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Hrant Dink Remembered

Anniversary of Hrant Dink Assassination Commemorated In Istanbul

ISTANBUL (Bianet) – Thousands of protesters marked the 13th anniversary of a Turkish-Armenian journalist Hrant Dink's murder on Sunday, January 19, as outrage continues to grow over a trial which failed to shed light on alleged official negligence or even collusion.

Hrant Dink, the editor in chief of Agos newspaper and an advocate of reconciliation between Turks and Armenians, was shot dead outside his office by then-teenager Ogün Samast who defines himself as Turkish nationalist. More than 100,000 people marched in the funeral procession for Dink.

"Hrant Dink was the symbol of brotherhood that our country needed most. I think



Marchers pay tribute to the late Hrant Dink on the anniversary of his death.

that was the biggest reason why he was taken from us. Because the country's dark-hearted ones need separation rather than unity," Social Memory Platform lawyer Sertaç Ekinci said.

Protesters and human rights activists placed red carnations on the spot where Dink was gunned down in daylight by a teenage gunman in Istanbul, outside of his minority Agos newspaper.

"As we could not manage to live together and respect other cultures, we have not been ashamed of the drought we have created. Ours is not hatred against evil. An



Ashley Kutzer (l) and sister Haley Kutzer (r) at St. James Annual Bazaar selling Hokistrings

Pretty, Powerful: Hokistrings Bracelets Raise Domestic Violence Awareness, Funds

BOSTON – When is a bracelet not just a bracelet? When it helps a battered women's shelter halfway around the world.

By Alin K. Gregorian

Mirror-Spectator Staff

Ashley and Haley Kutzer, according to their mother, Donna Partamian-Kutzer, are both artistic and generous.

The two teen sisters started Hokistrings, a line of beaded bracelets, last year. All the money from the sale of the popular bracelets

goes toward the Women's Support Center (WSC), a shelter for women escaping domestic violence in Yerevan.

"My daughter Ashley has had a long-time hobby of making beaded jewelry. Last year she began a new design and her peers took an immediate liking to her bracelets. What was a simple hobby suddenly began to take up much more of her time as she was taking orders from many of her friends from school and at work. Ashley decided that she could ask people for a few dollars for each bracelet and then donate the money to a good cause. It was right around this time that Lenna

see BRACELET, page 14

endless struggle. We want people not to give rein to the normality of evil, bow to power. We want them to struggle for their rights," human rights defender Sebnem Korur Financi said during her commemorative speech.

Many carried black banners that read "We are all Hrant, we are all Armenian" and "We want justice", as they did in the previous twelve commemorations.

see DINK, page 4

Hrant Dink Remembered in Cologne, Frankfurt

Muriel Mirak-Weissbach

Special to the Mirror-Spectator

COLOGNE, Germany – Thirteen years have passed since Hrant Dink was murdered in front of the office of Agos, the newspaper he directed as editor in chief.



Can Dundar and Aydin Ustunel

Although the young assailant was apprehended, arrested and convicted, others accused of complicity, as well as those who ordered the assassination, have still not been brought to justice.

This year, Armenian, German and Turkish intellectuals and civil society activists joined again to commemorate the man who fought for recognition of the

Armenian genocide and to keep alive the spirit of reconciliation he embodied. On January 18 in Cologne and on January 19, the anniversary of his death, in Frankfurt, events took place organized by several groups, including the Hrant Dink Forum, the German-Armenian Society (DAG), Kultur Forum Türkei Deutschland (KFTD), TÜDAY Human Rights Organization and medico international.

see COLOGNE, page 4

Canadian Armenian Genocide Survivor Eugenie Papazian Dies at 104

TORONTO (*Horizon Weekly*) – Eugenie Papazian Korkorian-Yeranian, a Toronto woman believed to have been one of the last Canadians to have survived the Armenian Genocide, died on January 14, four months shy of her 105th birthday.

Eugenie Papazian was born in Turkey, in the Ionia district of Samsun by the Black Sea in 1915. She never knew her parents. Her father was taken to the army in 1915 and did not return home, while her mother died when she was still a newborn.

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Eugenie Papazian (Korkorian-Yeranian)

NEWS IN BRIEF

Lavrov Happy with NKR Negotiations Progress

MOSCOW (Armenpress) – The Russian Foreign Ministry released a statement on January 17 about progress in the settlement of the Nagorno Karabakh conflict, Tass reported.

"There is progress in the implementation of 'small steps' on which the foreign ministers had agreed in April 2019 as a development to the agreements reached between the Azerbaijani president and the Armenian prime minister in Vienna in March 2019. The situation on the border and the line of contact is relatively calm. There is an operative communication between Yerevan and Baku," the ministry said in the responses to the reporters' questions during Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov's press conference.

Armenians Can Now Visit China Visa-Free

YEREVAN (PanARMENIAN.Net) – Armenia and China have officially abolished visas from January 19, Deputy Prime Minister Tigran Avinyan said in a Facebook post.

President Armen Sarkissian ratified the visa waiver agreement with China a little more than a month ago. Holders of Armenian passports will be able to enter, transit and stay in the territory of China for a maximum of 90 days within a period of 180 days.

The agreement to sign the deal was reached during Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan's visit to China in May.

The deal is expected to boost trade, business and tourism exchanges between the two countries.

Aleksanyan Comes in 1st at French Tourney

NICE, France (PanARMENIAN.Net) – Armenian wrestler, Olympic champion Artur Aleksanyan defeated all his opponents in the 97-kilogram event of the Henri Deglane Grand Prix de France.

A Greco-Roman wrestler, Aleksanyan is an Olympic Champion (2016) and bronze medalist (2012), a three-time World Champion (2014, 2015, 2017), and a four-time European Champion (2012, 2013, 2014, 2018). He is the second Olympic gold medalist of Armenia since regaining independence in 1991 and is the most decorated Olympian of independent Armenia as well. In his final bout, Aleksanyan beat Azerbaijan's Orkhan Nuriyev 3-1 to become the champion.

Armenians Rudik Mkrtchyan (55 kg) and Karapet Chalyan (77kg), meanwhile, took the second spot in their respective categories, while Gevorg Gharibyan (60 kg), Slavik Galstyan (67 kg), Malkhas Amoyan (72 kg) and Ruben Gharibyan (82 kg) came in the third.

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News From Armenia

Parliament Attack Leader Hunanyan Sends Letter to Prime Minister

YEREVAN (Armenpress) – The 1999 Armenian parliament attack ringleader Nairi Hunanyan has sent a letter addressed to Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan, the Prime Minister's Office confirmed on January 17.

Nairi Hunanyan led the terror attack on the Armenian parliament on October 27, 1999 and is currently serving a life-sentence since being convicted in 2003.

The Prime Minister's office refused to disclose other details.

Unconfirmed media reports earlier said Hunanyan has reportedly expressed his willingness in the letter to participate into a new investigation into the October 27 case.

On October 27, 1999 a group of five armed gunmen led by Hunanyan stormed into the parliament while it was in session and assassinated Prime Minister Vazgen Sargsyan, Speaker Karen Demirchyan, Deputy Speakers Yuri Bakhshyan and Ruben Miroyan, as well as three lawmakers and a Cabinet member. The gunmen held the remaining MPs in parliament hostage until surrendering to authorities the next day.

The five perpetrators, who include Hunanyan's younger brother and uncle, were sentenced to life in prison in 2003.

EU Representative Happy With Judicial Reforms in Armenia

YEREVAN (Armenpress) – Armenia is making efforts towards judicial reforms, and the European Union (EU) supports these efforts, the head of the EU Delegation to Armenia, Ambassador Andrea Wiktorin, told reporters on January 17.

Commenting on the current situation around the Constitutional Court (CC), as well as the criminal case launched against CC President Hrayr Tovmasyan, Wiktorin said the European Union, like other international structures, is closely following the ongoing developments, but they will refuse to comment on the ongoing concrete cases.

"I would be very surprised if there was an interference on a concrete criminal case, but we see that efforts are made for judicial reforms, and we support these efforts," she said.

Wiktorin said she has worked in Armenia for over 10 years and has had a chance to work with the first ombudsman.

"I just want to say that I now see that serious efforts are being made to improve human rights, in particular to prevent torture and prohibited treatment, and there is also cooperation with international structures on this path," she said.

New High-Voltage Line Between Iran and Armenia to Finish by End of 2020

YEREVAN (Armenpress) – The third high-voltage line between Armenia and Iran is scheduled to be finished by the end of the year. The new line is being constructed along the sidelines of the "gas-electricity exchange project" between the two neighboring countries, Deputy Foreign Minister of Armenia Shavarsh Kocharyan said during the session of the National Assembly Standing Committee on Regional and Eurasian Integration on January 21.

Kocharyan clarified that the pipeline between Armenia and Iran is underexploited, using just 20 percent of its total capacity. "If this deal is profitable for both sides, why don't we get more gas and give more electricity? The reason is that the two existing high-voltage lines do not have enough capacity," Kocharyan said, adding that the construction of the new line was delayed due to the sanctions imposed on Iran, since Iran also must have a significant contribution to the construction works.

"It is expected that by the end of the year it will be done and the exchange volume will increase," he said.



President Armen Sarkissian at Davos (Photo courtesy of Armedia)

President Sarkissian Attends Davos Forum

DAVOS, Switzerland – At the invitation of the founder and President of the World Economic Forum Klaus Schwab, President Armen Sarkissian participated in the 50th annual meeting in Davos, Switzerland.

"You were the first president of the Global Agenda Council on Energy Security of the World Economic Forum. The Forum is looking forward to hearing your vision regarding the forthcoming industrial revolution, new quantum technologies, quantum politics as well as on directions and trends of development of the contemporary world," Klaus Schwab wrote to Sarkissian.

This year the World Economic Forum was held on January 20-24 in

Swiss town of Davos, under the theme Stakeholders for a Cohesive and Sustainable World.

Over 700 speakers from different countries and over 3000 participants discussed issues related to economy, technologies, ecology, and industry.

In fifty years of its existence the annual meeting in Davos has become one of the most influential high-level global gatherings which every year brings together representatives of states, governments, international organizations, and business community as well as reputable experts to discuss global, regional, and industrial agenda, to offer solutions to the existing problems and challenges.

Among the speakers of this year's

gathering were the US President Donald Trump, German Chancellor Angela Merkel, President of the European Central Bank Christine Lagarde, activist on climate and ecological issues Greta Thunberg, and others.

Sarkissian spoke at the Davos World Economic Forum and made a statement on rapid changes happening in the world, global risks, new quantum technologies and systems, quantum behavior of politics, trends and avenues of development of the contemporary world.

In the framework of the World Economic Forum Sarkissian held meetings with a number of heads of state and government, representatives of business community.

Yerevan Mayor Demands Retraction Of Corruption Claims

YEREVAN (RFE/RL) – Yerevan Mayor Hayk Marutyan on Thursday, January 16, challenged two leading members of the opposition Bright Armenia Party (LHK) to substantiate their allegations that his administration has accepted dubious cash dona-

pal administration.

Khazhakyan claimed that the donations were made in return for construction permits given to them. Marutyan strongly denied such a quid pro quo.

The opposition politician subsequently alleged that the municipality also accepted cash from private donors.

Marutyan's spokesman, Hakob Karapetyan, dismissed that allegation as "disinformation." "After that statement the municipality conducted an additional inquiry and did not find any instances of cash donation," he told RFE/RL's Armenian service.



Yerevan Mayor Hayk Marutyan speaks to journalists, January 16, 2019.

tions from wealthy businesspeople.

In letters sent to the LHK's Edmon Marukyan and Davit Khazhakyan, he said they must retract those claims if they cannot come up with any evidence.

Khazhakyan is a member of the Yerevan city council who has repeatedly accused Marutyan of corruption and mismanagement. He sparked a scandal in November by revealing that private firms have donated two dozen garbage trucks to the municipi-

ty administration. Karapetyan did not exclude that the mayor will take the opposition figures to court if they ignore his demands.

Khazhakyan insisted, meanwhile, that he does have evidence of the alleged wrongdoing and has submitted it an ad hoc commission of the Armenian parliament which was formed recently to investigate the controversial donations. He said Marutyan should cooperate with the commission.

Matenadaran Digitization Ongoing, New Scanner Needed

YEREVAN (Panorama.am) – The Matenadaran, Armenia's national repository of ancient manuscripts, digitized a total of 543 manuscripts in 2019, Vahe Torosyan, Scientific Secretary of the Matenadaran, said on January 14.

He noted that mainly Armenian manuscripts are digitized by the repository. The Matenadaran is home to a total of 11,350 Armenian manuscripts, the secretary said.

Torosyan added a total of 6,598 manuscripts have been digitized to date, with the digitization of palimpsest manuscripts requiring extra efforts. Overall, 31 palimpsests have been digitized so far, he says, adding the Matenadaran plans to acquire a new scanner which will enable them to digitize difficult-to-open manuscripts.

"There are manuscripts, the backs of which are sewn in a way that if we open them completely, they would break. As a rule, we do not digitize them. We have to tear it down completely and sew the back again, or we can get a scanner that will scan them in a V-shape opening," he said.

According to the data, in 2019 2,851 manuscripts and 705 archival documents were served. 440 archival documents were digitized last year.

The digitization of manuscripts started in 2007-2008.



ARMENIA

Former Armenian Security Chief 'Died in Apparent Suicide'

YEREVAN (RFE/RL) – Georgi Kutoyan, a former head of Armenia's National Security Service (NSS) who was found shot dead on Friday, January 17, most probably committed suicide, Prosecutor-General Artur Davtyan said over the weekend.

Davtyan told reporters that investigators

shock death, including murder.

Kutoyan's body was discovered at a Yerevan apartment belonging to his family. According to the Investigative Committee, he had a gunshot wound to his head.

A spokeswoman for the law-enforcement agency, Naira Harutiunyan, said on January 20

Committee, Artur Melikyan, said on Friday that his officers found dozens of bullets and spent cartridge cases in the apartment.

In a written statement released on Saturday, the Investigative Committee said it has established that Kutoyan fired 35 gunshots at an apartment wall after "consuming alcohol" there in late December. He was killed by a bullet fired from the same pistol legally owned by him, said the statement.

Kutoyan and his family did not live in the apartment in question. According to the Investigative Committee, the former NSS chief went there the day before his death after telling his loved ones that he wants to "rest there for two or three days." The committee statement also said that Kutoyan, who reportedly studied in Britain, "returned" to Armenia on December 9.

A lawyer by education, Kutoyan had worked as an assistant to President Serzh Sargsyan from 2011 until his surprise appointment as director of Armenia's most powerful security agency in February 2016. He was sacked by newly elected Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan in May 2018 immediately after the "Velvet Revolution" that toppled Sargsyan.

Sargsyan was reportedly shocked by the unexpected death of his former aide. The 65-year-old ex-president attended the requiem service and Kutoyan's funeral on Monday as did most of his top loyalists. He refused to talk to reporters.

Kutoyan is the second former senior security official found shot to death in the last four months. Hayk Harutiunyan, a former chief of the Armenian police, was found dead in his country house in September. Investigators suggested that he committed suicide.



Funeral of Georgi Kutoyan on January 20

have found "quite a bit of information testifying to a suicide" as he attended a requiem service for Kutoyan held on Saturday. He cautioned, though, that they are continuing to consider other theories of the 38-year-old's

that investigators have found no "traces of violence" on the body. She added that they are awaiting the results of several forensic tests that could shed more light on Kutoyan's death.

A deputy head of the Investigative



The Armenian humanitarian mission in Aleppo with the donated medicine and supplies.

Humanitarian Delegation Takes Supplies to Aleppo

YEREVAN (Armenpress) – The Armenian humanitarian mission in Syria donated medicine and medical supplies to the Aleppo Hospital on January 16, the group's spokesperson Nazeli Elbakyan said.

The mission is being carried out by the Armenian Center for Humanitarian Demining and Expertise and includes medical and demining activities.

In the period of February 8, 2019 until January 16, 2020, the Armenian medics treated 13,680 patients. The group's de-miners have cleared 126,000 square meters of territory.

The Syrian side once again thanked for the donation and emphasized the importance of the ongoing mission.

Armenia Easing Bank Secrecy

YEREVAN (RFE/RL) – Armenia's parliament was poised on Tuesday, January 21, to pass in the second and final reading a government bill that will make it easier for law-enforcement bodies to access bank account data.

Armenian banks have until now been required to provide tax and law-enforcement authorities with information about financial accounts of only those clients who are accused or suspected of certain crimes.

The bill passed by the parliament in the first reading last month would allow investigators to also see what individuals linked to criminal suspects have in their domestic bank accounts. Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan has said this will help the Armenian authorities fight against corruption more effectively.

Justice Minister Rustam Badasyan likewise insisted on Tuesday that the existing bank secrecy rules impede anti-corruption efforts as he spoke during a final parliament debate on the bill involving draft amendments to two Armenian laws. Representatives of the pro-government majority in the National Assembly reaffirmed their support for the measure.

"All countries, at least those aligned in the Council of Europe, are now trying to ensure a more transparent regulation of the banking and financial sector," said Vladimir Vartanian, the chairman of the parliament committee on legal affairs.

Opposition lawmakers continued to criticize the bill, however, saying that it could scare away investors. "With these changes what messages will we be sending to investors if our investment climate is undermined as a result?" said Mane Tandilyan of the opposition Bright Armenia Party.

The Union of Armenian Banks called the government initiative a "step back" when Pashinyan's cabinet unveiled it in September. Some economists warned of capital flight from the country.

The Central Bank of Armenia sought to allay those fears at the time, insisting that the bill will not soften banking secrecy. It argued that investigators will continue to need permission from both prosecutors and courts to access information about bank accounts.

Badasyan argued in this regard that the new rules also require law-enforcement officials to better substantiate their requests for such permission. Those will have to be approved by Armenia's prosecutor-general or one of his deputies before reaching courts, said the justice minister.

Pianist Eva Gevorgyan To perform in Yerevan

YEREVAN (Panorama.am) – Fifteen-year-old Russian-Armenian pianist Eva Gevorgyan will perform a joint concert with pianists Armen Babakhanian and Poom Prommachart (Thailand, Canada) on January 30 at Aram Khachaturian Concert Hall. The concert, entitled "Armenian Piano Music Part 3" will feature works of Armenian composers, Aram Khachaturian, Arno Babajanyan, Haro Stepanyan, Komitas, Sayat-Nova, Sheram and Jivani among them. The event is organized by TM Production

Gevorgyan is studying at the Moscow State Tchaikovsky Conservatory. She has been playing piano since 3 years of age. She has participated in numerous competitions and festivals, and received the second prize at the 2019 Cliburn International Junior Piano Competition held in Dallas last year.

She was granted Armenian citizenship in 2019.



INTERNATIONAL

International News

Serbia to Open its Embassy in Armenia at End of February

YEREVAN (ARKA) – Serbia will open its embassy in Armenia at the end of February, Serbian Prime Minister Ana Brnabic said during a conversation with Armenian President Armen Sarkissian in Abu Dhabi.

In 2019 October Serbia lifted visas for citizens of Armenia, who can travel to Serbia as tourist and stay there for a period of 90 days. The agreement was reached during Sarkissian's official visit to Serbia.

In Abu Dhabi Sarkissian and Brnabic said the move is an important step in strengthening relations between the two countries. They also agreed that both countries can cooperate in environment protection and use of green technologies.

President Sarkissian spoke also about the ATOM (Advanced Tomorrow) presidential initiative, designed to give a boost to development of science and education. He noted that this multifaceted project calls for creation of the Museum of Future for kids and the first in Armenia Disneyland based on artificial intelligence.

The meeting between the President of Armenia and the Serbian Prime Minister took place on the sidelines of the Abu Dhabi Stability Week Forum.

Iran Names New Ambassador to Armenia

TEHRAN (Panoram.am) – Abbas Zohouri has been appointed new Ambassador of the Islamic Republic of Iran to Armenia. Zohouri along with 12 other new ambassadors met with the President of Iran on Tuesday.

As President Hassan Rouhani tweeted the meeting came before the ambassadors leave on their countries of mission.

"The President stressed the importance of developing economic relations," the Tweet said.

TUMO Center to Open in Berlin in October

BERLIN – On January 21, a memorandum of understanding was signed to establish a TUMO center in Berlin. The signing ceremony took place concurrently at the TUMO Yerevan and the Berlin headquarters of KfW Development Bank.

TUMO Berlin will open its doors in Charlottenburg, in western Berlin, providing tuition-free education to 1,200 students, in October 2020.

The event was attended by government officials from Armenia and Germany as well as the heads of the TUMO Center for Creative Technologies and KfW Development Bank.

Welcoming those in attendance, Deputy Prime Minister of Armenia Mher Grigoryan said, "Today's event proves that a country's geographic location or the richness of its natural resources does not determine its future. Rather, it is a country's human potential and the richness of its ideas, which have no boundary."

The establishment of a TUMO center in Berlin was spearheaded by the TUMO Center for Creative Technologies in tandem with KfW Development Bank.

Dr. Ingrid Hengster of KfW's executive board, stated in her address, "Promoting education is one of KfW's central priorities. With TUMO, we are adopting an innovative project, from a country that KfW also cooperates with in development, to promote the digital education of children."

Students at TUMO Berlin will focus on programming, animation, filmmaking, graphic design, 3D modeling, game development, music, drawing, photography and robotics.

TUMO CEO Marie Lou Papazian emphasized that, "The educational program that KfW and TUMO are launching in Berlin is an ambitious one. It will cover some of the fastest-growing fields in technology and design such as artificial intelligence, computational graphics, algorithmic music and include numerous opportunities to explore and prepare for future careers."

TUMO Berlin will join TUMO Paris and Beirut. Plans to establish new centers in Moscow, Tirana, Tokyo and other cities around the world are in progress.



Marchers pay tribute to the late Hrant Dink on the anniversary of his death.

Anniversary of Hrant Dink Assassination Commemorated in Istanbul

DINK, from page 1

Dink was outspoken about Armenian issues and he was prosecuted three times for violating Article 301 of the Turkish penal code, which makes it a crime to insult Turkishness, the Turkish nation, or Turkish institutions. He spent his career challenging the intolerance behind such statutes,

becoming a champion of minority rights in a country where such causes are punishable.

His murder instantly became a symbol of the racism and ultranationalism grinding at the core of Turkish society, a war against freedom of expression, and the complacency of Turkey's intellectuals.

Since Dink's murder, the movement called "We Want Justice," which demands a fair trial for Dink's murder case, has grown and become more complex, bringing together Turkish liberals, Armenians, journalists, Kurds and Alevites, and women and members of the LGBTI community.

(See related editorial on Page 17.)

Hrant Dink Remembered in Cologne, Frankfurt

COLOGNE, from page 1

In Cologne, representing the Armenian community were the Primas of the Armenian Church in Germany, Bishop Seropé Isakhanyan, and DAG President Dr. Raffi Kantian. Turkish-German author Do An Akhanlı participated, and Dilan Yazıcıoğlu presented selections from his monodrama "Anna's Silence." Can Dündar, the former chief editor of Cumhuriyet, has



Raffi Kantian (l.) and Dilan Yazıcıoğlu



Bishop Isakhanyan



Nare Karoyan (piano) and Judith Hoffmann

collected texts by Dink and contrasted them to materials from the court records of the trial against his murderer. A critic of the Erdogan government, he is among the growing number of journalists and intellectuals who have fled Turkey to escape persecution. (See <https://mirrorspectator.com/2018/05/03/journalist-can-dundar-in-german-exile/>) Two films were shown at the meeting, the first by Osman Okkan, co-founder of the KFTD, and film maker, entitled, "Mordakte Hrant Dink" (Hrant Dink Murder Files). The second was "No Darkness Can Make Us Forget" by Hüseyin Karabey. The music program featured Nare Karoyan on the piano, accompanying singer Judith Hoffmann.

The Frankfurt event also included films, a round table discussion and concert. In addition to Okkan, Dündar and Kantian, journalist Banu Güven and Green Party political figure Cem Özdemir took part. The 2007 film "In the Swallows' Nest" deals with the Armenian orphanage outside Istanbul where Hrant Dink spent part of his youth, and "A Choir," a 1996 film



Dogan Akhanli (l.) and Deutche Welle journalist Aydin Ustunel

about an Armenian chorus in Paris, which depicts life in the diaspora. The music program offered Armenian, Turkish and Kurdish songs, performed by the Lale Kocgün and Ensemble.

(All photos are by Krikor Manugian. See related editorial on page 17.)



INTERNATIONAL

Armenia Officially Protests Cancellation Of Soprano's Participation at Azeri Tenor's Request

YEREVAN (Combined sources) – Armenian Members of Parliament will send a letter of protest to the German parliament regarding the controversial cancellation of Armenian soprano Ruzan Mantashyan's performance in Dresden after of an Azerbaijani singer's xenophobic demand to do so.

"The Semper Opernball festival cancelled singer Ruzan Mantashyan's performance due to the demand of Azerbaijani tenor Yusif Eyvazov, who is singer Anna Netrepko's husband, because of Ruzan Mantashyan's Armenian nationality. We, the parliamentary standing committee on Science, Education, Culture and Youth Affairs, have drafted a letter and would like it to be signed by as many lawmakers as possible. The letter is addressed to the Bundestag, in order to draw their attention on the xenophobic manifestations taking place in Dresden," said Artur Manukyan, a lawmaker representing the ruling My Step bloc.

On January 13, media reports suggested Eyvazov refused to perform with Mantashyan due to "political concerns." The two singers were scheduled to perform together on February 7 at Semper Opernball.

Afterwards, the Azerbaijani singer claimed on his social media account that the reports are fake news. He published a news release by Semper Opernball which reportedly showed that the festival didn't even have a contract with Mantashyan regarding her performance.

However, a December 2019 news release included Mantashyan in the list of performers and the final contract wasn't technically yet signed because the negotiations weren't yet completed. But organizers and Mantashyan had agreed around her performance.

The Armenian soprano then publicly said she expects an apology from the organizers.

German opera singer René Pape has criticized Azerbaijani tenor Yusif Eyvazov for forcing Armenian soprano Ruzan Mantashyan out of Dresden Opera Ball.

"Usually, I don't comment on such things, but as a Dresden native and as an ambassador of music, art and anti-racism, I have to tell my esteemed colleague Yusuf not to bring hate into my town or somewhere else. To be able to make music means to be able to build bridges, not to destroy them," Pape said in a statement shared by Armenian opera diva Hasmik Papian.

Historic Armenian Church in Kayseri Damaged by Treasure Hunters

BAGPINAR, Turkey (Panorama.am) – The historic Surp Asdvadzadzin (Holy Mother of God) Armenian church in the village of Bagpinar in Turkey's Kayseri (Kesaria) Province has repeatedly been attacked by treasure hunters, Ermenihaber reported on January 21.

As a result of the attacks, the church has suffered significant damage. The frescoes have been damaged by holes dug into the church walls.

In an interview with a Turkish media outlet, Bagpinar Mayor Omer Nalbant expressed regret over the poor state of the church, expressing hope that the authorities will restore the church and turn it into a tourist destination.

According to Nalbant, he repeatedly placed metal doors and locks on the church, but to no avail, as thieves would break them every time.

According to the Turkish source, representatives of the Kayseri Provincial Department of Culture and Tourism said all churches in the province have been registered, adding restoration works are planned but no dates have been set.



Some of the damaged frescos

Hasmik Papian was the first to break the news.

"Dear Yusif, just in case you don't know it, Dresden had a very bright and very dark past and history and also a very glorious musical one. The city is making its way again to be one of the greatest cities in Europe and in the world," René Pape continued.

"To be invited to sing here and to make an audience happy is an honor and a privilege. You should be proud and happy to be asked to be part of it. You want to be remembered as an artist, not as a hater," she added.

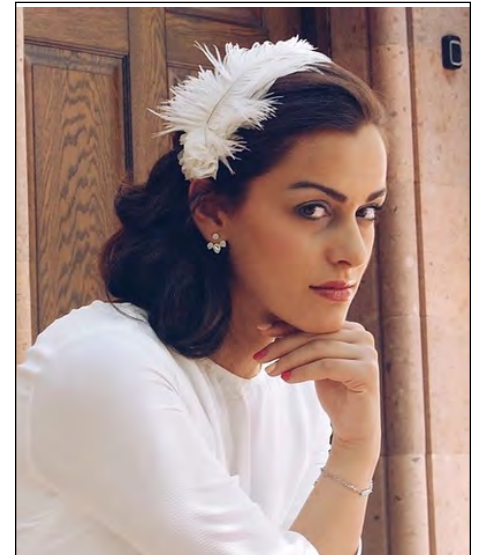
German bass-baritone Thomas Quasthoff also took to Facebook to criticize the Azerbaijani singer.

"Mr. Eyvazov, be ashamed! Racism has no place in our profession and in the world, in general," he said.

(In last week's *Armenian Mirror-Spectator*, the Armenian soprano in question was named as Papian. Indeed, Papian was the one who disseminated the targeting of her fellow Armenian soprano.)



Tenor Yusif Eyvazov



Soprano Ruzan Mantashyan

Cyprus Brands Turkey 'Pirate State' in Gas Drilling Row

NICOSIA (Middle East Eye) – Cyprus accused Turkey of being a "pirate state," attacking Ankara's exploratory oil and gas drilling off its coastal waters on January 19, a day after the European Union (EU) issued its own warning.

"Turkey is turning into a pirate state in the eastern Mediterranean," said the statement on Sunday from the Cypriot presidency. "Turkey insists on going down the path of international illegality," it added, according to AFP.

The statement came a day after the European Union called on Turkey to drop its plans to drill around Cyprus and the eastern Mediterranean, arguing that such exploration was "illegal."

Cyprus's internationally recognized government discovered offshore gas in 2011, but has been at loggerheads with Turkey over maritime zones around the island, where it has granted licenses to multinational companies for oil and gas research, Reuters said.

Turkey, which does not have diplomatic relations with Cyprus, says that some areas in which Nicosia has operations are either on the Turkish continental shelf or in areas where a breakaway Turkish Cypriot state has rights over any finds.

Cyprus was divided in a Turkish invasion in 1974 after a brief Greek-inspired coup.

Earlier, EU foreign policy spokesman Peter Stano said: "Concrete steps towards creating an

environment conducive to dialogue in good faith are needed.

"The intention by Turkey to launch further exploration and drilling activities in the wider region goes, regrettably, in the opposite direction," he said.

Still, Turkey's foreign ministry responded on Sunday: "The Turkish Cypriots have rights on this field... as much as the Greek Cypriots.

Its ship Yavuz had arrived at the "G" license field for its first round of drilling, the statement

added.

Turkey's President Recep Tayyip Erdogan had vowed that Turkey would start exploring for gas in the eastern Mediterranean "as soon as possible" this year, after signing a maritime deal with Libya.

Ankara angered neighboring countries in the Mediterranean with the agreement signed with the Tripoli government in November, which claimed extensive areas of the sea for Turkey.

Greek Foreign Minister Nikos Dendias said in

November that any maritime accord between Libya and Turkey "ignores something that is blatantly obvious, which is that between those two countries there is the large geographical land mass of Crete. Consequently such an attempt borders on the absurd."

Sanctions may be discussed as early as Monday when the bloc's foreign ministers meet in Brussels, officials said.

Erdogan, in Berlin Sunday for a Libya peace conference, has rejected what he has called the "ultimatums" issued by the EU.

Istanbul Mayor Rejects Criticism over Sales of Jailed Kurdish Politician's Books

ISTANBUL (*Cumhuriyet*) – Istanbul mayor Ekrem Imamoglu on January 15 said books by jailed Kurdish politician Selahattin Demirtas could be found in all book shops, after government-affiliated media criticized the opposition-run municipality for selling two short story collections by the imprisoned former party leader via its online retailer.

"Demirtas's books are sold everywhere. Including state institutions," Imamoglu said, adding that his first book was also available in the Turkish parliament's library. "It is also available in bookstores close to the government," the mayor said.

Imamoglu said only the courts had the authority to ban a book in Turkey and said that media reports accusing the municipality of terrorist propaganda for selling the books aimed at deepening hostility in society.

Demirtas, the former co-chair of the pro-Kurdish opposition Peoples' Democratic Party (HDP), has written two books of short stories since he was jailed in November 2016 on multiple terrorism charges.

The politician also does drawings and joined the satirical cartoon magazine *Leman* last month, while his first novel *Leylan* is expected to be on the shelves on January 22.

The media has also targeted the Istanbul's mayor's wife, Dilek Imamoglu, for watching a play last week based on a short story in Demirtas's book, *Devran*, along with the Kurdish politician's wife, Basak Demirtas.

"My wife knows where to go. She is a Turkish woman who can interpret Turkey and the world, and decides where to go accordingly," Ekrem Imamoglu.

The mayor said the women contributed to the peace efforts in Turkey by watching the play.

"I believe women will make the most important contribution to this country's unity, solidarity, and fellowship," he said.

Community News

Dr. Ari Sekeryan to Give Three Lectures On 'Armenians in The Ottoman Empire After the Genocide' At Fresno State

FRESNO – “An Untold Story of Survival: the Armenian Community in Istanbul during the Armistice Years (1918-1923)” will be the topic of Dr. Ari Sekeryan’s presentation on Friday, February 7, at 7:30 p.m. in the University Business Center, Alice Peters Auditorium, Room 191 on the Fresno State campus. The presentation is part of the Spring Lecture Series of the Armenian Studies Program.

A welcoming reception will be held from 6:30-7:30 p.m., immediately preceding the lecture, in the University Business Center Gallery.

Sekeryan was appointed the 16th Henry S. Khanzadian Kazan Visiting Professor in Armenian Studies for the Spring 2020 semester. This lecture series will explore how the Armenian community in the Ottoman Empire reorganized and protected its existence during the Armistice period (1918-1923). Based on an untouched collection of Armenian and Ottoman Turkish press, lectures provide fresh research on a neglected period in the history of the late Ottoman Empire and Ottoman Armenians.

The Armistice of Mudros signed in October 1918 opened a new chapter in the history of Ottoman Armenians. It was a time of hope and rebirth for the Armenian community. The beginning of this new chapter was celebrated on the very first day on the streets of Istanbul by the Armenians, Greeks and Jews. Yet, the



Dr. Ari Sekeryan

story of Armistice period has been mostly absent in the existing academic literature. The lecture presents an overview of the political and social developments that happened in the Ottoman Empire during the Armistice period and it explores how the Armenian community organized itself while facing political turmoil.

Sekeryan will give two additional public lectures during the Spring semester, on March 5 and April 2.

Sekeryan graduated from the Department of Oriental Studies at the University of Oxford, defending his dissertation titled, “The Armenians in the Ottoman Empire after the First World War (1918-1923).” In the 2018-2019 academic year, he was an Honorary Fellow at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, Institute for Research in the Humanities. He was a visiting lecturer in the Faculty of Oriental Studies at Yerevan State University (summer of 2018) and a research assistant in the Department of Sociology at the University of Oxford in 2016.



Students in Yerevan State University

Armenian Data Scientists to Continue Education at San Jose State's Master's Program

SAN JOSE/YEREVAN – The Data Science in Business master's program operated in Yerevan State University's Faculty of Economics and Management and San Jose State University's Data Analytics (MS) program have announced the launch of a cooperation, initiated by the Enterprise Incubator Foundation, Innovative Solutions and Technologies Center (ISTC), Yerevan State University and San Jose State University with the support of PMI Science.

Joint program will enable 2-4 selected students of YSU to continue studies at San Jose State University's Data Analytics (MS) program.

The students will be awarded a dual diploma from YSU and the San Jose State University, as well as the opportunity to pursue a paid internship at one of the many Silicon Valley institutions with which San Jose State University has employment contracts. Upon completion of the program, the Armenian students will return to Armenia and be involved in joint research works of YSU and San Jose State University.

The cooperation between the two programs was announced on December 24, 2019 in ISTC.

As one of the key contributors to technological advancement in Armenia, the Enterprise Incubator Foundation has been actively involved throughout all phases of project implementation, viewing it as a strengthening factor for Armenia's high-tech education through the establishment of close partnerships with international universities.

According to Bagrat Yengibaryan, Director of Enterprise Incubator Foundation, in the modern world, the management of economies and businesses undergo global changes, resulting in new, bold and literate approaches based on data collection and analysis.

“While researching the education programs of San Jose State University and other leading universities, it can be seen that programs of modern economy solve completely different problems, while their successful solutions will contribute to the development of economy and business. The world's leading universities are also responsive towards changes in business sector programs by updating their educational curriculum. San Jose State University's Data Analytics (MS) program is a bright example of it,” said Bagrat Yengibaryan.

It has been three years since the Data Science in Business master's program proved that it is possible to create an educational model which is not isolated from the business environment and the labor market.

The top 5 students and the program representatives of YSU Data Science in Business master's program, as well as the representatives of Enterprise Incubator Foundation and ISTC visited San Jose State University in April, 2019.



Students at the Data Science in Business program

A Journey into a Merciful World: Christmas at St. Vartan Cathedral with Sant'Egidio Community

By Ruth Bedevian

Her face lit up with overwhelming emotion as she cried out, “Oh, I really needed this coat, as she put aside the wrapping paper and tried on the navy-blue parka. It appeared to be an LL Bean or similar knock off, promising to keep its owner very warm through snow, sleet, wind and icy weather. In that moment, I could not fathom who was happier, she or me! Her radiant face is a glowing image that I will treasure from this 2019 Christmas Day “Luncheon & Fellowship” at Haik and Alice Kavookjian Auditorium that was co-hosted by Sant'Egidio Community and St. Vartan Cathedral.

My son, daughter, granddaughter and I were among the volunteers responding to an email request for donors and/or volunteers sent from the office of the Vicar, Father Davit Karamyan.

On Christmas morning, we delighted in our granddaughter Ruby's excitement with Santa's overnight visit and the stockings and gifts he had left under the tree. We satisfied our appetites with our Armenian breakfast which every year includes choerag, tel banir (string cheese), basterma and olives and then we set off to New York City, not knowing what to expect as this was a deviation from past Christmas Day activities.

The day grew to be a divine journey into a merciful world where the words from the Gospel resounded more rewarding, more profoundly into one's heart: ... “in as much as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me.” (Matthew 25:40)

Morning volunteers wrapped over 175 gifts of new clothing provided from in-kind donations and donor dollars. The afternoon shift served delicious warm Christmas fare to guests who had been sought out in various parts of the city shelters and streets and given a printed invitation to join a Christmas Day Luncheon celebration at St Vartan Cathedral, at 630 Second Ave. As in planning a banquet for visiting dignitaries, over 80 volunteers from both the Armenian and Sant'Egidio communities, gave attention to every detail to create a Christmas celebration where all could encounter the gift of God's love to the world in the birth of His son.

When everyone was seated, Paola, a representative from Sant'Egidio Community (<https://www.santegidio.org/>) welcomed the guests: “Everyone here has been invited... We all have a season in life of being neglected or lonesome. Know that you are welcome here.”

Another organizer from Sant'Egidio Community, Andrea, took the microphone to catch everyone's attention and asked individuals to raise their hands to tell what other languages they spoke. Responses were varied – Spanish, Italian, Russian, some African native tongues albeit every soul spoke one common language – that of the human heart.

Fr. Davit Karamyan, vicar of St. Vartan Cathedral, offered the Lord's Prayer in Armenian. There was no family-style service. Each guest was served an individual plate and seconds were in abundance. After a variety of desserts were served, each guest was presented with a wrapped gift with his/her name tag.

I sat with a table of eight, both men and women of varying ages. Perhaps like me, they did not know what to expect, but to fill their hunger with a warm meal. An elderly widow with no relatives sat next to me. She spoke English and Portuguese. A homeless woman spoke intelligently about world issues, seemingly well educated, yet unsettled. We were strangers to one another and together we created a sense of inclusion akin to family. My granddaughter, donning a festive elf costume,

see MERCIFUL, page 8



COMMUNITY NEWS

Bay Area Community Welcomes AUA President Dr. Karin Markides

OAKLAND, Calif. — The American University of Armenia (AUA) kicked off the year 2020 with a festive reception in the Bay Area hosted by Ani Vartanian and Razmig Boladian, both managing partners of Rubicon Point Partners. The event, hosted in their Hillsborough residence, brought together many AUA pillars and supporters from the area to meet the president of the University, Dr. Karin Markides, and to reaffirm their commitment to the University. Attending the event were several members of the AUA Board of Trustees and other prominent individuals.

Welcoming the AUA President and the guests, Razmig Boladian and Ani Vartanian expressed gratitude for being a part of the AUA community of pillars placing emphasis on the important role AUA has played in Armenia in the realm of “youth and education” the key drivers of development. Boladian then introduced Markides, sketching her profile and notable accomplishments in science and public service.

The gathering was a momentous occasion for Markides to greet and thank the guests for their belief in AUA and for their support to its sustained advancement. More importantly, the event provided her with the opportunity to share her personal observations and attainments in the months since her appointment as president of AUA in July 2019, and to present her vision for shaping a new role for the university in the development of Armenia. She spoke about the capacity to excel and influence in the

public sphere, focusing on sustainability.

“This means that not only do you have to look at the role of the university, as such, but you also have to take a systemic look at the challenges of sustainability. That requires consideration of three dynamics: integration, transformation, and universality. [...] These are essential for universities to deliberate in taking their positions in society as crucial actors and stakeholders,” observed Markides.

Expounding on her vision, she emphasized the value of interaction and collaboration across disciplines, bringing together government, industry, and universities at the meeting point, to build competence, and to treat everyone as equal partners despite unequal possibilities in order to realize greater impact and sustained development in Armenia.

Recounting her trips to various communities in Armenia and Artsakh, and meetings with regional and national government and business leaders in the past months, she spoke about the importance of advancing rural communities by building upon existing strengths and competencies, furthering technological knowhow, and fostering collaborative projects that enable discovery and advancement through open education. Markides also spoke about the strategic significance of building stronger international partnerships with universities in the US and elsewhere across borders, to foster relationships that would advance collaboration in research



From left, Razmig Boladian, Dr. Karin Markides and Ani Vartanian

and intellectual exchanges by AUA faculty and students. “Bridging faculty with research elsewhere is essential to serving as a model university in the 21st century and realizing new breakthroughs that increase visibility and capacity.”

Other guests speaking at the event included AUA alumnus Petros Keshishian (MSc EE '93)

who reflected on his years at AUA as “the source of light and life in the country” in those difficult times. He concluded adding that “AUA still is the place where ideas are born,” particularly speaking about the thought process at AUA, which makes it stand out among all others, while underscoring the important role AUA alumni play in support of their alma mater.

The formal part of the evening concluded with remarks by Dr. Larry Pitts, chairman of the AUA Board of Directors, who thanked Vartanian and Boladian for hosting the evening and the guests for their continued support. He then thanked the trustees for their immense and continued support. “Your support has allowed AUA to have a need-blind admission,” Pitts noted.

Panel on Armenian-American Press at NAASR

BELMONT, Mass. — The National Association for Armenian Studies and Research (NAASR) will host a panel discussion titled “The Armenian-American Press in Perspective: Its Purposes, Challenges, and Future Prospects,” on Thursday, February 13, at 7:30 p.m., in Batmasian Hall on the third floor of the new NAASR Vartan Gregorian Building.

This program is presented by the NAASR/Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation Lecture Series on Contemporary Armenian Issues and is co-sponsored by the AGBU Young Professionals of Boston, the Tekeyan Cultural Association and the AYF Greater Boston “Nejdeh” Chapter. It is free and open to the public. A reception will take place after the program in the Shahinian Solarium.

Early Armenian immigrants created institutions in their new hometowns in America — among them churches, clubs, and political organizations which became focal points of Armenian-American life. Serving no less an important role were the newspapers they established which became a vital forum for the exchange of ideas, news from the old country, world events, community politics, and much more.

The Armenian-American press has endured and evolved over the past 125 years and more, reflecting and shaping the community it serves. Today, as all print media struggle for their existence, Armenian-American outlets face the same challenges as well as others unique to their market.

NAASR Board Member Stepan Piligian will serve as the moderator for the evening, which will touch on such questions as: What role does the Armenian-American press serve today? Whom does it serve? What does its future look like?

The panel will consist of Leeza Arakelian (Assistant Editor, *Armenian Weekly*), Alin K. Gregorian (Editor, *Armenian Mirror-Spectator*), and Stephen Kurkjian (Pulitzer Prize winner, *Boston Globe*, and NAASR Board Member).

For more information about this program, contact NAASR at hq@naasr.org.



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Christmas at St. Vartan Cathedral with Sant'Egidio Community



Some of the many needy individuals having lunch at St. Vartan Cathedral on December 25.

MERCIFUL, from page 6

“worked” the room, visiting the tables and offering all the guests oranges. Her sociability, her curiosity, and her gentle spirit brought smiles to each person’s face.

A familiar adage applies: You learn something new every day.

I learned the Community of Sant'Egidio is a lay community of faithful with an ecumenical approach and enjoys a long history with the Orthodox churches and in particular, friendship with the Armenian Church and several of its clergy, including our recently elected Primate, Bishop Daniel Findikyan (Eastern Armenian Diocese) who has been a volunteer in past events. The Diocese and Sant'Egidio have partnered for the last several years on December 25. This is the first year, however, that the larger space of Kavookjian Auditorium was used to accommodate the growing number of guests.

I learned the Community of Sant'Egidio was established in 1968 in Rome and has grown from small beginnings. Today it is a global net-

work of small communities, giving assistance to people in various needs -the terminally ill, the physically and mentally handicapped, refugees – the marginalized populations around the world. In 1982 the Christmas Day Luncheon Celebrations were first organized, using the sanctuary of a church in Rome and now are celebrated across the world on December 25 in various available venues. It is estimated that membership numbers 50,000.

I learned how to pronounce Egidio (E -gee-dee-o) I learned that Saint Egidio (St. Giles in English) was a monk of Greek origin who lived in southern France in the 7th century. The ancient Church of St. Egidio from which the Community of St Egidio takes its name and the iconography of the monk defending a doe from the arrow of the king is noteworthy as a sign of defending the poor.

I felt the joyful depth, refreshment and hope in celebrating the birth of the Baby Jesus in the openness, the embrace, the inclusion of all God’s people. To touch, to see, to feel is greater than any words can express.

Reflections on the Baku and Sumgait Pogroms 30 Years Later

TORONTO – On January 13, 1990, a rally promoting anti-Armenian sentiment was held in Baku, the capital of the Azerbaijani SSR, after which the protesters were divided into groups and sent to designated addresses where the Armenian population of the city lived. For six days, under the initiative of the Azerbaijani People’s Front and the patronage of the local authorities, the Armenian population of Baku was subjected to inexplicable mass violence –

beatings, rape and murder. Many civilians were killed, injured and tortured; some managed to escape and recount to the world the catastrophe they had survived. Baku’s population of 250,000 Armenians – an ethnic minority – was being expelled.

These events were preceded by violence a couple of years earlier. Since 1988, anti-Armenian propaganda had been disseminated in Azerbaijan, both in print publications and in open rallies. This anti-Armenian sentiment eventually led to violent events. From February 27 to 29, 1988, the Armenian population of Sumgait, Azerbaijan, was subjected to unspeakable massacres. For three days, the orchestrated slaughter of the city’s Armenian population took place. Atrocities by eyewitness survivors were documented shortly after the massacres, and, with the initiative of the Zoryan Institute, these accounts were published in the 1990 book titled *The Sumgait Tragedy*.

With the involvement and efforts of Samuel Shakhmuradian, a political figure, journalist, and then deputy of the Supreme Council of Armenia, the book was to document the Sumgait crimes. More than 150 testimonies of victims and eyewitnesses of the violence allow the reader an intimate look at the first-hand horrors that Armenians faced. In her foreword to the book, Yelena Bonner, a prominent human rights activist in the former Soviet Union and wife of physicist and activist Andrei Sakharov, states that the foreword should have been written by the Azerbaijani woman featured in the book who, after saving an Armenian family from the attacks, said, “Look what’s happening out there, my child is seeing all of this, tomorrow he’ll be



Protestors in the streets of Sumgait, Azerbaijan in 1988

doing the same things.”

Thirty-two years have transpired since the Sumgait massacres and 30 years since the Baku massacres. The horrors of those days are still fresh in the memories of those who survived. Through the eyewitness accounts, the stories of these victims live on. As part of the mission of the Zoryan Institute, oral history accounts like those in *The Sumgait Tragedy* preserve the history of human rights abuses of the kind that took place in Baku and Sumgait. In the belief that a secure future for all is built on the unbiased evaluation of past events,

preservation efforts of this kind pay homage to those who have been directly and indirectly affected by the senseless violence. As is integral to the mission of the Zoryan Institute, these preservation efforts also serve to raise awareness, educate the public, and extend hope in the direction of the future such that history does not repeat itself.

(The Zoryan Institute is a non-profit organization that serves the cause of scholarship and public awareness relating to issues of universal human rights, genocide, and diaspora-home-land relations.)



Cover of Samuel Shakhmuradian’s *The Sumgait Tragedy*

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COMMUNITY NEWS

Christians in Need Foundation Lecture Tour in Baltics Discusses Genocide

GLENDALÉ – On December 8, Christians in Need Foundation (CINF) Vice-President Siobhan Nash-Marshall arrived in Lithuania to give a series of lectures across the Baltic countries. Taner Akçam was also invited as keynote speaker to present on his latest book, *The Killing Orders of Talat Pasha and the Denial of Armenian Genocide*. Nash-Marshall and Akçam's were officially invited by Tigran Mkrtchyan, the ambassador of Armenia to the Republic of Lithuania, the Republic of Latvia, and the Republic of Estonia. Nash-Marshall's lectures would be part of a larger event, meant to commemorate the Armenian Genocide and talk about the persisting Turkish denialism.

On December 9, Nash-Marshall gave her first presentation, hosted by the Lithuanian Embassy, at the Lithuanian Academy of Science. On December 10, she traveled to Latvia and gave her next lecture on December 11th at Latvia University. The final lecture was in Estonia, given on December 12 at the Tallinn Academy of Sciences. The final presentation was hosted by the Armenian-Estonian Society and the Estonian Embassy.

At every lecture a great number of Armenians, scholars, and students were in attendance. However, even before the arrival of Nash-Marshall and Akçam, some Turks and Azeris were advocating for the cancelation of the event.

Recordings of Nash-Marshall and Akçam's lectures can be found at the following links:
 Lithuanian Academy of Science
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fC8OV56Q6Tg&t=19s>
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ccEoTajBtkM>
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=k7GK-wHYgHo>



From left, Prof. Taner Akçam, Ambassador Tigran Mkrtchyan and Siobhan Nash-Marshall

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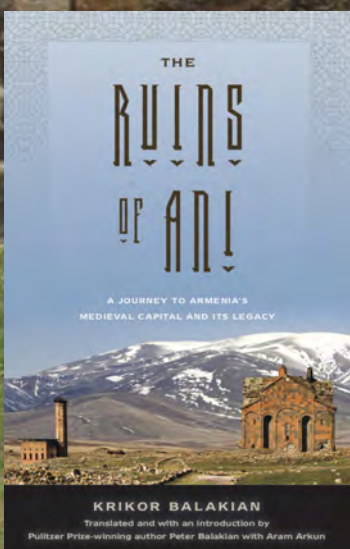
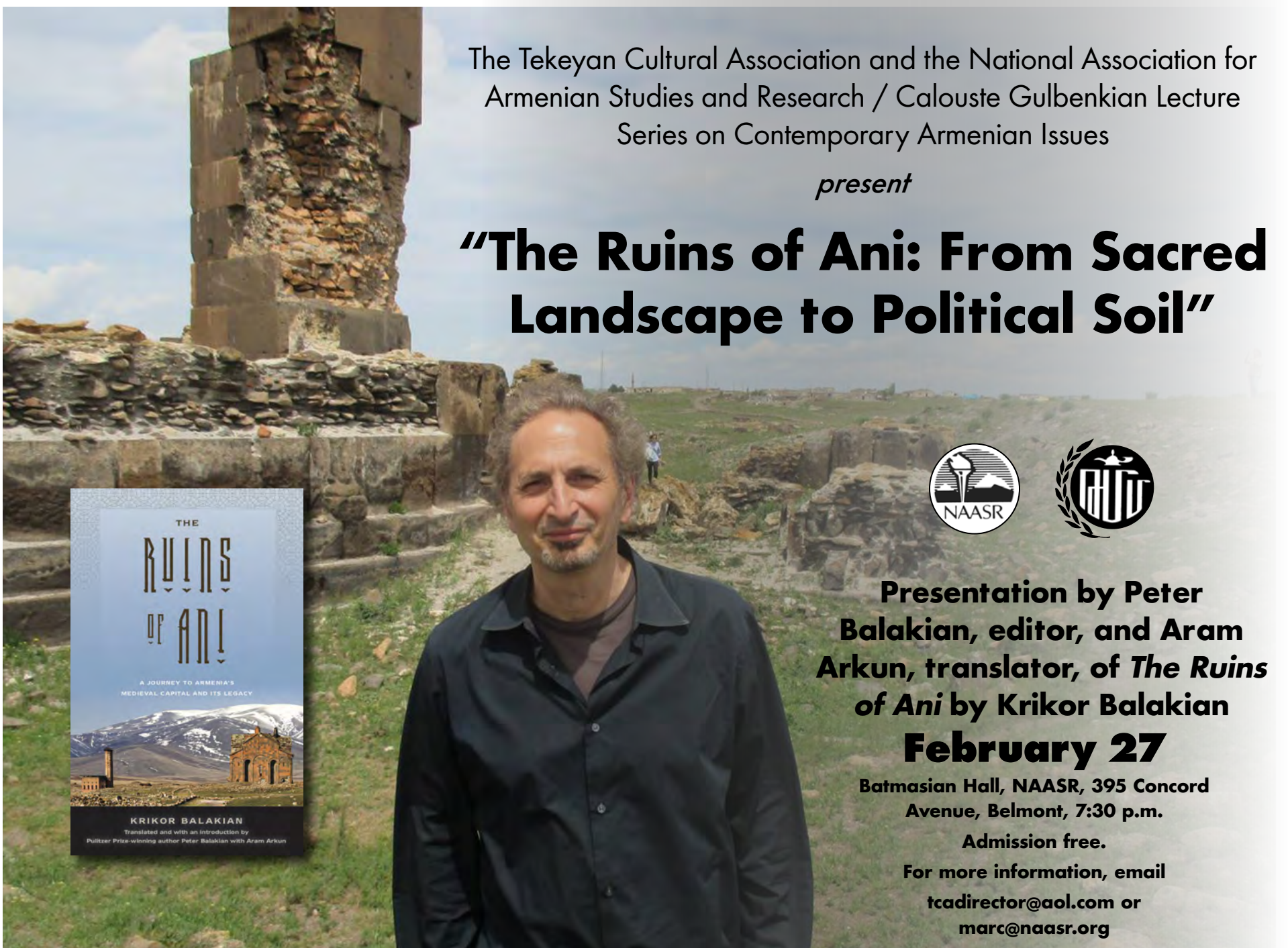
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COMMUNITY NEWS


Santa and the children

AMAA Shares the Joy of Christmas with over 11,000 Children Throughout Armenia and Artsakh

PARAMUS, N.J. and YEREVAN – On January 14 and 15, the Hall at the Armenian Missionary Association of America (AMAA) Center in Yerevan was crowded with children and their parents who gathered for special New Year's and Christmas Programs. These programs, which took place four times each day, were not just visits from Santa Claus, cheerful songs, dances and Christmas presents. They also included the Christmas message, which was conveyed from the stage: Share God's Love with One Another and Give Unselfish Joy to Others.

Through this year's Christmas play, "Three Baskets," presented by AMAA-Armenia's Hayasa theatrical group, the young actors successfully brought Divine Love to the audience. In the play, written by director/screenwriter Nune Abrahamyan, school-children tell about their cherished dreams on Christmas Eve and realize that even material dreams can come true if there is a desire and willingness to help others with an endless compassion.

Before each presentation, the Evangelical Church of Armenia's Christian Education Director Rev. Avetik Khachatryan and AMAA Armenia Representative Harout Nercessian greeted the audience and welcomed them to the Program.

AMAA Armenia and the Evangelical Church of Armenia jointly organized these festive Christmas and New Year's events in 45 towns and villages in Armenia and Artsakh. Over 11,000 children received presents and inspirational messages.



The cast of the play



Children with their presents



Children and parents watch the play



COMMUNITY NEWS

A Rich History of Pre-Genocide Armenia Hides in Family Heirlooms and Handwritten Notes

By Nate Berg

ATHENS (*Los Angeles Times*) – When the tightly knotted white and blue handkerchief was untied, it revealed a small handful of dirt from a distant time.

A soldier, rushing to gather whatever spare belongings he could carry, was fleeing to board a boat on the Gallipoli Peninsula. It was a boat of survival, taking him and other Armenians away from the Ottoman Empire and the campaign of genocide it was waging against them and other ethnic minorities. As he left, he knelt in the garden of his home and scooped up this bit of dirt. Carried in his pocket, it was a literal piece of the homeland to which he'd never return.

This was nearly a century ago.

The handkerchief has since been handed down for three generations. On a bright December day in Athens, it was one of several hundred objects brought by members of the Armenian diaspora in Greece to be added to what, until recently, had been only a limited historical record of Armenians living in the Ottoman Empire before and during the genocide.

Taking place mostly between 1915 and 1923, the genocide killed an estimated 1.5 million Armenians and dispersed many more to adopted homes around the world, from Lebanon to Syria to France to the United States. Turkey says the death toll was much smaller and describes the violence as a civil war, not genocide.

A Christian ethnic minority, Armenians lived throughout the Ottoman Empire among Muslim Turks and Kurds but were primarily concentrated in what is now eastern Turkey and western Armenia. Though many historical records and items document the empire around the turn of the century, little of it is told in the language, or from the perspective, of the Armenians. For Vahé Tachjian and Elke Hartmann, a married team of Ottoman scholars



Vahé Tachjian records details and examines photos at a Houshamadyan workshop.

known as “houshamadyan,” handwritten and self-published memory books that describe – sometimes simply, other times in great detail – the villages and ancestral lands Armenians were forced to flee. In 2011, they began posting information from these documents on their website, which they named Houshamadyan.

Almost as soon as the site launched, they began receiving emails from around the world written by the descendants of Armenians offering their own records. Surprised by this outpouring, Tachjian and Hartmann, both of whom have Armenian heritage, redirected their focus from formal archives to the heirlooms of the Armenian diaspora.

“There were so many treasures in family houses, family closets,” Tachjian said.

To document these materials and the handed-down history they carry, Tachjian, Hartmann and a small team of part-time collaborators began staging workshops around the world where people could bring their family heir-

looms and documents to be added to the collection.

Funded by private donors and foundations, these workshops have been held in Istanbul, Beirut, Paris, Los Angeles and Glendale, all destinations for the Armenian diaspora, and Tachjian says each place offers its own unique angle on this history.

The most recent workshop was in Athens, where a small minority of Armenians has lived since thousands arrived as refugees in the early 1920s. A mile south of the Acropolis, in the back room of a primary school that doubles as an Armenian cultural center, about a dozen descendants trickled in on a Saturday afternoon. Mostly in their 50s and 60s, they came carrying shopping bags of photos and carefully wrapped books, textiles and pieces of jewelry. Speaking fluent Armenian in his clipped bari-

tone, Tachjian interviewed each person about their family's history, the heirlooms they'd kept and any memories that had been passed down about the Ottoman villages and towns from which their families fled.

One woman, Vicky Khatchadurian, showed him silver utensils and a woven rug that her grandmother brought from Constantinople (now Istanbul) to the Greek island of Cephalonia, items that would go on to serve as her grandmother's marriage dowry. She “was a lucky one,” Khatchadurian said. “She had the opportunity to survive.”

Sitting on the tile floor nearby, Arshaluis Sapritchian, an Armenian language teacher at the school, was slowly turning through a handwritten notebook as each page was photographed. It was the autobiography of her grandfather, written in 1986 when he was 80 years old, beginning with his early years living in exile as the genocide started and much of his family was lost.

He wrote how later he was unexpectedly reunited with his mother and they became refugees in Greece, moving from temporary settlement to temporary settlement with other Armenians who'd fled. Sapritchian compares it to the way the Greek government is dealing with its more recent influx of refugees from places including Syria and Afghanistan.

“Today when I see what's happening with refugees, it's tearing my heart because it's the same thing that was happening with my grandfather,” she said. It was a story he never told his grandchildren until writing it down in this notebook. “He wanted us to grow up in happiness. He didn't want us to bear all this burden he had,” Sapritchian said. “But at age 80, he decided he needed to share this burden.”

ly's land. “Sometimes it's the last connection for these families with their identity,” Tachjian said.

For others who left before the genocide, particularly those who went to the U.S. as migrant workers in Massachusetts, Michigan or the farms of California's Central Valley, the threads of history are thicker. Letters and photographs flowed back and forth between family members, and sometimes this news from one's home village would become the last documentation of a place and a people wiped off the map. And because of the relative wealth in the U.S., more of the houshamadyan memoirs of these people were able to be published, further adding to the historical record. “Geography is very important,” Tachjian said.

He estimates that the Houshamadyan project has collected more than 30,000 photographs from across the diaspora, as well as a variety of more quotidian documents such as recipes, school rolls and musically annotated hymns that were sung in some of the first Christian churches. These scattered relics have become a new kind of archive for an overlooked history. In addition to publishing various manuscripts and photographs from family collections, affiliated academics have used the website to publish their own research on pre-genocide life, often pulling from Houshamadyan's online library. The website's resources are even being integrated into university classes in Turkey, where the genocide is officially denied.

Hartmann, the project's co-founder and a substitute professor of Turkish studies at the University of Hamburg, says that for decades



A handful of dirt, tied in a handkerchief by a soldier fleeing his family home in the Ottoman Empire nearly a century ago, has been passed down through generations.

Ottoman history has been seen simply as Turkish history, erasing all other populations from the picture. “This is slowly, slowly changing,” she said. “There's an interest in seeing the Ottoman Empire in its multitude.”

But at the same time, the connections to this pre-genocide history are fading as family members age. “Many things have already disappeared,” Tachjian said.

The Rev. Vicken Cholakian, head pastor of the Armenian Evangelical Church of Greece, says there's a danger that younger generations will lose interest in understanding this part of their history. He worries that stories of the genocide and the struggles afterward have overtaken the narrative of the Armenians and that younger generations would rather look to the future than to what can seem a wholly dark past. “It has become too central,” Cholakian said. “We should not repeat it so much to our young people that we don't have anything else to say.”

Tachjian and Hartmann argue that the history being retold through the Houshamadyan project is representative of a broader spectrum of Armenian history – a time before the darkness. Not just what was lost but what existed, in all its richness.

Cholakian says this is the point of houshamadyan, the memoirs and histories that survivors wrote about their villages and lives.

“They hoped the next generation would read it,” he said. “Who will read it next?”

(Nate Berg is a special correspondent of the *Los Angeles Times*. This story originally appeared in the January 17 edition of the paper.)



Vicky Khatchadurian shows Vahé Tachjian silver utensils and a small cup passed down from her grandparents.

based in Berlin, this is problematic.

“Armenian sources of course exist, and they are very rich,” Tachjian said. But unlike formal or official historical items, much of the story of Armenians living in the Ottoman Empire was either destroyed in the chaos of the deportations and massacres or never properly recorded in the first place. What remains are the unintentional markers of history passed through generations: handwritten accounts of local villages, photos mailed to family members abroad, embroidered garments, a handful of dirt tied in a handkerchief.

“Our objective was to give another value to these sources,” Tachjian said.

The project started in 2010. After scouring libraries and archives for their limited Armenian-language resources, Tachjian and Hartmann found a vein of material in what were



COMMUNITY NEWS

GeneTx and Ultragenyx Announce Investigational New Drug for Patients with Angelman Syndrome

SARASOTA, Fla. and NOVATO, Calif. – GeneTx Biotherapeutics LLC and Ultragenyx Pharmaceutical Inc. (NASDAQ: RARE), a biopharmaceutical company focused on the development of novel products for serious rare and ultra-rare diseases, on January 15 announced that GeneTx's Investigational New Drug (IND) Application for GTX-102, an experimental antisense oligonucleotide being evaluated for the treatment of Angelman syndrome (AS), filed with the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) is now active. Enrollment in the Phase 1/2 study is expected to begin in the first half of 2020.

"The FDA's clearance of the IND to evaluate GTX-102 in patients with Angelman syndrome represents a significant milestone for the Angelman community," said Paula Evans, chief executive officer at GeneTx. "Assessing an investigational therapy that aims to address the underlying cause of this devastating disorder has the potential to meaningfully alter the clinical course of patients' lives."

"Based on preclinical data, we believe that GTX-102 offers tremendous promise and may one day provide patients with a potentially transformative therapeutic option," said Camille L. Bedrosian, MD, chief medical officer of Ultragenyx. "We look forward to continuing our partnership with GeneTx to address this devastating disorder for which there are currently no approved treatments."

"The FDA cleared the IND which allows GTX-102 to enter the clinic," said Scott Stromatt, MD, chief medical officer, GeneTx. "GeneTx's Phase 1/2 study, named KIK-AS (Knockdown of UBE3A-antisense in Kids with AS), is expected to enroll 20 patients at multiple trial sites, beginning in the first half of 2020. The goal of this multiple dose, dose escalating, open-label study is to examine the safety, tolerability, and pharmacokinetics of GTX-102 in pediatric patients with Angelman syndrome. On February 15, 2020 we will open a website with more information on the KIK-AS study and provide a toll free number for parents and caregivers to obtain information on enrolling into the clinical study."

About Angelman Syndrome

Angelman syndrome is a rare, neurogenetic disorder caused by loss-of-function of the maternally inherited allele of the UBE3A gene. The maternal-specific inheritance pattern of Angelman syndrome is due to genomic imprinting of UBE3A in neurons of the central nervous system, a naturally occurring phenomenon in which the maternal UBE3A allele is expressed and the paternal UBE3A is not. Silencing of the paternal UBE3A allele is regulated by the UBE3A antisense transcript (UBE3A-AS), the intended target of GTX-102. In almost all cases of Angelman syndrome, the maternal UBE3A allele is either missing or mutated, resulting in limited to no protein expression. This condition is typically not inherited but instead occurs spontaneously.

Individuals with Angelman syndrome have developmental delay, balance issues, motor impairment, and debilitating seizures. Some individuals with Angelman syndrome are unable to walk and most do not speak. Anxiety and disturbed sleep can be serious challenges in individuals with Angelman syndrome. While individuals with Angelman syndrome have a normal lifespan, they require continuous care and are unable to live independently. Angelman syndrome is not a degenerative disorder, but the loss of the UBE3A protein expression in neurons results in abnormal communications between neurons. Angelman syndrome is often misdiagnosed as autism or cerebral palsy. There are no currently approved therapies for Angelman syndrome; however, several symptoms of this disorder can be reversed in adult animal models of Angelman syndrome suggesting that improvement of symptoms can potentially be achieved at any age.

GeneTx Biotherapeutics LLC is a startup biotechnology company singularly focused on developing and commercializing a safe and effective antisense therapeutic for the treatment of Angelman syndrome. GeneTx was launched by FAST, a patient advocacy organization and the largest non-governmental funder of Angelman syndrome research. GeneTx licensed the rights to antisense technology intellectual property from The Texas A&M University System in December 2017.



The new tractor in Navur

AMAA-Armenia Obtains Tractor For Village in Tavush Region of Armenia

PARAMUS, N.J. – As part of the "One Village" Consortium, AMAA-Armenia was instrumental in obtaining a Belarus tractor for the Navur Village (Tavush Region) near the Azeri border in December 2019. The tractor, donated by the Director of North Hills LLC Arshavir Gevorgyan and benefactors George and Khachik Titizian of Los Angeles, was a much-needed item for the community.

Mher Nikoyan, director of the cooperative, expressed his gratitude to the AMAA and the North Hills LLC, as well as to George and Khachik Titizian for this donation which will greatly help the Navur community.

Established in 2014, the non-profit "Navur Community Agricultural Consumers Cooperative," which is governed by its members, provides low cost agricultural services to the community.

AMAA-Armenia is one of eleven organizations forming the Consortium: The Armenian Missionary Association of America-Armenia (AMAA-Armenia), "Shen: Charity NGO, Children of Armenia Fund (COAF), Development Principles NGO, Fund for Armenian Relief, World Vision Armenia, Teach For Armenia (TA), World Council of Churches Armenia Round Table Foundation, Armenian General Benevolent Union (AGBU), Armenian Caritas Benevolent NGO and "Diaconia" Charitable Fund.

Arts Commons Announces Alex Sarian as New President and CEO

CALGARY (CBC) – Arts Commons has chosen a new president and CEO after a year-long search.

Alex Sarian, who has held a variety of leadership roles at New York City's Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts, will officially take over the role in May 2020, the Calgary organization announced on Monday, January 20.

Until then, CFO Colleen Dickson and CDO Greg Epton will continue to act as co-interim CEOs, as they have since the organization's previous president and CEO, Johann Zietsman, left in December 2018 to join the Adrienne Arsht Center in Miami.

Sarian said he's thrilled to have been chosen to lead the third-largest performing arts centre in Canada and one that's on the verge of new growth.

"It is a job whose responsibility requires caring for an ecosystem of institutions. It's not one institution, it's a collective. Coming from the Lincoln Center in New York, I understand what that means," he said.

"The opportunities, the challenges, the complexities. And, it's not an easy role to occupy but one that has immense power and impact."

Sarian said he plans to reach out to the previous president to ask for his blessings and advice.

Sarian joins Arts Commons as the arts hub is facing some big changes.

Last year, city council approved \$22.5 million in funding for the first phase of a major expansion to the complex, which is located just south of Olympic Plaza and is home to

the Calgary Philharmonic Orchestra, Theatre Calgary, Alberta Theatre Projects and One Yellow Rabbit.

The first phase of the transformation, which would see three new theatres built, is pegged to cost \$240 million, and the city is



Alex Sarian

still seeking additional funding. The second phase would see a significant upgrade and expansion of the 35-year-old, 560,000-square-foot Resident House (the facility's main building).

"A world-class city like Calgary deserves world-class venues and world-class institutions," Sarian said, adding that another challenge will be understanding the evolu-

ing philanthropic and arts funding ecosystem in the city.

"How can we keep that promise alive in a city that has continued to evolve? And how do we make sure that we are responsive to those demands? I think to be able to reposition the arts in the lives of all Calgarians and to have a building embody that ethos, there's no greater opportunity than that."

Scott Hutcheson, the chair of Arts Commons' board of directors, said several dozen candidates from six countries applied for the position.

"Arts Commons has a very good reputation, not just in Canada but throughout North America," he said.

Before his time at Lincoln Center, which is home to the New York Philharmonic, the Metropolitan Opera and the New York Ballet, Sarian directed the Off-Broadway MCC Theatre, where he worked with Theatre Calgary artistic director Stafford Arima.

He is also a trustee of The New Group, an award winning theatre company, and an advisor for SXSW.

Sarian, who is originally from Toronto, said the move will be a homecoming of sorts as his mom was born in Calgary. He lived in Argentina for 15 years before moving to New York City in 2002 to pursue his career in arts management.

He currently lives in Brooklyn with his wife, Aliza, a teacher and specialist in arts education, and their two rescue dogs, Olive and Pickle.

Arts & Living

A Christmas Holiday Tradition: Erevan Choral Society

CAMBRIDGE, Mass. — The Erevan Choral Society and Orchestra of Greater Boston annual Christmas Concert, a gift to the Boston-area community, has become a tradition, marking the start of the holiday season. The concert took place on Sunday, December 15, in the sanctuary of the Holy Trinity Armenian Church of Greater Boston.

This year's concert was dedicated to the 150th anniversary of the births of the Gomidias Vartabed and writer Hovannes Toumanian.

The students of the Armenian School of Holy Trinity Church opened the program with a number of recitations dedicated to the two. Then, under the traditional song of *O Come, All Ye Faithful*, played by the orchestra and conducted by Composer Konstantin Petrossian, choral members walked to the altar and commenced the concert, presenting a rich mix of traditional American and Armenian Christmas Carols.

The program also was enhanced by two impressive soloists. Soprano Knarik Nerkarayan's beautiful voice and singular performance of Ave Maria by J.S. Bach/Gounod, charmed those present. Tenor Giovanni Famzanoi was a pleasant surprise of the concert, who with his beautiful voice and unique



Soloist Knarik Nerkarayan

interpretation of traditional Christmas songs, made a great impression on the audience.

A special tribute was paid to Gomidias; a medley of his songs, arranged by Petrossian, was presented for the first time and was warmly received by those present. Needless to say, the famous *Yegeghetzin Haygagan* (The Armenian Church) song, which was dedicated to the loving memory of the Very Reverend Fr. Oshagan Minassian, the founder of the Erevan Choral Society, has become very popular in the community.

The high quality and professional performance of both the Chorale and the Orchestra, creating a constellation of sounds and harmony, were all visible throughout the concert.

At the conclusion of the concert, pastor of the Church, Fr. Vasken Kouzouian, announced to the audience the awarding of the Gold Medal to the Choral Society from Yerevan City Council. The award was given by order of Yerevan Mayor Hayk Marutyan in

see CHRISTMAS, page 16



Chef Alissa Asmarian, owner of upscale Armenian restaurant Heritage Eatery in L.A., teaches Chef Marcus Samuelsson how to prepare ghaparma. (Wonho Frank Lee)

L.A.'s Little Armenia Kicks off Season 2 of 'No Passport Required' With Marcus Samuelsson on PBS

LOS ANGELES (*Los Angeles Weekly*) — “No Passport Required” with Marcus Samuelsson, which explores the food and communities of America's immigrant neighborhoods, kicked off season 2 on PBS January 20 with the premiere episode featuring L.A.'s Armenian community and cuisine.

The Ethiopian-born chef, who was raised in Sweden, journeys from East Hollywood to Glendale, visiting Phoenicia Restaurant, Mideast Tacos, Papillon International Bakery and Sahag's Basturma among others meeting Armenians from Russia, Lebanon, Syria, Ethiopia and Egypt. From *lule kabob* (ground meat patties) to *ghapama* (pumpkin stuffed with apricots, rice and Aleppo peppers) Samuelsson explores the rich Armenian history passed down from generations in L.A.'s foothills in the series co-produced with Eater.

By Michele Stueven

“I discovered how extremely diverse the community is, whether it's Persian Armenian or Turkish Armenian,” the New York-based Samuelsson said. “It has so many geographically different entry points — which also means bringing a lot of different traditions together and says a lot about the strength of the community and their commitment to holding on to these traditions. I had some of the most delicious food and best conversations and saw how deeply proud these people are to be both Angelenos and Armenian.”

The premiere highlights the combination of younger chefs born in Los Angeles, blending new ingredients and techniques with traditional Armenian rituals.

“You have the young caterer who is walking a walk between traditional Armenian food and ingredients you might find in French restaurants, balancing between rituals and spices and traditions,” says Samuelsson. “Some are using foie gras in their sausage, for example. Then you see things like how pumpkin is used, yogurt and different dairy products combined with spice blends that have been used for hundreds of years. There's a fine line between holding on to your rituals, which started as cab driver food, and create new versions of that for the Smorgasburg crowd.”

An immigrant himself, Samuelsson's inspiration for the series came from Jonathan Gold opening our eyes and our minds to immigrant communities. Los

see COOKING, page 16



Chef Marcus Samuelsson serves ghaparma to guests at Heritage Eatery in L.A. (Wonho Frank Lee)

REVIEW:

Knoxville Symphony Orchestra Delivers a Memorable 'Mozart And Mahler'

By Alan Sherrod

KNOXVILLE, Tenn. (*Arts Knoxville*) — Mah·ler·i·an: noun — an admirer of the Austrian composer and conductor Gustav Mahler, or his work

In a preface to the orchestra's performance of Gustav Mahler's *Symphony No. 1 (Titan)* this weekend, Knoxville Symphony Orchestra maestro Aram Demirjian asked the audience for a show of hands of who considered themselves to be a lover of the music of Mahler. Some hands shot into the air enthusiastically, while others wavered and appeared a bit more tentative. Despite the obvious informality of such a poll, it was at that moment that I realized that maybe “Mahlerian” really is a thing that involves pride in membership — or trepidation among those not sure about joining up.

“This stunningly articulate performance of the Titan clearly won over any potential skeptics with its strong point of view...”

For the maestro, his apprehension was perhaps understandable. Successful Mahler perfor-



Conductor Aram Demirjian

mances require a focus, plan, and strong point of view from conductors. In addition, all of the Mahler symphonies have heavy instrumental requirements in woodwinds, brass and percussion, forcing orchestras to consider the extra costs and logistics. And, this would be the KSO's first foray into a complete Mahler symphony in the Demirjian era — the last being the Mahler *Second Symphony* in 2012. On the other hand, the *Mahler One* is the composer's least esoteric and most accessible symphony, given his later reputation for journeys into an often complex and sprawling territory of tone and texture.

As it turned out, Demirjian and the orchestra as well as the audience, had nothing to fear and everything to rejoice about. This stunningly articulate performance of the *Titan* clearly won over any potential skeptics with its strong point of view in which the expansiveness was modulated with thematic intrigues and clever punctuations in texture, cadence, and dynamics. The symphony's themes, drawn in large part from folk songs and the composer's own *Songs of a Wayfarer*, are also responsible for the work's accessibility, keeping the work tethered to earth and gently, but firmly, guiding the listener.

Assisting Demirjian in the delivery of this Mahlerian masterpiece were some superb individual and ensemble performances in the expanded ranks of the orchestra. The delightfully melancholy round that is *Frère Jacques*, but turned to a mournful minor, was begun by double bassist Dan Thompson, then carried on by the ensemble. The expanded section of seven

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ARTS & LIVING

Hokistrings Bracelets Raise Domestic Violence Awareness, Funds

BRACELET, from page 1

Garibian spoke about WSC at an event at Holy Translators Church in Framingham. Ashley learned of the work that Maro was doing in Yerevan for the Women's Support Center and she felt that this was a wonderful cause to support," she said.

So far, they have donated \$2,000 to the WSC. Ashley Kutzer, 17, is a high school senior. Ashley said that her sister, Haley, 15, will take over in the fall, once she goes off to college.

According to their mother they have since received public and private notes of gratitude both on social media and handwritten from women in Armenia who have suffered from domestic violence thanking them for their generosity, and also from others who are simply inspired by their story.

Their mother beams with pride about the girls' efforts. "It has been amazing to witness the passion that has gone into this project. The amount of time Ashley and Haley have spent on every tiny detail has been observed with pleasure. It warms my heart to see them work so diligently with the sole intent to help empower less fortunate women and children to get them to a place where they can live a much happier life," she said. "I have never had any association with the WSC and only learned of it through Lenna's introduction at an event at Holy

Haley, 15, is in the 10th grade and said she is thrilled about how popular the bracelets are.

"I would like to grow it into a non-profit especially because of the international sales," she said.

And international sales are happening, thanks to a fortuitous meeting with Canadian actor David Alpay, a Canadian-Armenian actor, and frequent collaborator of director Atom Egoyan.

Ashley said that they met him over the summer and gave him a bracelet and told him about their project. He put the picture on Instagram and "we started getting random orders from various places, like Germany, Italy and Myanmar," Ashley said.

Her sister added, "I am really excited how this affects the Women's Support Center and how it will impact them."

It takes many people to help. People like Nancy Barsamian, Laura Purutyan and Lenna Garibian have been "pivotal" with spreading the world about the WSC.

This is a story of old and new. Using both social media and traditional Armenian Church bazaars, the young ladies are raising awareness and funds.

The girls reached out to St. James Armenian Church bazaar organizers this fall to see if they could set up a table to sell their bracelets and raise awareness about the WSC. The church agreed and they set up a table to sell Hokistrings bracelets, while also distributing printed material about the WSC.

Women's Support Shelter

Maro Matosian, the executive director of the WSC in Yerevan, and its founder in 2010, was in the Boston area recently, and spoke about the organization as well as its network of supporters.

The topic of domestic abuse is one that is not addressed freely in Armenia. In addition, police are only recently getting training about how to deal with an abuser and a victim.

Matosian said that the WSC has a three-pronged set of goals:

- Providing service to victims of domestic violence, including legal, psychological and housing

- Community education to train service providers, police, educators and reach out to the community, including youth to teach them about healthy relationships

- Advocacy, working with universities, state agencies to address response from an International point of view, advocating about laws, helping put in place a mechanism for police and social services.

"We are continuing to work with the Ministry of Social Affairs," Matosian said.

"We annually deal with more than 300 cases," Matosian added.

Laws were adopted in December 2017 to punish those guilty of domestic abuse and those were implemented in 2018.

Women are still somewhat outside the system, she noted.

"Women's rights organizations are targeted in Armenia," she said. "We want to penetrate the system. They accuse [the organizations] of breaking up families, bringing in ideas from the West and they want to maintain traditional values."

Their shelter in Yerevan, she said, accommodates 74 women and children.

The group has an annual budget of \$220,000, the majority of which comes from fundraising in diaspora, and primarily the US.

Matosian's shelter has a staff of 14 based in Yerevan who serve throughout the city.

The center uses and needs everything from needle and thread to baby formula. The biggest expense for the center comprises food and hygienic products, such as detergent, diapers, toothpaste and cleaning supplies.

In addition to the shelter, the WSC has a



The bracelets featuring the Armenian tricolor

to get back their equilibrium and function better."

They usually stay in the shelter for 3 months. During that time, she said, they have to write down three goals they want to achieve. The shelter helps them with finding employment, renting apartments, vocational training and getting their children to school and dealing with health issues.

She stressed that they address the emotional and mental scars. "We try to restore their self-esteem, everything the perpetrator took away from them, give them the right to make decisions, the right to express emotions and offer them community interaction. We try to make them understand that they don't deserve a life of abuse."

And then there are the children. "We pay special attention to children who are very much affected by violence. According to the CDC [Centers for Disease Control], there is a high rate of suicide, health disorders that happen to children, as well as low performance. Domestic violence is learned behavior. The majority of boys become perpetrators and the girls enter this type of relationships," Matosian said.

Visitors from Massachusetts

Nancy Barsamian, Carolyn Mugar and Laura Purutyan went to Armenia last year and visited the WSC shelter.

Matosian said, "They presented me with information about the two girls and offered bracelets to the women in the shelter. They told me about these teenagers who wanted to help

transitional residence for the women ready to leave.

"There is a 30-percent increase every year. There are both more cases and more victims are able to talk about it," she said.



Trustee of Tufenkian Foundation Antranig Kasbarian and Ashley Kutzer at Tufenkian fundraiser.



James Tufenkian and Ashley Kutzer at Tufenkian Foundation fundraiser on December 7 at Michael and Susan Guzelian's home where Ashley was invited to speak and share her Hokistrings story and present her second check to the foundation.

Translators [Armenian Church of Framingham] in May of 2019."

"Really so far everything has been so positive," Ashley said.

In fact, the girls are planning to visit Armenia this summer and meet with Matosian.

Of course the goals are serious for the girls, but the bracelets are the star of the show. "We try to add new colors each season, like school colors and offer special deals," Ashley said.



Ashley and Haley Kutzer present their check to Maro Matosian of the Women's Support Center.

Those from the outside looking at Armenia might assume that the country is egalitarian, but that is not the case, she said. "There is a lot of misinformation" about the work of organizations like her, which is "politically motivated."

There is hope, though.

Now, with the new government in power, there is support for efforts like hers.

"[Prime Minister Nikol] Pashinyan, the Minister of Justice and Health and Social Services, I've never seen such political will to promote women's rights in Armenia, especially among the newer members of parliament," Matosian said.

Matosian stressed that the methodology they use is in line with the best practices suggested by the United Nations, European Union and other International organizations.

"With the people who come to our center, we have to administer a risk assessment for lethality. If it is high, we recommend they stay at the shelter," she said. "The majority come referred by the police. All of them suffer from trauma. They have difficulty sleeping, concentrating, remembering. Their entire system is out of balance. Within a week or 10 days, they begin

the women."

She was delighted. "It is very much empowering. When they offered the women bracelets, they said it is in solidarity with their plight. They [the women in the shelter] were very much moved by it."

"I was telling Lenna [Garibian] how much I



Satisfied customer and Hokistring fan actor David Alpay



ARTS & LIVING

admire their initiative even more now. They are from an affluent family, living in a bubble, in the comforts of suburbia, sheltered from the ills of society. They live a life of harmony and plenty. It is rare to see such young people think about the needs of others and the plight of women," Matosian said. "To think about the plight of abused women, not many adults even think about that."

The generosity seems to be infectious, according to Matosian. "More and more people hear about it and are motivated to come to support."

Lucine Kapreilian, another supporter of the WSC, offered praise for the girls and the volunteers. "This group of women and young ladies will continue to brainstorm ways to spread awareness about the issue of domestic violence in Armenia. We will help raise funds to support Maro's incredible work at WSC and support the need to serve more women with the ultimate hope and goal that in years to come the need for such resources will subside."

Nancy Barsamian is excited about the girls' efforts. "I completely support their project and their desire to learn more about issues effecting women and children in Armenia. The Hokistrings project has made the adults involved motivated and optimistic about how this project will make an impact on domestic violence in Armenia. On our trip in October Ashley and Haley gave us bracelets to hand deliver to the clients in the Women's Support Center. They were so appreciative and happy to know that others care about them and support them. I am amazed by the maturity, dedication and professionalism of these young ladies and I view this project as a perfect opportunity to mentor these young women in our church community. There are very few leadership roles for adolescents, especially girls, in our church community it seemed like a natural fit."

Barsamian has been familiar with the WSC and its efforts for a few years. "I had read about the WSC a few years ago when there was a crowd-funding campaign for the Safe House sponsored by OneArmenia and had been following the Tufenkian Foundation news about the growth and of the problem."

She added, "This past May I was a co-chair of a Ladies Tea at the Armenian Church of Holy Translators and the committee insisted that half the proceeds go to a women's organization in Armenia. After doing some research we decided upon the WSC. We contacted Maro and she put us in touch with Lenna Garibian who attended the tea and presented information about the WSC. From that event we donated \$3,000 to the WSC. Following the tea I had planned to visit the WSC in October, and it was at this point we met Maro, toured the facility, and met some families."

Seeing the center first-hand made the mission even more important to Barsamian.

"As a nurse and public health professional I saw firsthand how Maro is completely devoted to ensuring the safety of women who are in extreme cases of domestic violence. She is an innovator and trail blazer for the rights of women while assisting women to maintain their dignity and stability as a mother, women and skills to gain employment. Her work is extremely difficult and cuts through many issues confronting Armenian society today."

Garibian, who is on the advisory committee of the WSC, said, "We are working hard to raise awareness for the WSC's work in the diaspora. Within the context of these efforts, we've typically had a very small handful of young women helping out. We need to work harder at engaging all young people. It's especially important, because gender-based violence is not only a problem in Armenia, but also in the US. It affects all of us."

She added, "Unfortunately, domestic violence can be a divisive issue, but it shouldn't be. It is about protecting the safety and dignity of women and children in their own homes. The WSC's work has and continues to shift the conversation on domestic violence in Armenia. Gender inequality and violence against women have for so long been tolerated, if not condoned. Over the past 9-plus years, the WSC's broad-based counseling services, advocacy work, and training efforts have fueled a cultural mind-shift."

She concurred with Matosian that now the culture is more open to hearing the message about domestic violence. "The survivor community is feeling empowered to speak out against violence, building more awareness. And now, post-revolution the government is making



WSC Action Committee: From l to r. Bottom Row: Haley Kutzer, Ashley Kutzer. Top Row l to r: Donna Partamian-Kutzer, Maro Matosian, Lucine Kapreilian, Nancy Barsamian, Lenna Garibian and Laura Purutyan

legislative and policy changes that will support eliminating gender-based violence. These are efforts that we in the diaspora should not only applaud, but also support."

Garibian also expressed her support for the girls. "Haley and Ashley's efforts are so impressive, especially when you consider all the demands placed on young people today – between their studies and extra-curricular activities. Clearly these young women are setting aside their own fun to do work that is meaningful to them. It's a testament to their compassion and their commitment," she said.

For Purutyan, as well, the Kutzer girls' initiative was heartening.

"Many girls growing up in the diaspora are exposed to issues of woman's empowerment at home, at school and in the workplace. It's excellent to know that young people care about the everyday lives of others who live across world. And it's heartening to see them use their creative agency to learn and tackle a critical challenge. Ashley and Haley are humble, hard-working, social entrepreneurs with much to contribute," Purutyan said.

"It is important to support WSC and Maro

because she and her team are addressing what it takes to cultivate healthy families, by promoting whole relationships and enabling women to be safe and develop their strength as creative leaders as well as nurturers," Purutyan added.

Purutyan noted that efforts to raise funds will take place in Massachusetts again. "Members of the Greater Boston community plan to host similar projects to raise awareness about domestic violence and its impact in Armenia, and to raise funds that help sustain WSC," she said. "Churches in Greater Boston work together to reach out, encourage, and serve others in their neighborhood, in Armenia and elsewhere in the diaspora. (supporting the ill and elderly in nursing homes and shut-ins, promoting education, providing guidance and comfort to individuals and families.) Socially aware projects are undertaken by Women's Guilds, Men's Clubs, youth organizations, Sunday Schools and groups of concerned community members."

How to Help and Where to Buy

To buy Hokistrings, visit <https://www.etsy.com/shop/Hokistrings>

Prices are reasonable and go down proportionally with bigger orders, i.e., \$8 for one, \$14 for two and \$20 for three. All are colorful.

The girls offer a variety of styles, but they can also fulfill custom orders. Customers can choose their colors.

They are also in the process of creating a website for Hokistrings so that they can explain the story behind the bracelets as well as offer information about where the profits go.

To make a donation to the WSC, visit <https://www.womensupportcenter.org/>. All donations for the center can be made to the Tufenkian Foundation, 20 Capitol Drive, Moonachie, NJ 07074. Put WSC in the memo section. All donations are tax deductible.

Recipe Corner

Guest Recipe



by Christine Vartanian Dalian

Grape Salad with Pecans and Roquefort Cheese

By David Vartanian

INGREDIENTS:

3/4 cup pecan halves, more to taste
1 egg white, beaten
1/4 cup brown sugar
1 shallot, diced
1/2 cup balsamic vinegar
3/4 cup olive oil
1/4 cup chopped fresh basil
Salt and freshly ground pepper
6 cups assorted baby greens
2 cups seedless grapes
4 ounces Roquefort cheese, crumbled
1/2 cup sliced sun-dried tomatoes
6 thin slices prosciutto

PREPARATION

Preheat oven to 350°F. Coat pecans with beaten egg white; toss with brown sugar. Place on a baking sheet and bake for 10 minutes or until golden. Remove from oven and let cool.

Whisk together the shallots and vinegar. Slowly whisk in olive oil. Add basil, and season to taste with salt and pepper. Combine greens, grapes, Roquefort cheese and tomatoes in a salad bowl. Add the dressing to lightly coat the greens. Place on chilled plates, and top each serving with a slice of prosciutto and pecans.

Serves 6.



Chef and owner David Vartanian prepares a dish during a recent cooking class in the main dining room at The Vintage Press Restaurant in Visalia. (<http://www.thevintagepress.com/index.html>)

Wine Spectator writes The Vintage Press has "one of the best wine lists in the world," while Fodor's raves it is "the best restaurant in the Central Valley," and the L.A. Times applauds it as "a bastion of culinary merit."

*Best Chefs America features premier chefs that have been nominated and recommended by their peers in the culinary field.

ARTS & LIVING

CALENDAR

FLORIDA

FEBRUARY 2 — Banquet Celebration welcoming our newly consecrated Primate Bishop Daniel Findikyan for his first pastoral visit, 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 Sonig Kradjian 607-727-8786”

MASSACHUSETTS

FEBRUARY 9 — A cappella concert by Boston Jazz Voices to Benefit the Armenia Tree Project. 5 pm at the Jenks Center, 109 Skillings 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.armeniatree.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 Leeza Arakelian, assistant editor of the *Armenian Weekly*, Alin K. Gregorian, 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 Stepan Piligian. Thursday, 7.30 to 9.30 p.m. Batmasian Hall, NAASR Vartan Gregorian Building, 395 Concord Ave., Belmont. A reception will follow in the Shahinian Solarium. Contact NAASR at 617-489-1610 or hq@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 Chingris - Dumbeg, Ara Jeknavorian – Clarinet, Dave Anisbigian – Vocals/Guitar, and Brian Anisbigian – Oud. 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 Kazanjian (617) 240-3686 or Ria.tk@verizon.net. Tables of 8 can be reserved in advance with full payment Checks made payable to: Sts Vartanantz Armenian Church.

Feb. 27: “The Ruins of Ani: From Sacred Landscape to Political Soil”: Presented by Peter Balakian and Aram Arkun, translators of *The Ruins of Ani* by Krikor Balakian. Sponsored by the Tekeyan Cultural Association (TCA) and the National Association for Armenian Studies and Research (NAASR)/Calouste Gulbenkian Lecture Series on Contemporary Armenian Issues at the Batmasian Auditorium at NAASR, 395 Concord Avenue, Belmont, 7:30 p.m. Free admission. For more information, email tcadirector@aol.com or marc@naasr.org.

MAY 28 — Friends of Armenian Culture Society (FACS) presents the 69th annual Armenian Night at the Pops, featuring the young and talented violinist Diana Adamyan as soloist with the Boston Pops Orchestra. Symphony Hall, Boston. 8 p.m. For tickets and information, please visit FACSBoston.org

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. Mezze and dinner included. Cash bar. \$60 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 clean-up 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.

Knoxville Symphony Orchestra Delivers Memorable Mozart and Mahler

KNOXVILLE, from page 13

horns, led by principal horn Jeffery Whaley, had a big and impressive evening that included euphoric “whoops” as well as beautiful and powerful ensemble playing. The four trumpets (principal Phillip Chase Hawkins) provided a perfectly balanced offstage passage in the first movement. Also contributing to this strong showing were interim principal flute Jessica Petrasek, interim principal bassoon Jessica Findley Yang, principal clarinet Gary Sperl, and principal oboe Claire Chenette. Concertmaster William Shaub and associate Gordon Tsai led a violin section that was called upon for both silky ensemble playing and percussiveness.

While the audience left the Tennessee Theatre consumed by the Mahler performance, the evening’s feast was begun by young pianist Aristo Sham who joined Demirjian and the orchestra for Mozart’s flowing stream-like Piano Concerto No. 23 in A, K. 488. Mozart’s concertos deceptively require both control and clarity from their pianists, characteristics that

Sham possessed and displayed with an unostentatious mastery.

While Sham’s body language did not betray underlying emotions, his checkerboard socks against black attire were perhaps a visual hint to the pianist’s intriguing musical personality. His playing bubbled with energy, revealing a remarkably finessed point of view in which the articulation of passages was decisive, as well as natural and clean. The piano opens the adagio movement with a soft melancholy that Sham rendered with a beautiful deliberation and clarity. The contrasting finale movement, *Allegro assai*, was a cheerful conversational balance between the babbling-brook ebullience from Sham’s piano and happy sup-



Pianist Aristo Sham

A Christmas Holiday Tradition: Erevan Choral Society

CHRISTMAS, from page 13

recognition of the outstanding work that the Choral Society and the Orchestra have carried out to promote Armenian culture and music in Diaspora. This is an honorable award, and the first time a musical ensemble actively performing outside the Homeland, has been recognized and awarded.

The award was officially presented by Archbishop Nourhan Manougian, Armenian Patriarch of Jerusalem, who was present at the concert. Manougian highlighted the important work that Erevan Choral Society has carried out in the Diaspora for many years to promote Armenian Art at the highest level.

He also warmly congratulated Father Vasken Kouzouian, the Pastor of Holy



Archbishop Nourhan Manougian, Armenian Patriarch of Jerusalem, officially presented the Yerevan City Council Gold Medal to the Choral Society.

Trinity Armenian Church, on the 25th anniversary of his Ordination and Ministry.

Many public officials and clergymen were present at the concert, which has become an annual and traditional cultural event in the Armenian Community of Greater Boston.

LA.’s Little Armenia Kicks off Season 2 of ‘No Passport Required’ with Marcus Samuelsson on PBS

COOKING, from page 13

Angeles offers what his adopted hometown of New York doesn’t – it is vast and big and it’s not one thing.

“Restaurants are not the only way to express being a food town, and LA is an incredible food city,” he says. “It can be food trucks or markets. And especially in the Armenian community, which keeps it in the home as a meeting point for people young and old to get together to hold on to traditions. Restaurants might not be where all the food is. Some of the best meals are kept at home. You find that a lot in immigrant communities, rituals being kept. And that’s what we really dive into in this episode – great food, tradition and conversation.”

Other upcoming episodes will journey to Houston for West African food, the Italian American community in Philadelphia and the Chinese community of Las Vegas. Samuelsson will also venture to the greater Boston area to learn more about the Portuguese, Brazilian, and Cape Verdean diasporas.

“Americans in general are always curious about their neighbors in their cities and communities and eager to learn,” says the James Beard Award-winning Top Chef Master. “The best way to learn about culture is through food and I’m proud that this show highlights that.”

To see the episode, visit <https://www.pbs.org/food/features/no-passport-required-season-2-los-angeles/>



From left, conductor and composer Konstantin Petrossian, Patriarch Nourhan Manougian, Rev. Vasken Kouzouian and Rev. Mampr Kouzouian

COMMENTARY

Hrant Dink: Human Rights Trailblazer

By Edmond Y. Azadian

The behavior of the Armenian community in Turkey has been defined by fear; fear of expression and action as well as fear of showing their real identities in a society where the dark forces of hatred continue to fester. And there is good reason which justifies those fears: the memory of the Genocide has been transmitted from one generation to the other, even if spoken about only in muted voices.

Children of Armenian descent have been taught at school that they are the progeny of a treacherous race called Armenian and thus they are helped to develop self-hatred.

The Genocide and its historic impact has continued to be amplified by the continuing persecution of minorities through the September 5, 1955 pogroms in Istanbul and through the rigorous application of the wealth tax on Armenians, Greeks and the Jews and subsequent deportations to labor camps in Askale in the 1940s.

As if that were not enough, Turkish government leaders have continually intimidated Armenians. One such example was the statement of President Turgut Ozal, who in 1993 warned that if the lessons of 1915 have not been learned well by Armenians, then they deserve more. Subsequent Turkish leaders, including Prime Minister Tansu Çiller and President Recep Tayyip Erdogan, have not missed opportunities to threaten to expel migrant Armenians in Istanbul.

The Armenian community was conditioned to live and survive in this kind of intimidating atmosphere, when a different voice was heard – a defiant one. The voice belonged to Hrant Dink; it sent a shiver down the collective spine of the community. (See related stories on page 1.)

Leaders and citizens alike were stunned that an ethnic Armenian could be rash enough to try to shake off the chains of slavery which had been encircling the obedient minority for so long.

Before delivering his message to Turkey's general public, he shocked the Armenian community with his choice in the delivery of that message. He began publishing *Agos* weekly in the Turkish language, allowing only one page for Armenian. While his choice of language made practical sense, many characterized his actions as a betrayal of the Armenian language.

Armenians in Turkey have many publications but in particular two newspapers are considered standard-bearers of Armenianism: *Marmara* and *Jamanak* dailies, which continue to be published at the expense of great sacrifices yet always losing subscribers as the community shrinks.

Over many decades, restrictions placed on the instruction of the Armenian language in community schools have eroded proficiency in that language. Instead, Turkish has become the lingua franca for all minorities to communicate with each other.

As the community dwindled on the one side as a result of emigration, younger generations of Armenians from the provinces came to fill the ranks.

Most spoke Turkish only and were able to attain prominence and affluence in the community. Hrant's initiative met their needs exactly, particularly that generation, who although did not speak Armenian, it did not lack patriotism nor love for its Armenian legacy.

Hrant did not claim to be speaking on behalf of the community, but the conservative circles within the Armenian community were afraid that he would endanger the Armenians' safety. They greeted him with hostility, particularly when he did not mince his words, criticizing cronyism and corruption within the Armenian community.

Hrant Dink's message touched a sensitive chord among the youth, but it extended beyond the Armenian community to find resonance among the Kurds, since Dink's message perfectly matched their liberation aspirations.

In addition, Dink also became a spokesperson for the liberal and educated class of Turks. Many prominent Turkish writers, such as Baskin Oran, became regular contributors to *Agos*, raising its profile within Turkish intellectual and political circles.

Hrant stood for democracy and human rights. He had an unflinching stance in promoting minority rights. While the Turkish authorities were exerting every effort to erase the traces of any Armenian identity within the current borders of the Republic of Turkey, Hrant Dink, in defiance of that policy, defined his own identity. "I am the bearer of two identities," he said. "First, I live in Turkey, I am a citizen of the Republic of Turkey...Second, I am an Armenian."

He began unearthing and publicizing the contribution of the Armenians to Turkish history, language, culture and economy. He

hit the motherlode when he discovered that Sabiha Gokçen, the adopted daughter of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, whom the Turks had sanctified as the first female fighter pilot and in whose honor an airport was named, was an Armenian orphan. This bit of reporting led to him receiving death threats.

His advocacy of the recognition of the Armenian Genocide further aggravated government circles and fanatical nationalists. He was very outspoken about Armenian issues and that is why he was prosecuted three times under the country's medieval penal code, whose Article 301 is meant to punish any citizen who dares insult "Turkishness."

Hrant Dink had a messianic mission which required him to think outside the box and defy traditional views which Armenians and Turks had about each other. For the Turks, Armenians were traitors that deserved the punishment they received. For the Armenians, the Turks were unrepentant and unscrupulous killing machines.

Dink saw educating the Turks as a way to reconcile the two.

While Turkey's accession to the European Union was considered dangerous for many Armenians, Dink believed otherwise. He thought that Turkey's emancipation from its inward-looking mindset and learning the true facts of history would pave the way for mutual understating and reconciliation down the road.

"When you attempt to implement [recognition] in societies where knowledge is not free, the real paradox appears of its own accord," he said. And he concluded, "In the end, it is not that Turkish society knows the truth but still denies it; it is defending what it knows to be true."

Dink's concept of recognition differed from traditional views. Some eyebrows were raised among the Armenians when he laid down his philosophy by stating: "Real success can only be achieved not with court decisions or restrictive laws, but with the establishment of an environment of debate that will create change in mentality. ... Denial or recognition without comprehension will benefit no one."

At one point, Dink's message appealed to broad segments of Turkish society. Erdogan's earlier policies emanated from that atmosphere. Many believed then that democracy was laying its foundations in Turkey. "Turkey has changed," many would gleefully say to Hrant during his trips abroad, until Erdogan showed his

true colors. He showed that he wanted to resort to fundamentalist Islam as the central tenet of his policies, which delivered one victory after another, until he seemed to have achieved invincibility in Turkey and beyond.

To comply with the standards of the European Union, Turkey officially abolished the death penalty. But on the other hand, it settled bloody scores through assassinations and mass slaughter of the Kurds through the activities of the "deep state," which turned out to be cooperating with the MIT, the Turkish secret service.

The "deep state" had used Ahmed Ali Ağca to assassinate a prominent journalist, Abdi İpekçi, in 1979 and he was set free only to try to assassinate Pope John Paul II in 1981.

The "deep state" had targeted Dink for a long time. However, he felt safe because he was so well-known and so popular. In his last editorial, he wrote that he felt like a fearful dove and added, "In Turkey, people don't hurt doves."

For once, he was mistaken. He was gunned down in front of the editorial offices of *Agos* on January 19, 2007 by a teenager, Oğun Samast, who claimed to be a Turkish nationalist. Police arrested the assassin and treated him like a hero, posing for pictures with him.

Hundreds of thousands of people marched at his funeral with the calls "We are all Armenians," and "We are all Hrant."

Although the murderer was charged and sentenced to 13 years in prison, the real masterminds of the crime have evaded true justice.

At the commemorations marking the 13th anniversary of Hrant's assassination's, demonstrations were held at his graveside in Balikli Armenian Cemetery and in front of *Agos*' former office in Osmaniye district, where he was murdered. Many political figures and journalists spoke. Of particular importance was Garo Paylan's participation and eulogy during the service. Paylan is carrying on Dink's legacy and courageously advocating for his cause.

The Turkish government demonstrated its true position vis-à-vis Dink's memory, by blocking traffic leading to Harbiye, where a commemoration was being held. In addition, the subway station at that location was closed for three hours.

Today, a dead Hrant Dink is more dangerous than when the former living Hrant, as his mission and ideals have caught the imagination of millions of Turkish citizens. The Turkish government can no longer prosecute him or incarcerate him; he is still alive through his message, now more than ever.

He remains a human rights trailblazer for Turkey and beyond.



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COMMENTARY

Turkey's Libya Strategy: Cure Has Become Worse Than Disease

By Fehim Tastekin

TURKEY'S LIBYA STRATEGY seems to have produced many side effects with the situation on the ground rapidly escalating.

Turkey's hard power tactics on Libya perhaps paved the way for the Berlin summit by provoking the international community to take action against Turkey's unilateral moves, but the final communique that the foreign powers agreed on during the conference are conflicting with Ankara's interests and military plans. The provision that envisages sanctions on parties that break the United Nations arms embargo is effectively blocking Turkey's military venture. The communique also calls for a formation of a unity government that is recognized by the war-torn country's Tobruk-based parliament that strongly opposes the military cooperation and maritime boundary agreements that Turkey signed with the Fayed al-Sarraj-led Government of National Accord (GNA).

Russia, Egypt and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) have boosted their support for Libyan National Army (LNA) leader Khalifa Hifter who announced January 18 that he would block oil exports from the country's main ports in retaliation for Turkey's actions. The disruption in the oil production can have "devastating consequences first and foremost for the Libyan people," warned the United Nations Libya mission.

Ankara's road map with Libya derailed when several deterrent factors came into play preventing President Recep Tayyip Erdogan to realize his plans to dispatch military troops to the war-torn country despite the parliamentary approval he obtained January 2.

Erdogan had to agree to work with Russia, but jointly brokered cease-fire talks between the GNA led by Fayed al-Sarraj and the Hifter-led delegation have not produced the desired results.

Turkey was about to register the summit as a successful outcome of its hard power tactics, but Hifter left the negotiating table without signing the truce agreement leading everyone back to square one.

Why has Turkey's "tension strategy" not yielded the results Erdogan has promised?

Several factors have surfaced disrupting Turkey's plans. Apart from international objections, Libya's neighbors have been particularly annoyed by Turkey's interventionism.

The capacity problems Turkey's air force is facing after the 2016 botched coup attempt aside, the distance between the two countries is preventing Turkey to con-

duct effective air operations in the Libyan airspace. Turkey's hopes to use neighboring countries as logistical routes and bases were also dashed by the staunchly neutral positions of Tunis and Algeria.

Erdogan has been particularly disappointed by the Ennahda movement, when Tunisian parliament Speaker Rached Ghannouchi, leader of Ennahda and a close friend of Erdogan in the Muslim Brotherhood network, said that Tunisia will not be part of the Libyan conflict. Tunisian President Kais Saied denied Turkey's claims that Tunis was supporting the Sarraj-led GNA.

Algeria also has adopted a similar position by announcing that the country will maintain its distance with the warring Libyan parties after some news reports claimed two Turkish frigates were en route to Algerian ports.

Egypt, as one of the critical allies of Hifter, has challenged Turkey's plans more openly than ever. Egyptian President Abdel Fattah al-Sisi announced that Cairo is determined to take the necessary actions against any Turkish intervention.

The announcement has raised the prospect of turning Libya into a direct confrontation scene between Turkey and the Egypt-UAE bloc that has been at odds with Ankara's foreign policy goals since 2013.

Egypt's military exercise called "Qader 2020" coincided with the Moscow meeting leading many to consider the exercise as a show of force against Turkey.

Turkey's Libyan venture also increased the tension in the competition over eastern Mediterranean hydrocarbon resources. Erdogan has argued that the deal Turkey signed with the GNA government to demarcate maritime borders would eliminate the Cyprus, Greece, Israel and Egypt bloc's efforts to link eastern Mediterranean gas fields with European markets bypassing Turkey. In response, the bloc has stepped up these efforts by signing an energy cooperation deal between Greece, Israel and Cyprus.

On January 8, foreign ministers of Greece, Egypt and Cyprus met in Cairo to declare the deals Turkey signed with the GNA "void," in a move that further deepens Turkey's isolation in the international arena.

Turkey's pro-government circles' overoptimistic expectations about Turkey's "pivotal role in Libya" ignores the change of wind in Libya. Turkey-backed Islamist forces under siege between Tripoli and Misrata were hoping to push back the Hifter-led forces with the help of Turkey's military support, but in the end lost Sirte. The joint Turkish-Russian calls for a cease-fire came just as the Hifter-led forces were advancing toward Sirte.

The LNA seized the city without much conflict when a Salafist jihadist faction defected from the GNA and joined

be at their forefront," Ayesha Gadhafi said January 2, declaring her support for Hifter.

Moscow invited Ankara to the negotiating table to prevent a possible Turkish military intervention, while maintaining its support for Hifter through private Russian military company Wagner Group.

As a result, Erdogan backpedaled and brought up the idea of recruiting mercenaries from Syria for Libya to limit the Turkish army's role with coordination and training. Ankara's plan was to boost air defense in and around the airspace of Tripoli, which Ankara designated as a "red line." So far, the number of Turkish troops dispatched to Libya have reached 80.

However, Turkey's efforts to recruit Syrian fighters appears to have caused rifts in the Syrian opposition ranks. Hence, Turkey didn't have any choice but to sit at the table in Moscow.

The initial plan was to launch an initiative similar to Astana, but the Libyan equation does not allow such an initiative. In Astana, Turkey talks on behalf of the opposition while Russia and Iran talk on behalf of Damascus. In the Libyan conflict, on the other hand, Turkey has lost its leverage for mediation, while Russia retains its potential to act as a mediator. Furthermore, the counter front against Turkey is steadily expanding with new members and none of them were present during the Moscow negotiations.

"We would like to join the efforts by the Europeans, including the Germans, the French and the Italians, as well as Libya's neighbors – Algeria and Egypt – and the UAE, Turkey, Qatar and the Russian Federation to channel them in one direction in order to urge the Libyan parties to the conflict to reach an agreement through negotiations, rather than to continue to sort things out by using force," Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov said during a January 14 news conference.

Lavrov's remarks affirm Russia perhaps managed to block Turkey's military involvement, but there is more to be done.

According to Sky News Arabia, Hifter laid down seven conditions before signing the truce, including the LNA will be deployed in Tripoli; Syrian fighters will withdraw from the country; Turkey will be excluded from the international force that will be deployed for peacekeeping; some armed factions in Tripoli will be abolished; and a new unity government recognized by the Tobruk-based parliament will be set up.

None of these are in line with Turkey's interests in Libya and Erdogan's self-contradicting remarks are not helping the cause.

Last month, Erdogan asked Russia to end its support to Hifter while announcing his intention to deploy troops in Libya. On January 5, Erdogan denied to recognize Hifter as a legitimate actor in the Libyan war when opposition parties criticized Turkey's one-sided Libya policy.

"There is a putschist on one side and a legitimate government on the other. How come one can be a mediator between a putschist and a legitimate government," Erdogan said only to be denied by Putin three days later.

On January 8, Putin said Russia and Turkey were acting as "mediators" in the conflict and called for a cease-fire, no objections were raised by Ankara.

On January 13, Erdogan dispatched Turkey's defense and foreign ministers and spy chief to Moscow to sit at the same table with the Hifter whom he had labeled a putschist.

Another flip-flop came after Hifter refused to sign the truce and left Moscow.

"We will not hesitate to go after Hifter," Erdogan said.

The only positive outcome of Turkey's "tension strategy" was paving the way for the Berlin meeting on January 19. Turkey's most important objective is to make the maritime deal permanent, yet the result of the Berlin summit actually has made it more difficult.

(Fehim Tastekin is a Turkish journalist and a columnist for Turkey Pulse who previously wrote for Radikal and Hurriyet. He has also been the host of the weekly program "SINIRSIZ," on IMC TV. As an analyst, Tastekin specializes in Turkish foreign policy and Caucasus, Middle East and EU affairs. This analysis originally appeared in Al-Monitor.)

ANKARA'S ROAD MAP WITH LIBYA DERAILED WHEN SEVERAL DETERRENT FACTORS CAME INTO PLAY PREVENTING PRESIDENT RECEP TAYYIP ERDOGAN TO REALIZE HIS PLANS TO DISPATCH MILITARY TROOPS TO THE WAR-TORN COUNTRY DESPITE THE PARLIAMENTARY APPROVAL HE OBTAINED JANUARY 2.

the ranks of the Hifter-led forces. The defection indicates the volatile nature of the conflict. Although Tripoli-based Salafists supporting the GNA are quite powerful, in the climate of war one should always keep in mind reality: Tribes or clans tend to favor the powerful party, similar to the scenario that has transpired in Syria.

Indeed, some 1,000 people from various tribes from several cities, including Benghazi, Tobruk, Bayda, Zintan and Ghat, gathered in Benghazi to pledge support to Hifter and the Tobruk-based parliament in early January.

Apparently, some elements of the ousted regime also back Hifter, including the daughter of late Libyan leader Moammar Gadhafi.

"When Turkish soldiers' boots desecrate our homeland soil, which was watered by the blood of our martyrs, if there is no one among you to repel this aggression, then leave the battlefield to the free women of Libya and I will



COMMENTARY



My Turn

By Harut Sassounian

Newly-Elected Patriarch of Turkey Lashes out at His Armenian Critics

After giving a series of interviews to the Turkish press since his election on December 11, 2019, the new Armenian Patriarch of Turkey, Sahak II Mashalyan, responded to his Armenian critics on January 15, by issuing an official “Clarification” to Turkish-Armenian newspapers.

It is important to point out that the Patriarch’s critics were not simply those who live outside Turkey, unjustly accused of being unaware of the repressive treatment of Istanbul Armenians by the Turkish government. In addition to criticism from Armenians in Armenia and the Diaspora, the Patriarch was attacked by Armenians living in Turkey as well as the Turkish-Armenian newspaper *Agos*.

The Patriarch’s interview with the Turkish newspaper *Aksham* generated the most controversy as he not only distanced Istanbul Armenians from Diaspora Armenians, but also belittled the massive tragedy of the Armenian Genocide. His Beatitude complained that a few of the sentences in his interview with *Aksham*, drawing the most negative interpretations and exceeding the limits of understanding, reached a campaign of tarnishing his name.

The Patriarch made the excuse that in his 40-minute interview, he “had provided lengthy explanations and details which naturally were not included in the article. The words appearing in the newspaper were filtered from those expla-

nations which were given as answers for a particular question. That style was the choice of the editor. Without considering the questions, when only answers are provided, a change in the meaning takes place, which is placed successively, one after another. In this case, they become unclear expressions and failed statements, which make the transmitted idea meaningless.”

The Patriarch then stated that he had given the following answer to the question about Turkish Armenians: “Armenians of Turkey, unlike Armenians in the Diaspora and Armenia, form a third segment. From the point of view of administration and economy, the Armenian Diaspora has no ties with us; we are self-sufficient.”

When his Beatitude was asked about the irreconcilable attitude of Diaspora Armenians toward Turkey and the reasons for its negative position, he claimed that the given answer does not belong to him, but is a simple sociological correction – familiar to all – expressed as such: ‘One hundred years ago, the people who left these lands with a great tragedy have transmitted the trauma they lived to future generations and realized that for the Armenian identity and its preservation it is beneficial and necessary to form a consciousness of the Genocide. They continued to live for more than a hundred years in a status quo away from Turkey and Turks. But, we – Armenians who have remained in Turkey – continued to share our lives with Turks in these lands and gained the experience of living together. In that sense, we are distinct Armenians in the Armenian world.’

The Patriarch continued: “In such super sensitive subjects, the priority of the people has been that they listen to what they want, and not what the Patriarchs of Turkish Armenians say and under what conditions. The fate of the Armenian Patriarchs of Turkey is like the captain of a ship that is being crushed between two non-melting icebergs. In that circumstance, it is not always possible to secure harmony and errors appear to occur according to one of the sides. Sahak Patriarch too, like his predecessors, has tried to give answers

regarding Armenian issues that are satisfactory to all sides. It is never acceptable to any of the sides to take a rejectionist and disregarding position. Each person must first understand correctly, what in reality has been expressed in the uttered words and then criticize.”

Some in the Diaspora may agree with the Patriarch’s words, emphasizing the dire conditions that he and the Turkish community are in. Any Armenian who is familiar with those repressive conditions can be somewhat sympathetic to the Patriarch’s situation.

Our intent was never to urge the Patriarch to antagonize the authorities in Turkey. After all, he is responsible for the safety of his community. All we ask from the Patriarch is to be cautious in his words, not to alienate his followers in Turkey and not insult the memory of 1.5 million Armenian martyrs by engaging in outright denialism. Whenever possible, the Patriarch should avoid giving interviews to the Turkish press. He should appoint a press spokesman who is capable of avoiding difficult and sensitive questions, particularly on political issues. If the spokesman makes a mistake, it is less consequential than if the Patriarch himself makes a mistake. Spokesmen can be fired, but the Patriarch’s position is life-long.

Finally, it is unacceptable for the Patriarch to blame the Turkish newspaper for allegedly misinterpreting his words. First of all, we do not know what exactly the Patriarch told the Turkish newspaper and if it was really misinterpreted. For example, in his above “Clarification,” the Patriarch claims that he had used the word “Genocide” in his interview with the Turkish newspaper. This is not credible!

Secondly, the Patriarch is someone who is born and raised in Istanbul. He knows the Turkish media well. He should have known that the Turkish press often distorts the words of those they interview. Therefore, giving an interview to the Turkish press and then complaining that his words were distorted is not sincere. The Patriarch should have known that in advance. Complaining about Turkish media distortions after the interview is published is foolish!

Findikyan Reflects On Patriarchal Enthronement in Istanbul

By Bishop Daniel Findikyan

I was in Bolis [Istanbul] for five days, accompanied by Fr. Armash Baghdasarian, assistant pastor of the St. John Armenian Church (Southfield, MI), who was born and raised in Istanbul, and served the church there diligently and lovingly from the time of his childhood.

The enthronement took place in the Sourp Asdvadzadzin (Holy Mother-of-God) Cathedral across from the Patriarchate in the Kumkapi district of Istanbul. I was one of nine bishops and several priests who had traveled to Istanbul for the occasion, representing each of the Armenian Church’s hierarchical sees and several dioceses. Bishop Apgar [Hovakimyan], Primate of Canada, was also in attendance.

A number of ecumenical hierarchs also participated, notably His Holiness Bartholomew, the (Orthodox) Ecumenical Patriarch of Constantinople; a delegation from the Vatican; His Eminence Archbishop Levon Zekian, Archbishop of the Armenian Catholic Church of Constantinople; and Archbishop Khajag Barsamian. The cathedral was completely full, with many more people standing outside – easily totaling over one thousand people.

The long ceremony began with a procession from the Patriarchate across the street to the cathedral. There followed a festive “Giragamdits” (Saturday Evening) vespers service. At the end of the service, all of the bishops were vested, and with hand cross and bishop’s staff we ascended the holy altar to surround the Patriarch-elect.

During the ceremony, the Patriarch-elect knelt down and read an oath, whereupon Khajag Srpazan, as the senior bishop in attendance, read the long prayer of blessing on the new Patriarch. After that all of the bishops approached the still-kneeling Patriarch, and together blessed him with their hand crosses.

A Patriarchal Encyclical (Gontag) of His Holiness Karekin II, the Supreme Patriarch and Catholicos of All Armenians, was read by Archbishop Yeznik Petrossyan of the Mother See of Holy Echmiadzin. Representatives of the Great House of Cilicia read His Holiness Catholicos Aram I’s letter of congratulation; and the Very Rev. Baret Yeretian read the letter of His Beatitude Nourhan Manoogian, Armenian Patriarch of Jerusalem. Many people observed how significant it was that all of the holy sees of the Armenian Church were represented.

This was the first time that I have participated as a bishop in such a grand ceremony, and I was deeply honored and uplifted.

A Pledge of Service

There followed a long series of greetings by all of the hierarchs in attendance. At the end His Beatitude Patriarch Sahak II delivered his message: a very personal and heartfelt expression of humility and faith, in which he reflected on the long path of his life and ministry that has brought him to this exceptionally important office. He pledged to serve the Lord and the Holy See of Constantinople.

Patriarch Sahak said (my translation): “My journey leading to the Lord Jesus Christ has now brought me to this Enthronement, and I will not rest in my new position until I see Him face to face.” He expressed his thanks to the people, the clergy present, for their part in this ceremony and in his life. With special affection he remembered his spiritual fathers: his late predecessors in the office, Patriarch Shnork Kaloustian and Patriarch Mesrob Moutafyan.

The enthronement ceremony concluded with His Beatitude being escorted to his throne and taking his place—whereupon all of the hierarchs, one by one, approached him to kiss his hand and receive his blessing. A joyous public reception followed.

The next day His Beatitude celebrated his first Badarak as Patriarch. It was a wonderful, uplifting celebration with the participation of all of the Armenian clergy of Istanbul, a joint choir comprising dozens of singers, dozens of deacons and altar servers, as well as all of the visiting dignitaries.

At the end of the Badarak, the Patriarch called Fr. Armash Baghdasarian up to the bema and gave him a beautiful Armenian pectoral cross in appreciation for his dedicated service to the Patriarchate and to the Armenian Church as a whole.

An Emotional Personal Experience

In the evening a formal congratulatory banquet was held for the clergy, visiting hierarchs, ecumenical guests, and prominent members of the community. I rose and said the following:

“Your Beatitude, Brother Clergy, and Dear People. My participation in the enthronement ceremonies these days has been particularly emotional for me. Emotional first of all because my family’s roots are deeply embedded in the sacred soil of this historical See of Constantinople. And emotional as well because I represent the Eastern Diocese of the Armenian Church of America, which, more than 100 years ago, was originally placed under the authority of the Holy See of Constantinople by decision of Catholicos Khrimian Hayrig. From those days until now, our Bolsetsis, the faithful people who hail from this city, are among the most ardent, church-loving, faithful members of our Diocese.

“I have known Patriarch Sahag for more than 30 years. We first met in Jerusalem, when I was there doing manuscript research for my doctoral thesis and, providentially, a young, newly-ordained apegha named Hayr Sahak was on pilgrimage in the Holy City, having come from Istanbul. It was Great Lent. I shall never forget how deeply impressed and inspired I was to hear Hayr Sahak preach in the Church of the Holy Archangels one evening. His passion, his obvious faith, and his deep love for Jesus Christ and the Armenian Church impressed

me deeply and inspired me in my own vocation to be a priest.

“Patriarch Hayr, your new ministry begins among the good people of this historic city. But your flock also extends far beyond the geographical limits of this city. May our Lord bless you abundantly so that you may be a ‘Good Shepherd’ for your community and for the entire Armenian Church, for the eternal welfare of our people and for the glory of Jesus Christ.”

Echoes of Our History

During a private visit with His Beatitude, I pledged the full and enthusiastic support of our Diocese in assisting the Patriarch in his holy ministry. We discussed a number of prospects for cooperation, including pilgrimages by our people to Constantinople, historical Armenia, and other sacred and biblical sites in Turkey; cooperation in the training of seminarians, deacons, and priests in Istanbul and at St. Nersess Seminary; and assisting in raising needed funds for the Patriarchate.

This was my first visit to Istanbul. I had the opportunity to visit my father’s old neighborhood, the churches in which he prayed, as well as the Church of the Apparition of the Holy Cross (Yerevman Sourp Khatch) in the Kruçeshme neighborhood, where my grandfather directed the Gomidas Choir, founded by Gomidas Vartabed himself.

As a teacher and scholar, I have read a great deal about the centrality of Constantinople in world history, in the history of the universal Church, and of course in the history of our people and the Armenian Church. But to see with my eyes the places where this history happened; to pray in and around the holy places that became so influential in the development of our liturgy, theology, spirituality and Christian culture was simply awe-inspiring. One day last week while driving, the senior priest in Constantinople, Der Krikor Damadyan, pointed to a distant island in the Sea of Marmara and said, “That is where St. Nersess was imprisoned.” I said, “Which St. Nersess?” He replied, “St. Nersess the Great,” the fourth-century saint and Catholicos of our Church. Fourth century! Talk about history...

As I return from Istanbul, I recognize with greater clarity the importance of the Patriarchate of Constantinople for our church as a whole, and for the vitality of our Diocese. The city, the Holy See, and its new and ardent Patriarch are a great blessing for all of us. As we are blessed again and again by the clergy, the holy places, the holy traditions, and holy work of the Holy Mother See of Echmiadzin, and by the Holy See of Jerusalem, we stand to be blessed as well by re-engaging with the Holy See of Constantinople. I pledge as Bishop of this Diocese, to work closely with His Beatitude Patriarch Sahak and our people to do just that, with God’s help.

(Bishop Daniel Findikyan is the Primate of the Eastern Diocese of the Armenian Church of America. The above is a personal account of his trip to Istanbul on January 11-12, for the enthronement and Antranig Badarak of Sahak II, the 85th Armenian Patriarch of Constantinople.)



Armenia, Artsakh MPs Call to Condemn Baku Pogroms

YEREVAN (Public Radio of Armenia) – The Armenia-Artsakh Inter-Parliamentary Committee has adopted a statement on the 30th anniversary of Baku Pogroms. The statement reads:

On 13-19 January, 1990, coordinated mass pogroms of the Armenian population were committed in the capital of Azerbaijan, Baku, under the watchful eye of the state authorities. Hundreds of Armenians became victims of violence because of their ethnic origin; their property was looted and confiscated. More than 250 thousand Armenians living in Baku fled under the direct threat of physical extermination and found a refuge in various countries of the world.

The mass pogroms of Armenians in Baku were the result of largescale policy of discrimination against Armenians, unleashed by the Caucasian Tartar extremist forces at the beginning of the 20th century and continued by the authorities of Azerbaijan up until now. This policy led to a drastic reduction of the Armenian population in territories under the control of Azerbaijan. By gaining new impetus in the end of 1980s, that policy and the existential threat it imposed led to the extermination of the

Armenian population in Baku and in other settlements of the Azerbaijani SSR.

Stating that despite the facts recorded by the international community and human rights organizations, the Azerbaijani authorities until now conceal their genocidal actions, distort the reality, and escape the responsibility;

Emphasizing that the continuous official policy of Armenophobia in Azerbaijan and these and other crimes committed on that ground (the pogroms in Sumgait and Kirovabad, massacre of the Armenian population of the Artsakh's Maragha village, which fell under Azerbaijan's occupation, war crimes committed by the Azerbaijani armed forces against the civilian population of Artsakh and prisoners of war during its aggression in April, 2016), the consistent destruction of the Armenian cultural heritage, as well as the ethnic cleansing of the Armenians in the territories of Artsakh remaining under the Azerbaijani occupation up until now, attest to the Azerbaijani authorities' intend to wipe out the Armenians and all traces of their existence in the territories under their control;

Based on the principles enshrined in the Convention on Prevention and Punishment of

the Crime of Genocide (9 December 1948), the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (10 December 1948), the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (21 December 1965), the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (16 December 1966), and other international instruments relating to the protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms, which are also entrenched in the domestic legislation of all democratic states,

the Armenia-Artsakh Inter-Parliamentary Committee in the result of the joint meeting held on January 18, 2020

Pays tribute to the memory of our compatriots who were killed 30 years ago in Baku and states that fair compensation for the losses of the Armenian population is legal and relevant; Condemns the consistent policy of Armenophobia in the Republic of Azerbaijan;

Considers unacceptable any manifestation of xenophobia, extremism, and terrorism;

Confirms that there is no statutory limitation for the crimes against humanity and emphasizes that the condemnation of crimes committed in the past is the most important guarantee

for preventing the reoccurrence of such crimes in the future;

Calls on parliaments and parliamentary assemblies, international organizations, and human rights organizations:

to condemn the crimes committed by Azerbaijan against the Armenian population of Baku and the violations of international humanitarian law, which constitute a threat not only to the Armenian people but also to the security, stability, and development of the entire region;

to take effective measures for their prevention.

Reconfirms that the Republic of Armenia and the Republic of Artsakh, as guarantors of the peaceful life of the Armenian people in their homeland, demand the condemnation of atrocities against the Armenians and fair compensation for the victims and their assignees.

On the occasion of the 30th anniversary of the Baku pogroms, a special sitting of the Inter-Parliamentary Committee on Cooperation between the National Assemblies of the Republic of Armenia and the Republic of Artsakh was held in Yerevan.

Government Won't Rule Out Gas Price Rise

YEREVAN (RFE/RL) – Deputy Prime Minister Mher Grigoryan on Monday did not rule out the possibility of an increase in the prices of Russian natural gas supplied to Armenian households and corporate consumers.

Armenia's national gas distribution company owned by Russia's Gazprom giant said last week that it may ask public utility regulators soon to allow it to raise its retail prices.

They have remained unchanged since Gazprom raised the wholesale gas price for Armenia from \$150 to \$165 per thousand cubic meters in January 2019. The Russian gas monopoly said last month that the tariff will not rise further before the end of 2020.

In this regard, Grigoryan reiterated his earlier assurances that Armenian households will not pay more for gas at least until April 1. "As for a change of the price of gas supplied to our homes, we should also wait

until April 1," he told reporters. "We will have clearer ideas then."

Grigoryan insisted that the Armenian government and Gazprom have not reached a confidential deal on a price rise that would take effect later this year. But he noted at the same time that Gazprom's Armenian subsidiary needs additional revenues to make capital investments in the country's gas distribution network.

"Regarding investment plans, I won't make secret of the fact that there are desires to make some investments because we have to bear in mind that it's a matter of safety, efficiency and proper maintenance of the [gas] infrastructure," he said.

Grigoryan was also confident that a possible higher gas price would not reflect negatively on continued economic growth in Armenia.

Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan and Russian President Vladimir Putin discussed the issue when they met in Yerevan in October. "We talked about a gas price for Armenia that will not break Armenia's economic dynamics," Pashinyan said afterwards.

Canadian Armenian Genocide Survivor Eugenie Papazian Dies at 104

SURVIVOR, from page 1

She had a large family: two sisters, Arousiag and Azniv, three brothers, three maternal aunts and uncles, whom she never saw.

At the start of the 1915 deportations, the members of her extended family gather and find refuge in the mountains and then descended into a gorge. It is there that she was born. Seeing how frail her mother was, many advised and almost forced her mother to leave Eugenie there on the road. Her mother however did not agree.

Because of her beauty and golden hair, they named her Voski (Gold in Armenian). After Eugenie's birth her mother, exhausted, died.

For three years, her maternal grandmother struggled to look after her, then gave her to an orphanage when she was no longer able to feed her.

So began her painful odyssey through three children's homes in Greece, where an American relief organization had arranged the placement of Armenians in 13 orphanages.

An Armenian couple took her to Egypt, and she spent her early teens in Cairo, where she met her husband, Garabed Kokorian. She was 15 years old when she married Garabed.

Eugenie Papazian had 5 children, 9 grandchildren, 14 great-grandchildren and 1 great-grandchild.

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