

Third Ceasefire Broken by Azerbaijan as Death Toll Mounts

STEPANAKERT (Combined Sources) – Fighting in the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict zone reportedly spread on Tuesday, October 27, to an area adjacent to Armenia’s border with Iran.

The Armenian Defense Ministry accused the Azerbaijani army of shelling its border posts and wounding several Armenian servicemen in the morning. The Azerbaijani side used artillery and combat drones, it said, adding that one of those unmanned aerial vehicles was shot down over Armenian territory.

A ministry spokeswoman, Shushan Stepanyan, said Armenian army units and border guards had to strike back in response. They inflicted “considerable losses” on the Azerbaijani side, she wrote on Facebook early in the afternoon.

The Azerbaijani Defense Ministry denied violating in the ceasefire in that area. It said that Armenian forces themselves opened “intense mortar fire” at its troops stationed in the Zangelan district bordering Armenia’s southeastern Syunik province and north-western Iran.

The reported shelling took place near the Armenian-Iranian frontier which has long been protected by Russian border guards.

Russia also has up to 5,000 soldiers stationed in other parts of Armenia in line with



Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan visits an injured soldier.

bilateral treaties that commit Moscow to defending Yerevan against foreign aggression.

Shortly after the outbreak of the war in and around Karabakh on September 27, Russian President Vladimir Putin said that see CEASEFIRE page 3



Stranded in bunkers in Artsakh

‘You Do Not Know What Tomorrow Will Bring’

–Artsakh Refugee

By Mateos Hayes
Special to the Mirror-Spectator

YEREVAN – As the latest chapter of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict enters its fourth week, it takes a heavy toll on its participants.

Estimates of casualties sustained during the conflict vary wildly, with conservative estimates pegging it as low as two thousand, whilst some claims put the number as high as five thousand. Another toll the conflict has taken is in the form of displaced peoples. As many as 75,000 refugees, nearly 90 percent of Artsakh’s population of women and children, have been forced to leave their homes, whether they be in border towns such as Martakert or comparatively safer cities such as Stepanakert.

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Mercury Public Affairs Cuts Ties with Turkey under Pressure

WASHINGTON (Politico) – The lobbying firm Mercury Public Affairs has cut ties with the Turkish government following a pressure campaign by Armenian-American activists incensed by Turkey’s support for Azerbaijan in ongoing hostilities with Armenia.

The firm’s decision to scrap its \$1 million contract with Turkey is a victory for Armenia in a conflict that’s playing out in Washington as well as the disputed region of Nagorno-Karabakh along

Armenia’s border with Azerbaijan.

In the weeks since the long-running tensions between the countries flared on Sept. 27, Armenian-American activists have worked to deprive Azerbaijan and Turkey of what Aram Hamparian, the executive director of Armenian National Committee of America, described as some of their most potent weapons: their Washington lobbyists.

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Balakian Is Founding Member of Writers Movement Against Trump

By Aram Arkun
Mirror-Spectator Staff

HAMILTON, NY – Several months ago, Peter Balakian helped found a group called Writers Against Trump (WAT, writersagainsttrump.org), which includes a number of noted Armenian-American authors. The group has nearly two

thousand members in all. Its forceful mission statement does not mince words, proclaiming “We believe that this presidency is uniquely dangerous to our present and future society.”

Balakian expounds on it as follows: “We are American writers – now 1,900 of us – who have come together to work for change in November’s election. We devote our lives to language and thinking and ethics. We who founded the organization are in agreement that Trump’s presidency has been mired in corruption, incompetence, see TRUMP, page 10



NEWS IN BRIEF

Armenia Has 2 Azeri POWs; Azerbaijan 17

YEREVAN (PanARMENIAN.Net) – The Armenian side has two Azerbaijani prisoners of war who have been interrogated, according to Rafayel Vardanyan, Head of the Department of Criminalistics at Armenia’s Investigative Committee.

“They are kept in conditions that comply with international humanitarian law, receive appropriate medical care and food,” Vardanyan told reporters on Tuesday, October 27.

Vardanyan said 17 servicemen from the Armenian side are currently kept in Azerbaijan.

It was reported earlier that an Armenian civilian named Azniv Baghdasaryan was captured by the Azerbaijani military on October 7.

Georgia Bars Ambulances Headed to Armenia

TBILISI (News.am) – Georgia on October 26 blocked a batch of ambulances from entering Armenia through the Upper Lars border checkpoint between Russia and Georgia, reported the Telegram channel of Infoteka 24.

The ambulances were been sent by the Armenian community of Russia as humanitarian aid.

Trump: Armenians ‘Incredible People’

LONDONDERRY, N.H. – President Trump at a campaign rally on October 25 made further complimentary remarks about Armenians, calling them “incredible people.” He exclaimed: “You know Armenia? We’re working on that, you know, we’re working.” He said, “Go back and tell your people. We’ll get that straightened out.”

Later the same day, he tweeted his congratulations to the presidents of Armenia and Azerbaijan on an attempted renewal of the ceasefire.

Eurnekian Gives \$3.5 M To Armenia Fund

BUENOS AIRES (PanARMENIAN.Net) – Argentine billionaire businessman of Armenian descent Eduardo Eurnekian is donating \$3.5 million to Hayastan All-Armenian Fund, the Fund’s Executive Director Haykak Arshamyan said Tuesday, October 27.

“Argentinian Armenian entrepreneur, philanthropist and member of the Board of Trustees of the Hayastan All Armenian Fund, Eduardo Eurnekian, has joined the Fund’s “We Are Our Borders” global fundraising initiative by donating \$3.5 million,” Arshamyan said.

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ARMENIA

News From Armenia

Canadian Legislators Seek to Expel Turkey From NATO

OTTAWA — Members of the Legislative Assembly of Ontario requested to expel Turkey from NATO and discuss the recognition of the Republic of Artsakh, the Armenian National Committee of Canada reported this week.

They slammed the ongoing Turkish-Azerbaijani aggression against Artsakh.

On September 27 Azerbaijan, with the support of Turkey, launched a massive attack against the Republic of Artsakh (Nagorno Karabakh), by using all its ammunition, targeting also the civilian infrastructures both in Artsakh and Armenia. There are confirmed reports that there are mercenaries in the Azerbaijani army brought from Syria by Turkey for fighting against the Armenian side.

Catalonia Parliament Statement Calls for End To War in Artsakh

YEREVAN (Armenpress) — The Parliament of Catalonia adopted a statement on October 21, calling for an end to military operations in Nagorno Karabakh, condemning the attacks by the Azerbaijani armed forces on the civilian population and supporting the constructive talks between the sides aimed at the peaceful settlement of the conflict which should be based on the expression of will of the majority of the people of Nagorno Karabakh, the Armenian Embassy in Spain said.

Only Artsakh Solution Is Independence: De Zayas

YEREVAN (Armenpress) — Former UN Independent Expert Alfred de Zayas is confident that the Nagorno Karabakh conflict has only one solution — the international recognition of the independence of Artsakh.

“The tragedy of Nagorno Karabakh has only one solution: the international recognition of the independence of Artsakh — same as the international recognition of Slovenia, Croatia, Bosnia, Kosovo,” de Zayas said on Twitter on October 22

Former Presidents of Armenia Meet

YEREVAN (RFE/RL) — Armenia’s former Presidents Levon Ter-Petrosian, Serzh Sargsyan and Robert Kocharyan met for the first time in many years to discuss the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, it was announced on Wednesday, October 21.

Ter-Petrosian’s spokesman, Arman Musinyan, said the meeting was necessitated by the current “worrying situation” in the conflict zone.

Musinyan said Ter-Petrosian, Sargsyan and Kocharyan were joined by two former Karabakh presidents, Arkady Ghukasyan and Bako Sahakyan. He gave no other details of the meeting.

Ghukasyan and Sahakyan held on Tuesday, October 20, separate meetings with Ter-Petrosian and Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan.

On Monday Pashinyan discussed the hostilities in and around Karabakh with leaders of Armenia’s main opposition parties. Newspaper reports said that they talked about not only the situation on the ground but also possible solutions to the Karabakh conflict that could be proposed by international mediators and Russia in particular.

Edmon Marukyan, the leader of the opposition Bright Armenia Party, claimed on Wednesday that Pashinyan has also held a meeting with at least some of the former Armenian presidents.

Pashinyan’s press secretary, Mane Gevorgian, did not confirm the claim. “If such a meeting takes place there will definitely be an official statement on it,” she told RFE/RL’s Armenian Service.

The ex-presidents’ trilateral meeting is noteworthy given the long history of mutual antagonism between Ter-Petrosian on one side and Kocharian and Sarkisian on the other.

COVID Cases in Armenia Surging

YEREVAN (RFE/RL) — Armenian hospitals are increasingly struggling to cope with the pandemic due to a continuing surge in new coronavirus infections, Health Minister Arsen Torosyan warned on Sunday, October 25.

A resurgence in cases officially registered in Armenia began in mid-September and accelerated after the outbreak on September 27 of the war in Nagorno-Karabakh.

The Armenian Ministry of Health reported in the morning that 2,314 people have tested positive for COVID-19 in the past 24 hours, compared with 1,371 cases registered on October 15. It had reported 850 single-day cases during the previous peak of the pandemic in late June.

The ministry also reported 23 more deaths caused by the disease, bringing the official death toll from COVID-19 to 1,180.

As of Sunday morning, there were 25,412 active coronavirus cases in the country of about 3 million. More than 800 of these patients are hospitalized in a serious or critical condition, Torosyan said, adding that about 450 others are awaiting hospitalization.

In an interview, the minister said that the health authorities are now scrambling to increase the nationwide hospital capacity to deal with the increased

influx of infected people. He said that Armenian hospitals may soon be unable to treat all patients in urgent need of

other safety rules set by the government.

Many people stopped taking these precautions after the start of the deadly war



A COVID patient in Yerevan

life-saving medical aid if the spread of the disease continues unabated.

“If we are unable to hospitalize everyone there may be [coronavirus-related] deaths outside hospitals,” Torosyan warned. He again pleaded with Armenians to wear masks and follow

that has overshadowed the pandemic.

Torosyan acknowledged that the continuing war has contributed to the second wave of COVID-19 infections. “I don’t know to what extent, but it has definitely aggravated the situation,” he said.

Pashinyan Speaks with Pompeo on Azerbaijani Ceasefire Violation

By Aram Arkun

Mirror Spectator Staff

YEREVAN — Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan, according to the official website of his office, held a telephone conversation with US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo this week and pointed out that Azerbaijan broke the recent ceasefire agreement reached in Washington D.C.

Mane Gevorgyan, the press secretary of the prime minister, was asked by the Mirror-Spectator whether she could provide any additional information about this conversation.

She confirmed that PM Nikol Pashinyan drew the attention of the Secretary of State to the fact that it was Azerbaijan that violated the ceasefire agreement. He pointed out that Azerbaijan launched another offensive before the ink of the agreement



Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan

Foreign Minister Meets with Pelosi

WASHINGTON — On October 23, in the framework of the working visit to the United States, Foreign Minister of Armenia Zohrab Mnatsakanyan held an online meeting with Nancy Pelosi, the Speaker of the United States House of Representatives. Lilit Makunts, the Head of the Armenia-US Friendship Group of the National Assembly of Armenia also participated in the meeting.

During the conversation, Mnatsakanyan expounded on the large-scale war unleashed by Azerbaijan against Artsakh since September 27, and the following humanitarian situation. Minister Mnatsakanyan stressed that Azerbaijan’s pre-planned aggression is accompanied with numerous war crimes, including the indiscriminate targeting of civilian population and infrastructure, religious and worship sites by using weapons prohibited by international conventions.

According to Mnatsakanyan, the direct involvement of Turkey in military hostilities by Azerbaijan, which is expressed in Turkey’s political and military support to Azerbaijan and the deployment of foreign terrorist fighters in the conflict zone, is a threat to regional security and peace.

The Foreign Minister of Armenia expressed gratitude to the US House of Representatives for the recognition of the Armenian Genocide, especially emphasizing the personal contribution of Speaker Nancy Pelosi.

reached in Washington was dry. This is already the third ceasefire agreement brokered by the OSCE Minsk Group Co-Chairs that was violated by Baku. There is no doubt that Turkey encourages and instigates Azerbaijan to do it.

The Prime Minister also assured the Secretary of State that after signing the ceasefire agreement he gave an order to the Armenian armed forces to refrain from any response to the fire from Azerbaijani troops unless the latter are moving forward towards the Armenian positions. There is no reason for Armenia to violate the ceasefire and resume hostilities.

In this context, Gevorgyan said, Prime Minister Pashinyan asked Secretary of State Pompeo: “Who do you think is interested in reshaping or even abolishing the Minsk Group co-chairmanship?” He added that we are not interested in it at all, while Azerbaijan and Turkey do not conceal their intentions on this matter.



ARMENIA



Destroyed buildings in Stepanakert

Ceasefire Broken as Death Toll Mounts

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Moscow will fulfill its defense obligations to its South Caucasus ally. He noted at the same time that “the hostilities are not being carried out on the territory of Armenia.”

It emerged this week that the commander of Karabakh’s Defense Army, Lieutenant-General Jalal Harutiunyan, was replaced by another general, Mikael Arzumanyan, late on Monday after being reportedly wounded in action.

Karabakh authorities did not specify the circumstances in which Harutiunyan suffered the injuries. They said that his life is not at risk.

Nearly 60 percent of Nagorno-Karabakh’s population has been forced to flee homes since the start of the war with Azerbaijan one month ago, Artak Beglaryan, Karabakh’s human rights ombudsman, said on Monday, noting that an estimated 90,000 civilians have been relocated to other parts of Karabakh or have taken refuge in Armenia.

The shelling has targeted Stepanakert and most other Karabakh communities, causing extensive damage to local homes and public infrastructure. Most of Stepanakert’s remaining residents now live in basements and other bomb shelters.

According to Beglaryan’s office, the fighting has left nearly 40 Karabakh civilians dead so far. One of them lived in a village near Stepanakert that was reportedly shelled on Monday despite an Armenian-Azerbaijani ceasefire agreement brokered by the United States.

Beglaryan noted that his office is preparing a second report on the inhuman treatment of dead bodies of Armenian soldiers and prisoners of war by Azerbaijani armed forces. Videos circulate one injured Armenian soldier being shot point blank, while another exists of two Armenian soldiers being beheaded.

Azerbaijani armed forces fired Smerch cluster warhead at Nngi village of Artsakh, where many displaced civilians from neighboring communities had found shelter, on Monday.

“As a result of the strike three women were injured, as well as a residential house was totally ruined. Other houses and infrastructures of the village suffered damages to different extent.

The fact that there are no military objects in the vicinity of that village, as well as the use of prohibited cluster missile of mass destruction in densely populated area show that the Azerbaijani armed forces had criminal intent to target the civilian population and facilities. The

Human Rights Defender applies to the international community and human rights organizations to take immediate actions for adequately reacting and stopping the Azerbaijani atrocities,” Beglaryan’s statement concluded.

Armenia urged the United States on Monday to react strongly to what it called Azerbaijan’s failure to respect yet another agreement to stop the war in Nagorno-Karabakh which was brokered by Washington.

“It’s now clear that once again it has not proved possible to implement a ceasefire [agreement],” Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan said in a video address to the nation aired in the evening. “I cannot say at this point what the reaction of the OSCE Minsk Group co-chair countries [the U.S., Russia and France] and their presidents will be. But you must know that the Armenian side has done everything to adhere to the ceasefire.”

“I hope that official representatives of the U.S. will answer these questions. Have they clarified as a result of whose actions the ceasefire has been violated? If so, what consequences will there be for the party that has violated it?” he said.

Pashinyan charged that Azerbaijan is continuing its offensive military operations in the conflict zone because it wants to force Armenia and Karabakh to capitulate. The Armenian side has been “maximally flexible” in negotiations mediated by the U.S., Russia and France and prepared to agree to a “painful” compromise-based solution to the Karabakh conflict, he said, adding that it now has no choice but to continue fighting against the “Azerbaijani aggression.”

Russia Welcomes US Efforts

Speaking ahead of the Washington talks, Russian President Vladimir Putin expressed hope that the United States will contribute to Russian efforts to get the conflicting parties to respect a ceasefire agreement that was brokered by Moscow on October 10.

A similar “humanitarian” truce agreement brokered by France on October 17 has also not been observed.

Peskov said that Moscow is continuing to closely monitor the situation in the Karabakh conflict zone. “We still believe that there can only be a peaceful solution to this problem,” said Putin’s spokesman.

On October 23, Foreign Minister of Armenia Zohrab Mnatsakanyan met with US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo in Washington.

According to Armenia’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the main subject of the discussion was the situation in Artsakh resulting from the Azerbaijani large-scale aggression. Minister Mnatsakanyan informed the US Secretary of State about the war crimes committed by the Azerbaijani armed forces during the hostilities, which are manifested by the deliberate targeting of the civilian population of Artsakh, humiliating treatment of civilians and prisoners of war, beheadings and murders.

Pompeo expressed his condolences.

Mnatsakanyan highlighted that the Azerbaijani aggression is accompanied by the direct involvement of Turkey, which is manifested in its immediate military-technical support and transferring of foreign terrorist fighters to the region. According to Minister Mnatsakanyan, Azerbaijan’s decision to turn itself into Turkey’s zone of influence and a hotbed of international terrorism is a serious threat to regional security.

He added that the violation of the ceasefire agreements by Azerbaijan and the continuation of hostilities against the people of Artsakh once again demonstrate Azerbaijan’s goal of resolving the issue by military means.

Both sides reiterated the need for the immediate implementation of the agreements on cessation of hostilities in the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict zone, as well as the continuation of the peace process within the framework of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) Minsk Group Co-Chairs.

President in France

President Armen Sarkissian on October 23 visited France to meet with French President Emmanuel Macron. “Our objective is clear: to see the ceasefire applied,” French government spokesman Gabriel Attal said after Macron met with Sarkissian in Paris.

“The President [Macron] is working closely with [Russian President] Vladimir Putin for this,” tweeted Attal. “The solution to this conflict can only be found in appeasement. That is why it is imperative that Turkey cease its dangerous provocations in the region.”

Shortly after the outbreak of large-scale hostilities in and around Karabakh on September 27 Macron accused Turkey of recruiting jihadist fighters in Syria and sending them to Azerbaijan. “I urge all NATO partners to face up to the behavior of a NATO member,” the French leader said on October 1.

The situation in the conflict zone was the main focus of Macron’s talks with Sarkissian. A statement by the Armenian presidential press office said the two leaders agreed on the need for an unconditional implementation of Armenian-Azerbaijani ceasefire agreements that were brokered by Moscow and Paris earlier this month.

The statement cited Sarkissian as saying that Turkey’s military support for Azerbaijan is “further escalating the situation and endangering regional peace and stability.”

French Foreign Minister Jean-Yves Le Drian said last week that “the only country which isn’t calling for respect of the ceasefire is Turkey.”

However, Turkish Vice-President Fuat Oktay told the CNN Turk broadcaster on October 20 that Ankara will not hesitate to send troops to Azerbaijan if such a request is made by Baku.

HRW Accuses Azerbaijan

Human Rights Watch (HRW) accused Azerbaijan on Friday, October 23, of repeatedly using widely banned cluster munitions in the shelling of civilian areas in Nagorno-Karabakh.

“During an on-site investigation in Nagorno-Karabakh in October 2020, Human Rights Watch documented four incidents in which Azerbaijan used cluster munitions,” the U.S.-based group said in a report.

The report says that HRW researchers have identified the “remnants of Israeli-produced LAR-160 series cluster munition rockets” in the Karabakh capital Stepanakert and the town of Hadrut and examined damage caused by them.

“Azerbaijan received these surface-to-surface rockets and launchers from Israel in 2008–2009,” it says.

“The continued use of cluster munitions – particularly in populated areas – shows flagrant disregard for the safety of civilians,” said Stephen Goose, the head of HRW’s arms division sector.

“The repeated use of cluster munitions by Azerbaijan should cease immediately as their continued use serves to heighten the danger for civilians for years to come,” Goose said.

London-based Amnesty International also condemned the use of cluster rockets against residential areas in Karabakh following the September 27 outbreak of large-scale hostilities between Armenian and Azerbaijani forces. In an October 5 statement, it described the practice as “appalling and unacceptable.”



ARMENIA

'You Do Not Know What Tomorrow Will Bring'

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In addition to those that took refuge in Armenian cities on the Artsakh border such as Goris and Vardenis, many have also made their way to Yerevan. These beleaguered families have been readily hosted by the city's hotels, by relatives, by charitable organizations, and even by strangers. One of these families is that of Gayane S. As a Stepanakert resident, Gayane was in the thick of the heavy enemy shelling and UAV attacks on the first days of the war and was forced to flee.

In the wake of a surprise attack in which the Azeris launched swarms of drones against Artsakh, the women and children of this family found themselves in Yerevan. They were forced to leave behind their male relatives who went straight to the front. Happily, this beleaguered family has found shelter in the home of a very generous friend in Yerevan, and Gayane has been residing in a compound in Armenia's capital city ever since.

Gayane, 37, vividly remembers the day her life changed forever: "Early in the morning, we heard thunder from the clear skies, and we understood that these are the sounds of war. My husband immediately spotted an Azeri UAV being shot down."

Gayane was quick to wake her children and lead them to the bunker in their home's garden. The bunker had been constructed during the fighting of the 1990s, and Gayane's family had opted to keep it intact when they bought their residence in downtown Stepanakert: "Our neighbors were quite happy with that decision. They came to the bunker when the bombardment started." Gayane, along with her daughter, Anna, and her neighbors prayed as the boom of guns continued.

However, the bunker was small and damp, its walls made of sand. Soon, Gayane's children complained of nausea, and they could not stay in the bunker. As the air raid sirens continued to blare, the bunker shook as Artsakh's howitzers fired in retaliation. When Gayane's husband told her to prepare to leave the city with her children, she never imagined she would be gone long. "I was sure we would come back soon. We had tracked dirt into the house from the bunker, and I was sure

we would be back soon to clean it all up," she added. But as the weeks came and went, the prospect for the Gayane's quick return to their home became grim.

Gayane lost her brother to a drone attack in the war's early days, and was able to briefly return to Stepanakert to pay her last respects: "All the time I was back, the sirens blared, and they continued to hit the city constantly. When I went, the whole community came to mourn my brother's death." But as the security situation has become increasingly precarious, conventional funerals have become impossible. "Now, people don't have time to even keep the body. It must be buried quickly, and less that a handful of people can attend the service. When my neighbor died, his wife and children couldn't go to Artsakh to mourn him, because it wasn't safe," she said.

Tragically, such realities are becoming increasingly common.

Despite this, Gayane hoped for victory, and prayed that this will be the final war, so that the people of Artsakh would no longer have to live with fear and uncertainty. "I feel we will win, but I don't know how we will go back and cope with all the loss and go on."

Having endured heart wrenching loss over the course of this war, Gayane is painfully aware of the precariousness of life in a warzone. "In Artsakh, everything you do or want to do has to take the war into account. You must always weigh the pros and cons, as you can lose everything in an instant. You do not know what tomorrow will bring," she said.

Arev's Story

Arev A. is a 35-year-old housewife, who fled her house in Stepanakert along with her children, taking refuge in the home of a Yerevan resident who has generously opted to host them. Arev, like countless residents across Artsakh, awoke around 7 a.m. on a serene morning of clear blue skies to the sounds of battle: "We live in the highest part of Stepanakert, and from far we could feel our walls shaking as bombs detonated in the distance. At first, we thought the booming sounds were those of thunder, but when we saw the clear skies, we knew it couldn't be."

The specter of swarms of attacking drones still remained vivid in Arev's recollections. "Every hour in the afternoon and night we saw one [drone] or we heard them and saw some get shot down. This, along with the deafening sound of Artsakh howitzers exacerbated the sense of fear in the city: "everywhere was panic," Arev recalled.

Because her mother lived in the city center on the fifth floor of one of Stepanakert's many apartment blocks, Arev's husband went to get her mother and bring her to their home. Arev could not allow her children to go outside and play, and they soon became fearful and restless. "My youngest daughter said she didn't want our house to blow up, and that she didn't want her father to go to heaven," she said. The fighting similarly took a toll on Arev's eldest son, a boy of 7 who is very sensitive to noise. "He couldn't take the sounds of bombardment and started to cry," she added.

Arev initially had no intention of leaving the city. She, like

so many others of her generation in Artsakh had to live through the fighting of the 1990s as a child. However, Artur, an Artsakh man who has devoted his time to help evacuate families from Stepanakert, compelled her to prepare to leave the city: "He warned that the Azeris planned to strike the city with powerful weaponry... I had 20 minutes to pack up and leave with my kids. My mom encouraged me to leave, and that was a decisive moment for me."

The Value of Peace

Arev left the city along with her relative, Loucine A. and her family. A 39-year-old housewife, Loucine was similarly disoriented by the morning attack. "We never expected an attack on Stepanakert. For us, the war felt distant before," she said.

Despite this, Loucine had grown used to the sounds of battle, having lived through adolescence during the '92 war: "We were used to the bombings, so we weren't afraid as children. You can say that I took those years lightly."

But as a parent, Loucine found her experience to be markedly different: "Its terrible, because you fear for your children. I immediately understood I couldn't stay in Stepanakert... when I saw the fear and trauma on the faces of my children."

When full-scale war resumed on September 27, Loucine rushed into the bunkers with her children, quickly grabbing anything useful such as clothes, water, snacks, and medication for her 17-year-old daughter. Loucine found herself torn apart with worry, fearing for her son who was staying with his grandmother, and for her husband who was on the front as the fighting began.

Loucine was eventually able to reunite with her son at his grandmother's house: "Since we were together, things became calmer, and we began to see the reality, that a war had started," she said.

Loucine left the next day along with her children with the help of Artur.

The decision to leave left her conflicted, as it meant leaving her brother and husband – both in the army – behind: "It was really hard, because I had no time to think. I battled with my thoughts on the decision to leave the whole way to Yerevan," she added.

For Loucine, the entire event underscored the stark realities of life in a warzone. Life in Artsakh is rife with difficulties brought on by conflict: "people are still trying to overcome the consequences of the first two wars, and finding employment to provide for your family, and good education for your kids is really hard."

Nevertheless, Loucine believes that living in such a precarious situation allows her a unique and valuable perspective. "You understand how valuable peace is, and you understand the price that comes with that peace," she said. She hopes that those living in the Armenian diaspora appreciate this reality, and support Artsakh in any way they can, whether it be morally or materially.

"When you live here, it is like being on the frontline of the war between light and dark," Loucine added.



President Bestows Order of Fatherland Medals

YEREVAN (Armenpress) – President Armen Sarkissian signed an order on October 22 bestowing the Order of Fatherland upon Colonel Garegin Poghosyan, the Commander of a military base of the Armenian Armed Forces; Major-General Andranik Piloyan, the Commander of a military base of the Armenian Armed Forces; and Lt. General Tiran Khachatryan, the First Deputy Chief of the General Staff of the Armenian Armed Forces for "exclusive services rendered for the defense and security of the Fatherland and selflessness and valor in combat operations."

Earlier, on October 20, PM Nikol Pashinyan had announced bestowing National Hero titles upon the two active duty generals. Those who receive the National Hero title also receive the Order of Fatherland.

Gagik Tsarukyan Freed on Bail

YEREVAN (RFE/RL) – Gagik Tsarukyan, a wealthy businessman leading the opposition Prosperous Armenia (BHK), was released on bail on Thursday, October 22, almost one month after being arrested on charges rejected by him as politically motivated.

A Yerevan court allowed investigators to arrest Tsarukyan on September 25 three months after the Armenian parliament dominated by Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan's allies lifted his legal immunity from prosecution.

The National Security Service (NSS) claims that he "created and led an organized group" that bought more than 17,000 votes for the BHK during parliamentary elections held in 2017.

Tsarukyan strongly denies the accusations. He and his party maintain that Pashinyan ordered the criminal proceedings in response to the BHK leader's calls for the government's resignation. Pashinyan and law-enforcement authorities deny that the case is politically motivated.

A Yerevan judge refused to allow Tsarukyan's pre-trial arrest on June 21. Armenia's Court of Appeals overturned that decision on July 8, ordering a lower court to hold new hearings on the matter.

A judge of that court sanctioned Tsarukyan's arrest on September 25. The same judge agreed to grant him bail worth

100 million drams (\$206,000).

Calls for the release of the head of Armenia's largest parliamentary opposition force grew after the outbreak of the war



Gagik Tsarukyan

in Nagorno-Karabakh on September 27. BHK figures and other opposition politicians said that it would strengthen national unity in the face of what see as an existential threat to Armenia and Karabakh.

Armenians Call on Germany to Act

By Muriel Mirak-Weissbach

Special to the Mirror-Spectator

BERLIN – Representatives of the Armenian government and the church have issued urgent appeals to the German government and Bundestag (Parliament) to intervene in search of a diplomatic solution to the ongoing war in Nagorno Karabakh. But, to date, Berlin has declined the invitation, suggesting that Armenia and Azerbaijan handle it themselves.

Both the Ambassador to Germany, Dr. Ashot Smbatyan, and representatives of the church, as well as members of the Armenian community in Germany, appeared last week in events organized by the Bundespressekonferenz, an independent German journalists association, to present their views.

Speaking on October 20, Smbatyan reviewed the history of the conflict and listed war crimes committed by Azerbaijan, which is deploying weapons provided by NATO member Turkey as well as foreign mercenaries. Smbatyan warned that a “humanitarian catastrophe” was looming and human lives – both Azerbaijani and Armenian – were being destroyed. He called for stopping Turkey’s interference and issued a plea for concrete steps to be taken to contribute to a peaceful solution.

Antranig Aznavour, representing the Central Council of Armenians in Germany (ZAD), criticized German press accounts that deny Karabakh’s right to independence, in utter disregard for the right to self-determination. Germany “is calling for de-escalation but lacks determination,” he said; Berlin should put Turkey and Azerbaijan in their place. He called for economic sanctions and an arms embargo, and urged the media, parties, the government and civil society to become active: denounce the Azerbaijani aggression and Turkey’s role; and acknowledge Karabakh’s legitimate right to self-determination and independence.

Georgi Ambarzumyan, president of the AGBU-Germany, also criticized the press for its “equidistance,” noting that only the tabloid BILD-Zeitung had denounced Azerbaijan as aggressor. Ambarzumyan recalled the clause in the 2016 Bundestag resolution recognizing the genocide which acknowledged Germany’s historical responsibility, and stressed that this refers not only to the past, but to the present; Germany has a responsibility to defend Armenian life.

In discussion with journalists, the Armenian spokesmen lamented the lack of active interest shown by German politicians and press, as indicated by the fact that only BILD-Zeitung has a correspondent in Karabakh, and only the right-wing extremist Alternative for Germany party has visited the region – a visit neither the embassy nor the ZAD had anything to do with. (Another sign of disinterest on the part of the press was the number of journalists present at the event; one could count them on the fingers of one hand.)

Smbatyan concluded by expressing his thanks to Germany, France and the United Nations for mediating a ceasefire. But more is required; humanitarian aid is urgently needed. Asked by a journalist whether Russia would agree to an initiative launched by Germany, Smbatyan replied, that Germany is part of the Minsk Group of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE).

In the afternoon, another group of Armenians convened in the same venue, this time featuring representatives of the church, Bishop Sevropé Isakhanyan, Primate of the Diocese of the Armenian Church in Germany, and Ilias Uyar, Cologne lawyer and representative of the Diocese. Writer Dogan Akhanli also participated.

Ilias Uyar opened with an urgent call for German intervention, given the “impending humanitarian catastrophe,” and complained that nothing has come from Berlin except appeals. Germany, he said, enjoys the trust of both sides to the conflict, so why does it not act? “Germany is in the Minsk

Group, has the EU chairmanship and sits on the UN Security Council.” Concretely, Uyar listed a series of steps to be taken: Germany must actively initiate talks between the warring parties; denounce Turkey’s role and impose sanctions; in light of its historical responsibility, take political responsibility for the future by recognizing Artsakh; provide aid; and, investigate war crimes by Azerbaijan. He concluded by expressing his fear that the conflict could spill over into Germany, and recalled the arson attack on an Armenian embassy car last summer.

Bishop Isakhanyan was on hand “to condemn the war.” Prayers for peace, he said, take place daily in Cologne, the seat of the diocese, in parallel to those in Armenia. He issued a passionate appeal for peace, for which there was “no alternative;” this is not a sign of weakness, he said, but a means of protecting creation. “There is no just war,” he went on, “every war is unjust.” Rejecting the notion that this is a religious war, he recalled the centuries of peaceful coexistence among Muslims and Christians. He himself was born in Iran, and said he harbored no hate for Azerbaijanis. “I want these two peoples to live peacefully side by side.” He recalled his participation in demonstrations in Yerevan in 1988, at the age of 24, for a peaceful solution. He demanded politicians find solutions, with a willingness to compromise, in the recognition that the war must be ended at all costs. Specifically, he said Germany should monitor the Line of Contact.

Dogan Akhanli highlighted the role of Turkey, noting that there is also a threat against the minorities inside Turkey. With historical insight, he warned against the danger that Germany could again ignore the elimination of Armenians.

A day later, the same journalists association hosted an event with the Ambassador of Azerbaijan, Ramin Hasanov, joined by a human rights lawyer, Prof. Dr. Hans-Joachim Heintze. Speaking to an even smaller number of journalists, Hasanov gave the Azerbaijani version of events: the Armenians had provoked and Azerbaijan had responded in self-defense. There was no question of self-determination, but of Azerbaijan’s claim to territorial integrity. Armenians were the occupiers and Azerbaijan was merely “liberating its own territory.” Dr. Heintze supported this, arguing that the Armenians in Karabakh were a “national minority,” with no rights to self-determination, but only to minority rights. (Kosovo was an “exception” to this principle.)

In answer to a series of hostile questions. Hasanov rejected all allegations of war crimes, as “Armenian propaganda.” The were no jihadists from Syria or Libya, because Azerbaijan, with its huge, modern, well-trained and well-armed military, “did not need them.” Turkey was a brother state, but was not involved at all. Azerbaijan had every right to purchase weapons from Turkey (and Israel), though most of its arms came from Russia. Asked why independent human rights groups were denied entry to the conflict zone, Hasanov answered, the government could not guarantee security during a war.

What would be the response from Berlin?

On October 22, Deutsche Welle news agency reported that on a German government statement in which it “calls on Armenia and Azerbaijan to respect the agreements reached on 10 and 17 October 2020, regarding a humanitarian ceasefire between the two countries, to immediately end all hostilities and to avoid further casualties at all costs.” The foreign ministry statement noted that “Armenia and Azerbaijan have committed to facilitating humanitarian assistance,” and that it was now vital that they “immediately resume efforts towards finding a peaceful and lasting solution to the conflict, based on the fundamental principles of conflict resolution.”

Would that be possible? On October 27, the opportunity to do will present itself. In a highly unusual initiative, the Korrespondenten-café in Berlin has invited Dr. Ashot Smbatyan and Ambassador Ramin Hasanov, to appear together in a meeting with journalists. It will be the first time the two share the podium, and the proceedings will be on the record.

International News

Azerbaijani Prisoner of War Says Turkey Calls Shots in Azerbaijan

YEREVAN (Armenpress) – Azerbaijani prisoner of war Emin Beskalin Zahiroglu, receiving medical treatment in a hospitals in Artsakh, on October 22 provided details of how military specialists from Turkey control the Azerbaijani aggression against Artsakh.

Photographer Davit Ghahramanyan released footage in which the Azerbaijani prisoner tells that 3 officers had come with them for training sessions, adding that they are from Turkey.

“It was obvious from the style they talked and the military uniform. The trainings were mainly conducted according to the program prepared by them, which lasted 10-15 days. They are still in our command centers and without their instructions our commanders make no independent decisions,” Zahiroglu said.

Russian, Turkish FMs Again Discuss Karabakh

MOSCOW (RFE/RL) – Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov and his Turkish counterpart Mevlut Cavusoglu again discussed international efforts to stop the war in Nagorno-Karabakh in a phone call on Tuesday, October 27.

“The ministers emphasized the absence of alternatives to a peaceful resolution of the conflict, the need for an immediate ceasefire and the resumption of a negotiating process within existing mechanisms of the OSCE Minsk Group,” read a statement released by the Russian Foreign Ministry.

“They particularly noted the inadmissibility of internationalization of the crisis and involvement of foreign militants in it,” it said.

According to the statement, Lavrov and Cavusoglu also discussed the conflicts in Syria and Libya.

For their part, the U.S. and especially France have criticized Turkey’s role in the ongoing military conflict. The French government said last week that Ankara’s “dangerous provocations” are hampering the mediators’ efforts to stop the fighting and restart Armenian-Azerbaijani peace talks.

Turkish leaders have also called for Ankara’s involvement in the peace process that has long been mediated by the U.S., Russia and France. A spokesman for Russian President Vladimir Putin reiterated on Tuesday that this cannot happen without Armenia’s consent.

Iran Vows to ‘Severely Counter’ Terrorists Near Border

TEHRAN (PanARMENIAN.Net) – Iranian Deputy Foreign Minister for Political Affairs Seyyed Abbas Araqchi this week set off on a regional tour, as Iran’s special envoy.

According to Foreign Ministry Spokesman Saeed Khatibzadeh, Araqchi first visited Iranian border regions to see first-hand the latest developments on the ground.

Araqchi’s tour was to take him to Baku, Moscow, Yerevan and Ankara, Khatibzadeh said.

During his Tuesday visit to border areas in the northwestern province of Ardabil, near the Republic of Azerbaijan, Araqchi warned the warring parties in the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict to prevent any harm to the security of Iranian territories.

In addition, Major General Seyed Abdolrahim Mousavi, the commander of Iran’s Army, said on Monday that Iran has strengthened its air defense systems in the northwestern region of the country. Mousavi said his army will severely counter the presence of terrorists on its border, Tehran Times reports.

Thousands of terrorist mercenaries are fighting alongside Azerbaijani troops against Karabakh. Armenia was the first to report on Turkey’s deployment of thousands of Syrian fighters to Azerbaijan. International media publications followed suit, as did reactions from France, Russia, Iran and Syria.

“The tranquility of the people is of special importance to us,” he said.

Mercury Public Affairs Cuts Ties with Turkey under Pressure

TIES, from page 1

“A lot of people have bought a lot of summer homes and fishing boats and put their grandkids through college by lying about Armenia and covering up for Azerbaijan,” he said.

The Armenian National Committee and the Armenian Assembly of America tried to put pressure on Mercury by holding protests outside its offices in Washington and Los Angeles and urging Mercury’s clients to cut ties with the firm if it kept representing Turkey.

The campaign had an effect. Kathryn Barger, the chairwoman of the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors, and Hilda Solis, a supervisor and former Labor secretary in the Obama administration, wrote to

Mercury on Wednesday to urge the firm “to immediately sever any business ties with the Republic of Turkey.” (Mercury is a contractor to Los Angeles County, which is home to a large Armenian population.)

California state Assembly Speaker Anthony Rendon and 16 other state lawmakers told Mercury on Thursday they wouldn’t engage with the firm as long as it represented Turkey. And the Los Angeles Community College District informed Mercury that it would “begin to exercise the 30-day termination clause” in its contract if Turkey remained a client.

Mercury declined to comment. The Turkish embassy didn’t respond to a request for comment.



INTERNATIONAL

Fourth Major French-Armenian Demonstration for Artsakh in Paris

By Jean Eckian

PARIS — For the fourth time during the current crisis, 20,000 French-Armenian inhabitants of Paris and around gathered on the Place du Trocadéro, in front of the Eiffel Tower on October 25 to demand France recognize Artsakh. Coordinating Council of Armenian Organizations of France (CCAF) Co-Chairs Mourad Papazian and Ara Toranian blasted Turkish President Erdogan for his insulting attitude towards French President Emmanuel Macron, and the imbalance between Armenian forces and those of Azerbaijan, aided by Turkey.

Ara Toranian said: “The people of Artsakh are fighting for their survival and for the love of democracy and the Turkey / Azerbaijan duo are only looking for a military solution.” Several municipalities in France have decided to recog-

nize Artsakh as an independent country.

Noted French journalist Franz-Olivier Giesbert said, “It is important to fight against disinformation. Even far from the front, it is thus possible to provide support.”

The procession then headed in front of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to ask Minister Jean-Yves Le Drian to come out of “neutrality” to ensure the protection of Artsakh.



Paris Bridge March Dedicated to Heroes of Artsakh

By Jean Eckian

PARIS — On Saturday, October 24, a collective of one hundred young Armenians around Paris, all dressed in black, moved around in Paris, especially near the Turkish embassy, each bearing a plaque with the name and age of Armenian young people. soldiers who died as heroes for their homeland under the Turkish-Azerbaijani yoke. Among them, we can recognize the Deputy Mayor of Alfortville Saro Mardiryan.



France Not Planning Reciprocal Boycott on Turkish Products: Trade Minister

PARIS (Reuters) — France is not planning a reciprocal boycott against Turkish products and will continue talks and relations with Turkey and its president, Trade Minister Franck Riester said on Monday, October 26.

“There is no retaliation on the agenda,” Riester told RTL radio. He nevertheless reiterated the government’s condemnation of Turkish President Tayyip Erdogan’s recent comments about President Emmanuel Macron and his treatment of Muslims in France.

Erdogan urged compatriots on Monday to stop buying French goods, joining calls around the Muslim world for a consumer boycott in protest over images being displayed in France of the Prophet Mohammad that Muslims see as blasphemous.

In a televised speech, he urged world leaders to protect Muslims “if there is oppression against Muslims in France.”

Erdogan has angrily criticized French President Emmanuel Macron for pledging to defend secularism against radical Islam.

It comes after a teacher was killed for showing Prophet Muhammad cartoons.

Samuel Paty was beheaded on October 16 by 18-year-old Abdulkh Anzorov outside Paris, after presenting the images to his pupils during a class about freedom of speech.

Macron has paid tribute to Paty, and said France “will not give up our cartoons.”

Depictions of the Prophet Muhammad are widely regarded as taboo in Islam, and are offensive to many Muslims.

But state secularism — or laïcité — is central to France’s national identity. Curbing freedom of expression to protect the feelings of one particular community undermines unity, the state says.

Erdogan called for the boycott in a televised speech on Monday.

“Never give credit to French-labeled goods, don’t buy them,” he said in the capital Ankara.

He said Muslims are now “subjected to a lynch campaign similar to that against Jews in Europe before World War II,” adding that “European leaders should tell the French president to stop his hate campaign.”

Over the weekend, Erdogan said Macron needed a mental health check for speaking out so forcefully on Islam — comments that caused France to recall its ambassador to Turkey for consultations.

Two weeks before the attack, Macron described Islam as a religion “in crisis” and announced new measures to tackle what he called “Islamist separatism.”

France has Western Europe’s largest Muslim

population, and some accuse the authorities of using secularism to target them.

European leaders have come out in support of France. Germany expressed “solidarity” with Macron after the Turkish president’s comments, with government spokesman Steffen Seibert calling the remarks “defamatory” and “completely unacceptable” and foreign minister Heiko Maas calling Erdogan’s personal attacks “a particular low point.”

Dutch Prime Minister Mark Rutte said the Netherlands “stands firmly with France and for the collective values of the European Union,” while Italian Prime Minister Giuseppe Conte also expressed his “full solidarity” with Macron.

“Personal insults do not help the positive agenda that the EU wants to pursue with Turkey,” he wrote in a tweet.

But Turkey is not the only country to criticize Macron’s comments. Pakistan’s Prime Minister Imran Khan accused the French president of “attacking Islam” in a tweet on Sunday, while French products have been removed from some shops in Kuwait, Jordan and Qatar. There have also been protests in a number of countries, including Bangladesh, Iraq, Libya and Syria.

Erdogan’s calls for a boycott come after months of rising tensions between France and

Turkey.

While both countries are NATO members, they support differing sides in the ongoing conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan, as well as in Libya’s civil war.

Macron has also clashed with Mr Erdogan over Turkish oil and gas exploration in disputed waters in the eastern Mediterranean. France deployed jets and a frigate to the region in August amid the tensions.

And in January, Macron accused the Turkish president of breaking a promise to stay out of the conflict in Libya.

Protesters in Istanbul shout slogans against France during a demonstration Sunday against French President Emmanuel Macron’s comments about caricatures of the Muslim prophet Muhammad. (Yasin Akgul/AFP/Getty Images)

“What is the problem of this person called Macron with Muslims and Islam?” Erdogan said during a speech to members of his political party on Saturday. “Macron needs treatment on a mental level.”

“What else can be said to a head of state who does not understand freedom of belief and who behaves in this way to millions of people living in his country who are members of a different faith?”

Community News

Republic of Artsakh Sues Defense Contractor Over War Crimes, Crimes Against Humanity, and Genocide Committed by Turkey and Azerbaijan

WASHINGTON – The Republic of Artsakh filed a lawsuit on behalf of its civilian population against multi-billion-dollar defense contractor, L3Harris Technologies, Inc. (“L3 Harris”), in the US District Court for the District of Columbia.

Chicago firm Kerkonian Dajani LLC brought the suit alleging that L3Harris aided and abetted war crimes, crimes against humanity, genocide, extrajudicial killings, and torture committed by Turkey and Azerbaijan against the civilian population in Artsakh. Other plaintiffs named in the suit are individuals who either were severely injured or are the next-of-kin of civilians killed by shelling and drone strikes.

The complaint alleges that, since 2019, L3Harris has sold electro-optical/infra-red sensors to Turkey for its exand continued to do so with the knowledge that Turkey and Azerbaijan would use them to commit crimes against civilians. Recent reports indicate that Turkey and Azerbaijan use Bayraktar TB-2 drones in their



attacks on Armenian civilians.

According to the lawsuit, Azerbaijan and Turkey's drones have also targeted civilian infrastructure, including residential areas, schools, churches, and hospitals in a total of 120 civilian settlements. The lawsuit also details Turkey's role in transporting rebel and jihadist mercenary groups from Syria to Azerbaijan and the use of internationally banned cluster munitions against civilians.

On October 5, 2020, the Foreign Affairs Ministry of Canada, where L3Harris operates a subsidiary corporation, halted all exports of certain electro-optical/infra-red sensors to Turkey due to reports as to their use by Azerbaijan and Turkey in the Artsakh war. The United States, where L3Harris has its headquarters, does not have such a ban in place.

The lawsuit was filed in part under the Alien Tort Statute, which allows claims by non-citizens for violations of international crimes, including war crimes, crimes against humanity, and genocide against U.S. corporations. Plaintiff Republic of Artsakh is a small state populated by ethnic Armenians that declared its independence in 1991 when the Soviet Union collapsed. It is located between the Republic of Armenia and the Republic of Azerbaijan in the South Caucasus.



Sister's Place, Glendale

Community Fundraising In Los Angeles

Even Non-Armenians Are Coming Together To Help Artsakh

By Ani Duzdabanyan-Manoukian

Special to the Mirror-Spectator

LOS ANGELES – It is only 4 p.m. but the Gevorgyan family barbecue stand on Foothill Boulevard in Tujunga, California, sold out all the food they made for today. This is one of the many charity events organized by American Armenians to support people in Artsakh and Armenia, who are struggling with the immediate consequences of the war started by Azerbaijan on September 27.

Tony and Tigran Gevorgyan, respectively a student at Glendale Community College and a recent graduate of the University of Irvine, California, came up with the idea of selling Armenian-style barbecue and kabob made with their mom's recipe, keeping it a secret from their parents. Everything was set up when the boys introduced the project to Louisa and Arsen.

“But we are Armenians, we have to interfere. We are helping the kids with the preparation, cooking and simple advice,” smiles Louisa as she says, “and besides, this helps me to distract myself a little from the horrible stories that we hear from Artsakh. At least this way we can help our brothers and sisters.”

The customers are mostly Armenians. Most of them return after the first time. “The encouragement is huge. It makes us go on,” says Tony.

During these three weeks, the Gevorgyan family is living on a new daily schedule. After work and on the weekends, the whole family is cooking and selling barbecue. After finishing the fundraiser, in the evening, the boys join thousands of their compatriots in the marches and protests in different parts of Los Angeles, while their parents stay home to prepare the food for the next day. All proceeds go to the Armenia Fund (Hayastan All Armenian Fund).

Sister's Place

Karine Vardan united forces with the photographer Lilit Mansuryan to gather different vendors of art works, handcraft ornaments, jewelries, clothes, food and Armenian pastries for a fundraiser in Sister's Place, a cozy, hidden garden in see FUNDRAISING, page 11



Shahen and Karine Vardan, the owners of Sister's Place

Resolutions Introduced on Azerbaijani, Turkish Human Rights Abuses

Washington – The Armenian Assembly of America welcomed two human rights resolutions introduced in the United States Senate October 22 and spearheaded by Senator Bob Menendez (D-NJ), Ranking Member of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, along with Senators Chris Van Hollen (D-MD), Bob Casey Jr. (D-PA), Ed Markey (D-MA), Dick Durbin (D-IL), Cory Booker (D-NJ), and Jack Reed (D-RI).

As highlighted by Senator Menendez, the resolutions “require Secretary of State Mike Pompeo to detail Azerbaijan's and Turkey's human rights abuses throughout the South Caucasus, within their own countries, and, in Turkey's case, in Syria, Iraq, and Libya.” In addition, the “resolutions also require information on what role U.S. security assistance may be playing in these abuses to inform whether the United States should restrict or



“IN LIGHT OF THE SEPTEMBER 27TH ASSAULT ON ARTSAXH AND THE ARMENIAN PEOPLE, WE COMMEND THE INTRODUCTION OF THESE RESOLUTIONS SPEARHEADED BY SENATOR MENENDEZ, ALONG WITH THE SUPPORT OF HIS COLLEAGUES”

BRYAN ARDOUNY, ARMENIAN ASSEMBLY EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR .

end security assistance and arms sales to those countries. Both resolutions invoke statutory authority under section 502B(c) of the Foreign Assistance Act (FAA).”

“In light of the September 27th assault on Artsakh and the Armenian people, we commend the introduction of these resolutions spearheaded by Senator Menendez, along with the support of his colleagues to shine a bright light on the human rights abuses being committed by two of the most authoritarian regimes in the world,” stated Assembly Executive Director Bryan Ardouny.

Among other provisions, in addition to requesting all available information concerning violations of human rights and fundamental freedoms by the governments of Azerbaijan and Turkey, the resolutions require information pertaining to “whether United States-built F-16s have been used by the Government of Turkey in the South Caucasus since conflict in the region escalated on September 27, 2020, in a manner inimical to internationally recognized human rights,” as well as information on “the likelihood that United States security assistance, as defined in section 502B(d) of the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961 (22 U.S.C. 17 2304(d)) and including training and equipment provided under section 333 of title 10, United States Code, has been and will be used in the South Caucasus by the Government of Azerbaijan in a manner inimical to internationally recognized human rights.”



COMMUNITY NEWS

Throngs of Demonstrators Gather on New York's George Washington Bridge

NEW YORK – On October 25, about 2,000 protestors gathered on the George Washington Bridge to condemn the attack by Azerbaijan on Artsakh and Armenia.



OBITUARY

Susan Baidzar Arkun

NEW YORK – Susan Baidzar Arkun passed away on October 23 at the age of 57 after a four-and-one-half year struggle with lung cancer.

Susan was born in Forest Hills, New York, in 1962. After graduating Stuyvesant High School, she went to Yale University, graduating in 1984. She then attended Fordham Law School, which she graduated in 1989. She became a corporate tax lawyer for the large international law firm Paul, Weiss, Rifkind in New York City.

She was bright, beautiful and sharp-witted, and when young, was involved in fashion and music. As a lawyer she did a lot of pro bono work on women's issues and represented refugees in their asylum requests.

Susan spoke several languages and loved traveling. She loved cats too.

Unfortunately, she contracted a neurological condition which forced her to stop working in 1999 and had other health issues.

She is survived by her mother, Adrienne (Nazaretian) Arkun, brother Aram Arkun and his family, three aunts and many cousins.



Donation

Merri Agabian, the trustee of the estate of the late Sarah Agabian of Watertown, Mass. donated \$1,000 to the *Armenian Mirror-Spectator*, in accordance with her wishes

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COMMUNITY NEWS

Silent Protest At Boston's Faneuil Hall & Quincy Marketplace, October 24

By Ken Martin

Special to the Mirror-Spectator

BOSTON – Silence marked a day of protest on Saturday, October 24, in the heart of Boston as a solid core of 250 dedicated Armenian-Americans from surrounding communities gave up another personal weekend to continue to keep up the pressure on the American administration and world powers to condemn the ruthless attacks of Azerbaijan with Turkey's support on the Republic of Artsakh that started on September 27 and has grown into a full blown war.

In the cacophony of sounds that dominate the touristy area, once the meeting place of the Friends of Armenia in the late 1800s when Armenians began their struggles for autonomy and independence from the Turkish Ottoman Empire, by street musicians and performers, silence would seem the last thing that might capture visitors attentions. As the time went by though, that's just what happened as tourists and locals, out either defying or practicing pandemic advice or expressing pandemic fatigue, began communicating with the protestors who held signs describing the crisis. Many had finally heard and seen news stories about the issue and wanted to know more.

The silent approach was a success and the entire tourist zone took on a more somber note as the protestors, now one family, slowly marched by diners and visitors, the only sounds the shuffle of feet on the ancient cobblestones and the flutter of the flags of the US, Armenia, and Artsakh.

(All photos accompanying this article are courtesy of Ken Martin.)





COMMUNITY NEWS

Church and Diplomatic Leaders Take Part in Ecumenical Service for Peace

By Stephan S. Nigohosian

NEW YORK — In a moving gesture of solidarity with their Armenian brothers and sisters in Christ, national leaders from the Orthodox, Oriental Orthodox, Catholic, and Protestant churches gathered at St. Vartan Cathedral on October 21. They joined Bishop Daniel Findikyan, Primate of the Eastern Diocese of the Armenian Church of America, for a solemn evening prayer service.

The event, “An Ecumenical Service for Peace and Justice in Armenia, Artsakh and the World,” was an appeal for the condemnation of — and an immediate end to — Azerbaijan’s continued military attacks on the Armenian population in the republics of Armenia and Artsakh (Nagorno-Karabakh).

Diocesan Legate and Ecumenical Director Archbishop Vicken Aykazian, Diocesan Vicar Fr. Simeon Odabashian, cathedral vicar Fr. Davit Karamyan, and members of the Diocesan clergy from local parishes also took part in the evening.

Prayers for the welfare and protection of the innocent Armenian men, women and children affected by the crisis were offered by Bishop Daniel (who presided over the service), as well as Cardinal Timothy Dolan (Catholic Archbishop of New



New York Catholic Church's Archbishop Timothy Cardinal Dolan

York), Archbishop Elpidophoros (Greek Orthodox Church), and Bishop David (Coptic Orthodox Church).

“It was an evening of deep consolation for me, and for all our people, to see these profound figures of prayer standing with us — with the Armenian Church, and with our people in Armenia and Artsakh,” said Findikyan. “These were the leaders of the Catholic, Greek Orthodox, Oriental Orthodox, Episcopal, and many other church traditions in America, showing solidarity with the Armenian Church and its ancient Christian heritage. It was a rare occasion, and profoundly moving to witness.”

Also present were leaders of the Serbian Orthodox, Ethiopian

Orthodox, Episcopal, and Armenian Evangelical churches. Ambassador Mher Margaryan, Permanent Representative of the Republic of Armenia to the United Nations, also attended.

Somber, Yet Unifying

The Ecumenical Service had a somber yet unifying feeling, underscoring the fact that despite coming from various denominations, all the faithful are interconnected through a love of Jesus Christ. The spiritual hymns of the Armenian Church heard throughout the event spoke to the hearts and souls of all in attendance and served to join all attendees together as one. This sentiment of one Christian family inspired participants to speak out against the injustices being perpetrated against the people of Artsakh and Armenia by Azerbaijan and its



Archbishop Vicken Aykazian

sponsors.

“We are here at St. Vartan Cathedral this evening to help. You are not alone,” said Cardinal Dolan. “The shield of faith, the helmet of salvation, the sword of the Spirit: that’s our artillery, that’s our strategy.”

Similarly, Archbishop Elpidophoros stated: “Today, we continue to pray for the Armenian people, that they may continue to cherish their historic land and sacred sanctuaries. We should ask ourselves, ‘What is the international community doing to prevent these atrocities?’ We stand next to each other with deep respect.”

Bishop David emphasized the unity of the Christian community. “In times like these, we

must gather together in prayer and solidarity, supporting our brothers in the Armenian Apostolic Church,” he said.

In an emotional speech, he continued: “This is our Christian mandate: one of the founding principles of the Oriental Orthodox churches is that we are called to provide a [united] voice in dealing with issues of common concern and witness. If one member of the body suffers, we all suffer together.” He called upon world leaders to demand an immediate ceasefire and return to peaceful dialogue and negotiation, bearing in mind the well-being of the people of Artsakh and their right to safe existence and freedom of worship. He concluded with a prayer for unity in Christ: “Your cross is ours, your blood is our blood, your suffering is our suffering. The Coptic Church stands with you.”

At the close of the event, Findikyan’s spiritual guidance and leadership provided reassurance that an unwavering faith in God and solidarity among the international community will not allow the injustice and aggression against the Armenian people to continue.

In addition to the socially distanced worship-



Coptic Leader Archbishop David

pers donning surgical masks present in the cathedral, the faithful were able to participate in the prayer vigil from home via livestream broadcast on the St. Vartan Cathedral and Eastern Diocese social media platforms.

Reporters and camera crews from local New York broadcast media outlets also attended to document the event.



Members of the clergy from other branches at prayer

Balakian Is Founding Member of Writers Movement Against Trump

TRUMP, from page 1

and astonishing assaults on democratic institutions and norms, and he has displayed an overt racism and misogyny never seen before in the White House in the modern era. The sheer crass, self-absorbed, indecency of Trump has had a damaging effect on American identity both at home and globally.”

WAT’s goals, according to its website, include collaborating “with organizations seeking to encourage voter turnout, promote candidates who resist the Trump apparatus, protect the election from fraud and theft, and mobilize in the event of post-election trouble.”

Balakian said, “Writers Against Trump started in the first week of August, when the eminent writer, journalist and political activist Todd Gitlin approached me and asked whether I thought I could bring together a few writers together to do some campaign work. I then called a few of my friends, and Todd called a few of his, and before long, we had a wonderful, very strong group of writers.”

The Pulitzer Prize winning Balakian is a poet and writer who teaches as the Donald M. and Constance H. Rebar Professor of Humanities at Colgate University. Gitlin, author of 14 books, is a professor and chair of the doctoral program in communications at Columbia University. He was a founding member of Students for a Democratic Society and its third president.

By mid-August, a steering committee of ten was formed comprised of distinguished writers including novelists Paul Auster, James Carroll, Siri Hudtvedt, Askold Melnyczuk, poets Natasha Trethewey and Carolyn Forché, as well as younger writers Sophie Auster, Julia Lattimer, Shuchi Saraswat.

“Our committee spans a couple of generations and that’s been important,” Balakian said, “because within a week, we went digital thanks to the younger members like Sophie, Julia and Shuchi. WAT now had Instagram and Facebook

pages along with a website.” Balakian said that hundreds of writers began signing up and posting their written or video statements about why this election is so important for the future of democracy.

This moment goes beyond partisan views, he exclaimed, stressing: “There has been so much corruption and so much destruction of democratic norms, values and institutions under the Trump Administration that people are really keyed to the big values of American democracy.”

Though there are no formal local or even regional branches, WAT has created a network throughout the United States. Balakian said, “We have almost 2000 writers who have joined this in name, which suggests that there is a groundswell of leadership coming from the literary community. That is something to note.” This network, he said, “is being an energizer, a facilitator and a bonder, with all of us trying to make phone calls, send postcards, and find people who can be poll watchers.”

There are also some writers who are not US citizens who have joined, Balakian said, out of concern about the US and its commitments to democracy.

Among the well-known writers who have signed on to WAT are Margaret Atwood, Jericho Brown, Maureen Corrigan, Enrique Krauze, Tyehimba Jess, Robert Jay Lifton, Jacki Lyden, Viet Thanh Nguyen, Joyce Carol Oates, Jayne Anne Phillips, Salman Rushdie, and John Turturro.

There are a number of Armenian American writers who have joined in addition to Balakian, including Nancy Agabian, Jan Balakian, Chris Bohjalian, Carol Edgarian, Armine Iknadossian, Oliva Katrandjian, Lola Koundakjian, Nancy Kricorian, Micheline Aharonian Marcom, Peter Najarian, Aline Ohanesian, Alan Semerdjian and Patricia Sarrafian Ward, and some of them also have posted their statements on the WAT

website.

Balakian commented on the lack of engagement of the US in the Karabakh peace process until recently as a secondary factor that might motivate Armenians. He said, “I feel, and I am sure other Armenian American members of this organization would concur, that parts of the State Department have been gutted by Trump, and US leadership in complex parts of the world has waned.”

WAT in Action

One of the ways WAT is working to achieve its goal is through plenary sessions every other week with swing states for the presidential election, including Texas, Wisconsin, Florida, Pennsylvania and North Carolina. In these online meetings, there is brainstorming on strategies to get out the vote, poll watching and protecting the integrity of the election. Balakian said, “These have been very rich 90-minute sessions. We hope that they are helping propel energy and galvanize ideas.”

Both writers and political figures have participated in the sessions. Among the politicians, the mayor of Durham was involved in the North Carolina session and Assemblyman Steve Doyle from western Wisconsin in the Wisconsin session, while Rick Wilson, one of the founders of the Lincoln Project, a group of former Republicans who state they are working to defend democracy in the US, spoke in the Florida one.

Balakian served as the online host for the Wisconsin session on October 3. As a founding member of WAT, he said he sent out a lot of emails and eventually a group was formed which spoke on the complexity of the situation in Wisconsin. He said, “The idea is that we are here to listen and gather knowledge as well as to provide ideas and impetus.” The group included Assemblyman Doyle; poet and fiction writer Mauricio Kilwein-Guevara, who is the author of five books and a play; activist Iuscely

Flores of Milwaukee; John Nichols, a major political writer for *The Nation* magazine, associate editor of *The Capital Times*, and author or coauthor of over a dozen books; and poet and graduate student Eric Jefferson.

In addition to the effort to get out the vote, Balakian said there is a plan for a possible election and post-election crisis, in case President Trump loses and attempts to interfere with the results. Part of the plan is to hold a national plenary session on the night of November 5 with major writers which will be conducted by writer and film director Paul Auster. At the moment, three eminent writers, Salman Rushdie, Rebecca Solnit, and former poet laureate and Pulitzer Prize winner Natasha Trethewey are onboard to discuss the election results and what should happen next.

There will also be a series of local events during the day facilitated by bookstores and their partners.

Balakian speculated about what will happen with the election: “Wouldn’t it be nice if it were just a normal election? Yet there has never been so much heightened tension because of Trump’s persistent efforts to undermine the legitimacy of the American election process. Much will be written about this, no doubt.”

“I think many of us feel,” Balakian said, “that the work of democratic activism will not end with the election. We hope WAT will have a longer life. Our medium is language and there is commitment to the belief that words matters and that ideas and messages can be generated by writers that can have meaning and value in times of crisis. I think we all have a belief in the ethical value of literary culture.” He elaborated that this is a time-honored idea, which the Victorians believed, and that “the present is the moment for literary culture to stand up and get to work. This certainly has been true in the Armenian tradition since the period of the 19th century Armenian renaissance.”



COMMUNITY NEWS

Community Fundraising in Los Angeles: Even Non-Armenians Are Coming Together to Help Artsakh

FUNDRAISING, from page 7

Glendale. Sister's Place is named for Karine's four daughters, one of whom left for Armenia when the war just started.

"The fourth day of the war, Inessa told me that she bought a ticket to Armenia. I couldn't even oppose her. She didn't let me. She told me, 'Mom, how can I not be in Armenia now, when you yourself nurtured us this way?' I was terrified, especially in the beginning, when Azerbaijanis were attacking Vardenis [a city in the Republic of Armenia], but I couldn't say anything. She had made up her mind," Karine said.



Sister's Place, Glendale



The Gevorgyan family

With tears and pride in her eyes, Karine sat down to rest after sleepless nights of organizing. From the beginning of the diaspora's movement in Los Angeles, Karine was present in every demonstration and march, candlelight and prayer ceremony. This unprecedented unity of the Armenians inspired many non-Armenians as well.

YWCA Glendale

"Just seeing how the Armenian community responded to this crisis is amazing: the amount of resources that are being used, how people are coming together! We want to take of some of that stress and find even a small way in which we can be part of this as well," says Tara Peterson, the CEO of YWCA Glendale, who organized a Community Solidarity Drive for women shelters in Armenia.

YWCA had been working with the Women's Resource Center in Armenia previously. Seeing that the center is collecting items for women and children, Tara and her team decided that it would be a perfect partnership to help them.

"Every time when there is a war, women and children are the



Sister's Place, Glendale

ones who are getting harmed the most. It's important to all women, regardless where you come from and what your background is, to really understand the impact that it can have on somebody's life and the trauma that is ongoing. As a woman it's very painful to think that we are putting women and children in a position like that, and they can't get the support they need," says Tara.

JPMorgan Chase

The mobilization even reached major financial institutions in US. JPMorgan Chase was one of the banks that joined the cause as a result of some determined Armenian employees there. Armine Massihi is one of the branch managers at the bank. She decided to approach her marketing director, and then the regional director, to find a way for the bank to contribute to the donation campaign to the Armenia Fund (Hayastan All Armenian Fund). Chase agreed to match up to \$1000 per employee. Armine herself started to call all her colleagues from Irvine to New York. Although the company is not releasing the collected amount, Armine is certain that it is outstanding.

Garage sales, restaurant fundraisers, art projects, single donations and even lemonade stand sales: the entire Armenian-American community, all over the US, is using its talent and energy to help Armenia and Artsakh. Earlier in October the Consulate General of Armenia in Los Angeles and the Pan-Armenian Council of [the] Western USA announced that \$3,239,500 was raised during an event held in the consulate.

After collecting more than \$140 million, the Hayastan All Armenian Fund launched an initiative of 50+ calling on everyone

to pledge a monthly donation of \$50 or more to the fund. For over a month now, it seems that nearly all Armenians, without any hesitation, became contributors of the All Armenian Fund in one way or another. Establishing faith and trust again in the



The Gevorgyan barbecue stand

diaspora toward Armenian institutions is perhaps an even more important achievement than the amount of money itself – when even a little boy is willing to donate his entire piggy bank to the fund.

Arts & Living

The Power and Beauty of Komitas Reaches Europe

By Alin K. Gregorian

Mirror-Spectator Staff

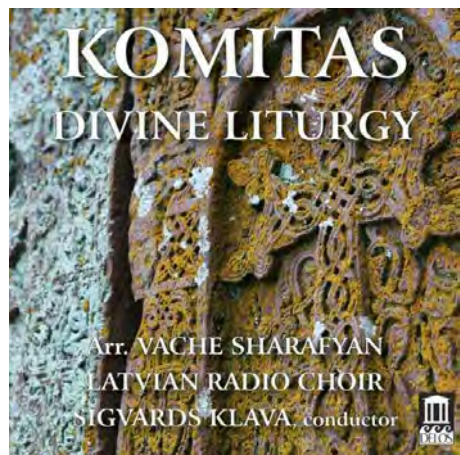
RIGA, Latvia – For Armenians, Komitas Vartabed, both as a man as well as a musician, remains a revered figure. His brilliant musicianship, coupled with his unimaginable suffering as a witness to the Armenian Genocide and his subsequent institutionalization, seem to encapsulate the story of the Armenians.

Much like Hungarian great Bela Bartok, Komitas, born Sghomon Sghomonian, was fascinated by ethnomusicology, finding and preserving his people's folk songs.

At the same time, he wrote a liturgy which is performed regularly in the Armenian Church, by an all-male chorus. Its twinned power and delicacy seem to throw a direct line from the church to God.

Komitas began working on the Divine Liturgy in 1892, and at least ten versions exist. The final version has been recorded by the presented on this recording – dates from 1914–15 and was completed just before his deportation from Constantinople, where he had settled in 1910, to a prison camp in Cankin.

On July 10, the record label Delos released “Komitas: Divine Liturgy,” in the world-premiere recording of a mixed-voice arrangement



by Vache Sharafyan. This new version features the critically acclaimed Latvian Radio Choir led by its artistic director, Sigvards Klava, with guest soloists bass Hovhannes Nersesyan and tenor Armen Badalyan.

The recording was made at St. John's Church (Sv. Jana Baznica), Riga, Latvia, September 20–23, 2019.

The idea for the new mixed choir version came from Tigran Mkrtchyan, the Ambassador of Armenia in the Baltic states, who also organized the premiere performance and recording done by the Latvian Radio Choir.

In an interview, Sharafyan said, “Music is the universal spiritual language. It is really very important to open the music of Komitas for the entire world, as music of the classical composers is open for all of us. Real Musical composition has a prayer-like universality: being performed by the different performers, it gives opportunity to everyone to express themselves through the same music. And the music of Komitas has such value as well. As the prayer – people say the same Lord's Prayer, though everyone expresses it's own thoughts and wishes through the same words...”

He added, “The soloists of the piece are incredible, packing power and emotion in the work. Both Hovhannes Nersesyan and Armen Badalyan are Armenian National Opera soloists, meanwhile they both sing in the church as well. Hovhannes is even a deacon and for some years studied at the Armenian seminary in Jerusalem. Knowing both of them I would love to say that they are very spiritual, clear and open people, see KOMITAS, page 13



Baret Magarian

Baret Magarian

“My Armenian Roots Account for Exotic Flavor in My Writing”

YEREVAN/FLORENCE – Writer and composer Baret Magarian was born in London and currently lives in Florence. He was educated at Durham and London Universities. Magarian has worked as a translator, musician, interviewer, journalist, lecturer, book representative and in PR.

By Artsvi Bakhchinyan

Special to the Mirror-Spectator

In London, he was a freelance journalist, published fiction in many magazines, wrote book reviews, features, and articles which

have appeared in all the major British broadsheets.

He began his career by writing features and reviews for *The Times*, *The Guardian*, *The Observer*, *The Independent* and *The New Statesman*, then published fiction in *World Literature Today*, *Journal of Italian Translation*, the online magazines *El Ghibli*, *Sagarana*, and *Voyages*. His poetry has appeared in the Florentine magazine *Semicerchio* and the Australian anthology *Contrappasso*. Magarian has published four books: *The Fabrications* (Pleasure Boat Studio), *Melting Point* (Italian translation, Quarup), *Mirror and Silhouette* (Albion Beatnik Press) and *Chattering with All My Favourite Beasts* (Italian and English, Ensemble). He has recorded an album of acoustic rock, composed and performed piano music in the vein of Alkan and Jarrett, and recently staged his monologue “The Pain Tapestry” in Florence and Turin to great success.

Dear Baret, I highly enjoy interviewing people with versatile background and activities. Perhaps you can understand me, yourself having interviewed interesting people, among them such diverse figures as Peter Ustinov, John Calder and Salman Rushdie. What do you like more in that process?



I like the whole process of interviewing a person: the research and preparation, the actual interview, the audience participation, if there is any – depends on whether the interview is conducted in private or public or is written (like this one) or aural/recorded and the publication of the interview (if it does get published). The key to revealing the person lies, I believe, in demonstrating absolute respect for the interviewee (through the tone of voice, through body language) and in allowing the interviewee to speak absolutely freely, with no restrictions, no aggression on the part of the interviewer and no hidden agendas. It is important also to try and avoid any kind of psychological guessing/deducing

see MAGARIAN, page, 17

A Critical Exclusive

Daniel Varoujan: An Armenian Poet In Ghent

Reviewed by
Christopher Atamian

Special to the Mirror-Spectator

Daniel Varoujan [Taniel Varuzhan] led a short and tragic life. Born into poverty in 1884 in the Prknig village of Sepasdia (Sivas), Varoujan studied at Venice's Mourad-Rafaelian School before obtaining a scholarship to attend the University of Ghent in Belgium from 1905 to 1909. These were lonely but enlightening years for a young man so far away from his native soil. Five years later in 1914 in Constantinople he would found the group “Mehian” along with fellow writers Gosdan Zarian, Hagop Oshagan, and Aharon and Kegham Parseghian. The group's name, “temple” in Armenian, referred back to the ancient Armenian pagan gods. In 1915 Varoujan was deported towards Chankiri and gruesomely tortured to death by the Young Turks.

A recent 2019 special issue of *Revue Belge de Philologie et d'Histoire* [The Belgian Review of Philology and History] sheds important light on the details of Varoujan's stay in Ghent. It may be the definitive study on the poet's life during this period. The seven pieces presented here range from anthropological and factual accounts (van Nuffelen and Payaslian, de Messemaeker and Verbruggen) to literary and theoretical ones (Beledian, Nicheanian). Some are eloquent and deft, others rather dry and formal. Together they form a fascinating look at the great poet's life and psyche during the period examined, as well as to the city of Ghent as a whole.

Varoujan in Ghent was a busy if sometimes desperate young man: he spent long days and nights studying and writing brilliant verse, became an ally of the socialist party, and implored various Armenian organizations abroad to subsidize his tuition and coursework. He took up the cause of working-class factory workers and deplored the supercilious indifference of the upper classes whose members became rich off the labor of others. At first he could not speak any of the local languages – Flemish or French – and was taken aback by the comparatively cold temperament of his hosts.

From Peter van Nuffelen and Simon Payaslian's introductory essay, “An Armenian Poet in Ghent-One Hundred Years Later,” we learn that Varoujan was already experimenting and pushing back boundaries, including classic forms of meter and rhythm: “Varoujan rejected the strict adherence to the modes of versification that existed at the time in Armenian poetry. According to him, poetry was the medium through which nature took form and gave expression to the authenticity of (human) thought.” (P. 782, translation mine)

In this introductory essay, the authors discuss the relationship between Belgium and the Ottoman Empire and point to the fact that for Varoujan and his compatriots, Europe remained the cultural example to be emulated. This piece is complemented by Pieter de Messemaeker and Christophe Verbruggen's “Foreign Students at Ghent University Around 1900.” The latter provides a comparative study on the countries of origin of foreign students in Ghent. It also examines why they found the city an attractive destination for their studies and

see VAROUJAN, page, 14



ARTS & LIVING

The Power and Beauty of Komitas Reaches Europe

KOMITAS, from page 12

meanwhile also absolute professional and gifted singers. Somehow I feel they really chosen for this project.”

While the soloists and the choir are forces to be reckoned with, the church added to the production. Sharafyan said the church is Riga’s oldest and has “amazing acoustics.”

As stated earlier, one of the major changes in this production is that the choir voice is adjusted from all male to mixed. “My aim was not to change, but preserve Komitas’ ideas and just make them as best as possible for the mixed choir’s nature, sound, colors... I would say my aim was to translate from the male choir to the mixed choir,” Sharafyan said.

Mkrtchyan is happy with the fruit of his efforts. “Since I started working as ambassador the dissemination of Komitas’ music has been a part of my mission. Every year in the Baltic countries the Embassy of Armenia organizes at least two dozen cultural events, during the majority of which feature works by Komitas. But the scale and level of this project was indeed different. Usually an Embassy’s initiative relates to that country’s relations with Armenia, i.e. it is of regional nature and about that are discussed in the country where the project was implemented (in this case, Latvia) and in the country which introduced it (in this case, Armenia). Surely, this project was the biggest in the history of Latvian-Armenian cultural history, because it got the attention not only of Latvia and Armenia, but the wider world. This became a global project and a very successful one,” Mkrtchyan said.

Ambassador Mkrtchyan noted that the “Latvian choir has incredible international audience, is most of the time having international tours and can export Komitas very successfully as well. Also, I think that the lack of transliteration of the Divine Liturgy had been a constant problem for foreign choirs to perform Komitas. We solved this issue together with Vache Sharafyan, and I hope Komitas would have been pleased for it.

“Honoring Komitas is part of a wider approach adopted by me since my first day as Ambassador. Through cultural diplomacy we



Ambassador Mkrtchyan

have been able to enhance Armenia’s image in the Baltic countries immensely. There are indeed some very strong pillars upon which our culture rests. One of them is St. Gregory of Narek, the 10th century priest and theologian whose works are like nothing else. His every line emanates of sanctity and unrivaled wisdom. Another very strong pillar is indeed Komitas and his work. Honoring and internationalizing the work of such figures is a must,” Mkrtchyan added.

In addition to the change in the addition of female voices, the effort by Mkrtchyan and Sharafyan was to make it a true concert performance rather than a strict liturgy.

Mkrtchyan has been delighted with the reception. The reception has been phenomenal. Initially the Latvian and Armenian media reacted enthusiastically when the Album was released in July. After that the international media started to write very positive reviews about the performance and the album, professional classical music reviewers were very positive about this CD. The reviews of the Independent, the Guardian, the BBC Music Magazine, Australian Limelight and others were indeed in many ways very much welcome

events. The German release planned in October promises another burst of reviews in German language media in Europe.

Bringing Project to Fruition

The project took three years from idea to



The performance at St. John’s Church in Riga

completion. Initially, in 2017, the Embassy of Armenia organized days of Gregory of Narek in Riga, the culmination of which was the Riga Doms Cathedral performance of Alfred Schnittke’s Choir Concerto. “At that time upon our suggestion the choir performed Lord Have Mercy, one of the most moving pieces of the Divine Liturgy of Komitas. One year later, in 2018, we organized the Latvian premiere of contemporary Armenian composer Tigran Mansurian’s Grammy-nominated Requiem. The Latvian Radio Choir and Sinfonietta Riga did an amazing job in even exciting the composer himself, who was present in Riga during the performance. Since that work is around 40 minutes, we requested the choir to have some more pieces from the Divine Liturgy of Komitas, altogether consisting of 10-12 minutes. Once again the choir managed it extremely well. At that point I thought that one of the biggest achievements that we can register would be a performance and ideally recording of the Divine Liturgy just during the 150th Anniversary of the Vardapet in 2019, which we carried out successfully,” Mkrtchyan noted.

Sharafyan added, “I have had a nice experience composing for mixed choir. I would love to mention the Hover State Chamber Choir and for male choirs, including for the

Estonian National male choir that won a Grammy and is the biggest male choir in the world (I was commissioned by them and wrote *Stabat Mater* that is in choir’s permanent repertory since then), and I know and open every time more and more about the obvious differences of the voicing combinations, colors and natural sound acoustics of the male and mixed choirs.”

He stressed that during the “translation” from single sex to mixed sex, he strove to “keep as much as possible the main Komitas sound character and to add more colors and the beauty of the female voices effect.”

For Armenians, the music of Komitas remains special, often bringing tears to the eyes of the listeners. When asked what the reaction of those in Latvia who had possible never heard of Komitas or heard his music, was, Sharafyan noted that they were equally moved.

“During the entire rehearsals/concert/recording processes I felt how the performers, amazing conductor Sigvards Klava, every singer loved the Komitas music and the same feeling I had during the concert. The entire audience (as I remember the seats were sold out a month before the concert) seemed entirely inside the

absolute silent spiritual concentration, meditation,” Sharafyan recalled.

The recording was made before COVID-19 halted much of the artistic activity around the world. However, for Sharafyan, the CD itself is a victory. “The CD is already opening some new

Gasparyan, conducted by Angel Gil Ordonez. It was for a concert dedicated to the 100 years anniversary of the Armenian-American diplomatic relations,” he added.

While Sharafyan and Mkrtchyan had not met before this project, they knew of each other. “I knew Tigran’s brother and father (both wonderful artists in Armenia and I had a great pleasure to collaborate with both in theater plays where I wrote the music), but I met Tigran for first due to Komitas Liturgy project. Now it seems to me that we have known each other for all our lives,” Sharafyan said.

He had only praise for Mkrtchyan’s initiative. “It’s really a great fortune and privilege to have such an ambassador representing the best of the Armenian culture worldwide and making really great cultural politics. It seems that where is Tigran he is surrounded by wonderful artists, literature, singers, musicians and such artistic political approach enriches the world and creates relationship and strong humanistic bridges between Armenia and other countries.”

During the pandemic, Sharafyan said he has completed a “huge eight-movement Concerto for piano and choir titled New Seasons for orchestra and soloists, all to be premiered and recorded/filmed soon in Armenia and Europe. Another piece is in progress. I also did new music for online theater with participation of artists from different countries organized by the American producer John Blondel.”

While he is gearing up for new works, his ballet premiere, “Ancient Gods,” had been postponed because of the pandemic.

Mkrtchyan noted that he had heard Hovhannes Nersesyan in the Armenian Opera and Ballet Theatre several years ago, and thought that he was one of our best bass singers. Apart from that I knew that he has spiritual education, studied in Jerusalem Armenian Seminary and is working in the church as a deacon. So I was certain that he would fit ideally in this sort of a project. Regarding the tenor I consulted one of my best opera friends, Gevorg Hakobyan, who strongly advised me to hear Armen Gevorgyan, which I did and liked very much. By the way, he is originally from Echmiadzin, the religious center of Armenia. So, the contexts of these soloists were extremely important when we approached them. Before doing so, Sigvards Klava also heard their various performances and approved of the initial idea to include them.

Mkrtchyan said, “I would like to thank the supporters of this initiative of the Embassy of Armenia in Latvia. The biggest gratitude belongs to the Latvian Radio Choir and its conductor Sigvards Klava who wished to take up this challenge and carry our honorably and with such success. The Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sports of Armenia reacted very positively to this project and supported its implementation. The Armenian Apostolic Church supported the initial stages of the implementation of this idea. Latvian-Armenian supporters- Mkhitar Mkhitryan, Ovik Mkrtchyan as well as Aram Arutyunyan supported the implementation of the project. Also I should thank my friends in Armenia, the Balasanyan Family Foundation which had their role in realizing this idea.”

Through serendipity, the ambassador found the chorus. “In 2016 I was watching a BBC historical drama of Tolstoy’s ‘War and Peace,’ the soundtrack of which is composed by the great Martin Phipps. I noticed that the choir was just breathtaking. Then my wife, who is herself a Latvian, told me about the choir. So I started to study more of this choir and eventually we decided to have a joint program together honoring the Latvian translation of Gregory of Narek’s Book of Lamentations in 2017. That was the start of 4 years of intense cooperation with 3 unforgettable concerts and this historic recording of Komitas Album.”

And at the end, he added, “I think they were very moved, as they understood what they were singing and they understood every word of the Liturgy.”

To listen or purchase a copy of the CD, visit <https://delosmusic.com/recording/komitas-divine-liturgy/>

(Editor’s Note: The interviews were conducted before the Azerbaijani war on Armenia.)



Soloist Armen Badalyan

paths for Komitas’ music. For example I got an e-mail from a South African choir and their conductor. They loved the music so much that asked me for the score to perform. I can’t wait to hear their interpretation in the not-too-distant future,” he added.

He continued, “I am sure that after CD release many choirs will want to perform the Komitas Liturgy. And it seems very timely to me to release the mixed choir version score with Latin transliteration... I think this must be the next step for the opening Komitas music for the world.

Sharafyan is an Armenian-born composer. He was a former organist at Echmiadzin’s St. Gayane Church, and also taught music at the Armenian Seminary in Jerusalem from 1992 to 1996. In 2000 he was chosen and commissioned by cellist Yo-Yo Ma as an official composer from Armenia for his Silk Road Project; his compositions have been performed worldwide by Ma and the Silk Road Ensemble. In 2007 the Moscow Philharmonic season debuted his Yuri Bashmet and the Moscow Soloists premiered his *Surgite Glorae Viola Concerto*.

He has composed more than 100 pieces, including operas, ballets, symphonic, choral vocal and chamber music. His music has been performed around the world by leading artists, groups, orchestras including also the Hilliard Ensemble, Dresden Symphony, Boston Modern Orchestra (led by Gil Rose), among others.

“On March 4, 2020, my Cello Concerto #2 as well as Armenian Odyssey suite for orchestra specially written for this even were performed at the Washington National Cathedral by the Post Classical Orchestra, cellist Narek Hakhnazaryan, Zulal vocal trio, Jivan



ARTS & LIVING

Daniel Varoujan: An Armenian Poet in Ghent

VAROUJAN, from page 12

how they in turn contributed to its intellectual and economic development.

In a sometimes maddening but fairly accurate historical rendering of the treatment of Ottoman Armenians and the founding of a short-lived Armenophile movement in Belgium, Houssine Alloul and Henk de Smaele ("Armenia in the Imagination and Politics of Prewar Belgium") examine the success of Armenians – or "Oriental Christians" as they

Islam. While it is certainly true that depictions of Islam (read: Turks) as "barbaric" by the Belgians were racially biased, the authors at some points come off as apologists for the horrific acts committed by the Ottoman government under Abdul Hamid in 1894-96 and the Young Turks in 1915-1923.

The following essay by Payaslian, "Daniel Varoujan at Ghent University (1905-1909)," is a meticulous examination of Varoujan's daily life while in Ghent and by extension that of his classmates and friends. The piece is followed by remarkable archival lists of everything from the thirty-nine poems that he wrote while in Ghent to how much he spent on household items such as soap and hair combs, foodstuffs (butter, eggs, milk), rent and every other imaginable expense. This will no doubt fascinate cultural anthropologists and economists, but it may not spark the lay reader's interest.

Finally in the three literary sections, the authors interpret Varoujan's work from different if equally fascinating angles. Émerance de la Censerie delivers a classic French *explication de texte* or close reading of two of Varoujan poems in "The French Poems of Daniel Varoujan or 'The Heart of the Race'." She analyzes them in light of established Belgian national history and of the then nascent Armenian national history, while reading the second poem essentially as an answer to the 1909 Adana massacres.

In a somewhat politicized conclusion, the author notes: "This poetry carries with it more than simply an aesthetic value; its goal, its duty even is to make readers think and to remind them that the troubles of the Armenian nation will continue to be a topic of discussion and that the recognition of the Armenian Genocide remains an ongoing battle." (p. 883, translation mine)

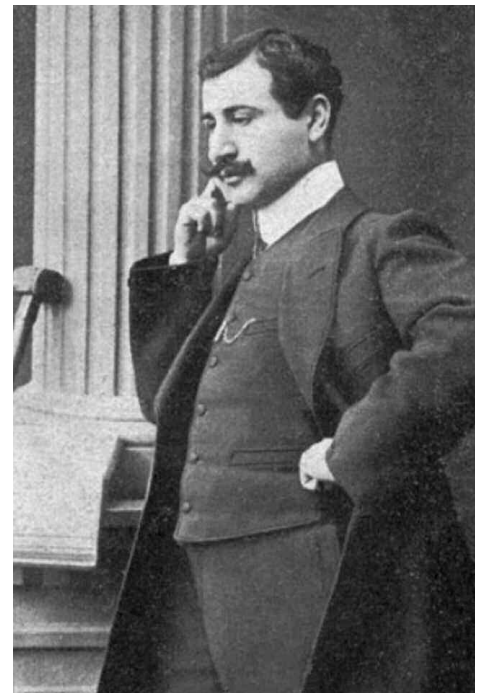
The noted writer and theorist Krikor

Beledian then gives a delicate and nuanced analysis of Varoujan's poems. In "'I have seen Europe,' Daniel Varoujan: The Time of the Destruction of Images," he astutely points out that Varoujan's oeuvre is structured around "the experience of the foreign" and is essentially pictorial in nature. Varoujan describes the colorful Venice of his early youth in sensual terms ("Venice the blue city, the glorious Grande Dame") and compares her to a courtesan "draped in aquatic ribbons" (p. 893).

Beledian also notes that Varoujan exalts the Armenian people "only because it is about to die." (p. 906) Towards the end of his essay he wonders whether the pictorial nature of Varoujan's poetry can survive the terrible massacres that took place in Adana in 1909. His nuanced analysis is a perfect lead-in to the seventh and ultimate essay in the piece, Marc Nichanian's "Mourning and the Gods."

A former professor at Columbia and Sabanci Universities, Nichanian has developed a fascinating theoretical framework for his analysis of the genocidal impulse in his seminal *Writers of Disaster*, based in part on an analysis of the concept of the witness and the interdiction of mourning. Nichanian's current essay revolves around the fact that Varoujan has heretofore been read as someone who glorified the past in his reference to the ancient Armenian deities: "We try to read him as a poet of mourning, who needs to be understood within a double context: the one of the 19th century philological reinvention of mythology, and the one of an ongoing national disaster, which he himself mysteriously called the 'nothingness of fatherland.'" (p. 933)

Nichanian sees Varoujan as the ultimate poet of mourning: one who mourns the passing of the past gods but also the death represented by what Nichanian terms the "national disaster."



Daniel Varoujan

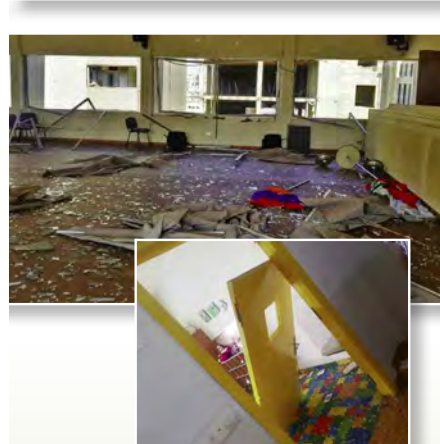
In light of current events in Armenia, it is a prescient and chilling message.

N.B: the essays in question were published bilingually in French and Flemish in the *Journal*, with abstracts in French, Flemish and English. Textual translation of both the authors' words and Varoujan's are strictly mine and I bear responsibility for any inaccuracies that result from my own negligence or lack of time.

To access the archives of *Revue Belge de Philologie et Histoire*/ *Belgische Tijdschrift voor Filologie en Geschiednis*, go to: www.rbph-btfg.be



were sometimes referred to – in the Turkish empire. They quite correctly allude to the economic jealousy that this success engendered and to the clash between Christendom and



The Vahan Tekeyan School, founded in 1951, was damaged by the August 4 explosion in Beirut. It primarily serves a low-income segment of the Armenian community and already was struggling due to Lebanon's economic crisis and the Covid-19 pandemic. Now it is trying to reopen for the fall semester.



The Tekeyan Cultural Association of the US and Canada is sending aid and asks your assistance too. Make your donations 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). All administrative costs for this campaign will be borne by the Tekeyan Cultural Association of the US and Canada.

For more information, email tcadirector@aol.com or call 617 924-4455.



ARTS & LIVING

Book Review

Micheline Aharonian Marcom's *The New American*

By Dr. Arpi Sarafian

In June 2020, the United States Supreme Court ruled to uphold the DACA Program which provides protection from deportation to eligible undocumented immigrants who arrived in the United States as children. Repealing the Program would deny the 800,000 DACA recipients, known as Dreamers, access to our universities and to better job opportunities. The Supreme Court ruling was hailed by many as a victory for justice and for America.

Micheline Aharonian Marcom's recently published novel, *The New American* (Simon & Schuster, 2020), reaffirms America as a country of immigrants.

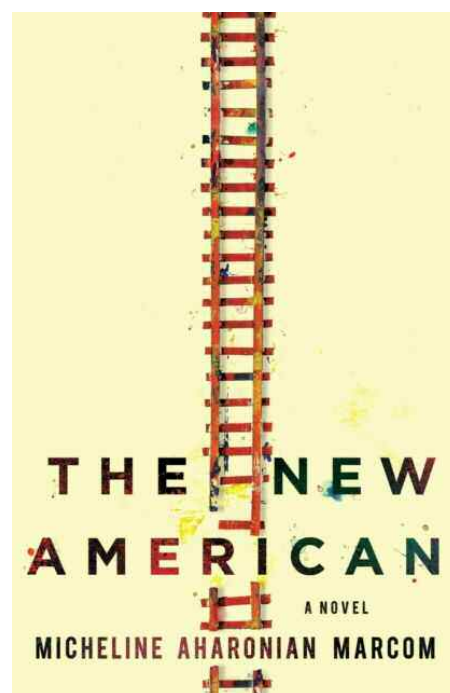
"The mixing of the blood on this land continues. We are here, we remain, the new Americans," says Emilio, a Dreamer himself, at

the conclusion of the book. The novel is an account of the journey North of Emilio Ramos Matias, a second-year UC Berkeley student who is taken into custody, and eventually deported to his native Guatemala, handcuffed and in chains, because he could not provide a valid ID when involved in a car accident outside the protection of his city.

In Guatemala, Emilio feels "lonely and out of place."

"I don't belong here," he thinks, and decides to return "home" to California to resume his studies and fulfill his dream of a "better" life.

Emilio survives the harrowing journey, and although "still uncertain of our future," it is not difficult to see his odyssey as a story of "human determination and even some kind of hopefulness that we might carry." Indeed, the promise of a new reality for him, as for many others, starts with the very title of the book. Emilio is "not afraid all the time anymore, because I am



home" (italics mine). He and Matilde are in love. They are expecting a baby boy, "The New American."

Nonetheless, the novel remains the story of the hell Emilio and his four Central American traveling companions go through to cross the border into the United States, to start their "better" lives. Pedro, Matilde, Jonatan and

William are fleeing violence and poverty in their homeland: "In Honduras there is no future for us. No hope." The two-thousand-mile long trail, controlled for the most part by armed gunmen, is dangerous. There are kidnappings, rapes, killings. At the railroad stations, helpless migrants push one another to make it aboard the cargo train they have nicknamed "La Bestia." At one point, when Emilio thinks he has lost his companions in the chaos, he frantically "grabs onto one of the last ladders on the last car," risking getting pulled beneath the wheels, "as the great Beast moves forward." Emilio jumps from wagon to wagon, running across the roofs of the boxcars the entire length of the train, looking for Matilde, the "pretty young Honduran in a grey hooded sweatshirt" he was falling in love with. "Have you seen her?"

The horrifying journey builds to the climax of the group's final days in the Sonora desert at the US-Mexico border. With swollen ankles and open sores inside their shoes, those who have survived — Jonatan has been kidnapped, Pedro is dying — walk through the barren desert in the scorching heat, "on the broiling desert floor," for days with no food or drink. With her vivid details Marcom makes their "invisible hunger and fear" visible. "The sun overhead is . . . pulling along with the air every bit of moisture from their bodies . . . They are all thirsty; they are all unbearably hot." "Only God and not even the lizards can live here," she writes. "The sun is our enemy, Emilio thinks. The sun could be God."

There are of course Las Patronas, the kind ladies who throw bags of food and plastic bottles of water to "the unknown weary who pass by them each day on the moving Beast." There are the volunteers at the Houses of the Migrants who provide food, care and shelter; and the priest who "tries to discourage their crossing over" but "cannot dissuade any from continuing his journey." "We put our faith in God. God accompanies me, father, He will care for us." These humane souls may mitigate the pain of the tired and fearful travelers, but they have no recourse to changing the policies which appear to have little to do with compassion or humanity. The ongoing violence in the world — we wake up to a new conflict every day — evidences that the displacement is here to stay. There are eighty million refugees around the world today, with more violence, more instability, more poverty, the only promise.

Aharonian Marcom's commitment to tell history's untold stories is nothing new. In her first three novels she had tapped into her roots, her Armenian heritage, to bring to life the 1915-1918 massacres and deportations of Armenians at the hand of the Ottoman Turks. The *New American* tells the story of the journey North of Central Americans fleeing unlivable conditions in their hometowns. Marcom feels comfortable with both histories. With her empathy for her characters and deep insight into their situations she gets inside their worlds and exposes horrors many may not be familiar with.

In her earlier work Aharonian Marcom had invoked the imagination to help her depict an inner reality. She had deviated from conventional narrative structures and ordinary discourse to tell a story where there are "no straight lines." With *The New American*, in contrast, the focus is on the external — except for brief italicized interludes of flashbacks and dreams. And while her facts, her meticulously chosen details, partly based on the first-hand testimonies of her Central American refugee students, give us a truthful account of the cruelties, they also reach into something deeper, into something more far-reaching and urgent. With the power and the beauty of her words Marcom makes us question the basic human logic of creating the conditions that force people to flee their homes, even when the fleeing means leaving one hell for another.

Once in the Bay Area of Northern California, Matilde urges Emilio to write a story, "to tell what happened to us." "Dates and statistics don't affect people as much as a story," she says. "Stories tell the real history, they tell how it feels." Her words echo celebrated novelist Virginia Woolf's, "To give a truthful account is beyond the powers of the historian. Only the poets and the novelists can be trusted to do it. Aharonian has done it. The *New American* has that special quality of truth only fiction can have.

Tekeyan Cultural Association

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ARTS & LIVING

Recipe Corner



by Christine Vartanian

Holiday Stollen

Celebrate with Holiday Stollen from *For the Love of Apricots* Cookbook

The apricot has been the symbol of the Armenian nation and victory for centuries. Armenians currently cultivate around fifty apricot varieties, which are typically harvested from the middle of June until the end of August. In the Middle Ages, Armenian kings and knights would go to battle wearing apricot-colored ornaments called “tsirani.” One of the three colors of the tri-color Armenian flag is also the color of the apricot. Apricots are listed as one of the “healthiest foods” in the world, says George Mateljan, Founder of the World’s Healthiest Foods website. The California apricot, one of nature’s nutritional powerhouses, not only has a rich history, California is the leader of apricot production in the United States. Over 300 growers in California, covering 17,000 acres in the San Joaquin Valley, along with many heritage orchards in the San Francisco Bay Area, produce over 85% of the apricots grown in the United States.

Celebrate the holidays with this traditional Stollen by Lisa Prince Newman, author of the bestselling cookbook/memoir *For the Love of Apricots: Recipes & Memories of the Santa Clara Valley*, now in its second edition. Lisa’s family moved to the Santa Clara Valley in the 1960s where they settled in Saratoga on a fruit orchard property.

For the Love of Apricots blends historic photos and images of California’s apricot orchards, from today and not so long ago, when orchards covered much of the Santa Clara Valley landscape. The cookbook’s more than 60 recipes range from breakfast to desserts and cocktails, using apricots in every form.

“I’ve loved apricots all my life,” says Lisa. “They color my memories of growing up in the Santa Clara Valley. In the 1960s, orchards extended in every direction, and as a child, I assumed they always would. Of course, this area is now known as Silicon Valley, the world’s greatest engine of innovative technologies. Not long ago, it was a magical landscape known as the “Valley of Heart’s Delight.”

“Each Christmas, my mother made Stollen for our family, and served it sliced, toasted, and buttered while we opened presents. Fresh apricot jam is a perfect accompaniment.* I like the subtle taste of cardamom in this recipe, which reminds me of when I lived in Norway where it is a traditional spice,” adds Lisa.

INGREDIENTS:

For the Bread:

- 1 tablespoon active dry yeast
- 1/4 cup warm water
- 1 cup scalded milk
- 1 stick unsalted butter, softened
- 1/4 cup sugar
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1/4 teaspoon ground cardamom
- 4 to 4 1/2 cups unbleached all-purpose flour
- 1 egg slightly beaten
- 3/4 cup chopped dried apricots
- 1/4 cup golden raisins
- 1/4 cup currants
- 1/4 cup sliced almonds
- 2 tablespoons grated orange peel
- 1 tablespoon grated lemon peel

For the Glaze:

- 1 cup confectioner’s sugar
- 2 tablespoons hot water
- 1 teaspoon unsalted butter

Yield: 3 small Stollen, serving 4-6 each. (You can make 2 larger loaves or 1 very large loaf with this recipe.)

PREPARATION:

Combine the yeast and water in a large bowl and stir until dissolved; set aside for 5 minutes. Combine the scalded milk, butter, sugar, salt, and cardamom in a large bowl and cool to lukewarm. Stir in 2 cups of flour and beat well by hand or use a mixer with a dough hook. Add yeast mixture and the egg. Stir in the apricots, raisins, currants, grated orange, lemon peels, and the almonds.



Beat for 10 minutes, gradually adding the remaining flour until the dough begins to pull away from the sides of the bowl.

Turn out onto a lightly floured surface and knead for 8 to 10 minutes until smooth and elastic, adding flour as necessary to prevent stickiness. Place dough into a large, lightly oiled bowl, turning to coat all sides. Cover with plastic wrap and let rise in a warm place until doubled in bulk (about 1 to 1 1/2 hours). Punch down the dough, turn out again on a lightly floured surface, and divide into 3 equal pieces. Cover with a kitchen towel and let rest 10 minutes.

Roll each portion into a 10 x 6 inch rectangle then fold the long side over to within an inch of the opposite side. Fold the remaining side over and gently seal with your fingers. Place on a parchment-lined baking sheet and let rise again until double in bulk (about 1 hour).

Bake the loaves in a preheated 375° F oven for 15 to 20 minutes until golden brown. Remove from oven. Make the glaze and brush it over the top of the Stollen while still warm. Note: Adding your choice of food coloring to the glaze gives a festive touch. Enjoy this holiday blogpost and recipe at: <http://fortheLoveofapricots.com/2016/12/apricots-in-europe-for-the-holidays>

*To accompany your Holiday Stollen, see Lisa’s Apricot Jam recipe at: <http://fortheLoveofapricots.com/2016/06/now-what-do-i-do-with-all-these-apricots/>

ORDER TODAY: *For the Love of Apricots Cookbook* is a perfect holiday gift for friends and family. Lisa will personally sign and include a special Apricot Bookmark in every cookbook she ships. A *For the Love of Apricots* Tote Bag is also available for sale. To order, go to: <http://fortheLoveofapricots.com>.



For the Love of Apricots: Recipes & Memories of the Santa Clara Valley by Lisa Prince Newman
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Go to Lisa’s Apricot Shop to purchase apricots year-round at California orchards through mail order at: <http://fortheLoveofapricots.com/shop-for-apricots/>

Review

Tigranes the Great: The Rise and Fall of An Ancient Empire

by Joshua J. Mark

Tigranes the Great: The Rise and Fall of an Ancient Empire (A Comprehensive Historical Biography) by Serge Momjian is an instantly engaging work on the life and reign of the Armenian monarch Tigranes II (the Great, r. c. 95 - c. 56 BCE) written for a general audience. The book reads like a novel through the use of dialogue, carefully reconstructed settings, and an excellent command of narrative form and progression.

The author presents Tigranes’ story in an accessible form and style, easy to read and unimpeded by citation. The intention is to engage a reader fully in Tigranes II’s life and world. In A Note to the Reader, the author explains the goal of the work:

This is not historical fiction, but a political biography based on true history with real historical figures... The idea is to bring the ancient past to life. It is hoped that this work will be accessible to those who love history but may never have read about Tigranes’ reign. (xvi)

Mr. Momjian admirably succeeds in this, bringing Tigranes II to life fully through clear prose and precise description of places and events. Mr. Momjian has a background in creative writing and journalism which is apparent in his thorough research, attention to detail, and engaging presentation. He has published articles, novels, and non-fiction works and is the 2015 CE recipient of the William Saroyan Medal, awarded by the Ministry of Diaspora of the Republic of Armenia.

The book is a slim volume of 142 pages, divided into 24 chapters plus an appendix that features maps and images relating to the text and a chronology of Armenian monarchs. There are a number of especially well-executed scenes and sequences throughout the book, but among the best is the Battle of Tigranocerta of 69 BCE, pitting Tigranes II against the Roman army under the general Licinius Lucullus. Tigranes was the son-in-law of Mithridates VI (r. 120-63 BCE) of Pontus who fought the Mithridatic Wars with Rome between 89-63 BCE. The Romans demanded Tigranes II hand Mithridates VI over to them, and when he refused, they invaded.

The battle did not go well for Tigranes II whose troops were caught off-guard by Lucullus and defeated. In describing a pivotal moment, Momjian writes:

A few moments later, the sound of galloping horses could be heard from the rear of Tigranes’ army stationed on the riverbank. All his soldiers looked back and saw Lucullus’ cohorts coming at full speed towards them... Panic spread throughout the line of his army, which began to collapse, as his vassal kings and nobles deserted him in haste for Roman protection. As a result of calculated attacks by the Romans, Tigranes’ army disintegrated in a matter of hours and he himself took flight northwards. (104)

Tigranes II would eventually submit to the Roman general Pompey the Great (l. c. 106-48 BCE) and his empire would be absorbed by Rome, but at the height of his reign, he commanded a vast empire and is recognized as one of the greatest kings of his age.

Unlike other works on the topic, written for an academic audience, Momjian’s book serves as a lucid introduction to Tigranes II’s life for any audience with an interest in ancient history. It was my great honor to be asked to consult on the work in manuscript form fact-checking and proofreading, and I recommend the book highly. Although I have known Tigranes’ story for many years, when I read Momjian’s book I found myself in suspense toward the end, eager to learn how things might turn out for the protagonist.



ARTS & LIVING

Deranian's Book on *Armenian Orphan Rug* in Translation

ARLINGTON, Mass. — In 2013 the Armenian Cultural Foundation published *President Calvin Coolidge and the Armenian Orphan Rug* by Dr. Hagop Martin Deranian. The result of more than three decades of research and investigation, Dr. Deranian's work traces the history of the rug and the Armenian orphans: their transportation from Urfa to safety to the present day Lebanon by the great Swiss humanitarian and physician Jakob Künzler, known as the "Father of the Armenian orphans." He details its journey to the United States, presentation to President Calvin Coolidge in the

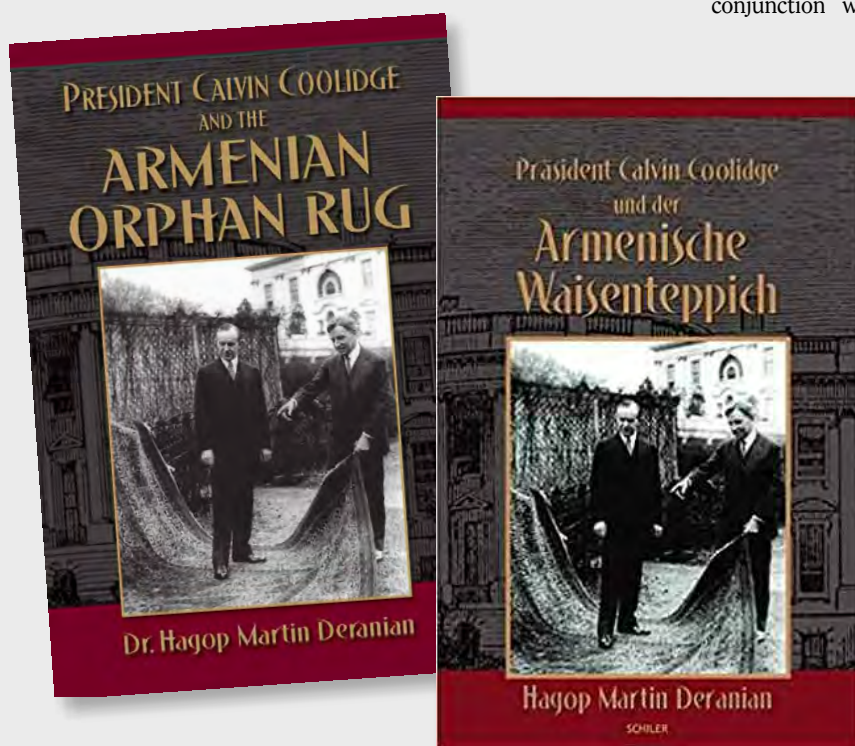
These words of President Calvin Coolidge on December 4, 1925, were made in response to Dr. John H. Finley, Vice-Chairman of the Near East Relief Executive Committee, who presented the rug for the Armenian orphans who "have tied into it the gratitude of tens of thousands of children to you and to America. And what they have tied into it will never be untied. . . It is sent to adorn the dearest of our temples, the White House of our President."

Coinciding with the release of the book, a planned December 16, 2013 Smithsonian Institution exhibit featuring the rug, organized in conjunction with the Armenian Cultural Foundation and the

Armenian Rug Society, was abruptly cancelled when the White House, reversing an earlier affirmative decision, refused to lend the iconic symbol of American and Armenian shared heritage to the museum. Following almost a year-long protest by the Armenian American community activists, other diaspora communities and pressure by the U.S. legislators, the Orphan Rug was made available for display as a part of an exhibit in the White House visiting Center, a year later on November 14, 2014.

In light of the great demand and interest internationally, the Armenian Cultural Foundation has welcomed the publication of the *President Calvin Coolidge and the Armenian Orphan Rug* in other languages. A German edition of the book, *Präsident Calvin Coolidge und der Armenische Waisenteppich*, translated by Ortrun Cramer, was published by Hans Schiler publishing house in 2014. This year the Nairi Publishing house in Tehran published two Armenian and Farsi editions of the book under the auspices of the Armenian Architects and Engineers Association of Iran. The Armenian edition *Nakhgah Kalvin Kolije yev hay vorperi gorge* is translated by Armenouhi Badalian and the

Farsi edition, *Reyis jomhur kalvin koulj va farshe yatimane armani* by Karine Haroutounian-Dror. Both titles, available through Nairi Publishing house, are exact reproductions of the English edition, including the original preface as well as all the illustrations, annotations and bibliography. The Armenian Cultural Foundation congratulates and commends the above efforts to make this small and yet important book on the post-Armenian Genocide episode pertaining to the Armenian orphans in the Near East to the public.



White House, several decades in the possession of the Coolidges and its return again to the White House in the mid-1980s, where it is stored to this day.

"The beautiful rug woven by the [Armenian] children in the [Ghazir] orphanage in the Lebanon has been received. This, their expression of gratitude for what we have been able to do in this country for their aid, is accepted by me as a token of their goodwill to the people of the United States. . . The rug has a place of honor in the White House, where it will be a daily symbol of good-will on earth."

My Armenian Roots Account for Exotic Flavor in My Writing

MAGARIAN from, page, 13

one's own insights are nearly always wrong. There is a tendency for all media people to assume they know the truth about a person that they have worked out the real facts. This is erroneous. They were not there when the interviewee's life was unfolding, so they can never know what it was really like to live those events, and to be that person. Of course the gifted interviewer can indeed have certain insights, even brilliant ones, but one must always be careful not to seem too clever.

I mostly share your attitude about interviewing people. Florence always has attracted the British and other writers from all around the world. How Florentine inspirations are reflected in your literature?

To be honest Florence plays hardly any role in my writing. The city is fascinating and dazzling, maddening and mysterious, elegant and inscrutable. But I never write about it directly.

In your writing *The Italian Quarantine* I liked this quote: "Florence has become like a colossal movie set, after having been abandoned when the production money didn't come through, an open-air theater for no one." And now?

Now Florence has more or less returned to normality, the shops and bars are all open again, the Florentines buzz around on their scooters, the tourists are back, but depleted by about 75 percent, and the wine is flowing freely. And yet the presence everywhere of masks, the obsession with hand hygiene, the queues outside restaurants and post offices reminds us that normality has not quite returned, and that we are all a little bit closer to our own sense of mortality, and life's ultimate mystery and fragility.

A writer friend of mine once said that the solitude is the writer's best friend. Do you agree with this?

Solitude is necessary in order to write I think,

but solitude in too great a dose is contaminating, damaging, like too much sunshine, or too much sponge cake.

You identify yourself also as a fringe theatre director and actor. It will be interesting to learn what kind of projects you have been in.

I directed my own three-hour play at university that was a wonderful experience. I also directed some cabaret in London, at a great pub theatre in Little Venice, with songs by Kurt Weill, Johnny Mercer, and others. I also directed Moliere's "The Misanthrope" in the Middle Temple Gardens. In Florence and Turin I directed the wonderful Italian-American actor Roberto Zibetti in my own monologue "The Pain Tapestry," which he also performed in French in Pornic. The same piece was also staged in Iceland, with Pall Palsson performing — finally — in English. As an actor I mainly have done small roles in videos and film trailers, most interestingly for Alessio della Valle in "Max Fortuna." That was a great experience — but a bit scary, as I had to play a mechanic whose role mainly took place under a car. I kept worrying that the car would fall on top of me!

Your biography says that you worked, among other things, also as a nude model. What is that experience like?

I found nude modeling to be absolutely fascinating. To me it was like taking some kind of hallucinogenic drug. I was aware of myself splitting into two: the me on the podium as the model, and then the me who was able somehow (because the experience was so intense and unreal) to observe myself standing on the podium. To make things even more complicated I was also able to inhabit the point of view of the artists who were drawing me. So the whole thing was extraordinary and magical, like an out of body transcendent experience, like a mirror reflecting into another mirror... I am very glad that I did it, but I wouldn't want to do it now — my stomach is too big.

Review 31 once wrote about you: "Magarian's authentic poetic voice is strangely addictive, articulated with a shamelessly exotic accent." Can this "exotics" be ascribed to your origin?

Yes I am pretty sure that is the case. My Armenian roots account for the exotic flavor to my writing and its dense sense of sensory richness.

I have listened some of your piano and guitar pieces. Some critics have mentioned that your music draws on the tonalities of Armenian music. How so?

Well, I have never studied music formally and I am essentially self-taught as a pianist but I love certain pieces by Khachaturian, by Gurdjieff (in the transcriptions of de Hartmann), and by Tigran Hamasyan. These pieces and their rich, pungent tonalities I love very much and I think they have seeped into my own piano pieces. I instinctively feel certain keys I use are very close in character to the rich sentimentality and nostalgia that I sense in the music of the Armenians that I mentioned.

And generally, have you any idea about your ancestors and their native region?

My mother's father Hovanness was the Armenian priest of Nicosia. His family had settled in Syria after the genocide, but then, on the threat of the Turkish takeover of Syria (as encouraged by the British) in 1939 he moved to Nicosia. My mother's mother Hosanah assisted my grandfather as a kind of social worker there, helping the needy and poor. My father was born in Nicosia, and his parents had settled there after the genocide. My father and mother met there and decided to emigrate to England in 1960. I was born there eight years later. Unfortunately I don't have much knowledge of the time before that. Maybe one day I will look into my history more carefully. As a child I always felt that everything was shrouded in mystery and the unknown when it came to my

Calendar

MASSACHUSETTS

NOVEMBER 18 — Wednesday at 10 am, 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. To register, email hello@ArmenianHeritagePark.org Afghan Cuisine Chef Sharifa Zareen, Sanctuary Kitchen Catering

DECEMBER 2 — Wednesday at 10 am, 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. To register, email hello@ArmenianHeritagePark.org Indian Cuisine Madhu Gadia, Cookbook author, The Indian Vegan Kitchen, and New Indian Home Cooking; founder, Cuisine of India

DECEMBER 5-6 — SAVE THE DATE. Trinity's 2020 Christmas Bazaar. Saturday, December 5 & Sunday December 6, 2020. Holy Trinity Armenian Church of Greater Boston. 145 Brattle Street, Cambridge MA 02138. Questions? 617 354-0632

DECEMBER 16 - Wednesday at 10 am, 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. To register, email hello@ArmenianHeritagePark.org Desserts! Chef Nathan Kibarian Pastry Chef, Island Creek Oyster Bar Chef/Owner, Desserts by Nathan

RHODE ISLAND

The Sts. Sahag and Mesrob Armenian Church of Providence hosts the following Armenian Cultural Hour programs virtually every Friday at 7:30 pm. For information on how to watch or participate in the programs, contact the church office or check the church's Facebook Watch page.

November 6 — "Musical greetings from Lisbon" Levon Muradian, Cello (Portugal)

November 13 — Emma Tovmasian & Vazgen Avetian (CA) in concert "Sere chi tseranoom", Armenian popular songs

November 20 — "Meet with Armenian Doctors" — Dr. Aznif Calikyan, Anesthesiologist

November 27 — "Nor Serund" Youth Talents from Armenia Armenian folk music and songs

December 4 — Renown Armenian Bass & Songwriter Ruben Telunts in Concert "Karotee Kanch"

December 11 — World Renown "Cadance" Ensemble from Armenia

December 18 — Christmas Concert, featuring "Yerevan" Chorale & Orchestra, Boston, MA

December 27 (Sunday) — Memorial Concert "David Ayriyan", Virtuozo Kamancha player

family — I suppose because the events was so close to the tragedy and horror of the Armenian genocide. I wish I could have spent more time with my grandparents. I never even met my mum's mother — it's so sad.

Italy always has had not a large, but significant Armenian presence. I know three Armenian artists living in Florence. Have your paths ever crossed with Armenians in Italy and in general?

Sadly I haven't really met any other Armenians in Florence, though recently I did go to a mass at San Miniato (who was of course himself Armenian) and I met some Armenians then. I would like to spend more time with Armenians actually. And recently I met an Armenian sculptor in Pietrasanta. So things are improving!



COMMENTARY

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Karabakh War: The Efficacy of Diplomacy

By Edmond Y. Azadian

Despite tremendous losses in human lives and materiel, morale continues to be high among Karabakh warriors. It is not hyperbole when Armenian soldiers claim that they are fighting for a historic piece of homeland, while Azerbaijanis are fighting to grab territory that does not belong to them.

While war has been raging since September 27, there have been three attempts for humanitarian ceasefires. The first was initiated by President Vladimir Putin of Russia on October 10; the next by President Emmanuel Macron of France on October 17 and the third by the United States on October 25.

The three co-chairs of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) Minsk Group have failed to achieve a ceasefire. After the third attempt, President Ilham Aliyev of Azerbaijan announced that the fighting will continue until all Armenian forces withdraw from Karabakh — an ultimatum for capitulation for the Armenian side. And still, the Minsk Group issues vague statements blaming both sides.

Aliyev himself has lost all control of his government and army and therefore is unable to defy the OSCE co-chairs and the international community on his own; his arrogance is borrowed from Turkey's President Recep Tayyip Erdogan.

The latter last week attended a funeral in an Armenian church in Istanbul, to pay his respects to the only Armenian member of his AK Party, Markar Yessayan. During the funeral service, Patriarch Sahag Mashalyan managed to sneak into his eulogy the topic of the war in Karabakh. At the end of the service, before leaving the church, Erdogan made a significant statement: "Turkey has the same right for a voice in the Karabakh conflict as Russia does."

This statement provides the key to the puzzle. At each attempt for a ceasefire, Turkey has tried to impose itself, first as a mediator and then as a candidate to provide its military as a potential peacekeeping force, and finally it has become a player on the battlefield as a spoiler. It will continue to remain in that role until it achieves its goal, but so far it has managed to create a stalemate, blocking Russia from having a totally free hand in the Caucasus.

The same scenario was enacted in Libya, where the stalemate eventually was successful to a lesser degree, because in addition to Russia, France, Greece, Egypt, Saudi Arabia and Israel were on the opposing side of the equation.

Now, the same action is taking place in the Caucasus, where there already is a conflict of global proportions.

Turkey is forcing its way to pursue its dreams of a Turanic empire, while convincing the West that it is performing an altruistic role by encircling Russia and irritating Iran.

It is apparent that Erdogan will not rest until he succeeds in having a voice in the final settlement of the Artsakh conflict with the stationing of a residual military presence.

Erdogan could not have chosen better timing for the war than now, when the COVID pandemic has pushed the healthcare system in Armenia to the point of collapse and when the US is involved in a stormy presidential election campaign, so much so that Secretary of State Mike Pompeo and President Donald Trump have nothing to offer except lip service, while thousands in the two Armenian republics are losing their lives under the combined Azerbaijani, Turkish and Islamic Jihadist forces.

Armenians have grudgingly taken note that in this existential war, they have against them several countries aiding and abetting the perpetrators of genocide.

Israel's drones proved to be the most lethal in this conflict. As in past wars in Karabakh, Ukraine shipped armaments to Azerbaijan. Alexander Lukashenko of Belarus, a nation already in turmoil, did manage to ship armaments, also making a mockery of the Collective Security Treaty Organization, in which Armenia and Belarus are members.

Georgia hypocritically announced that it was closing its air space to both warring parties. But in this day and age, nothing can be kept secret; Turkey used Georgia's airspace to supply Azerbaijan with armaments.

To counter the hostility of these unfriendly nations, France and Germany sent parliamentary delegations to Armenia and Karabakh. The only high level diplomat who demonstrated

active solidarity was Greece's Foreign Minister Nikos Dendias, who visited Armenia and later flew to Moscow to discuss the crisis with his Russian counterpart, Sergey Lavrov.

France's Macron was supportive verbally. He also pointed a finger at Turkey for introducing terrorist mercenaries into the battlefield. Later, when he spoke about the murder of the French teacher who had shown his class the cartoon of the Prophet Mohammed, an angry Mr. Erdogan advised the French president to seek mental health. He had also accused Chancellor Merkel of harboring a Nazi mentality. These European statements keep the high ground and refuse to trade insults and barbs with the Sultan.

Although the Armenian diaspora's activism was able to convince Canada to discontinue the transfer of drone parts to Azerbaijan, that same activism has yet to yield results with the US administration to enforce Article 907 of Freedom Support Act, which bans any transfer of military hardware to Azerbaijan, as long as the latter continues its hostility against Armenia.

Armenian diplomacy has worked well under duress. It was a learning curve for those diplomats to operate under pressure. Foreign Minister Zohrab Mnatsakanyan was all over the globe. He was in Moscow negotiating with Lavrov and then in Washington and Europe, in between giving interviews and lectures.

Armenia's President Armen Sarkissian was well received at the Elysee Palace in France. Before that, he had visited the NATO headquarters in Brussels, where he met the organization's Secretary General Jans Stoltenberg, with whom he gave a joint press conference.

After paying lip service to the human casualties, Stoltenberg



expressed his appreciation to Armenia for its participation in NATO's peacekeeping missions in Afghanistan and Kosovo. He added that NATO was not a participant in this war and that Turkey was a respected member that hopefully could use its power to bring peace to the conflict.

We are not sure if Mr. Sarkissian informed his host that Turkey was in the Caucasus to complete its genocidal plans using NATO armaments, like F-16 warplanes to kill civilians.

Mnatsakanyan, Sarkissian and Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan made many appearances on major news outlets. In particular, Indian TV's coverage of the conflict is interesting, especially since their adversary, Pakistan, has sent mercenaries to the conflict.

Pashinyan was well prepared to present the case in Armenian because his prior attempts to express himself in Russian and English had backfired. However, he was unfamiliar about Indian-Pakistani relations and the similarity of the Kashmir conflict to be able to interject it into the discourse.

The Arab world is mostly ignored by Armenia's leadership despite the fact that large Armenian communities live in those countries. With the current polarization in the Muslim world pitting Turkey against Saudi Arabia for leadership of the Sunni world, Armenia would do well to focus on it.

President Sarkissian, however, is mindful of the influence of that part of the world. His extensive interview with the influential Al Ahram newspaper in Egypt was eye opening for the Arab world.

Domestically, there is political solidarity. Even the three former presidents, who have no love lost for each other, have come together to support the war effort. Most of the anti-Russian rhetoric has died down in the media, although some short-sighted politicians and journalists, with an agenda, continue sniping at Russians when Armenia needs Kremlin's support.

In his extensive interview with Al Ahram, Sarkissian stated, "President Putin made it clear that Russia is going to respect

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COMMENTARY



My Turn

By Harut Sassounian

Azeri Soldiers Wearing Armenian Uniforms May Be Shot by Their Own Troops

The U.S. Department of State announced on October 25, 2020 with great fanfare the third attempted ceasefire in the Artsakh war in as many weeks. The first two ceasefires were violated by Azerbaijan and Turkey within minutes of going into effect. The new ceasefire announcement was made after the foreign ministers of Armenia and Azerbaijan flew to Washington, D.C. and separately met with Secretary of State Mike Pompeo on October 23, 2020.

This latest “humanitarian ceasefire” went into effect on Monday, October 26, at 8 a.m., local time. Unfortunately, the third ceasefire was also violated within minutes by Azerbaijan and Turkey. This indicates that Azerbaijan, Turkey and the Jihadist mercenaries from Syria have no intention to stop the war until they cleanse Artsakh of its Armenian population which is exactly what President Ilham Aliyev has repeatedly announced. Armenia and Artsakh, with a population of a little over three million, are fighting against the combined forces of Azerbaijan and Turkey with a total population of over 90 million. This is a battle of David versus Goliath. It also means that the powerful Azerbaijani military, armed to its teeth with billions of dollars of modern weaponry from Israel and Russia, is unable to fight its battles without relying on the Turkish military and Islamist mercenaries. Even with their combined forces, Azerbaijan and Turkey have been unable to overrun Artsakh after a month-long battle!

In recent weeks, Pres. Trump has mentioned Armenians three times in his speeches during campaign rallies in Nevada, Ohio and New Hampshire. He made complimentary statements about Armenians, but words are meaning-

less unless they are followed up with action. All Trump has to do is pick up the phone and call his buddy Erdogan and tell him to stop supporting Azerbaijan and withdraw the terrorists it recruited and transferred to Azerbaijan. Instead, Trump has done what is in his personal interest which primarily includes getting reelected on Nov. 3 by appealing to Armenian-American voters.

Besides military action, there are other fronts in which Armenians and Azeris are battling each other. In the United States, several resolutions have been submitted to the House of Representatives and the Senate to recognize the independence of Artsakh and ban the sale of weapons to Azerbaijan and Turkey. Similar steps have been taken by Armenian communities in Canada, France and Australia, among others. There have also been mass protests by Armenian communities in cities throughout the U.S., Canada, Australia, the Middle East and Europe.

Armenian-Americans and elected officials pressured various lobbying firms hired by Azerbaijan and Turkey to stop their propaganda efforts. Last week, Mercury Public Affairs announced that it terminated its lobbying contract with Turkey. Mercury has represented Turkey since 2013. In February of this year, Mercury signed a contract for \$1 million to represent the Turkish Embassy. The Los Angeles City Council had urged Mercury to end its contract with Turkey or it will no longer do any business with the firm. A similar announcement was made by the Los Angeles Community College District.

DLA Piper, another major lobbying firm, informed the U.S. Justice Department that it no longer represents Azerbaijan Railways. The Livingston Group also ended its lobbying for Azerbaijan on October 13. The BGR lobbying firm withdrew from representing Azerbaijan’s state oil company SOCAR, according to AHVAL News.

Armenia on the other hand has never hired lobbying or public relations firms. The rare example was the Armenian government signing a lobbying contract with the law firm of Alston & Bird (associated with former Senator Bob Dole) for \$10,000 from Sept. 15 to October 14, 2020. It is not known if that contract was extended. While hiring lobbying or public relations firms is always helpful, the Armenian community is not as dependent on them since they are politically active and rely on their own organizations in Washington, such as the Armenian Assembly of America and the Armenian National Committee of America. On the other hand, Azerbaijan and Turkey are

obligated to spend millions of dollars for lobbying to try and misrepresent their dirty laundry as clean.

Another aspect of the misinformation war is the one waged in the pages of newspapers and social media in various countries. The Azeri government pays a fortune each year to hired pens to besmirch Armenia and glorify the dictatorship of Azerbaijan. The other front is the social media. Whenever, a prominent American or European announces its public stand in favor of Armenia, a horde of Azeris and their paid agents hound those individuals and pressure them to retract their statements.

There have been several reports in recent days that Azeri troops are wearing the uniforms of Armenian soldiers apparently to create confusion in the battlefield. In one such battle, it was discovered that 40 Azeri soldiers’ bodies were found in Armenian uniform. In my opinion, this practice, rather than confusing Armenians, will result in Azeris shooting their own soldiers by mistaking them for Armenians.

The Armenian government should file a complaint with the International Criminal Court (ICC) about the barbaric behavior of Azeri soldiers. In one video, two Armenian prisoners of war are shot dead by Azeri soldiers. In another, the head of a dead Armenian soldier is cut off by Azeri soldiers. In a third gruesome video, Azeri soldiers are seen skinning an Armenian soldier while he is still alive. These are clear cases of war crimes. Azerbaijan should be condemned by the ICC and bear responsibility for these inhuman actions. In addition, Azerbaijan uses cluster bombs which are prohibited by international humanitarian law. Moreover, Azerbaijan has fired on a daily basis thousands of missiles on civilians throughout Artsakh cities and villages. Azerbaijan has also destroyed hundreds of Armenian houses, schools and churches. These are blatant war crimes. Azerbaijan should pay a heavy price for its barbaric behavior.

On the positive side, 10 million Armenians worldwide have been united as never before. Every Armenian realizes that this is an existential struggle. Turkey and Azerbaijan intend to commit a second genocide against Armenians. So far, Armenians have raised the unprecedented sum of \$150 million and millions more in humanitarian aid. The only thing missing is for an Armenian billionaire to make a billion dollar donation to support the survival of Armenia and Artsakh. After all, it costs Armenia \$30 million a day to meet its security needs.

The Efficacy of Diplomacy

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every treaty Russia has with Armenia, and this is an absolutely clear message.”

Russia is indeed worried at Turkey’s advances in the Caucasus. Turkish and Azerbaijani forces have been approaching Meghri in Armenia’s southern tip, which is a prized piece of territory for Turkey and Azerbaijan, because control of that piece of land will connect Azerbaijan’s mainland with Nakhichevan, and will pave the way for Erdogan’s march to Central Asia.

To everyone’s knowledge, Russia has sent reinforcements to that region and even has lodged some missiles toward the concentrations of mercenaries on Azerbaijani soil.

The West would love for Turkey to engage Russia in the Caucasus where conflagrations are already raging on the latter’s periphery, in Ukraine, Belarus and Kyrgyzstan.

That is why President Putin is treating the region cautiously, not wanting to provoke Erdogan into action, while in the meantime minding his treaty obligations.

Armenian diplomacy can go only so far. Any diplomatic move, if not backed by force, has limited impact. It looks like that diplomacy has run its course and no party in the Minsk Group is anxious to move militarily to impose a ceasefire. The impression is that the co-chairs have been harboring the possibility of Azerbaijan making some inroads and recovering territory so that it can use it as a bargaining chip at the Geneva conference on October 29.

Mr. Lavrov had plainly laid out his plan before the October 10 ceasefire for Armenia to begin implementing the Madrid plan, which calls for the return of five regions held outside Karabakh controlled by Armenia, and then two more, before any discussion is placed on the negotiation table about the status issue.

Armenia had refused the proposal categorically; unfortunately, just recently, army spokesman Artsrun Hovhannissyan conceded that Karabakh has lost the Kubatli region to Azerbaijan. The tug-of-war will continue until the conference date. Hopefully, the Karabakh army will not cede any more territory because, to begin with, those territories outside Karabakh were occupied for security reasons and in this case, as a bargaining chip at the negotiation table.

Armenia has too many enemies and few true friends. Karabakh President Arayik Harutyunyan has issued a public appeal to President Putin for help.

That call says it all.

200 American Fulbright Scholars Call for Artsakh’s Right to Self-Determination in Letter to US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo

WASHINGTON – On October 22, 200 receipts of Fulbright Scholarships sent a letter to Secretary of State Mike Pompeo, asking for the recognition of Artsakh’s right to self-determination.

Dear Mr. Secretary,

We write to you as U.S. Fulbright scholars and American citizens. From remote mountain villages to cosmopolitan capitals, the 200 of us have worked in 59 countries and across six continents to spread goodwill, cultivate intellectual exchange, and create personal and institutional relationships that benefit the United States.

As Americans who have represented our nation globally, we share a lifelong commitment to the Fulbright Program’s mission of “fostering mutual understanding between the United States and partner nations, sharing knowledge across communities, and improving lives around the world.”

We now write to advance these three objectives in regard to the ongoing conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan.

The war is anathema to the spirit of the Fulbright Program and to the values we have worked so hard to promote. It is clear to us that each day of fighting destroys mutual understanding, knowledge, and human life across the region.

We are deeply convinced that there is a need for creative, dynamic U.S. engagement to end the conflict. This engagement need not be heavy-handed or conspicuous, but it must be serious and innovative. Noncommittal expressions of concern and passive adherence to broken frameworks only serve to prolong the war and the irreparable destruction it engenders.

Without repeating the two sides’ competing claims, it is clear to us that the people of Nagorno-Karabakh (Artsakh) have a right to remain in their homes. It is also clear that the people of Nagorno-Karabakh would not be safe if Azerbaijan ever won control of the region. This unfortunate fact is evinced by Azerbaijan’s record, from the Sumgait and Baku pogroms to the destruction of Armenian cultural heritage in Nakhichevan, and from the lionization of Ramil Safarov to the 2016 execution of Armenian civilians in Talish. The events of recent weeks, including Azerbaijan’s unrelenting bombardment of civilian targets and the executions of at least six Armenians in Hadrut, conclusively show that anti-Armenian ethnic cleansing is no longer a hypothetical danger; it is an unfolding reality. With the international commu-

nity paralyzed, we are convinced that only U.S. support for self-determination in Nagorno-Karabakh can halt the ongoing atrocities.

Nagorno-Karabakh has never been incorporated within a sovereign Azerbaijan. Its people have legitimately voted for and declared independence, and for nearly thirty years they have stewarded a functioning government of their own. A number of states, including California, Colorado, Georgia, Hawaii, Louisiana, Maine, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, and Rhode Island, have officially recognized this reality. Supporting self-determination for Nagorno-Karabakh would be consistent with principles upheld by the United States in South Sudan (2011), Kosovo (2008), and East Timor (2002).

The continuation of the Armenia-Azerbaijan conflict will intensify humanitarian crises, derail regional development, and erode democratic norms everywhere, harming our national interest. While the United States is not a unilateral arbiter of other states’ disputes, it is a critical leader with great leverage and unique peacebuilding capabilities. We fear that choosing not to deploy these resources now would send a global message that the United States is disinterested in the security of fledgling democracies such as Armenia—and that our nation is unable to meaningfully advocate for peace in the face of aggressive, destabilizing actions by aspiring regional powers. This would be an abdication of moral leadership and a green light to those hostile to American interests and values.

Another path is possible. We are confident that the United States’ diplomatic efforts can catalyze a true settlement, finally resolving the protracted and destabilizing conflict over Nagorno-Karabakh.

The Institute of International Education and the Department of State chose us to represent the United States as teachers, researchers, academics, and volunteers around the world. Our deep experience advancing mutual understanding, shared knowledge, and humanitarian objectives—and our ongoing commitment to these values—compel us to share this letter with you now. We call on our nation’s diplomats to deploy every possible effort to immediately end the bloodshed, and to secure lasting peace in the Caucasus by supporting the self-determination of Nagorno-Karabakh.



COMMENTARY

Artsakh Protests and Counterprotests in Chicago

By Harry Kezelian

CHICAGO – Due to its status as America's third largest city, the presence of both Armenian and Turkish consulates, a thriving Armenian community, as well as a substantial Turkish community, Chicago is becoming a hotspot for protests revolving around the war in Artsakh. We spoke with Irina Petrosyan, personal assistant to the honorary consul of the

Tatosian's business, Oscar Isberian Rugs in the River North neighborhood of downtown Chicago.

Standing across the narrow street from the consulate, and holding a large sign that read "Karabakh is Azerbaijan," the protestors were waving Azerbaijani, Turkish, and even Israeli, Ukrainian, and Pakistani flags. Some also had American flags and Chicago's official city flag.

Petrosyan remarked that a personal contact of hers in the Ukrainian community had informed her that the individuals holding Ukrainian flags were not Ukrainian, and that furthermore, the Azerbaijanis allegedly had contacted members of the Ukrainian community offering them sums of \$200 to come and join the protest.

which was open for customers at the time. Tatosian in turn did not respond to protestors but went about the daily conduct of his rug business, helping customers. Petrosyan observed that there were many police officers present on the street. Since he knew there was going to be a protest, Tatosian had contacted the

city regarding security and Petrosyan believes that for that reason there was a heavy police presence.

Tatosian's customers and even delivery trucks were directed to park further away from the entrance rather than in the normal parking spots for the rug store. Petrosyan is not sure



whether it was the police or members of the Azerbaijani protest that directed these customers to park elsewhere. At any rate, leaving the rug store's parking spaces open allowed the "Armenian Consulate" sign to be visible from the street. Petrosyan stated that Azerbaijanis were coming to take pictures with the consulate sign, and seemed to want the entrance of the building and the sign to be visible from their side. They were also taking videos.

Protest at the Turkish Consulate (photo Vinnie Cartabiano)

On Saturday, October 17, a protest at the

Turkish Consulate, in its prime location in the NBC building in downtown Chicago, was organized by the local ARF. With participation from the Armenian Youth Federation (the youth arm of the ARF) and the general Armenian community, about 400 people attended this massive protest which in addition to protesting in front of the Turkish Consulate, also marched through the streets of downtown Chicago.

The ABC-7 TV station came and filmed the protest. As stated, Petrosyan believes that the reason they came was because of the small protest at ABC's studios two days earlier. However, the segment that eventually aired on TV was "30 seconds or less" according to Petrosyan.

At the protest at the Turkish Consulate (photo Vinnie Cartabiano)

On Thursday, October 22, a small demonstration took place on the bridge on Harlem Avenue which passes over the Kennedy Expressway. Armenian community members, including the young Fr. Andreas Garabedian of the nearby St. Gregory Armenian Church of Chicago, stood on the overpass with signs visible to drivers on both streets. The Kennedy Expressway is a major commuter and transportation thoroughfare because it connects downtown Chicago with O'Hare Airport, one of the busiest in the world. There is also a major "L" Train station (Chicago's public transit) at this intersection.

According to Petrosyan, whether they have been large or small, local Armenians have been organizing protests and demonstrations in Chicago practically every week since the war began. For example, the AYF organized an earlier protest at the Turkish consulate on October 3. Last Friday's pro-Azerbaijani demonstration was the first of its kind to have taken place in



Republic of Armenia in Chicago, Oscar Tatosian, to inform us about recent events in the city.

On Thursday, October 15, from 4:00 to 6:30 p.m., a protest was organized by Chicago's Armenian community "in coordination with the ARF [Armenian Revolutionary Federation]," in front of the downtown studios of Chicago's ABC affiliate TV station (ABC-7/WLS-TV). The protest was "for coverage about the war" said Petrosyan, and was organized to "demand coverage of our calls to justice" according to organizer Anoush Bargamian. We are informed that there were only about 20 people present at this protest. A representative of ABC-7 News emerged from the building saying that the news was being filmed on the second floor and nobody could hear the protestors outside, but that they would accept a statement from the Armenian group. A press release was handed to the ABC representative. Later, it was learned that ABC-7 had been filming the Armenian protestors from a first-floor window.

According to Petrosyan, the Armenian community believes that due to this small protest, ABC-7 Chicago was convinced to send a news team to the protest that was to take place at the Turkish Consulate on Saturday, October 17.

Before that could happen, however, a group of about 50 Azerbaijani protestors came to the Armenian Consulate in Chicago the following day, Friday, October 16. Petrosyan was an eyewitness to these events. The Armenian Consulate is run out of the same premises as

