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Turkish Cultural Diplomacy

Ara Güler Photography Exhibit in NY Inaugurated by President Erdogan

By Aram Arkun
Mirror-Spectator Staff

NEW YORK – An exhibition of the works of award-winning Turkish-Armenian photographer Ara Güler (1928-2018), given the epithet of the “Eye of Istanbul,” was inaugurated on September 23 at the Smithsonian National Museum of the American Indian in the Alexander Hamilton US Custom House in downtown New York City, near Wall Street.

It is no coincidence that the exhibition, sponsored by the president of the Republic of Turkey, started at the same time as the 74th session of the United Nations General Assembly, which brings international attention to events in New York. It opened with a speech by President Recep Tayyip



Cutting the ribbon to inaugurate the exhibition (Sarkis Baharoglu photo)

Erdogan, and continues until October 10. President Erdogan entered the hall with his wife, Emine Gülbaran, and a large entourage of officials, who filled the first three or four rows of seats. Security was tight. Erdogan’s daughter Esra and her husband Berat Albayrak, National Defense Minister Hulusi Akar, Trade Minister Ruhsar Pekcan, former Prime Minister Binali Yıldırım (now Justice and Development Party Izmir parliament deputy), Presidential Spokesman Ibrahim Kalin and Turkish Nobel chemistry laureate Aziz Sancar were all present for this cultural event.

The Program

The evening commenced with a musical performance by Turkish pianist and com-

poser Fahir Atakoglu, who used a photograph of Istanbul by Güler on his 2008 album, “Istanbul in Blue.” John Bailey, president of the American Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences from see EXHIBIT, page 14

Bill Seeks to Mandate Teaching About Genocide, Holocaust In Mass. Schools

By Alin K. Gregorian
Mirror-Spectator Staff

BOSTON – A coalition comprising Armenian, Jewish, educational and activist groups has banded together in support of a bill put forward by state Rep. Jeffrey Roy that, if passed, would make teaching about the Jewish Holocaust, Armenian Genocide, as well as the Ukrainian, Pontian Greek, Bosnian, Cambodian, Rwandan and Sudanese genocides, part of history curriculums.

The bill has the strong backing of the Anti-Defamation League (ADL) and the Jewish Community Relations Council (JCRC).

Working with the two groups is the Armenian National Committee of Eastern Massachusetts. Dikran Kaligian, a member of the ANC of Eastern Massachusetts, see EDUCATION, page 10



Dr. Dikran Kaligian



Remembering the Pontic Greeks

Ecumenical Commemoration of Genocide Victims

BERLIN – The Armenian Genocide was not only Armenian; what unfolded in the Ottoman Empire in 1915 and continued for years was a genocide perpetrated by the Young Turk regime against Christian communities. The Promotional

By Muriel Mirak-Weissbach
Special to the Mirror-Spectator

Society for the Ecumenical Monuments for Genocide Victims of the Ottoman Empire (FÖGG) has always stressed this fact, which its Altars of Remembrance in the Evangelical Luisenkirchhof in Berlin bear witness to. (See <https://mirrorspectator.com/2018/09/27/ecumenical-days-of-remembrance-in-berlin/>) There on the site of the church cemetery in Berlin-Charlottenburg are three altars commemorating the victims of the genocide, Armenians, Pontic Greeks and Aramaeans. (See <https://mirrorspectator.com/2018/03/01/ecumenical-altars-remembrance-berlin/>)

The FÖGG organizes events every year to honor the memory of the victims, on dates that are associated with the single communities. In late April, it is the Armenians, in May, the Greeks. And it honors the memory of all in an ecumenical spirit. On September 7, in the context of the Day of the Open Monument see GERMANY, page 17

Armenian Caucus Letter Raises Concerns About Lack of Parity In US Military Assistance to Azerbaijan, Armenia

WASHINGTON – The Armenian Assembly of America announced this week that it welcomes an Armenian Caucus letter which raises grave concerns about “the recent dramatic increase in Department of Defense assistance for the Republic of Azerbaijan and the clear lack of parity in financial aid to the Republic of Armenia.”

In their letter to the Secretaries of State and Defense, Representatives Frank Pallone, Jr. (D-NJ), Jackie Speier (D-CA) and Adam Schiff (D-CA) emphasized that the “historic parity” is a “cornerstone to regional stability and US geo-strategic interests,” see PARITY, page 9

NEWS IN BRIEF

Kim Kardashian Reveals ‘Big Plans’ For Armenia

LOS ANGELES (RFE/RL) – American reality TV star Kim Kardashian has pledged to explore the possibility of manufacturing her new shapewear line in Armenia and other business opportunities during her upcoming trip to the country.

Kardashian has been invited to participate as a “special keynote speaker” and panelist in the World Congress on Information Technology (WCIT) that will be held in Yerevan on October 6-9. The forum is expected to bring together 2,500 tech professionals from more than 70 countries.

“I will be visiting Armenia in the next 2 weeks and hope to seek ways I can help increase trade and hopefully create jobs for Armenians which includes @skims production there in the future,” Kardashian said late on Thursday, September 26.

“I’ve been working extremely hard on this matter and hope my trip to Armenia will bring some amazing news because I have big plans!” the Armenian-American celebrity added in a series of tweets.

It will be Kardashian’s second trip to Armenia.

MP Speaks about Human Rights in Azerbaijan at PACE

STRASBOURG (Armenpress) – Member of Parliament Tatevik Haryapetian, representing the My Step bloc, spoke about ethnic minorities and human rights, as well as repeating cases of hatred in sports in Azerbaijan in her speech at the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE) autumn session, on September 30.

“First, the issue of minority and human rights. As you might already have heard a well known Talish activist Fahraddin Aboszoda, who is imprisoned in Azerbaijan for his activities, a few days ago announced a hunger strike. The Talish people are one of the native minority nations in Azerbaijan and I think we can’t stay indifferent to this case and should keep an eye and take requested measures to prevent abuses towards national minorities in CoE [Council of Europe] member countries.”

She also addressed hate crimes in sports. “Unfortunately, last time we tried to show an obvious discriminatory attitude in Azerbaijan towards Armenian football player Henrikh Mkhitaryan and his fans, but the CoE Secretariat decided to address the topic only by a written declaration. As a result, we got another case of hatred when Armenian chess champion Maria Gevorgyan, at the behest of the Azerbaijani delegation, was removed from Tournament in Turkey,” she said.

“In accordance with the explanation of the Turkish organizer they had to withdraw the invitation because Azerbaijani chess players had asserted that if there was an Armenian in the tournament, they would refuse to participate,” Hayrapetian concluded.

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PM Pashinyan in New York City

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ARMENIA

News From Armenia

Large Amount of Cash Stolen after Attack on Priest's Car

YEREVAN (news.am) — On September 30, in Armavir Province, in the city of Vagharshapat, a priest called the police and reported that the window of the front door of his Toyota Camry parked at Movses Khorenatsi Street in Echmiadzin was shattered and his house keys were stolen from inside the car. Later, before 2 p.m., the thieves entered his apartment by opening the door and stole nearly \$1,500 and about 700,000 drams.

According to the source, the caller told investigators that he is a priest in one of the churches of Echmiadzin.

Ex-Official Files Crime Report against Armenia Prosecutor General

YEREVAN (News.am) — Former prosecutor of the Prosecutor's Office of the Erebuni and Nubarashen Administrative Districts Avetis Apiyan filed a complaint against the Prosecutor General of Armenia to the head of the Special Investigation Service Sasun Khachatryan on October 1.

The Spokesperson of the Special Investigation Service Marina Ohanjanyan confirmed the news.

The grounds for the complaint was the decision of the Prosecutor General to dismiss Apinyan from office. According to the former prosecutor, he was dismissed based on false information. Apiyan wrote that he believes the Prosecutor General of Armenia doesn't comply with the position held and the Standing Committee on State and Legal Affairs of the National Assembly of Armenia has to raise the issue of lack of confidence in the Prosecutor General.

On June 22, 2018, by the order of the Prosecutor General of Armenia, Apinyan was dismissed from the position.

On March 13, 2019, the Administrative Court, chaired by Judge Hrach Ayvazyan, upheld Apinyan's claim and obliged the Prosecutor General's Office to restore Apinyan in his former position.

Government to Fund Many More IT Labs in Armenian Schools

YEREVAN (RFE/RL) — In a move aimed at supporting continued rapid growth of Armenia's information technology (IT) sector, the Armenian government has decided to help double the number of engineering labs in public schools across the country.

The Education Ministry announced on Monday that the government has allocated 834 million drams (\$1.7 million) in additional funding to the Yerevan-based Union of Advanced Technology Enterprises (UATE) for that purpose. It said the private association will use the money to open 284 more such labs before the end of this year.

The UATE began organizing extracurricular robotics and computer programming courses for schoolchildren in 2008 in an effort to alleviate a shortage of skilled personnel widely seen as the main challenge facing the Armenian IT industry. More than 7,500 students currently study at its 284 Armath labs equipped with computers, robot parts and 3D printers.

IT instructors running most of these labs are paid by the government. The UATE pays the wages of their colleagues working in the other schools.

According to the Education Ministry, the UATE will receive almost 1.2 billion drams in total government funding this year, sharply up from 180 million drams allocated to it in 2018.

"As a result, nearly half of Armenia's schools will have Armath engineering labs by the end of 2019," read a statement released by the ministry. This will include virtually all schools located in the country's northern Shirak, Lori and Tavush provinces, it said.

IT is the fastest growing sector of Armenia's economy, having expanded by over 20 percent annually in the past decade. It employs more than 15,000 engineers and generates over 6 percent of Gross Domestic Product.

Create Conditions for Breakthrough in Peace Process: Pashinyan Says at UN

YEREVAN (Armenpress) — The peaceful settlement of the Nagorno Karabakh conflict is of crucial importance for the stability and the security of the region, Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan said in his speech at the 74th session of the UN General Assembly in New York on September 25.

"Since my very first day in office I have been taking steps in this very context. With this end in view, I publicly stated that any solution of the NK conflict must be acceptable for the people of Armenia, Nagorno Karabakh and Azerbaijan. It's noteworthy, that I was first Armenian leader to voice such position about the settlement of the conflict. I was heavily criticized in my country for such a formula of solution which places the three parties of conflict on an equal footing. Nevertheless, I strongly believe that this is the only way to the peaceful and lasting settlement of the conflict because it offers a possibility of compromise, mutual respect and balance.

I introduced this formula not only publicly, but also within the negotiations under the auspices of the OSCE [Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe] Minsk Group Co-Chairmanship. In order to move forward I expected similar statement from Azerbaijan. However, the highest authorities of Azerbaijan remain on their position which aims at a solution of the NK conflict acceptable only for the people of Azerbaijan. What does it mean in reality? It means that the Azerbaijani authorities do not have any intention to solve this conflict, instead they want to defeat the people of Nagorno Karabakh, they don't want to seek any compromise. What they aim at is a revenge for the unsuccessful attempted aggressions against the people of Nagorno Karabakh in 1990s and in 2016. This is why they are inflaming anti-Armenian sentiments among their

people. This is why they are spreading enormous resources on armament. This is why the anti-Armenian hate speech has become official policy in Azerbaijan," Pashinyan said.

He added that in fact, the Azerbaijani authorities want to bring back the

territories without the people," the Armenian premier said.

He said he considered it important to explain the reason why he is referring to this part of the story. "Do you think I want to contribute to the tension in



Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan at the UN

Soviet-era status of Nagorno Karabakh. "But it is a futile effort because the people of Soviet-era Nagorno Karabakh Autonomous Region declared their independence and exercised their self-determination as did Azerbaijan seceding from the Soviet Union. This position of Azerbaijan is tantamount of claiming the restoration of the Soviet Union. ... This dispute is not about territorial claims. It is about people, about real men and women and their right to live in their homeland in the way that their ancestors lived over many centuries. Unfortunately, the Azerbaijani authorities do not want to talk to these people and negotiate with them because they want to have that territo-

our region? Of course, not. On the contrary, I want to make it clear that the conflict of Nagorno Karabakh is a very complicated and very painful issue for the peoples of the region, that it is impossible to settle it without hard and consistent work, without compromise, mutual respect and balance. Therefore, I want to invite my Azerbaijani counterpart, President Ilham Aliyev, to accept the formula that will create condition for our breakthrough in the peace process. Any solution to the NK conflict must be acceptable for the people of Armenia, the people of Nagorno Karabakh and the people of Azerbaijan," he said. (See a video of the speech on www.mirrorspectator.com)

Artsakh President Sahakyan Receives Former Chairman Of Ramgavar Party Supreme Council Vartan Nazerian

STEPANAKERT — President of the Republic of Artsakh Bako Sahakyan on September 27 received the former chairman of the Supreme Council of the Armenian Democratic Liberal Party (ADL, Ramgavar) Vartan Nazerian. According to the Artsakh president's media service, various issues connected to Artsakh were discussed.

Nazerian declared, "Today, Bako Sahakyan conferred upon me the Medal of Gratitude, for which I am deeply moved and very thankful."

After the meeting with the president, Nazerian had an interview with an



Vartan Nazerian



Former chairman of Supreme Council of Ramgavar Party with Artsakh President Bako Sahakyan

ArtsakhPress correspondent, during the course of which he said that after receiving such an honor, he feels himself to be a true Artsakh native and a defender of Artsakh's land.

Sahakyan later participated in the opening ceremony of a cattle-raising complex in the vicinity of Mets Tagher village of Artsakh's Hadrut province. He expressed his gratitude to the for-

mer ADL Supreme Council chairman for the realization of this project and emphasized that such modern establishments develop the agriculture and economy in Artsakh.

Nazerian also announced that soon he would carry out a new project connected to the cultivation of land in Artsakh.

(Translated from the Armenian)



ARMENIA

Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan Holds Town Hall Meeting in New York City

By Aram Arkun
Mirror-Spectator Staff

NEW YORK – Armenia's Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan held a public meeting for the New York Armenian community at the Eastern Diocese of the Armenian Church of America on September 24 while in town for the United Nations General Assembly. Pashinyan was accompanied by, among others, Armenian Foreign Minister Zohrab Mnatsakanyan, the Armenian ambassadors to the United Nations and to the United States, the environmental minister, the consul-general of Armenia in Los Angeles, and Armenia's high commissioner for the diaspora, along with the prime minister's wife Anna Hakobyan.

The visitors entered Haik and Alice Kavookjian Auditorium together with Diocesan Primate Bishop Daniel Findikyan, Diocesan Legate and Ecumenical Director Archbishop Vicken Aykazian, Vicar of the cathedral Fr. Mesrop Parsamyan, and other clergy after praying at the cathedral.

Unusually for such events, there was no master of ceremonies. Instead, Findikyan succinctly welcomed the guests in Armenian and in English. Pashinyan immediately afterwards briefly spoke, and then personally took questions from the audience.

Another unusual element for a New York Armenian community event was the lack of any English-language component to the main program. Even those questions asked in English were answered in Armenian, with no English summary. While the majority of the over 700 strong audience appeared to understand Armenian, and may have been natives of Armenia, a certain number of Armenian-Americans, unable to follow the discussion, appeared disgruntled, and at least a few left early.

The majority of the audience was from the New York metropolitan area, but some Armenians had come from other parts of the East Coast, such as Boston and Washington, DC, to see the prime minister. The audience in general appeared enthusiastic and supportive of the prime minister.

In his initial remarks, Pashinyan declared



From left, Ambassador Mher Margaryan, Foreign Minister Zohrab Mnatsakanyan, Anna Hakobyan, wife of Nikol Pashinyan, Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan, Primate Bishop Daniel Findikyan, High Commissioner for Diaspora Affairs Zareh Sinanyan, Ambassador Varuzhan Nersesyan, and Archbishop Vicken Aykazian (Aram Arkun photo)

answering questions, often at length and at times with humor. None of the other representatives from Armenia spoke, though toward the end of the program the prime minister introduced them to the audience.

The questions were quite varied in scope, including economic, international, military, environmental and personal issues. Some were rambling and long, leading the audience to begin yelling and leading the prime minister to demand the questioner to get to the point. Only a few highlights can be mentioned.

Pashinyan stated that the most important issue facing the government is to raise the level of state governance. This does not only include corruption in the sense of attempts to illegally gain money, Pashinyan said, but also the problem of bureaucrats who now are reluctant to work quickly because they no longer have the opportunity of taking bribes on each application.

A related problem is that talented employees can earn much higher salaries working in the private sector than in government so they are leaving. The solution is to raise salaries. Pashinyan said that the government is attempt-

ing to raise the level of state governance. This does not only include corruption in the sense of attempts to illegally gain money, Pashinyan said, but also the problem of bureaucrats who now are reluctant to work quickly because they no longer have the opportunity of taking bribes on each application.

The prime minister pointed out that the revenue of the state has been increased by 120 million dollars, allowing immediate actions to help the populace, such as pension increases, and raises in the salaries of officers and contract employees serving in the armed forces, teachers, and, starting on October 1, firemen and forest rangers. The international reserves of the third Armenian republic are at historic highs at the moment. Over the last year and a half, over 65,000 new workers have been registered as part of Armenia's labor force. Some used to be working in the black market off the books, while others are actually completely new workers.

The government is also trying to connect unfilled jobs with job seekers, as there seems to be a disconnect between the two, Pashinyan said. It is also trying to prepare local specialists in fields which otherwise need to import them from abroad. He gave the example of strawberry production, in which European specialists are being paid ten times the range of Armenian salaries because no Armenian specialists are available.

However, Pashinyan also declared that some Armenians still prefer not to work and receive social assistance. He gave the example of a fire damaging a huge freezer complex and leading to hundreds of tons of meat spoiling. In order to eliminate this health hazard, the government offered relatively high payments of 5,000 or even 10,000 dram per day for this unpleasant physical labor, but no one wanted to do it. Eventually, Indians had to be hired.

The inevitable question on mining at Amulsar was asked. Pashinyan reasserted his previous statements that at present, the government has no basis on which to stop operations. It might have such a basis at the next moment, tomorrow, or in a month—or maybe it will not, he said. He said that it was wrong to demonize mining. The economy of many advanced states like the US has been built on mining. Substantial or fundamental [eakan] injury must be prevented to people's lives, but, he added, all health issues cannot be completely eliminated. If not, he said, we must stop using cars and close factories too, since these cause health problems for some. Even buildings like that of the Armenian Diocesan complex are environmental problems, he said, because they use space that could have been a site for wildlife and flora.

Pashinyan concluded that "We must use our

resources in the maximum way for the development of our country."

There were many personal issues raised by questioners, who evidently attempted to obtain publicly solutions from the prime minister that were unattainable in their prior efforts. These issues ranged from private business and technological issues and proposals,



Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan (Sarkis Baharoglu photo)



Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan with Primate Bishop Daniel Findikyan (Sarkis Baharoglu photo)

that the biggest challenge after coming to power was to make people realize that the government was serious in its goal of ending corruption, and the new officials did not intend to do as their predecessors did and merely enjoy the fruits of their positions. He stressed, "This is a path on which there will be no compromise." The result, he said, was that "Armenian must be truly democratic, a truly sovereign, truly social, truly legal state."

Community dialogue

Pashinyan spent the rest of the evening

ing to remove the poor workers in order to use the money saved on their salaries to give higher pay to the remaining good ones. Digitalization of government services will help in improving quality and accessibility, while saving manpower.

When speaking about attempts to bring to justice corrupt officials from the prior regime, Pashinyan noted that despite some successes, he was dissatisfied with the extent of this work. This has led to changes in the cadres of law enforcement agencies. He also noted that prosecutors

to a recent student wanting to work longer in the US before honoring his agreement to return to work two years in Armenia immediately after graduation.

In response to a question about the youth, a perennial Armenian concern, Pashinyan recommended they live at least one month a year in Armenia, apply for Armenian (dual) citizenship, and buy a home or open a business in Armenia if possible. He said these would be bridges tying them to Armenia, along with spiritual or emotional connection. Most important, he added, would be to marry an Armenian.

In addition, when a young student who has only been studying Armenian for 5 months and went to Armenia this year for the first time asked a question in his newly acquired Armenian about infrastructure in Armenia, Pashinyan thanked him for serving as a concrete example that the Armenian revolution inspired people to become more closer to their roots.

There is a partial video of the event, starting around 8 minutes after its commencement, available on YouTube (https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=382&v=G1mnCpyfyvg).



INTERNATIONAL

International News

President Offers Congratulations on Inauguration of World's Largest Yazidi Temple

YEREVAN (Armenpress) — President Armen Sarkissian sent a congratulatory message on the consecration and inauguration of the world's largest Yazidi temple named Quba Mere Diwane in the Armenian village of Aknalich, on September 30.

"I sincerely congratulate the brotherly Yazidi people on the consecration and inauguration of the Melek Taus temple. For centuries Armenia has been home to many Yazidis. By the inauguration of this temple today the Armenian land also became the center for the spiritual life of our Yazidi sisters and brothers. We should do everything for all citizens of Armenia regardless of their religious or national identity, to have a complete opportunity to protect their language, traditions, spiritual and cultural heritage," he said.

"I wish that this new sacred place brings peace and welfare to the families of our Yazidi compatriots and enriches their spiritual and cultural life," he added.

Turkish Authorities to Patrol Ani to Stop Armenian Flag Waving

ISTANBUL (Panorama.am) — The Kars Governor's Office and the local branch of Turkish Gendarmerie have adopted a decision to introduce a 24-hour patrol at the site of Ani ruins. The decision, announced on September 24, is to prevent numerous Armenian tourist visiting the site from waving the flag of Armenia.

In an interview with the outlet, Goksel Gulbey, the head of an anti-Armenian Turkish NGO called "Association Struggling against baseless Armenian lies" welcomed the decision, arguing for years Armenians have visited Kars, the ruins of Ani, Aghtamar island Van, Mount Ararat and waved the national flags of Armenia and Karabakh.

Singapore Premier Visits Armenia

YEREVAN (Armenpress) — As part of the official trip to Armenia, Singapore's Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong visited the Tsitsernakaberd Memorial on September 29 to pay tribute to the memory of the Armenian Genocide victims.

Singapore's PM laid a wreath at the memorial and also flowers at the Eternal Flame.

Lee then toured the Armenian Genocide Museum-Institute, where he signed the guestbook:

"The Armenian people have shown great strength and fortitude since the tragic events of 1915. May you always enjoy peace, security and harmony".

The Singaporean PM visited Tsitsernakaberd together with his spouse, Ho Ching.

They were accompanied by Deputy PM of Armenia Mher Grigoryan, Mayor of Yerevan Hayk Marutyan and Deputy FM Avet Adonts.

President Armen Sarkissian later met with Lee and his delegation.

After a one-on-one meeting, an expanded format meeting including delegations of both countries took place.

"I am very happy that the relations of Singapore and Armenia are moving forward in the right direction," Sarkissian said, welcoming the delegation in Armenia.

"It is very meaningful for me that during your time here you will also have meetings with the leaders of Eurasian Economic Union countries and Iran. Let's hope that in the future you will use Armenia as a gateway to Eurasia. I expect to see you here again for a longer period of time, when me and my colleagues, the government will have the chance to show you Armenia and Armenians more," he added.

Thanking his hosts for the warm reception, Lee said: "We are small countries, we live in a world where many challenges regarding uncertainties exist. But at the same time small countries have advantages in unpredictable situations, because they are able to adapt faster, to choose a new direction faster

Iranian President Again Offers Closer Ties to Armenia

YEREVAN (RFE/RL) — Iranian President Hassan Rouhani reaffirmed his country's readiness to supply more natural gas to neighboring Armenia and deepen broader Armenian-Iranian relations when he visited Yerevan on Tuesday, October 1.

Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan reassured him that Armenia remains committed to closer ties with Iran despite U.S. sanctions against Tehran.

"Our position is that our relations with Iran must be beyond geopolitical influences as much as possible because we are neighbors and have many common interests and we need to cooperate for many more centuries and millennia," Pashinyan said during his talks with Rouhani.

Rouhani arrived in the Armenian capital the previous night to attend a summit of the Eurasian Economic Union (EEU), a Russian-led trade bloc comprising five ex-Soviet republics. He met with Pashinyan just hours before the start of the summit attended by Russian President Vladimir Putin.

"We attach great importance to developing and expanding relations with our friend and neighbor Armenia in all areas," Rouhani said in his opening remarks at the meeting with Pashinyan cited by the latter's press office.

"We are ready to continue working with your government to devise and implement new projects and expand the volume of the gas-for-electricity program," he added.

Armenia currently receives up to 500 million cubic meters of Iranian gas each year and pays for it with electricity supplied to Iran. This swap scheme mentioned by Rouhani is due to be signifi-

cantly expanded after the construction of a third electricity transmission line connecting Armenian and Iranian power grids.

Work on the high-voltage line, which is mainly carried out in southeastern Armenia by an Iranian company, was supposed to be completed in September this year. Citing a senior Armenian offi-

ments, Russian gas is cheaper than Iranian gas.

Energy Minister Reza Ardakanian was among Iranian officials accompanying Rouhani on his latest visit to Armenia. Ardakanian met with Armenian Deputy Prime Minister Mher Grigoryan late on Monday. The two men co-chair an Armenian-Iranian intergovernmental



President Hassan Rouhani in Yerevan with Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan

cial, the Sputnik news agency reported last week that the end of the construction has been delayed until the end of 2020 due to a host of factors, including the U.S. sanctions.

Rouhani already offered to boost Iranian gas supplies to Armenia when he received Pashinyan in Tehran in February. The South Caucasus country's annual gas imports total roughly 2 billion cubic meters and mostly come from Russia. According to the current and former Armenian govern-

commission on economic cooperation.

Meeting with Pashinyan, Rouhani was also reported to hail growing Armenian-Iranian trade and say that Tehran looks forward cooperating with the EEU.

Iran and the EEU signed last year a preferential trade agreement which will come into force later this month. The deal was strongly backed by Armenia, the only member of the trade bloc that has a land border with the Islamic Republic.

Armenia Hosts Eurasian Union Summit

YEREVAN (RFE/RL) — Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan praised the Eurasian Economic Union (EEU) as he chaired a summit of the Russian-led trade bloc in Yerevan on Tuesday, October 1.

Pashinyan, Russian President Vladimir Putin and the leaders of the other EEU member states — Belarus, Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan — met in closed session before being joined by Iranian President Hassan Rouhani, Moldova's President Igor Dodon and Singapore's Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong.

"Our organization, which is already five years old, is getting stronger year after year," Pashinyan said in his opening remarks. "It has already proved its viability and attractiveness as an international integration grouping."

"I am happy to note that Armenia is making its contribution to this process," added the prime minister who criticized Armenian membership in the EEU when he was opposition to his country's former government.

Putin likewise declared that the establishment of the EEU has sped up economic growth and boosted living standards in its member states. "The EEU is developing steadily," he said at the summit. "A vast common market has been created and it is functioning with suc-

cess."

Putin went on to announce that Russia and its ex-Soviet allies making up the bloc will create a "common electricity space" by 2025. He said they are also planning a common oil and gas

EEU and Singapore. Armenia, Russia, Belarus, Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan signed a similar deal with Iran last year. Rouhani's presence at the summit underscored the deal's importance to the Islamic Republic.



The leaders of the host countries at the meeting in Yerevan

market. That requires the "harmonization of member states' legislations on gas supplies and transport," added the Russian president.

Pashinyan touched upon this issue in his speech. He said the prices of Russian natural gas traded within the EEU should eventually be set in the national currencies of member states, rather than the US dollar. Moscow is believed to have objected to this idea until now.

The session ended with the signing of a free-trade agreement between the

The Iranian president also used the summit to denounce the "inhuman" US sanctions against his country. "We believe that the international community must counter the US's hostile and unilateral approach and take serious decisions and effective actions against it," he said.

Rouhani also complained that some of Iran's partners, notably Russia, have been "following the US's example" and ignoring international law and breaching bilateral agreements. He did not elaborate.



INTERNATIONAL

New Garden Of the Righteous In Lebanon

BEIRUT, Lebanon (Gariwo) – On June 29, in the village of Kfarnabrakh, 45 kilometers from Beirut, the first Garden of the Righteous in Lebanon was inaugurated with the dedication of olive trees in honor of ten Righteous people from different ethnic groups, religions and beliefs.

The initiative stems from the common will of Gariwo and the Lebanese association Annas Linnas to pursue the common good and solidarity, and took place within the Sensorial Educational Garden located on the hill of Kfarnabrakh, about 1,100 meters above sea level in the Chouf District of the Mount Lebanon chain.

Annas Linnas, established in 2009 by the Greek-Melchite-Basiliense Rev. Abdo Raad to promote coexistence between local population and refugees, has been committed since 2011 to alleviating the inconveniences caused by the arrival of new refugees from the neighboring countries. Among its activities there is precisely the Sensorial Educational Garden, designed as an open space for individual prayer and collective discussion in contact with nature.

“I am very happy that a new place of memory of the Righteous is born in the Middle East, in addition to the one created in 2016 in Tunis inside the Embassy of Italy and at the Garden of Good created in 2017 in Jordan with the association EcoPeace Middle East,” declared Pietro Kuciukian,



The opening ceremony of the Garden of the Righteous

honorary consul of the Republic of Armenia in Italy and co-founder of Gariwo, who was at the inauguration ceremony together with the Ambassador of the Republic of Armenia in Lebanon Vahagan Atabekyan, to Raad and the representative of the Municipality of Kfarnabrakh.

“In the spring of 2019 ten olive trees were planted in the Garden of Kfarnabrakh, a symbol of peace, in memory and testimony of ten Righteous of the humanity whose memory will be made imperishable by the stone of Lebanon in

which their names will be engraved,” Raad added.

The Righteous honored are: Carlo Angela, Faraaz Hussein, Jakob and Elisabeth Künzler, Antonia Locatelli, Fridtjof Nansen, Andrej Sakharov, Sophie Scholl, Azucena Villaflor and Armin T. Wegner.

The ceremony was also the occasion to thank the Swiss association Elias and in particular its President, Yves Tabin, for the important contribution given for the realization of the Garden.



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President Vladimir Putin in Armenia with Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan

Putin Arrives in Armenia

YEREVAN (Armenpress) – Prime Minister of Armenia Nikol Pashinyan welcome Russian President Vladimir Putin on October 1 when he arrived in the country, adding his hope that Armenia and Russia will continue deepening strategic relations.

“We greatly value our bilateral relations with Russia. The Russian Federation is our strategic partner. We hope to make our relations stronger,” Pashinyan said.

This is the first visit of the Russian President to Armenia since Nikol Pashinyan became the Prime Minister of Armenia.

Following the Eurasian Supreme Council meeting, Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan met with President of the Russian Federation Vladimir Putin.

“I think that really remarkable events took place today at the Eurasian Supreme Council meeting, we signed an agreement with Singapore, the temporary free trade agreement with Iran comes into force, and I am very happy that all this is happening in Yerevan. It is a memorable fact for Armenia’s presidency in the Eurasian Economic Union. To be honest, I am pleased that our presidency in the Eurasian Economic Union has been this way. Of course, there is still time, I hope we will still be able to record other results in the EAEU,” Pashinyan told Putin, according to the official government news.

And of course, our bilateral relations are very important to us. Russia is a strategic partner for us, and we hope to make that strategic partnership more and more solid. And thank you for your willingness and understanding of our relationship. I am confident that our relationship will grow stronger and stronger. In any case, we are like that,” Pashinyan said.

Armenian Diocese of Egypt Donates Hospital in Hadrut

HADRUT, Artsakh – The members of the Diocesan Council of Cairo, Egypt, traveled to Armenia and then to Artsakh, where they participated, with the blessings of the Catholicos of All Armenians Karekin II, in the opening ceremonies of the delivery ward of the chief hospital of the city of Hadrut. This hospital section was completely renovated and supplied with medical equipment.

Artsakh President Bako Sahakyan participated in the ceremony and stressed that the modernization and expansion of the network of health establishments has a strategic significance for the provinces. Consequently, work in this vein will continue, he said. He declared his gratitude to the Armenian Diocese of Egypt for bringing to life this project.

Archbishop Ashod Mnatsaganyan, Primate of the Egyptian Diocese, spoke words of greeting and thanks. He announced that this was the first major initiative of the Diocese in Cairo to



Primate of Egypt Archbishop Ashod Mnatsaganyan speaking during the opening ceremony

help the homeland and its population. He said that such efforts henceforth will be ongoing, and will include settlements near the border.



Diocesan Council members of the Armenian Church of Egypt with President Bako Sahakyan in the center.

Community News

Anniversary Banquet of Holy Trinity Armenian Church to Honor Bruce Newell as 'Parishioner Of the Year'

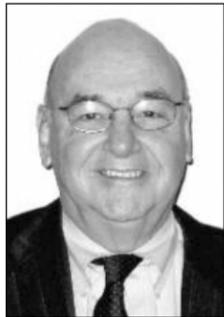
By Seta. A. Buchter

CAMBRIDGE, Mass. – Bruce Newell will be honored as "Parishioner of the Year" at the Church's 58th Anniversary Banquet to be held on Sunday, October 20, following Church Services, in the Charles and Nevart Talanian Cultural Hall of the church complex at 145 Brattle St.

Fr. Vasken A. Kouzouian, Pastor of Holy Trinity, will be the celebrant on this morning and offer the homily, with the Divine Liturgy beginning at 10:00 a.m. During the Divine Liturgy, special prayers will be offered for the departed souls of the faithful who worked and built Holy Trinity Armenian Church at its present site in Cambridge. Following Church Services, the Annual Banquet will celebrate the 58th anniversary of the consecration of Holy Trinity Church in Cambridge.

"Bruce married into the Holy Trinity parish . . . but you would never know it. On any given day of the week, Bruce is in the front of the church warmly greeting parishioners, or in the kitchen preparing for our bazaars and picnics and for six years, five of them as Chairman, leading our Parish Council meetings," stated Kouzouian. "Bruce has the gift of making everyone feel welcome and needed. We are proud to call this adopted son of our parish, Holy Trinity's 2019 Parishioner of the Year. He is a role model and inspiration for all of us."

When Bruce Newell married Carlene Hintlian, daughter of Carl and Mary Hintlian, in August 1963, he became a devoted and active member of Holy Trinity Armenian Church. He has served the church in many capacities. He was a member of the Parish Council from 2006 to 2011 serving as vice chairman for the first year and as chairman for the next five years. An active member of



Bruce Newell

the Trinity Men's Union, he served as president and could always be found lending a helping hand wherever needed. He was a member of the Church's Nominating Committee, most recently for the past two years.

On the Diocesan level, he served as a Diocesan Delegate from 2012 to 2016.

Newell was born on January 7, 1941 to Kenneth and Charlotte Newell in Watertown. He graduated from Belmont High School in 1958, from Florida Southern College in 1964, and served as an officer in the US Army from 1964 through 1966.

Newell worked on the floor of the Boston Stock Exchange and served on the Board of Exchange, also as vice chairman. He is a member of the Board of Directors of Nasdaq Exchange in New York. For the past 20 years, he has served on the board of Arlington Youth Hockey and several committees in the Town of Arlington.

He and his wife have two children, Todd Newell and Kimberly Newell Chebator and six grandchildren. He has one sister, Janet King.

During the Banquet, recognition will be given to outgoing Parish Council members Edmond J. Danielson, Daniel K. Dorian and Paul Jamgotchian.

Tickets can be purchased by contacting the Holy Trinity Church Office, emailing office@htaac.org, or logging onto www.htaac.org/calendar/event/703/.



Armenian Church of the Martyrs in Worcester, MA, the birthplace of the AMAA

AMAA's 100th Annual Meeting Banquet to Be Celebrated in Boston on October 19

PARAMUS, N.J. – "The Armenian Missionary Association of America (AMAA) was born, nurtured and grew up in the bosom of the Armenian Evangelical Union (AEU)," stated Rev. Dr. Vahan H. Tootikian, in a recent telephone interview.

By Florence Avakian

"In the last 100 years it has rendered 100 years of dedicated service to the Armenian Evangelical Church and the Armenian nation," said the eminent church leader who is the Executive Director of the Armenian Evangelical World Council which comprises five Evangelical Unions, the AMAA, and the Stephen Philibosian Foundation, a humanitarian and philanthropic organization.

On Saturday, October 19, in Boston, a grand Banquet will honor the Armenian Evangelical Church's relationship to the AMAA, as well as the AMAA's 100th Annual Meeting for their vital and dynamic work. In 2018, the 100th year of the AMAA was celebrated globally and crowned at a banquet in Los Angeles.

"The Armenian Evangelical Union of North America is the offspring of the Armenian Evangelical Union (Eastern States), which was organized in 1901 in Worcester," explained Tootikian. In 1960, two Armenian Evangelical Churches from Canada joined the AEU, and in 1971 this AEU joined with the Armenian Evangelical Union of California and formed the Armenian Evangelical Union of North America (AEUNA).

The Armenian Evangelical Church in New York was the "moving force of the AMAA, with such spiritual pillars as the Telfeyan and Donchian families," he continued.

The AMAA enjoys "a good relationship with all Armenian churches in America, as well as with Echmiadzin, Antelias, and the Armenian Catholic church."

Born in Kessab, Syria, Tootikian grew up in an Armenian Evangelical family. His grandfather and half of his family were deported during the Genocide to Deir-Zor where they were killed.

see AMAA, page 9



Rev. Vahan H. Tootikian, D.Min.

In the Presence of The True Cross at St. Vartan Cathedral

By Florence Avakian

NEW YORK – To be in the presence of the True Cross of Jesus Christ is a deeply felt emotional experience.

In a powerful service at New York's St. Vartan Armenian Cathedral on Sunday, September 15, witnesses were able to draw near to a relic of the True Cross. The sliver of the Holy Cross could be viewed imbedded in a cross-shaped reliquary, surrounded by the royal herb, basil.

The service for the Feast of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross – led by the Vicar of St. Vartan Cathedral, the Very Rev. Mesrop Parsamyan – symbolized both the grief Christians feel over the Crucifixion, as well as the spirit of salvation and hope that the Holy Cross came to represent after the Resurrection.

The Exaltation of the Holy Cross – Khatchveratz in Armenian – is one of the church's five major feast days, and the most important of the four feasts of the Holy Cross that mark the present season. Sunday's service began in the evening, with Parsamyan carrying the relic of the True Cross into the cathedral sanctuary.

He led a procession of nine Armenian priests from area churches in New York, New Jersey, and Connecticut, as well as six deacons. Also present in the sanctuary was Diocesan Vicar the Very Rev. Fr. Simeon Odabashian, representing Diocesan Primate Bishop Daniel Findikyan.

The priests and deacons chanted the prayers of the Medz Antasdan service, in Armenian and English, blessing the four corners of St. Vartan Cathedral to symbolize the four corners of the world. As the prayers were chanted, rose water was sprinkled on the large number of people attending, who in the symbology of the service



Very Rev. Mesrop Parsamyan (Photo by Albin Lohr-Jones)

represented the worldwide community of Christian believers.

The basil leaves which traditionally grace the church on Khatchveratz are a recollection of the re-discovery of the True Cross, in A.D. 326. The distinctive herb, named for the Greek word *basileos* ("king"), was found growing in profusion around the pile of debris where Christ's crucifixion cross had lain undisturbed for some 300 years. Traditional holds that it was formally identified Queen Helena, the mother of the Emperor Constantine the Great, when she had the recently deceased body of a young man placed on the discarded cross. The man instantly sprang to life, restored by the surging power of the Resurrection.

Sign of Victory

"For believers, the Holy Cross is a sign of victory," said Fr. Mesrop Hovsepyan, pastor of the St. Gregory the Enlightener Church in White Plains, NY, in his thoughtful sermon.

see CROSS, page 7



COMMUNITY NEWS



A worshipper kisses the cross. (Photo by Albin Lohr-Jones)

In the Presence of the True Cross at St. Vartan Cathedral

CROSS, from page 6

“It is the sign of God’s love for us, and his forgiveness. It is also a reminder that Christ brought resurrection for us through his crucifixion.”

“In our world of division, dishonesty, and hatred, where many fear death, the Cross brings unity, and promises life everlasting,” he continued. “It conveys honesty, love, and self-sacrifice, when there is a lack of peace.”

Every time the Sign of the Cross is made, Hovsepyan said, “we receive the saving power of the cross, and the strength from Christ to protect ourselves from the power of evil in this world.” The cross is “everywhere in our lives, decorating our churches, homes, vestments and vessels. It does so because it is a sign of life.”

Traditionally, Armenian churches are built in the shape of a cross, “so that when we worship, we literally stand inside of the cross, and become part of the cross which leads us to our

salvation.”

To conclude the service, worshippers came forward and kissed the relic of the True Cross, and received a sprig of the blessed basil herb.

A reception followed on the open air cathedral plaza, where people conversed with one another about the inspirational meaning of the service.

“Today at St. Vartan Cathedral, surrounded by our faithful community members, we performed a centuries-old service called Medz Antasdan,” explained Fr. Mesrop Parsamyan. “We blessed the four corners of the Earth with the Sign of the Cross. Indeed, the world is turning: the generations pass, and happy and sad times follow each other. However, the Cross is our only hope.”

“It is the sign and the proof par excellence of Christ’s love for us,” he said. “And it will always remain.”

AMAA Executive Director/CEO Zaven Khanjian Awarded Honorary Member Title by the Writers’ Union of Armenia

YEREVAN and PARAMUS, N.J. – On September 13, 2019, the Writers’ Union of Armenia (WUA) held its regular meeting. Among other items on the Agenda, the Union discussed awarding the title of “Honorary Member” to Zaven Khanjian, executive director/CEO of the Armenian Missionary Association of America (AMAA).

Edward Militonyan, president of the Union, presented Khanjian as an author, publicist, a Diaspora activist in the spheres of education and church and a great patriot. Militonyan said that he had an opportunity to meet Khanjian, talk to him and read two of his works: *Is this House Yours or Mine?* and *Aleppo: First Station*, and attend the presentation of these two books in Yerevan in June, 2019.

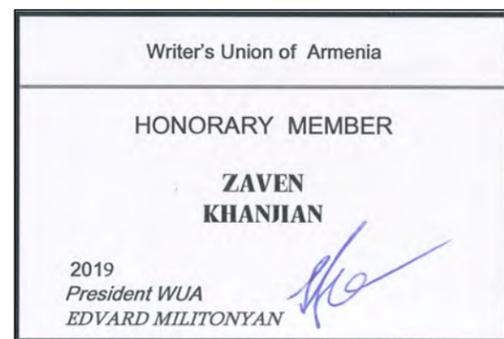
Militonyan noted that *Is this House Yours or Mine?* summarizes the indelible impressions of his Western Armenian pilgrimage. “It represents Armenian history, literature, architecture and a broader cultural map in general,” he said. “Zaven has a vast field of knowledge, where every stone and shrub, monastery, song and poetry are wonderfully and thoroughly immersed in spiritual light and touching emotion.”

After questions and answers, the Union members unanimously voted Khanjian as an Honorary Member of the WUA.

Militonyan was so impressed by Khanjian’s book, that he published an excerpt titled *Two Story House* in the April 19 weekly edition of the WUA official publication. In his Introduction Militonyan writes: “I was very touched by the story of Zaven’s forefather’s house, that it inspired me to

write this poetic version. I have changed some names. The story is rewritten through my eyes. My ancestors also have left their home in the Taron Valley. This is everyone’s story.” (This article can be found at: <http://www.grakanter.am/archives/12406>).

Khanjian’s books were presented at the



Zaven Khanjian’s membership card to the Writers’ Union

AMAA Center in Yerevan on June 12 under the auspices of the Writer’s Union of Armenia, Khachatur Abovyan “Diaspora” Scientific-Educational Center of Armenian State Pedagogical University and the AMAA.



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COMMUNITY NEWS

Honoring a Storied Past, Forging a Strong Future

BURBANK, Calif. — The camaraderie between the Armenians and Japanese that dates back centuries and has withstood respective injustices was highlighted during the momentous event, “Legacy of Diana Apcar, A Great Humanitarian and the Mother of the Armenian Nation,” on Tuesday, September 17, 2019 at the Western Diocese, in an evening dedicated to the Armenian-Japanese friendship in the presence of elected officials on a local, county and state level. The standing-room-only audience was inspired by the cultural fusion and historic ties during a presentation sponsored by the Western Diocese of the Armenian Church and the Consulate General of Japan in Los Angeles, supported by the Little Tokyo Service Center, the Japanese American National Museum, and the Japanese American Cultural and Community Center.

In his remarks, Archbishop Hovnan Derderian, Primate of the Western Diocese of the Armenian Church of North America, reflected on Apcar’s symbolic life and her humanitarian aid during a perilous chapter in Armenian history as she provided emotional care and financial assistance for Armenian Genocide survivors who found refuge in Japan.

“She touched the hearts of many Armenians, especially the orphans, by facilitating their relocation in Japan,” said Archbishop Derderian, acknowledging the “immense assistance and help” graced upon her by the Japanese.

Derderian referred to the evening as a “milestone in the life of the Western Diocese” that will further develop the friendship of the Armenian and Japanese people, while commenting on the “foresight of Apcar who played a powerful role in finding haven for orphans who fled the Armenian Genocide.”

“We extend our gratitude to the Consul General of Japan because you have immense respect for a nation that refuses to die,” said Archbishop Derderian. “We will forever be grateful to you for recognizing the Armenian Genocide and every step we take reflects the pain of our people, while maintaining our strong



Ambassador Nina Hachigian, Deputy Mayor of International Affairs in Los Angeles

commitment to be peace-loving and justice-promoting advocates.”

Akira Muto, Consul General of Japan in Los Angeles, reflected on the “significant friendship” between the Armenian and Japanese communities that continued on well after the Armenian Genocide. During the incarceration of Japanese-Americans during World War II, Armenian-

American farmers in Fresno aided Japanese families and protected their properties. This special friendship continues into the 21st century as humanitarian Dr. Akira Ishiyama, through the



Special presentation of the *khatchkar*

Armenian International Medical Fund, has provided over 120 children and young adults with cochlear implant surgeries in Armenia as part of his mission work since 2004.

Representing the Japanese American Cultural Community Center, Daren Mooko, interim president and CEO, stated that Apcar is seen as a “heroic figure who took decisive action as a means of survival.”

“As Japanese Americans we are drawn to and respect Diana Apcar’s legacy because through our own collective history we have a shared spirit of struggle and resistance to injustice that runs deep,” said Mooko. “Apcar serves as a guiding light for our work today.”

The event’s main presentation, by Dr. Meline Mesropyan, shed more light on Apcar’s life, legacy and humanitarian work in Japan, where she spent almost 50 years of her life dedicating herself to relief initiatives.

Born in 1859 in Rangoon, Burma, she moved to Calcutta a year later and married Apcar Michael Apcar. Together they moved to Japan in 1891 as her husband founded businesses in the cities of Yokohama, Kobe and Nagoya. Following his untimely death, she took care of their 3 children and the family business all by herself, while still finding the time to publish books and articles. A turning point in history, the Adana massacres of 1909, radically changed her writing style, according to Mesropyan, a graduate of Tohoku University in Japan.

Soon Apcar dedicated her efforts to aiding the Armenians in Turkey and made it a mission to publish her writing for the Armenian cause and send the critical information in circulars to different organizations around the world.

“Between 1915 and the late 1920s, about 1,500 Armenian refugees managed to reach Japan where they found Ms. Apcar’s enormous support,” said Mesropyan, who spent the last six

years as a Master’s and Ph.D. student researching the life and work of Diana Apcar. “Diana took them under her wing and through her crucial assistance they were able to go on to the U.S.

scope of her work until I began my research into the documentary,” said Malayan. “The film tries to invade pivotal moments in Diana’s life, her awakening to the Armenian cause, her spiritual vision, activism and her endless humanitarian work.”

A special presentation of the Armenian cross-stone *khatchkar* was unveiled by Derderian as a token of gratitude to the Japanese for honoring such a distinguished figure in Armenian history and to celebrate the friendship of the Armenian and Japanese communities.

Musical performances were provided by Heavenly Chants, a harp and flute duo of Salpy and Sossy Kerkonian, and the Japanese Festival Sounds. A question and answer session with Dr. Mesropyan and Malayan followed and a reception concluded the evening.

“As an Armenian-America fan of Japan, and also a diplomat, this was a very special evening for me,” reflected Hachigian, Deputy Mayor of International Affairs in Los Angeles. “I imagine that the pioneer Diana Apcar would have felt right at home amidst the Taiko drumming and the Armenian musical duet, the sushi and the mezza, the Japanese Senator and the local Armenian community.”

In a post-event interview, Judge Adrienne Krikorian, Chairman of the Western Diocese Diocesan Council, noted that the event was “particularly meaningful” and that Apcar “is and should be a role model for Armenian women in the Diaspora and Armenia.”

“She was a woman whose strength and determination deserves wider recognition throughout the Diaspora,” said Krikorian. “I am so proud that the Western Diocese and our Primate have the vision to embrace our sister communities, particularly where we share such a valuable legacy.”

Master of Ceremonies Edvin Minassian, Esq., elaborated on the historic links in crucial times between the Armenian and Japanese that will continue to flourish.

“My expectations of an affirmation of genuine bonds between the Armenians and Japanese were surpassed in the warm atmosphere as two ancient cultures exchanged their stories,” said Minassian. “Our cultural and national ties have been forged under dire circumstances but were furthered cemented by those who participated in a memorable, jovial and unprecedented event at the Diocese, under the leadership of Archbishop Derderian and Consul General of Japan Muto.”

-Taleen Babayan

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OS ANGELES — On September 22, the Armenian Democratic Liberal (ADL) Western District Committee members met with Prime Minister Nicole Pashinyan (Center) in Los Angeles and discussed about national and Diaspora issues.

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COMMUNITY NEWS



Liana Seraderian, second from left, with friends and siblings

Warming Hearts with a Tall, Cool Glass of Lemonade

BELMONT, Mass. — In early June, Liana Seraderian, 9, a third grader at St. Stephen's Armenian Elementary School in Watertown, had the idea to set up a lemonade stand over the summer and raise funds to help children with cancer. Her summer was very busy between traveling and summer camps.

Still, she didn't forget about her plan. She kept asking her mom every day until she finally found the perfect day to do it, right before school was about to start.

Seraderian invited a few of her friends and with the help of her two sisters, Sareen and Tsolaire, on August 30, set up the lemonade stand in Belmont Center, near her dad's dental clinic. It was a hot, sunny day and the lemonade was cold and delicious, made out of freshly squeezed lemons. A lot of people stopped by, some were even donating without getting any lemonade. Within one hour she raised \$1,000.

She was so happy and proud and she has decided to make this a yearly event.

The money raised is being donated to City of Smile Charitable Foundation and St. Jude Children's Research Hospital.

AMAA's 100th Annual Meeting Banquet To Be Celebrated in Boston

AMAA, from page 6

Following his childhood in Kessab, the future cleric who has devotedly served the church for 60 years, studied and graduated from the American University of Beirut, and the Near East School of Theology, he earned two master's degrees and a doctorate in theology. He is the author of 42 books.

He regards the greatest rewards of his life's work, "reaching out in the name of Christ, helping, and serving the Armenian people."

Just as Tootikian is one of the long-time leaders of the AMAA and the AEUNA, Rev. Jeremy Tovmassian, pastor of the Armenian Evangelical Church in Chicago, represents the young generation of new leaders.

Born in Boston, he studied administration and business at California State University. Originally he had hoped to be a lawyer, then became disenchanted with the business world, and finally decided that he "wanted his life to be devoted to doing justice, as his Pastor father, grandfather and great grandfather had done in

Boston, Detroit and California churches.

He is also the moderator of the Armenian Evangelical Union of North America. "Historically the AEUNA has nurtured and supported the AMAA, developing pastors and local churches to execute their mission," he relayed.

The AMAA and the AEUNA collaborate with each other, he revealed, adding that the AEUNA comprises a network of Armenian Protestant churches a few of which were created before the Genocide. "It is a symbiotic relationship which makes sure that pastors are capable of caring for their congregations wisely."

As an American-born Armenian, who is fluent in the Armenian language, Tovmassian digressed for a moment to share the news that his two-year old daughter speaks enough Armenian "to be dangerous."

Emphasizing the significance of the October 19 Banquet in Boston, he stated that "it's an honor and joy to celebrate the relationship that the AEUNA and the AMAA have, which has, and continues to change the lives of people all over the world."

This 3D-Printed Robot Assembles Itself and Then Rolls Away

By Amina Khan

BOSTON (*Los Angeles Times*) — It's the ultimate DIY robot, a machine that assembles itself out of a single sheet and then rolls away — all without need for an onboard motor or even wheels.

The so-called rollbot, described this week in the journal *Science Robotics*, demonstrates the power of origami-inspired automata. One day, these robots could serve as environmental sensors, interplanetary explorers or as medical devices in the body.

As robots have become increasingly ubiquitous, scientists and engineers have been developing ways to make them softer — allowing them to interface with squishy humans without hurting them, or to react to unpredictable environments without breaking. But strength and durability have traditionally come from metal limbs and mechanical gears, and it's hard to get the same performance with squishy parts.

Soft and functional robots certainly exist, but many of them come with a few drawbacks. For one thing, they usually have to carry their power source, which means having more hard parts on board.



Arda Kotikian

"You'll see highly functional soft robots that for example can crawl, can jump, but normally they're not fully soft," said study co-leader Arda Kotikian, a materials science graduate student at Harvard University. "And if they are, they're usually tethered to their power source. You can think of this tether essentially like a leash — so you need your very bulky power supply to be following your robot at all times."

Origami robots have provided a potential solution to these problems. Inspired by the Japanese art of paper-folding, scientists have begun to carefully print, cut and fold sheets of material that can exhibit remarkable qualities or even perform small tasks.

Although they're not exactly squishy, these origami bots also count as soft robots because they are flexible, yet they remain strong thanks to the flat, rigid planes between each fold.

"We kind of get the best of both worlds, in that sense," Kotikian said.

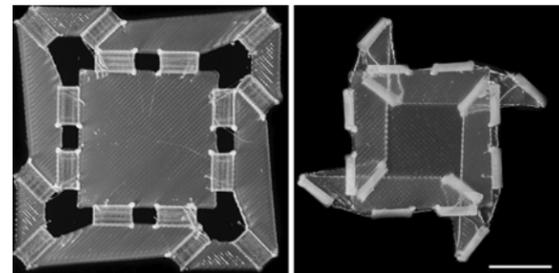
To make a robot that could change shape and move without needing to be tied to a power source, the scientists 3D-printed sheets made of several different materials.

The flat, unbending parts were made of a pas-

sive polymer while the folds, or hinges, were made with liquid crystal elastomer, which can dramatically expand and contract when exposed to the right temperature. The thicker they made these elastomer-filled folds, the more torque the hinges produced.

The researchers used two different elastomers, each of which reacted at different temperatures, so that they could control the sequence in which the origami bots folded and unfolded.

They created several moving shapes, includ-



The device can fold into a shape when placed on a heated surface. (Image Credit: Kotikian et al.)

ing a twisty square and a triangulated polyhedron. But their coup de grace was the rollbot.

When placed on a plate heated to about 200 degrees Celsius, the flat sheet measuring about 4 by 8 centimeters would curl itself into a pentagon, pop out its flaps and slowly roll across the platform — no battery pack required.

The invention was made possible by the shrinking divide between material and machine, said Caltech mechanical engineer Chiara Daraio, a co-senior author of the study.

Traditionally, engineers build a device out of a set of materials and then program it. Here, she said, the materials themselves are programmed — by modifying them, combining them into novel composites and arranging them in complex patterns and shapes.

"The project really started as [a way to] challenge the fundamental limit of materials," Daraio said.

The rollbot won't be winning at wind sprints anytime soon. But Kotikian said they may be able to speed up the robot's motions if they can make its hinges heat up and cool down faster.

Such a device could be designed to respond to a variety of different stimuli — not just temperature but light, electricity, humidity or even differences in acidity, for example.

These robots could serve as environmental sensors or even, if miniaturized, be used in the body to perform such tasks as monitoring and maintaining a healthy gut, Daraio said. They might also be deployed as exploratory robots, Kotikian added.

Tim White, a materials scientist at the University of Colorado at Boulder who was not involved in the work, praised rollbot and its siblings. In the future, he said, such robots could become capable of adapting their responses to changing environmental conditions.

"The next step in robotics is embedding autonomy," White said.

Armenian Caucus Letter Raises Concerns About Lack of Parity In US Military Assistance to Azerbaijan, Armenia

PARITY, from page 1

and urged the Departments of State and Defense to "fully uphold the intent of US law" and to "ensure any aid provided under a waiver of the law is met with parity in assistance for the Republic of Armenia."

Their letter comes after Assembly members and activists met with Members of Congress in the House and Senate and raised concerns about this troubling development, as well as reiterated the importance of US-Armenia relations and US assistance to help further advance Armenia's democratic and economic reforms.

"The Armenian Assembly of America is deeply troubled by the increasing imbalance of US military assistance between Armenia and Azerbaijan, and notes that consistent with US policy, parity with respect to such assistance must be maintained in the interest of peace and stability in the region," stated Assembly Executive Director Bryan Ardouny.

Regarding assistance to Armenia, Senate Appropriations State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs Subcommittee (SFOPS) Chairman Lindsey Graham (R-SC) and Committee Member Chris Van Hollen (D-MD) included an amendment in the Fiscal Year (FY) 2020 SFOPS Manager's Package to provide additional funds for assistance to Armenia to further democratic reforms and economic development. This amendment will increase the funds already recommended to Armenia — \$17.633 million through the Assistance to Europe Eurasia and Central Asia (AEECA) account.

The Senate report also reiterated support for a peaceful resolution of the Nagorno Karabakh conflict as well as humanitarian aid for Artsakh. Specifically, "the Committee...endorses the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe Minsk Process. The Secretary of State and USAID Administrator shall consult with the Committee on programs that can further

create conditions for resolution of the conflict and help address the humanitarian needs for all victims of the conflict." In addition, the report recommended \$1.5 million for International Narcotics Controls and Law Enforcement.

The Senate measure follows action in the House of Representatives wherein Speier's amendment to provide an additional \$40 million for democracy-building assistance to Armenia passed overwhelmingly. As part of the Armenian Assembly's National Advocacy Conference and Gala honoring Congresswoman Speier, Armenian American leaders and activists from throughout the United States met with Senate offices and emphasized the importance of US assistance to Armenia to help foster democracy and strengthen the rule of law.

"The Armenian Assembly welcomes the Graham/Van Hollen amendment in support of Armenia's democracy and economy," stated Assembly Congressional Relations Director

Mariam Khaloyan. "I would like to thank the activists who traveled to Washington, D.C. last week to join us on Capitol Hill in meetings with Senate and House offices where we discussed the importance of U.S-Armenia relations in alignment with America's national interests, and the need for additional funding to support Armenia's reforms," Khaloyan added.

The Senate FY20 SFOPS Appropriations Bill also restates the traditional exceptions to Section 907 of the Freedom Support Act, as well as maintains parity between Armenia and Azerbaijan with respect to funding for International Military Education and Training and for Foreign Military Financing (\$600,000 and \$1 million respectively to each country). Section 907 of the Freedom Support Act makes it clear that any military assistance cannot "be used for offensive purposes against Armenia" or "undermine...ongoing efforts to negotiate a peaceful settlement" to the Nagorno Karabakh conflict.



COMMUNITY NEWS

Bill Seeks to Mandate Teaching About Genocide, Holocaust In Mass. Schools

EDUCATION, from page 1

said, "All bills are drafted and written and submitted in January. A bill like this has been submitted for eight to ten years. Usually it does not go far, but the ADL took the lead, got the JCRC involved and then they approached the ANC and the Armenian Assembly [of America]." He added, "The ANC said it was a great idea and they started working together" with the Assembly on it.

Later, he said, other organizations came on board, including Facing History and Ourselves, Armenian Genocide Education Committee of Merrimack Valley and the Genocide Education Project.

The bill has 94 co-sponsors from both sides of the aisle.

There will be a public hearing on Monday, October 7 at 11 a.m. at Hearing Room A-1 at the State House. Three panels composed of educators and activists will testify that day.

Robert Trestan, the executive director of the ADL's Boston office, said in an interview on Monday, September 30, he hoped that the Education Committee, after the public hearing, would report favorably on the bill, helping it clear the House.

"We have a couple of steps to jump through," Trestan noted, adding that "this is the most amount of support" the bill has received compared to previous attempts.

"At a time when many, many groups are being targeted, it is critically important for students to learn about past genocides and the impact they have."

"Fewer and fewer people can speak about the need to learn about the impact of hatred," he added.

"We are hoping the legislature will recognize the importance of teaching students about genocide," Trestan said.

Background

High school and middle school students in the state are solely required to learn about US history; other chapters of history are not required to be taught.

Currently, the state of Massachusetts has a law that was passed and signed into law in 1998 by then Gov. Paul Cellucci, which places advisory recommendations on teaching the Armenian, Jewish and Irish mass deaths.

Under this law, "An Act Relative to the Instruction of the Great Hunger Period in Ireland, the Armenian Genocide and the Holocaust," House Bill 3629, the state advised the use of specific websites to teach the material, especially in light of the online proliferation of anti-Semitic and anti-Armenian websites, both of which have the perverse dual purposes of denying the Holocaust/Genocide and also suggesting that the victims deserved it.

The ban on suspect denialist websites was taken up by Turkish Genocide deniers who cloaked their intent under the guide of defending the First Amendment. In the case, known as *Griswold v. Driscoll*, First Amendment lawyer Harvey Silverglate, backed by the Assembly of Turkish American Associations (ATAA), battled the Massachusetts Board of Education over whether the removal of "contra genocide" materials from a curriculum guide amounted to a violation of free speech.

The case was initially dismissed in June 2009, three years after a judge first heard the motion. A three-judge panel upheld the motion in August 2011. The case went as far as the US Supreme Court in 2011, but the court refused to hear it.

In the opinion that upheld the dismissal, former Supreme Court Justice David Souter, noted Silverglate's contention that the guide amounted to a "virtual school library" and that it was an element of the overall curriculum had differing ramifications for his argument, since the latter is allowed to be controlled by politics.

"The revisions to the Guide after its submission to legislative officials, even if made in response to political pressure, did not implicate the First Amendment," Souter wrote.

"After it got passed, it was up to the State Department of Education to put together the framework," Kaligian explained. "They talked to the groups that were involved."

Therefore, now, he said, only a framework exists. "Now we have states turning to mandates 12 states have mandated it," he said, and are working toward education on the Holocaust and genocides, including the Armenian case.

Anthony Barsamian, the co-chair of the board of the Armenian Assembly of America, also



Robert Trestan of the ADL

expressed his pleasure with the bill. "We are 100 percent behind it. It is important that Massachusetts teaches genocide in its entirety and it should be a part of the curriculum along with the Holocaust" and so many other genocides.

"We have been talking to the parties that are sponsoring the bill. It is a part of our history and the fabric of what Massachusetts has done. Massachusetts has always been at the forefront of human rights and it is wonderful to see the coalition partners working together to mandate genocide education," Barsamian concluded.

The Anne Frank Center for Mutual Respect in

New York is a vital organization in this cause, Kaligian noted.

Kaligian added that the Armenians have warned many of their partners in the current proposed bill that the Turkish lobby would try to divide and conquer the coalition, in order to get the Armenian Genocide dismissed again. He said they have warned their colleagues that the lobbyists would approach them and offer their support for the bill as long as the Armenian section is taken out.

The Armenians' partners, Kaligian noted, have shown tremendous resolve and not budged.

The proliferation of online and real-life hate crimes and hate speech is bringing more urgency to the bill, Kaligian said. "In recent years there has been an uptick in anti-immigrant, racially motivated and anti-Semitic actions. There is a major increase in mass shootings and anti-immigrant crimes," he said, "From the run-of-the mill yelling to mass shootings, it is a huge concern that this is how human rights violations and acts of genocide start."

"It starts with dehumanization, other-ization. That's why genocide education is so important," he added. "This is how it starts and only by educating states and making them understand" can hate crimes and genocides be prevented.

The emphasis on the importance of learning from history was stressed by all those interviewed. Roxanne Makasdjian, the chair of the Genocide Education Project, in a statement said,

"As we see genocidal acts continuing to be perpetrated around the world today, it has sadly become all too clear that we must arm our students with the knowledge they'll need to recognize the warning signs and feel empowered to prevent genocides in the future. That empowerment can only come through an understanding of the process and stages of genocide, and the histories of numerous major instances of genocide that can communicate both the particular and universal lessons that each can impart. Including the Armenian Genocide is such an endeavor is critical, as it is considered by historians the modern-era prototype, during which new, 20th century technologies were used with horrifying efficiency to move and destroy massive numbers of people in a very short period. The fact that it inspired the invention of the word 'genocide,' Hitler's own pronouncement that the Armenian Genocide had already been forgotten, and the devastating effects of continuing genocide denial, are all important lessons above and beyond the history itself. Today's students are tomorrow's voters, elected officials, and global citizens."

Other members of the committee including Tsoleen Sarian and Tsoleer Avedissian of the ANC of Eastern Massachusetts and Seda Aghamianz of the Genocide Education Project.

The hearing on October 7 is open to the public and committee members urge supporters to attend it on Monday.



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COMMUNITY NEWS

Washington Community Commemorates Independence of the Republic of Armenia

WASHINGTON – The Knights and Daughters of Vartan Washington, DC Chapters invited Ambassador of the Republic of Armenia to the United States of America Varuzhan Nersesyan to be the main speaker during the Celebration of the 28th Anniversary of the Independence of the Republic of Armenia, on September 10, before his departure to Los Angeles to welcome Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan to the US.

Present were Representative of the Republic of Artsakh in US Robert Avedissian, Archbishop Vicken Aykazian, staff members of the Armenian Embassy, representatives of community organizations.

The event took place at the hall of St. Mary Armenian Apostolic church here. Master of ceremonies was Daughters of Vartan Matron Malvina Brown, who introduced the ambassador. Nersesyan started his diplomatic career at the age of 24 and has had many high-level posts including assistant to the prime minister; assistant to the president; deputy chief of mission at the Embassy of the Republic of Armenia in the US; the head of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) Division, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the



Archbishop Vicken Aykazian



Ambassador Varuzhan Nersesyan addresses the audience



Ambassador Varuzhan Nersesyan and Narine Malkhasyan Nersesyan

Republic of Armenia, among other diplomatic assignments. Nersesyan received the Mkhitar Gosh Medal by a Decree of the President of the Republic of Armenia.

Nersesyan touched upon the achievements gained during the years of Independence 28 years ago, the victory in the Artsakh liberation war as well as the Diaspora's role in developing and strengthening of Armenia. In this context he stressed the importance of Pan-Armenianism. Speaking about the Armenian non-violent and democratic revolution of 2018, and the achievements gained since the Revolution, he highlighted the vision on the development of Armenia till 2050

through the difficulties of closed borders. During question-and-answer period, he touched upon the importance of the help of the Armenian Diaspora during the last 100 years for the revitalization of Armenia.

Kevork Marashlian, commander of Knights of Vartan, expressed his gratitude to the ambassador for accepting the invitation and delivering the speech, and wished him luck.



Kevork Marashlian

Ecumenical Director and Diocesan Legate of the Armenian Church of America Archbishop Vicken Aykazian made the closing remarks and mentioned that 28 years ago when the Independence was announced, he was in Athens, Greece, and upon receiving the news went to the central palace entrance where all the flags of the independent countries fly, sat and watched for hours the Armenian Flag. He then complimented the staff of the Armenian Embassy, who were all were present, for their difficult work and being young diplomats.

The event concluded with his blessings.



Matron Malvina Brown and the audience

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Bernie Sanders Honored to Work with Armenian Community on Genocide Affirmation Legislation

WASHINGTON – US Sen. Bernie Sanders (I-VT) praised the Armenian Assembly of America's 2019 National Advocacy Conference and Gala, and stated he is honored to work with the Armenian community on legislation affirming the Armenian Genocide.

"I am proud to celebrate with the Armenian Assembly of America on another successful National Advocacy Conference and Lobby Day on the Hill. I honor your steadfast commitment to bring about the recognition of the Armenian Genocide, raise awareness of issues impacting the Armenian people both here and abroad, and celebrate the Armenian people throughout the world for their incredible contributions in business, politics, advocacy and popular culture," Senator Sanders told the Armenian Assembly.

"It has been my honor to work with Armenian community in co-sponsoring Senate Resolution S Res 150, a resolution to commemorate the Armenian Genocide through official recognition and remembrance. This resolution is a result of years of hard work by members of the Armenian Assembly," he said.

"After the murder of over two million Armenian children, women and men, and the forced removal of two million Armenians from their homes, many Armenians came to this Country. You built communities and lives that

honored the Armenian culture. You became leaders in your communities. As a diaspora you refused to be silent about the genocide that forced you from your homeland. You were steadfast in your commitment and determina-



Sen. Bernie Sanders

tion to gain recognition of the horrors of your ancestors, your parents, grandparents, and extended families experienced as a genocide," Senator Sanders continued.

"I thank you for your remarkable and successful efforts and reaffirm my commitment to you to join in recognizing the Armenian Genocide and supporting a strong relationship between the United States and Armenia."

The letter is available at bit.ly/berniesanders2019

Arts & Living

‘Charles’:

A Bio-Musical on Life and Art of Aznavour

HOLLYWOOD – A bio-musical on the life and music of legendary singer Charles Aznavour will debut at the Hotel Café Saturday, October 12, at 7 p.m. The production, written by Taleen Babayan, digs deep into primary sources, including Aznavour’s two out-of-print autobiographies, while incorporating 15 of his cherished songs.

Tracing key points in the musician’s life, “Charles” charts the personal and professional struggles the singer faced on his climb to becoming an iconic award-winning entertainer throughout the course of his eight-decade career in his beloved France and across the globe. From his humble beginnings, to his perseverance as a working musician in Occupied France during World War II, to overcoming crippling criticism, to his creative spark with Edith Piaf, the 90-minute show serves as an homage to his legacy as an integral member of France’s Golden Age of Music, while capturing the charismatic and shining spirit he embodied as a singer, lyricist, actor, diplomat and humanitarian.

Produced by Boundaryless Productions under the direction of Taleen Babayan and musical supervision of Harout Soghomonian, “Charles” features Maurice Soudjian and Bernard C. Bayer, who both portray Charles Aznavour, alongside Mariette Soudjian, who makes a guest appearance as Edith Piaf.

“Aznavour not only achieved success in his own right, but he surpassed musical genres while never forgetting his roots, thus leaving a lasting imprint on the world music scene,” said Babayan. “Despite his passing, he is still very much revered and his lifelong artistic quest marks every touchpoint that wholly fulfills a stage story.”

The Hotel Café is located at 1623 N Cahuenga Blvd, Hollywood. For tickets email showticketbp@gmail.com.

Armenian Little Singers Celebrate Komitas and Independence

By Muriel Mirak-Weissbach

Special to the Mirror-Spectator

BERLIN – Ambassador Ashot Smbatyan was on the mark when he said of the Little Singers of Armenia, “These children are the cultural ambassadors of Armenia who have their special role in our rich cultural heritage.” The Armenian ambassador to Germany made his remarks in Berlin on the occasion of the national holiday on September 25. To celebrate, the embassy invited the world-renowned children’s choir under the direction of Tigran Hekekyan to give a concert in the Berlin Concert House, followed by a reception.

The festive event celebrated the 28th anniversary of Armenia’s independence. Smbatyan said that the choir represents a new generation, born during these years of independence, and who guarantee a bright future for the country. Michael Roth, Minister of State at the German Federal Foreign Office, delivered a speech highlighting the role of culture in German-Armenian relations.

For the Little Singers of Armenia, this special concert was part of a broader tour dedicated to the 150th anniversary of Komitas. They had performed in Lithuania, at the 700-year-old castle on Trakai island, at the Church of St. Francis in Kaunas and in the Culture House in Vilnius. Following their Berlin concert, they appeared at the famous Gewandhaus concert hall in Leipzig and then in Halle.

A complete report will appear in next week’s *Armenian Mirror-Spectator*.



The melonpan

The Armenian Who Invented the Japanese Sweet Bun

TOKYO – Wheat bread was introduced for the first time to the rice-eating Japanese people in the 16th century by Portuguese missionaries. Because of Japan’s complete isolation from the world, the wheat culture remained unknown until the middle of the 19th century. Over the next century, the Japanese began to open up to the world and try different cultures, including food culture.

By Artsvi Bakhchinyan

Special to the Mirror-Spectator

After World War I, one of Japan’s most influential and wealthy people, Okura Kihachiro, who was a representative of Okura guni major financial institution and founder of the Tokyo University of Economics, came to Harbin, China, specifically to seek out a skilled baker from Russia whose fame had reached Japan. Kihachiro asked him to move to Japan on favorable terms, and the baker agreed. When in Japan, he was able to create the sweet bun melonpan that is widespread in Japan today...

The baker’s name was Hovhannes (Ivan) Ghevenian Sagoyan. Little is known about him. Born in 1888 in Karin (Erzurum), he probably moved to Moscow at an early age, where he became the personal baker of the Romanov house. The Russian royal family loved the assortment of breads Sagoyan made, which he based on French and Viennese baked goods. After the revolution of 1917 Sagoyan escaped to China and settled in Harbin and became the baker of the New Harbin Hotel.

Accepting the invitation to work in Japan, Sagoyan settled in Tokyo’s Meguro suburb, worked at the Imperial Hotel in Tokyo, and opened a bakery named Monsieur Ivan. In Japan, Sagoyan made a new sweet bun with



Hovhannes (Ivan) Ghevenian Sagoyan

the shape of cantaloupe melon, combining two types of dough and called it melonpan (melon bread in French) or sunrise-pan (sunrise bread). It was immediately adopted by Japanese, and still remains widely popular and soon became a national brand. Melonpan is also widespread in Taiwan, China and Latin America. It is made from plain sweet dough with yeast covered with a thin layer of dough with butter and egg. Melonpan usually does not taste like melon, but recently some producers have added melon to the bun. There are varieties of these bakery products: with creams, chocolate, caramel, maple syrup, whipped cream...

It is also important that Hovhannes Sagoyan trained several generations of Japanese bakers, with his most famous student being Fukuda Motoyoshi, the creator of the so-called Japanese hotel or milk bread.

Sagoyan married Tsuruko (Tsuru) Sagoyan (1888-1962), neé Miakozawa, and had three daughters. They did not have Japanese citizenship, as according to Japanese law, children born to Japanese and foreigners could not be Japanese citizens. Sagoyan’s daughters, though almost with no knowledge of Armenian, considered themselves Armenian and attended the main cathedral of the Japanese Orthodox Church - Holy Resurrection Cathedral in Chiyoda, Tokyo.

Archbishop Ruben Manasyan of Echmiadzin, who visited Japan in 1925, wrote the following in his report to Catholicos of All Armenians Gevorg V (the letter is kept in the National Archives of Armenia): “In Tokyo, Hovhannes Ghevenian from Erzurum, who has lived in Japan for many years, had a Japanese wife and three daughters who had not yet been baptized. The wife, Tsuruko Miakozawa and

see BUNS, page 13

Dr. Hayk Demoyan To Present Book on Armenian Churches, Monasteries

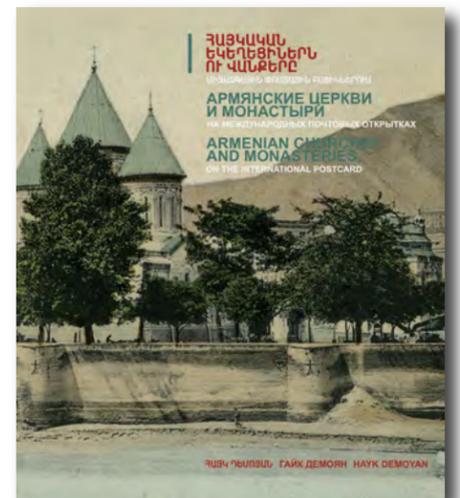
WATERTOWN – Dr. Hayk Demoyan will present his newly released book, *Armenian Churches and Monasteries in International Postcards*, at the Tarvezian Hall of St. James Armenian Church on Sunday, November 3, starting 12:15 p.m. (immediately after Church).

The book is a showcase of the unique collection of late 19th-early 20th century antique postcards depicting rare photos and pictorials of the Armenian churches and monasteries. This illustrated volume contains unknown visual documents on the Armenian architectural heritage spread throughout Armenia, Caucasus, Russia, Europe, Asia and America. Unfortunately, many of these churches and monasteries did not survive and were demolished. Many foreign travelers and photographers were admired with the uniqueness of the Armenian architectural style and identity. The epoch of engravings and gravures replaced with photos and photo-postcards. The latter became a tool



Dr. Hayk Demoyan

not only for communication but also spreading visual information about the country and important sights and ethnographic types of the country of destination. The pictures of many of them survived only on photo-postcards. The book has more than 300 illustrations. Presentation will be accompanied with power point presentation.



Cover of the Book

Christianity’s roots extend after the Holy Lands deep into the land of Armenia, and it defined the events of Armenian life and history for many centuries. The churches and monasteries memorialized the Armenian life and spirit. This stunning, opulently illustrated book presents more than 300 most significant illustrations which capture the majesty of Armenian Church and monasteries while the text offers a vivid account of the traditions and history associated with them.

Demoyan, is an academic scholar and author of dozens of books and publications on Armenian culture and history. One of his recent publications is the 600-page book titled, *Armenian Legacy in America, A 400 Year Heritage*. Both books will be available for sale after the presentation.

Demoyan was the former director of the Armenian Genocide Institute Museum in Yerevan where he served for more than a decade. Currently he is the Director of the Armenian Programs at the Aurora Humanitarian Institute in Yerevan, Armenia.

All are welcome to attend the special fellowship hour after the presentation of Demoyan’s newly published book,



ARTS & LIVING

The Armenian Who Invented the Japanese Sweet Bun

BUNS, from page 12
daughters – Kimiko, Eugenia and Lily – were baptized by my hand, accepting Armenian Apostolicity, and Hovhannes Ghevenian and Tsuruko Miakozawa were married according to the Armenian Church ritual.” In other sources the names Jane (Jenny) and Anna are also mentioned for Ghevenian’s daughters: we are not sure whether they are the names of other daughters or are the second names of aforementioned people.

receive American education.” However, Ghevenian’s wish did not come true.

One of Sagoyan’s daughters, Lily, looked Armenian. Prior to 1941 she was a correspondent for the *Hairenik* weekly English newspaper of Boston. In 1943-1945 she worked as a typist at Radio Tokyo. At times, she conducted the English-language propagandist program “Zero Hour,” which was circulated to anti-Nazi factions in the Pacific. Thus, Lily became a member of Tokyo Rose – this name was given

buried in the Yokohama Foreigners’ Cemetery. His daughters wrote the father’s name on his tombstone in English.

Famous Armenian opera singer Gohar Gasparyan testified that after her trip to Japan in 1957 she received a letter from a Japanese girl she met in the city of Matsuyama, which was signed as Sakanyan in Armenian letters (“What a mystery it was, I cannot understand,” the singer said). Of course, this Sakanyan is one of the daughters of the Sagoyan family, which shows their father has taught them at least to write their family name in Armenian...

Today, the Japanese remember with gratitude the Armenian baker who created a treat beloved in the country; his name is remembered in various articles and in popular literature (for example, Ida Yukiko’s *The Origin of Frequently Used Things, We Begin to Know the World*, volume first, “Bread,” 2000, pages 20-21. This information is provided me by Tokyo-based Melania Baghdasaryan-Nakajima). Hovhannes Sagoyan Ghevenian’s Monsieur Ivan bakery operates to till now. There, master classes are organized for bakers, faithfully maintaining the bakery traditions and the technology of the Armenian baker...



The Monsieur Ivan bakery

The Sagoyans were referring to a letter sent by a Boston-based Armenian (with signature H. Kh.) to the *Hairenik* (Homeland) Armenian newspaper in 1932. “In Tokyo (Japan) I have a friend who is married to a Japanese girl, they have three daughters, one is 12, the other is 15 and the third is 18. My friend expresses a desire to come to America permanently or temporarily to create opportunities for her daughters to

by Allied troops in the South Pacific during World War II to all female English-speaking radio broadcasters of Japanese propaganda. By the way, Lily Ghevenian was interrogated as a witness during the famous trial of American-Japanese radio host Iva Ikuko Togur d’Aquino (the latter accused of collaborating with the so-called Axis Forces in World War II).

Ivan Sagoyan died in 1952 in Tokyo. He is

Armenian-American Film ‘10e’ Gets Theatrical Release in Select Cities

LOS ANGELES – Popular Armenian-American playwright, director and award-winning screenwriter, Vahik Pirhamzei, brings his latest comedy to the big screen in select cities September 27. “10e,” a coming-of-age comedy that captures the generation gap between a single father and his 17-year-old daughter will follow in the footsteps of Pirhamzei’s groundbreaking 2012 film, “My Uncle Rafael,” which opened to record-breaking box office in Los Angeles. in8 Releasing will distribute “10e” theatrically.

The film stars Pirhamzei, Poema Oleas Mekhitarian, Karina Piliguian, Angelo Diona, Peter Nishan, Anna Chart, Tanya Avakian with Mariam Meliksetyan and Anahid Avanesian

After “My Uncle Rafael” staked the claim as the first comedy with an Armenian lead character to be released domestically, Pirhamzei is making history again with “10e” as the first teenage coming of age movie with Armenian-American lead characters.

“Knowing the younger generation of kids who grow up in homes with immigrant parents will finally see themselves represented in a commercial film in leading roles is rewarding for me,” states Pirhamzei. “It just happens to be Armenian-American teens in this film, that’s all.”

“10e” was co-written by Pirhamzei and Menua Minasian and directed by Pirhamzei, who is also known for the many characters he

portrays on stage and in films. He previously produced and starred in the comedy “My Uncle Rafael,” and directed and starred in “3 Weeks in Yerevan” and thriller “Guardian Angel,” starring Bokeem Woodbine and Ray Wise.

With a platform release on September 27 starting in Pacific’s Arclight theaters, distributor in8 and production-marketing house Richmond Media Entertainment are building a targeted marketing campaign to expand the film’s reach into the mainstream domestic market. The film will open in Los Angeles on several screens and then expand from there.

“Seeing first hand the buzz ‘10e’ garnered at several screenings in Los Angeles with culturally diverse audiences, I know moviegoers will be pulled into the story and have a great ride,” says Marc Fusco, principle at in8 Releasing. “Vahik is a special storyteller and we’re always excited to share his films with the world.”

Richmond Media is a Los Angeles based, multifaceted entertainment company that develops, produces, and promotes films and stage plays for unique and wide audiences alike.

Coming off of an 80-city domestic release of “The Samuel Project” in April, in8 Releasing is an entertainment production and development company specializing in creating and distributing content for targeted audiences worldwide.

For more information on the film visit www.10eMovie.com

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ARTS & LIVING

Ara Güler Photography Exhibit in NY Inaugurated by President Erdogan

EXHIBIT, from page 1

2017 to 2019, then spoke. He called Güler very much a man of the people, a world traveler, who patiently could photograph both peasants and heads of states. He would go to great lengths to approach his subjects but would not cross certain lines. For example, after long efforts, he succeeded in obtaining access to Charlie Chaplin, but after seeing the latter's sad state in old age, he declined to photograph the legendary actor.

Bailey concluded with a famous definition of photojournalism by Güler, declaring, "The person running towards the explosion is a photojournalist. The one running away is not. Ara Güler ran toward his story. By doing so, he ran into history. Such is the man, such is the artist."

Bailey also participated in a panel discussion the next day held within the scope of the exhibition, together with Christopher Mahoney, vice president of Phillips Photography, and photographer Alexey Titarenko.

President Erdogan took the podium after Bailey to praise Güler's works. He said that Güler believed in peace and brotherhood, and that it was important that this exhibition was

reaching millions of people, are one of the greatest values created by Turkey, Erdogan said that Güler's memory lives on in his photographs, some of which are of Erdogan's family.

After the end of the ribbon-cutting (see video clip on the *Mirror-Spectator* website, www.mirrorspectator.com) and the formal event, Erdogan went to look at the photos and was immediately so tightly surrounded by a huge

1950s and 1960s, including his famous series on fisherman of Kumkapı. There are many portraits of celebrities like Winston Churchill, Alfred Hitchcock, and Brigitte Bardot. There are also a few color photographs of scenes from Anatolia.

The Güler exhibition first debuted in London in April 2019 at the Saatchi Gallery, then went to the Polka Gallery in Paris in May, and the Tofukuji Temple of Kyoto, Japan, in July during

kish-officials-honor-ara-guler-while-reluctant-to-mention-his-armenian-heritage/)

Not one word was spoken about Güler's Armenian background by the speakers at the New York event. In contrast with this deliberate avoidance of Güler's ethnic background, some of Güler's most famous photos were of Armenian subjects, such as those of the aforementioned Kumkapı fishermen first published in the Istanbul Armenian newspaper *Jamanak* [Zhamanag] in the 1950s. One of these photos is reproduced in the current exhibition, as is a photograph of Armenian-American writer William Saroyan.

Güler's given name at birth in 1928 was Mıgırdıç [Mırdıç] Ara Derderyan, but his father Dacat, a pharmacist, and mother Vercin, were forced to change the family name as a result of the Surname Law of 1934. His father Dacat was born in Shabin Karahissar (Sebinkarahisar) in 1896 and came to Istanbul with his mother as a 6-year-old for school. The rest of his family, deported during the Armenian Genocide, were killed or lost.

Ara Güler avoided speaking publicly about the oppressions that Armenians living in Turkey, including his family, experienced. However, he did once tell Turkish novelist Orhan Pamuk that his father had to leave his home and hide for months in a different house, never once going outside, to avoid the discriminatory "Wealth Tax" of 1942 and possible relocation to a forced labor camp for failure to pay this tax. Güler also witnessed and photographed the pogroms of September 6-7, 1955 in

Istanbul (<https://www.nytimes.com/2018/11/01/opinion/orhan-pamuk-ara-guler-istanbul.html>).

As Turkish journalist Ozan Ceyhun wrote in *Daily Sabah*, a media sponsor of the exhibition, on September 25, "Güler obviously has a very important place in cultural diplomacy that is successfully being conducted by the country's presidency. Turkey's values are shared with the world's public opinion in this program where Turkey's foremost artists are embraced and their projects put in the spotlight. The Turkish



Cinematographer John Bailey (Aram Arkun photo)



Deputy Chairman of the Dogus Group Hüsnü Akhan (Sarkis Baharoglu photo)

crowd of officials, guests, security and journalists that it was impossible to approach him. Several Turkish television stations covered the event along with Turkish newspapers.

Among the prominent visitors from Turkey at the opening was Deputy Chairman of the Dogus Group Board of Directors Hüsnü Akhan, who for 13 years was the chief executive officer of the large Turkish conglomerate, and helped establish the Ara Güler Archive and Research Center and the Ara Güler Museum while Güler was still alive. Akhan explained why his company was involved in this work. He said: "Well, first of all, we at Dogus Group are always quite keen about saving Turkish culture and art. So, Ara Bey is one of the famous and more capable photographers of Turkey... not just Turkey. Even though he was a Turkish citizen, his art and his contributions to the art of photography are worldwide. That is why we wanted to keep his wonderful archive, and to restore it, to deliver it, transfer it to the next generations. That is our main aim as Dogus Group. Arts and culture do not see borders. It is not doing something with religion or nationality or nation. Art and culture are always universal."

The New York exhibition primarily showcased Güler's masterful and moving black-and-white photos of scenes in Turkey from the

the G20 summit, before coming to New York. Further planned sites for the exhibition include the Trastevere Museum of Rome in January 2020 and the Turkish Embassy in Mogadishu, Somalia, in May 2020.

At the event, multiple copies of an exhibition catalogue entitled simply Ara Güler, published by the Ara Güler Archives and Research Center and the Ara Güler Museum, and presented by the Presidency of the Republic of Turkey, were available.

The bilingual Turkish and English hardcover catalogue opens to a photograph of President Recep Tayyip Erdogan taken by Güler facing a letter bearing Erdogan's signature. The latter praises Güler as a photographer, and declares, "Ara Güler, with his photographs published by prominent press agencies and publications, contributed immensely to the promotion of Turkey. The late Ara Güler's albums and exhibitions, which include his photographs that constituted the headline or cover photos of many newspapers and periodicals, attracted attention in many great cities of the world."

The brochure distributed specifically for the New York exhibition contains the same letter by Erdogan.

Güler's Armenian Background

The New York exhibit, the book and brochure all provide a brief biography of Güler. His Armenian background can only be inferred indirectly from two brief allusions: his graduation from the "Getronagan Armenian high school" in Istanbul and the publication of some of his stories as a young man in Armenian newspapers. (See <https://mirrorspectator.com/2018/10/22/tur>

president's Chief Adviser Fecir Alptekin is responsible for this along with her team, and Ara Güler exhibitions are allowing many residents in various cities of the world to have a taste of this artist's works, of whom Turkey is proud of." (see <https://www.dailysabah.com/columns/ozan-ceyhun/2019/09/27/turkeys-pride-ara-guler>)

Making works of photography more accessible to the world is praiseworthy, but omitting an important dimension of the photographer while using his work out of context for political purposes is not.



A famous photo of Armenian fisherman at Kumkapı (Aram Arkun photo)



A view of the exhibit at the US Customs House (Aram Arkun photo)



ARTS & LIVING

Turkey Prepares to Flood 12,000-Year-Old City to Build Dam

ISTANBUL (*Guardian*) – After the half-hour drive from Batman in south-east Turkey, the ancient city of Hasankeyf, which sits on the banks of the Tigris River, appears as an oasis.

Hasankeyf is thought to be one of the oldest continuously inhabited settlements on Earth, dating as far back as 12,000 years and containing thousands of caves, churches and tombs.

But this jewel of human history will soon be lost; most of the settlement is about to be flooded as part of the highly controversial Ilisu dam project.

Construction work on the dam and its hydroelectric power plant started in 2006 and Hasankeyf is now just weeks away from destruction, despite a fight by residents and environmental campaigners to save it. The Turkish government has given residents until 8 October to evacuate.

An attempt to challenge the project at the European court of human rights on the grounds that it would damage the country's cultural heritage was unsuccessful.

First conceived as far back as the 1950s, the dam project has long been mired in controversy. On its completion it will be the fourth biggest dam in Turkey and is predicted to generate 4,200 gigawatts of electricity annually, but at a huge cost.

The scheme will mean the flooding of 199 settlements in the region, thousands of human-made caves and hundreds of historical and religious sites. Campaigners warn that close to 80,000 peo-



Hasankeyf, on the banks of the Tigris River

ple will be displaced.

They also warn of terrible damage to the natural environment, saying biodiversity will suffer, and that numerous vulnerable and endangered species are threatened by the construction of the dam.

Ridvan Ayhan, who was born in one of the caves in Hasankeyf, is an active member in the Initiative to Keep Hasankeyf Alive, founded in 2006 as a grassroots campaign to halt the dam project.

Walking along the mountainside facing the town, Ayhan reached a cave clearly marked with an engraved cross, indicating an ancient church.

"It's not just our story, Hasankeyf, it's also your story, because it's the human story," he said.

It is unknown what year the church dates back to. Only 10 percent of the area has been explored by archaeologists.

"We've asked for the area to be an open-air museum but the government wouldn't accept it," Ayhan said. "If you dig here you will find cultures layered on top of one another."

Under the church is a tomb where piles of human bones have surfaced. "The government doesn't even respect the dead," Ayhan said. "They are barbaric."

Hasankeyf has been part of many different cul-

tures in its long history, including ancient Mesopotamia, Byzantium, Arab empires and the Ottoman empire, but Hakan Ozoglu, a history professor at the University of Central Florida, said the settlement predates all these civilisations.

"We have references to the town in several ancient texts in different languages such as Assyrian, Armenian, Kurdish, Arabic," he said.

The professor says Hasankeyf is a laboratory that could provide many answers about the past. "Such rare physical evidence of the human past must be protected at all cost," Ozoglu said.

Only eight historical monuments – including a tower from what was said to be the oldest university in the world, half of an old Roman gate to the city and a women's hamam dating to around 1400 – have been saved from Hasankeyf. The pieces were moved 3 kilometers away and now stand on a vast plain.

"It's meaningless for us to see these historical pieces there," Ayhan said.

With the deadline handed down by the government, people from the surrounding areas have come to say farewell to the historical site, knowing it will be their last chance to see it.

Few tourists visit the area, however, due to its inaccessibility.

Ozoglu said the benefit from the dam cannot come close to that of the potential of tourism that would be better marketed if it had Unesco's name attached to it.

"I cannot see very many other places on Earth that deserve [more] to be on the list of Unesco's protected sites," Ozoglu said.

Ayhan shook his head when Unesco was mentioned – the Initiative to Keep Hasankeyf Alive had already applied unsuccessfully for the settlement to be listed.

"Unesco said the culture ministry has to apply for it," Ayhan said. "We wrote to the ministry but no answer ... It's their duty but they didn't do anything." The Turkish ministry of culture and tourism would not comment.

A spokesperson at the ministry of energy and natural resources was also contacted. "Why do you want to talk about Hasankeyf when we have so many other projects?" was their only comment.

The Turkish authorities' crackdown on protests has also hindered Hasankeyf residents' fight to stop the dam.

"If we protest, they take us to prisons," Ayhan said. "There's no democracy here. If there was democracy, maybe we could do something." He says he was arrested in 2012.

The government has built a "new Hasankeyf" for 700 households, 3km away from historical Hasankeyf, to relocate residents before 8 October. But Eyup Agalday, 27, said he and his wife were not offered their own home in the new settlement, as the government has a cutoff for those married after 2014. "I will have to live with my parents again – the whole family of 10 members will be in the one house," he said.

Agalday, like his ancestors, is a shepherd, and currently lives in one of Hasankeyf's many caves. He will not be allowed to take his animals to the new village and has started selling his goats. "I am forced to do something and be in a city where I don't want to live," he said.

Agalday said about a fifth of Hasankeyf's residents have already moved to the new settlement, with around five or six families moving each day. A green pick-up truck could be spotted from below with belongings and furniture piled high, making its way out of Hasankeyf.

Sitting under the shade of bountiful grapevines on the opposite side of the river, Hediye Tapkan, 38, said she had no idea where her family, including five young children, will go. "We like our place, we make our bread here, we have lots of grapes and figs which sometimes we sell, our lands are productive," she said.

Tapkan and her family have also not been offered a replacement home, even though they were allegedly forced to sell some of their land – at 900 Turkish lira for 1 dunum, or £125 for 1,000 sq metres – for the construction of the new village.

As the residents wait for the floodgates to open and for Hasankeyf to be slowly submerged by the rising river, they say they will continue to raise their voices and spread the message of the settlement's history, even after entry to it is banned in October.

"[If we don't,] when we die, our children will come and spit on our graves and say, why didn't you save Hasankeyf?" Ayhan said.

Recipe

Guest Recipe



by Christine Vartanian Dalian

Arousiak Avedyan's Family Yalanchi

Arousiak Avedyan says this traditional Armenian recipe for grape leaves ("yalanchi") stuffed with a tantalizing mixture of onions, rice and dill is an Avedyan family favorite. She says "delicious" is the only word to describe these tender grape leaves that can be served as a main dish or an appetizer, depending on your appetite. Arousiak Avedyan's treasured family recipe was handed down to her from her late mother-in-law, Alice Avedyan, who was originally from Istanbul.

INGREDIENTS

10 medium onions, chopped
 1/2 cup rice (short grain)
 1 bunch fresh dill, chopped
 1/4 cup pine nuts
 1/4 cup currants
 1 teaspoon each salt and pepper
 3/4 teaspoon allspice
 1/2 teaspoon cinnamon, optional
 1 to 1-1/2 cups vegetable oil (or oil of choice)
 Juice of 1/2 large lemon, to taste
 2 lb. jar grape leaves, drained and rinsed

PREPARATION

Sauté onions in one cup of oil until soft. Add more oil if necessary. Add the rice and other ingredients except the lemon juice and grape leaves, and stir a few times. Cook, covered, for 20-25 minutes on medium heat. Stir again, remove from stove, and cool completely.

If using bottled grape leaves, soak them in cool water for a few minutes, and remove stems. (Soaking bottled leaves helps to reduce some of the salt from the brine it is packed in.) To begin, lay one grape leaf on a flat work surface (a plate or dish), shiny side down. Place about two teaspoons of cooled filling at the stem-end of the leaf, depending on the size of the leaf. Spread filling about three-quarters across the width of the leaf.

Start rolling the leaf from stem end away from you, then fold each side of the leaf over the filling and continue to roll away from you. Fold firmly, but not too tightly, so the leaf won't unravel during cooking. Line the bottom of a large pot with some broken or extra grape leaves. Place wrapped leaves tightly together in the pot, and squeeze lemon juice on top. Add more lemon juice, if desired. Place a heavy plate on top of the wrapped grape leaves. Pour water over the grape leaves, but not enough to cover grape leaves.

Cover and cook for 45-50 minutes on stovetop. Check if the rice is fully cooked, and remove from stovetop. Cool completely and refrigerate overnight. Serve with fresh pita bread, olives, cucumbers, parsley, string cheese, roasted peppers, salad, and lemon wedges.

Yield: 80-90 grape leaves.

Recipe and photos contributed by Arousiak Avedyan and Robyn Kalajian at thearmeniankitchen.com.





ARTS & LIVING

CALENDAR

ARIZONA

NOVEMBER 2-3 — ARMENIAFest at St. Apkar Armenian Apostolic Church. Weekend food and cultural festival featuring traditional Armenian foods, beverages, exhibits, music and dance performances. 8849 E. Cholla St., Scottsdale.

CALIFORNIA

NOVEMBER 23 — Armenian EyeCare Project Gala. Join the Armenian EyeCare Project for its annual Gala celebrating another year of great accomplishments in Armenia. Held at the beautiful Balboa Bay Resort in Newport Beach, CA at 6:30pm. Evening begins with stunning cocktail reception and silent auction followed by an exquisite five-course dinner, live Armenian music by the Hosharian Brothers Band, an exciting live auction and more! Tickets are \$450/person if reserved by Oct. 10; \$500/person after Oct. 10; and \$250/person for those age 35 & under. All proceeds to benefit the AECP's many sight-saving programs in Armenia. To RSVP or for more information, call 949-933-4069, email info@eyecareproject.com or visit eyecareproject.com/gala

CONNECTICUT

OCTOBER 24 — Book presentation by Adrienne G. Alexanian, editor of her father's memoir *Forced into Genocide: Memoirs of an Armenian Soldier in the Ottoman Turkish Army*, University of Connecticut's Office of Global Affairs, UConn, Hartford, Hartford Times Building, Room HTB 210 – 10 Prospect Street, Hartford, from 5 to 8 p.m. For information: (860) 486-5184 or zahra.ali@uconn.edu. Book sale/signing during reception prior to the presentation and after. All proceed from the sale of the books will be donated.

FLORIDA

DECEMBER 7 — Saturday, 12:30 to 4:30 p.m. The Women's Guild of St. David Armenian Church in Boca Raton, invites all members, spouses & friends to their Annual Christmas Luncheon & Fashion Show at the Wyndham Deerfield Beach Resort, 2019 NE 2nd Street, Deerfield Beach, FL, to enjoy an afternoon of fellowship, delicious food, and exciting fashion provided by Mario Pucci, among others. For reservations (deadline Nov. 29th) and additional information, please call Diane Azarian (401) 556-3886, Ginny Kyvelos (781) 789-9169, or the church office (561 994-2335).

DECEMBER 13, 14, & 15 — Friday, Saturday, & Sunday - Friday - 6pm to 10pm; Saturday - 9am to 10pm; Sunday - 1pm to 6pm; - St. David Armenian Art & Food Festival, 2300 Yamato Road, Boca Raton, FL. Join us for an afternoon of delicious homemade Armenian food, fun, fellowship, raffles, and children's activities while you shop for Christmas gifts at our vendors. For more information, call the church office at 561-994-2335. Admission is free and there is ample parking on the church grounds.

MASSACHUSETTS

OCTOBER 7 — St James Men's Club Dinner Meeting - social hour and mezza at 6:15 PM and dinner at 7 p.m., St James Armenian Church Charles Mosesian Cultural and Youth Center - Keljik Hall, 465 Mt. Auburn Street, Watertown. Guest speaker Dr. Myron Allukian, public health expert and the former Dental Director of the City of Boston for 34 years. The title of Dr Allukian's presentation is Healthy is Wealthy: How to Live a Healthy and Longer Life, which is a discussion of health care in the United States with an emphasis on what individuals, families, and society can do to help ensure healthier lifestyles and healthier lives. He will also discuss the impact on our lives by the US health care system and big business. Dr. Allukian is currently the President of the Massachusetts Coalition for Oral Health and Vice Chair of the Oral Health Working Group. He has been called "The Social Conscience of Dentistry". Mezza and a Losh Kebab & Kheyma Dinner \$17/person. Ladies invited. For additional information call the St James Church office at 617-923-8860 or call Hapet Berberian at 781-367-6598.

OCTOBER 13 — Sunday Cultural Series! Traditional Armenian Dance Lessons. 2-4 pm, Armenian Museum of America Adele & Haig Der Manuelian galleries, 3rd floor, 65 Main Street, Watertown. On the second Sunday

of every month, join experts Gary and Susan Lind-Sinanian for a workshop on Armenian dance. Gary and Susan have collected over 100 village dances and shared these with the community for the last 42 years. Learn Armenian dances performed at American picnics and traditional dances from the old country. Members free. Non-members \$12. Register online (<https://www.armenianmuseum.org/museum-events>) or call Education Coordinator, Garin Habeshian at 617.926.2562 Ext. 103

OCTOBER 17 — Be-Bop Guitars from Berklee College of Music will perform at the Armenian Museum of America, Adele & Haig Der Manuelian galleries, 3rd floor. The 9 members have a combined total of over 300 years of Berklee Jazz educator experience. This performance was made possible thanks to the Dadourian Foundation. Members free, non-members \$15. NOTE: The museum's elevator is in the process of being upgraded and is currently out of service.

OCTOBER 19 — NOVEMBER 9 — Fall Studio Art Classes Armenian Museum of America Adele & Haig Der Manuelian galleries, 3rd floor, 65 Main Street, Watertown. Young artists will be inspired by objects on display in the galleries to refine their individual artistic talents. Projects such as painting from observation, designing Armenian calligraphy, and pottery decoration will be presented. Members \$96. Non-members \$120. For more info and to register visit <https://www.armenianmuseum.org/classes>, or call Education Coordinator, Garin Habeshian at 617-926-2562, ext. 103.

OCTOBER 18-19 — St. James 72nd Annual Bazaar, Delicious Armenian Food and Pastries. Silent Auction, Attic Treasures, Booths and Vendors. Raffles, Children's Activities, and more. Friday and Saturday. Details to follow. St. James Armenian Church – 465 Mt. Auburn St., Watertown. For more information contact 617.923.8860 or info@stthagop.com or visit www.stjameswatertown.org.

OCTOBER 19 — The Armenian Missionary Association of America (AMAA) 100th Annual Meeting Banquet celebrating the Armenian Evangelical Church. Westin Hotel, Waltham, 70 Third Ave., Waltham. 6 p.m. reception, 7 p.m. Dinner, \$125. RSVP by October 5. Tickets and sponsorships available online at amaa.org. Checks payable to the Armenian Missionary Association of America, and mail to 31 W. Century Road, Paramus, NJ 07652

OCTOBER 19 — The Vosbikians are coming to the Merrimack Valley. The Armenian Friends of America proudly present their Annual HYE KEF 5 Dance, featuring The Vosbikians. The DoubleTree by Hilton Hotel, Andover, MA. Tickets Purchased before 9/13/19 will include the Great Venue, Outstanding Buffet, The Vosbikian Band and 5 Free Raffle Tickets Adults \$75.00 & Students 21 & under \$65 Specially priced AFA Rooms available through 9/17/19. For Tickets and more information, Contact: Lu Sirmaian 978-683-9121 or Sharke' Der Apkarian at 978-808-0598 Visit www.Armenia-FriendsofAmerica.org

OCTOBER 20 — Annual Banquet of Holy Trinity Armenian Church of Greater Boston, Celebrating the 58th Anniversary of the Consecration of Holy Trinity and honoring Bruce Newell as the "Parishioner of the Year," 12:30 p.m., Charles and Nevart Talanian Cultural Hall, 145 Brattle Street, Cambridge. Recognition will also be given to Outgoing Parish Council Members, Edmond J. Danielson, Daniel K. Dorian and Paul Jamgotchian. Dinner Donation is \$35 for adults and \$15 for Children under 12. Seating by advanced paid reservations only. RSVP requested by October 10; to purchase tickets, log onto www.htaac.org/calendar/event/703/ or call the Church Office, 617.354.0632.

OCTOBER 27 — Sunday Cultural Series: Popular Songs by Armenian Composers Performed by renowned singers Arthur Ispiryan from Yerevan and Nara from California 2-4 pm, Armenian Museum of America Adele & Haig Der Manuelian galleries, 3rd floor, 65 Main Street, Watertown, MA. Please join us at the Armenian Museum as we welcome renowned singers Arthur Ispiryan from Yerevan and Nara from California as they perform popular songs by Armenian composers. Special appearance by Aram Satian, the president of the Composer's Union of Armenia and Composer Maestro Konstantin Petrosian. This performance is presented by Armenian Museum of America and the Composer's Union of Armenia, and sponsored by the Dadourian Foundation. Special appearance by Aram Satian, the president of the Composer's Union of Armenia and Composer Maestro Konstantin Petrosian. Members free. Non-members free with \$15 Museum admission.

NOVEMBER 1,2 — NAASR Grand Opening and Gala. Friday, November 1 – Grand Opening & Ribbon Cutting, NAASR Vartan Gregorian Building, at NAASR's new world headquarters, 395 Concord Avenue, Belmont, MA. Saturday, November 2 – NAASR 65th Anniversary Gala, at the Royal Sonesta Hotel, Cambridge. 6 pm Reception, 7 pm Dinner and Program. Honoree Dr. Vartan Gregorian, president of the Carnegie Corporation of New York; Master of Ceremonies David Ignatius, columnist for the *Washington Post* and novelist; Featuring renowned soprano Isabel Bayrakdarian, accompanied by the Borromeo String Quartet, performing a program of songs by Komitas. Further details to follow.

NOVEMBER 8 and 9 – Annual Autumnfest Bazaar sponsored by the Armenian Church at Hye Pointe, at our new location 1280 Boston Road, (Rte. 125) Haverhill, Friday 12 – 7 pm and Saturday 12 – 7 pm. Lamb, Losh, Chicken Kebab and Kheyma. Dinners served all day. Pastry table, Armenian cuisine, gift baskets, raffles for cash and prizes. For more info, visit www.hypointearmenianchurch.org or call (978) 372-9227. Take Rte. 495 N to exit 48, bear right at the end of the ramp.

NOVEMBER 9 — Armenian Women's Welfare Association, Annual Luncheon, Saturday, 12 - 4pm, Belmont Country Club, 181 Winter Street, Belmont.

NOVEMBER 9 —An Evening with Fr. Vasken Kouzouian: Celebrating 25 Years of Ministry, 6:30 p.m., Cocktail Reception; 7:30 p.m., Dinner and Celebration. Samberg Conference Center, MIT, Chang Building (E52), Floor 7. 50 Memorial Drive, Cambridge MA 02142. Donation: \$100 per person. Seating by advance paid reservation only, by November 1. Reserve online at <https://aneveningwithfrvasken.eventbrite.com> or through the Church Office, 617-354.0632..

NOVEMBER 16 — St. Stephen's Armenian Elementary School 35th Anniversary Celebration. Keynote speaker: Dr. Diran Apelian, Professor of Engineering & Former Provost, Worcester Polytechnic Institute, Distinguished Professor, UC Irvine. Entertainment: singer Artur Hakobyan (Mister X). Emcee: Lisa Gulesserian, Ph.D., Harvard's Preceptor on Armenian Language & Culture. @ The Westin Hotel Waltham-Boston. 6:30pm Cocktails / 7:30pm Dinner and program. More to follow...

DECEMBER 6 and 7 — Friday and Saturday, Trinity Christmas Bazaar, Friday, 12 noon-9 p.m., Saturday, 10 a.m.-7 p.m.; Holy Trinity Armenian Church of Greater Boston, 145 Brattle Street, Cambridge. For further information, contact the Church Office, 617.354.0632.

DECEMBER 15 — Christmas Holiday Concert – Erevan Choral Society and Orchestra, 3:00 p.m., Church Sanctuary, Holy Trinity Armenian Church of Greater Boston, 145 Brattle Street, Cambridge, MA. Save the date; details to follow. For further information, call the Church Office, 617.354.0632, or email office@htaac.org.

MICHIGAN

OCTOBER 26 — Kef Time Keghi IV 6:30 p.m. Saturday, at St John Armenian Cultural Hall, Southfield, headlined with Traditional Keghetzi Pagharch feast, full buffet dinner with dancing, music by the Keghi All-Star Armenian Band. Reservations call Laura Negosian Lucassian at 248-376-3794 or email at Llucassian@TBEonline.org. Donation: Adults \$45, Children under 17, \$20. Cash Bar. Mail checks to Karen Nigosian, 21919 Michigan Ave, Dearborn. MI 48124 Checks payable to Nor Keghi Association. Proceeds to support continuing renovations at public schools and community projects in Nor Keghi, Armenia. Supported by parishioners of the four Armenian churches in Greater Detroit.

NOVEMBER 16 — The Knights of Vartan, Nareg-Shavarshan Lodge #6 and the Daughters of Vartan, Zabelle Otyag #12 will celebrate their respective 100th and 70th organization anniversaries. Featuring: Kevork Artinian and his All Star Band at St. Mary's Cultural Hall, 18100 Merriman Rd, Livonia. This is a fundraiser Dinner/Kef Dance to celebrate Knights and Daughters as well as a chance for future members to observe how our community puts our heritage on display. All proceeds to fund renovation of school gymnasium, Knights of Vartan #106, Elementary School, Yerevan, Armenia. For Reservations Contact: Laura Lucassian, (248) 376-3794, Cost \$75 per person, \$40 after 9:30 pm

NEW JERSEY

OCTOBER 12, 13 — The Tekeyan Cultural Association's Mher Megerdchian Theatrical Group will present

Ecumenical Commemoration of Genocide Victims

GERMANY, from page 1

2019, the FÖGG organized a tour through the ecumenical altars and on September 8, a solemn ceremony. Among the honored guests were Greek Consul Andreas Spyropoulos; Archimandrite Emmanuel Sfiatkos, Priest of the Greek Orthodox Parish Ascension of Christ; Panagiotis Matlis, President of the Hellenic Community in Berlin; Konstantinos Kunduras, President of the Society of the Thracians; Amill Gorgis, Syrian Orthodox Chairman of FÖGG, and others.

Dr. Tessa Hofmann, president of the FÖGG, led participants and guests through the commemoration, with an account of the historical events, interspersed with readings of selections from memoirs written by survivors. "This year 2019," she said, "is the centenary of the commemoration of the extermination of Greek Orthodox Christians in the Pontus region." Just four months earlier, on May 19, they had gathered to honor them at the same Berlin site.

"But the extermination of the Pontic Greeks," she continued, "is only one aspect of a vast state crime. We call it the extermination of the indigenous Christians in the Ottoman territory. The Ottoman Greeks had been victims since the Balkan wars. Economic boycott measures, forced resettlements, repeated local and regional massacres of the elites, as well as massacres of unarmed civilians went on for a decade. The capture of the defenseless Ionian port city of Smyrna in September 1922 by Turkish nationalists, or Kemalists, marked the end of this process, which must be designated as the de-Christianization of Asia Minor. Commemorating Smyrna serves a retrospective view of all the victims of the state crimes of the Ottoman Empire."

After a moment of silence in memory of the victims, Hellenic Community President Matlis greeted the gathering. A folk song, *It is too Early to Rise*, was performed by Fotis Giselis on



Greek Music from Asia Minor, Maritina Buntspecht and Fotis Geselis

the bouzouki and Maritina Buntspecht on the guitar. The song comes from Vurla in Erithrea and relates the story of the lost homeland, especially of the city Alatsata, which had been inhabited only by Greeks until 1922.

Hofmann picked up the threads of the story: "The Holocaust of Smyrna," she said, "as the burning of this city is known, has come to be a permanent memorial site in world literature, thanks above all to Jeffrey Eugenides and Aris Fioretos, authors of Greek extraction. Greek-speaking readers and Greeks who have grown up in Greece," she noted, "are more familiar with Elias Venezis and Dido Sotiriou. Both

came from Asia Minor and introduced their autobiographical experiences with flight and expulsion to a broad public."

Hofmann referred to two other witnesses of the "so-called Asia Minor catastrophe, or the Holocaust of Smyrna," both Armenian sur-

intelligentsia. But, more than its natural beauty, she said, "the city was famed for its vibrant cultural life, with eight Armenian schools, including the American Robert College, several Armenian churches of different sects, at least three Armenian newspapers and magazines."



At the monument

vivors and not so well known. Smyrna bears these names, she explained, because the fate of the city "illustrates most clearly that the victims of the extermination of Asia Minor Christians, for which the state was responsible, were not selected according to ethnic criteria, but rather because of their faith."

Hofmann wanted to stress another important point; since the generation of perpetrators as well as victims has died out, "they are accessible to us only through the memoirs of the eye witnesses and contemporaries, who are also gone. And yet the memories of the events of Smyrna in 1922 remain especially relevant, as they are kept alive by the fate of today's persecuted and refugees." Here she pointed to "people who are drowning in the Mediterranean while seeking to escape, the persecuted, those who are denied protection and support" as symbols of the depressing reality, "then and now."

Farewell to Smyrna

There followed readings of selections from memoirs of survivors of the Holocaust of Smyrna. The first came from the diary of Dr. Garabed Hacherian (published by his daughter Dora Sakayan, of Montreal).

Bardizag (Turkish Bahçecik), where he was born in 1876, was a parish of eight small villages in Mutessariflik, Izmit, and counted about 10,500 Armenians at the beginning of the 20th century. Four other villages of the group were Armenian, two Greek and one Turkish. Armenian refugees from Bardisag in Sivas province had settled there in the 17th century.

Hofmann explained that the new Bardisag on the Sea of Marmara, with its healthy climate and beautiful landscape, had become a favorite summer residence for Constantinople's wealthy

Chacherian was a doctor who had attended Armenian and American schools, studied medicine in the capital and practiced in Bursa and Bardisag. He served in the Ottoman armed forces during the war. She read from his diary, which has been published in nine languages.

The second reading came from the memoirs of *Deli Sarkis* (published in 2011 by his daughter, Ellen Chestnut Sarkisian). Hofmann introduced the author as the son of a butcher born in 1905, who also came from a village in the Mutessariflik of Izmit. This was Keramet, an Armenian village on the northern shore of Lake Ascania or Izmit. He survived the deportation and with 44 others returned at war's end to his home; the village had once been inhabited by 1,500 Armenians, and the returning survivors were not numerous enough to make a new start. In autumn 1919, Sarkis (then only 14) lied about his age to join the Hellenic armed forces. After training, he took part in armed conflict but in November 1921 left the army and went to Smyrna, a city he described as one "with a huge Greek and a large Armenian population." The Kemalist "Liberation army" had driven out the Greek troops, and tens of thousands of panicked Ottoman Greeks and Armenians had taken flight. Sarkis joined in the defense of the Armenian prelatore. With 200 Greeks and a smaller number of Armenians he was put up against the wall to be shot, but fell unconscious and survived.

The selection that Tessa Hofmann read relates this dramatic episode:

"We - (that is, Sarkis and his friends Dikran and Bedros) - hid inside the building for a few days. We had nothing to eat and no water. In despair, we decided to run outside in the direc-

tion of the quai. What a big mistake! Turkish soldiers controlled everything. One hit me on the back of my jacket so hard that I fell. Together with 200 Greek and a smaller number of Armenian men and boys, we were shoved into the Bashmachan railway station. Then we were hurriedly thrown against the wall, and machine-guns were quickly set up and aimed at us. As the guns began to fire, I thought: 'This is the end!' I heard the rat-ta-ta of the guns and fell unconscious, as I saw the lad next to me collapse.

"A little later I came to. I looked around me. Dozens of bodies lay in every imaginable position. There was blood everywhere: on the faces, arms and legs, as proof of terrible wounds. A young man next to me shouted loudly begging for someone to kill him. His legs were a bloody mass. My forehead and right leg throbbed. I saw vague shadows of the khaki dressed soldiers. 'Stay down and keep quiet!' I told myself, 'the murderers are still there!'

"The Turkish soldiers climbed over the bodies, to bring their bayonets into positions, and violently drove their blades into those that were still alive. One heard the sound of blades breaking, swords that crushed bones, the tearing of flesh and plaintive cries, then silence. The shadows, no longer so vague, moved away. They had done their job. I jumped up but then sank back down in dizziness. Desperate, I managed to crawl over the corpses until I reached a hole and began to run in the direction that I thought led to the quai.

"Wherever I turned my gaze, right or left, the buildings were in flames. I saw walls of fire, and the heat felt as though it wanted to singe my skin. Later I learned that the Turkish soldiers had set fire to Smyrna, beginning with the Armenian quarter (...) Much later I heard that a half million people had been thrust together in an area a mile and a half long and no more than a hundred feet wide. In the face of the sea, these men, women and children were screaming for help. (...)

"No matter where I looked, Turkish soldiers were shooting into the crowds or slashing them with their swords and cutting off their limbs so they could not swim. But mostly they seized the jewelry from the necks of the beautiful women and girls of Smyrna or grabbed the prettiest girls and dragged them away. Ironically the Turkish soldiers even killed Turkish civilians who had come to the quai to get some loot for themselves. (...)

"Years later I was asked which experience was worse: the massacres and deportations to the Syrian desert or the extinction by fire of the people and city of Smyrna. Without hesitation I had to say: Smyrna. I don't think that anyone can imagine the heartrending scenes that I witnessed. May God bless all victims there who lost their limbs, their lives and, what was worse, their reason."

The readings concluded with a song by Fotis Giselis and Maritina Buntspecht, entitled, "I have already said it and will say it again!" from Lydia in Asia Minor, a song about the separation of loved ones.

(Material for this article, including the photographs, has been provided through the courtesy of Tessa Hofmann.)

CALENDAR

"Caught in the Net," a comedy in one act, directed by Harout Chatmajian. Oradell Elementary School, 350 Prospect Ave., Oradell. 8 p.m. on Saturday and 4 p.m. on Sunday. Tickets \$35 and \$50. Performed in Armenian with English subtitles. For tickets call Marie (201) 745-8850 or Talar (201) 240-8541.

OCTOBER 25 — Banquet Honoring Dr. Taner Akcam
Abajian Hall St. Leon complex Fair Lawn, NJ
Sponsored by Knights & Daughters of Vartan- Under the Auspices of His Grace Bishop Daniel Findikyan, Primate. For Reservations please call Sona Manuelian 551-427-8763. \$125 p.p. early reservations recommended.

NEW YORK

NOVEMBER 15 — Book presentation by Adrienne G. Alexanian, editor of her father's memoir *Forced into Genocide: Memoirs of an Armenian Soldier in the Ottoman Turkish Army* - Fordham University Armenian Society, Fordham University, 113 West 60th St. N.Y., N.Y. 10023 - Room 602 - 7:00 to 9:00 p.m. For information - Takoosh@aol.com Book sales/signing following the presentation. All proceeds from the sale of the books will be donated to St. Nersess Armenian Seminary.

RHODE ISLAND

OCTOBER 20 — The Cultural Committee of Sts. Sahag and Mesrob Armenian Church, Providence Presents Meet With The Doctors - Questions & Answers. We invite everyone to avail themselves of this opportunity and "Meet with our Armenian Doctors" Dr. Herman Ayzvazyan Internal Medicine. Topic: New Trends in Primary Care Medicine. Ara Boghigian, Moderator. Sunday, 12:30 p.m., Hanoian Hall, 70 Jefferson St., Providence.

Calendar items are free. Entries should not be longer than 5 lines. Listings should include contact information. Items will be edited to fit the space, if need be. A photo may be sent with the listing no later than Mondays at noon.

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'Revolution' Or Coup?



By Philippe Raffi Kalfayan

Special to the Mirror-Spectator

I have never described the events of April-May 2018 as a "revolution" for two reasons. The first is that Serzh Sargsyan gave up power with reason and wisdom, making the transmission of power bloodless. Secondly, a real revolution, in

the political sense, would have sought a fundamental change to the foundations of the Republic, its Constitution and the entire political system. This was not the case; on the contrary, the new team wore the costume of the previous one and globally pursued the policies of the previous governments with one major exception, an intensified fight against corruption. Popular support for the incumbent Prime minister is not an excuse for it. If the Constitution no longer meets the expectations of the country, then a constitutional reform must be launched. Until then, it must be respected.

Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan, on September 26, spoke before the General Assembly of the United Nations in New York, where he blamed all the country's shortcomings on the old corrupt elites. Pretending that the financial capabilities of those elites gives them power in the media and elsewhere yet pursuing and accepting money from the same groups for the foundation led by his wife, Anna Hakobyan, is not very consistent. Nor is declaring that the promotion of sustainable development and human rights is an inclusive process while harassing all supporters of the Kocharyan and Sargsyan governments. While the prime minister built his entire campaign against the excessive institutional powers of his predecessor, not only did he not reform them; he exaggerated them by eliminating five ministries, and strengthening his personal powers.

A number can eloquently illustrate this concentration of power: The prime minister of Armenia, with 2.5 million inhabitants, now has more than 720 employees. By comparison, the Prime Minister of France, with 67 million inhabitants, counts 1,900 employees.

What motivates this policy? Is it a lack of trust in the people surrounding him? Is that the conviction he is the only one who can lead the transformation? Is it his desire not to share the power, nor to delegate it? Or fear of seeing former Republican leaders back at the helm of the country? It is probably a combination of all these factors. The stakes are such that it is impossible for a single man to carry out a strategic reflection and coherent action, especially when his team is made up of courtiers without critical approach or experience. It is amusing to see a 28-year-old minister of justice, just out of school, say at the time of his appointment that he already has significant experience. It is to be feared that in this field, as in others, young ministers will be reduced to copying and pasting inappropriate projects, models or proposals from international institutions.

The Good

What has changed positively – and it is a major breakthrough – is the discourse and actions regarding corruption, as well as insisting that every citizen and corporation must contribute their fair share to the state budget by paying taxes and in return state officials must be above reproach and abandon their practices of favoritism at the expense of national, community and justice interests.

Corruption is highly dangerous for national interests, but to assign all the evils of this practice to two former leaders, Serzh Sargsyan and Robert Kocharyan, and their teams, is short-sighted. That vice has been entrenched since the advent of the Soviet republic and has passed on from generation to generation. Selfish individualism was exacerbated after the collapse of the Soviet Union, and everyone, in all parts of society, prioritized his or her personal interests above those of the state. The most enterprising and ambitious have benefited more than others. Taking some of them to trial is necessary to deter future wrongdoings for society as a whole, but this is not sufficient and in no way justifies the current policy of judicial harassment by using illegal remedies against certain individuals. In addition, if we were to eliminate all those with a corrupt past, then we would see the disappearance of the Armenian state. The current raft of "resignations" of senior officials show the limits of this enterprise. Some government advisers or members of the parliamentary majority will certainly be implicated.

Mikael Minasyan, businessman and former ambassador (and incidentally the son-in-law of Sargsyan) advocates abandoning this policy of hatred and division, and instead taking advantage of the experience of the three former presidents, despite all their failings and turpitudes, some of which can even be described as criminal. I always agreed with this approach but only on condition that there be a transitional justice process in parallel; one that has yet to be defined. In order to meet the internal and external challenges ahead, Armenia needs to reconcile all the meagre forces at its disposal.

A head of state must ensure the unity of the nation, respect its constitution, and offer equal rights for its citizens. Several recent statements or decisions of Prime Minister Pashinyan are more than a little disturbing.

First, he asserts that it is out of the question that Serge Sargsyan and Robert Kocharyan play a future role in the political life of Armenia. Promoting democracy and asserting the above is contradictory: it is not he who can decide that, but the ballot box.

Second, he said at a press conference in Los Angeles in September that he was not excluding the government's involvement in church affairs. He said: "If it turns out that the Armenian people want the government to enter church affairs, the government will discuss this and will understand what practical possibilities exist." It should be asked on what constitutional or legal grounds such an intention would be based.

Third, he expressed a fundamentally shocking idea at a meeting with NGOs (September 13, "Fostering and protecting human rights"). In the presence of representatives of the United Nations and the European Commission, he declared "there is the need to clarify what human rights mean, who is the human, who can exercise the right. There may be a need for clarification..." Is this the same person who advocates human rights in the United Nations forum? These remarks could be described as clumsy if we did not put them in perspective with the attempts of manifest violations of the constitutional order.

The Not-So-Good

In recent months, we have witnessed episodes that are not glorious for Armenia's reputation on the international scene.

This observation is all the more paradoxical in that the prime minister praises the "Velvet Revolution" and the democratic progress of Armenia in international forums. If there was any doubt about the exportability of the revolution as a "product" in a regional and international political environment dominated by leaders who are increasingly defiant of the rule of law and democracy, the credibility of its promoter is now widely damaged.

Indeed, the recent violations of the constitution by the prime minister are so blatant as to be considered "illegal," especially with regard to the decision of the Constitutional Court on the legal issues raised by the attorneys of Robert Kocharyan. Is the prime minister more competent than the Constitutional Judges or the Venice Commission experts? He further publicly dictated what Judge Anna Danibekian should do with regard to Robert Kocharyan's petition for parole.

This method brings the Armenian prime minister more in line with the style of someone like President Recep Tayyip Erdogan, who rejected the "illegal" decisions of the Constitutional Court in 2016, which ordered the release of two journalists unduly imprisoned. A parallel could be drawn between Erdogan's permanent cleansing of all government and civil society institutions on the alleged grounds that they have been infiltrated by the Gülenists, and the Armenian prime minister's desire to purge the Armenian administration, civil society and religious institutions of all persons who have had a direct or indirect link with the Republican Party or with Robert Kocharyan.

The attacks on the members of the Constitutional Court and the public declaration of his intention to remove them are serious violations of the Constitution, which strictly protects their tenure in office.

The attempt began with a letter from a newly elected judge, Vahe Grigoryan, suggesting that he and another new judge were the sole legitimate judges as they were the only ones elected post-Velvet Revolution. The Venice Commission of the Council of Europe, consulted by the government, swept aside the claim in a single line. They recalled that Article 213 of the revised Constitution of 2015 provides in a clear and unambiguous way that the President and the members of the Constitutional Court appointed before the entry into force of the constitutional amendments will continue their mandate until the end of their terms.

The blind obstinacy of My Step party continues with a new initiative of the President of the Armenian National Assembly and the parliamentary majority who are pushing for a law aimed at dismissing the President of the Constitutional Court. The legislature has no constitutional right to do so either. Any contravention of this principle would be considered a coup d'état and would tend to establish a dictatorship. It is impossible to remove a judge either by a decree of the government or by an act of Parliament unless it is proven he or she has committed a crime.

Judicial Meddling

This undemocratic situation is indicative of the dangers of the destruction of the foundations of the Republic that constitutes this arbitrary witch hunt against people suspected of sympathizing with the former Republican Party. Since taking office, the government has gone so far as to suggest to its representative at the European Court to let it condemn Armenia so as to better challenge the national judges who have rendered decisions under previous governments.

The President of the Venice Commission of the Council of Europe recalled in his letter of May 22, 2019 to Prime Minister Pashinyan that justice reforms should be designed and implemented in accordance with the laws, the Constitution, and according to European standards on the rule of law and human rights. The report of the Venice Commission on Armenia dated July 15, 2019, indicates that an agreement was reached with Armenian authorities that it would be neither necessary nor useful to carry out a general vetting of all sitting judges. Instead, disciplinary procedures should be strengthened and a link with the asset declaration system established.

This did not prevent the government's incongruous move of proposing a law that would sanction any judge who has rendered a judgment having violated the European Convention on Human Rights. This illustrates the level of aberration and mediocrity reigning in Armenia. It must be remembered that justice is rendered by men and women, not robots, and making wrong decisions can

see REVOLUTION, page 19



COMMENTARY



My Turn

By Harut Sassounian

War of Words at the UN General Assembly Between Armenia, Azerbaijan and Turkey

The United Nations' General Assembly held its annual session September 24-30, 2019 in New York City. The participants were heads of states and high-ranking officials of UN member countries, including Armenia's Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan, Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan and Azerbaijan's Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov. Surprisingly, Azerbaijan's President Ilham Aliyev was absent – a big mistake on his part!

The first speech was delivered by Erdogan on September 24, 2019. After speaking about the lofty notions of justice and equality, which are constantly violated by Turkey, Erdogan once again complained about the fact that Turkey is not represented among the five Permanent members of the UN Security Council (US, UK, France, China and Russia) which have a veto power. Long before Turkey is admitted to such an exclusive club, India, Brazil, and possibly Germany should have a priority over Turkey. Erdogan also misrepresented Turkey as the country that “has inflicted the first and heaviest blow” to ISIS terrorists in Syria. In reality, Turkey has been the biggest supporter of ISIS terrorists! Surprisingly, Erdogan blamed Greek Cypriots for Turkey's continued occupation of Northern Cyprus. He also criticized Israel for its mistreatment of Palestinians.

Turning to the Caucasus, Erdogan stated: “it is unacceptable that Nagorno-Karabakh and its surrounding areas, which are Azerbaijani territories, are still occupied despite

the [UN] resolutions adopted.”

Nikol Pashinyan, the Prime Minister of Armenia, addressed the UN General Assembly on September 25, 2019, condemning Azerbaijan for its unwillingness to resolve the “Nagorno Karabakh” (Artsakh) conflict. He said that the solution to the conflict must be acceptable to all three populations of Armenia, Artsakh and Azerbaijan.

Regarding Turkey, Pashinyan stated that “by refusing to establish diplomatic relations with Armenia, overtly assisting Azerbaijan against Armenia and Nagorno Karabakh, Turkey remains a serious threat to Armenia and the Armenian people, who had experienced the deep tragedy of the genocide and continue to face the fierce denial of truth and justice.”

Speaking at the UN General Assembly on September 28, 2019, Azerbaijan's Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov stated that “rather than wasting time on attempts to mislead the international community and its own people, Armenia must drop its lousy attempts to prolong the unsustainable status quo and faithfully comply with its international obligations.” The sooner Armenia gives up its “aggressive and hostile policy in the region,” the better it would overcome its “serious political, economic and social burden,” Mammadyarov said.

Armenia's UN delegate exercised his “right of reply” to Azerbaijan's Foreign Minister Mammadyarov's speech, accusing him of distorting the conflict of Nagorno Karabakh. Armenia's representative then mentioned the Azeri massacres of Armenians in Sumgayit, Azerbaijan, in 1988. He added that Nagorno Karabakh was never a part of Azerbaijan.

Azerbaijan's representative then responded with his own “right of reply.” The Armenian and Azerbaijani delegates proceeded to deliver a series of remarks replying to each other's accusations.

Meanwhile, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu displeased with Erdogan's criticism of Israel at the UN General Assembly, condemned him harshly according to the Jerusalem Post: “Prime Minister Netanyahu slammed Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan on Tuesday calling him a liar and saying that ‘he who doesn't stop lying about Israel, he who kills Kurds in his own country, he who

denies the terrible crimes against the Armenians – that person should not preach to Israel.”

Netanyahu's comments did not please Armenians around the world who pointed out that under his leadership Israel has rejected the veracity of the Armenian Genocide and blocked the acknowledgment of the Armenian Genocide by the Knesset (parliament). Netanyahu's words were viewed as simply a disingenuous attempt to use the Armenian Genocide as a tool to bash Erdogan, while Israel itself has not acknowledged the Armenian Genocide. This is the height of hypocrisy by Netanyahu!

As I have repeatedly pointed out, the Israeli government, as the leadership of a nation that has suffered genocide itself, should have been the first country to recognize the Armenian Genocide, not the last. At this late stage, even if Israel were to recognize the Armenian Genocide, it would be a pointless exercise as dozens of countries and international organizations have already acknowledged the Armenian Genocide. By continuing its shameless refusal to recognize the Armenian Genocide, the Israeli government is simply tarnishing its own reputation in the international community.

Even the Prime Minister of India Narendra Modi joined the political fray in New York by meeting with the President of Cyprus and the Prime Ministers of Armenia and Greece to indicate his displeasure at Turkish President Erdogan's siding with Pakistan in his UN speech. Such a meeting is definitely in the interests of Armenia, Cyprus and Greece in order to counter Pakistan's cozy relationship with Turkey and Azerbaijan. In June, the Foreign Ministers of Armenia, Cyprus and Greece met in the Cypriot capital of Nicosia to discuss an expansion of their relations. All three countries share the common goal of opposing Turkish hegemony in the region.

To end on an amusing note, President Erdogan refused to sit at President Trump's table with other heads of states at a banquet given by the U.S. President at the United Nations last week, since Egyptian President Abdel-Fattah El-Sisi, whom the Turkish President abhors, was sitting at that table. Erdogan's chair remained empty, depriving him of the golden opportunity to brainwash President Trump during dinner!

‘Revolution’ Or Coup?

REVOLUTION from page 18 happen. The European Convention, like any other text of law, can be interpreted in the light of each case and its context. Moreover, the European Court clearly authorizes wide margins of interpretation in certain areas of the Convention.

In this context, I extend my full support to the Constitutional Court, its president and its members, and urge them to resist these unacceptable anti-constitutional coup attempts by the executive and legislative branches. I also call on all political forces inside and outside Parliament to do the same.

I would also add that Armenia has few qualified lawyers. Hrayr Tovmasyan has co-authored a considerable number of laws currently in force, including those relating to the administrative corpus. It took three years to find an acceptable replacement for Alvina Gulumyan, a former judge at the European Court of Human Rights. Armenia could not offer candidates meeting European criteria.

Be it amateurism, authoritarianism, or incompetence, the result is disastrous. The prime minister and his parliamentary majority had the chance to build a new climate, respectful of democracy and of the rule of law, to put everyone back to work, and to work to appease the country. The content of public speeches and declarations of good intentions, however, are contradicted by the reality of daily acts. Personal goals and hatred seem to override the national interest.

Overall, rather than a “revolution,” we are witnessing a coup against democratic institutions.

[Philippe Raffi Kalfayan is a Lawyer, Lecturer in International Law and a former Secretary General of FIDH (International Federation of Human Rights). He is a regular columnist for the *Mirror-Spectator*.]

Turkey Is Now a Haven for Terrorists

By Jonathan Schanzer and Aykan Erdemir

On Monday, September 23, four children of an American and his Israeli wife killed by the Palestinian terrorist group Hamas in 2015 filed suit against Turkey's Kuvvet Turk Bank in a New York court. They charge that the bank helps Hamas finance its terrorist attacks, allegations the firm is almost certain to deny.

The lawsuit against this Shariah-compliant bank, which counts the Turkish government as a shareholder, comes two weeks after the US Treasury sanctioned 11 Turkey-linked entities and individuals for supporting Hamas and other jihadist outfits. The evidence keeps mounting: Turkey has become a haven for regional baddies.

Under President Recep Tayyip Erdogan, Turkey has become a permissive jurisdiction for rogue regimes and their illicit bankers. Between 2012 and 2015, Tehran relied on Turkish banks and a dual Iranian-Turkish gold trader to circumvent US sanctions at the height of Washington's efforts to thwart the Islamic Republic's nuclear ambitions. It was the biggest sanctions-evasions scheme in recent history.

Similarly, Venezuela's Maduro regime has been using Turkish-based companies in a money-laundering network involving the sale of Venezuelan gold. The US government sanctioned that network in July.

Reports suggest that a Treasury-sanctioned money man for the Assad regime in Syria owns an extensive network of companies in Turkey, thus enabling Syria to circumvent US sanctions.

Turkey has also proved a forgiving host to terrorists. In April, Treasury sanctioned six individuals and a Turkish money exchange for their role in bankrolling Islamic State. The action underscored how Islamic State terrorists continued to operate from Turkish territory well into 2018.

Turkish law enforcement is known to turn a blind eye to jihadists, while the country's courts treat them leniently, often releasing them pending trial or granting them parole – in stark contrast to harsh treatment meted out to secular and pro-democracy dissidents.

After their ouster from Egypt in 2013, the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood established new institutions in Turkey. In addition to Islamist propaganda, the movement's television stations have broadcast death threats against Egyptian officials and foreign nationals in Egypt. Ironically, the Turkish government defends the Muslim Brotherhood's “freedom of expression” even as Erdogan has silenced Turkey's domestic

“TURKISH LAW ENFORCEMENT IS KNOWN TO TURN A BLIND EYE TO JIHADISTS, WHILE THE COUNTRY'S COURTS TREAT THEM LENIENTLY, OFTEN RELEASING THEM PENDING TRIAL OR GRANTING THEM PAROLE...”

allowing actual terrorists from Hamas to operate freely on Turkish soil. Saleh Aroui, the Hamas military commander responsible for the 2014 kidnapping and killing of three teens in the West Bank, spearheaded that operation from Turkish soil. The US Treasury designated Aroui as a terrorist in September 2015 and subsequently issued a “Rewards for Justice” bounty for information leading to his arrest or capture.

But Aroui is just one of many Hamas operatives who have operated in Turkey. In 2011, 10 Hamas operatives Israel released as part of a prisoner exchange arrived in Turkey, and many remain active there. Imad al-Alami, Hamas' long-serving envoy to Iran and a US-designated terrorist since 2003, received medical treatment in Turkey in 2014 and continued his work there while he convalesced.

The New York lawsuit against the Kuvvet Turk Bank has the potential to check Turkey's impunity. In 2016, the nonprofit St. Francis of Assisi filed a complaint in California against Kuvvet Turk Bank and its parent company, Kuwait Finance House, for allegedly processing donations to Islamic State. A federal judge dismissed the case because it couldn't be proved that a US person had been harmed.

By contrast, Monday's complaint against Kuvvet Turk has plaintiffs with ties to the United States. The plaintiffs also argue that the bank is subject to jurisdiction in New York for using its correspondent bank accounts in the Empire State to facilitate US-dollar-denominated transfers for Hamas' benefit.

It's already clear that Erdogan's Turkey has become a permissive jurisdiction for illicit and terror finance. But this new case on behalf of an American victim of terrorism and members of his family could finally begin to hold the regime in Turkey responsible.

[Jonathan Schanzer, a former terrorist finance analyst at the US Treasury, is senior vice president for research at Foundation for Defense of Democracies, where Aykan Erdemir, a former Turkish parliamentarian, is a senior fellow. This column initially appeared in the *New York Post* on September 23.]



Turkish Apology

By Mitch Kehetian

When Nazi Germany invaded Poland in the launch of World War II some 80 years ago, more than six million civilians were killed on Hitler's orders, both Polish and Jewish.

Modern democratic Germany has not brushed its past aside though it was the crime of the Nazi regime and its fanatic leaders. And has repeatedly repudiated its past world crimes . . . as a lesson for humankind.

In a somber observance of the start of the war the president of Germany Frank-Walter Steinmeier spoke from the heart when he stressed "this was a German crime." Though the crimes were initiated on Hitler's orders. Some years ago British statesman Winston Churchill said when a nation forgets its past it has no future.

While in Warsaw for the 80th observance the Associated Press said the German president then shared his own personal look at the past when he said "I bow in mourning to the suffering of the victims and ask for forgiveness for Germany's historical debt. I affirm our lasting responsibility."

Yet during the political spat over building a wall on our southern border with Mexico, a member of the anti-Trump leftist squad bearing the Democrat banner referred to the detention camps as concentration camps. There's only one expression for that sickening gaffe. Wash your mouth.

The German apology is a lesson for many, especially modern day Turkish President Erdogan, who still denies the Armenian Genocide that led to the massacre of 1.5 million

Armenians and thousands sent to their deaths while forced to march into the steaming hot Der Zor desert in Syria.

A book entitled Resistance: A Diary of the Armenian Genocide 1915-1922, published in London, Ontario, Canada brought back memories to me of the genocide during a trek in 1969 through Turkey's occupied portion of historical Western Armenia. In the diary author Misak Seferian concentrated on the battle for Erzurum as the Turkish army fought a force of Armenian volunteers – sacking the historic Armenian city where my mother was born and raised through her teen years before the family escaped the Turkish hunt for her father, a tailor by day and militant fighter at night. In Seferian's vivid descriptions of Erzurum Portrayed by Tavrez Publishing I relived the several days I spent in the old city unable to find any surviving Armenians.

While in western occupied Armenia, now barren of its original inhabitants dating back to the birth of Jesus Christ, I also walked the paths of Keghi and Moush the birthplaces of my father and my wife's parents.

Through the years the question of the Armenian genocide is openly debated and discussed, especially so on April 24 when it was launched by government edict. Turkish leaders say the Armenians were not loyal members of the Ottoman Empire and that the so-called genocide, if true, took place in the Ottoman Era not the modern Republic of Turkey.

When Polish-Jewish lawyer intellectual Raphael Lemkin was assigned by the United Nations in 1946 to draft the intent of government executed genocide, Lemkin cited the Armenian massacre as a genocide. Thus the birth of the terminology of genocide - a government execution of a race of people.

I believe Turkey's Erdogan needs to talk to the president of Germany, especially in the stressing: "I ask for forgiveness and affirm our lasting responsibility."

(Mitch Kehetian is a retired editor of the *Macomb Daily* and a former trustee on the board of Central Michigan University.)



Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan, left, shakes hands with Tekeyan Cultural Association Los Angeles Chapter Chairman Parsegh Kartalian, with Vice Chairman Ara Babayan behind the latter, at the InterContinental Hotel in Century City, Los Angeles, on September 22.

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You must book through TravelGroup to attend the AHC private Armenian events

Medical Professionals are invited to register for our "Challenges in Global Health" program offering 15.0 ACCME, CPE and CDE credits.