

THE ARMENIAN Mirror-Spectator

Volume LXXXVI, NO. 46, Issue 4440

\$ 2.00

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

Genocide Is Genocide: Views from Berlin

By **Muriel Mirak-Weissbach**

Special to the Mirror-Spectator

BERLIN – The resolution on the Armenian Genocide, long awaited by the Armenian community especially in the diaspora, and long-feared by the Turkish establishment, is set to be put to a vote on June 2. As the *Mirror-Spectator* goes to press before that date, it is impossible to predict here how the proceedings will unfold and what they will yield. What is possible, however, is to present the content of the resolution, based on a draft proposal leaked to the press a few days before – a draft which as such is subject to changes in the course of the actual debate – and to sketch the parameters of the political debate it has unleashed.

The unified text agreed upon by the parliamentary factions of the Christian Democratic Union/Christian Social Union (CDU/CSU), Social Democratic Party (SPD) and Green Party, is entitled, “Remembering and Commemorating the Genocide against the Armenians and other Christian Minorities in 1915 and 1916.” In a series of premises, the Bundestag presents its position before listing demands it

Stick to ‘Genocide’ Wording despite Turkey, Armenia Urges Bundestag



President Serzh Sargsyan

REUTERS PHOTO

BERLIN (DW) – Armenia’s president has urged German politicians to brand deaths in 1915 Ottoman Turkey as “genocide” and to not be intimidated by Ankara. Turkey’s president and prime minister have both spoken out against the wording. (The *Mirror-Spectator* is going to press before the June 2 vote.)

Serzh Sargsyan, Armenia’s president, told Germany’s daily newspaper *Bild* on Wednesday that he was sure that German lawmakers would adopt the wording submitted in a motion from Germany’s opposition Greens.

The draft resolution on Thursday’s agenda of the Bundestag, Germany’s lower house of parliament, contains the see WORDING, page 5

makes on the government.

The Bundestag honors “the victims of the expulsions and massacres of the Armenians and other Christian minorities of the Ottoman Empire which began over 100 years ago.” These “crimes of the then-Young Turk government ... led to the near total extermination of the Armenians in the Ottoman Empire” and victimized other

Christian communities, “especially the Aramaen/Assyrian and Chaldean Christians.” It was a “systematic expulsion and extermination of over one million ethnic Armenians.” To characterize it as genocide, the text cites a formulation used last year on April 24, 2015, by President Joachim Gauck, and repeated in the see BERLIN, page 5



From left, School Director Galina Najarian; Eddy Bahadrian of Tekeyan Founders Body; Dr. Hovig Vartanian, chairman of Vahan Tekeyan School Board of Trustees; Nar Khatchadourian, member of Tekeyan Founders Body and Mike Vayedjian, ADL Lebanon chairman

Tekeyan Central Board Allocates \$10,000 To Vahan Tekeyan School in Beirut

BEIRUT – The Vahan Tekeyan School is located in the hub of the Armenian community in this vibrant city, in the Bourdj Hammoud neighborhood. Since the inception of the school, the American-Armenian community has supported it generously. In the initial years, there were active Tekeyan School auxiliary committees on the East Coast and West Coast of the US dedicated to fundraising. The role was later relegated to the Central Board of the Tekeyan Cultural Association of the US and Canada.



Khatchadourian, member of Tekeyan Founders Body.

The Tekeyan Board also has an ongoing program to support five Tekeyan schools in Armenia and Karabagh, its Sponsor a Teacher, which raises \$40,000 annually.

COMMUNIQUE:

ADL Reform and Unity Movement Coordinator Nazerian Meets with Diaspora Minister Hakobian

YEREVAN – On May 31, Armenian Democratic Liberal Party (ADL) leader Vartan Nazerian, the chief coordinator of the ADL Reform and Unity Movement, met with Minister of the Diaspora of the Republic of Armenia Hranoush Hakobian in the latter’s office. They discussed developments in the various ADL regions and exchanged views on methods of changing the existing situation. The minister repeated her desire to see the ADL reconstructed and unified, and exhorted that no efforts should be spared to this effect. Nazerian revealed the viewpoints held by the Reconstruction and Unity Movement and himself, and presented his proposals. This meeting concluded with the exchange of good wishes.



Diaspora Minister Hranoush Hakobian and Coordinator of the ADL Reform and Unity Movement Vartan Nazerian

NEWS IN BRIEF

At Least 4 Killed in Aleppo Rocket Attack

ALEPPO (PanARMENIAN.Net) – At least four people were killed and dozens more wounded as armed militants shelled the Armenian neighborhood of Nor Kyugh in Aleppo, *Kantsasar* newspaper announced in a Facebook post, on May 30.

A total of eight rockets landed in the neighborhood on Sunday, May 29, causing a building to collapse.

Days earlier, the Armenian neighborhood fell under a heavy rocket attack.

The street where the Armenian nursing home is situated was also bombarded.

One of the rockets landed on a building where an Armenian family resided. Luckily, no human losses were registered in the region.

The Armenian nursing home was seriously damaged; windows broke, some parts of the ceiling collapsed.

Argentina’s Entre Rios Province Recognizes Armenian Genocide

BUENOS AIRES (Prensa Armenia) – The province of Entre Rios in Argentina, on Tuesday, May 31 recognized the Armenian Genocide, approving a law adhering to the National Law 26199, which establishes every April 24 in Argentina as the “Day of Action for Tolerance and Respect between Peoples.”

The Entre Rios Senate passed the adherence by unanimous vote of those present “in commemoration of the Genocide that the Armenian people fell victim to and with the spirit that its memory is a permanent lesson in present and future.”

Also on Tuesday, the Deputy Governor of Entre Rios and President of the Senate, Adan Humberto Bahl, along with other Senators met with Nicolas Sabuncuyan and Jorge Dolmadjian, members of the Armenian National Committee of South America.

“The meeting was extremely positive. In addition, this will be the beginning of a way to work together with the province on human rights issues in various fields,” said Dolmadjian.

The bill was filed on March 30, 2015 by deputy Maria Laura Stratta, who is now Minister of Social Development. On May 12, 2015 it obtained the initial approval in the Chamber of Deputies.

“Ten years after the enactment of the law that put Argentina in first place in the struggle for the recognition of the Armenian Genocide, it is very important that the representatives of the people of Entre Rios decided to join that path,” said Sabuncuyan, director of the Armenian National Committee of Buenos Aires.

The provinces that have joined the recognition law are: Buenos Aires, Catamarca, Chaco, Chubut, Córdoba, Corrientes, Jujuy, La Pampa, Misiones, Neuquen, Rio Black, San Juan, Santa Cruz, Santa Fe, Santiago del Estero and Tierra del Fuego.

INSIDE

Pops Night

Page 14

INDEX

Arts and Living	14
Armenia	2,3
Community News.	6
Editorial	18
International	4,5



ARMENIA

News From Armenia

MFA Official Says Azerbaijan Destroys Armenian Cultural Heritage

YEREVAN (Armenpress) – In an interview this week, the head of the international organizations department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Armenia, Vahram Kazhoyan, said all Armenian cultural heritage presence has been destroyed in Nakhichevan, now an exclave of Azerbaijan.

According to him, Azerbaijan insists on saying that Armenia is preventing the formation of a fact-finding mission there.

He said, “All allegations, which state that Armenia is against the monitoring missions of historic-cultural monuments, including the fact-finding mission within the UNESCO ‘Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict’ Hague 1954 Convention are false.

Meanwhile, Azerbaijan, despite numerous requests, refuses to accept the UNESCO fact-finding mission, as well as the joint mission of [International Commission on Monuments and Sites] ICOMOS and [United Nations Committee for Education, Science and Culture] UNESCO to Nakhichevan for ‘Researching Jugha and presenting results to the international community’ which was adopted in 2008 by the ICOMOS council.”

He continued, “From 1998-2006, the Azerbaijani forces have completely destroyed the cross-stones and tombstones of the Armenian cemetery of Jugha, which dated back to the 9-16 centuries, and were unique and of high cultural value. The site of the cemetery was transformed into a shooting range.” He noted that the government in Baku is not allowing foreign diplomats to visit the site.

He concluded, “Unlike Azerbaijan, all monuments in Nagorno Karabagh, regardless of origin, are under state protection, which can be witnessed by thousands of tourists.”

April War Hero’s Family Receives Apartment

YEREVAN (Armenpress) – The number of houses of SOS Gyumri charity project increases by one, becoming 25.

“Electric Networks of Armenia” has added one more house to the 13 it had donated before. The family of Hratchya Galstyan, killed in the April war, received the house on the day his baby was born, SOS Gyumri charity project’s Facebook page informs.

Overall 23 houses have already been allocated to different families. More than 100 residents who lived in substandard conditions since the deadly earthquake of 1988 have already comfortable houses. Two more houses will be allocated by MP Arman Sahakyan and Vega Company.

Yazidis Stand by Armenian Nation

YEREVAN (Public Radio of Armenia) – Armenia is the only country where Yazidis have been provided with broad opportunities to preserve their national identity, the head of the Yazidi community of Armenia, Aziz Tamoyan, told reporters this week.

The Yazidis pledge to stand by the friendly Armenian nation to rebuff the assaults of a common treacherous enemy if necessary, he said.

More than 50 Yazidi volunteers left for Artsakh to stand next to Armenian brothers during the large-scale military actions unleashed by Azerbaijan in early April.

“Everyone knows that Artsakh has historically belonged to the Armenian people, and Aliyev’s criminal activity is doomed to fail,” Tamoyan said.

“The international community, the progressive mankind, the international organization should strongly condemn Aliyev’s misanthrope policy and punish him as a war criminal,” Tamoyan said. He added that “Yazidis in different countries of the world will combine their efforts to achieve this.”

Five Yazidis were killed in the April war, including serviceman Kyaram Sloyan, who was beheaded.

Kocharian Faults Russia Over Karabagh Escalation

YEREVAN (RFE/RL) – 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 this week.

He also criticized Armenia’s current

Three Senior Defense Ministry Officials Arrested on Corruption Charges

YEREVAN (RFE/RL) – An army general and two other senior Armenian Defense Ministry officials have been arrested in separate corruption investigations conducted by law-enforcement authorities, it emerged on June 1.

Gen. Melsik Chilingarian was taken into custody late Monday, 10 days after being sacked as head of the ministry’s Department of Armaments which deals with storage, maintenance and repair of weapons and ammunition supplied to the Armenian armed forces.

Also arrested was Col. Armen Markarian, one of Chilingarian’s subordinates who was in charge of vehicles used by the army. Markarian was fired earlier in May.

Armenia’s Investigative Committee said the two men are suspected of abuse of power that resulted in “severe consequences.”

The third suspect, Col. Mher Papian, holds a senior position in the Defense Ministry’s Department on Material-Technical Procurements tasked with arms procurements. He was detained as part of a separate inquiry conducted by the Investigative Committee. The law-enforcement agency said Papian may face prosecution on charges of “negligent attitude towards military service” which also led to “severe consequences.”

A spokeswoman for the committee said that investigators will specifically look into the quality of various items which the arrested officials provided to the Armed Forces and determine whether they were purchased at inflated prices. She did not go into details.

Incidentally, President Serzh Sargsyan dismissed Papian’s immediate superior, Deputy Defense Minister Alik Mirzabekian, as well as Gen. Arshak Karapetian, the military intelligence chief, and Gen. Komitas Muradian, the commander of the Armenian army’s communication units, in late April.

The sackings came more than three weeks after the outbreak of heavy fighting around Nagorno-Karabagh that nearly escalated into a full-scale Armenian-Azerbaijani war. A senior pro-government lawmaker attributed them to “shortcomings” in the Armenian military’s response to an Azerbaijani offensive in Karabagh.

The four-day hostilities raised questions about the Armenian military’s apparent lack of prior knowledge of the assault. Critics also suggested that Karabagh Armenian frontline troops did not have sufficient modern weapons and other military equipment when they came under attack.

Sargsyan and other Armenian officials have insisted that the Azerbaijani offensive failed because it was aimed at achieving significant territorial gains that would have led to a “military solution” to the Karabagh conflict.”

government for failing to thwart the Russian-Azerbaijani arms deals worth an estimated \$5 billion and to provide the Armenian armed forces with more modern equipment that would have offset the Azerbaijani military buildup.

“Everyone wanted to believe that the military alliance with Russia at least guarantees the maintenance of the military balance, namely Armenia’s and Karabagh’s security,” Kocharian said in comments posted on his unofficial website, 2rd.am. “Before the implementation of [defense] contracts signed by Baku and Moscow in 2011 the balance between the [conflicting] parties in terms of the quality of weaponry was maintained. But it turned out that things are much more complicated.”

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

Those weapons included more than 90 tanks as well as dozens of combat helicopters, multiple-launch rocket systems, howitzers and heavy flamethrowers. President Serzh Sargsyan and other Armenian officials have publicly denounced their lucrative sale to Azerbaijan, saying that the Azerbaijani army used some of these weapons during the April 2-5 hostilities along the Karabagh “line of contact.”

In public, Russian leaders have dismissed the Armenian criticism, saying that Russian arms supplies to both Baku and Yerevan have actually strengthened the military balance in Karabagh and reduced the likelihood of a full-scale Armenian-Azerbaijani war.

Kocharian, who governed Armenia from 1998-2008, said the Sargsyan government 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.]”

The ex-president claimed that the current Armenian government could have also countered the “noticeable” superiority gained by Baku by providing the Armenian military with more, relatively inexpensive equipment such as night-vision devices and radios. “The existing shortcomings must be immediately eliminated, and efforts are obviously being made in that direction,” he said. “But this has to be done at an institutional level, not on a patriotic basis, as was the case at the start of the [1988] Karabagh movement.”

“Volunteers must go to the frontlines not spontaneously but be sent there by military commissariats in accordance with their military skills,” he added.

Kocharian last month visited Karabagh and met with its leadership to discuss the fallout from what was the worst fighting between Armenian and Azerbaijani forces since 1994. He also toured several sections of the Karabagh “line of contact.”

Kocharian has avoided any direct contact with Sargsyan, underlining a rift with his successor and erstwhile ally. The ex-president has increasingly criticized Sargsyan’s policies in recent years, stoking speculation about his return to active politics.

The speculation again intensified after former Foreign Minister Vartan Oskanian and several other political figures widely regarded as Kocharian supporters set up a new opposition party in April. The ex-president denied having links with the party on May 13.

Later in May, General Samvel Babayan, Nagorno-Karabagh’s former army commander, returned to Armenia after several years of self-imposed exile in Russia. Babayan signaled plans to resume his political or military activities in an interview with a news website sympathetic to Kocharian. He cited the increased risk of renewed war with Azerbaijan.

Babayan, Kocharian and Sargsyan are all natives of Karabagh who led the Armenian-populated region during its 1991-1994 war with Azerbaijan. Kocharian is believed to have had a particularly close rapport with the once-powerful general.

TCA Initiates Fundraising Campaign for Armenia and Karabagh Soldiers, Families

WATERTOWN – The grave situation in Armenia and Karabagh created in April of this year wreaked great financial and human damage, as well as aroused great concerns among Armenians throughout the world. The Tekeyan Cultural Association (TCA) of the United States and Canada could not remain indifferent to these circumstances. Its Central Board has pledged to send \$50,000 to aid the families of victims of the fighting as well as the wounded.

Half of this amount (\$25,000) is being sent and its distribution will soon begin. The rest is being raised through fundraising. It is important to note that no administrative fee is involved, and all money donated will be sent directly to recipients.

The administration of the aid will be similar to that of the already existing Sponsor A Teacher Program run by the TCA of the US and Canada. The organization has an official representative in Armenia who distributes aid to teachers in Karabagh and Armenia. The same representative will directly manage the distribution of aid to the war victims and their families so that there will be no other local intermediaries involved in the distribution process.

Lists of Artsakh victim families have been compiled. The beneficiaries will be soldiers wounded in the conflict and the families of martyred soldiers. They will be visited individually and receipts obtained. Donors and the public will be informed in a transparent process.

Those who wish to contribute to this campaign may make their donations out to the Tekeyan Cultural Association, Inc. (Memo: Artsakh Fund), and send them to 755 Mount Auburn Street, Watertown, MA 02472. For more information, contact (617) 924-4455 or email tcadirector@aol.com.



ARMENIA

UWC Dilijan School Holds Inaugural Graduation Ceremonies

DILIJAN, Armenia – On May 28, the international school United World College (UWC) Dilijan held commencement ceremonies for the first graduating class of the school. In total, 95 students from 48 countries who were admitted in 2014 to the new school in the UWC network in Armenia bade farewells to the school and to the town of Dilijan, which for two years had been their home.

“Two years ago when we had students’ induction welcoming the class of 2016, I said to them, ‘it will go in a flash’. And here we are now meeting to send them on their way in friend-



Hakob Sarkissian, General Director of Ernst & Young Valuation and Advisory Services LLC, admiring the sprouting pomegranate tree that each of the UWC Dilijan College donors received.

best universities in the world.

“Ruben and I are delighted that our dream, which seemed an impossible task at the beginning, was brought to life thanks to our partners, people who felt as we did, putting their trust and support into the project. Through our combined strength, the first international school in the post-Soviet landscape has opened in Dilijan. I hope that the school’s first graduates will continue to strive towards their dreams, have the strength and courage to reach their goals, that they are never afraid to seek help and refuse to rest on their laurels, that they can change themselves and the world around them. Be happy and make those around them happy, and help fulfill their dreams.” Zonabend encouraged.

The school’s graduates successfully passed their IB Diploma examinations, and will continue their studies prestigious universities such as Harvard, Yale, Columbia, Brown, U.C. Berkeley, Duke University, Johns Hopkins University, Wesleyan University,

University College London, the London School of Economics, the University of Edinburgh and Minerva Schools, amongst others.

The graduates were presented with Armenian flags and souvenirs in the shape of the Armenian alphabet to remind them of Armenia. The graduating students then presented sprouting pomegranate trees in glass containers to each of the UWC Dilijan donors, symbolizing their growth and development during their time at the school as well as their gratitude for the generous support that made a first-class education possible.

Gagik Adibekyan, one of the founding patrons of UWC Dilijan, and chairman of the Board of Directors of RD Group, gave a farewell speech to the students, wishing them success in the next stage of their lives and presented the school with an award won by UWC Dilijan at the 2016 FIABCI World Prix d’Excellence



Armenian students planting the last of the 48 trees, symbolizing the number of nationalities represented by the UWC Dilijan graduating class of 2016.

Awards worldwide competition for development projects.

The final speech of the ceremony was made by Noubar Afeyan a founding patron of UWC Dilijan and Managing Partner, CEO of Flagship Ventures.

“I would say to you what I say to my four children. Make peace with disappointment. We spend most of time trying to avoid disappointment but by doing so we preclude things that might actually lead to acceleration, value creation and changing the world,” Afeyan said. “I would also like to add that we hope that every graduate from this school dedicates a small piece of their future lives to UWC Dilijan keeping connected and supported, and keep giving advice, as we want your experience to be something to share with the future generations.”

The students and teachers livened up the farewell speeches from the donors with impressive performances. Following the commencement ceremonies, the graduates gathered for the opening ceremony of the alumni garden when Armenian students planted the last of the 48 trees, symbolizing the number of nationalities represented by the UWC Dilijan graduating class of 2016.

More than 400 guests took part in the cere-

mony, which included 40 of the school’s donors, 170 of the student’s parents as well as invited guests from embassies represented in Armenia.

The graduation ceremony ended with a public concert at the Dilijan stadium, performed by the founding patron of UWC Dilijan, businessman, philanthropist and musician Vladimir Avetissian, who entertained UWC Dilijan students, local residents and guests.

During the 2016-2017 academic year UWC Dilijan will be led by its new director, Denise Davidson, formerly Deputy Head at Mount St. Mary’s College in New York, who for 12 years was the headmistress of Gateways School in Leeds, Great Britain. Davidson brings to UWC Dilijan nearly 40 years of experience working and inspecting schools and colleges in the UK and at an international level.

UWC Dilijan School is the first international boarding school in Eastern Europe and CIS. The school opened in September 2014 in the Armenian town of Dilijan and currently has 188 students enrolled from 61 countries including: Armenia, Russia and other countries of CIS, Europe and Asia, Middle East and Africa, North and South Americas, as well as from Australia.

The educational project was initiated and masterminded by businessman and philanthropist Ruben Vardanyan and his wife Veronika Zonabend. The school was built with generous donations from over 200 benefactors. Its admissions policy aims to make enrollment available to anyone, regardless of socio-economic background, on the basis of demonstrated need.

The UWC Dilijan is situated at the junction of Asia and Europe, halfway between Yerevan and Tbilisi, the capitals of Armenia and Georgia. It covers over 88 acres of land, partially located within Dilijan National Park.

The UWC Dilijan academic program – the IB Diploma – is recognized by universities worldwide. The school is a full member of UWC International and an International Baccalaureate World School (Diploma). Program Curriculum are taught in English, and a wide range of other languages (initially French, German, Russian, Spanish). The school also offers the students a wide range of programs to engage with the local Dilijan community and environment. For more information visit: <http://uwcdilijan.org/>

Record Number of Armenian Students Participate in Math Competition

YEREVAN (Arka)—This year’s “International Mathematical Kangaroo” math competition saw a record number of Armenian winners, said AYB School, the organizer of the event in Armenia and Nagorno-Karabagh.

Overall, 41,000 school students from 1,012 schools in Armenia and Nagorno-Karabagh participated. This year’s winners are Hayk Andriasian, Gagik Gevorgyan, Gagik Chatinyan, Mikael Mkrtchyan and Sergey Nersisyan.

In addition to five winners, another 886 Armenian school students will be awarded with diplomas and prizes. Apart from this, AYB School established special prizes for another 713 students from those schools, which had no winners. Altogether, 1,604 students will receive prizes from the competition.

The award ceremonies will be held in 30 cities in Armenia and Nagorno-Karabagh from May 30 to June 3.

The International Mathematical Kangaroo is the largest competition for school students in the world, with over 5,000,000 participants from 63 countries in 2016. The competition is held annually and according to the organizers, the key skill tested is logical combination, not just pure knowledge of formulas.

The competition is a multiple choice test that runs for 75 minutes. It consists of 24 questions for students up to 4th grade, and 30 questions for other students. Evaluation and collecting of results as well as the prizes are regulated and organized nationally.

Special prizes are given for the “longest kangaroo jump” (the highest number of consecutive correct answers) for each school. AYB School’s organizing partner in Armenia is VTB Bank (Armenia).



Ruben Vardanyan congratulating the Class of 2016 graduates while UWC Dilijan school founding members and donors look on - (L-R) - Vladimir Avetissian, Gagik Adibekyan, Veronika Zonabend, Tim Flynn and Noubar Afeyan

Artsakh Human Rights Defender’s Office Launches Mission to Expose Azeri Atrocities

STEPANAKERT (ArmRadio) – The Office of the Nagorno-Karabagh Republic’s Human Rights Defender has launched a fact-finding mission to prepare a final report on the atrocities committed by Azeri forces against civilians and soldiers in Artsakh, said Ombudsman Ruben Melikyan.

The Ombudsman’s office released an interim report on April 22 to present the violations of international human rights law and international humanitarian law, the cases of attacks on civilian population of Artsakh,

cases of inhumane treatment, as well as cases of torture and mutilation of servicemen.

“The interim report was based exclusively on published facts, which are not enough for a final report,” Melikyan noted. Therefore, he said, the Human Rights Defender’s Office has started an independent fact-finding effort.

The initial report includes photos and description of facts meant for people above the age of 18. Only photos widely shared and discussed in mass media and on social net-

works have been used in the document.

According to the Ombudsman, the primary goal is to present the inhumane actions of the Azeri forces on international platforms, as their recently committed atrocities have reached different levels of cruelty.

Melikyan believes that the atrocities should be condemned and properly assessed by the international community. “There are enough facts and the Human Rights Defender’s Office will be consistent in presenting the facts to the world.”



INTERNATIONAL

International News

EEU Seeks Trade Deal With China

MOSCOW (RFE/RL) – Russia says leaders of the Eurasian Economic Union (EES) have agreed to start negotiations on a trade deal with China.

Speaking on May 31 after an EES summit in the Kazakh capital, Astana, Russian First Deputy Prime Minister Igor Shuvalov said the negotiation process will be “challenging.”

The Russia-led EES was officially inaugurated two years ago after the leaders of Russia, Kazakhstan, and Belarus signed a founding treaty. Armenia and Kyrgyzstan later joined the grouping.

Shuvalov said a free-trade deal signed with Vietnam last year was expected to come into force this year after the ratification process is finalized.

Kazakh President Nursultan Nazarbaev said the EES was also interested in cooperation with India, Israel, Egypt, and Cambodia.

Armenia Elected to UNESCO Committee

PARIS (Armenpress) – The 6th session of the General Conference of the states that have joint the “Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage 2003” took place at the United Nations Organization for Education, Science and Culture (UNESCO) headquarters on May 30- June 1 during which the election of the Intergovernmental Committee for 2016-2020 were held.

Armenia was elected from the Second Electoral Regional Group (Eastern European countries), receiving a unanimous vote.

Cyprus, Austria, Guatemala, Colombia, Cuba, the Philippines, Zambia, Senegal, Mauritius, Palestine and Lebanon were elected from the other electoral groups.

The Intergovernmental Committee is one of the key bodies of the Convention.

Grey Wolves Leader Convicted of Hate Speech

ISTANBUL (Bia News) – Grey Wolves Organization’s Kars Province leader, Tolga Adigüzel has been sentenced to 7 months and 15 days in prison for using hate speech against Armenians and thus “inciting people to hatred and crime and insulting.”

Adigüzel had said after a concert of Armenian pianist Tigran Hamasyan and the Yerevan State Chamber Choir in the ancient Armenian city of Ani: “I regretfully, fiercely and vehemently condemn the concert given by some neither fish nor fowl human piece of garbage wearing priest’s clothes. What are they aiming at with this action? Who are their supporters inside? Everybody should know their place and watch their step. Do they want to try our patience by traitor minds from inside and outside? Should we also go on the hunt for Armenians on streets of Kars? Could we give concerts in places which they consider sacred [...]?”

Following this statement People’s Democratic Party (HDP) Istanbul MP Garo Paylan filed a complaint against Adigüzel which led to charges.

The Kars 3rd Criminal Court of Peace has sentenced Adigüzel for “openly insulting a part of people for their social class, race, religion, religious sect, gender or regional differences (Article 216/2 of Turkish Penal Code)” to at least six months in prison.

His sentence has been increased to 7 months and 15 days in prison on ground that he had committed the crime through means of the press (Article 218 Turkish Penal Code). He has also been sentenced to a punitive fine of 3,430 euro.

Paylan filing the suit has made the following statement following the verdict: “Hate speeches cause hate crimes. In this case, not leaving hate speech against the Armenian identity is very promising for both Armenians and all other society segments in Turkey who believe in peace and justice. We will continue fighting against every crime involving hate speech, seeking justice and striving for peace in the society.”

AGBU London Gala Rouses Support for Syrian Relief

LONDON – On May 21, AGBU brought together hundreds of supporters and friends for a Gala Benefit Dinner at the Landmark Hotel. The evening was devoted to celebrating the achievements of the AGBU Humanitarian Emergency Relief Fund for Syrian Armenians and inspiring con-

crises swiftly and instilled in the audience the great significance of their contribution to Syrian relief. In particular, Alierta – a friend and supporter of the Armenian community – encouraged AGBU members to raise awareness about the crisis in Syria and outlined the way Armenians are exemplary in the

and we will continue the heritage of our founders and continue to reach out to every Armenian in need.”

To donate to the AGBU Humanitarian Emergency Relief Fund for Syrian Armenians, visit <https://donate.agbu.org/agbu-urgent-appeal>.



Master of Ceremonies Camilio Azzouz giving opening remarks at the Gala

tinued support for helping to alleviate the dire conditions that continue to persist in the region.

Thanks to the generosity of AGBU Central Board member and CEO of Amber Capital Joseph Oughourlian and his wife Jenny, all the proceeds from the fundraising dinner were directed to the AGBU Humanitarian Emergency Relief Fund for Syrian Armenians.

The highlight of the gala was the keynote speech by the Lord Darzi of Denham. Lord Darzi captivated the audience with his wit and charm. Born in Baghdad to Armenian parents, Lord Darzi is known as one of the world’s leading surgeons, pioneering the key-hole surgery that has saved the lives of countless patients around the world. He has also served as a government health minister and became the first person of Armenian origin to become a member of the House of Lords.

Speeches were also given by Camilio Azzouz of the AGBU London Trust and AGBU Europe Board; Oughourlian; César Alierta, the chairman of the Spanish telecommunications provider Telefónica; and AGBU President Berge Setrakian. All the speakers emphasized the importance of responding to global

world: “I’ve seen how resilient and strong the Armenian community is. It is part of your DNA. It is the most important community in the world because the Armenian community is the only one that can know how life is in the Middle East, Europe, Canada, the United States and Latin America

and also serve Christian values.”

Among the prominent guests were members of AGBU London, the AGBU London Trust, AGBU Europe, the AGBU Central Board and the clergy of the Armenian Apostolic Church along with members of the AGBU Young Professionals (YP) network.

Special acknowledgment was given to AGBU Central Board member Vasken Yacoubian, who has been instrumental in organizing relief efforts in Syria and for Syrian Armenians living in Armenia. “From the bottom of our hearts, you are truly a hero to us and a big source of inspiration. If my generation puts so many hours of work into what we do, it’s because of people like you who have put everything they have into our community. We want to deeply thank you for that,” Azzouz said in recognition of Yacoubian.

The gala closed with remarks by Setrakian, who sketched the formidable history of the Armenians of the Middle East over the past century and emphasized the perseverance of the Armenian people: “These are difficult times, but we will prevail. I remain optimistic. This vision of ours, created in 1906, has gone through many challenges, but we thank Armenians worldwide who have trusted this organization

FIDE Chief: Armenians to Participate In Baku Chess Olympiad

BAKU (Public Radio of Armenia) – Team Armenia will take part in the Chess Olympiad that is due to be held in Baku on September 1-14, Kirsan Ilyumzhinov, the head of international chess’s governing body, FIDE, said while attending an Olympiad countdown ceremony in the Azerbaijani capital on Tuesday, May 24.

As quoted by Azerbaijani media, Ilyumzhinov said that the issue of Armenia’s participation in the 42nd Chess Olympiad was discussed during his recent trip to Yerevan.

“During my visit [to Yerevan] I met with Armenian President Serzh Sargsyan, who is also head of the Chess Federation of Armenia, as well as with [top grandmaster] Levon Aronian and invited them to take part in the Olympiad. Until today I have heard no refusal from Armenia, and so Armenian chess players will take part in the Chess Olympiad in Baku,” said Ilyumzhinov.

Vice-President of the Armenian Chess Federation Smbat Lputyan said in a statement today, however, that Armenia is still discussing the matter and has not decided on its participation yet.

Armenian and Azerbaijani athletes have a history of avoiding competitions held in “enemy” territory because of the

decades-long conflict in Nagorno Karabagh, which briefly escalated into large-scale hostilities in early April.

Thus, because of security concerns, European soccer’s governing body, UEFA, had to cancel matches between the Armenian and Azerbaijani national teams that were to have been held in Baku and Yerevan in the run-up to Euro 2008.

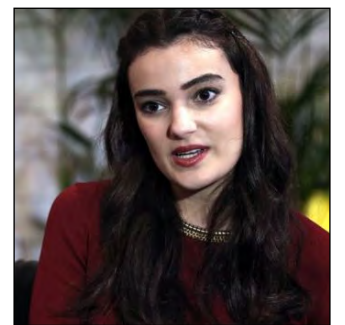
Individual Armenian and Azerbaijani athletes have also refused to travel to the neighboring country for competitions in different sports. But there have also been quite a few examples when they did participate in such competitions, with security guarantees provided at the international level. The latest such example is the participation of Armenian athletes in the first-ever European Games hosted in Baku last summer. No major incident was reported during those games or other major competitions in which Armenian and Azerbaijani sportspeople traveled to “hostile” territory.

Visiting Yerevan earlier this month, FIDE’s Ilyumzhinov urged Armenia and Azerbaijan to “engage on the chessboard and not in the battlefields,” wishing Team Armenia to win their fourth Olympic gold medals at the Baku Olympiad.

Ex-Miss Turkey Sentenced for Insulting Erdogan

ISTANBUL (BBC) – A Turkish court has convicted a former Miss Turkey of insulting President Recep Tayyip Erdogan, giving her a 14-month suspended prison sentence.

Merve Buyuksarac, 27, was found guilty of insulting a public official for postings she made on social media. She denied insulting



Merve Buyuksarac

Erdogan.

Her lawyer says he will file a formal objection to the verdict and take the case to a higher court.

Rights groups have criticized Turkey for backtracking on freedom of speech.

Almost 2,000 people, including celebrities and schoolchildren, have been prosecuted in Turkey for insulting the president since he came to office in 2014, under a previously little-used law.

Buyuksarac, the 2006 Miss Turkey, was briefly detained last year for sharing a satirical poem on her Instagram account in 2014.

The posting, an adaptation of the Turkish national anthem, was shared thousands of times on social media, and it was considered by prosecutors to be insulting to Erdogan, who was then prime minister.

Her sentence was suspended on condition that she does not reoffend within the next five years.

The model’s lawyer, Emre Telci, told the Associated Press news agency: “These insult trials are being initiated in series, they are being filed automatically.

“Merve was prosecuted for sharing a posting that did not belong to her. My client has been convicted for words that do not belong to her.”

Erdogan’s lawyer, Hatice Ozay, said in court the post had gone beyond “the limits of criticism” and amounted to an “attack against my client’s personal rights.”

Human rights activists say Erdogan is using the law to silence and intimidate critics, including journalists, academics and ordinary citizens.

The president caused uproar last month when he filed a criminal complaint against a German satirist in a case that prompted a debate over freedom of speech in Germany.



Genocide Is Genocide: Views from Berlin

BERLIN, from page 1

Bundestag debate that followed the next day: "Their destiny stands as exemplary for the history of mass murders, ethnic cleansing, expulsions, yes Genocide, which characterized the 20th century in such a terrible way. At the same time we know the uniqueness of the Holocaust, for which Germany bears guilt and responsibility."

Further reference is made to last year's commemoration: "On the centenary, April 24, 2015, speakers of all parliamentary factions in their debate and the German president on the evening before it, condemned the Armenian genocide, commemorated the victims and called for reconciliation." And, as was the case a year earlier, the role of Germany is cited: "The Bundestag regrets the ignominious role of the German Empire, which, as the Ottoman Empire's leading military ally, despite unequivocal information also from German diplomats and missionaries about the organized expulsion and extermination of the Armenians, did not try to stop these crimes against humanity." And: "The German Empire shares the blame for the events." Due to its complicity, Germany bears "a special historical responsibility" to facilitate the process by which Turks and Armenians work through the past in pursuit of understanding and reconciliation. This point is reiterated and elaborated, as the Bundestag expresses its support for all initiatives leading in this direction and urges the government to pursue the same. This refers not only to relations between Armenians and Turks but also to the state-to-state relations, whose improvement is "also important for the stabilization of the Caucasus region." The text furthermore notes the "task for education in Germany, in schools, universities and political formation to take up study of the expulsion and extermination of the Armenians, including it in curricula and textbooks, as part of the study of the history of 20th century ethnic conflicts, to transmit this to future generations."

A central point is that "Germany's own historical experience shows how difficult it is for a society to come to terms with the darker chapters of its own past. Yet the honest reappraisal of history is the most important foundation for reconciliation, within society as well as with others. In this respect one must distinguish between the guilt of the perpetrators and the responsibility of those living today. Commemorating the past also reminds us to remain alert and to prevent hatred and

destruction from threatening individuals and peoples again and again."

On the basis of these premises, the text articulates what the Bundestag demands of the government, for example:

- in the spirit of the German Bundestag debate on April 25, 2015 on the centenary that it continue to contribute to a vast public discussion of the expulsions and near-extermination of the Armenians in 1915/16, as well as the role of the German Empire.

- that it encourage the Turkish side to openly deal with the past expulsions and massacres and thereby to lay a necessary cornerstone for reconciliation with the Armenian people...."

The emphasis in the demands is on promot-



Cem Özdemir, one of the proponents of the Genocide resolution

ing study and reappraisal of the past, seeking reconciliation and providing the means (scholarships, programs, financial aid etc.) to make this possible.

In a section on background, the text, referring to the "greatest and most serious catastrophe in the thousands of years of history of the Armenian people," states that "Numerous independent historians, parliaments and international organizations characterize the expulsions and extermination of the Armenians as genocide," and that this, along with religion and language, is of fundamental significance for their identity. It repeats that the German Empire knew everything, but did nothing. It states that Turkey denies the facts, rejects that it was planned, questions the figures, etc. Again, the importance of facing the truth is

stressed as a precondition for reconciliation. As for the German Empire's role, details are given on the efforts of Johannes Lepsius to raise the alarm with his "Report on the Situation of the Armenian People in Turkey," and how the military censorship banned and confiscated it. A final note on the historical record pertains to the vast material in the wartime archives of the Foreign Ministry which documents the "systematic execution of the massacres and expulsions...."

The Resolution and Its Critics: The Turkish View

From the Turkish standpoint, the resolution was illegitimate, riddled with falsehoods and constituted political poison, and therefore had to be stopped. On May 28, it was reported that a motley collection of Turkish groups, otherwise divided among themselves, had come together to sign email letters to members of the Bundestag protesting the resolution. Over 500 organizations are estimated to have joined this initiative under the leadership of the Turkish Community in Berlin, from members of the AKP, and CHP, to rightwing Grey Wolves, Islamists and Kemalists. (There was even mention of something called the "Talaat Pasha Committee.") Their message to the Bundestag, according to press reports, was: "Over 90 percent of the Turkish popu-

lation rightly rejects the accusation of genocide, and considers it slander." They continued with the warning that any resolution would be "poison for the peaceful coexistence between Germans and Turks here, as well as in Turkey." Their reference to 30,000 Germans living in the Antalya region could be read as a not-so-veiled threat. Although the mailing reportedly went to all parliamentarians, those of Turkish background or who have ethnic Turks among their voters were particularly targeted. The same day, an estimated 1,300 demonstrators from this milieu took to the streets in Berlin, with signs saying "parliaments are not courtrooms," and "the Bundestag is not competent" (i.e. does not have jurisdiction over such matters).

Foremost among the parliamentarians to be attacked by this coalition was Cem Özdemir, the Green Party leader who has led the Genocide resolution initiative. As he told the press, he had been called every imaginable name: "It's always the same terms," he said: "Traitor, Armenian pig, S.O.B., Armenian terrorist, even Nazi." He remarked that the situation for parliamentarians in Germany, however, differs from that in Turkey. "No Bundestag member should fear being jailed or even killed," he said.

On May 31, President Recep Tayyip Erdogan took action. Although his speaker had already announced that it would be better not to pass the resolution, Erdogan personally picked up the phone and called Chancellor Angela Merkel to warn that passage of the resolution would damage relations between the two countries. Appealing to Germany's "healthy common sense," he told Merkel, "If this text is accepted and Germany blunders into this trap, this could worsen all our relations to Germany, where three million Turks live and which is our NATO partner." Merkel expressed her "concern." Her office announced she would try to attend the vote, if her schedule allowed it. SPD faction leader Thomas Oppermann commented that "The Bundestag has a quorum even without Merkel and [Foreign Minister] Steinmeier."

Call a Spade a Spade

If the draft resolution provoked rage and protests from Turkish quarters, it also raised serious questions from those who – Armenians or not – supported political action to condemn the genocide officially. One point singled out for criticism was the absence of

any reference in the text to the Greek Orthodox, who should be included among the victims of the genocide. The most important criticism dealt with the way the text deals with the issue of genocide per se. Three leading public figures who are proponents of genocide recognition, sent an open letter on May 30 to the members of the Bundestag. They are Helmut Donat-Freiherr von Bothmer, whose Donat publishing company was a pioneer in issuing works on the Armenian Genocide; Steffen Reiche, former Bundestag member and parish priest; and Prof. Wolfgang Schlott, President of the Exile-PEN in German-speaking countries. The case they argue reflects the thinking of a significant segment of German civil society engaged in the Armenian issue.

Expressing concern that the lawmakers "are making a serious, irreparable mistake" in the draft, they write that the June 2 decision will carry consequences of political and historical nature, as well as in relation to international law. They assert that since 1915 the full truth about the Genocide has been "repressed, denied or at best ignored" by a succession of ruling bodies in Germany and that to recognize the Genocide means taking this into account. Instead, they state, aside from its title, the text deals with genocide only indirectly. They criticize the formulation which refers to the destiny of the Armenians as "exemplary for the history of mass murders, ethnic cleansing, expulsions, yes Genocide, which characterized the 20th century in such a terrible way," saying it is "inappropriate and unacceptable" in the context of a century of silence on the issue. They criticize the fact that further references to genocide in the text are attributed to "numerous independent historians" or to speeches by parliamentarians and Gauck. The open letter includes a critique by Berlin genocide expert Prof. Tessa Hofmann, who reviews the German role in 20th genocides, from the Herreros and Nama in Namibia, to the Jews, Sinti and Roma in World War II; in the interim period, she writes, Imperial Germany was co-responsible for the Ottoman war crimes on Christians between 1914 and 1918. She attacks the repeated formulations "massacre" and "expulsions" which play down the fact that the deportations were in fact death marches. She also calls for stronger wording to include the Greek Orthodox victims.

The open letter makes its central point forcefully: "In no place does the resolution of the CDU-CSU, SPD and Green Party say that you yourselves consider and condemn the events of 1915 as Genocide. Yet this is precisely the issue – it is the evaluation of the legislative branch which you belong to. It is not a matter of whether Person X, various speakers or part of some professional group present the view that it was genocide." The open letter therefore calls on the parliamentarians to alter the disputed formulations and/or to add: "The German Bundestag condemns the persecution, mass deportations and systematic killing of Armenians, Greek Orthodox and Aramaic speaking Christians by the Ottoman Empire as genocide."

Mooting that the parliamentarians would never formulate a resolution on the Holocaust in such euphemistic terms, the authors of the open letter demand adequate, precise language. They underline the fact that "in evaluating the resolution draft, it is not a matter of hair-splitting, but of genocide – the most heinous crime in the history of mankind. And if the Bundestag takes a position on this, it must be unambiguous." By the same token, they demand that the ignominious role of Imperial Germany's role be clearly named and denounced.

A more detailed analysis of the genocide debate in Germany will be possible after the vote has been taken. One key aspect to be examined – and which the authors of the open letter reference – is the extent to which the entire issue has become a political football in the Realpolitik world of relations with Turkey, then and now.

(Note: All quotations have been translated from the original German by the author.)

Stick to 'Genocide' Wording despite Turkey, Armenia Urges Bundestag

WORDING, from page 1

word "genocide," despite warnings by Turkey's President Tayyip Erdogan on Tuesday, followed by new Prime Minister Binali Yildirim on Wednesday.

Yildirim said the deaths were the result of "ordinary" events during war conditions. Turkey and Armenia have long been estranged over the World War One massacre. Armenians say up to 1.5 million of their kin were killed between 1915 and 1916. Ankara argues that roughly half a million died in civil strife with Ottoman rulers.

More than 20 nations, including France and Russia, have already recognized the mass deaths as genocide, albeit prompting diplomatic tension with Turkey.

"I am sure: the politicians in the Bundestag see it the same way and will not allow themselves to be intimidated," Sargsyan said, referring to the draft.

Changing the wording "just because that makes the head of state of another country angry" would not be fair, nor prudent long-term, said Sargsyan.

Erdogan, who telephoned German Chancellor Angela Merkel on Tuesday, May 31, told a news conference that the Greens' resolution, if adopted by the Bundestag, would damage ties between Ankara and Berlin.

Reiterating that stance on Wednesday, Yildirim described as "absurd" Thursday's pending Bundestag motion, which also has support from Merkel's conservative bloc and the center-left Social Democrats (SPD).

"History should be left to historians," Yildirim told journalists in Ankara.

The Greens' draft resolution entitled "Remembrance and commemoration of the genocide of Armenians and other Christian minorities in 1915 and 1916" carries the contested word throughout the text.

The pending Thursday vote collides with the bid by Merkel and the EU as a whole to get Turkey to implement a complex deal to exchange migrants with Europe.

Germany has extensive ties with Turkey, including 3 million residents of Turkish origin, dating back to a "guest worker" scheme in the 1960s and 70s.

Community News

EyeCare Project Hosts Glendale Event to Thank Supporters

GLENDALÉ – On May 12, the Armenian EyeCare Project hosted a small gathering in Glendale at the home of Michael and Mari Sahakian. The evening was a way of sharing the Project's accomplishments with friends and donors and thanking those in the Glendale and Pasadena area for their longtime and loyal support.

Dr. Roger Ohanesian, an ophthalmologist in Laguna Hills and founder and chairman of the Armenian EyeCare Project, talked to guests at the gathering as they looked out over a gorgeous view of the Los Angeles Basin and dined on hors d'oeuvres and dessert.

Discussing the significance of the project's accomplishments, Ohanesian talked about how, over the past nearly 25 years, the EyeCare Project has changed the landscape of eye care in Armenia, which has enabled them to transition from a Soviet system of centralized health care to a Western system with new funding and delivery systems.

Ohanesian also discussed the organization's accomplishments in Armenia including seven subspecialty eye clinics currently operating in Yerevan; the Center of Excellence for the Prevention of Childhood Blindness, which opened its doors in Yerevan in 2010; the cutting-edge Mobile Eye Hospital which travels throughout Armenia to reach those living outside the capital; and – its biggest project yet – the five Regional Eye Clinics currently being developed throughout Armenia so those living in remote regions of the country will have access to quality eye care.

As the project implements each of its programs it is evident there is a common thread – enabling Armenians to have, within a few years, self-sustaining quality eye care throughout the country.

"We've had the major areas covered and they're covered very well," said Dr. Ohanesian. "The doctors in Armenia have become so skilled they have patients coming from other countries for eye care and doctors from other countries coming for training and to observe their highly skilled colleagues." Dr. Ohanesian talked about some recent cases when patients from Georgia, Kazakhstan and Russia traveled to Armenia for eye care.

Ohanesian also shared some impressive statistics with guests: Through the Mobile Eye Hospital alone, nearly 800,000 patients – 580,000 adults and 225,000 children – have been cared for of which more than 50,000 patients had surgery and 120,000 received eye-glasses at no cost. At the Project's subspecialty clinics in Yerevan – Retina, Glaucoma, Corneal-Uveitis, Pediatrics and more – nearly 80,000 patients are seen each year and more than

see GLENDALÉ, page 7



Dr. Onnik Keshishian and AACP Founder Dr. Roger Ohanesian



Tom Vartabedian

Columnist's Class on Obituary Writing Draws National Attention

HAVERTHILL, Mass. (*Lawrence Eagle Tribune*) – Like the pied piper, longtime *Haverhill Gazette* journalist Tom Vartabedian was hoping his class on writing your own obituary would gain a local following and that his students would become

"ambassadors" for obituary writing.

He had no idea his small class at the Citizens Center would gain the attention of the *Wall Street Journal*.

By Mike LaBella

James Hagerty, an obituary writer for the *Wall Street Journal's* Pittsburgh, Penn., office, learned that when it comes to confronting one's own death, local seniors who are learning to write their own obituaries with help from Vartabedian are breathing a sigh of relief that the task won't be left to others.

They could not wait to share tributes to their lives with Hagerty, who visited the senior center recently along with a videographer.

Hagerty said he came to Haverhill to do a story on the class after reading an *Eagle-Tribune* news article that appeared in an online news service he subscribes to.

"A lot of people have an aversion to writing," Hagerty said about writing your own obituary. "It takes guts to put it on paper and let other people read it."

Vartabedian recently completed his free three-session class at the Citizens Center and at the request of Hagerty, called his students back for an encore session. Many of his students came prepared with what they had written and he critiqued their work.

"I couldn't say no," Vartabedian said. "I wanted to be part of Haverhill being showcased by one of the nation's leading publications."

Vartabedian said the last time this kind of attention was focused on Haverhill was in 1971, when Sharon Poole became the first girl in the country to play on a Little League team. Poole's story became national news. Her mother, Kathleen McCharron Poole, 84, attended a previous obituary writing workshop.

Vartabedian has spent 50 years with the *Gazette* covering every beat and writing hundreds of "super-obits," or special tribute obituaries. He bases each one on a person whose life he wants to highlight beyond what was said in their official obituary.

He said the idea to teach the class arose out of his unexpected confrontation with gastro-intestinal cancer that was diagnosed in February.

While dealing with his own illness, Vartabedian decided to help others put into words what they cherished about their own lives. He tells his students not to leave it up to a loved one but to write about their lives while they are still in good health.

Sixteen people showed up for his encore class, which included many people who were not able to attend all three previous sessions and those who had completed their obituaries but wanted Vartabedian to critique them.

Hagerty listened keenly to Vartabedian as he read one tribute after another, as his student writers listened proudly to their words.

Ralph Wightman, 87, told the class that when his wife died he wasn't able to write her obituary but left it to a family member, who he said did the best they could but left out a lot of information he just couldn't figure out how to include at the time.

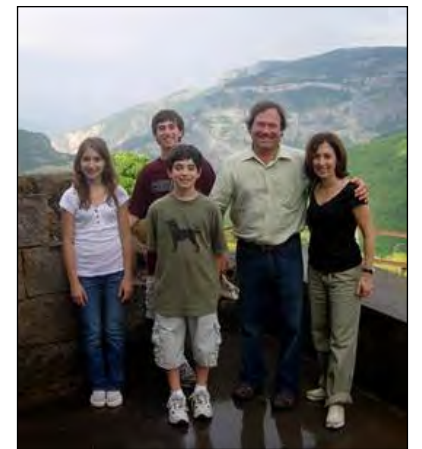
see VARTABEDIAN, page 8

My ABC Identity

By Roger Strauch

My relationship with Armenia started 46 years ago when, as a teenager, I visited Armenia with my brother and parents. It was the height of the Cold War and my father was one of our country's senior representatives to the Soviet science community. My dad was chairman of the Harvard Physics Department. His mission was to seek out the best and brightest experimental physics labs in the Soviet "empire."

On this quest Dad befriended Dr. Artem Alikhanian, the co-director, with his brother, of the Yerevan Physics Institute. Alikhanian had cut a deal with Khrushchev and then Brezhnev to fund his lab with a simple value proposition: "You give me lots of money and I'll take the talented scientists who are not welcome in Moscow and create a world class physics institute. I'll take your Jews,



The Strauch family in Armenia

Georgians, Siberians, and keep the Armenians and we will do work that will distinguish us worldwide."

Alikhanian did just that. And in 1970, Alikhanian invited my dad and the family to Armenia, a very unusual occurrence.

Shortly after my Dad died in the year 2000, I was invited by the Armenian government to help get to know and to mentor the country's IT community. Upon arrival, I was also greeted by some of the same scientists who had first met me as a 14-year-old kid. They encouraged me to engage with Armenia commercially and philanthropically. In the US, I was already quite involved with the Armenian community. My wife, Dr. Julie Kulhanjian and I met as students at Stanford and were raising three kids as Armenian-Americans.

I had wanted very much to work in a developing nation and I knew Julie would support me if I focused my efforts in Armenia. I was inspired by Dad's professional admiration for and appreciation of Armenian talent and culture. Since 2001, I have spent about 1-2 months in Armenia every year.

As an entrepreneur and venture capitalist with more than three decades experience, I say there has never been a more exciting time to be an entrepreneur in

see ABC, page 11



COMMUNITY NEWS

EyeCare Project Hosts Glendale Event to Thank Supporters

GLENDALE, from page 6
5,000 infants have been screened and treated for ROP at the Center of Excellence for the Prevention of Childhood Blindness.

“What the EyeCare Project has done in the past 25 years has been extraordinary,” said Aram Bassenian, a former board member of the project. “Many people didn’t think bringing this level of quality eye care services to Armenia was possible. But we believed, we kept going, and here we are today.”

With two of the five Regional Eye Clinics already funded – the Haig Boyadjian Eye Clinic in Ijevan, Tavush and the John and



Michael and Mari Sahakian and Aram and Terez Bassenian with Dr. Roger Ohanesian



Some of the guests

Hasmik Mgrdichian Eye Clinic in Spitak, Lori – the EyeCare Project is 40 percent of the way toward its “Five-for-Five” goal – five clin-

ics in five years for \$5 million. To learn more about the AECF visit www.eyecareproject.com.

Arsine Kaloustian Named Acting-Managing Editor of Florida Armenians

BOCA RATON, Fla. – Florida Armenians announces the promotion of Arsine Kaloustian to Acting-Managing Editor of Florida Armenians, effective immediately. Kaloustian has served as Florida Armenians Public Affairs Director since the very beginning and has been instrumental in the media outlets’ launch and success over the years.

“Florida Armenians started as an idea - the idea that an Armenian community should be tied together, move as one, and be united, regardless of politics or affiliations,” Kaloustian said. “Florida Armenians built upon that foundation, and as a result we have extended our reach to every Armenian community in the state. Today, we have more followers on Facebook than any other Armenian organization in Florida, and that is something we are so very proud of because it means we are actively achieving our goal of bridging our community in a meaningful way. I am honored to be stepping into this role, and am excited to discover what the future holds for Armenians in Florida,” she said.



Arsine Kaloustian

Kaloustian has been active in various Armenian American organizations for almost a decade. She previously served as the Chairperson of the Return to Asbury Armenian Kef in 2014 and 2015, and currently serves as the Chairperson of South Florida’s Armenian Genocide Commemoration (AGC, Inc.) and Florida Chairperson of the Armenian Assembly of America.

Kaloustian will take over for out-going editor Taniel Koushadjian, who launched Florida Armenians in 2011 to meet the needs of a growing non-partisan Armenian-American readership. Florida Armenians is the only independent Armenian news media outlet in America, and serves the 30,000 and growing Armenian-American community members in Florida, now the third largest state in the Union.

“Arsine’s role in the launch and growth of Florida Armenians has been invaluable and she has elevated our publication to the top of the class in terms of accurate reporting and effective dissemination of Armenian American news,” Koushadjian said. “No doubt, Kaloustian will continue to raise our own editorial standing with our growing list of contributors and readers across the country and I’m confident that she will do a great job in this new capacity,” he said.



Sponsor A Teacher
In Armenia and Karabagh
16th Anniversary

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



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

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

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip code _____

Tel: _____

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

TCA Sponsor a Teacher
5326 Valverde, Houston, TX 77056

Your donation is Tax Deductible.



COMMUNITY NEWS

Assemblymember Adrin Nazarian Champions Armenian American Museum

SACRAMENTO, Calif. – Assemblymember Adrin Nazarian (D-Sherman Oaks), chair of Assembly Budget Subcommittee #4, appropriated \$5 million within the Assembly's Budget proposal to build an Armenian American Museum in Glendale.

"The Armenian journey to California – from genocide to prosperity – is a critical thread in the fabric of our State. An Armenian museum recognizing our past would be an excellent addition to our State's wealth of cultural and historical centers," stated Nazarian.

The mission of the Armenian-American

Museum is to promote understanding and appreciation of America's ethnic and cultural diversity by sharing the Armenian American experience. The Museum will be a cultural campus that enriches the community, educates the public on the Armenian American story, and empowers individuals to embrace cultural diversity and speak out against prejudice.

The museum is patterned after Los Angeles County museums that combine the lessons and experiences of a specific group of residents with the vision of preventing discrimination and improving collaboration between all citizens of the County.

The Armenian American Museum would:

Serve as a bridge to foster understanding between the multitude of cultures residing in Glendale, Burbank, La Canada, Pasadena, and surrounding areas

Engage diverse audiences, particularly youth, through enthralling exhibitions, entertaining public programs, and captivating collections

Provide tools and resources to nurture cultural leadership and promote knowledge, sharing, and collaboration

Provide an impactful and immersive experience, telling the history of Armenia and the

story of Armenians living in America

Present Armenia's struggle for liberation, self-determination, and justice

Preserve, share, and promote Armenian culture and collective heritage

For more information on the museum please visit armenianamericanmuseum.org.

With the help and support of Speaker Anthony Rendon and Assembly Budget Chair Phil Ting, Assemblymember Nazarian is committed to championing the allocation of \$5 million for the Armenian American Museum through the next steps of the budget process.

Columnist's Class on Obituary Writing Draws National Attention

VARTABEDIAN, from page 6

"I wanted to thank my wife for putting up with me for 18 years while I was in the Navy and traveling," Wightman said,

Barbara O'Shea said she is still in the process of editing her obituary, and that having this additional class will help.

"My children don't really know much about the later years of my life," O'Shea said about the reason she came to the class.

O'Shea said she was surprised to see a *Wall Street Journal* reporter sitting in on the class.

"It puts a spotlight on this little Council on Aging," O'Shea said.

Vartabedian told the class that after the *Eagle-Tribune* published a story about his class, he started getting one phone call after another from people who wanted to be part of it.

"We are going to start it up again in the fall," Vartabedian said. "As long as there is a need and desire, why stop?"

Vartabedian said he hopes others will be inspired and influenced to write their own obituaries and that the idea will catch on in other communities.

"The thought occurred to me that if you go back to the Armenian Genocide, more than 1.5 million people were mass slaughtered... and you have 6 million people in the Nazi death

camp who didn't have a chance to write their own obituaries and probably no one has written one for them," he said.

In talking about the current heroin epidemic that has the region in its grip, Vartabedian said the burden of writing obituaries for young people who are dying every day from heroin overdoses often lands on the parents.

"Don't short-change that child," he said. "As tragic as it may be, they deserve as much of a nice obituary as everyone else."

He lightened the mood by talking about a recent trend of including political commentary in obituaries. Quoting from an Associated Press story, Vartabedian talked about an Alabama woman who asked that "In lieu of flowers, do not vote for Donald Trump."

"A Stoughton male said he wished Donald Trump were president, and not to vote for Hilary Clinton, while a Virginia woman facing the choice between Trump and Hilary chose death instead," he said.

Asked if an obituary can include a sense of humor, Vartabedian encouraged it.

Julia DeVeaux, 84, noted in her obituary that she was a member of the choir at Calvary Baptist Church in Haverhill.

"She did not sing great," DeVeaux wrote, which triggered a round of laughter.

On a more serious note, which Vartabedian

found interesting, DeVeaux noted that she was predeceased by two sons, Michael W. and Marque E. DeVeaux, "of heaven."

"I tell people that my two sons are with their grandparents, who loved them dearly," she said.

Kalister Green-Byrd, 81, arrived directly from the airport, after returning from a visit with her son Marshall (one of eight children) in South Carolina. She wanted to attend the class to thank Vartabedian for helping her write the story of her life and share it with others.

"Tom loves the city and will do anything to help people," Green-Byrd said. "I'm so glad to see this today."

Green-Byrd included a sentiment in her obituary that warmed the hearts of everyone in

attendance.

"If you wish to remember me, do a kind deed, show love, give a smile or words of encouragement to someone who needs it. If you do what I ask, I will live forever in your heart."

Vartabedian talked about his immediate future, saying he plans to participate in the upcoming Relay for Life Haverhill, which is June 10 and 11. He said he plans to do a lap around the track at Northern Essex Community College with his six grandchildren.

"An obituary is a testament to a life that has been lived," Vartabedian told the class. "It's deeds that are our true monuments... the lives we lead as individuals. And don't think your life is any less significant than another."

OBITUARY

Dr. John Greppin Scholar of Classical Armenian

CLEVELAND, Ohio – John A. C. Greppin, PhD, was born on April 2, 1937 in Rochester, NY and died peacefully at home on May 3. He was 79.

He was the son of the late Ernest H. Greppin and Edna Barbara (Kill).

Beloved husband of Mary E. Greppin (Hannan) for 54 years., he was the father of Sarah Greppin Howe (Mark A. DeW.) and Carl H. H. Greppin (Elizabeth K. Chandler); grandfather of Cecelia E. and Helen R. DeKorne and Kaitlyn M. E. and Chase C. Greppin; and brother of Ernest H. Greppin, Jr. and the late James F. Greppin.

Dr. Greppin attended the Allendale School, in Rochester, NY, Dartmouth College, and University of Rochester. He received a PhD in Indo European Studies at UCLA in 1972. He taught Greek and Latin at the Woodstock Country School in South Woodstock, Vermont, and was a professor at Cleveland State University from 1975 to 2010.

He was the author of 16 books and 500 articles and reviews.

His academic specialty was Classical Armenian.

He, along with his family, spent a year in Soviet Armenia on a State Department grant in 1974-75. In 1998 he spent a semester in



Gottingen, Germany as a visiting professor. He founded the *Annual of Armenian Linguistics* and edited it for 25 years. He also co-edited *Raft, a Journal of Armenian Poetry and Criticism*.

In lieu of flowers, contributions may be made in his name to University School, 2785 Som Center Road, Hunting Valley, OH 44022.

Donation

Herman Hintiryan of Oak Park, Mich. donated \$500 to the *Armenian Mirror-Spectator*.

Giragosian

FUNERAL HOME

James "Jack" Giragosian, CPC
Mark J. Giragosian
Funeral Counselors

576 Mt. Auburn Street, Watertown, MA 02472, TEL: 617-924-0606
www.giragosianfuneralhome.com

Telephone (617) 924-7400

Aram Bedrosian Funeral Home, Inc.

Continuous Service By The Bedrosian Family Since 1945

558 MOUNT AUBURN STREET
WATERTOWN, MA 02472

MARION BEDROSIAN
PAUL BEDROSIAN
LARRY BEDROSIAN

Edward D. Jamakordzian, Jr. d/b/a

EDWARD D. JAMIE, JR.
FUNERAL DIRECTOR

Serving the Entire Armenian Community
Any Hour - Any Distance - Any Location

Edward D. Jamie, Jr., Manager

Call (718) 224-2390 or (888) 224-6088

Bus. Reg. 189-06 Liberty Ave., Hollis, NY 11412



Nardolillo Funeral Home

Est. 1906

John K. Najarian, Jr.

Rhode Island's Only Licensed Armenian Funeral Director

1278 Park Ave. Cranston, RI 02910 (401) 942-1220
1111 Boston Neck Rd. Narragansett, RI 02882 (401) 789-6300

www.nardolillo.com



COMMUNITY NEWS

Armenian American Medical Association Hosts Gala to Honor Dr. Richard Babayan



Dr. Richard Babayan

CAMBRIDGE, Mass. — On Saturday, April 30, the Armenian American Medical Association (AAMA) honored Dr. Richard Babayan, an active member of the AAMA since 1977, for his significant contributions to the field of medicine and involvement in the Armenian community. The gala appreciation dinner in Babayan's honor was held at the Hyatt Regency Hotel with 120 guests in attendance.

Musical performances by Shahan Nercessian, Sami Andonian, and Mari Nagahara were enjoyed by all.

Babayan, surrounded by his wife, mother, sister, and children received high praise and salutes from his Armenian and American urology colleagues. Invited speakers included Dr. Aram Chobanian, President Emeritus of Boston University, Dean Emeritus of Boston University School of Medicine; Dr. Michael O'Leary, Professor of Urology, Harvard Medical School and Dr. John Saryan, chairman, Department of Allergy and Immunology, Lahey Hospital and Medical Center, with whom he has collaborated

throughout the years.

Dr. Garo Tertzakian, a urologist practicing in California, and a longtime friend and colleague of Babayan, was also in attendance. Tertzakian, who has been actively involved with advancement of urology in Armenia, praised Babayan's work and achievements. He then presented the honoree a special gift from the Armenian Association of Urology of Armenia. The gift, a St. Gregory of Narek triptych, is a panel painting divided into three sections that are hinged together and can be folded shut or displayed open. This work of art utilizes various medieval techniques. Gregory of Narek was an Armenian monk, poet, mystical philosopher and theologian. Based in the monastery of Narek (Narekavank), he was Armenia's first great poet.

Babayan, born in Teaneck, NJ, to Kanare and Vigen Babayan, a survivor of the Armenian Genocide, is a nationally and internationally renowned urologist with more than 100 scientific articles in the peer-reviewed literature. He is the chief of urology

at Boston Medical Center, Professor and Chairman of Urology at Boston University School of Medicine, and newly elected President of the American Urological Association (AUA). As President of AUA, Babayan will make an official visit to Armenia this fall and will be the guest of honor of the Armenian Association of Urology (AAU) at which time he will initiate a formal relationship between AUA and AAU to make resources available to Armenian urologists in training in order to raise the level of urological care in Armenia.

The AAMA welcomes new members! To learn more, or to view photos from the event, visit www.aamaboston.org

33rd Annual Diocesan Assembly Meeting Held in Montreal

LAVAL, Quebec — The 33rd Annual Assembly of the Armenian Diocese of Canada, hosted by Holy Cross Armenian Church of Laval was held on May 27-28.

Delegates from parishes across Canada, from Vancouver to Montreal, attended the Assembly held under the presidency of Bishop Abgar Hovakimian, Primate, and the chairmanship of Jack Stepanian, former chairperson of the Diocesan Council.

Karekin II, Supreme Patriarch and Catholicos of All Armenians, Justin Trudeau, the Prime Minister of Canada, Philippe Couillard, Premier of Quebec, and Marc Demers, Mayor of Laval, had sent their blessings and congratulations, welcoming the delegates and expressing their wishes of success to the Diocesan Assembly.

On Thursday May 26, the diocesan clergy conference was held where the clergymen from coast to coast across Canada gathered to evaluate and discuss various aspects pertaining the advancement and continuous progress of parish life in all the communities.

The following day, delegates visited the building that has recently been acquired by a community donor with the intent to donate the said property to the Diocese for its future transformation into a church.

During the Assembly, annual reports of the Primate, Diocesan Council, the Board of Trustees, the Nominating Committee, the Auditing Committee, the Endowment Fund, Diocesan ministries (Women's Guild Central Council, Canadian Youth Mission to Armenia, Children's Fund for Armenia, Canadian Armenian Association Performing Art, and Ararat Summer Camp), and the Chancellor's Office were presented to the delegates' attention. Appropriate resolutions were proposed and approved.

The Primate presented a detailed report concerning the new diocesan projects, and introduced the Diocesan Yearbook. His Grace highlighted the importance of the canonization of the Holy Martyrs of the Armenian Genocide and the Blessing of the Holy Christ that took place during the centennial of the Armenian Genocide at the spiritual center of all Armenians, Mother See of Holy Echmiadzin.

Rev. Zareh Zargarian, Parish Priest of Holy Trinity Armenian Church of Toronto was appointed by the bishop as the vicar of the Armenian Diocese of Canada.

One of the main tasks on the Assembly's agenda was to review the changes of the Diocesan Bylaws, which were discussed and approved by the Delegates.

In application of the Diocesan Bylaws, the Assembly elected Rev. Komitas Mirzakhanyan to serve in the Diocesan Council as a clergy representative, and Antranik Sirinyan, Aram Isnar and Dolar as lay members of the Council, the highest executive body of the Diocese. On Saturday evening, the Parish Council of Holy Cross Armenian Church of Laval organized a banquet for the participants of the Diocesan Assembly. In order to enhance transparency of the Diocesan activities, leaders of the Canadian Armenian organizations and political parties, were invited by the Primate to attend the Assembly.

ԹԵՔԵԱՆ ՄՇԱԿՈՒԹԱՅԻՆ ՄԻՈՒԹԻՒՆ



Tekeyan Cultural Association
of the United States and Canada

**TCA FUNDRAISING DRIVE
FOR THE FAMILIES OF
WOUNDED AND
MARTYRED SOLDIERS**

OF

Artsakh and Armenia

**DONATIONS DIRECTLY DELIVERED TO
THE FAMILIES AND RECEIPTS OBTAINED**

All Donations Should Be Made Out To:

Tekeyan Cultural Association, Inc.

Memo: Artsakh Fund

755 Mount Auburn Street

Watertown, MA 02472

For more information, contact: 617 924-4455 or tcadirector@aol.com



COMMUNITY NEWS

HEY!

What's the big idea?

Arsenal Center for the Arts
2016 Annual Fundraiser &
*Charles Mosesian Award for
Support of the Arts* presentation

June 7, 2016

Tickets available at
arsenalarts.org

Platinum Sponsor:



SUBARU
OF NEW ENGLAND

Patron Sponsors:



Arsenal Center for the Arts | 321 Arsenal Street | Watertown, MA



COMMUNITY NEWS

My ABC Identity

ABC, from page 6

Armenia. We have a critical mass of talented human resources, cool working environment, ability to create intellectual property that can be efficiently exported to the rest of the world, and a lovely lifestyle.

Today there are about 400 IT enterprises employing about 15,000 IT professionals in Armenia. Those numbers are growing by more than 15 percent a year. There are thousands of open positions for engineers. About 15 to 20 percent of our IT companies are developing and marketing their home grown, intellectual property. We are moving from one start up a week to one start up a day. I am excited about the increasing number of product designers and artists who are conceptualizing new prod-



Peter Abajian leads our Paros organization which supports thousands of people daily throughout the country, with development, humanitarian, cultural, and education projects funded by hundreds of Diasporan families.

face of adversity, tragedy, limited resources,

American dreamer, the child of parents who lost almost everything and rebuilt their lives in America, I think I can appreciate the journey you are on.....and well...join you....as an Armenian by Choice. We share a value system and aspirations. You call people like me ABC's. I wear that label like a badge of honor. It is a privilege to work and live in our vibrant global Armenian community.

So let me tell you what I am doing in Armenia today:

My family and I have a nice home in Yerevan.

About 15 years ago, my first philanthropic effort was to help disabled people earn respect, rights and jobs. This led to the formation of The Paros Foundation.

Here is the preschool we renovated on the Azerbaijan border, including Armenia's first security wall so that the children would be protected from the all too frequent Azeri gunshots at their building.

Every year we have a one-month Service Armenia mission for young people to come and work on our projects - renovations of medical clinics or taking young people with developmental disabilities out for a pleasant day at an amusement park.

I have been working with the Center for Entrepreneurship and Executive Development, CEED, Jemma Israyelyan, and the Kassarjians of Repat Armenia to meet and mentor the many talented men and women of the start up and IT community.

I co-founded Armenia's first broadband wireless service provider, Icon Communications. I proudly serve as an investor, co-investor and advisor to companies PicsArt, Solo Learn, Teamables, and to Granatus - Armenia's first venture fund. Recently, I joined the amazing

Impact Hub Community in Yerevan.

In April, Nerses Ohanyan and I hosted more than 100 Armenian community start up folks at the HyeTech Showcase on the UC Berkeley campus. So much is going on. So much creative energy. So many possibilities. I think we are reaching a point where it is better for some businesses to build in Yerevan rather than the States. That's right... I think we are reaching a point where it is better for some businesses to build in Yerevan rather than the States.

Some people, particularly older Diasporans are not so optimistic. They do not see Armenia as a land of opportunity. They observe and even experience corruption and in some cases limited free speech. These are real issues in Armenia. However, these are not reasons to avoid engagement in Armenia. Just look at what one ABC is able to do. We want more Diasporans to take actively engage and take advantage of the opportunity to make a positive impact in Armenia and to enjoy the associated personal growth and satisfaction. Our community of intellectual property developers and exporters is living and working in a parallel universe without significant impediments or obstacles, except, of course, our own abilities. And we are harnessing what is best about Armenia ...everything I have just talked about.

We can do some things better. Some say that we need easier access to investment capital. I say we need to develop stronger business plans to compete in the global market place. We need to improve our skills to effectively communicate our ideas to investors and partners. I am confident we will do so and



Disabled Armenians are helped by The Paros Foundation.

ucts for international markets. And there are dozens of clever, hard working entrepreneurs starting service businesses like delivering food and Uber like taxi services with exportable business models. Yerevan is a great place to educate kids, eat, drink and enjoy life. You do not have to endure one-hour commutes, expensive real estate and high labor costs. There is an organization called Repat Armenia to support those of you who commit to a year or more of professional engagement in the country

So what is it about being Armenian that will increase your probability of success? In the

being a minority, Armenians have never ceased to dream of a better future and for making a positive impact on the entire world. You value education, tenacity, creativity, family, and your unique culture and language. You are respectful of and often burdened by your past, but you are ultimately empowered by the remarkable spirit and passion of your fore fathers and mothers. You care deeply about honoring your heritage with good deeds and successes that will earn you, your family, and your people rewards and recognition. I admire and relate to those characteristics. So, as a first-born American, as an



Roger Strauch's wife, Dr. Julie Kulhanjian

that investors will come to our field of dreams and play ball!

So life has come full circle for me. Dad's job was to identify world-class talent and to build new friendships and to create new professional possibilities. Fifty years ago, dad discovered what he was looking for in Armenia and shared this with his family. Now his son and his grandchildren are seizing the opportunity to do the same in an Armenian ecosystem that has all of the ingredients for a grand and enriching adventure ahead.

(Roger Strauch and his family live in northern California.)



Here is the Gumri children's center - **Debi Arach** (moving forward)- that serves 140 severely economically disadvantaged kids, most of whom live in domiks. The mission of this after school program is to help lead these children towards a brighter economic future for themselves and their families. Our program provides intense academic support coupled with humanitarian services including a health clinic, delicious food and warm showers.



COMMUNITY NEWS

St. Nersess Graduates Two Seminarians

ARMONK, N.Y. — On Friday, May 20, more than 125 guests celebrated the graduation of Deacon Narek Garabedian and Edgar Gevorgyan, who received their diplomas from St. Nersess Seminary.

The event was held for the first time on the new campus and began with Vespers in the new chapel. Following the service, Fr. Mardiros Chevian, seminary dean, opened the graduation ceremony by welcoming all who were present and reminding the graduates that their time at the seminary was not a sacrifice but rather a blessing. Presiding at the event was Archbishop Khajag Barsamian, Primate of the Eastern Diocese and President of the St. Nersess Board of Directors. Michael Haratunian, a member of the St. Nersess Board of Directors, congratulated the graduates and commented that St. Nersess is the heart and soul of the Armenian Church. Next, Rev. Ryan Bishop, a member of the graduating class at St. Vladimir's Orthodox Theological Seminary, congratulated St. Nersess Seminary on holding its first academic year on the new campus. He also thanked the seminarians for sharing their Armenian culture, faith, wisdom, and food with the students at St. Vladimir's as it made it a richer experience for everyone.

Representing Archbishop Hovnan Derderian, Primate of the Western Diocese and vice president of the Board of Directors, the Rev. Sarkis Petoyan, who is a St. Nersess graduate, reminded the audience to not just congratulate the graduates but to express



St. Nersess graduates Edgar Gevorgyan and Deacon Narek Garabedian with Fr. Mardiros Chevian and Archbishop Khajag Barsamian

appreciation to them. "The graduates have gone from being a disciple to now an apostle, one that will share his knowledge with others," said Petoyan.

Prof. Roberta Ervine spoke on behalf of the St. Nersess faculty, comparing the graduates to seeds and giving blessings to all faithful who will witness how they will grow.

Eric Vozzy, speaking on behalf of the sem-

inarians, offered the following advice to the graduates: "Make sure everything you do points to Christ as you are sent out to serve God." Before receiving their diplomas from Barsamian, each of the graduates spoke to the guests about the personal path that led him to enroll as a seminarian at St. Nersess Seminary. Gevorgyan said that St. Nersess Seminary is more than a place to learn but is a house of wisdom which has given him

spiritual nourishment. Garabedian spoke about how the seminary has armed him with knowledge to help the Armenian Church to grow, and how he must always question and think, and allow Christ to strengthen him.

Barsamian then gave the closing message, thanking those who have given from the heart to build the new St. Nersess campus. He reminded everyone that Jesus Christ is the foundation of the Church, and that the new graduates are now responsible for carrying on the legacy of the Church. Other honored guests in attendance were the Very Rev. Simeon Odabashian, Very Rev. Daniel Findikyan, Rev. Yeprem Kelegian, Rev. Karekin Kasparian, Rev. Krikor Sabounjian, Rev. Daniel Karadjian, Rev. Shnork Souin, Rev. Bedros Kadehjian, Rev. Sevak Gabrielyan, Rev. Mesrob Hovsepyan, Rev. Hratch Sargsyan, Rev. Kevhart Garabedian (St. Vartan Armenian Church, Vancouver, Canada), and St. Nersess alumni who serve as lay leaders in the Armenian Church.

Family and friends of the graduates enjoyed a dinner reception on the seminary grounds and had an opportunity to personally congratulate the graduates on their accomplishments. The following day, Dn. Narek Garabedian and Edgar Gevorgyan were amongst the 29 graduates at St. Vladimir's Orthodox Theological Seminary where they received their Master of Divinity degree and Master of Arts degree, respectively. For more information on St. Nersess Seminary, go to stnersess.edu.

Genocide Education Project Teacher Training at Armenian Museum On June 10

WATERTOWN — The Genocide Education Project (GenEd) will be conducting a free, one-day Teacher Training Workshop at the Armenian Museum of America (ALMA) in Watertown, on Friday, June 10, from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. The goal of the workshop is to help high school history (and English) teachers educate their students about the Armenian Genocide.

GenEd was formed 15 years ago by Armenians in California to help high school history teachers learn about the Armenian Genocide. In conjunction with the San Francisco Unified School District, GenEd developed an Armenian Genocide curriculum that assists educators in teaching a one-day, two-day, or ten-day unit on Genocide and human rights, with a particular focus on the Armenian Genocide. GenEd has been conducting these Teacher Training workshops in California and other western states for over a decade, with great success.

The workshop is free and open to all teachers, and GenEd has started sending out emails to Boston-area teachers to publicize the event. However, there's nothing more convincing to a teacher than to hear from a parent that they want their children to be taught about a particular subject.

Those interested can forward the information to their town's high school history teachers and social studies directors and urge them to attend this workshop — nothing is more convincing than hearing it from a parent.

To help with funding the program, tax-deductible checks for \$25, \$50, or \$100 can be sent to: Genocide Education Project, 51 Commonwealth Avenue, San Francisco, CA 94118.

For more information on GenEd or on the June 10 workshop, email Aram Kaligian at info@GenocideEducation.org.

Medical Association Hosts Blood Drive to Honor Memory of Genocide Victims

WATERTOWN — The Greater Boston community came together once again to serve those in need. Saturday, April 17 marked the second annual Blood Drive of the Armenian American Medical Association (AAMA) of the Greater Boston in commemoration of the 101st Anniversary of the Armenian Genocide. The event took place at and was co-sponsored by the Armenian Cultural and Education Center (ACEC). A total of 45 vol-

unteers and 34 donors took part in gifting their blood to Blood for Memory, a worldwide movement to save a life by donating blood in honor and remembrance of the victims of the Armenian Genocide and crimes against humanity. All blood donations were safely and professionally coordinated by the blood mobile unit of the Kraft Family Blood Donor Center, made possible through the support of the Friends of Brigham and

Women's Hospital and the Friends of Dana-Farber Cancer Institute.

To learn more about the Blood for Memory project at: www.bloodformemory.org.

If you wish to donate but were unable to attend the drive, you may contact the Kraft Family Blood Donor Center at Dana-Farber Cancer Institute and Brigham and Women's Hospital by calling (888)-LETS-GIV (538-7448).



Some of the medical professionals at the blood drive



COMMUNITY NEWS

After Selling Viki to Rakuten, Razmig Hovaghimian Launches New Startup

SINGAPORE (TechinAsia) – There's no denying that Razmig Hovaghimian is one of the most impressive startup stories to come out of Asia. From a failed pizza maker to owner of Viki, a video streaming site bought by Rakuten, to being Rakuten's first-ever entrepreneur-in-residence, Razmig's life as a founder has had many twists and turns. Now he enters another chapter with his newest brainchild.

"We are creating a hub for city news and stories happening right around you, tapping into the pulse of your city," Razmig says. It's an app called Ripple.

The idea behind it is simple: every story has a location. With this in mind, Razmig says he built Ripple to deliver relevant content – both text and video – to the right people through location tagging. With each city's newsfeed, a user can view the top voted stories in their area. Essentially, he says the app acts as a "nearby" button for news.

The big question is credibility and authenticity of the reports from independent sources.

Aside from city newsfeeds, Ripple has a global feed where the most popular stories from all cities are featured.

"That's what the name means. You ripple a story by upvoting it and more and more people will get to see it," he tells Tech in Asia.

After bootstrapping since January, Razmig today revealed that Ripple has secured a \$4 million series A round from investors, including some names from Silicon Valley and media heavyweights.

The investors are Rakuten, Greylock Partners, Graph Ventures, Social Capital, Charles River Ventures, John S. and James L. Knight Foundation, Eric Schmidt's Innovation Endeavors, Pejman Mar Ventures, Matter Ventures, 500 Startups, MIT Media Lab director Joi Ito, and angel investors Blake Krikorian, Magdalena Yesil, and Shane Smith of VICE Media. Rakuten of course is an existing backer of Razmig – along with Greylock, Charles River, and Joi – having invested in Viki before.

Previously in beta in San Francisco – its base – and Oakland, Ripple launches publicly today with the addition of news streams in New York, London, Cairo and Bangkok. It's available for both iOS and Android devices.

Hyperlocal news apps aren't a new thing. However, unlike others, Razmig says Ripple isn't just a collection of news from media groups and blogs. It's a hybrid of that and original content from Ripple correspondents. These correspondents are "citizen journalists" who are actually living in the area where the news originates from. For example, users in San Francisco's Mission District will find daily stories from Ripple correspondents who are working on the ground in Mission as well as local news partners such as KQED, Mission Local and Hoodline.

Ripple encourages communities to tell original and quality stories that may not be captured by traditional media. It's just not possible for media outlets to have a crew in every city – especially since many are facing budget cuts right now.

Such constraints have resulted in two trends in reporting: parachute reporting, where people only fly into a city or a community when something major has happened like a fire or a shooting, and internet reporting, where people cut and clip stuff online and don't actually talk to people on the ground. Ripple goes against those two trends, Razmig says.

The big question, however, is the credibility and authenticity of

the reports from independent sources. Razmig says they address this by carefully screening correspondents. "We only accept correspondents in a particular area who live in that neighborhood."

Interested contributors are asked to submit their basic information and LinkedIn profiles or portfolio links, but it's not clear how else a writer is vetted.

Ripple churns out 50 stories a day from a network of 200 correspondents out of 700 applications as well as several media part-

ners. team sold to international non-government organization Thrive Networks in 2015. He started those two ventures as class projects at Stanford Business School. They turned out to be his first successful ones. He tried pizza delivery and jeans exports after high school but failed at those.

While Ripple was born just this year, Razmig got the concept for the app long before his time at Rakuten – and even before Embrace and Viki.



Razmig Hovaghimian

ners. Razmig says it's too early to disclose the number of app users, but he shares it's surprising how engaged the users are. "More important than having hundreds of thousands of users is to have a few thousand obsessed users," he notes.

String of ventures

Ripple is Razmig's first creation as Rakuten's entrepreneur-in-residence, a post which means he gets to work on ideas inside and outside Rakuten while performing his other roles at the Japanese company, including head of video and board of directors observer.

I realized that I love the intersection of tech, community, and media.

He landed those posts after Rakuten acquired his company, Viki, a streaming video site much like Netflix but with the ability to crowdsource subtitles from its users similar to how Wikipedia's users collaboratively create content. The 2013 deal, which was reportedly valued at US\$200 million, was one of the largest ever for a Southeast Asian company and put Razmig on people's radars.

Prior to Viki, Razmig co-designed and patented Embrace, a premature infant incubator for the developing world which his

At Stanford, he spent his summer working with the United Nations in South Sudan and East Africa. "Saw too many stories around me that were going untold – from kids renting guns for US\$5 a night to foreign prisoners building oil rigs. I wanted to take photos myself and report about these stories, but that was right when Facebook was just starting and there were no smartphones yet," he recalls.

"After Viki, I played around with many ideas, but kept defaulting back to participatory journalism. This time I'm doing it with the knowledge from Viki and of the power of community in breaking down barriers. I realized that I love the intersection of tech, community, and media."

Building its community of writers and news sources as well as readers is Ripple's focus at the moment. Monetization will come later on.

Razmig says the team is looking at deriving revenue from ads – either "inside the feed or sponsoring the feed."

"We've actually experimented with some airlines. The way it works is every time you land in another city, say Bangkok, you can get local news from there right away."

He says that the "vast majority" of Ripple's contributors are currently unpaid, but "as we start monetizing, we will share our revenues with them."

Even without pay, local writers are happy to contribute to the app because they see it as a way to reach additional readers and build their brand, he explains.

"Like them, our mission is to uncover untold stories and strengthen communities by sparking thoughtful conversations," Razmig says. "To make ripples, that's what the app is all about."

Ripple is independent from Rakuten, but the two will be working on some "synergies" in the future.

Rakuten is touted as the Amazon of Japan because of its dominant position in the country's ecommerce market. Over the past few years, the company has been zooming in on video and content; it acquired messaging app Viber, European video site Wuaki, and ebook store Kobo, and invested in social bookmarking site Pinterest.

Hovaghimian says he's working on a few ideas with Rakuten, but he's keeping those under his hat for now.

According to Wikipedia, Hovaghimian was born in Cairo, Egypt, to Armenian parents. He moved to Los Angeles, California, by himself at the age of 16. Hovaghimian attended the University of California at Berkeley, majoring in political economy and minoring in business administration. After graduating, he spent time as a consultant at Mitchell Madison Group in the US and Europe, before relocating to Japan to work as a management consultant at ad agency Dentsu. He returned to the US to attend the Stanford Graduate School of Business, where he received his MBA.

Editing by Steven Millward

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.

Arts & Living

SAS Distinguished Dissertation Award Best Conference Paper Award

LOS ANGELES – The Society for Armenian Studies (SAS) announces that Dr. Shushan Karapetian has been chosen to receive the SAS Distinguished Dissertation Award for 2011-2014 for her dissertation “How Do I Teach My Kids My Broken Armenian?”: A Study of Eastern Armenian Heritage Language Speakers in Los Angeles.” The SAS Award is accompanied by a \$1,000 prize.

The selection committee had this to say about Dr. Karapetian’s dissertation: “The committee found the dissertation to be timely and well researched and a welcome addition to the body of knowledge. In its examination of Armenian as a heritage language it addresses an issue of great contemporary relevance through solid scholarship, and it stands a valuable contribution to an under-analyzed topic.”

Karapetian received a PhD in Near Eastern Languages and Cultures from UCLA in 2014, where she has taught Armenian Studies courses over the past six years. This year she began her tenure as the first postdoctoral fellow in the UCLA Armenian Studies Program, which entails the expansion of her research on Armenian heritage speakers and the development and instruction of an entirely new course entitled Language in Diaspora: Armenian as a Heritage Language. Her research interests

focus on heritage languages and speakers, particularly on the case of Armenian heritage speakers in the Los Angeles community, on which she has presented and lectured widely. She is currently serving on multiple committees in



Dr. Shushan Karapetian

the Los Angeles Armenian community aimed at reforming Armenian language instruction and promoting the use of the Armenian language.

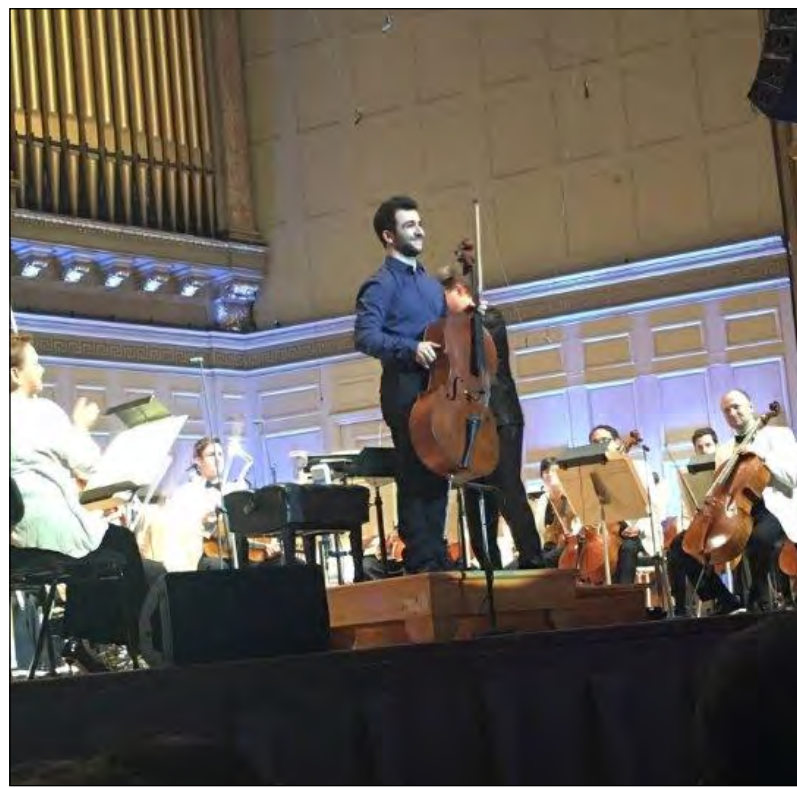
The SAS chose Dr. Sona Haroutyunian’s dissertation, “An Analysis of Dante’s Tenses in the Armenian Translations of the Divina Commedia,” for honorable mention. Haroutyunian is professor of Armenian language and literature at Ca’ Foscari University of Venice.

Vahe Sahakyan was named as the recipient of the graduate student SAS Best Conference Paper, for his work “From Extra-Territorial Communitarianism to Ethno-Territorial Nationalism: Emergence of Armenian Revolutionary Parties in the 19th Century.” Sahakyan is a graduate student in the Department of Near Eastern Studies at the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor. The SAS Best Conference Paper award is accompanied by a \$500 prize.

The Society for Armenian Studies (SAS), founded in 1974, is the international professional association representing scholars and teachers in the field of Armenian Studies. The aim of the SAS is to promote the study of Armenian culture and society, including history, language, literature, and social, political, and economic questions.

The SAS publishes the peer-review Journal of the Society for Armenian Studies and published a semi-annual Newsletter and organizes panels and conferences on Armenian Studies.

SAS is headquartered at the Armenian Studies Program at California State University, Fresno and its website can be found at societyforarmenianstudies.com.



Cellist Edvard Pogossian

Cellist Edvard Pogossian Enchants Boston Pops Crowd

BOSTON – Edvard Pogossian is a chip off the same musical block as his father. Twenty-six years after his dad debuted with Armenian Night at the Pops, on comes the son to apply the same finesse with his cello.

By Tom Vartabedian

On the eve of the First Independent Republic of 1918, conductor Keith Lockhart acknowledged Armenia’s Independence and looked to Pogossian to carry the show.

“This amazing young man will blow you away on the cello,” Lockhart said in his introduction. “One of the things I truly enjoy as conductor is some of the friendships our Pops has built upon with the Armenian community and the people it brings together.”

On came Pogossian to display his wares. He wrapped himself around the cello and gave the piece an uncanny brilliance, eyes searching the audience but very much focused upon the matter at hand. One rehearsal with the Pops was all that time allowed.

“Mr. Lockhart made the whole experience as comfortable and professional as I could have imagined,” Pogossian said. “Being supported by such a world class orchestra as the Pops and such a great conductor was so unbelievably wonderful and a day I shall never forget.”

Edvard Pogossian is no stranger to the “Rococo” classic, having performed it while winning the Juilliard Concerto Competition in New York and again in see POPS, page 15

The young Juilliard virtuoso basked in his own limelight May 27 with an exhilarating rendition of Tchaikovsky’s *Variations of a Rococo Theme*, in Symphony Hall.

Armenian Night at the Pops Crackles with Energy

BOSTON – The Friends of Armenian Culture Society presented the 65th annual Armenian Night at the Pops on May 27 at Boston’s Symphony Hall. It was a well-attended event

which both exposed many non-Armenians to Armenian culture and supported the career of a young Armenian musician.

The highlight for the evening for Armenians was the Boston debut of cellist Edvard Pogossian, who performed Tchaikovsky’s *Variations on a Rococo Theme* together with the Pops Orchestra conducted by Keith Lockhart. Aram Khachaturian’s *Sabre Dance* from “Gyané” as well as a Yekmalian/Gregorian version of the Hayr Mer prayer were also part of the Armenian-oriented program.

Pogossian is a sophomore at Juilliard, and a recent winner of the Juilliard Concerto Competition as well as the Los Angeles Philharmonic Young Artists Competition in 2011. He has performed at Carnegie Hall, Zipper Hall and on National Public Radio’s “From the Top” show. Pogossian is a founding member of the Zeldia Piano Quartet.

The evening program also included a suite of songs from the movie “Star Wars: The Force Awakens,” as well as a variety of songs performed by Sutton Foster, together with pianist Michael Rafter. Foster has performed in 11 Broadway shows and is a popular television star.

A Musical Extravaganza In Pasadena

By Kevork Keushkerian

PASADENA, Calif. – The AGBU Satamian Theatre Group, in collaboration with the Armenian Christian Outreach of Paz Naz, proudly presented a Community Symphonic Concert titled “Triumph of the Human Spirit,” on Saturday, May 21, at the Sanctuary of the First Church of the Nazarene of Pasadena.

The concert was dedicated to the victims who were subjected to genocide in the 20th century. By God’s miracle, those who managed to survive the atrocities, rose again and through the triumph of their spirit, regrouped, labored and prospered to condemn, shame and disgrace their perpetrators.

The symphonic community concert was conducted by Arto Tchiftchian, who comes from Bulgaria, where he served as conductor of Rouse State Opera for 8 years. He also founded and conducted the Plovdiv Youth Symphony Orchestra, which had regular concerts in Bulgaria and successful tours of Germany and France.

Tchiftchian has conducted the Armenian Philharmonic Orchestra of Yerevan, the Thessaloniki State Orchestra of Greece, The Strasbourg Youth Symphony Orchestra and the Haskova City Symphony Orchestra of Bulgaria. He was awarded with the Bulgarian Medals for Culture and awards from the Borghese Foundation for Music Interpretation and excellence in conducting symphonic music.

In his opening remarks, Dr. Krikor Simonian, chairman of the Satamian Theater Group, reiterated the general theme of the concert by emphasizing the will of the survivors to demand justice and then invited Pastor Mano Agulian of the Armenian Christian Outreach of Paznaz, for a prayer.

The first part of the program included overtures and arias by Beethoven, Verdi and Tchouhajian. The second part was the glorious 7th symphony of Beethoven.

The *Egmont overture, Op. 84*, by Beethoven is a political manifesto in which Egmont’s gravitating for justice and national liberty is opposed to the despotic authority of the Duke of Alba. It is also a drama of destiny in which the Flemish nobleman, with fatalism, accepts the consequences of his honesty. It was played beautifully and with such strength, as to be in par with the composer’s intentions.

Soprano Lucine Danielyan performed arias from Verdi’s opera “Aida” as well as “La Forza del Destino.” She sang beautifully and passionately, leaving a lasting impression on the audience.

She was born in Yerevan, Armenia. Her career as musician started at the piano department of the Yerevan State Conservatory. Then in 2002, she received her vocal training at the Yerevan State Conservatory. From 2008-10, she continued her vocal training at the University of Bulgaria. Starting 2012, she became a full member of the Ruse State Opera in Bulgaria and sang title roles in Verdi’s “Aida,” “Don Carlos” and “Il Trovatore,” Puccini’s “Madama Butterfly” and Wagner’s “The Flying Dutchman.”

Young Bass Rafael Telunts performed two arias, Romanza of Fiesco – Il Lacerato spirito from Verdi’s opera “Simon Boccanegra” and the aria of Arshak from Dikran Tchouhajian’s opera “Arshak II.” Both performances were of such caliber that the attendees greatly appreciated.

see CONCERT, page 15



ARTS & LIVING

A Musical Extravaganza in Pasadena

CONCERT, from page 14

Telunts was born in Yerevan, Armenia. He first studied violin at the renowned Tchaikovsky musical institute in Yerevan. In 2001, at the age of 17, he realized his true passion was in opera and singing. So, he was accepted at the famous Yerevan State Conservatory. Now he continues his performances in opera in the United States, having Professor Vladimir Chernov of UCLA as his vocal instructor.

Verdi's *Nabucco* overture was composed in 1841 and premiered the following year at La Scala in Milan, Italy. It is an adaptation of the Biblical story of the Jewish captivity in Babylon, from the book of Jeremiah and Daniel, following the plight of the Jews as they are assaulted, conquered, and subsequently exiled from their homeland by the Babylonian King Nebuchadnezzar II. It was a very powerful performance, which left the audience in awe.

The second part was dedicated to Beethoven's *7th symphony in A Major, Op. 92*. It was completed in 1812 and first performed in 1813, in Vienna. The first movement has a driving rhythm reminiscent of a peasant celebration. The second movement has a stately grace that almost begs to be

decorated by a procession of courtiers. The third movement brings to mind a ballroom filled with swirling costumes and the final movement zips along at an irrepressible pace that threatens to sweep the entire orchestra off its feet and around the theater, caught up in the sheer joy of performing one of the most perfect symphonies ever written.

This was Tchiftchian's first conducting experience in the United States and one might say that he was meticulous and highly demanding, putting everyone in the orchestra on edge to do their best and I should add that he succeeded in his mission, as was apparent in the audience's standing ovation at the end of the performance. During the rehearsal, one of the violinists approached him and told him that it was an honor



The orchestra conducted by Arto Tchiftchian

to work with him.

The program was put forward with the collaboration of Krikor Satamian, the artistic director of the Armenian General Benevolent

Union, and Tchiftchian. They worked very hard and diligently to come up with an uplifting performance, worthy of a sophisticated audience.

Cellist Edvard Pogossian Enchants Boston Pops Crowd

POPS, from page 14

Chicago with the Juilliard Orchestra under the direction of Itzhak Perlman.

One might gather his father's presence in Symphony Hall infused the spirit and motivation behind Edvard's performance. In 1990, Movses Pogossian made his American debut performing the Tchaikovsky Concerto with the Boston Pops on the violin. The *Boston Globe* wrote it up and lauded the artist for an exceptional performance.

"My father is a wonderful musician and has definitely inspired me in many ways, both in music and in life," said the son. "It was a great sentiment that he performed this very same concert 26 years ago. In the end, his impact and influence on me was much bigger than specifically this concert. For this performance, I tried my hardest to be able to make my own musical voice heard as successfully as I possibly could."

Pogossian considers the *Rococo Variations* a challenging, yet amazing piece with such an

exhilarating finale. In the end, it was clear he was deeply spent from his exuberance.

"To be completely honest, I was so pumped up and wired afterwards that I couldn't sleep until very late into the night," he revealed. "There is always a good amount of stress associated with concerts of this magnitude, especially for someone not yet on the professional level."

Pogossian said he found it rather challenging to maintain other serious interests once he enrolled at a conservatory like Juilliard. One passion he has been able to continue is his love for soccer, whether it's a pick-up game or watching matches.

He is also a dedicated fan of classical music.

When Pogossian was merely 4, he wanted to play the double bass. To his dismay, his parents told him there were none his size and encouraged him to start with the cello.

"I completely forgot about the bass and have been playing cello ever since," he said. "I have never encountered a single regret. It's by far my favorite instrument and I hope to play it for the rest of my life."

Pogossian has always been appreciative of the support he has received from the Armenian community, whether in Los Angeles, New York City or Boston. He has covered a lot of ground in such a short career that appears to have skyrocketed of late.

"I encountered so much warmth and camaraderie during the Pops," he added. "For that, I am grateful."

All it took was a trip out the door before being surrounded by a mass of Armenian fans. At the other end of Symphony Hall,

singer/actress Sutton Foster encountered her own fan club after her performance of Broadway show tunes following intermission.

Pogossian's grandparents still live in Armenia where he has visited on several occasions. He says it's always a treat to visit that country with its vast history and culture. His ultimate goal is turning music into a lifestyle, whether playing the instrument or teaching it.

This summer, he will involve himself with chamber groups and building up his resume.

"For now, I'm trying to attend school for as long as I'm able so I can be as honest and capable a musician as possible," he brought out.

As far as Armenian Night goes at the Pops, Ara Arakelian remains buoyant about the past as well as the present and future. He looks with pride at the 65-year history and points to a number of performing artists who have enjoyed flourishing careers, among them another cellist Narek Hakhnazaryan, violinist Emmanuel Tjeknavorian and pianist Nareh Arghamanyan.

The chairman of Friends of Armenian Culture Society (FACS) points to the relentless support and enthusiasm as being key to his group's success. In the coming year, FACS will embark on a project to explore the inspirations and influences of Armenian music and artists on other cultures.

"Occasionally, the opportunity arises for introducing a new work to Boston audiences," said Arakelian. "Fellow Armenians from all walks of life gather to celebrate the emergence of a new talented performing artist. Our goal is to continue preserving the gems of Armenian culture and music in the most professional settings and venues."

YANNI • THE DREAM CONCERT
LIVE FROM THE GREAT PYRAMIDS OF EGYPT

AS SEEN ON PUBLIC TELEVISION
THE NEW CD + DVD SET FEATURING
A CAREER-SPANNING SELECTION OF FAN FAVORITES
AND NEVER-BEFORE-PERFORMED SONGS.

CONCERT ALSO AVAILABLE ON BLU-RAY

AVAILABLE AT amazonmusic

Portrait



Songstress and television star Sutton Foster (Aram Arkun photo)



ARTS & LIVING

A Busy Spring at ALMA

WATERTOWN – This spring, the Armenian Museum of America (ALMA) has hosted a number of free events and exhibition openings through partnerships with a number of artists and organizations in order to further educate the surrounding community about Armenian culture, Genocide, and prominent Armenian figures.

On Sunday April 10, ALMA, along with Facing History and Ourselves, presented a commemoration of all women, across history and around the world, who have been affected by the horror and destruction of genocide. Speakers Edina Skaljic, a Bosnian genocide survivor, and Chantal Kayitesi, a survivor of the Rwandan genocide outlined their own in-depth and personal experiences with genocide for an audience left in awe of their stories.

Anna Aleksanyan, of the Strassler Center for Holocaust and Genocide Studies, also gave a haunting presentation on how women were targeted, both physically and non-physically, during the Armenian Genocide.

The program also included first-rate musical performances by violinist Armen Ghazaryan and pianist Levon Hovsepian, as well as a special blended music piece with poetry written and performed by Frank Cunningham. These



Armen Ghazaryan performing Khachaturian's *Lullaby*

performances perfectly matched the tone of the speakers, and were able to convey the emotions associated with genocide through art.

Guests were also treated to a number of guest exhibitions created and inspired by and for women who have experienced or been affected by genocide: *Kindling* by Sandy Smith-Garces, who was inspired by the plight of Darfuri women in Eastern Chad; *Pax Rwanda: Embroideries of the Women of Savane Rutongo-Kabuye*, curated by Juliana Meehan, who supports the Savane Rutongo-Kabuye embroidery workshop created by a group of Rwandan women from both sides of the Rwandan Genocide conflict; and *Every Stitch a Memory*, by Holocaust survivor and Ann Frank classmate Netty Vanderpol. The museum's own *Stitching to Survive* exhibit, curated by textile curator Susan Lind-Sinanian, was also available for viewing.

No one from the audience was left unaffected by this emotionally wrought presentation.

On April 17, a special exhibition, "Objects That Transcend," opened at the Armenian Museum. Curated by Museum of Fine Arts Senior Graphic Exhibition Director, Jennifer Munson, this exhibition brings the personal collection of Berdj Garabedian to life. Garabedian collected 18th and 19th century coins and met-



Two of Berdj Garabedian's daughters at his exhibit

alware over the course of his life and understood that preserving Armenian Culture is the sacred and ultimate duty of every Armenian.

After acquiring the collection from Garabedian's three daughters, the Armenian Museum is pleased to show selections from the collection in an excellently executed exhibition. A light reception accompanied the opening, along with a short gallery talk from Curator Jennifer Munson, who explained how she brought the objects to life using photographs collected by the Project SAVE Armenian Photograph Archives.

Finally, on Tuesday, April 26, ALMA hosted a special book event in the Adele & Haig Der



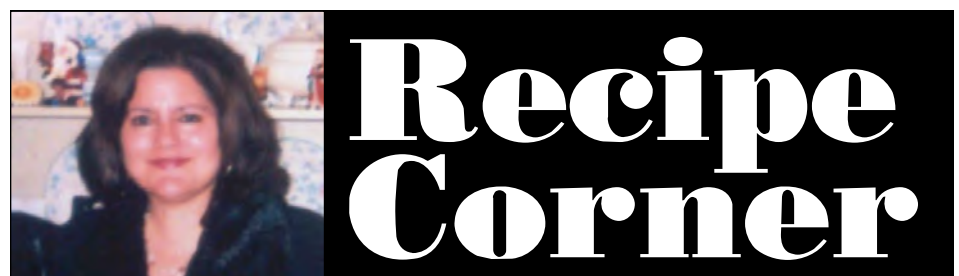
Edina Skaljic shares her testimony of surviving the Bosnia Genocide.

Manuelian Galleries to commemorate the lives of John Garo and Yousuf Karsh, both Armenian photographers.

The focus of the evening was the newly-released book, *The Search for a Master's Legacy*, which focuses on Garo's lost legacy and Karsh's journey later in his career to recover Garo's lost work. The featured speakers were Mehmed Ali, the author of the book, and Jerry Fielder, the curator and director of the estate of Yousuf Karsh.

Karsh's widow, Estrellita, came to the program, where she offered deeply personal reflections on his life and commitment, not only to photography, but also to guiding the next generation of photographers and artist.

For more information about these and other upcoming free events at the Armenian Museum, visit www.armenianmuseum.org.



Recipe Corner

by Christine Vartanian Datian

Fresh Spinach, Bacon and Bulgur Salad

INGREDIENTS

2 cups medium bulgur (#2 or #3) found at Middle Eastern markets
 4 cups low sodium chicken broth or water
 1 medium bunch spinach, washed and torn in pieces
 8 slices bacon or turkey bacon, cooked, drained, and crumbled
 1 cup cherry or grape tomatoes, cut in half
 1 cup green onions or scallions, chopped
 1/2 cup flat leaf parsley, chopped
 1/2 cup green or yellow bell pepper, chopped
 1/2 cup garbanzo beans, washed and drained
 Juice of 2 large lemons
 1/4 cup olive oil, more to taste
 1/4 cup chopped fresh mint
 1/4 cup roasted red peppers, diced
 1/4 cup cucumber, seeded and diced
 1/4 cup red onion, diced
 1 tablespoon Worcestershire sauce
 1 tablespoon grated lemon peel
 Kosher or sea salt, black pepper, garlic powder, ground cumin, paprika, and Aleppo pepper to taste
 Kalamata or black olives and Greek yogurt or sour cream as garnish

PREPARATION

Cook the bacon in a small pan until crispy, drain, and set aside.

In a large pot, bring the chicken broth or water plus one tablespoon of olive oil and one teaspoon of Kosher or sea salt to a full boil; add the bulgur, stir for a minute, reduce heat to medium low, cover and cook for 20 minutes or until all liquid is absorbed. Remove pan from the heat and let set for 8-10 minutes. (You can prepare the bulgur for this recipe the day before and chill overnight, if desired.)

Spoon the bulgur into a large serving dish; top with the spinach, crumbled bacon, tomatoes, green onions, parsley, bell pepper, and garbanzo beans. Toss with lemon juice and olive oil, and add the fresh mint, roasted red peppers, cucumber, red onion, Worcestershire sauce, grated lemon peel, and the seasonings to taste. Toss again, adding more lemon juice or olive oil, if desired.

Arrange salad on serving plates, garnish with paprika and Kalamata or black olives, and top with some Greek yogurt or sour cream. Serve with toasted pita bread, garlic bread, flat bread, or Middle Eastern cracker bread and fresh Romaine lettuce leaves to scoop up the salad, if desired.

Serves 6.

*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>



ARTS & LIVING

CALENDAR

MASSACHUSETTS

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 atmuhtaac@gmail.com, or call 617.501.4300 by June 13. Please remember to bring your tavloo boards. Donation for the losh kebab and kheyma 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. Gregory Armenian Apostolic Church of Merrimack Valley, 158 Main St., North Andover, MA, 11 am.-7pm; losh and chicken kebab; kheyma; vegetarian plate; pastries; dine in or take out. Further information, Sossy Jeknavorian, (978) 256-2538 or Ann Apovian, (978) 521-2245.

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

SEPTEMBER 18 — Sunday Afternoon at the Park. For



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.

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

supporters are invited.

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

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

NEW YORK

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

PENNSYLVANIA

JULY 6 — On the occasion of the 2016 Grand Convocation and Centennial Celebration of the Knights and Daughters of Vartan will sponsor the 25th anniversary showing of William Saroyan: The Man, The Writer, a one-hour documentary on the late writer, written and director by Paul Kalinian and produced by Dr. Susie Kalinian. Wednesday, 7:30 p.m., Hilton Philadelphia at Penn's Landing, 201 S. Christopher Columbus Boulevard, Philadelphia. The filmmakers will be present for a question-and-answer session.

JULY 8 — Kef Night in Philadelphia Net proceeds will be donated to Artsakh Relief Fund, Sponsored by the Knights & Daughters of Vartan Featuring World Famous Richard Hagopian Band & DJ Robbie Barone. Hilton Philly @ Penn's Landing 201 S. Columbus Blvd, Philadelphia. Friday, July at 9 p.m. Tickets: \$25 purchased before July 1 or \$30 @ door (cash bar) Dessert & Coffee. For tickets or more info call/text: Vick Bazarbashian 610-389-4633 vbazar01@gmail.com or Gabrielle Meranshian 856-725-2260 gabriellemeranshian@gmail.com

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 Yerejian at 401- 354-8770, joycey41@cox.net or Joyce Bagdasarian at 401- 434-4467.

AGBU Performing Arts Department to Hold Concert with The Bambir

NEW YORK — The AGBU Performing Arts Department will hold a concert featuring The Bambir and poet/musician Alan Semerdjian on Friday, June 3 at 10:30 p.m. at the Rockwood Music Hall in New York.

The Bambir is an Armenia-based music collective spanning four decades. With more than 50 musicians having passed through its ranks, the band has now moved into its second generation, with sons of the original members making up a new four-piece ensemble. During their 2012 extended tour in Ireland, they played over 120 shows across the entire country and performed in all of its most prestigious festivals. Their New York show is part of an American tour that includes shows in Chicago, Austin, Los Angeles and Winona, Minn. Their most recent album, "Upsessions," was released in June 2015 from Meeting Point in Yerevan.

They will be accompanied onstage by Semerdjian, a poet and musician who has spent 20 years making and releasing music in a myriad of bands and genres. In the summer of 2013, Semerdjian partnered with Asheville's NewSong Recordings for his latest release, "Quiet Songs for Loud Times." Semerdjian's distinct aesthetic strikes notes familiar in modern folk music, indie and art rock, and Americana traditions.

Tickets will be available at the door for a \$20 suggested donation. For more information and future dates, visit www.thebambir.com.



The Bambir

COMMENTARY

Armenian Martyrs Murdered Once Again

By Edmond Y. Azadian

It has been a foregone conclusion in Armenia that the Turks have not achieved the final solution for their Armenian problem and that they are using every opportunity to reach their goal.

The four-day war with Azerbaijan early this April further consolidated that belief, because it was instigated by Ankara and the Turkish military took part in the aggression.

Some analysts, military strategists and historians in Armenia have been thinking about the unthinkable: only the destruction of Azerbaijan can guarantee Armenia's survival. Azeris have not been hiding their goal. The head of the state of Azerbaijan, Ilham Aliyev, has announced and continues to repeat that Armenians have settled on historic Azeri land and that they have to surrender that territory to Baku.

Mind you, this is not about Karabagh or surrounding strategic swathes of territory under Armenian control but the claim is on Armenia proper. And of course, the claim is historically false, but in these days of political expediency, who would care to check historic documents?

In the mindset of Azeris, this is a doable project; if Ottoman Turkey wiped out the entire population of historic Armenia with impunity and if Ilham's father, Heydar Aliyev, was able to depopulate Nakhichevan under the nose of the Soviet leadership, then Armenia's depopulation remains within the range of strategic possibilities.

To prevent that doomsday, Armenian analysts are advocating the reverse philosophy.

It is a huge question as to how Armenia could destroy Azerbaijan, liberate Lezgis and Talishes who are agitating for independence and then sign a truce with a rump state of Azerbaijan.

Azerbaijan is backed by Turkey and Turkey is backed by NATO and everything else is protected by oil interests.

Turkish leaders all along have been in the same frame of mind. We should not forget that even in recent history, Turkish President Turgut Ozal threatened to bomb Armenia upon its independence from the USSR, because "Armenians had not learned their lesson in 1915."

This statement is especially interesting because at no other time have Turkish leaders openly confessed to their state's prior sins. In the case of this existential threat though, it packed a punch. And that this desire was still harbored by the Turkish state is doubly interesting and worrisome.

In the Syrian civil war, the Turks have targeted the Armenians along with the Kurds. The mercenaries who attacked and destroyed the Armenian villages in Kessab were armed and trained by Turkey. Armenians in Syria have been a thorn in the side of Turkey since the days of the Genocide.

As one of the Kurdish deputies said in the Turkish Parliament, the Turks belong to Central Asia. They have come to occupy Asia Minor, destroying on their way ancient civilizations of the Greeks, Armenians and the Assyrians.

It seems that through the appeal of the extreme form of Islam, to which many young and economically disadvantaged and uneducated youth are particularly susceptible, they flock to Islamic State (IS or Daesh). That organization, preaching unity of that extreme form, endorses, and practically seeks, the destruction of non-Islamic monuments, including the Buddha's statue in Afghanistan, Palmyra in Syria and the Armenian Church in Sinjar, Iraq.

The esthetic appreciation that the Turks have demonstrated is revealed in their treatment of Armenian architecture. The churches, monasteries, fortresses and other monuments which could qualify for UNESCO preservation list have been used by the Turks as stables and for storage. And for one hundred years, they have been deliberately destroying those monuments to erase all traces of Armenian civilization in those historic lands.

Azeris who claim to be "one nation with two states" are not far behind in their destructive zeal. They have cold-bloodedly destroyed about 10,000 Khatchkars in Nakhichevan in full view

of the world.

The city of Aleppo is today's embattled Leningrad. It is divided into two sectors, one under the government forces, where the remnants of the Armenian community are sheltered and the other section controlled by the Islamic forces, under Turkish command.

The Asia News service reports "Islamic forces in Syria launched an artillery attack on the Armenian city of Aleppo on April 24. The heavy bombardment, an obvious violation of a ceasefire agreement, killed at least 17 people. Residents of the city's Armenian district stated their belief that the attack was deliberately timed for the anniversary of the Armenian Genocide. The biggest indicator of the belief is that unexploded bombs were found with the message 'Martyr Enver Pasha,' who was one of the leaders of the young Turks movement who perpetrated the Armenian Genocide."

Enver Pasha is trying to take his revenge from the realm beyond.

Enver Pasha was a member of the Young Turk triumvirate, along with Talaat and Jemal. After the defeat of his Ottoman army, he went to Moscow to offer his services to the fledgling Soviet government. He was dispatched to Central Asia to quell the revolt of the Basmaci rebel forces. Instead, he joined them against his Soviet overlords and declared himself Emir of Turkestan. He was chased out by a Red Army brigade led by Hakob Melkumyan (Yacov Melkumov) and was killed near Dushanbe on August 4, 1922. In 1996, his remains were brought from Turkestan to Istanbul and interred at the Liberty Monument in the Sisli sector of the city.

By the same token, Talaat Pasha's remains were brought from Berlin to Istanbul, as the Turks were cooperating secretly with the Nazis during World War II.

That is why Parliament Member Garo Paylan was revolted: "There are 2,000 streets in Turkey in Talaat's name. Can you imagine walking in Germany on a street named after Hitler or Goering?"

While US Secretary of State John Kerry complained about the atrocities of IS, he could not do much. On March 17 he declared that Daesh is committing genocide against Christians.

"We know that in the areas under their control, IS has made a systematic effort to destroy the cultural heritage of ancient communities – destroying Armenian, Syrian Orthodox and Roman Catholic Churches, blowing up monasteries and tombs of prophets, desecrating cemeteries, and in Palmyra, even beheading an 83-year-old scholar who had spent a lifetime preserving antiquities."

Islamic forces had occupied Palmyra and they began destroying most precious Roman architectural jewels in the area, in a challenge to the civilized world. Russian forces chased the IS militants out, calmed the area and they performed a classical concert.

The latest news is that they are building a military base there.

The most despicable crime was committed in Deir Zor, where 150,000 to 400,000 Armenians met their deaths during the Genocide.

A Martyr's Memorial complex was built and dedicated on May 4, 1991 by architect Sarkis Balmanoukian. Every year thousands of pilgrims congregated at the memorial and prayed in the church sanctuary. The Genocide Memorial was a large, free-standing sculpture. At its base, the remains of the Genocide victims were buried. The complex consisted of a circular glass display of Genocide victims' remains, out of which a white marble tower reached for the sky, blanketed by Khatchkars.

Several years ago, this writer visited the monument, tracing the trail in the sand where his mother had walked in 1915. The monument was the last point on earth from where angels soared into the sky. It was such an inspirational location, where living Armenians faced the "living" bones of the martyrs.

On September 21, 2014, the memorial complex was blown up by the Islamic State forces.

The bones collected from the sands in the area were once again broken and scattered in the desert.

Armenian martyrs were murdered – once again.

Mirror Spectator



Established 1932

An ADL Publication

EDITOR

Alin K. Gregorian

ASSISTANT EDITOR

Aram Arkun

ART DIRECTOR

Marc Mgrditchian

SENIOR EDITORIAL COLUMNIST:

Edmond Y. Azadian

CONTRIBUTORS:

Florence Avakian, Dr. Haroutiun Arzoumanian, Taleen Babayan, Diana Der Hovanessian, Philip Ketchian, Kevork Keushkerian, Harut Sassounian, Hagop Vartivarian, Naomi Zeytoonian

CORRESPONDENTS:

Armenia - Hagop Avedikian
Boston - Nancy Kalajian
Philadelphia - Lisa Manookian
Berlin - Muriel Mirak-Weissbach

Contributing Photographers:

Jacob Demirdjian and Jirair Hovsepian

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

Baikar Association, Inc.

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

Telephone: 617-924-4420

FAX: 617-924-2887

www.mirrorspectator.com

E-Mail: editor@mirrorspectator.com

For advertising: mirrorads@aol.com

SUBSCRIPTION RATES:

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

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

ISSN 0004-234X

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

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

Copying for other than personal use or internal reference is prohibited without express permission of the copyright owner. Address requests for reprints or back issues to:

Baikar Association, Inc.

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

The Armenian Genocide – Well, It Never Occurred

By Paul Murad

Each nation in the world depends upon their own particular culture, unique religion, moral behavior, and hidden strategic agendas. Some of these geopolitical views obviously clash with others and if so, there is a need to fully understand what is going on. In fact particular views may appear trivial in opposition to the worldwide perspective. The Turkish view, for example, is that the Armenian Genocide from 1915 to 1919 never occurred. Any contrasting views

about the existence of this genocide, especially inside of Turkey would be exposed to Turkishness – which we shall define as a form of political correctness – a practice permitting the denial of freedom or of speech, expression or truth in contrast to the political conventional lore. How can you, if you discuss this issue with Turks, correct or challenge anyone with such a different point of view? With historical facts, pictures, writings by an American ambassador, foreign media at the time period during these events?

You have to be joking. Clearly, the Turkish government morally accepts a deceit where

the Armenian Genocide never occurred. Thus, you cannot convince the Turks to relearn or accept their own history? If they refuse to hide behind this façade of falsehood, what is the possibility of having a meaningful dialogue? Can we ignore these facts or common sense, as meaning nothing to undergo the risk of Turkishness?

"We can forgive a child who is afraid of the dark; the real tragedy of life is when men are afraid of the light."

-Plato

continued on next page



COMMENTARY



My Turn

By Harut Sassounian

Another Seasoned U.S. Diplomat Hounded Out of Office

The headline of the May 17 opinion column by David Ignatius in *The Washington Post* – “When diplomats get punished for doing their jobs” – triggered unhappy recollections of the forced resignation of John Evans, US Ambassador to Armenia, for daring to speak about the Armenian Genocide, as described in his recently published book, *Truth Held Hostage: America and the Armenian Genocide – What then? What now?*

The Ignatius article was about the scandalous treatment of another diplomat, Robin Raphel, a former assistant secretary of state, who was investigated by the Justice Department for espionage.

Raphel was a distinguished American diplomat. In a 2014 article, *Washington Post* reporters described her as “a fixture in Washington’s diplomatic and think-tank circles.... At the time of the raid, Raphel was a senior adviser on Pakistan for the office of the special representative on Afghanistan and Pakistan. In that job, she was chiefly responsible for administering non-military aid such as US economic grants and incentives. The 67-year-old longtime diplomat was among the US government’s most senior advisors on

Pakistan and South Asian issues.... At the time of the FBI search of her house, she had retired from the Foreign Service but was working for the State Department on renewable, limited contracts that depended in part on her security clearance.”

Raphel began her government career as a CIA analyst. She served 30 years in the Foreign Service while stationed in Great Britain, India, Pakistan, South Africa and Tunisia. In 1993, she was appointed as first assistant secretary of state for South and Central Asian affairs. She retired from the State Department in 2005 and returned in 2009 to work as an advisor to Richard Holbrooke, special representative for Afghanistan and Pakistan. Prior to that position, Raphel worked as a lobbyist for Cassidy & Associates, representing Pakistan, Equatorial Guinea and Iraq’s Kurdistan Regional Government, according to the *Washington Post*.

Raphel’s investigation began on October 21, 2014, when the burglary alarm was triggered in her house. Incredibly, FBI agents could not bypass the alarm system, something common burglars are able to do! Raphel rushed to her home and found the agents going through her files which included some classified documents. Simultaneously, other FBI agents were searching and sealing her State Department office. Subsequently, Raphel was placed on administrative leave, had her security clearance revoked, and her contract with the State Department was not renewed.

The *New York Times* revealed in March of this year that “the inquiry began when American investigators intercepted a conversation in which a Pakistani official suggested that his government was receiving American secrets from Raphel, conversations that led to months of secret surveillance,” and accusations that she was spying for Pakistan.

In his opinion column, Ignatius noted that her case raises

“disturbing questions about how a diplomat with nearly 40 years’ experience became the focus of a career-shattering investigation – apparently without anyone seeking clarification from knowledgeable State Department officials about her assignment to open alternative channels to repair the badly strained relationship with Pakistan.”

Raphel explained to Ignatius: “The FBI’s case of me was flawed from the beginning because they had a fundamental misunderstanding of what diplomats do.”

Jeff Smith, a former CIA general counsel who was one of Raphel’s attorneys, told Ignatius that “if the Bureau [FBI] had talked to senior people at State who were knowledgeable about her work, I believe they would never have launched this investigation.”

Amy Jeffress, another one of Raphel’s lawyers, told the *New York Times* in March: “It is of utmost importance to our national security that our diplomats be able to do their work without fearing that their routine diplomatic communications will subject them to criminal investigation.” Raphel’s colleagues raised \$90,000 for her legal defense fund.

Even though the Justice Department ended up dropping all charges against Raphel, her case had a “chilling effect on other diplomats, who feared they might be next,” several State Department officials told Ignatius.

The hounding of experienced personnel like Ambassador Evans and former assistant secretary of state Raphel deprives the United States of competent and honest diplomats who can fearlessly defend the foreign policy interests of the United States in an effective and fair manner.

It is still not too late to hold a congressional hearing on the appalling mistreatment of two outstanding civil servants Evans and Raphel. At the very least, the President or the Secretary of State should issue a formal apology to both diplomats.

The Armenian Genocide – Well, It Never Occurred

from previous page

Maybe we are looking at this problem the wrong way. Maybe the Turks through Turkishness are really telling the truth. Let us assume if this flawed logic is correct. If the Turkish people can tell one lie, then maybe we can be just as controversial to tell a whole bunch of white lies. Let us look at some of these fairy tales to rewrite history and examine the consequences of this Turkish story.

Mankind has lived in a Century of Genocides. Let us assume some of these genocides did not exist if the Armenian Genocide is ignored? How can human events change by using this logic? Let us assume we can use world-wideness with the same way as Turkishness to rewrite history. Let us treat some of these genocides and look at what happens if they never occurred. The major ones in the twentieth century are: The Armenian Genocide; The Ukraine Famine (Holodomor) and Stalin’s Terror; The Jewish Holocaust; Japanese War Crimes; China’s Great Leap Forward leading up to the Cultural Revolution; The Killing Fields of Cambodia; Iraq: The al-Anfal Campaign; Rwanda; Muslims in Bosnia and Darfur.

Here we need to gaze deeply into a magic crystal ball to remake history. The argument is to possibly look at the logic where the Armenian Genocide was not a progenitor for some of these Genocides either directly or indirectly. Let us examine this flawed logic.

Let’s say the Armenian Genocide never occurred; 1.5 million Armenians never died. Although we need to assume there was no Genocide, let us first assume the precursors of these events which did not exist. This means, for example, the 100,000 Muslims who died during the Balkan Wars never died. Moreover, the fleeing 300,000 Muslim homeless refugees never left the Balkan moving through the Dardanelles. Their movement never followed and they stayed in the Balkans.

We can also ignore what a high-level German General, Hans von Seeckt, who made statements after WW I such as:

...he blamed all of the problems of the Ottoman empire on the Jews and the Armenians, whom he portrayed as a fifth column working for the Allies, and argued that the Armenian genocide was a harsh, but necessary measure on the part of the Young Turks to save Turkey from internal decay. In July 1918, Seeckt sent a message to Berlin stating that: “It is an impossible state of affairs to be allied with the Turks and to stand up for the Armenians. In my view any consideration, Christian, sentimental, and political should be eclipsed by a hard, but clear necessity for war”.

None of this ever occurred. It is interesting where the Turks in 1894 to 1896, murdered about 100 to 300 thousand Armenians consisting mostly of businessmen in Constantinople. These individuals during this massacre represented the blood surging within the economic lifeline between the Ottoman Empire and Europe. By killing these businessmen, the Ottomans literally cut their own economic throat. Were these dead Armenians the fifth column described by Major General von Seeckt which caused decay and ultimate downfall of the Ottoman Empire? One wonders? Let us rewrite history and assume the 1890-era massacres did not happen.

One can extrapolate if this bloodshed did not occur, the Caliph and the Ottoman Caliphate, with its corruption, repressive and tyrannical realm would have survived. Thus, the three Pashas, Talaat Pasha, Jemal Pasha, and Enver Pasha, that planned the Armenian Genocide, never came to power. These Young Turks were organized as the Committee of Union and Progress (CUP) and decided to Turkify the multiethnic Ottoman society to preserve the state from further disintegration. During the 1890 era, Talaat Pasha was initially a telegrapher who understood the new technology to use the telegraph for communications and send large numbers of people on the railroad. This knowledge was a genocide prerequisite. By removing the 1890 massacres, a contradiction exists because the Young Turks that planned the genocide did not get into government. Hence these leaders do not exist. Despite this, let us assume the Pashas still did come into power.

If the Balkan War or similar events did not occur, the war in Gallipoli would not follow. This scenario of Gallipoli led toward the Armenian genocide by the victory which emboldened the Young Turks.

There was also 1,000 Armenian Churches within Turkey that existed before the Genocide, which were decimated. They now exist. In fact, even the entire Ottoman Empire and the Caliphate now exists with this simplified logic. This makes life interesting. Note that these events contrast the point if the Armenian Genocide never occurred...

Each of the three Pashas died either through the hands of Armenian extremists or as part of Armenians in a Russian military unit. Let us assume if there was no genocide, there would be no reason to assassinate these individuals. They too did not die. Thus, Ataturk would have never reached prominence following the genocide. He too did not reach power or exist leaving the three Young Turks Pashas still in charge into the 1920’s and beyond.

The Turkish lie not only destroys the history of Armenians but it also degrades Turkish history. If this falsehood was true, then none of their own history exists.

Let us look at other genocides that also did not take place. One point should not be ignored. The Armenian Genocide was obviously the template for all of these other genocides. However, we have to accept there is no means to chastise those guilty individuals who would initiate these genocides. Such importance for stopping genocides occurred with the 1948 United Nations Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide (CPPCG); especially to identify the meaning of the word ‘genocide’[2].

The Ukraine Famine- Stalin never starved 7-12 million Ukrainians in the 1930s. Never occurred. All the history and facts also were lies. Stalin probably felt the world, as an entity, would not suffer any consequences toward him regarding executing his actions. He could do whatever he wanted to do. By rewriting history, we can historically note that Stalin must have been a real nice human being. He obviously also killed ten million Russians in addition to ten million Russians that died in combat against Germans in WW II without any thought; a real nice person!

The Jewish Holocaust- There is a significant departure with this logic. Whether you agree or disagree, the Armenian genocide was directly a progenitor for the Holocaust. All other genocides can only be considered indirectly despite ignoring knowledge or consequences about the Armenian events.

It should be recognized much evidence exists where the German Embassy and staff were fully aware of the Turkish governmental policy and practice to execute a genocide during the 1914-1919 era. By this, the Germans learned how to perform the science for performing a genocide from the Turks. Several of these individuals ascended to high-level Nazi Party positions and directed the Holocaust. Let us describe some of these individuals:

General von Seeckt served as Chief of Staff of the Turkish Army during World War I. Upon returning to Germany after 1918, he was promoted and placed in charge as the highest ranking officer of the German military or Reichswehr. Why? In about 1921, he requested Talaat Pasha to negotiate with Lenin to end the war between Russia and Germany. This success and his friendship probably allowed Talaat to hide living in Berlin where he was eventually assassinated by the Armenian Soghomon Tehlirian. Von Seeckt interacted with Hitler and provided some invective views about Jews as well.

Vice Consul Max Erwin von Scheubner-Richner of Erzurum was in Turkey during the

genocide. After the war he was involved in the Russian counter-revolution. He was Adolf Hitler’s chief political advisor in the 1920s. During the Beer Hall Putsch, he was walking arm-in-arm with Hitler and others who marched toward armed guards on November 9, 1923. With weapons firing, Von Scheubner-Richner deliberately forced Hitler down to the ground dislocating Hitler’s right shoulder where he fell over saving Hitler’s life. Shot in the lungs, he died almost instantly. Hitler regarded this individual as a significant person important to the Nazi party.

Baron Konstantin von Neurath remained fully informed of the Ottoman government’s policies vis-a-vis its Armenian population while in Turkey. As the Reichsprotector of Bohemia and Moravia, with Reinhard Heydrich, he was one of the architects of the Holocaust, as his more powerful deputy. Neurath was tried and convicted in Nuremberg.

Franz von Papen became Hitler’s vice chancellor after serving as Chief of Staff of the Fourth Turkish Army during World War I in Palestine. Von Papen was responsible for managing German-Austrian and German-Turkish relations under the Nazis as the Ambassador to Turkey (1939-1944). He was subsequently sentenced to eight years of hard labor by the West German denazification court in the Nuremberg Trial, but was released on appeal in 1949.

With each of these particular and other individuals, there was probably a Laissez-faire mentality regarding the consequences for executing a genocide especially the Holocaust. If we rewrite history where Hitler was killed during the Beer Hall Putsch, World War II may have not occurred. This means the six million Jews did not die under the Nazi regime. They are all alive and with old age, are living well somewhere in Europe. I am sure all Israelis would be happy to accept this fact. However, there is an interesting counterpoint. Without the Holocaust or the Armenian Genocide, there would be no Israel, which was created almost overnight in 1948; Israel or its name Palestine would still be a small obscure fragment hidden within the Ottoman Empire. The five million Germans that died during World War II, never died. The twenty million Russians, also did not die. Events where Americans died during the war, never occurred. This rewriting history is unusual taking advantage if you believe the cascading effects of this Turkish fairy tale.

Japanese War Crimes- The Japanese acted barbaric similar to the Mongol Turkic hordes, throughout the Pacific. There was no war. With rewriting history, Japan never invaded China, the Philippines, Korea or Southeast Asia. There was no rape of Nanjing. The three-thousand see GENOCIDE, page 20



ANCA-Western Region Endorses Sanders for the Upcoming Calif. Primary

GLENDALÉ – The Armenian National Committee of America - Western Region on Wednesday, June 1, endorsed Vermont Senator Bernie Sanders as the Democratic candidate in the California presidential primary to be held on June 7. The ANCA-WR believes that Sanders is best positioned to advance foreign policies and international humanitarian principles supported by California’s Armenian-American electorate.

“The Armenian National Committee of America- Western Region is proud to endorse Bernie Sanders in California’s June 7th Democratic presidential primary as the only candidate with a proven record of consistent and strong support for issues that advance the Armenian Cause,” said ANCA-WR Chairwoman Nora Hovsepien.

As a member of the U.S. House of Representatives (1991-2007) and U.S. Senate (2008-present), Bernie Sanders has supported Armenian Genocide legislation, Section 907 restrictions on U.S. assistance to Azerbaijan, and efforts to secure Turkey’s return of confiscated Armenian and other Christian Churches.

As senator and later a presidential candidate in 2008, Clinton supported Armenian-American concerns, including her pledge to recognize the Armenian Genocide. However, as Secretary of State, Clinton reneged on her promises and advanced an agenda through which she called the US recognition of the Armenian Genocide “a door that is a very dangerous one to go through” saying that it was a “matter of historical debate” rather than a political decision.

This stood in stark contrast to her pledge as a presidential candidate in 2008 when she unequivocally said: “I believe the horrible events perpetrated by the Ottoman Empire against Armenians constitute a clear case of genocide.” In her book, *Hard Choices*, Clinton characterized the Genocide issue as an “emo-

tionally charged conflict” between Turkey and Armenia.

Immediately after assuming office as secretary of state, Clinton zealously shepherded the dangerous Armenia-Turkey protocols that posed a threat to Armenia’s national security. Her approach to the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict and her failure to properly condemn Azerbaijan’s military advances and rhetoric, further complicated the fragile peace process and resulted in loss of military and civilian lives in Artsakh.

In assessing the protocols process, as well as her worldview in the region, it is clear that Clinton’s motivations were to advance Azerbaijan’s oil interests over concerns for justice and human rights.

Clinton explicitly said in “*Hard Choices*” that the aim of the protocols and other initiatives in the Caucasus was not necessarily to achieve peace but to advance US interests.

In Clinton’s own words, “The conflict in the Caucasus posed problems for our plans for piping Central Asian natural gas to European markets to lessen their dependence on Russian energy.”

“Based upon Bernie Sanders’ positive legislative record, and in comparison to Hillary Clinton’s troubling opposition to Armenian-American issues as Secretary of State, it is our view that he would, as President, be more supportive of our community’s foreign policy priorities,” explained Hovsepien.

The California Primary Elections will be held on Tuesday, June 7.

Below is a Sanders’s detailed record on Armenian-American issues.

104th Congress (1995-1996) - Voted for the Radanovich Amendment to the House Foreign Aid Bill cutting aid to Turkey by \$3.0 million, a symbolic amount equaling the annual amount spent by the Turkish Government to lobbying against Armenian Genocide legisla-

tion and other top Turkey priorities.

104th Congress (1995-1996) - Voted for the Visclosky Amendment to the House Foreign Aid Bill strengthening the Humanitarian Aid Corridor Act, which withheld aid to any country, including Turkey, which obstructs the transit of humanitarian assistance to a third coun-

recognize the Armenian Genocide.

108th Congress (2003-2004) - Voted for the Cunningham Amendment cutting aid to Turkey for undermining U.S. priorities in Iraq.

108th Congress (2003-2004) - Signed April 2003 letter to President Bush urging him to recognize the Armenian Genocide.



try in need.

105th Congress (1997-1998) - Voted for the Pallone-Radanovich Amendment which maintained Section 907 restrictions on U.S. aid to Azerbaijan due to that country’s ongoing blockades and aggression against Armenia and Nagorno Karabagh.

105th Congress (1997-1998) - Signed a letter to the White House urging it to stop the sale of Seahawk helicopters to Turkey due to the likelihood of their use in committing human rights violations.

106th Congress (1999-2000) - Cosponsor of H. Res. 398, the United States Training on and Commemoration of the Armenian Genocide Resolution.

107th Congress (2001-2002) - Signed April 2002 letter to President Bush urging him to

108th Congress (2003-2004) - Signed April 2004 letter to President Bush urging him to recognize the Armenian Genocide.

112th Congress (2011-2012) - Cosponsor of S. Res. 392, Return of Churches Resolution, which urges the Republic of Turkey to safeguard its Christian heritage and to return confiscated church properties.

112th Congress (2011-2012) - Cosponsor of S. Res. 399, Armenian Genocide Resolution, which calls upon the President to ensure that the foreign policy of the United States reflects appropriate understanding and sensitivity concerning issues related to human rights, crimes against humanity, ethnic cleansing, and genocide documented in the United States record relating to the Armenian Genocide, and for other purposes.

ՄԵՐ ՄԿՐՏՉԵԱՆ ԹԱՏԵՐԱԿՈՒՄԻՐ
TCA MHER MEGERDCHIAN THEATRICAL GROUP

presents

AGBU SATAMIAN THEATER GROUP

in

FUNNY MONEY

WRITTEN BY RAY COONEY
TRANSLATED & DIRECTED BY KRİKOR SATAMIAN

Հրաշք Խաղի և Կ'բուխ

SATURDAY JUNE 4 8:00 PM
SUNDAY JUNE 5 4:00 PM

Oradell Elementary School
350 PROSPECT AVENUE ORADELL, NJ 07649

ADMISSION \$35 - \$50

RESERVATIONS
MARIE (201) 745-8850 TALAR (201) 240-8541

The Armenian Genocide – Well It Never Occurred

GENOCIDE, from page 19

Americans that died in Pearl Harbor leading America’s introduction into WW II, never occurred. The American Battleships at Pearl Harbor never sank. Following the Doolittle raid against Tokyo, over 250,000 Chinese died in Japanese attempts to find these American pilots. With this flawed logic, the Japanese did not kill any of these Chinese. They did not kill Philippino or Chinese guerrillas or exploit ‘Comfort’ women throughout the Pacific, which even today, upsets the Southeast Asian countries with Japan. Never occurred. Moreover, no atrocities ensued during any of these events. An estimate of hundreds of thousands of Japanese in Nagasaki and Hiroshima did not die within a brief instantaneous moment of a nuclear flash. The 90,000 Japanese who died during the concurrent Napalm firebombing in Tokyo also did not die in a single savage, hot and fiery evening.

Japanese historic amnesia was about forgetting their genocidal activities during the war. This is like the Turkish lie regarding the Armenian Genocide. However, the Japanese probably used this model for their defense. The Tokyo War Crimes Trial (1946-1948), Japan’s counterpart to the Nuremberg Trials in Germany, left controversial legacies that were embedded within the cold war structures due to international and domestic political relations. Guilty Generals and Admirals never reached the trials due to ceremonial suicides.

General Yamashita, for example, was the commanding general of the Japanese Imperial Army in the Philippine Islands during their unsuccessful defense of the islands. This was against the invading Allies under Douglas MacArthur. He was the Japanese Military Governor of the islands from October 9, 1944, until his surrender to the Allies on September 3, 1945. Let us assume he did not commit any of the numerous crimes against humanity thereby dismissing war crimes where these actions were acceptable by the Japanese code under victors’ justice. This means the Japanese as victors, can do whatever they

wanted. These crimes of his troops included the rape of 120 women. Yamashita was tried and found guilty. There was also crimes about the 10,000 guerrillas killed by his soldiers which never reached trial. Following conviction by a military court, his lawyer went to the American Supreme Court. After a month, they agreed with the military court and Yamashita was hanged. Yamashita’s gold also involved moving treasures through Southeast Asia to Japan probably the equivalent of Fort Knox, it too never occurred. Unfortunately, the gold is still to be recovered although some was recovered... Did the Japanese historic amnesia become the template for the Turks to ignore the Armenian Genocide?

We can make comments about the 40-80 million Chinese which died under Mao Zedong with the Great Leap Forward and Cultural Revolution or the 2 million that died during the Killing Fields of Cambodia. However, using this expanded Turkish logic, none of these facts really transpired. In fact the 3,000 Americans did not die during the 9-11 attacks against the World Towers, they too are well. Muslim extremists never slaughtered Americans. There were no wars in Iraq or Afghanistan using the Turkish political correctness approach to alter any of these real historical events...

In fact we can ignore any foolishness about morality or words such as:

“Genocide has no conscience. Genocide has no morality, it has no memory. Genocide has no ethics. Genocide does not discriminate based upon religion; it swallows whole Christian Armenians, European Jews, Cambodian Buddhists, Bosnian Moslems, and those with no religious preference. Genocide knows no color; it devours whites, yellows, or blacks. Genocide is mindless; it devours the educated and uneducated. It thrives on ignorance and if it is not recognized for what it really is, this will continue to propagate because those that perpetrate this monstrosity may not be held responsible for their actions. If it is not stopped, it will continue. Who will be next? Are these new victims the Turkish and Iraqi Kurds who want their own nation or is Africa ready to shed some more blood and tears? Have we learned nothing from the anguish of history?”

-PA. Murad