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NEWS IN BRIEF

High-Level Chinese Delegation Visits Armenia

YEREVAN (RFE/RL) – Armenian President Serzh Sargsyan described consistent development of “centuries-old friendly relations between Armenia and China” as a top foreign policy priority for Armenia as he received a delegation led by Zhang Gaoli, first vice premier of the State Council of the People’s Republic of China and member of the Standing Committee of the Central Political Bureau of the Communist Party of China, on June 6.

Sargsyan welcomed the high ranking official and his delegation, stating that their visit to Armenia is evidence of the high-level cooperation between the two countries and a mutual desire to strengthen it further.

According to the president’s office, the sides stated with satisfaction that since the establishment diplomatic relations between the two countries the Armenian-Chinese partnership has constantly developed and expanded, see CHINA, page 20



Chinese Vice Premier Zhang Gaoli (L) shakes hands with Armenian President Serzh Sargsyan during a launching ceremony of a Chinese-language school in Yerevan, Armenia, June 6. (Xinhua)

Czech President to Urge Government to Recognize Armenian Genocide

PRAGUE (Armenpress) – In an interview with the Czech Parliamentni Listi online newspaper, Czech President Milos Zeman said he intends to urge the Parliament and the Government of the Czech Republic to follow Germany’s lead and officially recognize the Armenian Genocide.

“I have expressed my point of view back in 2014, when the Armenian President was visiting Prague at my invitation; I said that the 1915 massacres are Genocide. And because we will depart for Armenia next week, I will repeat this”, he said. “But the next step needs to be done, and upon returning from Armenia I have to urge the Parliament and the Government to follow the German Bundestag’s example.”

He said the Czech Republic should back the issue, since it already has been recognized by Russia, Poland, Slovakia, Italy and other countries.

Germany Demands Respect From Erdogan

BERLIN (RFE/RL) – The German government hit back at Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan on Monday after he branded as terrorists ethnic Turkish members of Germany’s parliament who voted for a resolution recognizing the 1915 Armenian Genocide.

Addressing a rally in Turkey, Erdogan said the 11 lawmakers are “the long arm of the separatist terrorists” operating in his country. He demanded “blood tests” to see “what kind of Turks they are.”

A spokesman for Chancellor Angela Merkel denounced Erdogan’s remarks, saying that “to associate individual members of parliament with terrorism is utterly incomprehensible to us.”

“The resolution was a political initiative that emerged from the midst of the Bundestag, which is a democratically elected, independent organ under our constitution,” Steffen Seibert told a press conference, according to the AFP news agency.

“The Bundestag reached a sovereign decision. That must be respected,” Seibert said, adding that this was the message Merkel had given to the Turkish president.

Erdogan reportedly singled out German Greens party co-leader Cem Ozdemir, a key sponsor of the resolution overwhelmingly passed by the Bundestag on Thursday, June 2. Ozdemir was placed under police protection after receiving anonymous death threats.

Some of the other ethnic Turkish lawmakers also reported such threats. “I am seriously worried,” one of them, Ozcan Mutlu, told ARD television on Sunday. “I’ve never experienced this. Some manic, crazy person might hear that and think ‘the leader has given his orders.’”

Bundestag’s Genocide Recognition A First Step

By Muriel Mirak-Weissbach
Special to the Mirror-Spectator

BERLIN – When the results of the vote were announced – all in favor, with only one nay and one abstention – the German Bundestag burst into applause. In the visitors’ gallery, rows of Armenians pulled out signs with the message “#Recognition Now says Thank you!” This was clearly a breach of parliamentary rules of conduct, but no one seemed to care. Then an Armenian flag was unfurled, another, more grave breach of conduct. Its bearer was discreetly escorted out of the hall. No matter.

Armenian women wept for joy. “Finally!” – as Gregor Gysi of the Left Party had lamented during the debate, finally, at long last, the German parliament was declaring its recognition of the see BUNDESTAG, page 5



Armenians in the Bundestag gallery express their thanks. (Getty Photo)



The ruins of Aleppo’s Armenian Quarter (Tert photo)

Aleppo Armenian Quarter Devastated by Bombing

ALEPPO (RFE/RL and Armenpress) – Four Armenian civilians have reportedly been killed and dozens of others wounded in Syria’s formerly largest city of Aleppo in continuing clashes between Syrian government troops and opposition forces.

Armed militants on Saturday, June 4 fired a rocket in the Suleymaniye district of Aleppo, Syria. An Armenian resident, Betty Nersesian was killed in the attack, Kantsasar newspaper said in a Facebook post.

The Nor Kyugh Armenian district of Aleppo was targeted on June 2. As a result, 34-year-old Katrin Khachoyan, 62-year-old Karapet Khachoyan and 33-year-old Nora Sargis were injured.

Four Syrian-Armenians were killed as armed militants once again bombarded the Armenian neighborhood of Aleppo, firing at least 40 rockets.

According to local Armenian activists, they died on Thursday, June 2, when an Armenian-populated government-controlled district of the war-ravaged city was shelled by insurgents. Three of the male victims were said to have been burned to

death inside a small workshop that caught fire, while the fourth man was killed by a rocket moments later.

Zarnig Boghigian, the editor of the Aleppo-based Armenian magazine Kantsasar, said the shelling lasted for two hours, leaving several dozen other Syrian Armenians wounded.

“Last past night was really bad. Armed terrorist groups fired around 40 rockets and gas tanks within two hours,” Boghigian said by phone. The gunfire seriously damaged an Armenian church and a school, she said.

Boghigian claimed that the Nor Kyugh district was deliberately targeted by “pro-Turkish” rebels.

Kantsasar reported earlier that an Armenian nursing home in Aleppo was shelled and partly destroyed last week. It said one Syrian Armenian, a woman, was killed and two others wounded as a result.

Aleppo was home to the majority of an estimated 80,000 ethnic Armenians who lived in Syria until the outbreak of the bloody civil war five years ago. Only up to see ALEPPO, page 20

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ARMENIA

News From Armenia

Moscow, Yerevan Discuss Fuel for Nuclear Plant

MOSCOW (Public Radio of Armenia) – Russia and Armenia discussed on June 6 the possibility to supply the Armenian nuclear power plant (ANPP) with additional fuel to create a fuel reserve, Russia's TVEL fuel company, which is part of the state-owned Rosatom nuclear energy corporation said in a statement, Sputnik News reports.

Representatives of TVEL held a meeting with ANPP General Director Movses Vardanyan on the sidelines of the Atomexpo 2016 forum.

“During the meeting, the prospects of further cooperation, including the possibility of additional deliveries of Russian fuel for reserve were considered,” the statement said.

Tourism, Mining, Food Processing Potential Present in Nagorno Karabagh

YEREVAN (Armenpress) – The Nagorno Karabagh Investment Fund is taking part in the EEU: Armenia Cooperation annual forum which is being held in the Armenian resort town of Tsakhkadzor. The Investment Fund expects to attract new investors and establish new business ties.

Mher Mkhitaryan, deputy director of the fund, said they want to find partners willing to export products from Nagorno Karabagh, as well as investors eager to launch businesses.

“Processed food is mainly exported from Nagorno Karabagh, several factories are operating. We plan to attract investments in this area,” he said.

According to him, there is great potential in the fields of mining and tourism as well. The hotel business is developing rapidly. More than 300 small and medium enterprises receive assistance. “These include loan subsidizing programs with capital assistance,” he said.

Aurora Prize Opens Public Call for Nominations

YEREVAN – The Aurora Prize for Awakening Humanity, an annual international humanitarian award is currently accepting nominations until September 9. The Aurora Prize is seeking personal stories of individuals who have put themselves at personal risk for the sake of others.

Every year, an Aurora Prize Laureate is honored with a \$100,000 grant, as well as a \$1,000,000 award to be donated to charitable organizations that inspired their work.

“Like the winner of the inaugural Aurora Prize, Marguerite Barankitse, I, too, have witnessed firsthand the terrible atrocities that humans are capable of inflicting upon one another,” said Elie Wiesel, Aurora Prize co-chair. “It has given me a profound appreciation for those individuals who put themselves at risk to help their fellow man. These are the very people we are honoring with the Aurora Prize.”

The first-ever Aurora Prize Laureate, Marguerite Barankitse of Maison Shalom, was honored in April for saving and caring for 30,000 children, orphans and refugees during Burundi's civil war.

“This Aurora Prize was consolation to me for the whole of Burundi's people,” said Barankitse. “Success is not what you have, but who you are. My mission is to give everyone hope – hope for success, for compassion, and for love. I'm so grateful for the opportunity the Aurora Prize has afforded me, the three organizations I nominated for the award, and the people of Burundi.”

Barankitse is and her fellow 2016 Aurora Prize finalists – Dr. Tom Catena from Mother of Mercy Hospital in the Nuba Mountains of Sudan; Syeda Ghulam Fatima, the General Secretary of the Bonded Labor Liberation Front in Pakistan; and Father Bernard Kinvi, a Catholic priest in Bossemptele in the Central African Republic – are just a handful of the extraordinary individuals making a difference around the world.

Nominations can be sent to www.auroraprize.com

Former Karabagh Army Chief Greeted By Supporters Upon Return from Exile

STEPANAKERT (RFE/RL) – Samvel Babayan, Nagorno-Karabagh's former top military commander, received a hero's welcome from hundreds of supporters in Stepanakert on Sunday as he returned to Karabagh after years of self-imposed exile.

Babayan, who headed the Karabagh Armenian army from 1993-1999, travelled to Karabagh following a series of statements criticizing the Armenian military response to the April 2 Azerbaijani offensive.

The hardline general was greeted by about a thousand people when he laid flowers at a Stepanakert memorial to Karabagh Armenians killed during the 1991-1994 war with Azerbaijan. The crowd, quite large by Karabagh standards, then escorted him to his old apartment, applauding and chanting “Samvell!” The impromptu procession blocked traffic through major streets in the Karabagh capital.

“I will do everything in my power to ensure that your security is properly protected,” Babayan told the supporters at the war memorial. But he did not clarify how he will do that, again insisting that he has no political ambitions.

Speaking to journalists, Babayan said he is ready to hold “discussions” with Karabagh's political and military leaders. But he stressed that no meetings with them have been scheduled yet.

Babayan, 51, became the unrecognized republic's most powerful man after a Russian-mediated truce stopped the Armenian-Azerbaijani war in 1994. He was arrested in 2000 and subsequently sentenced to 14 years in prison for allegedly masterminding a botched attempt on the life of Arkady Ghukasian, the then Karabagh president.

Immediately after being set free in 2004, the former Karabagh strongman relocated to Yerevan where he set up there his own political party called Dashink (Alliance). He emigrated to Russia in 2011 for still unclear reasons.

Babayan returned to Armenia late last month, citing the increased risk of renewed war with Azerbaijan. In ensuing interviews with media outlets sympathetic to Armenia's Karabagh-born former President Robert Kocharian, he called for an urgent “modernization” of Armenia's and Karabagh's armed forces. He also claimed that President Serzh Sargsyan's administration failed to properly respond to Azerbaijan's massive military buildup in the years leading up to the April 2-5 hostilities along the Karabagh “line of contact.”

Armenia's ruling Republican Party and Defense Minister Seyran Ohanian dismissed Babayan's criticism.

Babayan's comeback fueled media speculation that he could join a new opposition party set up by former Foreign Minister Vartan Oskanian and other political figures widely regarded as Kocharian supporters. “I do not intend to join any party, but I can see that there are people who share my ideas,” the retired general said on May 26 without naming them.

Meanwhile, a Karabagh opposition parliamentarian and strong Babayan backer, Hayk Khanumian, was attacked and hospitalized on Monday. He suffered a broken nose and ribs as a result.

Speaking to RFE/RL's Armenian service (Azatutyun.am) from his hospital bed, Khanumian said that moments after he left the parliament building in Stepanakert several men wearing military uniforms forced him into their car and drove him to a nearby village where he was badly beaten up.

Derenik Malkhasian, a journalist with Civilnet.am online television, said he witnessed the incident in

Stepanakert. He said some of the uniformed attackers confiscated his mobile phone after he started filming them.

A spokesman for the Karabagh police initially denied the beating. Nevertheless, several police officials visited the outspoken politician in a local hospital later in the day. The police did

forced him to sign a statement and make a video confession to the effect that “yesterday's events were wrong.”

“They beat up and forced him to write that I paid him to organize yesterday's gathering,” Babayan said after visiting the oppositionist in the hospital.



Samvel Babayan

not launch a formal criminal investigation afterwards.

The four main factions of Karabagh's parliament were quick to condemn the attack in a joint statement. But they stopped short of alleging political motives behind it.

Khanumian wrote on Facebook on Monday evening that the attackers

walked alongside Babayan during Sunday's procession. He also announced that he and his associates will launch a campaign for Babayan's re-appointment as commander of the Karabagh Defense Army.

Babayan disavowed that campaign on Monday, however. “I don't want to become defense minister,” he said.

Armenian President Sargsyan Lauds EU

YEREVAN (RFE/RL) – President Serzh Sargsyan on Tuesday, June 7, described the European Union (EU) as a model of regional integration and reaffirmed Armenia's commitment to deepening ties with the 28-nation bloc through a new treaty.

Sargsyan visited the EU Delegation in Yerevan to congratulate its head, Piotr Switalski, and other staff on Europe Day, an annual celebration of peace and unity in Europe that starts on May 9. The date marks the anniversary of a historic 1950 speech by then French Foreign Minister Robert Schuman in which he laid out his vision of European integration.

“During this short historical period of time, the idea of a united European family has stood the test of time, proved its viability and exposed the advantages of peoples' peaceful co-existence,” Sargsyan said at an ensuing meeting with Switalski.

“In essence, the EU's moral authority now goes well beyond its geographical borders,” he told the European diplomat, according to his press office.

Sargsyan also said that Armenia's relations with the EU have become “more active” in recent years. “Our negotiations on a comprehensive Armenia-EU legal document are going on successfully and we hope that it will be signed within a reasonable period of time, which will further stimulate our cooperation,” he said.

The Armenian president referred to a new political and economic deal which is supposed to serve as a less ambitious alternative to an Association Agreement negotiated by Yerevan and Brussels in the summer of 2013. Sargsyan precluded the signing of that far-reaching agreement with his unexpected decision in September 2013 to seek Armenia's accession a Russian-led alliance of ex-Soviet states.

The new accord is expected to contain many political and even economic provisions of the cancelled Association Agreement. But it will have no free trade-related component due to Armenia's membership in the Eurasian Economic Union.

Negotiations on the alternative deal were officially launched by the EU's foreign and security policy chief, Federica Mogherini, and Armenian Foreign Minister Edward Nalbandian in Brussels last December. Switalski expressed hope in January that they will be concluded by the end of this year.

According to Armenian government data, the EU accounted for nearly 26 percent of Armenia's foreign trade and remained its leading export market in 2015.



ARMENIA

Unseen Armenia:

Unsung Hero, Artist Ara Sargsyan

By Hovsep Daghdigian

YEREVAN – Those who have visited Armenia have undoubtedly seen the statues of the writer Hovhannes Tumanyan and composer Alexander Spendiaryan in front of Yerevan's Opera House. Their creator, the painter and sculptor Ara Sargsyan, has works placed throughout Armenia, the former Soviet Union, and throughout the world. His sculptured panels on the Moscow Cinema on Abovian Street, near Republic Square, depict scenes from classic Armenian dramatic and cinema productions.

Sargsyan was born on April 7, 1902 in Marvi village near Constantinople. His mother taught in the local girls' school. Despite problems there, she was reluctant to move as she did not want to abandon the school and the village children. Ara learned Armenian, French, and Turkish at a young age. He loved history and languages but mostly painting, and he excelled



Ara Sargsyan, from photo in Ara Sargsyan museum

at sculpture; modeling family members as well as characters from stories he read. His uncle Sarkis, a prominent architect, told Ara's mother that the boy was gifted and she should not interfere with, but encourage, the boy's art. In 1914, at the age of 12, he moved to Constantinople with his family. He attended the Yessaian school there.

Ara's father Mihran, together with Gomidas, Zohrab, and other intellectuals were arrested in 1915 when Ara was 13 years old. Ara went to the prison to try to get his father released. His father was subsequently released, as only the top Armenian intellectuals were being targeted at that time; he was not an important enough intellectual for the current wave of arrests. Meanwhile his older brother Badrig got drafted into an army labor/death battalion. Ara showed up in his brother's place. The recruiting officer, noting Ara's youth, rejected him due to his young age or physical size. Thereafter Ara's uncle hid Badrig from the Ottoman authorities.

As a very gifted young man Ara Sargsyan studied in Constantinople, then received a scholarship to study in Rome at the age of 19. Stating that Rome was too expensive he later moved to Vienna to attend the Academy of Fine Arts where his acceptance test was to sculpt a statue of an elderly woman. He did so masterfully and was accepted to work with the other masters. He finished his Master's education in 1924, well ahead of schedule. At the suggestion of a friend he started displaying his work, with great success.

But there is another part of the story. In Constantinople at the age of 15 Sargsyan became a friend of Arshavir Shiragian, a member of the ARF and subsequent member of Nemesis – the operation which brought to jus-

tice key members of the Ottoman Turkish government responsible for the Armenian Genocide. Shiragian was two years older than Sargsyan. Sargsyan joined the ARF, becoming its youngest member. He, with others, helped people escape from the Ottoman Empire and worked to support Russia and Italy against the Ottomans.

When Ara moved to Europe he learned Greek, German, Italian, and other languages fluently. From Rome he had moved to Vienna but it recently became known that he secretly also went to Germany, though there is little documentation about his presence there. In short, Ara Sargsyan was an active Nemesis operative, helping to locate and impose justice on the organizers of the Armenian Genocide.

Still in Europe in 1924, he heard of a new Armenian Soviet Republic. Looking at maps he could find neither Armenia nor its capital Yerevan. Yet he decided against a lucrative art career in Europe and decided to emigrate to Armenia to help establish the new country.

Around the same time other notables also moved to Armenia including Alexander Tamanian – Architect, Hovsep Orbeli – historian and archaeologist, Mardiros Saryan – painter, Yervant Kochar – sculptor. But Sargsyan was an ARF member and Nemesis operative. Such militant nationalists were not welcome by the U.S.S.R. so he carefully hid his affiliation. No political parties were welcome other than the Communist Party. In his memoirs Arshavir Shiragian never mentioned Sargsyan for reasons of Sargsyan's safety.

In Armenia Sargsyan immediately made friends within the artistic community and created many works of art which were placed both in Armenia and throughout the Soviet Union. He was the first artist to receive the title "Academician, Sculptor of the People," a huge honor. He established the the Painters Union in 1932 and served as its

president until 1937. During the Stalin years, however, Stalin rejected some of his work and Sargsyan was accused of having a western or an ARF mentality. During this era, he secretly sent his family to live with his wife's relatives in Georgia. After World War II they returned to Armenia. In 1945 Sargsyan established the Yerevan State Academy of Fine Arts. International PhD candidates studying art came to Armenia to defend their theses in front of Sargsyan.

Later the KGB learned that Sargsyan's brother, Badrig, was an ARF member in Greece, and was actively working with the US government. They interrogated Ara Sargsyan about this but he replied "Half of Armenians are Sargsyans. How do I know who this other guy is?" That got him off the hook for now. But at an exposition in Brussels in 1959 he, by chance, met his brother whom he had not seen for close to 40 years. Their embrace was noted by the KGB and while Ara's art was free to travel, from that time on he was not.

During the Khrushchev era friends of Ara Sargsyan approached him, urging him to sign a petition for reunification of Artsakh (Karabagh) and Nakhichevan with Armenia. He refused, explaining that any petition to Soviet authorities based on nationalism would fail. "The Armenians of Karabagh are tough; they can endure a bit longer," he said. Meanwhile Armenians were leaving Nakhichevan. He pointed out that the unification of Nakhichevan with Armenia, based on economic issues which would benefit the entire USSR, stood a much better chance of acceptance. This should be done quickly, he stated, while the Soviets have the authority to alter the borders. Later Artsakh would also unite with Armenia. After



President Hassan Rouhani with Armenian Foreign Minister Eduard Nalbandian

Iran's Rouhani Again Urges Closer Ties With Armenia

TEHRAN (RFE/RL) – President Hassan Rouhani reaffirmed Iran's desire to deepen relations with Armenia "in all areas" on Sunday, June 5, as he oversaw the signing of an Armenian-Iranian agreement on visa-free travel between the two neighboring nations.

Foreign Minister Edward Nalbandian signed the agreement with his Iranian counterpart Mohammad Javad Zarif after holding talks with Rouhani during an official visit to Tehran.

The deal lifted visa requirements for Iranian nationals visiting Armenia and vice versa. The Armenian government gave the green light to the mutual visa waiver on Thursday, saying that it will boost bilateral ties and attract more Iranian tourists to Armenia.

The official Iranian IRNA news agency said the deal signed in Rouhani's presence "is the result of significant progress in Iran-Armenia relations made in the past few months."

"The Islamic Republic President ... called for promotion of ties between the two states in all areas in the post-sanctions era," it said in a separate report on Rouhani's meeting with Nalbandian. "He underlined that Iran and Armenia have similar positions on regional and international developments," it added.

The Armenian Foreign Ministry likewise quoted Rouhani as praising the "strong" Armenian-Iranian relationship and saying that the recent lifting of international sanctions against Tehran opened up new opportunities for its further expansion. The two governments should take "practical steps" to boost bilateral commercial ties, he said, according to a ministry statement.

According to IRNA, Rouhani also reiterated that Iran is seeking to "connect the Black Sea to the Persian Gulf through Armenia." The Iranian leader discussed the matter with President Serzh Sarkisian in a phone call in January.

Armenian Transport Minister Gagik Beglarian said after visiting the Iranian capital later in January that Yerevan and Tehran are considering creating a new transport corridor that would connect India to Europe via their territories. Beglarian said they believe that cargo shipments can be carried out through the Persian Gulf, Iran, Armenia, Georgia and the Black Sea.

Nalbandian was reported to assure Rouhani that the Armenian side is ready to "draw up and implement new, more ambitious projects" with the Islamic Republic.

The Foreign Ministry statement said Nalbandian also briefed the Iranian president on recent developments in the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. He praised Tehran's "balanced position" on the dispute.

Iran was quick to express serious concern at the April 2 outbreak of heavy fighting in and around Karabakh. Iranian Defense Minister Hossein Dehqan urged an immediate end to the hostilities when held separate phone talks with his Armenian and Azerbaijani counterparts on April 3.

my death, he told friends, the Soviet empire will collapse just as all other empires have. You will then look at a map and see an independent Armenia.

In the winter of 1969 he attended a meeting to discuss the commemoration Lenin's 100th anniversary. Leaving the building he was either pushed or fell, breaking his leg. He spent six months in a hospital reserved for treating only prominent officials. He recovered nicely, exercising and working on his memoirs which he hid under his pillow. In his will he stated that if he died, he was not to be buried until an autopsy was completed. He stated "It's a good thing my leg got broken, because otherwise it would have been my head, and then who would know what I did in my youth. Anyway, I wrote my will."

The day before his scheduled release from the hospital he received permission to travel abroad. The following day he died. An autopsy was performed by noted surgeon Dr. Antranig Tchagharyan and Dr. Badalyan. They found nothing wrong. Internal organs were in excellent health. Dr. Tchagharyan, a friend of Sargsyan's, exclaimed "Ara, you are healthy, get up!" A blood analysis similarly revealed nothing wrong. But key sections of his memoirs had been removed.

There is little doubt that the KGB killed him.

As an honored artist who educated hundreds of students, some of whom were very successful, as an organizer of numerous cultural organizations, as an artist with works throughout the Soviet Union, arresting Ara Sargsyan or revealing that he was a member of the ARF and of Nemesis would be scandalous; a huge embarrassment to the KGB and Soviet Authorities. No! Ara Sargsyan had to go. His funeral was elaborate. He lay in state at the Opera House in Yerevan.

His works reflect the experiences of his youth. They focus on rebirth but with an element of enduring sadness as well. Before he died he promised to donate his time and talent to sculpt the long wall at the Genocide Museum at Tsitsernakabert. Each time I visit there from now on, the sight of that wall will remind me of the national and artistic contributions, the dedication, and the courage of Ara Sargsyan.

Information for this article was taken mostly from a Russian language book, "Heroic Life" by Victor Solkhanyan, with help from Hovhannes Tchagharyan, son of one of the doctors mentioned above. Also there is the brochure "The Ara Sargsyan and Hagop Kojarian home/museum." The museum, on 70 Pushkin St., exhibits some of Sargsyan's works, but nothing related to his Nemesis activities. The museum director, Anna Sargsyan, is Ara's granddaughter.



INTERNATIONAL

International News

Ambassador Meets Members of Bulgaria-Armenia Group

SOFIA (Armenpress) – Armenian Ambassador to Bulgaria Armen Sargsyan on June 3 held a meeting with the members of Bulgaria-Armenia friendship group in the National Assembly of Bulgaria.

The head of the Bulgaria-Armenia friendship group, Atanas Zafirov, stressed the importance of the working relations between the Parliamentary group and the Embassy of Armenia to Bulgaria, and expressed hope that the newly appointed ambassador will play a significant role in deepening and developing that cooperation.

Zafirov emphasized with satisfaction the expansion of the Parliamentary group.

A range of issues related to the development of trade, economy and tourism between Armenia and Bulgaria were discussed.

Turkey Threatens to Suspend EU Migration Deal over Visa Issue

ANKARA (Armenpress) – Turkey would have to suspend its agreement with the European Union to stem the flow of migrants into the bloc if there is no deal to grant visa-free travel to Turks, Foreign Minister Mevlut Cavusoglu told state broadcaster TRT Haber on Tuesday, according to Reuters.

In a live televised interview, Cavusoglu said the German government must make clear its stance is not in line with a German parliament resolution declaring the 1915 massacre of Armenians by Ottoman Turkish forces a genocide.

Ukraine to Supply Cargo Planes to Azerbaijan

KIEV, Ukraine (Armenpress) – Ukrainian Prime Minister Vladimir Groysman announced on June 7 Ukraine has signed an agreement with Azerbaijan on supplying 10 Antonov 178 military cargo planes.

“An-178s will fly in Azerbaijan. An agreement has been signed with the Azerbaijani company to supply 10 Antonov 178 planes”, Groysman announced via Twitter.

Council of Europe’s Anti-Racism Commission Rebukes Azerbaijan

STRASBOURG (Armenpress) – The European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI) this week published its new report on Azerbaijan in which it cites concerns about the continued use of hate speech, a crackdown on independent civil society and media, prejudice against LGBT people and discrimination against religious minorities.

As a result, vulnerable groups can no longer turn to NGOs for assistance in cases of racism, hate speech and discrimination. Even though no violent hate crime based on ethnic affiliation has been registered in Azerbaijan during the last five years, political leaders, educational institutions and media have continued spreading hate speech.

The pardon, release and promotion in 2012 of Ramil Safarov, who had been sentenced in Budapest to life imprisonment for the murder of an Armenian army officer, contributes to a sense of impunity for the perpetrators of racist crime. The report recommends that authorities put an end to the constant, mediatised use of hate speech, and promote mutual understanding and confidence. Azerbaijan has not enacted comprehensive anti-discrimination legislation and there is no institution responsible for preventing and combating racism and discrimination.

ECRI also deplores a considerable number of violent attacks against LGBT persons.

The Law on Freedom of Religious Belief is not in line with international standards. Various religious minorities have been subject to harsh restrictions and discrimination, including police raids, detention, closure of places of worship, the ban on praying outside mosques, censorship of religious literature and heavy penalties.

Merkel Points to Russia’s role in Resolving Karabagh Conflict

BERLIN (Tass) – Germany as the chair of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) will contribute to resolving the Nagorno-Karabagh crisis and maintain contacts on the issue, including with Russia, German Chancellor Angela Merkel told a joint news conference with Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev on Tuesday, June 7.

“By and large, of course, Russia too will play a decisive role in resolving the Nagorno-Karabagh conflict,” the chancellor said. She noted that Germany “would use its contacts” with the Russian, US and French governments on this issue.

“Germany currently holds OSCE chairmanship and wants this conflict to be resolved peacefully,” Merkel said.

Azerbaijan values Moscow’s role in solving the conflict

Azerbaijan considers Russia a strategic partner and evaluates Moscow’s role in solving the conflict in Nagorno-Karabagh

positively, Aliyev said.

“Russia is our neighbor and friendly country. We maintain constructive relations with it, we are working in different areas,” he said.

“Yes, Russia sells arms to Armenia, we understand this, because Russia is a weapons supplier and manufacturer. It has the right to sell them,” Aliyev said.

He added that Baku evaluates Moscow’s efforts to solve the Nagorno-Karabagh conflict “very positively” and hopes that Moscow will exert influence on Armenia.

He noted that the aim should be not only to ensure the preservation of ceasefire but also make progress in the political process, adding that the will of parties is required to take a step forward in this direction.

The situation along the line of engagement of the conflicting parties in

Nagorno-Karabagh deteriorated dramatically overnight to April 2.

On April 5, Russia mediated a meeting between Colonel-General Najmeddin



German Chancellor Angela Merkel with Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev

Sadykov, the chief of the Azerbaijani Armed Forces General Staff, and Colonel-General Yuri Khachaturov, the chief of the Armenian Armed Forces General Staff, that took place in Moscow. The sides agreed to cease the hostilities on the line disengaging the Azerbaijani and Armenian troops in Nagorno-Karabagh.

At UN, Russia Makes Case for Turkey-ISIS Ties

UNITED NATIONS (Associated Press) – Russia has accused Turkey of supplying the Islamic State (ISIL) extremist group with components for improvised explosive devices.

Russia’s UN Ambassador Vitaly Churkin said in a letter to Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon circulated on May 25 that the devices “are being widely used to commit terrorist acts.”

He said an analysis of chemical components of explosives captured from Islamists in the region of the Iraqi city of Tikrit and the Syrian city of Kobani, and a review of conditions for selling the components, “indicates that they were either manufactured in Turkey or delivered to that country without the right of re-export.”

Churkin accused five Turkish companies of delivering aluminum powder, ammonium nitrate, hydrogen peroxide and other material produced by various Turkish and foreign companies to the Islamic State group.

Turkey’s Foreign Ministry spokesman in Ankara called the letter “the most recent example of Russia’s propaganda campaign against Turkey, and as such it cannot be taken seriously.”

Russia, a key ally of Syrian President Bashar Assad, and Turkey, a major backer of Syria’s opposition, have been at odds during the five-year conflict. Tensions escalated following Turkey’s downing of a Russian warplane near its border with Syria last November.

Russia retaliated by deploying long-range air defense missile systems to its base in Syria and imposed economic sanctions on Turkey. President Vladimir Putin has accused Turkey of “allowing terrorists to earn money by selling oil stolen from Syria,” and Russia’s top military brass accused Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan and his family of personally profiting from oil trade with Islamic State militants.

Churkin said one notable feature of the explosive devices assembled by militants from the Islamic State, is the use of parts manufactured by US, Swiss and Swedish companies.

He said “detonation cords manufactured in third countries have been illegally resold through Turkey to ISIL fighters.”

“These facts demonstrate that the Turkish authorities are deliberately involved in ISIL activity, as they are providing access to components for improvised explosive devices that are being widely used to commit terrorist acts,” Churkin said.

UN: More than 10,000 Migrants Have Died in Mediterranean since 2014

GENEVA (Armenpress) – More than 10,000 people have died attempting the perilous journey across the Mediterranean to Europe since 2014, the United Nations said on June 7.

“You’ve now had since the start of 2014 – when this phenomenon of rising numbers across the Mediterranean happened – 10,000 deaths. That threshold has been crossed just in the last few days,” UN refugee agency spokesman Adrian Edwards told reporters.

The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) said the number of Mediterranean deaths had risen sharply in 2016, with 2,814 people dying since the start of the year, following a total of 3,771 in 2015 and 3,500 the year earlier. That amounts to 10,085 deaths in less than two-and-a-half years.

“This is clearly an appalling number of deaths that have occurred in the Mediterranean, just on Europe’s borders just in the past couple of years,” Edwards told AFP. “It’s an extremely worrying dynamic,” he said, reiterating the agency’s call for the world to find “viable alternative and regular means of

dealing with these movements”. “They’re happening, they’re not stopping, they need a solution to prevent further lives being lost,” he said.

The International Organization for Migration said the death toll so far this year was already nearly a thousand above the 1,838 deaths registered in the Mediterranean during the first half of 2015. As of Monday, a total of 206,400 refugees and migrants had arrived in Europe since the start of the year, mainly landing in Greece and Italy, the organization said.

Following the latest shipwreck off the Greek island of Crete last Friday, the IOM said around 320 people remained missing, presumed drowned. Rescuers pulled some 340 people to safety but there has been much uncertainty about how many people had been onboard the ship. IOM said Tuesday that based on testimony from several survivors it was convinced there had been either 648 or 650 men, women and children onboard. The survivors, spokesman Joel Millman said, “were sure of the number because smugglers counted them twice a day before departure.”



LONDON (Tass) – Ivan Aivazovsky’s “An Ottoman Coffee House in the Moonlight” was sold at a Christie’s auction in London for \$280,000, part of Russian week at the auction house. Two other Aivazovsky paintings were sold for 158.5 thousand and 110.5 thousand pounds.

Two other Aivazovsky lots, “The Shipwreck” and “View of the Saladin Citadel from the banks of the Nile” were sold for \$228,000 and \$159,000, respectively.

Traditionally, Aivazovsky is among the most expensive lots at the Russian week auctions.



Bundestag's Genocide Recognition

BUNDESTAG, from page 1

Armenian Genocide, after years of hemming and hawing and hand-wringing. The news was cause for celebration, and not only for Armenians. Did the text have shortcomings? Yes, to be sure. And yet, the vote was a landmark decision.

The day will be remembered as marking the beginning of a new phase.

Whether it was coincidence or not, June 2, the date of the Bundestag debate, was the date in 1921 when the trial of Soghomon Tehlirian, the assassin of Talaat Pasha, got underway in Berlin.

Thrashing out the Issues

Days prior to the vote, the draft resolution had been leaked to the press. Pressures erupted from opposite directions: if representatives of Turkey or Turkish lobbies in Germany warned against passage of the resolution, on pain of undermining or destroying German-Turkish relations, proponents of the move urged the Bundestag to be yet more explicit in formulating its own recognition of the Genocide. In the course of their session on June 2, parliamentarians of all parties addressed these concerns directly before passing it by a near unanimous vote.

After welcoming the many honored guests, including the Armenian Ambassador and Turkish representatives, Bundestag President Norbert Lammert opened the discussion with the categorical statement that “A parliament is not a historians commission and certainly not a court of law,” a point to be reiterated by others. At the same time, Lammert said, the body could not and would not evade uncomfortable issues – like that of the genocide – when the Germans, who were wartime allies of the Ottoman Empire, were also guilty. “We Germans,” he said, “know on the basis of the dark chapters in our own history, perhaps even more than others, that dealing with historical events can be extraordinarily painful.” Germans, he added, have also been protagonists of such a process of working through the past self-critically and honestly, and have seen that, instead of endangering relations with other countries, it actually makes possible “understanding, reconciliation and cooperation. Virtually every speaker was to make the same point.

Lammert distinguished clearly between the guilt of the Young Turks for crimes of the past, and the responsibility of Turkey's government today for shaping the future. In response to the rabid protest actions, including death threats that some Turkish groups had delivered against Bundestag members of Turkish background, Lammert declared such threats “aimed at preventing the free opinion on the part of the German Bundestag to be unacceptable.” “We will not accept them,” he said, “and we most certainly will not allow ourselves to be intimidated by them.”

One after another, parliamentarians stepped up to the podium to issue variations on the theme of guilt and responsibility, spelling out the fact that no one was putting Turkey on the stand. The resolution, in the words of Dr. Rolf Mützenich of the SPD, “is no juridical statement of claim,” a formulation repeated by Dr. Christoph Bergner of the CDU/CSU. Or, as his colleague Dr. Franz Josef Jung put it, “We are not concerned here with severely criticizing Turkey or putting it on the bench of the accused.” Demonstrations are certainly allowed, Mützenich said, but the Bundestag is also allowed to draw its own political conclusions from the debate on genocide, and will not be intimidated.

As if in response to criticism that had been raised in the public domain, that the lawmakers were not making their own recognition and denunciation of the genocide explicit enough, Bergner reflected on the change

that had taken place since the centenary commemorations in April last year. At that time, what was primary was commemoration. “But it has become somewhat clearer in this session,” he stated: “what in the coalition formerly was disputed, that is, the fact that we can commemorate those events appropriately only if we use the term ‘genocide’ to describe them.” This is the only way to characterize the dimensions of the tragedy and to render justice to the victims. Dieter Nietan of the SPD underlined the same, forcefully: “We want to show the victims of this crime against humanity our sincere respect. If one is to be sincere, one must also say what that was. Thus: A genocide remains a genocide.” For Albert Weiler of the CDU/CSU, who is president of the German-Armenian Forum, “We have the historical responsibility to name the Young Turks’ atrocities by name and designate them as genocide.”

Germany's historical role was a central theme for two reasons. First, because Imperial Germany was co-responsible for the genocide. For Gregor Gysi of the Left Party, Germany “acted as an accessory to the genocide.” Cem Özdemir, Green Party leader and leading proponent of the initiative, stressed that the purpose here was not to assume a holier-than-thou attitude, but to deal with it because it “is also a matter of a piece of German history.” To document the case, he cited an infamous statement by Imperial Chancellor Bethmann Hollweg, who said, “Our sole aim is to keep Turkey on our side until the end of the war, regardless of whether or not the Armenians as a result are destroyed.” And, to substantiate Germany's awareness of the dimensions of the atrocities, he quoted Count von Lüttichau, the church representative from the German Embassy in Constantinople, who reported on the results of the policy in 1918: “In the eastern provinces, that is with the exception of Constantinople and Smyrna and other places in western Turkey, 80-90 percent of the entire population and 98 percent of the male population are no longer alive.... As far as the clergy are concerned, they have been practically exterminated.”

Özdemir contended that “the fact that in the past we were accomplices to this terrible crime can not mean that we should become accomplices to the deniers today.”

As a corollary to the admission of German complicity – and this is the second reason for highlighting the German role – speakers underlined the valuable lessons of modern Germany's experience in having acknowledged the Holocaust, worked through it historically and reached reconciliation with Israel. While depicting the Holocaust as unique, the parliamentarians offered Germany's post-war experience as a valid precedent for similar processing in Turkey. Virtually every speaker argued that, without recognizing and coming to terms with the past, there is no perspective for reconciliation. In this connection, it was also noted that the fact that genocide occurred under wartime conditions did not qualify or relativize the enormity of the crime. The current atrocities being committed in Syria today, by the same token, cannot be rationalized as collateral damage.

The Power of Truth

Weiler began his intervention with a famous quote by Friedrich Schiller, Germany's national poet. In a lecture at the university of Jena on the subject of universal history, Schiller had said, “The greatest gift that man can give to man is truth.” The search for truth was an underlying theme in the Bundestag proceedings, as members, among them Cem Özdemir, pointed to the crucial role of truthful text books and other teaching materials, especially for students at the high school level. The battle to include Armenian Genocide studies in the curriculum in Germany has been being waged for years, and the sad state of available source material in Turkey is notorious.

In this light, it is most fortunate that Dietmar Nietan decided to speak out on this problem in bold terms. He said he was launching “an appeal to all young people, whether Turkish, Armenian, German or

other background: Please do not believe everything you are told, what is in your text books, possibly even what we are telling you today in the Bundestag. I ask of you: Make up your own mind. Look through the documents that are available at the Foreign Ministry, which are for the most part in German, because they come from German diplomats. Form your own judgment. Let your heart speak, when you go through these documents and don't let anyone persuade you that those who use the term ‘Genocide’ want to insult the Turkish people. No, the Turkish people are great and strong, and have no need to hide from their past, but can face it in self-confidence and humility. Fight for this to happen; for that is the right way to do justice to the responsibility that has been imposed on us by our history.”

History or Realpolitik?

In their frequent caveats against confusing moral-political judgments of historical fact with preoccupations with daily political maneuvers, Bundestag members were attempting to remove the salt from the soup. The fact is, the issue of Genocide recognition has unfortunately become inextricably bound to immediate problems in relations between Germany and Turkey. If there are numerous plausible explanations for the continuing procrastination in Berlin on recognizing the Genocide, the most obvious is the fear that it would jeopardize relations with Ankara, not only in routine diplomatic niceties, but that it could upend the EU agreement made to regulate the flow of refugees to (especially) Germany. The fear was not ungrounded, as President Recep Tayyip Erdogan intimated that any such move on the genocide issue could unravel the deal. He warned of a worsening of “diplomatic, economic, business, political and military relations.” Both he and his new Prime Minister Binali Yildirim, who called the resolution “ridiculous” and “a total fabrication,” called German Chancellor Angela Merkel on the telephone two days before the vote, to complain. (Erdogan would later claim that Merkel promised him she would block the passage by ordering her faction to vote “no,” much in the same fashion he would order his party to vote this way or that. His version of the facts is unlikely, given that Merkel voted for the resolution in an internal faction vote prior to the Bundestag session.)

When the measure passed, Ankara responded in predictable fashion. Foreign Minister Mevlüt Cavusoglu called the resolution “irresponsible and unfounded,” government spokesman Numan Kurtukmus said it was “null and void,” Erdogan, at the time on an Africa tour, threatened “serious” consequences. The Turkish ambassador was recalled from Berlin and the Foreign Ministry ordered the German Embassy to send its diplomat in for a calling down.

Turkish press reactions were graphic. As picked up by German media, a critical paper *Sözcü* sported a picture of Merkel as Hitler, with a banner headline “Shame on you!” followed by the text: “Hitler's grandchildren have accused Turkey of genocide. Germany, which committed genocide in World War II, massacring 6 million Jews, and which has prepared the way for our children to be martyred by delivering weapons to the PKK, has ratified the so-called Armenian genocide. We are furious!” Their fury, according to German press commentaries, was directed also at Turkish politicians for failing to stop the vote. Then *Sabah*, recently turned into a government mouthpiece, wrote, “Our brother-in-arms has stabbed us in the back,” whereas *Hürriyet* asserted that it was the German-Turkish friendship that had been subjected to genocide. *Cumhuriyet* spoke of “The Loneliness of 1915,” in that Erdogan and the AKP had “lost another diplomatic war.”

It seemed as though Yildirim were backstepping on June 3, when he called on Berlin to “repair potential damage,” and indicated that there would not be a total break in ties. That same day, the Turkish parliament swiftly passed a resolution rejecting the Bundestag's move, alleging that it was based on “unfounded Armenian mootings.” Then Erdogan escalated tensions in a speech given on June 5 at a private university in Istanbul.

Germany, he said, “was the last country,” that should talk about “so-called genocide,” given its guilt for the Holocaust as well as the extermination of the Herreros.

Most serious was the tone and thrust of remarks he made the evening before, with regard to the German Bundestag members of Turkish background, whom he accused of being pro-terrorist. “It is well known whose mouthpiece they are,” he was quoted by Anadolu. “They are the long arm in Germany of the separatist terror organizations in this country,” with reference to the PKK. In his Istanbul speech, he reportedly targeted Cem Özdemir (without naming him). “Along comes a smart aleck,” he said, “and prepares something that he proposes to the German parliament. A Turk, some people say. Oh, what Turk. Their blood ought to be tested in a lab.” According to the German paper *Welt* Justice Minister Bekir Bozdog from the AKP sent a Twitter message on these parliamentarians: “People with such bad [sour] mother's milk, with such bad blood, could never represent the Turkish nation.” The same source reported that Ankara's mayor Melih Gökçek made a mock-up wanted poster with the mug shots of the eleven parliamentarians, which circulated widely in copies and on the internet, where users called for violence against them.

The parliamentarians are taking this seriously. Özcan Mutlu from the Green Party, told TV viewers on June 5 that he feared for his life, since “This quality [of threat] I have never experienced.” The danger is that some crazy nuts, hearing this talk, think that they've gotten some orders from above. “This way so many people have been killed in Turkey,” he told a German TV news program. As for Cem Özdemir, the main culprit according to Erdogan, he has reportedly been in discussion with German security officials, and his residence is under heightened observation. “Unfortunately, he told *Welt*, “there is also a Turkish Pegida,” referring to a group in Germany known for its racist, xenophobic views. “Right extremism is not a German privilege. It exists unfortunately also in Turkey and among German Turks.” Özdemir often draws a comparison between Turkey and Germany, as far as personal security for a political dissident or critic is concerned. Here in Germany, he said again in the June 2 session, he has no need to fear being persecuted or killed for his political positions.

Erdogan Caught in a Bind

It is to be hoped that Ankara's escalated political rhetoric will not be translated into acts of violence, and that German political figures like Mutlu, Özdemir and others, whatever their ethnic background, may continue to enjoy their constitutionally guaranteed rights to free speech and political action in a climate free of fear. No matter what the threat level, the German political establishment will not vacillate.

And the future of the Turkish-German relationship, often cast as the Merkel-Erdogan duo? Considering the psychological parameters of Erdogan's personality disorders, anything is possible; he could pursue his narcissistic fantasies and thereby place his government's and his country's relations with Germany and the EU in peril. Or, the vestiges of rationality may persuade him to accept certain facts of life: that, as Mideast expert Rainer Hermann has editorialized in the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, Turkey needs Germany as much as Germany needs Turkey. For all his blustering threats to break relations, Erdogan must know that without the partnership with Germany, his country's economy would be devastated, foreign investments and trade would collapse (not to mention tourism); with a deteriorating economic situation, his political base would shrink and with it, his dreams of becoming the all-powerful president-for-life. In short, although it is painful for an autocratic personality to admit, he is not his own political man. It may be that he cannot live with an Angela Merkel who endorsed the genocide resolution, but it is 100-percent certain that he cannot live without her – or Germany.

(Note: All direct quotes have been translated from the German by the author.)

Community News

Mainers at White House Summit On Women

PORTLAND, Maine – Anna Astvatsaturian Turcotte of Westbrook and Mikell Reed Carroll of Portland were recently selected to attend the White House United State of Women Summit to be held June 13-15 in Washington DC.

Convened by the White House, the United State of Women Summit will rally women and changers together to celebrate what they have already achieved, and how they are going to take action moving forward. Covering key gender equality issues, it will make a powerful difference in our collective future. The Summit will focus on six topics: Economic Empowerment, Health and Wellness, Educational Opportunity, Violence Against Women, Entrepreneurship and Innovation and Leadership and Civic Engagement.

Both Turcotte and Carroll are alumni of the University of Maine School of Law, graduating in 2003 and 2002, respectively. After being nominated and selected to attend the Summit, the women learned of each other's participation in the Summit through social media.

Turcotte is a writer, lecturer, and human rights activist. She is an Armenian refugee from Baku, Azerbaijan. After fleeing Baku in the fall of 1989, Anna and her family spent three years in Armenia as refugees before coming to United States in 1992.

She is a graduate of University of North Dakota and University of Maine School of Law. She is a recipient of Outstanding Law Student of the Year by Who's Who American Law Students award for her work on the International Criminal Court (ICC). Turcotte is a recipient of the Mkhitar Gosh Medal, Republic of Armenia's highest civilian honor awarded by



Anna Astvatsaturian Turcotte

President Serzh Sargsyan for exceptional achievements in the political-social spheres, as well as outstanding efforts in the fields of diplomacy, law, and political science. Anna also received a Gratitude Medal from the President of Nagorno-Karabagh Republic (NKR), Bako Sahakyan, for her efforts toward NKR's global recognition.

In 2012 she published her book *Nowhere, a Story of Exile*, which she wrote at the age of 14 as her family settled in North Dakota. The book is based on the childhood diaries that she kept as her family was fleeing Baku, Azerbaijan and during years in Armenia as refugees.

Turcotte travels around the world, writing and lecturing on topics of ethnic cleansing, genocide prevention, right to self-determination and refugees. In Maine, she is a Vice President, Operational Risk Officer at TD Bank in Falmouth. She lives in Westbrook with her husband John A. Turcotte and their son and
see WOMEN, page 8



Monique Svazlian Tallon with her book *Leading Gracefully*

Monique Svazlian Tallon Coaches and Writes on Feminine Leadership

WATERTOWN – Monique Svazlian Tallon is an executive coach based in Los Angeles who works to empower women. She published a guide to women's leadership in book form this year titled *Leading Gracefully* (Highest Path Publishing), and has been involved in Armenian community work. Tallon came to Boston to give a lecture at the Armenian International Women's Association this spring, at which time she gave an interview to the *Mirror*.

By Aram Arkun
Mirror-Spectator Staff

She started out by clearing up a common misconception about coaches. She said: "I am an executive coach. I am not a life coach. I mainly work with people in the corporate world." This does not entail giving advice or counselling. She continued, explaining that "coaching is a set of tools to help you, the client, to come up with your own answers. Only you know what is best for your life and your job. Through this coaching technique people are able to see things from a different perspective and come up with a different approach."

Born, raised and educated in San Francisco, Tallon graduated San Francisco State University with a degree in marketing and then worked in various roles in different marketing companies in the San Francisco area. She then went to work for eBay in Silicon Valley for five years as an event manager, leading trade shows and conferences, before she founded her own coaching and training firm, Highest Path Consulting, in 2008.

After four years at eBay working hard, she said she realized no one had been giving her any credit for her accomplishments. She was given the opportunity to organize a 10,000-person conference called eBay Live and found her own management style. Instead of micromanaging, she asked 20 executives at their first meeting for their help, which in turn empowered them to be contributing members of her team.

Tallon said, "That experience taught me that women had a different choice. They did not have to emulate an older more masculine style of leadership – top down, hierarchical, and more authoritative. Women can be as, or more, effective ... I was at the time using feminine leadership qualities but I didn't know it."

This experience led Tallon to decide to try to teach women what she herself had newly discovered through her own firm, and now her own book. She took a one-year course for certification through the Coaches Training Institute (2008-9) and then did a one-year leadership program through the same institution. What she liked about coaching was, she said, that "it is more action-oriented and future oriented. You look at the issues, but then say what you can do about it." She moved to Milan, Italy, where she worked for several years.

Tallon explained that she further developed her approach. She said, "The feminine leadership model that I have developed is a combination of the latest
see LEADERSHIP, page 7

UConn Forward to Play for Armenian National team

By David Borges
New Haven Register

NEW HAVEN (*New Haven Register*) – The University of Connecticut (UConn) will have one player competing against international competition this summer, but it won't be for the team one might expect.

Steve Enoch, the 6-foot-10 rising sophomore, will play for Armenia's U20 national team in the FIBA Europe Championships this July in Greece.

What's that, you ask? Why will a kid from Norwalk, with no Armenian heritage, be playing for Team Armenia? Well, it mostly has to do with some connections at St. Thomas More, the prep school in Oakdale where Enoch played as a senior.

The Armenian team is allotted two slots for dual-citizen players – one for its U20 team, another for its older team – and the U20 team specifically wanted a big man. Sevag Keuchayan, a Swiss native who played for coach Jere Quinn at St. Thomas More some 20 years ago and is heavily involved with European basketball, got wind of this and called his old coach.

Enoch was the first player who came to Quinn's mind.

"I just thought it would be such a wonderful opportunity for Steve," said Quinn. "He needs to play. He's a kid who played on the JV team as a sophomore (at Norwalk High), varsity as a junior, for me as a senior, then (UConn). He needs to play in a variety of settings, because he's young to the game. The more he plays, the better he's gonna be."

It will also be a unique cultural and social opportunity for Enoch.

"Steve fits in well everywhere, he's such a



UConn's Steven Enoch, who play at St. Thomas More, will play for the Armenian national team this summer despite having no ties to the country.

respectful kid and a wonderful person," said Quinn. "I think it would be great for him."

Enoch is currently working on paperwork to provide him with dual citizenship in Armenia, but it's not expected to be an issue. Otherwise, all his plane tickets are bought and everything else is set. After taking summer courses at UConn in June, he'll leave on July 1 to begin working out with the team. The tournament will be held in Greece.

Quinn, of course, has coached several players who have gone on to star at UConn, most recently Enoch and NBA all-star Andre Drummond. Next up will be Christian Vital, a shooting guard who committed to the Huskies last month after de-committing from UNLV.

"He shoots the ball really well," said Quinn. "His calling card is his competitiveness. He's a throwback kid. I told Kevin (Ollie), 'Kevin, he's you. He's out to prove everybody wrong and play hard. You're gonna love having him.' The first time he was in our gym, Kevin said to me, 'I love that kid.'"

Quinn added that Vital chose UConn for two primary reasons: his fondness for Ollie, and the fact that he's best friends with Steve Enoch.



COMMUNITY NEWS

Alex And Ani's Carolyn Rafaelian Joins Self-Made List As Jewelry's Richest Woman

CRANSTON, R.I. (*Forbes*) – Carolyn Rafaelian founded fashion jewelry company Alex and Ani in 2004, taking over what had been her father's Rhode Island jewelry factory to manufacture the new age, celestial-chic bangles that have become the brand's staple.

To say growth has been explosive would be an understatement. In 2010, Alex and Ani – named after two of Rafaelian's daughters – did an estimated \$4.5 million in revenues. By 2015, sales had hit \$500 million, catapulting the 49-year-old onto *Forbes*' second annual list of America's Richest Self-Made Women thanks to her majority ownership.

Rafaelian joins the ranks at number 22, with an estimated net worth of \$700 million, making her the second richest newcomer to the list, after Gail Miller, billionaire owner of basketball's Utah Jazz.

She's the richest self-made woman in the nation to derive her wealth from jewelry, and joins an impressive group of fashion and retail moguls on *Forbes*' ranking that includes Spanx founder Sara Blakely, preppie-chic designer Tory Burch, and bridal tycoon Vera Wang.

Rafaelian's success can be partly attributed to her mastery of the supply chain. Alex and Ani's pieces – like its bestselling \$28 zodiac-themed charm bangles – are mainly made of recycled materials like scrap metal and vintage or surplus jewelry, keeping costs low and margins high. Everything is manufactured on-site at the company's Cranston, R.I. base.

Alex and Ani now has 65 freestanding stores as well as concessions in hundreds of department stores and boutiques.

As her fortune has grown, Rafaelian has invested in her home state, buying (and renovating) 40,000-square foot Belcourt Castle near Newport, R.I. and 163-acre Sakonnet Vineyards.



Monique Svazlian Tallon Coaches and Writes on Feminine Leadership

LEADERSHIP, from page 6

neuroscience research available on how men's and women's brains are wired differently women have conformed and adapted to work and play in a man's world, taking on those qualities, and not leveraging the strengths that come naturally to them. I have interviewed a number of different prominent female executives who use this approach in their leadership, and also rely on my personal experience."

She explained that she felt that qualities like empathy, humility and vulnerability were not only feminine strengths, but also skill sets that are sought out in leaders today, whether male or female. She said, "Our president, for example has a very nice mix of feminine and masculine and we see other male leaders exemplifying and embodying these qualities. The point is not to be one or the other but to have balance. My book is a how-to guide to develop these skills."

Tallon's own coach encouraged her to begin writing at Huffington Post on women's issues, which gave her the confidence to then write this book. It was released on March 1, 2015 at the Microsoft Global Women's Conference in Seattle, and 2000 copies were distributed. Tallon gave the keynote speech about overcoming obstacles. It helped that Tallon had worked for Microsoft

on their diversity and inclusion program.

While her professional work is not specifically directed at Armenians, because of her personal background, Tallon has also applied her analysis and approach to Armenian social structures in the diaspora and Armenia. Her parents moved to Soviet Armenia from Egypt and Syria in 1947, and then came to the US in the 1970s. Her father Gerard (Jirair) became a violinist at the San Francisco Opera Orchestra. An aunt who stayed in Armenia, Verjine Svazlian, became lead researcher at the Institute of Archeology and Ethnography at the Academy of Sciences in Armenia and spent decades collecting Armenian Genocide survivor accounts. Another aunt, Marie Rose Abousefian, originally from Aleppo, is an actress and writer now living in the US.

Tallon's parents sent their daughter to Armenian Sunday school, and she learned to read and write Armenian (as well as to play the piano). Her parents have a house in Armenia, which no doubt has made travel to Armenia easier.

Tallon found that among many Armenians in the diaspora (and in Armenia), there was a type of "shame" culture – *amot e* in Armenian. Girls in particular are told, she said, "to be quiet, obedient and perfect. This is not intentional. It is

coming from a place of wanting to fit in, to assimilate. We are a massacred people. We really want not to stick out."

Telling our children "amot e" all the time, she said, negatively affects their self-confidence, especially girls, who cannot be themselves. Tallon said that even she, growing up, "was always afraid of saying the wrong thing or getting into trouble. I had to work hard to get over it." Her book provides exercises to overcome this, and build up self-confidence.

Tallon joined the executive committee of the San Francisco affiliate of AIWA in 2012, and worked to increase the resources for Mer Hooys orphanage in Yerevan, which assisted young girls. Tallon was able to coordinate planning with the Women's Resource Center of Armenia, which provided the youngsters with various programs.

Tallon professionally worked with the Dundee Mining Company in Kapan, Armenia, for the last four years, coaching their senior management team, made up mostly of locals. This gave her a better understanding of the challenges and also the opportunities in Armenia for women. Though now sold to a Russian company, Dundee was at the time Canadian-owned, and the owners invested in

development for the local management. Tallon coached over Skype.

There were two women out of the 10 members of the management team. Tallon said, "It is a very male-dominated industry and a male-dominated culture, so there are a lot of gender biases and stereotypes." Many Armenians felt that women were not capable of decision-making and management, and were too emotional.

Perhaps as a result, the women Tallon coached had issues with self-confidence, but her work to overcome this, she said, "taught me that women can transcend these biases if they can 'own' their self-confidence and command that respect." There were also some remnants of the Soviet hierarchical mentality, and poor work ethics against which Tallon struggled. She also coached some Armenian men in Armenia and helped them control their anger while in the work environment.

Tallon wishes to continue to work to improve women's status in Armenia. She said, "My dream would be to lead a women's revolution in Armenia. I believe it would completely transform the country I am very passionate about reproductive education and rights for women in Armenia. It is important to address these gender biases from a young age, especially in the villages." She wants to change the mentality of the older generations, get more legal protection for women's rights and remedy domestic violence.

Tallon stressed that "if women collectively worked together they can create huge social change in Armenia ... We need to help and empower them so that they can be the women that nurture and care for and create a future for Armenia."

Tallon has spoken to a number of Armenian groups in the US, such as the Armenian General Benevolent Union in New York and AIWA. She is coming back to Boston this fall to speak at the AIWA 24th Anniversary Celebration Conference (September 29 to October 2) and at the Armenian General Benevolent Union (AGBU) center in Watertown for the New England chapter of the AGBU Young Professionals on September 29 at 7 p.m. She is considering lectures for Armenian student groups on how to pursue your dreams. She is looking into translating her book into Armenian so that it would be accessible in Armenia.

Tallon said that she likes writing and plans future books. Her next one will be on relationships. She continues to look for opportunities to speak in corporations and to their women's groups.

Mirror Spectator Seeks Summer Intern

The Armenian Mirror-Spectator is seeking an intern for a six-week program this summer (mid-July through August). The intern will receive a \$150 weekly stipend provided through the Armenian Students' Association of America's Internship Program.

The intern should be in college or graduate school. If interested, please contact Aram Arkun at tcadirector.com or call 617 924-4420.



COMMUNITY NEWS

Noubar Afeyan Has Had 38 Biotech Wins; Here's How His Formula Challenges Silicon Valley Dogma

BOSTON (*Forbes*) – Biotech startups share some similarities to tech startups, but the rules that govern their success seem different. Venture capitalists and experts talk about creating tech ecosystems, which create a sense of linear progressions, where people and companies play prescribed roles. But the right way to think about biotech success seems to be more about culture. Noubar Afeyan, one of the most successful biotech entrepreneurs at work today, is an expert at creating the culture and medium in which successful biotech develop.

The first insight I got from him during our interview is that product-market fit isn't the gospel in the biotech world that it is in Silicon Valley. (After a conversation with Clay Christensen a few years ago, I wrote about how building a successful startup isn't about finding the right key for a lock; it's about shaping the key and the lock at the same time).

Afeyan is CEO of Flagship Ventures, which has boiled the process of biotech startups down to a science. Afeyan has been involved in 38 successful startups over the years, according to Flagship's site. Successful means they made it out of the startup phase, to a follow-on round or other growth phase, and five are listed as acquired. One of the companies in his portfolio, Moderna, is producing innovative protein-based therapies and is considered a leading IPO candidate. It had a valuation reported at \$3.5 billion in 2015.

Born in Lebanon, Noubar is the grandson of an Armenian refugee who landed in Lebanon after he was saved during the genocide by German officers. His father was an entrepreneur, with a small import/export business. But when the civil war in Lebanon came, the family moved to Canada.

Afeyan got a degree in chemical engineering from MIT. There by chance, at a National Science Foundation meeting, he met an electrical engineer in his 50s, who described to him how he had built a company that supplied tools to the new and burgeoning field of electrical engineers. That man? David Packard.

Noodling on the idea of building tools for biomedical engineering, Afeyan went on to

found PerSeptive Biosystems, which was acquired. After that, Afeyan turned to his passion, which is startups – not founding individual companies, but creating a process for startups.

"I became interested in figuring out whether I could start companies for a living, professionally," he said.

A big, affable man, Afeyan loves to teach – he's a lecturer at MIT's Sloan School of Management – and seemingly has a gift for taking new cut at old ideas. He spent some time in our interview talking about how wrong the word "entrepreneurship" is.

"It's a complete misnomer. Do you know what the root of that word is? It's the French word for undertaker," he said. "It's the state of being something."

"I think it should be 'ing.' Entrepreneuring."

Here are five ideas for entrepreneurs, culled from the Afeyan's scientific startup process. And if anyone can draw the connection for me for how the French word for undertaker came to mean the insane endeavor of starting and building a company, please do in the comments!

First, here's how Afeyan wrote out his formula for me in an email – or at least, his suggestion for the way to think about the process of a biotech startup.

I would say it this way – first envision several possible future states where in each case some combination of new science or technology can deliver value by addressing an unmet need. From among those, chose the one future state you want to pursue by trading off likelihood of reaching that state as well as the impact and value created by doing so. Then evaluate various paths to reach that future state. Keep in mind that the future states you envision will necessarily seem unreasonable at first (given that the technology/science and need are not yet clearly established). An entrepreneur's goal is to define incremental steps from the present to that envisioned future each of which may seem reasonable but which in combination can take us to a place that initially seemed unreasonable to aspire to.

And here were five of the ideas that we talked

about when I asked him to expand on this.

Be a paranoid optimist. Entrepreneurs should always be worried about what could go wrong, and yet believe that in the long run thing will go right. "You need a gas pedal and a brake pedal," Afeyan said. I thought this was interesting because it adds a dose of realism to what sometimes seems like a false or overly exuberant sense of optimism out of Silicon Valley.

Follow a process of variation-selection-iteration. One of the key insights here is that it's not just products. Silicon Valley is very focused on products, but in the biotech space, you can also use this process with hypotheses, jobs or marketing messages in your company, among many other things. "The pace of the variation is only limited by the resources you can deploy," said Afeyan.

Recognize what creates value. Your company is not necessarily a product-building engine; it is a value creation engine. Your ideas have value, too. "You sell the idea to gain credibility and trade in credibility to get money. The more you build stuff from your ideas, the more credibility you have," Afeyan said.

Be realistic. Realism imbues this process, more than I find in the world of tech startups, where the abundance of cash leads entrepreneurs to take pie-in-the-sky risks. Realism doesn't rear its uncomfortable head until the end of a startup's life, when it becomes apparent that your startup isn't one of the rare winners.

Think about the destination, not the directions. One of the other differences between the Silicon Valley model and the biotech model is that creating product-market fit often means picking a direction and then steadily narrowing



Noubar Afeyan

it. Afeyan has a different idea: he asks his team of about 20 to hypothesize in as many different directions as possible, but always with the aim of creating a use for a new discovery. "There is nothing like a game about this," he said. If the science isn't there, why are you talking about products?

How does this work in practice? Afeyan gave me an example of nine or 10 years ago, when researchers were just beginning to be able to measure the microbes that colonize the gut. There were multiple hypotheses for how that new science could be used, from the idea that you could diagnose different diseases by measuring microbes, to the idea that you could potentially come up with a subset of microbes that combatted a particular super-bug, to the idea of enabling fecal transplants. The third hypothesis led to a company, Seres Health.

Mainers at White House Summit on Women

WOMEN, from page 6

daughter. Most recently, in November 2015, Anna ran a successful campaign and was elected to the Westbrook City Council.

Carroll is a wife, mother, Mrs. Maine International 2016, volunteer, health advocate non-profit attorney and public servant. She was most recently employed by the Department of State at the US Consulate in Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam, US Embassy in Managua, Nicaragua, and as the Staff Attorney for the National Center for Victims of Crime in Washington, DC. She is currently caring for her son full time while her husband works for the Department of State in Afghanistan but looks forward to returning to work for the Department of State in their Office of Global Criminal Justice in Washington DC in the fall, 2016

In her work as a non-profit attorney and public servant Mikell has worked with more than 6000 victims of crime throughout the US, with more than half being victims of domestic violence.

Mikell has been a volunteer and official Ambassador with the American Heart Association since 2012 and as Mrs. Maine International 2016 she has chosen the Prevention of Heart Disease in Women as her community service platform and an issue she will champion if she is chosen as Mrs. International 2016.

Both women said they are honored to be selected to participate in the White House Summit on Women. They are excited to learn valuable information about gender equality and empowerment of girls and women that they can then bring back to Maine.

OBITUARY

Roxy (Stepanian) Antriasian

ANDOVER, Mass. – Roxy (Stepanian) Antriasian, of Andover, died on May 31. She was the wife of the late Edward Antriasian; mother of Adele Kohler, Stephanie Natarajan and Ron Antriasian; grandmother of Jake, Anjali and Jasmine; sister of Ira Stepanian.

Funeral service was at Holy Trinity Armenian Church, 145 Brattle Street, Cambridge on Saturday, June 4.

Arrangements were by the Bedrosian Funeral Home.

In lieu of flowers, memorial gifts may be made to Holy Trinity Armenian Church.

Interment followed at Mount Auburn Cemetery, Cambridge.



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COMMUNITY NEWS

John Sarkisian: Big in Business Circles But Entangled in Suits

By Don Bauder

SAN DIEGO (*San Diego Reader*) – John Sarkisian is an establishment darling. He is one of the purported economic experts interviewed regularly for the *Union-Tribune's* "EconoMeter" feature. He is founder and vice chairman of Carlsbad's Pro Performance Sports (doing business as SKLZ), a maker of sports training equipment. He was a founding investor in Semtek Innovative Solutions, which creates patented encryption technology, and BrightScope, which provides pension/retirement-related information. He is a longtime restaurateur and recently launched Encontro North Park.

He is a board member of San Diego Sport Innovators, an affiliate of the prestigious CONNECT, which fosters entrepreneurship in technology. Sarkisian is a frequent lecturer and panel participant on subjects such as technology and economic trends. In April, he gave a talk to San Diego's Business Executives Council, which bills itself as "the premier membership

organization serving San Diego's business leaders."

But one of Sarkisian's greatest skills may be his technique for evading payment to a former partner who convinced both a superior court jury and appellate court that Sarkisian defrauded him in real estate transactions. The Court of Appeal, Fourth Appellate District, ruled last September that Sarkisian committed fraud and breach of fiduciary duty against his former partner.

Sarkisian owes that former partner, Rudy Medina, \$1.6 million, ruled the appellate court, and the sum is now \$2.1 million including interest, says Medina's lawyer, Kenneth Fitzgerald. A shattered Medina is now in Chapter 7 bank-



John Sarkisian

ruptcy, and the bankruptcy trustee, attorney Ronald Stadtmueller, is trying to collect that money. But Sarkisian and his lawyer, Miles Grant, are not talking to Stadtmueller, Fitzgerald, or me. I learned from Sarkisian's sister, also a restaurateur, that Sarkisian recently changed his residence.

"Sarkisian and Grant showed up at a debtor's exam and said, 'We won't tell you anything,'" says Stadtmueller. "We have hired process servers in this case. [They] are unable to find him. He is dodging service."

The battle between Sarkisian and Medina started a decade ago. Initially, they were very close. They were partners in a real estate developer, Del Mar Heritage. As the appellate court explained, Medina did the day-to-day work but strategized regularly with Sarkisian. In 2006, as the appellate court noted, Medina, grieving his father's death and suffering from a spinal injury, was in "a high degree of pain and was less effective at work. He began taking narcotics and other pain medications." Medina's doctor told Sarkisian that Medina "was being treated for extreme pain, and was moving

toward surgery."

In May 2006, Sarkisian told Medina he wanted a "divorce" from their partnership. "Medina trusted Sarkisian, whom he described as his best friend and partner," said the appellate court. But "unbeknownst to Medina... Sarkisian was having discussions with Willy Ayyad," another Heritage investor and Sarkisian friend. Sarkisian told Ayyad he intended to buy out Medina.

Medina, no longer running Heritage and suffering from depression and severe anxiety, agreed to sell his interest in two Heritage projects – Fallbrook land and an apartment project called Poinsettia Ridge – to Willy Ayyad, according to the appellate court. Medina did not know that Sarkisian and Ayyad had put money in a Costa Rica deal via Heritage.

In February of 2007, Sarkisian and Medina signed off on the separation agreement. Medina believed the Fallbrook investment would be sold in three to five years and Poinsettia Ridge was a "forever hold" for partners.

In mid-2007, reacting to criticisms Medina made, Sarkisian sued his former partner for libel and slander. Medina came back with a suit charging Sarkisian with fraud and breach of fiduciary duty, among many things. Importantly, Medina charged that Sarkisian had misrepresented the transactions to induce Medina to sell at a lowball price and then immediately arranged juicy deals for Ayyad and himself.

Medina made a good case that Sarkisian was feeding him wrong information while scheming with Ayyad to sell the properties at a fat profit. Right after Medina sold his interests in the properties for a low sum, Sarkisian lined up a broker to sell the properties. Said the appellate court, "The jury reasonably concluded...that given Sarkisian's undisclosed deal with Ayyad, Sarkisian's quick action in contacting a broker shortly after the Medina deal was finalized, and the rapid progress toward a sale, Sarkisian planned to facilitate that sale before he convinced Medina to sell his interest... Medina was left in the dark concerning the contemplated sale, convinced by his trusted, longtime business partner to sell his interest to Ayyad at a discount."

How fat was the profit? An example: Medina got \$400,000 for his interest in Poinsettia Ridge. Five weeks later, Sarkisian entered into an agreement to sell that project, and he netted cash of over \$1 million. "Rather than a 50/50 split, it was a 72 percent to 28 percent split," said the appellate court, taking figures provided by Fitzgerald. On the Fallbrook deal, Medina got a bit over \$1 million while Sarkisian raked in \$2.1 million – a 66/34 split. Ayyad's annual rate of return: 1535 percent on Fallbrook and 331 percent on Poinsettia Ridge. Figuring what Medina got versus what he would have received had there been no fraud, the jury awarded Medina \$1.59 million and the appellate court did not argue with the calculation.

In his brief to the court of appeal, Fitzgerald said that Sarkisian "duped his partner into selling his interests in two valuable projects at a deep discount. Knowing that Medina desperately needed cash, and knowing that Medina was impaired by prescription medications and post-operative pain, Sarkisian misled Medina into thinking that two valuable projects would never be sold, or would not be sold any time soon. In truth, Sarkisian secretly planned to sell them for full value right after the final separation."

Said Fitzgerald in the brief, "A long-time real estate broker, Sarkisian pursued one of the oldest broker scams in the book: working for an undisclosed principal (Ayyad) to obtain and flip properties from his nominal client (Medina) for his own profit and benefit. This is a classic breach of fiduciary duty."

What happened to the Costa Rica deal? "Sarkisian claimed that he lost all of his investment in Costa Rica, and that he had no money to settle with [Medina]," said Fitzgerald in response to my question. I wondered if Sarkisian is delaying payment because he plans to appeal to the state supreme court. Fitzgerald says no. "He is just refusing to satisfy the judgment."

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COMMUNITY NEWS

Steve Kerr and His Family's Little-Known History of Saving Armenians

LOS ANGELES (UpRoxx) – The 2015-16 Golden State Warriors rewrote history by concluding their record-breaking NBA regular season with an astonishing 73 wins. Golden State may have achieved basketball immortality, but it faced many challenges along the way, including playing without Steve Kerr, the 2016 NBA Coach of the Year, for half of the season.

In an exclusive March interview with Kerr this year, he called this “the hardest year of my life.” Six weeks after the Warriors won it all last June, and following a 40-year championship drought in the Bay, Kerr underwent back surgery. Unexpected medical complications were the result. He was forced to take a four-month leave of absence to recover, leaving his team in the hands of assistant coach Luke Walton.

This was not Steve Kerr’s first challenge. He won five NBA championships playing alongside Michael Jordan and Phil Jackson in Chicago, and with Tim Duncan and Gregg Popovich in San Antonio. However, during his freshman year at Arizona, he received a call from Beirut notifying him of his father’s assassination by an Islamic Jihad during the Lebanese Civil War.

Steve and his father, Malcolm, were both born in Beirut. Malcolm, a Princeton graduate, lived in Lebanon and the U.S. while continuing to further his education. His life’s ambition was to return to Lebanon and lead the American University of Beirut (AUB), a dream realized in 1982 when he became its president. For over a year, Malcolm Kerr worked out of his office in College Hall, just outside of which he was killed on January 18, 1984.

“His murder made me understand the pain that others experience,” Kerr says. “It’s made me realize that millions of people go through these things.”

While Malcolm Kerr’s assassination has been well chronicled, the lesser-known story of his parents’ involvement in the first major American humanitarian effort initiated his family’s relationship with the Middle East.

The Kerrs were on the frontline of American relief after World War I. Stanley Kerr arrived in Aleppo in 1919 and began photographing, documenting and rescuing Armenian women and orphans. He then transferred to Marash to take charge of an American mission. His memoir, *The Lions of Marash*, is set at this location and describes how the armies of Mustafa Kemal eradicated the Armenians from the new Turkish republic.

Private American charity reached the Armenians first. In response to the massacre of over 1.5 million Armenians, philanthropist Cleveland Dodge formed the Committee for Armenian and Syrian Relief. Former president Theodore Roosevelt advocated intervention, saying, “All Americans worthy of the name feel their deepest indignation aroused by the dreadful Armenian atrocities.”

The American Committee for Armenian and Syrian Relief, later known as the Near East Relief, is credited with helping preserve the Armenians in the face of the genocide that sought to destroy them. They pioneered the idea that all Americans, regardless of age, income or background, could help others.

Ann Kerr is the coordinator of the Fulbright program at UCLA, where her husband Malcolm taught for 20 years as chairman of the Department of Political Science. A copy of her eldest son John’s Fulbright I.D. hangs in her office alongside the newspaper showing Steve Kerr’s 1997 NBA championship-clinching shot. Today, John Kerr serves on the board of the Near East Foundation, continuing the family legacy of involvement with the region.

During my meeting with Ann Kerr, she says Steve has his father’s self-deprecating sense of humor, most evident during his tenure as an analyst for the NBA on TNT, while also possessing his passion and calm demeanor. Steve travelled the world with his parents, and gained many experiences overseas that shaped his world view.

As a junior at Occidental College, Ann left to study abroad in Lebanon. Three days a week, she taught at a Catholic Armenian girls’ school – the Immaculate Conception. She met Malcolm at AUB while he completed his Master’s, and they were soon married in Santa Monica in 1956. Today, Ann continues her work with Fulbright to engage the Middle East with American higher education.



Steve Kerr

new round of devastation and the final exodus from their ancestral homeland into permanent exile.

Unlike Armenians in Beirut, Steve Kerr was not raised on stories of genocide, but he was aware of his forefather’s humanity in the face of atrocity. “I was aware of my grandparents running an orphanage in Marash and eventually finding Beirut through their travels,” Kerr says. “I have a great deal of pride in knowing how much they helped.”

Susan van de Ven, the daughter of Ann and Malcolm, has an exchange of letters with her grandparents about their experiences, which she used for her thesis at Oberlin College, and later presented at the Armenian Patriarchate of Jerusalem in 1986 for the anniversary of the Armenian Genocide. Her grandmother, Elsa Reckman, volunteered as a schoolteacher in Constantinople, and later met Stanley Kerr while working in Marash.

Elsa and Stanley ran an orphanage for Armenian children in Lebanon in the 1920s after leaving Marash until an outbreak of typhoid forced the orphanage to close. Elsa lost an unborn child when she contracted typhoid. They eventually married in Beirut in 1922, and Stanley became the chairman of the Department of Biochemistry at AUB, while Elsa served as dean of women. Following 40 years of faculty service, they retired in 1965.

The Near East Relief campaign raised a staggering \$19.5 million from private donations by

1919, and \$117 million by 1930 – over \$1.6 billion today when adjusted for inflation.

Despite the monumental efforts of the Near East Relief, the Armenian Genocide is not recognized by the United States.

“Everybody learns about the Jewish Holocaust, but very few know about the Armenian Genocide,” Kerr says solemnly. “It’s not taught in schools, and obviously there are still the political issues of whether Turkey is willing to use the word ‘genocide.’”

After Game 3 of the first round of the 2015 NBA Playoffs last April, Dr. Douglas Kerr, Malcolm’s younger brother, gave a presentation in Cleveland entitled “Witnessing the Genocide,” based on Stanley’s book. In May, after Game 2 of the Western Conference Finals, several members of the Kerr family received a posthumous award in Washington, D.C. on behalf of Elsa and Stanley during a national commemoration of the centennial of the genocide.

In 1965, Antranig Chalabian uncovered a box at AUB containing Stanley’s copies of the *New York Times*, which eventually inspired Stanley to write his memoir. “Lots of Armenian names in my family history,” Kerr says before retelling when family friend, Vahe Simonian, called him and broke the news of his father’s assassination.

“We’ve had so many Armenians at our house over the years. I felt like an honorary member of the Armenian community through my family.”

(<http://uproxx.com/dimemag/steve-kerr-middle-east-armenia-warriors/>)



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COMMUNITY NEWS

Tumblr Taps Simonian to Head Marketing Partnerships

LOS ANGELES – Tumblr has named Tatiana Simonian as its new Head of Marketing Partnerships, effective immediately.

“She will be responsible for developing strategic partnerships and integrations with entertainment and media brands,” a Tumblr spokesman said last week.

By Gavin O’Malley

Based in Los Angeles, Simonian will report to Stephanie Dolgins, Tumblr’s Chief Marketing Officer.

A veteran marketing executive, Simonian joins Tumblr from Nielsen Entertainment,

where she served as VP of branded music.

Previously, Simonian served as the inaugural Head of Music at Twitter, where she developed best practices and global campaigns for artists and award shows and devising artist-based launch strategies for Twitter products.

Former roles also include digital marketing at Disney and Hot Topic, where she created multiplatform activation strategies for music, film and product-related initiatives.

Tumblr’s fortunes look highly uncertain – and not just because it is attached to the teetering ship that is Yahoo.

“A big factor is that Facebook, Instagram and Twitter are more successful at catering to mobile audiences,” eMarketer analyst Oscar Orozco noted in a recent report. The research firm suspected that Tumblr’s usership is already plateauing, and this 2016 mark its last year of double-digit growth.

Of course, it’s not the only social network with slowing user growth, but Tumblr is a fraction of the size of its rivals. Indeed, its reach among Web users is only 8.7 percent – far below the 69.9 percent who use social networks in general, eMarketer noted.

Put another way, Tumblr will have 23.2 million domestic users this year – less than half as many as Pinterest’s 54.6 million, and less than one-third as many as



Oliveira Simonian

Tatiana Simonian

Instagram’s 89.4 million.

Worse yet, the gap between Tumblr and its competitors is only expected to widen through 2020.

Over the next four years, Tumblr is on track to add a measly 6.2 million users. By contrast, Instagram is set to add 26.9 million users, Facebook will add 14.6 million, and Pinterest will add 12 million.

It’s not for lack of trying.

“Tumblr is pushing for new ways of sharing content on its platform, including video, messaging and GIFs – hoping to increase mobile engagement,” Orozco noted.

Despite these efforts, however, Tumblr’s woes are not helping Yahoo’s broader outlook. This year, eMarketer expects that Yahoo will capture 1.3 percent of total US digital ad spending – a slight decrease from last year.

AGBU Artsakh Campaign Raises \$325,000

NEW YORK – Since the four-day war in Nagorno-Karabagh in April, AGBU worldwide fundraising efforts, individual donors and a special allocation by the AGBU Central Board of Directors have raised more than \$325,000 for the people of Armenia, Nagorno-Karabagh and their armed forces. After large scale military attacks by Azerbaijan and the continuing security threats it poses to Armenia and Nagorno-Karabagh, there is a dire need for a unified and reinforced commitment by Armenians worldwide. AGBU has reaffirmed its unwavering support to the people and armed forces of Armenia and Nagorno-Karabagh and brought urgent support to the families of fallen soldiers, injured soldiers and innocent civilians.

On May 13, the AGBU Armenia team visited severely injured soldiers and volunteer fighters at the Central Clinical Military Hospital and the Rehabilitation Center of the Armenian Red Cross Society in Yerevan. The team also visited the homes of discharged soldiers and families of fallen soldiers in the regions of Shirak and Ararat to deliver \$1,000 to each family.

On May 21 and 22, AGBU Armenia visited Nagorno-Karabagh, including the Military Hospital in Stepanakert and the homes of fallen soldiers in the regions of Martakert, Martuni and Hadrout, providing families in need with



Since the four-day war in Nagorno-Karabagh in April, AGBU worldwide fundraising efforts have raised more than \$325,000 for the people of Armenia, Nagorno-Karabagh and their armed forces.

\$1,000 of financial assistance. AGBU Armenia Deputy Director Hovig Eordekian met with Arayik Harutunyan, Prime Minister of Nagorno-Karabagh, and introduced AGBU’s campaign directions, which include the purchase of medical equipment and supplies, financial assistance

to the families of fallen and injured soldiers and support to displaced families.

“After returning to Yerevan, we will immediately start a very important phase of our campaign, which entails purchasing medical equipment and assisting our military. The list of

equipment was identified by the Defense Ministries and prioritized by the medical divisions of the military. It will include emergency and intensive care equipment as well as hemostatic agents and portable x-rays. We believe that this equipment will help save the lives of soldiers on the frontline,” said Eordekian.

Since the beginning of April, AGBU Armenia has provided support to more than 70 displaced Armenians, including 30 children, by hosting them at the Nairi Hotel in Stepanakert, where AGBU Nagorno-Karabagh program coordinator Sassoun Baghdasaryan has been overseeing this project and delivering financial assistance to 21 families of injured and fallen soldiers.

To ensure its resources are correctly allocated, AGBU began coordinating its programs with Armenian governmental agencies as well as other organizations that have initiated fundraising campaigns. As a result of these efforts, AGBU Yerevan, Repat Armenia, Sahman and the Arar Foundation created a Coordination Group, a growing network that meets regularly to share experiences and recommendations.

AGBU calls on its worldwide members and friends to increase their efforts with full commitment and jointly support Nagorno-Karabagh.

For more information, visit the AGBU website.



The AGBU Armenia team visited severely injured soldiers and volunteer fighters at the Central Clinical Military Hospital and the Rehabilitation Center of the Armenian Red Cross Society in Yerevan.



The AGBU Armenia team visited the homes of discharged soldiers and families of fallen soldiers in Yerevan and the regions of Shirak and Ararat.

Arts & Living

Gallery Z Hosts Sixth Exhibit of Year

Opening Reception to Be Held June 16

PROVIDENCE, R.I. – Gallery Z will host its sixth exhibit of the year, featuring the works of Linda DiFrenna, Lara B., Helena Stockar and Virginia Delgado.

The exhibit started on June 9 and will go through Saturday, July 2.

The opening reception will be held on Thursday, June 16, at 5 to 9 p.m., part of Gallery Night Providence.

Linda DiFrenna is a multimedia artist who holds degrees in the arts from Roger Williams University and the Rhode Island School of Design, as well as having studied in Germany. Her work has been exhibited throughout New England, Florida, Louisiana and New York City. In addition to her artistic practice, she has held teaching positions at local colleges.

Said DiFrenna: “My intention as an artist is to create inspirational works of art which bring the viewer a sense of discovery that is exciting and exhilarating. I want to create images that are evocative, curious, mysterious, and unexpected. I want images that will make the viewer pause in front of the piece and really look closely. It is important to me that my work evokes emotions that encourage dialogue.

“This exhibit includes straight photography and manipulated photographs. I focus on the relationship between image and material. Some pieces incorporate paint, ink, marker and/or spray paint. There is always a balancing act between the image and the abstract use of these materials. It is a challenge not to lose the image and the meaning of the piece behind the paint or ink but to enhance it.

“Alternative and imaginative approaches to making art produce sensations and emotions I remember experiencing as a child. To play freely with paper, paint, scissor and glue without thought of right or wrong. I grant myself the freedom to move between the traditional image, processes and materials without apology.”

Lara B., born and raised in Beirut, discovered her love of painting at an early age. She pursued her passion for the arts by attending the Toros Roslin Art Academy of Beirut. see GALLERYZ, page 16



Lara B. “Solo Cellist”



Charles Garabedian, “Stigmata” (2014), acrylic on paper, 72 x 45 3/4 inches

Myth, Flesh, and Three Paintings by Charles Garabedian

NEW YROK (Hyperallergic) – There is a small exhibition in memory of Charles Garabedian (1923 – 2016) currently at Sidecar, the adjoining annex space of Betty Cuninghame Gallery on the Lower East Side. Consisting of one painting on each of the room’s three walls (the fourth is a large window facing the street), it’s a quick reminder of the long life and prolific output of a Los Angeles painter whose work was filled to bursting with light, color, and

By Thomas Micchelli

a ribald empathy for his fellow human beings.

In the introduction to an interview for Hyperallergic Weekend published the year before he died, Jennifer Samet captures Garabedian’s personality and influence in a single paragraph:

He stays above the fray throughout our conversation, telling the stories of the myths he loves and travel adventures with friends, rather than explaining the work or aesthetic decisions. “You are a humanist,” his wife Gwen calls out to him, when she hears us discussing his personal relationship to Greek tragedy. Garabedian is humble but ambitious; the figures in his paintings are monumental but gawky – relatable heroes and heroines. It is hard to imagine the work of Dana Schutz, Judith Linhares, and Francesco Clemente without Garabedian’s example, although Garabedian would never claim to lead any school; he is too busy with the challenges and fun of the daily work, even at age 91.

The three paintings, all acrylic on paper and fairly large – ranging from three to six feet in height – were made within the last 13 years of the artist’s life. They are also uniformly enigmatic, touching on myth, religion, and exotic ancient civilizations, themes Garabedian mined for much of the latter part of his career.

“Stigmata” (2014) is the most recent and perhaps the oddest of the three: it is dominated by the figure of a woman, her back turned, her head thrown back, her fingers dug deeply into her hennaed locks as she stares skyward at the crucified Jesus hovering above her like a helicopter. It is a motif usually associated with depictions of St. Francis, holding out his hands in supplication as they are pierced with holes mimicking Christ’s wounds.

see PAINTINGS, page 15

Graphic Rendition of Precious Gift: The Armenian Alphabet

By Arthur Hagopian

JERUSALEM – When Avedis Baghsarian, versatile artist, photographer, sculptor, was seven years old, and living in the Armenian Quarter of Jerusalem where he was born, he was intrigued, as all the young children were, by the intricate, panoramic threads of the entangled panoply of humanity around him: Jews, Muslims, Greeks, Copts, Syrians, Ethiopians . . .

What did it all mean to him, as an Armenian? Was there any point of intersection among these fascinating, and confusing threads?

What was the difference between Jews, Muslims and Christians?

He asked his father Arakel, whom he knew to be endowed with wisdom and charity, for he had for some time been enrolled as a seminarian at the Armenian Patriarchate, with the (now abandoned) hope of studying for the priesthood.

Arakel, a strong family man (and avid football fan), had expected such a loaded question, but did not want to make his explanation too complicated.

Avedis will never forget what his father told him:

“We think that religion is a source of communication with God and we will eventually go there,” he said, pointing to the sky.

“But the means to arrive there will be different: some will take the bus, others might take the train, It is not the means of transportation that counts but rather the final destination we are all aiming for,” he added.

He concluded with a Shakespearian dictum: “Do not judge a person from his religious beliefs but rather evaluate a person from his actions.”

That, and a keen pride in his precious Armenian heritage, have guided Avedis through his prolific artistic endeavors, the most recent, a graphic rendition of the Armenian alphabet, a vivid expression of his desire to inspire and encourage young Armenians to keep the faith.

“I am worried that if we do not raise awareness of our children about our language, and alphabet, our poetry and literature, we will lose our culture and our millennia year-old history,” he says.

The avenue he has chosen, with the intention of “empowering our children through education and enriching their life,” is one that leads to the innermost core of the Armenian soul.

Armenians are rightly proud of their unique alphabet invented 1700 years ago by Saints Sahag and Mesrob. It originally consisted of 36 letters, including more than half a dozen duplicate sounds and a double (“yev”), that have created major headaches for children trying to distinguish between the uses of a “tah” and a “toh.” Two more letters were added in the 12th century.

Is it any wonder then that Armenians will opt for the more easily manageable English alphabet with its 26 letters when communicating via social media, SMS or Facebook?

In a world where unending “text messaging with short symbolic tags” are taking over the means of communication, it is easy to visualize the abandonment of proper language and alphabet, Avedis avers.

His concern is tangible: future generations of Armenians, mainly those in the Diaspora, run a very real risk of losing their ethnic identity through assimilation and acclimatization if they neglect to inculcate in their children the delights, and travails, of their mother language and its alphabet.

The modest, but bold and innovative step he has taken towards helping redress the

see ALPHABET, page 13



ARTS & LIVING

Los Angeles AGBU Satamian Theater Group Performs 'Funny Money' in New Jersey

ORADELL, N.J. — The Armenian General Benevolent Union (AGBU) Satamian Theater Group from Los Angeles performed an Armenian version of Ray Cooney's "Funny Money" on June 4 and 5 at the Oradell Elementary School auditorium upon the invitation of the Tekeyan Cultural Association (TCA)'s Mher Megerdchian Theatrical Group.

The play was directed by Krikor Satamian.

At the conclusion of a performance, Dr. Krikor Simonian, chairman of the Satamian Theater Group, spoke of the important service that the two theatrical groups were carrying out for the Armenian people, which continues to keep the Western Armenian language alive on stage in New York and Los Angeles. He promised to invite the Mher Megerdchian Group to Los Angeles soon.

A more detailed article on the performances will appear in the Mirror forthwith.



Members of the AGBU Satamian Theater Group with the executive of the TCA Mher Megerdchian Theatrical Group after the recent performance of "Funny Money" in New Jersey.

Graphic Rendition of Precious Gift

ALPHABET, from page 12

anomaly is embodied in a slim volume, *Armenian Alphabet* (a companion volume, *Calligraphy in Motion*, rhapsodizes the English alphabet), where he has created his rarified version of the invention of Saints Sahag and Mesrop, remaining punctiliously faithful to the original, while embellishing each of the 38 letters of our alphabet with ethereal curves and lines that seem to be climbing ever higher, towards a distant Ararat.

The silver sheen and the underlying undula-

tions, underlined by the eddying whorls, dazzle the eye.

He has no plans yet to convert the graphic fonts into a computer software program, but is attracted by the prospect. There already are several Armenian fonts available for word processing; adding one more would be a breeze, IT experts confirm. The fact that like Latin characters, Armenian is written from left to right, unlike Hebrew and Arabic for instance, which move in the opposite direction, right to left, makes the job easier.

Jeweler Vartanian Opens Store in London on Kate Moss's Advice

By David Belcher

LONDON (*New York Times*) — If the jeweler Ara Vartanian had asked the gods for a muse, he could not have gotten a better one than Kate Moss. That is what the model has been since she visited his São Paulo, Brazil, atelier four years ago — and she is the reason, at least in part, that Vartanian is opening a new showroom in early June in Mayfair.

"It was a totally chance meeting," he said recently in a phone interview from São

Paulo where I fell in love! I wanted everything and I haven't stopped wanting." She was in São Paulo for the annual American Foundation for AIDS Research (amfAR) gala (she is a longtime co-chairwoman of the annual event, which this year honored her for her contributions).

The next year she wore a necklace and earrings designed by Vartanian to the gala, causing quite a stir. "She told me that I had to go to London with this stuff," he recalled.

Vartanian, who also has stores in Rio de Janeiro and Los Angeles, plans to display about 500 pieces of jewelry in the London space, and to recreate there the relaxed aes-



Kate Moss in Ara Vartanian diamonds



White and rose gold earrings set with pigeon-blood rubies and white diamonds, created by Ara Vartanian.

Paulo. "I was having lunch near my showroom, and they called me to say Kate Moss was in the store and said she wanted a tanzanite ring designed for her."

Vartanian, who is a connoisseur of rare stones, including tourmalines and pigeon blood rubies, said it was a simple process for Moss. "I always say a stone chooses you," he noted. "She looked at one and said, 'Boom, that is the one.'"

In an email, Ms. Moss wrote: "I came across Ara's treasure by accident in a small shop in São Paulo. I was invited to his stu-

thetic of his São Paulo atelier by using cushy vintage couches and earth tones. "There is a niche for jewelry like mine because I'm the person who buys the stones and individually designs each piece," he said. "Sometimes it hurts when I sell them. You design it. You create it. By the time it's ready you're so connected to it that you don't want to let it go."

As for London, "I could not have chosen a different place to open a store," he added with a laugh. "The wind blew and the sails pointed in that direction."

Varter's Oriental Rugs SIDEWALK SALE

One Day Only
June 18th 2016 10 am-7 pm

We are having our first ever liquidation sidewalk sale. We have thousands of rugs to choose from. These rugs range from new to old, antique to semi antique. Prices are 60% to 80% off. Some of these rugs are well below cost. We have something for everyone's needs in style, color and size including hard to find rare color and sizes. This is a one-day sale so if you were ever thinking about buying a rug this is the perfect time.

Besides having a huge selection of handmade oriental rugs, we are experts of antique rug repair and hand hashing of all types of oriental rugs including handmade, machine made, tufted, braided, hooked rugs, rag rugs and flat weaves of all kinds.

Varter's Oriental Rugs
327 Pleasant St., Belmont, MA
617-489-3700
www.vartersrugs.com

New Film Encourages Youth to Get Rooted with ATP in Armenia

PASADENA – Armenia Tree Project (ATP) launched its latest educational film at an event hosted by the AGBU Vatche and Tamar Manoukian High School in Pasadena on April 26.

The film, titled #GetRooted with Building Bridges, was created by ATP's Building

strong national appreciation."

The video was produced by CivilNet.TV in partnership with ATP's staff in the US and in Armenia. The first Building Bridges video, "Something New," has gotten nearly 25,000 hits on YouTube. The new #GetRooted video



(L to R) ATP Environmental Education Program Manager Sarah Hayes, Western Region Development Associate Anahit Gharibyan, AGBU Manoukian High School Armenian teacher Norayr Daduryan and high school students Peter Deirbadrossian and Patil Kaptanian at the premiere of the new #GetRooted video

Bridges environmental education program. This program launched in 2010 introduces ATP's environmental education material to diaspora students, teaches them about Armenia's rich natural heritage, and connects them to students in their ancestral homeland.

The video launch at the AGBU school was notable because many of the students in the audience actually had roles in the film. They planted trees with their counterparts in Armenia during a class trip in 2015.

The event was led by Patil Kaptanian and Peter Deirbadrossian, students who have been actively involved in raising environmental awareness at the school in recent years.

Deirbadrossian recited a moving poem called "The Tree": "There was a huge tree, a centuries old tree. Bad people cut that tree, and a year after, that tree gave vines (new branch), fresh green branches. Dear friends, I felt that the tree is my ancient nation, and the vines are me and you, the new generation. Next year, when I go to Armenia and plant a tree, I will bow down in front of that tree, because I will be granting new life to the next generation."

Several other leaders were recognized at the event including Principal Armine Movsisyan, Armenian language teacher Norayr Daduryan, science teacher Asdghig Yoghourtjian-Sepetjian and technology teacher Varant Chinchinian. In addition, popcorn was donated for the film screening by ATP supporter James Melikian, who is also known as "The Popcorn Man."

The premiere was organized by Anahit Gharibyan, who leads ATP's Building Bridges program on the West Coast. The film was introduced by executive producer Sarah Hayes, who heads the Building Bridges program.

"Our film demonstrates the importance of caring for the environment and encourages youth to visit Armenia to plant trees with their peers. There are more than 100 Diaspora elementary, intermediate and high schools throughout the world. We seek to reach out to these schools and work with them to implement ATP's Building Bridges environmental education program within their classrooms," explains Hayes. "Such actions will encourage cross-cultural alliances which will advance a

is available online at: www.tinyurl.com/get-rootedarmeria

The Building Bridges program provides a range of multimedia content to students in the diaspora including a website, Facebook page, videos, live presentations from ATP staff, and hosting visits with ATP in Armenia.

There is also a printed newsletter created by Sarah Hayes and illustrated by Alik Arzoumanian. The sixth edition of the publication, which is available for free both online and in print, was released in the fall and the focus is on water globally and in Armenia. To request copies of the publication or other information about the Building Bridges program, contact Sarah Hayes at sarah@armenia-tree.org.



Recipe Corner

by Christine Vartanian Datian

Lemon Pork Cutlets and Mushrooms With Chopped Mint and Cilantro

INGREDIENTS

4 medium pork cutlets, cut about 1/4 in. thick
2 cups fresh mushrooms, diced or sliced
3/4 cups plain or Italian breadcrumbs or 3/4 cup all-purpose flour seasoned with sea salt, black pepper, garlic powder, dried basil, and paprika
1 large egg, beaten with one tablespoon of water
2-3 cloves garlic, minced
2-3 tablespoons olive oil
2 tablespoons unsalted butter
Juice and zest from one large lemon
Fresh lemon wedges as garnish

PREPARATION

Place the bread crumbs or seasoned flour and the beaten egg in two separate bowls. In a large non-stick skillet, sauté the garlic in olive oil for a minute or two, do not burn. Dip the cutlets first into the egg mixture and then the bread crumbs or flour to coat both sides. Dip cutlets a second time in the egg mixture and bread crumbs or flour, if desired. Cook the cutlets in the skillet until browned, turning once; add the mushrooms, lemon juice, and zest, and toss until all ingredients are combined. Add the butter, and cook cutlets for about 5-8 minutes longer. Remove from heat. Arrange cutlets on four serving plates. Serve with Chopped Mint and Cilantro Salad on the side. Garnish plates with fresh lemon wedges.

Serves 4.

Chopped Mint and Cilantro Salad

INGREDIENTS

2 cups coarsely chopped fresh mint
1 cup chopped fresh cilantro
1 medium carrot, shredded
1/2 medium red onion, sliced thinly
2-3 green onions or scallions, sliced or chopped
Kosher or sea salt and coarse black pepper
Olive oil, fresh lemon juice, red wine or balsamic vinegar
Chopped pistachios or sliced almonds as garnish

PREPARATION

In a medium bowl, combine the mint, cilantro, carrots, and onions and toss. Drizzle with olive oil and season with salt, pepper, and lemon juice or choice of red wine or balsamic vinegar; toss again and serve. This salad may also be made a day ahead of time, covered and chilled. When ready to serve, add the dressing and seasonings, and sprinkle with the pistachios or sliced almonds, if desired.

*Christine's recipes have been published in the Fresno Bee, Sunset and Cooking Light Magazines, and at <http://www.thearmeniankitchen.com/>

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

Composers Celebrated at Armenian Museum

WATERTOWN – The Armenian Museum of America, together with the Composer's Union of Armenia, presented a program dedicated to the 90th birthdays of composers Alexander Ajemian and Khachatour Avetisian on Sunday, May 22.

Berj Chekijian, director of the Armenian Museum, noted that he has worked on an agreement between the museum and the Composer's Union for two years. During the last years, the two have mutually organized many cultural events like: "Festival of Contemporary Armenian Chamber Music," the Bostonians vocal group concert and a memorial concert dedicated to the 100th anniversary of the Armenian Genocide.

This and all the other concerts have taken place with funding support from the Dadourian Organization.

The May 22 concert included many popular songs of both Ajemian and Avetisian. The soloists were Nouné Karapetian (soprano), Gohar Manjelijian (mezzo soprano), Garo Nichanian (bass/baritone, Canada), and Knarik Nerkararian (soprano). The piano accompanist was Nuné Hakobyan.

The concert was beautiful and very success-



The evening's performers

ful. The music director of the co-operative concert was composer/conductor Konstantin Petrossian.

The next concert will take place on June 19,

and will be dedicated to piano music. With Armenian classical composers, there will be works written by the performer, composer/pianist Haik Arsenian.



Myth, Flesh, and Three Paintings by Charles Garabedian

PAINTINGS, from page 12

The woman in Garabedian's painting doesn't appear to have a mark on her: is she currently pre-stigmata, or is Jesus passing her by? The woman's pose can be one of ecstasy or despair, and the tension between the two lends the image its strength. The colors, though, are unquestionably buoyant – juicy greens, yellows, ambers, and umbers roiling around an expansive field of powder blue.

Even more curious than the relationship between the woman and Jesus is the imagery painted on her clothing: what appears to be a lamppost on a grass-lined sidewalk adorns the back of her blouse while, on her skirt, a sailboat beneath a yellow sun floats across an emerald-green ocean. Is the latter an allusion to the many Gospel stories featuring the sea, and is the lamppost a sign for the equivalence often drawn between God and light?

Garabedian isn't letting on, and the gentle, cheeky humor pervading the image – “monumental but gawky,” in Samet's phrase – suffuses it with a lightness of touch that escapes any hint of ponderousness. The artist may be using a theme of pious suffering as his source, but his treatment is in no way tied to the usual connotations or historical precedents. He remakes the idea into his own fresh (in both the offbeat and impudent senses of the term) image.

“Sisyphus” (2007) is a throwback to Renaissance and Neoclassical paintings by the likes of Pieter Bruegel the Elder and Nicolas Poussin, who would diminish the significance of their ostensible subject so that it becomes just one component of a much larger context – the workaday world in the former's “Landscape with the Fall of Icarus” (c.1555) or the sweep of nature in the latter's “Blind Orion Searching for the Rising Sun” (1658).

In Garabedian's take on mythology's exemplar of pointless labor, Sisyphus is shoved all the way to the left edge of the painting, an anonymous figure rendered in penumbral tones of muddy brown and moss green. He isn't rolling a rock but holding it aloft, as light as a hunk of Styrofoam. To his right, and taking up most of the composition, is a plinth built of bricks and surrounded by classical columns, which stand atop a stepped platform, like an



Charles Garabedian

altar. A pink, rocky outcropping, where Sisyphus can be found engaging in his labor (whatever it might be) rises on the left, while directly behind the plinth Garabedian has made a mountain ridge from scraps of reflective metal foil, a silvery shimmer against the milky blue sky.

There must be a purpose to the altar-like plinth, which comes off as 20th-century-rust-belt-industrial compared to the Doric columns, but the reason isn't apparent. The closely spaced pillars, which, upon second glance, look as if they're made of poured concrete rather



Charles Garabedian, “The Eunuch” (2003-04), acrylic on paper, 48 x 61 inches (all images via Betty Cuningham Gallery)

than limestone or marble, suggest both a temple and a jail. If the brick plinth is meant as an anachronism beside the mythological figure of Sisyphus, is it a shrine to modern industry or a relic of its decline?

The questions raised by the architectural elements are compounded by the fantastical landscape behind them. The rocky outcropping is sexually suggestive in its pink fleshiness, while the silver foil of the farther range might denote snowcaps or mountains of quartz. The cordoned-off plinth seems to embody the painting's opacity, an obstacle blocking further inquiries while setting off such a buzzy mental tease that we soon forget Sisyphus altogether, who could be an anonymous, routinized worker in the post-industrial social order, or a stand-in for the artist, whose obsessive labor adds a touch of mystery and wonder – the silver foil – to an otherwise utilitarian world.

Ten years ago I wrote a review of a solo show by Garabedian, who was 83 at the time, at the Cuningham Gallery in its former Chelsea location. The catalogue for that exhibition included an interview between the artist and Kristine

McKenna, in which he says, “As we age, our physical need for sex decreases, but the role it plays in our imagination and in our emotional lives remains the same, and may even increase.”

In the review I noted that “[t]he strongest works in the show are the ones in which sexuality is at its ripest—lush, brightly keyed paintings of full-bodied nude women in creamy pinks and hot crimsons,” and so it's intriguing that the piece hung on the gallery's center wall is called “The Eunuch” (2003-04), in which a nude man bends forward, legs spread as if anticipating a medically indicated indignity, leaning

on the barren ground with his arms crossed at the wrists. His forward-thrusting pose obscures any evidence of his emasculation.

The abstraction of the figure is severe, with the legs and arms forming a set of triangles that shrink in size from left to right, like an inverted W, giving the configuration of the eunuch's body a hieroglyphic feel. The archaism of the image is underscored by the stripped-down landscape – a sand-colored mountain similar to Yosemite's Half Dome rising above some brushy, dung-brown evergreens.

The tension here is both formal and physical: the contortion of the nude body is almost painful to look at, and there is an uncomfortable split between the foreground and background as the eunuch's buttocks form a matching ridge to the mountain on their right. Consequently, the landscape refuses to settle into a specific space, pulled forward by the figure and backward by the pale yellow-and-violet sky.

We can't help but read into the image, which was painted the year the artist turned 80, an element of self-portraiture and self-parody, especially if “[a]s we age, our physical need for sex

decreases, but the role it plays in our imagination and in our emotional lives remains the same.” The entanglement of need and desire is shot through the figure's contortions, as the split between appetite and ability condemn the naked eunuch to the fate of a sexual Tantalus, with satisfaction continuously at hand and consistently thwarted.

The straightforwardness of Garabedian's bright, simple colors and ungainly figures – mythic icons rendered as flawed, flesh-and-blood humans – springs from the directness and honesty of his vision. In his interview with Samet, he describes how he felt at the moment he decided to commit himself fully to painting: “It started a whole new life. I became a new person. I moved from East LA to a little apartment on the beach in Santa Monica. Everything was suddenly different. I was doing something that I was incredibly interested in.” It was a long life, and he was blessed to keep at it until the end.

Charles Garabedian: A Tribute to Chaz continues at Betty Cuningham Gallery's Sidecar (15 Rivington Street, Lower East Side, Manhattan) through June 11.



Charles Garabedian, “Sisyphus” (2007), acrylic on paper, 35 1/4 x 44 1/4 inches



Gallery Z Hosts Sixth Exhibit of Year

GALLERYZ, from page 12

Thereafter, she continued her studies at the Lebanese University of Fine Arts where she graduated with honors in 2001. Eager to broaden her spectrum of art, she fortified her educational experience by immersing herself in circles with established Armenian painters and sculptors. Lara B. participated in a number of shows within Beirut, where she enjoyed early recognition of her art work. Her paintings earned impressive distinction by winning first prize at the National University of Fine Arts and third prize at the Artistes Association of Beirut in 2001.

Since moving to the United States in 2002, Lara B. has continued to garner acclaim for her art. Within two years, Lara B. has shown her artwork at collective exhibitions in New York, San Francisco and Providence, and has had two solo shows, in Providence and Oakland. Her work was also selected to appear on a magazine cover with international distribution in winter 2003. Currently, Lara B. resides in California, where she has her studio and cultivates her prolific tradition.

She said, "Capturing the moment's complexity of the human psyche is the driving force of Lara B.'s paintings. The pensive physiognomies, ethereal scenes, and complex textures open gateways into worlds full of hidden secrets and emotions. Stillness transcends each image while bold lines playfully dance like notes on a musical score. A great variety of textures are implemented within these paintings, whether it be by gracefully draping veils across an impassioned woman's face, or by caulking thick strokes of paint which draw viewers into each ripened images. Windows and arches are prominently displayed, providing hope in the form of light and strength as stable edifices. Hues often seem dark and monotone at initial gaze, however, just as one's eyes need to accommodate upon entering into a dimly lit room, a more detailed viewing of the work reveals a true panorama of col-



Helena Stockard "Wife of Wired Man"



Virginia Delgado "Istanbul"

ors. This gradual perceptibility affords greater appreciation into the depth and complexity of the paintings."

Helena Stockard received a degree in industrial design from the School of Design in Prague. Seeking political freedom, she immigrated to the US in 1968. She brought to her work a deep knowledge of the history of art, as well as an obsession with people and color. She has exhibited in major cities in the US, Czech Republic and Scotland. Her paintings and drawings are in art collections all around the world, including Johnson and Wales University and Hasbro Children's Hospital in Providence.

Her work shows a broad expressionist form depicting humanistic ideas about people struggling against nature and the evil of man. Her paintings create strong images of not only people enveloped by the atmosphere of their environments but the inner emotions of her subjects. It is these emotions that she used as a point of departure to explore the depths of complexity and the comparison that can be derived between natural events and social injustices.

She explained, "When I paint, I think mainly about the light, color, and composition. My thoughts, philosophy, and message are not solely about the subject matter, but about perfecting the balance of those elements. The struggle for this perfection was crystallized prior to the creation on any individual work. It comes to me as a direct communication between you, the observer, and me, the painter."

Virginia Delgado has been photographing street scenes and cityscapes for the last fifteen years. She has traveled to Istanbul, Paris, Naples, Buenos Aires, London and New York among other major cities. Working exclusively in analogue, shooting black and white film, she produces her own prints from her darkroom. She leaves the edges of the negative visible to show that she works in film and doesn't crop or manip-

ulate her images beyond what can be done in the darkroom.

Delgado is a Rhode Island resident and has been a featured artist in Bristol-Warren Art Night and Providence Gallery Night.

Said Delgado, "I currently live in Bristol, RI, where I am raising a family and teaching English as a Second Language at Roger Williams University. I continue to photograph daily life and memorable faces and continue to travel in search of rich material.

"I am first-generation American and my Uruguayan parents were my first artistic influence. My father was a sculptor with a great talent for life drawing. My mother was a painter who followed the same classical school as my father. I grew up in Fort Lee, NJ, comparing Da Vinci to Michelangelo and hearing stories about Van Gogh and his ear. Art was everywhere. Every afternoon my parents would cross the George Washington Bridge and board the A train Downtown to The Art Student's League. By the time I was in college, I was also going to classes. Not because I showed any real talent in drawing, but because it would refine my eye, my father said. I would learn to see. And I did."

In addition to this exhibit, Gallery Z displays an ever-changing extensive and diverse selection in salon style of original fine art works.

The adjacent "Italy" room expands the vibrant local Federal Hill Italian cultural atmosphere with "Dreamy Venice," filled with luminous handmade Murano glass gifts (paperweights, sculpture, vessels, perfume bottles) and Murano glass jewelry (pendants, necklaces, bracelets, rings, earrings, watches, hair clips), all personally chosen and imported from Venice by Gallery Associate Linda Kamajian in a sparkling rainbow of colors. These are set amidst Fine Art paintings and photographs related to Italy or by some of Gallery Z's established Italian-American Fine Artists.



ARTS & LIVING

CALENDAR

MASSACHUSETTS

JUNE 12 — St. James Armenian Festival – Annual Picnic in Watertown, On Church Grounds, 465 Mt. Auburn Street, Watertown. Sunday. Delicious Armenian Food! Live Music! Raffle! Children's Activities! Moon Bounce, Balloons, Face Painting, Caricatures, and More! www.stjameswatertown.org info@sthagop.com

JUNE 13 — Trinity Men's Union Dinner/Meeting and 7th Annual Tavloo Tournament, 6:15 p.m., Social Hour; 7 p.m., Dinner, followed by the Tavloo Tournament. Holy Trinity Armenian Church, 145 Brattle St., Cambridge. The Tournament is open to all and all skills are welcome and encouraged to participate. Entry fee is \$5 per person; to register email Dave Dorian attmuhtaac@gmail.com, or call 617.501.4300 by June 13. Please remember to bring your tavloo boards. Donation for the losh kebab and kheyima dinner is \$15 per person. For dinner reservations, RSVP by June 12 to the Holy Trinity Church office, 617.354.0632 or email tmuhtaac@gmail.com. For further information, log onto www.htaac.org/calendar/event/284/

JUNE 16 — Thursday, Holy Cross Armenian Catholic Church Presents a program of music and poetry called "A Cultural Evening Dedicated To Saint Krikor Naregatsi," Doctor of the Universal Church Declared by Pope Francis, Mystical Philosopher and Theologian. Keynote Speaker will be Monsignor Andon Atamian. 7:30 p.m. Holy Cross Armenian Catholic Church, 200 Lexington St., Belmont. This program will be followed by a reception. Both free and open to the public.

JUNE 18 — Talk by Robert Mirak: "Genocide Survivors, Community Builders: The family of John and Artemis Mirak," Date: Saturday, 1:30 p.m. Old Schwamb Mill, 17 Mill Lane, Arlington. Information: info@oldschwambmill.org, 781-643-0554. This is the story of two Armenian orphans uprooted from their homes in the Ottoman Empire during the Armenian Genocide and their lives in the new world, where they became an example of courage and achievement in both their Armenian and non-Armenian communities.

JUNE 20 — The Gregory Hintlian Memorial Golf Tournament sponsored by Holy Trinity Armenian Church at the Marlborough Country Club, Marlborough; 9:30 a.m., registration; 11 a.m., "Shot Gun." Join us for a day of golf - player's fee: \$175 (includes hospitality, lunch, dinner, green & cart fees, prizes and gifts) - or just dinner and a social evening (\$50 per person). Limited to 128 players. Tournament and tee sponsorships available. RSVP deadline, June 13. To register or for further information, log onto <http://www.htaac.org/calendar/event/203/>, contact the Holy Trinity Church Office, 617.354.0632, or email office@htaac.org.

JUNE 25 — Armenian Food fair, sponsored by St.



On Thursday, June 16, at 7:30 p.m., the Holy Cross Armenian Catholic Church of Belmont will host a cultural evening dedicated to St. Krikor Naregatsi, mystical philosopher, poet and theologian. Keynote speaker will be Monsignor Andon Atamian of the church. The program will offer recitation of poems as well as music. The church is located at 200 Lexington St., Belmont. The program and the reception that will follow it are free and open to the public.

Gregory Armenian Apostolic Church of Merrimack Valley, 158 Main St., North Andover, MA, 11 am.-7pm; losh and chicken kebab; kheyima; vegetarian plate; pastries; dine in or take out. Further information, Sossy Jeknavorian, (978) 256-2538 or Ann Apovian, (978) 521-2245.

JUNE 25 — The Armenian Church Of Our Saviour is presenting a new edition of ARMENIANS GOT TALENT! Saturday, 6 pm, in its Cultural Center at 34 Boynton Street, Worcester. The talent show features parishioners of all ages performing various musical and dance numbers with fun for the whole family. Following the program there is a buffet with a variety of Armenian foods. Tickets are \$10.00 for adults and teens and \$5.00 for children under 12. For reservations and additional information, call 508-320-1232 or 508-835-9277. No Tickets will be sold at the door.

JULY 31 — Sunday, St. Stephen's Armenian Apostolic Church, Annual Church Picnic, 12 pm to 5 p.m., Camp Haiastan, 722 Summer St., Franklin.

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

SEPTEMBER 18 — Sunday Afternoon at the Park. For families and friends. Armenian Heritage Park on the

Greenway. Boston. 2-4 p.m. All are invited.

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

OCTOBER 22 — Armenian Friends of America presents Hye Kef 5, a 5-hour dance, 7 p.m. to midnight with buffet; Andover Windham, 123 Old River Road, featuring musicians Onnik and Ara Dinkjian, Johnny Berberian, Mal Barsamian, Jason Naroian and Paul Mooradian, with proceeds benefiting area churches. Advance tickets before Sept. 1 @ \$55, call either John Arzigian, (603) 560-3826; Sharke Der Apkarian, (978) 808-0598; Lucy Sirmaian, (978) 683-9121, or Peter Gulezian, (978) 375-1616.

OCTOBER 23 — Save the Date. YerazArt will celebrate its 10th anniversary. Concert followed by reception, Cambridge.

NOVEMBER 3 — K. George and Carolann S. Najarian, M.D. Lecture on Human Rights at Faneuil Hall, 7:30 p.m. Doors open at 6:45 p.m., "Justice & Equality: My Life as an Activist." Speaker: Harry Belafonte, Activist & Entertainer. Reception follows at Bostonian Hotel. All are invited; free and open to the public. Further information: ArmenianHeritagePark.org

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

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

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

RHODE ISLAND

JULY 16 — 6 p.m. – 12 a.m. – A HYE SUMMER NIGHT # 10 sponsored by the Ladies' Guild, Sts. Vartanantz Armenian Church and the Providence ARS "Ani" Chapter. The dinner dance will be held at the Alpine Country Club, 251 Pippin Orchard Road, Cranston, RI featuring Hachig Kazarian, John Berberian, Ken Kalajian, Jason Naroian and vocals, Khatchig Jingirian from CA. The dinner-dance is \$55. Dance only after 8:00pm is \$35. Students dance only \$30. ID required. Buy your tickets early. R.S.V.P. by June 30, 2016. Call Joyce Yeremian at 401- 354-8770, joycey41@cox.net or Joyce Bagdasarian at 401- 434-4467.



Haig Hovsepien Performs at Jordan Hall

BOSTON — On June 4, Haig Hovsepien performed as the featured soloist with the New England Conservatory (NEC) Preparatory School Youth Philharmonic Orchestra's (YPO) final annual concert.

Hovsepien won the 2016 NEC Prep School Concerto Competition's top-most division and thus was entitled to perform with the YPO in its final concert.

After an intense and dynamic performance of Shostakovich's *Symphony No. 1 in F minor* and Khachaturian's *Concerto for Violin in D minor* under the direction of David Loebel, he received thunderous applause with standing ovations from the appreciative audience.

Hovsepien is a junior at Belmont High School. He plays the saxophone and is a proud member of his school's award winning wind ensemble and the Jazz Band.

(Photos by Jirair Hovsepien)



COMMENTARY

Karabagh after the War

By Edmond Y. Azadian

After the four-day war in April on the contact line with Azerbaijan, almost one hundred victims were buried but not the worries that were left behind; on the contrary, the concerns and the weaknesses rose to the surface to be discussed publicly.

When the dust settled, it turned out that 809 square meters of territory was lost to the enemy. Government supporters dismissed the importance of the loss as strategically insignificant. And since the war aroused patriotic fervor, some true patriots, along with a few demagogues, maintained that the loss of even one centimeter is intolerable.

When the outcry became louder about the misappropriation of the military funds allocated to the army, heads began to roll among the military brass.

Some politicians began to extract mileage out of the tragedy by blaming the government; "Russia's large-scale arms sales to Azerbaijan changed the Armenian-Azerbaijani military balance and greatly facilitated the April 2 outbreak of heavy fighting around Nagorno-Karabagh," former President Robert Kocharian said, and blamed the Armenian government for failing to thwart the deal.

Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov's visit in the aftermath of the flare-up did not bring any clarity to the situation; it only helped to quell anti-Russian sentiments, which were getting out of hand.

Obviously, the conflict had some other international ramifications; a high-powered Chinese delegation visited Armenia, which can bode well for the nation's economy and perhaps also defense.

Iran once again offered its good offices to help the warring parties settle their differences through diplomacy. Barely released from the yoke of international sanctions, the last thing Iranian leaders want is war in their neighborhood.

Alarm bells also went off in Western capitals, because as a news analyst wrote, "The four-days' war had serious humanitarian repercussions. But the violence also notably underscored the vulnerability of regional energy infrastructures located on Europe's North Atlantic Treaty Organization's (NATO) strategic southern flank – namely the Baku-Supsa and Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan (BTC) oil pipelines, the south Caucasus National Gas Pipeline and nearby oil and gas terminals."

Azatutyun.am has already indicated that Armenia has deployed anti-aircraft air defense and missile defense systems and has held military exercises in Karabagh to simulate possible attacks and air-strike scenarios on Azerbaijani oil and gas infrastructures.

To deter the Armenian side from being tempted to threaten western oil interests, Bakhityar Aslanbeyli, a Baku-based vice president with the oil multinational firm BP has suggested formulating a new concept for NATO – a kind of "Article 4.5" – that could contribute to the protection of trans-border and trans-regional energy infrastructure.

Armenia is a small, land-locked country blockaded and threatened by powerful enemies. It was proven time and again that should a doomsday scenario develop, we cannot depend on our strategic ally, Russia. A victim of genocide cannot be victimized by another genocide. Therefore, what is the solu-

tion for our ultimate survival?

There are 200 nuclear warheads in Israel, which are not legally allowed yet are tolerated by the international community. The reasoning for supporting that kind of arsenal, under the US banner, is that the Jewish people have experienced the Holocaust and they are surrounded by powerful enemies. Never mind that some of those enemies (i.e., Iraq, Syria and Libya) have been pulverized by US muscle.

No matter how much we dream of a world free of nuclear weapons, Armenia, by the same token, is entitled to the same kind of deterrence. Recent news reports indicated that former prime minister of Armenia, and current member of parliament, Hrant Bagratian, and retired Armenian Maj. Gen. Arkady Ter-Tadevosyan, have threatened Azerbaijan with the use of nuclear weapons and dirty bombs.

As a doomsday weapon, Armenians have also threatened to blow up the Mingachevir Dam, which may create an ecological disaster with the destruction of many villages in Azerbaijan.

The logic of war is cruel. While destroying the Iraqi army, Gulf War Commander Gen. Norman Schwarzkopf said, "There is no better civilized way of killing people."

In the May 31 issue of the *Washington Post*, Nina Caspersen draws some brutal conclusions about the recent Karabagh war: "The recent fighting appears to have shifted the front line in Azerbaijan's favor. This is significant, but not because the reclaimed territory is strategic or sizable. The Azerbaijani gains dealt a blow to Armenian pride, but more importantly, they signaled that Nagorno Karabagh's position is perhaps not as secure as the enclave's leadership believed it to be or as strong as they have portrayed it to their public."

Perhaps Samvel Babayan's arrival in Nagorno Karabagh is an indirect endorsement of the *Washington Post* assessment. General Babayan headed the Karabagh army from 1993 to 1999 and he rightly got credit for many victories. He received a hero's welcome in his native land, but his motives are not very clear. "I will do everything in my power to ensure that our security is properly protected," he said, in his attempt to justify and explain his return from self-imposed exile in Russia.

He also called for an urgent modernization of the armed forces to neutralize the military threat from Azerbaijan.

War heroes rarely make wise statesmen. While in Karabagh, he acted as if he was above the law. He was convicted for his role in the assassination attempt on the former president of Karabagh, Arkady Ghokassian. After serving four years of his sentence, he moved to Armenia and founded his political party, Dashink. While in Armenia he was associated with some unsavory characters. He is critical of the government's handling of the recent war, but he has been denying his intention to lead once again Karabagh's army or taking up a political role. If his intentions are to lift the morale of the public, he has achieved that successfully.

There is unease and confusion all around. Karabagh could use some moral support, which many war veterans have been bringing, besides General Babayan. No one can verify if General Babayan is abreast of modern developments in weaponry and war strategies to entrust him with a critical role.

In these demoralizing times, patriotic zeal is essential for the public. But the leadership in Karabagh needs a more sober assessment of the situation and more wisdom and expertise.

Hopefully Armenians in the homeland can provide both for Karabagh's survival.

LETTERS

Aurora Prize Winner Should Have Spoken about Armenian Genocide in Turkey

(Editor's Note: The following letter by Lucine Kasbarian is addressed to Marguerite Barankitse, the inaugural winner of the Aurora Prize in Armenia. Shortly after winning the honor, she attended the World Humanitarian Summit in Turkey.)

Dear Madame Barankitse,

I was so pleased to learn that you had deservedly received the Aurora Prize for Awakening Humanity, an award given to humanitarians in memory of the Armenian Genocide. Congratulations!

Your tremendous work on behalf of children and their inalienable rights – regardless of their ethnic or religious backgrounds – is very moving and inspiring!

I was extremely touched to see photos of you posing in front of Mt. Ararat. As you know, it is the symbol of Armenia to all Armenians, even as it sits beyond Armenia's present borders.

From viewing the UN session at the recent World Humanitarian Summit as well as reading press reports, I learned that you did not mention the Armenian Genocide in your remarks there.

One would think that you would have taken the opportunity to

"Awaken Humanity" about the still unpunished Armenian Genocide by discussing it while at a conference which, coincidentally, took place in Turkey, the perpetrating state that, to this day, continues to enjoy the fruits of that Genocide and persecute its remaining indigenous Armenians.

Mentioning the Armenian Genocide would have sent a very strong message and been an appropriate way to acknowledge your benefactors and the Armenian people who, after 100 years, still await justice for the planned elimination of their ancestors and confiscation of their indigenous homeland.

I am filled with disappointment.

Sincerely yours,
Lucine Kasbarian

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COMMENTARY



My Turn

By Harut Sassounian

Having Admitted Complicity in Genocide, Germany Should Now Compensate Armenians

Despite 'Sultan' Erdogan's insults and threats, the German Parliament went boldly forward last week and recognized the Armenian Genocide. In retaliation, Turkey immediately withdrew its ambassador from Berlin.

The historic Bundestag resolution, adopted with a near unanimous decision (1 vote against and 1 abstention), is titled: "In remembrance and commemoration of the genocide of Armenians and other Christian minorities in the Ottoman Empire 101 years ago." According to ARD television, 74% of the German population agrees that genocide was committed against Armenians. Another revealing survey cited by "Der Spiegel" magazine found that 91% of the German public does not trust Erdogan!

German Chancellor Angela Merkel, fed up with Erdogan's repeated blackmails, decided to put Turkey's megalomaniac dictator in his place, while Pres. Obama has to muster the courage to do so! The German leadership had to fend off not only the Turkish regime's attacks but also sharp criticism

from many of the three million Turks living in Germany.

After the Parliament's decision, Erdogan arrogantly declared: "We have nothing in our past to be ashamed of, but those countries that often accuse Turkey of 'Armenian genocide' have the blood of millions of innocent victims." Turkey's minister of justice Bekir Bozdogan was just as brazen, as he told Germans: "First you burn the Jews in ovens, and then you come and accuse the Turkish people of genocide." Erdogan and Bozdogan must be reminded that Germany, unlike Turkey, long ago admitted the Nazi-era crimes, apologized for the Holocaust, and paid billions of dollars in compensation.

It remains to be seen if 'big mouth' Turkish leaders would dare to take punitive actions against Germany, besides the routine withdrawal of their ambassador, as they do each time another government acknowledges the Armenian Genocide. Should Erdogan decide to go beyond making empty threats, such steps would backfire on Turkey as Germany is its largest trading partner. Turkey's economy is already in serious trouble after Russia banned the import of Turkish goods and discouraged its citizens from going to Turkey as tourists because of the downing of a Russian jet by the Turkish military near the Syrian border last year.

Turkish leaders have already damaged their country's interests by making provocative and scandalous announcements which have helped to publicize worldwide the German Bundestag's action on the Armenian Genocide. Thousands of newspapers, websites, TV and radio stations covered the German decision and the Turkish outbursts. It is noteworthy that the international media paid particular attention to the German Parliamentarians' admission that their country, a military ally of Turkey during World War I, was complicit in the Armenian Genocide.

The New York Times and The Times of London, two of the

most prestigious newspapers in the world, published powerful editorials on June 3 reaffirming the facts of the Armenian Genocide, supporting the German's Parliament's decision, and urging Turkey to confront its dark past.

In an editorial titled, "Yes, It's Genocide," The New York Times wrote: "... It was a genocide, the first of the 20th century.... The Armenians are fully justified in their quest for a historical reckoning.... President Obama, who as a candidate in 2008 pledged to recognize the events of 1915 as a genocide, has failed to do so.... The Germans, who have admirably confronted the terrible genocide in their own history, did the right thing in defying Mr. Erdogan's threats."

The London Times' editorial, "Genocide Denial: The mass slaughter of Armenians needs to be acknowledged by Turkey," was just as impactful: "The German resolution is right not only in its message but also in diplomacy. Turkish pique is regularly directed at allies who recognize the Armenian genocide. That response is worse than undignified and ahistorical: it is a denial of suffering on an unspeakable scale that poisons the politics of Europe to this day, and it needs to be challenged. The slaughter of Armenians was not, as Turkish apologists maintain, one of the unplanned but inescapable tragedies that happen in wartime. It was a specific campaign of deportation and mass killing by the Ottoman regime.... Modern Germany and its statesmen have expressed repeatedly their nation's remorse for genocidal barbarism in the last century. It is long past time for Turkey to do the same."

Having recognized the Armenian Genocide and acknowledged its own share of responsibility and complicity, Germany now has to make appropriate amends to Armenians, thus setting a venerable example for Turkey, not only in recognition, but also in restitution!

Constantinople Archbishop Issues Groveling Letter to President; Agos Hits Back

After the German Bundestag on June 2 passed a resolution recognizing the Armenian Genocide, the acting head of the Armenian Church in Istanbul, Archbishop Aram Atesyan, posted the following letter addressed to President Recep Tayyip Erdogan, on its facebook page. The subservient tone, riled Armenians around the world.

Agos newspaper in Istanbul issued a response. Read the response after the archbishop's letter.

Dear Mr. President,

The decision that Bundestag made about the events happened during the tragic times of World War I caused regret in our nation. As the Turkish Armenians society, we submit our regret to your dignified office as an expression of our heartfelt and sincere feelings.

Armenian Patriarchate in Turkey is a religious institution which performs its obligations to the state perfectly and got over the delusion of seeing itself different from the other citizens. Also, its maxim is to express the feelings of Christian-Armenian Turkish citizens, who know how to protect their rights when necessary. The Patriarchate is aware of the fact that some people are not happy with its stable attitude that it maintains by abiding the traditional way. Our late patriarchs not only provided religious services to our community with their statements and constructive attitude, but also put their stamps on the history with their exemplary behaviors, which still guide us today.

In this regard, it is unacceptable that a parliament, which was formed by the votes of German citizens and has the duty of establishing laws for the peace, prosperity and security of their nation, expressed its opinion, though it has no right to do so. It is unacceptable that this parliament legalized its decision on behalf of the entire German nation and considers itself a judge.

Sliding the role of German Reich over by a few sentences and pointing the Ottoman Turkey as the sole perpetrator is ethically controversial. It is also questionable to what extent this decision expresses the feelings of German citizens.

As we stated on number of occasions, using this tragedy that traumatized the Armenian nation in international politics causes sorrow and pain. This resolution and similar resolutions hit us hard. Unfortunately, this historical pain of Armenian nation is considered as a tool for accusing and punishing Turkish state and nation. And because of this ugly mentality, sub- and supra-identities of Turkish Armenians are harmed. The ones who are willing to see the truth can realize how Armenian nation has been abused by imperialist powers.

Turkish and Armenian peoples have to live together. These two ancient and neighboring peoples shouldn't be driven apart from each other by hatred inciting discourses. Instead of politicizing the history, the aim should be the fellowship

and peace. Two neighboring peoples, who have common history and similar traditions, will live together with peace one day, as long as we deem it possible and prevent the unnecessary steps.

In a world where politicians express their opinions about our people's suffering by taking their interests into account, we, as the Patriarchate, will continue to pray for the fellowship of Turkey and Armenia. This attitude is the force of our faith and the expression of our sense of citizenship. On the other hand, we know that some people will react against this attitude of ours. May God take root in the hearts of the citizens of the both countries. May God help the souls who devote themselves to create what is good.

On this occasion, we once again express our regret and pray to God for bestowing health, success and happiness on you. Also, we pray to God for making the state dignitaries, who work for the good of people, succeed in their services.

Cordially,

Archbishop Aram Atesyan

General Vicar of Armenian Patriarch in Turkey

Agos's Letter to Atesyan appears below:

Dear Mr. Archbishop,

We have read your letter about the Armenian Genocide resolution of Bundestag, which is addressed to the President and signed on behalf of "Turkish Armenians Society," with sorrow, anger and shame. Please regard this letter as the voice of those members of that society who disagree with the content and style of your letter.

You define the systematic and almost complete annihilation of a people by the decision of the state itself as "the events happened during the tragic times of World War I;" this is an affront to the ancestors, victims and the survivors in the eyes of the society to which you also belong.

The society that you defined as "Christian-Armenian Turkish citizens who perform their obligations to the state perfectly, got over the delusion of seeing themselves different from the other citizens and know how to protect their rights when necessary" doesn't have a homogeneous structure; rather, it consists of individuals who have their own independent feelings, opinions, and firm acknowledgment of truth. The thing is, Armenians are not the ones who see themselves different from other citizens. After 1915, whenever the political atmosphere gets intense, Armenians become subjected to discriminatory, fascist, and obviously threatening discourses and threats, especially in times of 1942 Wealth Tax and [the] Sept. 6-7 plunders. And on Jan. 19, 2007, they witnessed the assassination of Hrant Dink, one of the most precious figures who devoted himself to the peace between and in two peoples.

You said, "We, as the Patriarchate, will continue to pray for

the fellowship of Turkey and Armenia"; how could you justify this statement of yours, given the fact that your addressee President Erdogan threatened the citizens of Armenia to send them back to Armenia two days ago? Doesn't it trouble your conscience? Let us remind you those statements of the president, in case you have forgotten: "Currently, there are almost 100.000 Armenians in my country. Almost half of them are Turkish citizens. However, the other half are citizens of Armenia and we can send them back to Armenia, like Europe did."

You said that you are aware of the fact that "some people are not happy with your stable attitude that you maintain by abiding the traditional way." Honestly, we are having difficulty in understanding how forelock-tugging can be considered as an attitude.

The Armenian Genocide, as a crime against humanity, is a concern of the whole humanity. You said that you pray for the good of two peoples. The common future of those peoples would be possible only when an honorable reconciliation is achieved, because then, there won't be this kind of oppression that caused you to deny even your own history.

Dear Mr. Archbishop,

Since you said "The role of German Reich is slid over by a few sentences," we see that you have failed to comprehend the content of the resolution. Almost 80% of this resolution, which declares German Reich as the accomplice to the genocide, consists of Germany's confrontation with its own history.

Let us continue: you said, "Using this tragedy that traumatized the Armenian nation in international politics causes sorrow and pain." Indeed, the oppression that led you to write this letter causes sorrow and pain. Also, the sub- and supra-identities of the Armenian society in Turkey is not harmed by this resolution, but by your words. Above all, your words on "abuse of Armenian nation by imperialist powers" are recorded as an example to the denialist discourse; not by the ones who will take advantage of your usage of the official state discourse, but by your own people. In the near future, we will see who will appreciate your discourse with "enthusiastic applause."

On this occasion, borrowing your style in your letter, we once again express our sorrow, uprising, and anger, and pray to God for you; may God bestow sense, intelligence, and comprehension on you.

We also pray to God for giving you a dignified attitude, which you obviously lack, since you said that "you pray to God for making the state dignitaries, who work for the good of people, succeed in their services" in a time when tens of people are being killed every day in a civil war.

Cordially,

AGOS



High-Level Chinese Delegation Visits Armenia

CHINA, from page 1

enveloping various fields such as political, economic, cultural, educational and so on.

The president of Armenia and the first premier of China mentioned that despite external economic shocks Armenian-Chinese economic cooperation has dynamically developed during the recent years. The joint initiatives in the spheres of industry, energy, agriculture, science, and culture are an important stimulus for leveling up the existing relations, they said.

The First Premier of China highlighted the economic cooperation between his country and the Eurasian Economic Union, mentioning that Armenia, as an EEU member state, can have its contribution to the progress of talks in that direction.

The sides agreed that mutual high-level visits, which have become regular in recent years, significantly strengthen Armenian-Chinese relations. Sargsyan and Zhang Gaoli also expressed satisfaction over Armenian-Chinese cooperation in international organizations.

The two also attached great importance to the measures for strengthening cultural ties. In this context the construction of a school with advanced teaching of the Chinese language was highlighted, which, according to the Armenian leader and the senior Chinese official, it will be a promising contribution to the friendship between the future generations of the two states.

Aleppo Armenian Quarter Devastated by Bombing

ALEPPO, from page 1

10,000 of them reportedly remain in the war-ravaged country now. Many are said to be unable to flee the war zone or simply have nowhere to go.

Fighting in and around Aleppo intensified in February as Syrian government troops backed Russian warplanes began making major gains there, sending tens of thousands of Syrians fleeing towards the Turkish border.

The Islamic Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (ISESCO) issued a statement calling on the international community to take immediate measures to save Aleppo from deliberate and complete destruction, reports Sputnik News.

According to the statement, Aleppo is the capital of Islamic culture, because of its historical value, as well as its scientific, cultural and archaeological heritage.

“The world has not seen anything like what

Aleppo has been exposed to, in particular, the mass destruction of humans and infrastructure, which is an unprecedented humanitarian, environmental and architectural disaster in modern history,” ISESCO said in the statement published on its website on June 6.

In recent weeks, the situation in Aleppo and its neighborhoods has deteriorated, as various militant groups, including the al-Nusra Front, which is outlawed in Russia and many other countries, have been shelling the city in an attempt to counter the Syrian army and the Kurdish militants.

In a statement, Armenian Foreign Ministry spokesman Tigran Balayan strongly condemned continuous rocket attacks by armed militants in the Armenian neighborhoods of Aleppo, that claim lives and injure many.

In latest attacks, the Holy Trinity (Zvartnots) church, historic educational and cultural centers were heavily damaged.

Why Germany's Recognition of Armenian Genocide Is Such a Big deal

By Liana Aghajanian

Germany's parliament was practically unanimous: The killings of over 1.5 million Armenians by Ottoman Turks in 1915 constituted genocide.

The German Bundestag's overwhelming vote last week in favor of this resolution, with just one vote against and one abstention, brought both gratitude and anger. Armenian communities, many of them descendants of genocide survivors who are dispersed across the world, are grateful. Turkey, however, was incensed and recalled its ambassador to Germany. Many Turks see the vote as not just a threat to longstanding German-Turkish relations, but to Turkish national identity.

These opposing emotional reactions over the “g-word” and its politics are nothing new. Turkey and its government have long denied the genocide took place, calling the use of the term a gross distortion of the truth. Instead they've chosen to interpret the killings as a consequence of war, and not a systematic attempt to wipe out most of the Armenian population of the Ottoman Empire. Turkey's most conciliatory step has come in the form of condolences offered in 2014 to descendants of genocide survivors by Recep Tayyip Erdogan, who was then prime minister (he is now Turkey's president).

Germany joins a growing list of countries – including Argentina, Canada, France and Russia – that recognize the Armenian genocide as such. The European Union's biggest nation broke away from holdouts like the United States that use different terminology, without the g-word. Germany's move adds pressure on Turkey and its policies of denial. It's a monumental decision made all the more significant by the often unknown role Germany played in the mass extermination of Armenians, 30 years before the Holocaust.

An ally of the Ottomans, Germany had military officials across the empire who bore witness to the deportation and killings of the Armenian population, along with Assyrian and Greek minorities. Their role had both direct

and indirect implications as many stayed silent, fought alongside Ottomans or provided weapons for the crimes that took place. Some sources also say the German role in the Armenian genocide became a model for the Holocaust.

Last week's vote acknowledged complicity, turning Germany into the “world experts in atonement,” as columnist Leonid Bershidsky described it.

But perhaps more revolutionary than the decision itself was the person who championed it: the co-leader of Germany's Green Party, Cem Özdemir.

Considering his Turkish background, Özdemir's pioneering involvement is noteworthy – an important, rare voice in Armenian-Turkish reconciliation. Many, including Armenians, praised what they saw as Özdemir's moral courage in standing up to denial, even as he received threats and was called a traitor by Turkish politicians.

His support, and that of a small but strong group of Turkish activists, offers the Armenians some hope that Turks will one day do the same. For that to happen, a fundamental change has to come from within Turkey, from both officials and ordinary citizens challenging their past and the residue it has left behind.

The stakes seem high for Turkey, with its deepening descent into authoritarianism and nationalism, eroding press freedom, and long, fraught relationship with another minority group, the Kurds. To move forward as a democracy Turkey needs to revisit the blind spot in its history that became the crux through which its other problems are intrinsically connected, the event on which a modern Turkey grew: the Armenian genocide.

Armenians and Turks share a burden, one that changed the fate of millions in such explicit ways. More than 100 years on, Armenians have never forgotten this part of their history. But now more than ever, it is the Turks who must do the remembering.

(Liana Aghajanian is an Armenian American journalist who edits Lanyan Magazine, an independent online publication about Armenia and its international diaspora. This commentary originally appeared in PRI [Public Radio International].)

Ex-President Kocharian Declares Azerbaijan Did Not Solve a Single Strategic Military Problem

YEREVAN (RFE/RL) – Azerbaijan must have underestimated the military preparedness of the Nagorno Karabagh Defense Army and the readiness of Armenians to oppose its aggression, Armenia's former president Robert Kocharian said on June 1 in his first published remarks on the April war.

“The price of the launched military operation and its growing scale were apparently getting unacceptable for Baku and the war was stopped,” the former Armenian and Karabagh leader said in an interview with his unofficial website, 2rd.am.

“I would not evaluate what happened as a victory or a defeat. Azerbaijani troops occupied a number of our positions, but did not solve a single strategic military problem. The euphoria of a military victory in Baku is absolutely groundless. At the same time, we did not regain what we lost, which does not add to our optimism regardless of the size of the loss. Besides, the human casualties during the four days of hostilities are unusually and unacceptably high for us.”

Kocharian said the hostilities also made it clear that “even under the disturbed military balance there is no easy military solution to the conflict.” “And this may really push the stalled negotiating process forward,” he added.

Kocharian also described the painful reaction of society to the fact that Azerbaijan started to exceed the Armenian side by the quality of its weaponry as “understandable.”

“It was no secret, but it is one thing to know, and another to see it in the battlefield. The irony is that Armenia, which is a member of the [Russian-led] Collective Security Treaty

Organization (CSTO) and hosts a Russian military base in its territory, noticeably yielded to the adversary in the quality of its armaments,” he said. “Everyone wanted to believe that a military alliance with Russia would guarantee at least the preservation of the military balance and hence the security of Armenia and Karabagh.”

Kocharian, who led Armenia as president in 1998-2008, went on to criticize the current leadership of Armenia for not doing enough to supply the army with the necessary technical equipment. He said: “It is not normal when a commander controls the course of engagement with a mobile phone, when there are no night-vision gun-sights at platoon points and there is a shortage of bullet-proof vests for mobilized personnel. It is necessary to fill all existing gaps and it is clear that work in this direction is being conducted today.”

Kocharian declared that the government of Sargsyan could have scuttled the Russian-Azerbaijani arms deals had it acted immediately after their signing in 2010-2011. “Armenia should have managed to halt the implementation of the Russian-Azerbaijani agreements or at least limit it in terms of the variety [supplied weapons] or synchronize that with commensurate supplies to Armenia,” he said. “It had more than enough arguments [to convince the Russians.]”

While insisting that Russia is not interested in an escalation of the Karabakh conflict, Kocharian stressed: “Supplies of state-of-the-art offensive weapons to Baku disrupted the balance, considerably increasing the likelihood of such a scenario.”

SIT. JAMES ANNUAL PICNIC!

ARMENIAN FESTIVAL

SUNDAY, JUNE 12, 2016

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Shish, Losh and Chicken Kebab! Kheyma, Hummus, Eetch
Delicious vegetarian options!

LIVE ARMENIAN MUSIC!
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FUN FOR ALL AGES!
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For more information or to volunteer contact:
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