Armenian Leaders Pay Tribute to Baku Pogrom Victims

YEREVAN (Combined Sources) – Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan, National Assembly Speaker Ararat Mirzoyan, Secretary of the Security Council Hikmat Harutyunyan and Armenian Rearmament Minister Vahan Abrahamyan paid respect to the victims of the February 1990 Baku pogroms during a ceremony held at Yerevan's Tsitsernakaberd Memorial Complex in Yerevan on Monday, January 13, to pay homage to the victims of the Baku pogrom on the 30th anniversary of the atrocity.

A mass pogrom of Armenian population was committed in Baku from 13 to 19 January 1990 as a culmination of the genocide of the Armenians in Azerbaijan unfolded between 1988 and 1990.

According to different sources, between 150 and 400 people were murdered, and 1,500 to 2,000 were wounded. In addition, 20,000 to 30,000 Armenian men and women were forced to leave their homes, while hundreds of thousands were expelled from their properties, forcibly expelled and arrested.

Bisho Sahak Mashalian, center

The Armenians, who are the second largest population in Azerbaijan, were subjected to various anti-Armenian pogroms, mass killings, mass deportations and beheadings.

YEREVAN – On January 11, Bishop Sahak Mashalian (Masalian), Armenian Patriarch of Constantinople, was enthroned in a ceremony held at Istanbul's Sourp Asdvadzadzin (Holy Virgin) Armenian Cathedral. Mashalian was elected as the 86th Armenian Patriarch of Constantinople on December 11, 2019.

The exact number of the victims of the Baku pogrom still remains unknown. According to different sources, between 150 and 400 people were murdered, and hundreds were left disabled. The pogroms went on for a week amid a total inaction of the authorities of Azerbaijan and the USSR, as well as the internal troops and the large Baku garrison of the Soviet Army. Those who managed to avoid death were forced into deportation. The Soviet troops were deployed to set order in Baku only on January 20, 1990.

The Baku pogroms were committed with extreme cruelty, including gang rapes, burnings of people alive, throwing people out of balconies of higher floors, dismemberments and beatings.

The Armenian Patriarchate of Constantinople, established in 1461, is one of the four hierarchical sees of the Armenian Apostolic Church. The other three are the Mother See of Holy Echmiadzin, the spiritual center of all Armenians and the residence of Supreme Patriarch and Catholics of All Armenians; the Armenian Catholicosate of the Great House of Cilicia; and the Armenian Patriarchate of Jerusalem.

The congregation included Fener Greek Patriarch Bartholomew, the spiritual leader of Orthodox Christians, representatives of other Christian denominations in Turkey and foreign diplomatic missions in Istanbul.

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

Armenian, Rwandan Presidents Meet

YEREVAN (Armenpress) – President of Armenia Armen Sarkissian met this week with President of Rwanda Paul Kagame on the sidelines of the Abu Dhabi Sustainability Week Forum in the United Arab Emirates (UAE), the Presidential Office said.

The two presidents agreed that Armenia and Rwanda have many commonalities, similar history and present, both survived genocide, both are small, but strong, have many advantages which they can turn into success. The sides agreed that the two countries need to reveal each other, get acquainted with the opportunities of one another, and it is necessary to work actively on this path.

The presidents talked about the necessity of closer cooperation of successful, small countries. They attached importance to the full utilization of the existing potential in the bilateral relations. President Sarkissian said the field of e-governance, which is quite developed in Rwanda, can be a promising direction for a mutual partnership.

The Armenian President invited his Rwandan partners to visit Armenia this year to attend several international conferences, such as the Armenian Summit of Minds, the 6th STARMIUS international festival.

Mansurian’s Requiem To Have Czech Premier

BRNO, Czech Republic (Paomagazini—Armenian composer Tigran Mansurian’s Requiem will be performed in Brno Philharmonic of the Czech Republic on January 23-24 for the first time, the philharmonic website reports.

The first part of the concert, titled “Bach and Mansurian,” features Cantata No. 32 Liebler Jesu, mein Verlangen (Dearest Jesus, my desire) and Cantata No. 68 Also hat Gott die Welt gebet (God so loved the world by German composer Johann Sebastian Bach, with the Requiem set to be performed in the second part of the event.

Mansurian wrote his forceful 2011 Requiem at the request of the conductor Alexander Liebreich and dedicated it to the memory of the Armenian Genocide victims.

Co-commissioned by the Munich Chamber Orchestra and the RIAS Choir Berlin, Mansurian’s Requiem reconciles the sound and sensibility of his country’s musical traditions with Western practices, the combination of ancient Armenian religious and secular music with the Latin Requiem text “giving rise to something unexpected,” the composer says.

This is profoundly moving contemporary composition, illuminated by the “glow of Armenian modal- ity,” as Paul Griffiths puts it in his booklet essay. The work is a milestone for Mansurian. The Los Angeles Times has described his music as that “in which deep cultural pain is quieted through an eerily calm, heart-wrenching beauty.”

The Balikçi family appealed the case at the Court of Cassation, which overturned the court ruling on procedural grounds. The trial was continuing, the military judiciary was abolished upon Statutory Decree No. 68 after the July 2016 coup attempt.

A retrial began on February 8 at Karabakh Penal Court of First Instance. A witness who was also serving in the military at the time, Halil Eksi, first stated that Agaoglu deliberately killed Balikçi but then changed his statement.

After an application by the Balikçi family, he gave a statement again, saying that he changed his statement under pressure. The People’s Democratic Party (HDP) MP Cem Paylan commented on the court verdict, recalling that Balikçi was killed on the anniversary of the Armenian Genocide.

“Attacks importance to this. At last, we have seen that a hate crime against Armenians in the country resulted in a court sentencing the defendant,” he said.

However, he said, Turkey needs a “clean mark,” where such hate crimes would not happen and it has not achieved this yet.

“We must make political openings and create a climate where no one is targeted by hate crimes.”

Paylan also mentioned the killing of Hirant Dink, the trial of which has been continuing for 13 years and said he hopes the decision on Balikçi’s killing sets a precedent for other cases of hate crimes.

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YEVEYN (RFP, RL) – The Armenian government is preparing a return to the presidential system. One of them, Bright Armenia (LHR), has yet to discuss its participation in the constitutional reforms proposed by the prime minister.

LHR leader Edmon Marukyan said on Tuesday that the constitutional reform process launched by the authori- ties is an opportunity to reform the existing “super prime-ministerial system.” He said his party will therefore accept the government offer to name one member of the commission.

The opposition Prosperous Armenia Party (BHK) has yet to discuss its participation in the commission’s work.

Deputy Justice Minister Rafael Grigoryan suggested that the commission will likely start its activities as early as next month. But he gave no possible time frames for the drafting of constit- tutional changes.

Armenian Government Pressing ahead with Constitutional Changes

YEVEYN (RFP, RL) – The government has started forming an ad hoc commission tasked with drafting fresh amendments to Armenia’s constitution. Under an executive order signed by Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan, the commission will consist of 15 members, including Justice Minister Rustam Baydakian, the government’s representa- tive to the European Court of Human Rights, human rights ombudsman Arman Talatyan and two representatives of the country’s judges.

It will also comprise six legal scholars, who will be chosen by the Justice Ministry on a supposedly competitive basis, two civil society members and representatives of the three political forces represented in the Armenian parliament.

The government officially announced plans to amend the constitution in October as part of its strategy of reform- ing the national judicial and electoral systems. The strategy calls for constitu- tional changes relating to the work of judicial bodies and conduct of elections.

Valshah Hovakimyan, a senior law- maker from Pashinyan’s My Step alliance, told RFP, RL’s Armenian serv- ice on Tuesday, January 14, that the commission will also discuss the wis- dom of restoring the presidential sys- tem of government in the country. Asked whether the current authorities are intent on engineering such a change, he said: “There have been no such discussions.”

The current constitution underwent sweeping changes as a result of a dis- puted referendum held in 2015. They led to Armenia’s transformation into a parliamentary republic.

Former President Serzh Sargsyan ini- tiated that constitutional reform in an effort to hold on to power after com- pleting his second and final presidential term in April 2018. He was toppled in the ensuing “Velvet Revolution” led by Pashinyan.
Armenian Leaders Pay Tribute to Baku Pogrom Victims

COMMEMORATION, from page 1

By Arthur Harutyunyan and Jason Sohigian

In the development of the city during the Soviet times,” he said.

He added, “Even today, perpetrators who com-
mitted atrocities against helpless people are
regarded as heroes of Azerbaijan, while their
 crimes are considered a glorious chapter in the
fight for Azerbaijan’s sovereignty and territorial
integrity.”

Azerbaijan President Ilham Aliyev declared, “The Armenian community of
Baku has always been a victim of the Armenian pogroms in the past. Today, we
pay tribute to the victims of these pogroms and call for justice to be
achieved.”

The Azerbaijani government has recently opened a commission to
investigate the events of the 1990s and has promised to
publish a report on the investigation. The commission
will be chaired by the President of Azerbaijan.

Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan and Parliament Speaker Ararat Mirzoyan bow before a monument to the victims of the Armenian pogroms.

A procession to the memorial honoring the victims.

YEREVAN – Armenians in Armenia have paid tribute to the victims of the Baku pogroms that took place in 1990. In a ceremony held at a statue honoring the victims, Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan and Parliament Speaker Ararat Mirzoyan spoke about the importance of remembering the past and the need for justice.

Pashinyan said, “We cannot forget the injustice that was done to our compatriots in Baku. Today, we pay tribute to the victims of these pogroms, who lost their lives and suffered unimaginable pain.”

Mirzoyan added, “The Armenian community of Azerbaijan has always been a victim of pogroms. Today, we call for justice to be achieved and the victims to be remembered.”

At the ceremony, a monument was unveiled to honor the victims of the pogroms.

Armenians living in Armenia today call for the lifting of the sanctions against Azerbaijan, which they blame for the pogroms.

“We demand justice for the victims of the Baku pogroms. The sanctions against Azerbaijan must be lifted so that we can work together towards a better future,” said one Armenian living in Armenia.

However, Azerbaijani officials have criticized the Armenian call for justice, saying that it is an attempt to rewrite history.

“Armenians are trying to rewrite history by blaming Azerbaijan for the pogroms,” said an Azerbaijani official.

Despite the tension between Armenia and Azerbaijan, the two countries have recently agreed to resume diplomatic relations.

“The reopening of diplomatic relations is a positive step towards resolving the conflict,” said Pashinyan.

Armenian pogroms in the 19th century

Arafat Mirzoyan and Nikol Pashinyan bow before a monument to the victims of the Armenian pogroms.
### International News

#### Azerbaijan Singer Refuses to Share Stage With Armenian Singer at Opera Ball

**DRESDEN, Germany (Panorama.am)** Azerbaijani opera singer Yusrif Eyvazov has refused to perform on the same stage with Armenian singer Ruzan Manukyan because of the latter's nationality which is said out of political considerations, Hasmik Papian, world-renowned Armenian soprano wrote on her Facebook page.

As Papian informed the concert in question is scheduled to be part of the annual Dresden Opera Ball. Eyvazov, in particular, has refused to share the stage with Armenian singer Ruzan Manukyan, citing the latter's nationality as a reason.

*“I have performed at the mentioned opera theatre on numerous occasions and cannot recall such an incident. I am about to raise a protest over this,”* Papian added.

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#### Fashion designer, Choreographer Nariman Grigoryan Killed

**TASHKENT, Uzbekistan (Panorama.am)** – Uzbek fashion designer and choreographer of Armenian origin Grigoryan Grigoryan was assassinated in Tashkent on January 14, the local Buret of Sputnik news agency reported. As the source said, the murder took place at Yashnaband neighborhood of capital.

The circumstances of the incident have not yet been released.

Grigoryan in 2015 won the Breakthrough Prize and later Best Designer for Evening Dresses in 2017. His collections has been shown at Fashion Weeks in several locales, including Belarus and Marbella, Spain.

In 2018 he opened his chain of shops for wedding dresses and “bride by NG” beauty salon.

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#### Foreign Minister, Jordanian Parliamentary Discuss Middle East

**YEREVAN** – On January 14, Foreign Minister Zohrab Mnatsakanyan had a phone conversation with Ayman Safadi, Minister of Foreign Affairs and Expatriates of Jordan. The phone conversation was held with Ayman Safadi, Minister of Foreign Affairs and Expatriates of Jordan. The phone conversation was held with Ayman Safadi, Minister of Foreign Affairs and Expatriates of Jordan. The phone conversation was held with Ayman Safadi, Minister of Foreign Affairs and Expatriates of Jordan. The phone conversation was held with Ayman Safadi, Minister of Foreign Affairs and Expatriates of Jordan. The phone conversation was held with Ayman Safadi, Minister of Foreign Affairs and Expatriates of Jordan. The phone conversation was held with Ayman Safadi, Minister of Foreign Affairs and Expatriates of Jordan. The phone conversation was held with Ayman Safadi, Minister of Foreign Affairs and Expatriates of Jordan. 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Hakan Sukur. How Former Turkey Soccer Star Ended up as US Cab Driver

By Ciaran Varley

SAN FRANCISCO (BIB) – Hakan Sukur is Turkey’s greatest ever goalscorer and one of Europe’s most prolific strikers. A legend.

So, how did he end up driving taxis and selling books for a living in the US, in exile from his home country?

According to an interview with German newspaper, Welt am Sonntag, the 45-year-old former Blackburn player spent the major-

Hakan Sukur now

World Cup goal coming just 11 seconds after kick-off against South Korea in 2002

Sukur scored what is still the fastest ever goal in World Cup history. “I moved to the United States, initially run-

Sukur scored 51 goals in 112 appearances for Turkey between 1992 and 2007. He was part of the Turkish side that finished third at the 2002

World Cup and the group of Europe’s most prolific strikers. A legend.

Sukur scored 51 goals in 112 appearances for Turkey between 1992 and 2007. He was part of

the team that reached the World Cup semi-final in 1990 and finished third at the 2002

World Cup. The story throws up more questions about Erdogan’s government. In 2018, Neusl Oztuk also attracted criticism after posing for a picture with the Turkish President, including from the German Football Federation (DFB), which said “football and the DFB defend values which are not sufficiently respected by Mr. Erdogan.”

Erdogan was subsequently best man at Oztuk’s wedding.

Politicians and sport, hey? A thorny business.

Armenian Students Back from Almaty

INTERNATIONAL

International Olympiad with 18 Medals

Armenian students back from Almaty

Gold medal winner Aleks Abelyan, left, and two other medalists from Armenia
Zoravik to Commemorate Dink Assassination Anniversary with Film Screening, Discussion

CAMBRIDGE, Mass.—To commemorate the 12th anniversary of the assassination of Turkish-American journalist Hrant Dink in 2007, Zoravik presents a screening of a film about Hrant Dink followed by a discussion of the film and of Dink’s legacy. The event will take place on January 19, at 7:30 p.m. in Harvard’s Fong Auditorium in Boylston Hall and is free and open to the public.

The evening will feature a screening of the 45-minute long documentary, “Heart of Two Nations. Hrant Dink: Conversation with Nouritza Matossian,” filmed and produced by biographer, director, and human rights activist Nouritza Matossian. “Heart of Two Nations” features private interview footage collected while Dink faced several charges for “insulting Turkishness,” was prosecuted and sentenced to a suspended six-month imprisonment, and was warned to leave the country after receiving death threats for writing about the abuses and rights of disadvantaged ethnic groups living in Turkey as well as his own Armenian compatriots. Attesting to the uniqueness of this first-person footage collected prior to Dink’s assassination, Amnesty International has described the documentary as a “deeply engaging and moving” film that stands as “a unique record of a remarkable journalist and editor’s life and work.” The film won the Public Prize at Toronto’s Pomegranate Film Festival in 2008 after its release on the first anniversary of Dink’s assassination.

The documentary will be introduced by Matossian via video link from London, England. After viewing the award-winning documentary, Dr. Oğuzhan Kılıçdaroğlu, a historian and columnist at Agos, will moderate an interactive, open-mic conversation with audience members about the documentary, the assassination, and Dink’s impact.

Matossian is a writer, filmmaker, broadcaster, and human rights activist. Her biography of composer Iannis Xenakis was made into a BBC documentary, and her 1998 book on Arshile Gorky was made into a documentary and her 1998 book on Arshile Gorky was made into a documentary. She is currently serving as the Coordinator of the Krikor Guerguerian Online Archive Project at the Strassler Center for Middle Eastern Studies, Harvard University. He currently serves as the ship at the Center for Middle Eastern Studies, Harvard University. He currently serves as the ship at the Center for Middle Eastern Studies, Harvard University.

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SPRINGFIELD, Penn. — The Society for Orphaned Armenian Relief (SOAR) is the only charitable organization whose singular mission is to provide humanitarian assistance to orphaned Armenians around the world. The organization is celebrating its 15th anniversary with a “Crimson and Crystal Celebration” on March 28, at the Springfield Country Club.

Musical entertainment will be provided by Lucy Yeghiazaryan Jazz Quartet and Else Berberian and Band. Event proceeds are earmarked for the Armenian Evangelical Boarding School (AERBS) in Aniag, Lebanon; Khachberd Orphanage in Yerevan, Armenia; and the Our Lady of Armenia Center in Gyumri, Armenia.

Founded in 2005, SOAR provides humanitarian relief to orphaned Armenian children and orphaned adults with disabilities around the world. Through our in-country staff and trusted network of global volunteers, SOAR strives to provide this institutionalized population with the same educational and social opportunities as their non-institutionalized counterparts while simultaneously facilitating deinstitutionalization, family empowerment, and reunification.

Represented by 144 Chapters, 6 Junior groups, and more than 600 volunteers worldwide, SOAR supports 43 institutions — orphanages, special boarding schools, day centers, and orphan summer camps — in Armenia, Arーシア, Janakaj, Lebanon, and Syria. In addition to SOAR’s institutional-based work, SOAR established the Services to Children in their Own Home (SCOH) Program. The SCOH Program works with residential institutions to deinstitutionalize and re-engage children with biological families and provides home-based services after reunification to reduce the economic, social, emotional, and professional barriers within the family that may trigger reinstitutionalization.

SOAR prides itself on collaboration, creativity, cross-cultural respect, fiscal responsibility, and transparency. In 2006, distributions totaled approximately $60,000. Since 2015, SOAR has exceeded $1 million distributions annually. SOAR’s efforts not only address the major humanitarian constructs of education, emotional and psychological support, nutrition, health and hygiene, dental and vision care, and fundamental human rights, but academic programs offer curricula on a multitude of topics that stimulate intellectual curiosity, empowerment, and enrichment.

For many members, SOAR is their life’s work who cannot forget the orphaned children they have embraced as their own. They look forward to meeting more supporters and more people who can embrace the same vision.

Tickets and sponsorship details for the gala can be found at https://www.soar-us.org/event/crimson-and-crystal-celebration/. If you have any questions about our milestone celebration, please contact George S. Yacobian Jr., at 631.213.3452 or gysacobian@soar-us.org.

Those interested can also write to the Society for Orphaned Armenian Relief, 150 N. Radnor Chester Rd. Suite #200, Radnor, PA 19087 or email info@soar-us.org or www.soar-us.org.
Armenia Border Community Students Prosper in Newly-Renovated School

SAN FRANCISCO/YEREVAN – With the completion of the reconstruction at the secondary school in the large border village of Nerkin Karmir Aghbyur, in Armenia’s Tavush Region, students are experiencing a vibrant newly energized approach to their education. The nearly $250,000 capital project was funded by Jean-Marie and Lori Atamian and their friends, Michael and Patricia Starzer, through the Paros Foundation’s Prosperity on the Border initiative and was completed in phases over four years. The campus consists of three large, two-story buildings and has been reconfigured to accommodate more than 150 students in this growing village.

One of the most modern rural educational facilities in Armenia, the Nerkin Karmir Aghbyur school now boasts bright classrooms and hallways, fully equipped science labs, a robotics room, an auditorium, a dance studio, library, exercise rooms and a state-of-the-art kitchen and cafeteria. The gym has also been renovated and the children are provided with gym clothes at the start of every academic year, which proudly displays the school’s logo. Originally an isolated border school in disrepair, the campus consists of three large, two-story buildings and has been reconfigured to accommodate more than 150 students in this growing village.

One of the most modern rural educational facilities in Armenia, the Nerkin Karmir Aghbyur school now boasts bright classrooms and hallways, fully equipped science labs, a robotics room, an auditorium, a dance studio, library, exercise rooms and a state-of-the-art kitchen and cafeteria. The gym has also been renovated and the children are provided with gym clothes at the start of every academic year, which proudly displays the school’s logo. Originally an isolated border school in disrepair, the campus consists of three large, two-story buildings and has been reconfigured to accommodate more than 150 students in this growing village.

“The annual and long-term financial support provided by the Atamians is helping transform Nerkin Karmir Aghbyur into a thriving and growing community,” said Peter Abajian, executive director of the Paros Foundation. “This village is serving as a model for our Prosperity on the Border Initiative and is inspiring other diasporan families to support the development of several other border villages, including: Paravakar, Chinari, Baghanis, Varagavan and Artsvabert.”

To help support this project, visit www.parosfoundation.org.
NEW YORK – On December 25, volunteers from St. Vartan Cathedral gathered at the Diocesan Center in New York to host an outreach luncheon for some of the city’s more vulnerable residents.

The St. Vartan Cathedral Community partnered with the Community of Sant’Egidio, a Roman Catholic lay association, to serve a hot meal for about 150 people who found themselves homeless, alone, or in difficult straits on Christmas Day.

Some 30 volunteers from the Cathedral and Sant’Egidio communities prepared and served food in Haik and Alice Kavookjian Auditorium. In advance of the day, they had collected warm clothing and other items to be given as gifts to the visitors.

“One of the most important aspects of the gathering was its personal, family-like nature,” said Fr. Davit Karamyan, who as cathedral vicar organized the event along with Sona Haratunian and Deacon Eric Vozzy. “Our volunteers sat and talked with the guests, selected gifts suitable to each one. Earlier, members of the Sant’Egidio group had gone to city shelters, Port Authority, and elsewhere to extend personal invitations to each guest.”

“It was a beautiful way to remember our Lord in the season of his birth,” he said.

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RACINE, Wis. – Chatschik Grigorian, 101, passed away at home on Tuesday, December 3, 2019.

Chatschik was born on January 19, 1918 in Tbilisi, Georgia.

He came to the United States in 1951 following his service in World War II.

Chatschik married the former Vartiny Levonian on September 12, 1953 at St. Mesrob Armenian Apostolic Church on State Street.

He was employed as a press operator for Western Publishing Company for 29 years, retiring in 1981. Prior to that he worked at Belle City Malleable.

Chatschik was quite the dancer. He and Vartiny would travel throughout southeastern Wisconsin to various dance halls on the weekends. In the summer, you could see him dance at Armenian picnics. He also enjoyed playing cards, tavloo, Armenian brandy and making shish kebob. Chatschik’s true passion was soccer. He played as a youth in Armenia and could frequently be found cheering for his favorite Premiere League and Bundesliga teams.

He was a member of St. Mesrob Armenian Apostolic Church where he served as Special Godfather to the Cross.

He is survived by his wife, Vartiny Grigorian; children, Karin (Werner) Freitag of Guxhagen, Germany, Avak (Meline) Grigorian and Ellen Grigorian, both of Racine; five grandchildren, Ani, Alina, Anoush, Martin and Jorge; and four great-grandchildren. He is also survived by nieces, nephews, other relatives and friends.

A private family service was held at St. Mesrob Armenian Apostolic Church followed by interment at Graceland Cemetery.

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**St. Vartan Cathedral Helps the Homeless on Christmas Day**

**OBITUARY**

Chatschik Grigorian

Centenarian, Veteran

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Monasticism Alive and Well in Ancient Times and 21st Century

By Florence Avakian

PARAMUS, N.J. — What is monasticism? What was it like in ancient times? Can it survive in our current world? This was the tantalizing subject of a recent Diocesan Zohrab Information Center lecture held at the Mor Aphrem (St. Aphrem) Center of the Eastern US Syriac Orthodox Archdiocese in Paramus, NJ.

The speakers included the hierarchs of the Armenian and Syriac Dioceses of Eastern America, Archbishop Mor Dionysius John Kasak, Patriarchal Vicar and Primate of the Archdiocese for the Syriac Orthodox Church for Eastern US; Bishop Daniel Findikyan, Primate of the Diocese of the Armenian Church of America (Eastern) and Dr. Roberta Ervine, professor of Armenian Christian Studies at St. Nersess Armenian Seminary.

Also addressing the attendees were the Very Rev. Fr. Augenik Akhouri, a monk in the Syriac Orthodox Church who resides at the Mor Aphrem Center, and Deacon Eric Vozzy, resource developer of the Eastern Diocese’s Department of Creative Ministries.

The history of monasticism in the two sister communities of Armenia and Syria is intertwined. Monasteries were founded under the See of Antioch in Syria, and Mesopotamia. They became centers of prayer, research, learning, and the virtuous life with thousands of monks and nuns. “The fragrance of their virtue wafted gloriously from their monasteries, caves, hermitages and cells,” the Syriac Archbishop stated poetically.

In hard times, the authorities abandoned their cells and monasteries and went into the cities to aid the faithful, and to confirm them in their religion. When heresy arose, they departed to preach to the faithful, to preserve them from the mistaken beliefs of the heretics, and to give them a firm hold in the orthodox faith.

Bishop Daniel Findikyan, Dr. Roberta Ervine, and Archbishop Mor Dionysius John Kawak discuss monasticism in the 21st century.

Theological principles were the most important part of the discussion. Welcoming the audience, Dr. Christopher Shenlian, Zohrab Information Center executive director, briefly introduced the discussion, a culmination of a season-long Zohrab Information Center series on “monasticism.” He described both the lecture series and the panel discussion as an “exploration of what monasticism has been and how it could exist in our current world?”

Archbishop John Kasak began his discourse with a warm personal note, recalling his education and how the present Christian life should “infiltrate” the world. “Monasteries were truly engines of Christianity, the psychological problems of celibates were addressed, they should lead to vibrant conversations. The history of monasticism should be combined in the life of the monk, and in our life as a society.”

Some of these famous monasteries were mainly found in Syria, Turkey, Egypt, Palestine and Jerusalem. One of the most famous, was St. Matthew’s Monastery founded in the late 4th century, with a large population of monks, and still inhabited today, Archbishop Kawak said.

Emphasizing a significant point, the Primate asked “How can the Armenian Church thrive or even survive without monasteries today? What will drive our church without monks? We wonder ‘how many lives could of or would have looked different’ if there was a monastery here in America for others like him drawn to monastic life. He added that it would be ‘refreshing,’ and enhance the ‘spiritual life of the church.’"

Dr. Ernest M. Barsamian and Sonig Kradjian, Boca Raton, FL $250
Ms. Ann Chepjian, Brookline, NH $250
Emma Sogoian, Bloomingfield Hills, MI $100

First in his talk, Findikyan noted that there were also deep roots of monastic life in and outside of Armenia. “Monasteries were true engines of the Armenian Church. It was in the monasteries within Armenia that the creators of our theology trained future priests and nuns. All phases of art are expressions of faith. They were driven in the monasteries, and spearheaded by monks,” he said.

“Most Armenians up to 120 years ago lived within walking distance of monasteries,” continued the Diocesan Primate. What interrupted that was the Genocide. The Ottoman regime taxed these monasteries out of existence.

“Today the hierarchical centers of our church in Holy Echmiadzin, Antelias, Jerusalem, Constantinople and the Eastern US; Bishop Daniel Findikyan, Dr. Roberta Ervine, and Archbishop Mor Dionysius John Kawak discuss monasticism in the 21st century.

Christian to live an authentic Christian life in Christendom about how difficult it is for a man to live an authentic Christian life in today’s society. While a monastery might address these concerns, he asked about the challenges of being a monk and running a monastery in America today, including questions of ‘location, logistics, rubrics, prayer schedules and the responsibility of the community.’ “If monasticism is so vital, how much longer do we have to delay?” he asked. “The Armenian Church has the responsibility to allow the opportunity and room for monasticism to flourish.”

Deep Roots

In his talk, Findikyan noted that there were also deep roots of monastic life in and outside of Armenia. “Monasteries were true engines of the Armenian Church. It was in the monasteries within Armenia that the creators of our theology trained future priests and nuns. All phases of art are expressions of faith. They were driven in the monasteries, and spearheaded by monks,” he said.

Without it, chaos will reign. ‘Monks are the adonists of the spiritual life. This life changed through the centuries because the community has changed. A monastery is symbiotic with its community,’ he said quoting St. Nerses.

Crucially Necessary

What is crucially needed today, Ervine stressed, are the elements of education, healing, service, hospitality, the preservation of culture and the offering of alternatives. All of these should be combined in the life of the monk, and with individual married priests.

“We live in a world of fragility. Why not give service? There should be a bridge between our past and our future here,” Ervine added.

Vozzy shared his thoughts and experiences, by confessing that he has always been “drawn” to the concept of monasticism. This was a major pull in his return to the Orthodox Christianity, noting that the minimal presence of monastic life in the Armenian Church today is a “vow.”

“We need it because for me it would result in an integrated life,” he said with emotion. He wondered “how many lives could of or would have looked different” if there was a monastery here in America for others like him drawn to monastic life. He added that it would be “refreshing,” and enhance the “spiritual life of the church.”

He referenced conversations throughout Christendom about how difficult it is for a Christian to live an authentic Christian life in today’s society. While a monastery might address these concerns, he asked about the challenges of being a monk and running a monastery in America today, including questions of ‘location, logistics, rubrics, prayer schedules and the responsibility of the community.’ “If monasticism is so vital, how much longer do we have to delay?” he asked. “The Armenian Church has the responsibility to allow the opportunity and room for monasticism to flourish.”

A monastery is symbiotic with its community,” he said.

During the lively question and answer period, several significant points emerged, including the difference between celibacy and monasticism, the psychological problems of celibates living alone, and the possible lack of understanding of people’s problems by celibate priests.

All agreed that the evening’s creative ideas should lead to vibrant conversations. Emphasized was the crucial link that must be pursued between education and monasticism, and how the present Christian life should meld in with the Western way of life.
New YORK — On January 6, less than a week into a new decade, the Armenian Church of America welcomed the birth of Christ with an “Armenian Christmas” Divine Liturgy at New York’s St. Vartan Cathedral.

Celebrating the Feast of the Nativity and Theophany of Jesus Christ for the first time since his elevation to the episcopal rank, Bishop Daniel Findikyan led an inspiring badarak before a crowded sanctuary and thousands of viewers watching an online broadcast.

In his sermon, the Primate spoke on the theme of darkness and light. He began by invoking the words of the Prophet Isaiah: “The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light, and you who dwell in the world and in the shadow of death, light has shone on you” (Isaiah 9:2).

“These words capture the heart of today’s Christmas celebration,” Findikyan said.

He went on to describe how the surrounding world — whether in the news headlines or in one’s personal life — is still a place of darkness much of the time.

“But,” he added, “the light has shown on us: the light of that manger 2,000 years ago. The Light of Jesus Christ.”

Affirming that God has “come into this world and illuminated it permanently, and irreversibly,” he compared Christ to “a divine sun that never sets, never weakens; that only gives power — and love, joy and hope.” That light is there, waiting for us to accept it, he said.

On Christmas day, “the church and the Lord call on us to open our eyes, and open our hearts, to the Light of God.”

Findikyan delivered his Armenian Christmas homily with passion and conviction, in English and Armenian. To conclude, he invited to the altar the Rev. Fr. Davit Karamyan, whom the Primate formally introduced to the public as the new Vicar of St. Vartan Cathedral. In an affecting moment, Findikyan honored Karamyan by presenting him with a pectoral cross.

Gregory Badishkanian served as godfather for the churchnesh (Blessing of Water) ceremony, which commemorates the baptism of Jesus by the hand of John the Baptist.

For the fifth consecutive year, the Diocese broadcast the Armenian Christmas liturgy over the Internet. The live broadcast with a running narration was watched by thousands on YouTube and Facebook.

The sacred music of the Divine Liturgy was rendered beautifully throughout the service by the St. Vartan Cathedral Choir, under the direction of Khoren Mekanejian. Accompanying on the organ was Florence Avakian.

Following services on January 6, a traditional home blessing and Christmas reception were held in Haik and Alice Kasooglian Auditorium.

An Armenian Christmas Eve service was held on the evening of January 5. The celebrant was Karamyan.

Parishes across the Eastern Diocese also held Christmas services on Monday, January 6.

(All Photos by Albin Lohr-Jones)
A deacon swings the censer.

At prayer in the cathedral.

A member of the choir.

The procession entering the church.

A reception after the church services.

A member of the faithful kisses the cross.

Bishop Daniel Findikyan, Primate, raises the chalice.

Bishop Daniel Findikyan with the censer.
Gourgen Manoukian Preserves Armenian Traditional Costumes and Creates New Art

By Aram Arkun
Mirror-Spectator Staff

WATERTOWN — Gourgen Manoukian is a multitalented artist. A painter, he has not only created watercolors and oils, but also done set design for films and graphic arts.

Born in Yerevan in 1937 from a family of refugees from Van (his grandfather participated in the battles for the defense of Van during the Armenian Genocide), he graduated middle school in 1954 and from 1956–63 worked at Yerevan’s Russian Theater as a set designer. He studied from 1965 to 1970 at Moscow’s Applied Art Faculty of the Textile Institute. After graduation, he began work in 1971 at HayFilm, the Armenian state film company, and Armenian television studies, as art director. As such, his artistic credits extend to around 40 art films and television productions. His artistic interests extend to Armenian traditional costumes, graphic arts, and cinema.

His best known films include “Hayrik,” “Kams,” “Hetsyal, or in spasum ein,” “Depi Sasuntsi Davit,” “Spiqot apes,” “Jur mer hapa-paunoya,” and “Hayrakutnot salmanits ay kaghm” but he also has created many paintings and watercolors.

Manoukian declared, “My paintings of the great figures of Armenian culture are my favorites, like Remitas, Aram Khachaturian, or Khrimian Hayrik.” When asked how long it takes him to complete a painting, he said, “Some are created over years, stopping and starting, others very quickly.”

Manoukian immigrated to the Boston area in the 1990s, after having two exhibitions of his work here, including a big one at the Armenian Museum of America.

Last year, he published the art book Haykakan taraz [Armenian Costumes] through Antares in Yerevan. This work is the culmination of decades of research and labor. Back in 1972, when he was working in Moscow on the film “Hayrik,” Manoukian went into a bookstore and saw a fancy album which had images of Armenian costumes. However, they were presented as Turkish ones. Upon returning to Yerevan he swore to himself that he would eventually prepare a work presenting information on Armenian traditional costumes, and so he did.

His 185-page, large-size volume presents the various styles of Armenian traditional clothing which survived to the beginning of the 20th century and even to the present. It also includes some improvisations created by the author based on traditional styles. It begins with a brief Armenian and English-language introduction by the author, and contains words of praise by Armenian Academician Ruben Zaryan, well-known artist Grigor Khanjyan and writer Tatul Sonentz-Papazian of Boston.

Manoukian said, “I have worked for many years to restore Armenian traditional costumes from ancient times to the present. I have attempted to the best of my abilities to restore and recreate certain lost costumes, which are unknown not only to the world at large but also to many Armenians.”

Manoukian will be presenting his book in the spring in Detroit for the Tekeyan Cultural Association, in Providence, and possibly also in other cities of the US.
ERAYAN – Dikran Tchouhadjian's operatic heritage is unquestionably worth admir- ing the stages of prestigious opera houses. For many reasons, some obvious to all (the Armenian Genocide), many manuscripts have been lost as they were never published. The five works that have survived, now at the Charents Literature and Arts Museum, are his first opera “Arase Secondo,” known as “Aşxeh the Second” to Armenians (renamed “Olimpia” by the composer), his first, second and third opera-buffas “Arti’s Cuning,” “Keussé Kehya” [The Beardless Elder], “Leblebiji Hor Hor Agha” (a.k.a. “Garine”) and his last opera, “Zemiri.”

Four of these works have been saved from oblivion... to some extent... “Arase Secondo” Witten in 1868, it was first produced in 2001 at the San Francisco Opera house, albeit cut down to two hours instead of its three-hours-plus length, and sung in Armenian instead of its original Italian lyrics. It was based on the utest [faithful to the manuscript[s] published by the Armenian General Benevolent Union (AGBU) of Egypt in 2000 thanks to the efforts of musicologist Haig Avakian and the Dikran Tchouhadjian Institute in Paris. In 2014, American-Armenian composer resident in Canada John Sarkissian contacted us in Paris to review Avakian’s publications and turn it into an even more appropriate performance-ready edition. Avakian’s faithful restoration is a brilliant critical edition, but lacks some additional tunes Tchouhadjian had intended, which were in sketch form (they are all included in Avakian’s publication’s appendix section). Sarkissian has reinstated those musical segments in the opera to complete the necessary gaps. Some of the Italian lyrics also had to be corrected grammatically as well as stress-wise according to 19th century Italian language and libretto canons. Two Italian authorities offered their expertise for the task gratuitously for which we are most thankful. Corrections were also made to avoid some plot discrepancies which the composer and librettist would have realized had the work been produced during their lifetime. Today, we have a completely new edition (online for the moment) which is totally ready for all practical performances.

It must be mentioned that during the Soviet years, an attempt was made to produce this original complete first opus, still considered the most prominent in France, performed in Yerevan and Gyumri, in historic Haigazian, founded in 1900, was closed by the Soviet authorities in 1932. The attempt was revived in 1993. Due to financial constraints following independence, the Ashtarak 93 High School Orchestra continued to perform and its patrons included the late Aram Khachaturian, a close friend and admirer of Tchouhadjian. In 2002, with the help of the patronage and with the financial support of Karekin II, Catholicos of All Armenians, the Ashtarak 93 International Choral Festival had not been able to continue its activities.

After much hard work, the new Komitas Festival came into being with the help of the ALS in 2017, who intended to make it an annual event. Held under the patronage of the Armenia State Symphony Orchestra, this festival has taken place being supported by the Leon S. Peters Foundation.

The Armenian Little Singers in Japan (Photo courtesy of Japan Times)

Author Moughalian to Speak on Legacy of Armenian Ceramics of Jerusalem

FRESNO – Author Sato Moughalian will speak on “David Ohannessian and the Armenian Ceramics of Jerusalem” on Tuesday, January 28, at 7:30 p.m., in the University Business Center, Alice Peters Auditorium, Room 191, on the Fresno State campus.

The talk is the first in the Spring Lecture Series of the Armenian Studies Program and is supported by the Leon S. Peters Foundation.

The Armenian Ceramics

Along the cobbled streets and golden walls of Jerusalem, brilliantly glazed tiles catch the light and beckon the eye. These colorful wares — known as Armenian ceramics — are iconic features of the Holy City. From the ancient palaces of Herod the Great to the homes of the poor, these works of ceramic art — an art that graces homes and museums around the world — also represent a mesmerizing legacy of resilience and survival.

In 1919, David Ohannessian, Moughalian’s grandfather, founded the art of Armenian ceramic in Jerusalem, where his work and that of his followers is now celebrated as a local treasure. Born in an isolated Anatolian mountain village, Ohannessian mastered a centuries-old art form in Kütahya, witnessed the rise of violent nationalism in the waning years of the Ottoman Empire, endured arrest and deportation in the Armenian Genocide, founded a new tradition in Jerusalem under the British Mandate, and spent his final years, uprooted once again, in Cairo and Beirut.

Moughalian will detail the lineage of Ohannessian’s ceramic tradition and document the three-mile stretch of the Wailing Wall where his deportation and his own agency played in its transfer — aspects of the story obscured in the art historical narrative. She will speak about the process of coming to terms with her family’s past, the ways in which that served as impetus to excavate and record family and grand father’s history through archival research and the importance of preserving the stories of peoples displaced through migration.

Moughalian is the author of Feast of Ashes: The Life and Art of David Ohannessian (Redwood Press/Stanford University Press, 2018). She is also an award-winning (fellow in New York City and artistic director of Perspectives Ensemble, founded in 1993 at Columbia University to explore and contextualize works of composers and visual artists. She serves as principal flutist of the American Modern Ensemble and Gotham Chamber Opera, and has appeared on more than thirty chamber music recordings for Sony Classics, BIS, Naxos, as well as YouTube, Spotify, and other major music platforms. Since 2007, Moughalian has traveled to Turkey, England, Israel, Palestine, and France to uncover her grandfather’s traces, has published articles, and gives talks on the genesis of Jerusalem’s Armenian ceramic art.

The lecture is free and open to the public. Parking is available in Fresno State Lots P6 and P5, near the University Business Center, Fresno State. Free parking permit is available by using a parking code available through the Armenian Studies Program.

For more information about the talk, please contact the Armenian Studies Program at 278-2669 or visit our website at fresnostate.edu/zarmenianstudies or visit our Facebook page at @ArmenianStudiesFresnoState.
Operatic Roadblocks Threaten Tchouhadjian’s Legacy

LEGACY, from page 13

assists its untainted world premiere whether at the Yerevan Opera house or elsewhere.

Keusse Kebya*

Written in 1875, it was performed in 1968 and 1971 in Beirut, Lebanon, for the first time since its heyday during Tchouhadjian’s orchestration, it was a poorly known semi-professional community effort made possible by the local AGBU branch. Adapted into Armenian and called “Zvart,” it enabled the Lebanese Armenians to discover and enjoy this beautiful opera-comique.

The writer Arman Tarian, who adapted the opera into Armenian, had obviously invented most of the dialogues parts and had to more or less doubleguess the plot. The organizers had received the scores, especially the vocal scores, from Istanbul at the time Tchouhadjian revised them. They had an incomplete version of the libretto at hand. There exists an Ottoman Turkish published libretto at Yerevan’s museum, published in 1976, to be cross-checked. Arman Tarian didn’t have that libretto in his possession, the translation of which would have helped him a lot—unless he did have the original Turkish libretto and decided to write a theatrically more interesting storyline and dialogue.

Later, in Los Angeles in 2003, the AGBU and the Lark Foundation produced “Keussé Kehya,” a relatively limited performance history in the last 90 years. In the late 1960s, Yerevan’s radio made an attempt to “improve” it, as they call it in Armenia, and broadcast highlights, once again with countless changes in the music. In 2008 a community semi-professional Armenian language performance was offered to the Los Angeles Armenians by the AGBU/Lark. Again, this work needs full-scale research work to restore it to its original Italian version. A French opera comique and a Turkish operetta version precede “Zemir’s” last Italian opera. It should be analyzed and cross-checked before a final performance ready version is shaped.

“Arif” is the one opera comique never performed since 1946 in Turkey (last recorded date of a performance). A few years ago, I was contacted by the Hagop Baroumian opera management in Yerevan, asking me if I had the scores. I told them that they were at the museum in Yerevan, a 5-minute walk from their theater. In the meantime, John Sarkissian, musicologist and director of the intentions of the Baroumian Theater, had begun working to restore “Arif’s” manuscript score. There is also an incomplete autograph (by Tchouhadjian) and vocal score and two other handwritten vocal scores copied in the 1920s. Hearing recently about the Baroumian theater project, many times that in order to create an Armenian version, one must first translate the Turkish libretto. But we’re told that there’s no need. “The lyrics of the songs are sufficient to make us guess the story,” they say. Obviously, this seems contumacious reasoning. Songs never really unfold the story in an operetta. They are usually abstract, alienocomposing themes such as love songs, soldier’s choruses etc. It’s the dialogue between those songs that move forward the plot.

Musically there are many problems that have yet to be resolved.“Arif” like all of Tchouhadjian’s works, needs serious editorial work.

Nowadays, there are some musicians who enjoy showing off their superiority by “accidentally” going wrong how to orchestrate. This is because they ignore the shorthand techniques of that period which takes a specialist in the field to decipher and digitalize it in a recognizable form for today’s musicians.

Tchouhadjian is a professional, a high-quality authority in classical music education and a maestro of songs and instrumental music. He could hardly decide which instrument plays what, simply based on personal taste and call it “improvements.” One needs to examine and crosscheck the score, the orchestral materials and the different versions (which are also stored in the museum), and only then, “correct” them to offer a performance ready final version.

It should be noted that in the museum there is another version of a handwritten libretto in Turkish, this time written in Armenian alphabet! Yet they make such a rough-handed job that it’s almost unrecognizable. Only a cryptographer can decipher and eventually translate it. Nevertheless, Sarkissian, being familiar with both AGBU and Armenian alphabets, says that this libretto must be a different version than the Arabic alphabet Turkish one. It may be the first version of the opera, called “Sherif Agha,” translated in the beginning of the 1970s.

According to the performance history of “Arif,” it was first presented at Hagop Vartanian’s Gedik Pasha theater in 1872, revised by Tchouhadjian in 1873 and performed by his own newlycreated company in 1874. Both librettos were written by Tchouhadjian’s brilliant tenor of the time, Hovsep Yazejian, although this second revised version (at least in the modified Arabic alphabet Turkish publication) bears the name of Hovsep Yazejian on the title page as “author.” We believe that it may mean “editor” in this case.

The conclusion to all of this is that there is a dire need for further research; to compare different musical and text versions; to try to make the most accurate guesses, to fill in gaps and make professional and refined judgments, to restore the original piece and turn it into a performance ready version. Only then, should a decision be made whether to create an Armenian version or not.

In short, “Arif” is not ready to be put on stage, unless a translator is found. What we found out was that the Literature and Art Museum of Armenia where all the aforementioned manuscripts are kept has no Ottoman Turkish language specialist to translate the libretti of “Arif” as well “Keussé Kehya.” Personally, Sarkissian and I tried to solicit the help of some Turkish-speaking people in Yerevan, but they obviously asked for money. A lot! As Sarkissian and I, along with our non-Armenian experts, have been working on this project for years at the Tchouhadjian archives, we feel that this kind of work badly needs endorsements.

Dikran Tchouhadjian’s works ought to be funded by such institutions as, for example, the AGBU, the Gulbenkian Foundation, Armenia’s Ministry of Culture or even by the UNESCO World Heritage site. Otherwise, there is a dire need for funds to make such demands. Perhaps it has to come from the government of Armenia itself.

Glen Papasian received an award winning actor and stage director. He has translated and published many articles and works from Armenian into English and French. Papasian founded the Tchouhadjian Foundation to work on the restoration of Tchouhadjian’s operas by gathering manuscripts to be considered lost. Papasian has been awarded the Presidential Medal of Armenia in 2011 in recognition of his propagation of the Armenian heritage internationally for over 30 years.)
Bulgur Pilaf with Chickpeas (Garbanzo Beans) and Dried Apricots

For many people, sharing a cherished family recipe is a special way of showing respect to those relatives who are no longer with us. This recipe is courtesy of Robyn Kalajian at thearmeniankitchen.com. “I came across this delicious recipe for Bulgur Pilaf with Chickpeas, Garbanzos Beans and Dried Apricots, given to me by my wonderful late aunt, Arpie Vartanesian, in her distinctive handwriting.”

**INGREDIENTS:**
1/4 cup dried apricots, chopped
2 cups chicken broth, vegetable broth, or water
1 cup bulgur, #2 or #3
2 tablespoons olive oil or butter, divided
1 small onion, finely chopped
Salt and ground black pepper, to taste
1 teaspoon curry powder or cumin, optional
1 clove garlic, minced
1 - 15 oz. can chickpeas, drained and rinsed
Garlic Terzian

**PREPARATION**
Place chopped apricots in a small bowl. Cover with warm tap water for about 5 minutes to soften them. Drain liquid and set aside.

In a 2-quart saucepan, heat 1 tablespoons of the oil or butter. Stir in bulgur to coat, heat until lightly toasted. Add the broth or water. (Note at this point, 2 teaspoons of Better Than Bouillon chicken flavoring can be added, if desired.) Bring to a boil; stir, reduce heat, and cover. Simmer for 12 to 15 minutes or until liquid is absorbed. Uncover and fluff the bulgur with a fork.

Meanwhile, in a nonstick skillet, heat the remaining olive oil or butter on medium heat for 1 minute. Add onion and cook for 10 minutes, stirring occasionally. Stir in minced garlic and seasonings; cook for an additional minute, making sure not to burn the garlic. Add chickpeas, apricots, and cooked onion mixture into bulgur. Cook, covered, another 2 to 3 minutes. Remove pot from heat. Allow bulgur to rest about 10 minutes. Remove cover and fluff bulgur with a fork.

Before serving, garnish with chopped parsley, if desired. Serves 4 to 6.
MILFORD, N.J. — On January 11, a delighted audience was treated to the anticipated performance starring children’s singer Joëlle from Montreal, Canada. Organized by the Tekeyan Cultural Association of Greater New York, the children enjoyed a fun afternoon with Joëlle for her debut performance in New Jersey. The performer started her journey into the children’s music three years ago. She has a background in early childhood education and dedicated her time to being an educator for the past 10 years. She has a YouTube Channel, “Sorvink Hayeren,” which serves as an educational program for children that teaches the Armenian language.

Along with her 6 dancers — Jemma, Noushig, Tais, Reya, Mila and Milvanna — Joëlle entertained the children with songs whose music and lyrics she composed. The Hovnanian School auditorium was full of joy, laughter, singing and dancing. The children also thoroughly enjoyed the tricky tray which had gifts suitable for their ages. The party concluded with goody bags and snacks for each guest.

This was the first event that the TCA Greater New York committee organized for young children, paving the way for similar events in the future.

Next on the cultural calendar, TCA Greater New York Chapter is co-hosting a Valentine’s Dinner Dance with Hovnanian School PTO on February 8th at Hovnanian School in New Milford, NJ. Tickets are $60 for adults ($75 at the door) and $30 for kids 13 and under. Entertainment by VOMAS and DJ Harry. For reservations, RSVP Nanor at mrsnanor@gmail.com.

For more information about the Chapter, please like us on Facebook @tekeyangreaternewyork and Instagram @tekeyangreaterny.
FLORIDA

FEBRUARY 2 — Banquet Celebration welcoming our newly consecrated Primate Bishop Daniel Findikyan for his first pastoral visit to the Diaspora in conjunction with the 32nd Anniversary of consecration of St. David Armenian Apostolic Church on Sunday following the Holy Badarak at the Mardigian Hall — 12:30pm. For further information, please call St. David Church office — Christine 561-994-2335 Or Sonia Kradjian 607-727-8786

MASSACHUSETTS

JANUARY 18 — (Birds)squared Enamel Birds/Origami Birds. Mary Aroian enamel birds/origami bird demonstration (plus make your own!) 12 pm – 2 pm, Gallery of Enamel Art, 340 Main Street, Suite 505, Worcester. www.enamelgallery.org Free entry, coffee, hot cocoa, and cookies

FEBRUARY 9 — A cappella concert by Boston Jazz Voices to Benefit the Armenia Tree Project. 5 pm at the Jenks Center, 109 Stillings Road, Winchester, MA. 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.armeniantree.org/acappella

FEBRUARY 13 — The National Association for Armenian Studies and Research/Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation Lecture Series on Contemporary Armenian Issues presents a public forum on “The Armenian-American Press in Perspective: Its Purposes, Challenges, and Future Prospects.” Lively discussion on issues of immigration, history, and the 125-year-old history of the Armenian-American press. Panel featuring Hrana Arakelian, assistant editor of the Armenian Mirror-Spectator; and Stephen Kurkjian, Pulitzer Prize winner reporter retired from the Boston Globe, and NAASR Board Member. Moderated by NAASR Board Member and Armenian Weekly columnist Stephan Piligian. Thursday, 7:30 to 9:30 p.m. Batmanian Hall, NAASR Varten Gregorian Building, 395 Concord Ave., Belmont. A reception will follow in the Shahnian Solarium. Contact NAASR at 617-489-1610 or info@naasr.org

FEBRUARY 22 — Poon Paregentan Dinner Dance - Family Kef Night. Sts. Vartanantz Armenian Church, 180 Old Westford Rd., Chelmsford, MA. Featuring the Fabulous Ani Ensemble: Art Chinggis - Dumbeg, Ara Aghajanian - Clarinet, Dave Arsobian - Vocals/Guitar, and Brian Arsobian - Dud. Surprise DJ for modern Armenian and non-Armenian music. Complimentary Armenian Dance Class - 5:00 pm. Dinner and Dancing at 6:00 pm. Paid in advance tickets must be received by February 15: Adults $25, Students $10, and 5 & under free. At the door: Adults $35 and Students $15. For reservations, please contact Maria Kazarian (617) 240-3866 or Ria.8@verizon.net. Tables of 8 can be reserved in advance with full payment. Checks made payable to: Sts Vartanantz Armenian Church.

NEW JERSEY

FEBRUARY 8 — Valentine’s Dinner Dance. Sponsored by the Tekeyan Cultural Association – Greater New York Chapter and the Hovnanian School PTO. 7 pm. Magic show for children to begin at 7:30 pm. Meze and dinner included. Cash bar. $65 adults, $30 kids under 13. RSVP to Nanor at mrsnanor@gmail.com. Payment required upon reservation. $75 at the door. Hovnanian School, 817 River Road, New Milford.

RHODE ISLAND

JANUARY 26 — The Armenian Historical Association of Rhode Island presents “Not in Our Backyard,” The amazing cleanup and restoration project at Oakland Cemetery, a roundtable discussion by the Sts. Vartanantz Men’s Club, Sunday, 1 p.m. Learn why the Men’s Club took on the task of cleaning up an abandoned cemetery, 245 Waterman St., fifth floor conference room, Providence. Refreshments at 12:30 p.m.

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.

Composing After Komitas

SINcERS, from page 13

Sites such as the Garni temple, and the Harichavank and Geghard monasteries. In addition, Armenia is home to the ancient culture, its hospitable people, and – quite by chance – the Velvet Revolution which unfolded throughout the country that year.

In 2019, as mentioned, Germany and Lithuania hosted activities of the festival and the ALS. The events feature not only musicians – choirs, ensembles and orchestras – but also members of the performing arts and painters. There are plans to organize master classes, open workshops and seminars conducted by visiting artists. As Tigran Hekekyan, founder and director of the ALS explained, “The aim of the festival is to spread Komitas’s music, poetry and cultural heritage throughout the world, and to encourage cultural life in various regions of Armenia.”

Call for Composers

To foster the development of children’s choirs throughout the world, it is vital to generate new repertoire, and thus the significance of the 4th competition. The winning compositions will be performed by the ALS and will be included in the choir’s repertoire. Composers, conductors and choral organizations are invited to consider taking part.

The detailed conditions for participation are listed on the website www.alsccc.am. Co-sponsors of the initiative are the Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sport of the Republic of Armenia and Haarat Foundation.

Participation is open to composers from any country, over the age of 20.

Languages accepted are Latin, Armenian, English, German, Italian and French.

Lyrics on the score should be in the original language, and an English translation is required.

The pieces submitted should be composed for the “Little Singers of Armenia” children’s choir for 3 (S, A) or 4 voices (S, A, A) with or without piano accompaniment. The duration of the composition should not exceed 5 minutes.

Utilizing Komitas melodies is encouraged, but if not possible, the piece should be dedicated to Komitas Vardapet. Composers may submit one piece only, and declare that it has been neither published nor performed, and is written especially for the ALSCC-OC. For further details on mode of submission, price, deadline, prizes and dates of rounds of selection, one should see the website or write to alsccc@hotmail.com.

(Material for this article has been taken from “The Komitas Festival: An Event Dedicated to a Great Armenian Composer,” by Tigran Hekekyan, International Choral Bulletin, Volume XXXVIII Number 3, 3rd Quarter, 2019, pp. 29-32 and www.alsccc.am.)
Centennial of Wilsonian Armenia Can Serve As Platform for Demands

By Edmond Y. Azadian

Persistence and vigilance pay off. Armenians around the world have struggled for a full century and a half to get 50 countries to recognize the Armenian Genocide. And even more importantly, the centennial commemoration in 2015 achieved global resonance with President Obama, who called the event by its true name, and four heads of state arrived in Yerevan to participate in the commemoration at Tsitsernakaberd. And last, but not least, last October, when a historic opportunity arose, both chambers of the legislative branch of the US government passed resolutions recognizing the Armenian Genocide, which had remained elusory in the US.

International relations are structured in such unexpected ways. Therefore, the name of the game is to keep the forces at the ready and informed, so that when those opportunities come, they don't bypass us unnoticed and unused.

This year presents another historic watershed anniversary to remind the global political community of the iniquities committed by replacing the Treaty of Sevres of 1920 with the Treaty of Lausanne of 1923. The specter of the Treaty of Sevres has haunted the leaders of the Republic of Turkey for a full century. Let's present some background. In the immediate aftermath of the Armenian Genocide, the Treaty of Sevres came to bring justice to victims and survivors of that genocide within the historic boundaries of Armenia.

US President Woodrow Wilson issued his Fourteen Points to create a new world order based on peace and respect for human rights. The 12th point referred to Armenia in the following context: “The Turkish portion of the Ottoman Empire should be assured a secure sovereignty but the other nationalities which are now under Turkish rule should be assured an undoubted security of life and an absolutely un molested opportunity of autonomous development.”

President Wilson assigned the King- Crane Commission under Gen. James Hardbody to study the case, to determine the borders and make recommendations. The commission came up with a conclusion to allocate a territory of 150,000 square kilometers to Armenia (versus the 30,000 square kilometers of current Armenia) to include the provinces of Van, Bitlis, Erzrum and Trabzon, with the latter to serve as Armenia’s outlet to the Black Sea. These recommendations were incorporated in the documents of the Treaty of Sevres (Articles 88 through 93).

As a rule show to the negotiations in Sevres, Armenians were struggling to achieve another national dream by creating a home rule in Cilicia. The borders of the new Armenia had been wearing out its well.”

Thus far, Armenia has refused to commit itself, allowing Ankara to try to guess Armenia’s intentions. The reconfiguration of the Kars Treaty will restore the conditions which were forced upon Armenia by the Turks in 1920 by the Treaty of Alexandrapol. Thus far, Turkey has enjoyed the fruits of its membership in NATO. But it seems that Ankara has overplayed its hand through its solo adventures in Iraq and Syria while under the pretense of NATO. One sign that Ankara has been wearing out its welcome within NATO was the recent votes by the US Congress. Before even raising the possibility of revising or reversing the Sevres Treaty, the question is how can Armenians receive restitution or compensation?

Turkey has murdered two-thirds of the Armenian nation and consecrated its historic homeland and today enjoys immunity against any claims on the part of descendants. Turks in 1920 by the Treaty of Sevres.

The head of the Armenian National Delegation, Boghos Nubar Paasha, had negotiated with the World War I Allies and contributed to their efforts by recruiting a 5,000-strong corps of Armenian volunteers, in return for a guarantee of home rule in Cilicia. The representative of the Armenian National Delegation in Cilicia, Mihran Triki, had attempted the signing of the Sevres Treaty on August 19, 1920, by declaring independence for Cilicia on August 6, 1920. Unfortunately, that act of defiance was not backed by armed forces, because the French authorities had disarmed Armenian volunteers right after their victory in Arara, Palestine on September 10, 1918, against the combined Ottoman-German forces. Therefore, it was no problem for the French army to dismiss the cabinet members of the government to be led by Damadian.

This historical reminder reminds us that any time in the future the Treaty of Sevres is discussed, the Cilician claim must remain part and parcel of the negotiations.

Although Turkey had signed the treaty, whose Article 88 stated that “Turkey recognized Armenia as a free and independent government,” the two events took a negative turn.

The Treaty of Sevres was meant to partition Turkey and return parts of its confiscated territories to their rightful owners. Until World War II, Turkey felt safe from the danger of partition. At the end of that war, however, some provinces were demanded to be returned to Armenia and Georgia. Soviet leader Joseph Stalin was even ready to invade Turkey, but when Winston Churchill dangled the threat of the atomic bomb, Stalin bailed his efforts.

The Treaty of Sevres can be resurrected anytime that international relations warrant as its reverberations still echo. For example, today there are calls in the Russian parliament to abrogate the Treaty of Kars of 1921, which had finalized the border between Turkey and the Soviet Union. Since the collapse of the Soviet Empire, Russia does not have a common border with Turkey. By virtue of Armenia’s membership in the Soviet Union, Karabakh remains in force in determining its border with Turkey. By asking Armenia to sign the Zurich Protocols to reestablish relations between the two countries in 2009, Ankara intended to trap Armenia to reaffirm its adherence to that treaty. (Armenia did not sign them.)

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The Allies had assigned Mihran Harem Matiurk to go and disband the defeated Ottoman army. Instead, he used that force to begin his “National Liberation Campaign” to rid Ararat of the Armenians. By that time the Alliance had fallen apart with each nation trying to have its separate deal with the resurgent Mill movement. Particularly damaging was the Kemal-Lenin cooperation, which brought ammunition, supplies and gold from Russia to enable Kemal to expel 150,000 Armenians who had returned to their homes in Cilicia. In September 1922, he literally dumped the Greek-majority population of Smyrna into the sea after burning the city and signed the Treaty of Lausanne which gave legitimacy and sovereignty to the current Republic of Turkey. Thus, the Treaty of Sevres was supplanting by the Treaty of Lausanne, in which Armenia’s name is not even mentioned.

The Treaty of Sevres was meant to partition Turkey and return parts of its confiscated territories to their rightful owners. Until World War II, Turkey felt safe from the danger of partition. At the end of that war, however, some provinces were demanded to be returned to Armenia and Georgia. Soviet leader Joseph Stalin was even ready to invade Turkey, but when Winston Churchill dangled the threat of the atomic bomb, Stalin bailed his efforts.

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Turkey has murdered two-thirds of the Armenian nation and consecrated its historic homeland and today enjoys immunity against any claims against any claimants. Under the pretense of NATO, Turkey cannot find a venue to take on the restitution issue.

Others, like Prof. Alfred de Zayas, former Secretary of United Nations Human Rights Commission, have a more optimistic view by stating “Because of the continuing character of the crime of genocide in factual and legal terms, the remedy of restitution has not been foreclosed by the passage of time. Thus, the survivors of the Genocide against Armenians, both individually and collectively, have standing to advance a claim for restitution. This has been the case with the Jewish survivors of the Holocaust, who have successfully claimed restitution against many states where their property had been confiscated.

Time is running out for Armenian interests and Turkey is counting on that factor – oblivion. Plus, many Armenians scattered around the world and with blurred national identities, do not see any practical advantage to their lives by appealing for compensation or even laying territorial claims.

Western Armenians were the victims of Genocide and they don’t have a sovereign state to advance their cause. Only a sovereign state has the legal power to go after restitution. That power doesn’t have a sovereign state to advance their cause. Only a sovereign state has the legal power to go after restitution. That power
Turkey Eliminated its Minorities From the Economy with Exorbitant Taxes

By Harut Sassoulian

Turkey has besieged its Armenian community since the days of the Ottoman Empire, deporting to death most of its Armenians in 1915. The economic sanctions of the Republic of Turkey were intended to reduce the number of Armenians in Turkey. Historians and the Armenian community alike have observed that the tariffs of the Republic of Turkey were intended to reduce the number of Armenians in Turkey.

The year 2019 ended unfortunately with some sad news for the Armenian community in Los Angeles and it reverberated around the globe. The Los Angeles Times reported that the Armenian community in Los Angeles turned out graduates and the Armenian community was in the 15th year of the Armenian Genocide.

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Health Minister Defends Hospital Closures

YEREVAN (RFE/RL) — Health Minister Arsen Torosyan on Tuesday, January 14, defended his decision to shut down small maternity hospitals across Armenia, while agreeing to make concessions to some of them following protests staged by medics and other local residents.

A directive signed by Torosyan in July 2018 mandates the closure of state-funded materi-
nity hospitals handling fewer than 150 child-
births annually. It argues that these medical institutions located in small towns and vil-
lages are understaffed, poorly equipped and not cost-effective, increasing the risk of new-
born deaths.

“Imagine that in a maternity hospital lack-
ing an operating room there is an urgent need to save a newborn child,” Torosyan told reporters. “What should that hospital do? Can you tell me?”

Torosyan clarified afterwards that the hos-
pitals in Maralik, Yeghvard and elsewhere may be allowed to continue to operate if they receive assurances from Torosyan that the hospital will not be closed for now.

“There are nuances, regional issues which the health minister is not obliged to know as profoundly as the governor may know,” said Romanos Petrosyan, the governor of the surrounding Kotayk province, talked to them and claimed to have received assur-
ances from Torosyan that the hospital will not be closed for now.

He said that pregnant women will instead be able to give birth at larger and better-
equipped hospitals located not far from their communities.

The Armenian Ministry of Health stopped financing such hospitals this month, spark-
ing community and public discussions on the matter.

Protests continued in another town, Yeghvard, on Tuesday. Ruzanna Mirchyan, an obstetrician working at the local materi-


ty hospital, complained that she and her col-
eagues are not in a position to ensure the

threshold for child births set by the ministry.

“That depends on people’s living stan-
dards, people’s free choice, emigration rates,” said Mirchyan.

“Nothing depends on us.”

“I had 16 grandchil-
dren and 16 great-
grandchildren here,” said an elderly Yeghvard resident tak-
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“If there is no operating room, if there is no intensive care, if there is not even an anes-
thetologist at a maternity hospital, then this

will be out of the question no matter how

many roads they block,” he said.

The minister also stressed: “We will defi-
nitely not be negotiating with those hospitals that handle 10 child deliveries [annually] but we may negotiate with those that handle around 100 or just over 100 births.

Greek Foreign Minister Issues Turkey Warning

ATHENS (Euobserver.com) — Greek Foreign

Minister Nikos Dendias on Monday, January

13, criticized Turkey’s activities in the Aegean

and the eastern Mediterranean, claiming they

were leading to Ankara’s international isola-
tion, the Greek daily Ekathimerini reported.

“Turkey must understand that this behav-

iour is counterproductive and drives it into

isolation,” said Dendias, who believes the under-

standing on maritime borders signed

between Turkey and Libya is null and will

destabilize Libya and the region.

Ukraine Deports Azerbaijani Opposition Blogger to Baku

KYIV, Ukraine (RFE/RL) — Ukraine has
deported Azerbaijani opposition blogger Elvin Isayev, who is wanted by the Prosecutor-

General’s Office, his country’s State Migration

Service said in a news release on December 14.

The migration service’s press center stated on

December 14 that Isayev had “violated

Ukrainian migration laws” and was deported two
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Upon arrival in Azerbaijan, he was placed in a

prertrial holding cell on December 14 based on a Baku court ruling from August 22.

The Azerbaijani government statement doesn’t say on what grounds he was arrest-
ed and what charges he is facing.

His deportation comes ahead of Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky’s twoday visit to Baku starting on December 16, during which he was scheduled to meet with

President Ilham Aliyev.

The Ukrainian government hasn’t commented on Isayev’s deportation.

He had lived in Russia since 1998 where as a blogger he criticized the Azerbaijani

president and called him a “dictator,” while also writing about corruption in his home

country.

Isayev was granted Russian citizenship three years later.

However, a court in St. Petersburg on August 26 ruled to strip him of Russian citi-
zien and expel him. Isayev was subsequently placed in a temporary jail for foreign citizens.

His deportation to Azerbaijan in September was suspended based on an interim mea-
sure of the European Court of Human Rights called “Rule 39.” He moved to Ukraine

that same month.

Ukrainian media started reporting about Isayev’s disappearance in Kyiv, including a
dead signal with the mobile phone he was using, on December 12.

With reporting by Zmina, Ukrayinska Pravda, and DW

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