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State Department Opposes Turkey Sanctions, Genocide Resolution

By Nick Wadhams

WASHINGTON (Bloomberg) – The Trump administration opposes Turkey sanctions adopted by the House last week as well as a resolution condemning the Armenian genocide, arguing that the two initiatives risk further straining relations with a key NATO ally, a senior State Department official said.

The administration is concerned that the sanctions – passed 403-16 in the House last week in response to the Turkey’s military offensive in northern Syria – will tie its hands and cut off options to resolve US concerns about Turkey’s actions, said the official, who asked not to be identified discussing internal deliberations. The official wouldn’t say whether President Donald Trump intends to veto the bill.

The measure, H.R. 4695, would sanction senior Turkish officials and prohibit them from entering the US. It would also bar the transfer of US defense materiel to Turkey for use in Syria, and it would require the Pentagon and State Department to submit plans to prevent the resurgence of Islamic State.

House Foreign Affairs Chairman Eliot Engel, a New York Democrat, said during debate on the measure that Trump gave Erdogan “the green light to launch a military invasion of northern Syria” that resulted in “slaughtering our Syrian Kurdish partners who fought alongside the United States” against Islamic State. The administration has denied that Trump’s withdrawal of US forces gave a go-ahead signal to Ankara.

The same day the House passed the sanctions bill, it also approved a resolution condemning the massacre of 1.5 million see OPPOSITION, page 20



ARAM ARKUN PHOTO
Ruben Vardanyan congratulates Mirza Dinnayi at Yerevan’s Freedom Square

Mirza Dinnayi’s Aid to Terror Victims Recognized with Aurora Prize

YEREVAN – Mirza Dinnayi received the fourth annual Aurora Prize for Awakening Humanity on October 20 in a large public ceremony in Freedom Square in Yerevan as part of the Aurora Forum events (see more on this in forthcoming issues of the *Mirror-Spectator*).

By Aram Arkun
Mirror-Spectator Staff

Dinnayi is cofounder and director of Luftbrücke Irak [Airbridge Iraq], which has helped save the lives of Yazidis and other victims of terror in Iraq. Of slight build, Dinnayi has an engaging and, at least on the surface, easygoing temperament, with a good sense of humor. This stands in contrast with all the terrible things he has witnessed in his life.

As Aurora Prize Laureate, Dinnayi will receive a \$1,000,000 grant as Aurora Prize Laureate, which will expand the scope of humanitarian work in the region. He has chosen to divide this sum among three organizations which provide medical care and rehabilitation to ISIS terror victims. Aside from Air Bridge Iraq, these include the Shai Fund and the Social, Educational, and Economic Development (SEED) Foundation.

see PRIZE, page 10



Mirza Dinnayi (Aram Arkun photo)

Russian Foreign Minister Lavrov Visits Armenia

See full story on page 4.



Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov, left, with President Armen Sarkisian

A Life Well Spent In Pursuit of Education, Hope And Paying It Forward

By Alin K. Gregorian
Mirror-Spectator Staff

BELMONT, Mass. – When Dr. Vartan Gregorian was here for the official grand opening of the new headquarters of the National Association for Armenians Studies and Research (NAASR) on November 1, which is named for him, he agreed to sit down for an interview.

During a wide-ranging discussion, he looked back on his achievements while discussing the new challenges he is relishing.

Gregorian, currently the president of the Carnegie Corporation in New York, has headed, taught at or sat on the see GREGORIAN, page 13



NEWS IN BRIEF

Paylan in Turkey Parliament Discusses Genocide

ISTANBUL (Armenpress) – Armenian member of the parliament of Turkey Garo Paylan delivered a statement on the recognition of the Armenian Genocide during the parliamentary debate of the 2020 state budget draft, his Office told Armenpress, on November 8.

“Before 1915 Armenians were living on these lands – in Isparta, Mersin, Adana, Trabzon, Tigranakert, Bursa, and one in every five in this country was Armenian, but now we even can’t fill a stadium if we gather. Of course, we didn’t evaporate. A great disaster took place, which, unfortunately, we deny with an abjuration policy and refuse to talk about it for already 104 years.

“Look, other parliaments talk about that, but we say let them not talk. Let the material relating to this region be talked about in this region. If there is a parliament in the world that should talk about it, that is Turkey’s Grand National Assembly because we are the sons of these lands,” Paylan said.

Armenian Catholic Priest, His Father, Assassinated by IS in Syria

QAMISHLI, SYRIA (RFE/RL) – Unknown gunmen shot dead an Armenian Catholic priest and his father as they were traveling in a car in northeastern Syria on Monday, November 11.

Father Hovsep Petoian, the head of the Armenian Catholic community in the Kurdish-majority city of Qamishli near the border with Turkey, and his father, Father Abraham Petoian, were heading to the province of Deir Al-Zor when they came under attack on November 11, Deacon Hakob Parsamian said.

The two men were due to oversee the restoration of a church in Deir Al-Zor, the Kurdish news agency Hawar reported.

A third man, a deacon from the town of Al-Hasakeh, was reportedly wounded in the attack, which was claimed by the Islamic State (IS) extremist group.

More than 100,000 ethnic Armenians lived in Syria, mainly in the northwestern province of Aleppo, prior to the Syrian civil war. Many of them have fled, including thousands to Armenia.

IS militants persecuted Christians and displaced tens of thousands of them when it ruled large parts of Iraq and Syria.

Also on November 11, three bombings killed at least three people and wounded five others in Qamishli, reports said.

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NAASR Gala

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ARMENIA

News From Armenia

Yerevan to Launch Waste Separation Program

YEREVAN (Panorama.am) – The Yerevan municipality plans to launch a waste separation pilot program, the press department at the municipality reported on November 12. According to the source, discussions are underway with economic entities to collect and transport the separated waste for which the municipality will provide special vehicles.

The municipality plans to install waste disposal containers designated for different types of waste.

Quake Hits Iran; Armenia Offers Help

YEREVAN (RFE/RL) – Armenia offered to assist neighboring Iran after a powerful earthquake struck the Islamic Republic on November 8.

The earthquake with a magnitude of 5.9 in Iran's East Azerbaijan Province killed at least five people; at least 120 other people have been injured.

Authorities reported that heavy rains in the area hampered rescue efforts. More than 40 aftershocks hit the area.

According to the Armenian Ministry of Emergency Situations, Minister Felix Tsolakyan has had a telephone conversation with Iranian Deputy Chief of Mission in Yerevan Ali Mohammad Mottaghi, offering to send rescuers to Iran.

Tsolakyan also reportedly asked the Iranian diplomat to convey his "condolences and words of support to the people of Iran, the families of the victims and wish speedy recovery to the injured."

The statement does not say whether the Iranian side accepted Armenia's offer of assistance.

The earthquake, which according to the European Mediterranean Seismological Center struck 112 kilometers southeast of Iran's major city of Tabriz was also felt in parts of Armenia.

According to the country's seismic agency, in several towns of southern and central Armenia it was felt as an earthquake with a magnitude of between 3 and 4.

Government Mulling Smoking Ban

YEREVAN (Armenpress) – The Healthcare Ministry's proposed bill on imposing a smoking ban (On Reducing and Preventing Health Damages Resulting from Tobacco Products and Substitutes), envisages a number of restrictions for smoking in public areas.

Deputy Minister of Healthcare Lena Nanushyan said at a news conference on November 8 that the bill also envisages restrictions on selling tobacco and advertisements.

"For example, if a restaurant patron is smoking the manager of the venue is obliged to warn them that smoking is banned there. If the patron continues smoking, police can intervene and fine them," she said, adding that the public areas (restaurants, cafes) must install No-Smoking signs in visible locations.

Fines for citizens will be set up to 50,000 drams given the situation. If a restaurant manager has failed to notify that smoking is prohibited then the restaurant itself will be fined from 150,000 to 250,000 drams.

Airing tobacco advertisements on TV are subject to an up to 750,000 dram fines.

Nanushyan emphasized that the bill is not targeting smokers, but aims to preserve public health. Moreover, the bill also envisages support for smokers who are willing to quit.

Director of the National Healthcare Institute Alexander Bazarchyan said they've closely worked with different stakeholder parties during the development of the bill package. He said they've studied international practice and leading experts have been involved.

"The claims that banning smoking in enclosed areas and entertainment venues might harm the businesses is not appropriate. Different countries' experience shows that these restrictions haven't anyhow impacted businesses. Currently, dozens of restaurants and entertainment facilities have already switched to a No Smoking mode without even the bill being passed yet, which is commendable," he said.

Armenia's Education Minister Rejects Calls For Resignation Over Language Policy

YEREVAN (RFE/RL, Armenpress) – Armenia's minister for education, science, culture and sports has dismissed calls for his resignation by an influential, diaspora-backed opposition party, which staged a rally to protest his policies.

Young members of the Armenian Revolutionary Federation (Dashnaksutyun) staged a sit-in at Minister Arayik Harutyunyan's place of work to voice opposition to his legislative initiative that would make the teaching of the Armenian language, literature, and history optional at universities.

The party, which failed to win seats in parliament in the December 2018 election, has also criticized the ministry for funding the performance of a play it deemed offensive.

Controversy ensued over the past

of Armenia also pointed to the proposal to not mandate the teaching of the Armenian language and history in universities and cited Harutyunyan's public, often vile, commentary in his defense as reasons for demanding his resignation.

Meanwhile, students of the faculty of Armenian language department at Yerevan State University went on strike in protest Harutyunyan's proposed legislation which cuts Armenian Language, Armenian history and Armenian literature subjects from the mandatory curriculum and makes it optional for students.

"This is simply a warning campaign," said Gevorg Gyulumyan, a student of the Armenian language department who is also among the organizers of the strike, reported Armenpress. "Let the ministry consider this a warning. I advise the minister to consult with

Armenian language," explained the ministry.

The ministry said the bill not only does not reduce the role of Armenian and Armenian studies, but on the contrary "stipulates the sowing of these important values and training of respective specialists."

The ministry allocated 2.7 million drams for a performance of an abstract "Hue and Call" performance in the Republic Square subway station in Yerevan, which received a huge public response.

It was described an experimental program that would feature a staging of contemporary poetry reading (Yeghishe Charents, Azat Vstuni, Gevorg Abov and others).

"The grant makes up 0.3 percent of the budget of 903 million drams in 2019. To what extent the expectations of the performance committee for the performance have been justified, we will know when the organizers will present the non-financial and financial results in the prescribed manner. However, we report that the various allegations attributed to the Ministry on this play are unacceptable and are viewed as manifestations of mercenary management of public opinion," the statement said.

Several people chanted "shame, shame" during the performance.

(See related editorial on page 18.)



Education Minister Arayik Harutyunyan speaks to the media on November 7.

weekend during an outdoor rehearsal of a modernist play based on early 20th-century Armenian poetry.

Some Dashnaksutyun members accused the performers of "nontraditional" sexual orientation and unpatriotic behavior.

However, Harutyunyan, a key figure in the country's 2018 "velvet revolution" and a member of the ruling Civil Contract Party, seemed undaunted by the criticism.

"I am ready to resign only when I feel I'm not doing enough. This is not the case," he said.

He countered by accusing Dashnaksutyun of obstructing reforms, and of displaying "undisciplined behavior" inside the country.

Harutyunyan appealed to Dashnaksutyun's backers outside Armenia to "take care of their [Armenian-based] party, because...[it] does not give credit to one of our oldest political parties."

He praised the foreign branches of Dashnaksutyun, saying that "during my visits abroad I see adequate...partners willing to engage in constructive work, I do not see it here [in Armenia]."

One Dashnaksutyun member, Gegham Manukyan, dismissed the minister's accusations and accused him of trying to drive a wedge between Dashnaksutyun members in Armenia and abroad.

"I would simply advise that Arayik Harutyunyan refrain from even thinking about that or else he will end up in a very bad place," Manukyan said.

Members of the ARF Youth organization said that the ministry has more critical priorities than spending tax-payer drams to fund projects that go against what they called "national identity."

In an announcement issued on Monday, November 11, the ARF Youth

experts before making this kind of decisions."

In response to the striking students and teacher, the education ministry issued a statement saying that each university was free to choose its mandatory curriculum, saying, "wide autonomy is given to universities under this bill to decide the content of educational and academic programs."

The ministry explained that in the event that the proposed bill is approved, the academic board of each university can decide whether these subjects should become mandatory in all departments.

"Moreover, in order to be accepted to any university in Armenia, Armenian nationals – regardless of selected major – are obliged to pass a single examination of Armenian language," explained the ministry.

The ministry said the bill not only does not reduce the role of Armenian and Armenian studies, but on the contrary "stipulates the sowing of these important values and training of respective specialists."

Talking to media, the minister, who also sits on the board of the ruling Civic Contract party of Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan, went on to accuse the leadership of Dashnaksutyun, who he said are linked to the former authorities, of creating "artificial problems for the Pashinyan government."

Pashinyan on Friday met with Armenian Revolutionary Federation Youth Organization of Armenia protesters who have been staging demonstrations to demand the resignation of Education Minister Arayik Harutyunyan, who has proposed curtail the teaching Armenian language and history in universities across Armenia.

regardless of selected major – are obliged to pass a single examination of

HayPost CJSC Awarded Gold Medal in 2019 EUROPA Stamps Competition

YEREVAN – On October 10, HayPost CJSC, the National Postal Operator of Armenia, received the gold medal in the 2019 EUROPA stamps online competition through public voting, followed by Turkish Post PTT (Turkey - Silver) and Posti Group Corporation (Finland-Bronze).

The event took place in Jersey, within the framework of the international PostEurop Plenary Assembly and welcomed over 150 postal industry professionals from over 52 European postal administrations.

The online competition, which involves voters all around the globe, had been officially launched from May 9 to September 9. It is noteworthy that this year's competition theme was "Natural Birds" and was aimed at raising awareness towards nature's sustainability.

Armenia was participating with a postage stamp fully illustrated inspired by the Armenian miniatures. The postage stamp depicts the barn swallow (*Hirundo rustica*) sitting on a branch in an environment typical for the flora of Armenia. The author of the stamp's design is the artist-designer of "HayPost" CJSC Ashkhen (Mila) Khandzratsyan.

On the other hand, a jury composed of six philatelic experts who participated in the EUROPA Jury competition, unanimously announced Posta Slovenije (Slovenia) as the winner of this year's EUROPA stamp Jury Prize.

Once again, HayPost reaffirms its commitment to show the world Armenian Philately and place Armenian stamps in the international philatelic market.



ARMENIA

Former Armenian Speaker Charged With 'Usurping Power'

By Naira Bulghadarian

YEREVAN (RFE/RL) — Law-enforcement authorities brought coup charges against former parliament speaker Ara Babloyan on October 28 as part of their investigation into Hrayr Tovmasyan's appointment in March 2018 as chairman of Armenia's Constitutional Court.

Babloyan was not arrested by the Special Investigative Service (SIS), unlike a former senior parliament staffer who was also charged with forgery and "usurpation of power" last week. He strongly denied the accusations.

"I stated that the accusations are illegal and that everything I did was in accordance with the constitution and laws," the 72-year-old pediatric surgeon running Armenia's largest children's hospital told reporters outside the SIS headquarters in Yerevan.

The SIS alleged last week that the former Armenian parliament elected Tovmasyan court chairman as a result of an illegal seizure of the judicial authority by a "group of officials." It said that Babloyan illegally accepted and announced the resignation of Tovmasyan's predecessor, Gagik Harutiunyan, before receiving a relevant letter from the latter. It said that Arsen Babayan, the arrested staffer, backdated the letter to enable Tovmasyan to head the Constitutional Court before the entry into force of sweeping amendments to the Armenian constitution.

The amendments introduced a six-year term in office for the head of Armenia's highest court. Tovmasyan became chief court justice under the previous constitution which allows him to hold the post until the age of 70.



Parliament speaker Ara Babloyan, Yerevan, December 30, 2018

In a weekend interview with RFE/RL's Armenian service, Babloyan insisted that Harutiunyan's letter of resignation was dated March 1, 2018 and that he received and signed it on March 2, 2015, not three days later, as is claimed by the SIS.

"Gagik Harutiunyan signed his resignation on March 1 and that document was on my desk on March 2," Babloyan said, adding that Constitutional Court and parliament seals on the document prove that.

The former Constitutional Court chairman

insisted that his resignation was voluntary and in conformity with Armenian law when he spoke to RFE/RL's Armenian service last week.

The SIS announced the coup inquiry on October 17 two days after seven of the nine Constitutional Court judges dismissed calls for Tovmasyan's dismissal made by the current Armenian parliament loyal to Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan. In an appeal to the court, the parliament claimed, among other things, that Tovmasyan cannot act impartially because of his past affiliation with the former ruling Republican Party (HHK).

Pashinyan similarly charged in July that Tovmasyan "privatized" the Constitutional Court with the help of the HHK. Tovmasyan countered early this October that the authorities are seeking to oust him in order to gain control over Armenia's highest court.

Critics, notably senior HHK figures, say that Babayan's arrest and other criminal proceedings targeting Tovmasyan are part of Pashinyan's efforts to force the high court chief's resignation. The prime minister and his political allies deny this.

Vahagn Hovakimyan, a senior lawmaker from Pashinyan's My Step alliance, on October 28 also accused Babloyan of committing serious procedural violations during the announcement of Gagik Harutiunyan's resignation. He said that the former speaker illegally followed a legal clause which he believes came into force in April 2018.

Babloyan and his lawyer, Aram Vartevanyan, dismissed Hovakimyan's claims.

First-Ever Nuclear Medicine Center Opens in Armenia

YEREVAN (RFE/RL)N — A new medical center providing radioisotope-based diagnosing and treatment to cancer patients has opened in Armenia amid a growing demand for the service that thus far Armenians have been able to get in the region only by traveling to neighboring Georgia.

The ceremonial opening of the center on November 8 was also attended by Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan.

The European Center of Nuclear Medicine fitted out with up-to-date equipment is the first such facility in Armenia that will provide radioactive iodine therapy for thyroid cancer, a disease that has a high rate in the country and the region in general. The center operates on the premises of the Erebuni Medical Center located in one of Yerevan's suburbs.

"Nuclear medicine is making great strides and is becoming a very trendy field in the world. That's why our administration has decided to have an advanced center [of nuclear medicine] in Armenia," executive director of the Erebuni Medical Center Mikayel Manukian said.

"Now patients will be able to receive high-quality therapy in Armenia, since all of our specialists are well-trained. We have a team of very good young physicists," he added.

According to Manukian, patients who until now had to go abroad for radioactive iodine therapy for thyroid cancer will be able to receive this treatment locally. Besides being more convenient, it will also be less costly for them, he added.

"A primary examination will cost patients about 40,000 drams (\$85)," he said, adding that the issue of government-funded treatment for socially vulnerable groups will further be discussed with the Ministry of Health.

For Single Photon Emission Computed Tomography (SPECT) diagnosis and later therapy Armenian cancer patients most often travel to Georgia.

The newly opened European Center of Nuclear Medicine in Armenia will be headed by radiologist Natalia Shengelia-de Lange, who had worked for 15 years at a Vienna Medical University clinic before heading two nuclear medical centers in Georgia.

"The center is equipped at the highest level. All measures of radioactive safety have been taken into account for both the patients and the environment," Shengelia-de Lange said.

Isotopes for the needs of the center will be imported from abroad in a particular quantity based on the needs of patients.

Several months ago scientists at Yerevan's Physics Institute announced that they had finally put a cyclotron into operation and managed to obtain a medical isotope.

But the center's physicist Gurgen Elbakian stresses that the isotope obtained at Yerevan's Physics Institute is not what is needed for the center. "We have two types of isotopes here. One is used for diagnosis purposes and the other for thyroid cancer therapy," he said.

Representatives of the center do not rule out that they will use the locally obtained isotopes if these isotopes are stable and of good quality. "There are still not isotopes [that we want] in Armenia. We hope that due to our physicists they will become available soon. But at this point we have an exclusive contract with one of the largest European isotope producers. These medical isotopes will be delivered to Armenia on plane," Elbakian said.

The European Center of Nuclear Medicine has been constructed as part of the Erebuni Medical Center's investment project. More than

\$1.2 million have been spent on the construction of the new facility that has lead lined walls and doors providing shielding from radiation.

For safety reasons patients receiving high-dose radioactive iodine therapy often have to be isolated for several days. The center says it provides various facilities for self-service as well as entertainment in patient rooms. Safety features also include a separate sewage system for rooms containing dangerous substances.

The center started receiving its first patients beginning on Saturday, November 9.

Pashinyan Allies Lambaste Kocharyan Over 'Trouble-Making'

YEREVAN (RFE/RL) — Pro-government lawmakers have vehemently criticized Robert Kocharyan over his article published on a Kremlin-funded news agency's website in which the former president described Armenia's current leadership as "pro-Western" and predicted "bad scenarios" for the country.

"Is a divided Armenia ready for bad scenarios?" queried Kocharyan in his article published on Sputnik-Armenia on November 8.

Kocharyan, who is being tried on coup and bribery charges and is currently in prison, also accuses the government of Nikol Pashinyan of weakening Armenian positions in Nagorno-Karabakh peace talks and committing gross mistakes. He warns of a new possible war with Azerbaijan that will entail "devastating consequences incomparably graver than ever before."

"We have seen bad scenarios during Robert Kocharyan's presidency," Andranik Kocharyan [no relation], a member of the My Step parliamentary faction and head of the parliament committee on defense and security, said, reacting to Robert Kocharyan's article on Friday. "It would be better if Robert Kocharyan at some point in his life started to talk about good scenarios... We want the new Armenia to go ahead with good scenarios and achieve strength that will enable it to always have good scenarios."

"If he [Robert Kocharyan] thinks that Armenia is moving along just one vector, he couldn't be more wrong. Armenia and its security system are moving in the direction that only adds to their capabilities and never reduces them for sure,"

Andranik Kocharyan added.

In his article Robert Kocharyan, in particular, accuses Pashinyan of effectively nullifying the agreements on strengthening ceasefire in the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict zone achieved with Azerbaijan by the previous administration of President Serzh Sargsyan following a brief escalation of fighting in 2016. He also claims "complicated relations" between the ruling elites in Armenia and Nagorno-Karabakh and blunders committed by Armenia's leadership in this regard.

"The prime minister's statement that 'Karabakh is Armenia, full stop!' has shifted the negotiations away from the principle of self-determination of peoples onto a plane of territorial integrity of nations, which is undesirable for us," Robert Kocharyan writes.

"I think that Robert Kocharyan should first of all answer when the Meghri issue originated. At that time, we were heading down a very dangerous path. Thank God, we managed to steer clear of that trap," said Andranik Kocharyan, referring to an alleged plan for a territorial exchange between Armenia and Azerbaijan as part of a broader Karabakh solution ostensibly discussed during Robert Kocharyan's presidency.

Another My Step lawmaker Ruben Rubinyan, who heads the parliament's foreign relations committee, said that in his article Robert Kocharyan uses talking points of Azerbaijan. "It can be described as trouble-making," he said. "I don't think that any Armenian politician, especially a person who formerly occupied the post of the president, could bring forth such pro-

Azerbaijani arguments," he said.

Rubinyan also rejected Kocharyan's claims that Armenia has a divided society today. "We saw people's unity during the 2018 Velvet Revolution. We saw people's unity during the 2018 December [snap parliamentary] elections. We've seen this unity also between Armenia and Nagorno-Karabakh," he said.

In his article Kocharyan also accuses Pashinyan of having a "pro-Western" orientation. The former president notes that among those that support Pashinyan are also political groups that call for the withdrawal of the Russian military base from Armenia. He claims that in Armenia today there are many government officials and pro-government members of parliament who espouse pro-Western views.

Rubinyan dismissed this claim as ridiculous. "We are against the idea of being 'pro-someone'. We stand only for the interests of Armenia and Nagorno-Karabakh," he said.

My Step's lawmaker Gayane Arakelian, for her part, argued that the goal of Kocharyan's article was to derail Armenian-Russian relations. The parliamentarian who sits on the European integration committee said: "Clearly this is a message to Russia that pursues certain goals. I say that Kocharyan will never stop at anything. Even if with each such message he deeply harms Armenian-Russian relations, he will never have repugnance to do so. He will resort to anything possible even at the cost of the state and statehood, even at the cost of the country's sovereignty," Arakelian said.



INTERNATIONAL

International News

Park in Turkey Built Atop Assyrian, Armenian Graves

ISTANBUL (Panorama.am) – A plot of land in Turkey's southeastern Mardin province containing Assyrian and Armenian graves has been transformed into a park, Ahval Turkish news outlet reported, citing left-wing news site Duvar, on November 12.

The newly-landscaped park in Mardin's town of Dargeçit, part of the ruling Justice and Development Party's (AKP) "national parks" project, hosts a recreational facility and a wedding hall, Duvar said.

The project had been launched by the town's state-appointed official in 2016, despite repeated warnings from residents on the sanctity of the land. The Turkish interior ministry in March of 2016 replaced the mayor of Dargeçit with a state-appointed official.

"It is neither ethical nor conscientious to build a recreational center and park atop a cemetery," Duvar quoted Dargeçit resident Abdulmesih Ergun as saying.

"This was once a Christian cemetery. There were once Assyrians and Armenians here," Ergun said.

In the beginning of the 20th century Mardin was home to more than 12,000 Assyrians and 7,500 Armenians.

Wrestler Wins Russian Tournament

ADYGEA, Russia (Panorama.am) – The 2012 London Olympic Games silver medalist, world and European champion Arsen Julfalakyan took part in a Greco-Roman wrestling pan-Russian tournament held and was named its winner.

The 32-year-old spent in bouts defeated his opponents 6-3, 4-0, 8-0, and 6-4, the Armenian National Olympic Committee (ANOC) reported.

Julfalakyán noted that it was hard to participate in such a tournament after a seven-month break.

"I fell short of training practice at some extent. My rivals were high-class wrestlers, prize winners of the Russian championship. I think I needed that tournament to understand my present physical condition and what gaps I should fill," the athlete said.

The tournament held from November 9 and 10.

Alleged IS member 'Marooned' between Turkey and Greece

ATHENS (Guardian) – An alleged American member of Islamic State has been marooned in the no-man's land between the Turkish and Greek borders after the Greek authorities refused him entry, according to a Turkish news report.

The Turkish television channel Haber 7 screened video images of a man dressed in dark clothes waving at the camera from the strip of land between the two border posts.

Jean-Charles Brisard, the president of the Centre for Analysis of Terrorism in Paris, said in a tweet that the video showed how "an Isis jihadist expelled by Turkey to Greece is literally stuck in the buffer zone separating the two countries after Greece's refusal to allow entry into the territory".

A state department spokeswoman said: "We are aware of reports of the detainment of a US citizen by Turkish authorities. Due to privacy considerations we have no further comment."

It was not clear whether the Turkish detention had come before or after the apparent attempt to expel the suspect via Greece.

The spokeswoman gave no further details but the timing of the statement issued in the early afternoon in Washington suggested that after expulsion to Greece failed the man had been taken into Turkish custody.

On Monday Turkey said it had begun deporting foreign members of Isis held in custody, in a policy that risks diplomatic fallout with its European allies.

One US citizen had already been repatriated and seven German nationals were due to be flown home on November 14., the interior ministry spokesperson Ismail Catakli said on Monday.



Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan meeting with Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov, Yerevan

Russian Foreign Minister Lavrov Visits Armenia

YEREVAN (RFE/RL, Armenpress) – Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan spoke of "more dynamic" relations with Moscow as he met with Russia's visiting Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov in Yerevan on Monday, November 11.

"The last time you were on an official visit to Yerevan was two years ago. During this period great changes have taken place in Armenia. I want to emphasize that as a result of these changes our relations have become more dynamic," said Pashinyan, who came to power in May 2018 as a result of peaceful street protests described by many in Armenia as a "velvet revolution."

Lavrov, for his part, also noted that changes in Armenia have not obstructed "the continuity in bilateral relations and development of allied and strategic partnership in all fields."

"We see very close contacts between our countries' economic departments; intergovernmental commissions are getting ready for work in Yerevan in the first half of next year. Yerevan will also host a Russian-Armenian inter-regional forum... Our departments are actively contacting each other," Lavrov said.

Later on Monday Lavrov held a joint press conference in Yerevan with his Armenian counterpart Zohrab Mnatsakanyan.

Speaking about the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, Lavrov said that no agreements can be formalized in the settlement of the issue without the consent of the people of Nagorno-Karabakh.

"Everyone understands that without the consent of the people of Nagorno-Karabakh it will not be possible to formalize agreements. Armenia will simply not sign them," said Lavrov, adding that during his meeting with Pashinyan the Armenian prime minister said that "final agreements should take into account the interests of Armenia, Nagorno-Karabakh, and Azerbaijan."

"And it is hard to argue with that," said the Russian foreign minister.

Biological Lab Access

During the press conference it was also announced that in the near future Yerevan and Moscow will sign a memorandum that will allow Russian specialists to access biological laboratories established in Armenia with US

assistance.

Russia long has pushed for access to three biological labs in Armenia, which have been sponsored by the United States. Some Russian media have alleged that the laboratories could have been involved in military research, something that Armenia has denied.

Lavrov also pledged that Russia will help normalize ties between Armenia and Turkey.

Lavrov arrived in Armenia on November 10. The same day in Yerevan together with his Armenian counterpart Mnatsakanyan he attended the opening of an exhibition dedicated to the approaching 75th anniversary of victory over Nazi Germany in 1945.

In his remarks Lavrov highlighted the role of Armenians in the fight against Nazism.

"The Armenian people are rightfully proud of their heroes, who made an invaluable contribution to the common cause of the defeat of Nazism," Lavrov said.

According to Armenia's Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Mnatsakanyan, for his part, stressed that "May 9 is our common holiday, our common day of remembrance of how we fought shoulder to shoulder and strove together towards victory."

"This victory is the joint achievement of all the peoples of the former Soviet Union, as well as the nations of the anti-Hitler coalition. This is truly a world holiday, as the Great Patriotic War – the Second World War was a struggle for the future of mankind," Mnatsakanyan added.

He emphasized that Armenians have a special attitude towards Victory Day and the heroism displayed by the people of the USSR during the Great Patriotic War. "The Armenian Diaspora also took part in the fight against Nazism. Its representatives were part of Resistance movements, fought as part of Allied forces, raised funds to help the Red Army," Mnatsakanyan stressed.

Later, President of Armenia Armen Sarkissian hosted Lavrov and his delegation, the Presidential Office told Armenpress.

Welcoming him as an old friend, Sarkissian said relations between Armenia and Russia are dynamically developing. He stated that Lavrov as a

foreign minister played a key role in the strengthening of the Armenian-Russian friendship. The Armenian President remembered his first meeting with Lavrov 25 years ago in New York when the latter was serving as Russia's permanent representative in the UN, and thanked him for the support provided to the Armenian diplomats in the UN.

Sarkissian conveyed his warm greetings to the Russian President Vladimir Putin and readiness to see him again in Armenia.

In his turn the Russian FM thanked for the warm welcome and also conveyed the warm wishes of the Russian leader to the Armenian President. "This shows our firm commitment to deepen the allied relations and strategic partnership in all spheres," Lavrov said.

Talking about the cooperation prospects, Sarkissian introduced several events to take place in Armenia next year within the frames of presidential initiatives, such as the Armenian Summit of Minds, STAR-MUS 6th international festival. In particular, Armen Sarkissian touched upon the ATOM (Advanced Tomorrow) presidential initiative on science and technology development in Armenia. The program aims at bringing major foreign technological companies to Armenia making the country one of the leading centers in artificial intelligence and math modeling. "We expect an active cooperation also with the Russian companies and educational institutions on the sidelines of this project," the Armenian President said.

The Russian FM welcomed all these initiatives which are directed for expanding the bilateral contacts and strengthening the relations.

Finally, Lavrov visited the Tsitsernakaberd Armenian Genocide Memorial in Yerevan.

He was accompanied by Deputy Foreign Minister of Armenia Shavarsh Kocharyan and Director of the Armenian Genocide Museum and Institute Harutyun Marutyun.

Lavrov laid a wreath and paid tribute to the memory of the victims of the Armenian Genocide, and then watered a spruce tree which he had planted at the Memory Park 12 years earlier.



INTERNATIONAL

Pashinyan Travels to France for Peace Conference, UNESCO Anniversary

PARIS – Accompanied by his spouse Anna Hakobyan, Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan arrived in France on a working trip to attend the Second Paris Peace Conference and the 40th United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) General Conference.

The official reception was attended by UN Secretary General António Guterres, European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen, President of the Democratic Republic of Congo Félix Tshisekedi, PRC Vice President Wang Qishan, Secretary General of the International Organization of La Francophonie Louise Mushikiwabo, UNESCO Director-General Audrey Azoulay and others.

On November 12, Pashinyan attended the opening of the Second Paris Peace Forum and a thematic discussion, at which he will deliver a speech. Prime Minister Pashinyan will present a symbolic gift to the Library of the Paris Peace Forum.

President of France Emmanuel Macron, Vice President of China Wang Qishan, President of the Democratic Republic of the Congo Félix Tshisekedi and President of the European Commission Ursula von der Leyen delivered opening remarks at the Forum.

The Prime Minister of Armenia handed a symbolic gift to the Paris Peace Forum Library, a book by Hayk Demoyan about Armenian athletes in the Ottoman Empire.

Introducing the book, the Premier said it is about Armenian sporting clubs and achievements in the Ottoman Empire before the 1915 Genocide. The book features photos of Armenian athletes who used to participate in sports, as well as advertisements which encouraged women to exercise. And it hap-



Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan and his wife Anna Hakobyan hold a copy of the book they donated to the Paris Peace Forum Library

pened more than 100 years ago in the Ottoman Empire – a society absolutely intolerant to the women's social and physical activity. Sporting clubs were established among Armenians against all odds and were contributing to the peace and peaceful coexistence between the Christian and the ruling Muslim Communities.

Pashinyan held private talks with Macron on

the sidelines of the Second Paris Peace Forum.

Macron thanked the Armenian premier for accepting the invitation to partake in the Forum. He stressed the great importance he attaches to developing multifaceted cooperation with Armenia. In turn, Prime Minister Pashinyan expressed gratitude for the warm welcome and high-level organization of the Forum. Pashinyan said meetings held on various occasions may add momentum to bilateral relations.

Pashinyan and Macron referred to issues high on the agenda of Franco-Armenian relations, as well as the prospects for launching visa liberalization talks between Armenia and the European Union.

Pashinyan visited the Office of the Organisation Internationale de la Francophonie to meet with OIF Secretary General Louise Mushikiwabo.

Later on he visited the pavilion of the IDEA Foundation on the sidelines of the Forum where he got acquainted with the exhibits, the Foundation's activities, including materials about the Aurora Humanitarian Prize. Aurora Prize Laureate, Dr. Tom Catena was in attendance.

Pashinyan also met with UNESCO Director-General Audrey Azoulay.

Pashinyan highlighted the ongoing cooperation between the Armenian government and UNESCO and reaffirmed Armenia's support for humanitarian missions carried out by this organization in different parts of the world. Noting

that Armenia is eager to expand the scope of interaction with UNESCO, the Premier hailed the Organization's sustained focus on the preservation of cultural heritage in our region.

Pashinyan emphasized that the Republic of Armenia is committed to promoting education as a powerful tool for training young generations in the spirit of peace, dialogue, human rights, tolerance and non-discrimination.

Pashinyan added that his government fully supports the Yerevan State University's proposal to establish a UNESCO Chair on Education and Genocide Prevention. He stressed that education is a powerful tool for preventing the crime of genocide.

Azoulay thanked Nikol Pashinyan for attending the 40th session of the UNESCO General Conference and praised Armenia's efforts to preserve its rich cultural heritage.

Late on November 11, Pashinyan arrived in the Champs Elysees, where he attended an official reception hosted by Macron in honor of the heads of state and government participating in the forum.

Kurdish Medics Injured In Apparent Attack on Ambulance in Syria

TAL TAMR, Syria (Guardian) – An ambulance on its way to rescue people wounded in a Turkish airstrike has been damaged in a bombing, in the latest of what Kurdish groups say is a pattern of attacks against medical staff in north-eastern Syria.

The ambulance, which had red markings indicating it was a medical vehicle, was heading to villages north of the town of Tal Tamr on Saturday, November 9, when it was struck by shrapnel from a weapon that exploded close by. The two paramedics inside were injured in the blast.

"The ambulance was targeted with heavy weapons," said Cadus, an independent German aid group and joint operator of the vehicle. "At the time of the attack our ambulance was not operating at the frontline."

Aram Hamidi, a Kurdish paramedic in the vehicle, said it had been hit by Turkish fire. "Our ambulance was struck and destroyed," he said in a video interview released by the Rojava Information Center, a media collective working in the area.

"Both I and my colleague who was driving were injured ... I was wounded by shrapnel. I still have a piece in my jaw, and all my teeth are broken."

A series of agreements between Ankara, Moscow and Washington halted a Turkish invasion of north-eastern Syria earlier this month, but fighting continues on the frontiers of territory under Turkey's control.

Kurdish groups say medical personnel have been targeted throughout the Turkish operation in the area and continue to be vulnerable. The Rojava Information Center estimates that five medical personnel have been killed since the invasion began last month. Three were abducted and executed and two died in drone strikes. A further seven at least have been injured, it said.

Sebastian Jünemann, the chief executive of Cadus, said it was unclear whether the ambulance had been hit by a drone or artillery fire, and that it was hard to tell if had been deliberately targeted. He said Cadus coordinated its movements with the UN's civil-military coordination centre.

"We have been targeted by Isis in Mosul but never by a state actor like Turkey for example," Jünemann said. "In Mosul we took certain security measures ... but in this situation the actor is a Nato member so we are assured that we are secure. Normally we should be safe."



Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan with UNESCO Director-General Audrey Azoulay

Turkey's Erdogan May Call off US Trip after Congress Votes

ANKARA (Reuters) – President Tayyip Erdogan may call off a visit to Washington next week in protest at votes in the House of Representatives to recognize mass killings of Armenians a century ago as genocide and to seek sanctions on Turkey, three Turkish officials said on November 4.

Erdogan is due in Washington on November 13 at President Donald Trump's invitation, but said last week that the votes put a "question mark" over the plans.

"These steps seriously overshadow ties between the two countries. Due to these decisions, Erdogan's visit has been put on hold," a senior Turkish official said, adding that a final decision had not been taken.

Turkish sources say Trump and Erdogan have a strong bond despite anger in Congress over Turkey's Syria offensive and its purchase of Russian air defenses, and despite what Ankara sees as the US president's own erratic pronouncements.

Those personal ties could prove crucial, given NATO member Turkey's purchase of Moscow's S-400 missile defense system, which under US law should trigger sanctions.

Turkey has already been suspended from the F-35 fighter jet program in which it was both joint producer and customer, and the offensive it launched against Kurdish forces in northeast Syria on Oct. 9 set the stage for further US retaliation.

Although Trump appeared to clear the way for the incursion by withdrawing troops, the White House briefly imposed sanctions before lifting them after a deal to halt the fighting and clear the Kurdish fighters from the border.

Then, two weeks after that deal, the Congressional votes infuriated Turkey once more.

Erdogan's spokesman Ibrahim Kalin said Turkey wanted to be sure that the president's planned Washington visit could achieve "concrete results" on issues including Syria, counter-terrorism, the defense industry and trade.

Erdogan "will make a final decision (on the trip) soon, maybe in a few days," he told reporters after a cabinet meeting.

Trump has expressed sympathy for Turkey over its purchase of Russian defense systems, blaming his predecessor for not selling Ankara US Patriot missiles. His eagerness to pull US

forces out of Syria also aligned with Erdogan's plan to send troops across the border to drive back the Kurdish YPG.

However, last month Trump threatened to "obliterate" Turkey's economy, and Trump sent Erdogan a letter on the day the offensive started warning him he could be responsible for "slaughtering thousands of people".

"Don't be a tough guy. Don't be a fool!" Trump wrote.

A Turkish security official cited Trump's letter, along with the votes in Congress, as damaging: "If the atmosphere doesn't change, there won't be any point to this visit".

Slideshow (2 Images)

Erdogan himself said three weeks ago he could no longer keep up with Trump's blizzard of tweets.

Still, for Ankara, Trump remains the best hope of salvaging a partnership between two countries which, despite their difficulties, want to quadruple their annual trade to \$100 billion.

"The two leaders have a good relationship," a source close to the Turkish presidency said. "President Trump wants to have good relations with Turkey in spite of his own establishment."

Community News

Westside Guild of the Ararat Home to Hold 28th Christmas Luncheon

LOS ANGELES – The members of the Westside Guild of the Ararat Home will gather at the Beverly Hills Hotel for their 28th Annual Christmas Luncheon. This annual event will be held on Saturday, December 7, with the festivities beginning at 10:30 a.m., affording guests the opportunity to start their holiday gift shopping at the Silent Auction and Opportunity Drawing, and to purchase the wide variety of home baked goods and specialties.

Barbara Poladian and Andrea Fehring, co-chairs of the Luncheon Committee, have been conducting meetings and working diligently in preparation for another successful luncheon. Their efforts are on display with the numerous items available at the Silent Auction, including jewelry, gift baskets, gift certificates, handbags, wallets, luggage, children's gifts and apparel. For the Silent Auction, Pirsch-Glendale has donated a chef-led cooking class for six winning adults in their world class showroom. This is a hands-on group class with each person playing a role; they will sit down in their demonstration kitchen featuring appliances by LaCornue, Miele, Wolf, Thermador and Gaggenau. The chef will guide them through each step of the process and make sure they are also having fun.

As in previous years, raffles are also held with cash prizes and other holiday gift items. A separate raffle will be held solely for the single prize of a TransAtlantic Cruise from London to New York for two people. There are other unique surprises the co-chairs are preparing to make this event extra special.

The luncheon at 12 noon will present a star-studded program headed by Carlo Ponti, founder of the Los Angeles Virtuosi Orchestra, and featuring two vocalists, Kim Mantzke Ortiz and Tina Mantzke Voss. Noralea Goodrow and Tamara Goodrow Buuck, co-presidents of the Westside Guild, report that they are thrilled and overjoyed to have Maestro Carlo Ponti, music and artistic director, take our guests on a musical journey, particularly during the Holiday Season. He will be conducting the music of well-known composers, and along with the vocalists, there will be a focus on the sounds of Christmas by having the audience sing along. One of the songs the women will be singing is *It's the Most Wonderful Time of the Year*, with an invitation for the guests to join in.

Ponti is the son of the late film producer, Carlo Ponti, Sr. and Italian actress Sophia Loren, and older brother of film director Eduardo Ponti. He was awarded Italy's Premio Galileo Award in 2006 for exceptional music achievement. In the United States he was the recipient of the 2008 Artistic Achievement Award from the Virginia Waring International Piano Competition and the 2009 Spirit of Hope Award from the Childhelp Foundation for his contributions to the development and advancement of young musical talent through music education. In 2011 he was co-recipient of the Lupa di Roma prize in Rome, and received the Premio Civitas 2014 Award in Naples, Italy. He was Associate Conductor of the Russian National Orchestra from 2000 to 2018, served as music director and principal conductor of the San Bernardino Symphony from 2001 to 2013 and in 2013 founded the Los Angeles Virtuosi Orchestra and is currently performing its fifth concert season (2019-2020) in Los Angeles. He is noted for the extraordinary work he is doing in our schools to provide musical opportunities and instruments for our youth.

Kim Mantzke Ortiz was raised in a musical family, and graduated from UCLA with a BA in music and a choral music teaching credential. She has been employed with Every Nation Ministries for over 20 years in campus ministry; also teaching elementary music. Throughout her career she has been involved as Director of Worship in her local church. Tina Mantzke Voss is a Billboard award winning recording artist and songwriter. She has appeared on Broadway, particularly the Frank Sinatra

see LUNCHEON, page 9



L to R: Haigazian University President Rev. Paul Haidostian, Ph.D., AMAA President Nazareth Darakjian, M.D., Honoree Herair Mouradian, Honoree H. Steven Aharonian, M.D., Haigazian University Board Chair Hasmig Baran, Ed.D., Honoree Vahe Nalbandian, Ph.D. and Honoree Louis Kurkjian

Haigazian Board of Trustees, Alumni Association Honors Retiring Trustees and Awards Six Scholarships

La Cañada, Calif. – Four Haigazian University Board of Trustees members were honored for their long years of service during the Annual Banquet organized by the Board of Trustees and the Alumni Association on Sunday, November 3, at the La Cañada Country Club. The banquet was the culmination of several days of meetings in Los Angeles, bringing together trustees from across the U.S. as well as Beirut.

The evening began with the opening prayer by former Haigazian University President Rev. Dr. John Khanjian and the audience singing the Alma Mater. Haigazian President Rev. Dr. Paul Haidostian, having just arrived from Beirut, shared: "The real wealth of Haigazian University is its people, past and present, be they Board members, students, faculty, administrators, alumni, supporters, or Women's Auxiliary groups."

Each honoree was presented with a plaque by Board of Trustees Chair Dr. Hasmig Baran. The four honorees, Dr. H. Steven Aharonian, Louis Kurkjian, Herair Mouradian, and Dr. Vahe Nalbandian, were introduced by Trustee Dr. Barkev Kassarian and AMAA President Dr. Nazareth Darakjian. Their comments clearly spoke of being privileged to serve such a remarkable endeavor.

Concerning the impact Haigazian has on many levels, Haidostian commented: "In addition to the regular academic programs, our teacher training workshops, publications, international conferences, internships for young officials from Armenia and Artsakh, and partnership with global educational centers, take us beyond the limits of the Beirut campus."

"My gratitude is to all who have made this day possible," continued President Haidostian, "especially raising funds for scholarships. Being that the annual scholarship budget is 1.5 million dollars, annual tuition is \$9,000, and the average annual household income not exceeding \$15,000, one may understand each recipient's gratitude. Special thanks to the AMAA, the Philibosian Foundation, and other partners for their continued commitment and generosity." Noting the coming celebratory year, President Haidostian said, "2020 is our 65th anniversary, with events being planned throughout the year in Beirut, Los Angeles and Yerevan!"

With their hearts and minds on the current problems occurring in Beirut, the evening highlighted the understanding that Haigazian University, with its diverse student population, will indisputably continue to be a vibrant institution, as its graduates continue to use their newly gained knowledge and expertise as leaders in their chosen fields to enrich Lebanon, the surrounding countries, and the Armenian Diaspora.

Banquet Co-Chairs Katia Kermoyan-Khodanian and Raffi Kendirjian and their committee are to be commended for organizing this event to bring hope and encouragement to young people in the Middle East aspiring to a brighter future through this unique university.

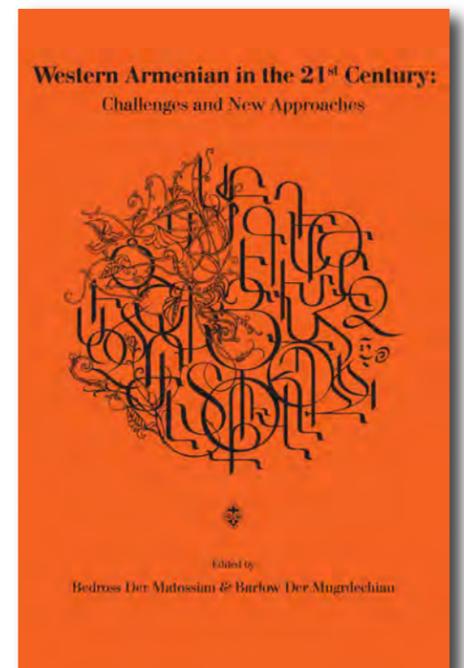


Banquet Committee

Panel Discusses Western Armenian In the 21st Century

By Florence Avakian

NEW YORK – A Nor'easter with pounding rain and howling winds did not prevent more than 60 brave souls in attending a fascinating forum on "Western Armenian in the 21st Century: A Dialogue About Challenges and New Approaches." The panel discussion was held in the Eastern Prelacy of the Armenian Church in New York on October 16. The departing point of the discussion was the recent publication by the Society for Armenian Studies (SAS) of the collective volume *Western Armenian in the 21st Century: Challenges and New Approaches*, edited by Bedross Der Matossian and Barlow Der Mugrdchian.



It was presented by the Armenian National Education Committee (ANEC), the Krikor and Clara Zohrab Information Center, and the Society for Armenian Studies (SAS), with Archbishop Anoushavan Tanielian, Prelate of the Eastern Prelacy of the Armenian Apostolic Church, in attendance.

Mary Gulumian, director of ANEC, welcomed everyone and introduced the topic and panelists. Dr. Christopher Sheklian, director of the Zohrab Information Center, served as moderator of the discussion. He began by bringing greetings from Bishop Daniel Findikyan, Primate of the Eastern Diocese of the Armenian Church of America, who he said "is deeply committed to a problem we all have to tackle," and hopes that different organizations will continue to work together to address the vitality of Western Armenian.

The panelists included Dr. Vartan Matiossian, executive director of the Armenian Prelacy and a distinguished Armenian Studies scholar; Jesse Siragan Arlen, a PhD candidate in Near Eastern Languages and Cultures at UCLA; and Gilda Kupelian, director of the Armenian Studies Department at the Eastern Diocese of the Armenian Church of America.

Sheklian set things in motion by asking how Western Armenian can be incorporated, and used in daily life, in every venue, and for all kinds of things.

Not Impossible to Learn Armenian

Matiossian, born in Uruguay, has written, taught and been published in English, Armenian and Spanish for 40 years. He stated that anyone can learn Armenian, and use it daily.

"Our defeatism should be taken away. It's important to be proactive," the scholar said. "One should not wait to be taught by someone. It's necessary to want to learn the language and make it relevant to daily life." He also stressed the importance of producing material for this purpose.

see LANGUAGE, page 7



COMMUNITY NEWS

Panel Discusses Western Armenian In the 21st Century

LANGUAGE, from page 6

Kupelian emphasized the importance of supporting Armenian schools, their structure and curriculum. “We have to use strategy. The work has to be planned, and not done by accident.” She emphasized that Armenian schools need financial allocations for resources and teacher training. One possibility for a new resource Kupelian suggested was the creation of “Armenian centers” where the language could be used in an enjoyable, natural environment.

Jesse Arlen stressed three necessary components: firstly, “Choice - Armenian being presented as a beautiful thing, not for money, but for meaning and value. Secondly, [Armenian] as a virtual entity, since today’s technology offers a large number of items on line. And thirdly, [Armenian] as a proactive part of our daily lives.”

Importance of Technology

Sheklian pointed out that because of today’s growing technology, daily newspapers are no longer the dominant force they used to be. Therefore, he asked the panelists to offer specific tools and material that can be used today to foster learning Western Armenian.

Matiossian explained that “our institutions need to develop any kind of publications for those over the age of eight. Things should be contemporary,” he said, adding as example the recent seven-volume Western Armenian translation of the “Chronicles of Narnia.” He recalled that when the Eastern Armenian translation of



Panelists included (l-r) doctoral candidate Jesse Siragan Arlen, Gilda Kupelian, Dr. Vartan Matiossian, and Dr. Christopher Sheklian

“Harry Potter” came out in Armenia, the kids there went crazy with excitement.”

Arlen continued with this theme saying that “Harry Potter” type of books that resonate with

youth are important. He added that whatever material that is developed should also try to employ current technology that is especially popular with younger people. He gave the con-

crete example of an Instagram account “Lsetsink,” (“We heard”), which presents funny snippets “overheard” by the managers of the account – but in Western Armenian.

Value Needs to Be Intrinsic

The moderator asked about the difference between valuing or loving the language as an imposition versus using the language, adding that, “Its value needs to be intrinsic. It needs to be used in daily life.”

Kupelian reaffirmed the need to cultivate the intrinsic value of Armenian, saying that the best students in the school she directs are “those *odars* married to Armenians. They want to learn Armenian.” Cultivating this intrinsic value, she added, requires the support of community leadership. Kupelian insisted parental and community encouragement to use Western Armenian is crucial for implanting this desire to learn the language.

A lively question-and-answer session with the audience followed. In response to a question about the role of the Republic in Armenia in fostering Eastern or Western Armenian, Matiossian said that “we in the diaspora sold ourselves in the name of Armenia, and therefore our lack of sufficient funds is also tied to that concept,” suggesting that the diaspora must foster the learning of Western Armenian and support a thriving life in diaspora as well as in the Republic of Armenia. In order for this to happen, Matiossian insisted, we need the support of our leadership and we must “put our money where our mouth is.”

“Absolutely crucial is that the Armenian language be used every single day,” he stressed strongly in conclusion.

Researcher to Present ‘Genetic Atlas of Historic Armenia’ at NAASR

BELMONT, Mass. – Researcher Dr. Levon Yepiskoposyan of the Ethnogenomics Laboratory at the Institute of Molecular Biology of the National Academy of Sciences of the Republic of Armenia will present a talk entitled “The Genetic Atlas of Historic Armenia,” on Thursday, November 21, at 7:30 p.m. at the National Association for Armenian Studies and Research (NAASR) center.

The event will be the first to take place in the new NAASR Vartan Gregorian Building which had its grand opening on November 1.

Yepiskoposyan’s talk will be part of the NAASR/Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation Lecture Series on Contemporary Armenian Issues and will be held in Batmasian Hall on the third floor of the new building. This program is free and open to the public. A reception will take place after the program in the Shahinian Solarium.

Located at the crossroads of Europe and the Middle East, the Armenian Highland (Historic Armenia) served as a transition corridor for major waves of prehistoric and historic migrations. The genetic history of Armenians as an indigenous population of the region attracts keen scientific interest to resolve the puzzle of ancient Middle Eastern populations’ expansion and the spread of Indo-European languages.

Since 2015, Yepiskoposyan has been part of a research team engaged in a project to draw a genetic atlas of historical Armenia in order to reproduce the rich spatial mosaic of the Armenian gene pool across time and space. Working at the cutting-edge of genomic research, Yepiskoposyan will share his insights into how genetic research is (re)shaping our understanding of Armenian history and the history of the region.

Yepiskoposyan is a member of the UCLA-ArmGenia genetic research project, is the director of the Karin Tak Cave excavation team in Artsakh, and has served as the Rector of Artsakh State University and President of the Armenian Anthropological Society. He is the author of more than 90 articles published in peer-review journals and books and is the author, co-author, or editor of four books. While he is in the United States he is participating in the Armenian Genealogy Conferences in Southern California and Fresno on November 16 and 17.



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COMMUNITY NEWS

NAASR Gala Celebrates New Building and Its Mission

By Aram Arkun
Mirror-Spectator Staff

CAMBRIDGE, Mass. – The atmosphere was giddy at the 65th anniversary gala of the National Association for Armenian Studies and Research (NAASR) at the Royal Sonesta Hall's Grand Ballroom. Nearly five hundred guests from Boston, many other parts of the US, and beyond were celebrating the completion of NAASR's new state-of-the-art headquarters in Belmont and looking forward to what will come next.

The guests, in addition to prominent philanthropists, intellectuals and longtime supporters of NAASR, included diplomats such as Armenia's Ambassador to the US Varuzhan Nersesyan and Armenia's UN Ambassador Mher Margaryan. Befitting the educational and cultural nature of NAASR, there was present an impressive roster of current university presidents, such as Joseph Aoun of Northeastern University, Lawrence Bacow of Harvard University, and Mary Papazian of San Jose State University, and past presidents Dr. Aram Chobanian of Boston University, Bruce Boghosian of the American University of Armenia, and Vartan Gregorian of Brown University.

David Ignatius, columnist of the *Washington Post* and a novelist, served as master of ceremonies and introduced himself in the context of the evening as primarily a brother and a son. A proud brother of Sarah Ignatius, NAASR executive director, he is the son of former US Navy Secretary Paul Ignatius, who was in the audience and would turn 99-years old the following week. David Ignatius noted in connection to



Yervant Chekijian

ferent points in the program featuring Dr. Lisa Gulesserian, lecturer on Armenian language and culture at Harvard University, Dr. Khatchig Mouradian, at Columbia University, and Dr. Laure Astourian, assistant professor of French at Bentley University, all younger scholars speaking in appreciation of NAASR's support of scholarship and Armenian culture.

NAASR Gives Thanks

Yervant Chekijian, chairman of NAASR's board of directors since 2016 and chair of the fundraising for the new building, expressed his gratitude to the donors, especially primary patrons Edward and Pamela Avedisian, who humbly named the building not after themselves but after Vartan Gregorian. Chekijian thanked the gala committee led by Sarah and Piligian, the NAASR board of directors, and all those involved in the project. Chekijian revealed that 6.5 million dollars has been raised for the building, with only 700,000 dollars more needed to cover its total cost. He recalled the first NAASR chairman and founder, Manoog Young, who worked tirelessly for decades, and his successors Nancy Kolligian and Raffi Yeghiayan. Chekijian invited his two predecessors to come up to the stage to each receive the NAASR Leadership Award.

Chekijian reminisced about his connection with NAASR. He was a teenager at the banquet where NAASR announced the first chair in Armenian studies at Harvard University in 1959. He said he was even prouder of the



David Ignatius

the new NAASR headquarters, "Constructing a building is a gift from the past and present to the future."

A series of brief videos were screened at dif-



Nancy Kolligian and Raffi Yeghiayan

new generation of Armenians, many of whom were in the audience that night. After ticking off all of the technological advantages of the new NAASR building, he said the building is only a platform for people to come together and continue NAASR's mission, to study collaborate write and explore the Armenian heritage, in a new era. "I know the future looks bright. I know we are guaranteeing that the future is secure," he confidently said.

The Transformative Power of Education – And Music!

Chekijian then called on Sarah Ignatius to address the audience. She said that she had meant to retire but instead found a much better calling as NAASR's executive director. She reported that NAASR ran an essay contest for undergraduates on the transformative power of education. That is the principle at the core of NAASR's mission, she said, and of Vartan Gregorian's life. The students wrote about professors or teachers who had a meaningful impact on their lives. There were two first-place winners, who had to fly in specially to speak at the banquet: Lillian Avedian, a University of California Berkeley senior who at present is studying in Santiago, Chile, and Gurgun Tadevosyan, a senior at New York University (NYU) who flew in from Abu Dhabi.

Avedian praised her pro-

fessor, Myrna Douzjian, and said that in her hands, Armenian literature is young, dynamic, free and ultimately, personal. Avedian said she grew up feeling stifled by Armenian culture, uncomfortable as a woman due to various constraints. She thought there was something inherently wrong with herself, and left the Armenian community.

Yet she felt something missing in her life, so she took a chance on the Armenian language class offered by Douzjian. Douzjian showed that feminism was not incompatible with Armenian culture, and allowed Avedian to engage with radical, daring Armenian poets and feel that she could embody their power. Now Avedian said, she writes constantly in Armenian periodicals and asserts her own voice, while embracing her heritage fully, thanks to the "role model of courage, intellect and power" provided by Douzjian.

Gurgun Tadevosyan, originally from Yerevan, spoke in a combination of awe and admiration of his professor, Nancy Rosenblum, at NYU, who is often called a superstar of political theory. He realized in her class that he wanted to teach politics in Armenia, giving his students tools to explain the values of freedom, introduce them to American ways of thinking about politics, why I should love freedom, why I should fight for it. Rosenblum helped Tadevosyan realize he can use his identity to connect Armenians to western political thought.

Between the talks, opera singer Isabel Bayrakdarian, soprano, gave a wonderful

continued on next page

KEN MARTIN PHOTO



Sarah Ignatius

OBITUARY

Yazidi Philanthropist Mirza Sloyan Dies in Germany

MUNICH, Germany – Yazidi businessman and philanthropist Mirza Sloyan passed away on November 3 after a complicated surgery. Sloyan, who made his fortune in Russia but was born near Aknalich, Armenia in 1946, was in Aknalich (Armavir province) on September 29 for the opening of the Yazidi temple he helped sponsor, Quba Mere Diwane, or the temple of Taus-e Malak. (See <https://mirrorspectator.com/2019/11/07/biggest-yazidi-temple-in-the-world-opens-in-armenia/>)

This is said to be the largest Yazidi temple in the world.

He sent a lot of aid after the Yazidi Genocide in Iraq by ISIS in 2014, and founded the All Russian Yazidi Congress and the Lalish internet television channel to present news about the Yazidis throughout the world in Russia.

The Sloyan family fled their village of Kyullug in Surmalu (today Igdir) to what became the territory of the Republic of Armenia during World War I, suffering losses and massacres due to attacks by Ottoman Turkish and Kurdish forces.



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COMMUNITY NEWS



Gurgen Tadevosyan

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performance of works by Gomidas and Sayat Nova which contributed to the uplifting and celebratory atmosphere of the evening. Bayrakdarian was accompanied by the Borromeo String Quartet (Nicholas Kitchen, violin; Kristopher Tong, violin; Mai Motobuchi, viola; and Yeesun Kim, cello, <http://www.borromeoquartet.org/>), which is in residence at the New England Conservatory.

Philanthropists and Educators

Ignatius introduced clarinetist and investor Edward Avedisian, who laid the foundations, quite literally, of the NAASR building as a result of his generous philanthropy, and gave him as a memento a framed picture of the building. Avedisian said that in the building, "I see a nucleus of much more to come."

Avedisian had insisted that the building be named after Vartan Gregorian, and now had the opportunity to show the assembled audi-

ence what Gregorian did to inspire this. Avedisian began by pointing out the roles played by the two most important women in Gregorian's life. Grandmother Voski taught Gregorian life lessons: most importantly, that one's integrity is not for sale. For example, while president at Brown University, Gregorian was offered the presidency of Columbia University. Though he wanted to take it, he had to refuse in order to keep the promise he made to raise the former's endowment to over one billion dollars, which he went on to accomplish. His word was always his bond, Avedisian said.

Gregorian's wife, Clare Russell, challenged him to accomplish more in life even after every great achievement, and consequently, over the many decades of their marriage, shared in all his many successes. From an old Yankee family, she became an ABC (Armenian By Choice), learning to speak, read and write Armenian.

Beyond their influence, Avedisian said, there was also that of the two lions at the entrance of the New York Public Library in Manhattan (Gregorian served as its president for eight years), named Passion and Fortitude.

Avedisian related an interesting anecdote about Gregorian, who kept the honor of the Armenians high on various occasions. Franz Werfel, who did so much for the Armenian cause by writing the novel *The Forty Days of Musa Dagh*, was not really recognized for these efforts by the Armenians. Gregorian took it upon himself to correct that, by having Werfel's body exhumed from its grave in Los Angeles and reburied in Vienna alongside many other Austrian luminaries.

An additional twist to the story is that Werfel was a nonpracticing Jew who embraced Catholicism without formally converting, so special arrangements had to be made for prayers. The Armenian archbishop in Vienna agreed to do it, but needed a deacon. As it happened, Gregorian learned by heart the entire liturgy as a child, so he ended up carrying out the deacon's role.

The cofounding of the Aurora Prize as an act of gratitude symbolically to those who saved Armenian lives during the Genocide sprang no doubt from the same wellspring as the Werfel story.

Gregorian took the stage and responded by noting that Avedisian, "a stubborn philanthropist," did not mention how he presented a great challenge to Gregorian. The latter rejected all attempts at naming the NAASR building after himself, but Avedisian would not give up. Eventually Gregorian's staff tipped the balance, calling Gregorian selfish to deny the donor his wish.

Gregorian agreed, but on one condition, that Avedisian's name would

appear on the building. "Guess what!" Gregorian exclaimed. "His name does not appear on the building...at least not yet."

Gregorian thanked all those associated with NAASR for the honor, and confessed that in the beginning, he did not believe the Armenians could create such an organization. He congratulated Manooq Young, posthumously, for his vision and accomplishments.

Gregorian extolled the values of Armenian culture, which even celebrates two saints for their role in the creation of the Armenian alphabet. He said, "Being Armenian means that you are original."

He spoke of regional, religious and political divisions among Armenians, but concluded that when the Ottoman Turks tried to annihilate the Armenians, they did not see them as Protestant, Catholic or Apostolic Armenians.

"Today we have a nation, independent Armenia, and we have to get used to it. For the first time -- I have lived long enough now to say this, I have seen unity among Armenians which I have never seen." NAASR with its new building, he said, is an manifestation of the unity of Armenian efforts.

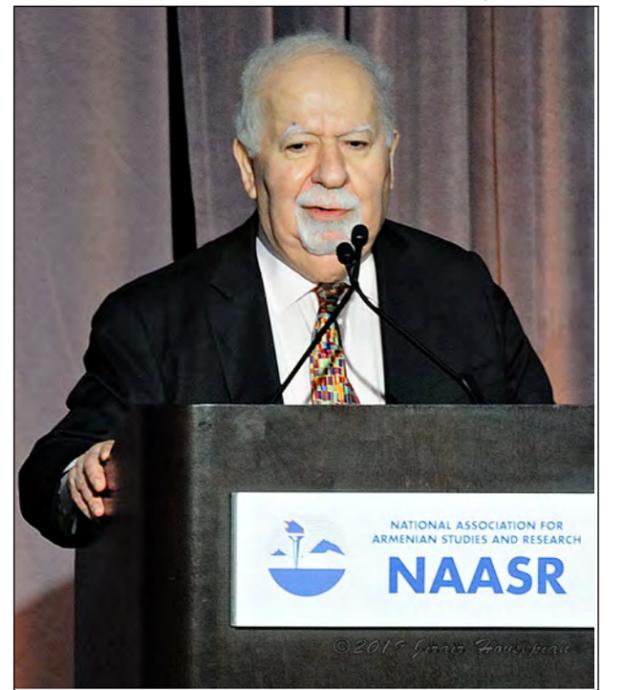
Gregorian recently visited Armenia, and said he was very heartened. He saw that the Armenian youth were eager to learn. He saw that Carolyn Mugar has planted 6 million trees in Armenia over 25 years through the Armenian Tree Project. He saw his partners Ruben Vardanyan and his wife Veronika and Noubar and Anna Afeyan, who "have provided

an infrastructure for Armenia's reconstruction." They have helped, he said, to gather forces to make Armenia a center for tourism, banking, industry and education. (See interview with Vartan Gregorian on Page 1.)

He said, "My hope is that as we do the Aurora Prize, another thing which Ruben and Noubar started and I joined, we recognize that the time has come for us as Armenians in America to pay back what America did for us." Americans of all faiths contributed to one of the largest humanitarian aid commitments, of over 100 million dollars, in the World War I period and its aftermath. Americans also helped Armenians stranded in the wake of World War II during the beginnings of the Cold War.

Now he said, it is time for Armenians to invest in those who are not doing well around the world, and that is what the Aurora Prize does. In this way, he said, Armenians would act as leaders and not as followers. He said, "We were there when nobody spoke. Now, we speak when nobody speaks." He asked that Armenians support the Ararat Challenge fundraiser (<http://100lives.isebox.net/auraprize2018/ararat-challenge-the-second-chance-our-world-deserves#restofofext>).

Gregorian concluded, "It gives great pride to me to be associated with NAASR's building and NAASR's mission because having a library means we are here to stay. We are here to contribute as equals. We are not here as recipients. We are also contributors. ... God bless all the heroes of Armenia who have fought for this...God bless all of you and God bless Armenia."



Vartan Gregorian



Edward Avedisian



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Westside Guild of the Ararat Home to Hold 28th Christmas Luncheon

LUNCHEON, from page 6

musical "My Way." She is a graduate of American Musical and Dramatic Academy in New York. She has been a worship leader at the First Presbyterian Church of Hollywood and serves as a guest worship leader at different churches throughout California. Renowned musician and composer Jan Sanborn will be accompanying the vocalists.

A special highlight of the afternoon will be the traditional presentation of the Angel of the

Year Award. This year the honoree will be Liliana Youssoufian in recognition of her dedication, commitment, and years of devoted service to the Westside Guild and the Ararat Home of Los Angeles.

Tickets for the luncheon are \$95.00. Sponsorships are available with all donations benefitting the Ararat Home of Los Angeles. For reservations and/or sponsorships, please contact Lynnette Amerian, lynamerian@yahoo.com.



Carlo Ponti and the Los Angeles Virtuosi Orchestra

COMMUNITY NEWS

Mirza Dinnayi's Aid to Terror Victims Recognized with Aurora Prize

PRIZE, from page 1

The American Shai Fund works to defend religious minorities, primarily in the Middle East and Africa, including the minorities living in the Nineveh plain in Iraq. Its president and founder, Charmaine Hedding, declared at a Yerevan press conference held immediately after the Aurora Prize was announced, "I just want to say to the Aurora Forum, you are a light... the light that you have shed on some of these issues is absolutely phenomenal. It is an honor and privilege to be with you all here this evening and to be part of this fantastic event, and also more specifically, to highlight the plight of the Yazidi minorities that have been sex slaves, that have been sold in sex markets



Charmaine Hedding, president and founder of the Shai Fund

like we have never seen before. In our time, I never thought that we would see this and to not do anything. For those of us to say never again, not on our watch, for those of us who read about the Armenian Genocide, the Holocaust, how can we not get involved? The call tonight is to be a light, like the Aurora Forum, and to stand up for people like this, persecuted religious minorities. Mirza, it is a privilege to be here with you."

Dinnayi said at the same press conference that the SEED Foundation, based in Erbil, is "actually the best NGO in all Kurdistan and Iraq because of the professionalism of Mrs. Sherri Kraham Talabany," its president. Talabany said, "Our mission is to help survivors of violence and conflict in their recovery. ...We are a devel-



Sherri Kraham Talabany, president of the SEED Foundation

opment NGO, a human rights NGO. We provide long-term care, mental health, psychotherapy, case management, legal protection services. We work with Yazidi survivors of Daesh. We work with survivors of trafficking, survivors of human slavery and we provide long-term care, because if you don't treat the survivors of trauma, you'll continue the cycle of violence in Iraq that has plagued the country for decades."



Mirza Dinnayi receives a medal as Aurora Humanitarian from the 2011 Liberian Nobel Peace Laureate and Aurora Selection Committee member Leymah Gbowee

Path to Humanitarianism

While Dinnayi was the center of attention in Yerevan and attending glittering gatherings, it is his work with the most vulnerable, under the most distressing conditions, that singled him out.

Dinnayi, the son of the chief of a Yazidi tribe, grew up in a village in the Sinjar province of Iraq, in Shingal. He remained there until he finished the 12th grade and received his baccalaureate degree at the age of 18. He said that when he was 3, Saddam Hussein deported the Yazidis from their villages in this area to big collectives. He said, "I saw the Iran-Iraq war, and how the Yazidis were killed. They could not express their religion so freely under the Saddam regime."

The Yazidi religion was not accepted in the Iraqi constitution. Furthermore, there were informal obstacles to Yazidis holding high positions in the military, government or judiciary. There were some major legal issues for Yazidis, Mandaeans, and Christians in Iraq. Dinnayi said that if a husband or wife converted to Islam, either freely or forcibly, according to Iraqi law, all the minor children would have to convert and the non-Muslim spouse would automatically be divorced, as the spouse would be considered an infidel. For Yazidis, this was true for either husband or wife, but for Christians only in the case of the woman if the husband converted.

"I saw such discrimination from the beginning," said Dinnayi. "When you grow up seeing such discrimination you have a special understanding of the whole universe, and, for example, why this happens to me."

He began to write short stories and poems at the age of 15, mainly about the rural farming culture he knew and the Yazidis. It was not permitted to study in the mother tongue of the Yazidis, Kurmanji, so he and other Yazidis became proficient in Arabic. Even now, Dinnayi said, his Arabic is better than his Kurmanji.

Dinnayi became involved in a student group while studying medicine at the University of Mosul, but Iraqi intelligence got word of it and attempted to catch the members. Dinnayi managed to escape through the Kurdish borders in 1992 to the Kurdish area of Iraq, but the Iraqi Kurdish civil war forced him to seek asylum in Germany.

In Germany, he became engaged in many Yazidi cultural activities, advocated for the rights of non-Muslim minorities in Iraq, and worked for peace and coexistence. After the fall of the Saddam regime in 2003, when Kurdish leader Jalal Talabani became interim president of Iraq, he invited Dinnayi to become his advisor for non-Muslim minorities. Dinnayi said he stayed there from 2004 to 2005 but it was hard for him to reintegrate into Iraqi society after becoming used to a German lifestyle. More importantly, a civil war had engulfed Baghdad

by 2006 and 2007 and death was always around the corner. His family would call every few days to ask what he was doing there.

After this, he became an advisor for some ten years to the Kurdish Regional Government (KRG) in Erbil concerning disputed regions,



Some of the children receiving treatment in 2007

which include Yazidi, Christian and Turkmen populated areas, claimed by both the KRG and the central government.

Air Bridge Iraq

On August 14, 2007, Dinnayi was in Germany when the extremist Sunni Muslim terror organization al-Qaeda attacked two Yazidi villages near Mosul in Iraq, killing more than 300 people and injuring more than 850 with truck bombs inside the villages and markets. About 60 children were among the latter.

By this point, Dinnayi had studied both medicine and law, and though not a practicing doctor, knew what the needs were. He did fundraising in Germany for the victims and then went as a volunteer to distribute the money and aid. When he saw many children in the hospital who would die soon without help, he posted an appeal in a German newspaper, *Neue Osnabrücker Zeitung*, asking for hospitals to host some of these child victims. Two hospitals agreed.

The real challenges then began. Dinnayi said that as the children were from villages, they did

not have any passports or identification papers, and the age of one child, who had no family left, was not clear. Dinnayi asked the Iraqi government to issue some kind of passport for them. He also spoke with the German ambassador in Iraq, and explained the emergency. As Dinnayi had dealt with him before when he was an advisor to the government, he trusted Dinnayi's judgment and agreed to issue visas within days of receiving the passports. This was a big risk for the embassy because, explained Dinnayi, there was no German NGO in Iraq at the time because of the civil war, and no one believed that Dinnayi would return the children to Iraq after treatment.

Within three days, the passports arrived. The problem, Dinnayi said, was that "all Baghdad was a ball of fire." A friend at the German embassy requested that Dinnayi stay in the hotel until going to the airport. As a German citizen, if Dinnayi went outside, he might be kidnapped and cause the government problems.

Yet the hotel happened to have been attacked by al-Qaeda three or four weeks prior and activists and politicians staying there had been killed. Half of the hotel had been destroyed and food was not available.

Dinnayi took the passports and visas of the six children in the first group and went to Erbil, from which he planned to take a charter flight to Germany. The German embassy did not allow family members to go.

He said, "So you can imagine, I had a 6-year-old child who cannot speak, barely walking. I had a girl with broken legs in a wheelchair. I had two other boys, also in wheelchairs. So I was alone with those six children."

An ambulance took them to the airport, but after a wait of two hours, they were told that



A child receiving treatment in 2007

Turkey would not allow the charter flight to pass through its airspace.

Dinnayi said, "The children were very upset. The families told me, 'you brought the children



COMMUNITY NEWS



Crowds mobbing the rescue helicopter August 8, 2014

150 kilometers from Dohuk to the airport. Now they cannot fly – what are you doing?’ Everybody was blaming me.” He took the children to a hotel and the next day got them tickets for a flight to Istanbul. There they booked an airport hotel to stay overnight, and a flight to Düsseldorf, Germany, the next day.

The next morning at the Istanbul airport, the person responsible for check-in refused to let the children on because the flight had no medical equipment. Dinnayi had no choice but to ask for the manager and play hardball. He recalled that he said, “These six children are victims of the al-Qaeda terror organization. You have a choice. I can call BBC and CNN in Istanbul and tell them that al-Qaeda killed the innocent minorities of Iraq but the Turks are not allowing us go, or you will bring me a piece of paper and I will sign that all that happens to the children is my responsibility. I will not charge anything. I will not ask for any compen-

unteer workers, do not receive any pay. Approximately 150 children from all over Iraq and from all religious communities (Muslim, Christian, Yazidi etc.) have received treatment in all. This does not include work to aid survivors of the 2014 genocide of Yazidis attempted by ISIS.

Assistance to Yazidi Victims of ISIS

Dinnayi was in Erbil for his job as advisor to the KRG as Mosul fell under the control of ISIS on June 10, 2014. He was planning to return to Germany for a summer vacation with his family but he called his wife to cancel, declaring that he feared a huge catastrophe would soon occur. Indeed, two months later, the Yazidis in Sinjar were attacked and the entire community displaced. When 325,000 people went to the mountain it was a huge problem due to the lack of water and food.

Dinnayi was engaged in lobbying, meeting every day with diplomats to try to convince the international community to act. The whole mountain area was occupied by ISIS and the safe zone was 150 kilometers away. For this reason, the Iraqi government decided to initiate a humanitarian mission via helicopter from the Kurdish area to bring food and water there and extract vulnerable people to the safe area.

Dinnayi volunteered to fly with the helicopters, he said, because he knew all the areas where the refugees had collected and was in contact with them. Nearly every day he was with the flights, which were being shot at by ISIS. The helicopters were very old Russian Mi-17 models which were supposed to hold 20-25 people and yet each time they picked up 40-50 people.

“One day,” Dinnayi said, “our helicopter crashed because of overload and I broke my leg. Unfortunately, I lost my friend who was the pilot and some of the refugees died. But we were very lucky, because the crash was over the mount.”

Dinnayi was in a wheelchair for three months as his leg and broken ribs healed. He came to Germany and then to Geneva only one week after his return to speak at the UN Human Rights Council on the Yazidis, which led to an investigation about the Yazidi Genocide.

Helping Yazidi Girls and Women

Only 1½ weeks later he returned to Iraq and met the first group of girls who had been raped by ISIS. He said, “I was ashamed to hear these stories of atrocities, as a man, to hear what happened with those innocent girls of 16, 17 years old. I decided, I said, well, the catastrophe of the Yazidis and the plight of the Yazidi people is so huge that maybe I cannot help them in all the issues, but maybe I can do something for those women and children. And this was the reason that I concentrated my work to help the survivors of ISIS, and the women and children especially, who were sexually abused.”

He helped pressure the Yazidi Spiritual Council to accept these women, because in the beginning the Yazidi community itself would not accept them. Fortunately, the Yazidi religious

leader or Baba Sheikh accepted these children and women. Yet, Dinnayi realized, there is no medical or psychological aid for these traumatized beings in Iraq. There is only one psychotherapist per every 250,000 people in Iraq, and generally that person has no experience in trauma.

One of the German states, Baden-Württemberg, decided to accept up to one thousand of the women and children victimized by ISIS. The Germans asked Dinnayi to lead this project. Dinnayi did this as a volunteer, and his NGO became a partner of the German project. A German team from the government ministry led and decided for the project, but Dinnayi led the receiving commission in Iraq.

Within almost 9 months, 1,100 women and children were resettled through this project. Dinnayi said it was a very, very hard job. He worked 18 hours a day and had to interview all the women and children. He said, “I myself was traumatized, because you hear every day 20 stories of rape, and you ask yourself, every time, why did people do that to those innocent women. I saw 9-year-old or 11-year-old girls who were pregnant because they were raped 20 times or 30 times. ... In the summer of 2015, I was actually at the end. I couldn’t sleep. I was crying every day. I came back to my family, to my wife and children living in Germany. And I told them, okay, let’s go and take three days’ vacation.”

During those three days, he debated with himself whether he



Mirza Dinnayi with Lamya Haji Bashar at the International Criminal Court, October 14, 2016. Haji Bashar was forced by ISIS into sexual slavery. She escaped in 2016 but was injured by a land mine. Dinnayi’s Air Bridge Iraq helped her obtain medical treatment and she became an activist for the Yazidis. In recognition of her human rights achievements, she was given the Sakharov Prize of the European Union.

should withdraw from the project and seek psychological treatment himself. At the end, he decided that if he withdrew, the project would collapse because no one could live under such stress. On the other hand, he said that if he continued, “it is only helping me, because I see these atrocities and besides that I see that I can help those victims so maybe this will help to heal my trauma. And I was lucky, that I had overcome this trauma. Until now, I have these traumatic ideas.”

The project also had various bureaucratic hurdles to be overcome. The Germans required detailed files on each woman, each between 11 and 32 pages, which Dinnayi had to translate. Then most of the husbands of the women had been killed or were missing, so they were not allowed to get passports for the children nor to fly without their husbands.

Dinnayi went to Iraqi civil courts and asked them to issue a temporary guardian certificate for the children, with which passports could be obtained. When children did not have family, Dinnayi ended up being the guardian.

He had no time for anything but work. Dinnayi related, “The problem was that I even forgot day and night during the project, because I was sleeping one night in Duhok (my office was in Duhok), and then I went with the beneficiaries to Erbil, almost two hundred kilometers, sleeping one night there; flying in a special charter with 60 or 70 people to Stuttgart, Germany, sleeping one night in Stuttgart, then moving by train to my family, sleeping one night there, then coming back to Erbil because I had to prepare the next mission. So I was during four days in

see AURORA, page 12



The helicopter which crashed August 12, 2014, on which Mirza Dinnayi was riding

sation if anything happens. I am responsible alone in person.”

This was accepted, and after the children were treated for about two months in Germany, Dinnayi brought them back to Iraq successfully.

At this point, he thought that since there is no German humanitarian organization in Iraq he and his German friends might as well make one. He said, “We called it Luftbrücke Irak because of the Luftbrücke Berlin after Second World War, which also provided humanitarian aid via the air.” It was formalized as an organization in November 2008 (see <https://luftbruecke-irak.de/?lang=en>) and it helps terror victims of all creeds and backgrounds.

From 2007 to the present, all funding has been from private donors and friends. The host families in Germany, along with vol-



COMMUNITY NEWS

Former AMAA VP Peter Kougasian Honored by NYC District Attorney's Office

NEW YORK – Peter Kougasian, Esq., former Board Member of the Armenian Missionary Association of American (AMAA) and Vice President and a long-time active member of the Armenian Evangelical Church in New York City, was honored on September 27 by the New York City District Attorney's Office at a celebration of his 40 years of service as an Assistant District Attorney and as “an extraordinary human being.”

Kougasian was an elected member of the AMAA Board since 1996, serving during that time as vice president and as chairman of the Armenia Committee. He also served as moderator of the Armenian Evangelical Church of New York for many years. He is a long-time member of the New York City Bar Association serving as former vice president, former chair of the Executive Committee and former chair of the New York City Bar Association delegation to the House of Delegates of the New York State Bar.

“We congratulate our dear friend Peter on this very prestigious honor,” said Zaven Khanjian, AMAA executive director/CEO. “His service to the AMAA is founded on the same principles that he has come to be known for in his profession – loyalty, dedication, devotion, service and commitment.”

The standing-room-only crowd of Kougasian's former colleagues and many friends was present at the celebration to unveil a bronze plaque that will hang outside of the Manhattan DA Office Training Center, which has officially been named after him. The plaque reads:

“The Peter M. Kougasian Training Center – Dedicated to Peter M. Kougasian, Assistant District Attorney 1979-2018. Executive ADA and Counsel to the Special Narcotics Prosecutor, Senior Trial Counsel, Bureau Chief, Director of Legal Training, Co-Founder Diversity Program, Conviction Integrity Committee, Ghostwriter Extraordinaire. In each position held during his 40 years as a prosecutor, Peter committed himself to justice, improving the institution that he revered, and serving the city he loved. He taught us the practice of law through his

brilliance of words, his kindness of heart, inventive humor, and a touch of magic.”

The dedication ceremony, presided over by current District Attorney of New York County Cyrus Vance, Jr. Esq., featured several notable speakers, including Supreme Court Justice Sonia Sotomayor, a friend and former colleague who, by video, praised Kougasian for his long career. Speakers also cited his friendship, mentoring, loyalty, wisdom, leadership, dedication, humor, generous heart, faith, pride of his Armenian heritage and his love of magic.

A Phi Beta Kappa graduate of Princeton University and a Yale Law School graduate, Kougasian has been “a friend for all seasons, a forever friend, a formidable public lawyer by day and a magician by night,” according to Judge Robert Katzmann, Chief Judge of the US Court of Appeals



Peter Kougasian, Esq.

for the Second Circuit and a 40-year friend and former Yale classmate. “Peter found a love for magic in college and performed whenever and wherever he could, even once before fellow amateur magician Johnny Carson. He has been called the ‘Amazing Kougasian’ and ‘Uncle Peter,’ performing at many clubs in New York as well as internationally. Peter is a person of profound faith and has

been proud of his Armenian heritage. He makes all of us better and brings out the best in all of us. As we celebrate Peter's life today, we also celebrate his wife Beth and son Alex who are at the center of his life.”

“Peter's retirement is a loss for all of us,” said Vance, his former boss. “His gift to me was to share the magic of his gift of writing. I am forever grateful for your years of friendship, Peter. I love you. We all love you. I thank Peter for being in our lives; you are someone we've all looked up to. The plaque will now hang outside of the Training Room. In the days and years ahead, feel free to touch the plaque and get a touch of Peter's magic.”

Bridget Brennan, Esq., Special Narcotics Prosecutor for the City of New York, said that “Peter guided many colleagues with their careers and was a sounding board, trusted friend and advisor for us. His guidance has been invaluable, and it is fitting that this Training Room is named after Peter as he has trained and educated so many of us who are here today. You shaped our outlooks and our careers.”

“Peter, you are a man of integrity, honor and valor,” said Supreme Court Justice Sotomayor, who was a classmate of Peter's both at Princeton and Yale and worked with him under the late Robert Morgenthau, Esq. in the DA's Office. “I hope that every young ADA who visits this Center will realize the very high bar you've raised for us in learning and mastering our skills as lawyers and as human beings. It is fitting to name the Training Center in your honor, Peter, as your words, heart, humor and magic have touched so many. Your epic struggle with ALS has been an example for all of us. You have told me that your faith has buoyed and sustained you. I know that is true, but I see much power in your indomitable spirit. The Training Center is lucky to have that spirit at its heart.”

In a touching moment, from his New York City hospital room where he has been treated for ALS since November 2018, Kougasian spoke on camera to his assembled friends with the assistance of an electronic device.

“I am truly humbled and touched by this honor,” said Peter. “You know that I am passionate about training because it is through training that we convey the value of our greatest assets. Your friendship sustains me, and I am thankful to everyone who has made this ceremony possible.”

To see the entire video of the dedication ceremony, visit <https://www.manhattanda.org/peter-m-kougasian-training-center-dedication/>

Mirza Dinnayi's Aid to Terror Victims Recognized with Aurora Prize

AURORA, from page 11

four different places...So every time, it was like a joke, before I opened my eyes. Am I at home, I shouldn't do a mistake at least in front of my wife...where is the bathroom?”

Dinnayi said, “I am so happy when I compare the situation of those women and children who we got to Germany and the children and women who are still in the camps. There is a big difference. The children are very well integrated. They still have this pain. There is an injury inside them that we are not able to heal, unfortunately, because you cannot return back to them their pasts, and you cannot bring their relatives back to them, but their lives are secure, they are no longer living in tents.”

The girls and women got visas for two years and there were 22 municipalities in the state of Baden-Württemberg state which placed those women in special houses. There they had 24-hour translators, a social worker would take care of them, and each family had its privacy. After 2 years they were moved to regular housing units, the children went to school and the women went to treatment. This was the first time in the history of Germany that a state undertook such a project, Dinnayi said, which is why the project is so unique.

After this, the Canadians started another project for resettlement and took a couple of hundred of the women and the Australians did the same. No Americans helped.

Yazidis and Armenians

Dinnayi speaks often about the special relationship between Armenians and Yazidis.

The Armenian parliament and now the Aurora Prize have provided special recognition to the Yazidi Genocide. He said, “This is the first time that the Yazidi were accepted and we are so lucky that Armenia, especially the grandchildren of a previous genocide 100 years ago, recognized this genocide.” Furthermore, he said, “Through the establishment of this forum and this prize Armenia became one of the greatest nations, because they are in solidarity with the victims of genocide.”

In general, he said, “The Yazidi community in Armenia is a well-integrated community in Armenia.” He noted the recent building of a new Yazidi temple in Armenia and contrasted that to the situation in Iraq. If a temple would be destroyed in Iraq, there would be no possibility of rebuilding it, as Yazidis are treated as infidels.

He said, “I think we share a cultural heritage together, but unfortunately we also share a history of pain.” Aside from culture, Dinnayi has found that there are even close genetic connections between Yazidis and Armenians. He said, “I did a DNA investigation with the Family Tree DNA laboratory in the US on some 30 Yazidis from Iraq and the nearest population to the Yazidis was the Armenians. In my family tree, I have more than 100 matches of which many, many are Armenian. 75 percent of my matches were from Armenia and Asia Minor.”

The Future

Prior to the Aurora Prize, Dinnayi had another small humanitarian project in Iraq, but at present he said he was mainly working for the recognition of the Yazidi Genocide in Europe,

especially with the European Parliament. The latter has passed various resolutions, but what he wants, he said, is to have a special tribunal, either a hybrid tribunal for the crimes of ISIS concerning the Yazidi Genocide, or an internationalized Iraqi tribunal to bring those ISIS fighters to justice and try them according to the international conventions about genocide. While many ISIS fighters are in prisons, they are being tried according to the Iraqi anti-terror law or the Iraqi penal code and not in connection with genocide or international crimes in general. Dinnayi said that the Iraqi penal code is a joke—it is very easy for rapists, for example, to have impunity and overturn any punishment due to a provision allowing this if a certificate of marriage is presented afterwards.

Dinnayi noted that many countries, among them Armenia, symbolically recognized through their parliaments the Yazidi Genocide, which he said is very good and important. He added, “We know that this challenge will take a long time. We know about the Armenian Genocide, that it took 100 years until some countries said yes, while the perpetrators until now say no, this was not a genocide...So you see how difficult a situation it is.”

He is also working to persuade other countries to accept more women and more victims, though there are no new projects in this vein so far. In the past five years, Dinnayi said, little has changed. Around 80 percent of the Yazidis from Sinjar remain refugees or internally displaced persons in the camps in Kurdistan or outside of Iraq. The people refuse to return to their villages, he said, while those who remain seek an

opportunity to leave.

Among the problems is the corruption of the current Iraqi government. It took no steps towards transitional justice and reconciliation. The future, not only for the Yazidis but also the Christians and Mandaean, is bleak, he said, if there is no special zone or a kind of autonomy established in Sinjar, or the Nineveh plain for Christians. Furthermore, although ISIS is not in this area at present, militias and the Iranian-Turkish conflict create instability.

Meanwhile, Dinnayi is afraid that the Turkish invasion of Syria may lead to a big wave of refugees coming to Sinjar. He exclaimed, “I hope that the international pressure on President Trump, on the Europeans, will put enough pressure on Mr. Erdogan to stop this invasion, because it is against humanity, it is against international law.” All the Yazidis meanwhile have been deported or displaced from places like Afrin, Syria, over the last five years. There used to be around 35,000 Yazidis there. Some were forcibly converted to Islam.

Going forward, Dinnayi has no intention to slow down.

Dinnayi will continue his work, despite paying a heavy personal price, including health issues. He declared, “If you start humanitarian work, you will be part of this humanitarian family and you cannot stop any more. Because you are in direct touch with the victims, with the people in need, with the vulnerable children women, men, and if you stop for one minute, you will feel guilty and you cannot stop more. This was the reason [I continue my work]. I was not expecting to get a prize from any people.”



COMMUNITY NEWS

A Life Well Spent In Pursuit of Education, Hope and Paying It Forward

GREGORIAN, from page 1

boards of a dizzying array of top-tier institutions: University of California at Los Angeles (professor) and University of Pennsylvania (provost); Brown University (president) and the New York Public Library (president). With the latter, he took on an immense challenge, bringing back the huge system from the depths of financial disarray and chaos and made it a glittering part of the city's fabric.

He serves on the boards of the National September 11 Memorial and Museum, and the American Academy in Berlin and served on the boards of the J. Paul Getty Trust, the Aga Khan University, the Qatar Foundation, Brandeis University, Human Rights Watch, the Museum of Modern Art, and the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation. And the list goes on and on.

And now, he is the co-founder with Dr. Noubar Afeyan and Dr. Ruben Vardanyan, of the Aurora Prize for Humanity, an Armenia-based foundation which aims to pay forward the kind deeds of non-Armenians who reached out to help during the Armenian Genocide.

NAASR Calling

For this Iran-born, Stanford-educated historian, at 85, life still offers thrills and challenges.

The new NAASR building is named for Gregorian, but the bulk of the funds were donated by Ed and Pam Avedisian of Lexington. They declined NAASR's offer to put their names on the building, instead asking for Gregorian's name. It was an offer that Gregorian himself declined repeatedly.

"I was contacted by David Ignatius. I know him very well. For the past four or five years, he has been the master of ceremonies for the Aurora Prize in Armenia. He is a very good man and a friend," Gregorian said.

As he recalled, Ignatius said he had "an unusual request. 'Would you meet a delegation from NAASR with a donor whose condition for helping us finish our building is naming it after you.'" The three-member team included David Ignatius' sister, Sarah Ignatius, the executive director of NAASR, Ed Avedisian and NAASR Board Chair Yervant Chekijian. (See related story on Page 8.)

"I said I don't want it. There are many other worthy Armenians," he recalled, noting that he suggested Charles Aznavour, among others. "They said no, that's the condition."

He mulled the issue while the visitors stayed at the Yale Club, waiting for his answer. "My staff said you're very selfish if you turn it down. I reluctantly agreed with the condition that Ed's name be on it too."

Gregorian had met Avedisian before in Armenia, where the latter was there, at the Khoren and Shooshanig Avedisian School (<https://mirrorspectator.com/2012/03/21/ed-ward-avedisian-offers-hope-to-poorest-children-of-armenia/>).

The school provides tuition-free learning as well as a state-of-the-art building in one of the poorest areas of Yerevan.

"I came to know him and respect him," Gregorian said of Avedisian.

Armenians are lucky, he said, to have "people like Carolyn Mugar who has planted 6 million trees, Ed and Pam Avedisian, Ruben Vardanyan for the UWC Dilijan College whose students are all admitted to Ivy League schools."

Gregorian said he has had longstanding ties to NAASR. He said he was a friend of founder Manoog Young and an early supporter of his efforts to establish endowed chairs of Armenian Studies. NAASR established the first chair of Armenian Studies at Harvard University in 1959.

"I thought it was impossible to accomplish what he (Young) was trying to do," to get universities across the US to have Armenian Studies chairs. "I thought there was not enough of a demand for Armenian Studies. I thought it was considered esoteric. But Manoog Young tried coordinating the universities," he said.

Gregorian added that he intends to donate his Armenian collection to NAASR, which is rich with a lot of publications and periodicals from the Soviet era.

In addition, he said, now major universities around the world, including Oxford, have Armenian studies programs. "It is remarkable that non-Armenians are teaching our culture,"

he said, noting that many chairs are occupied by non-Armenians.

In the wake of the founding of the chairs, "a whole new generation" of scholars emerged, from Richard Hovannisian to Ina Baghdiantz McCabe.

US Diaspora

Gregorian, as he also said at his speech during the opening ceremony of the NAASR building, said that the Armenian community in the US is now at the best place it has ever been.

He noted that in addition to the new NAASR

He added, "A good Armenian and good American are not mutually exclusive. We came here for the Constitution, where all men are created equal. We don't have to give up our culture or religion."

Aurora Future

One of the projects near and dear to Gregorian now is the Aurora Humanitarian Initiative.

"Aurora was established as an act of tribute to those who helped Armenians during the Armenian Genocide," he said.



Dr. Vartan Gregorian at the opening of the NAASR building named for him, with Ed and Pamela Avedisian (Jirair Hovsepian Photo)

building, the new Armenian American Museum in Los Angeles is going to open. There is a sense of changing of the guard in the Armenian diaspora, he added. For much of the previous century, the Armenian communities in the Middle East had been considered the most stable and strongest. Now, he suggested, the baton has been passed to the US.

The Armenian nation, he said, has two lungs – the Armenian diaspora and Armenia. "When one lung collapses, the other has to function until the other recuperates," Gregorian said.

And now, he said, he wants to make sure that Armenia is strengthened. "We have built all over the world but we have never invested in Armenia. Now we are in a position to help. Look at Singapore, Calcutta, Madras," he said. "We have lost all of those."

"There is too much talent and ambition in Armenia. If they are not satisfied, they will leave. They need the opportunity to shine," he added.

His ambition for the small republic, he said, is to make education from kindergarten through college first-rate, through heavy investments, thus making Armenia the center of technology, banking and medical fields in the region. He also advocated the opening of small enterprises.

In addition, he said in much of the diaspora, the divisions have disappeared. "The diaspora is forming for the first time a sense of unity," he said. "Whether it is the AGBU or Homenetmen, all over the world, there are various communities," he said.

"We all function united as a big river, like the Amazon," he said. "We are not in America temporarily. We need to strengthen for the sake of Armenia."

He praised that new vitality in the community for doing its part toward the adoption of the Armenian Genocide resolution in the House of Representatives earlier this month. "That's what happened with the recognition of the Armenian Genocide. It all came together. It is a very promising time. We speak with one purpose, one language when it comes to national interest."

That is why, he said, Aurora is focusing on people like Dr. Tom Catena, who works in South Sudan, or Marguerite Barankitse in Burundi. Both have been winners of the Aurora Prize for their efforts in saving lives.

"Catena declined the first time he was nominated because he said he couldn't leave his patients," Gregorian recalled. The US-born Catena is the only doctor in the Nuba Mountain in Sudan, where he has lived for more than a decade. He finally agreed to come to Yerevan and pick up his prize when several doctors from Armenia volunteered to take his place at his clinic.

"We had to get him a suit," Gregorian recalled, as the doctor did not have one.

He also paid tribute to other previous winners Kyaw Hla Aung, the Rohingya lawyer helping his people who have been forced out of Myanmar, enduring horrors in the process, as well as this year's laureate, Yazidi activist Mirza Dinnayi, who has been a vital support to the survivors of brutal attacks by IS on Yazidis in Iraq. (See related story on Page 1.)

"No Muslim nation stood for him [Kyaw Hla Aung], but little Armenia did. All of them [the Aurora winners] are doing the right thing," Gregorian said.

With the millions of dollars disbursed through the laureates, Gregorian said, Aurora has helped 850,000 around the world. "Each candidate gets to pick who gets the money. That is where Aurora comes in," he said.

In addition, now Aurora has launched the Ararat Challenge, a crowdfunding campaign to support those in urgent need for basic humanitarian aid around the world.

"God gave us a second chance. We are trying to see how we can give back," Gregorian said.

He added he is proud that Armenia is now home to the largest Yazidi temple in the world, and that the government of Artsakh has renovated the mosque in Shushi.

"Our conflict is not religious, but historic and ethnic," he added.

Gregorian said that he was incredibly touched by one honor in the past, that of an elementary school in Providence, the home of Brown University, which he led for years. "It was the best recognition for me. It reminded me what my values are," he said.

He recalled his love of books which got their start at the Diocesan library in Tabriz, Iran.

When asked to look back on his many achievements and explain how he has crammed in so much, he thought for a few seconds before answering with a shrug. "It had to be done. You do things because they are right."

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Arts & Living

Adaptation Of Armenian Novel to be Produced by Egg & Spoon

NEW YORK — *Zabelle*, Nancy Kricorian's award-winning novel about one woman's survival of the Armenian Genocide, is being produced by Egg & Spoon as part of its third season. The piece was originally created and produced at Syracuse University's Department of Drama in 2015. It was directed and adapted by Leslie Noble, a professor in the department, and devised by an ensemble of four performance students: Sarineh Garapetian, Julián Garnik, Catherine Giddings, and Lindsey Newton.

Those four artists will return to the piece almost five years later to launch Egg & Spoon's 2019-2020 Season at Access Theater.

"The experience of adapting Ms. Kricorian's powerful story of survival and directing a performance with these extraordinary young people was on that has stayed with me over the years," says Leslie Noble. "The students are now teachers. The story continues."

The idea to adapt Kricorian's novel came from Sarineh Garapetian, who now serves as a producer, when she was a sophomore at Syracuse. Her intention was to perform it in April 2015 to commemorate the 100th anniversary of the Armenian genocide. "When it got closer to the centennial, I felt that it was impor-



Sarineh Garapetian

tant to have a piece that would not blame but inform others, about a time in history that many of my classmates didn't know about," Garapetian states. "But working on the piece became about much more than that — it started a conversation. Audience members began sharing their own stories, in response to ours. And ultimately, this conversation is what made producing *Zabelle* feel that much more important."

In the suburbs of Boston, *Zabelle* Chasbanian's life is nearing an end. And as her present is fading, a distant and forgotten history is reemerging to the surface: her childhood as a refugee during the Armenian genocide. "Through *Zabelle* we humanize the one and a half million Armenians lost in the genocide," said Adam Coy, director. "While growing up in a Jewish household, my mother instilled the phrase, 'we must remember.' We must remember to honor the many senselessly lost to persecution, and we must remember so that we don't allow it to happen again."

"*Zabelle*" runs November 14-17 at Access Theater in SoHo. Tickets can be purchased at www.eggandspoontheatre.org/zabelle.



Pablo Bedrossian from Honduras

'Armenians, Wherever We Meet, We Are a Family'

YEREVAN-SAN PEDRO SULA (HONDURAS) — **Dear Pablo, this is for the first time I have met an Armenian living in Honduras. Please introduce yourself.**

My name is Pablo Bedrossian. I was born in Buenos Aires, Argentina and currently live in the second biggest city of Honduras, San Pedro Sula. My grandfather,

By Artsvi Bakhchinyan

Special to the Mirror-Spectator

Agop, was a heroic survivor of the Genocide. My grandmother, Loutfia, survived the massacres of Marash. I am a medical doctor (cardiologist), but after 13 years working as a physician, I decided to change my

occupation. I worked as a senior manager in pharmaceutical companies, and have been doing it for 18 years. I studied business and got an MBA. A local company from Honduras, called Laboratorios Finlay, brought me to this country. Five years ago I started my own consulting company GO UP / Expertos en Negocios (www.goup-ca.com). I am married, with a daughter. I am a man of faith and my highest pleasure is reading and traveling around the world.

According to *The Southern Side of the Earth: Armenians in Latin America From the Beginning to 1950* by Vartan Matiossian, already in 1929 the government of Honduras required \$2,500 from different migrants, including Armenians. This means that the Armenian presence in Honduras might be already for 90 years. According to www.armeniadiaspora.com there are 900 Armenians in Honduras, but I doubt if this number is correct. What would you say?

I came to Honduras from my birthplace Argentina at the end of 2002. Since then I began to look for Armenians, but the search was very hard. I summarized my search in an article called "Los Armenios en Centroamérica" ("Armenians in Central America"), which was translated to English, French and Italian). I found the first reference in a magazine that talked about an old man, an owner of a restaurant — an American, but "half-Armenian descendent." Although he lived so far from my home, in 2006 I drove three hours to meet him. He felt touched when I said my last name. "Bedrossian is my mother's family name too," he said. When I went back in 2007, he had returned to United States. Also, Manolo Keosseian, a professional football (soccer) coach from Uruguay, lived in Honduras for a while for job reasons (in 2007 and 2019). Now he lives in Montevideo. Three years ago, a client of mine told me about another Argentinean Armenian, Adriana Keichian. She is married to a Honduran and is in charge of a school for special children. As you see, I could find very few Armenians in Honduras, most of them current immigrants.

There is a family whose last name is Gurdian. The first information about them was found in the 19th-century in Nicaragua from where they spread to Costa Rica and a few to Honduras. Some members of this family consider themselves to be Armenians, but others believe they are Spanish. Pablo Gurdian Bond, in a thorough article, supports that his family came from Spain. I answered him with another paper called "Las dos historias del apellido Gurdian" ("Two Stories About Gurdian Surname"). In my research I discovered a family story about three brothers that came from Armenia to Nicaragua in the 19th century. Also, the last name does not exist in Spain, but the Armenians have Kurdian. So, the descendants might be

see PABLO, page 15

Giving to Keep a Language Alive: UCI Alumnus Funds Second-Year Western Armenian Course

By Valerie Elwell

IRVINE, Calif. (*UCI News*) — Noubar K. Ouzounian, M.D. '85 knew his professional path was to become a doctor when he was just thirteen years old. In 1968, in a community hospital in the outskirts of Beirut, Lebanon, Ouzounian witnessed his father die of a gallbladder infection that could have been prevented with a proper diagnosis, a course of antibiotics and more proactive management of his care.

"When that happened, I said to myself that there has got to be a better way to treat people—with more scientific knowledge and more compassion," Ouzounian says.

Intent on this goal, Ouzounian studied hard and completed medical school at the American University of Beirut in 1980, during the height of the Lebanese Civil War. He decided to pursue a medical internship in the United States and was admitted as a legal resident. He was applying to various Southern California residency programs when he got a call back from the University of California, Irvine (UCI) School of Medicine saying that they had an opening for a one-year internship, and he was welcome to interview.

"It was a Wednesday. I came down from Pasadena to UC Irvine. They were interviewing each applicant for about 10-15 minutes. I got two minutes and then they said 'thank you very much.' So, I thought I wouldn't get it. The next day, I get the phone call — you're accepted and come sign the papers. So, on Friday, I arrived. It was one of my happiest days ever," he says.

He discovered he liked the medical specialty otolaryngology [commonly known as Ears, Nose and Throat or ENT] and decided to apply for that residency. While most applicants would have to wait a year before starting, Ouzounian was able to start a month later due to an unexpected opening. He then became one of the first three residents to train at Kaiser Permanente in 1984 through a cooperative program between UCI and the hospital.

"That program is now a regular rotation for the UCI otolaryngology residents. They spend six months with us at Kaiser. I'm now one of 15 doctors who train them, and about half of us are UCI graduates," he says.

Ouzounian has been practicing at Kaiser Permanente in Orange County since 1985. He's a board certified otolaryngologist with a practice primarily concentrated on thyroid and ear surgeries. To date, he's trained more than 50 physician residents from UCI and was the recipient of UC Irvine's Outstanding Volunteer Clinical Faculty award in 1997.

While the School of Medicine forms one of Ouzounian's deepest connections to UCI, there's more to his UCI story.

Born and raised in Lebanon, Ouzounian is Armenian. Both sides of his family were displaced during the Armenian Genocide. His father's family ended up in a refugee camp in Lebanon; his mother's settled in Syria.

Like many refugee families, Ouzounian's found it painful to discuss their memories of the genocide. What Ouzounian does know is that his maternal great-grandfather was shot dead in front of his grandfather. Later, his grandfather and his sisters and mother were able to escape disguised as Kurds.

For this reason, Ouzounian is invested in preserving the heritage and language of his ancestors. He has found that UCI, with its vibrant Armenian Studies Program, is playing a vital role in this preservation and is thus a worthy recipient of his support.

see OUZOUNIAN, page 15



ARTS & LIVING

Giving to Keep a Language Alive: UCI Alumnus Funds Second-Year Western Armenian Course

PABLO, from page 14

Armenians: the mystery still remains.

We know there are many cities and towns in Central and Southern America named Armenia, including two in Honduras. Have you ever been there?

In Honduras there are more places called Armenia. When I published another paper called "Sitios de Centroamérica llamados Armenia" ("Places in Central America Called

Armenia, a small village in the Copan department, in the Western area of Honduras. Also, in Honduras there is a río Armenia (Armenia river) in Yoro department, as well as a small community called Armenia. I could never visit those places, but I visited Armenia in Sonsonate, El Salvador. Vartan Matiosian, the wonderful expert that you mentioned in the beginning, explained me the origin of those names: the Vulgata (the Bible translated to



Pablo Bedrossian With Manolo Keosseian (right), at the lahmejoun party at Pablo Bedrossian's place.

Armenia"), I found only two sites in Honduras and both with the same name: "Nueva Armenia" ("New Armenia"), one on the north coast and the other one in Francisco Morazán, in the middle of the country. Years ago, an Armenian guy sent me a message telling me that he visited an unknown place for me, Nueva

Latin by San Jerome, says "And the ark rested... upon the mountains of Armenia" instead of "Ararat", the original word. Under the Spanish influence there was a tradition to choose biblical places to name cities and towns in America; that is the most probably reason of the name.

We know that the government of Azerbaijan makes anti-Armenian propaganda in the countries with few Armenian population – did they do it also in Honduras?

The people in Honduras have a low education level. Most of them do not know about Azerbaijan, so we do not have this problem. Many of the most powerful families in Honduras came from Palestine; they arrived in the early 20th century. They are Christians, not Muslims. Here they are commonly called "Turks" because, under the splint of the empire, they arrived with a passport of Ottoman nationality. During the coup d'état of 2009 I took a picture of a curious graffiti with the message "Turcos genocidas" ("genocidal Turks"), not with our meaning of course.

Have you or the others made any efforts to introduce Armenia in Honduras?

Yes. I have published articles and sent books as gifts about Armenians telling the tough story of the Genocide. The common people do not know about it. Carlos Antaramian, another great expert, author of the book *Del Ararat al Popocatepetl: los armenios en México* ("From Ararat to Popocatepetl: Armenians in Mexico") wrote me about the interest of the new Armenian ambassador in Mexico (who is in charge of Central America region too) to visit us in the future. It would be an excellent opportunity to present Armenia and his history to

Honduran people.

What would you say about the Armenians in the bordering countries of Honduras – Guatemala, El Salvador and Nicaragua?

The situation about Armenians in those countries is very similar to Honduras. There are very few; most of them were born in other countries. For example, Samuel Berberian, who was born in Athens and raised in Argentina, was dean of Theology Faculty of Universidad Panamericana of Guatemala. Also Edgardo Surenian, an evangelical pastor from Argentina, spent few years in El Salvador.

I am sure you are in touch with the Armenians in Argentina – what about Armenia and other communities?

I am! Just few days ago, I visited San Lazzaro, the Armenian island in Venice. There I met father Hamazasp Kechichian. In 2018 I met Mesrob Lakissian, the priest from the Saint Illuminator's Armenian Apostolic Cathedral of New York. Also, in 2019 I visited the Armenian Cathedral in Moscow and the Armenian Church in Paris. Wherever I travel I try to find Armenians. One of the most interesting experiences was my visit in 1990 to Krikor Der Balian, in Swaziland, a small African country. Krikor has built a small Armenian Church in his land. The Armenians, wherever we meet, we are a family!

Well, Pablo, thanks... and I hope your next trip will be Armenia!

Giving to Keep a Language Alive: UCI Alumnus Funds Second-Year Western Armenian Course

OUZOUNIAN, from page 14

In 2017, at the Armenian church in Costa Mesa, Ouzounian attended a lecture given by Houri Berberian, professor of history and the Meghrouni Family Presidential Chair in Armenian Studies at UCI.

"She was just starting the Armenian Studies Program and she spoke about her vision to make it a dynamic center for the study of Armenian history and language. That's what moved me to initially donate to the program," he says.

In 2018, Berberian, with the help of many Armenian community members, launched a language series in Western Armenian.

This is important because the majority of Armenians were divided between the Russian and Ottoman empires in the 19th century. Two vernacular Armenian languages—Eastern and Western – developed independently of each other. The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) declared Western Armenian an endangered language in 2010, mainly because almost all those speaking it are either refugees or descendants of sur-

says.

Even the most ardent supporters of Western Armenian could not anticipate that the first-year language course offered at UCI would quickly reach maximum enrollment. Its popularity spurred the School of Humanities to seek funding for the 2019-20 academic year to secure the course for a second-year. It was Ouzounian who stepped in, making a generous donation to ensure it continued.

"Let's face it. If you're an Armenian living in Argentina, in France, in the US, your exposure to the Armenian language, especially books or poetry is limited; you are mostly reading and speaking the language of that country. So, it's important to have programs for those who want to study the literature and develop their knowledge of the language. That's why I'm interested in supporting this endangered language program," he says.

As director of the UCI Armenian Studies Program, Berberian's next goal is to preserve the teaching of Armenian language at UCI in perpetuity by establishing an endowment.

"The people in the community need to know where to give. I'm sure they want to help but



Dr. Noubar K. Ouzounian

vivors of the genocide.

"This is the language that, in a sense, the genocide tried to eliminate by eliminating its speakers. So, it's crucial historically for the descendants of Western Armenian speakers to be able to pass down the language," Berberian

sometimes it's hard to trust where your donation goes and what it serves. I want my fellow Armenians to know about the program, to trust that their donations will go towards valuable research and continuing our language and heritage," Ouzounian says.

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ARTS & LIVING

Visiting Scholar at Armenian Museum

WATERTOWN – The Board of Trustees and staff of the Armenian Museum of America announced this week the arrival of visiting scholar, Dr. Alisa Dumikyan.

Born in Armenia, Dr. Dumikyan received her master's degree from the Yerevan Brusov State University of Languages and Social Sciences (1995-2000) and a second master's degree from the International Center for Scientific Education of National Academy of Sciences of the Republic of Armenia (NAS RA) (2006-2008). She received her PhD from the Institute of History of National Academy of Sciences of the Republic of Armenia (2009-2013).

Dumikyan has spent her career teaching and researching in Armenia and abroad: from 2001 to 2009 she taught at the Yerevan Brusov State University of Languages and Social Sciences, the Russian-Armenian University and other universities. From 2008 to 2019, she worked as a senior researcher at the Institute of History of the National Academy of Sciences of the Republic of Armenia.

Her area of focus surrounds the issues in the historiography of ancient and early medieval Armenia from the 19th century and has written prolifically on this matter. Her publications include the following articles and papers: "To the problem of conceptual approaches of the French Armenologists and Orientalists to the history of the Kingdom of Van," "Taik in the Assyrian and Biainian cuneiform inscriptions, ancient Greek and early medieval Armenian sources (the interpretations of the 19th century French armenologists)," "Historical and spiritual perception of Armenia in the maps of French researchers of XVII-XIX centuries," "The reliability of the 19th century French and modern Armenological interpretations of the Biblical information about Mt. Ararat in the light of the Qumran manuscripts," "The Interpretation of information on the Armenian King Abgar by French Armenologists of the 19th century."

Dumikyan's initial attention will be on strengthening the museum's scholarship of its ancient and medieval objects.

She also expressed her delight with the arrangement. "I was very honored when I was invited to work at the museum as an Armenian Researcher. The Armenian Museum is a unique institution with a very rich and extensive collection representing various periods throughout Armenian history, and I feel extremely fortunate to have this wonderful opportunity to share my knowledge and expand upon it with the vast



Dr. Alisa Dumikyan

resources at the Armenian Museum and its library," Dumikyan said.

She added, "Of special importance are the materials from the Urartu/Van Kingdom, the collection of ancient Armenian coins and stamps donated by Paul Bedoukian (the largest collection outside of Armenia), medieval Armenian manuscripts, ceramics, metal ware and rugs, which are a testament to the rich Armenian historical heritage. The museum's key mission is preserving and spreading Armenian historical and cultural heritage and the development of Armenology in the United States and Armenia, as well as for Armenians and non-Armenians throughout the world."

Apo Torosyan's Work Exhibited in New Hampshire

NEWFIELDS, N.H. – Artist Apo Torosyan's new exhibit at Main Street Art, is taking place through November 22.

The gallery is located at 75 Main Street.

"In the previous phase of my art work I portrayed the dark side of life, which was the Armenian Genocide, my family history. Now I am portraying the lighter side of life, which is light itself, representing hope," Torosyan said.

The title of the show is "Reflections," which he added, "is part of that evolution, a celebration of life."

Istanbul-born Torosyan graduated from the Academy of Fine Arts, B.F.A./M.F.A. in 1968, and emigrated to the U.S. in the same year. After establishing a very successful visual design company, he sold his company in 1986 to dedicate his time to his art. Since then he has had many solo and group shows all over the U.S. and Europe. His art work has appeared in private and corporate collections in Turkey, Greece, Spain, France, Armenia, Canada and the U.S. his art works are in the permanent collections of the Museum of Modern Art at Tonneins, Bordeaux, France, the Armenian Library and the Museum of America in Watertown, MA; Ararat Eskijian Museum in Los Angeles; Armenian Western Diocese in Burbank, CA; A.G.B.U. Manoojian Collection, Montreal, Canada; Sacred Heart University, Fairfield CT; Flaten Art Museum in Northfield, Minn., and is



"Reflections," by Apo Torosyan, each panel 36" x24"

in the permanent collection of the Holocaust Museum in St. Petersburg, Florida.

He was a member of the Boston Printmakers and the International Association of Genocide Scholars.

For gallery hours, visit <http://www.mainstreetart.org/>

Recipe Corner

Guest Recipe



by Christine Vartanian Datian

Zucchini Walnut Bread

INGREDIENTS

2 cups shredded zucchini (from about 2 medium zucchini)
2 cups flour
3 large eggs, beaten
1 cup vegetable oil
1 cup sugar
3/4 cup brown sugar
1 tablespoon grated lemon zest
1 teaspoon cinnamon
1 teaspoon vanilla
1 teaspoon fine salt
2 teaspoons baking soda
1 teaspoon baking powder
1 cup chopped walnuts or pecans, optional
1/2 cup golden or black raisins, optional (Plump raisins by soaking in hot water for a few minutes. Drain well before adding.)
Coarse sugar

PREPARATION

Preheat oven to 350 degrees F. Put zucchini in strainer and press or squeeze with hands to get excess liquid out.

Grease two 9-by-5-inch loaf pans. In large bowl, beat together the eggs, oil, sugar and vanilla.

Add the flour, baking soda, baking powder, lemon zest, cinnamon, salt, nuts, and raisins, and mix together. Add the zucchini and combine.

Spoon batter into loaf pans. Sprinkle tops with coarse sugar. Bake until a toothpick comes out clean and the sides have started to brown, about 45-50 minutes. Let cool on a rack 10-15 minutes.

COOK'S NOTE

Other dried fruit such as pitted, chopped dates, prunes, or dried cranberries can be substituted measure-for-measure for raisins. When measuring flour, spoon it into a dry measuring cup and level off the excess. (Scooping directly from the bag compacts the flour, resulting in dry baked goods.)

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





ARTS & LIVING

CALENDAR

CALIFORNIA

NOVEMBER 23 — 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, 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, a 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 AECF'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

FLORIDA

DECEMBER 1 — Thanksgiving Luncheon hosted by the Women's Guild in Boca Raton, welcoming Fr. Gomidas Zohrabian and his family to St. David Armenian Church as the new pastor. 2300 NW 51st St. Boca Raton.

DECEMBER 3 — Social hosted by the Women's Guild inviting all card and tavloo players for an enjoyable day of socialization (11 am to 4 pm) and dinner (4 pm to 7 pm) 2300 NW 51st St, Boca Raton

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.

FEBRUARY 15, 2020 — SAVE THE DATE for the Annual Dinner Dance hosted by the Women's Guild of St. David Armenian Church, 2300 NW 51st St, Boca Raton

MASSACHUSETTS

NOVEMBER 21 — Third Thursdays! Classic Groove with special guest, John Berberian on Oud, 7 p.m. reception, 7:30 p.m., concert at the Armenian Museum of America Adele & Haig Der Manuelian galleries, 3rd floor, 65 Main Street, Watertown. Classic Groove draws on the versatility of its members to perform a diverse mix of music for all occasions. Classic Groove's repertoire ranges from R&B to Top 40, Smooth Jazz, Latin, Country, Swing, Middle Eastern, show tunes, male and female duets, Blues, and Motown. They are thrilled to have a special guest musician, John Berberian on the oud for this performance! This performance was made possible thanks to the Dadourian Foundation. Members free. Non-members \$15. (The museum's elevator is in the process of being upgraded and is currently out of service.)

NOVEMBER 21 — Researcher Dr. Levon Yepiskoposyan of the Ethnogenomics Laboratory at the Institute of Molecular Biology of the National Academy of Sciences of the Republic of Armenia will present a talk entitled "The Genetic Atlas of Historic Armenia," on Thursday, at 7:30 p.m. at the National Association for Armenian Studies and Research (NAASR) center. Part of the NAASR/Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation Lecture Series on Contemporary Armenian Issues. Free and open to the public. A reception will take place after the program. NAASR Vartan Gregorian Building, 395 Concord Ave., Belmont.

NOVEMBER 22 and 23 — Saints Vartanantz Armenian Church, Annual Food Festival and Bazaar, 180 Old Westford Rd., Chelmsford. Food and Pastries, and Vendors, Friday, 11 a.m. to 8 p.m. and Saturday, 11 a.m. to 7 p.m. Live Armenian Music and Dancing, Friday – 6 to 8 p.m.

Narrated Slide presentation about Sts. Vartanantz Church history followed by a Sanctuary Tour – Saturday, 11 a.m. Tavloo Tournament - Saturday, 2 p.m. For information, please call 978-256-7234. Also, possible to include the following picture and short article on the bazaar.

NOVEMBER 24 — Second Sundays Cultural Series: Painting Mt. Ararat. 2-4 pm at the Armenian Museum of America Adele & Haig Der Manuelian galleries, 3rd floor, 65 Main Street, Watertown. Sunday. Led by Artist-in-Residence Arevik Tserunyan, attendees will learn about artist Martiros Saryan and his depiction of Mt. Ararat to guide their own recreation. Members \$28. Non-members \$35. To register, call Education Coordinator, Garin Habeshian at 617- 926-2562, ext. 103 or email at ghabeshian@armenianmuseum.org. Limit 12 per class. (The Museum's elevator is in the process of being upgraded and is currently out of service.) For more information visit: <https://www.armenianmuseum.org/classes>

DECEMBER 1 — A cappella Christmas Concert by Boston Jazz Voices to Benefit the Armenia Tree Project. 5 p.m. at the Jenks Center, 109 Skillings Road, Winchester. The venue has plenty of free parking. Event will feature an a cappella performance, refreshments, raffle, and silent auction. Tickets are \$30 each and a family four-pack of tickets is available for \$100. Tickets available via Eventbrite at www.armeniatree.org/acappella

DECEMBER 6 and 7 — Trinity Christmas Bazaar. Holy Trinity Armenian Church of Greater Boston. Charles and Nevert Talanian Cultural Hall. 145 Brattle Street. Cambridge. Friday, 12 to 9 p.m., Saturday, 10 a.m. to 7 p.m. Delicious Armenian dinners (lamb shish, losh, chicken kebab, and combo dinners), an a la carte menu and take-out meals. The Bazaar is the perfect place to do your Christmas shopping or just get into the spirit of the season! For further information, contact the Holy Trinity Church office at 617.354.0632 or e-mail office@htaac.org.

DECEMBER 8 — Candlelit Labyrinth Walk: In Peace & Harmony "Boston's Newest Holiday Tradition." Sunday, 4:30-5:30 p.m., Armenian Heritage Park on The Greenway, Boston. Meet & Greet. Celebrate. Walk the Candlelit Labyrinth. Tie a Ribbon with Your Wish on the Wishing Tree. Enjoy Hot Chocolate & Luscious Cookies. RSVP appreciated hello@ArmenianHeritagePark.org

DECEMBER 15 — St. James 88th Anniversary Name Day Celebration - Honoring Hripsime Parsekian and Leslie Cristello, Parishioners of the Year. 10 am Divine Liturgy. Name Day Banquet to follow. Keljik Hall. St. James' Charles Mosesian Cultural and Youth Center. \$45 per person. \$15 for children 12 and under. Advanced Reservations Required – purchase tickets online at www.stjameswatertown.org. 465 Mt. Auburn Street, Watertown 617.923.8860 info@stthagop.com

DECEMBER 15 — Christmas Holiday Concert — Erevan Choral Society and Orchestra. 3 p.m. Church Sanctuary. Holy Trinity Armenian Church of Greater Boston 145 Brattle Street Cambridge. Holy Trinity Armenian Church of Greater Boston and the Erevan Choral Society and Orchestra, founded by the Very Rev. Oshagan Minassian (1930-2008) and now under the direction of Konstantin Petrossian, Music Director and Conductor, will present their annual Christmas Holiday Concert. The program will consist of a variety of beloved Armenian and Western sacred and holiday music. The public is warmly invited to attend this complimentary concert which is a gift to the community. For further information, contact the Holy Trinity Church office at 617.354.0632 or e-mail office@htaac.org.

DECEMBER 31 — Sayat Nova Dance Company of Boston invites the community to welcome the New Year together, at its New Year's Dinner-Dance celebration. St. James Church's Charles Mosesian Center/Keljik Hall, 465 Mt. Auburn Street, Watertown. Entertainment will be provided by popular singer Arabo Ispiryanyan and his band from Armenia, and community's very own DJ Rams! Cocktail hour is at 7 pm, with dinner served promptly at 8 pm. And of course, there'll be dancing 'til 2am! Donation: Adult - \$125; children (5-12): \$75 For tickets please call Alina Ashjian (617) 852-1816 or Mike Demirchian (617) 240-8266 or go online [SNDCNYE2020.eventbrite.com](https://www.eventbrite.com) Tickets are advance purchase only.

MICHIGAN

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

JANUARY 11, 2020 — Tekeyan Cultural Association of Greater New York presents "A Children's Song and Dance Show," starring Joelle. 2-4 p.m., Saturday, the Hovnanian School, 817 River Road, New Milford. Tickets \$25 in advance, \$30 at the door. Children 2 and under free. Joelle of Montreal will perform her first children's show in New Jersey. Light reception to follow. For tickets text or email Talia, 917-238-3970, rsyptaliab@gmail.com or Salpie 516-413-4178, Salpimegerian@gmail.com.

NEW YORK

NOVEMBER 14-17 — New York City premier of "Zabelle," a devised play about a girl's survival during the Armenian Genocide. Adapted from a novel of the same by Nancy Kricorian. produced by Egg & Spoon as part of its third season. The piece was originally created and produced at Syracuse University's Department of Drama in 2015. It was directed and adapted by Leslie Noble, a professor in the department, and devised by an ensemble of four performance students: Sarineh Garapetian, Julián Garnik, Catherine Giddings, and Lindsey Newton. Those four artists will return to the piece almost five years later to launch Egg & Spoon's 2019-2020 Season at Access Theater. Zabelle runs November 14-17 at Access Theater in SoHo. Tickets can be purchased at www.eggandspoontheatre.org/zabelle.

NOVEMBER 17 and 24 — Art show sponsored by St. Gregory Enlightener Armenain Church of White Plains. Two Sundays, 12-12.30, Creative art by five local artists for viewing and purchase. 1131 North St., White Plains.

RHODE ISLAND

NOVEMBER 17 — Armenian Historical Association of Rhode Island presents Ruth Thomasian, Founder and President of Project Save Armenian Photograph Archives, Inc. Program titled "A Look at Ourselves: Armenians through the Camera's Eye." Sunday. Refreshments at 12:30 pm Lecture 1:00 pm. AHARI located at 245 Waterman Street, 5th floor conference room Providence. The AHARI Museum will be open from 2:00 - 3:30 p.m. Everyone is invited to bring family photos for Ruth's "Antiques Road Show" evaluation after the presentation. info@armenianhistorical-ri.org

NOVEMBER 30 — Sts. Sahag & Mesrob Armenian Church ACYOA Alumni-Providence Chapter-48th ANNUAL HOLIDAY KEF. Egavian Cultural Center, 70 Jefferson St., Providence. 8:30 p.m. to 1 a.m. Featuring Johnny Berberian, Mal Barsamian, Jay Baronian, Kenny Kalayjian. Cash Bar, Raffle, Coffee, Dessert-Adults \$25, Students \$20. For reservations contact Rena Megrdichian (401)57305731, Dorothy Martiesian (401)749-0269 or church office (401)272-7712. office@stsahmes.org Sponsors & Donations accepted if you cannot attend.

Mirror-Spectator

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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Education Reform Hits a Snag in Armenia

By Edmond Y. Azadian

Every revolution has consequences, sometimes positive and at other times, utterly destructive.

The revolution which took place in Armenia was very unusual, beginning with its name (Velvet) and ending with its goals and achievements.

Armenia's citizenry joined the movement as one, to get rid of the self-centered, corrupt regime and to see improvements in their daily lives through reforms that the revolution had promised.

We also need to be mindful that the revolution did not have any ideological bent nor veneer, for the simple reason that people were already sick of those ideologies which had not translated into bread and butter on the family table.

It has been more than a year and a half since the revolution, which is consolidating its bases in Armenia, and now people are getting impatient with the impact on their daily lives.

Many people assumed that the revolution would bring brisk and sweeping changes and they are disappointed with the pace because Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan is paying deliberate attention to modalities and legal ramifications of his government's actions. That is winning kudos overseas but not necessarily at home.

For example, it is hard for the majority of the people to understand how the government cannot get rid of the president of the



Constitutional Court, Hrayr Tovmasyan, if there was a revolution.

Similar questions are raised in other quarters. People seem to enjoy court cases when they become circuses, where their former tormentors are now being tormented. One such case is the trial of Robert Kocharyan.

Recently a huge controversy erupted when Education Minister Arayik Harutyunyan came up with a draft proposal which entails freedom for universities to relax the requirements for Armenian language, literature and history for students studying the sciences. Harutyunyan's proposal was politicized by the Armenian Revolutionary Federation (ARF, Dashnaksutyun) and the organization's youth movement resorted to strikes, asking the minister to resign. Although the confrontation is between the minister and the ARF, one of the leaders of the student movement is Gevorg Gyulumyan, a regular contributor to Azg weekly, the sister paper of the Mirror-Spectator.

He stated, "This is simply a warning. Let the minister consider this as a warning. I advise the minister to consult with experts before making such a decision."

However, the controversy is raging between the minister and the ARF youth, whose members have staged a protest in front of the government building in Yerevan to repeat their calls for his resignation. The minister seems undaunted, saying, "I am ready to resign only when I feel I am not doing enough. This is not the case."

In his turn, further escalating the confrontation, the minister tried to drive a wedge between the ARF branches in Armenia and the diaspora by stating that he would appreciate if the ARF leaders in the diaspora "take care of their party, because the undisciplined behavior by Armenia's Dashnaksutyun is not a credit to one of our oldest political parties."

There seems to be a merit to the protests, especially when we consider the primitive level of language proficiency of university graduates who specialize in sciences.

But the issue is presented in a lopsided manner. The point, which is not properly explained by the government, is that the place where the students have to master the language arts, literature and history is the public schools, which are failing in their mission.

The ministry maintains that "when the proposal is approved, the academic board of each university can decide whether these subjects should become mandatory in all departments."

Arayik Harutyunyan wears more than one hat as Pashinyan's government consolidated several ministries under one roof. Therefore, he is the minister of education, science, culture and sports.

Another controversy which is brewing is the removal of religious or Armenian Church history from the curriculum of all public schools.

This stipulation seems to be mandated by the European Union, whose standards Armenia is trying to emulate or adopt.

One recommendation is to incorporate the subject in the Armenian history unit, since the Armenian Church is so intertwined with the nation's history, but the church authorities refuse to settle with this arrangement.

Mr. Harutyunyan's conduct has been ruffling some feathers. Once, upon seeing a priest on the premises of a high school, he asked, "What the hell are you doing in this school?" And the priest answered, "I am teaching religion."

Armenia may look to Europe as a role model in civilization, but when it comes to religion, it deserves some dispensation. Indeed, throughout the Middle Ages, Europe was engaged in religious wars until the remedy was discovered by the separation of church and state.

On the other hand, Armenia has suffered under the Soviet atheistic rule; its churches were destroyed, the members of the clergy were murdered and religion was banned.

In the face of invading alien sects, which are destroying society's fabric, citizens of Armenia deserve to develop a defense mechanism. The history of the Armenian Church has to become part of the history curriculum. Indoctrination is not a cure, but students need to acquire a basic knowledge of the Armenian Church and its tenets. A fair share of the curriculum must be devoted to the Armenian Evangelical movement and the Armenian Catholics, which have contributed meaningfully to Armenian education.

Religious indoctrination is not healthy as it contains the seeds of

future violence and sectarian wars. Indoctrination and religious fanaticism have been weaponized by some countries, such as Turkey, which has used Islam to mobilize the masses to destroy or loot other civilizations.

The weaponization of religion has catapulted Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan to the top. His academics are in jail, while his religious masses are at the ballot box perpetuating his authoritarian rule and his occupation armies in Cyprus, Syria, Iraq, Somalia and elsewhere.

An education pundit, Artak Galstyan, maintains that religion is a narrow subject. Anyone interested in specializing in religion can attend the Gevorgyan Seminary in Echmiadzin and does not need to learn it in public schools. This is an exaggerated view; every citizen of Armenia must be well versed in a basic knowledge of Armenian Church history to withstand the onslaught of religious sects and to round up his education.

Mr. Harutyunyan cannot claim to be well versed in all areas which his ministry controls. That is why controversies have been arising.

Recently, the ministry allocated 2.7 million drams for a public performance of an abstract play called "Hue and Call," which took place in Republic Square subway station. That performance triggered a lot of controversy, with some demonstrators calling it Satanic or pro-LGBT propaganda. After the ministry's scandal involving the dismissal of conductor Constantine Orbelian at the opera, one can understand the ire of the artistic community when the ministry has to take months or a year to approve a shoestring budget for a classical performance on a stage in Yerevan.

Mr. Harutyunyan has a hard path to hoe. Initially Pashinyan was quick in assigning ministerial portfolios to young activists who had walked with him from Gyumri to Yerevan. To his credit, it should be mentioned that the premier was alert to review their performances and act immediately to replace ministers who cannot perform and carry out the proposed reforms of his Velvet Revolution.



COMMENTARY



My Turn

By Harut Sassounian

Armenians Fly from Istanbul to New York To Participate in Turkish Propaganda

It is amazing the lengths to which the Turkish government went to include Istanbul Armenian clergy and laymen in its propaganda campaign.

On November 5, 2019, Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan's Communications Office organized an exhibit in New York City featuring photos of the Armenian Holy Cross Cathedral located in Western Armenia, today's eastern Turkey, near Van, on Aghtamar Island.

The opening of the exhibit was not only attended by Alper Aktas, Turkey's Consul General in New York, but surprisingly, by several Armenian leaders as well as other Christian clergymen from Istanbul. Among the attendees were Istanbul Armenian Patriarchate's Locum Tenens Bishop Sahak Mashalian; Shirvan Murzoyan, an Armenian priest from Istanbul; Yessayi Demir, Chairman of St. Kevork Church in Samatia, Istanbul; Mesut Ozdemir, Chairman of Dsnount Sourp Asdvadsadsi Church; Yetvart Ayvazian, Chairman of Sourp Krikor Lousavorich Church in Kouzounjouk, Istanbul; Tamar Karasou, Director of the Turkish Branch of Sourp Krots Association; Aram Kouran from "Louys" biweekly; Chairman of the Board of Sourp Prgich Armenian Hospital in Istanbul, Bedros Shirinoglu and his wife; Turkish Minority Community Foundation Representative Moris Levi; Syriac Ancient Church Foundation President Sait Susin; American Greek Orthodox Church Archbishop Elpidophoros Lambriniadis; and members of the Turkish and Armenian communities. I am pleased that none of the clergy from the Armenian Church in the United States (Prelacy and Diocese) attended the opening of the exhibit in New York.

While it is understandable that given the tense relations

between the United States and Turkey, the Turkish government would want to carry out a propaganda campaign in the US to improve its stained image, much less acceptable is the participation of the Armenian laymen and clergy as well as Syriac and Greek leaders. One can excuse the attendance of the Istanbul leaders given the fact that they are hostages in the hands of the oppressive Turkish regime. In the case of Bishop Mashalian, however, he may have come willingly, as he is one of the two candidates for the December election for the position of the Armenian Patriarch of Turkey. The Bishop knows well that any disobedience to the wishes of the Turkish government will cost him the seat of the Patriarchate.

Despite the strong desire of Erdogan's government to carry out propaganda in the US, it failed to capitalize on this opportunity. Turkey spent a fortune to fly the 88 photographs of the Holy Cross Church to New York, pay for the rental of an exhibit hall in Manhattan, fly and accommodate over a dozen guests from Istanbul to New York City, and pay the expenses of making a film on the Holy Cross Cathedral, "The Hidden Monuments of Anatolia Coming to Light: Akdamar," shown at the exhibit. Yet, the highly-paid US lobbying firms hired by Turkey either were not asked or failed to disseminate the exhibit propaganda to the American media. Secondly, the Turkish government did not think of delaying the opening of the exhibit by one week so President Erdogan, who will be in the US this week, could attend the official ribbon cutting ceremony. In September, President Erdogan was present in New York at a similar opening of the exhibit of the photos of Ara Guler, a Turkish Armenian, which was also sponsored by the Turkish President's Office.

Here are the reasons why I consider the Holy Cross Church photo exhibit a manifestation of Turkish propaganda:

1) The Turkish government has designated Holy Cross as a museum, not a church, allowing Armenian liturgy to be performed only once a year by special permission. Much more important than organizing an exhibition in New York would have been the designation of the Holy Cross edifice as a church, not a museum. What are the Armenian and other clergymen doing celebrating the exhibit of a museum? If they had any guts, they would have refused to attend the exhibit until the museum is designated as a church which was completed in 921 AD, under the sponsorship of Armenian King Gagik Ardruni. Visitors have even to pay a fee to enter "the museum."

2) After the Holy Cross Cathedral was repaired in 2007, the Turkish government did not allow a cross to be placed on

the dome of the church, giving the excuse that the cross was too heavy for the dome. Finally, after much criticism, in 2010 the Turkish government allowed a cross to be placed atop the Holy Cross Cathedral.

3) The Turkish government turkified the name of the island by changing it from Aghtamar to Akdamar (which means "White vein" in Turkish).

4) In his remarks, Bishop Mashalian praised President Erdogan for organizing the exhibit in New York: "Under the leadership of the president's vision, special attention and interest was shown in the Akdamar Church.... This is a cultural initiative to overcome the difficulties of communication between the Turkish and Armenian peoples, as well as a bridge to a better future and understanding based on goodwill."

5) Chairman of the Board of Sourp Prgich Armenian Hospital in Istanbul Bedros Shirinoglu stated that "President Recep Tayyip Erdogan has made great efforts for minority communities.... We would like to express our gratitude to him for all his help and to the [President's] Communications Office for this exhibition.

6) American Greek Orthodox Church Archbishop Elpidophoros Lambriniadis reinforced the Turkish propaganda by underlining the significance of the photos at the exhibition in terms of showing the importance attached to the Christian minority in Turkey, saying: "Turkey is going in the right direction and it is good to tell the whole world about this."

7) President Erdogan proudly told the Turkish media last week that 17 representatives of Turkish minority groups are in New York at this time for the photo exhibit of the "Akdamar Church."

If the Turkish government was truly sincere in promoting the Armenian Church in Aghtamar, why did it allow a group of Azeris recently to visit the church and claim it to be a Caucasian Albanian Christian church? This is the usual lie that the Azeri government uses to describe all historic Armenian churches in Azerbaijan. The Azeri visitors displayed inside the Holy Cross Church the Azeri and Turkish flags with an "Azeri priest" claiming to say prayers. In a statement made outside the front door of the church, an Azeri representative accused Armenians of invading Azerbaijan and committing vandalism. The Turkish government should apologize to Armenians for allowing the perpetration of such a gross lie!

The 1942 Wealth Tax Disaster of Turkey

By Raffi Bedrosyan

November 11 is known as the Remembrance Day in the US, Canada and other allied nations, a day to honor and remember the soldiers who died during the service to their country, starting from World War I. But Armenians and other minorities in Turkey remember November 11 as the day of legalized robbery and forced bankruptcy by the Turkish government during World War II.

The Wealth Tax legislation was passed on November 11, 1942, imposing arbitrary, unbearable taxes on Armenians, Greeks and Jews living in Turkey, not based on their income but on their known or 'imagined' assets. The result was economic destruction of the remaining minorities in Turkey and complete transfer of wealth, production and economic activity from the minorities to the Turks, effectively 'nationalization of the economy'. This article provides a summary of the events surrounding the legislation, making use of memoirs of some Armenian families who suffered the consequences, as well as articles written by Turkish sources such as investigative author and historian Sait Cetinoglu and Istanbul Tax Office accountant at the time, one of the implementers of the legislation, Faik Okte.

The justification for the wealth tax was to prevent profiteering and black-market riches created during the war conditions. For a few months before the legislation, the Turkish media continuously published articles of wealthy minority opportunists and caricatures of "black market Jews." But the government saw this situation as an opportunity to "eliminate" minorities from the economy. Prime Minister Sukru Saracoglu explained the government policy in a speech in August 1942: "We are Turks and Turkists forever. We do not wish for the dominance of any palace, class or capital, we just want to ensure the dominance of the Turkish nation." The legislation proposed to tax people based on their ethnic identity and religion. People were labelled Moslem, Non-Moslem and Converted (Donme). Donme people were Jews, mostly from Thessaloniki, who had converted to Islam. The non-Moslems were further classified as Armenian, Greek and Jewish, and taxed according to their ethnicity. Armenians were taxed the most, at 232 percent of their assessed wealth, Jews at 179 percent, Greeks at 156 percent and Moslem Turks at 4.94 percent. Faik Okte writes that some Turks rejoiced, thanked God and sacrificed animals upon hearing the low tax percentage for them, which also meant that they would be able to buy the assets of the non-Moslems at auctions.

The wealth tax legislation was passed by Parliament on November 11, 1942, without any debate. It proposed to establish tax assessment commissions, members of which were all Turks, mostly businessmen and merchants competing with the Armenian, Jewish and Greeks, obviously to benefit the most from the bankruptcy of the minorities. There could be no objection or appeal to the assessed tax, with a deadline of 15 days to pay the assessed tax in cash. At the end of 15 days, the remaining assets of the persons incapable of paying the tax would be auctioned off for non-payment, and the person would be sent to labor camps in eastern Turkey in order "to pay his debt by physically working." These labor camps were established for road, railroad and tunnel construction projects, by breaking stones from rocky mountains under deplorable working and living conditions, sleeping in tents in freezing weather.

The tax assessment commissions finished their work by December 1942. About 87 percent of the assessed taxes were for non-Moslems, 7 percent for Moslem Turks and the remaining 6 percent for non-citizen foreigners. There are anecdotes of tax assessment commission members deciding the fate of Armenian and Greeks by flipping coins, to insert how many zeros on their assets and wealth taxes. Some of these commission members were known for their hatred for Armenians, who were the children of the Armenian Genocide perpetrators, continuing the destruction of the remaining Armenians. During January 1943, thousands of real estate, houses, shops, flats, apartment buildings, factories, machinery and equipment changed hands from Armenians, Greeks and Jews to Turks and Turkish institutions. About 67 percent of the real estate were grabbed by Turks, and 30 percent by the Turkish state. Most of the valuable real estate, designed and built by Armenian and Greek architects and owned by minorities on the main thoroughfare of Istiklal Caddesi, formerly Rue du Pera, changed ownership during this time.

Toward the end of January 1943, auctions started to liquidate remaining assets of the minorities. The auctioned assets were not only house contents such as furniture and carpets. Among the heart-wrenching stories, the rocking horse toy of a seven-year old Armenian girl was grabbed by a policeman, ignoring her cries and pleadings. The wheelchair of a disabled Armenian old lady was removed after she was unceremoniously dumped on a mattress. In the dead of the cold winter, stoves and even blankets were removed from homes to be auctioned off. The dental instruments of an Armenian dentist, my mother's family dentist, was sold based on the weight of the metal in the instruments.

We should emphasize that even though the justification for the Wealth Tax legislation was to collect money from the profiteering businessmen, it was applied not only to the wealthy but even to the poorest people, if they were Armenians, Greeks or Jews. There were thousands of low-income Armenians such as street vendors, fishermen, laborers, porters, fruit sellers, janitors and salaried

workers, who made up 44 percent of people forced to pay these taxes. People without any real estate assets made up 43 percent of the assessed taxpayers. To give an example of the irrational assessment and unfairness of the legislation, a Jewish retired person was assessed 1,530 Turkish Lira tax, but ended up losing his flat valued at 24,000 Turkish Lira at an auction.

Between January and July 1943, 1229 persons, all non-Moslems, were sent to labor camps to Askale near Erzurum for non-payment of the Wealth Tax. Unable to withstand the harsh working conditions, lack of food and water, 21 persons passed away. They would be placed in wooden boxes and buried in the fields or mountains, without any funerals nor clerics. One of the most unfortunate incidents is the fate of a Greek who became sick in the labor camp in Erzurum, wrote a letter to his wife in Istanbul to sell the last piece of their family jewelry so that they can pay off their debt and he can return. The wife finally sells it, pays the debt to the tax office, sends the receipt proof to Erzurum for the release of her husband. Erzurum labor camp officials respond that her husband has passed away three days ago.

The Turkish government ended the Wealth Tax legislation in September 1943, after the New York Times and other foreign media started writing about it. The Parliament decided not to demand payment from still uncollected taxes at the end of September 1943 and people were allowed to return from the labor camps. A total of 314 million Turkish Lira was collected, mostly from the non-Moslem minorities. This sum was equivalent to 80 percent of the 1942 Turkish state budget of 394 million Turkish Lira.

The Wealth Tax had absolutely no impact on reducing profiteering, wartime prices, or helping the economy of the Turkish state. Its main impact was to legalize the plunder and robbery of the minorities, and to transfer the minorities' wealth to the Turks and the Turkish state. The minorities were ethnically cleansed by the Armenian and Pontic Greek Genocides during World War I, but the remnants were still a significant force in Istanbul economy and real estate. The Wealth Tax served the purpose of economically cleansing the minorities during World War II.

(Raffi Bedrosyan is a civil engineer and concert pianist, living in Toronto, Canada. He has donated concert and CD proceedings to infrastructure projects in Armenia and Karabakh, in which he has also participated as an engineer. He helped organize the reconstruction of the Sourp Giragos Diyarbakir/Dikranagerd Church and the first Armenian reclaim of church properties in Anatolia after 1915. He gave the first piano concert in the Sourp Giragos Church since 1915. He is the founder of Project Rebirth, helping thousands of hidden Armenians return to their Armenian roots, and is the author of the book *Trauma and Resilience: Armenians in Turkey - Hidden, Not Hidden and No Longer Hidden*, published by Gomidas Institute, London, England.)



The SEVAN detector at Zeuthen recorded its first particles on October 4, from left B. Sargsyan, T. Karapetyan, M. Walter, J. Knapp and A. Chilingarian.

Space Environment Viewing Network Extended to Germany

YEREVAN – The Space Environment Viewing and Analysis Network (SEVAN) network started as a United Nations Basic Space Science Initiative (UNBSSI) project in the International Heliophysics Year 2007 (IHY-2007). The very successful IHY-2007 program included the deployment of arrays of small, inexpensive instruments around the world to get global measurements of ionospheric and heliospheric phenomena.

The SEVAN network aims to improve the fundamental research on particle acceleration in the vicinity of the Sun, on space weather effects, on high-energy physics in the atmosphere and on lightning physics. It also provides reliable, timely and affordable Space Weather forecasting based on coincident data from the network of particle detectors on Earth's surface and from the space-borne facilities. SEVAN detectors have been designed and fabricated at the Cosmic Ray Division (CRD) of the Yerevan Physics Institute (YerPhi). They simultaneously measure fluxes of the most common species of secondary cosmic rays (photons, electrons, muons, neutrons), thus being a very useful device for investigation of cosmic rays, solar flux variations, and electron acceleration in thunderstorms. SEVAN modules have so far operated at the Aragats Space Environmental Center (ASEC) in Armenia, Artsakh, Croatia, Bulgaria, Slovakia, Czech Republic, and India. Recently, two new SEVAN detectors were installed at DESY, the German National Accelerator Center, in Hamburg and Zeuthen, Germany.

Data from the entire SEVAN network is an ideal basis for research into exciting phenomena of cosmic rays and solar and atmospheric physics. SEVAN especially lends itself to scientific outreach to pupils, school teachers, students, the wider lay public, and to decision makers on the value of science in society. The SEVAN network will be widely used in these activities.

YerPhi and DESY cooperate in education and training of young students to inspire them for science and technology careers and to produce skilled scientists and engineers for industries and the general benefit of society. During recent visits of the president of the Republic of Armenia to DESY Zeuthen, and of the directorate of DESY to YerPhi, both sides expressed their intention to continue and even strengthen this fruitful cooperation of mutual benefit.

Armenia attracting attention At Philoxenia International Tourism Exhibition

THESSALONIKI, Greece – Armenia was the center of attention for hundreds of visitors during the duration of the 2019 “Philoxenia” International Tourism Exhibition which took place in Thessaloniki, November 8 to 10.

The country's exhibition booth was replenished with flags, videos showing the country's tourist highlights and products such as Ararat brandy and Karas wines. Visitors

Morocco, Slovakia, Serbia as well as members of the Parliament, local governors and mayors.

The highlight of Armenia's exhibit was the Masis Armenian Dance Group with twelve dancers dressed in traditional Artsakh costumes who performed several dances with Armenian music over the exhibition hall's speaker system. These dancers then took a victory walk around the hall with Armenian



The members of the Masis dance group in Thessaloniki

received information about the country, hotel accommodations, religious sights of interest to visitors from Greece, gastronomy and Armenian wines which are becoming better known in the world on a daily basis.

Armenia's participation attracted a lot of local officials among whom were the General and Honorary Consuls of several countries including Cyprus, Luxemburg, Peru,

flags while the music was reverberating in all the exhibition halls.

Armenia's participation was organized by the Hellenic-Armenian Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Greece in cooperation with the Tourism Committee of the Ministry of Economy of Armenia. The event was held under the auspices of the Embassy of Armenia to the Hellenic Republic.



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State Department Opposes Turkey Sanctions, Genocide Resolution

OPPOSITION, from page 1

Armenians early in the last century by the Ottoman Empire, the predecessor of the Republic of Turkey. President Recep Tayyip Erdogan's government vehemently opposed the resolution and summoned US Ambassador David Satterfield to express its disapproval.

According to the administration official, the decision to pass the genocide resolution just as the House was condemning Turkey over the Syria incursion is unfortunate timing and may result in legislation that's seen as punitive rather than principled.

The Trump White House had previously held off making statements about the initiatives, but past administrations had been similarly wary of genocide resolutions, arguing it would only impede reconciliation. Turkey has warned for years that such resolutions could lead to a breakdown in relations.

The official said the US position hadn't changed, and it mourns the 1.5 million Armenians deported and massacred at the end of the Ottoman Empire. The US already commemorates Meds Yeghern, what it calls one of the worst mass atrocities of the 20th century, and welcomes efforts by Armenia and Turkey to reckon with their history, the official said.

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