

# THE ARMENIAN Mirror-Spectator

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## Diasporan Tekeyan Members Visit Vahan Tekeyan Schools in Armenia

YEREVAN (*Azg*) – This year marks the 15th anniversary of the founding of the Sponsor a Teacher Program of the Tekeyan Cultural Association (TCA) of United States and Canada in Armenia and Karabagh.

During the last 15 years, the project has raised more than \$648,000 and reached out to 5,404 teachers and school workers in Armenia and Karabagh. Throughout this period, Maro Bedrosian, treasurer of the TCA Board of Directors of US and Canada, has headed the project. Letters of thanks to sponsors and donors have been mailed providing the names of the teachers they have sponsored, visits to schools have been documented and photographed, and articles have been written in various newspapers, including *Azg* in Yerevan; *Abaka* in Montreal, Canada; the *Armenian Observer* and *Nor Or* in California; and the *Armenian Mirror-Spectator* in Boston, covering the delegations' visits to the schools. Once a year, the names of all donors are published in the above newspapers.

The Sponsor a Teacher Program began see TEACHERS, page 8



TCA members from US, Canada, England and Greece in front of the bust of Vahan Tekeyan with students of Garpi School

### NEWS IN BRIEF

#### Delegation from 65 Armenian Companies Headed for Tehran

TEHRAN (PanArmenian.net) – A delegation representing 65 top Armenian companies, headed by the country's Economy Minister Karen Chshmarityan, left Armenia for Iran on November 9. According to the Mehr news agency, Levon Aharonian, the chief of the Armenia-Iran Joint Chamber of Commerce (AIJCC), relayed this information to reporters and added that the visit aims to boost trade and business cooperation.

The Armenian business heads are scheduled to meet with their Iranian partners and counterparts. Referring to the prospects of Tehran-Yerevan trade ties, Aharonian noted that Iran-Armenia trade volume amounted to \$400 million from March 21, 2014 to March 21, 2015, and expressed the hope that the figures will be improved in the future.

Armenia was the 23rd biggest importer of Iranian non-oil goods in the first half of the current Iranian calendar year (March 21-September 22), according to the Iran Customs Administration. Iran exported bitumen, oil, industrial lubricants, and soybean oil to Armenia and imported sheep, waste aluminum and cast-iron in return.

Also Tehran exported \$63.847 million worth non-oil goods to Armenia and imported \$5.409 million of non-oil goods from the country in the six-month period.

#### Historic Photo Concerning St. Nersess Seminary

NEW YORK – A historic photograph which pertains to the article "St. Nersess Seminary on the Threshold of a New Era," written by Hagop Vartivarian in the October 31 issue of the *Mirror-Spectator*, sheds light on the efforts to raise funds



for the seminary. From left, Mr. and Mrs. Arsen Hanamirian, Archbishop Khajag Barsamian, the late Catholicos of All Armenians Karekin I and Dr. and Mrs. Raffy Hovanessian are pictured meeting at St. David's Church in Florida.

#### Nazarian Family Donates MRI Unit To Heratsi Hospital in Yerevan

NEW YORK and YEREVAN – On September 23, a new MRI unit was inaugurated at the Heratsi Hospital in Yerevan thanks to a \$1.4 million donation by AGBU Board of Trustees Member Nazar Nazarian, his wife Artemis and their son, AGBU Central Board Member Dr. Levon Nazarian. The ceremony was attended by AGBU President Berge Setrakian, Minister of Education of the Republic of Armenia Armen Ashotyan, Minister of Health of the Republic of Armenia Armen Muradyan and Yerevan State Medical University (YSMU) Rector Mikayel Narimanyan.

The MRI unit is an addition to the AGBU-YSMU Levon and Claudia Nazarian Radiology Center, founded in 2010, and will allow the center to perform medical tests unavailable at other hospitals in Armenia. The new device provides high quality images that enable accurate diagnoses. Narimanyan said that, due to the new MRI unit, doctors will be



Berge Setrakian and Mikayel Narimanyan signed a cooperation agreement to continue the partnership between AGBU and YSMU.



The MRI unit is an addition to the AGBU-YSMU Levon and Claudia Nazarian Radiology Center

#### Genocide Museum Director Demoyan Reflects On Centennial

By Aram Arkun  
Mirror-Spectator Staff

WATERTOWN – Dr. Hayk Demoyan, director since 2006 of the Armenian Genocide Museum-Institute of the National Academy of Sciences of the Republic of Armenia, the only major museum dedicated primarily to the Armenian Genocide in the world, recently visited Massachusetts to speak about the latest activities of the museum, especially in light of the centennial commemorations.



Hayk Demoyan

Demoyan has been deeply involved with the commemorations not only in his capacity as the museum director but also as secretary of the coordinating commission created by the government of Armenia in 2011 to promote the commemoration of the centennial of the Armenian Genocide.

Demoyan stated that the state commission to commemorate the centennial is unique because nearly all Armenian organizations throughout the diaspora were included. Demoyan noted that through this body, "we had dialogue. Each community had its ties with the Armenian state commission, not as a subordinate but in a collaborative manner." Consequently, he worked on many occasions with different committees in different countries, with the cooperation of the Armenian Ministry of the Diaspora and a network was created. Demoyan assessed its work as successful,

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## ARMENIA

## News From Armenia

## President Sargisian Receives Russian Foreign Minister Lavrov

YEREVAN (Armenpress) – On November 9, President Serge Sargisian received the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation Sergey Lavrov, who has arrived in Armenia on an official visit.

The president welcomed Lavrov and expressed confidence that as with his previous visits, the visit would be an important step toward strengthening relations between the two countries.

Recently, the activity of the fourth forum of inter-regional cooperation was successfully completed, to which Chairman of Russia's Federation Council Valentina Matviyenko, arrived in Armenia on official visit, participated. All the meetings and events, according to the President, were mutually beneficial and effective. According to the Armenian president, such intensity of communications state the two countries' mutual curiosity on developing the federal collaboration in all directions and about readiness to jointly discuss current issues within the existing frameworks.

Sargisian thanked Lavrov for Russia's role in the Nagorno Karabagh conflict resolution and in assuring security and stability in the region.

Thanking Sargisian for his reception and conveying President Vladimir Putin's regards, Lavrov emphasized that Vladimir Putin is consistent in realizing Armenian-Russian high-level agreements.

## US Embassy in Armenia Supports Rural Economic Development

YEREVAN (Armenpress) – The US ambassador to Armenia Richard Mills recently declared: "I want to emphasize that our support for economic growth in Armenia puts great emphasis on the regions. For instance, the US government has been actively helping to develop the Armenian agricultural sector for more than 20 years. The sector employs 40 percent of the Armenian labor force and accounts for 20 percent of Armenian GDP, so agriculture is vitally important to the health and growth of the overall Armenian economy. Our agricultural support programs now implemented by USAID currently provide about \$12 million in assistance to boost the competitiveness of Armenian agriculture and grow the economies of rural communities. In addition to our sustained partnership in the agricultural sector, we have also explored other means of boosting rural development. For example – and unfortunately, I can't give too much away – we'll be announcing later this month a very exciting tourism initiative, in cooperation with the Smithsonian Institution in the United States, that I believe will inject a burst of oxygen into the economy of rural Armenia."

## Armenian Government To Pay Compensation to Tula Bus Crash Victims

YEREVAN (ArmeniaNow) – The government of Armenia will compensate the families of nine Armenian citizens who were killed in the November 3 bus crash in Russia, Transport and Communications Minister Gagik Beglaryan said on November 9.

The official also said that financial compensations will be given to dozens of other passengers of the Moscow-Yerevan coach injured in the accident on a highway near Tula, some 220 kilometers south of Moscow. "We will probably give the families of the victims more than 1 million drams each (\$2,100), while the injured persons will get up to 1 million drams each," Beglaryan told the media. The official emphasized that the state bears only "humanitarian responsibility" for that accident. "We must help our compatriots at this difficult time," Beglaryan said.

According to the minister, an investigation will decide who bears the immediate responsibility for the crash – whether it is the driver who was taken into custody in Russia or the company that organized the transportation of passengers from Moscow to Yerevan.

## Genocide Museum Director Reflects on Centennial

DEMOYAN, from page 1  
with the organization of high-quality events and exhibitions.

The Yerevan Genocide Museum alone had temporary exhibits shown in more than 50 cities. Two halls of the Paris mayoralty presented Armenian Genocide materials in the heart of Europe, with the mayor present at the opening and the exhibit continuing for 1 ½ months. The Los Angeles Skirball Cultural Center exhibited the first pages of contemporary international newspapers containing articles with visual material about the Genocide, while a huge Russian exhibition took place in one of the world's largest war museums. Catalogues of the various exhibitions were published in many local languages.

Demoyan had proposed as early as 2012 that the state commission should have branches which should continue in 2016 as a representative body for discussing pan-Armenian issues, and indeed President Serge Sargisian announced in 2014 that this transformation would occur.

Demoyan felt that Armenians should not just sit on their laurels when the year 2015 concludes. Instead, he said, "We must turn the results of 2015, as important and tangible products, into a means for realizing our goals."

Demoyan expressed one major concern. In the past few years, when the Genocide Museum-Institute wanted to organize events throughout the world, Demoyan said, "it seemed like one portion of the community did not want to participate – in a word, it was a boycott done in an organized manner."

Meanwhile, in Armenia, in order to preserve the autonomy of the new museum exhibitions, and also on moral grounds, Demoyan said that he and his wife, exhibit and publication designer Lusine Matevosyan, who works for the museum, refused to accept any money in their design and preparation.

He said, "My family made a decision not to assemble a great sum of money, but instead to create a great museum, and a story which we can tell our children. We know our work is a duty and a mission in the memory of the martyrs of the Genocide. We could not make any money from presenting our national tragedy."

The general expenses of the museum are paid for through a state budget, but donors were found for technology and construction. Demoyan on principle never approaches donors for money. He said, "I expect, perhaps naively, that people will come and ask, how can I help the museum." There are a few donors, like the general manager of VivaCell MTS Ralph Yirikian, Jevan Cheloyants of Moscow, the Syrian-Armenian Gabriel Jemberjian and two others, who have helped a great deal. There are none from the US, he noted.

The museum only shows about 5 percent of its holdings, which approaches 100,000 items (including 500 unique original Near East Relief photographs). Demoyan said, "We would have to increase our display space five times over in order to show all our feasible topics."

He added that when he had become director in 2006, there were practically no original items in the museum, so that at first he had to find money to purchase them, and next to win over people with important collections.

He noted, "I can say with happiness and pride that the collection now is in good shape, with many unique objects, including those pertaining to Aurora Mardiganian, Maria Jacobsen, Karen Jeppe, Bodil Bjorn, Jakob "Papa" Kunzler, Armenian sports and uniforms, and Armenian scouts collections. In the coming years we easily can

great many new traveling or temporary exhibitions and albums."

Each day, the museum receives new objects and items. Demoyan said that they are happiest when handwritten survivor accounts or recorded interviews arrive, which happen once or twice a month. An interesting upcoming exhibit will focus on 100 objects, each one with its unique story, which can form a book.

The revamped museum exhibits in Yerevan have had many visitors. From April until the end of October, there were, for example, more than 300 Turkish visitors.

Demoyan said that one of the important approaches adopted by the museum was to present the Armenian tragedy through an individual's story. Genocide survivor and film actress Aurora Mardiganian is one example. The museum had already been assembling material about her tragic life. In a relative's house, nearly 100 items, her photographs, articles and writings, newspapers, and her personal Bible had been found. In 2015, several new discoveries were made. First, in January, by coincidence, 1½ minutes additional minutes from her lost film "Auction of Souls" (also known as "Ravished Armenia") were found in the beginning of a version of a film called "Der Zor" brought to Armenia decades ago by Yervant Setian, a repatriate. On the same reel was a silent film giving information to students on the Armenian Genocide. A hitherto unknown Japanese translation of Mardiganian's book was located, dated 1923. Then, her traveling suitcase, inscribed with her name and that of the film, turned up.

Soon, the Genocide Museum and Institute will publish a volume on Mardiganian, with separate English and Armenian editions. There also is a catalogue prepared of a traveling exhibition devoted to her experiences (The Road of Aurora). Demoyan hopes to prepare a documentary on her.

Demoyan simultaneously is perpetuating Mardiganian's legacy in a different way. For the last two years, he has been donating whatever money is raised from his lecture trips on Mardiganian for Syrian Armenian relief. Any revenue from books, postcards and other items sold will be given as aid symbolically in Mardiganian's name.

The Genocide Museum does not just organize exhibitions. It is an institute for research and study. Of the 65 people working there, 15 are academics concentrating on catalogues, publications, translations and dissertations. The

institute is attempting to assemble relevant archival and primary source materials from different countries in a centralized location to save scholars time, trouble and expense. Recently, for example, Demoyan recently copied some Armenian provincial newspapers from the Vienna Mkhitarian Monastery's library as primary sources.

The museum gives digitalized versions of original memoirs and other documents to students and scholars for use, and provides scholarships for foreign doctoral students to come to benefit from its resources. It publishes the sole periodical in the world focusing on the Armenian Genocide, the English-language International Journal of Armenian Genocide Studies, which is peer reviewed. It provides information to documentary filmmakers and journalists, many of whom frequently ask for information and help.

Demoyan stressed that the museum as an educational and academic institution cannot be part of any political activity. However, its work may indirectly have an influence on political activity. After all, aside from ordinary tourists, presidents and other high-ranking international officials frequently visit the museum as a part of state protocol. In 2015, more than 300 delegations visited and learned about the Genocide and Armenian history.

Demoyan himself is an active public figure in Armenia. He was appointed by President Sargisian as a member of the 36-person advisory Public Council of the Republic of Armenia in 2009, and was elected several years ago to the 65-person Yerevan City Council of Elders as part of the Republican Party faction. He said that in this capacity "I always express my opinions...I work for the general interest."

Demoyan has a personal message for readers. He exclaimed: "I am very sorry that we only have one Armenian Genocide museum at the centennial. If there are people in Washington who are ready to make a museum, the creative body of the [Yerevan] museum is ready to prepare its design and the exhibits without pay...if the good will and interest exists." He added that in his opinion, the Washington museum should focus on American humanitarianism, and show how it began with US relief for Armenians. This will be an uplifting experience, he thought, not the sad one a museum solely focusing on the Armenian Genocide would provide.

His present trip includes stops at Boston, Rhode Island, Paris, and Beirut.

## Nazarian Family Donates MRI Unit To Heratsi Hospital in Yerevan

MRI, from page 1

able to see cardiovascular pathologies at an earlier stage, observing changes, without endovascular interventions, that may lead to heart attack and stroke.

"The machine is a 1.5 Tesla 'high-field' unit, and therefore, expands the range of MRI services that the hospital can offer patients," said Dr. Levon Nazarian, a radiologist and vice chairman of the Department of Radiology at the Thomas Jefferson University Hospital in Philadelphia. "State-of-the-art imaging is essential if Armenia is to be seen as a center of medical excellence."

During the inauguration, Muradyan highlighted the importance of introducing modern equipment at YSMU, which enables young doctors to work with new technologies used by the world's best hospitals early in their careers: "These technologies also allow specialists to send digital images to reference hospitals, which means that [Armenians] will be saved the trouble of traveling to other countries for the purpose of diagnosis and will be able to receive the highest quality medical care in their home country, in particular at the diagnosis stage." He added that in the coming months YSMU expects to receive two more similar devices that will meet the needs of Armenia's healthcare sector.

Before the start of the ceremony, Setrakian and Narimanyan signed a cooperation agreement to continue the partnership between AGBU and YSMU.



## INTERNATIONAL

# US, Russia Reject PACE Report on Karabagh

WASHINGTON – The Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) Minsk Group US Co-Chair Ambassador James Warlick and Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov share criticism of the Council of Europe's Parliamentary Assembly (PACE) for issuing a report that demands Armenian withdrawal from Nagorno Karabagh and the territory's return to Azerbaijan.

The resolution on Nagorno Karabagh was drafted by Azerbaijan-affiliated former British Parliamentarian Robert Walter and approved by the PACE's Political Affairs Committee on Wednesday, November 4. The three-page document calls for a peaceful settlement starting with "the withdrawal of Armenian armed forces and other irregular armed forces from Nagorno Karabagh and the other occupied territories of Azerbaijan," and "the establishment of full sovereignty of Azerbaijan in these territories."

It also contains criticism of the OSCE Minsk Group, saying that the body co-chaired by the United States, Russia and France should "consider reviewing its approach to the resolution of the conflict."

Peace proposals made by the three mediating powers differ from the Karabagh settlement advocated by Walter's resolution. Instead, the OSCE Minsk Group Basic Principles prefer an internationally recognized referendum in Karabagh in which the disputed territory's predominantly Armenian population would be able to reaffirm its de facto secession from Azerbaijan.

"PACE and other [international organizations,] should consult with OSCE

Minsk Group co-chairs before issuing reports or resolutions on Nagorno Karabagh," Warlick tweeted on Friday, November 6.

Azerbaijan rejected Warlick's criticism and defended Walter's resolution. "So far the work of the OSCE Minsk Group has produced zero results," Azerbaijani Foreign Ministry spokesman Hikmet Hajiyev said, according to Haqqin.az. "Other international structures trying to contribute to the conflict's resolution do not need to consult with the Minsk Group co-chairs engaged in meaningless activities."

Similar to Warlick's position, Lavrov said that attempts by PACE to intervene in the unresolved conflict with such documents only "harm" international peace efforts spearheaded by Russia, the United States, and France. Lavrov emphasized that only these three nations have an international mandate to mediate in the Armenian-Azerbaijani dispute within the framework of the OSCE Minsk Group.

"Any drastic, radical actions, whoever takes them, only harm this cause and the work of the co-chairs," Lavrov told reporters. "We – Russia, the United States and France – are firmly against attempts to take this subject to other international platforms that do not deal with the conflict's settlement, instead of a consistent, businesslike and patient dialogue on the Nagorno Karabagh settlement. At least, nobody has given them such a task on behalf of the international community," Lavrov said.

Armenian Minister of Foreign Affairs Edward Nalbandian reaffirmed Armenia's strong condemnation of the proposed PACE document and accused Walter of working for Azerbaijan. "A

person who was for many years a member of a pro-Azerbaijani group in the British parliament and who is financed, according to British press reports, from Baku, could not have had an impartial position," Nalbandian said at a joint news conference with Lavrov.

Walter was named by the PACE leadership in 2014 to launch a fact-finding mission to the Karabagh conflict zone and draw up the resolution titled "Escalation of violence in Nagorno Karabagh and other occupied territories of Azerbaijan." Armenian members of the PACE and the Armenian Foreign Ministry argued that this title predetermines Walter's findings and runs counter to statements made by the U.S., Russian, and French mediators. Walter has also been accused of having close ties with Azerbaijan's government, saying that he has repeatedly defended Baku's dismal human rights record frequently criticized by Western human rights groups. Walter is married to a Turkish woman and became a Turkish citizen. Turkey's Foreign Minister Mevlut Cavusoglu was reported to have personally handed a Turkish ID card to the retired parliamentarian at the Turkish Embassy in London.

"It has turned from an organization protecting human rights into an organization protecting special interests," Armenia's Chief of Staff Davit Harutiunian said about the PACE. "Unfortunately, recent years' [PACE] votes on various issues testify to the fact that special interests have started taking precedence," he added.

The Strasbourg-based PACE will debate the proposed resolution on Nagorno Karabagh at its next plenary session due in January 2016.

## International News

### 1000 Syrian Armenians Returned to Kessab, Historian Says

YEREVAN (PanARMENIAN.Net) – Around 1000 Armenians have returned to Kessab, a Syrian-Armenian historian told reporters on Tuesday, November 10.

"Armenians fleeing Aleppo contributed to the increase of population in Kessab, with the situation in the town relatively stable," Gevorg Yazchian said, according to Panorama.am.

Yazchian noted that 50 Armenian civilians have been killed in Syria so far. Besides, 10 soldiers of Armenian descent have died in the army, while another 50 Armenians have been injured.

Referring to Aleppo, the historian said some 15,000-17,000 Armenians out of the 45,000-50,000-member community have left the city for their historic homeland, about the same number of people having fled to Beirut.

"Some Syrian Armenians have relocated to the Kurdish areas in the country's northeast and are being treated well enough," Yazchian said.

The historian noted that a considerable part of Syrian Armenians have no intention of ever returning to their homes, having lost everything there.

### 2,800-year-old 'Burial Jars' Unearthed in Van

VAN, Turkey (PanARMENIAN.Net) – Nearly 40 archaeological experts at an excavation site in Van province have uncovered 2,800-year-old pithoi, large ceramic storage containers. The latter have reportedly been used as tombs during the reign of the Urartian Kingdom, which centered around Lake Van established in 860 BC, Daily Sabah reports.

The archeology team from Istanbul University has been carrying out excavations in the region every year for the past five years to unearth artifacts from the Urartian Kingdom, which ruled the area until its defeat by the Medes in 590 BC.

The pithos tombs, used as burial chambers at the time, give clues about some of the customs of the kingdom.

### Belarus Ambassador Considers Armenia Vital Link between EAEU, Iran

YEREVAN (Armenpress) – The Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU) expects mutually beneficial cooperation with the Islamic Republic of Iran and Armenia can be a connecting link which is very important, according to the Ambassador of Belarus to Armenia, Igor Nazaruk.

During an interview he referred to the role of the Republic of Armenia in the framework of the EAEU as very constructive.

"I cannot recall any occasion during which Armenia had any negative impact on decisions made during discussions in the framework of the EAEU during the current one year," Nazaruk emphasized.

According to the ambassador, Armenia should take into account its obligations within the EAEU when formulating the provisions regulating trade turnover of the future agreement with the EU. "Information on the negotiations of the agreement testifies to the fact that the future EU-Armenia agreement provisions regulating trade turnover will have general formulations. Of course, we welcome such an approach, and consider that the EAEU members states must establish multidimensional and multifaceted relations with other countries without violating agreements reached within the EAEU," Nazaruk said.

"During the Eurasian Customs Union Belarus President Alexander Lukashenko brought forth the idea of 'integration of integrations.' That is to say, we should not be confined to ourselves. Yes, we can create special conditions and relations for the organization of trade as the EAEU is first of all an economic union. But we always view the EAEU from a broader point of view as our union will be more powerful if member countries have strong external relations," he said.

The members of the EAEU are Armenia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and the Russian Federation. The union was formed on January 1, 2015.

## Assyrians, Armenians in Syria Protest Kurdish Confiscation of Property

HASAKA, Syria (Public Radio of Armenia) – Sixteen Assyrian and Armenian organizations have issued a statement protesting Kurdish expropriation of private property in the Hasaka province of Syria, the Assyrian International News Agency (AINA) reports.

The statement accuses the Democratic Union Party (YPD), the Syrian wing of the Turkish Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK), of human rights violations, expropriation of private property, illegal military conscription and interference in church school curricula.

YPD has gained some international attention in its fight against ISIS, a fight which Assyrian fighters have joined, but it has been accused by Human Rights Watch of massive violations of human rights, extending to forced evictions and the destruction of homes and property of non-Kurdish populations in regions under its control. Some of the violations which impact the Christian Assyrian population are: Enforcement of new curricula in private and public schools; conducting forced recruitment of young people; enforcing special taxes and occupation of Assyrian owned public buildings.

According to Assyrian leaders in Hasaka, the Kurds form about 30 percent of the population in Northern Syria's Jazeera region (provincial capital Hasaka) but increasingly act as occupiers of the region. YPD militia killed David Jendo, the commander of the Assyrian Khabour village guards, in April this year. The guards were established to defend the Khabour villages from ISIS.

Most recently the YPD has taken the decision to confiscate what it calls "abandoned emigrant property," which is the property of internally displaced Syrians, driven away from their homes by the Syrian conflict.

Assyrian and Armenian churches, political and civic organizations issued

the following letter to protest YPD's actions:

For over four years our country, Syria, is struggling with tragic events. War devastation and terrorism have caused all ethnic groups much suffering. But we, inhabitants of Al-Jazeera, have kept so precious nowadays ideals of peaceful coexistence between various communities of our province. Due to extraordinary situation and having safety in mind Local Self-Administration was created, together with number of dependent institutions. Some of its regulations, however, are not properly prepared nor thoroughly measured. This causes valid concerns among various ethnic and national groups. While it is happening official authorities are still performing its fiscal, administrative, legal and military duties.

#### Law on Emigrant Property

After careful consideration representatives of Christian communities in Qamishli agreed on following:

Aforementioned Law on Emigrant Property is in violation of Human Rights Law, breaking fundamental Right to property

Under no circumstances, nobody can be labeled as "traitor" just for leaving their home.

Efforts at creating "Institution for Emigrant Properties Redistribution and Management" is an attempt of expropriation real estate under a guise of helping those in need.

These regulations create a dangerous precedence in Proprietorship Law in whole province of Al-Jazeera. Additionally this will cause substantial demographic changes centered at local Christians who will lose their homes. It's worth mentioning that nearly 35 percent of all real estate in the area is owned by Christians. Expropriation of this properties will cause valid concerns amongst both those who fled and stayed, preventing the latter from ever coming back.

It's worth noting that stance, taken by many local Christians, of not selling nor appointing a proxy for their properties is fully supported by both state and international law. Any claims of this being illegal are false.

Taking all of the above into account we believe that such actions of "Local Administration" will cause ethnic cracks and turmoil. In order to avoid it and to convince authors to abandon these regulations we hereby announce ourselves as plaintiffs and prosecutors for any and all cases under both state and international tribunals and courts of law.

"Procedure on issuing permits and licenses, new permits and licenses fees and taxes" is redundant and illegal. Already existing permits and licenses are absolutely valid. They were issued in accordance with the law by official Syrian authorities and did not lose their legitimacy. Demand for their replacement and new fees, often exceeding their holders financial capabilities, is unacceptable.

"Conscription Law". Demanding military service by organization without state legitimization is preposterous.

Any interference into church private schools in Al-Jazeera province is unacceptable. These institutions are sanctioned by administrative and education authorities. Pressure on these institutions is viewed as an interference in education and upbringing of Christian children and adolescents.

We appeal into everybody's sense of responsibility and ask for restraint when handling matters that could limit rights of both individuals and communities. Fundamental Human Rights have to be upheld in order for peace and safety to once again grace all of Syria. We are hoping for continuous, peaceful coexistence of all Al-Jazeera inhabitants, regardless of their faith, ethnicity, nationality and culture.

# Community News

## 100 LIVES Joins Near East Foundation to Announce \$7 Million Scholarship Fund

NEW YORK – A new eight-year educational scholarship has been established to benefit 100, at-risk children from the Arab Middle East. The 100 LIVES initiative announced the new program at the Near East Foundation's Centennial Gala on October 28 before an audience of humanitarian aid leaders and members of the Armenian community.

100 LIVES and NEF developed the program together as a way to express gratitude on behalf of the Armenian community to the people of the Middle East who offered shelter and food to refugees of the Armenian Genocide a century ago.

Valued at nearly \$7 million, the 100 LIVES and Near East Foundation Gratitude Scholarship Program will provide children affected by conflict, displacement and poverty the opportunity to study at UWC Dilijan, an international co-educational boarding school currently hosting students from over 60 countries, or other UWC network schools around the world. The program will be administered through the Scholae Mundi Foundation, which aims to provide students with opportunities to develop the knowledge, skills and attitudes needed to contribute to the international community and catalyze social change.

The 100 LIVES initiative was founded this year to celebrate those who helped destitute Armenians one hundred years ago, allowing their descendants to survive and thrive. This scholarship is one of the many ways 100 LIVES seeks to continue in their spirit by supporting people and organizations working to keep the legacy of gratitude alive today.

"We are proud to be able to help parents experiencing great hardship and uncertainty to secure a better future for their children, as our parents and grandparents were able to do for us," said Ruben Vardanyan, co-founder of 100 LIVES. "It is with great pride that we announce our partnership with the Near East Foundation, and with eager anticipation that we look to identify the scholarship recipients."

"By providing crucial access to education, we truly hope to be able to provide these children opportunities to have the successful future they deserve – much like the extraordinary work the NEF has been committed to these past hundred years," said Armine Afeyan.

NEF will facilitate this scholarship as a part of its larger mission to deliver education, community organization and economic development throughout the Middle East and Africa. Originally founded in 1915 as the American Committee for Armenian and Syrian Relief and later incorporated as the Near East Relief through an act of Congress, NEF has played a crucial role over the past 100 years in assisting the world's most vulnerable populations.

"The Near East Foundation is proud to celebrate its centennial anniversary by enabling a hundred driven and in-need students to receive a world-class education," said NEF President Dr. Charles Benjamin. "We are excited to join 100 LIVES in rewarding talented students and future leaders the opportunity to excel and succeed."

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



From left, Dr. Vahram Shemmassian, Dr. Rouben Adalian and Maurice Kelechian

## ANI Director Adalian Presents Lecture at 'Treasures of Western Armenia' Conference

MISSION HILLS, Calif. – On Sunday, October 25, the Ararat-Eskijian Museum, National Association for Armenian Studies and Research (NAASR), and the Armenian Jewelers Foundation hosted "Treasures of Western Armenia: A Conference on Material Culture & Genocide in Western Armenia." The conference was held at the Ararat-Eskijian Museum.

By Danielle Saroyan

The conference was prompted by a recent publication titled *Treasures of Western Armenia*, published by the Geneva-based Armenian Jewelers Foundation and the Russian Museum of Ethnography. This book is an ethnographic collection, which includes records for the first time of the 1916 scientific expedition to Armenia led by Alexander Miller. Copies of the book *Treasures of Armenia* were available during the conference.

Speakers included Armenian National Institute (ANI) Director Dr. Rouben Adalian who presented on "The Effects of Genocide on Culture and Civilization in Western Armenia;" Armenian Jewelers Foundation Chairman Pierre Akkelian, who presented on "The Lost Treasures of Western Armenia: The Miller Collection of 1916;" and Armenian Rugs Society President Hratch Kozibeyokian who discussed "Traditional Armenian Design Patterns Across Various Arts."



From left, Hratch Kozibeyokian, Dr. Rouben Adalian and Pierre Akkelian

"The Armenian Jewelers Foundation has done a great service by bringing public attention to the discovery of a marvelous collection of historic items retrieved from Western Armenia during the genocide. Now, everyone can learn more about the arts and crafts of a vanished civilization," said Adalian. "I was honored to be part of an event announcing the launch of such a beautifully-produced catalogue," Adalian said.

Longtime California Armenian community educators Gabriel Injeikian and Anahid Meymarian are among the many notable attendees. Injeikian, who founded Holy Martyrs Ferrahian Armenian High School in Los Angeles in 1964, pioneered Armenian schools in the United States. Meymarian played a significant role in preserving the story of Armenian Genocide survivor Aurora Mardigian, who is known as Armenia's Joan of Arc.

An exhibition and reception followed the program at the Deukmejian Banquet Hall Foyer, showcasing valuable artifacts, traditional costumes, and jewelry made and used by ordinary Armenians at the time.

## All-Armenian Fund Affiliates Raising Funds for 'Our Home'

LOS ANGELES/NEW YORK – Hayastan All-Armenian Fund affiliates in the United States of America (Armenia Fund, Inc./Los Angeles and Armenia Fund USA/New York), this week announced the launch of their joint fundraising campaign "Our Home." This innovative campaign will culminate with the live 12-hour broadcast of the 18th Annual International Thanksgiving Day Telethon which airs on November 26. The telethon will air from Los Angeles and be broadcast from coast to coast and internationally on cable and satellite television as well as online: [www.armenianfund.org](http://www.armenianfund.org).

This year's flagship groundbreaking project is the construction of single-family homes for families in Artsakh who have five children or more and lack adequate housing. There are already 466 families identified in Artsakh who fit the criteria and 211 are known to live in unacceptable housing conditions.

"This is truly a humanitarian project and we have received a great deal of positive feedback from our donors. It is not easy to raise five or more children even in the United States, let alone Artsakh. We all should pitch in to help the parents who are raising the next generation of Armenia's scientists, doctors, statesmen and artists by providing them adequate housing," explains Antranik Baghdassarian, President of Armenia Fund, Inc. the US Western Region affiliate of Hayastan All-Armenian Fund.



The homes that Armenia Fund constructs will have land plots of 10,000 square feet each, where the families can grow fruits and vegetables. Armenia Fund will provide furniture for every room in the house as well as provide household appliances, including water heaters, refrigerators, washers, stoves and vacuum cleaners.

"Coming off the heels of the 100th Anniversary of the Armenian Genocide, we reflect not only on our survival but our future – our children, the beneficiaries of this year's Telethon's target project. I am glad we are combining our efforts with our Western Region affiliate this year. It projects unity and highlights the importance of this year's project. By streamlining our efforts and joining our unique talents and resources, we will better serve Armenia and Artsakh by reducing costs and operational expenses, thus allowing more funds to be allocated for projects. We call on all Armenians in the United States and around the world to watch the Telethon and donate generously for this noble program," stated Khoren Bandazian, president of Armenia Fund USA, the US Eastern Region affiliate of Hayastan All-Armenian Fund.

According to the program, priority will be given to low income families, as well as the families of active duty officers of the armed forces, families of veterans of the Artsakh Liberation War and to the survivors of soldiers who lost their lives defending Artsakh.

"This is a great partnership benefiting the children of Artsakh. Their parents do the heavy-lifting of providing for the children through their hard work, the government of Artsakh does its part by providing subsidies and allowances for every child, and we will build them new beautiful homes. The Fund will only be able to do this with the support of our donors, who we cannot thank enough for their generosity and caring," explains Ara Vardanyan, the Executive Director of Hayastan All-Armenian Fund, Yerevan.

The Telethon airs for 12 hours on US Thanksgiving Day, November 26, beginning at 10 AM Pacific Standard Time (1 p.m. Eastern).

Armenia Fund (Hayastan All-Armenian Fund) is a non-sectarian, non-political, all-inclusive worldwide Armenian charity with 25 affiliates in 23 countries of the world.



## COMMUNITY NEWS

# Judge Zaven Sinanian and Judge Greg Keosian to Receive Top Honors at Armenian Bar's Judges' Night

GLENDALE – The centennial year of the Armenian Genocide has seen the Armenian Bar Association reinvigorate its membership and the broader community with movements and marches towards justice and solidarity. One of the most dazzling features on the Armenian Bar's annual calendars of commitment and action has been its recurring Judges' Night gatherings where the organization invites legal professionals, law students, and the interested public to honor two or three judges who are especially deserving of distinction.

In the past, the jurists who have received the Association's prestigious acclaim have come from the leadership ranks of the federal and state court systems. This year, the Armenian Bar Association does not look beyond its own fold for two peerless honorees who are worthy of the professional and Armenian communities' cheers and commendations.

This year's honorees are Judge Zaven Sinanian and Judge Gregory Keosian, whose positive similarities are striking: friends for

years before becoming lawyers, charter members and leaders of the Armenian Bar Association, involved in the strengthening of the Diaspora and the Homeland, appointed



Judge Zaven Sinanian and Judge Greg Keosian

to the California Superior Court within weeks of each other in 2002, and mentors to a new generation of young lawyers and law students.

In recognition of the magnitude of this sig-

nature event, the Armenian Bar's most-recent past chairmen, Armen K. Hovannisian, Garo B. Ghazarian and Edvin Minassian, are heading the organizational initiatives.

Hovannisian explained: "Presiding in their separate courtrooms for more than a dozen years, Zaven Sinanian and Greg Keosian have burnished their family names and professional reputations and, together, represent the most positive values that Armenians throughout the world have been known for. Smart and savvy, straightforward and sophisticated, hard-working and efficient, qualities that have made them the finest among Armenians and the best among Americans."

Ghazarian pointed to the historic nature of this year's Armenian Bar Judges' Night, "The similarities of Judges Sinanian and Keosian extend far beyond their judicial sleeves and their gavels. They follow in the hallowed footsteps and high examples of a generation who

sacrificed everything so that we may live and prosper." And Minassian summed up the Armenian Bar's position, "Teeming with joy and flush with pride, we will gather in spectacular fashion to honor two incredible men who are cut from the same cloth, wear matching black robes, and share an exalted record of service to the United States and to their Armenian heritage."

The Annual Judges' Night Gala will take place on November 24, at the Vertigo Event Venue, 400 W. Glenoaks Blvd., Glendale.

## Fresno SOAR Global Hosting Program

FRESNO – The Fresno Chapter of the Society for Orphaned Armenian Relief ([www.soar-us.org/fresno](http://www.soar-us.org/fresno)) has established the Global Hosting Program, designed to provide temporary relief for at-risk children coming from disadvantaged families in Armenia.

The three-week program, set to launch in the summer of 2016, gives children an opportunity to experience life outside their village and live with a host family in the United States.

The Global Hosting Program allows children who lack consistent shelter, are malnourished, orphaned, or neglected by their parents to enjoy a variety of fun activities and experiences that will enrich their lives. More importantly, the experience will forever connect two families that come from different parts of the world.

Many children from Armenia who are from disadvantaged homes will never have the chance to experience life outside their own world. The cost alone is simply prohibitive. By participating in a summer camp, hosted by Camp Hye Sierra, these young individuals will be exposed to new and exciting activities, along with the attention of so many in the United States who want to share their love. The children will meet and become friends with Armenian children of the same age living in the Diaspora. This will facilitate their cross-cultural development and enhance their desire to become successful members of society.

Camp Hye Sierra, serving Armenian youth since 1987, is operated by the Western Diocese of the Armenian Church, and offers a 160 acre property in Dunlap, Calif. The camp will host children from Armenia for one week.

Other activities during the remaining two weeks will include: a trip to the Disneyland with one night stay in a hotel in Anaheim; a reception to welcome the children by Honorary Consul of the Republic of Armenia Berj Apkarian; a trip to Fresno Chaffee Zoo; a day at Clovis Aqua Park; a trip to Shaver Lake and shopping and other local excursions with local volunteers.

The children will have medical insurance during their stay, covered by IMG International Medical Group. SOAR Fresno Chapter Board treasurer Nar Blair, who works for Dr. Gardikas, will provide the children with a free physical examination with Dr. William Garnica in Fresno.

The children will fly from Yerevan to Los Angeles via Moscow Sheremetevo Airport. SOAR-Fresno and the host families will greet the children at LAX airport and drive four hours to Fresno. There will be constant communication with the children's families through Skype, Viber or phone.

All expenses will be covered by the SOAR-Fresno, including visa fees, airfare, transportation, accommodations, entertainment and allowances. Expenses for the entire program are being underwritten by local contributions from individuals in Fresno.

To assist SOAR-Fresno with a financial contribution, serve as a host family, or otherwise help with the three-week program, contact Lucy Eryisian, SOAR-Fresno Chapter President, at [leryisian@att.net](mailto:leryisian@att.net).

Donations for the Global Hosting Program can be made online at <http://soar-us.org/donate.html#donation>.



## Sponsor A Teacher

In Armenia and Karabagh

# 15th Anniversary

Since its inception in 2001, TCA's Sponsor a Teacher program has raised over \$520,000 and reached out to 5,256 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.

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## COMMUNITY NEWS

# Reverend Dr. Movses Janbazian, Man of Vision with a Mission

## A Night of Remembrance

By Lori Janbazian Sarkisian

TORONTO — A commemoration event honoring the late Rev. Dr. Movses Janbazian's memory, former executive director of the Armenian Missionary Association of America (1987-2000), was held at the Armenian Evangelical Church of Toronto on Saturday, October 10. The event, organized by the Armenian Evangelical Church of Toronto, was held in honor of Janbazian's 70th birth and 15th death anniversaries.

Clergy representing the Armenian churches of Toronto, members of Rev. Janbazian's immediate and extended family, as well as several members of the Toronto-Armenian community, took part in the commemoration event. In his opening remarks, the evening's Master of Ceremonies Mr. Mihran Jizmejian noted Rev. Janbazian's countless contributions to Armenian Evangelical Churches worldwide, his work within the Armenian Missionary Associations, and highlighted their close personal relationship and their experiences working together.

Several performances took place during the event, including Lilit Smpadian's rendition of Aram Khachadourian's *Gayane's Lullaby* on the piano, Araz Tokjian's rendition of Chopin's *Nocturne n. 20* and Nahabed Rusinian's *Gilgila* on the violin, as well as

soprano Sona Hovsepien's rendition of "Medz Eh Havdarmutiunt" and Rev. Armenag Missirians "Hayr Mer" (Lord's Prayer).

A heartfelt video about Janbazian's life and work was presented, after which Zela Kakousian (Sarmazian) and Lori Sarkisian (Janbazian) introduced the two keynote speakers, Rev. Hovhannes



The late Rev. Dr. Movses Janbazian

Janbazian's commitment to the Armenian Church, the Armenian people, Armenia and Artsakh, and to humanity at large.



The service for Rev. Dr. Movses Janbazian

Sarmazian and Rev. Dr. Rene Levonian respectfully. The two reverends spoke eloquently about Rev.

The Very Rev. Yeghia Kirejian, pastor of the St. Gregory Armenian Catholic Church of Toronto; Rev. Zareh Zargarian, pastor of the Holy Trinity Armenian Apostolic Church of Toronto; and Rev. Stepanos Pashayan of St. Mary Armenian Apostolic Church then delivered their remarks, in which they highlighted Janbazian's years of active service and commitment to the importance of interdenominational respect and camaraderie in the Armenian church.

Remarks on behalf of the family were deliv-

ered by Janbazian's sister Ani Hasserjian, son Vahak Janbazian and brother Hagop Janbazian.

The commemoration event concluded with a prayer delivered by seven clergy members of the Armenian churches of Toronto, after which a reception was held in the Rev. Dr. Movses Janbazian fellowship Hall of the Armenian Evangelical Church of Toronto, where guests reminisced and shared memories of the late Reverend.

# Genocide Martyrs Icon Arrives at Holy Trinity Church, Cambridge

By Aram Arkun

Mirror-Spectator Staff

CAMBRIDGE, Mass. —On November 1, all churches in the Diocese of the Armenian Church of America (Eastern) consecrated printed canvas replicas of the icon of the Holy Martyrs of the Armenian Genocide, originally painted by Tigran Barkhanajyan for the 2015 ceremony of canonization. Holy Trinity Armenian Church of Greater Boston was no exception.

Its pastor, Fr. Vasken Kouzouian, later said "it was a very emotional day. It left a powerful impression on those participating — and many generations participated, from the youngest to the oldest. This was done intentionally, as it is our ancestry that we are venerating."

Kouzouian declared in his sermon that "many of us are going to feel a bond with this icon because a part of our family tree is depicted in it. The artist, who created this painting, made an effort to portray every segment of Armenian life as it was in the beginning of the

20th century." He continued, "Our family tree has generations of history and generations of stories to tell, but at the same time our family tree contains a branch that was dead. It was cut off in the prime of life." Yet now, he said, through canonization of the martyrs, the branch had turned living and golden and the martyrs' "blood, hope, faith and traditions run through our lives."

The icon was cleansed first with water and wine. The children of Genocide survivors cleaned it and then younger people of newer generations came to dry it off. As the icon was brought into the church, Kouzouian noted how it turned into the focus of attention of all. It had an unusual effect on those present. He said, "There were tears flowing, and deep reflection going on. People came up to kiss the icon in different ways...It was a very beautiful and moving experience."

In the future, the veneration day for this icon will be in April, because of the traditional chronology of the Armenian Genocide, but this year it was done on November 1, immediately after the ancient Feast of All Saints of October 31.



Rose Mary Aznavorian, a descendant of a survivor of the Armenian Genocide, washing the Icon with wine, after Grace Boyajian, standing to the left, another descendant of survivors of the Armenian Genocide, washed the Icon with water.

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COMMUNITY NEWS

# Armenian Assembly Summer Internship Deadlines Near

WASHINGTON – The Armenian Assembly of America (Assembly) application deadline for the 2016 Terjenian-Thomas Summer Internship Program in Washington, DC is December 1. Additionally, applications for the Assembly's Yerevan Internship Program in Armenia will be accepted through January 10, 2016.

The eight-week summer program is designed to provide college students of Armenian descent the opportunity to live and work in the nation's capital, while taking part in a full schedule of educational, social, and cultural activities. Students accepted to the Washington program are assisted in securing internships with congressional offices, think tanks, media outlets, government agencies, or non-governmental organizations based on their educational background and interests.

In addition, Assembly interns will have the opportunity to discuss Armenian American issues during meetings with Members of Congress and other government officials, industry professionals, and noted academics through the Capitol Ideas and Lecture Series programs.

Founded in 1977, the Armenian Assembly Summer Internship Program was the first internship program offered by an Armenian organization in America. In 2013, the Terjenian-Thomas Internship Program announced that over 1,000 students of Armenian descent have graduated through the Assembly ranks. From its earliest phases the Armenian community has consistently supported the Assembly Summer Internship Program with major gifts from the Richard Tufenkian Memorial Fund, the John Hanessian Scholarship Fund, the Armen Astarjian Scholarship Fund, the Ohanian Memorial Fund, James and Connie Melikian, and

the Knights of Vartan. In 2003, the Assembly's Summer Internship Program was renamed in honor of Aram and Florence Terjenian and Annie Thomas after the announcement of their pace-setting \$1 million donation to the program.

Partial and full housing scholarships for the Terjenian-Thomas Summer Internship Program in Washington, D.C. are available to qualified students on a competitive basis. Applications are available on the Assembly's website.

The Assembly also offers a similar internship program in Yerevan, Armenia. Now entering its 16th year, the Yerevan Internship Program provides students the opportunity to live and work in one of the most historically and culturally rich



The 2015 Class of Assembly Terjenian-Thomas Summer Interns on Capitol Hill with Rep. Adam Schiff (D-CA).

countries in the world. Students will work in Armenian government agencies, non-governmental organizations, medical centers, or media outlets, as well as meet with Armenia and Nagorno Karabagh government officials and tour historical sites in and around the country.

For more information on the Assembly internship programs or assistance with the application process, contact Internship Program Director Joseph Piatt via email [atjpiatt@aaainc.org](mailto:atjpiatt@aaainc.org).

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First, enjoy a short film on highlights from the career of professional Armenian footballer **Henrikh Mkhitaryan**—Armenia's all time top goal scorer since his debut in January 2007. He has been chosen "Armenian Footballer of the Year" five times.

Then we will screen a documentary "The World at his Feet" on soccer player **Christiano Ronaldo** who made his international debut for Portugal in August 2003, at the age of 18. He has since been capped over 100 times and has participated in 6 major tournaments: three UEFA European Championships (2004, 2008 and 2012) and three FIFA World Cups (2006, 2010 and 2014). Ronaldo is the first Portuguese player to reach 50 international goals, making him Portugal's top goal-scorer of all time as well as the country's top scorer in the European Championship with 6 goals. He scored his first international goal in the opening game of Euro 2004 against Greece, and helped Portugal reach the final. He took over captaincy in July 2008, and he led Portugal to the semi-finals at Euro 2012, finishing the competition as joint-top scorer in the process. In November 2014, Ronaldo became the all-time top scorer in the UEFA European Championship (including qualifying) with 23 goals.

We would like to extend special thanks to George Derderian, Jr., for the use of Ultimate Soccer Arenas



Refreshments are available and can be purchased in the first floor Arena Grill & Café and can be brought into our meeting room. Wine and Spirits also available on second level.

**Open to the public—\$5/person**  
**Friday, November 13—doors open 7 pm**  
**Movie begins at 7:30 pm sharp**  
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Funds raised from these events support the Tekeyan "Sponsor a Teacher" program supporting schools in Armenia and Karabagh

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COMMUNITY NEWS

# Diasporan Tekeyan Members Visit Vahan Tekeyan Schools in Armenia

TEACHERS, from page 1 when the difficult economic situation of teachers working in Armenia's schools after the collapse of the Soviet Union was brought to the attention of the TCA. The latter placed this issue on its agenda at its annual convention. It was reported that the teachers work-



Dr. Haroutiun Arzumanyan giving the stipend to Knarig Avedisian of Garpi School

istry, physics and biology. Principal Dzovinar Martanian greeted the guests at the entrance of the school and the dance group of the school presented Armenian dances as a welcome to the guests. At the principal's office, Martanian informed that 504 students attend the school every day from kindergarten to the 9th grade, they have participated to many competitions that Tekeyan Cultural Association of Armenia has organized and won many medals. Then the teachers were presented their identity cards and received their stipends from the guests.

Members then toured many classrooms, including the French and English language classes. In every classroom, students recited poems written by Vahan Tekeyan. On leaving the school, students again performed Armenian dances as gesture of goodbye to the guests.

The next stop was the Garpi Village Vahan Tekeyan School. The Garpi school has 722 students. The entire school has been refurbished, including the Cultural Hall, with new chairs donated by Serop and Maro Bedrosian of Texas. The principal of the school, Arsen Ohanyan,

said, "This philanthropic action is a bit of aid for the teacher in these difficult conditions. What is important is to be appreciated. This did not just get us used to receiving aid, but also obliged us to participate ourselves in the philanthropic work."

While seeing the guests off, the staff of the school, in a custom special to the villagers, gave them fruits from their private gardens.

The Stepanavan Vahan Tekeyan School has 250 students. Through the intervention of TCA Armenia, the school was included in the government's plan with the World Bank and received a new build-



Edmond Azadian listening to the recitation of the Hagopian twins, Garine and Irina

ing in Tekeyan schools were struggling financially and thus were often forced to emigrate. The convention collectively adopted a motion to launch Sponsor a Teacher in Armenia to initially reach out to the three schools named after Vahan Tekeyan. At that time, teachers in the schools of Armenia were among the most poorly paid professionals in the country. In 2000, a teacher's annual salary was \$120 and now, since the involvement of the Tekeyan Cultural Association, the government has increased their salaries so that they make anywhere from \$200 to \$250 a month. The TCA Board of Directors raises funds and delivers them to the teachers through special yearly visits.

Former TCA Executive Secretary Kevork Marashlian in an interview with the newspaper Azg said: "When we started this program, the economic situation of teachers in Armenia was quite dire. And now it already has been 15 years that this philanthropic endeavor has been organized for the teachers and entire staff of the schools named after Vahan Tekeyan in Armenia and Artsakh."

The project is administered in Armenia by Gayane Muradian, representative of the TCA of US and Canada in Armenia, who distributes the funds.

This year three members of the TCA Central Board, President Dr. Haroutiun Arzumanyan, Vice President Edmond Azadian and member Hagop Vartivarian along with Marashlian were in Armenia during the disbursement of the funds. They visited the Yerevan Vahan Tekeyan School on November 2, accompanied by Tekeyan members from London, England, Mrs. Hratch Kouyoumdjian, Garabed Boyadjian, Jirair Kevorkian, Hagop Fesjian of Athens, Greece and Sima Arzumanyan of Montreal, Canada.

The school is located in the Malatya-Sebastia district with laboratories for chem-

ing few years ago. The story of this school was extremely moving. When Assistant Principal for Instruction Hasmik Ghazaryan related the story of the founding of the school, she could not suppress her tears. She said, "I remember when after the earthquake classes were held in small huts, where nothing existed. We worked without



Hagop Vartivarian giving the stipend to Dzovinar Martanian, principal of Yerevan School



Eight-year-old Vartanoush Hovhannisian recites a poem at the Garpi School.

salaries. While now I am happy when I see this school in good order." And what do such philanthropic efforts mean for a teacher? "The pedagogue feels that his work is being appreciated – it is not as much financial aid as moral." However, in all three schools, the teachers

argued that they had never received such aid from the state, and they would have liked similar efforts to be organized on the state level.

The Sponsor a Teacher Program has increased the prestige of the Vahan Tekeyan schools.

The distribution of aid to the schools in Karabagh and Gumri will take place in the near future.



ABOVE: Gayane Mouradian with the principal and teaching staff of Stepanavan School. LEFT: TCA Armenia Representative Gayane Mouradian verifies the signature of Lucine Melikian at Stepanavan School.



Choral group of Garpi school performing for the guests



Garabed Amirian of Garpi school, 5, recites a poem.

ՀԱՅԱՍՏԱՆԻ ՀԱՆՐԱՊԵՏՈՒԹՅԱՆ  
ՍԱՀՄԱՆԱԴՐՈՒԹՅԱՆ  
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ՆԱԽԱԳԻԾ ԵՎ ՄԵԿՆԱԲԱՆՈՒԹՅՈՒՆՆԵՐ

*For the purpose of intact intent of establishment of legal state and civil society in the Republic of Armenia, the Congress of the Armenian Democratic Liberal Party of Armenia, announces that it approves the proposed Constitutional Amendments and calls for support for their implementation .*





COMMUNITY NEWS

# Berge and Vera Setrakian Host Reception for AUA President

NEW YORK – On October 10, AGBU President Berge Setrakian and his wife Vera hosted a luncheon in honor of AUA President Armen Der Kiureghian at the Waterside Restaurant in North Bergen, NJ. The event

than 20 different countries.” Lorraine Alexander, AUA vice president of development and external relations, and Dr. Larry Pitts, chairman of the AUA Board of Directors, also addressed the audience:

“Education is investment. When you invest in education, you are moving things forward for the future to take care of the overall needs of society,” said Dr. Pitts.

Der Kiureghian is one of the founding members of AUA, founding dean of AUA’s College of Science and Engineering, former interim provost and currently the president of the university. He is also a scholar of international fame and is the Taisei Chair in Civil Engineering Emeritus at the University of California, Berkeley. Der Kiureghian is



(left to right) AGBU President Berge Setrakian, AGBU Vice President Sinan Sinanian, Mrs. Claudia Nazarian, AGBU Council of Trustees member Nazar Nazarian and Mrs. Vera Setrakian.



On October 10, AGBU President Berge Setrakian and his wife Vera hosted a luncheon in honor of AUA President Armen Der Kiureghian at the Waterside Restaurant in North Bergen, New Jersey.

provided an opportunity to meet Dr. Der Kiureghian and learn about the university. Among the guests were members of the AGBU Central Board and Council of Trustees, AUA Board of Trustees and alumni along with members of the Greater New York Armenian community.

In his welcoming remarks, Setrakian emphasized the partnership between AGBU and AUA: “From its inception, AGBU believed that AUA could be in the best interest of Armenia to bring a Western-oriented educational institution to a country that was coming out of the Soviet era. It’s an institution that needs our continued support.”

At the luncheon, Der Kiureghian spoke at length about the university and its impact on Armenia: “AUA is the only US-accredited university in all of the former Soviet republics. Ninety percent of our students are citizens of Armenia...but we have students from more



Dr. Der Kiureghian is the founding dean of AUA’s College of Science and Engineering and currently the president of the university.

an elected member of the US National Academy of Engineering, the highest honor for an American engineer and an elected foreign member of the National Academy of Sciences of Armenia. He has served as visiting professor in universities in Denmark, Germany, India, Italy, Japan and Slovenia.

As one of the founding organizations of AUA, AGBU has been involved in the university since its establishment in 1991. AGBU has proven to be a champion for AUA through financial assistance in the launch of academic programs and scholarships, the establishment of the AGBU Papazian Library and the start of the AUA Extension-AGBU NKR Program to help reignite the workforce in the Nagorno-Karabagh Republic through various training courses.



Dr. Larry Pitts, chairman of the AUA Board of Directors, discussed the importance of investment in education.

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# Arts & Living

## Popular Songs By Boston Singers Is a Hit

WATERTOWN – The Adele & Haig Der Manuelian Galleries of the Armenian Museum of America were filled to capacity recently for the premiere performance of “The Bostonians” in a concert titled “Popular Songs by Armenian Composers.” The performance was the second in a series jointly sponsored by the Armenian Museum, the Composer’s Union of Armenia and the Amaras Art Alliance, and funded by the Dadourian Foundation.

The standing-room-only audience was treated to the vocal talents of soprano, Nouné Karapetian; mezzo-soprano, Roselin Osser; tenor, Michael Calmés; and baritone, Philip Lima, along with dazzling accompaniment on piano by William Merrill.

The wide variety of music moved from perfectly synchronous quartets to a number of solos from each artist, with highlights including a heartfelt rendition of *Im Yerevan* (Vagharshag Kotoyan) from Calmés, along with more humorous pieces like *Hor-Hor’s Cuplets* (Tigran Chukhadjian) from Lima, and a playful duet of *Yot Kuyrer* (Aram Satunts) from Karapetian and Osser.

Each song, performed in Armenian, was made even more impressive as, with the exception of Karapetian, who is of Armenian descent, none of the other artists speak the language. Osser, Calmés and Lima all learned the texts of the pieces phonetically in order to sing their respective roles so convincingly in Armenian, and were all awarded an honorary “-ian” in their names at the conclusion of the performance by Armenian Museum Director Berj Chekijian. The audience participated enthusiastically in the encore song, *Kenats Yerg* (Aram Meranglooyan), which was met by a resounding standing ovation. Audience members had the opportunity to meet with the performers at a reception following the concert.

Konstantin Petrossian, co-chairman of the Foreign Department of the Composer’s Union of Armenia, a composer, pianist and conductor, served as artistic director for the performance. Petrossian is a member of the



The artists

Composer’s Union of Armenia, ASCAP, the Armenian Musical Assembly. He also serves as the President and Artistic Director of the Armenian Music Festival of Rhode Island.

The Composer’s Union of Armenia has an 80-year history. Throughout all those years, members of the Union include such notable composers as Romanos Melikyan, Armen Tigranyan, Ashot Satyan, Grigor Yeghizaryan, Arno Babadjanian, Alexander Haroutunian, Edgar Hovhannesian, Avet Terteryan, Grigor Hakhinyan, Edward Baghdasaryan, Alexander Adjemyan, Chachatur Avetisyan, Konstantin Orbelyan, and many other world-renowned composers. With new leadership of the Union under the direction of Aram Satyan, there has been an active rebirth of creating new music and performing the new compositions outside of Armenia.

The concert was made possible by a donation from the Dadourian Foundation. The Dadourian Foundation serves to promote the Armenian Christian faith and cultural identity.



Kristin Reeves as Victoria

## Joyce Van Dyke’s ‘Daybreak’ at Tufts

MEDFORD, Mass. – The final Tufts University performance of Joyce Van Dyke’s play “Daybreak” took place on November 8 at the Balch Arena Theater of the Tufts Department of Drama and Dance. The actors, students at Tufts directed by Prof.

**By Aram Arkun**  
Mirror-Spectator Staff

Barbara Wallace Grossman, did an impressively good job, delivering professional and moving performances, while the theater setting itself was impressively transformed to reflect the themes of the play.

The floor had a hand-stenciled lacework design (unfortunately to be painted over after the final performance), and hanging bands of fabric cocooning the inside of the amphitheater serving as screens for projected colored lights and images initially reminded one of the inside of the Armenian Genocide memorial at Tsitsernakaberd in Yerevan, with its inwardly inclined twelve slabs of stone.

The three-scene play deals with the experiences of two women who survived the Armenian Genocide, and the way survivors dealt with the traumatic memories and great personal losses over decades. It raises questions of memory and transmission, and even manages to expose racism and prejudice among Armenian survivors, showing that no people are immune from such flaws. It imagines that with time, something “beyond reconciliation” may occur, and though some may not agree with its formulation, the play does point people in a direction of hope and optimism despite the grimness of its topic.

see DAYBREAK, page 12



The cast of “Daybreak” at its conclusion

## BOOK REVIEW

### *Ozone Journal* by Peter Balakian

By Keith Jones

In his most recent collection, *Ozone Journal* (2015), the poet Peter Balakian braids the “mental thing” of which da Vinci spoke, with things, as he puts it, “on the horizon.” This new volume extends in feel and atmosphere, as well as in its tripartite form, Balakian’s previous collection of poems, entitled *Ziggurat* (2010), a marvelous combine, à la Rauschenberg, in which life-writing and grief-work interanimate at scales at once intimate and global. These two works – along with the long poem that inhabits the second section of each of these volumes, a series beginning in *Ziggurat* (as “A-Train / Ziggurat / Elegy”) and continued in *Ozone Journal* (as the eponymous “Ozone Journal”) – refine Balakian’s larger poetic project poignantly, with grace and verve.

If his concerns throughout his oeuvre have been with history’s traumatic shards, these recent works have an even more exquisite compression of the proximate and the far-flung, the intimacy with which the global and the earthly is



now shared. Indeed a feeling for the collectively shared – a sense that all historical events leave their deposits in each of us – is the broader spirit in which Balakian’s poetry now achingly, now painstakingly proceeds. In this most recent collection, the “Historical” breaks down into personal events and experiences that, while the speaker’s own, are never his own entirely – never, as Thoreau might put it, as a “solitary agent.” Balakian’s is a poetics of the personal vividly mired in the confusions of the impersonal, of crises at various scales that belong more to the thresholds of self than to the self as such – Rimbaud’s “I is the Other” in a globally self-conscious, disaster-strewn age.

Through beautifully wrenching instances, *Ozone Journal* maintains world-historic specificity (“All day I was digging Armenian bones out of the Syrian desert”), while remaining attuned to the smaller fluctuations, more intimate, that impinge upon and make possible a poetic subject’s interiority. These are poems of rapturous diction – of sensuous, geographically specific, felt peregrinations, the wanderings, or *dérive*, in which our own historical moment would appear to bring forth a seeker confronted by and recording this, our planetary spectacle. But if it is a work in which the

REVIEW, page 12



## ARTS &amp; LIVING

# 'Migrations'

## Sculpture by Michael Aram Unveiled At St. Vartan Cathedral

By Florence Avakian

NEW YORK – It was an event – spiritual, inspiring, uplifting – that long will be remembered. On Tuesday evening, October 6, the profoundly meaningful sculpture, "Migrations," dedicated to the Centennial of the Armenian Genocide was unveiled on the Plaza of St. Vartan Armenian Cathedral before a crowd of more than 350.

The powerful sculpture depicts the Armenians, symbolized by hundreds of birds, migrating from a carved map of historic Armenia within a vertical polished stainless steel shape. The fleeing birds, revealing various traumatic emotions, resemble branches of a tree rising to the heavens. "The historic map is turned on its side, signifying the upheaval of the country, and the emptying of the Armenian people from their homeland," said Michael Aram who created, designed and generously donated the masterwork.

Dignitaries attending the special event included Primate of the Armenian Diocese (Eastern) Archbishop Khajag Barsamian, Archbishop Yeghishhe Gizirian, Diocesan Vicar General Very Rev. Simeon Odabashian, St. Vartan Cathedral Dean Very Rev. Mamigon Kiledjian, St. Nersess Armenian Seminary Dean Rev. Mardiros Chevian, Armenia's Ambassador to the United Nations Zohrab Mnatsakanian, Metropolitan Opera tenor Yeghishhe Manucharyan, pianist Sahar Arzruni and scholar Dr. Helen Evans.

Also attending were members of Aram's family, including Aret Tikiryan and their chil-

dren Anabel and Thaddeus; his parents John and Anita Wolohojian; and relatives Lucine Delins, Stefan Wolohojian, and Gregory and Patrician Egavian.

On a podium decorated with vases of fall flowers, community activist and philanthropist, MC Sandra Shahinian Leitner welcomed the enthusiastic crowd, declaring that "as the descendants of the survivors, the Genocide became central to our identity. This greatest atrocity of the Great War has been met by 100 years of silence and denial by the Turkish authorities, and remains unrecognized by the U.S. government."

The Armenian Genocide Centennial "has been marked by unprecedented notice, she noted, including world-wide rallies, the special recognition by Pope Francis, the three-day gathering in Washington, DC, and the profoundly meaningful canonization of the perished as saints of the Armenian Church by the Catholicos of All Armenians Karekin II. She paid tribute to Archbishop Khajag as the "quiet force" behind many of the Centennial events.

She revealed that Aram's grandparents

never discussed the horrors they had endured, but over time Michael learned of his family's "extraordinary resilience, and the role they played in helping others survive." To thunderous applause, she invited the Primate and Michael Aram to unveil the covered sculpture.

Prayers were offered by the Primate, and Odabashian and Kiledjian, accompanied by Manucharyan singing the chant *Krisdos Dznay Yev Haydnetzav* (Christ is Born and Revealed). Then in a traditional age-old ritual, the Primate circled the sculpture, blessing all four corners.

In his remarks, the Primate related that this chant is most closely related with Christ's resurrection, "a message of hope



Michael Aram working on his sculpture, "Migrations"

emerging from suffering, and of life transcending death." And symbolizing this, 12 doves are released every Easter at St. Vartan Cathedral.

He recalled that it took many decades before Dr. Rafael Lemkin "created the right word – Genocide, – to correctly describe the events of 1915, but even today, there are still some who deny this terrible tragedy." Today, the events of a hundred years ago are still "eternally relevant, and a source of moral and creative inspiration for us all. And that is tonight's large message," he declared.

Calling attention to the sculpture, the Primate stressed that "this extraordinary work of art speaks to us as the product of profound inspiration, by an artist of supreme sensitivity and creative ability. I am grateful to him for sharing the personal journey of himself and his family which led to this beautiful work, and tonight's unveiling."

This sculpture, he related, "will stand as an enduring testimony that our common humanity is shown not in a tragedy itself, but in our miraculous response to the tragedy. Let us show our loving concern for one another, and our solidarity with all others who have and are still suffering, and let it lead us to a path of justice, mercy and peace."

### Journey of Migrations

In a heartfelt, extemporaneous discourse, Michael Aram revealed his year-long personal journey which led to the creation of the sculpture. "How will I tell the story of my family, and the millions who found no words to tell their story," he said softly in an emotion-filled voice.

"As descendants of the survivors, we have absorbed much pain and trauma. I wanted to work with the image of the *khatchkar* (cross-stone) as the framework of the victims, but I trembled at the magnitude, the scope and the enormity of the great crime. The jagged cut through the steel demonstrates how our homeland had been taken – the great void that rests in our identity and soul."

Birds have a "deep meaning in our culture, the release of the doves during Transfiguration," he continued. "I thought of the journey the Genocide victims took, the journey of faith, of heavy sadness that defines Armenian identity. I felt each bird in this sculpture has its own identity, some shrieking, some silent, some resolved, some making the ultimate sacrifice – multiples migrations. A lot of emotion went into it, people separated, lost, starved, tortured, orphans who lost their identity, shriveled humans who looked like birds," he said, his voice cracking.

"Tonight, my heart is so full of emotion. I feel an incalculable debt to our ancestors who did so much for us. We are the seeds who have sprouted and grown. There are Armenian communities all over the world. We are the living proof of the ultimate, amazing journey they took. This is also for those who are not Armenian, but who have taken that journey," he said to a lengthy ovation.

The memorable evening concluded with two master musicians sharing their talents. Manucharyan, an acclaimed interpreter of Italian, French and Russian operatic and concert repertoire on world stages, sang two beloved and heart-rending Armenian selections by Komitas – *Groong* (The Crane), an anthem relaying the plight of Armenians forced to leave their homeland, and *Andouni* (Homeless).

Manucharyan was accompanied on the piano by noted recitalist, chamber music partner and concert soloist Arzruni, who also offered three Khachaturian solos, *The Birthday*, *A Musical Picture* and *Two Funny Aunties Have Quarreled*.

A rousing rendition of Komitas' "Hayasdan" performed by both artists, brought the event to a close. Many in the audience continued to stay long after, congratulating the artist, conversing with one another, and taking photos of the sculpture which was surrounded by dozens of lighted candles.

Distinguished curator at the world famous Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York, and noted Armenian scholar Dr. Helen Evans voiced the feelings of many by expressing her "deep admiration" for the sculpture. Evans was responsible for bringing a magnificent *Khatchkar* from Armenia to the Metropolitan where it sits proudly on display. She revealed that Armenians were the first to see the bird as the soul flying to salvation, a symbol so powerfully displayed in "Migrations."

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## ARTS &amp; LIVING



# Recipe Corner

by Christine Vartanian Datian

## Lentil, Potato and Kale Soup

Nutrition-packed meal is disguised as a delicious soup.

### INGREDIENTS

1 1/2 pounds dried brown or green lentil beans, washed and drained  
 1 large onion, diced or sliced  
 3 stalks celery, including tops, diced  
 2 carrots, diced  
 3-4 cloves garlic, minced  
 1 small baking potato, peeled and diced  
 1/2 medium green or red bell pepper, diced  
 6 cups beef, lamb, vegetable, or chicken broth  
 4 cups water  
 1 cup crushed tomatoes (Italian style) or fresh chopped seeded tomatoes  
 1 tablespoon each red wine vinegar, kosher or sea salt, and Worcestershire sauce  
 1 teaspoon each dried cumin and basil  
 1/2 teaspoon each black pepper, paprika, red pepper flakes, and cayenne pepper  
 1/4 cup fine bulgur  
 1/2 bunch flat-leaf parsley, chopped  
 2 cups fresh kale, cleaned, stemmed, chopped  
 Fresh garlic croutons or sliced Italian bread (optional)  
 Olive oil

### PREPARATION:

In a large soup pot, sauté the onions, celery, carrots, garlic, potato, and bell pepper in a few tablespoons of olive oil for 5-8 minutes, tossing until the onions are translucent.

Add the lentils, broth, water, tomatoes, vinegar, bulgur, Worcestershire sauce, and spices (to taste), mix, and bring to a full boil. Cover, reduce heat to medium low, and cook for one hour, stirring occasionally until the lentils and vegetables are fully cooked.

Before serving, toss in the parsley and kale, mix, and cook uncovered for 10-12 minutes longer.

Check seasonings and use a hand blender to smooth soup ingredients for one minute, if desired. Serve soup topped with garlic croutons or a slice of Italian bread.

Drizzle with olive oil to taste. Serves 4-6.

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

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

## Van Dyke's 'Daybreak' at Tufts

DAYBREAK, from page 10

The skillful use of music, sudden Armenian dance sequences, surrealistic elements like lace handkerchiefs falling from the ceiling or sky, and, in the background, whirling images of lace or circular Armenian eternity symbols projected onto the vertical strips of fabric, emphasize the dreamlike nature of shifts in time from present (1938 and 1978) to past or future. The dance sequences break up the intense and often poignant emotional exchanges of the play and give viewers tem-

porary emotional respite.

At the end of the play, after a brief break, Grossman introduced Dr. Lerna Ekmekcioglu of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and Aram Arkun, historian and executive director of the Tekeyan Cultural Association, who spoke about the themes of the play and the power of literature and drama. The playwright Joyce Van Dyke was present in the audience, and was joined by the cast members after they changed out of costume. A discussion with audience participation ensued.

ARAM ARKUN PHOTO



The Balch Arena Theater set at the start of "Daybreak"

## Balakian to Lecture on Elia Kazan, Armenian Genocide and Hollywood

FAIR LAWN, N.J. – Peter Balakian will lecture on Elia Kazan and his 1963 Oscar-winning film, "America, America," on Thursday, November 19. Balakian argues that Kazan's depiction of the Armenian Massacres of 1896 following the Ottoman Bank incident is a landmark chapter in the history of cinema and in the history of the representation of the Armenians in the Ottoman Empire.

"Kazan's presentation of the plight of the Armenians and Greeks in Turkey is not only groundbreaking in the history of Hollywood cinema," Balakian says, "but it has been ignored and misunderstood."

The presentation will be accompanied by a screening of the dramatic Armenian scenes from the film.

Balakian's chapter on Kazan's "America, America" is from his new book of essays *Vice*

and *Shadow: Essays on the Lyric Imagination, Poetry, Art and Culture*, which features pieces on Charents, Gorky and Siamanto, as well as Bob Dylan, Hart Crane, Joan Didion and others.

Balakian's new book of poems *Ozone Journal* was published simultaneously – both by The University of Chicago Press.

He is Donald M. and Constance H. Rebar Professor in the department of English at Colgate University.

The lecture will take place at 7:45 p.m. at St. Leon Armenian Church, 1261 Saddle River Road.

The event is jointly sponsored by AGBU Ararat, Armenian Network of America- Greater NY, National Association for Armenian Studies and Research (NAASR), St. Leon Armenian Church and Tekeyan Cultural Association. The event is free. A reception will follow the discussion and book signing.

## Ozone Journal by Peter Balakian

REVIEW, from page 10

global body politic is crisscrossed, examined, anatomized and exhumed, it is simultaneously a work attuned to the most minute genealogies of self, of personal histories, of a kind of biologism at once vulnerable, fraught, ever undergoing erasures, blurs, and disappearances.

We strolled over the river,  
 as the ultraviolet rays split off chlorine atoms

Ani wrapped in infant pink and white;  
 at 161st we found the bleachers  
 where the lights blinded the moths.

Dominican boys ran from scalpers/MLB  
 cowhide on the hand and heart –

Later walking back over the Macomber  
 Bridge –

chlorine monoxide left us lighter.

The poem's speaker and his daughter, Ani, are the "we" of this section within the long poem, "Ozone Journal." At the upper edge of a mid-1980s Manhattan Island they pass into the Bronx at the same scale as "rays" and "atoms," innocents seemingly untouched by the deaths of moths, the slaughter of cattle, euphemistically marked, but recorded all the same. Even the "Dominican boys" seem lightly threatened by something unnamed, their only salvation pledging allegiance to a game that would not have them but for those things, "hand" and "heart," it extracts from them as tribute. Back over a bridge, in indefinite space, the speaker will say, "chlorine monoxide left us lighter," and here we have that sense of a radical particularity and porousness of form that is *Ozone Journal's* theme.

Throughout the long poem "Ozone Journal," the attention turns exquisitely, granularly particular, alive to that very something in the air we moderns breathe, as if sub rosa.

accidents, river haze, CS gas, we moved  
 with whatever floats – dispersions of self  
 and industrial manna,

the shirtless exiles walking up 158th  
 along the river where your jewelry was  
 stolen in an apartment

with jerry-rigged fire escapes, an inside job  
 done by

mild-mannered tenants who disappeared  
 into soot fumes

and the nanoparticles of spray-can mist;  
 by the time we realized what happened  
 they were in another state.

The particularity here involves as much "nanoparticles," or, (as in other invocations of the atmospherically molecular elsewhere throughout the poem) CFCs, ultra rays, UVBs, and ultraviolet, infra-CO2, as it does something as fine as a dissolving "mist" at once of graffiti artists and cat burglars. It is as if the Don DeLillo of *White Noise* and the Alfred Hitchcock of "To Catch a Thief" teamed up to shoot a caper in the old Hollywood style. But what is disquieting here is the weight these various "dispersions" take as the last word, full stop ("state"), speaks not of territoriality, which is at first glance part of the pun, but of a total dematerialization of the agent or agents responsible for the theft. This "state" the thieves vanish into, of course, is spatial, the city itself and its warrens. But at a trace level what we have is the rendering of a whole "industrial" era, "whatever floats" literal-

ly in the aether of the Anthropocene, "tenants" into "fumes."

Part of what is so astonishing in these poems is that even with their attention on the granular and their alertness to the slightest fluctuations within or at the edges of things, they neither veer into reductive thought nor posit a crude or heavy-handed equivalency. In an early poem of this collection, entitled "Joe Louis's Fist," the riots and their aftermath in "Detroit in '67" remind a state trooper of "Berlin in '45," but these seemingly discrete instances are summoned not as correspondent but as orbital, a constellation of temporalities shattering the chronological presumptions, and assumed linearity, of "History." In such a mesh or weave, these poems let things flit past, meanings pouring through like water or light; events get stuck or caught or shape-shift before our eyes, dissolve at the tip of our tongues. At one point in "Ozone Journal" the page becomes a tree, the tree becomes like lungs, leading the poet to say that the "yellow haze of the Jersey side" was a "greenhouse-sky" where, canopied along the river, "trees breathed in our respiration." No thing, no person, no event, no "state" appears fixed or permanent. Even the recurrences of the speaker's wife and daughter, his cousin, his father and uncle, underscore this impermanence. Neither they nor he recur as coherent, stable selves. All is flux, people even more so than events. For where, as these poems suggest, can the intensity of events – or even the historical as such – be said to reside if not in "the hidden abode" (in Marx's great phrase) of subjectivity?

The final poem of *Ozone Journal*, entitled "Home," stages a series of displacements. It opens in radical disjuncture: "Driving Route 20 to Syracuse past pastures of cows and falling silos / you feel the desert stillness near the refineries at the Syrian border." In Balakian's poems, no place – no space and time – is singular. We are at once in upstate New York, the Middle East, the Hamptons, New Jersey, Australia, Jerusalem, Kolkata, London, the Ivory Coast, Cyprus, and Manhattan Island. The poet's felt sense of place names, tied as each is to his own (or his family's) peregrinations, spins the globe on the head of a pin, where, in a different episteme, there were once angels dancing. But because ours is a world of interpenetrating worlds, the poet moves us from "fallen silos" to "desert stillness," from Syracuse to Syria, with the ease and speed of a line break. The itinerary here concerns his uncle and leads as well to flashes of his father. Such restless displacement is the diasporic subject's share, "never returning to / the Armenian village near the Black Sea."

What is "Home," the poem asks, but a kind of memory palace, a building haunted by nostalgia's evocations? And whose "I" is the I remembering when one's inheritance is a permanent state of dispersal, of bloodlines wherein memory itself functions ethnographically, transpersonally, as something akin to a forensics or ventriloquism of lost peoples, places, sensitivities or sensibilities, at the edges of encounters, instants, sensoriums, events, with time itself a misplaced or misbegotten thing? In

*continued on next page*



## ARTS &amp; LIVING

## CALENDAR

## CONNECTICUT

**NOVEMBER 21 — Annual Holiday Fair**, featuring the sale of delicious Armenian and American delicacies and foods, Saturday, 10 a.m. to 2 p.m., 1910 Stanley St., New Britain, the Armenian Church of the Holy Resurrection. There will also be vendors and an opportunity to catch a quick bite to eat at the Kitchen Café. Come join us and pick out your desserts for Thanksgiving and get some Christmas shopping in at the same time!

## MASSACHUSETTS

**NOVEMBER 14 — “Rediscovered Master: The Art of Simon Samsonian” exhibition** closing reception, Saturday, 6-8 p.m. The Armenian Museum of America, 65 Main St., Watertown. The event will include a short lecture involving reminiscence on the artist by family members, and a reception held in the Adele & Haig Der Manuelian Galleries on the third floor of the museum. The event is free and open to the public, and light refreshments will be served at the reception.

**NOVEMBER 14 — Holiday Arts & Crafts Fair, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.**, at Jaffarian Hall, St. Gregory Armenian Church, 158 Main St., North Andover; handcrafted items by local crafters & artisans; light lunch served; further details, Dorothy (978) 686-7769 or Rose (978) 256-0594.

**NOVEMBER 15 — Razmik Mansourian – Live in Concert with Albert Bulbulyan and Hovhannes Meghriyan**, 5 p.m., Charles and Nevert Talanian Cultural Hall, Holy Trinity Armenian Church, 145 Brattle St., Cambridge. Tickets are \$35 and \$40; advance purchase recommended. For tickets or further information, call 617.842.6552, 781.241.2118, or 617.458.0903, or log onto Holy Trinity's website [www.htaac.org/calendar/event/148/](http://www.htaac.org/calendar/event/148/). Proceeds to benefit the Holy Trinity Armenian School.

**NOVEMBER 20-21 — Sts Vartanantz Armenian Church of Chelmsford Annual Bazaar and Food Festival.** Friday and Saturday, 11 a.m. – 8 p.m. Lunch and dinner featuring lamb shish kebab, chicken kebab and losh kebab. Served from 11 a.m. to 7 p.m. Takeout available. Homemade Armenian pastries. Booths include Armenian country store with wide variety of dry goods, jewelry, white elephant tables, arts and crafts, silent auctions and cash and prize raffles. On Saturday, November 21: Backgammon (Tavloo) Tournament, 2 to 4 p.m., and live Armenian music and dancing featuring Jason Naroian Ensemble, 4:30 - 7:30 p.m. Sts. Vartanantz Church is located at 180 Old Westford Road, Chelmsford.

**NOVEMBER 21 — Join Project SAVE Archives as it celebrates 40 Years and Beyond** preserving and promoting our Armenian heritage through photography, Saturday, Scottish Rite Masonic Museum and Library (Previously National Heritage Museum), 33 Marrett Rd. Lexington, Cocktail Reception- 6 p.m. Program 8 p.m. Featuring Nubar Alexanian Documentary Photographer and Filmmaker and Scout Tufankjian Photojournalist and Author. Wine Pull and Book Signing to Benefit Project SAVE \$125 per person. <http://www.projectsavae.org/eventpage.asp>



**Peter Balakian will speak about the classic film by Elia Kazan, “America America,” on Tuesday, December 1, at a program jointly sponsored by the Tekeyan Cultural Association, the Armenian Mirror-Spectator and Facing History and Ourselves, Armenian Museum of America, Watertown, at 7 p.m. He will also sign copies of his two new books.**

**NOVEMBER 21 — Presentation of a new book and book signing of Muron Scented Whispers** by Monsignor Andon Atamian, new pastor of the Holy Cross Armenian Catholic Church. Presentation by Avik Derentz Deimenjian, 7 p.m., Holy Cross Armenian Catholic Church, Atirizian Hall, 200 Lexington St., Belmont. Reception to follow.

**DECEMBER 1 —The Tekeyan Cultural Association, the Armenian Mirror-Spectator and Facing History and Ourselves are presenting a talk by Peter Balakian** on the classic film “America America” written and directed by Elia Kazan. The film is about a young Anatolian Greek man from the provinces who loses his family fortune on his way to Constantinople and is dreaming of going to America. 7 p.m. Balakian will also sign copies of his two recent books, *Ozone Journal* and *Vise and Shadow: Essays on the Lyric Imagination, Poetry, Art, and Culture*. At the Armenian Museum of America, together with the National Association for Armenian Studies and Research (NAASR).

**DECEMBER 4 and 5 — Trinity Christmas Bazaar**, Friday, 12-9 p.m., Saturday, 10 a.m.-7 p.m., Holy Trinity Armenian Church of Greater Boston, 145 Brattle St., Cambridge. Featuring delicious Armenian dinners, a la carte menu and take-out meals; booths and vendors — perfect for doing your Christmas shopping; Armenian

gourmet foods, delicacies and pastries; raffles, and more. Activities for Children, Peter Adamian Hall: Friday, 7-9 p.m., All Aboard “The Polar Express” Pajama Party, recommended for children ages 6 and older; Saturday, 10:45-11:30 a.m., The Magic and Juggling of Robert Clarke, aka “LuckyBob,” for “children of all ages.” For further information, contact the church office at 617.354.0632, or log onto [www.htaac.org/calendar/event/111/](http://www.htaac.org/calendar/event/111/).

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

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

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

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

**DECEMBER 13 — Christmas Holiday Concert — Erevan Choral Society** and Orchestra, 7 p.m., Church Sanctuary, Holy Trinity Armenian Church of Greater Boston, 145 Brattle St., Cambridge, MA. Save the date; details to follow.

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

## NEW YORK

**NOVEMBER 19 — Four Authors in Search of a Past: History, community, inspiration.** A reading with Nancy Agabian, Haig Chahinian, Lola Koundakjian and Veronica Pamoukaghlian. 7 p.m., Saint Illuminator's Armenian Apostolic Cathedral, 221 East 27th Street, New York. A reception will follow.

from previous page

keeping with this puzzle, the “you” of the poem is without a shored-up referent. At one point, the poem's speaker and his uncle fuse, merge into an atmosphere of dispersal. No “you” is one's alone, as the poem makes clear. What confounds is whether the “you” of a topaz ring seen at first in Aleppo and then in a pawn shop off Lexington Ave., and the “you” at the beginning and end of the poem were or are or could ever have been identical to its various appearances or iterations. Significantly, at poem's end — which is the end of this collection of poems — “Home” as a place of arrival vanishes even as its “entrance” appears:

at the big glass entrance door, you're walking through wet grass, clouds

clumped on a hillside, a subway station sliding into water.

In this final line, we are left with a moving image of banishment, the speaker staring at or into the place he can never wholly enter or be absorbed by. The wall of glass he walks into is the wall of glass he is ever walking out of and away from, the place of desire a place of fleeting refuge. In this sense, “home” is never a place of origin but rather a threshold site where one crosses over and returns to first instances; a place, in other words, always returned to in an effort at reconstruction. Whatever its meanings, “Home” lies forgotten or buried, is belated and previous to and yet lying before us, requiring no end of restless, even phantasmal,

summonings to enter. Indeed, “at the big glass entrance door,” we are reminded that all place is for us, finally, an inner geography — that “walking” is but a kind of mood or habit of mind, one which literally lies interstitial to the phenomenological world as such, ontologically and existentially. The “wet grass, clouds / clumped on a hillside, a subway station sliding into water” is neither pastoral nor a-pastoral, but an attunement to the kind of architectural there-ness that the poetic I's imagination is, the reflection of “the big glass entrance door” as real as reality itself — a thing of the mind as much as of memory and no less significantly there for being a “mental thing” (da Vinci). This threshold encounter is emblematic of all that the poet leaves behind even as he is “walking through,” passing over but not into, staring directly at while looking away from desire, from what or where it ought to be, but never is. Such is the zero-degree of these poems, those places or sites or instances in which “O” is at once a number prior to numbering and an utterance at the threshold of language and yet containing all of its expressivity, from terror to awe. It is also the “O” in ozone, the oxygen without which no speaker speaks. At the cusp of ozone depletion, the poet says, “no plankton, no world — who can take in the dread.”

These subtle shifts in tone and feel and scale are what Balakian is a master of — the drifting, split-second mirage, the cinematic dissolve and cross-cut as well as the sculptural, stat-

uesque moment chiseled out of consonant blends and an imagistic, jazzman's ear for vowels. There is a textured, nuanced music in his jagged motifs, in the quiet, intimate transfigurations of his lines, as if in keeping with what the speaker of these poems tells us Miles Davis once said, “the softer you play, the stronger it gets.” The grandeur and force of Balakian's *Ozone Journal* recalls, too, what Agnes Martin once said in praise of Mark Rothko — that he “reached for zero so that nothing could stand in the way of truth.” These are poems of fulsome, kind, painterly perceptions, their truths our truths, beautiful, haunting, plaintive, urgent. In our dying world's age, these poems legislate a vital compartment to the demands of our shared present, timely and untimely both.

(Keith Jones is the author of *Fugue Meadow* (Ricochet Editions 2015) and *Surface to Air, Residuals of Basquiat* (Pressed Wafer 2012). His poems have appeared or are forthcoming in *Chicago Review*, *Denver Quarterly*, *Flag + Void*, *Let The Bucket Down*, *No Infinite*, *Sundial*, *Verse*, and *The Winter Anthology*. His chapbook manuscript, *The Lucid Upward Ladder*, was named a finalist for Verse Magazine's 2015 Tomaz Salamun Prize. He lives in Boston, Massachusetts. This review originally appeared in *Consequence Magazine*.)



## COMMENTARY

# Mirror Spectator



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## COMMENTARY

## Turkey After the Elections

By Edmond Y. Azadian

Turkey's President Recep Tayyip Erdogan had triggered a political tempest in his country and the region earlier this fall, which many believed would spin out of control and create an all-out civil war. But the November 1 election results indicate that he has assured his march towards a "constitutional dictatorship," as was characterized by the Kurdish leader of the People's Democratic Party (HDP), Selahattin Demirtas.

The June parliamentary elections were inconclusive for Erdogan's Justice and Development (AK) Party to form a single-party government and to carry out the constitutional reforms, paving the way for a presidential system that would concentrate power in the hands of Erdogan and expand his power throughout the region. Thus, he decided to schedule a snap election on November 1.

Unlike the United States, there are no checks and balances on the executive branch through the legislative and the judiciary branches in Turkey.



By the estimation of many analysts, Erdogan is poised to become the strongest ruler in Turkey since Ataturk.

In the aftermath of the reelection, markets have rebounded in the country and the Turkish Lira has enhanced its value, indicating that the stability of the country is around the corner.

All of the above indicate that Erdogan was vindicated in his gambit. What he primarily did was to launch an atmosphere of fear throughout the country by abandoning unilaterally the peace negotiations with the Kurds, which had yielded some positive results since 2013.

Two major terrorist attacks in Suruc and Ankara against the Kurds, engineered by the Erdogan administration through ISIS operatives, served their purpose. The perpetrators of those crimes have yet to be found.

As Roger Cohen has indicated in a *New York Times* article, the throat-cutting Jihadists circulate freely in the country and the police look the other way. The prime minister designate, Ahmet Davutoglu, maintains that they cannot be incarcerated until they have been caught red-handed, while on the other hand, many Kurds are being assassinated or jailed on trumped-up charges, without being caught red-handed committing a crime.

"What does Erdogan – in theory a key American ally leading a NATO state – see in the knife-wielding Jihadis of the Islamic State? They are useful in confronting Turkey's age-old nemesis, the Kurds who have taken over wide sections of northern Syria and established self-government in the area which they call Rojava. That in turn has raised the specter of a border-straddling Kurdistan, the nightmare of Turkish Republic." (Roger Cohen, "Turkey's Dangerous Polarization," *New York Times*, November 8, 2015)

The Kurds have an odd status on Washington's political radar; they are labeled terrorists in Turkey and a useful ally in Syria and Iraq. That may be a tactical choice of the US, and the alliance may dissipate any time. On the other hand, the Kurds also must have figured out well through experience in their entire history, since they have been used, abused and abandoned by all the powers in the region.

Erdogan pleaded with Washington for a long time to establish a no-fly zone in Syria, under the pretext of protecting the refugees. Washington did not pay more than lip service to the idea. Then Erdogan bargained to exchange the use of Incirlik Airbase by the US Air Force against a free hand to bomb Kurds in Syria and Iraq.

Now that the Turkish plan to eradicate the Kurdish autonomous region in Syria – mostly by Russian intervention – has failed, Prime Minister Davutoglu has indicated that Turkey is willing to introduce ground forces in Syria – a factor meant to further complicate the quagmire on the battlefield.

In his post-election speech, Erdogan said that he would continue the fight against the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) "until its militants buried their arms."

During the November 1 snap election, AK regained the parliamentary majority, winning 317 (49 percent) of the 550 seats, only 13 short of the number needed to call a referendum to make constitutional changes.

The scare tactic that Erdogan used has yielded handsome results for his AK Party, by symbolizing it as the base for Turkey's stability. Thus, almost a million Kurdish and left-wing voters have switched from the pro-Kurdish HDP to AK party since June, which barely met the 10-percent minimum limit, taking 59 seats, 21 fewer than in June.

It is believed that allowing the 10 percent to the Kurdish party was also Erdogan's doing because otherwise, all the Kurds would go underground and complicate his plan.

The three Armenian candidates running in three different parties have retained their seats to serve their cosmetic role in demonstrating to the EU that Turkey remains an inclusive democracy with Kurds, Assyrians and Armenians being represented in the parliament.

Demirtas believes that the AK-dominated government will resume negotiations with the Kurds sooner or later but refuses to support Erdogan's plan for constitutional changes which would put more power in the hands of the presidency.

"We would have to lose our minds to agree to this," he said in an interview. "Erdogan's plan for the executive presidential system is not a model for an executive presidency but [rather] a one-man rule, a constitutional dictatorship that merges all authority into a single hand."

Despite his categorical refusal to endorse Erdogan's bid for constitutional changes, Demirtas may eventually acquiesce to the change, first because Erdogan has been threatening "to go to the people" to approve the new constitution and second, because Demirtas has proven to be a political realist throughout his rise to power, believing that diplomacy is the art of the possible. While the PKK opts for a maximalist position of seeking independence, Demirtas has entertained a more moderate goal of achieving some degree of autonomy for the Kurds within the system. When the government initiated the negotiations, even the jailed leader, Abdullah Ocalan, had agreed to autonomy versus full independence. Should that goal be achieved, Erdogan has some tangible results to show to the West. Through the recent turmoil, he proved to be the Teflon politician who won 5 million more votes than in the June election.

On a side note, Turkey is moving from a parliamentary system to the presidential system, while Armenia is moving in the opposite direction.

Erdogan's position was also enhanced by outside factors; Germany's Chancellor Angela Merkel came to his rescue by visiting Ankara on the eve of the election and moderating her stand on Turkey's admission to the European Union. The US looked the other way when Turkey continued bombing Kurds under the pretext of going after ISIS. Even Russian-Turkish relations were not broken after Erdogan threatened to do so following Russian jets violating Turkish air space. And lastly, the Israeli-Turkish front was inordinately quiet, as Israel looks to preserve its hegemony in the region, in cooperation with Ankara and Riyadh.

International tolerance is already on the horizon for Erdogan's rise. It remains to implement his constitutional reform to consolidate his power at home.

Then the world should be ready to deal with Sultan Erdogan.





## COMMENTARY



My Turn

By Harut Sassounian

## Met with Israel's President, and Spoke at Armenian Genocide Conference

Last week I spoke at the first conference on the Armenian Genocide in Israel, gave a lecture at the Armenian Patriarchate in Jerusalem, and attended a meeting with Israel's President Reuven Rivlin.

President Rivlin was a staunch supporter of Armenian Genocide recognition while he was Chairman of the Knesset (parliament). As President, he is now more circumspect, not wishing to contradict his government's reprehensible silence regarding the Armenian Genocide. However, during his meeting with the scholars attending the genocide conference last week, President Rivlin left no doubt that his position on the Armenian Genocide has not changed. He even used the term "Armenian Genocide" during the meeting. He also recalled his speech at the UN General Assembly earlier this year in which he specifically referenced the Armenian Genocide.

I reminded President Rivlin that over two dozen countries have already recognized the Armenian Genocide and that Israel should also acknowledge it simply because it is the right thing to do! I expressed the hope that with his continued support Israel would complete 'the missing page' of my book which lists the countries that have recognized the Armenian Genocide!

I then handed President Rivlin my book, *The Armenian Genocide, The World Speaks Out: 1915-2015, Documents & Declarations*, a copy of the speech I delivered at the conference, and my newspaper, the California Courier.

The Armenian Genocide conference was organized by Prof. Yair Auron and the Department of Sociology, Political Science and Communication at The Open University of

Israel. Among the distinguished speakers were: Jacob Metzger, President of The Open University of Israel; Prof. Yair Auron; Prof. Israel Charny; Prof. Elihu Richter; Prof. Dina Porat, Chief Historian of Yad Vashem; Dr. Stefan Ihrig, author of "Ataturk in the Nazi Imagination"; Ragıp Zarakolu, a prominent human rights activist from Turkey; Prof. Ayhan Aktar from Istanbul Bilgi University; Ya'akov Ahimeir, journalist and editor of Israel Broadcasting Authority's weekly international news survey on Channel 1; Benny Ziffer, editor of the literary and cultural section of Haaretz newspaper; and George Hintlian from Jerusalem's Armenian community.

In my conference presentation, I expressed regret that the State of Israel has yet to acknowledge the Armenian Genocide. Here are excerpts from my remarks:

"I must first draw an important distinction between the position of the Israeli government and the people of Israel and Jews around the world who have been some of the leading voices calling attention to the Armenian Genocide and its recognition:

– Henry Morgenthau, U.S. Ambassador to the Ottoman Empire, during the Genocide;

– Franz Werfel, the Austrian Jewish novelist, who wrote in 1933 the international bestselling novel, "The Forty Days of Musa Dagh." His book was translated into Hebrew in 1934 and was widely read by Jews everywhere, particularly in the Warsaw ghetto, as a source of inspiration for survival and resistance to the Nazis during the Shoah;

– Raphael Lemkin, the Polish Jewish lawyer, who coined the term genocide. He disclosed during a 1949 interview on the CBS-TV Program Face the Nation: "I became interested in genocide because it happened to the Armenians";

– I would add to these historical figures the name of Yossi Beilin, who spoke out on the Armenian Genocide as Israel's Minister of Justice on April 24, 2000, and as Deputy Foreign Minister in 1994, despite heavy pressures and criticisms from the Israeli government;

– We also fondly remember Minister of Education Yossi Sarid who was the keynote speaker in Jerusalem on April 24, 2000, the 85th anniversary of the Armenian Genocide. He declared: "I am here, with you, as a human being, as a Jew, as an Israeli, and as Education Minister of the State of Israel... Whoever stands indifferent in front of it [genocide], or ignores it, whoever makes calculations, whoever is silent always helps the perpetrator of the crime and

not the murdered."

– I must include in this list of Righteous Jews, Professors Israel Charny, Yair Auron, Yehuda Bauer, Nobel Peace Prize winner Elie Wiesel, and a large number of Jewish scholars who were the trailblazers in writing articles and books on the Armenian Genocide, even before Armenian scholars.

– I must also commend Knesset members and former Knesset Chairman Reuven Rivlin – the current President of Israel – who staunchly supported Armenian Genocide recognition despite his government's vehement opposition.

As it is well known, the Armenian Genocide was the "prototype" of the Shoah in view of German complicity in the extermination of Armenians in the Ottoman Empire. In the process of that criminal cooperation, the German military learned from its Turkish ally practical evil lessons on how to organize and implement the elimination of an entire race! Hitler was emboldened by the silence of the world while Armenians were getting wiped out, to confidently declare on the eve of his invasion of Poland in 1939, "Who, after all, speaks today of the annihilation of the Armenians?"

Consequently, the State of Israel should have been the first country, and hopefully not the last, to recognize the Armenian Genocide! Who should empathize more with the victims of a genocide than those who have suffered a similar fate?

Those who give Realpolitik reasons to justify Israel's reluctance to acknowledge the Armenian Genocide, should answer the following question: Would they accept the denial of the Shoah by another country, simply because it is in that country's strategic interest to do so?

Equally illogical is the claim that now is not the right time to recognize the Armenian Genocide! When is a good time to recognize a genocide? Isn't 100 years of waiting long enough?

Moreover, for years, we were told that acknowledging the Armenian Genocide would ruin Israel's good relations with Turkey. Now, we are being told that Israel cannot acknowledge it in order not to make its bad relations with Turkey worse!

It would be immoral to exploit the recognition of the Armenian Genocide as a bargaining chip between Turkey and Israel. No political, economic or military interest should override the recognition of any genocide!

Israel should recognize the Armenian Genocide for one reason only: It is the right thing to do!"

# You Cannot Honor the Graves without Honoring the Bodies Themselves

By Robert Fisk

Do we honor the dead or the corpses? I'm not talking about those poppy fashion accessories worn by the BBC's clones, or PR Dave's obscene bit of crimson Photoshopping, but the real, actual remains of the human beings slaughtered in the Great War of 1914-18. And, in this particular case, I'm talking not of the soldiers but of the civilians buried in 33 graves which I looked down upon last week from a windy hilltop beside the old Roman city of Byblos in Lebanon. Beneath those tombstones lie the bones of some survivors of the greatest war crime of that titanic conflict, the Genocide of a million and a half Armenian Christians by the Turks in 1915. They died in one of the huge orphanages opened for thousands of children amid cholera and disease by European doctors and NGOs after the Great War ended, and were buried in the orphanage grounds.

Many of them saw their parents slaughtered in front of them, but escaped the massacre only to die in Lebanon. Some lived on to work among the orphans and died of old age. But they are the 'honored' dead, as surely as the soldiers who lie today in the cemeteries of the Somme and Verdun and the graves of those who endured the conflict. Or are they? For these individual Armenian graves, most of them bearing the names of the survivors, are soon to be disinterred and buried – mixed together – in a 'common grave' beside the nearest Armenian church. Their names already appear on a marble stone near the hole where their bones will be placed – but their individuality will disappear, skulls and backbones and femurs jumbled together. What is left of their bodies will have lost their uniqueness.

Worse still, their own Armenian church

which "protects" the old orphanage site, is to rent the land to a company that plans to construct a beach-front boutique hotel of wooden villas and, while the land where the graves now stand cannot be used for construction – it is too near the ancient Roman city – it will be landscaped and used, it now seems, for wedding photographs. The brides and grooms will not know whom they have displaced.

But Vartan Avakian will know. He took me to Byblos to show me the tomb of his own great-grandfather Hagop in this very cemetery, and Hagop's remains will be among those disinterred. "Those who

photographic record of the Armenian Genocide – the first genocide of the 20th century. Pictures of the dead hang in corridors haunted by most beautiful Armenian liturgical church music. "Remember!" it says in Armenian on a nearby wall. "Life is short, death is real, eternity is immortal." Which, I suppose, is the Armenian version of our own remembrance of those who grow not old as we grow old.

But moving the dead worries me. True, in 1918 the Armenian survivors carried some of the bones of their own dead from the Syrian Desert to a chapel at Antelias,

....in 1918 the Armenian survivors carried some of the bones of their own dead from the Syrian Desert to a chapel at Antelias, north of Beirut, where they can be seen to this day.

escaped the mass graves of our Genocide should not be moved into another mass grave," he said bitterly. Vartan and seven other Armenian friends have been hunting through local construction documents and discovered that the exclusive resort will be called the Diplomatic Club. So poor old Hagop, who witnessed but survived the Genocide at the age of 21, must make way for the wealthy company that will rent this land from the church for its privileged hotel guests.

The Armenian church can say – justifiably – that the names of the dead will be more greatly honored, because their cocktail of bones will lie beside an Ottoman building that now houses a magnificent museum of the Genocide, containing a

north of Beirut, where they can be seen to this day. I have myself dug the skulls of dead Armenians from the killing fields of northern Syria – originally left by their Turkish murderers to be covered by the waters of the Khabur River – and given them to the priests of the genocide memorial church at Deir ez-Zor. But these bones had been lying unknown, without any Christian grave. They were placed in the crypt amid other remains where, alas, they were discovered by Islamist fighters last year – and hurled into the street before the church was dynamited. True, graves of British soldiers on the Somme were removed to another cemetery when a new French motorway route to the Channel was under construction not long ago. But

they were reburied with honor under their own individual tombstones and their disinterment was in the interest of a project that would benefit a new generation of humanity.

Besides, when tens of thousands of soldiers "known unto God" were simply atomized into the fields of the Somme by shell-fire during the war itself, should bones really carry the same power as our historical memory? And didn't we ourselves bring back an "Unknown Soldier" to lie in state forever in London?

But to stand on the Somme and know that a dead man, often named, lies just below the ground a few feet from us provides a most unique reflection on humanity's cruelty and tragedy. Hagop was a survivor but his bones, albeit unseen, and his tombstone possess an individuality that recovers the dead and brings them back, in our consciousness, to the world of the living. A common grave may be a place of prayer – surely that is what the ash pits of Auschwitz have become – but it cruelly destroys the unique identity of each human being who died there – which, in the case of Auschwitz, was, alas, the Nazis' intention.

Time matters, of course. We do not weep for the dead of Agincourt and Waterloo. They were routinely thrown into mass graves. And our world is for the living, not the dead. Ashes do return to ashes. Yet in the shadow of the last century's Golgotha, I suspect that bodies, corpses, human remains – however decayed – should still be important to us. Their identities are more important than poppies – and certainly more profound than the profits of a boutique hotel.

(Robert Fisk is the award-winning chief Middle East correspondent for *The Independent* (UK) daily. This column originally ran in the November 8 edition of the paper.)



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