauce is steaming, 3 to 5 minutes longer.
5. Spoon meatballs into a bowl and scrape sauce over them. Spoon meatballs and sauce into pocket breads and tuck in bell pepper and onion rings, if desired.

Serves 4-6.

Go to: <http://www.myrecipes.com/recipe/lamb-eggplant-meatball-pita-sandwiches>

To see more of Christine's recipes, go to: <http://www.myrecipes.com/search/site/Datian> or <http://www.thearmeniankitchen.com/>

Christine Vartanian Datian is a native of Fresno, California and now lives in Las Vegas. She is a graduate of California State University, Fresno (CSUF), and holds a Master of Arts Degree (MA) in Mass Communications. She has been published in *Sunset* and *Cooking Light* magazines for over a decade.

## Pianist Kariné Poghosyan to Perform in Benefit for Tchaikovsky Music School

BENEFIT, from page 9

Canadian premiere of Alan Hovhannes's Piano Concerto *Lousadzak*. Other performance highlights included solo recitals in Montgomery, New York, and Richmond, Va., as well as performing Khachaturian's Piano Concerto with the Greater Newburgh (NY) Symphony under the baton of Woomyung Choe.

Poghosyan's musical studies began in her native Yerevan in Armenia at the School of the Arts No. 1, continuing at Romanos Melikian College and the Komitas State Conservatory. After moving to the United States in 1998, she received her BM, *summa cum laude*, from California State University in Northridge under Françoise Regnat, and her MM and DMA degrees at Manhattan School of Music under Arkady Aronov, completing her DMA in a record-breaking two years with a thesis on Aram Khachaturian's works for piano. She is currently based in New York, where she teaches at the Manhattan School of Music.

Poghosyan recently returned from a tour to Vienna, Austria and Yerevan, Armenia, where she performed to rave reviews the music of



Kariné Poghosyan

Aram Khachaturian featured on her CD, "Khachaturian Original Piano Works and Ballet Transcriptions," at the Armenian

Embassy (Vienna) and at the Khachaturian House Museum (Armenia). This CD, "Khachaturian Original Piano Works and

Ballet Transcriptions," was released on the NAXOS label this past April and has been accepted in the first round submission for a Grammy nomination.

Ritenauer, born and raised in Macedonia, Ohio, received both his Bachelor of Music and Master of Music degrees from Manhattan School of Music where he studied orchestral percussion and was a conducting student in the School's Contemporary Performance Program studying with Jeffrey Milarsky. In addition, he has studied conducting at the Pierre Monteux School in Hancock, Maine, where in 2013 he led a 100th anniversary reading of *Le Sacre du Printemps*.

Ritenauer is also an active freelance percussionist in New York City and serves as Principal Percussionist of the Hudson Valley Philharmonic. This year, he performed the world premiere of William C. White's Percussion Concerto with the Youth Orchestra of Prince William and the Hudson Valley Philharmonic.

To purchase tickets visit [www.aecnyc.org/events](http://www.aecnyc.org/events) or [www.facebook.com/armeniafundusa](http://www.facebook.com/armeniafundusa).



## ARTS &amp; LIVING

## CALENDAR

## MASSACHUSETTS

**DECEMBER 5 — Lowell ARF “Aharonian” Gomideh 120th anniversary celebration,** 6:30 pm, Kazanjian Memorial Pavilion, Sts. Vartanantz Church, 180 Old Westford Road, Chelmsford; dinner and program; Armenian National Committee Freedom Awards to James Milinazzo, former Lowell mayor; Daniel Varoujan Hejirian, noted artist; David Boyajian, journalist/Armenian activist; Community Service Awards to Kathy Cryan-Hicks, Chelmsford Public Library; The Lowell Sun newspaper; Jennifer Doaks, Chelmsford High instructor; musical oud performance by Datev Gevorkian; donation, \$50 adults, \$15 students; reservations, Armen Jeknavorian, (978) 256-2538 or armenj@comcast.net.

**DECEMBER 6 — The Greater Worcester Armenian Chorale presents a special Christmas Concert** led by Artistic Director and Conductor Konstantin Petrossian, Sunday, 1:30 pm, with a fellowship at 12:30 p.m., at Holy Trinity Armenian Apostolic Church, 635 Grove St., Worcester. Admission is free. Soprano Knarik Nerkararyan is the guest soloist. For additional information call 508-963-2076.

**DECEMBER 7 — Aram Arkun, Historian and Executive Director of Tekeyan Cultural Association** and Assistant Editor of the Armenian Mirror Spectator will be the speaker at the St. James Men’s Club. Topic will be “Zeytun: The Armenian Eagles’ Nest.” Losh Kebab and Kheyman Dinner Social Hour (mezza) 6:15 p.m. Dinner 7 p.m. \$14 per person. St. James Armenian Church Charles Mosesian Cultural & Youth Center - Keljik Hall 465 Mt. Auburn St., Watertown. Ladies welcome.

**DECEMBER 10 — Christmas Open House, 6-11 p.m., with talk at 7:30** by Christina Maranci, “Vigilant Powers: Three Churches of Early Medieval Armenia,” at NAASR, 395 Concord Ave., Belmont. Contact NAASR at 617-489-1610 or hq@naasr.org for more information. 20% off all on-site purchases.

**DECEMBER 13 — St. James 84th Anniversary Name Day Celebration** & Banquet Honoring Raffi & Carol Yeghiayan, Parishioners of the Year. Save the Date, details to follow. St. James Armenian Church, 465 Mt. Auburn St., Watertown.

**DECEMBER 13 — Christmas Holiday Concert – Erevan Choral Society and Orchestra,** 7 p.m., Church



**On December 7, Aram Arkun, historian and executive director of the Tekeyan Cultural Association, as well as assistant editor of the Armenian Mirror-Spectator, will be the guest speaker at the St. James Men’s Club. The topic will be “Zeytun: The Armenian Eagles’ Nest.” A traditional Armenian dinner will be served. The program will start at 6:15 p.m., with dinner at 7 p.m., at St. James Armenian Church’s Charles Mosesian Cultural and Youth Center, Keljik Hall, 564 Mount Auburn St., Watertown. Ladies are welcome.**

Sanctuary, Holy Trinity Armenian Church of Greater Boston, 145 Brattle St., Cambridge. Founded by the Very Rev. Fr. Oshagan Minassian (1930-2008), and now under the direction of Composer Konstantin Petrossian, Music Director and Conductor, the concert will feature the Vocal Quartet from the Bostonians, and Knarik Nerkararyan, Soprano. The program will consist of a vari-

ety of traditional Armenian and Western sacred and holiday music. The public is warmly invited to attend this complimentary concert which is a gift to the community. For further information, contact the Holy Trinity Church office, 617.354.0632, or email office@htaac.org.

**DECEMBER 31 — St. James 2016 New Year’s Eve Celebration.** Entertainment by Arthur Apkarian and Band from Montreal. Save the date, details to follow. St. James Armenian Church, 465 Mt. Auburn St., Watertown.

## NEW JERSEY

**DECEMBER 5 and 6 — St. Thomas Armenian Church of Tenafly will sponsor its annual Food Festival and Holiday Bazaar** on Saturday and Sunday December 5 & 6. Hours are Sat. 12 - 8 PM, Sun. 12 - 6 PM. Traditional Kebabs, Armenian Gourmet Foods and Homemade Desserts will be available both days. Other attractions include Vendor Booths, Armenian Bookstore & Artifacts, Jewelry, Raffles, Music, “White Elephant” booth and a Tavloo tournament. Entertainment includes a Clown-magician, face painting and Santa Claus for kids on Saturday at 4pm. On Sunday, the ANTRANIG Dance Ensemble will perform also at 4 PM. Church is located at the corner of E. Clinton Avenue & Rt. 9W, (174 Essex Drive). For more information call 201/567-5446.

## RHODE ISLAND

**DECEMBER 5 — The Cultural Committee of Sts. Sahag and Mesrob Armenian Church** in Providence presents “Silent Night, Holy Night” Christmas Concert featuring The Armenian Chorale of RI, with special performances by Joanne Mouradjian, Gohar Manjelijian, Debra Pjojian and Junior Choir - Saturday, 6:30 p.m. in the Church Sanctuary. Light refreshments following concert - Donation \$10. Those attending the Christmas Concert will receive \$10 off the admission to the ACYOA dance !!

**DECEMBER 5 — ACYOA ANNUAL HOLIDAY KEF,** Saturday, Sts. Sahag & Mesrob Church Cultural Center. 70 Jefferson St., Providence. 8:30 p.m. Music by Mal Barsamian, Jason Naroian, KenKalajian, Brian Ansbikian, David Hoplamazian. Mezza. \$25. Adults \$15. Students. For More Information, call Christina 401-256-2686 or Greta 401-556-0771

## Tickets on Sale Now for AGBU NYSEC’s 8th Annual Performing Artists in Concert

NEW YORK — The AGBU New York Special Events Committee’s (NYSEC) Performing Artists in Concert is fast approaching and tickets are available now. The 8th annual event will take place on Saturday, December 5 at 8 p.m. at the Weill Recital Hall at Carnegie Hall in New York.

This year’s concert, “Melodies of Hope,” in honor of the Centennial of the Armenian Genocide, will bring together young musicians from Armenia, Australia, Canada, China, Germany, Macedonia, Portugal and United States to pay tribute to the fact that Armenian music and culture are alive and thriving in 2015. The musicians in this year’s ensemble include: Arpine Azatyan (violin), Sona Barseghyan (piano), Vasko Dukovski (duduk and clarinet), Luke Ratcliffe Khachaturian (piano), Artur Mouradian (violin and viola), Talin Nalbandian (mezzo-soprano), Astghik Poghosyan (violin and artistic director), Tamara Sevunts (actress and poet) and Amy Tcheupdjian (cello).

Each musician participating in the concert has received an AGBU Performing Arts Fellowship, which has supported his or her training at some of the world’s most prestigious institutions. This year’s ensemble includes graduates

from the Shanghai Music Conservatory, Monash University of Melbourne, the Juilliard School and Cologne High Institute of Music.

The evening’s program will feature a diverse array of Western classical and Armenian com-

and rare performances of works by the 10th century Armenian poet and monk Grigor Naregatsi, including readings of his poetry and a poem by Daniel Varoujan. This year’s concert will conclude with Gomidas’ “Tsiternak” (swal-

the concert’s ensemble of musicians as their gift and sign of respect to the centenary of the Armenian Genocide.

Tickets for the benefit concert are on sale now. Seats are available in the orchestra and



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posers. Along with lesser-known pieces by Sharafyan and Saryan, guests will also be treated to more popular Western classical hits

low in Armenian and a symbol of hope and freedom), arranged by Yang Yi and the students of the Shanghai Music Conservatory for

front balcony for \$65 and in the rear balcony for \$35. To purchase tickets through Carnegie Hall, visit [www.carnegiehall.org](http://www.carnegiehall.org).



## COMMENTARY

# Mirror Spectator



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## COMMENTARY

## Global Reverberation of the Refugee Problem

By Edmond Y. Azadian

Migration has been the destiny of the Armenians. We have a tragic history of forced migration. Of course, the most spectacular migration which would end all subsequent migration was in the aftermath of the 1915 Genocide, which uprooted the bulk of the Ottoman Empire's Armenian population from its historic homeland and scattered them around the world. That experience haunts every Armenian and has been transferred from generation to generation, so much so that every time we see refugees behind barbed wire, every time a boat full of refugees sinks in the open sea, their plight touches a very sensitive chord deep within us.

The current flood of Syrian refugees inundating the Middle East, Europe and even North America is the result of a manmade humanitarian tragedy which certainly could have been averted and today it calls for urgent attention and action.

Admitting or denying refugees has outgrown its humanitarian scope to become a political, social, economic and psychological problem. Ancient fears and suspicions have been rekindled and they find their expression through political actions and reactions.

Fifty percent of Syria's population has become refugees through the brutal civil war, overflowing into neighboring countries; individual countries, the EU and the UN have all been mobilized to address this vital issue of global magnitude.

As during the Armenian Genocide and the Jewish Holocaust, the powers that be could intervene and stop the carnage today, but they do not. If we look at history, in Germany's case, it even colluded with the Ottoman government. Later on, it set up humanitarian programs to win the gratitude of the victims and survivors. Today some of the countries posing as benefactors are the main cynical instigators of the tragedy. This case was starkly exposed at a heart-wrenching event in Paris, when Eric Ouzounian, the father of Lola Ouzounian, one of the victims of November 13's attack on the Bataclan music venue, refused to take part in a memorial service dedicated to the memory of the victims and blamed the French government for the attacks in an article published by Huffington Post. In particular, he wrote: "France conducted a disastrous policy in the Near East for many years. Nicolas Sarkozy violated the UN Security Council resolutions banning all kinds of interventions by land in other countries, sent troops to Libya to topple Qaddafi, and joined the coalition against the head of Syria Bashar al-Assad, when these countries were not France's enemies. ... Recent presidents have acted with inconceivable frivolity, led by shortsighted vision. But this isn't the only facet of the political world's responsibility."

The blame can equally extend to the US and the UK but especially Turkey. Yet, Turkey is being rewarded for its role in the crime. In fact, Turkey trained and armed ISIS criminals and sent them across the border into Syria to commit their beheadings and murderous rampages which resulted in the exodus of Syrian citizens into neighboring countries.

Lebanon has admitted more than one million Syrian refugees which is almost equal to one-fourth of its population. Jordan has admitted more than 600,000, while Turkey was forced to admit 1.8 million refugees, which would not have sought asylum, had Turkey not poked the hornet's nest and created unrest in their home country.

Turkey has helped the refugees flood the European mainland to created panic. The ruse was successful as EU countries gathered in Brussels on Sunday to beg Ankara to slow or to stop the flow of refugees, rewarding it with very generous deals. Turkey has been awarded \$3.2 billion in assistance to its refugee program. The bigger bonus was that Chancellor Angela Merkel of Germany softened her position and the EU promised to begin the stalled negotiations with Turkey for the latter's admission into the European Union. Of course, there was a more global policy at play behind these magnanimous gestures. Turkey stood to be isolated in its standoff with Russia and these policy changes symbolize the allies' solidarity with Turkey. A recent wire story from Russia has President Putin suggesting that the Turkish authorities shot down the Russian plane bombing ISIS – helping curb the terrorist strongholds – to protect ISIS as Turkey gets cheap oil from them, which they in turn steal from Iraqi pipelines.

President Erdogan had duped the West to be tolerant to their bombing Kurdish targets in Syria and Iraq, under the guise of fighting ISIS. His irresponsible adventure of shooting the Russian military aircraft brought the NATO allies reluctantly together to his rescue. It looks like in both cases, the tail is wagging the dog.

While getting into these foreign policy adventures, President Recep Tayyip Erdogan is nurturing a time bomb at home. All the terrorist cells that have been incubating in Turkey will eventually mature and turn against him because they do not consider Erdogan and his party sufficiently fundamentalist with regard to Islam, practicing the extreme form of that religion. When Osama

bin Laden was gleefully shooting at Soviet MIG fighters in Afghanistan through US supplied Stinger Missiles, who could have imagined that he could turn to the West as his target, setting his sights on the World Trade Center?

A humanitarian drama is being enacted in Europe as the Syrian refugees try to cut the barbed wire fences on Hungary's border and walk through the Chunnel from the European mainland to England.

Many countries have set up quotas to receive the refugees, with the most generous being Germany. France is next in line, despite the threat of political backlash by ultra-rightist Marine Le Pen, who aspires to take over the presidency, playing on the xenophobic fears of the population, already heightened because of the recent attacks.

Canada will receive 25,000 Syrian refugees, but President Obama's pledge to admit 10,000 refugees has already led to Congressional action to stop them, which he has vowed to veto.

Polls indicate that 53-56 percent of the US population is against admitting more Muslim refugees. Who do these Syrian refugees look like? Somebody answered: the biological father of Steve Jobs, who was indeed a Syrian immigrant. Imagine if Albert Einstein were on the German ocean liner St. Louis with 937 passengers, almost all Jewish, when the ship was turned away from the port of Miami to return to Europe. More than a quarter of the passengers later died in the Holocaust.

President Frank D. Roosevelt was suspicious that some Nazi spies were able to creep in amongst the Jewish refugees and thus he restricted their entry to the US.

In the aftermath of World War II, Jewish immigration, perhaps more than any group, transformed America culturally, scientifically and philosophically. In a way, they transferred Europe's best traditions to the US.

President Roosevelt's anti-immigrant phobia turned him also against the Japanese minority in the country. Indeed, through an order of his, 120,000 people of Japanese ancestry living on the West Coast were rounded up and detained without charges during World War II. They were sent to brutal internment camps throughout the duration of the war. Of course, the US government extended an apology to the victims of that policy and they were compensated financially later.

Today's fears may have some justification: some bad apples may cross the borders with the legitimate refugees, who are victims of terrorism escaping the very same terrorists that have the West in their sights. Almost 30 governors, mainly Republicans, have expressed positions against admitting refugees to their states, but immigration is governed by federal policy.

President Obama said, "When I hear folks say that well, maybe we should just admit the Christians but not the Muslims, when I hear political leaders suggesting that there would be a religious test for which person who's fleeing from a war-torn country is admitted, when some of those folks themselves come from families who benefited from protection when they were fleeing political persecution, that's shameful. That's not American. That's not who we are. We don't have a religious test for our compassion."

Immigrants founded this country and it cannot turn against its *raison d'être*. Ten thousand refugees represent a mere drop in the bucket in the ocean of 350 million.

United Nations Secretary General Ban Ki-moon criticized the border controls in a call for Europe to respond to the refugee crisis with "compassion, solidarity and shared responsibility."

Armenia has demonstrated that compassion by welcoming 17,000 refugees from Syria, ranking third in Europe in terms of admitting refugees. The director of European Friends of Armenia Eduardo Lorenzo Ochoa writes in an article that "Armenia shows Europe how to welcome refugees." Most of the Syrian refugees in Armenia are of Armenian descent but there are also Yezidis and Assyrians who have made Armenia their home. Mr. Ochoa concludes his remarks with the flowing statement: "Armenia's approach to the current crisis is a direct continuation of this praiseworthy tradition, and proves that Armenia is fully and undeniably part of European community values."

Although Armenia upholds European values, the European Union has no plans to support refugees in Armenia, after sending \$3.2 billion to Turkey for the same.

A word needs to be said about countries which have contributed to the turmoil in Syria by arming the terrorists: Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Qatar and Bahrain have admitted zero refugees although their bloodstained signatures are on the destiny of those refugees.

Nadim Houry, Human Rights Watch deputy director for the Middle East and North Africa, has called those wealthy countries' inaction in the face of the Syrian crisis "shameful."

These refugees did not choose on their own to rush to Europe and to America. They were living – well indeed – in a stable and we can add, prosperous country until the West decided a regime change was necessary.

The moral of the story is do not bomb and destroy stable countries and then feign charity for the victims.



## COMMENTARY



My Turn

By Harut Sassounian

## Erdogan Shot Himself in the Foot By Shooting Down the Russian Jet

Leaders around the world have been pandering to Recep Tayyip Erdogan for years, trying to win him over to their side. They flattered the Turkish President so much that the lavish compliments went to his head. As the self-appointed Grand Sultan of the neo-Ottoman Empire, Erdogan started meddling in the internal affairs of neighboring countries, and jailing scores of his own citizens who dared to point out that the Sultan is naked!

The first leader to be duped by Erdogan was Syria's President Bashar Al-Assad whose ill-considered honeymoon with Turkey turned into an endless nightmare, devastating his country. The next head of state to part ways with the Turkish dictator was President Al-Sisi of Egypt. Israel's Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has still not fully learned his lesson, carrying on a baffling love-hate relationship with Turkey. Erdogan almost succeeded even in tricking Armenia's leaders with the deceptive Armenia-Turkey Protocols. Ironically, Armenia's interests were saved by none other than Erdogan's junior partner, President Ilham Aliyev of Azerbaijan, who killed the deal with his persistent self-serving objections.

The latest world leader to discover Erdogan's fiendish nature is Vladimir Putin, after losing a military jet and two Russian airmen to a Turkish attack under the guise that the plane had crossed Turkey's airspace for 17 seconds!

Within days of this tragic incident, the Russian govern-

ment took several retaliatory measures that would have a devastating effect on Turkey's economy:

- Banned the import of Turkish products. Trade between the two countries amounts to a whopping \$33 billion annually, making Russia Turkey's second largest trading partner.
  - Refused the entry of Turkish businessmen into Russia. Sixty of them were detained upon their arrival in Moscow last week and sent back to Turkey.
  - Lifted the visa-free travel of Turkish citizens to Russia as of January 1.
  - Forbade hiring new Turkish workers – currently 200,000 live with their families in Russia – and cancelled multi-billion dollar construction contracts with Turkish firms.
  - Ordered Russian travel agencies not to send tourists to Turkey, depriving that country of billions of dollars in income. Since 4.5 million Russians visited Turkey last year, Russia is the second largest source of foreign tourists.
  - Imposed higher customs duties on imports from and exports to Turkey.
  - Under consideration is the cancellation of three major projects: 1) Selling natural gas to Turkey as Russia supplies over half of that country's needs; 2) Building Turkey's first nuclear power plant, worth over \$22 billion; and 3) Constructing a multi-billion dollar natural gas pipeline from Russia to Turkey.
- President Putin has also taken several military steps since the downing of the Russian jet:
- Boosted the Russian military presence in Syria – on the ground, in the air, and off the Mediterranean coast.
  - Bombed pro-Turkish terrorist groups in the region where the Russian jet was hit and two Russian airmen killed.
  - Destroyed hundreds of Turkish trucks, some of which were transporting weapons to the rebels in Syria, and others carrying oil bought from ISIS and smuggled into Turkey.
- Russia may take additional military measures against Turkey in the near future:
- Arming Kurdish militants in Iraq, Syria and within Turkey.

• Shooting down Turkish planes and helicopters that cross Syria's or Armenia's airspace, in view of such incursions in the past.

On the diplomatic front:

- Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov cancelled his pre-planned trip to Turkey last week.
  - Putin refused to take Erdogan's phone calls and rejected his request for a meeting during their Paris visit.
  - The Russian President called off the planned Summit Meeting with Erdogan in St. Petersburg on December 15.
  - The Russian Duma (Parliament) is considering a law that would criminalize denial of the Armenian Genocide: 300,000-500,000 Ruble penalty and three-year imprisonment.
  - Some Russian politicians have even called for the liberation of Western Armenia from Turkish occupation and the establishment of free Kurdistan with its capital in Diyarbakir!
- It appears that President Putin will not easily back down after the treacherous Turkish attack on the Russian jet. He has no choice but to react harshly to show the world that he won't allow anyone to attack Russians with impunity. Putin described the Turkish action as a "stab in the back from the accomplices of terrorists" and sternly warned of "severe consequences."

Erdogan has finally bitten more than he can chew! He is foolishly confronting a nuclear power with a leader determined to go to great lengths to teach the arrogant Turkish President a lesson he will not soon forget.

If indeed Sultan Erdogan is counting on NATO to defend his reckless adventure, he is sadly mistaken. He cannot misrepresent the shooting down of a Russian jet as an attack on Turkey, and then seek protection by hiding under NATO's skirts!

Regrettably, Turkey has become a major liability for NATO. The Turkish President's irresponsible behavior over a minor incursion risks dragging all NATO members into a larger conflagration. NATO should seriously question the wisdom of harboring a terrorist state in its midst that can trigger yet again a grave international incident with far reaching consequences for the entire world!

# Wielding The Weapon Of Truth

By Muriel Mirak-Weissbach

As politicians in Berlin debate the relative merits and dangers of Germany's possible active military engagement in the war theatre against so-called Islamic State (IS), a number of public figures have taken up a precious weapon to wage in this conflict. This is the weapon of truth. Instead of calculating the numbers of ground troops that might be required, and who might provide them – considerations made in cheerful amnesia regarding the catastrophes wrought by similar conflicts in Afghanistan and Iraq – several journalists and political figures have preferred to expose the forces behind the IS menace, in hopes of paralyzing the continuing financial, logistical, military and ideological support that has made IS a formidable agency.

The central focus of their exposé is Saudi Arabia, its royal family and state institutions as well as private foundations and individuals. Although the history of the genesis and growth of IS is complex, and many cooks have been brewing the deadly stew, the Saudi connection is the most vital to guaranteeing IS its ability to operate with impunity. Were the multi-faceted Saudi support lines to be severed, the task of paralyzing IS militarily would present no serious obstacles to those currently engaged against it. To sever these support lines, they first must be identified, named, and acknowledged in the public domain.

In Germany it began with scattered comments, often almost parenthetical, in press reports on the conflict, whereby this or that

journalist lamented the continuing de facto "sympathies" in Saudi Arabia for the jihadists. On November 8, the issue emerged explicitly in a prime time Sunday television program, called "Terra X." The feature on "Lost Worlds – Destroyed Cultural Heritage in the Orient" presented the tragic chronicle of the destruction of ancient sites by the barbaric IS, from Mosul and Hatra to Aleppo and Palmyra. In a central segment, Daniel Gerlach, a well-known journalist and Arab expert, told viewers that the precedent for IS's rampages against all pre-Islamic cultural heritage was to be found in the process leading to the establishment of Saudi Arabia as an entity. In the 18th century, the fanatical Ibn 'Abd al-Wahab (1703-1787), who claimed to return to the principles of early Islam (Salaf), rejected the veneration of graves of leading Muslims (including companions of the prophet), denounced luxury and ostentation. He joined forces with the Saud tribe to conquer most of Arabia. The pact he sealed with tribal leader Muhammad bin Saud decreed that he, representing the political power, would combat "unbelievers" while al-Wahab would function as the leader in religious matters. The resulting state, the Emirate of Diriyah, was the predecessor to the Kingdom named after the Saud tribe, which adopted Wahabism (or Salafism) as its state religion. As Gerlach related, and actors reconstructed on screen, the early Saudi Wahabites ravaged all religious monuments in the area, not only pre-Christian temples and churches, but also Islamic sites, whether mosques or sites commemorating venerable figures. The same point had been made by Navid Kermani, a leading Islamic scholar and prize-winning author in Germany. In a speech in late October, Kermani had pointed out that people who are shocked by the IS's desecration of cultural sites simply do not know that the early Wahabites had wrought the same destruction in Saudi Arabia.

Outside Germany, a decisive contribution to this process came from Moscow. As Russian President Vladimir Putin reported in a press conference at the conclusion of the G20 meeting, he had given his colleagues evidence of who exactly the IS backers are. Although he could not share the detailed intelligence information with the journalists, he did assure them that he had briefed the meeting on two important factors – finances and oil routes – and in minute detail. "I provided examples," he said, "based on our data on the financing of differ-

ent Islamic State units by private individuals. This money, as we have established, comes from 40 countries and there are some of the G20 members among them." (Though he did not name names, it is known that Saudi Arabia is a member of the G20.) Then, he added: "I've shown our colleagues photos taken from space and from aircraft which clearly demonstrate the scale of the illegal trade in oil and petroleum products." The photos showed a "motorcade of refueling vehicles" which "stretched for dozens of kilometers, so that from a height of 4,000 to 5,000 meters they stretch beyond the horizon." This raised the question, why, if such columns are visible from overflying aircraft, no one in the anti-IS coalition had bombed them. The following day, the New York Times reported, "U.S. Warplanes Strike ISIS Oil Trucks in Syria" ... for the first time. Significantly, Putin called for support from the US and Europe in the fight against IS, but also from "Saudi Arabia, Turkey, Iran."

Perhaps encouraged by this highly effective, albeit not-so-diplomatic intervention by the Russian president, Rainer Hermann, a German Middle East specialist, decided to blow the whistle, laying out the whole story in a full-page feature in the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*. The FAZ is a journal of record in Germany, comparable in impact to the *New York Times* and *Washington Post* in the U.S. Hermann, who had peppered his earlier articles with vague references to the Saudi factor in IS, presented on November 27 the most complete picture to date of the phenomenon.

Entitled "The Breeding Ground of Terror," the feature begins bluntly: "Saudi Arabia exports above all two products: oil and Islam. Saudi oil is the lubricant for the world economy, but Saudi Islam is a danger to world peace." For a half century, he goes on, the Saudis have used their petrodollars to finance a mission to spread this "intolerant" and "backward" brand of Islam, against all other Muslims and non-Muslims. This "Saudi offensive created the theological and ideological breeding ground for today's terrorism in the name of Islam." Though Hermann writes that, since the Saudi Kingdom has also been threatened by IS, it may not finance the terrorists directly, nonetheless "it is the creator of this monster, since IS is a particularly violent continuation of Wahabite Islam."

Tracing its history, Hermann presents the Saudi offensive as a Cold War move against

Egypt's Nasser. Starting in 1962, the Saudis set up institutions to combat Nasserite Pan-Arabism and secularism, first the Muslim World League (1962) then the Organization of Islamic Conference (OIC), now known as the Conference for Islamic Cooperation. With massive financing at the time from Salman Bin Abd al Aziz al Saud, who is today king, they built mosques, schools, cultural centers and offered scholarships to universities (like the University of Medina, 1961), to indoctrinate Muslims with Wahabism. In 1972, the Wahabite theologians were integrated into the state bureaucracy. Muslim students from all over the world, from the Arab states, North Africa, across Central Asia, Pakistan, India and East Asia, would come to study and, after graduation, return home to spread Wahabism. Hermann reports that "since its founding in 1961, about 45,000 religious cadres from over 160 countries have studied at the Islamic University." In addition, the Saudis have founded schools and universities worldwide to spread the "true Islamic identity."

There were two challenges in 1979, Hermann writes, that impacted this process. One came from the Iranian revolution, the other, from a radical preacher Juhayman al Otabi, who occupied the mosque in Mecca and denounced the Saud dynasty as corrupt. The Saudi royals capitulated and the most radical form of ideology became supreme. At the same time, Saudi institutions, like the World Assembly of Muslim Youth (WAMY, 1972) and an International Islamic Relief Organization (IIRO, 1978), started supporting terrorist groups. They were buttressed by Islamic satellite stations and websites. When Fahd became king in 1982, Hermann writes, some saw him as a modernizer. But he financed 1500 mosques, 2200 schools, and over 200 Islamic cultural centers. A print shop named after him issued 138 million (!) copies of the Quran, in 20 languages. Some of the Saudi-backed operations have been investigated in the wake of terrorist attacks, and some even shut down. But the belief structure and the IS terrorists who embrace it, are still at large.

When the Saudis were asked what they might contribute to help Europe overcome the refugee crisis, they declined to offer invitations to welcome refugees. (Nor, it must be said, are Syrian refugees eager to resettle in Saudi Arabia, and for good reason.) The Saudis said



## Evening of Classical Music

By Florence Avakian

NEW YORK — St. Vartan Armenian Cathedral was aglow with enchanting musical selections on Saturday, October 17, by three artists originally from Armenia. They included two leading soloists of the St. Vartan Cathedral Choir, mezzo-soprano Hasmik Meikhanedjian and soprano Anahit Zakaryan, and pianist-composer Hayk Arsenyan.

With more than 200 in attendance, the first half of the program featured a group of well-known Armenian songs, with the second half focusing on international classical composers, and on and off Broadway popular favorites.

The concert began with Komitas' Chinar es, a classical love song, sung with heightened emotion by the two singers. It was followed by the beautiful Parandzem's Aria from "Arshak II", a powerful tribute by a wife to her kind and loving husband, sung passionately by Meikhanedjian.

Kanachian's Oror, a musical prayer by a mother asking God to protect her child has always been a beloved favorite, and was sung with a bell-like, heartfelt voice by Zakaryan, one of the best performances of this touching lullaby. Another all-time favorite was Meikhanedjian's stirring rendering of Melikian's Vart with its varied moods, with the rose pleading to not pluck it, and then expressing regret after it has been picked.

Yerk Dzovin (Song of the Sea) was an impressive ballad composed by St. Vartan Cathedral choir director Maestro Khoren Mekanejian at age 26, and received a powerful interpretation by Hasmik Meikhanedjian who commented that it had melted into her being when she first heard it.

And Tigranian's Finale from the "Anoush" opera reflected the passion of Anoush who already crazed, jumps off the rocks into the sea. Zakaryan intensely relayed her desperation and anguish.

Noted pianist-composer Hayk Arsenyan who accompanied the singers throughout the concert, offered a nuance-filled performance of Three Preludes (Op. 32) by Rachmaninoff, displaying his technical and interpretative virtuosity, and playing these demanding works with

integrity.

Among the well-known opera favorites sung were two which received dramatic and colorful performances, Puccini's Vissi d'Arte from "Tosca" by Zakaryan, and Bizet's Gypsy Song from "Carmen" by Meikhanedjian who strode onto the stage with the message that every woman is Carmen.

Several popular Neapolitan songs and Broadway favorites sung with flair by the two singers ended the concert, and brought the audience to its feet in a standing ovation, with several flowers bouquets showered on the three artists.

Archbishop Yeghishe Gizirian paid tribute to the singers and pianist, and expressed appreciation to Khoren Mekanejian, the Very Rev. Mamigon Kiledjian, dean of St. Vartan Cathedral which sponsored the concert, and the generosity of the Dadourian Family Foundation which made the concert possible in memory of the late Haig Dadourian.

Hasmik Meikhanedjian is a graduate of both the Armenian State Pedagogical University, and Yerevan's State Conservatory, in both music and conducting. She has been a soloist with the State Radio and TV Chamber Choir of Armenia, and has performed in festivals and concerts throughout Europe, the former Soviet Union, and in the New York metropolitan area.

Zakaryan is a graduate of Armenia's State Music Conservatory, and has been a soloist at the Armenian State Opera, the Academy Choir of Armenia, and the Armenian Female Choir, and was one of the founders of the Armenian Youth Opera Theater. She has performed throughout the Soviet Union, and Europe, and in the New York metropolitan area.

Pianist-composer Arsenyan debuted with the Armenian National Philharmonic Orchestra at age 11, and was soloist with the Radio France National Philharmonic Orchestra at age 17. Since then, he has performed in recitals in the U.S., Canada, the Soviet Union, Europe, South America and the Middle East. He is an avid explorer of various experimental projects with dance, drama and the visual arts. Currently he teaches at New York University Tisch School of the Arts, and is a member of the French Society of Authors and Composers, with two collections of his original works published in Paris.

## Wielding The Weapon of Truth

TRUTH, from page 15

they would be happy to finance the building of 200 (!) new mosques in Germany. Just one day after Hermann's exposé of the Saudi-IS connection appeared, the same FAZ hosted an interview with Cem Özdemir, leader of the Green Party and member of Parliament. He too had no hesitation in stating that Saudi Arabia and other Arab Gulf states are the "ideological sources" for this perversion of Islam. "The Saudi Wahabism is not a part of the problem," he said, "it is the source and cause." Özdemir rejects any Saudi offers of "missionary help" in building mosques in Germany. Rather, he proposed that the German government should undertake a fundamental review of its economic relations with Riyadh. "For me, the jihadism which is reinforced by Saudi Arabia, is a form of fascism. That is, as we have seen in Paris, an existential threat to our society."

The truth is indeed the most potent weapon. Although Saudi Arabia is not the sole creator and sponsor of IS, its continuing support for

the jihadists represents a major obstacle to any attempt to defeat the terrorists. If the anti-IS coalition partners were serious, they would confront the Saudis, yes, even threaten a rupture in diplomatic relations, to dry up the financial flows, and cut off logistical and military support. As for abolishing the hideous Wahabite ideology - that belief structure which has been rightly compared to fascism - that may indeed take longer. But if the immediate military threat can be crushed, that will open the way to defeating its ideology.

On December 1, the news broke that Putin named another name: Turkey. He said he had proof that "oil from the deposits controlled by Islamic State militants enters Turkish territory on [an] industrial scale." Turkish complicity with IS has been no secret. Now it is a political issue. And that is all for the good.

(Muriel Mirak-Weissbach is a regular contributor to the *Mirror-Spectator*. She is an author and philanthropist and lives in Germany.)

## Paylan Greets MPs in Turkish Parliament in Armenian

ANKARA (Ermenihaber.am) — Exclaiming "Parev tzez," Armenian MP Garo Paylan greeted his colleagues at the Turkish Parliament in Armenian, according to the Turkish newspaper Milliyet.

Addressing the parliament, Paylan, from the opposition Peoples' Democratic Party (HDP), referred to the killing of Kurdish lawyer and human rights activist Tahir Elci in Diyarbakir. He compared Elci with Armenian journalist Hrant Dink, calling him a "dove of peace."

The Armenian MP strongly criticized the authorities. "There is dust on the state 'three fingers thick.' Our duty is to clean the dust, instead of hiding it. We covered up the murder of Hrant Dink, which led to the reoccurrence of the crime. Another 'dove of peace' - Tahir Elci, was killed," Paylan said.

"Like Hrant Dink, Elci was committed to fighting for the sake of peace, brotherhood and democracy. Both were killed. And this is the result of the dust that has covered the state," he said.

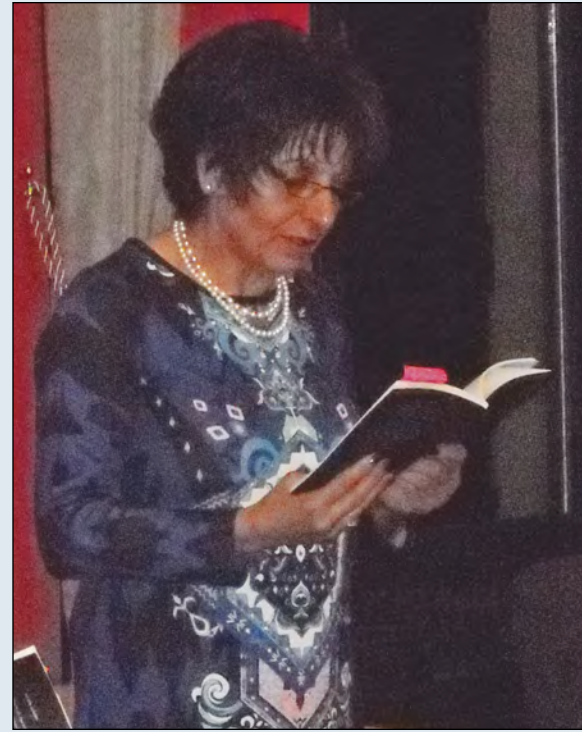
## Germans Celebrate Paruyr Sevak

GERMANY, from page 1

of 12 books, including drama, poetry, prose and essays, worked on this project for two years together with Agapi Mkrtchian, an Armenian author of numerous volumes of short stories and poems, in both German and Armenian. Mkrtchian, who studied in Yerevan, Jena and Frankfurt and teaches German literature in Wiesbaden, was recently honored in Yerevan by the Armenian Writers Union with the Vasdakovor order, as an author of

Yerevan-born singer who has completed her studies in Frankfurt, opened the presentations with a song by Komitas, a composer whose life played an important part in Sevak's work. Other pieces performed were compositions by Romanos Melikyan and Melik Mavisakalyan. Accompanying her on the piano was Diana Sahakyan, a prize-winning musician, also from Armenia and working in the Frankfurt area. Further musical offerings by Komitas, Ruben Hakhverdyan and Aram Khachaturyan came from the very young Arpi Nazaryan, who has won prizes as a soloist on the transverse flute.

Lisa Berkian-Abrahamian recited in Armenian, her mother tongue. Berkian-Abrahamian is also the author of a book on her late husband, Ara Berkian, who was an architect, sculptor, painter and philanthropist. She wrote her thesis on Sevak, her favorite poet, a fact which helps explain the particular power of her delivery. Presenting the German translations were three members of a poetry-lovers society, the Dichterpflänzchen (which has been performing in the region for over 20 years), Hartmut Borchert, Gabriele Liebig and Lutz Schauerhammer.



Lisa Berkian-Abrahamian

outstanding merit. The book concludes with two appreciations from Armenian scholars, literary critic Ani Pashyan, and Prof. Samuel Muardyan, from the Yerevan State University Chair for Armenian Literature.

The translators have succeeded in producing a work that is rigorously faithful to the original, in content and rhythm, yet at the same time poetically effective in German. This was demonstrated with great power during a musical reading of selections on November 20 at the Literaturhaus in Wiesbaden, Germany. The event at this meeting place for writers, housed in the beautiful, historic Villa Clementine, was a benefit evening sponsored by the Mirak-Weissbach Foundation, which supports Armenian youth in education, including musical education. The participants who recited poems donated their talents to the cause, and Dinges & Frick printers produced beautiful posters and flyers as their contribution.

Although unfortunately illness prevented co-author Heide Rieck from attending, Agapi Mkrtchian presented the book project and gave an overview of Sevak's life and work. She stressed the fact that Sevak was not only a poet, but also a literary scholar and translator. Although he is the most beloved poet for Armenians, young and old, he is unfortunately not very well known abroad. It is in an attempt to make his art and ideas available to a German public that this new translation has come into being.

Tigranuhi Howhannisyan, a young

Sometimes the poem was recited first in German, then in Armenian; and sometimes, the Armenian came first. This way, bilingual Armenians in the audience (who probably were the majority) could appreciate the quality of the German version, while the Germans could develop an ear for the rich sounds of the Armenian. Among the poems selected, some developed philosophical themes, like "The One-eyed" and "Sand a Leopard", others treated human relations and love, like "One of us." Still others pondered the meaning of life and death, as in "One Meets



Agapi Mkrtchian

in Life by Chance" and "Dying (or: To Die)." A good example of the poet's sense of irony came in "I Am Going Crazy." Several dealt with the homeland and the fate of Armenians, a dominant theme in Sevak's works, for example, "The Mother's Hands," and, as a triumphant finale, "We Are Few, But We Are Called Armenians." The recitation of this last beloved poem, both in the original and in translation, moved many to tears. Its final line (in English translation) is: "We are. We shall be, and we shall become even more." Arpi Nazaryan's concluding flute solo sang a lyrical reflection on this proud, yet modest assertion of Armenian identity.