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NEWS IN BRIEF

Armenian Democratic Liberal and Tekeyan Cultural Association Leader Nahabet Nahabetian Passes Away

BUENOS AIRES – Nahabet Nahabetian, a longtime Armenian Democratic Liberal (ADL) Party and Tekeyan Cultural Association (TCA) leader in Argentina, passed away on February 11, at age 93.

Born in Athens, Greece in 1927, he settled in Argentina in the 1950s, where he started his own manufacturing business and became a prominent entrepreneur. He was very active in the Armenian community in Argentina and rose to positions of leadership.

He was respected in the leadership circles of the Diocese of the Armenian Church of Buenos Aires and the Armenian General Benevolent Union. He was one of the founders of what became the Tekeyan Cultural Association in Argentina and instrumental in steering the construction of the TCA Suren and Virginia Fesjian Center in Buenos Aires. Nahabetian became the founder and publisher of Sardarabad, a bilingual weekly organ of TCA, in 1975.

He was respected in all Armenian circles and was a generous contributor to



Nahabet Nahabetian, at right, with Catholicos of All Armenians Karekin II

Armenian causes. He is survived by his son Sergio Nahabetian and his family. His wife Baghdine predeceased him.

The TCA Central Board has sent a letter offering their condolences to the Nahabetian family.

Canadian Diocesan Council Deplores Creation of New Parish In Windsor, Ont.

TORONTO – The following is a statement released by the Canadian Diocesan Council:

At its meeting of January 30, 2020, the Diocesan Council of the Armenian Holy Apostolic Church Canadian Diocese deliberated the deplorable situation created by the uncanonical actions taken by representatives of the Armenian Catholicosate of Cilicia in Windsor, Ont., by creating a new parish under its jurisdiction, whereas a duly established parish already exists within the Diocese of Canada, created some 27 years ago.

The Diocesan Council hereby profusely expresses its resentment and expects from the representatives of the Armenian Catholicosate of Cilicia to take the matter into serious consideration and to correct the uncanonical order.

Armenian Soldier Killed in Syria

ALEPPO (Panorama) – An Armenian soldier was fatally wounded during the Syrian army's battles for the district of Saraqib on Wednesday, February 5, the Aleppo-based Kantsasar newspaper reported on Facebook.

The deceased serviceman was identified as Jean Katandjian, 31.

His funeral took place at the Holy Cross Armenian Catholic Church in Aleppo on Thursday, February 6.

Armenia to Upgrade Iran Border Crossing

YEREVAN (RFE/RL) – The Armenian government has secured over 21 million euros (\$23 million) in funding from the European Union and the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) for its plans to modernize and expand Armenia's sole border crossing with Iran.

Finance Minister Atom Janjughazian and the head of the EBRD office in Armenia, Dimitri Gvindadze, signed on Friday, February 8, agreements to that effect at a ceremony in Yerevan.

In a short statement, the Armenian Finance Ministry said EU grants will make up just over half of the sum needed for the project's implementation. An EBRD loan will presumably pay the rest of the bill.

The Meghri checkpoint processes up to one-third of goods shipped to and from landlocked Armenia.

Armenia has already rebuilt and upgraded in recent years its three border crossings with Georgia.

Jordan's King in 'Historic' Visit To Armenia

YEREVAN (Combined Sources) – Jordan's King Abdullah II Ibn Al Hussein Al Hashimi, on his first visit to Armenia beginning on Tuesday, February 11, spoke of similarities between his country and Armenia, voiced support for closer bilateral ties and praised the centuries-old Armenian presence in the Middle East.

He also called for Armenian support for his position on the status of Jerusalem after holding separate talks with President Armen Sarkissian and Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan.

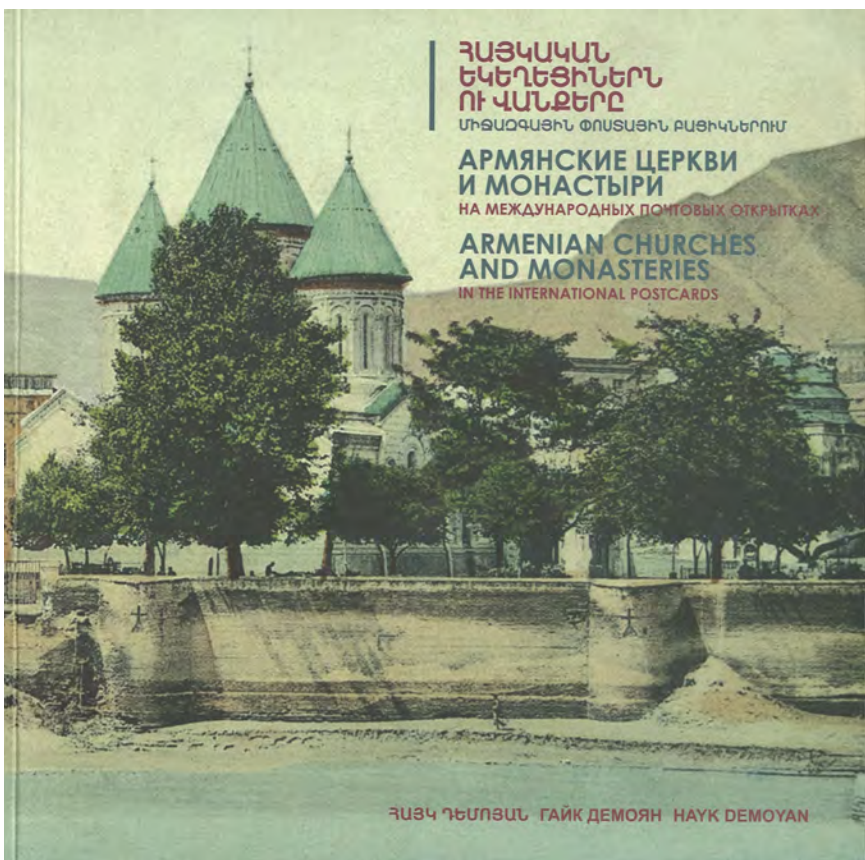
Both Armenian leaders described Abdullah's first-ever visit to their country as "historic" during the talks that seemed to have focused on ways of boosting Armenian-Jordanian economic ties. Sarkissian was satisfied with the "wonderful discussions with His Majesty."

"I'm very glad that ... relations between our countries are reinvigorated and we have already concrete results," Pashinyan told the Jordanian monarch at the start of their meeting.

"Our two countries and peoples have see JORDAN, page 4



Armenian President Armen Sarkissian (R) and Jordan's King Abdullah arrive at the presidential palace in Yerevan, February 11, 2020.



Demoyan Publishes Volume of Postcard Images Of Armenian Churches and Monasteries

WATERTOWN – Postcards and photo albums of images of Ottoman Armenians and their cultural institutions have proliferated in recent years. Following this trend, Dr. Hayk Demoyan published a trilingual thematic album recently (2019) titled *Armenian Churches and Monasteries in the [sic] International Postcards*. This 180-page medium-size color paperback volume reproduces images of postcards depicting Armenian churches and monasteries throughout the world from the late 19th and early 20th centuries, alongside a few engravings and photographs. All text is reproduced in Armenian, Russian and English.

By **Aram Arkun**
Mirror-Spectator Staff

The book is divided into four major geographical categories or chapters: Armenia and the Caucasus, the Ottoman Empire and the Middle East, the Russian Empire, and Europe and America. These categories are at times only loosely applied. For example, some sites in Western or Ottoman Armenia are included in the first category. While Aintab, Adana, Sis and Tarsus are included in this

see DEMOYAN, page 20

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And Scene: Actor Saro Emirze

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ARMENIA

News From Armenia

Soldiers Killed in Avalanche

YEREVAN (RFE/RL) – An avalanche in south-eastern Armenia killed three soldiers and injured another on Friday, February 7.

The Armenian Defense Ministry said the rescuers found the bodies of three contract soldiers – Private Karapet Nazaryan, Sergeant Tigran Arzumanyan and Sergeant Nver Shahbazyan – at an Armenian army post in the mountainous Syunik province, which was hit by powerful downslide.

The fourth soldier, Private Hamlet Mirzoyan, suffered minor injuries and was rescued from under the snow, the ministry said in a statement. It described his condition as “satisfactory.”

“An investigation is being conducted to determine the exact circumstances of the incident,” the statement added.

The soldiers were deployed on the border with Azerbaijan’s Nakhichevan exclave. The Ministry of Defense did not disclose the exact location of their outpost.

Armenians Rank as Happy, Optimistic

YEREVAN (Armenpress) – Armenia is ranked 7th out of 46 countries on the Happiness Index, according to a survey by MPG LLC, a full member of the GALLUP International Association in Armenia.

Respondents were asked if they were feeling very happy, happy, neither happy/nor sad, sad and very sad.

Of those polled, 60 percent said they were happy, while 13 percent said very happy, MPG LLC Vice President Gayane Dadzunts said.

Another 23 percent responded they were neither happy/nor sad; 2 percent said they were sad, and only 1 percent very sad.

According to the surveys, Colombia, Indonesia, Ecuador, Kazakhstan, Nigeria and the Philippines are top happiest countries, followed by Armenia.

In another survey by the same organization, Armenia was named 5th most optimistic country in the world.

The most optimistic country in the world is Peru, followed by Albania, then Nigeria and Kazakhstan.

A total of 1517 people in Yerevan, other cities and villages were polled.

The most pessimistic countries are Lebanon, Hong Kong, Jordan, Italy and Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Gyumri Reaches out to Sister City Xi’an

GYUMRI (Armenpress) – The City of Gyumri will send 2,000,000 drams (\$4,100) worth of humanitarian aid comprising medical items to its sister city, Xi’an, in China as the country is fighting to contain the deadly coronavirus outbreak.

The Gyumri City Council approved the decision on February 11.

The 320-kilogram cargo includes scrubs, protective masks, gloves etc. The aid will reach the city in Shaanxi Province in 4-5 days, Gyumri Mayor Samvel Balasanyan said.

In addition to the aid sent by the city, a local pharmacy has donated 6,000 protective masks, which will also be sent to China.

Xi’an and Gyumri had signed a memorandum of cooperation in 2015.

Dilapidated Bridge in Yerevan to Be Rebuilt

YEREVAN (Armenpress) – A 17th-century bridge will be restored to its original glory.

The restoration will be carried out by Yuri Afrikyan, a businessman who is implementing an investment program nearby on Argishti Street.

Afrikyan is building a hotel complex, an Armenian Crafts Center, and a Museum of Armenian Handicraft Tools near the Red Bridge, which dates to 1679, on Hrazdan River.

A City Hall official said at the meeting that the authorities must pay great attention to construction in that area. “It is the historic-cultural heart of Yerevan,” he said.

Referendum on Armenian Constitutional Court Scheduled for April 5

YEREVAN (RFE/RL) – President Armen Sarkissian has backed the parliament’s controversial decision hold a referendum on constitutional changes that would dismiss seven of the nine members of Armenia’s Constitutional Court locked in a bitter dispute with Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan.

In a weekend decree, Sarkissian scheduled the referendum for April 5 amid continuing opposition statements challenging the legality of the amendments drafted by Pashinyan’s My Step bloc.

Under the proposed amendments, the court’s chairman, Hrayr Tovmasyan, and six other members installed by former Armenian governments, would be replaced by other judges to be confirmed by the current parliament controlled by My Step. Pashinyan again accused them of remaining linked to the “corrupt former regime” as the National Assembly opted for the referendum on February 6.

Tovmasyan has been under particularly strong government pressure to resign in recent months. He has refused to quit and said the authorities are keen to gain control over the country’s highest court. Tovmasyan is strongly backed by the former Republican Party of Armenia and other hardline critics of the government.

The ruling bloc’s efforts to install new high court judges through the constitutional changes have also been strongly criticized by the more moderate opposition parties represented in the parliament and some legal experts.

Edmon Marukyan, the leader of the opposition Bright Armenia Party (LHK), insisted that the far-reaching changes sought by Pashinyan are

unconstitutional and were passed with serious procedural violations. Marukyan said Sarkissian should have therefore sent the draft amendments to the Constitutional Court for examination instead.

Both the LHK and the other parliamentary opposition party, Prosperous Armenia (BHK), say that an Armenian law on referendums also makes the court’s approval of constitutional changes obligatory.

Vladimir Vartanyan, a senior pro-government parliamentarian, countered, however, that the seven court justices cannot make an “objective” decision on the matter because at stake is their own future.

In a written “clarification” issued immediately after his decree, Sarkissian’s office argued that the referendum would have been scheduled even if the head of state had refused to sign the parliament’s decision. It cited an article of the Armenian constitution in support of this assertion.

“It has to be noted that by setting nor setting a date for the referendum the president of the republic does not express his attitude and position on the essence of the constitutional amendments adopted by the National Assembly ... or the procedures used for making that decision,” said the statement.

Naira Zohrabyan, a senior BHK figure, dismissed this explanation on Monday, February 10, accusing Sarkissian of seeking to dodge responsibility for the planned ouster of the Constitutional Court judges. She said that the president, who has largely ceremonial powers, effectively sided with Pashinyan.

“If you sign [the parliament’s decision] it means that you fully accept the legitimacy of the process,” Zohrabyan said in an interview.

The BHK and the LHK may still prevent the holding of the referendum if their parliament deputies appeal to the Constitutional Court and convince it to declare the draft amendments unconstitutional.

Under the constitution, such appeals must be signed by at least 27 members of the 132-seat parliament. The BHK and the LHK control 26 and 17 parliament seats respectively, putting them in a position to request a court judgment.

The LHK has already indicated its readiness to challenge the proposed constitutional changes in the court. BHK representatives have made more ambiguous statements in that regard so far.

“We have not yet discussed [the issue,] so I find it hard to say whether Prosperous Armenia will join in [the appeal,]” said Zohrabyan. The BHK leadership should formulate its position “in the coming days,” she said.

Zohrabyan dismissed suggestions that the party led by businessman Gagik Tsarukyan is wary of antagonizing Pashinyan.

The prime minister was quick to hail the presidential decree on the referendum. In a video address aired on Facebook, he also urged Armenians living abroad to travel to their home country and vote for the amendments on April 5. Armenian law bars them from voting outside the country.

To pass, the amendments would have to be backed by the majority of referendum participants making up at least one-quarter of Armenia’s 2.57 million or so eligible voters.

Former Armenian Security Chief to Set Up Party

YEREVAN (RFE/RL) – Artur Vanetsyan, the former head of Armenia’s most powerful security service, has announced his entry into active politics, saying that he will set up a party to challenge Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan’s government.

In an interview with the editors of nine Armenian newspapers publicized on Thursday, February 6, Vanetsyan said the party will strive to disprove government claims that the country’s former leaders are the main political rivals of the current authorities.

“A very important practice has emerged in Armenia, which is called dividing the society into [pro-government political] whites and [opposition] blacks,” he said. “I think that it’s a false political agenda that has been brought to our landscape; a political agenda whereby the former rulers are the alternative to the current authorities. I can assure you that there is no such thing.”

“There will be no return to the past,” added Vanetsyan. “I am someone who will be fighting against a return to the past.”

Pashinyan appointed Vanetsyan as director of the National Security Service (NSS), the former Armenian branch of the Soviet KGB, immediately after coming to power in the “Velvet Revolution” of April-May 2018.

Vanetsyan worked as a deputy chief of the NSS’s Yerevan division up until the revolution. He quickly became one of the most influential members of Pashinyan’s entourage, overseeing a number of high-profile corruption investigations launched by the new authorities.

Vanetsyan was unexpectedly relieved of his duties in September just a couple of months after being promoted to the

rank of NSS general. He criticized Pashinyan’s “impulsive” leadership style following his dismissal, triggering a bitter war of words with the premier.

Vanetsyan, 40, claimed in his interview that he himself decided to step down. He said his refusal to “participate in developments unfolding around the Constitutional Court” was one of the main reasons for that decision. He referred to controversial government efforts to replace the court’s chairman, Hrayr Tovmasyan, and six other justices.

The former NSS chief also pointed to the latest concerns voiced by Council of Europe officials over the Armenian government’s and parliament’s standoff with the high court judges. “That is a very serious issue for us also in terms of national security because it relates to our country’s international standing,” he said.

Pashinyan’s public feud with Vanetsyan was reignited last month by the “Haykakan Zhamanak” newspaper controlled by the prime minister’s family. In an extensive article, the paper accused him of organizing a smear campaign against Pashinyan’s family allegedly conducted by anti-government media. Hrachya Hakobian, a pro-government parliamentarian and Pashinyan’s brother-in-law, alleged afterwards that Vanetsyan was fired in September because he was plotting a

coup.

Pashinyan stated later in January that Armenian security services have thwarted a “hybrid” anti-government conspiracy hatched by current and former officials.

Vanetsyan denounced the “Haykakan Zhamanak” article as slanderous. He went on to call on the ruling Civil Contract party to consider installing a



Artur Vanetsyan

new prime minister.

“A person who attempted a coup d’état should have been placed in an appropriate institution,” Vanetsyan told the editors of other publications. “Of course I did not have such a desire.”

Armen Grigoryan, the secretary of Armenia’s Security Council and a Pashinyan ally, scoffed at Vanetsyan’s declared entry into politics later on Thursday. Grigoryan described him as an “echo of the past” who will hardly attract a large following.



ARMENIA

'We're Above Civilization'

Life in a Cosmic Ray Station

By Amos Chapple

YEREVAN (*The Guardian*) – Cut off during winter, a former Soviet weapons research facility high up on Mount Aragats, Armenia is now part of a network of sites around the world studying the mysterious particles

The cosmic ray research station on Mount Aragats sits at an altitude of 3,200 meters. The site was constructed in 1943 to conduct top-secret research into atomic reactions for the development of nuclear weapons. Now the facility provides insight into thunderstorms and cosmic rays. The only way visitors can reach the base in winter is via a nine-mile (15km) climb through snow.

Arriving at the station at sunset, the wind is howling across the plateau and the temperature has plummeted to dangerous levels.

Technicians at the facility work one month on, one month off during the winter.

Inside the station, it is surprisingly cozy. Edik Arshakian and Gurgen Jabaryan, both technicians, are tasked with monitoring the scientific equipment, while Gohar Hovhannisian prepares the meals. She describes being somewhat trapped during the winter.



One of the research station's technicians being taken down by snowmobile after his one-month winter shift.



The Cosmic Ray Station on Mount Aragats

Hovhannisian presides over an enormous kitchen built during the Soviet period, when scores of technicians were required to monitor and maintain rudimentary equipment. In winter she cooks mostly for just two technicians and herself.

The confusingly named "rays" are, in fact, high-energy protons and atomic nuclei that zip through space at nearly the speed of light.

When they meet the Earth's atmosphere they strike atoms and scatter them like snooker balls. These particles have the power to cut through material, including humans, and are sometimes blamed for corrupting digital memory and crashing computers.

The particles are one of the main obstacles to interplanetary travel, and their effects on astronauts and pilots are the subject of continued study.

High-altitude bases such as the one on Aragats are exposed to far higher doses of the cosmic specks than occurs at sea level, since the Earth's atmosphere serves as a protective blanket.

The Aragats facility is part of a network of sites around the world studying cosmic rays and is linked to research stations as far away as Costa Rica and Indonesia.

As well as studying cosmic rays, the center is equipped with sensors that can record lightning strikes from miles around. In 2018, researchers using the sensors on Aragats found a link between thunderclouds and drastic spikes in radiation, which may affect passengers and crew onboard aircraft.

Soviet-era electronics abound at the base. Amid the economic turmoil that followed the collapse of the Soviet Union,

the Aragats station was kept alive by state funds and donations from the Armenian diaspora community which continue today.

Dotted around the center, "scintillators" record incoming



Edik Arshakian and Gurgen Jabaryan have dinner.

cosmic rays as they strike chunks of clear plastic inside, causing tiny flashes of light.

Although Aragats is a thriving research site in summer, when visitors can arrive by car, through the long winter months it is a lonely place almost cut off from the rest of the world.

Jabaryan jokes that his favorite part of working at the site is "when the snowmobile comes to pick me up at the end of the month." But the isolation of this mountain station is a worthy sacrifice for science since, as Hovhannisian says: "We're above civilization. The cosmic particles arrive clear and pure here since there's nothing to disturb them."

Armenian Opera Director Constantine Orbelian Reinstated

YEREVAN (RFE/RL) – Constantine Orbelian, an acclaimed Armenian-American conductor and pianist, has been reinstated as director of Armenia's national opera theater after winning a court battle against the government.

Orbelian was appointed as artistic director of the Alexander Spendiarian National Opera and Ballet Theater in Yerevan in 2016 and became its director general as well a year later. He is widely credited with breathing a new life into one of the country's most important cultural institutions chronically underfunded by successive post-Soviet governments.

In March 2019, then acting Culture Minister Nazeni Gharibyan dismissed Orbelian as chief executive, saying that he is not legally allowed to combine the two leadership positions. She also argued that the 63-year-old US citizen is not fluent in Armenian.

Orbelian rejected the decision as illegal and challenged it in court. Most actors and musicians of the state-run theater also condemned his dismissal, demanding that

Gharibyan be sacked instead.

Dozens of them rallied outside the main government building in Yerevan. Meeting with their representatives, Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan defended the legality of Orbelian's dismissal while pledging to address their concerns.

In October, a district court in the Armenian capital declared the controversial sacking null and void. Armenia's Court of Appeals upheld that ruling on Monday, February 10.

Speaking to journalists on Tuesday, Orbelian said the decision means that he can again perform the duties of director general. He cautioned, though, that his three-year contract signed with the former Armenian government expires in August and that he does not know yet whether the current authorities will extend it.

Orbelian was scheduled to meet with Ara Khzmalyan, a deputy minister of education, culture and sports, on Wednesday, February 12. He said he will discuss with Khzmalyan the possibility of renewed government funding for the theater.

The San Francisco-born musician complained



Constantine Orbelian

that for the last two years the government has not financed performances staged by him in and outside Armenia. Also, he said, the roof and the ven-

tilation system of the imposing theater building, one of Yerevan's main landmarks, need urgent repairs.



INTERNATIONAL

International News

Two Airlines Offer Cyprus-Armenia Flights

NICOSIA, Cyprus (Cyprus Mail) – Two budget airlines, Whizz Air and RyanAir, have announced direct flights from Cyprus to the capital of Armenia, Yerevan – taking off in summer 2020.

Hungarian budget airline Wizz Air will launch flights from Larnaca to Yerevan on June 1, Armenian state news agency Armen Press announced on Friday.

The flights to and from Zvartnots airport will operate twice a week, on Mondays and Fridays. At the moment, there are no direct flights from Larnaca to Yerevan.

Meanwhile, budget behemoth RyanAir will begin direct flights from Paphos to Yerevan from June 2020. The flights from RyanAir will be year-round and also twice a week.

While the new route offers a new summer destination to Armenian residents it will also a destination of great interest for the Armenian community in Cyprus.

German-Armenian Finance Group to Meet in July

YEREVAN (Armenpress) – The upcoming meeting of the Armenian-German Inter-Governmental Commission for Financial and Technical Cooperation is set to be held in Berlin July 21-22.

Deputy Chief of Mission of Germany to Armenia Klaus Wendelberger conveyed the official proposal from the German side on hosting the event to Deputy Minister of Economy of Armenia Varos Simonyan during a meeting on February 10. Simonyan, the co-chair of the commission, accepted the offer.

GIZ Country Director Anne Kempa, KfW Armenia Senior Project Coordinator Bella Andriasyan and economy ministry staffers also participated in the meeting.

The German envoy said Germany is willing to continue providing assistance to the Armenian government's reforms, especially in the economic sector – highlighting the development of “green economy” and the SME sector and tourism.

Ambassador to Iceland Presents Credentials

REYKJAVIK, Iceland (Armenpress) – The new ambassador of Armenia to Iceland, Alexander Arzumanyan, (residence in Stockholm), presented his credentials to President of Iceland Gudni Jóhannesson on February 4.

After delivering the credentials, Arzumanyan had a private conversation with Jóhannesson.

The president of Iceland welcomed the decision of the Government of Armenia to accredit its 1st Ambassador in Iceland. At the request of the president, Arzumanyan presented the process of democratic reforms in Armenia, the recent developments over the peaceful settlement process of Nagorno Karabakh conflict, as well as Armenia-EU cooperation prospects.

Cosmonaut Gagarin's Limo on Sale in Russia

YEREVAN (Armenpress) – A unique Soviet-made limousine which carried Yuri Gagarin to the Kremlin for a meeting with Soviet leader Nikita Khrushchev after he became the first human to journey into outer space in 1961 is being auctioned off in Moscow, according to Zvezda TV on February 8.

The car had been stored in Yerevan.

The ZIL-111V limousine is one of only 12 of its kind ever made. One of these vehicles was gifted to Cuban leader Fidel Castro by the Soviet leadership.

Gagarin traveled in this vehicle only once, on April 14, 1961. Ever since, the car has not undergone any service, and the paint and tires are still the original ones. Even more interestingly, all this time the car was parked in a special garage in Armenia.

The auction will take place on February 15 in Moscow's Old Time showroom.

Jordan's King in 'Historic' Visit to Armenia

JORDAN, from page 1

carved a niche for themselves in today's modern world, all the while remaining true to their identities, their cultures and faiths,” Abdullah said in a speech delivered at the presidential palace in Yerevan later in the day. “And Jordan, much like Armenia, has made its human capital the main driver of its journey towards development. Our countries have much to gain from cooperating to capitalize on this promising potential.”

“Although this is our first official visit to your beautiful country, we feel we are among family, and in fact we are family,” he declared.

Abdullah went on to lavish praise on Jordan's Armenian community. “Thousands of Jordanians trace their roots back to Armenia,” he said. “They do honor to both of our countries and play vital roles in the arts, education, public service, business and much, much more. And they form the solid bedrock on which our friendship continues to grow and flourish.”

The community mainly consists of descendants of survivors of the 1915 Armenian genocide in Ottoman Turkey who had taken refuge in what is now Jordan. Sarkissian stressed that it was Abdullah's great-great-grandfather, Emir Hussein bin Ali of Mecca, who urged Arabs to shelter them.

“I would like to bow to the great memory of your ancestor and your family and to tell you the thanks from my nation,” the president told Abdullah.

“Our joint history extends far beyond that,” the king said for his part. “Armenians in the Middle East are part of the oldest Christian community in the world. They are an integral part of our region's past ... and we look to work with you to make sure they continue to play such a role in shaping its present and creating its bright future.”

In that context, Abdullah pointed to the existence of an ancient Armenian quarter in Jerusalem and his religious custodianship of the city's Muslim, Armenian and other Christian worship sites.

“Preserving the city's identity and its legal status, as well as the historic status quo in relation to holy sites, Islamic and Christian alike, is going to be key,” he said. “So we look to Christian leaders and friends like you and around the world to work with us in safeguarding Jerusalem as a unifying city of peace.”



Armenian President Armen Sarkissian listens as King Abdullah speaks.

Jordan is reportedly concerned about an Israeli-Palestinian peace plan put forward by the United States. Amman has been particularly sensitive to any changes of status in Jerusalem after US President Donald Trump's decision to recognize it as Israel's capital.

Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan received the king also. He said: “Your Excellency, it is a great honor for me to see you in our country. This is a historic visit, your first visit to Armenia. And as we have discussed, not the last. We hope to see you many times in our country.”

“Relations with Jordan are very important to us, as we generally see the Middle East and your country as strategic partners. I am very happy that the relations between our countries are intensifying. We have already specified the results, we have a few specific areas of mutual interest. I am also glad that a business delegation has come with you, and we are going to sign a specific document to improve our relations and make them more effective.”

He also thanked the king and his subjects for sheltering survivors of the Armenian Genocide.

Abdullah II replied: “Your Excellency, thank you very much. As you said, we are very proud of the story our peoples have shared. I have been so warmly welcomed since my first visit to Armenia yesterday, and as you said, I hope this is one of my many visits. Our special friendship has been going on for many years, and I hope it will continue to be

brighter and warmer. We are proud to have shared the story. We still have a lot to do together and I think you will agree. I am very optimistic and delighted with your reception.”

During the meeting the two discussed a number of issues related to the development of Armenian-Jordanian economic and humanitarian relations.

Pashinyan noted that Armenia has a favorable economic environment. He emphasized that the government of Armenia is interested in the involvement of Jordanian business and capital and that there are good prospects for cooperation in different sectors of the economy. He suggested that Armenia could become a good platform for Jordanian businessmen to enter the Eurasian Economic Union market with privileged conditions.

Abdullah II added that his country's government is also interested in developing trade and economic ties with Armenia and they are interested in cooperation in tourism, agriculture, information technologies and other fields.

The two also exchanged views on the events in the South Caucasus and the Middle East. The parties touched upon the negotiation process of the Nagorno Karabakh conflict settlement and emphasized the importance of a negotiated settlement of the issue.

Abdullah II invited Pashinyan to Jordan on an official visit.

(RFE/RL and the Prime Minister's office contributed to this report.)

Baroness Cox: Genocide of Armenians in Baku, Sumgait Needs to Be Recognized

BRUSSELS, Belgium (news.am) – The genocide of Armenians has been continuing in Baku, Sumgait, and Nagorno-Karabakh and needs to be recognized so that it does not continue

with impunity, Baroness Caroline Cox said during the “The Forgotten Refugees: What Happened to the Armenians of Baku?” conference at the European Parliament on February 5.

She recalled that she is black listed and cannot enter Azerbaijan because of her visits to Artsakh.

“I know people who fled to UK because of pogroms in Baku,” Cox said, adding that the situation in Azerbaijan during those years was not “a wonderful picture of democracy and openness” as one of Azerbaijani participants tried to present.

Anna Astvatsaturian Turcotte, the refugee who fled Azerbaijan in the beginning of the 1990s, told her story of fleeing Azerbaijan.

“Many of us have horrible memories of years living in cold and block-

aded Armenia escaping with nothing. So many spirits were broken. So many lives were destroyed the lives of 350 thousand of people like me,” she said.

ULB lecturer David Babaev, in turn, thanked the European Parliament for offering a platform “to voice our concern about the situation with Armenian refugees who were forced to leave Baku in 1990”.

“Those atrocities: violence, intimidation, rape, murder and burning people alive should not stay unpunished,” he added.

The conference titled “The Forgotten Refugees: What Happened to the Armenians of Baku?” is organized by the European Armenian Federation for Justice and Democracy (EAJD), mission of Armenia to the European Union.

Clarification

Last week we reprinted a news item from Armenpress about a prestigious Credit Suisse award for stellar violinist Sergey Khachatryan. The award had been handed out, several years ago. The news release was incorrectly reposted and in turn, we printed it without noticing the date.

We regret the error.



INTERNATIONAL

Erdogan's Micro-Imperialism Could Prove Disastrous for Turkey and its Neighbors

By Axel Corlu

ISTANBUL (Ahval) – Despite Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan's ability to sell what he sees as his government's achievements to the public, Turkey's current posture in the eastern Mediterranean and Middle East is dire, and his increasingly desperate foreign policy maneuvers have the potential to spark more conflict in an already volatile region.

Turkey has pursued an aggressive and expansionistic policy in its region for the last decade. Even Ankara's "zero problems with neighbors" era, which preceded the far more ambitious and belligerent current foreign policy, was fraught with the problems of Neo-Ottomanism and Pan-Islamism – offshoots of a much older school of imperialist thinking.

The spike in the Turkish government's adventurousness can be traced back to the 2016 coup attempt, which gave the Erdogan government the domestic carte blanche it had long sought.

The government's strategy for creating an impression of foreign policy success domestically, and thereby cornering most opposition parties, is through a discourse that emphasizes national interest.

This vague but extremely useful term has had a crippling effect on the various opposition factions in the country, as they are unable to formulate a counter-narrative without appearing to be unpatriotic.

Thus, when Erdogan took steps to dismantle the country's century-long alignment with the West as if it had been nothing but a marriage of convenience, he was able to do so by selling this as a new and independent foreign policy. This reverberated strongly with a domestic audience that had been brought up on nationalistic tales

of the West unjustly exploiting Turkey for its own nefarious schemes.

Erdogan was the leader who would represent a resurgence of pride seeking to be fulfilled in response to the lost empire trauma that had been so carefully cultivated for a century.

The result? Well, Turkey is mired in various conflicts in the eastern Mediterranean where it is clearly losing. Ankara has not achieved any of the objectives of its heavy-handed intervention in the Syrian civil war. It now finds itself in an untenable position against the Syrian government and the various regional and great powers involved in the conflict.

Turkey's position in Idlib is also becoming untenable from a military perspective, which will have far-reaching consequences for the buffer zone it has set up along the border in northeast Syria, and the district of Afrin it has occupied in the northwest.

In the eastern Mediterranean, Turkey faces an alliance of regional powers including Israel, Egypt and Greece, as well as the opposing economic interests of major powers such as France and Italy. Erdogan was thoroughly outmaneuvered by rivals that excluded Turkey from gas projects in the eastern Mediterranean.

Erdogan agreed a deal in November to back the United Nations-recognized Government of National Accord in Libya and another agreement that claimed the two countries are maritime neighbors with territorial waters that block the route of a gas pipeline Turkey's regional rivals plan to build to take gas from the eastern Mediterranean to markets in Europe.

The Turkish government could present its decision to send soldiers to Libya as another sign of strong, principled leadership to protect Turkey's interests.

But even the least capable international observer could have seen that becoming allies

with a rapidly unravelling, moribund political entity in Tripoli facing the rival General Khalifa Haftar, supported by Russia, France, Egypt, Saudi Arabia and the UAE, was bound to be a disaster.

Turkey's various political gambits to gain a ceasefire (to buy time and prop up the failing Tripoli administration) have failed miserably while Haftar's allies politely have stood by, muttering pleasantries and muted calls for peace. Haftar did not sign anything as he would have been insane to agree to a ceasefire when he and his backers were in a dominant military position. Haftar continued to besiege Tripoli so as to place himself in an even better position to negotiate the next time he is called to the table.

In other words, Turkey's Libya adventure was doomed from the beginning, and it is not headed in a particularly promising direction at the moment.

For the sake of brevity, I will not go into the other futile foreign policy efforts of the Erdogan administration here, as these two suffice to demonstrate two facts:

Erdogan has become a clear danger to regional stability, and his burning of bridges with the West, along with the increasingly unbalanced nature of his overseas adventures, could spark a series of wars that could devastate the eastern Mediterranean and Middle East.

By trying to bite off more than it can chew, Turkey has committed itself to a course of action that cannot be supported by its economic or military capabilities. When these adventures fail, Turkey's national interest will not have been well-served, but deeply undermined, and generations of Turkish citizens will have to pay for the grave mistakes of this administration.

The situation in the eastern Mediterranean

today is a textbook example of a zero-sum game, in which various state actors are maneuvering around the prospect of hydrocarbon resources. The only part that does not make sense in this picture is the assumption that states are rational actors that work toward their self-interests. As in the case of Erdogan's Turkey, a state actor can take steps that undermine its self-interests, and are not based on a rational view of what is in Turkey's best interests, but on what is in the best interests of Erdogan.

Erdogan's Turkey has emerged as a threat to stability at an extremely volatile region of the world. The ending of the Cold War did not negate the possibility of global or regional conflicts of unimaginable destructiveness. Irresponsible international actors like Erdogan do not have the capability to shift major power balances in the world, or even the capability to achieve micro-imperialist objectives as their domestic audiences believe, but they do have the ability to open a Pandora's Box and trigger ever more destructive wars that could engulf the world.

Pre-Coronavirus, The Caucasus Was Liking the Chinese Tourism Bump. Now What?

By Sam Bhutia

TBILISI (Eurasianet.org) – Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia have bet big on tourism in recent years. Officials in the three South Caucasus nations equate tourists with economic growth, diversification and new jobs. And they know that in the global hospitality industry, the new money comes from China.

That's a problem, now that China is on lockdown battling an outbreak of coronavirus.

Prior to the outbreak, the countries had been relaxing visa requirements for Chinese tourists – the world's largest group in size and spending, according to a 2019 report from the UN's World Tourism Organization.

Chinese tourists could get a relatively seamless e-visa to Georgia. Azerbaijan offered e-visa and visa on arrival. Last May, Yerevan and Beijing concluded negotiations to allow each other's citizens visa-free travel for a period up to 90 days (making Armenia one of 31 countries offering visa-free travel for Chinese citizens). China has also begun adding the countries to its so-called Approved Destination Status program, allowing tour groups to visit: Georgia received ADS status in 2012, Armenia in 2016, and Azerbaijan looks likely to receive this seal of approval soon.

But on February 1, after it had been in effect only a few weeks, Yerevan temporarily suspended its visa-free regime with China until the end of March. Azerbaijan and Georgia have not yet imposed any blanket travel bans on Chinese visitors, but are surely affected by the worldwide plunge in travel. All regional carriers have stopped servicing China.

The silver lining here is slight, and only visible to a dyed-in-the-wool optimist: Yes, the influx of Chinese tourists to the region has skyrocketed – increasing by 40 to 50 percent last year over 2018 – but the number of Chinese visitors remains low. By the Georgian National Tourist Administration's estimates, only about 50,000 Chinese citizens visited Georgia last year; numbers for Armenia and Azerbaijan are lower, around 15,000 and 25,000 respectively. They simply don't compare to the Russian visitors in the region. (Russian tourists comprised 19 percent of inbound visitors to Georgia in 2019, or 1.47 million, even with the Kremlin travel embargo in June).

Fortunately for hoteliers, peak tourism season is five or six months away. If the coronavirus is still raging in July, the South Caucasus will have bigger worries than this still-slim portion of visitors.

Azeri Woman in £16m Harrods Spend Loses Wealth Seizure Challenge

By Dominic Casciani

LONDON (BBC) – A woman who blew £16 million (\$20.7 million) of unexplained wealth in Harrods has lost her appeal against a National Crime Agency bid to seize her luxury London home.

The Court of Appeal has rejected Zamira Hajiyeva's attempt to stop the UK's first ever Unexplained Wealth Order from being implemented against her.

Hajiyeva must reveal how she became wealthy enough to buy a mansion near Harrods and a golf course in Berkshire.

She faces losing the properties if she can't provide proof of income.

Hajiyeva's husband is a state banker jailed for fraud in their native Azerbaijan.

The couple deny all wrongdoing and Hajiyeva has not been charged with a crime in the UK.

Dismissing the appeal on February 5, Lord Justice Burnett, the Lord Chief Justice, also refused to allow Hajiyeva to take the case to the Supreme Court – and ordered her to pay the National Crime Agency's (NCA) legal costs.

In the judgement, Lord Justice Burnett and two other senior judges said that Hajiyeva had been lawfully targeted by the first ever Unexplained Wealth Order (UWO) two years ago.

"The relevant requirement for making a UWO [is that] the court must be satisfied that there are reasonable grounds for suspecting that the known sources of the lawfully obtained income available [to the targeted individual] would have been insufficient to enable him or her to obtain the property," said the judges.

"In the present case Mr Hajiyev's conviction for fraud and embezzlement was only one of the strands.

"There was evidence of Mr Hajiyev's status as a state employee and the unlikelihood that his legitimate income... would have been sufficient to generate funds used to purchase the property."

Hajiyeva must now provide the NCA with a full account of the sources of her wealth - including how she was able to buy her £15m home and the Mill Ride Golf Course in Berkshire.

If she cannot provide evidence that satisfies the investigators, they can then return to court to ask another judge to make a separate order to seize the property.

That process could take another year if Hajiyeva successfully appealed. But if she has no grounds to do so, she may be forced out in months.

'Helpful Precedent'

Sarah Pritchard, of the NCA's National Economic Crime Centre, said it was a "significant result."

"As a new piece of legislation we anticipated that there would be legal challenge," she said. "We are pleased that the court has upheld the case today. It will set a helpful precedent for future UWO cases."

The court's decision means that senior judges have given a green light to the NCA and other police forces to use the UWO power in the widest possible way.

It means they can seek to seize assets of suspected criminals with links to foreign corrupt regimes and, crucially, members of their family who are living in luxury in multi-million pound homes in London.

Three other unrelated UWO cases are due to be heard soon.

Susan Hawley from pressure group Spotlight on Corruption welcomed the judgement – but urged the authorities to do more to uncover suspected corrupt cash hidden in the UK.

"Unexplained Wealth Orders are fantastic for raising public awareness about dirty money in the UK but not that useful for tracking it down," she said.

"The real test of whether the UK is serious about tracking down dirty money is whether it proactively freezes and confiscates the assets and arrests kleptocrats on the streets of London."



Zamir Hajiyeva (Huffington Post photo)

And Daniel Bruce, Chief Executive of Transparency International UK said its research had identified suspected wealth relating to around 500 properties belonging to more than 150 individuals.

"We would like to see this investigated and where possible recovered, with funds being responsibly returned to those they were taken from," said Bruce. "Our figures are likely to be the tip of the iceberg due to the lack of transparency around who owns UK property."

What Happens Next?

Hajiyeva now has to comply with the original order and provide the NCA with details of her wealth. If she fails to comply, the agency can seek to recover her assets.

If she provides an account, the NCA has 60 days to consider it before either accepting her account or seeking to seize her property.

If the agency believes that an account provided to it is false or misleading, she could be charged under the Proceeds of Crime Act and jailed if convicted.

This timetable will stop however if Hajiyeva is able to appeal to the Supreme Court.

Hajiyeva has repeatedly denied wrongdoing, saying her jailed husband is a victim of a massive injustice in their native Azerbaijan.

Community News

ACYOA Planning 75th Anniversary Alumni Reunion Weekend in 2021

NEW YORK, NY – The Armenian Church Youth Organization of America (ACYOA), the national youth program of the Eastern Diocese of the Armenian Church of America, is planning an event-filled 75th Anniversary Alumni Reunion Weekend in Northern New Jersey from Friday, September 17 - Sunday, September 19.

Preparations are underway to ensure that the celebratory weekend attracts as many ACYOA alumni as possible to share in the festivities.

Shake' (Ajamian) Derderian from Philadelphia will lead efforts across the Eastern Diocese throughout 2021 to celebrate ACYOA on the parish level. Kim Bardakian of San Francisco and Scott Najarian of Boston will co-chair the 75th Reunion Weekend on September 17 -19, 2021.

Early members of the Reunion Host Committee includes ACYOA alumni Sue (Chagachbanian) Biramian, Arda (Nazerian) Haratunian, Dn. Diran Jebejian and Taline (Jessourian) Najarian. Many others will join in the coming months to help organize specific events and serve as regional ambassadors to encourage alumni of all ages to participate in the weekend activities.

ACYOA was created on January 12, 1946 in Providence, RI, one of the early legacies of the Primate of the time, the late Archbishop Tiran Nersoyan, who saw a successful youth movement as the future of the Armenian Church. Throughout its history both at the local chapter and national levels, ACYOA has organized and sponsored Christian education programs and retreats, service programs (domestically and abroad), leadership conferences, social and cultural events, and sporting competitions.

At this time, it's encouraged that all ACYOA alumni make note of the date for this weekend of celebration— September 17-19, 2021. More details of the reunion weekend will be made available in the coming months.

To get involved or become an ACYOA Alumni Ambassador for your church or region, contact ACYOA75@gmail.com.

Third Annual Couples' Night Hosted by New England Armenian Clergy

WATERTOWN – Rev. Dr. Avedis Boynerian and Dr. Yn. Arpi Boynerian announced recently that for the third year in a row, the Couples' Night Out event, a collaborative effort of the New England Armenian clergy, will take place.

The evening offers an opportunity to come together as a community to emphasize the values and importance of a healthy marriage relationship – one that shines as couples delight in each other spiritually, emotionally and physically.

Couples of all ages are invited to gather on Friday, March 13 at 6 p.m. at St. Stephen's Armenian Church hall in Watertown and be uplifted by this year's theme, "Marriage, Stress or Blessing!"

The speakers will be Rev. Dr. Vahan S. Kouyoumdjian and Yn. Maggie Tekeyan Kouyoumdjian.

As we all are aware, a marriage, like any other relationship, requires continuous attention, support and evaluation for it to be transparent, healthy and prosperous. These qualities keep the relationship as the core and foundation of our community.

The Boynerians wrote, "When we think of our spouse, the person we love, and we delight in them, it changes our hearts until we love what they love and do what they want to do. That is, it changes the perspective we have towards our spouse. When we delight in our spouse, we delight in being with them and delight in who they are.

Tickets are \$100 per couple (includes buffet dinner). They can be purchased by contacting members of the New England Armenian Clergy.

(Rev. Dr. Avedis Boynerian is the pastor of the Armenian Memorial Church.)



In a new partnership with Armenia's National Agrarian University, students will conduct internships and field research at ATP's nurseries and greenhouses in order to develop specialists in the fields of nursery management and forestry (ATP File Photo)

Armenia Tree Project and Agrarian University Initiate New Training Programs to Develop Much-Needed Specialists

WORBURN, Mass. and YEREVAN – Speakers on several panels at Forest Summit: Global Action and Armenia highlighted a common theme that is at once alarming, and a call for proactive action and resources. This is the lack of specialists in the fields of nursery management and forestry. Many speakers identified the challenge, and it has been confirmed by Armenia Tree Project's experience on the ground, in trying to build the capacity of its nursery and tree planting staff.

This issue is of special importance since Armenia announced its ambitious goal to double its forest cover by 2050. This will require significant resources in terms of financing, seedling capacity, and human resources in the form of trained experts who are familiar with techniques such as tree propagation, nursery management, site identification, tree planting, and long-term tree care and management.

The issue was brought to the forefront during the Summit's first panel, in a discussion about the key challenges and opportunities to increase Armenia's forest coverage. In addressing some of the gaps, Hovik Sayadyan, technical task leader at UNDP Armenia, pointed out that there are no institutes for forest management in Armenia, in particular for forest inventory, afforestation, or forest management.

Vardan Urutyan, rector at Armenia's National Agrarian University, expanded on this issue with a number of challenges around forest education. For example, financial resources are often insufficient for training specialists and there are few graduates from the Agrarian University. Those who do graduate often cannot find employment in this sector. He cited the need to improve the attractiveness and competitiveness of the forestry profession.

Given the challenges, there is an expectation within Armenia that more trained professionals must be developed in order to succeed in expanding the forest cover and managing the existing forests.

Urutyan discussed a number of target areas for the Agrarian University, including contemporary forest science labs, endowment funds to support forest education, updated training materials, ongoing education for lecturers, and incentives to encourage and reward scientific research.

The issue of capacity and shortage of trained professionals was also raised by Karen Manvelyan, director of WWF Armenia, in a panel on impacts and gaps of forestry initiatives supported by international organizations. Mr. Manvelyan pointed out that for organizations that do have specialists on staff, such as Armenia Tree Project, reforestation and afforestation projects have been implemented successfully. However in some other cases in Armenia where relevant specialists were not consulted, the results have been less successful.

"We picked up on this common theme at the Forest Summit, and it is something that Armenia Tree Project has also noticed when we have job openings

see ATP, page 7

Black Lawmakers Call Biden Surrogate's Comments Racist, Demand Former VP Disavow Him

COLUMBIA, S.C. (AP) – Black lawmakers in South Carolina are calling on former Vice President Joe Biden to disavow statements from a longtime friend and campaign surrogate that they say are racist.

About half of the 45-member Legislative Black Caucus held a news conference on Wednesday, February 5, blasting Democratic state Sen. Dick Harpootlian for remarks they contend insinuated that their group's chairman had been bought by Biden rival Tom Steyer because he was paid for his work for Steyer's campaign. They said Biden, who is running for president and is a top contender in the upcoming South Carolina primary, should distance himself from Harpootlian following the comments.

"We ask that he do it publicly, and that he do it now," House Minority Leader Todd Rutherford said. "His refusal to do so will not go over well in the black community, and it certainly will not go over well with members of the Black Caucus that are standing behind me."

Harpootlian denies that his comments were racially motivated. Biden spokeswoman Paige Hill said Wednesday that Harpootlian "does not speak for the Biden campaign."

The fight broke out just over three weeks before South Carolina's presidential primary, the first voting contest in the South. The majority of South Carolina's Democratic voting electorate is black, a demographic that overwhelmingly supports Biden in the 2020 Democratic presidential race. Biden is working to find his footing after a struggling showing in Iowa's first-in-the-nation caucuses on Monday.

Harpootlian tweeted earlier on February 5 about Federal Election Commission filings showing Black Caucus Chairman Jerry Govan receiving "almost \$50,000" from Steyer's campaign in just more than a month's time and called the billionaire Steyer "Mr. Money Bags."

"Is he pocketing the dough or redistributing the wealth?" Harpootlian asked, referring to Govan.

Harpootlian also told the Post and Courier newspaper of South Carolina: "He told me he was with Joe Biden until Mr. Moneybags showed up." He continued: "This is what happens when billionaires get involved, whether it's Donald Trump or Tom Steyer. They just buy things. They don't have to persuade anybody, they just buy them."

After the news conference, Harpootlian told reporters that he was not a Biden campaign spokesman and hadn't consulted the campaign before making any comments.

"I am not racially motivated in any of this," Harpootlian said. "I will not be silenced by those who use race as a shield from criticism. ... This is an effort to shield themselves by saying this is racist."

Late Wednesday, Steyer accused Harpootlian of having "a horrid track record of disrespecting and disparaging African Americans." In a statement provided to the Associated Press, he went on to call Harpootlian's comments "Trump-like dirty campaign tactics that the Biden campaign should not tolerate."

The Steyer campaign said earlier that Govan was being compensated \$10,000 per month, an amount it called "consistent with the salaries of other members of the team in South Carolina." see BIDEN, page 7



Democratic state Sen. Dick Harpootlian



COMMUNITY NEWS

Friends and Family Remember Prof. Kevork Kherlopian

GLENDALE – January 31 marked the 10th anniversary of passing away of Prof. Kevork Kherlopian in Glendale. On that date, friends and family gathered around his gravestone to recall memories that they shared during the last three decades.

Garbis Der Yeghiayan gave a moving speech highlighting the professor's contributions as a scholar, educator and Armenologist.

Kherlopian was the son of Rev. Dickran Kherlopian, who had originated the first Armenian Teaching Training College, which served as the stepping stone for the founding of Haigazian College in Beirut and the Armenology Department there which he headed until his death in 1969.

Dickran Kherlopian, a teacher, editor and

minister, had also served as the captain of the fire fighters during the Aintab resistant movement.

In 1969, Kevork was serving as a visiting lecturer from Armenia at Haigazian College. Kevork and Rev. Kherlopian have also been included in the Armenian Encyclopedia.

Kevork Kherlopian emigrated to Armenia in 1946 with the first group of immigrants. He studied at the Department of Armenian Language, Psychology and Logic of Yerevan State University and received a doctorate in that field.

From 1965 to 1985 he studied Armenian Theology under the guidance of Catholicos Vazken I and received his doctorate in theology. His writings include "The World View of Anania Shiragatsi," "The Humanism of

Gregory of Narek," "Problems of Complex Upbringing at School," "Social and Psychological Problems of University Upbringing" and "Modern Notions of Upbringing," "Interpretation of the Lord's Prayer," "The Genocide" and many research papers, brochures and articles on Armenological and religious issues. He is the most travelled Armenologist and propagated Armenian Studies in the diaspora. He has lectured in France, Egypt, Lebanon, Brazil, Argentina, south east Asia and various states in the US. Among many of his awards include the St. Sahag & St. Mesrob Order conferred by Catholicos Karekin I, Silver Medal from Yerevan State University and Mekhitar Sebastatsi Medal from the Mekhitarist Congregation of Venice.



Prof. Kevork Kherlopian

ANCA-WR Endorses David Ryu for Los Angeles' Council District 4

LOS ANGELES – The Armenian National Committee of America - Western Region (ANCA-WR) has endorsed Councilmember David Ryu for Los Angeles' Council District 4.

The endorsement followed a meeting between Councilmember Ryu and representatives of the ANCA Western Region, the ANCA San Fernando Valley East as well as the ANCA Hollywood chapters which fall within Ryu's 4th Council District.

Councilmember David Ryu represents Los Angeles' Fourth District, which encompasses the Sherman Oaks and Toluca Lake neighborhoods in the Eastern San Fernando Valley and Los Feliz and other neighborhoods adjacent to Little Armenia, Hollywood.

"During our meeting the Councilmember reaffirmed his commitment to serving the interests of the Armenian-American community of the 4th Council District," remarked ANCA-WR Chair Nora Hovsepien, Esq.

"Councilmember Ryu has been a strong advocate for the Armenian community on city council, supporting the funding of Armenian schools, community organizations, and initiatives, working to support ANCA regional and national efforts such as genocide recognition and Turkish divestment at local council, and issuing his strong support for the self-determination for the Armenians of Artsakh," she continued.

"I am proud to have the endorsement of the Armenian National Committee of America - Western Region," said Ryu. "Whether it's advocating for the needs of the community at home, or for the rights of the global Armenian

community, the ANCA-WR has shown its effectiveness as the voice of the Armenian-American community. I look forward to continue working with the ANCA-WR in my next term."

Ryu represents a significant Armenian-American constituency, including several schools, churches and community centers. Consistent with his vision of improving civic awareness and participation within migrant communities, Ryu expressed his commitment to empowering the Armenian community, particularly its youth, to achieve greater representation in the civil service and public office - as he has done both as a Councilmember and former staffer for the Asian American

community. In this vein, Councilmember David Ryu, who is the first Korean-American to be elected to the Los Angeles City Council, emphasized his and his office's commitment to diversity in his staff, which includes an Armenian-American.

"We wholeheartedly endorse Councilmember Ryu based on his unwavering support to the Armenian American community in his district and strong track record on issues that are important to our community. It has been a pleasure working with his office locally and look forward to further collaborative efforts in the future," remarked ANCA Hollywood chapter Co-Chair Lara Yeretsian, Esq.

Black Lawmakers Call Biden Surrogate's Comments Racist, Demand Former VP Disavow Him

BIDEN, from page 6

The FEC filings show Steyer's campaign paid Govan \$43,000 for work from Oct. 31 to Dec. 4. Steyer's team contends that Govan came on board in September so the amount would essentially account for back pay.

Govan was announced as a "senior adviser" to Steyer's South Carolina campaign in October, raising some eyebrows among those who found it curious a campaign would be paying a state lawmaker while receiving his endorsement.

Democrats seeking their party's nomination have been lobbying caucus members for support for over a year now, their endorsements possibly avenues into support with black voters.

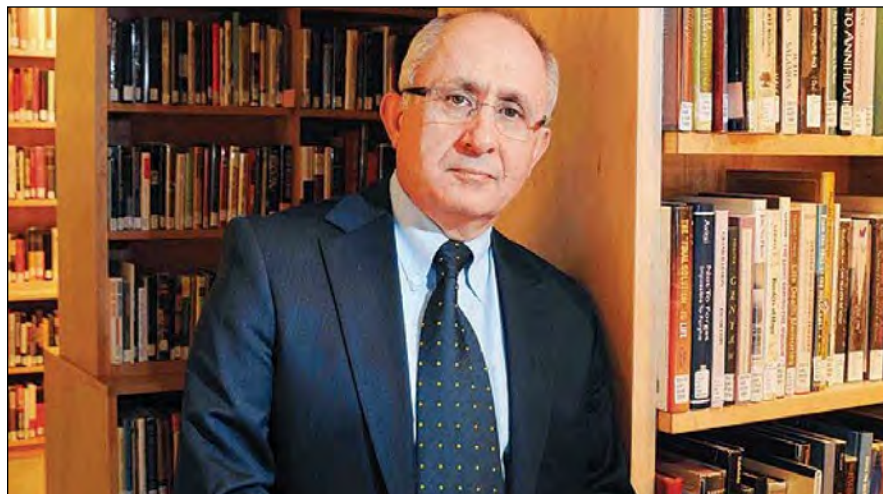
Steyer has since been endorsed by other South Carolina lawmakers, including state Sen. John Scott, another member of the Black Caucus. Govan previously supported Biden, serving as an adviser and co-chairman of his 2008 presidential campaign in South Carolina.

Taner Akçam to Discuss New Research on Genocidal Decision-Making in Lecture at NAASR

BELMONT, Mass. – The National Association for Armenian Studies and Research (NAASR) will present a lecture by Prof. Taner Akçam entitled "When Was the Decision to Annihilate the Armenians Taken?" on Thursday, February 20, at 7:30 p.m., in Batmasian Hall on the third floor of the new NAASR Vartan Gregorian Building, 395 Concord Ave. A reception will follow the program in the Shahinian Solarium.

In this presentation of recent research, Taner Akçam argues that documents from the Ottoman archives in Istanbul indicate that first decision to exterminate Armenians was taken on December 1, 1914, well before most scholars have thought. Another document, a letter by Bahaettin Sakir, one of the main architects of the Armenian Genocide, written on March 3, 1915, says that the Central Committee of Union and Progress had decided to exterminate the Armenians, giving the government wide authority to implement this plan. Doubt has been case on the authenticity of this letter and most researchers have ignored it.

Drawing on these newly available Ottoman documents, Akçam presents the case that we must reconsider the question of the decision(s)



Prof. Taner Akçam

for the extermination of Armenians and will attempt to shed new light on the decision-making process, its chronology, and the role of governors in its implementation.

Akçam holds the Robert Aram and Marianne Kaloosdian and Stephen and Marian Mugar Chairholder in Armenian Genocide Studies at Clark University. His book publications include

A Shameful Act: The Armenian Genocide and the Question of Turkish Responsibility, *The Young Turks' Crime Against Humanity: The Armenian Genocide and Ethnic Cleansing in the Ottoman Empire*, and *Killing Orders: Talat Pasha's Telegrams and the Armenian Genocide*.

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

Armenia Tree Project and Agrarian University Initiate New Training Programs

ATP, from page 6

or expand into new program areas," notes Arthur Harutyunyan, ATP's operations manager in Armenia. "There have been cases where young professionals apply for a job, and they don't have any real-world experience in a tree nursery, or may even have difficulty identifying species in a forest. This needs to change, and we are committed to helping to improve the capacity of professionals in our field."

A new partnership between ATP and the National Agrarian University has emerged to

address this problem. Students at the university will conduct internships and field research at ATP's nurseries and greenhouses. A pilot program will be held this year with the support of UNDP.

"Already we have hosted a number of students and professionals at our nurseries and other locations for training," explains Harutyunyan. "This partnership with the Agrarian University will expand the program and help us educate a new cadre of young professionals, as well as people currently working in our field who may need to learn about the

latest techniques and methods."

ATP's facilities and planting locations offer a number of learning opportunities, including nursery management, greenhouse management, forest management, urban forestry, and fruit tree production. "Our programs are wide ranging, from site selection for a new forest to knowing which types of trees need to be planted at a certain location, or establishing a fruit orchard in a town," adds Harutyunyan. "We are encouraged by this collaboration and hope it plays a constructive role in Armenia's goal to

expand its forests."

There were many topics identified at the Forest Summit where additional training, study, and capacity building are needed. These include the need to study and understand Armenia's biodiversity and the potential impact of invasive species, creating and implementing sustainable forest management plans, tree nursery management, and wildfire prevention.

The 30-year reforestation plan will create many job opportunities; creating a trained workforce to fill those jobs is essential.



COMMUNITY NEWS

Istanbul Armenian Journalist's Mission Is Not Yet Complete

By **Haykaram Nahapetyan**

Special to the Mirror-Spectator

WASHINGTON — Istanbul-based Turkish-Armenian journalist, community activist and musician Bagrat Esdukian wants to move to Armenia and settle there. The reason why he would not do that is because he feels he needs to remain in Turkey to continue the fight for the rights of Armenians.

During his recent presentation at St. Mary Armenian Church in Washington, D.C., Esdukian spoke of the history and the rights of compatriots in Turkey, Turkish-Armenian relations, and the tragic assassination of Hrant Dink, the founder and first editor of the Turkish-Armenian *Agos* weekly.

It was prominent British columnist Robert Fisk, the recipient of the *Armenian Mirror-Spectator's* special award of 2017, who after the tragic murder of Dink in January 2007 referred to Dink as the "1,500,001st victim of the Armenian Genocide." As Esdukian stated, this concept was picked up later by many.

Somewhat like US presidential statements on the Armenian Genocide's day of remembrance, the Turkish-Armenian community also used to generally refer to the tragic events of 1915 as "massacre," "deportation," and Medz Yeghern (Great Calamity), and in this fashion avoid use of the term genocide. The first Turkish Armenian to publicly refer to 1915 as genocide on Turkish television was Dink, Esdukian stat-

ed in his speech. He added that nowadays the use of the term in public is becoming more common among Turkish Armenians. According to this Istanbul-Armenian community representative, thanks to Dink's efforts an increasing number of non-Armenians in Turkey is beginning to realize that a terrible injustice had happened to Armenians a century ago.

"If we imagine the Turkish Republic to be a brick wall, then the Armenian Cause is the wrongly installed brick of the wall. However, many in Turkey fear that if they try to fix that brick the entire construction may come down," Esdukian related in a figurative fashion. Hrant Dink attempted to move or fix the brick.

Esdukian resisted attempts to refer to the Armenian people of Turkey as a diaspora. "Because we lived in that geography and city for thousands of years, before many other ethnic groups which may be numerically superior now, arrived" explained the Turkish-Armenian intellectual.

Among the main goals of today's Istanbul Armenians, Esdukian highlights the protection of the Armenian cultural heritage in Turkey, particularly, the 50 Armenian churches, 16 schools and 2 hospitals. The community's media includes two daily (*Marmara* and *Zhamanak*) and one weekly (*Agos*) newspapers. Esdukian highly valued the importance of Aras, an Istanbul Armenian publishing house which prints Armenian literature not only in the Western Armenian language but also in Turkish. The number of non-Armenians readers has been increasing, he stated.

Woman Charged with Aiding Felon In Las Vegas Road-Rage Shooting

By **Katelyn Newberg**

LAS VEGAS (*Las Vegas Review-Journal*) — A 60-year-old woman faces a charge of aiding a felon in connection with an August road-rage shooting on a Las Vegas highway that left a man dead, but it remains unclear if police have identified who killed him, police announced in January.

Marcia Mingo was booked into the Clark County Detention Center on October 3 after she allegedly lied to detectives to hide that her two adult children — Carmen Dilworth and Virgil Dilworth — were in a Dodge van with her on August 5 when someone in the van fatally shot Jeffrey Boyajian, the *Review-Journal* has learned. The shooting happened about 7:30 p.m. when a white van pulled up to the driver's side of Boyajian's Chrysler 300 on Interstate 15 near the Silverado Ranch Boulevard exit, police have said.

Police were initially unable to locate the van but found it in Los Angeles County before the end of August. Court records indicate that while police do not think Mingo fatally shot the man, she does face a felony charge of harboring, concealing or aiding a felony offender in connection with the shooting.

"Marcia Mingo lied to detectives to protect the identity of the person who fired the gun and killed Jeffrey Boyajian," according to Mingo's arrest report.

Boyajian's cousin said in August that Boyajian was fatally shot the day before his 59th birthday, and he was driving into town to celebrate with his mother.

According to Mingo's arrest report, Boyajian had attempted to "brake check" a van that was tailgating him when the van pulled up beside Boyajian. People who pulled over to help Boyajian after witnessing the shooting told police they saw an arm "extend out of the passenger side window" and shoot at the Chrysler.

A request for Mingo to be evaluated to determine if she was competent to stand trial was filed in Las Vegas Justice Court on October 28, records show. The document indicates that while Mingo had not been "previously evaluated," she may suffer from dementia.

As of Wednesday, Mingo was still being evaluated for competency and had not returned to the detention center, court documents and jail records show.

After Boyajian was killed, investigators began searching for the Dodge van, which they tried to pick out of a list of 556 possible vans that were registered with the Nevada Department of Motor Vehicles, according to the arrest report. Detectives were able to find one that matched "all of the specific details" of the van in the shooting.

Police traced the van to a Summerlin home that Mingo moved out of August 5, the report said. Las Vegas police contacted Mingo in Los Angeles on August 17, and she said that her husband, who she was in the process of getting a divorce from, drove the van from California to Las Vegas with two other people in the beginning of August while she was moving out of the home.

Mingo claimed that her husband passed off the van's keys to her at the Summerlin home "around sunset," but she "didn't know the exact date."

But Mingo's husband denied being in Las Vegas on the day of the shooting, the report said. He also said he had sold the van to Mingo's daughter.

Through cellphone records, detectives determined that he was in Los Angeles on August 5; the phone records also showed Mingo and her two children driving from Los Angeles to Las Vegas that day, the report said.

Mingo's husband also told police he left a .380 pistol at the Summerlin home when he moved out in June. Detectives found three .380 cartridge cases at the scene of the shooting, the report said.

Court records do not indicate that either of Mingo's children had been arrested in Clark County since the shooting. Metro homicide Lt. Ray Spencer did not immediately respond to request for comment Wednesday.

Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department records indicate that a 37-year-old Virgil Dilworth was arrested in Los Angeles on September 23, but he was released in November. Booking records indicate Dilworth was arrested by a Los Angeles Police

Baibourtian Meets Board Members of Rose Float Association

GLENDALE — On February 5, Ambassador Armen Baibourtian, consul general of Armenia in Los Angeles, received the Board members of the American Armenian Rose Float Association, represented by Arthur Kokozyan, Johnny Kanounji, and Nubar Terpetrosian. They briefed Baibourtian on the five-year activity of the Association, during which they secured participation of the Armenian float in Pasadena's famous Rose Parade. Consul General Baibourtian appreciated their work and participation of the Armenian Float in this event of nationwide prominence. In response to the request of the American Armenian Association leaders to extend Consulate's General support to their endeavors, Ambassador Baibourtian highlighted its importance and assured his support to their efforts.

Pasadena's Rose Parade, hosted by the Pasadena Tournament of Roses, is an annual parade, held every year on January 1. The parade will be held for the 131st time in 2021. Each year the parade has different theme. This time the parade will be titled "Dream. Believe. Achieve." which aims at strengthening faith and aspiration for education.



Dr. Armen Baibourtian with Arthur Kokozyan, Johnny Kanounji, and Nubar Terpetrosian

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Laura and William Conrow of Ross, Calif. have donated \$50 to the *Armenian Mirror-Spectator*.

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COMMUNITY NEWS

Sunday School: Faith and Science Workshop 'Lightlab'

By Arpi Boynerian

CAMBRIDGE, Mass. – The Sunday school superintendents of five Armenian churches of Boston – the Armenian Memorial Church (Watertown), St. James Armenian Apostolic Church (Watertown), St. Stephen's Armenian Apostolic Church (Watertown), First Armenian Church (Belmont), Holy Trinity Armenian Apostolic Church (Cambridge) – have come together.

They are motivated by the Bible verse Psalm 133:1, "How good and pleasant it is when brothers (and sisters) live together in unity!"

Their purpose is to offer an engaging science-based Christian workshop: "Lightlab: Are You in His Light?" for all Sunday school students in grades 2-8.

This workshop aims to teach the children the correlation between science and faith. The program will include worship, hands-on science discovery and Biblical lessons. The lessons will be about the nature of light to help the children to get to know Jesus as the Light of the world. The hands-on activity will be making a

color wheel, discovering how God gave people different gifts, which we are called to bring them together to serve Him in the church and community. Also, we will have the opportunity to hear about the Christian faith and the life of physicist scientist like Michael Faraday who said, "The book of nature, which we have to read, is written by the finger of God." And James Maxwell who said, "I think men of science as well as other men need to learn from Christ, and I think Christians whose minds are scientific are bound to study science that their view of the glory of God may be as extensive as their being is capable."

This workshop will be presented by Suzanne Shera, the author of *Lightlab of Philadelphia*. Shera is a scientist and math and science educator with degrees in physics and optical engineering. She will use science lessons and hands-on learning to engage children about their relationship to faith.

This workshop will take place on Sunday, March 8, 10:15 a.m. - 12:15 p.m., at Holy Trinity Armenian Church, (145 Brattle St., Cambridge) in the Charles and Nevart Talanian Cultural Hall. The event is open to all students grade 2-8, at no cost.

To participate, RSVP by March 1 with



Suzanne Shera

one of the participating Sunday school superintendents.

Parents and grandparents of youngsters in the Armenian community are encouraged to seize this opportunity and encourage their children and their friends to attend this science and faith workshop to further build the faith of their children and fellowship with students from other churches, as one Armenian Christian community.

Berkeley's Only Youth Homeless Shelter at Risk of Closing

By Susie Steimle

BERKELEY (KPIX) – It is the city of Berkeley's only youth homeless shelter and its future is in jeopardy.

The YEAH! Shelter (pronounced "yay") is run by Covenant House California. The nonprofit has millions of dollars allocated to purchase a new space to shelter it's youth in Berkeley, but each time the CEO finds an adequate space, YEAH! is either outbid or unwelcome in the neighborhood.

"I believe that without the YEAH! I wouldn't be me today," Montel Ward told KPIX.

Ward stayed at YEAH! In Berkeley a few years ago, he says it saved him from a life out on the street.

"I don't know where I would be. That's how integral YEAH! is to my growth. I was sent there on purpose," Ward said.

"We've been looking for an alternative space in Berkeley for over two years now," President and CEO of Covenant House California Bill Bedrossian said on February 8.

Since 2001, YEAH! has been operating out of the Lutheran Church of the Cross in Berkeley. It has never been a permanent option. Anyone sleeping at the facility has to be out by 8 a.m. and generally isn't allowed in until after 8 o'clock at night.

Bedrossian admits the church space isn't ideal, but finding an alternative hasn't been easy.

"We're always up against businesses or people with deeper pockets than we have," he said.

At community meetings for proposed locations, neighbors regularly shouted down Bedrossian and other members of Covenant House saying the neighborhood wasn't the right place for the youth due to high crime nearby. Others said they didn't feel included in the process, or would prefer the youth be placed in the Berkeley Hills.

"We are at a place where we are looking again with no prospects of where we can go," Bedrossian said.

Pastor Cary Bass-Deschenes with the Lutheran Church of the Cross says he's disappointed to see community push back. He says the church will never kick out YEAH! out, but he's been asking them to find a better alternative with more space for several years now.

"We're not kicking them out, you know? As long as they don't have a place to go, they're welcome to be here. So it's like being in a relationship and breaking up, but breaking up amicably," Bass-Deschenes said.

If you were to ask the twenty somethings who have stayed at the shelter, they think the adults are over-complicating things.

"If you're pretending to care so much the thing to do is actually do something," said shelter resident Jake Gleysteen said.

"It's that simple," Ward adds.

Both Ward and Gleysteen started out on the street with mental health issues and basic needs not being met. Now they're both housed, working and able to be 20 somethings who don't have life figured out just yet.

"It's not like I spent one night there and then like everything was fine and I have a job and stuff. It wasn't that quick," said Gleysteen. Still, thanks to YEAH!, he's able to try to figure things out.

"Not to say I really know what I'm doing with my life. Having a place to stay gives me some of the security to find out," Gleysteen said.

Bedrossian says the backup option is one proposed by Governor Newsom. A few weeks ago the Governor announced that the state will house up to 70 homeless people in FEMA trailers in Oakland.

If the nonprofit can't find a new space in Berkeley soon, some youth will likely be staying in those trailers. But they're hoping they won't have to.



Bill Bedrossian

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COMMUNITY NEWS

Fresno Unified School District High School Social Studies Teachers Attend Genocide Ed Workshop

FRESNO – The Genocide Education Project, in partnership with Fresno Unified School District, the Armenian Genocide Commemorative Committee, Fresno, and Fresno educator and Holocaust education specialist, Hillary Levine, provided a day-long workshop for Fresno’s middle and high

era genocide, its consequences and the ongoing Turkish denial.

Aligned with California’s History-Social Science educational framework and Fresno’s Instructional Practice Guide protocols, the workshop introduced print, video, and web-based approaches to teaching about geno-



Teachers at the workshop



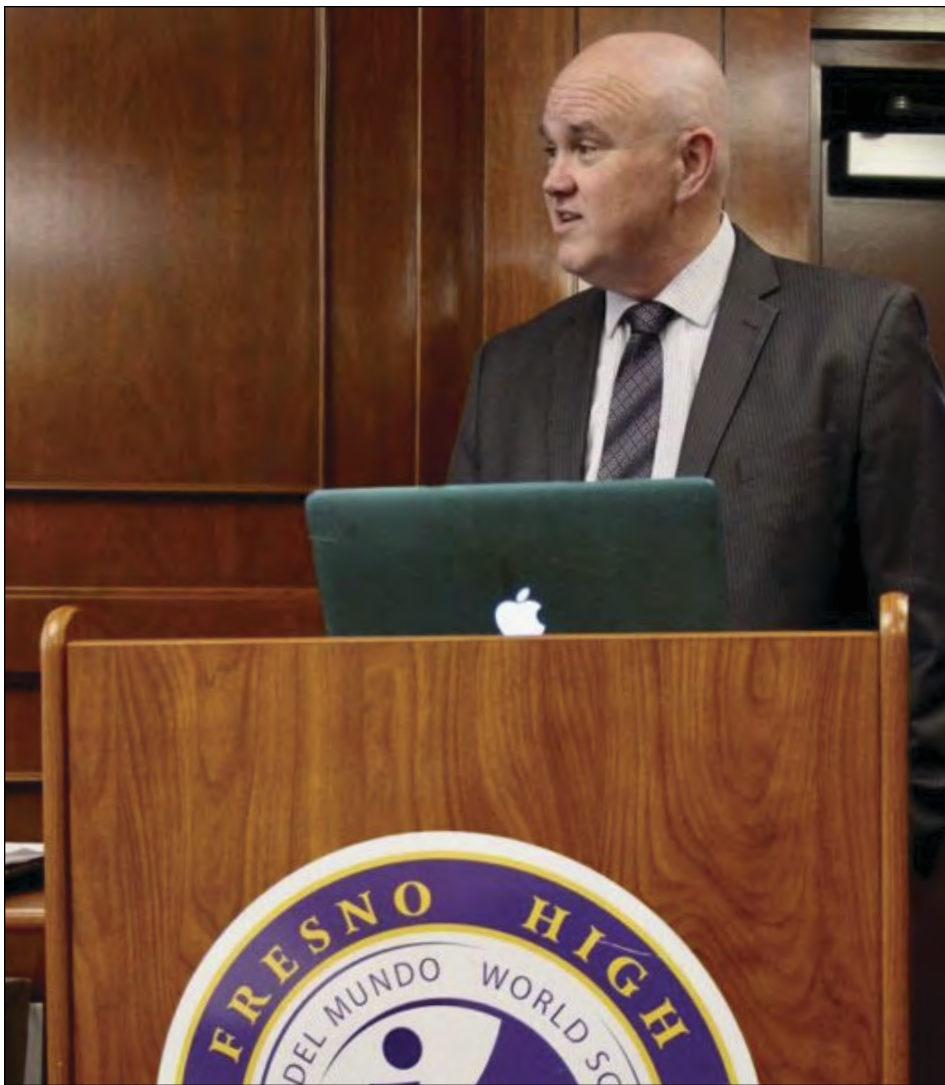
Sara Cohan

school social studies teachers.

GenEd’s Education Director, Sara Cohan, presented foundational education about the definition and stages of genocide, Armenian civilization and history, including the Armenian Genocide, the geopolitical, economic, and social context in which it was perpetrated, its role as the prototype for modern-

genocide, with particular focus on the Armenian Genocide and the Holocaust, two seminal cases through which important parallels and universal lessons are learned.

Hillary Levine and Cohan also led an interactive session during which teachers prepared presentations utilizing the Ten Stages of Genocide.



Fresno Unified’s Superintendent, Bob Nelson (above) and Stephen Ruiz, History/Social Sciences Manager welcomed teachers and emphasized the district’s commitment to provide professional development that helps teachers and students better understand Fresno’s diverse communities and the histories that brought them.



From left, Roxanne Makasdjian, GenEd Education Exec. Dir.; Eileen Ohanian, Armenian Genocide Commemorative Committee, Fresno, member; Stephen Ruiz, Fresno Unified School District History/Social Sciences Manager; Zaroohi Der Mugrdchian, Armenian Genocide Commemorative Committee, Fresno, Chairwoman; Hillary Levine, Fresno educator, Holocaust specialist; Barlow Der Mugrdchian, Director of the Center for Armenian Studies, Fresno State University; Sara Cohan, Education Director, GenEd.; Paul Jamushian, AGCC Fresno



Hillary Levine, educator and Holocaust specialist, introduced a variety of resources for teaching about the Holocaust, including oral histories of survivors and the educational project called “Violins of Hope,” a collection of violins, violas, and cellos rescued from the Holocaust and restored.





COMMUNITY NEWS



The assembled at the Orthodox Youth Directors in North America conference

Eastern Diocese Explores Recent Trends in Orthodox Youth Ministry

PHOENIX, Az. – The Eastern Diocese sent six representatives to the 2020 Orthodox Youth and Camp Workers Conference, hosted by the Serbian Orthodox Church in North and South America and sponsored by the Orthodox Youth Directors in North America. The conference took place January 23-25, at the St. Sava Serbian Orthodox Church.

The Diocese's delegation included pastors Fr. Khachatur Kesablyan (Sts. Vartanantz Church, Chelmsford, Mass.), Fr. Vart Gyozyan (Hye Pointe Church, Haverhill, Mass.), and Fr. Tadeos Barseghyan (St. Sahag Church, St. Paul, Minn.); parish youth worker Lisa Mardigian (St. John Church, Southfield, Mich.); and Diocesan Department of Youth and Young Adult Ministries staffers Kathryn Ashbahian and Jennifer Morris.

The yearly gathering combines professional development opportunities with informative sessions on cultural trends and their impact on Orthodox Christian youth and young adults.

Keynote speakers Fr. Josiah Trenham, Dr. Eugenia Constantinou, Gabriel Otte, and Jonathan Ignatius Green made presentations under titles like "The Bible and the Fathers in Youth Formation," "Recovering from

Failure," "Youth and Social Media," and "Resisting Radical Social Agenda." The conference featured a screening of the documentary film "Social Animals."

The emphasis on the effects of social media on young souls was meaningful to the participants.

"Orthodox theology has a lot to offer discussions surrounding technology," said Kathryn Ashbahian. "It's crucial to have these conversations about social media so that we can provide our youth with meaningful boundaries that protect their mental and spiritual health."

For several of the representative, attending the conference is an annual outing that is not only informative but spiritually uplifting; a chance to "gain knowledge and be inspired by fellow Orthodox youth workers," in the words of Jennifer Morris. "We share stories from the trenches and learn from one another to improve our work."

"I appreciate spending this time with fellow Diocesan youth leaders and camp directors," said Lisa Mardigian. "The conference helps us brainstorm for the upcoming camp season."

As a fruit of the conference, Fr. Tadeos Barseghyan will shortly launch a new program called "iFaith," to facilitate conversa-



From left, Fr. Vart Gyozyan, Jennifer Morris, Fr. Khachatur Kesablyan, Kathryn Ashbahian, Fr. Tadeos Barseghyan and Lisa Mardigian

tions with the teens of his parish community, utilizing topics discussed at the confer-

ence and resources from the Department of Youth and Young Adult Ministries.

Faith and Love Mission to Artsakh and Borders in Los Angeles Area

PASADENA – On Friday, February 21, and Sunday, February 23, the Christians in Need Foundation (CINF) and the Ararat Foundation will hold two lecture presentations by Siobhan Nash-Marshall organized with the help of the Armenian Cilicia Evangelical Church of Pasadena, the ARPA Institute, Armenian-American Family Association, Inc. and Mashdots College.

"Faith and Love – Mission to Artsakh" will take place on February 21 at 7:30 p.m. at the Armenian Cilicia Evangelical Church, 339 S. Santa Anita Ave., Pasadena.

"Faith in Artsakh – Protecting the Borders of the West," will take place on February 23 at 2 p.m. at the Merdinian School's Aram and Anahis D. Boulghourjian Hall, 13330 Riverside Drive., Sherman Oaks.

Nash-Marshall is the vice president of CINF, a non-profit organization that has been serving Christian communities throughout the Middle and Near East since its founding in 2014. In 2017, at the request of

the Artsakh government, CINF sent its first American educators to Artsakh to lead courses in English, logic and ethics. An experienced educator, Nash-Marshall holds the Mary T. Clarke Chair of Christian Philosophy at Manhattanville College, where she personally trained 2017 American teachers. Since then, CINF's Artsakh initiative has grown from a handful of students to almost 300 in 2019. In 2020, CINF's courses will again grow, this time to include vocational courses taught by Italian master craftsmen.

CINF's programs in Artsakh have been very successful. The general public, educators and government officials have all praised CINF's courses.

In the two lectures Nash-Marshall will discuss these activities and more. More importantly, the presentation will focus on the importance of Artsakh and why every effort must be made to protect it.

Admission to the two events is free of charge. Refreshments will be offered after the presentation.



Siobhan Nash-Marshall

Arts & Living

Oud Great Richard Hagopian to Perform at Abril Bookstore

LOS ANGELES – “Music of Historic Armenia” will be a lecture/performance by oud virtuoso Richard Hagopian at Abril Bookstore on February 22, where he will discuss the origins and melodic modes of Armenian music, focusing on the musical production of the *oud*. Hagopian will also discuss and perform the styles of various *oud*-masters who have influenced his work, in particular, Oudi Hrant and Tateos Ekserjian and that of his teacher Kanuni Garbis Bakirgian.

Hagopian is an Armenian-American master of the *oud* and an expert of traditional Armenian musician. He was born in Fowler, Calif. in 1937 and has been a musician since childhood, learning to play the violin and clarinet at 9 years old. He started playing the *oud* at age of 11.

At first he was self-taught then by invitation studied Eastern (Ottoman Classical) music theory and *oud* under the Armenian kanun player Kanuni Garbis Bakirgian. Hagopian also took lessons by correspondence from legendary blind Armenian *oudist* Udi Hrant Kenkulian of Istanbul, who later in 1969 gave him the title of “Udi” (*oud* master), being one of the few to receive this title.

Hagopian gained fame in the 1960s and 70s with the Kef Time Band. According to the liner notes of the 1968 LP “Kef Time Las Vegas,” the Kef Time Band was formed originally as the band for a Las Vegas show called the Cleopatra Revue, which ran at the Flamingo Hotel from 1963 to 1968.

During this time, the leader of the Cleopatra Revue band, Armenian-American *dumbeg* player Buddy Sarkissian, met Hagopian and immediately hired him after hearing him play the *oud* and sing. This was the beginning of the Kef Time Band’s career; they would go on to become the most famous band playing the “kef” style of dance music popular among the Armenian-American community.

Hagopian has performed throughout the United States and taught a master class at the



Richard Hagopian

Manhattan School of Music, as well as teaching as artist-in-residence at California State University.

Hagopian for more than 30 has years played annually at “Kef Time” events drawing typically 500-1000 people at dances (“Kefs”) in Cape Cod, Hartford and Detroit. His followers have demonstrated a deep passion for his unique style and authenticity, and overall ability to entertain through his *oud* mastery and vocal charm.

He currently claims to play over 50 instruments. In 1989, he was awarded esteemed National Heritage Fellowship.

The program on February 22 will start at 7.30 p.m. Abril Bookstore is located at 415 E. Broadway, Glendale.

Admission is free. Reserved priority Seating also available at Abril Bookstore or online at www.itsmyseat.com/abrilbooks



Saro Emirze (Photo by Alexandra Kinga Fekete)

German-Armenian Actor Saro Emirze: From Hamlet to Hollywood

YEREVAN/BERLIN – German-Armenian actor Saro Emirze was born in 1977 in Frankfurt am Main. Between 1999 and 2003 he studied acting at the Felix Mendelssohn Bartholdy Academy of Music and Theatre in Leipzig and in 2001-2003 at the Staatsschauspiel Dresden (Studio). In 2002, while still a student, he appeared on stage at the Staatsschauspiel Dresden in a leading role in production of “Disco.”

By Artsvi Bakhchinyan

Special to the Mirror-Spectator

In 2003, Emirze became a permanent member of the ensemble of the Theater Junge Generation in Dresden, where he acted in numerous plays. In 2008, he moved to Zittau, where he was permanently engaged at the Gerhart-Hauptmann-Theater, before he became a member of the ensemble of the Plauen-Zwickau Theatre, where he performed from 2009 to 2012. There he starred on stage under the direction of Matthias Thieme in “Danton’s Death” by Georg Büchner or as Meckie Messer in “The Threepenny Opera” by Berthold Brecht).

In 2012, Emirze moved to Berlin. Since 2014, he has worked regularly with the Shakespeare und Partner theatre company and the New Globe Theatre. His credits include the title role in “Hamlet” as well as parts in “The Robbers” by Friedrich Schiller and “King Lear.” In 2017 his performance of several roles and as a congenial pop singer impressed the audience of the play “India” under the direction of Kai Schrickel. He then went on to play the double role of Molière and Scapin in “Scapin the Schemer” by Molière).

In addition to his work in theatre, Saro Emirze can also be seen regularly in film and television productions. He played various roles in the popular crime format SOKO, and could be seen in the ZDF public broadcast-series Wilsberg. He also appeared in the internationally acclaimed series Bad Banks. Moreover he is known to a wide audience thanks to his continuous role in the most successful German crime series Tatort Schwarzwald.

Dear Saro, along with theater you acted in more than 26 TV and film productions. Do you prefer the stage or the screen?

I studied acting at a school which focused on theater. After that, I worked at a variety of theaters in Germany for more than 15 years. During that time I rarely acted in films. So, of course, I feel more at home in the theater. When being on stage, I have a better perception of my effect and my acting. Also, since it is more familiar to me, I feel more secure on stage.

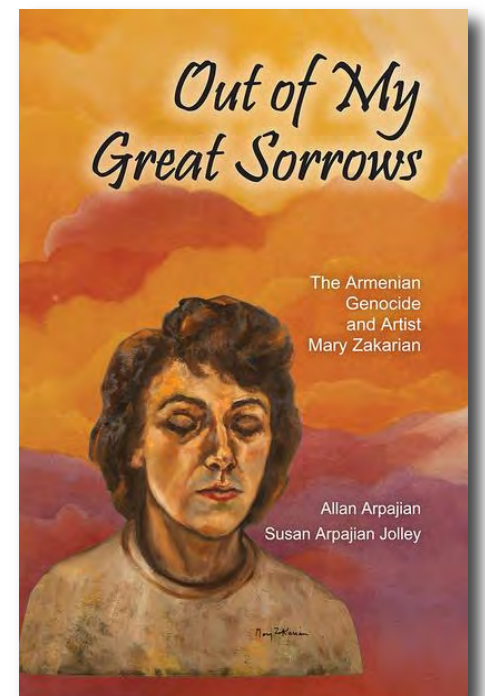
What I love most about it is the fact that you get an immediate feedback and reaction from your audience. When acting in films you sometimes have to wait for more see SARO, page 14

Hamazkayin Announces Winner of Tölölyan Prize In Contemporary Literature for 2019

WATERTOWN – The Eastern Regional Executive of Hamazkayin Armenian Educational and Cultural Society announced winners of the Minas and Kohar Tölölyan Prize in Contemporary Literature as Susan Arpajian Jolley and Allan Arpajian, co-authors of *Out of My Great Sorrows: The Armenian Genocide and Artist Mary Zakarian*.

Out of My Great Sorrows is the story of Philadelphia artist Mary Zakarian, whose life and work were shaped by the experiences of her mother, a survivor of the 1915 Armenian Genocide. Written by Mary Zakarian’s niece and nephew, the narrative examines the complexities of the artist’s life as they relate to many issues, including ethnicity, gender, immigration, and assimilation. Above all this is a story of trauma – its effects on the survivor, its transmission through the generations, and its role in the artistic experience. Zakarian painted obsessively throughout her life. As she gained recognition for her artwork, she became increasingly haunted by her mother’s untold story and was driven to express the tragedy of the Armenian Genocide in her art. Zakarian’s attempt to deal openly with the issues of trauma and guilt caused conflicts in her relationship with her mother. These emotions became a driving force behind her art as well as the basis for her personal difficulties. By examining Mary Zakarian’s life and art, the authors bring new insights to the study of the Armenian experience. This moving story will inspire all those who have struggled to express themselves in the face of injustice and oppression. This critically-acclaimed book is available on Amazon.

Named after one of the major Armenian literary critics of the second half of the 20th century and his wife, a devoted teacher of that literature for decades, the annually awarded



Minas and Kohar Tölölyan Prize in Contemporary Literature recognizes the work produced by talented writers working in North America. The prize is intended to encourage new work in all the major genres of literary production, as they are currently understood in North America. Works in Armenian, English, French, and Spanish are considered if the authors are of Armenian ancestry, or the work has an Armenian theme or revolves around an Armenian topic.

This prize was initiated by the Eastern Regional Executive committee of Hamazkayin a number of years ago to encourage and recognize those who wish to write on Armenian topics and/or in Armenian language. The financial award of \$1,500 is made possible through Edward and Vergine Misserlian of San Francisco.

Members of the jury are: Dr. Sima Aprahamian Hovhannessian, (Montreal), Anoush Agnerian (Montreal), Dr. Vartan Matiossian (New York/New Jersey), Karen [Kären] Jallatyan (California).



ARTS & LIVING



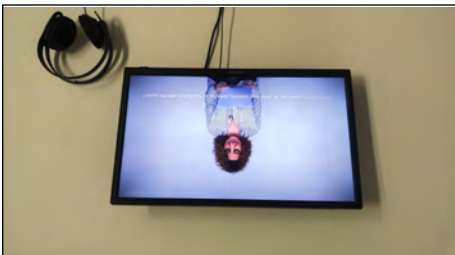
"Artlabyerevan" art collective Revolutionary Sensorium large-scale video installation (Photo credit: Karen Mirzoyan)

Armenia Presents Velvet Revolution at 58th International Biennale di Venezia

VENICE, Italy – The Pavilion of the Republic of Armenia at 58th International Art Exhibition, La Biennale di Venezia, held from May to November, 2019, was named "Revolutionary Sensorium." It was an artistic and analytical representation of the Armenian revolution of 2018 and brought together artists, scholars and activists to reproduce the revolutionary events and reflect on them.

This three-part project was composed of a video installation by "Artlabyerevan" art collective; a public performance by artist Narine Arakelian; and critical reflections and creative manifestations by scholars and queer, feminist activists in a video series titled "Dialogues about Revolution and Power."

"Artlabyerevan" explored the ideas and phe-



Anna Zhamakochyan: "Revolution: An Event of the Return of Reality"

nomena central to the Armenian revolution, which include the role and motives of the "revolutionary multitude;" the performative nature of revolutionary events; the essential role of digital technologies and drone shots for political mobilization and revolutionary action; state repression and police violence against revolutionary protests. To create an illusion of re-participation, the art collective live-streamed the flow of visitors into the exhibition space, projecting their images onto the screen of their video installation.

Artist Narine Arakelian reenacted one of the revolution's most unique forms of protest – the "Cast Iron Pots and Pans" initiative. This under-

taking saw women, from all walks of life, opening their windows at 11 p.m., every night, banging pots and pans together, all throughout Yerevan, and other major cities of the country. Arakelian recreates this moment along the streets and canals of Venice involving over 50 female volun-

vate space. The artist delved into the role of women in the revolution, whose efforts, radical undertakings, acts of courage, and innovativeness were paramount to its success.

Susanna Gyulamiryan, curator of the Pavilion of Armenia, collaborated with female experts,

Ayvazyan and Anna Nikoghosyan presented analyses on the 2018 revolution in Armenia; Anna Zhamakochyan recited the poem-manifesto "Revolution: An Event of the Return of Reality;" and Ruzanna Grigoryan declared, in a slogan-like statement, that she is "Not speaking



Cast Iron Pots and Pans public performance by artist Narine Arakelian (Photo credit: Serge Bantea & Viktor Polyakov)

teers. Indeed, while street protests formally ended at 11 p.m. to avoid provocation with police, women brought the revolution to the pri-

researchers, scholars and queer feminist activists from Armenia to create her "Dialogues about Revolution and Power." In it, Gayane

of the revolution for the sake of the revolution." The series provided a platform for discursive reflections and creative interventions.



ARTS & LIVING

German-Armenian Actor Saro Emirze: From Hamlet All the Way to Hollywood

SARO, from page 12

than a year until the audience can judge the result.

Another big difference, compared to acting on stage, is that you cannot change any of your performance once the scene is shot. In the theater, you always have the chance to constantly improve your performance from show to show. That is something I really like about theater. As a film actor you don't have control over the result – how the movie will be cut, what the audience will get to see from my performance in the end, is not in my hands. This is something I still have to get used to.

Working with colleagues in film is also different: During the making of a film, you usually spend lots of time with the whole crew, you grow closer with them; it is almost like a family for a short period of time. But once the movie is shot, you don't see anyone of the team anymore. That's different in theater and I like it better.

But still, if I had to decide, I would choose to work in films. Since my childhood I was addicted to movies, even obsessed.

This love for films and cinema I owe completely to my father. Besides his passion for making music, he was also a fiery "movie aficionado." From an early age I started watching movies. On Fridays, my father used to bring along 3 or 4 movies for the weekend, which we obsessively absorbed together. This certainly had a huge influence on my interest in films and acting...

They say every actor dreams about playing Hamlet. You did it first in 2015. What kind of experience was that?

It is a great gift to play Hamlet. The role has so many facets, so much to play – tragedy, comedy, and both at the same time and so much more. At each performance I was on stage for more than three hours, so I could let it all out and let off steam. This was a great experience and also very challenging. Back in 2003, I had already worked on that play. It was my first role, I played Laertes, in my first theater engagement. During that time my father died, on the day of the premiere. So, this play is very special to me.

In Western films actors of other ethnicity usually play mainly ethnic roles. I assume this does not concern you – your appearance would permit you to play any roles – am I right?

Yes, that's right. Already as a child I was rather light-skinned with blond hair. This allowed me to also play a German on German television, or a French and so on. But it also happened that I was cast for the role of an Armenian, but did not get the role, because I obviously did not look "Armenian enough," which of course really annoyed me.

You come from an Armenian family from Turkey. It is always interesting to know the family story, roots...

My great-grandparents are from Prkenik village and Egin (Akn). My grandparents, as well as my parents, were born and raised in Istanbul.

In the 1970s, my parents emigrated to Germany. My mother had attended an Austrian school in Istanbul and therefore she could speak German. My father was very open-minded and didn't want to live in Turkey anymore and raise his children there.

We have seen two films on Turkish-Armenian family lives in Germany – "Meine Mutter, mein Bruder und ich!" (My Mother, My Brother and Me!) by Nuran Calis and "Anduni - Fremde Heimat" (Anduni - Foreign Home) by Samira Rads. Was your family experience similar to those in the films?

I know both directors and I have also auditioned for one of these films. Unfortunately, I didn't get the role, because I didn't look Armenian enough. I remember I was very angry about it. But that's a long time ago. So, I haven't seen the films yet, but I will surely watch them when the opportunity arises.

Your surname makes me associations with diver Sirvard Emirzyan from Yerevan was the youngest athlete on the USSR Olympic team back in 1980, as well as German musician Aren Emirze, who tried to breathe new life into Western Armenian poetry by composing music to them. Are you connected with them?

Aren is my big brother. We have a very good relationship and are always up-to-date with the other one's life. Currently, he is working on several albums, including a German-Armenian project. He will be recording a German-Armenian song with one of the most famous German singer/songwriters.

Do you have favorite Armenian artists?

I love William Saroyan, not just because of his name. He is an amazing writer, who surprisingly had attended a concert of my father, Karekin, in the 1960s when he performed with his band in Istanbul... crazy story but true. So Saroyan and for sure, Gomidas, whose music always gives me goose bump and let my tears flow when I hear his music in an Armenian church.

In 2014 you read some excerpts from Romanian-Armenian author Varujan Vosganian's novel The Book of Whispers at the Armenian Cultural Union in Cologne. How involved are you in the Armenian com-

munity in Germany?

There is an Armenian cultural association in Frankfurt, where I was born and raised. My parents used to go there with us frequently; we also regularly went to Armenian church fairs, because my father was very involved there. He sang in the church choir and often gave concerts at several events.

At the moment I live in Berlin and unfortunately I don't have any contact with Armenians there. But I am always very happy when I meet someone by coincidence and can speak Armenian.

Have you ever been in Armenia?

Once, in 2004, with my brother. Armenia seems very peaceful to me, which unites all the beautiful places of Europe in one small country. I loved Dilijan very much; it is quiet and soulful with a very artistic expression. Beautiful nature and for sure the place I will write in my autobiography when I am 64, to quote the Beatles, one of my favorite bands, by the way. I

felt safe and relaxed when I was in Yerevan. For sure it is a place I would let my future kids go out alone without worrying. But first I have to be lucky and find the woman of my life if my acting career allows it... My mother always hoped and wanted me to find an Armenian soulmate to marry, which is pretty tough to find in Germany where Armenians are a very small community. Maybe I will find her with this interview (laughing). Hey, Armenian women out there, if you are interested please contact my mother first... after her approval I am up for it!

And what was your last big project for the last year?

Well, I got a supporting role of a Polish Jew in a Hollywood movie. I lost 30 pounds to play that part. We started shooting from February till June 2019, in Budapest and New York. The director was Barry Levinson, who won the Oscar for "Rain Man." The movie will be released this year under the name of "Harry Haft."

Recipe Corner



by Christine Vartanian Datian

Old Fashioned Bulgur Raisin Pudding

INGREDIENTS:

1 cup fine bulgur (use medium bulgur for a more coarsely textured pudding)
2 cups water

Combine ingredients in a pot and bring to a boil; simmer over low heat for 10-15 minutes until water is completely absorbed. Combine the cooked bulgur in a shallow baking dish with the following ingredients:

1 cup evaporated milk
1 cup water
1/3 cup sugar, or a little more
1 teaspoon cinnamon
Dash of allspice or nutmeg
1/2 cup chopped walnuts or almonds, to taste
1/2 cup golden raisins or dried currants (or any type of raisin)

Cover and bake in a 325° oven for 45 minutes. Remove cover; stir and continue baking uncovered for 15 minutes. Serve with half and half, whipped cream or ice cream. Garnish with cinnamon, fresh diced fruit, chopped dates, pistachios, cranberries, or other dried fruit.

*The is one of the many treasured recipes published in the Armenian and Selected Favorite Recipes Cookbook by the Holy Trinity Armenian Apostolic Church Trinity Guild (now Ladies' Guild) in 1970. The cost for each cookbook is \$20.00, including \$5.00 for shipping. Make check payable to: Holy Trinity Armenian Apostolic Church. To order, contact: nazik@holymtrinityfresno.org.



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ARTS & LIVING

UCLA VEM Ensemble Featured In 'Modulation Necklace'

LOS ANGELES – The mission of the University of California, Los Angeles' Armenian Music Program is simple: "To preserve and celebrate Armenian music as an art form." True to this mission, the Program proudly celebrates the official release of "Modulation Necklace," a new CD of Armenian Music, by the Naxos-distributed label, New Focus Recordings.

Following its lauded recent performances in Yerevan, the VEM Ensemble – which is a key component of the Program – participated in many of the performances on this recording. Celebrating the aesthetic diversity of the post-Soviet era Armenian music, the CD highlights a selection of works from distinguished contemporary Armenian composers Artur Avanesov, Ashot Zohrabyan, Michel Petrossian, and Artashes and Ashot Kartalyan. Along with the VEM Ensemble, "Modulation Necklace" also features internationally renowned musicians Scott St. John, Antonio Lysy, Varty Manouelian, Movses Pogossian, Katisse Buckingham, Dustin Donahue, as well as UCLA alumni Charles Tyler and Niall Ferguson.

Dan Lippel, president of New Focus Recordings, praised the album, noting, "Violinist Movses Pogossian has assembled this illuminating collection of contemporary music from Armenia...revealing a vibrant repertoire whose aesthetics are as outward-looking as they are grounded in their reverence of centuries-old culture."

A testament to the artistry and the grace of this collection is Artashes Kartalyan's *Tekeyan Triptych* for mezzo-soprano and string quartet, composed for Vahan Tekeyan's poems of love and loss, commissioned by the Tekeyan Cultural Association. As stated by Raymond Tuttle of *Fanfare Magazine*, "Artashes Kartalyan's sensitive, emotional, and always lyrical writing for the voice amplifies their emotions. Mezzo-soprano Danielle Segen sings them gorgeously."

Highlighting some of the most relevant contemporary Armenian composers, "Modulation

Necklace" is a true celebration of Armenian music as an art form and a testament to the rich history and heritage which it tributes. A significant achievement for the VEM Ensemble and the UCLA Armenian Music Program, the creation of this CD is the latest in a series of projects that celebrate and present the beauty of Armenian Music.

During their upcoming East Coast Concert Tour (April 27 to May 4), members of the VEM Ensemble will take Armenian music to audiences in New York, Boston and possibly a third city. Danielle Segen's tour of Armenia with Artur Avanesov and Movses Pogossian, in cooperation with the American University of Armenia (March 19 to 25), will bring Armenian music gems to remote regions of the country. On April 22nd, the VEM Ensemble will perform its annual Armenian Genocide Commemoration Concert at the Billy Wilder Theater of the Hammer Museum.

Finally, in a new groundbreaking initiative titled "Day of Armenian Music at UCLA" on May 8th—in collaboration and with the support of the Armenian Community of Los Angeles—high school students from the greater Los Angeles area will be hosted for a day-long celebration of the richness and diversity of Armenian Music. The focal point of the day will be a concert at Schoenberg Hall, which will feature a variety of genres: Classical (VEM Ensemble), Folk (newly-founded UCLA Armenian Music Ensemble), Jazz (Vartan Ovsepian with friends), and Choral (Children's Choir from the Lark Musical Society, the Program's Community Music Partner). The day will also include a campus tour of UCLA and lectures by Karenn Chutjian Presti (history of Armenian music) and Armine Grigoryan, a renowned Armenian pianist and the Director of the Aram Khachaturian Museum in Yerevan.

To learn more about the Armenian Music Program and the VEM Ensemble, visit the website. The proceeds of "Modulation Necklace" will benefit the UCLA Armenian Music Program.

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Charles

by Taleen Babayan

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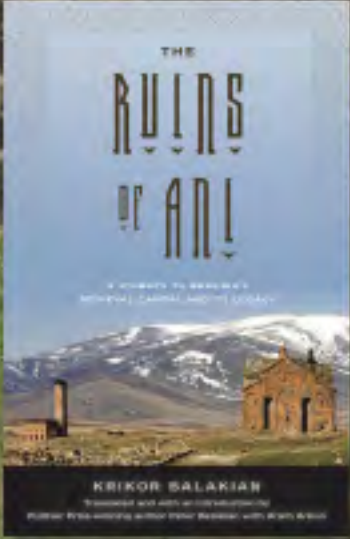
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The Tekeyan Cultural Association and the National Association for Armenian Studies and Research / Calouste Gulbenkian Lecture Series on Contemporary Armenian Issues

present

"The Ruins of Ani: From Sacred Landscape to Political Soil"



Presentation by Peter Balakian, editor, and Aram Arkun, translator, of *The Ruins of Ani* by Krikor Balakian

February 27

Batmasian Hall, NAASR, 395 Concord Avenue, Belmont, 7:30 p.m.

Admission free.

For more information, email tcadirector@aol.com or marc@naasr.org

Small Istanbul Publisher Sustains Armenian Literature

By Ayla Jean Yackley

ISTANBUL (AI-Monitor) – A small book publisher is introducing Turkish readers to long-snubbed Armenian literary figures while also fighting to rescue Western Armenian, making Istanbul an improbable center of book production in the endangered language.

Now Aras Publishing has launched a chil-



Rober Koptas

but we have no choice but to try,” said editor-in-chief Rober Koptas.

“We are like seaweed clinging to the rock: We are among the last and we will continue to dwindle, but this is our way of leaving our mark.”

Aras released 20 books last year and almost 250 since it was founded in 1993 by a group of idealists including bestselling author Mıgırdic Margosyan and Hrant Dink, a journalist assassinated in 2007. From their offices in the 19th-century Hıdıvial Palas in downtown Istanbul, editors pore over painstakingly translated novels, memoirs, research tomes and serialized books from long-vanished turn-of-the-century periodicals.

Once a world capital for Armenian publishing, Istanbul’s first Armenian printing press opened in 1567, and by the 19th century, newspapers and book-making flourished there and in cities across Anatolia. *Akabi’s Story*, written in Turkish with Armenian characters in 1851, is widely considered to be the first Ottoman novel. But the industry cratered as Armenians’ fortunes turned. The genocide of up to 1.5

million Armenians beginning in 1915 spelled the near-obliteration of millennia of Armenian civilization in the land that is now in Turkey.

Today, Aras is Turkey’s only publishing house offering books in Western Armenian, the language spoken by most Armenians living in the Ottoman Empire and distinct from Eastern Armenian, used in the Republic of Armenia. Only 250,000 native speakers survive, mainly in Turkey, Lebanon, Syria, Europe and the Americas, according to the United Nations’ cultural agency UNESCO which classifies Western Armenian as “definitely endangered.”

About a third of the Aras catalog is in Western Armenian. Its core mission has become more urgent since the war began in neighboring Syria, where up to 70 percent of Armenians have fled nine years of conflict. “Aleppo sustained Western Armenian literature, but with the war, that tradition has been destroyed, leaving Beirut and Istanbul,” said Aras co-founder Yetvart Tovmasyan.

dren’s division and opened a new editorial office, built with donations from readers, that includes a space it hopes will forge deeper connections among its readers. The Zabel Yesayan Salon, named for the Ottoman-era feminist writer, hosts lectures, author readings and workshops. This month’s program includes discussions on being young and Armenian in Istanbul and one sultan’s fascination with the fictional detective Sherlock Holmes.

It’s a bold undertaking for an independent press at a time when speech is strictly policed in Turkey and discussions on constraints on its minorities and the World War I-era genocide of up to 1.5 million Armenians remain taboo. Even cultural endeavors carry risks: In October, the authorities banned an academic conference on Armenian history without offering cause.

“We want to build bridges through dialogue, and we’re doing it openly with knowledge, literature and culture. Could this lead to repercussions? Anything is possible in this country,

Armenian-language print runs are typically 1,000 copies and do not earn Aras a profit. “Publishing these books is financially difficult, but keeping Western Armenian alive is the reason for our existence,” said editor Lora Sari. A small fraction of its books is shipped overseas, but most of Aras’ readers are in Turkey, where 50,000 or so Armenians make up the largest Christian community in a country of 83 million people.

Sari is the director of Hippo, a division producing books in both Turkish and Armenian with a small grant from the European Union. “Armenian kids discover books not in Armenian but in Turkish. Without books, the loss of the mother tongue becomes inevitable. Already it’s difficult to say that Armenian remains the first language of Turkey’s Armenians, because so few people speak more than a few words at home.” Hippo, she said, aims to create “a common literature” for Armenians and Turks.

The spirit of inclusivity has extended to Homshetsma, a dialect of Western Armenian that is spoken by fewer than 1,000 Muslims near the town of Hemsin in Turkey’s Black Sea highlands. In 2014, Aras published Turkey’s first collection of short stories in the archaic tongue and followed two years later with a Homshetsma translation of the Antoine de Saint-Exupery classic, *The Little Prince*.

But most of Aras’ readers are Turkish, and the early Republican writers it has revived include Zaven Biberyan and Hagop Mintzuri. “We believe everyone would want to read the great writers of their land, and until Aras began, neither Armenians nor Turks could find many of these works,” Sari said.

Zabel Yesayan is the greatest Istanbul-born writer most Turks never heard of. She became the first Armenian woman from the Ottoman Empire to study at university – and the only woman on the list of intellectuals to be rounded up on April 24, 1915, an event that ignited the genocide. Yesayan escaped arrest and found refuge in the Soviet Union, only to perish in the Great Terror campaign in 1943. An antiwar activist, Yesayan tackled inequality in her novels, short stories and journalism, including in the 1918 novella “The Last Cup,” now available in Turkish for the first time.

Aras’ only foray into English is Margosyan’s *Infidel Quarter*, published in 2017 with the



Armenian novelist, translator and professor Zabel Yesayan

Gomidas Institute. Margosyan first penned the bittersweet reflections on growing up one of the last Armenians in the Kurdish city of Diyarbakir in 1984 in Western Armenia before writing the Turkish version, which has sold more than 40,000 copies. His admirers translated it into Kurdish in 1999.

Margosyan said he invests those earnings back into Aras to keep producing in Western Armenian. The publisher celebrated its doyen’s 80th birthday in 2018 with *Fillaname*, a complete anthology of his work. The title is a play on the Kurdish word for “infidel.”

The medieval neighborhood where Infidel Quarter is set has largely disappeared, its narrow streets the center of fierce clashes between security forces and Kurdish militants in 2015 and 2016. Authorities razed swashes of the district to flush out the fighters and rubble from stone houses built by Armenian masons was dumped into the waters of the Tigris River that twists below the city.

“The area within the old city walls, what we once called the infidel quarter, was flattened. On the street that was given my name, not a single house was left standing,” Margosyan said. “The book took on a different value when the places it described were suddenly lost.”

Dozens of fans lined up for Margosyan’s autograph at a 2018 Istanbul book fair, pulling out worn copies of “Infidel Quarter” in Turkish and Kurdish. For readers from Diyarbakir, Margosyan is more than a favorite writer. He is a living connection with a city and a past that has been all but lost.

(This article originally appeared on February 10.)

Jerusalem Museum Showcases Armenian Artists Who Reimagined Ceramics for the City

By Aviva and Shmuel Bar-Am

JERUSALEM (*Times of Israel*) – One room at Sledmere, a palatial home in Yorkshire County, England, is unique. Designed by an Armenian artist for British diplomat Mark Sykes in 1913, it is called The Turkish Room – and its walls are completely covered by ceramic tiles.

Six years after the room was finished, the British military governor of Jerusalem asked this same artist to restore the glazed tiles on the outer walls of the Dome of the Rock. The governor’s name was Sir Ronald Storrs; the Armenian artist David Ohannessian.

Ohannessian accepted the invitation, and together with the British brought over Armenian artists Neshan Balian and Megerdich Karakashian. All three had previous experience in glazed ceramic workshops in Turkey.

As fate would have it, within a very few years Storrs and the three Armenian artists changed the face of Jerusalem. For in 1920 Storrs decreed that every new building in the city had to be constructed with Jerusalem’s warm, native stone. At the same time, the Armenians were combining traditional ceramics with all that is uniquely Jerusalem. And since then, Armenian Jerusalem ceramics – a local product that didn’t exist before the artists’ arrival in 1919 – can be seen on or inside dozens of buildings in the city.

Ohannessian’s granddaughter, Sato Moughalian, released a biography about the tradesman last year.

Last fall, Jerusalem’s Rockefeller Archeological Museum launched an exciting new exhibit showcasing 100 years of Armenian Jerusalem Ceramics. Fawzi Ibrahim, the museum and the exhibition curator, called it “A Glimpse of Paradise” after a fabulous mural of the same name produced by the late Marie Balian, an internationally acclaimed Armenian ceramics artist. The exhibition was designed by Eliran Mishal.

In preparation for the exhibit, Ibrahim carried out a lot of detective work. He located pieces of the ceramic tiles that adorned the Dome of the Rock from the 16th century, 18th-century tiles from St. James Cathedral, and discovered exquisite 17th and 18th century ceramic tiles that decorated the Tomb of David before the works were destroyed by vandals.

Ohannessian received his first public commission in 1922, when he was asked to decorate a beautiful bench created by famous British designer Charles Robert Ashbee for the Tower of David.

Although that work no longer exists, Ibrahim unearthed very similar Ohannessian panels from the same period and displayed them in a bench very much like the original.

Ceramics Tell a Story

Over the past 100 years, Jerusalem has changed hands three different times. Ceramic street signs on one wall of the exhibit tell the story, for during the Mandate names were listed in English on top, Arabic in the middle, and Hebrew down below. When the city was divided in 1948, signs in East



The 1930s East Jerusalem villa built by writer and scholar Isaaf Nashashibi boasts an array of ceramic tiles on its facade. (Shmuel Bar-Am)

Jerusalem eradicated the Hebrew words; today Arabic is sandwiched between Hebrew on top and English at the bottom.

One of three videos at the exhibit features many of the Jerusalem buildings boasting ceramic tiles. Another depicts Sledmere’s Turkish Room and a third demonstrates the two methods of producing local Armenian ceramics: under glazing and dry cord (Cuerda Seca). Paints, materials and tools used to create the ceramics are on display as well, while excellent signs offer detailed explanations of the history and development of this unique school of art.

The Rockefeller Museum – an East Jerusalem

satellite of the Israel Museum – is itself a work of art. John D. Rockefeller Junior donated two million dollars for construction of this magnificent edifice, the first building in the country to be built specifically as a museum. Containing thousands of archeological artifacts excavated during the British Mandate (1919-1948), it opened in 1938 south of Herod’s Gate and across from the Old City walls.

A brilliant mixture of east and west, the complex houses several wings in a single structure

continued on next page



ARTS & LIVING

CALENDAR

MASSACHUSETTS

FEBRUARY 21-23 — Shadow Puppet Workshop at the

Armenian Museum of America, Adele & Haig Der Manuelian Galleries, 3rd Floor, 65 Main St., Watertown. Friday, 3-5 p.m., Saturday, 1-3 p.m., Sunday, 1-2 p.m., Sunday, 2 p.m. Performance & Reception: complimentary admission to family, friends. During students' February Vacation, kids will enjoy a fun 3-day workshop making and playing with shadow puppets. Their puppet show will be based on an endearing traditional Armenian folk tale, "The Tailless Fox," which we will read together. The workshop will close with a student performance and reception. Make sure to save the date! Members \$32, Non-members \$40. The Museum's elevator is in the process of being upgraded and is currently out of service. For more information visit: <https://www.armenianmuseum.org/events/shadow-puppet-workshop>

FEBRUARY 22 — Poon Paregantz Dinner Dance -

Family Kef Night, Sts. Vartanantz Armenian Church, 180 Old Westford Rd., Chelmsford. 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.

FEBRUARY 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.

FEBRUARY 29 — 30th Commemoration of the Baku

Pogrom. Dinner and Program featuring a biographical Presentation on Zabel Yesayan, Armenian novelist, translator, and professor of literature by Judith Saryan. St. Gregory Armenian Church, 158 Main St., No. Andover. 6 p.m. Adults - \$20. Students - \$10. For reservations, please contact Armen at 978-256-2538, armenjeknavorian@gmail.com; or Ara, 978-251-4845, ara.a.jeknavorian@gmail.com. Merrimack Valley Armenian National Committee of the Merrimack Valley.

MARCH 2 — St. James Men's Club Dinner Meeting -

social hour and mezza at 6:15 p.m. and dinner at 7 p.m., St. James Armenian Church Charles Mosesian Cultural and Youth Center - Keljik Hall, 465 Mt. Auburn Street, Watertown. Guest speaker will be Stewart R. Goff, RN, MS, who is the new C.E.O of the Armenian Women's Welfare Association and the Armenian Nursing & Rehabilitation Center (ANRC) in Jamaica Plain. He

assumed his new role on May 8, 2019. The presentation is titled "The ANRC, Is it Armenian Enough?" Mezza and a Losh Kebab & Kheyma Dinner \$17/person. Ladies invited. For additional information call the St. James Church office at 617-923-8860 or call Hapet Berberian at 781-367-6598.

MARCH 28 — Sayat Nova Dance Company invites you

to an evening of fun and laughter. Back by popular demand, world-renowned comedian and pianist Kev Orkian returns to Boston during his 2020 World Tour! Get ready for a fun-filled night of laughs as KEV entertains the audience with his brand new show "SUPARMENIAN"! To be held at Newton North High School Auditorium, 457 Walnut Street, Newton, at 7:30 pm. Reserve your tickets today! Tickets: \$60 (\$60 tickets include a pre-show meet & greet reception with KEV from 6-7pm). \$45 (General Admission). Tickets may be reserved: Online at itsmyseat.com/KevInBoston (online fees apply) Or by calling: Alina (617) 852-1816 or Shant (781) 879-8102. Flyer and seating chart available at <http://www.sayatnova.com/kevorkian.htm> All tickets are final sale.

MARCH 28 — Songs of the Other with Daniela Tosic,

voice; Sylvie Zakarian, marimba; Nikola Radan, flute. Works by Komitas, A. Hovhannes, N. Grover, N. Radan, V. Srvandziantz. Armenian Cultural Foundation, Arlington. Saturday, 7 p.m. Open to the public. Admission Free.

APRIL 19 — Annual Reconfiguration of the Abstract

Sculpture at the Armenian Heritage Park on The Greenway, Boston. Sunday beginning at 7:00 am. Coffee, hosted by Starbucks & Conversation from 8:30am -9:30am. The annual reconfiguration is supported by the Park's Charles and Doreen Bilezikian Endowed Fund. A crane lifts and pulls apart the two halves of the split rhomboid dodecahedron, made of stainless steel and aluminum, to create a new sculptural shape. The annual reconfiguration is under the direction of A&A Industries, Inc., Peabody, who fabricated the Abstract Sculpture, the generous gift-in-kind of owners Aurelian and Anahid Mardiros and their family. Rain date: April 26 RSVP appreciated at hello@armenianheritagepark.org

MAY 2 — Celebrate Public Art two-part program during

ARTWEEK BOSTON. Armenian Heritage Park on The Greenway, Boston. Saturday at 1:00pm. WORLD LABYRINTH DAY: WALK AS ONE, join people in cities and towns in 35 countries world-wide walking in peace and harmony including Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Belgium, Brazil, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, England, France, Germany, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Lithuania, Mexico, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Peru, Poland, Romania, Russia, Scotland, South Africa, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Uruguay and USA followed by RECEPTION TO VIEW THE 2020 RECONFIGURATION OF THE ABSTRACT SCULPTURE, hosted by Eastern Lamejun Bakers and MEM Tea Imports. RSVP appreciated hello@armenianheritagepark.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 Adamyany as soloist with the Boston Pops Orchestra. Symphony Hall, Boston. 8 p.m. For tickets and information, please visit FACSBoston.org

JUNE 17 — Tea & Tranquility. Armenian Heritage Park

on The Greenway, Boston. Wednesday from 4:30 pm - 6 p.m. Late afternoon to meet and greet, walk the labyrinth, enjoy refreshing ice teas, hosted by MEM Tea Imports ,and desserts. RSVP appreciated hello@armenianheritagepark.org

JUNE 25 — Under A Strawberry Moon. Armenian

Heritage Park on The Greenway, Boston. Thursday at 8:30pm. Evening to meet & greet, tie a ribbon on the Wishing Tree. Enjoy a moonlit labyrinth walk, luscious chocolate dipped strawberries, hosted by vicki lee's and refreshing ice teas, hosted by MEM Tea Imports RSVP appreciated hello@armenianheritagepark.org

NEW JERSEY

SEPTEMBER 17-19, 2021 — Armenian Church Youth

Organziation of America (ACYOA) 75th Alumni Anniversary Weekend in Northern NJ. More details to follow. Questions? Email: ACYOA75@gmail.com

NEW YORK

MARCH 1 — The Tekeyan Cultural Association of

Greater New York presents "Charles," a bio-musical on the life and art of the legendary Charles Aznavour, by playwright Taleen Babayan. Featuring Maurice Soudjian, Bernard C. Bayer and Mariette Soudjian. Music: Harout Soghomonian. Sunday, 5.30 p.m. at 2537 Broadway, New York, NY. Tickets \$45. [www.symphonyspace.org /events](http://www.symphonyspace.org/events). Text or call Sheela at 201-218-6726. Program in English.

MASSACHUSETTS

MARCH 14 — The Cultural Committee of Sts. Sahag &

Mesrob Armenian Church Presents Its "Music Appreciation Series" Featuring Talented Performers Knarik Nerkararian, Soprano, Dalita Getzoyan, Flute,Nune Hakobyan, Piano, Gregory Ayriyan, Violin. Book Presentation "Haykakan taraz - Armenian Costumes" By Artist Gourgen Manoukian. Saturday, at 7 p.m. Egavian Cultural Center, 70 Jefferson Street, Providence. Donation \$15 Refreshments.

MARCH 22 — The Cultural Committee of Sts. Sahag

and Mesrob Armenian Church Presents "Meet The Doctors 2020 — Questions & Answers." We invite everyone to avail themselves of this opportunity and "Meet with our Armenian Doctors" Dr. Beverly Serabian, PhD, clinical psychologist Topic: Healthy Lifestyle Practices and Psychological Well Being Sunday, at 12:30 p.m. Hanoian Hall, 70 Jefferson Street, Providence.

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

from previous page

and boasts an octagonal tower. On display at one end of the reflecting pool in the museum's inner court stands an Ohannessian masterpiece, a blue fountain made of blue tiles whose design he never duplicated.

Wherever you look...

To view local Armenian ceramics in Jerusalem, all you need to do is wander through the city. They are found on dwellings built by wealthy Christians and Muslims during the British Mandate, in hotels, churches, museums, cemeteries, at least one mosque, and at the entrance to a synagogue.

In the Talbieh neighborhood at least two buildings sport beautiful ceramic tiles. One is even known as Ceramics House (Beit Hakeramika), for its gorgeous ornamentation. Built by Elias and Catherine Gelat in the 1930s, it is also famous as the site where the United Nations Peel Commission held its deliberations and came up with the first plan for partitioning Palestine.

There are ceramic tiles on several homes in the Bak'a neighborhood, including a villa on Shimshon Street. Its owner was Dib Shukry, one of the leading car dealers in Jerusalem during the 1930s. Nearby, in the German Colony, ceramic tiles beautify the entrance to a home on Hatzfira Street dating back to 1938.

Both Lawrence of Arabia and Richard Gere were once guests at the American Colony Hotel on Nablus Street. The gorgeous villa, one of the first homes to appear outside of the Old City Walls, was built by a rich effendi to house himself and his four wives.

The effendi died without leaving a single male heir, and in 1896 it was rented out to the American Colony, a group from Chicago noted for its charitable undertakings. The Colony began taking in paying guests at the beginning of the 20th century, doubling up to make room for out-of-town visitors. Little by little the American Colony Hotel became famous for its combination of European and Middle Eastern

hospitality and ambience. Ohannessian's 1923 works are on display in the elegant lobby.

Located across from Mount Zion, the white-domed Scottish Church of St. Andrews was built in 1927 and honors hundreds of Scottish troops who died wrestling the Holy Land from the Ottoman Turks during World War I. The guesthouse, which was added in 1930, sports several stunning blue Armenian ceramic works of art.

Missionaries from America and England are buried in the Protestant cemetery on Mount Zion, adjacent to the Jerusalem University College. But near the entrance, the grave of one Herand Petrosian, who passed in 1937, is covered with Armenian tiles.

Sometime in the 1930s, writer and scholar Isaaf Nashashibi built a gorgeous villa for his family in the Sheikh Jaffah neighborhood that boasts a rich array of ceramic tiles. Today it serves the East Jerusalem population as a center for the arts and literature, offering courses, lectures, and housing an extensive public library.

Ceramic tiles adorn an edifice on Helena Hamalka Street downtown that was constructed in 1929. Soon afterward it was incorporated, together with a neighboring building, into a hotel that operated until 1966. All kinds of important people lodged there before they became government officials, including David Ben-Gurion and Levi Eshkol.

Sometime in the late 1920s, the owner of a pub near the Mahane Yehuda market was persuaded by a neighborhood butcher and his goons to transform his enterprise into a Sephardic synagogue called Hessed VeRahamim. Remarkable for its doors, which are covered with uniquely decorative silver symbols representing the 12 tribes, it was recently renovated.

Today the entrance is graced with lovely Armenian ceramic tiles created by Hagop Antreassian. One of the rare Armenian artists who, although born in Jerusalem, is not a scion of the original three families who arrived in 1919, he began his ceramics career in 1980.



COMMENTARY

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COMMENTARY

The US-Russia-Turkey Triangle and Armenia

By Edmond Y. Azadian

There are some countries in the world which are affected by their location in the thick of crosscurrents of international relations and the resulting instability.

Armenia happens to be one of those countries, particularly now that it is on its own, trying to navigate through turbulent waters.

It is a hostage to the developments in the Caucasus. For centuries, the dominant forces in the region have been Iran, Turkey and Russia and their rivalries have defined or determined Armenia's destiny.

Today, the US has been added to that mix, playing a forceful role.

Media coverage touches only the surface of the ongoing rivalries, whose outcome may be revealed many years in the future.

President Recep Tayyip Erdogan of Turkey has been using those rivalries to his advantage. But that policy is not a recent invention. The Ottoman Turks managed to rule an empire for almost six centuries and sharpened their diplomatic skills, which involved experiencing tremendous exposure to blunders and opportunism.

In 1878, Russia had almost achieved its perennial dream of reaching the warm waters of the Mediterranean by defeating Ottoman Turkey. But its fortunes were overturned at the Berlin conference of the same year, through the help of British Prime Minister Benjamin Disraeli. At that same conference, Armenia's destiny also suffered a setback through Articles 16 and 61.

The same scenario was repeated in 1921, this time with new actors, namely Mustafa Kemal Ataturk and Vladimir Lenin, clipping Armenia's wings through the Treaty of Kars (1921). Some rumors indicate that the Treaty of Kars is to be revised on its centennial anniversary. That, of course, will depend on the developments of the volatile situation in the region.



Today, Mr. Erdogan is a new actor in an old play. One thing he has learned well is that in order to come up successful, he has to turn his country into a strong pawn on the chessboard of international relations. To the chagrin of Armenians and all victim minorities in Turkey, that country is a powerful one and able to enter tussles with major countries and come out victorious.

Despite Erdogan's transgressions, President Donald Trump still characterizes him as a "hell of a leader" and a "friend."

Turkey's purchase of Russian S-400 defense missiles had angered not only the US but also the other NATO members.

After its purchase of Russian arms, voices were heard in major Western capitals to force Turkey out of the alliance.

The US took some punitive measures in the form of sanctions and Mr. Erdogan threatened to retaliate by expelling the US forces from the Incirlik air base, where 50 US nuclear weapons are believed to be stored.

In addition, the US refused to budge on the extradition of Turkish cleric Fethullah Gulen and proceeded with the federal prosecution of the Halkbank culprits, who had undermined the US trade embargo on Iran.

But it looks as if the pendulum is tipping back. Erdogan's brinkmanship has lost its steam as has the US's intransigence.

Normally, shifts in US policies are heralded by the media, only to

be confirmed later by official sources. It is becoming apparent that Washington will not push the envelope any further in opposing the Russian arms acquisition by Turkey. Indeed, in a commentary in "War on the Rocks," Ray Rounds writes: "By using the F-35 embargo to explicitly coerce Ankara, the United States is far more likely to further damage relations with a NATO ally than find common ground."

Then the article refers to the US embargo in 1975 to force Turkey to come to the bargaining table after the latter invaded Cyprus.

The writer concludes that the embargo backfired and Turkey is still in Cyprus.

In the article, the sanctions are interpreted as a measure to protect the security of the US weapons systems rather than punishing Turkey. This means that a gentler policy toward Turkey is in the offing. Ankara is equally sensitive to the shifts of US policy in Washington and has been responding in kind.

As a gesture toward the US, Erdogan donated \$50 million in military aid to Ukraine (which Trump had delayed!) and then made a belligerent announcement that Ankara refuses to recognize Crimea's annexation to Russia, a favorite political theme at Foggy Bottom.

Then moving tactfully, Mr. Erdogan is fine tuning his policy in Syria, where Turkish forces have clashed with Russian forces, although both parties are blaming their respective surrogates.

In the meantime, the US forces are receding from the Syrian battleground, allowing Russian and Assad's forces to advance.

Mr. Erdogan tried to give a bloody nose to Russia to appease the US, although Turkey has other interests in Syria, with the top of the agenda being stopping the advance of the Kurds.

What is the reflection of all these movements over Caucasus and Armenia?

For all its belligerence, Turkey has been moving cautiously in its Russian policy because the Turkish Stream gas pipeline and the construction of a nuclear power plant at Akkuyu are important projects.

But above all, Turkey's assets in Azerbaijan are equally important.

There seems to be a power transfer in Azerbaijan. The recent reshuffling in the government and First Lady Mehriban Aliyeva's increased prominence in Baku and Moscow are indications of internal and external political shifts in Azerbaijan. In light of those changes, Turkey's Foreign Minister Mevlut Cavusoglu has twice announced that there is an opportunity to settle the Karabakh issue where Mr. Putin's input is considered to be essential.

Turkey has never given up its position of solving the Karabakh issue in Azerbaijan's favor. Therefore, Mr. Putin's input can only strengthen Turkey's hand.

Moscow has been maintaining parity between Yerevan and Baku, despite its strategic alliance with Armenia.

Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan, who as an opposition leader was adamantly opposed to Russia's boots on the ground in Armenia, has come to the painful realization that his country's relationship with Russia, no matter how torturous, is an indispensable one.

On the other hand, the young leadership and pro-government media are spewing venom against Russia.

Looking back in history, we have to avoid the scenarios of 1878 and 1921 in our current actions.



COMMENTARY



My Turn

By Harut Sassounian

The World Dislikes Trump & his Policies, According to Pew Research Center

A study published by the Pew Research Center revealed that many in the world do not approve President Donald Trump's foreign policies. This is not a surprising discovery, but is in total contrast to what the President has been claiming regarding his exaggerated accomplishments.

Even before his election, candidate Trump repeatedly stated that President Barack Obama was not respected by the rest of the world and that he, as President, will restore respect to the United States by foreign countries.

Given President Trump's many exaggerations and outright lies, no one should be surprised by the untruth of what he claimed. The fact is that his predecessor, President Barack Obama, was highly respected around the world, and to the contrary, President Trump has become the laughing stock of most people, in and out of the United States, except by the autocratic leaders of Turkey, North Korea, Russia, China and Saudi Arabia.

Let us look at the actual numbers based on the Pew Research Center. In the 33 countries surveyed, the median of only 18 percent of the people stated they viewed Trump's foreign policy as positive. Not surprisingly, Trump's highest foreign policy rating was among Israelis (55 percent), while 32 percent disapproved and 13 percent said, "no difference."

The following countries, in descending order, expressed their degree of President Trump's approval of foreign policy: Poland (34 percent), Hungary (31 percent), Ukraine (29 percent), Nigeria (29 percent), India (27 percent), Kenya (25 percent), South Africa (25 percent), Slovakia (24 percent), Australia (24 percent), Lithuania (22 percent), Czech Republic (22 percent), Philippines (21 percent), Indonesia (19 percent), Greece (19 percent), Bulgaria (18 percent), Lebanon (18 percent), UK (18 percent), Italy (17 percent), Japan (17 percent), South Korea (16 percent), Canada (16 percent), Russia (14 percent), Netherlands (11 percent), Sweden (11 percent), Argentina (10 percent), Tunisia (9 percent), Mexico (9 per-

cent), Turkey (9 percent), France (9 percent), Brazil (8 percent), Spain (7 percent), and Germany (6 percent). In the United States, Trump's approval rating on foreign policy was 37 percent. It is concerning that some of the lowest ratings were among the NATO allies, while the ratings in the neighboring countries of Canada and Mexico were also very low.

When asked about individual policy issues, the median of the people in the 33 countries surveyed showed the following ratings:

- U.S. increasing tariffs or fees on imported goods from other countries: 18 percent approve; 68 percent disapprove.
- U.S. withdrawal from international climate change agreements: 14 percent approve; 66 percent disapprove.
- Building a wall on the border between the U.S. and Mexico: 24 percent approve; 60 percent disapprove.
- Allowing fewer immigrants into the U.S.: 34 percent approve; 55 percent disapprove.
- U.S. withdrawal from the Iran nuclear weapons agreement: 29 percent approve; 52 percent disapprove.
- U.S. negotiations with North Korean leader Kim Jong Un about the country's nuclear weapons program: 41 percent approve; 36 percent disapprove.

Regarding the respect the current and the two previous U.S. Presidents – Trump (2017-2019), George W. Bush (2001-2008) and Barack Obama (2009-2016) – enjoyed around the world, the Pew Research Center discovered that Obama was ranked much higher than both Bush and Trump among the people in the 33 countries surveyed. Here are the rankings of the three Presidents with the lows and highs during the various years of their presidency:

Canada: Bush (28 percent-59 percent); Obama (76 percent-88 percent); Trump (22 percent-28 percent).

France: Bush (12 percent-25 percent); Obama (83 percent-91 percent); Trump (9 percent-20 percent).

Germany: Bush (14 percent-51 percent); Obama (71 percent-93 percent); Trump (10 percent-13 percent).

Greece: Bush (not available); Obama (27 percent-41 percent); Trump (17 percent-25 percent).

Italy: Bush (30 percent-43 percent); Obama (68 percent-77 percent); Trump (25 percent-32 percent).

Netherlands: Bush (39 percent); Obama (92 percent); Trump (17 percent-25 percent).

Spain: Bush (7 percent-26 percent); Obama (54 percent-75 percent); Trump (7 percent-21 percent).

Sweden: Bush (21 percent); Obama (93 percent); Trump (10 percent-18 percent).

UK: Bush (16 percent-51 percent); Obama (72 percent-86 percent); Trump (22 percent-32 percent).

Bulgaria: Bush (27 percent); Obama (not available); Trump (26 percent).

Czech Republic: Bush (36 percent); Obama (75 percent-77 percent); Trump (28 percent).

Hungary: Bush (not available); Obama (58 percent); Trump (29 percent-33 percent).

Poland: Bush (29-47 percent); Obama (49 percent-64 percent); Trump (23 percent-51 percent).

Slovakia: Bush (21 percent); Obama (not available); Trump (34 percent).

Russia: Bush (8 percent-28 percent); Obama (11 percent-41 percent); Trump (20 percent-53 percent).

Ukraine: Bush (19 percent); Obama (11 percent-41 percent); Trump (44 percent).

Australia: Bush (23 percent-59 percent); Obama (77 percent-84 percent); Trump (29 percent-35 percent).

India: Bush (not available); Obama (48 percent-74 percent); Trump (40 percent-56 percent).

Indonesia: Bush (14 percent-23 percent); Obama (53 percent-71 percent); Trump (23 percent-30 percent).

Japan: Bush (25 percent-35 percent); Obama (60 percent-85 percent); Trump (24 percent-36 percent).

Philippines: Bush (not available); Obama (84 percent-94 percent); Trump (69 percent-78 percent).

South Korea: Bush (22 percent-36 percent); Obama (75 percent-88 percent); Trump (17 percent-46 percent).

Israel: Bush (57 percent-83 percent); Obama (49 percent-71 percent); Trump (56 percent-71 percent).

Lebanon: Bush (17 percent-34 percent); Obama (35 percent-46 percent); Trump (15 percent-23 percent).

Tunisia: Bush (not available); Obama (24 percent-28 percent); Trump (12 percent-18 percent).

Turkey: Bush (2 percent-8 percent); Obama (12 percent-45 percent); Trump (11 percent).

Kenya: Bush (72 percent); Obama (78 percent-95 percent); Trump (51 percent-65 percent).

Nigeria: Bush (not available); Obama (53 percent-84 percent); Trump (58 percent-59 percent).

South Africa: Bush (32 percent); Obama (72 percent-77 percent); Trump (39 percent-42 percent).

Argentina: Bush (5 percent-7 percent); Obama (31 percent-61 percent); Trump (11 percent-22 percent).

Brazil: Bush (not available); Obama (52 percent-69 percent); Trump (14 percent-28 percent).

Mexico: Bush (16 percent-28 percent); Obama (38 percent-55 percent); Trump (5 percent-8 percent).

Finally, in comparison with other major world leaders, President Trump ranked at the bottom third of the Pew Research Center survey in 33 countries, losing to French President Emmanuel Macron, German Chancellor Angela Merkel, and even Russian President Vladimir Putin, but outscoring Chinese President Xi Jinping by a single point.

The Oil Nation That Squandered Its Wealth

By Vananad Meliksetian

Some of the world's first ever commercial oil wells were operational near Baku in 19th century Imperial Russia in today's Azerbaijan. The oil abundance produced some of the wealth that Alfred Nobel later put towards the creation of the famous Nobel Prizes for the sciences. Also, the enigmatic Calouste "Mr. Five Percent" Gulbenkian began his career in Baku.

After more than 150 years of extensive oil production activities, the new-found country's energy-wealth hasn't been depleted yet. Shortly after the Cold War the independent Republic of Azerbaijan struck a deal with western supermajors for what was dubbed "the deal of the century". The country's existing oil fields and future discoveries were supposed to lessen Europe's dependence on Russian energy. Although Azerbaijan has failed to meet these expectations, the nation of 9 million souls has earned a tremendous amount of money over the past decades. The effectiveness of the positive cashflow, however, on health care, education and income per capita is questionable as the level of development is fairly similar to its neighbors who lack major energy deposits.

The Azeri-Chirag-Gunashili (ACG) complex of oil fields was discovered in the 80s but production didn't start until the 90s. The majority, approximately 80 percent, of Azerbaijan's oil exports originate from ACG. Therefore the lack of new significant discoveries and the depletion of existing fields is a significant threat. Production at ACG peaked in 2010 when 835,000 barrels per day were produced. The oil fields, however, are

quickly losing steam. Last year the fields' production decreased by 8.4 percent to 535,000 barrels and according to statements from BP, the lead operator of the project, decline seems to be accelerating.

Fortunately, some of the decline will be offset by a new platform, Azeri Central East, that is coming online in 2023. Also, Azerbaijan is ramping up the export of natural gas to Turkey and the EU from the massive Shah Deniz gas field. The new pipeline is of strategic importance to the EU where political leaders are desperate to diversify away from Russian energy.

A striking development in Azerbaijan's long energy-related history is the departure of major Western oil and gas companies. The exit of Exxon in 2018 and Chevron in 2019 could be a sign of worsening conditions concerning profitability for at least the ACG complex of oil fields.

The new-found energy wealth was an opportunity for Azerbaijan to develop and modernize. And in some measures, it definitely did. The country's economic performance between

75 percent of the state's revenue is generated by the oil and gas sector. Therefore, Azerbaijan is highly sensitive to fluctuations in global commodity prices.

The oil price crisis of 2014 was particularly problematic for Azerbaijan. The national currency, the Manat, was devalued twice. According to the World Bank, the country's GDP was halved from around \$60 billion in 2014 to just under \$30 billion in 2016.

Data from the World Bank shows that GDP per capita in Azerbaijan decreased by almost 40 percent between 2014 and 2018. That means its income per capita, at \$4,721, was roughly the same as the neighboring nations of Armenia and Georgia, with GDP per capita of \$4,212, and 4,717 respectively. This was a staggering development as both Armenia and Georgia lack any significant energy resources of their own. The former's situation is even more dire as its borders with Azerbaijan and Turkey have been closed since its independence in the nineties. Corruption and nepotism are major brakes on Azerbaijan's development.

Inefficiencies and corruption

According to Transparency International, Azerbaijan is 126th of the 180 countries on the corruption index. The ruling family, the Aliyevs, have been in power since the country's independence. The current president, Ilham Aliyev, effectively took over from his father and rumors have it that his wife is next in line. The dynastic rule was confirmed by the U.S. Embassy in Azerbaijan in leaked documents which compared the Aliyevs to the infamous Corleone family of the "Godfather" movies.

The country's oil and gas industry is essential for maintaining stability and the concentration of power. Therefore, it is likely that

Azerbaijan will remain an important energy producer despite falling oil production. Within this context, oil's importance will decrease while natural gas' share will increase. Also, expect the President and his family to maintain their hold on power while the country remains "not free" according to Freedom House.

(Vananad Meliksetian writes for Oilprice.com. This commentary appeared on oilprice.com on February 6.)

A STRIKING DEVELOPMENT IN AZERBAIJAN'S LONG ENERGY-RELATED HISTORY IS THE DEPARTURE OF MAJOR WESTERN OIL AND GAS COMPANIES.

2000 and 2014 was remarkable with GDP growth hitting 15 percent per year. Industrial areas sprung up across the country and modernization projects were underway with the billions earned from oil exports. However, the Azeri economy lacks the ability to compete on the international stage due to the low diversity of export products.

Azerbaijan's dependency on the production of oil and gas is one of the highest in the world. With a whopping 95 percent of the country's exports being hydrocarbons. Also, approximately



Demoyan Publishes Volume of Postcard Images Of Armenian Churches and Monasteries

DEMOYAN, from page 1
chapter, Urfa and Mersin are placed in the Ottoman Empire section. A postcard depicting Penang's no longer extant Armenian church, and another showing the city harbor, are included in the Ottoman Empire and the Middle East chapter, though Malaysia is located in southeast Asia.

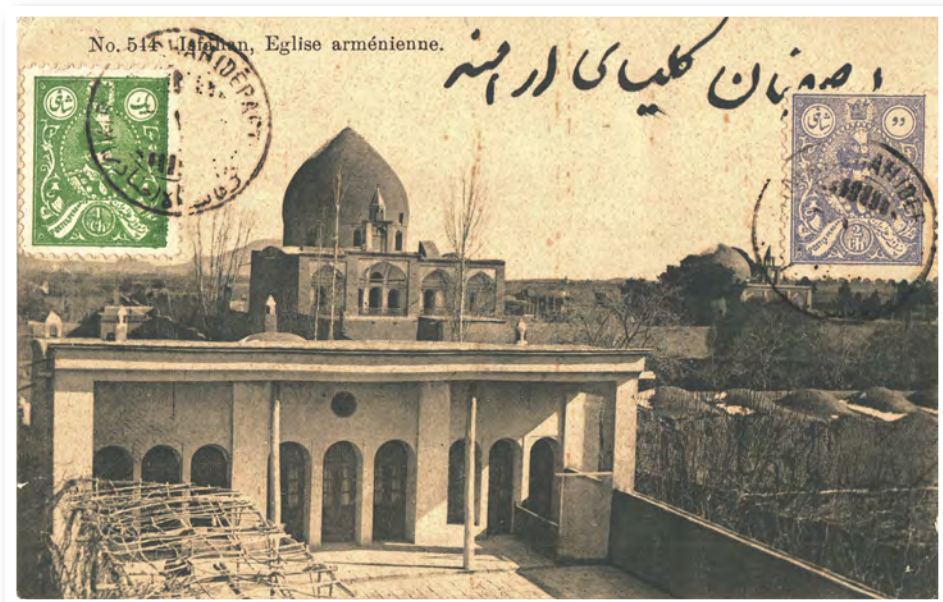
While America is included in the last chapter, there is only one Armenian-American church depicted, that of Fresno's Holy Trinity Church, alongside a postcard with a panoramic view of the latter city. Demoyan frankly makes no claim to be exhaustive in this volume, and writes that he wishes to expand the contents in future editions. The majority of the images are taken from items in his private collection.

The images range from those of well-known institutions such as the cathedral at Echmiadzin and nearby St. Gayane Church, or

Church of the Holy Cross in Moscow, demolished in the 1930s

Demoyan usually adds in the trilingual captions the date of construction of an edifice and sometimes the name of its architect, if known, as well as the date of the postcard on which it is depicted. He notes if the church or monastery has been since destroyed. If he does expand the scope of his work in future editions, it might also be interesting to include more background information on the individual churches. There are some minor discrepancies in the translations that can be regularized.

Aside from occasionally reproducing engravings or photographs of relevant churches, he also includes a few unusual auxiliary items such as a charity stamp issued to fund the construction of an Armenian church in Poti in 1900. The focus of the postcard images is on the churches or monasteries, not the postmarks or



Early 20th century postcard of the Church of the Holy All Savior in New Julfa (Isfahan, Iran).

the monastery complex at Lake Sevan to others which no longer exist. Examples include the Kamoyants Church of Saint Gevorg of Tiflis, destroyed in 1937-38, the Church of St. Gregory the Illuminator in Balti, Moldova, which was demolished in the 1950s, and the Armenian

writings on the cards. While the traditional style of Armenian church architecture is immediately recognizable, it is interesting to see how Armenian churches in different parts of the world have adopted or adapted local architectural styles



Author Dr. Hayk Demoyan holding some of the postcards used for his recent book



Early 20th century postcard of the Armenian quarter of Adana and the Protestant church

to Armenian needs. In addition to Armenian architecture, the postcards occasionally provide glimpses into everyday life, local clothing and even incidents like floods. This volume can be browsed for general information or entertainment, but it also can serve as a useful resource for academic specialists.

The author has published a number of books and articles, including the recent massive illustrated volume *Armenian Legacy in America: A 400-Year Heritage*. He served as director of the Armenian Genocide Institute-Museum for approximately a dozen years, and then became director of Armenian Programs at the Aurora Humanitarian Institute in Yerevan.

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Early 20th century postcard of the Armenian Church of the Holy Mother of God (1825) in Nizhni Novgorod during the flood of the Volga River