



Beirut Tekeyan School and Center Suffer Great Damage

Need Our Help

By Aram Arkun

Mirror-Spectator Staff

BEIRUT — The August 4 explosion in Beirut has caused great loss of life and property. Among the many Armenian institutions damaged are the Tekeyan School in Bourj Hammoud and the Tekeyan Center in Gemmayze.

The Tekeyan School serves a largely low-income Armenian population in Bourj Hammoud, and like many other Lebanese institutions, was already struggling during the difficulties of the recent Lebanese economic crisis, compounded with the arrival of the novel coronavirus. The Tekeyan Cultural Association of the United States and Canada had sent the school financial assistance this year, but now it is clear that the need is much greater and much more urgent.

The principal of the Tekeyan School, Galina Shememian Nadjarian, related the situation the day after the explosion, on August 5. Still clearly shaken, she said, “Yesterday, we lived through an utter night-

mare. We did not understand what happened. Only now are some explanations emerging about the situation and its causes. It took place yesterday at approximately 6 or 6:30 p.m. our time. While I pulled myself together, I received photographs from the school’s guard. I rushed to the school this morning.”

“Where can I start? How can I explain it? Everything is topsy-turvy. The Tekeyan School has no doors or windows. There are no offices, no computer room, no kitchen, no music room, no laboratory. Everything is ruins, the library, the hall, the sound system.” The iron gates of the school were also destroyed.

see BEIRUT, page 3

Armenia, Artsakh Send Aid To Shell-Shocked Lebanon



Aid from Armenia leaves for Beirut. See story on page 2.

Appeal for Lebanon and the Tekeyan School of Beirut

The aftermath of the terrible Beirut explosion of August 4 will affect Lebanon for a long time to come. The unnecessary loss of life is a cause for mourning throughout the world. The treatment of the wounded and the efforts to rebuild destroyed homes, institutions and much of the heart of the city will require international help. The Tekeyan Cultural Association of the United States and Canada (TCA) joins in the mourning and is ready to play a part in the work of reconstruction.

Every Armenian organization has an obligation to help the Armenian community of Beirut, which has played such a significant leadership role in the Armenian diaspora. The Tekeyan Cultural Association’s ties to Lebanon run deep.

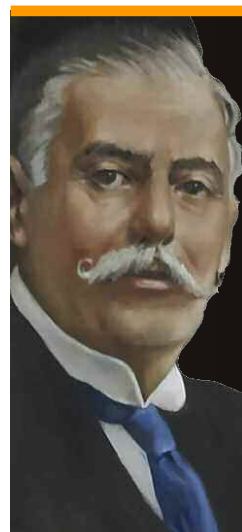
The situation of the Beirut Armenians had significantly deteriorated over the past few years due to the Lebanese economic crisis. The novel coronavirus was one more cruel blow. The Tekeyan School of Beirut serves primarily the low-income Armenian community of Bourj Hammoud. The school, along with the community it serves, was facing great financial difficulties, and TCA agreed earlier this year to increase its assistance. Aside from sending money from its own resources, it initiated a fundraising campaign.

see APPEAL, page 4

At Least 13 Armenians Die in Beirut Tragedy

BEIRUT (Combined Sources) — According to Lebanese sources, 11 Armenians were among the approximately 200 killed after the explosion in the city’s port on Tuesday, August 4, and 250 were injured.

see DEATHS, page 4



Treaty of Sèvres Centennial and Cilician Armenia

This week, we commemorate the centennial of the Treaty of Sèvres and the declaration of independence of Cilicia with a special section, including mention of the courage and diplomacy of Mihran Damadian. See pages 8-14.

NEWS IN BRIEF

COVID Cases Continue Increasing in Armenia

YEREVAN (PanARMENIAN.Net) — The number of confirmed coronavirus cases in Armenia grew by 23 to reach 40,433 on Monday, August 10, according to information provided by the Health Ministry.

Fresh figures also revealed that 96 more people have recovered, while five patients had died from Covid-19 in the previous 24 hours.

A total of 176,354 tests have been performed since the beginning of the outbreak in the country, the National Center For Disease Control and Prevention said.

So far, 32,616 people have recovered, 796 have died from the coronavirus in the country, while 228 others carrying the virus have died from other causes.

Catholicos Karekin II Offers Prayers for Lebanon

ECHMIADZIN — On Sunday, August 9, Catholicos of All Armenians Karekin II led a solemn hokehankisd service, to pray for the repose of victims of the August 4 explosion in Beirut.

The requiem service followed the Divine Liturgy celebrated before the outdoor altar of Holy Echmiadzin’s King Drtad pavilion, where the catholicos delivered a eulogy for the fallen.

“We ask the Lord to grant peace to the victims, among them our own Armenian countrymen; to comfort the hearts of their loved ones and all who grieve; and to bring a rapid recovery to the thousands of injured,” Catholicos Karekin II said.

After gratefully describing Lebanon as a country that has been welcoming to Armenians, especially after the Genocide, and affirming that Armenians have a profound stake in the well being of Lebanese society, he said that in the wake of its recent disasters, “Lebanon needs the support of the world’s nations today.”

“Every Armenian heart reaches out to Lebanon today, in this time of trial. We convey our sympathy to the Lebanon’s President, its State Council, and all of its people. We grieve along with our spiritual brother Catholicos Aram I of Cilicia, with our Armenian community in the country, and especially with the Armenian families who have suffered the loss of loved ones in this tragedy.”

He also observed that “The gentle Lebanese people have overcome many trials in their history, and we have faith that with perseverance and solidarity they will overcome the difficulties of this age. In the meantime, we invite our patriotic children across the world to support the Lebanese-Armenian community through this painful period, and more generally to help that land renew itself after the heartbreaking destruction caused by the explosion.”

INSIDE

Theater and COVID

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ARMENIA

News From Armenia

More Aid Approved For Border Villages

YEREVAN (RFE/RL) — The Armenian government approved on Thursday, August 6, 277 million drams (\$570,000) in additional financial aid to four villages in Tavush province damaged during last month's deadly fighting at a nearby section of Armenia's border with Azerbaijan.

According to the provincial administration, 89 village houses there were hit by cross-border shelling from the Azerbaijani side. The central government pledged to repair all of them immediately after the weeklong hostilities which left at least 12 Azerbaijani servicemen and 5 Armenian soldiers dead. It had initially allocated 25 million drams for that purpose.

Minister for Local Government and Infrastructures Suren Papikyan said more than 110 million drams of the extra government funding will be channeled into ongoing house repairs in three of those border villages: Aygepar, Nerkin Karmiraghbyur and Chinari.

Papikyan said another 84.3 million drams will be spent on refurbishing schools and bomb shelters located in these and another border village, Movses. He noted that the schools were not damaged by the Azerbaijani shelling.

EU Offers Aid for Hailstorm Damage

YEREVAN (Armenpress) — In mid-July 2020, a devastating hailstorm hit the city of Gyumri in Armenia, followed by floods that caused substantial damage to housing and infrastructure, the press service of the EU Delegation to Armenia announced.

In response, the European Union is providing €80,000 in humanitarian funding to assist the most affected people. This EU funding supports the Red Cross in delivering much needed relief aid, including cash assistance to help the most vulnerable cover their immediate basic needs such as food and hygiene items; vouchers for clothes; and the distribution of mattresses, pillows, blankets and bed linen.

The humanitarian aid will directly benefit 2,670 individuals whose belongings and houses were severely damaged or destroyed by the hailstorm and subsequent floods. The funding is part of the EU's overall contribution to the Disaster Relief Emergency Fund (DREF) of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC).

The most recent storm one was unprecedented in its scale and impact. About 1,000 households were affected, out of which 600 (2,670 persons) still live in container-housing that was built as 'temporary shelters' following a devastating earthquake in 1988.

Schools to Open on September 15

YEREVAN (RFE/RL) — Schools in Armenia that have remained closed due to the coronavirus pandemic since March will open their doors to students on September 15, according to Education Minister Arayik Harutyunyan.

Harutyunyan said on August 10 that the issue was discussed by senior government officials coordinating the coronavirus state of emergency earlier that day.

The minister added that vocational training colleges, music and art schools will also reopen on September 15.

All establishments must comply with sanitary and hygienic rules set by the government, Harutyunyan stressed. According to the minister, decisions on universities and a number of other educational institutions will be made within the next week.

"Authorities overseeing the state of emergency, other our colleagues and the ministry have jointly developed detailed procedures and guidelines on all issues, which will be published and shared in the coming days," Harutyunyan said in a Facebook post.

"Dear teachers, parents and students, in the coming weeks we must work together to ensure a successful start and a smooth course of the academic year, taking into account the restrictions caused by the pandemic and excluding media provocations," the minister added.

Armenia, Artsakh Send Aid To Shell-Shocked Lebanon

YEREVAN and BEIRUT (Combined Sources) — A number of countries, including Armenia, are sending humanitarian aid and medical teams to Beirut.

The first Armenian relief aircraft carrying medicine and medical equipment to Beirut after the major explosion on August 4 arrived in the Lebanese capital on August 8, Armenian Foreign Minister Zohrab Mnatsakanyan tweeted.

"First of the three airlifts of assistance from Armenia to brotherly Lebanon arrived in Beirut," Mnatsakanyan tweeted. "From Armenia's heart to Beirut."

The second and third paneloads of supplies for Lebanon were sent on August 9 and 11.

In addition, as a gesture of solidarity the National Assembly of Armenia was illuminated with the colors of Lebanese flag on August 6.

An Armenian delegation traveled to Beirut on board the relief plane carrying humanitarian aid. They took part at a mass in Antelias performed by Aram I, the Catholicos of the Great House of Cilicia in the Saint Gregory the Illuminator Cathedral.

The delegation included Armenia's High Commissioner for Diaspora Affairs Zareh Sinanyan, the administrator of the High Commissioner's Office Sara Anjargolyan, Deputy Prime Minister Tigran Avinyan's Office Administrator Varag Siseryan, lawmaker and head of the Parliamentary Friendship Group between Armenia and Lebanon Hrachya Hakobyan and the executive director of the Hayastan All Armenian Fund Haykak Arshamyan.

After the mass, the delegation had a meeting with Catholicos Aram I. The catholicos presented the condition of the Lebanese-Armenian community after the Beirut blast. He said that the homes of many representatives of the Armenian community have been damaged and require speedy rebuilding, Sinanyan's Office said in a news release.

Aram I emphasized the importance of prioritizing the needs of the Armenian community and said that a commission involving all community institutions is

working on this matter.

The Republic of Artsakh has also assistance to Lebanon to help in eliminating the aftermath of the devastating August 4 Beirut explosion, President of Artsakh Arayik Harutyunyan said on social media.

The cargo "From the People of Artsakh to Lebanon" has already arrived in Beirut.

"The assistance is in the form of food," Harutyunyan said. "And this isn't all, because I am going to convene a meeting on this issue tomorrow and I will inform on our decisions. Artsakh stands by Lebanon in overcoming this difficult challenge," he said.

Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan described Lebanon as "one of Armenia's closest friends," implying the existence of a sizable and influential Armenian community in the Middle Eastern state.

Pashinyan said that Armenia cannot remain indifferent at this difficult time toward the needs of the people of Lebanon and its Armenian community.

"On behalf of the Armenian Government I would like to express my condolences to the families of the victims and wish speedy recovery to all those who were injured. Our two countries are connected by numerous historical and cultural ties. Beirut was the capital of the Armenian Diaspora of the 20th century. For many decades, Beirut was the epicenter of religious, political and cultural life of the Diaspora. To this day it keeps its unique significance and huge role as a highly important center of Armenian presence in the Middle East. At this difficult moment, we cannot remain indifferent toward the needs of the brotherly people of Lebanon and the Armenian community of Beirut.

Pashinyan stressed that Armenia will provide as much assistance as it can to Lebanon.

The blast and its devastating consequences have led to calls for the evacuation of Lebanon's ethnic Armenian nationals willing to relocate to Armenia. Some opposition politicians and public figures as well as Lebanese-born citi-

zens or residents of Armenia have urged the Armenian government to launch special Yerevan-Beirut flights for that purpose.

According to Sinanyan, some 40 Lebanese Armenians have expressed the wish to emigrate to Armenia.

Lebanon, a nation with a population of some 6.8 million, is home to more than 150,000 ethnic Armenians, many of whom live in capital Beirut.

World leaders have pledged nearly \$300 million (253 million euros) to Lebanon to help it recover from last week's massive explosion in Beirut, the Voice of America reports.

More than 30 leaders, meeting by teleconference at the behest of French President Emmanuel Macron, said the "assistance should be timely, sufficient and consistent with the needs of the Lebanese people ... and directly delivered to the Lebanese population, with utmost efficiency and transparency."

The money would not be tied to political or institutional reform, Macron's office said. However, pledges were also made for longer-term support that would depend on changes brought in by the authorities, the Elysee Palace said.

The world powers insisted on transparency in how the aid is spent, wary of sending assistance to a government that many Lebanese view as corrupt and also voicing concern about the influence of Iran through the Shi'ite group Hezbollah.

Macron, who visited Beirut on Thursday, August 6, said at the opening of the video link that participating nations needed to put aside their differences to support the Lebanese people and that aid should be coordinated by the United Nations.

The world leaders, including U.S. President Donald Trump, called for an impartial, credible and independent inquiry into the blast that killed at least 158 people and injured about 6,000 others.

(Stories from PanArmenian.net, Armenpress and RFE/RL were used to compile this report.)

Sargsyan Rules Out Return to Politics

YEREVAN (RFE/RL) — Former President Serzh Sargsyan assured Armenians on Friday, August 7, that he is not seeking their country's "return to the past" more than two years after losing power as a result of mass protests.

Despite remaining the top leader of the former ruling Republican Party of Armenia (HHK), Sargsyan has kept a low profile since the 2018 "Velvet Revolution" triggered by his attempt to extend his decade-long rule. During a rare and brief conversation with journalists in April this year, he promised to hold an extensive news conference after a coronavirus-related state of emergency in Armenia, which was due to end on May 14 but has been repeatedly extended since then.

In a series of short video messages posted on Facebook on Friday, Sargsyan blamed the current government's "failed fight against the pandemic" and the continuing state of emergency for his failure to meet the press and speak at length for the first time since the revolution. He said he has decided to record instead video answers to questions preoccupying the public.

"It is clear that there can be no return

to the past," the 66-year-old ex-president said in response to one of those questions. "But it is equally clear that it is impossible to attain a bright future without correctly evaluating the past. The history of the newly independent Republic of Armenia cannot start from April 2018."

"We have many things to do," he went on. "Without losing hope, we need to consolidate all resources of our state, all capable forces and individuals and to move forward."

Sargsyan added that he has rarely made public statements so far in order to avoid adding to political tensions and "polarization" in the country.

Other senior HHK figures regularly and strongly criticize the administration of Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan, a former journalist who led the 2018 protests fuelled by popular anger against government corruption and injustice. They accuse the current authorities of incompetence, misuse and attempts to stifle dissent.

Pashinyan and his political allies dismiss these claims. The premier has repeatedly implicated Sargsyan, his family and political entourage in corruption



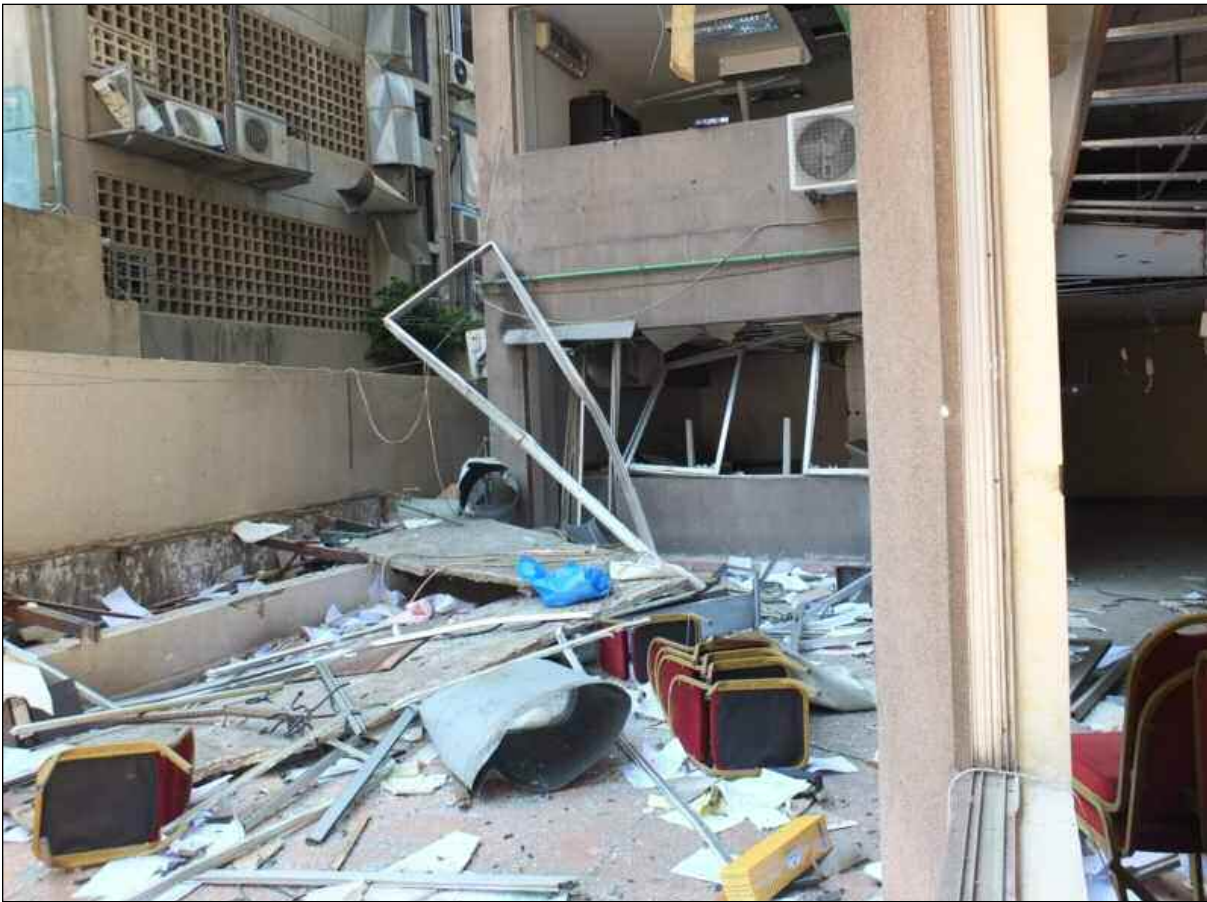
Former President Serzh Sargsyan

both before and after coming to power.

Sargsyan, his two brothers, son-in-law Mikael Minasyan as well as some former senior officials have been indicted in separate corruption investigations launched after the 2018 regime change. They reject the accusations as politically motivated.



ARMENIA



Beirut TCA School Damaged

BEIRUT, from page 1

She exclaimed, “It is as if we went through an earthquake or a war. Windows are hanging outside in pieces. Pieces of glass are all around the courtyard. The enclosed kindergarten playroom is destroyed. We still have to see whether the building itself is in usable conditions, with its foundation and columns.”

She would have not been able to leave alive if she was in her office at the time of the explosion, she said. Shememian Nadjarian was principal for 9 years, and has worked at the school for 18 years in all. She said that the loss is so great because even getting one desktop computer was difficult in Lebanon, let alone paying teachers’ salaries.

There is a guard who lives in the building with his family. Fortunately he was unharmed, and there were no lives lost at the school, though some of the parents and children have been wounded or harmed. Most live in apartments in Bourj Hammoud.

There are 107 students enrolled and 24 teachers and staff.

The prior week, the principal said, teacher training was being conducted, to prepare for reopening on September 1. Special measures were to be taken due to coronavirus and probably it would have been a hybrid style opening, with distance learning several days a week. This would have required extra assistance for families without computers or internet access.

The school is insured, but Lebanese insurance companies will not cover this type of act, which is either force majeure or an act of war. The school is

vulnerable to both robbery and damage from rain, which is common in August in Beirut. Consequently, the first task will be to secure the building from the elements.

Nearly all the Armenian community structures in the quarter have been destroyed or greatly harmed, including churches, political party clubs and compatriotic union halls. The Catholicos of Cilicia Aram I visited the municipality on August 4 and the Lebanese Interior Minister on August 5.

Ara Terzian, who manages the Tekeyan Center, on August 5 said that he rushed in his car from a village and reached the center by a quarter to eight the night of the explosion. The latter is located closer to Beirut’s port and the epicenter of the explosion, so it was more heavily damaged. Terzian remarked that the center had the double disadvantage of being not more than 400 meters from the explosion site and being in an open area.

The building is a commercial site and eight people were wounded there. Of these, one is an Armenian who was visiting someone in the building, he said, and the other seven worked in the offices. There probably were about 40 people in the building at the time of the explosion, Terzian estimated.

He exclaimed that the seven-story Tekeyan Center building was in ruins. Nothing remained but the columns. Twenty percent of the walls had fallen and all the doors and windows are gone.

Terzian said that the center used to be an important source of support for the Tekeyan School, and various other Armenian organizations, including newspapers, musical and theatrical

groups. Unfortunately, in the last few years the general decline in the Lebanese situation also severely affected its revenues. Now to repair the destruction from the explosion will cost hundreds of thousands of dollars. Formal estimates are being obtained. As in the case of the Tekeyan School, the priority is first to secure the building from the elements and thieves.

There are many worthy causes now to support in Lebanon, and many organizations are working hard to this effect. The Tekeyan Cultural Association of the United States and Canada will continue its historical role of helping its eponymous institutions in Beirut, and the school in particular, which helps so many Armenian families secure a good education for their children irrespective of their own financial situation. American Armenians have been involved in the development of the school from the start and now they will help it rebuild and overcome this new tribulation.

Those who wish to help the school financially can send their donations online by credit card at <https://givebutter.com/bXn8Lm> or by check to the Tekeyan Cultural Association (memo: Beirut Tekeyan School), at its headquarters (755 Mount Auburn Street, Watertown MA 02472). For more information, email tcadirector@aol.com or call 617 924-4455. All administrative costs for this campaign will be borne by the Tekeyan Cultural Association.

(Photo above is the Tekeyan Center, which is in ruins. The photo below captures the extensive damage to the Tekeyan School.)



International News

Istanbul’s Dadyan Varjaran Gets New Principal

ISTANBUL (*Jamanak*) – Yeranuhi Balci has been announced as the new principal of Istanbul’s Dadyan Varjaran, located in the Bakirkoy neighborhood.

The school was led for many years by Alis Bayram.

The parish council of Holy Mother of God Church in Bakirkoy decided to give the reins of the school to Yeranuhi Balci, who is experienced worker in the field of education.

Balci has been a math teacher at the school. She has also been vice-principal.

Balci is a graduate of the Essayan Varjaran.

Greece Accuses Turkey Of ‘Threatening Peace’ In the Mediterranean

ATHENS (DW) – Greece has called a military meeting after Turkey resumed a mission looking for gas reserves near a Greek island. Erdogan has meanwhile called for dialogue to resolve ongoing issues between the two NATO members.

Greece on Monday, August 10, accused NATO ally Turkey of “threatening peace” in the eastern Mediterranean after Ankara resumed searching for oil and gas near the remote Greek island of Kastellorizo.

The Greek foreign ministry said that Turkey’s decision to deploy a seismic research ship constituted a “new serious escalation” and “exposed” Turkey’s “destabilizing role.”

The Greek ministry said the country “will defend its sovereignty and its sovereign rights.”

The office of Greek Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis said he had spoken to EU Council President Charles Michel and NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg.

Stoltenberg urged respect for international law during his conversation with Mitsotakis.

“The situation must be resolved in a spirit of Allied solidarity and in accordance with international law,” Stoltenberg tweeted.

“Let us all come together as Mediterranean countries and find a formula that protects all of our rights,” Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan said on Monday in a national address after a meeting with his own ministers, striking a comparatively conciliatory tone.

“We cannot allow [nations] to ignore a big country like Turkey and try to imprison us to our shores.”

Turkey dispatched the research ship Oruc Reis to the region on Monday – just three days after Erdogan said he was tired of waiting for the outcome of sporadic talks held in the past month with Greece and the EU’s current presidency holder, Germany.

Paylan Seeks Reburial of Turkish-Armenian Artist In Diyarbakir

ANKARA (*PanARMENIAN.Net*) – Turkish-Armenian lawmaker Garo Paylan from the Peoples’ Democratic Party (HDP) on August 11 submitted a parliamentary question as to why Armenian composer Aram Tigran was not allowed to be buried in the city following his death on August 8, 2009, Bianet reports.

Also known as “Apé Aram,” Tigran was the son of a family who was expelled from Diyarbakir in 1915. He had stated in his will that he wanted to be buried in his ancestors’ hometown, which was not permitted at the time because he was not a citizen of Turkey.

A conservatory named after him was shut down after Diyarbakir Mayor Selçuk Mızraklı from the HDP was replaced with a government-appointed trustee in August 2019.

Paylan asked the following questions to Minister of Culture and Tourism Mehmet Nuri Ersoy: Will you make any attempt to keep the memory of Aram Tigran, whose art and personality was loved by the peoples of Turkey? Why don’t you allow Aram Tigran to be buried in Diyarbakir in accordance with his will?



INTERNATIONAL

Appeal for Lebanon and the Tekeyan School of Beirut

APPEAL, from page 1

Now, on top of the existing difficulties, the school building suffered extensive damage, as did the Tekeyan Center, which during its heyday would help the school locally. The costs to repair both buildings will run in the hundreds of thousands. It is urgent to help the school rebuild and become operational before the start of the fall school year.

Armenians have suffered many calamities in recent history – wars in Lebanon, Artsakh and Armenia, earthquakes in Gyumri. These experiences should have taught us to create a pan-Armenian structure, enjoying the confidence of all segments of the Armenian diaspora, as well as of the Armenian republic, to raise funds worldwide and allocate them to recovering sufferers without any discrimination.

TCA appeals to the alumni of the Tekeyan School, Tekeyan supporters in North America, and the generous Armenians of the diaspora to join in this campaign to make sure that our compatriots in Lebanon are not left alone. There are many worthy aid efforts taking place now. We hope that among them you will consider adopting this school's cause and support the provision of education as a means of improving the lives of Beirut Armenians.

Donations may either be made online by credit card at <https://givebutter.com/bXn8Lm> or as checks mailed to the Tekeyan Cultural Association (memo: Beirut Tekeyan School), at its headquarters (755 Mount Auburn Street, Watertown MA 02472). For more information, email tcadirector@aol.com or call 617 924-4455. All administrative costs for this campaign will be borne by the Tekeyan Cultural Association.



Indian Soldiers Reveal Secrets of Armenian Genocide

“.... Here, you can have this doll. It is my daughter's. You can keep it.”

One hundred years ago, these were probably the last words that a British soldier said to an Armenian orphan lost in the endlessness of the Mesopotamian desert handing her the precious memory of his once peaceful civilian life.

However, this is not an excerpt from a novel, but a real story attained from a descendant of Sikh soldier who once served in the British army during WWI.

Arjan Manhas, a young community historian, had as classmates two Armenian brothers. He remembers one day he was invited to their house for a party. It was a typical Armenian party with an immense quantity of food and lots of guests. Arjan noticed an old man, a grandfather, sitting away from the crowd, browsing through the pages of an old photo album.

“He told me that they were his ancestors in these photos, survivors of the Genocide that happened a century ago,” he recalled.

Arjan is sharing with me his memories on the other side of the computer screen during our online interview from Canada, home to nearly half a million Sikhs.

Arjan started to dig deeper through the history's less known pages of his own nation's losses and triumphs. He soon discovered that both

his paternal and maternal great grandfathers used to serve in the British-Indian Army from 1916 to 1919. Among his findings was a journal of a soldier who served with his great-grandfather. The journal included material about the deportation camps in the present-day Iraqi desert, where tents were sheltering Armenian women and children.

“The women had a ring. But no husband was there. There were two boys and two girls inside the tent,” reveled the journal. Sikh soldiers shared their food with the starving children, play with them letting them play with their beards and turbans.

Arjan remembers that the journal included some dark pages; both the mothers and children were sexually assaulted, traumatized. Arjan doesn't like to talk about these horrible details; perhaps they remind him of the suffering of his own nation.

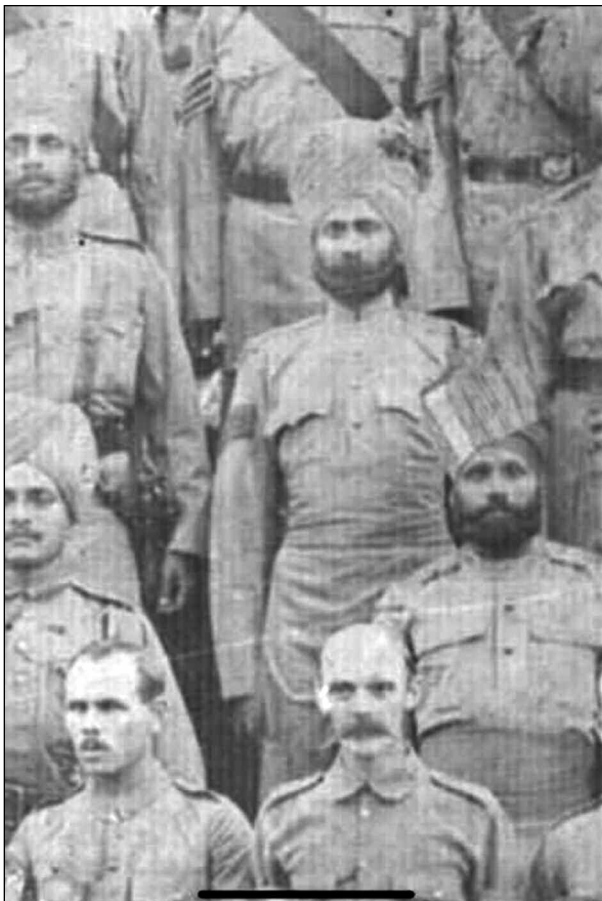
In 1984, according to independent sources, about 8, 000 to 17,000 Sikhs were killed in India as a result of a series of organized pogroms. These events are also known as the Sikh Massacre.

Sikhism is a monotheistic religion, that originated in Punjab in 15th century and is the fifth largest religion in the world.

During WWI Sikh soldiers as well as the British were prisoners of war and had been placed in the camps with the deported Armenians. In fact, the Ottoman army separated British and Muslim prisoners from Hindus and Sikhs, sending them in to the “worst camps” in Ras al-Ain to work on the rail line.

“The Turkish soldiers bullied the Sikh soldiers, forced them to eat meat, cut off their hair, take of the turbans....”Arjan Manhas continues his stories.

During the march to their final destination, these prisoners witnessed the entire horrific



Sikh soldiers serving in the British army during World War I

picture of the atrocities perpetrated by the Ottomans in a small Armenian village.

“When we went to look into a well a swarm insects flew out. It was not advisable to drink from these wells; there were Armenian corpses rotting in many of them.”

These are the memories of another Indian Prisoner of war, Sisir Sarbadhikari, shared in his self-published book, Abhi Le Baghdad (On to Baghdad).

Arjan Manhas has only one picture of one of his great-grandfathers, Tara Singh, and his application to join the British-Indian Army. Another great-grandfather, Dummas Singh, was suffering from PTSD after the war and no records, nor stories about him Arjan is able to add to his precious collection.

— Ani Duzdabanyan-Manoukian

British Armenians Mobilize for Lebanon

LONDON – By the decision of the Primate of the Diocese of the Armenian Church in the United Kingdom and Ireland, Bishop Hovakim Manukyan, a prayer service for Lebanon and for the loving memory of all who perished because of this devastating catastrophe was held on Sunday, August 9 in St. Yeghishe Armenian Church, Cranley Gardens, London. Similar prayers were held in all the churches in the UK.

In his sermon Bishop Manukyan said it is the right time to express our solidarity with our brethren and sisters in Lebanon by helping them with aid to overcome this terrible tragedy. He asked the congregation to keep Lebanon and our brothers and sisters there in your prayers as we ask God to help them in these difficult times.

After him the vice-chair of the British Armenian Community Dr. Hratch Kouyoumjian was invited to convey his message to the public. Dr. Kouyoumjian thanked the bishop for his prayers and described the terrible situation the country of the Cedars is in. He added that after the Genocide, dark clouds gathered over Armenia and Armenia was hit by the terrible earthquake, and now by a tragic coincidence, Armenia Street in Beirut suffers a similar tragedy.

Finally, he mentioned the collective action of all organisations in the UK upon the invitation of the Community Council and the blessing of the bishop to pool their resources and contribute to the remedial action and the reconstruction of the damaged zones Beirut which the country desperately needs.



From left, pastor of the St. Yeghiche Church Fr. Nishan Alaverdian, Deacon Africyan and Dr. Hratch Kouyoumjian, speaking

At Least 13 Armenians Die in Beirut Tragedy

DEATHS, from page 1

They were residents of various parts of Lebanon, but at the time of the explosion were in the city center, which is close to the beach.

The names of most of the Armenian victims are known. They are Nazar Najarian, Jessica Bezdjian, Delia Papazian, Jack Barmakian, Anahit Berberian, Liza Kavoukjian-Gozubeougian, Varoujan Tosunian, Gaya Fodouljian, Sarkis Tekirian. The names of the other victims have not yet been released. In addition, there are several who are missing and not yet confirmed as dead.

The Armenian Foreign Ministry spokesperson Anna Naghdalyan puts the number at 13, however.

Community News

AMAA Mobilizes To Help Lebanon

By Zaven Khanjian

PARAMUS, N.J. – The explosion that took the lives of scores of innocent Lebanese and wounded thousands in Beirut yesterday is beyond devastating. Whether an accident or the canning deliberate act of evil hands and minds, the damage is beyond extensive and bearable. The resulting devastation and destruction caused is so widespread and immense that some describe it as unseen during the 15-year civil war.

A country severely suffering from political, economic, financial and health crisis has now experienced violence and physical damage to life and properties. Our hearts cry for the victims of the explosion and their families. It is my hope and prayer that this does not lead into widespread violence in a country that has for ages offered the illumination of education, freedom of movement and expression, it's natural beauty and the warmth of its people to the region and beyond. It is where my alma mater is. May the victims Rest In Peace and may the Holy Spirit console loved ones and families with its power which is beyond understanding.

Lebanon, now, more than ever, desperately needs two things.

Peace, first and foremost.

Since independence in the 1940s, and because of the abundant vital freedoms that are alien to the region; the atmosphere of free expression, free press, free access and the beautiful natural amenities the country is blessed with and has offered, Lebanon has been the focal point and center of all clandestine and covert operations, intrigues and conspiracies plotted in the region. This small, once majority Christian nation in the heart of the Near East, lying on the shores of the Mediterranean is tired of the rivalries and duels, strives and struggles carried out on its soil. Lebanon today, beyond its corrupt political elite, has been subjected to collective punishment through direct or indirect sanctions which have suffocated its economy, paralyzed its trade and is on its way to starve the country and its population. In a humanitarian spirit that is par with our values, it is imperative that inhumane sanctions in the region leading to and resulting in the suffering of millions be lifted immediately. Rival powers in the region should settle their differences around a negotiating table and not the dinner tables of its peaceful and innocent population. peace is imperative and top priority in Lebanon and beyond.

Rebuilding

Struck with the curses of political, economic, financial plus COVID-19 ailments, Lebanon now needs all decent, loving and caring hands in the world to come to its rescue. Emergency assistance including, food, provision, medicine, shelter that was urgently needed yesterday are supplemented today with the simplest of needs; cover (glass or other) for the shattered structural and moral windows and doors of the country.

All destructive hands off Lebanon.

This is an appeal to all peace loving, compassionate and Christ centered hands and hearts to reach out and save Lebanon and the region beyond.

The AMAA is committed to unabashedly continue its indiscriminative emergency assistance to our communities in Lebanon injecting HOPE and revival.

(Zaven Khanjian is the AMAA Executive Director/CEO.)



COAF Village

COAF Soiree to Raise Funds for COVID-19 Relief In Rural Armenia

Featuring Sebu Simonian, Mary Basmadjian, Araksya Karapetyan, and Sona Movsesian

LOS ANGELES/NEW YORK – The Diamond Anniversary Children of Armenia Fund (COAF) Summer Soiree will be held virtually this year on August 15 to raise funds for the organization's COVID Emergency Relief Fund. COAF has been at the forefront of rural development in Armenia for 16 years, providing youth with opportunities for advancement through improved infrastructure, and state-of-the-art education, health, social and economic programs.

COAF's existing rural health and social services programs have been the focus of attention during the pandemic. Partnerships with the European Union (EU) Delegation in Armenia and the Austrian Development Agency have provided humanitarian assistance to vulnerable families throughout 64 beneficiary communities, along with medical equipment to village health centers. The organization has also increased online education programming for students and is in the process of assisting small rural businesses that have faced financial hardship.

The COAF Summer Soiree is an annual benefit historically held in New York City. Like most fundraising events during the pandemic, this year's Soiree will be available virtually, allowing Armenians worldwide to register for free to learn more about COAF and its COVID outreach in Armenia. Funds raised this year will be reinvested into COAF's health infrastructure in rural Armenia, providing critical support to village medical facilities in the form of equipment, supplies and capacity-building.

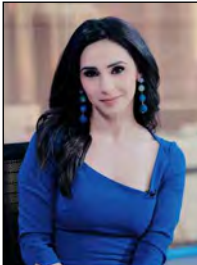
This year's Summer Soiree is being hosted by Araksya Karapetyan of Good Day L.A. on FOX 11 Los Angeles. Born in Armenia, Araksya moved to the US at a young age and was inspired to become a journalist after visiting her homeland for a summer vacation where she found herself documenting on camera the everyday reality of life there. Araksya also hosted the Annual COAF Holiday Gala last December in New York City, helping raise over \$6 million.

Special performances this year include musician/singer/songwriter and one-half of the Los Angeles-based Indie pop duo, Capital Cities! Sebu Simonian toured the COAF SMART Center last year while in Armenia, where he met with students and treated them to a concert. Popular comedian Mary Basmadjian, a recent guest on COAF's INSTALIVE series on Instagram, will also deliver a comedic sketch during this year's Soiree. Conan O'Brien's right-hand woman Sona Movsesian will also be featured with a special appearance.

COAF's team of child musicians from Armenia will also participate, including kanon-playing duo Meri Musinyan and Kristine Yengoyan, along with pianist Armen Puchinyan & Friends accompanied by jazz sensation Narine Dovlatyan. Musinyan, Yengoyan and Puchinyan have all delivered memorable musical performances at past COAF galas in New York City.

This year has been marked by one crisis after another, whether the global pandemic, the civil rights movement in the US, the escalation of violence on the Armenian-Azerbaijani border, and the devastation in Beirut. COAF is taking all necessary steps to prepare for the anticipated waves of COVID-19 infection expected in rural Armenia this fall/winter. All funds raised from the Soiree will go directly to the COAF COVID Emergency Fund, allowing COAF to step up efforts in combatting the COVID-19 crisis. The lives and livelihoods of thousands of people are at risk and your generous contributions will give COAF the opportunity to expand exceptional humanitarian assistance to more beneficiary villages.

Armenians worldwide are being encouraged to register for the Soiree and learn more by visiting link. Those who are unable to take part in the Soiree on August 15 can help by visiting website.



Araksya Karapetyan

LA City Councilor Kerkorian Condemns Remarks by US Ambassador to Azerbaijan

LOS ANGELES – Following Azerbaijan media reports that the United States had "apologized" for protests in Los Angeles by American citizens against Azerbaijani aggression, Los Angeles City Councilmember Paul Kerkorian formally demanded a response from the US Ambassador to that country.

After Azerbaijan attacked Armenian border villages last month, protests against the aggression took place around the world. In some places, including Los Angeles, Azerbaijani nationalists initiated provocative actions to disrupt the exercise by Armenian-Americans and others of their constitutionally protected rights.

According to the Azerbaijani media reports, United States Ambassador Lee Litzenberger disparaged Armenian-American citizens to the Azerbaijani Foreign Ministry, blaming them for "provocation" as they exercised their First Amendment rights. These media reports also reported that the US ambassador had



Paul Kerkorian

claimed that local Los Angeles officials had also apologized – a claim that is false. Especially troubling, the US ambassador supposedly assured this foreign government "that an investigation will be carried out regarding this issue and appropriate measures will be taken."

In his letter to the ambassador, Councilmember Kerkorian demanded clarification and/or retraction from the Ambassador, since there is little reason to assume that unsubstantiated reports from Azerbaijani state-influenced media are factual.

Kerkorian wrote: "As an elected leader of the City of Los Angeles, I would be shocked and disturbed to learn that an ambassador of my country would comment upon or intervene in any way in an investigation by a local law enforcement agency within the United States, let alone to reach a conclusory characterization about such an investigation. Moreover, ... I would be deeply concerned if the United States Department of State or one of its ambassadors believed that they (or any Federal agency) had the authority to 'investigate' occurrences that took place in Los Angeles that do not involve Federal law, let alone to take 'appropriate measures.' Finally, I would certainly hope that no ambassador of the United States of America would ever apologize to any foreign government for the exercise of constitutionally protected rights by Americans at home."



COMMUNITY NEWS / OBITUARIES

St. Mark to Hold Armenian Fest-to-Go Labor Day Weekend

SPRINGFIELD, Mass. — St. Mark Armenian Church's annual Armenian Festival, which has become a favorite in the Greater Springfield area, will this year be an Armenian Fest-to-Go, offering its traditional Armenian dinners and baked goods in a drive-thru format. The drive-thru will be a two-day event, taking place on Saturday, September 5 from 4 p.m. to 7 p.m., and Sunday, September 6 from 12 p.m. to 5 p.m. at the church, 2427 Wilbraham Road in Springfield.

The Fest-to-Go drive-thru will allow members of the community to bring home the same meals and baked goods always offered at the parish's traditional festival, right from the comfort and safety of their own cars.

An online ordering system has been set up on the church's website, <https://www.stmarkarmenianchurch.org/2020-aftg-order-form>, which is an easy way to read descriptions of each food item, select a pick-up time and pre-pay to make the drive-thru process quick and smooth. Quantities will be limited, and online pre-ordering and pre-pay is strongly recommended by September 3.

A printable order form can also be downloaded from the St. Mark website, [stmarkarmenianchurch.org](https://www.stmarkarmenianchurch.org), and mailed to the church (2427 Wilbraham Road, Springfield, MA 01129) or those wishing to place their orders over the

phone can leave a message on the church phone.

Though online ordering is encouraged, card, check (made payable to St. Mark Armenian Church) and cash will be accepted for drive-up orders.

The church will donate \$1 from each purchased dinner will be to the Food Bank of Western Massachusetts.

The event will be observing CDC guidelines, and ask that attendees remain in their cars and wear a mask at all times.

In addition to the donation to the Food Bank, proceeds from the FEST-TO-GO will benefit the ministries of St. Mark Armenian Church. Sponsorships are welcome, which can be made by going to the church website, [stmarkarmenianchurch.org](https://www.stmarkarmenianchurch.org).

For more information, visit [stmarkarmenianchurch.org](https://www.stmarkarmenianchurch.org) and its Facebook page. For questions, contact the church.



TCA - Greater New York donates \$10,000 to Beirut's Vahan Tekeyan School teachers and staff

The dire economic crisis and recent disaster in Beirut has impacted the Lebanese people, especially the Armenian community, in an unprecedented way.

The Tekeyan Cultural Association of Greater New York Chapter is donating \$10,000 to the Vahan Tekeyan School teachers and staff during this devastating and difficult time. We thank them for their hard work and dedication, and are grateful that they are part of the Tekeyan family.

We stand in solidarity with our fellow Lebanese-Armenians who need our help now more than ever.

Tekeyan Cultural Association - Greater New York Committee

OBITUARY

Kiraz (Edmond Kirazian) Noted French Illustrator

PARIS — Illustrator Kiraz (Edmond Kirazian) died on August 11. Born in Cairo (Egypt) on August 25, 1923, he died in Paris at age 96.

Passionate about drawing, he began his artistic work very early and published his first political drawings to 17 years old, for newspapers such as *Image*, *Parade*, the *Réforme d'Alexandrie* or in *Al Moussavar*, under the name of "Kiraz."

He arrived in Paris in 1945 and began drawing for the newspaper *La Bataille* (1950-51). He then continued at the *Rouge et le Noir* (1951-52), *Samedi Soir* (1952-54), and *Ici Paris* (1955-59).

But it is thanks to the great industrialist Marcel Dassault, owner of the magazine *Jours de France*, that Kiraz owes his reputation by publishing every week, until 1987, the famous drawings of the "Parisiennes," young mischievous women, with elongated silhouettes, huge eyes, mainly concerned with shopping and fashion.

During his long career, Kiraz created a total of 25,000 drawings.

— Jean Eckian

Tekeyan Cultural Association, Inc.

Dr. Nubar Berberian Annual 2020 Awards

Dr. Nubar Berberian, intellectual, journalist, activist and editor of many ADL daily newspapers for more than 50 years, passed away at the age of 94 on November 23, 2016. In his will, Dr. Berberian directed his Trust Fund managers to appropriate awards every year to college students of Armenian descent worldwide who major in either International Law or Political Science.

ELIGIBILITY AND REQUIREMENTS

- 1) Eligible recipients are college students of Armenian descent who major in either International Law or Political Science.
- 2) Applicant must be enrolled in a full-time graduate program in a fully accredited college or university in the world.
- 3) Applicant must provide all of the information requested on the application form.
- 4) Applicant must submit a copy of his or her most recent college transcript.
- 5) Applicant is to include a small head and shoulders self-portrait.
- 6) Application could be received by requesting from tcadirector@aol.com.
- 7) Applicants should submit applications electronically (via email) to: tcadirector@aol.com. Paper submissions will be accepted by the deadline at:

Tekeyan Cultural Association, Inc.

Dr. Nubar Berberian Trust Fund

755 Mt. Auburn Street

Watertown, MA 02472

(Electronic application is preferred.)

- 8) The deadline of receiving the applications is **September 15, 2020**.
- 9) The administrators and managers of the fund will vote the qualified winners in **October 2020** based on the merits of each applicant.
- 10) The winner or winners will receive their awards in **November, 2020**
- 11) Winning applicants are not eligible to apply again.
- 12) This announcement is published in Armenian, English, French and Spanish.

Watertown, MA, July 15, 2020

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COMMUNITY NEWS

'Transition Tremors' Program Addresses Velvet Revolution Two Years Hence

BELMONT, Mass. — As part of its Zoom Series Lecture series, the Society for Armenian Studies (SAS) is organizing a Zoom Panel titled "Transition Tremors: Armenia Two Years after the Velvet Revolution." Co-sponsored by the National Association for Armenian Studies and Research (NAASR)/Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation Series on Contemporary Armenian Issues, the Zoom Panel will take place on Saturday, August 22, at 12 p.m. ET (9 a.m. Pacific).

In 2018, a democratic breakthrough via mass-scale nonviolent disobedience campaign led by Nikol Pashinyan, brought down Armenia's soft-authoritarian system headed by then President-turned-Prime Minister Serge Sargsyan. Since then, the country continues to face challenges to consolidate its still fragile democracy. The task of the current government to transition to a full-fledged democracy has been hampered by various factors, including the still persistent of the ancien régime, unreformed judiciary, weak political party system, spread of misinformation and fake news. The most recent global health crisis brought on by Covid-19 pandemic further complicated reform initiatives. In an attempt to take stock of gains and challenges towards democratic consolidation, this panel will contextualize Armenia's domestic politics over the past two years, doing so in a global comparative context. The discussion is geared towards identifying some of the key issues/challenges that the post-Velvet government faces.

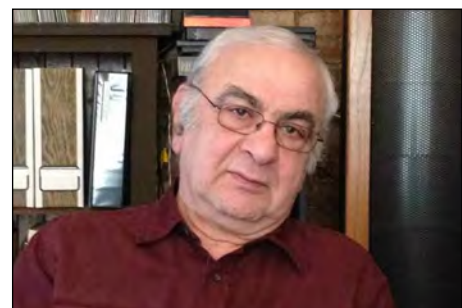
The panel, moderated by Prof. Jirair Libaridian (University of Michigan, Ann Arbor-retired) will feature Prof. Anna Ohanyan (Stonehill College) who is going to talk about "Velvet is not a Color: Armenia's Democratic Transition in a Global



Prof. Asbed Kotchikian



Prof. Jenny Paturyan



Prof. Jirair Libaridian

Context"; Prof. Jenny Paturyan (American University of Armenia) will discuss "State Capacity Building & Institutions: Changing Role of Legislative, Executive, and Judicial Branches in Armenia Since 2018"; Prof. Asbed Kotchikian (Bentley College) will discuss "The Reconfiguration of the Political Landscape in Armenia and the Ensuing Challenges"; and Prof. Armine Ishkhanian (London School of Economics and Political Science) will talk about "Changing Role of Civil Society in Post-Velvet Revolution Armenia."



Prof. Armine Ishkhanian

"This is a very timely panel that will critically assess the political and socio-economic developments in Armenia since the Velvet Revolution. The panelists are among the most important scholars of contemporary Armenian affairs. This will be a unique opportunity to listen to them. I highly encourage everyone to participate in the Zoom Panel," said Prof. Bedross Der Matossian, president of the Society for Armenian Studies (SAS).

To Register for the Zoom Panel visit: <https://bit.ly/armeniantremors>

Tekeyan Cultural Association

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SPECIAL FEATURE

The Final Destruction Of Armenian Cilicia

By Aram Arkun

What happened in Cilicia after World War I can be viewed as a tragedy on its own, or as part of the aftermath of the Armenian Genocide. Either way, it was a great blow to the Armenians who had survived the World War and the efforts of the Ottoman Empire to uproot and annihilate them as a people.

The Armenians had been deported from their homes in Cilicia and in other parts of the Ottoman Empire to sites now found in Syria, Iraq and Jordan starting in 1915. At the end of the world war, the British and the French occupied Cilicia as well as various other parts of the defeated Ottoman Empire. The Armenians began to return to their homes, encouraged that these great Western powers would ensure their safety and allow them to rebuild their lives. Cilician Turks and some other Muslims viewed the Armenian welcome of the occupying powers with hostility.

Background
Cilicia is located today in southeastern Turkey, extending from the coastal areas off the Mediterranean Sea to mountainous areas. Armenians had begun emigrating there in large numbers starting in the 10th century, fleeing Seljuk Turkish invasions of their homeland proper, and eventually established a kingdom, which lost its independence in 1375 after attacks by Seljuk Turks and the Mamluks of Egypt.

Armenians maintained a degree of autonomy in small areas of Cilicia, especially in mountainous locales like Zeytun and Hajin, for a long period of time, and there remained a majority population, but in many regions, many people of Turkish, Kurdish, Arab and Circassian origin settled. The nineteenth century efforts to reform the Ottoman Empire attempted to end the autonomy enjoyed by some martial Armenian communities. The reform efforts were not enough to stem the decline of the empire, which in turn had grave repercussions for the Armenians.

The Cilician Armenians were subject to three sets of massacres in the span of little more than a generation. Their etiologies are a subject for a different article.

The Hamidian massacres of the 1890s were followed by the Cilician massacres of 1900, and then of course a full-scale genocide. Naturally Armeno-Turkish relations would be difficult henceforth.

Not only surviving Armenians native to Cilicia returned after the end of the war. Armenians from other areas who were not allowed to return to their own provinces remained in Cilicia, which was closer to the locations to which they had been deported.

Attempts at Justice

When the Armenians returned, they sought lost family members and properties. Sometimes young children and women had been taken by Muslim families as servants or concubines. Homes, lands, animals and various items of personal property had been confiscated either by the state or taken by neighbors.

The French and British attempted to facilitate this process by creating local commissions, which had both Armenian and non-Armenian members. The return of property was uneven. Where Armenians were more numerous, such as in towns like Hajin, they were much more successful in obtaining properties (and even in a few cases may have gone beyond what was legitimate). Where they were less numerous, the local Muslim population attempted to obstruct the process.

It was also hard at times to reintegrate Armenian women and children who had been taken by Muslim families into their original families. Some feared new Muslim/Ottoman violence if they returned to their Armenian identities. There

were women who had children from their Muslim captors and did not want to leave the latter. Some of the Muslim captors forcibly resisted attempts to free Armenians,

Armenians wanted particular individuals who caused great harm through violence and rape punished. They applied to the Ottoman court system which the occupying British and French allowed to function in Cilicia, but usually did not receive justice there. They also petitioned the British and French to take direct action.

The latter did expel some leaders of the Committee of Union and Progress from Cilician lands, and did arrest a few perpetrators of crimes. However, they took action in an opportunistic fashion, and allowed Ottoman leaders to remain in power when they seemed willing to collaborate with the occupiers even when their hands were stained by the crimes they had committed against Armenians. Overall, the Armenians saw little justice after their return to their homes.

Military and Political Leadership

The defeated Ottoman Empire was allowed to continue to politically administer its territories until the decisions of the peace conference, so the British and French kept the local Ottoman system of government in place in the occupied portions of Adana and Aleppo provinces which constituted historical Cilicia. They had their own military officials who supervised the administration as well as controlled their occupying forces.

The wartime agreements for the partition of the Ottoman Empire allotted Cilicia (which included additional territories to the north such as the provinces of Sivas (Sepsadia) and Mamuretülaziz (Kharpert) that could never be militarily seized) to the French, but the British had to initially occupy much of this area militarily until the French had sufficient troops to take over at the end of 1919.

The troops used by the French included members of the Armenian Legion, volunteers (“gamavors”) who came from places like the United States and France to avenge the deaths of loved ones, help save their remaining compatriots and hopefully create an Armenian state after the war. The French as administrators attempted to appeal to both Muslims and Armenians and so worked to lessen the numbers and the role of the legionnaires in Cilicia.

The legionnaires attempted spontaneously to intervene to liberate Armenians in captivity, at times leading to clashes with local Muslims. They also had tumultuous relations with



Muslim troops from North Africa and Asia serving under the French and British.

The Armenians of Cilicia formed National Unions in each town and city which helped in the resettlement of Armenians and the attempts at justice. In places like Zeytun and Hajin, which had small Muslim populations, these unions served as de facto local governments. At their head was the Armenian National Union in Adana, which often dealt with the French and Ottoman authorities. A Cilician National Union representing most cities was not formed until June 1920. Armenian inter-political party councils were also formed in many places and later there was a supreme council with political party representatives.

Perhaps the most prominent Armenian political figure in Cilicia was Mihran Damadian, who served as Plenipotentiary Representative of the Armenian National Delegation, based in Paris, to the French government. A leader of what became the Armenian Democratic Liberal Party, he attempted to resolve internal issues among the fractious Cilician Armenians and helped organize National union branches.

Catholicos of Cilicia Sahag II Khabayan, as leader of one of the four main institutions of the Armenian Church worldwide was active, in attempting to lobby for the rights of the Cilician Armenians, as were local Armenian Catholic and Protestant leaders.

Dreams of Future Independence Dashed

The French initially gave some signals that an Armenian state could be created in Cilicia, in addition to their use of the Armenian Legion. For example, several French administrators had “Armenia” in their titles, such as colonel Edouard Brémont, Chief of Administration in Armenia, or François Georges-Picot, High Commissioner of Syria and Armenia, but soon these titles were changed.

Armenians may have wanted Cilicia part of an integral Armenia, or if not, as an independent state. However, it turned out that the French initially hoped to hold onto Cilicia and Syria. The Paris Peace Conference was supposed to make the final decision. In the meantime, the European powers made various deliberately misleading statements directed at public opinion while the US avoided taking on the role of mandatory power for an integral Armenia including Cilicia.

By mid-1919 it became clear that the victorious powers would not create an integral Armenia, and by the end of 1919, that there would not be an independent Cilicia either. Yet the French still encouraged Armenians to believe that France came to Cilicia to protect the Armenians until the latter were ready to govern themselves.

The French constantly had difficulties in controlling Syria, to the south of Cilicia, because of the Arab independence movement under Emir Faisal. The Armenians suffered from this. One result was the February 28, 1919 massacres of Armenians in Aleppo, and concurrent attempts to attack Armenians in parts of Cilicia.

The replacement of British troops by French from the end of October to early November 1919 weakened control over the local populations, since the French did not have as many troops or military equipment as their predecessors. Attacks multiplied on Cilician Armenians in the winter by Turkish Nationalist supporters.

The French, who had eyes on Cilicia since the beginning of World War I, if not earlier, did not really intend to allow its transformation into an Armenian state. This is evident from French diplomatic correspondence from the fall and winter of 1919. Furthermore, if France itself would not be able to retain hold of Cilicia, the inclination of some high level French officials was to come to a broad accord with the Turkish Nationalists, using Cilicia as part of their pack of disposable bargaining chips for other goals. Informal discussions between Turkish Nationalist and French officials were held from the fall of 1919.

The informal discussions turned into public negotiations at European conferences beginning in early 1920, with the French willing to give up most of Cilicia for economic concessions and the Kemalists always striving to obtain more.

Fighting and Final Expulsion

The retreating Ottoman armies left arms caches and men, in the guise of gendarmes, behind to prepare for a resistance struggle in 1918. The Ottoman government protested the British and French occupation of Cilicia. Weak responses to attacks on the French and Armenians in 1919, European divisions and diplomatic overtures, the fear of increasing immigration bolstering the Armenian population of Cilicia and making it irretrievably lost to the Turks, and the allure of the rich resources of Cilicia encouraged the concentration of Turkish forces against Cilicia. At the Sivas Congress of Turkish Nationalists (September 4-11, 1919), it was determined that regular military units near Cilicia would secretly aid Cilician Turkish nationalist organizations. Turkish Nationalists began larger scale fighting against the French and the Armenians from January 1920.

The Armenians were seen as allies of the French, but the French at times abandoned the Armenians to the attacks of the Turkish Nationalists. The most infamous case is that of the city of Marash. The French pulled out suddenly after three weeks of fighting, although they appeared to have the military edge, in February 1920, and tried to do it in secret so that the Armenian civilian population would not follow and encumber the French troops. Nonetheless, thousands of panic-stricken Armenians learned of the retreat and attempted to follow. This led to several thousand more Armenian deaths from attacks and the bitter cold.

It is estimated that about 12,000 Armenians were killed in the Marash fighting and retreat, six churches and much of the city were burnt, and nearly all shops were looted. Few of those killed were direct participants in the fighting.

A good number were slaughtered in horrible ways involving rape, torture and mutilation. Several thousand were burnt alive. Many who surrendered on promises of protection, largely women and children, were then killed, including 4-500 in the Ulu Jami or Great Mosque.

What happened in Marash set the tone for the fate of Armenians elsewhere in Cilicia. It was part of a concerted final effort to clear Cilicia of Armenians, as well as of the French.

Urfa was cut off from February 1920 and its French garrison was massacred in April while retreating. The railroad was



SPECIAL FEATURE

constantly interrupted in the Amanus in Feb and March and Bozanti fell at the end of May.

At the end of May, the French handed over Sis, Bozanti, Aintab (later retaken), and areas to the north of the Cilician railway line to the Turkish Nationalists as part of a short-lived armistice, and thousands of Armenians from the Sis area were evacuated. The abortive international Treaty of Sèvres of August 10, 1920, beloved by some Armenians today, only included the territories of Erzerum, Bitlis, Van, and Trebizond from the Ottoman Empire as part of an Armenian state (Art. 89). Adana and most of plains Cilicia as well as mountainous northern Cilicia were left to the Turks, while Baghche, Urfa, Aintab and Birijik as well as a portion of coastal Cilicia were included in Syria.

At the London negotiations in March 1921, the French agreed to relinquish more land to the Turks, including the Dort-Yol area. The Franklin-Bouillon agreement of October 1921, also known as the Treaty of Ankara, confirmed this and handed over the rest of Cilicia. It was ratified by the Treaty of Lausanne in July 1923.

Armenians attempted to organize themselves militarily but they were largely dependent on French acquiescence and lagged behind the Turkish Nationalists. Nonetheless they played an important role in the defense of Armenian populations.

In places without French troops, like mountainous Hajin, the Armenians sometimes lasted for months against much larger forces, but without French help. Hajin fell in October 1920 and thousands of Armenians were massacred or enslaved. Several unsuccessful attempts were organized to assemble volunteers to go to the aid of Hajin from plains Cilicia. Other Armenian volunteers, upon French request, were formed into militias to help defend villages and agricultural work in the summer of 1920 in the Cilician plains area.

Damadian and the Cilician Armenian National Union, with the support of other local Christian communities, proclaimed Cilician independence on August 4, 1920. This was a desperate act to preempt the signing of the Treaty of Sèvres on August 10, which provided for the French evacuation of much of Cilicia in favor of the Ottoman Turks.

Unfortunately, the situation devolved quickly into a farce. Several of the Armenian political parties separately issued their own declarations of independence for Cilician territories a few days earlier. On August 5, Damadian and his new cabinet were evicted only a few hours after taking possession of the Adana government building by French soldiers, ending this episode, and of course the Treaty of Sèvres was signed (though never ratified).

Furthermore, in September 1920, the Armenian Legion was formally disbanded and the French began to disarm and expel Armenian volunteer forces and Adana National Union leaders from Cilicia. French victories against the Kemalists in the Adana area made Armenian volunteers and goodwill no longer that important, and even a hindrance, to French plans of relinquishing Cilician territory to the Turks.

The Armenians all began fleeing Cilicia after the Oct. 20 1921 Franklin-Bouillon Agreement and prior to the Turkish take-over in January, 1922, as they had no trust in the provisions of the Franco-Turkish agreement for their protection. Some fled south to Alexandretta, but fled once more when this region was handed over to the Republic of Turkey by France in 1939.

The result of massacres and persecution led to the ethnic cleansing of the remaining Armenians in Cilicia. Turkish Nationalist commander Selaheddin Adil Pasha's instructions concerning Hajin, exclaimed during the fighting, made clear this goal: "Well then, this has become the head of a boil. Let us lance it and cause this disgusting thing to shrivel up from its root. Let a problem called Hajin not remain in the Tarsus. In these clean Turkish lands, the mountains of Kozanoglu smelling of thyme, the Armenian microbe has no business."

Armenian toponyms and monuments were soon deliberately destroyed to erase the traces of Armenian existence in Cilicia, which is remembered today primarily by Armenians outside of this historical homeland.



Elected and appointed leaders of the Armenian National Union in exile of Adana. Seated from left: Garabed Ashikian (treasurer), Dr. D. Mnatsaganian (chairman), Lt. John Shishmanian, (Commander of the Armenian Forces of Cilicia), Firooz Khanzadian. Standing from left: Aram Mndigian, Dr. Salibian, Setrag Guebenlian (vice-chairman) (Courtesy Ardemis Matteosian)

Official Declaration to the Armenian People

Today, August 4, 1920, at noon, the Representative of the United Armenian Delegation, the Armenian National Union, the religious heads of the three Armenian denominations, the religious and civil delegates of Greek, Syriac, Chaldean and Syrian communities collectively called upon Colonel Brémond, Head of Administrative Control in Cilicia and solemnly presented him with an official document signed by the above-mentioned in the name of all Christians of Cilicia, declaring the independence of Cilicia from the Turkish state and endowing it with an autonomous administration under French protection.

The Head of French Control showed a greatly sympathetic attitude and whilst promising to relay to his government this important document which was destined to open a new era in the contemporary annals of Cilicia, gave strict orders to us to exhort our people to remain calm and orderly.

The official national bodies consider it their duty to exhort all people to show complete orderliness, refraining from all kinds of demonstrations and gatherings, as are already forbidden by the state of siege regulations.

Through their decent behaviour and by absolutely refraining from any unlawful acts towards the Turkish and Moslem population of the town, from insobriety and generally from any action likely to disrupt the public peace, the Armenians must effectively show that they are a politically mature people and worthy of liberty that they demand and proclaim unanimously with their fellow Christian countrymen.

For popular celebration of this declaration of independence, it is only allowed to bedeck Christian buildings and establishments with flags, preferably with the French flag.

Inter-Christian Special Council
Adana, August 4, 1920
(Haygagan Lekeone, pp. 351-2, translated in The Armenian Legionnaires, pp. 226-7)



Armenian students digging trenches around an Armenian school near Adana for defense against Turkish Nationalists (John Amar Shishmanian collection, Hoover Institute)



SPECIAL FEATURE

Marking the Centennial of the Treaty of Sèvres

By Alin K. Gregorian

A century has passed since the signing of the Treaty of Sèvres on August 10, 1920, in the town of the same name in France. The treaty sought the dissolution of the Ottoman Empire and recognized the smaller nations in the empire as well as relegated the empire's influence from the Arab regions.

The treaty had stemmed directly from the surrender of Germany on November 11, 1918. On June 28, 1919, Germany and the Allied Nations (including Britain, France, Italy and Russia) signed the Treaty of Versailles, formally ending the war.

As an ally of Germany during World War I, the Ottoman Empire was then targeted by the Allies. The Allies, in addition to punishing the Ottoman authorities, believed in a new type of existence, one in which justice would prevail. In this case, justice applied to the smaller nationalities of Armenians, Kurds, Greeks and Arabs in the Ottoman Empire.

The official name of the treaty, The Treaty of Peace between the Allied and Associated Powers and Turkey, pitted the British Empire, France, Italy and Japan, with their associated nations, Armenia, Belgium, Greece, the Hedjaz, Poland, Portugal, Rumania, the Serb-Croat-Slovene State and Czechoslovakia."

The pact also provided for an independent Armenia, for an autonomous Kurdistan, and for a Greek presence in eastern Thrace and on the Anatolian west coast, as well as Greek control over the Aegean islands commanding the Dardanelles.

According to the treaty:

Whereas on the request of the Imperial Ottoman Government an Armistice was granted to Turkey on October 30, 1918, by the Principal Allied Powers in order that a Treaty of Peace might be concluded, and

Whereas the Allied Powers are equally desirous that the war in which certain among them were successively involved, directly or indirectly, against Turkey, and which originated in the declaration of war against Serbia on July 28, 1914, by the former Imperial and Royal Austro-Hungarian Government, and in the hostilities opened by Turkey against the Allied Powers on October 29, 1914, and conducted by Germany in alliance with Turkey, should be replaced by a firm, just and durable Peace.

President Woodrow Wilson's Fourteen Points

To understand how the terms of the Treaty of Sèvres were reached, we have to go back again to the end of World War I, a bloody four-year war the likes of which the world had never seen. Lands were drenched in blood and many participants who survived could not shake off the horrors they had seen. Many leaders, US President Woodrow Wilson included, hoped to draw up and arrive at a new world order, one in which a global war, which had seen more than 20 million dead and even more injured, could not take place.

It was this tragic event, which led Wilson to draw his Fourteen Points, one based on guaranteeing peace and respect for human rights. Number 12 on the list addresses Armenia. They appear below, abridged.

1. Open covenants of peace, openly arrived at, after which there shall be no private international understandings of any kind but diplomacy shall proceed always frankly and in the public view.

2. Absolute freedom of navigation upon the seas, outside territorial waters, alike in peace and in war, except as the seas may be closed in whole or in part by international action for the enforcement of international covenants.

3. The removal, so far as possible, of all economic barriers and the establishment of an equality of trade conditions among all the nations consenting to the peace and associating themselves for its maintenance.

4. Adequate guarantees given and taken that national armaments will be reduced to the lowest point consistent with domestic safety.

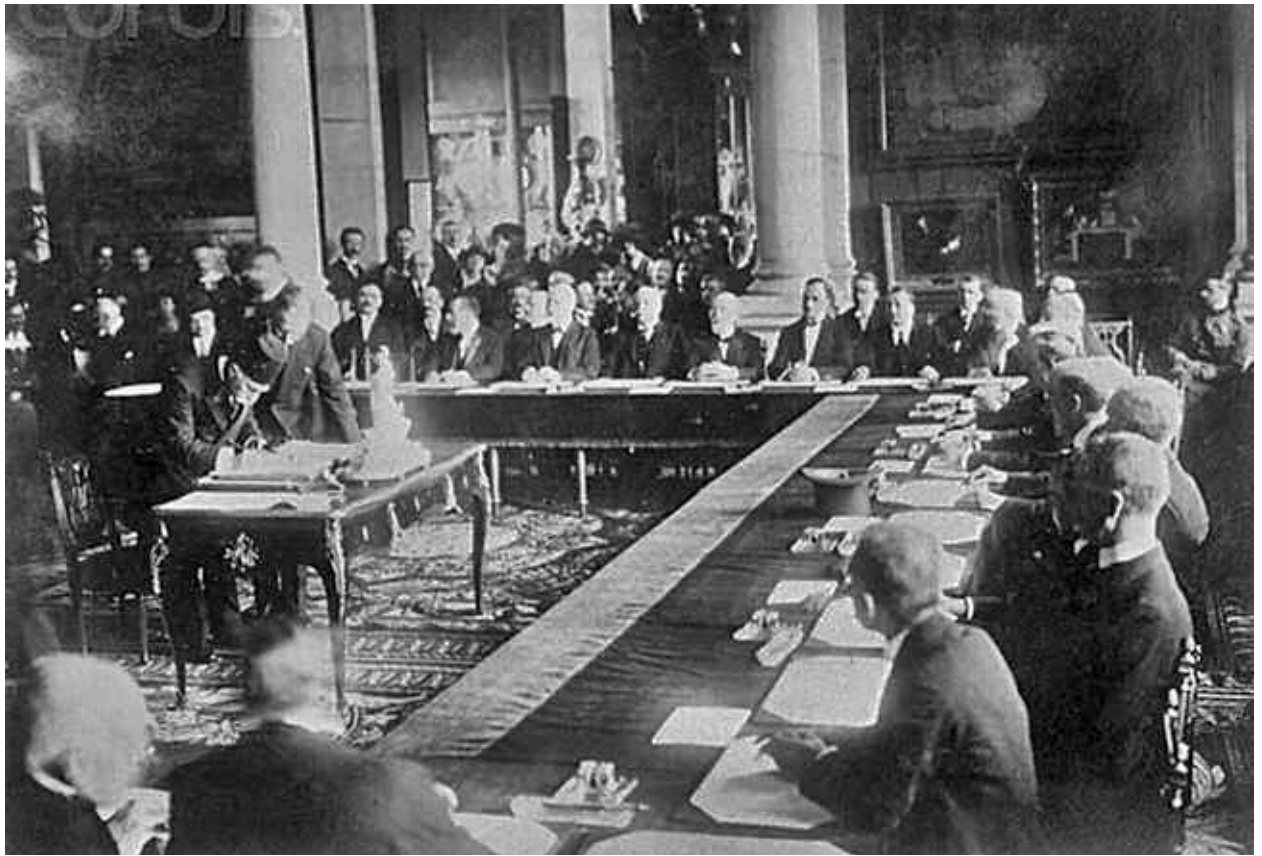
5. A free, open-minded, and absolutely impartial adjustment of all colonial claims, based upon a strict observance of the principle that in determining all such questions of sovereignty the interests of the populations concerned must have equal weight with the equitable claims of the government whose title is to be determined.

6. The evacuation of all Russian territory and such a settlement of all questions affecting Russia as will secure the best and freest cooperation of the other nations of the world in obtaining for her an unhampered and unembarrassed opportunity for the independent determination of her own political development and national policy and assure her of a sincere welcome into the society of free nations.

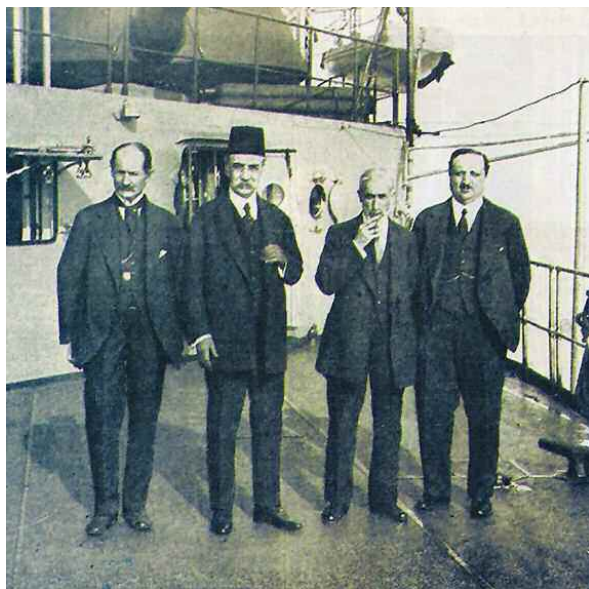
7. Belgium, the whole world will agree, must be evacuated and restored, without any attempt to limit the sovereignty which she enjoys in common with all other free nations.

8. All French territory should be freed and the invaded portions restored, and the wrong done to France by Prussia in 1871 in the matter of Alsace-Lorraine, which has unsettled the peace of the world for nearly fifty years, should be righted, in order that peace may once more be made secure in the interest of all.

9. A readjustment of the frontiers of Italy should be effected



Damat Ferid Pasha signs the Treaty of Sèvres.



The Ottoman delegation at Sèvres comprising the three signatories of the treaty. Left to right: Rıza Tevfik Bölükbaşı, Grand Vizier Damat Ferid Pasha, the Ottoman education minister Mehmed Hâdî Pasha and ambassador Resad Halis.

along clearly recognizable lines of nationality.

10. The peoples of Austria-Hungary, whose place among the nations we wish to see safeguarded and assured, should be accorded the freest opportunity of autonomous development.

11. Rumania, Serbia, and Montenegro should be evacuated; occupied territories restored; Serbia accorded free and secure access to the sea; and the relations of the several Balkan states to one another determined by friendly counsel along historically established lines of allegiance and nationality; and international guarantees of the political and economic independence and territorial integrity of the several Balkan states should be entered into.

12. The Turkish portions of the present Ottoman Empire should be assured a secure sovereignty, but the other nationalities which are now under Turkish rule should be assured an undoubted security of life and an absolutely unmolested opportunity of autonomous development, and the Dardanelles should be permanently opened as a free passage to the ships and commerce of all nations under international guarantees.

13. An independent Polish state should be erected which should include the territories inhabited by indisputably Polish populations, which should be assured a free and secure access to the sea.

14. A general association of nations must be formed under specific covenants for the purpose of affording mutual guarantees of political independence and territorial integrity to great and small states alike.

Back to Sèvres

The Treaty of Severs was drawn up as a direct result of the Fourteen Points, replete with Wilsonian idealism.

The following articles in the treaty asked for the creation of an independent Armenia from the Armenian provinces in the Ottoman Empire, though Cilicia, the most important one, was not part of this new Armenia.

ARTICLE 88.

Turkey, in accordance with the action already taken by the Allied Powers, hereby recognizes Armenia as a free and independent State.

ARTICLE 89.

Turkey and Armenia as well as the other High Contracting Parties agree to submit to the arbitration of the President of the United States of America the question of the frontier to be fixed between Turkey and Armenia in the vilayets of Erzurum, Trebizond, Van and Bitlis, and to accept his decision thereupon, as well as any stipulations he may prescribe as to access for Armenia to the sea, and as to the demilitarization of any portion of Turkish territory adjacent to the said frontier.

ARTICLE 90.

In the event of the determination of the frontier under Article 89 involving the transfer of the whole or any part of the territory of the said Vilayets to Armenia, Turkey hereby renounces as from the date of such decision all rights and title over the territory so transferred. The provisions of the present Treaty applicable to territory detached from Turkey shall thereupon become applicable to the said territory.

The proportion and nature of the financial obligations of Turkey which Armenia will have to assume, or of the rights which will pass to her, on account of the transfer of the said territory will be determined in accordance with Articles 241 to 244, Part VIII (Financial Clauses) of the present Treaty.

Subsequent agreements will, if necessary, decide all questions which are not decided by the present Treaty and which may arise in consequence of the transfer of the said territory.

ARTICLE 91.

In the event of any portion of the territory referred to in Article 89 being transferred to Armenia, a Boundary Commission, whose composition will be determined subsequently, will be constituted within three months from the delivery of the decision referred to in the said Article to trace on the spot the frontier between Armenia and Turkey as established by such decision.

ARTICLE 92.

The frontiers between Armenia and Azerbaijan and Georgia respectively will be determined by direct agreement between the States concerned.

If in either case the States concerned have failed to determine the frontier by agreement at the date of the decision referred to in Article 89, the frontier line in question will be determined by the Principal Allied Powers, who will also provide for its being traced on the spot.

ARTICLE 93.

Armenia accepts and agrees to embody in a Treaty with the Principal Allied Powers such provisions as may be deemed necessary by these Powers to protect the interests of inhabitants of that State who differ from the majority of the population in race, language, or religion.

Armenia further accepts and agrees to embody in a Treaty with the Principal Allied Powers such provisions as these Powers may deem necessary to protect freedom of transit and equitable treatment for the commerce of other nations.

What Happened

The good intentions of Wilson and the other powers became simple ideals that were not followed through.

The treaty was never signed by the United States of America. The treaty was signed but never ratified by



SPECIAL FEATURE

A Missed Opportunity and The Revenge of History

By Edmond Y. Azadian

World War I and its aftermath represent an era complicated to understand, analyze and make sense of. It was even more challenging for the Armenian people, who had experienced the Genocide.

This planned mass murder by the Ittihadist regime was intended to annihilate the Armenians for good, eliminating all chances for their recovery. This destruction was an ideological necessity as the Ittihadists, before them the Sultan, and after them the Kemalists, had similarly subscribed to an overriding philosophy of creating a unified state comprising Muslims only. That way, they could bar once and for all any interference by Christian powers under the guise of protecting the minorities of the empire.

The plan for the Genocide was executed with mathematical accuracy so that there would be no survivors, let alone a leadership that would plan a recovery.

But the defeat of the Ottomans in the war left many questions unanswered about the perpetrators of the crime.

Armenians, after losing their homeland and two-thirds of their population, were able to rise again and attain their independence in the Caucasus and strove to create a home rule in Western Armenia, particularly in Cilicia, where an Armenian kingdom had existed from the 10th to the 14th centuries.

It is this saga of Cilician Armenians which has not been properly studied and understood, for a variety of reasons.

During World War I, the Allies (including Britain, France, Russia and the US) fighting the Ottoman-German forces approached the Armenians and in particular, Boghos Nubar Pasha, who was heading the Armenian National Delegation, to join the Allied forces and as payment, rule over their lost homeland of Cilicia.

Some historians claim that the Allies had never signed a document with the promise of home rule in Cilicia and thus it was not valid. However, the Armenians did not have an independent entity which could represent the nation under international law. As well, the Allies had repatriated the dispersed Armenians to Cilicia, through their own means, which indicates more than a promise.

The Allies expected the Armenians to join the war effort. A legion would be created under Allied Command to be named the Legion of the Orient (later to become the Armenian Legion) to recruit volunteers. Three Armenian political parties undertook the task of recruitment, sending their representatives to the US.

The delegation was composed of Mihran Damadian, Ardavast Hanumyan and Stepan Sabah-Gulian. They traveled to the US, braving German gunboats, and visited many cities where the immigrant Armenians had been starting new lives. They recruited young men who first were trained in New Jersey and later in Cyprus, where they joined volunteers from Musa Dagh.

The Musa Dagh youth had already acquitted themselves valiantly, saving the lives of their people and had barely escaped the Turkish scimitar; now they were asked to once again put themselves in harm's way to recover Cilicia.

Almost 5,000 Armenian volunteers were sent to the front in Palestine. They served as the vanguard of the Allied forces in Arara, where they assailed the Ottoman-German fortifications, which crumbled immediately on September 19, 1918. Thus, they served as impetus for the beginning of the end of the Ottoman defeat.

The Allies used a similar tactic with the Arabs. The Arab revolt, led by British Intelligence Officer Thomas Edward Lawrence, known better as Lawrence of Arabia, is well document-ed. That revolt reinforced the Allied victory.

As a result of the effort, 150,000 Armenians and 100,000 other Christian minorities returned to their homes in Cilicia, under the supervision of the French forces.

On the way back to Cilicia, the French authorities began to disarm some of the Armenian volunteers. Unsuspecting Armenians were not aware that by 1919, the French had entered into backroom dealings with Mustafa Kemal, the leader of the Ottoman forces.



Mihran Damadian (oil painting by Sukias Torosyan)

the Armenian National Delegation to the French colonial headquarters. There he was asked to organize the resettlement program for the repatriates.

Damadian was one of the rare breed of leaders who was both a consummate, erudite intellectual as well as a hero with 30 years of death-defying revolutionary activities under his belt. He was an inspiring statesman and captivating orator.

Beyond the resettlement program, Damadian was pursuing the old dream of Armenian home rule in Cilicia, under a French mandate.

Meanwhile, intense diplomatic activity was taking place in Paris and other European capitals. The Treaty of Sèvres was being drafted to dismember the defeated Ottoman Empire and grant independence to all nations under its yoke, including the Armenians, who were given most of historic Armenia within a territory of 160 square kilometers with an opening to the sea in Trebizond.

The Treaty of Sèvres did not include Cilicia, where a quarter of million Christians were brought back with the promise of home rule. The Armenians put too much credence in the French promises, while France was all the while negotiating with the Turks, behind their backs.

Mustafa Kemal was either a supreme diplomat or a bold opportunist. Instead of disbanding the Ottoman army, which he was tasked to do by the Allied leadership, he reinforced it and played off the competing interests of the Allies. He negotiated with Lenin in Russia, promising the rise of communism in Turkey, and for which he received arms, money and food, all the while making similar guarantees to the Western powers.

As the date was approaching fast to sign the treaty (August 10, 1920), the Armenians in Cilicia were getting impatient.

Damadian had gathered all the leaders of the Armenian groups, as well as the leaders of the other Christian groups and formed a shadow government.

Time was of the essence and the Armenians planned to preempt the signing of the Sèvres Treaty. Therefore, Damadian gathered his cabinet members and the leadership of the communities and headed to the city hall in Adana and occupied it on August 5, 1920. He proclaimed Cilicia's independence under the French mandate. He sent his proclamation to the commander of the French forces in Cilicia, Gen. Edouard Brémont, who in return, sent a contingent of Senegalese forces and ordered Damadian and his cabinet to vacate the premises, where a huge tricolor flag was already hanging.

Damadian made a last stand, believing that the French would appreciate his valor. He cited the words of one of the leaders of the French Revolution, Honoré Mirabeau: "If you have been instructed to make us leave this place, you should seek permission to use force, for only the power of bayonets will dislodge us."

Sure enough, the bayonets were pointed at Damadian, who was forced to leave.

This intriguing chapter of history has not been thoroughly studied. Damadian himself has left scant memoirs, insufficient to develop a sound theory.

To this day, a lot of controversies remain and many questions are left unanswered. Damadian, in the last pages of his memoirs, answers only some of the questions:

- The Armenians had to take their defense into their own hands, as the Kemalists forces were harassing the Armenians.

- Cilicia's independence movement did not take place to counter the independent Republic of Armenia, as blamed by Avedis Aharonian and Alexander Khadissian. On the contrary, it was supposed to complement the Republic of Armenia by acting as its window on the Mediterranean.

- Armenians did not create the Cilician issue. It was thrust on us by the international community, which then failed to defend us.

The controversy will certainly continue, because as the saying goes, success will have many godfathers, while defeat is always an orphan.

Indeed, how many real and fake founders do we have for the First Republic? Too many. But the historic fact is that independence of the First Republic was thrust upon Armenians, when they were least ready to embrace it.

One major factor in the collapse of the Cilician dream

was French treachery. The French government not only refused to inform Armenians about its intentions, even the local army officers were unaware of what was going on in the corridors of power back home.

The French retreated from Marash, for example, on a snowy night, silently, leaving the Armenians to the mercy of the marauding Kemalists hordes. Many Armenians who were alarmed by the French retreat tried to follow the soldiers, but they froze to death.

One weakness in the Armenian position is that they placed too much trust in the French and ignored the military component of the plan. Had they secretly armed themselves, as the Kemalists did, they could have put up a good fight, as they had done in Marash, Hajin, Urfa, Aintab and Zeitoun and they could have delayed the advance of the Kemalists forces, if not outright defeated them.

Cilicia is one of the most fertile regions of Asia Minor. Today it serves as Turkey's breadbasket.

The Cilician movement was a missed opportunity for the Armenians, but its lessons were not lost. This time, as the opportunity rose in Karabakh, the Armenians did not listen to their friends or foes. They resorted to defending themselves and in a short time, their rag-tag army was converted into a modern fighting machine, which helped Armenia to recover one of its lost pieces.

Our loss in Cilicia was compensated in Karabakh. That was the revenge of history—a hard lesson learned in the span of a full century.

the Ottoman Empire.

The proposed boundaries incorporated the Ottoman vilayets of Erzurum, Bitlis, and Van. This region was extended to the north, up to the west side of Trabzon to provide the First Republic of Armenia with an outlet to the Black Sea.

The United States Senate rejected the mandate for Armenia in 1920. The outbreak of the Turkish War of Independence led to the Ottoman Empire not ratifying the

Treaty of Sèvres. Later in that year, the Turkish-Armenian War broke out. Armenia was defeated and signed the Treaty of Alexandropol on November 2, 1920 renouncing its territorial integrity under the Sèvres Treaty. The Treaty of Kars was negotiated between Soviet Russia and Turkey following the annexation of the Democratic Republic of Armenia by the Soviet Army in December 2, 1920, and signed between the Soviet government in Armenia on October 23, 1921. The latter was never accepted, either by

the overthrown Armenian government nor later by the Republic of Armenia. The government of Soviet Russia separately negotiated a similar border between what it considered its territory of Armenia and Turkey in the Treaty of Moscow (1921).

The final Turkish and Armenian borders were internationally agreed upon in the Treaty of Lausanne in 1923 which replaced the generally unratified and unimplemented Sèvres Treaty.



SPECIAL FEATURE

The Armenian Legionnaires In Cilicia

By Susan Pattie

Often when the Armenian Legionnaires are mentioned, it is in the context of their important role at the Battle of Arara, part of the decisive Battle of Megiddo where they fought as part of the Allied Forces under General Allenby. Though they won that battle decisively and the Armistice followed soon afterwards, the active role of the Legionnaires had really only just begun. This moment comes mid-way through the book *The Armenian Legionnaires: Sacrifice and Betrayal in World War I* as the Legionnaires continued to fight until August 1920 when the last of the Armenian Legionnaire battalions was demobilized.

1920 brought devastating new destruction to towns and villages being rebuilt by returning Armenian refugees. Marash, Hadjin, Urfa and many more were abandoned by the French, increasingly weak and distracted by their own geopolitical ambitions, and crushed by the Kemalist forces, increasingly strong, motivated and led by the charismatic Mustafa Kemal. Surviving Armenians gathered in Adana and Mersin or dispersed to other countries.

In Adana, Lt John Shishmanian was appointed the head of the remaining Armenian Legion troops and also ordered to organize decommissioned Legionnaires still in the area as well as civilians who were willing and able to help. Their primary work was to protect Adana from guerilla attacks on transportation and communication networks. Born in Kentucky of Armenian and Scottish-American heritage, Shishmanian was also the liaison between the French officers and the returning Armenians rebuilding homes and some still making plans for a semi-independent Cilician Armenia.

General Brémont was seen as too partial to the Armenians and sent back to Paris while other officials began arresting Armenian Legionnaires, including Shishmanian, on feeble pretexts. Some such as the highly respected Lt. Vahan Portukalian were threatened with death sentences until false evidence presented in the military court was thrown out.

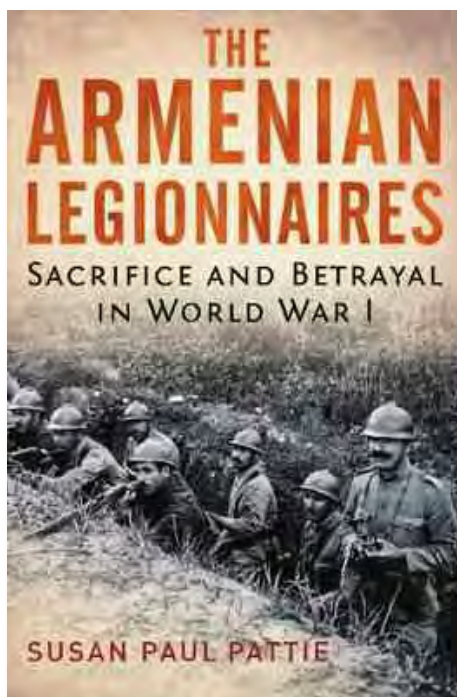
The “final act” of the Legionnaires’ work in World War I was as heroic as the earlier stages had been but much more complex. Contradictions and unrealistic demands, backtracking and lack of protection left the men feeling betrayed both for themselves and for their compatriots whom they had come to help.

Closing his concise summary of the historical context in Chapter Two of *The Armenian Legionnaires*, Varak Ketsemanian points out that the Legion’s “achievements concern a people who attempted to come to grips with the destruction and devastation of their nation. Its story also shows the union of hundreds of Armenians from different backgrounds for a greater cause. ... who fought to keep the vision of an Armenia alive.”

The Legionnaires fought with guns until their demobilization in 1920. Afterwards the men and their equally determined wives and sisters fought with their talents and intellects, with their devotion to community, churches and families wherever they ended up. The vision of what “Armenia” might be continued to change but they believed in a concept of Armenians coming together and forming communities. They realized that this too requires work and planning for future generations in dispersion to grow to not only appreciate their heritage but take it into the future.

This issue of the *Mirror* includes three excerpts from *The Armenian Legionnaires*, which are in turn largely taken from the original Armenian-language work *Haygagan Legeone* by Dikran Boyajian and published by Baikar Press in 1965.

[Susan Paul Pattie is author of *The Armenian Legionnaires: Sacrifice and Betrayal in World War I* (IB Tauris, 2018, available through NAASR and Amazon), supported by and in collaboration with Dr. Carolann and George Najarian, honoring Legionnaire Nshan Najarian.]



Return to Cilicia

(from *The Armenian Legionnaires* Chapter 9 and *Haygagan Lekeon*)

Boyajian notes that, of course, the task of settling the refugees was very difficult. As refugees were funnelled from Aleppo to Adana, this process was undertaken voluntarily by Dr. Roland with Lt. Jim Chankalian as his aide. The refugees were encouraged to go back to their villages rather than stay in Adana, in order to ease overcrowding. Orphanages were set up, housing some 10,000 children. More orphans were to have come from Aleppo but it was not possible. Dr. Roland did more than find housing and created work for the refugees. Boyajian writes,

“In order to encourage the Armenian’s spirit of entrepreneurship, [Dr Roland] succeeded in securing credit from the French authorities to establish a carpet and handicraft factory within the Apkarian school, under the meticulous supervision of Lt Jim Chankalian. Employment was secured for nearly 300 hundred persons in this factory.”

An excerpt from a letter from Jim Chankalian (in English) dated 1920 is included in this description.

“Many women under my care have been taken from Turkish harems. Previously they were in an abominable state but, after a little care, they became entirely new women. I don’t have access to funds to carry out such work. I am spending all my monthly salary on them, but this is not enough.

“This is the greatest and most necessary work that we can do. These unfortunate women are all young. They flee from Turkish houses almost naked. It is impossible for me to see all this and not be affected. I enjoin them to be good, but how can they be content with half a loaf of bread daily? When they are naked and hungry, how can we expect them to be virtuous? My friend, this is the state of our exiled sisters. It has been eight months that I am busy with this work, but I have yet to receive any support from Armenian organizations. The funds given to me from the French government are absolutely inadequate.”



Captain Jim Chankalian, a leader of the Reformed Hnchagian Party who later became a leader of the Armenian Democratic Liberal Party





SPECIAL FEATURE

‘The French Record in Cilicia’

(*Christian Science Monitor*, reprinted in *The New Armenia*, vol. XIII March-April no. 2, Boston, Mass. pp. 22-24; and later Boyajian’s *Haygagan Lekeon* in Armenian)

Evidence accumulates that when a true history of the Near East during the last five years comes to the printed page, there will be revealed to the world a record of inefficiency, expedience, cupidity and promise-breaking by those from whom the Christian peoples of that part of the world had every right to expect fair dealing and salvation from the Turk, which will astound the world’s sense of justice and righteousness.

The historian who seeks proof of the injustice inflicted upon those Christians may find some

of it in the experience of Lieutenant John Shishmanian, native of Kentucky, USA, of Scotch and Armenian ancestry; American ambulance driver in France preceding entrance of the United States into the war; wounded at Verdun; second lieutenant in the French Army; instructor of Armenian troops on the island of Cyprus; commanding officer of Cilician Armenian Volunteers, organized to defend the Christians in the City of Adana, Cilicia; while still wearing the uniform of a French officer, and without specific excuse, except the political expediency of the Treaty of Sevres, “railroaded” out of Cilicia by his own superior French officers, and only set free when an inquiry by the Secretary of the State of the United States had apparently convinced the French of the urgent advisability of denying that he had ever been so much as arrested.

Lieutenant Shishmanian told the story in detail to a representative of the *Christian Science Monitor*. He made it clear that he did not mean to criticize adversely the French officers in Cilicia as being responsible for the policy under which the Turks and Kurds have been favored and the Armenians, Chaldeans, Assyrians and Greeks oppressed. Responsibility for this, he held, rests with higher officials in Paris, whom he described as attempting to manage things in the Near East for the selfish purposes of some individual Frenchmen, and without a proper understanding of the people upon whom great wrongs are being inflicted.

“I was born in Kentucky,” said Lieutenant Shishmanian, “and years ago had experience with the Kentucky militia in feud troubles. Before we entered the war I went to France as a member of the American ambulance field service. Some time after that, in order to see active service, I enlisted in the French Army and rose to the rank of second lieutenant. After serving at Verdun, I was ordered, with about a score of other French officers, in January 1918, to go to Cyprus and drill Armenian troops into an Armenian legion.

“This drilling was done in Cyprus to conceal the organization of the Armenian legion from the Turks. There were about 5,000 men, 1,600 from America, and they saw service in Palestine and Syria, and later occupied Cilicia for the French.

“The legion was organized because France was short of troops and had to have Armenians to help keep the Turks engaged on the Palestine front; and also because France was afraid that without sufficient troops there she would lose her prestige in the Near East; and because of her desire, after the Sykes-Picot treaty, to have good reason to say a strong word in her own behalf, after the war, in connection with the Near East.

“Remember that more than 200,000 Armenians were brought back from exile, under the British and French regime, and were encouraged to rebuild their homes in Cilicia That was just after the armistice, and that was how Sis, Hadjin, Urfa, Marash, Adana and other places were repopulated. During the year and a half when the Cyprus Legion (sic), almost alone, occupied Cilicia, these people were perfectly happy and safe.

“Now, as soon as the British had evacuated Cilicia, the trouble began. The French have shown a stupid, inefficient and vacillating policy in everything they have done in Cilicia. But they had so few men in comparison with the number the British had that they were terrified. Because of this they kept concentrating the people in the towns, and this prompted the Turks, when they saw that we would not attack, to guerrilla warfare.

“Take the case of Marash. The 6,000 French troops evacuated that city after the Turks had flown the white flag. Let me emphasize that: the French evacuated after, not before, the Turks had signaled for truce.

“The situation today is the result of the same policy. All the Armenians have been disarmed, in the sense that none is allowed to go on the streets armed, and he is not supposed to have arms even to defend himself from attack.

“Now the Cyprus Legion (sic) was due to be demobilized last June. The demobilization order came. My service expired June 5. I asked permission to go home. The French Colonel in Adana told me that 20,000 Kemalists were coming against the city. The only communication with Europe lay through Mersina, and the Turks, he said, might destroy that railroad any day.

“In Adana at that time there were almost 100,000 people. The inhabitants of Sis, Aintab, Urfa, and other places, back to which they had been brought by the British and French, had now been forced to seek refuge in Adana: the place was much overcrowded and the people were on the verge of starvation. There were attacks by the Kemalists almost daily.

“The Colonel said that he was organizing a big column to go to Mersina and drive the Kemalists off the railroad along the way. He asked me to organize Armenian volunteers to defend the city during the column’s absence and made me their commanding officer.

“There were 1,000 volunteers and we defended the city for three months. This force was completely armed, equipped, clothed and fed by the Armenians themselves, who made great sacrifices for this purpose. When the colonel asked me to raise the volunteers, he provided me with no arms or equipment. I was told to go out and hustle for them. I did, any way I could. The people cut down their own scanty food to clothe and feed us and we found our arms. Our 1,600 defended the city against the daily and nightly attacks of some 15,000 or 20,000 Kemalists for three months.

“On the night before the French left Adana, during the first week in July, the Colonel asked the Armenians to furnish 2,000 more volunteers before dawn. The request was made at 9 o’clock. The volunteers had to be found, assembled, armed, equipped, officered. The Armenian notables said this was impossible, the time was too short. The Colonel said it must be done.

“That night the Armenians hustled around and did their very best, but by dawn, only 85 new volunteers had been found. Now I understand that General Gouraud has recently reported that although Armenians keep declaring that they can furnish men for an army in Cilicia, when he called for 2,000 for the relief of Tarsus, they furnished only 18! But he should also tell of the preposterously unreasonable shortness of time imposed upon them, and that when given more time later, they did the job and did it efficiently.”

“And here is what the job was, what the colonel wanted those extra men for. He wanted them to go down into the wheat plain south of Adana, clear it of Turks so that the wheat could flow into the city and, something quite important to him, to open up and keep open the automobile road to the seaport of Karataash, for an avenue of escape for his staff and anyone else who wanted to come along, in case the big column toward Mersina was defeated.

“It should be stated that this area could have been occupied and cleared of the brigands or Kemalists long before this time and a continuous supply of wheat assured the city. But for reasons best known to the French, this was not done until after they had prevailed upon the Near East Relief to supply flour six months longer.

“After the column came back, Armenian laborers, including boys and girls who went out to the vineyards and vegetable gardens just outside Adana, began to be kidnapped and killed by the Turks. Soon this was done right in the streets of the city. Many children were killed. The parents came to me. I went to the Colonel one day and told him my office was full of weeping women. He said nothing could be done. Later I gave him names of 138 cases, with witnesses and all, and still no action. The result was that on July 10, the whole Christian population got out of hand, to put it mildly. The Armenians, Chaldeans, Assyrians and Greeks simply ran wild, and by midnight nearly all the Turks, except a few hundred around the French governor’s residence, had fled to Konia.

“After that the French officers decided that the Turks must come back. They told me that the Armenians were ruffians, they massacred the Turks, and the French must control them. The French general told me I must disarm the Armenians. I responded that it would be impossible for me to execute that order. Then he ordered me to give him a list of those with arms and collect the arms into depots. I told him it was impossible to get such a list. Apparently the French did not want to try to do this work themselves. After that, French officers would walk into houses and, if they found arms, the men in the house would be arrested and hung. Six or seven Armenians were hanged in that way. And it was such a hanging that eventually led to my release.”

“There were no French white troops in Adana to speak of. They will not go out to Asia Minor. The French forces are mostly Senegalese Negroes and Algerians. The former fight well and are loyal, but the latter are Muhammedans and desert in great numbers to the Turks,



Lt. John Shishmanian (John Amar Shishmanian Papers, Envelope B, Hoover Institution Archives)



Lt. John Shishmanian (center) leaving Cilicia after his release from arrest and confinement in Alexandretta. Initially not allowed to take his personal belongings, here pictured with suitcase, “old revolutionary” on left, his orderly on right (John Amar Shishmanian Papers, Envelope B, Hoover Institution Archives)

always managing to take arms and ammunition with them, even machine guns, which is rather remarkable.”



SPECIAL FEATURE

Prime Minister Pashinyan Commemorates Centennial of Sèvres Treaty

YEREVAN – On the 100th anniversary of the signing of Treaty of Sèvres, Armenian scholars held the “Treaty of Sèvres and the Armenian Question” forum at the National Academy of Sciences in Yerevan on August 10. Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan sent his comments to the seminar, where they were read.

I salute all the participants of the conference dedicated to the 100th anniversary of the signing of the Treaty of Sèvres. I express my deep gratitude for initiating this important event.

The Treaty of Sèvres has a significant place in the modern history of the Armenian people. It is not by chance that it continues to be the subject of scientific research and analysis. Therefore, it is very possible that our scientists’ impartial analysis of this document, signed a century ago, and the events that preceded it, will be available to both our people and the wider international community. Today’s conference serves this very purpose: I wish success to its work, wishing everyone fruitful discussions, new and possible discoveries.

The Sèvres Treaty is a historical fact. It remains so to this day. What is the use of this document for the Armenian people? Why is it still the center of our attention?

First, the Treaty of Sèvres was based on the aftermath of World War I, one of the most dramatic pages in human history, almost two years after its end. Just as the Treaty of Versailles established peace in Europe, so the Treaty of Sèvres was established in the former Central Asian territories of the Ottoman Empire. It put an end to the suffering and deprivation of the peoples of the region because of the war. It signaled the end of the “cursed years.”

Like the Treaty of Versailles in Europe, the Treaty of Sèvres created a new system of inter-state relations in the region. It introduced new principles and values, not only for peace but also for justice in Central Asia.

The contract was based on the most advanced ideas of the time. The key there was the principle of self-determination and equality of nations. It put an end to the centuries-old slavery imposed by the empires, giving freedom and independence to the peoples of the region.

Moreover, by granting the right to establish nation-states in historical territories, it created favorable conditions for the further coexistence of the Muslim-Christian peoples, peaceful coexistence, the preservation of the region’s civilizational diversity, and the region.

Second, the Treaty of Sèvres is the international document that recognized and enshrined Armenia’s independence. The Republic of Armenia acted as an equal party to that document. Centuries after the loss of independence, the Armenian authorities for the first time signed an international treaty with the great powers of the world. The Republic of Armenia was recognized as a full member of international relations, an equal subject of international law, within the limits set out in the Treaty.

By being a party to the treaty, it recognized the contribution of Armenia, the Armenian people, to the victory of the Allies in World War I and the establishment of peace. It was emphasized that the role of the Armenian people in international relations and in the post-war world governance was properly assessed.

Third, the Treaty of Sèvres, in its Article 89, established the indisputable historical connection of the Armenian people with the Armenian Highlands, where the Armenian people had been born, lived, created a state and culture for thousands of years.

And finally, the Treaty of Sèvres was signed in the period following the years of the Armenian Genocide, when the Ottoman Empire was trying to resolve the “Armenian question” by annihilating the Armenian people. The Armenian people were subjected to the most cruel and inhuman suffering. The losses he suffered were enormous. Meanwhile, the Treaty of Sèvres paved the way for overcoming the consequences of the genocide. The “Armenian question” was justly resolved in the historical cradle of the Armenian people through the creation of an independent state. Historical justice was being restored. Favorable conditions were created for the restoration of our people’s economic demographic potential, its normal development: progress.

Although the Treaty of Sèvres was never implemented, it continues to be a historical fact that reflects our path to restoring an independent state. It is our duty to remember it, to realize it, to keep its advice.

President Sarkissian Says Treaty of Sèvres Is Essential Document for Fair Resolution of Armenian Question

YEREVAN (Armenpress) – Armenian President Armen Sarkissian sat down with the Syrian *Al-Azmenah* newspaper for an exclusive interview on the Treaty of Sèvres.

The questions and answers below are the official translation of the published article provided by Sarkissian’s Office.

Question: Mr. President, August 10 marks the 100th anniversary of the Treaty of Sèvres which after WWI was signed at the Paris Peace Conference by the 13 victorious countries of the Entente on one side and the defeated Ottoman Empire on the other side. The Treaty was called to solve the tormented for decades Armenian issue and end sufferings of the Armenians. Your opinion?

Answer: The Treaty of Sèvres in its essence was a peace treaty and with this regard it really could have solved fundamentally one of the thorniest for our region problems – the Armenian issue.

The Treaty of Sèvres was preceded by the first conference, which took place in February-March 1920 in London where a political decision was adopted that one, unified Armenian state must be created. At the same time, the Republic of Armenia, which was de facto recognized on January 19, 1920 at the Paris Conference, was accepted as its axle and some territories of Western Armenian under the Ottoman rule should had been united with it.

By the Treaty of Sèvres, Turkey was to recognize Armenia as a free and independent state. Turkey and Armenia agreed to leave demarcation of the borders of the two countries in Erzurum, Trabzon, Van, and Bitlis provinces (vilayets) to the decision made by the United States (the arbitral award of President Woodrow Wilson which on November 22 will also mark its 100th anniversary) and accept his decision immediately and all other proposals – to provide Armenia with an access to the sea and demilitarization of all Ottoman territories adjacent to the mentioned border line.

Question: But the Treaty of Sèvres remained on paper...

Answer: I would rather say that the Treaty of Sèvres was not fully ratified (which means it remains unperfected and it is true that when it comes to Armenia its decisions were not implemented because the international political situation had changed but, at the same time, it was never denounced either.

The Treaty of Sèvres is a legal, interstate agreement which is de facto still in force because this document became the base for other documents, which derived from it, for determining the status of a number of Middle East countries after WWI or more recently, among them Syria (currently Syria-Lebanon) and Mesopotamia (currently Iraq-Kuwait), Palestine (currently Israel and Palestinian authority), Hejazi (currently Saudi Arabia), Egypt, Sudan, Cyprus, Morocco, Tunisia, and Libya.

Along with all this, the Treaty of Sèvres could have promoted the resolution of the Armenian Issue and unification of the Armenian nation on its historical lands.

It could have partly mitigated the losses inflicted on the Armenian people by the Genocide of 1915 and thus create conditions for the regulations of the relations between Armenia and Turkey and establishment of a lasting peace among the peoples of our region.



Armenian girls, tattooed by Arab Bedouins, saved ("bought") by legionnaires and brought to doctors in Cilicia (John Amar Shishmanan Papers, Envelope B., Hoover Institution Archives)

But in September 1920, the aggression unleashed by the Kemalists against the Republic of Armenia ended in the dissolution of the Armenian independent statehood and sovietization of Armenia.

Thus, the centuries-long struggle of the Armenian people for uniting in one state entity the separated parts of Armenia was unsuccessful.

But the Republic of Armenia and the Armenian nation all over the world remain the inheritors and masters of our millennia-long history and civilization. No matter what was done or will be done, no matter how the undeniable facts are being denied, no matter how much the material monuments and Armenian traces on the territory of historical Armenia are being destructed, it is impossible to annihilate the memory of the Armenian people.

The Treaty of Sèvres even today remains an essential document for the right of the Armenian people to achieve a fair resolution of the Armenian issue.

Question: There is an opinion that the Treaty of Lausanne of 1923 negated the Treaty of Sèvres.

Answer: It is simply not true and cannot be true. The Treaty of Lausanne does not contain such an annulment; moreover, it does not contain any reference to the Treaty of Sèvres. The Republic of Armenia did not sign the Treaty of Lausanne, thus we are not a party of the Treaty of Lausanne. Thus, it implies no obligation for the Republic of Armenia. In this case, the international Res inter alios acta principle (a thing done between others does not harm or benefit others). The Treaty of Sèvres and the Treaty of Lausanne are two different legal documents.

Question: Let's get back to our times. The Middle East, which is an immediate neighbor for the countries of the South Caucasus, has become a hot spot once again: armed conflicts, civil wars, fight against terrorism, territorial disputes. Border

clashes took place on the Armenian-Azerbaijani line of contact in mid-July which claimed human lives and created extraordinary tension between Yerevan and Baku.

Answer: Yes, these days when the entire world and we are fighting against our common enemy, the coronavirus pandemic, and regardless of the fact that conflicts all over the world have been halted, our neighboring country - Azerbaijan tried to take advantage of the situation and use in the negative sense this “window of opportunity” to unleash aggression on the Armenian-Azerbaijani border. Fortunately, the Armenian Armed Forces demonstrated their high battle-ready spirit and literally in two or three days were able to contain the encroachments of the opponent and thus saved our region from the blazes of large-scale clashes.

Question: The UN, EU, OSCE, various capitals made statement on these extremely dangerous developments, urging the parties to maintain peace and dialogue. And only Ankara's tone was bellicose, in full support of Baku's actions.

Answer: It is true that the international community responded widely to these events. It is especially true with regard to Moscow, Washington, and Paris – the co-chairs of the OSCE Minsk Group on the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. But the Tavush events raised some serious concerns.

My first concern relates to a very aggressive rhetoric of our southern neighbor – Turkey. Turkey has been using with regard to Armenia a kind of language which is inappropriate in the international relations. And this is absolutely unjustified and irresponsible. Keep in mind that this is the country which was the scene of a great human tragedy, the country which 105 years ago executed a genocide against our nation. And instead of trying to establish bridges with Armenia by recognizing those black pages of its history, they resort to a language which in fact reveals their intention to carry on with what was done 105 years ago.

The second concern is Azerbaijan’s attempt to create an impression that Armenia poses a threat to the international infrastructure which is going through Azerbaijan. This is total nonsense. These infrastructure has been in place for over 20 years, and Armenia has never had any intention to destroy it. My message is the following: Armenia has never been and will never be a threat for anyone because we are the successors of those who went through the Genocide and survived. We know all too well what suffering means, we know the human values. I am concerned that when the entire world is fighting together against the coronavirus pandemic, some are undertaking inhuman actions.

Another concern is about official statements coming from the government of Azerbaijan or relevant structures on Azerbaijan’s threat to hit the Metsamor nuclear plant. I am a physicist and know very well the real consequences of a strike on a nuclear power plant. Thus, I take these statements as an intention to carry out a terrorist act which in international relations is defined as nuclear terrorism. God forbid it happens one day, we will have a Caucasian Chernobyl. Not only Armenia will be affected but everyone, including Azerbaijan, Turkey, Georgia, Middle East... Regardless of what problems exist between the country and neighbors, playing with fire of nuclear issue is unacceptable.

Arts & Living

'Together for Armenia' Digital Concert Series Raises Money for Fund For Armenian Relief Projects

NEW YORK – Thousands tuned in to hear the sweet-sounding melodies that echoed in solidarity from New York to the homeland during the inaugural “Together for Armenia” digital concert, held virtually on Thursday, July 28. Led by pianist Sahan Arzruni and featuring violinist Ani Kavafian, oudist Ara Dinkjian and opera singer Christopher Nazarian, the virtual effort benefited the Fund for Armenian Relief (FAR) and its humanitarian programs.

During a precarious time when the music industry has been altered and live concerts have shifted to the digital world as the pandemic stretches on, the passion for music – from musicians and audience members alike – has not diminished. Instead, musicians have turned to support causes, such as through the “Together for Armenia” concert series that aims to raise money to support the critical initiatives of FAR – an organization that provides aid to the most vulnerable in Armenia and Artsakh by effectively impacting issues from child protection to healthcare to education and to the elderly.

The inaugural concert featured works by Komitas, Bach, Gusan Ashot and Arno Babajanian and as the series continues, Arzruni plans to include Armenian sacred, folk, jazz, pop, as well as compositions from the standard repertoire.

“The audience is there to be entertained so I selected pieces that are familiar,” said Arzruni, an ethnomusicologist who offers commentary about the music in between sets. “The most important criteria is to maintain a very high standard.”

While the 30-minute concert was a seamless watch that delighted audiences, Arzruni acknowledged the diligent work behind the scenes.

“The main challenge in organizing the concert was to have it all synchronized,” said Arzruni, who noted that each musician recorded separately, in a different locale, at a different time. “When I played with Ani, for example, she was in her home and I was in mine playing Komitas’s Krunk, separately, but together.” He credited FAR’s technical team who arranged the recordings and editing with great efficacy and masterful skill.

The bi-monthly concert series, which will have a run of at least 12 performances over the next six months, will feature a mix of performers and musical genres while incorporating artists beyond the United States to provide an even more fulfilling experience for viewers.

“Judging from its premiere tribute to Armenia, FAR is mounting an engrossing series featuring celebrated musicians of the Armenian heritage who perform gems of Armenian music and other classics as we listen to engaging commentary by Sahan Arzruni,” said pianist Cheryl Seltzer.

The concert series provides a means for those who have been unable to consume quality culture, as musical venues remain shuttered and performances postponed, giving them access into these high caliber productions.

“Together for Armenia” is a wonderful respite from our current confinement and limited cultural options,” said administrator Margaret Janicek. “I felt transported by the musical performances to different places and expansive mindsets.”

A frequent traveler to Armenia, Arzruni chose to partner with FAR because he has seen first-hand the organization’s achievements and appreciates their positive working relationship. In coordination with FAR and the Armenian Ministry of Culture, Arzruni has embarked on educational trips to Armenia and Artsakh in recent years to teach students music throughout the provinces.

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ZoomPerformance Q&A with the cast, Author and Nora Armani

The Year of Living Remotely and Un-Certainly

By Nora Armani

Special to the Mirror-Spectator

NEW YORK – Two thousand and twenty has not been a good year – not so far. We can easily speak about this year in the past tense, as things are highly unlikely to change before we step into 2021.

This year will be remembered for washing hands incessantly and obsessively, wearing masks, or refusing to wear them, staying home, or disobeying the rules, keeping our social distance even from loved ones as they die, or catching the virus and praying we recover. It will be remembered as the year where a pandemic took many lives, wreaked havoc globally, rocked the economy to its foundations, made the rich even richer and the poor abjectly destitute. It is also the year natural and man-made disasters multiplied and converged in a vengeful way. Mother Earth and the Universe have been grounding us, telling us to go back to our caves and remain under house-arrest for the evil deeds we have committed.

Ideally, this year should be remembered for starting a major shift in social behaviour, in human thought, in our relationship to the present and the future, and in the ways in which we prioritize and communicate with each other. And yet, one need only browse through the news to see that none of the signs are being heeded by mankind, and the immediate instinct of all is to quickly get back to normal, not realizing that change is the only way out of this situation.

We need to backtrack and retrace our steps to see how much humanity has harmed Mother Earth, how human avarice has produced irreversible environmental damage and climate change. The lives of the poor have become disposable and injustice has stepped on vulnerable people, suffocating them with the strength of its grip. Major social issues have become overshadowed by the very greed that caused them in the first place, with a few privileged people generating so much of the misery in the world. It is clear that the time has come for a major change.

Change would be possible if we actually learned something from this Pandemic; something fundamental and much bigger than the new skills acquired during the lockdown, be they the use of new technologies, online training and courses, baking bread, dabbling in a new language, strumming a new instrument, or taking up crocheting. These are skills that we could have learnt even without a pandemic. Fundamental and deeper learning would involve learning about the world around us, and ourselves beyond more thorough ways of washing one’s hands, or the best ways of covering one’s face, or even the art of spending more time with family. My hope is that this period will make us come to realize that our lives on this planet, and the life of the planet itself, are closely interrelated.

When one reads the news and the way solutions are proposed to social, political, global, and humanitarian problems, one sees immediately that the band-aid approach is still what humanity is operating by. Very few people have learnt something and are really putting their newly acquired knowledge into use. We need to delve deeper into ourselves and reevaluate our spiritual needs. Helping others

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2020 Arpa Film Fest to Showcase Inspiring Films From Around the World

LOS ANGELES – The 23rd Annual Arpa International Film Festival (Arpa IFF) announces its full lineup of selected films for this year.

The Arpa IFF, which in the past has originally taken place at historic theaters around Hollywood, will take place online this year. The festival will run for an 11-day span in order to accommodate all of its planned screenings as a streaming virtual event November 12 – 22, 2020. This year’s Arpa IFF will again highlight a diverse range of world cinema, 65 films from 19 countries that explore many contemporary issues.

Feature Narrative Films

“Aleksi” Feature, Drama, Comedy, Coming of Age 2019 directed by Barbara Vekaric, Croatia

“Lone Wolves” Feature, Thriller, Crime, Drama 2019 directed by Sergi Arnau, Spain

“Min Alesh?” Feature, Drama 2019 directed by Amleset Muchie, Ethiopia

“Omar and Us” Feature, Drama, Human Rights 2019 directed by Maryna Er Gorbach & Mehmet Bahadır Er, Turkey

“Once Upon a Judgment Day” Feature, Drama, Western 2020 directed by Mehmet Tanrisever, Turkey

“Respite” Feature, Action, Crime, Drama 2019 directed by Saro Varjabedian, USA

“Scent of My Daughter” Feature, Drama 2019 directed by Olgun Özdemir, Turkey, USA, France

“Submission” Feature, Drama 2020 directed by Leonardo Antonio, Portugal

“Untimely” Feature, Drama 2020 directed by Pouya Eshtehardi, Iran

Feature-length Documentary Films

“An Armenian Trilogy” Feature Doc, Armenian History, Music 2019 by Dan Yessian, USA

“Bloodless: The Path to Democracy” Feature Doc, History, Politics, Human Rights 2020 by Bared Maronian & Silva Basmajian, USA

“Born Just Now” Feature Doc, Performance Art, Women 2018 by Robert Adanto, USA

“Miracle in the Desert: The Rise and Fall of the Salton Sea” Feature Doc, Environmentalism 2019 by Greg Bassenian, USA

“Quo Vadis 2020” Feature Doc 2019 by Gabriele Fabbro, USA

“What Will Become of Us” Feature Doc, Armenian History, Diaspora 2020 by Stephanie Ayanian & Joseph Myers, USA

Short Documentary Films

“Confessions of a Runner” Short Doc, Sports, Addiction, Recovery 2020 by Bachar Khattar, Lebanon

“Finish Line” Short Doc, Sport, Human Rights 2019 by Saeed Mayahy, Iran

“From Kurils with Love” Short Doc, Adventure, Wildlife 2020 by Taylor Reese, USA

“In the Same Direction: Jeff Pipher & Socrates’ Trial” Short Music Doc, Jazz 2020 by Alexander Craven, USA

“Jo & Kessy Artists with Disabilities” Short Doc, Artists, Disability 2019 by Nwaye Zar Che Soe, France

More shorts and music videos will also be available.

Arpa Foundation for Film, Music & Art (AFFMA) is a charitable, non-profit, tax-deductible organization registered as a 501(c)(3), thereby making all sponsorships 100-percent tax deductible.



ARTS & LIVING

The Year of Living Remotely and Un-Certainly

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more, and being less self-centered may be a good starting point, as we have come to realize that we are part of a whole and cannot exist as isolated units.

As an actor and a performing artist I feel my profession is one of the hardest hit. Certainly members of the medical profession, our dedicated leaders and the essential workers who sacrifice their own safety and that of their families to secure the well being of us all, are suffering a lot. Theirs is the result of a heavy burnout. Our frustration, as artists, rests in the cancelled plans, and the idleness produced especially in the first weeks of the pandemic, until we each shifted gears and found our own ways of keeping occupied.

I was performing in a play, "Terrorism," at Columbia University's newly built multi-million dollar Lenfest Center for the Arts complex, when the pandemic imposed its rules and obliged the producers to cancel the last two performances of an already limited run, following an earlier attempt at reducing audience numbers per show.

The second blow came when the seventh edition of SR Socially Relevant Film Festival New York, scheduled to open this year at the Lincoln Center, was stopped five days short of our opening, as the entire Lincoln Center with its Film, Opera, Ballet, Theatre and Music complexes were shut down.

The third adjustment was taking online the last two courses of my MA in theatre and film) at Hunter College and the Graduate Center CUNY. Overnight, our only contact with the outside world was our computer screens. We all adapted and learnt to navigate masterfully on the Zoom platform thanks to the imposed daily practice.

For me, the collateral benefits were learning to bake bread, cooking home made – but not necessarily healthy – dishes on a daily basis while accumulating the pounds, and recording cooking and poetry video clips between burning my food due to inattention. I also participated in Zoom readings and events, learnt to go LIVE on Facebook.

After the first few weeks of the lockdown spent sitting on the couch binging on Netflix, Acorn, HBO and PBS, my schedule started to fill up again, and I started reliving the same busy pre-COVID-19 days only this time virtually.

Unlike many, or maybe much like most, the lockdown was good to me, because during that time I was able to complete my MA degree, graduating with highest honors. With a diploma awarded virtually, I went into full production to move the SR film festival online. New skills were discovered, new boundaries crossed, and a broader international audience base was reached. I started to see the silver lining in all of this. First, without going online the festival would not have reached so many people outside of New York City. Second, almost all the filmmakers were able to participate and meet their audiences, albeit virtually, something which would not have been possible in the case of a physical week-long festival in New York. And finally, instead of a week, the festival lasted 10 days in June, offering all participating filmmakers the opportunity to discuss their films not just during a mere ten-minutes post-screening Q&A, but during a whole hour dedicated to two or three filmmakers with international moderators adding so much to the experience.

One other project I was working on was a play about immigrant women, "iMigrant Woman," originally written in Italian by Valentina Acava Mmaka in the form of three monologues by immigrant women to be staged in New York.

With the lockdown I immediately saw its potential as a play on the Zoom platform. With an international cast of five women from London, Chicago, Louisville KY, Los Angeles, and Princeton NJ, an author from Kenya, and myself in New York, we were able to perform the play spanning five continents. This would not have been possible, or even imaginable, in a staged version here in New York. The success of these ticketed performances prompted a redux at the end of September.

But is this form really theatre? It certainly is written as a play, and it was presented live with actors for an audience, not as a pre-recorded pre-

sensation which would categorize it as a film. The acting was more theatrical than it would have been for film or television. The small adjustments made in the ways the actors addressed the audience, spoke their thoughts as "asides," and projected may resemble film acting, but not having the luxury of doing many takes emphasizes the live component, certainly tilting the balance towards a theatrical experience. The actors memorize their lines

Nora Armani and Mary Regan in the play "Terrorism" Photo Heidi Bohnenkamp



Minack Theatre in Cornwall, the UK

instead of reading them off the screen, as done with Zoom play readings. By memorizing and speaking as the characters with minimal movements within the frame, the final delivery creates a much more fulfilling theatrical experience. This medium is still evolving and every day is bringing in new discoveries for us theatre folk.

Needless to say, nothing comes even close to the feeling of standing on stage in front of an auditorium packed with an eager audience breathing the same air, feeling the collective heartbeat of the audience, listening to their laughter, their sniffls, their occasional coughs, their chatter, and sometimes even that one annoying cell phone ring. But all this is forgotten when the resounding applause rewards us in the end. That is the magic of live theatre. On Zoom, there is no interference as audience mics are muted, but by the same token, the audience applause has to be communicated through silent emoji's or written comments.

The performing arts, like bars, high-end restaurants and sports events where the live group gathering is an essential component of the experience, are the hardest hit, I think. A painter can still paint, a sculptor can sculpt, a composer can compose music, and a writer can continue to write. Yes, it will be a while until museums reopen, and galleries exhibit again.

Film production in France, in the UK, and in some states in the US such as New York, are slowly resuming activities with new COVID-19 guidelines, involving strict social distancing, frequent testing and the presence of COVID-19 compliance officers on set.

Nothing is planned yet for the performing arts, except virtual online and digital presentations.

Both SOLT (Society of London Theatres) and the The Broadway League along with all their member producers, have decided that opening theatres at 50-percent capacity would make no sense, because the high cost of operating

Broadway theatres and shows cannot be sustained with reduced audience numbers.

"The alchemy of 1,000 strangers bonding into a single audience fueling each performer on stage and behind the scenes will be possible again when Broadway theatres can safely host full houses," said Thomas Schumacher, chairman of the board of The Broadway League, which represents producers.

"The Show Must Go Online" is the title under which the UK-based international publication The Stage covered some of the major productions going online during this closure, echoing the famous show business cry of "The Show Must Go On." For now, this seems to be the only alternative for the live performing artist. Theatre seems to be the luckiest artform transitioning to this medium, since barring rapid argument scenes when two or more performers must speak at the same time or overlap, all else may successfully be presented on Zoom or other such platforms. In other performance genres such as musicals, operas and concerts where coordination and synchronized music and singing are required between performers, the shortcomings of the medium produce a cacophony.

Sadly, 85-year-old Dame Judy Dench is right when she says she may not see theatre again in her lifetime – at least not indoor theatre on the big West End and Broadway stages as we know it.

One obvious solution would be to stage in open air spaces. But summer is almost running out, and there is frustration at many venues such as the idyllic Minack Theatre in Cornwall and Brighton Open Air Theatres and many others this side of the Atlantic and elsewhere where these locations are not able to come to the rescue. Governments are still reluctant to green light large scale performances in open air spaces.

The great plague of Athens during the late 5th century BCE had social effects that were as

important as their biological impact. There have certainly been many plagues throughout recorded human history. In Athens the plague arrived at a pivotal moment in the affairs of this centre of western civilization. Sophocles' specific vocabulary for plague in "Oedipus the King" shows the deep and dangerously volatile relations between the epidemic and tragic drama.

Likewise, during Shakespeare's time in Elizabethan and Jacobean England, a plague ravaged the city of London and its countryside. Out of that was born the healing poetics of Shakespeare that survived the centuries and came to us, with the universal power of portraying all aspects of human nature. The urgency of the situation made people realize the ephemeral nature of life, and re-evaluate their priorities, just like we are doing, or supposed to be doing today, in the age of COVID-19. Poet playwrights could potentially heal, but only so much as their patient may be willing to listen.

Who knows what the legacy of the age of COVID-19 will be?

Pulitzer Prize winning playwright Robert Schenkkan's words in a recent interview with the Los Angeles Fountain Theatre's artistic director Stephan Sachs spell out this harsh reality: "If we do not learn something valuable out of this, it will be one good pandemic gone to waste."

What we learn is yet to be seen. One thing is for sure, Theatre, Poetics and live performances are a crucial component of human civilization, and their absence will leave behind a burnt out crater hit by Coronavirus that right now seems to be larger than a big meteor hitting Earth. It will take time to flatten the curve as it will take time to fill out the crater before we can resume a normal existence.

(Nora Armani is an actress, director and producer who has performed in plays, films and television productions in several countries. She is the co-founder of the SR Socially Relevant Film Festival in New York.)



ARTS & LIVING

‘Together for Armenia’ Digital Concert Series Raises Money for Fund for Armenian Relief Projects

FAR, from page 15

Established as a response to the devastating 1988 earthquake in Armenia, FAR has raised more than \$350 million for 300 projects in the economic, education, relief, cultural and social spheres during the last three decades. It is currently meeting the pressing needs of the COVID-19 pandemic that tore thru Armenia by contributing to an emergency campaign. They are also helping on the ground and delivering 30,000 items of Personal Protective Equipment in Armenia and Artsakh. To further train healthcare professionals, FAR launched a webinar training, in partnership with Armenia’s

National Institute of Health. The FAR team has also been assisting the province of Tavush following the July war with Azerbaijan.

“FAR is keen on being cost-effective and result-oriented,” said Garnik Nanagouljian, Executive Director. “We are very fulfilled when we see the stages of development of those we service, such as a child in our orphan program who flourishes and becomes the recipient of our educational scholarships.”

Nanagouljian said he hopes the concert series, which sends a “powerful message to the world,” will provide another channel for Armenians to support the homeland.

“It’s the music, the Armenian culture and the spirit of Armenia that comes together to help people in need and I’m very thankful to Sahan for his creativeness in launching this program,” said Nanagouljian.

Maintaining a strong bridge between the Diaspora and the homeland has long been a priority for Arzruni, who first traveled to Armenia in 1975 and continues to feel a deep connection to his roots. He is encouraged by the talent and skills of the next generation.

“Music is a wonderful discipline for the mind, soul and spirit,” said Arzruni. “Although it’s not practical to be a musician in the 21st century, if

the flame of these students is strong enough, they will achieve their goals.”

Arzruni has an ambitious vision for the upcoming digital concerts and plans to include the youth of Armenia in the series to showcase their talents.

“Together for Armenia” presented the finest hour of internationally recognized musicians,” said Dr. Vartan Abdo, director of the Armenian Radio Hour of New Jersey. “It was a brave production, presented graciously and successfully, and we impatiently await the next concert.”

“Thank you Sahan and FAR for an outstanding program,” said engineer Vahan Tanal who watched the concert with his wife, Lisa. “What a pleasure to watch and listen to extraordinary Armenian performers from around the world and also be able to help Armenia during these difficult times.”

Looking towards the future, Nangouljian said that FAR is driven to engage in even more aspiring programming in order to change the culture of society in Armenia, from children with disabilities, to health and nutrition, to economic development – thanks to the unity of Armenians in the Diaspora and the homeland.

“The primary and essential reason we are doing the concert series is to fundraise,” said Arzruni. “We hope people will be generous because we are presenting the best of Armenian artistry and the best of the Armenian artists.”

For more information on how to view the upcoming “Together for Armenia” concerts, visit: <https://www.farusa.org/together>

–Taleen Babayan

Recipe Corner

by Christine Vartanian



Lebanese Cheese Fatayer (from Analida’s Ethnic Spoon)

Fatayer are a staple of Lebanese cuisine.

Photos and recipe are courtesy of Analida Braeger at the popular Analida’s Ethnic Spoon food blog launched in 2013. Analida is the talented food writer, recipe developer, and creator of Analida’s Ethnic Spoon food blog. Analida is an adjunct lecturer of architectural history at Mercyhurst University in Erie, Penn., and works to “offer historical perspectives about each recipe, its culture, and sometimes the background for its ingredients at my food blog.”

Fatayers are a Lebanese food found throughout the Middle East in pastry shops and market stalls. Fatayers can be filled with meat (lamb fatayer is traditional.) They can be triangular in shape or cigar-shaped. These are similar to the Turkish pogacas or the Latin American empanada, or the Eastern European burek.

INGREDIENTS:

16 oz. pizza dough frozen, then thawed
1 cup feta cheese, crumbled
5 oz. plain yogurt
1/4 cup mozzarella cheese, shredded
2-3 tablespoons fresh parsley, chopped fine
1 dash of nutmeg
1 large egg beaten with 1 tablespoon water for egg wash
1 teaspoon za’atar sprinkled on finished fatayer
1 teaspoon nigella seeds, if desired

PREPARATION:

Defrost the pizza dough. Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Line a baking sheet with parchment paper.

In a bowl combine the feta cheese, yogurt, mozzarella cheese, parsley, and nutmeg. Crush with a spoon to break down the chunks of feta. (You want the mixture to look like a very thick lumpy paste.)

On a floured surface knead the dough until it is elastic. Roll into a log and cut into ten pieces. Roll each ball and set aside covered. Roll out each ball into an oval shape and place about 2 tablespoons of filling down the center of the dough.

Fold over the top left of the dough over the filling and press down. Fold over the opposite side over the folded side and pinch. Repeat the process at the bottom of the pastry. Brush with egg wash and place on parchment paper on a cookie sheet. Sprinkle with nigella seeds, if desired. Repeat process until all fatayers have been made.

Pre-heat oven and bake at 350 degrees for 15-20 minutes or until golden brown. Fatayer may be served warm or at room temperature. To freeze for the near future, wait until they are room temperature and place in a freezer safe bag. To eat, thaw out to room temperature or warm them in a 200-degree oven.

Serves 8-10.

Also try Analida’s recipe for Lebanese Lamb Fatayer at: <https://ethnicspoon.com/lebanese-lamb-fatayer/>

Analida Braeger and her husband Tom who is a talented photographer. Tom creates the professional food styling and photography for Analida’s Ethnic Spoon.

- For the latest recipes and postings: <https://www.ethnicspoon.com>
- Sign up for her free newsletter and receive a free copy of her latest e-book, A Taste of South East Asia Cookbook at: <https://ethnicspoon.com/a-taste-of-south-east-asia-ebook/>

References:

<https://ethnicspoon.com/lebanese-cheese-fatayer/>
<https://ethnicspoon.com/recipe-index/>
<https://ethnicspoon.com/a-taste-of-south-east-asia-ebook/>
<https://www.facebook.com/ethnicspoon/>



Calendar

MASSACHUSETTS

AUGUST 22 — Saturday, 9 am. Labyrinth Walking: Connection between Movement and Wisdom. Facilitator: Kristin Asadourian, founder, KA Coaching. The Labyrinth Walking Wellness Series is a virtual program of Armenian Heritage Park in partnership with The Greenway Conservancy Fitness Program. For the link to register via ZOOM, email hello@ArmenianHeritagePark.org

SEPTEMBER 9 — Wednesday, at 10am. Celebrating What Unites Us! A virtual cooking series, a collaboration of City of Boston Age-Friendly Boston, OLDWAYS and Friends of Armenian Heritage Park to keep us connected, coming together. ARMENIAN CUISINE. Lena Tashjian, Cookbook author, recipe developer, writer, The Vegan Armenian Kitchen Cookbook: Recipes and Stories from Armenia and the Armenian Diaspora (2020); founder, Vegan Armenian Kitchen.com. To register via Zoom, please email hello@ArmenianHeritagePark.org

SEPTEMBER 23 — Wednesday, at 10am Celebrating What Unites Us! A virtual cooking series, a collaboration of City of Boston Age-Friendly Boston, OLDWAYS and Friends of Armenian Heritage Park to keep us connected, coming together. BREADS! Andrew Janjigian. America’s Test Kitchen Bread Expert. Editor, Cooks Illustrated. , To register via Zoom email hello@ArmenianHeritagePark.org

OCTOBER 7 — 10am Celebrating What Unites Us! A virtual cooking series, a collaboration of City of Boston Age-Friendly Boston, OLDWAYS and Friends of Armenian Heritage Park to keep us connected, coming together. NATIVE AMERICAN CUISINE Chef Sean Sherman member of the Oglala Lakota tribe Cookbook author, The Sioux Chef Indigenous Kitchen - 2018 James Beard Award for Best American Cookbook; co-founder, The Sioux Chef.com - 2019 James Beard Leadership Award. To register via Zoom, email hello@ArmenianHeritagePark.org



COMMENTARY

Mirror Spectator

Established 1932

An ADL Publication

EDITOR

Alin K. Gregorian

ASSISTANT EDITOR

Aram Arkun

ART DIRECTOR

Marc Mgrditchian

SENIOR EDITORIAL COLUMNIST:

Edmond Y. Azadian

CONTRIBUTORS:

Florence Avakian, Dr. Haroutiun Arzoumanian, Philippe Raffi Kalfayan, Philip Ketchian, Kevork Keushkerian, Harut Sassounian, Hagop Vartivarian, Naomi Zeytoonian

CORRESPONDENTS:

Armenia - Hagop Avedikian
Boston - Nancy Kalajian
Los Angeles - Taleen Babayan
Berlin - Muriel Mirak-Weissbach

Contributing Photographers:

Jirair Hovsepien

The Armenian Mirror-Spectator is published weekly, except two weeks in July and the first week of the year, by:

Baikar Association, Inc.

755 Mt. Auburn St., Watertown, MA 02472-1509

Telephone: 617-924-4420

FAX: 617-924-2887

www.mirrorspectator.com

E-Mail: editor@mirrorspectator.com

For advertising: mirrorads@aol.com

SUBSCRIPTION RATES:

U.S.A.	\$80 a year
Canada	\$125 a year
Other Countries	\$190 a year

© 2014 The Armenian Mirror-Spectator
Periodical Class Postage Paid at Boston, MA
and additional mailing offices.

ISSN 0004-234X

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to The Armenian Mirror-Spectator, 755 Mount Auburn St., Watertown, MA 02472

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The Debate over Hagia Sophia, the New Republic, Hrant Dink and Tahir Elçi



By Taner Akcam

During the recent return of the Hagia Sophia/Hagia Sophia Museum to the status of a mosque, three moments stuck out as highly symbolic: the sight of a group of persons running to the mosque shouting “Allahu Akbar!,” the Turkish Minister of Religious Affairs ascending to the pulpit for the Friday sermon with sword in hand, and the President of the Republic reading from the Qur’an.

These are the symbols of the “new Republic” that President Tayyip Erdogan is constructing, and all intentionally harken back to very important historical traditions.

Over the course of much of Ottoman-Turkish history we observe an abiding tradition of refusing to automatically recognize the right to life of those who were different, often justified on the basis of “might makes right” (kılıç hakkı). This tradition, which based itself on destruction and slaughter, has special meaning for the Syriac/Assyrian Christian community, which experienced this tradition first-hand, as the victims of the “Seyfo [Syriac word for sword].” This is the sword that was drawn in Hagia Sophia on Friday, July 24.

This politics of annihilation, which began after the Tanzimat period, in particular and would end up eliminating close to 30 percent of the Ottoman population (primarily Christians), would persist during the Republican Period, during which time it targeted not just Christians, but Jews, the [largely Kurdish] population of Dersim and Alevis.

Neither the founders of the Turkish Republic nor their political opponents have ever fully come to terms with this policy of “annihilation and destruction,” and the reason for this is to be found in the “codes” of Ottoman collapse and Republican national rebirth.

Defeat in wars is a humiliation and degradation for every country, a wounding of national pride and honor. Thus, the principal task of every defeated nation becomes the restoration of its wounded honor. And the first step is the inevitable demand to judge and punish those who are seen as responsible for the defeat. Such a process was entered into by the Ottomans in the wake of World War I, but it turned out to be short-lived and incomplete, being seen by many as a “victors’ justice” forced upon a supine population by an occupying power and ultimately abandoned with the latter’s withdrawal and the victory of the nationalist forces.

Turkish honor, then, was not seen as having been restored through the punishing of those responsible for the debacle, but through military victory in the Turkish War for Independence.

The “truth” that has been imprinted on our brains, as Turkish citizens, is this: it was the Turkish War for Independence that served as the balm for our damaged national pride.

In this sense, there is a vast difference between the German experience after the Second World War and the Ottoman/Turkish one after the First. By facing up – admittedly, by being forced to face up – to its history and to try those who had brought the country to such a sorry state, was able to redeem itself and to restore its national pride. It was upon the trials and judgments at Nuremberg that the German people succeeded in establishing a new state, one that sought a new understanding of what it meant to be German and a new relationship between citizen and state.

But for the Turks, there was never such a coming to terms with their recent past. National pride was not restored through a reconfiguration or new understanding of citizenship or national belonging, nor through an acknowledgement of past misdeeds. Rather, national pride was seen as being redeemed through the much simpler narrative of national collapse and resurrection. Within this narrative there was no room for a reassessment of the annihilationist policies long pursued; indeed, after a brief period of public trials immediately following defeat, there quickly arose a policy of almost complete denial or concealment.

It is not coincidental therefore that the new Turkish Republic and its founding ideology of Kemalism itself were founded on a continuation of these annihilationist policies inherited from the Ottoman state. In view of this, it should surprise no one that President Erdogan’s “New Republic” – a not-so-veiled attempt to reverse much of the country’s secular Kemalist legacy – should be based on these very same foundations.

This understanding of recent Turkish history can be of great benefit for understanding the current debates over the Hagia Sophia’s transformation.

Neither the principal opposition party, the Republican Peoples Party, nor others have been very vocal on this matter, carefully avoiding the creation of any fissures. This should not be seen as surprising; rather it points to the existence within Turkish society of a silent, perhaps even unacknowledged shared understanding regarding the period of transition from empire to nation state.

But what is being seen here is in fact a crisis within the Republic itself, of which the Hagia Sophia affair is but a manifestation, a symptom of something more fundamental; it is a birth pang of the emerging political order.

What this crisis is showing us is that, apart from the Islamist-Nationalist coalition of Recep Tayyip Erdogan and Deniz Bahçeli (and, to a lesser extent, Doğu Perinçek), there is currently no political circle within Turkey possessing a consistent, coherent response to the crisis that the Republic is experiencing. The regime’s bold stroke vis-a-vis

Hagia Sophia should not be seen as stemming from desperation. Rather, it is simply meant to relay the not-so-subtle message of the path to be followed by the New Republic, and that message is that the “annihilationist tradition” of the old regime, inherited by the Republic’s founders, will be retained in the era to come.

This fact bears repeated emphasis: in regard to these long-held “annihilationist policies,” the “New Republic” of the current government coalition does not represent a complete break from the Kemalist tradition, any more than the Kemalists – their claims to the contrary – represented a break from the late Ottoman statecraft of their Unionist predecessors. The “conquest and the sword” featured at the Friday sermon at Hagia Sophia are unmistakable symbols of this continuity.

As for the country’s political opposition, its utter inability to publicly oppose these “coded messages” show the lack of any alternative vision for the future republic. This sorry state of affairs is best reflected in their inability to even produce a justification for the 1934 decision to turn the mosque into a museum in the first place.

I fear that, just as the Turkish War for Independence served as both a salve for wounded national honor and a compress that masked the annihilationist mindset of past governments, by failing to oppose the symbols of “conquest and sword” the current opposition has, for whatever reason, taken on the role of protective compress, shielding from scrutiny this continuing mindset prevailing within the current coalition.

Hrant Dink, Tahir Elçi and the New Republic

It is nevertheless possible to come out in opposition to the Erdogan-Bahçeli-Perinçek vision for a republic, one constructed on the “annihilationist tradition” of the past, to not simply serve as a shield for such efforts, and to possess a different vision for a “New Turkish Republic.” But any vision for a republic that is built on the inherited national myths of the War for Independence and its heroes cannot offer a viable alternative; it can only be another salve for Turkish pride and honor, a shield from our troubled, hidden past. And herein lies the failure of the current opposition.

What is needed is people willing and able to produce a vision of a truly new republic, one that transcends the “official history” of the country’s establishment.

in the United States, with the killing of the unarmed Black man George Floyd by police, a serious debate has been reignited over the country’s founding principles and the role of slavery in its establishment. This process, which has been made more urgent by the recent deaths of civil rights leaders John Lewis and Elijah Cummings, rests on the fundamental claim that the reason for persistent racism and discrimination in America today is that it has been part and parcel of American history since the beginning, extending back before the time of its establishment and its “founding fathers.”

But the America of today is also a country that has been shaped in great measure by the struggle for civil rights and equality. If America has truly made strides toward fulfilling its dream of offering an equitable and free democracy to all its citizens, the argument goes, great civil rights leaders such as John Lewis, Elijah Cummings, and Martin Luther King must be seen as founding fathers of at least equal importance.

It is possible to establish a truly democratic society only by a periodic reappraisal of a country’s history and of its founders. If the seminal contributions of persons such as Martin Luther King and John Lewis are not recognized, no truly democratic tradition can fully take hold.

This is the state in which we in Turkey also find ourselves. The only thing that will allow us to counter the benighted, destructive republican tradition of the ruling coalition is a truly democratic and egalitarian Turkish Republic that is able to honestly face and come to terms with the darker aspects of its history.

And such a republic will need to produce and recognize new “founders.” Such persons do indeed exist, persons similar in their visions to the aforementioned American civil rights leaders, persons who have fallen victim to those opposing their struggle. I am thinking especially of Hrant Dink and Tahir Elçi, two men whose names symbolize this vision of a new republic.

These two, who were of Armenian and Kurdish stock, respectively, took on as their life’s mission the creation of this new society, and showed us exactly what the “annihilationist tradition” in Turkey – this same tradition that is now finding expression the Right-Islamist coalition in power – had destroyed and was continuing to destroy.

A new tradition and a new republic, if they are also to be understood as a salve on wounded national pride and damaged honor, cannot be founded merely on the War for Independence and the accepted founders of the Turkish Republic. What such a reformed society needs most of all is a balm to begin to heal the wounds, to mollify some of the pain and bitterness of the last 150 years of Ottoman-Turkish history. It is possible to come to terms with the destructive policies and mentalities of the past, and to create a new, inclusive narrative. But for this task we need to raise up and embrace a new group of “founders,” one possessing a new understanding and vision for the Turkish Republic.

The words, actions, and legacies of Hrant Dink and Tahir Elçi are the best and clearest response we possess to Turkey’s “annihilationist tradition” and its sword, symbolically brandished at Hagia Sophia. These are our symbols, our “founding fathers” of a more democratic, more just, and more equitable Turkish Republic.



COMMENTARY



My Turn

By Harut Sassounian

Diaspora Commissioner Welcomes Non-Armenian Migrants to Armenia

On the top of all the other disputes among Armenians, a new controversy was added last week by Zareh Sinanyan, the Armenian Republic's High Commissioner for Diaspora Affairs.

A few days before Sinanyan's visit to Lebanon over the weekend, accompanying a plane-load of humanitarian aid from Armenia, he spoke on a teleconference with a group of Armenian officials and others and made some unexpected statements. Here are excerpts from Sinanyan's statement:

"...We should create such a reality in Armenia that not in the distant future we can think about not only the repatriation of Armenians, but also making Armenia the homeland of, how do I say this, for nationalities like us. I am talking about Christian Arabs, Assyrians, those nationalities that do not represent a national security danger to Armenia and can be easily integrated in Armenia. Because in such an intelligent, thoughtful and civilized manner, we can change the demographic situation in Armenia. We should not be embarrassed by that. That is a correct step. That will be a success. Imagine that we can make Armenia a country that is attractive also to non-Armenians..."

Sinanyan's above statement created a major controversy in Armenian circles worldwide. The vast majority of Armenian comments on Facebook pages were highly critical, turning

this issue, like many others, into a partisan political dispute.

I also watched another one of Sinanyan's interviews with the Civilnet website prior to his visit to Lebanon. In that interview, Sinanyan again spoke about Christian Arabs, Assyrians and other nationalities immigrating to Armenia. However, this time, Sinanyan stated that the idea came from Shahan Kandaharian, the editor of Aztag newspaper in Lebanon, the official organ of the local Armenian Revolutionary Party (ARF). Sinanyan implied that the ARF supported this idea, repeating twice that Kandaharian is an ARF member. In fact, the ARF leaders have publicly announced that they prefer Lebanese Armenians not abandon the well-established community of that country. Naturally, no one can constrain any Lebanese Armenian from immigrating to Armenia, which is much more preferable than immigrating to other foreign lands. Kandaharian's words were somewhat misconstrued by Sinanyan. In the video, Kandaharian was speaking about the immigration to Armenia of Lebanese who had Armenian roots, not Christian Arabs nor Assyrians. Sinanyan also alleged that those who criticized him on Facebook are ARF members and an "army of fakes." While there may be a few fakes, but it is clear that the overwhelming majority of the critics are Armenians who do not wish non-Armenians to immigrate to Armenia.

Nevertheless, there are several important issues that need to be raised:

First of all, the immigration of non-Armenians to Armenia is a very sensitive issue for most Armenians with serious national consequences which go far beyond Sinanyan's authority and responsibilities. The genocide of 1915 which decimated 1.5 million Armenians makes all Armenians extra protective of the remnants of their people and the diminished homeland.

Furthermore, while Sinanyan is responsible for implementing the Armenian government's policy of repatriating Diaspora Armenians, the immigration of non-Armenians to Armenia has nothing to do with the office of the High Commissioner of Diaspora Affairs.

The immigration of non-Armenians is a matter of govern-

mental policy. Since independence, there has been a small number of non-Armenians who have settled in Armenia as businessmen or family members of Armenian citizens. There have been also some refugees who have asked for asylum in Armenia. Anyway, it is doubtful that a large number of non-Armenians would be interested in moving permanently to Armenia in the near future.

To be clear, we are not talking about the various minority nationalities that live in Armenia, such as Yezidis, Assyrians, Greeks and Russians. These minorities have been residing in Armenia for centuries. There is no question about their continued residence in Armenia.

In terms of changing the demographics of Armenia and increasing its population, the first thing the Armenian government has to do is to establish policies that would discourage the native population of Armenia from leaving the homeland. This would mean creating jobs and providing housing. After that, the Armenian government should try to attract Diaspora Armenians, particularly those in the near abroad, such as the recent emigrants to Russia, to return to Armenia. To do that, Armenia needs to facilitate their move to Armenia by having a simple procedure for their resettlement, and providing them housing and employment. Otherwise, the Russian Armenians either will not return to Armenia or will turn around and go back after a short stay. This is exactly what happened to Syrian-Armenians who moved to Armenia, fleeing from the civil war in Syria. Many of them left for Western Europe, Canada or the United States due to lack of jobs and housing in Armenia.

The priority right now for Sinanyan's office is to attract Armenians from the Diaspora to move to Armenia. If by a miracle, a large number of Diaspora Armenians resettle in Armenia, only then the Armenian government can raise the issue of allowing a large number of other nationalities to immigrate to Armenia. There needs to be a major national consensus for allowing a large number of non-Armenians moving to Armenia. This is not a one man's or one group's decision.

How Do You Save a Truly Corrupt Country Like Lebanon?

By Robert Fisk

Well, we can all agree that the sea took 70 percent of the blast!" a close Lebanese friend announced to me this week, with intriguing if doubtful science. I had asked him – because I knew the answer – which of Lebanon's religious communities had suffered most grievously from the explosion that changed the nation. Or did not change the nation, as the case may be.

Like everything in Lebanon, his calculation may have been right. Because Beirut, like Tripoli – and Haifa, for that matter – is built on one of those ancient east Mediterranean promontories, like "the face of an old fisherman" as Fairouz memorably called her capital city. The great clap of sound may have embraced more salt water than buildings. And the fish, so far as we know, are not religious.

But my acquaintance – a Sunni Muslim, a civil servant of many years, a reader of books rather than memos – was quick to caution me. "Let's not see this in civil war terms. But yes, the Christians were hit worse because they live next to the port in the east of the city, the Maronites mostly. The Muslims side of Beirut lost its windows, the Christians lost their lives." But even that wasn't quite true.

Those who said that the dead contained Lebanese of every faith were also correct. There were Muslims – Sunni and Shia among the fire-fighters, shopkeepers and others – not to forget the dozens of Syrian refugees who may be a quarter of all the fatalities. In fact, the Syrians somehow got included in the death toll for Lebanon. But there was something slightly odd about the way this tragedy was retold in the west.

In France, in Britain and America – and, I noticed, in Russia, too – the narrative (a word I hate) was a little different. The "Lebanese", so we were told, were now protesting against the "elites" and the government – which had corrupted the country, bankrupted its economy, failed to protect its people – and now demanded a new system of politics, democratic, non-sectarian, uncorrupted, etc. True again.

And yes, the smashed houses and apartment

blocks and devastated streets were indeed part of the destruction of Beirut. But their names – Gemmayze, Mar Mikhael, Ashrafieh – were presented as mere locations on a city map rather than the very epicentre not just of the blast wave but of the old Christian heartland of the Lebanese capital. These districts were beautiful, their Ottoman heritage magnificently preserved – just look at what has happened to the breathtaking Sursock Museum.

These areas were joyous, centres for young people (largely middle class but Muslim as well as Christian), filled with restaurants and bars, immensely popular not only among Lebanese youth but with the westerners who lived in the city and felt safe in a French-speaking, English-speaking, largely pro-European (and often anti-Syrian, anti-Iranian) population.

Before the civil war, it was the other way round: foreigners lived in the west of Beirut, clustered around the American university with its liberal education, its protest demonstrations, its (then) Palestinian movements, its middle class Sunnis and Druze and – if, you drove south twenty miles, its large, ignored Shia minority. In subsequent wars with Israel, it would be these and other Muslim areas which would be smashed by bombs, decimated by explosions, its people cut down in swathes. The Christian districts would be partly spared.

Gemmayze and Mar Mikhael were Christian Phalangist front lines, the streets of west Beirut patrolled by a mixture of venal Palestinian and Muslim militias. When the Israelis invaded Lebanon in 1982, they were greeted as saviours by tens of thousands of Christians and welcomed into their streets. Ariel Sharon would meet Christian militia leader and later murdered president-elect Bashir Gemayel in the magnificent "Au Vieux Quartier" restaurant in east Beirut, the hostelry long ago redeveloped but the street in which it stood devastated on 4 August.

And no, the ball of fire whose shock waves broke those people's lives last week was not some kind of hideous political revenge for the past. The Christians stood up to months of Muslim militia bombardment during the war and Syrian bombardment afterwards – and in recent months, their people have been among the cheerleaders of those demanding an end to

Lebanon's rotten governments. But among them, too, are those who hysterically welcomed home from exile the awful and – many believed – crazed Christian general Michel Aoun, he who was Syria's enemy and who is now Syria's friend and whose son-in-law is now the foreign minister (hence the attack on his ministry at the weekend).

On the day Aoun returned to Beirut in 2005 after years of pleasant exile in Paris, his supporters, singing and waving banners, repaired to Gemmayze to celebrate his return. "We'd better go and listen to them and find out what they want," a Sunni businesswoman said to me at the time. "After all, we now have to live with them." True, yet again. But then this week steps forward the son of the aforesaid assassinated president-to-be, young Nadim Gemayel, a former member of parliament, to tell the world that Hezbollah and thus Iran was behind the corruption of Lebanon.

And this is a story being heaped into the "narrative" of this most recent of Lebanon's crises. By Saturday, we were being told – this in the Financial Times – that "it has long been an open secret that Hezbollah controls sectors of Beirut's port, as it does its airport..." Well, up to a point, Lord Copper. Television channels then hinted that Hezbollah's weapons were smuggled through the same harbour. Was the ammonium nitrate to be used for Hezbollah bombs? Indeed, perhaps some of it had already been used for violence, its supposed 2,750 tons long ago reduced in weight?

So perhaps it's time for a visit to my favourite all-purpose Lebanese government ministry, the Department of Home Truths. Hezbollah does indeed control parts of Beirut airport next to the southern suburbs, which it rules. Watch who runs the security in the terminal when Iranian airliners land and Hezbollah members pass through immigration control. But the port?

Here's a little home truth from a Beirut shipping agent whom I've known for several decades. "Every Lebanese party has its people in the port – Sunnis, Shia, Christians, the lot. If I need to bring in a vessel and I want to move goods quickly through the port, I might get customs men who are Berri's party people." He is talking about the Amal movement, the Shia

pseudo-militia belonging to the speaker of the Lebanese parliament. "And if the Berri people are asking too much? Well, I go to Hezbollah to see if I can get a lower rate from their customs people." Or to the Christians. Or even (though not many, it seems) the Druze who work in the port.

And that's the point. With every major party – their intelligence sought by every major foreign power – operating in the port, would Hezbollah really store explosives, munitions, bombs, even missiles in the harbour? In a Hollywood movie, of course. But in real life? No, their weapons come across the Syrian-Lebanese frontier to the east. During the civil war, the Christian Phalange in east Beirut controlled the entire '5th Basin' (so it was called) in the port. But did they import weapons and ammunition into Beirut through the harbour? Of course not. (They shipped them in industrial crates into their port of Jounieh to the north, but that's another story). Beirut's port was not a weapon

see LEBANON, page 20

LETTERS

What Armenia Needs Is a US Base

To the editor:

There has been much discussion of the benefits of a Russian military base in Armenia to counter threats from Turkey and Azerbaijan. (Russian base casts long shadow on Armenia, Turkey, Edmond Y. Azadian, Armenian Mirror-Spectator, August 8, 2020.)

What is really needed is a US super base in Armenia fully equipped with a 360° state of the art missile defense array. This will stabilize the Caucasus region as well as the greater Middle East.

An American presence will be another tool in the Armenian military toolbox forcing hostile actors into passivity.

Michael Boyajian
Fishkill NY 12524

