

THE ARMENIAN Mirror-Spectator

Volume LXXXI, NO. 21, Issue 4663

\$ 2.00

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

NEWS IN BRIEF



Armenians Evacuate Kashatagh/Lachin

Including Berdzor and Tekeyan School

BERDZOR, ARTSAKH – Azerbaijani forces entered the Kashatagh or Lachin District, which contains the vital corridor connecting the Republic of Armenia to Artsakh, on December 1, while most Armenians evacuated the district. The corridor itself at present is held by Russian troops. Berdzor (Lachin), the capital of the district, is within the narrow corridor, and one of the two schools there which served the population since the 1990s is the Vahan Tekeyan School No. 1 of Berdzor. Anahit Kosakyan, principal of the school, reported what has happened to the school during the current Karabakh war and its aftermath.

By **Aram Arkun**
Mirror-Spectator Staff

The school has some 220 students. The Tekeyan Cultural Association of the United States and Canada has been providing support to the teachers and staff through its Sponsor a Teacher program, as well as assisting in the renovations of the school's facilities for a dozen years.

Kosakyan said that from the first day of the war, children and the elderly were evacuated from Berdzor. Kosakyan remained because her son was serving on the frontline, and her husband was there also. On October 19, it became clear that the shelling of the city would become

worse, so she took her 81-year-old mother and left. After the ceasefire was announced, she returned, went to Yerevan for two days, and then came back again.

Approximately three or four hundred soldiers from the Armenian forces had been using the school, she said, as a barracks. They ate their meals there and slept in the school. The only other school in Berdzor was being used in the same fashion.

Kosakyan said, "In truth, the school is in a bad condition. There was a lot of destruction and many things were stolen. It is a very sad state of affairs." While the outside structure of the building was intact, the

see EVACUATION, page 3



Anahit Kosakyan,
principal of the
Vahan Tekeyan
School of Berdzor

Pashinyan Confirms Rejecting Earlier Truce Agreement

YEREVAN (RFE/RL) – Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan has confirmed Russian President Vladimir Putin's assertion that he could have stopped the war in Nagorno-Karabakh three weeks before the Armenian-Azerbaijani ceasefire brokered by Moscow on November 9.

In televised remarks on November 17, Putin said that the Armenian side would have suffered fewer territorial losses and, in particular, retained control of the strategic Karabakh town of Shushi had Pashinyan agreed to Azerbaijan's terms of a ceasefire on October 20.

see TRUCE, page 2

France Tells Turkey to Remove 'Mercenaries' From Karabakh

PARIS (RFE/RL) – France expects Turkey to withdraw Syrian mercenaries recruited for Azerbaijan during the recent war in Nagorno-Karabakh, a senior French official visiting Armenia said late on Saturday, November 28.

"French President Emmanuel Macron was the first to call things what they are and state that Turkey transported Syrian mercenaries from the Turkish city of Gaziantep to Nagorno-Karabakh," Jean-Baptiste Lemoyne, a secretary of state at the French Foreign Ministry, told a news conference in Yerevan held at the end of his two-day visit.

see MACRON, page 6

Need for Diplomacy Greater than Ever in Post-War Armenia, Karabakh

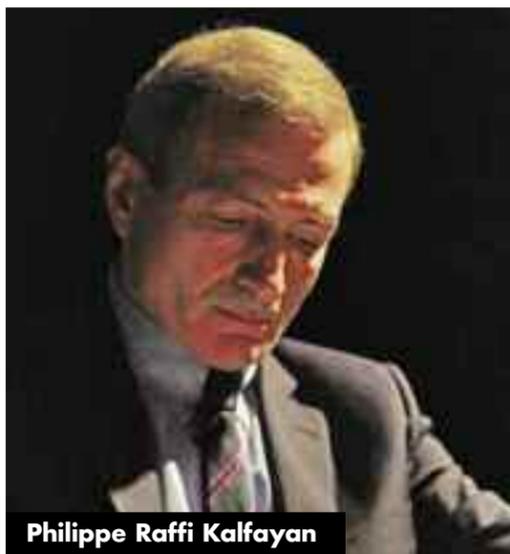
By **Alin K. Gregorian**
Special to the Mirror-Spectator

PARIS – Armenia and Artsakh face an existential threat the likes of which they have not encountered since independence in 1991.

Philippe Raffi Kalfayan, a regular contributor to the opinion section of the *Armenian Mirror-Spectator* and an expert on international law, recently returned to his home in Paris from a stay in Armenia. What he saw there gave him cause for alarm.

"My recent stay in Yerevan was dedicated to discussing and preparing the legal field and actions related to Artsakh self-determination and post-war legal proceedings," he said, adding, "My contribution is so minor compared to the young soldiers who sacrificed their lives for the country's defense."

see DIPLOMACY, page 4



Philippe Raffi Kalfayan

Karabakh Leader Says 600 Bodies of Soldiers Recovered so Far

STEPANAKERT (PanARMENIAN.Net) – Nagorno-Karabakh (Artsakh) President Arayik Harutyunyan said Monday, November 30 that the bodies of 600 soldiers killed in the recent fighting have been recovered since the beginning of search-and-rescue operations.

Harutyunyan met with the family members of missing persons and servicemen and prisoners of wars and captives on Monday. The Commander of the Russian peacekeeping troops, Lieutenant General Rustam Muradov, and Director of Karabakh's State Emergency Service Karen Sargsyan too participated in the meeting.

President Says Government behind 'Tragedy' Must Go

YEREVAN (PanARMENIAN.Net) – President Armen Sarkissian has weighed in on the situation in Armenia in the aftermath of a devastating war unleashed by Azerbaijan, maintaining that the government whose activity has led to "such a great tragedy" must resign.

"There is one solution if such a great tragedy has taken place: the government behind it must go. If a politician is strong, they can return later," Sarkissian said at a meeting with the representatives of Russia's Armenian community in Moscow on Sunday, November 29.

"The previous elections were held two and a half years ago, when the country was a completely different place. But Armenia is now changed. There is a civilized way out of the crisis: early elections, preceded by the formation of a government of national accord," Sarkissian said.

The President believes acknowledging the crisis the country has plunged into is key.

New Moth Species Discovered in Armenia

YEREVAN (PanARMENIAN.Net) – A group of biologists from Germany's Institute for Ecosystem Research have discovered a previously unknown specimen of moth in Armenia's Urtsadzor settlement and called it *Depressaria urtsadzorensis*, the Foundation for the Preservation of Wildlife and Cultural Assets (FPWC) reported on November 30.

The main focus of interest for the scientists was the diverse fauna of invertebrates, moths and other insects, that are found in abundance in the Caucasus Wildlife Refuge.

When conducting their research they found a moth species, which was not known to inhabit Armenia before.

INSIDE

Let's Put on A Play

Page 12

INDEX

Armenia	2-3
Arts and Living	12
Community News.	8
Editorial	16
International	4-7



ARMENIA

News From Armenia

Stepanakert Airport Should Be Opened

YEREVAN (Armenpress) – Former advisor to the president of Artsakh Davit Babayan suggested on December 1 that in case of unblocking transport communication routes as envisaged by the statement signed by the leaders of Armenia, Russia and Azerbaijan, the re-launch of the airport of Stepanakert should be put into discussion.

“With the support of the Russian side, the re-opening of the Stepanakert airport will create a second important route connecting with the external world. Moreover, after its re-opening the airport can become an important transportation hub, as well as will enable to solve socio-economic issues,” Babayan told Armenpress, adding that according to his information during the recent military operations the airport of Stepanakert has been targeted, but didn’t suffer serious damages.

Djorkaeff Brothers Meet With Pashinyan

YEREVAN (Armenpress) – Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan held a meeting on December 1 with the French-Armenian football legend, France’s Goodwill Ambassador for Armenia Yuri Djorkaeff and his brother, Denis Djorkaeff, who is the Deputy Mayor of the French town of Décines-Charpieu and the advisor to the head of the Football Federation of Armenia.

The Armenian High Commissioner for Diaspora Affairs Zareh Sinanyan was also in attendance, the Prime Minister’s Office said.

Pashinyan thanked the Djorkaeff brothers for supporting Armenia and Artsakh in the difficult post-war period.

“I am happy to once again host you. The activity and support which the Djorkaeff family is doing for Armenia and Artsakh is very important. During these difficult times we must be united and unite our pan-national potential to overcome the difficulties and move forward. We must be more active and more closely connected,” Pashinyan said.

Former Karabakh Army Chief to Be Discharged From Hospital

STEPANAKERT (PanARMENIAN.Net) – Former commander of the Nagorno-Karabakh (Artsakh) Defense Army Jalal Harutyunyan will be discharged from the hospital “within 2-3 days,” Head of the Armenian Defense Ministry’s Information and Public Relations Department Gevorg Altunyan said Monday, November 30, Panorama.am reports.

Harutyunyan was relieved of his post in late October after sustaining major injuries during military hostilities unleashed by Azerbaijan, and was replaced by Lieutenant General Mikayel Arzumanyan.

Families Want Answers On Missing Soldiers

YEREVAN (Armenpress) – The family members of the troops who are missing in action in the Second Nagorno Karabakh War that ended on November 10 are rallying outside the Defense Ministry headquarters demanding a meeting with Defense Minister Vagharshak Harutyunyan.

The parents of the missing soldiers were earlier outside a military base in Vagharshapat, demanding authorities to launch search operations in Zangelan. They said they don’t understand why search operations haven’t been conducted there and why the process is being delayed. The Chief of Staff of the Vagharshapat military base had told them that the search operations would start November 2.

The families of the missing troops had earlier demonstrated outside the Russian embassy, asking Moscow to assist in the process.

However, Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov Moscow said on December 1 that he doesn’t see a deliberate delay in the exchange process of the bodies of those killed in Karabakh and the prisoners of war, RIA Novosti reported.

Pashinyan Confirms Rejecting Earlier Truce Agreement

TRUCE, from page 1

Shushi was captured by Azerbaijani forces two or three days before the subsequent truce agreement halted the war on November 10. Azerbaijan agreed to stop its military operations in return for an Armenian pledge to withdraw from three districts around Karabakh.

Baku regained control over four other districts, which had been occupied by Karabakh Armenian forces in the early 1990s, during the latest war. Its troops also captured Karabakh’s southern Hadrut district.

Speaking to the Rossiya-24 TV channel, Putin said: “On October 19–20, I had a series of telephone conversations with [Azerbaijani] President Aliyev and Prime Minister Pashinyan. At that time, the armed forces of Azerbaijan regained control over an insignificant part of Nagorno-Karabakh, namely, its southern section.

“On the whole, I managed to convince President Aliyev that it was possible to end hostilities, but the return of [Azerbaijani] refugees, including to Shusha, was a mandatory condition on his part. Unexpectedly for me, the position of our Armenian partners was that they perceived this as something unacceptable.”

“At that point, the prime minister told me that his country could not agree to this, and that it will keep fighting,” added Putin.

Pashinyan essentially confirmed this on Sunday evening. In a lengthy Facebook post, he insisted that Yerevan’s acceptance of the earlier deal negotiated by Putin and the resulting return of refugees to Shushi would have also restored Azerbaijani control of the town overlooking the Karabakh capital Stepanakert.

“The problem was that in that case more than 90 percent of Shushi’s population would be Azerbaijanis who would control the road to Stepanakert ... Thus the agreement did not materialize,” he wrote.

Pashinyan claimed that Putin found his arguments “logical.” Putin’s

November 17 comments suggest the opposite.

“Prime Minister Pashinyan told me openly that he viewed [the return of Azerbaijanis to Shushi] as a threat to the interests of Armenia and Nagorno-Karabakh,” the Russian president told Rossiya-24. “I do not quite understand the essence of this hypothetical threat. I mean, it was about the return of civilians to their homes, while the Armenian side was to have retained control over this section of Nagorno-Karabakh, including Shusha.”

Pashinyan sought to justify his rejection of the October 20 ceasefire terms as he continued to defend his handling of the six-week war strongly condemned by the Armenian opposition and a growing number of other domestic critics. They hold him responsible for Azerbaijan’s military victory and demand the Armenian government’s resignation and the conduct of snap parliamentary elections.

The critics have seized upon Putin’s revelation and portrayed it as further proof of Pashinyan’s incompetence and disastrous decision-making. They say that the prime minister would have not only kept more territory under Armenian control but also saved the lives of hundreds and possibly thousands of Armenian soldiers had he agreed to the proposed ceasefire on October 20.

In addition, former Presidents Levon Ter-Petrosyan and Robert Kocharyan accused Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan on Monday, November 30, of blatantly lying about their offers to negotiate with Russia and try to stop the war in Nagorno-Karabakh.

Pashinyan hit out at them in a series of Facebook posts that defended his handling of the war which resulted in sweeping territorial gains made by Azerbaijan.

Amid continuing opposition calls for his resignation, the embattled premier claimed on Sunday that Ter-Petrosyan, Kocharyan and another former president, Serzh Sargsyan, objected on

October 19 to key terms of a ceasefire agreement which Moscow thought would stop the hostilities.

In another statement posted on Monday morning, he questioned the sincerity and seriousness of Kocharyan’s and Ter-Petrosyan’s stated readiness to fly to Moscow, as Armenia’s “special envoys,” for urgent talks with Russian leaders.

Pashinyan said they wanted him to arrange a meeting with Russia’s President Vladimir Putin or Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov. He said he suggested that they talk instead to former Russian President Dmitry Medvedev and try to organize unofficial “courtesy meetings” with Putin, Lavrov or other senior Russian officials.

Pashinyan added that the two ex-presidents did not travel to Moscow even after he helped Kocharyan secure a court order allowing the latter to leave Armenia. Kocharyan has been standing trial on coup charges rejected by him as politically motivated.

Victor Soghomonyan, the head of Kocharyan’s office, swiftly denied Pashinyan’s claims. “Lies and distortions are inseparable from Nikol,” he said.

Ter-Petrosyan issued an even more scathing denial through his spokesman, Arman Musinyan.

“President Ter-Petrosyan finds it meaningless to comment on the nation-destroying scourge’s mental torments,” Musinyan wrote on his Facebook page. “Let him blurt out whatever he wants. There is no way he can make excuses.”

“The Armenian people will never forgive him,” Musinyan added, alluding to the outcome of the six-week war stopped by a Russian-brokered ceasefire on November 10.

Ter-Petrosyan and Kocharyan reportedly met October 20 for the first time in over two decades. They were joined by Sargsyan and two former Karabakh presidents. The meeting was noteworthy given the long history of mutual antagonism between Ter-Petrosyan on one side and Kocharyan and Sargsyan on the other.

New Minister of Economy Appointed

YEREVAN (news.am, azatutyun.am, ArmenPress) – Prime Minister of Armenia Nikol Pashinyan introduced newly appointed Minister of Economy Vahan Kerobyan to the staff of the Ministry of Economy on November 27. Pashinyan thanked ex-minister Tigran Khachatryan for his work, expressed his satisfaction and added that there was no political motive behind his dismissal.

The head of government wished Kerobyan success and stated the following: “Mr. Kerobyan is a representative of the private sector and used to criticize the government for not paying enough attention to businesses and the private sector. Now he has the opportunity to listen to businessmen and representatives of the private sector and not only raise the issues in government, but also deal with the solutions to those issues,” he said.

Khachatryan expressed gratitude to the prime minister and the staff of the ministry for their cooperation. Addressing the prime minister,

Khachatryan said the government has always provided solutions to the issues that he has raised over the past two



Vahan Kerobyan

years, adding that in many cases there have been responses from the private sector according to which the government’s decisions, especially in the form of anti-crisis measures have been targeted and have had an impact creating a

precondition for causing positive changes.

Kerobyan expressed gratitude to the prime minister for providing him with such an opportunity and thanked Khachatryan for the work he has done over the past two years. “Although I have criticized the Ministry of Economy, your work and the team deserve respect and admiration. In my opinion, the coronavirus and the war created new realities, and there are new challenges. I believe the current staff is capable of meeting the objectives that are set. Despite the horror of the war, our vision for “Armenia-2050” remains, and I will keep it in focus. This will be the benchmark with which we will move forward to record at least 10% economic growth on average. Our only option is for success,” the newly appointed minister said.

The 44-year-old Kerobyan is one of the founders of Armenia’s largest food delivery company, Menu.am, established in 2012. Prior to that, he was CEO of the Star Supermarket chain from 2004 to 2012, which went bankrupt.

His appointment is part of the widespread changes in cabinet positions after the domestic turmoil in the aftermath of the disastrous Karabakh war.



ARMENIA

Armenians Evacuate Kashatagh/Lachin

EVACUATION, from page 1

walls inside were damaged. Papers and books were mixed up and many things stolen. Even her office door was broken. Kosakyan attempted to keep an eye on the school from November 12 or 13, but it was not possible to do much as the soldiers had remained there.

On November 26, the police and security forces told the Berdzor population that the city was being emptied of its civilian population, and that everyone would have to leave by November 30 at 6 p.m. Though afterwards there have been rumors that it will remain Armenian, Kosakyan said, nothing official was stated. Meanwhile, Russian soldiers were defending the roads in Berdzor.

Until a final decision was given, Kosakyan, like many others, did not abandon her Berdzor residence with all its contents, since that would be expensive and difficult, but she left for Yerevan with some essential belongings on November 27 to wait for more definitive news.

Representatives of the Artsakh Ministry of Education, Science and Culture came to inspect the school from Stepanakert, and saw what shape it was in. They took certain books and items, and declared that if Berdzor will indeed be handed over, they would decide what to do over the next several days, and if necessary, empty out the building. The school's building custodian stayed several more days to see what would happen.

All the students of the school now are scattered in different places, some in the hotel areas of Tsaghkadzor, others with relatives or in other homes in Yerevan. Kosakyan will try to reestablish contact with them. The teachers of the school also are scattered.

As late as November 29, authorities still were bringing Armenians to Berdzor from outlying regions of the district that were



the provisions of the truce of November 9. The ultimate fate of Berdzor's inhabitants still remains unclear. President Ilham Aliyev of Azerbaijan in a December 1 speech (<https://en.trend.az/azerbaijan/politics/3342905.html>) declared that according to the November truce agreement, Berdzor (the town of Lachin) would be returned to Azerbaijan after the parameters of a new cor-



Berdzor Tekeyan School

going to be placed under Azerbaijani control, Kosakyan said, and residents were told that the town itself would remain Armenian. However, on November 30, in the morning the Russian military told the Armenians that they had to definitively leave. She said that many people left their home furnishings and goods in Berdzor, as she had done, due to the uncertainty and the difficulty and expense of transportation to the Republic of Armenia.

The roads on November 30 were snowy. Kosakyan told one or two needy large families, who had lost everything they had, to take what they could from her Berdzor home. Meanwhile, late in the afternoon of November 30, the school custodian told Kosakyan that Artsakh state bodies were removing furniture, books and presumably whatever else can be salvaged from the Tekeyan School in Berdzor.

Lachin or Kashatagh district is the third and last district controlled by Artsakh, after Aghdam and Karvachar or Kelbajar, to be handed over to Azerbaijan in accordance with

ridor connecting Armenia to Nagorno Karabakh are determined.

There are some Armenians apparently who are remaining in the town. Davit Davityan, a staff member of the local administration, told an Agence France Presse reporter on November 29 that 200 people vital for connecting gas, electric and roads services, could stay. The Armenian administration would give their names to the Russian peacekeeping soldiers and these people would get passes. Also, some Armenians with nowhere else to go remained in the town.

Mayor Narek Aleksanyan told ArmenPress that Russian peacekeepers on November 30 stated that the flag of the Artsakh Republic had to be lowered but that the Azerbaijani flag would not be raised. They did not specify whether Azerbaijani troops would enter the town. Aleksanyan had no information about the aforementioned 200 people with permits but stated that there were many more than 200 people remaining in the town, including himself.



The Lachin district (Qashatagh) of Nagorno-Karabakh was handed over to Azerbaijan on Monday as part of the deal signed on November 9 by Pashinyan. Earlier, the Armenian troops left the Agdam and Kalbajar districts.

Once Qashatagh region of Artsakh comes under the control of Azerbaijan, the 5-kilometre wide corridor through Berdzor will become the only route connecting Armenia to Artsakh. Questions regarding the status of the corridor remain unanswered. Ria Novosti news agency has published these photos, showing the locals leaving their homes.





INTERNATIONAL

Need for Diplomacy Greater than Ever in Post-War Armenia, Karabakh

DIPLOMACY, from page 1

"In my previous article, I had mentioned that this war could have been avoided (<https://mirrorspectator.com/2020/10/09/recognition-is-the-only-solution-for-karabakh/>). I have never believed that the Armenian army was superior to that of Azerbaijan. In Yerevan, people are now recognizing that for over 25 years Armenia had enjoyed 'khorovadz' and a privileged short term business and enrichment but neglected investing in modern weaponry and state security. This is why we are where we are," he noted.

The Agreement

The shock waves from the signing of the November 10, which resulted in a ceasefire, still reverberate.

"The terms reflect the reality of the battlefield. It reflects territorial losses, more than what we could have returned if the war didn't occur," he explained.

"Unexpectedly the army was not prepared for such a massive attack," he said.

The agreement was signed under coercion, according to Kalfayan. "We had to decide whether to continue adding heavy losses," he said, in effect, rendering Armenia without a choice.

The signature by the head of the state, in this case Armenia's Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan, legally engages the country, Kalfayan explained. Therefore, the country has to implement the measures. However, he added, "in order to be fully binding forever, the agreement needs to go through the ratification process," according to Armenia's constitution.

He added that Armenia, in effect, "is caught between two bad scenarios until December 1." If parliament votes to reject the treaty, war will resume, "and the Russian Federation won't be happy."

In the event that parliament ratifies it, the content of the agreement could not be changed and future negotiations on the final status and territorial delimitations would be jeopardized.

Kalfayan blames the prime minister for not realistically assessing the country's military capabilities and for tuning out the big hints dropped by Russian President Vladimir Putin and Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov.

Putin said in an interview recently that Pashinyan had repeatedly been offered the solution of stopping the war in October, without any loss of property, if he agreed to the return of Azerbaijani refugees to Artsakh. He had refused. (See related story on page 1.)

Even at the Geneva meeting on October 30 between the foreign ministers of Armenia and Azerbaijan and the representatives of the OSCE Minsk Group, Armenia was offered a better deal than it got 9 days later.

In addition, Kalfayan notes that Armenia would have done much better had it mandated on October 20 former Presidents Robert Kocharyan and Levon Ter-Petrosyan to go to Moscow to negotiate a ceasefire with Russia.

"This initiative collapsed and the presidents didn't go there," he said.

"He knew the military situation was to the detriment of the army. He knew we have heavy human losses," he said.

Pashinyan instead seemed to focus his efforts on the mobilization of the Armenian diaspora.

"Maybe he was having illusions about aid [arriving] from the diaspora. Maybe he had illusions that Western countries would come. Maybe he was in denial of reality," Kalfayan said.

Russia's Role

One of the surprising and devastating occurrences in the war was what did not happen: Russian involvement. Armenia and Russia are members of several defense pacts, including the Collective Security Treaty Organization.

"From a purely legalistic standpoint," Kalfayan said, Russia's answer to why they did not get involved — that Armenia proper itself was not attacked — was not wrong.

In addition, he said that sources indicated that while Pashinyan was talking several times a day with Putin, he did not formally ask for Russia's direct intervention in Artsakh. The official method is a formal letter, which was not sent until November 1, after the Armenian leader got a specific request from Artsakh President Arayik Harutyunyan.

Added Kalfayan, "Meanwhile, Ilham Aliyev [of Azerbaijan] knew that he was about to win the war."

For now, Kalfayan added, "The agreement is implemented and Russian Federation is actually administering Nagorno-Karabakh, humanitarian aid, returning of refugees to their homes, delimitations of the territory, peacekeeping and monitoring mechanisms."

Before and After the Ceasefire

Kalfayan said that he thought the decision to start a glob-

al war without due preparation in reply to a well-planned military attack and related actions (diplomatic, lobbying, legal, digital and media), then to keep on fighting and down-play losses, and finally to sign the ceasefire treaty basically under duress are typical of the fiery and vain temperament of Pashinyan.

"The cost of this in terms of human lives is just not acceptable," he said.

"During his time in office Pashinyan has annihilated all checks and balances and on the contrary reinforced his personal power. In that respect, having decided that he may sign this agreement without consulting the Parliament, the President and the ministry of foreign affairs is somehow logical, though disastrous," he noted.

He added, "Personally, due to my personal humanitarian convictions, I would have avoided the human losses at any rate. Conceding territories that the Armenian side had always intended to return was the option. This is what I would have considered a courageous decision. I have always found the declarations of invincibility issued by some political or military figures as extremely ridiculous and dangerous. From the first days, it was clear, based on authoritative sources that the human losses were considerable and that there existed imbalance in the levels of weaponry."

Returning the territories from Azerbaijan that Armenia had taken during the previous war and held as an insurance policy was accepted by all, he said. He continued, "Most responsible political parties, including the ARF, have always accepted the idea that the five surrounding territories should be returned to Azerbaijan against the recognition of independence of Artsakh and the guarantee of a secure physical corridor to Armenia."

And he tried to get his point across to Pashinyan.

"I wrote on October 30 to the Prime Minister a substantiated personal letter requesting from him three things: to stop the war as soon as possible in order to spare the lives of soldiers and young people; to visit Moscow as soon as possible and request from President Putin for the Russian Federation to intervene in Nagorno-Karabakh and to install a war cabinet, composed of a small team of experienced people from different political forces until the war and negotiation end up," he explained.

Minsk Principles

For the past couple of decades, the Minsk Group of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) has overseen the ceasefire and met with Armenia and Azerbaijan to finally come to an agreement. Part of the reason the group did not have success was that the first step was requiring Armenia to return the territories it had taken from Azerbaijan proper, without offering a similar show of good faith from Azerbaijan.

"Back in 2016, and later early 2019, I stressed that the Minsk process principles were representing a deadlock. Armenian diplomacy did not change the fundamentals of the negotiation, relying exclusively and too self-confidently upon the political process. It underestimated the geopolitical upheavals and did not anticipate the aggressiveness of Erdogan's policy," Kalfayan noted.

"The April war in 2016 was a strong signal, but nobody, except President Levon Ter Petrosyan, accurately interpreted the event," Kalfayan said.

In a recent interview, after the signing of the ceasefire, Putin suggested that Armenia itself had not recognized a free Artsakh, therefore why should other nations?

However, Armenia had been caught in a legal Catch-22 regarding the recognition: It could not recognize the republic legally as it would hinder the negotiations with the Minsk Group, but on the other hand, it could not easily convince other nations to recognize it.

Said Kalfayan, "Armenia kept saying that if it had recognized Artsakh it would have stopped the negotiation process within the framework of Minsk Process. [Instead now] we are in a situation where Azerbaijan has violated the first of the basic principles of the negotiation process, i.e. the obligation to not use force, and created a new de facto situation where Artsakh has lost some portions of its historical autonomous territory (Oblast) and Armenia is no longer in a position to recognize Artsakh, nor to make that decision under the terms of the agreement. Recognizing Artsakh in 2016 or earlier would have forced the Minsk Group to reconsider the fundamental principles. The more time passed, the stronger the Azerbaijani army got prepared, and less chance was left to recognize it. The recognition of Artsakh by Armenia is now a frozen option and this matter of fact is at odds with the emerging movement of international recognition of Artsakh. We are witnessing a vicious circle, where international recognition will be hindered by the non-recognition from Armenia."

Going Forward

And what does the future hold for the situation? Is there a way to make things better?

Kalfayan replied, "Yes, because the self-determination principle is more relevant than ever, and the November 10 agreement totally violated this right while it a peremptory norm of international law. No, because the de facto situation supersedes the legal one. All efforts should now be invested in the diplomatic process. For that, Armenia must replace its negotiator; Azerbaijan and Ilham Aliyev will never sit and have discussions again with Prime Minister Pashinyan. Armenians need new and experienced negotiators that may impose respect to Moscow and Baku."

And now, with Turkey insisting on sending peacekeeping forces to Artsakh, the situation in Artsakh can become even more perilous. As of this writing, the Turkish forces have not yet been deployed, despite the overwhelming support of the Turkish parliament for that action. Russia has expressed its concert that Armenians, because of the Genocide, would not look favorable on the move.

Kalfayan takes it one step further. "The most effective protection left for Armenia is the bilateral military treaty with Russia."

Churches and Monuments

One of the justified concerns of the Armenian nation is that the monuments will be destroyed upon the exit of the people of Artsakh. The media is teeming with photos of soldiers kicking down gravestones, blowing up church bell towers, etc.

Already, several museums have expressed concern and urged proactive actions to preserve the invaluable cultural riches.

Said Kalfayan, "The destruction of cultural heritage affects societies in the long term and prevents them from rebuilding themselves because culture is a glue of identity, a source of dignity. During the last two decades, much destruction occurred (Afghanistan, Syria, Libya, Mali, Iraq). The international community has been unable to prevent it despite the 1954 Hague Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict. That Convention and others that followed are insufficiently ratified by number of countries. UNESCO [United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization] is more efficient in engaging in the reconstruction of the destroyed or damaged property."

He added, "The destruction of cultural property is a weapon of war. In 2013, the ICC [International Criminal Court] prosecutor launched an investigation in the crimes committed in Mali. In 2016, the ICC found the Malian jihadist, Ahmad Al Faqi Al Mahdi, guilty of war crimes for the destruction in 2012 of ten religious sites in Timbuktu, while the city was under the control of Ansar Dine, a group suspected to have ties to al Qaeda. He was sentenced to nine years' imprisonment. This was a historic judgment, as the destruction of cultural heritage had never before been considered a war crime."

Unfortunately, UNESCO, like any other UN-related institutions, has no enforcement power. Even the International Court of Justice does not have the power to help in such cases, he said.

War Crimes

In addition, pictures and videos of brutal killings and mutilations of Armenians can be found readily. Regarding legal recourse, Kalfayan offered, "One must consider the difference between the criminal liability and state responsibility in international law.

"The criminal liability does not apply to states, since criminal law can only indict individuals. In order to bring individuals to justice (for an example Ilham Aliyev or Army Commanders), there is the ICC [International Criminal Court]. That avenue is not easily envisage-able, since neither Armenia nor Azerbaijan is party to the Treaty of Rome, which created it. The only way for the ICC prosecutor to decide upon a preliminary investigation is to obtain a resolution of the UN Security Council.

Azerbaijan, he noted, plays the game better. "Azerbaijan anticipated some steps during the war to claim that the Armenian side had attacked civilian targets or destroyed cultural properties. Whether true or not, those allegations have been relayed in the media and create an impression of mutual crimes," he said.

Kalfayan continued, "The state responsibility for internationally wrongful acts offers civil-like liability proceedings within the framework of interstate claims before the International Court of Justice (ICJ). The ICJ considers the violations of international law and its judgments may decide

continued on next page



INTERNATIONAL

Karabakh After The Ceasefire

By Alina Aslanian

Special to the Mirror-Spectator

STEPANAKERT – Driving through Karvachar just days before the handover to Azerbaijan, I stared hard at the scenery, as if to imprint the details into my memory. I knew it would be the last time I would navigate this beautiful road that twists and turns through the mountains of Karabakh. I was not alone. The road was busy with busloads of families returning from Yerevan, where they had fled when the war broke out. Like me, many stopped off at the ancient monastery of Dadivank. I am not a person of faith, but as I watched the impromptu baptisms around me, I felt the weight of history. It felt strange to see a Russian tank with their flag waving over a place of worship here. However, the congregation was pleased to see it.

I was returning to Stepanakert to join my colleagues at The HALO Trust, a neutral humanitarian demining organization that has been clearing landmines in Karabakh since 2000. During my employment, I have met many families who have lived off land cleared by HALO. They are by no means wealthy, but once the landmines were cleared, the land was bountiful and they were able to raise livestock and grow vegetables. Many of these families were now forced to abandon their smallholdings and pack up their precious few belongings for a new life in the capital or other remaining parts of Karabakh.

Stepanakert was foggy and cold that day. Buses dropped off the displaced families in the city center. Children stared listlessly as their parents made anxious phone calls, trying to find accommodation for the night. There were frequent communication blackouts due to telecom towers that were damaged during the war. Aid workers and journalists huddle in the one hotel with internet access.

Over the next few days, there were signs of life almost returning to normal. There were vegetables and bread in the markets and more clothes hung to dry above the streets. It was



A boy clutches his toy in Stepanakert

then visited a beekeeper, who had found a Shoab cluster bomb among her beehives. Finally we visited Aygestan, where a former military ammunition store had been destroyed during the fighting. The devastation is enormous; the entire landscape strewn with bullets, grenades and rockets. It seemed almost absurd to see cattle munching on grass on a landscape littered with debris of war. HALO estimates it will take at least 12 months to clear this site alone.

During my time at HALO I have heard many sad stories. However, they were from the 1992-94 conflict, so although I was saddened by them, I always felt one step removed from them. This time is different. When you're here, and you've lived through the war alongside the people, it's very raw. Everybody has lost someone or something; a precious relative or a much-loved home. My parents used to reminisce about the home that they were forced to leave in Abkhazia during its war for independence with Georgia in 1991. I can understand their loss a lot better now. So many parents here are witnessing their children live through what they had to endure themselves just two decades ago. The emotional damage could take generations to heal. But HALO will clear the physical damage now – to keep people as safe as possible, as soon as necessary.

To donate to the HALO Trust Karabakh Relief Fund to clear explosives, visit halotrust.org. All donations will be matched.

(Alina Aslanian is Programme Officer for the HALO Trust in Nagorno Karabakh. She graduated with a Master's in Public Administration from Middlebury Institute of International Studies at Monterey)

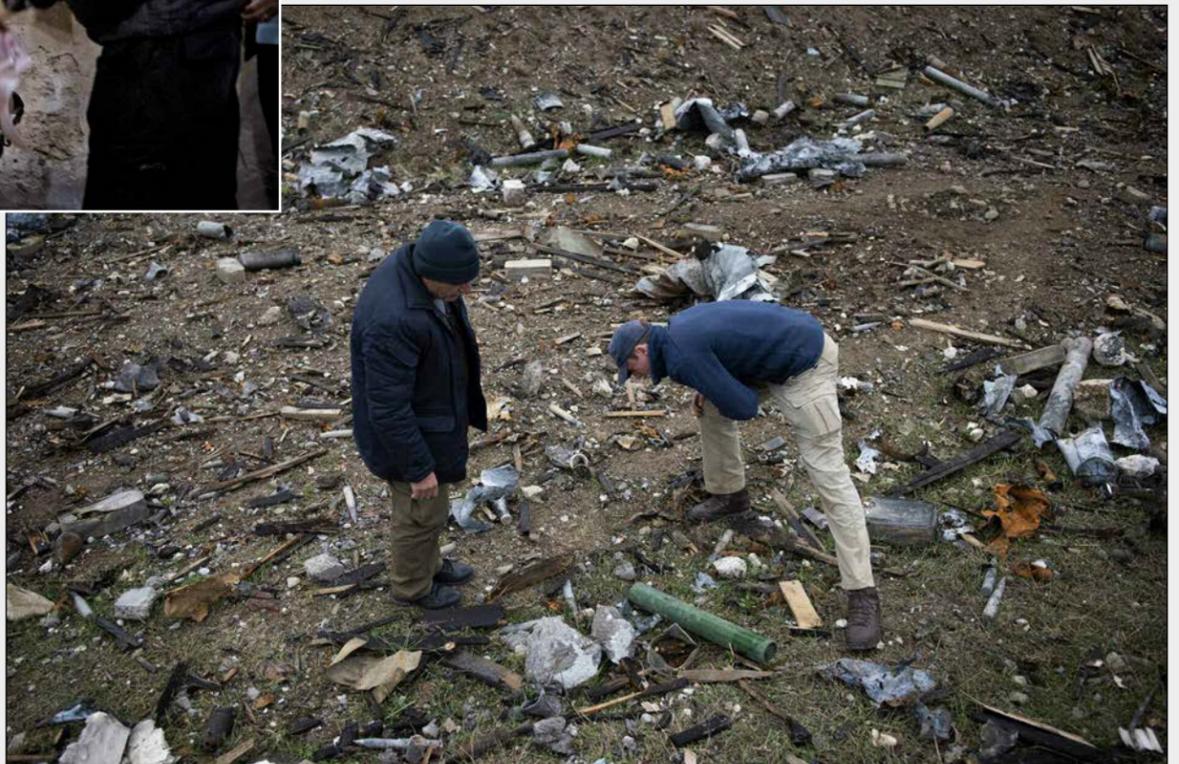


A christening inside Dadivank (photo by Scout Tufenkjian)

heartening to see children's clothes drying alongside them now.

I visited a family whose village HALO had cleared a few years ago. A mother of six had returned to her land, which was now very close to the line of contact. Of a village of 200 people, only a handful of families had returned. As her three-year-old played with his toy cars, she told us how she felt lucky: some of her neighbors had had their entire homes burnt down by shelling.

My colleagues and I travelled onto Martakert and Martuni towns. There was glass everywhere and we found some cluster munitions in the streets, as well as a rocket on the side of one of the main roads. Since the outbreak of the war, HALO has been out on the streets and in the shelters handing leaflets showing different types of ordnance so that people can recognize dangerous items and protect themselves from potentially lethal accidents. We put up danger signs around the cluster munitions, and



The destruction in Aygestan

from previous page

on the obligations of cessation and reparation, as well as the guarantees of non-repetition. The violations to be considered in the current conflict may find grounds in different conventions: the International Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Racial Discrimination, the International Convention against the Recruitment, Use, Financing and Training of Mercenaries, and the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment." We are currently considering all avenues.

For now, he said, Armenia has to focus on healing its

wounds and move forward. He suggested the establishment of a transition government that will fully discuss the future negotiations and the new path for diplomacy.

"The timing of the process depends on the ambitions of the Armenian side. We must be conscious that the longer the negotiations, the more irreversible the situation will be. It is likely that Azerbaijan and Turkey will accelerate the settlement of the regained territories," he added.

And finally, he concluded, "For me, the existence of Armenia as a state is the victory over the Ottoman Empire and Turkey, whose project was and still is the annihilating of the Armenian Nation. Today, that victory has been hurt

very deeply, the population is devastated and fearful about the future, but the resignation is not part of my agenda. I never give up! And many of my working colleagues or friends in Armenia are of the same vein."

Kalfayan is a French lawyer and international law expert. From 2001 to 2007 he was the secretary general of the International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH). Since 2003 Kalfayan has also served as a consulting legal expert for the Council of Europe's Directorate General for Human Rights and Rule of Law.



INTERNATIONAL

International News

Remembrance of Genocide Punishable

DIYARBAKIR, Turkey (*Agos*) – The former president of the Diyarbakir Bar Association, Ahmet Ozmen, and all the members of the former executive board, are being tried in their official capacity for pronouncements made during the days of remembrance of the Armenian Genocide. The lawyers on November 18 rejected the charges directed at them, insisting that the events of 1915 were a genocide and they have adopted the principle of calling what happened by its name.

The attorneys who are members of the board of the Bar Association have been charged under the infamous Article 301, which relates to “insulting Turkishness.” To initiate a case under that article, it is necessary to have the special permission of the Minister of Justice.

Ozmen indicated to press representatives that the authorization for this litigation is in complete contradiction to the plan for judicial amendments published two days ago by the Minister of Justice.

The date for the trial has been set for February 17, 2021.

Armenia Condemns Assassination of Iranian Scientist

YEREVAN (*Armenpress*) – Armenia condemns all types of terrorism in the region and the world, Foreign ministry spokeswoman Anna Naghdalyan said on November 27, when asked commenting on the question about Armenia’s reaction to the murder of Iranian nuclear scientist Mohsen Fakhrizadeh.

“We are expressing our deepest condolences over the killing of famous Iranian scientist, head of the defense innovation and research organization at the Iranian defense ministry, Mohsen Fakhrizadeh. Armenia condemns all types of terrorist acts in the region and the whole world,” she said.

Turkish VP Criticizes Greece and Armenia

ANKARA (*Nor Marmara*) – On November 27, Turkish Vice President Fuat Oktay expressed his opposition to animosity created against Muslims and criticized the wave of xenophobia created in Europe. He criticized Armenia and Greece, where he claimed there is hatred above all in regard to Turks. Oktay, emphasizing the ideas of civilization and brotherhood, said that in Turkey mosques, churches, and synagogues are side by side. Ethnic groups with different creeds and cultures are brothers and live shoulder to shoulder, he claimed.

According to him, in Greece mosques have been turned into movie theaters, in Armenia mosques have been torn down and turned into barns, and in the heart of Europe every day there are movements against Islam, while in Turkey the situation is different.

(No mention was made by him of the churches destroyed in Turkey or Azerbaijan.)

MP Appeals to OSCE to Study Case of POWs

YEREVAN (*Armenpress*) – Member of Parliament from the opposition Bright Armenia faction Ani Samsonyan this week applied to the Chair of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) Parliamentary Assembly’s Third Committee on Democracy, Human Rights and Humanitarian Issues Kyriakos Hadjiyianni over the case of Armenian servicemen who are currently in the Azerbaijani captivity.

“As a member of the Armenian delegation to the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly I have applied to Chair of the Assembly’s Third Committee on Democracy, Human Rights and Humanitarian Issues Kyriakos Hadjiyianni over the issue of our captives”, the lawmaker said on social media, adding that she has also provided the videos showing the mistreatment of the Armenian POWs.

She expressed hope that the committee, chaired by a Cypriot colleague, would examine the issue.

France Tells Turkey to Remove ‘Mercenaries’ From Karabakh

MACRON, from page 1

“France expects concrete actions from Turkey so that Turkey removes the mercenaries from the region,” he said. “Paris is going to discuss with its European partners sanctions against Turkey.”

France has been pressing the European Union to impose the sanctions because of Turkish actions in the eastern Mediterranean where Turkey and EU members Greece and Cyprus are locked in a dispute over natural gas rights. Relations between Ankara and Paris have been increasingly tense in recent months.

Macron accused Turkey of recruiting jihadist fighters from Syria for the Azerbaijani army shortly after the outbreak of large-scale hostilities in and around Karabakh on September 27.

Russia also expressed serious concern in the following weeks about the deployment of “terrorists and mercenaries” from Syria and Libya in the Karabakh conflict zone. Russian President Vladimir Putin and his foreign and defense ministers repeatedly raised the matter with their Turkish counterparts.

Ankara has denied sending members of Turkish-backed groups to fight in Karabakh on Azerbaijan’s

side. Azerbaijan also denies the presence of such mercenaries in the Azerbaijani army ranks.

Multiple reports by Western media quoted members of Islamist rebel groups in areas of northern Syria under Turkish control as saying in late September and October that they are deploying to Azerbaijan in coordination with the Turkish government. Armenia has portrayed those reports as further proof of Turkey’s direct involvement in the war stopped by a Russian-brokered ceasefire on November 10.

Karabakh’s Armenian-backed army claimed to have captured two Syrian fighters during the fighting. Both men are now prosecuted in Armenia on relevant charges.

Lemoyne discussed the issue at a meeting with Armenian Foreign Minister Ara Ayvazian held earlier on Saturday. According to the Armenian Foreign Ministry, they stressed “the importance of removing foreign armed terrorists brought to the region by Turkey.”

Lemoyne arrived in Yerevan with a delegation of French officials, aid workers and French-Armenian community activists on a board a plane that brought a second batch of French humanitarian assistance to

Armenian victims of the Karabakh conflict. It mainly consisted of medical supplies for Armenian soldiers and civilians wounded during the war. The delegation headed by Lemoyne visited two Yerevan hospitals treating them.

Lemoyne said the French government plans to send more such aid to Armenia when he met with Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan on Saturday.

“We are grateful to friendly France for providing humanitarian assistance and correctly presenting the situation in Nagorno-Karabakh to the international community,” Pashinyan told the French official.

France is home to a sizable and influential ethnic Armenian community. It was instrumental in the passage by France’s Senate on November 18 of a resolution calling on the French government to recognize Karabakh as an independent republic.

Lemoyne expressed the Macron administration’s opposition to the resolution when he addressed the Senate during a debate. The French Foreign Ministry reiterated on November 19 that “France does not recognize the self-proclaimed Nagorno-Karabakh Republic.”

Turkey’s Justice Minister Gul and Presidential Envoy Kalin Meet with Representatives of Minorities

ISTANBUL (*Nor Marmara*) – On November 29, Minister of Justice Abdulhamit Gul and envoy of President Erdogan, Ibrahim Kalin, had a meeting with the spiritual leaders and community/institutional representatives of the minority communities of Turkey. The meeting was convened in President Erdogan’s offices in Dolmabahce and the participants practiced social distancing. After taking photographs, the meeting contin-

ed and Ankara Yusuf Cetin and Jewish Chief Rabbi Itshak, along with lay workers.

After the meeting Minister Gul and envoy Kalin made the following statements. In the words of Kalin, they had the opportunity to go over real issues related to the minorities together in this venue. He indicated that in the last 18 years under President Erdogan’s leadership, a giant effort had been made to secure the rights of

ties about which questions have been raised. The position of the state has been founded on the equality of all compatriots in regard to rights and justice, Kalin said. Regardless of a citizen’s creed, all are equal before the law and the state, and no one can be condemned because of his national affiliation (ethnicity) or religion.

Gul said that this meeting had a consultative purpose and important questions were considered together.



Meeting of minority leaders

ued behind closed doors.

Participating were Greek Patriarch Bartholomew, Armenian Patriarch Sahag II, leader of the Armenian Catholic community Archbishop Levon Zekiyani, Metropolitan of the Syriac Orthodox Church of Istanbul

religious minorities and to solve problems, and in accordance with the law on Vakıfs (religious foundations/institutions) accepted in 2008, numerous properties have been returned. This meeting was an opportunity to discuss churches, schools, and proper-

The 83 million citizens of Turkey have the same rights and all are first-class citizens. No one can feel excluded because of religion or national affiliation (ethnicity), pronounced Minister Gul.



Zhora Hakobyan

'I Am Very Proud to Represent My Beloved Country, Armenia!'

By Artsvi Bakhchinyan

Special to the Mirror-Spectator

YEREVAN/MINSK – Zhora Hakobyan, a 23-year-old from Minsk, is a Thai boxing and kickboxing world champion among professionals. He was born in the city of Akhalkalaki (Georgia). When he was 5 years old, the family moved to the Belarusian city of Polotsk. He has been fond of martial arts since childhood and his uncle took him to the Polotsk kickboxing and Thai boxing hall to the coach Anatoly Seledovsky.

In 2013, four years after starting sports, Zhora won the first championship of the Republic of Belarus among juniors in Thai boxing. In 2014, he repeated this success and flew to the world championship in Malaysia, where he also became the champion. Three months later, he went to the European Championship in Poland and again became the winner. In recent years, he has given preference to a professional career. Zhora spent his first professional fights in the city of Molodechno against Belarusian athletes. In 2019 in Odessa in the FEA WORLD GP tournament Zhora won the title of world champion among professionals in weight up to 70 kg. In Minsk, Zhora plays in the world famous Gridin Gym team, as well as with the Multi Fight Club organization, which brings together all good Armenian fighters from all over the world.

Zhora, after the match, how is the pain?

It hurts for a fighter, especially after a fight, when the adrenaline goes down, you feel every muscle in your body, namely after a hard fight. From the outside it may not look so painful, but believe me, when you miss a tight blow, it takes a few seconds for the stars from appearing in front of your eyes.

You have been involved in sports since childhood - what was your strongest motivation?

The strongest motivation for me was and remains so now: it is to be better and stronger than someone else, I was taught from childhood that I should win and nothing more, and I try to stick to it!

Is it true that Thai boxing is best learned from Thai trainers?

No, that's not true, at least for me. Thank God, I found my coach, my man, whom I trust completely, Andrey Sergeevich Gridin, the trainer to whom people fly from different countries in order to learn all the basics of Thai boxing and kickboxing. Every fighter knows him, and I'll tell you this, if I knew that there is someone better in this business than him, then I would hardly have trained with him until now.

You have been living in Belarus since the age of five. Do you keep in touch with your place of birth?

Yes, of course, I am constantly in touch with my relatives, in Akhalkalaki. I have a lot of good guys who constantly support me before my fights, I try to go there when I can, there is completely different weather, different food, different taste, and completely different concepts, in the near future I want to conduct my training there for battle.



You are also competing under the flag of Armenia and have become a member of a large Armenian fighting family.

I am very proud to represent my beloved country Armenia. It is an honor for me. I am also proud that I was born an Armenian, soon it will be a year since I signed up with Multi Fight Club, I am glad to represent this organization, this is great because our famous fighters such as Giorgio Petrosyan, Harut Grigorian, Gago Drago, etc., and when we train and spend time together, it energizes you even more, and of course I want to wish every Armenian fighter to train with them somehow!

What other athletes of Armenian descent in Belarus?

You know, there are a lot of Armenians in Belarus, and you can't keep track of everyone, I know that there are good wrestlers, football players, also kickboxers and, in principle, a lot of creative people, so our athletes do not go unnoticed here. I had a fight in Minsk in February and a lot of

Armenians came to it to support me. I thank them very much!

Do you speak Armenian and what Armenian traditions do you have in your family?

I do speak Armenian, but since I was born in Akhalkalaki, it can be difficult for me to make out what they talk about in Yerevan; they are completely different dialects and some words. It's a matter of time, everyone in my family also speaks Armenian. My family always supports Armenian traditions, Armenian holidays. I will not single out something, I will say that we do not miss significant dates and events for the Armenian people!

What would you like to wish Armenian readers all over the world?

First of all, I want to wish everyone health in this difficult time, I also want to wish everyone a peaceful sky above their heads and justice in everything, and no matter how the situation develops, I know that we are Armenians, a strong people, and together we will overcome everything!

Requiems Held in Syria For Syrian Armenian Soldiers Fallen in Artsakh

KESSAB/LATAKIA/KAMISHLY, Syria (Kantsasar.com) – On Sunday, November 22, the Divine Liturgy was celebrated in the Soorp Asdvadzadzin Church of Kessab, the Soorp Asdvadzadzin Church of Latakia, and the Soorp Hagop Church of Kamishly. At the services in all three Syrian-Armenian churches, requiem prayers were offered for the three Syrian-Armenian soldiers who died in the Artsakh War: Haroutiun (Harout) Panoyan, Hagop Astarjian, and Movses (Mosig) Seklemian.

After services in Latakia, local Armenian leader Avedis Garboushian spoke, saying "Where is the United Nations, the courts protecting human rights? When will they be moved to end this injustice? It is not enough to publish condemnations, we have heard and seen such proclamations, the time has come to pass from words to action. Today, in this room, on behalf of all of us, we call upon them saying, your silence has become the cause of the continuation of genocides; if you had judged the genocidal Turks in in

1915, today they would not have the boldness to do it again. Therefore, we hold the entire world accountable for its indifferent behavior. The great Armenian poet and victim of the 1915 Genocide, Siamanto, was right when he said 'Oh human justice, I spit in your face!'"

Pastor of the Latakia church Fr. Vazken Keoshgerian exclaimed: "Our heroes did not die in vain. According to the Bible they fell as seeds, so that a new generation should sprout and flower, [as] new hopes and a new future. They have become single shining stars in the Armenian sky. Today the Armenian people are at the height of Golgotha, but we know that after Golgotha there is Resurrection and the new dawn of resurrection."

In Kessab, the service was conducted by Fr. Arshag Alajajian and a lengthy eulogy after church was given by Haroutiun Lnteyan. In Kamishly, the service was conducted by Rev. Fr. Besag Berberian and a short eulogy was given after church by Apig Kehyaian, where the relatives of fallen soldier Movses Seklemian were also present.



Church service in Kamishly

Community News

ACEF Portfolio Remains Healthy Despite Volatile Market

By Stephan S. Nigohosian

NEW YORK – Shortly after the first case of Covid-19 in the U.S. was confirmed in January and quickly reached pandemic status, world financial markets reacted with worrying volatility. But while many investors around the globe were uncertain about the future of their financial assets, the Armenian Church Endowment Fund's (ACEF) portfolio remained under the guidance of its Board of Directors and Investment Committee. As a result of the Committee's keen foresight and proven financial acumen, ACEF's portfolio ultimately outperformed the market during the downturn. Toward the end of March when the S&P was down 21 percent year-to-date, ACEF's portfolio only dropped an estimated 13.3 percent during that period. The portfolio's hedge fund investments fulfilled their objective by providing a cushion during the decline, and the private equity investments softened the blow during the crisis and are now yielding a higher-than-market return on a mid- and long-term basis.

At the close of 2019, the Fund was valued at approximately \$115.3 million, an increase of nearly 16 percent from the previous year. The Our Church Our Legacy endowment campaign, established to enable the Diocese of the Armenian Church to strengthen and support its vital partnership with local parishes and communities, continued to help increase the overall size of the Fund. Currently, the total portfolio is down approximately 1 percent to flat, year to date.

Among those who maintain and direct ACEF's portfolio are the organization's newest Board members, Nancy Berberian, Kirk Hachigian, Bryan Stepanian and Marie Vanerian, each bringing his/her unique skills and unparalleled experience in the financial sector to the group. "We are very fortunate to have such exceptionally talented professionals dedicate their time and expertise to ACEF's Board," says Chairman Charles A. Demirjian. "Their combined backgrounds in private equity, wealth management and not-for-profit organizations have proven to be the perfect fit for managing and directing the Fund." Demirjian also expressed great appreciation for outgoing Board members Greg Bedrosian, Michael Dukmejian and Tom Garabedian, whose service and guidance helped the Fund reach an all-time high during their tenure.

Nancy Berberian, a certified public accountant and former auditor with Arthur Anderson & Co., resides in Chicago and has served on the Parish Council and Women's Guild of St. Gregory the Illuminator Armenian Church. She received a bachelor's degree in accounting from Michigan State University, and has also served in various Board positions in the Children Research Fund.

Kirk Hachigian earned a B.S. in mechanical engineering from the University of California at Berkeley and an M.B.A. from the Wharton School at the University of Pennsylvania. He has run and continues to sit on the boards of several Fortune 500 companies. "I joined ACEF's Investment Committee nearly one year ago, and I cannot think of a more qualified group of people to work with," says Hachigian. "Based on our collective knowledge and experience, we are in the process of making changes to the portfolio in the coming year to further improve its performance." Hachigian also adds, "ACEF can think really long term, 25 to 30 years from now, and can change the portfolio around to take advantage of opportunities, even during volatile times." In addition, Hachigian is optimistic about the future for both ACEF and the Diocese, adding, "The Legacy Foundation and ACEF are there for the long haul to support the Armenian Church and our culture."

see ACEF, page 11



Rudolf Karapetyan

An 11-Year-Old's Pledge to Artsakh

NEW YORK – "When I become 18, I will go to Armenia, become a soldier and fight to get Karabakh back," says 11-year old Rudolf Karapetyan.

By Florence Avakian

Rudolf is a student at the St. Vartan Cathedral Armenian School. He had been watching the news on Armenian TV throughout the six-week war, and "felt very sad when Armenia lost," he says with the innocence and strong conviction of a youngster.

Rudolf was born in Gyumri, and came to New York with his parents and younger brother two years ago. "Losing Shushi was the most terrible," he says, looking downward with sad eyes. "There is a church there (Holy Savior Cathedral), and now I cannot go there."

He wants to return to Armenia some day and "live my whole life in Gyumri." He thinks fondly of his grandfather who survived the 1988 earthquake. "I always look at his picture. He was the principal of a school in Gyumri." The Karapetyans still have some family members in Armenia.

Rudolph again returns to the current tragedy. "Armenians lost because three countries – Turkey, Azerbaijan and Pakistan – with more than 100 million people and many more weapons were fighting Armenia with only 3 million people. And no one helped Armenia. I want to see the destruction in Karabakh,* he says resolutely."

Before the war ended, Rudolf had collected \$52 in one month from his piggy bank to send to Armenia. "I want to work and donate more money," says the impressive 11-year old.

During our conversation, the principal of the school, Hovannes Khosdeghian came in with a vase of yellow roses which he had bought. "We will fight again, and bring Karabakh back, especially Shushi. The flowers symbolize our future victory," he declares.

"Artsakh is our ancient land and represents our ancestry. That is why it is valuable to us Armenians. And we try to inculcate in our school's children (ages 3 to 12) how memory shapes our identity. Ancestral memory is a positive force," he continued.

"Our approach in our school is to create an environment of our ancestry. Children will always veer towards the positive approach. We try not to impose our ideas on the children. They are smart enough to think and evaluate for themselves," he explains. Our school is a place of love. Children want to converse with children. This is normal. We want them to listen to the sound of the Armenian language. In so doing the children will feel it is normal to have this kind of conversation among children who are their friends."

see PLEDGE, page 11

Remembering Senior Lieutenant Gevorg Arshakyan: Friend, Patriot, Hero

By Christopher Gor Patvakanian

When I was a junior in high school, I wrote an essay about Philip Zane Darch, the first soldier from my hometown, Watertown, MA, to die in World War II. Darch was just 18 years old when he lost his life defending the United States in Pearl Harbor, and his bravery, sacrifice, and patriotism was an inspiration to me for the rest of my life. He was someone who answered the call to action, and was willing to die for his family and country to be protected and safe. In short, he was a hero. Years later, I guess it was fate that I'd meet another hero like Darch thousands of miles away, in Yerevan, Armenia, during the summer of 2018. And that hero was Senior Lieutenant Gevorg Arshakyan.

I had the honor of meeting Gev, short for Gevorg, before he became Senior Lieutenant Arshakyan, when we were both volunteering at the Aurora Prize for Humanity. Aurora Prize is a humanitarian organization recognizing individuals for humanitarian work, and gives awards on behalf of the survivors of the Armenian Genocide.

The bar for becoming a volunteer with Aurora Prize is honestly quite high, and looking back, it's not a surprise I met Gevorg there. From the first day, I knew he was different from any other person I had ever met. My first impression was pure amazement at just how well he spoke Armenian. And when I say he spoke Armenian, I mean he spoke the purest, cleanest Armenian I had ever heard – no use of Russian/English terms or slang, which is quite honestly rare. From thereon, the more time we spent together, it became very clear his command of Armenian was only one of many remarkable things about Gev.

It turns out Gevorg was not only studying phi-



Gevorg Arshakyan

losophy and law at his beloved Yerevan State University (YSU), but also receiving a third degree from the Vazgen Sargsyan Military University, which is the Armenian equivalent of West Point. I had never met anybody who was so well versed in multiple disciplines, not to mention very dedicated about serving in the military. Gevorg told me that he believed Armenia needed intelligent, passionate people to serve and make the military better. It was very different from the usual attitude of people believing they were too smart or too valuable to fight in the army. Gevorg was the kind of upstanding citizen who truly lived and practiced the values he spoke of.

And in that short summer, I had the pleasure of spending time with Gevorg not only volunteering, but bonding and discussing any and all topics of life.

see REMEMBRANCE, page 11



COMMUNITY NEWS / OBITUARIES

Dr. George G. Markarian

Iran Soccer Great, Medical Innovator

LISLE, ILL. — George G. Markarian, MD, age 88, a longtime resident of Lisle, passed away on November 22. He was born on May 15, 1932 in Tabriz, Iran.

Dr. Markarian is survived by his wife of 58 years, Larissa Markarian (nee Bagratuni), sons Gregory George Markarian, MD and Michael George Markarian; grandchildren Farrah Elena Markarian and Joseph Hideki Markarian; siblings Hrand Markarian and Angie Demers-Markarian, MD; niece and nephew Pierre Demers and Helen Demers. He is preceded in death by his parents and Paranjem and Bartough Markarian; his sister Goharik Markarian.

Dr. George Markarian was the son of Armenian immigrant parents who fled Soviet Armenia to Iran to escape communist persecution. After three years, his family moved to Tehran, where he grew up. He was an extremely gifted soccer player and also very talented academically. As he grew up, his talents in academics and soccer grew immensely. By the time he was 17, he was admitted to the Iranian National team as its star center forward and also shortly thereafter he was admitted to the University of Tehran medical school.

His medical career ran in parallel with a phenomenal soccer career. As captain of the national team he led the 1951 Iranian squad to a silver medal in the Asia Olympic Games (Asian Cup). He was also the premier center forward for the top club team in Iran called Taj. This team annually finished number one in the Iranian league while he was a member. He played alongside other Iranian greats like Khatemi, Boyuk Jedikar, and Mahmoud Bayati. Dr. Markarian also started a medical school university team that finished first in Iran six straight years while he was playing.

He often had to play multiple games on the same day because at that time he played for three teams and would sometimes go from one game to another on the same day. He was a prolific scorer and while records were not kept in that era, he would often score multiple goals per game whether it be for the national team, Taj or the medical school team. One example was a day he had two games with the first game in the morning for the medical

school where he scored five goals and then later that evening he scored 3 goals for the Taj club in the Iranian league.

In 1956 Iran was playing their very important rival Iraq. Before that match Dr. Markarian was engrossed in his medical studies and informed the national team he could not play for the match because the training would interfere with his preparation for his medical school exams. When the Shah of Iran learned of this and realized how important George's role would be to have success in such an important match, he contacted his professor and made arrangements for George's exams to be delayed. Also, the Shah had Dr. Markarian stay at his palace and study and train for the match on his private soccer field within the palace grounds. The Shah's strategy reaped rewards against a very tough and talented Iraq squad as Iran defeated Iraq 4-3. Dr. Markarian scored 3 goals including the game winner and had a perfect assist for Iran's second goal of the match which was a long cross outside the penalty area near the corner flag to the head of Nader Afshar (second goal of the match).

For many Iranians of the time Dr. Markarian was a national hero, a treasure, a superstar and while he was known mostly in Iran, to many who watched his style of play and ability to dribble and easily beat defenders without losing the ball and finishing a lot of opportunities with goals, they considered him amongst the elite players of the world.

While he was in Iran he also volunteered in an Armenian medical clinic in Tehran, where he provided free services for Armenians in need. His desire to become a great doctor opened a new chapter in his life as he immigrated to the United States to start a residency in Chicago, Illinois for the subspecialty of Orthopedic Surgery. In 1958 he worked with Dr. Sid Shafer at Illinois Masonic Hospital. After he received very valuable instruction, he entered the Northwestern University Medical School Orthopedic Surgery residency program. There he had the opportunity to work with Dr. Hampar Kelikian, who influenced him greatly. During his residency, he was also chief of six services at Cook County hospital.



In 1966 he came to Naperville, Ill. to be the first orthopedic surgeon in its hospital. Like his soccer career, he had a very impressive career as an orthopedic surgeon. In 1967, he learned about a new British procedure at McGill University in Montreal, Canada called a total hip replacement from the inventor Sir John Charnley. That same year he performed the first total hip in the United States at Edward Hospital. It was a cemented Mckece Farrar metal on metal implant.

Since there were no instruments available because he was the first to do this in the United States, he had to buy all the instruments himself and the implants and had to import the cement from Canada because these materials were not available. The first patient was a Benedictine Monk from Saint Procopius Abbey in Lisle, Illinois. He had done 50 cases by 1970 when the first one was done at Northwestern Memorial Hospital by Dr. Clinton Compere who borrowed Dr.

Markarian's instrumentation to do his first case.

During his career he had done thousands of total hip and total knee replacements and he was always on the cutting edge of technology as improvements came along. He was also very innovative with fracture care, in particular in his own techniques for proximal humerus fractures, distal clavicle ac separations and fractures and acetabular fractures. He often had instruments developed by the Orthopedic Device companies to perform these techniques.

He was also one of the first people to perform arthroscopic surgery in the United States in 1976 he did his first knee arthroscopy at Edward Hospital. Again because the equipment was scarce he had to purchase his own equipment. He was an excellent arthroscopic surgeon for the knee, shoulder and ankle and elbow.

He had a reputation of excellence, kindness, honesty and compassion for his patients. He practiced for over 36 years and performed over 25,000 surgeries. He was president of the medical staff of Edward Hospital for over 25 years and chairman of the department of surgery for 25 years at Edward Hospital. He brought in new management which transformed Edward Hospital into a reputable medical center that could accommodate the needs of a growing community. He improved the quality standards, rewrote the bylaws and implemented departmental policies. He retired from Orthopedic Surgery in 1999 and resided in his house in Lisle, where he enjoyed time with his family and friends.

Arrangements were made by the Friedrich-Jones Funeral Home & Cremation Services (44 S. Mill St. Naperville, IL 60540). The funeral service was held on Saturday, November 28 at Armenian All Saints Apostolic Church (1701 Greenwood Rd, Glenview, IL 60026).

Interment followed at Naperville Cemetery.

Giragosian

F UNERAL H OME

James "Jack" Giragosian, CPC
Mark J. Giragosian
Funeral Counselors

576 Mt. Auburn Street, Watertown, MA 02472, TEL: 617-924-0606
www.giragosianfuneralhome.com

Telephone (617) 924-7400

Aram Bedrosian Funeral Home, Inc.

Continuous Service By The Bedrosian Family Since 1945

558 MOUNT AUBURN STREET
WATERTOWN, MA 02472

MARION BEDROSIAN
PAUL BEDROSIAN
LARRY BEDROSIAN

DENNIS M. DEVENY & SONS

Cemetery Monuments

Specializing in
Armenian Designs and Lettering

701 Moody St. Waltham, MA 02543
(781) 891-9876 www.NEMonuments.com



Celebrate the Holidays with Armenian Wines

Support Armenia's grape-growers and winemakers
by buying Armenian wines

Find a Store

Storica's Zulu Reds, Whites, and Roses, and Keush Sparkling
are now available

Art's Specialties

369 Trapelo Rd, Belmont, MA

Ball Square Fine Wines

716 Broadway, Somerville, MA

Berman's Fine Wines

55 Massachusetts Ave, Lexington, MA

Dion's Fine Wines

416 Watertown Street, Newton, MA

Dion's Fine Wines

850 Lexington Street, Waltham, MA

Acker Wines

160 West 72nd street, New York, NY

Ambassador Wine

1020 Second Avenue, New York, NY

Mayfair Wine

188-03 Union Tpke Fresh Meadows, NY

New York Wine Exchange

9 Broadway, New York, NY

Sterling Grapes & Grains

115 Fifth Avenue Brooklyn, NY



storicawines.com @storica_wines

*Available in CA, IL, ME, NJ, NY



COMMUNITY NEWS

SmartGateVC Kickstarts Its Southern California Accelerator, Creating New Tech Advancement Opportunities

GLENDALE – SmartGateVC announces the launch of its newest initiative, Hero House Glendale GateWay. Hero House Glendale GateWay is an acceleration program that aims to arm companies with path-breaking technological advancements and scalable business models. Accelerator participants will go through a 12-week mentorship program focused on establishing their growth framework, and refining and validating their sales strategies. This is followed by eight weeks of on-site business and customer development assistance.

The accelerator partners with world-renowned companies such as Google, AWS, IBM, HubSpot, and others to provide companies with the best

Founders with strong execution skills, working on robust AI startups with early traction (revenue/user base/launched product) are welcome to apply for SmartGateVC's Hero House Glendale GateWay accelerator by December 16, 2020 11:59 PM (23:59 PM) PST.

In its years of operation in Eastern Europe and in the US, SmartGateVC has built a robust network of founders, scientists, and business experts, converging where science and entrepreneurship join to disrupt the status quo. Collaboration between these forces has created a new wave of deep tech companies that have closed rounds with top tier venture capital firms, had pilots with industry leaders and topped the



Hero House co-workers in Yerevan, Armenia



Startups located in the Hero House, in Yerevan, Armenia, July 24, 2018

resources for building their products. The program culminates in a Demo Day at Hero House Glendale. During Demo Day, participants will pitch in front of a carefully selected, 100+ invite-only audience of US investors. Moreover, companies will receive assistance for setting up professional, yet cost-efficient tech teams in Eastern Europe. The program will run from February 8 – July 24, 2021

lists of America's Most Promising 50 AI Companies. The Hero House Glendale GateWay accelerator ensures the consistency and scaling of these collaborations by connecting LA area founders with scientists from Southern California universities.

Given Silicon Valley's sky-high labor and housing prices, many startup founders are foregoing the Bay Area in favor of other rising innovation

centers. With its favorable business environment, flourishing marketplace, and talented resource pool, Glendale is emerging as Southern California's next up-and-coming regional tech hub. Most importantly, SoCal is home to the world's leading research universities, including Caltech, USC and UCLA, that top the lists of the global universities granted the largest number of patents.

The Hero House Glendale GateWay accelerator is funded through the City of Glendale's Tech Initiative. This is the result of the city's 2-year effort to develop a Start-Up Tech Accelerator that will further stimulate the growth of the ecosystem of innovation in Glendale.

The City of Glendale's Economic Development Division continuously focuses on growing Glendale's thriving tech ecosystem that is home to over 1,000 high tech firms, generating over \$5 billion dollars in sales each year and employs over 41,000 people. The Economic Development

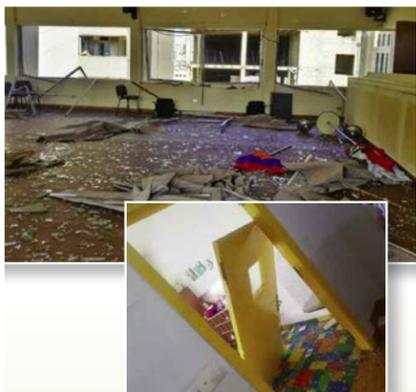
Team hosts monthly Tech on Tap events that allow local entrepreneurs, startups and tech professionals to network and connect within the city. In addition to this monthly event, the City hosts an annual Glendale Tech Week which has grown into the region's most exciting and anticipated display of tech and innovation gathering more than 5,500 attendees across 34 events.

SmartGateVC is a Silicon Valley pre-seed venture capital fund backed by Tim Draper and a network of entrepreneurs and professionals from the U.S., Europe, and MENA. Their key focus areas are Artificial Intelligence (AI), Security, Internet of Things (IoT) and emerging Computational Biotech, Quantum Computing and Blockchain across California, Massachusetts, NYC, and greater Eastern Europe. The fund invests on the edge of technology innovation where science and entrepreneurship join to disrupt the status quo.



The Tekeyan School of Beirut

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.



COMMUNITY NEWS

Remembering Senior Lieutenant Gevorg Arshakyan: Friend, Patriot, Hero

REMEMBRANCE, from page 8

Gevorg had a level of maturity years beyond his age and such honest character, and it was just unbelievable. That's why so many people gravitated towards him – we all admired and aspired to be even a fraction of the kind of person he was. Conversations with Gevorg lived up to his personality; they were one of many places where his intellectual curiosity and grasp of philosophy and law shined. He could talk about anything and impart wisdom – making cunning arguments, and drawing from life experience or philosophical theories as if it were second nature. It was a blessing that we turned out to be neighbors, and we would often come home together after volunteer shifts and hang out around the neighborhood, having chats for hours under the streetlights of Papazian Street.

That summer, Gevorg was finishing up his final year studying at the military university, but until he graduated and was deployed, he had some last weeks to spend with his friends and family. That we got to spend time together before he would go to serve for two years meant a lot to me, because I knew he had an endless number of friends and loved ones to pass the time with. A few of our best memories included getting autographs from Henrikh Mkhitaryan, watching the World Cup soccer games, and visiting Yerevan State University. Something I noticed was that every time we would hang out, so many people, at least 5-7 each day, would recognize Gevorg and stop him to catch up. One of our mutual friends told me, "Oh this is completely normal, get used to it if you're going to be spending time with Gev."

During those months, Gevorg was always talking about so many of his goals and ideas for Armenia, and how he was already thinking about all of the things he'd like to do when he came back from his military service. And then just like that the time for his military swearing ceremony and graduation approached. I joined

alongside his friends and family who came to watch him pledge his allegiance to Armenia at the Vazgen Sargsyan Military University. And if it wasn't already clear how important Gevorg was to his community and peers, there were well over 20 people there to see him, when most had only a few family members and maybe one or two friends come to watch.

It was a hot, dry Yerevan day, and Gevorg was alongside the other graduates standing under the sun in full military gear, for what must have been at least an hour. When he finally was called up to swear allegiance to the military, and finished, the amount of applause and cheers from our crowd was so loud that anybody who didn't know Gevorg quickly figured out just how big of a beloved figure he was.

After swearing in, there were a few speeches given, and of course, Gevorg was one of the few to speak. Speaking on behalf of his graduating class, he said, "We made a pledge, so our country could be eternal. We made this choice willingly. For our nation to become better. For our generations live in a safer and more peaceful country." After the speeches, the swearing in ceremony ended, and Gevorg met us outside the gates of the university. Despite being in the hot sun for so long, he still came out with a smile on his face to greet his friends, take pictures, and thank them for coming. After that, we ended going back together to his house, where I briefly met his family. They were so proud of Gevorg, their only son, who would be going off soon to protect the motherland.

After the ceremony, there were still a few days until Gevorg would officially be deployed, and I remember meeting with Gevorg the night before he would be deployed to say goodbye. A couple of his neighborhood friends had gathered with us too, and we talked, and talked, and talked through the evening. I remember Gevorg saying he didn't know if he'd be going to sleep that night, but what the reason was escapes my



mind. Eventually, the time came to say goodbye, and we parted ways.

That was the last day I saw Gevorg. For two years he served in Mataghis, Artsakh, and was a beloved officer of the military, having a big impact on all those who had the honor to know him. I'm certain they felt the same we all felt when we met him. There's a phrase in Armenian that people use to describe individuals who are very revered, that roughly translates to "Big with a capital letter." Gevorg was especially "Big" in this sense, in all aspects of his life. I never really got a chance to know the details of Gevorg's life during his military service, but from the brief messages he got a chance to send during that time, he never once complained. I would sometimes find out some details on how Gevorg was doing through one of his friends, who more regularly spoke to him over the phone, and he too said Gevorg was always positive.

When Gevorg finished his military service, it was August 2020, and I remember feeling such

joy knowing he'd finally be back home and get to continue fulfilling all the amazing things he had planned for Armenia. In the time he was back, Gevorg did not delay. He enrolled again in YSU to pursue master's degrees in philosophy, law and human resources. Always an active member in student government as an undergraduate, upon returning, Gevorg was elected chairman of the Scientific-Educational Commission of YSU Student Council. In addition to continuing his education, he also began working as a military studies teacher at the Hay Aspet School. He was even interviewed by Shant TV after taking on the position. Gevorg explained that he thought the role of a teacher was not simply teaching students the material, but to discipline children, share one's life experience, and more importantly, prepare them to be good citizens worthy of their country.

Sadly, Gevorg's time on this earth to share his values and talents was cut too short. The war Azerbaijan waged against Artsakh beginning on September 27 took the lives of many, and Senior Lieutenant Gevorg Arshakyan was no exception. Even though Gevorg had finished his two years of compulsory military service, he volunteered to go back and sacrifice his life to protect our homeland. His aunt described in a television interview about his final days that the closed door in their house could not stop Gevorg from going to volunteer – his decision was final. If they didn't let him leave through the front door, he threatened to jump out from the window. Eventually his family gave in and let him leave. Senior Lieutenant Arshakyan lost his life in the defense of Shushi on November 7, 2020. His 24th birthday was just 5 days later.

To say it is a devastating loss for our nation is an understatement. There is so much Gevorg had done and wanted to do for Armenia and Artsakh, it could really be the content of an entire book. In the words of one of Gevorg's friends "When people say Gevorg became a hero, he really didn't become a hero. He was already a living hero." It was an honor to meet real life hero Senior Lieutenant Arshakyan, and his legacy and life, like those of all our brave fallen soldiers, will forever be immortal.

Some of Gevorg's friends and I would like to continue his legacy and create some form of a memorial in his name. If you are moved by his story, please send me an email at cpatvakanian@gmail.com, and I will let you know how you can contribute to honoring his life.

Donations

The following donations were received by Tekeyan Cultural Association during the last two weeks:

Datian Family Trust, \$50, in memory of Susan Anton, for Armenia Fund.

Mr. and Mrs. Mike Arzoumanian, \$500 for Karabakh School and \$500 for Sponsor A Teacher programs

Alice Nigoghosian \$100 for Vahan Tekeyan School, Beirut

Isabel Melikian, \$100 for Vahan Tekeyan School, Beirut

Martin & Diana Shoushanian Foundation, \$200 for Karabakh School

Panos and Anahid Titizian, \$200, in memory of Garo Babahekian for Vahan Tekeyan School, Beirut

Anne Dardarian, \$250 for Vahan Tekeyan School, Beirut.

An 11-Year-Old's Pledge To Artsakh

PLEDGE, from page 8

The St. Vartan Cathedral Armenian School is a Saturday 4-hour session.

"The overriding thinking is that such a time-limited program such as ours should not be effective in developing an Armenian identity," Khosdeghian says. "However, from parents feedback, we heard our school children were remembering throughout the summer, the Armenian vocabulary, songs, church shargans, word puzzles, artwork with letters from ancient manuscripts which they individually created, and various school activities. This is the positive result of our approach."

ACEF Portfolio Remains Healthy Despite Volatile Market

ACEF, from page 8

Bryan Stepanian is managing director and client advisor for Alex. Brown in Greenwich, CT, where he manages in excess of \$3.5 billion in assets and provides global advisory services to family offices, institutions and ultra-high net worth individuals. He graduated from Fairfield University with a B.A. from The Dolan School of Business, and serves on multiple boards of business-related and non-profit organizations. "Our decision to stay the course during the pandemic and not sell into a down market has proven to be the right decision," Stepanian says. "The Investment Committee will make sure that the portfolio is well-diversified and positioned correctly, based on our market outlook and capital market assumptions." He emphasizes the Board and Investment Committee's responsibility as stewards of church capital as a fiduciary duty that requires particular sensitivity to market volatility. Further, he is confident that the investment strategy implemented by the Committee will achieve further growth. "Our allocation to alternative investments should reduce volatility in the portfolio, and smooth out returns for ACEF going forward," he says.

Marie Vanerian is senior vice president at Merrill Lynch, where she provides wealth management and investing advice to a global roster of individual and institutional clients, including St. John's Armenian Church (Detroit) and the Holy See in Etchmiadzin. In addition to majoring in Economics at Michigan State University, she is a graduate of the Wharton School at the University of Pennsylvania, and a Certified Investment Management Analyst (CIMA).

IDEAL HOLIDAY GIFT!

HAND WOVEN BRACELETS
WITH SEMIPRECIOUS STONES
IN UNIQUE ARMENIAN DESIGNS
FOR MEN, WOMEN, AND CHILDREN

50% OF THE PROCEEDS WILL BE GIVEN
TO THE AGBU HUMANITARIAN RELIEF FUND
FOR FAMILIES IN ARTSAKH AND ARMENIA.



VISIT WWW.AKORIE.COM

(PRESS ARMENIAN TAB TO SEE MORE STYLES)



Arts & Living

A Century After Genocide, Armenian-Americans Grapple with Trauma and Cultural Identity in a Documentary Double Feature

PHILADELPHIA and DETROIT — Generations of Americans of Armenian descent have had to reckon with the aftermath of a genocide that nearly annihilated their people. Their stories have a new urgency in light of the recent war that broke out between Azerbaijan, backed by Turkey, and the Armenians in the contested region of Nagorno-Karabakh, also known as Artsakh. The complex issues that have caused lasting trauma and led to the renewed violence today are illuminated in a pair of moving, deeply personal documentary films coming soon to public television stations in Philadelphia and Detroit.

In the greater Philadelphia area, "What Will Become of Us," directed by Stephanie Ayanian and Joseph Myers, airs on PBS station WHYY on Tuesday, December 8 at 7:30 p.m. ET. "100 Years from Home," directed by Jared White and produced by Lilit Pilikian, follows directly after at 9:00 p.m. ET.

In Detroit, "100 Years from Home" airs on PBS station WTVS Detroit Public Television on Monday, December 14 at 8:00 p.m. ET, with "What Will Become of Us" directly after at 9:30 p.m. ET.

There will also be an encore broadcast of "100 Years from Home" in the Southern California area on PBS SoCal on Thursday, December 10 at 9:00 p.m. PT.

"100 Years from Home" is a vivid portrait of an American woman grappling with questions about cultural identity, intergenerational trauma, family, survival, and finding her place in her community and the world. The film was nominated for "Best Documentary" at the 2019 Arpa International Film Festival in Hollywood, Calif. where it premiered to a sold-out screening.

The picture follows Pilikian's journey as she searches for her great-grandparents' house in modern-day Turkey, which they were forced to abandon over a century ago during the Armenian Genocide in the Turkish Ottoman Empire that killed over 1.5 million Armenians during and after World War I.

"What Will Become of Us" is a forward-looking feature documentary produced for public television distribution that speaks to the many immigrant communities who have experienced trauma. Today, often unrecognized, these tragic events create a burden for the younger generation, discouraging them from taking up their culture. "What Will Become of Us" follows six Armenian-Americans – famous and otherwise – as they navigate this solemn centennial and strive to forge identities for the next hundred years.

"Genocide always casts a long shadow. The greatest challenge for any community that has gone through a genocide is to be able to come out of that shadow," said Columbia University scholar Khatchig Mouradian in an affecting segment of the film.

Early in the film, Karine Shamlan looks through family photographs with her grandmother, 108-year-old genocide survivor Asdghig Alemian Tetezian, who bears witness to the horrors she personally witnessed as a young girl.

To bring their story to life, Ayanian collaborated with long-time filmmaking partner Joseph Myers. Myers, being of Jewish descent, had an immediate connection to the story. The film premiered in late March 2020 through Detroit Public Television and is now being distributed on PBS stations across the United States. Ayanian, whose grandparents survived the Genocide, said, "My desire as a filmmaker is to make their sacrifices count."

Philadelphia is home to one of the oldest Armenian communities in the United States. In October, large swaths of Armenian-Americans in Philadelphia, and across the country, rallied

see DOCUMENTARY, page 15



Sina Najarian Skates

Sina Skates Is Winning The Hearts of Young Theatergoers

BIRMINGHAM, Ala. — In the words of the Bard, the play's the thing. That is even true for children, for whom plays can be the means for understanding everything from morals to science.

Sina (Najarian) Skates, a playwright originally from Belmont, Mass., now makes her home in Alabama's largest city. She currently lives in Birmingham, with her husband, 3 children, 4 cats, a dog and a hamster named Birch.

By Alin K. Gregorian

Mirror-Spectator Staff

She has made it her mission to reach young minds to teach and entertain.

Her professionally produced, commissioned works at the Birmingham Children Theatre, have been seen by tens of thousands of children, parents, and educators across the Southeastern United States.

Skates attended Brandeis University and recalled that she loved her time there. "I felt a special connection to the school," she noted, because the majority of the students are Jewish and shared the Armenian experience of genocide.

At Brandeis she took courses in clowning and physical comedy.

She explained that a clown is generally placed in an impossible situation and has to solve their dilemma and find a way out.

"This is what we find funny in life," she explained.

The arts were a part of her life since childhood, Skates said. She grew up taking ballet lessons. Her mother's side, especially, she recalled, were artistic, with her grandmother an opera singer and her grandfather running the church choir.

"I studied dance for many years but I felt limited in terms of the work I could do. [But] through theater and writing was how I could express myself," she noted.

Her main desire, she said, "was to reach people."

Now, her work with children through the theater, allows her to connect with a young audience.

Writing is nothing new for her, though. She has been writing since she was in the second grade.

"I could write plays and make my friends perform in them," she recalled, laughing. "I was always very creative and expressive. And I was always drawn to physical comedy."

After college, she worked in the non-profit sector. Later, she married and worked as a teacher of dance and creative movement.

While teaching, she had about 300 students a week, ranging in age from 3 to 6.

"I came in with a framework" for the classes, she said. For example, she explained, she would have students help the king find a diamond in the library.

see SINA, page 13

23rd Arpa International Film Festival Wraps up

HOLLYWOOD — This year marks the 23rd anniversary of Arpa International Film Festival, the signature event of the Arpa Foundation for Film, Music and Art (AFFMA), which took place between November 12 – 22, 2020. As one of Hollywood's longest-running film festivals, this year's festival showcased 69 films, comprised of Features, Documentaries, Shorts, Animated Films, and Music Videos from 20 different countries. This year's festival once more highlighted a diverse range of films that explored themes such as genocide, war, environmentalism, music, art, and a variety of issues.

In consideration of the continuing challenges and uncertainty stemming from the Covid-19 pandemic, and per the extended federal and state guidelines, The Arpa IFF, which in the past has originally taken place at historic theaters around Hollywood, took place online this year. People from all around the world took part in the 23rd Annual Festival.

The 2020 Arpa International Film Festival's award winners are:

Best Short Film: A tie, "Babu" by Eelum Dixit and "Return (Verger)" by Selman Deniz

Best Music Video: A Tie. "Catalyst Bars" Feat. Alexi; "Smash Again" by Alexi Papalexopoulos, "Getaway to Kaohsiung" by Namewee

Best Animated Short Film: "The Rotation" by Hazhir As'adi

Best Short Documentary Film: "From Kurils with Love," directed by Saeed Mayahy

Best Feature Documentary film: "Born Just Now" directed by Robert Adanto

Best Screenplay: "Aleksi" directed by Barbara Vekaric

Best Director: "Omar and Us," directed by Maryna Er Gorbach & Mehmet Bahadir Er

Best Feature Film: "Omar and Us," produced by Maryna Er Gorbach & Mehmet Bahadir Er

The members of the 2020 Arpa International Film Festival Jury were:

Gabe Saporta – Musician and Entrepreneur
Anthony Grieco – Screenwriter and 2015 prestigious Nicholl Fellowship recipient

Eric Nazarian – Screenwriter, Director, Producer, prestigious Nicholl Fellowship recipient

Karen Kondazian – Actor, Author, Journalist, Producer

Roman Mitichyan – Actor, Director, Producer
Clayton Trussell – Screenwriter and Producer, best known for his work on the Netflix series, "Narcos" and "Narcos: Mexico"

Heather McComb – American Actress and Producer

Chuck Harter – Producer

Justin Humphreys – Screenwriter, Film Historian, and Curator

This year Arpa launched a platform for university students to submit their films to the film festival.

Through our collaboration with the University of California, Irvine (UCI) Film Festival "ZotFest," student filmmakers submitted their films, with the opportunity to showcase their creations beyond a university's vicinity. The intention behind our collaboration is to give a platform for upcoming student filmmakers. Through the collaboration, we screened six student films at this year's festival.

To date, AFFMA has awarded more than 150 individuals with grants in support of their creative endeavors.

For more information, visit

ArpaFilmFestival.com.



ARTS & LIVING

Sina Skates Is Winning the Hearts of Young Theatergoers

SINA, from page 12

The road to being a successful children's playwright was not a straightforward one. Skates recalled that one of her husband's friends was working at the Birmingham Children's Theatre and they said that they were looking for someone to write a show and she volunteered to do it.

"It was an accident that I wrote it," she said.

However, it was a happy one.

"The first show sold out and it became the best-selling play at the theater," she said.

The musical play was based on a different direction for the poem "Twas the Night before Christmas" by Clement Clarke Moore, which famously begins with "Twas the night before Christmas, when all through the house not a creature was stirring, not even a mouse."

What if, in fact, a mouse was stirring and the house was not quiet, Skates asked herself. "There was a house and now we have a problem," she said.

The theater uses adult professional actors for the roles, not children, but the audiences are all children and their families.

As it turned out, the show had such a successful run that she came back to write another musical, "Little Miss Muffet" and "The Lost Sheep."

In fact, "The Lost Sheep" was so successful that about 25,000 people saw it.

Writing is something that comes naturally to her, she said.

"I am always writing more and more," she said. "I'm really lucky to have been able to sell some work."

While she tries to entertain the young audiences with her shows, she tries to impart a message, noting they all have "deep meanings" while they are "very funny."

"The Night before Christmas," she said, emphasized that friendship is more important than shiny things.

"The messages are not in your face and that draws people to the work," she said.

Her latest production, "E.L.V.E.S.," is about two of Santa's elves, Jojo and Francis, locked in their room. Much like what we are experiencing now during the pandemic, all they want is to be together and get the toys made for Santa.

The moral is "that we can overcome the prob-

lems and prevail even in the darkest times if we work together," she said.

She emphasized that children and adults – at this point Armenians and Americans – need positive messages. "There is so much darkness around us," she said. "So many people have broken hearts."

"I can create something of joy," she said. "We can get through this together."

Of course, with the pandemic, "E.L.V.E.S." will be seen on Zoom rather than the theater itself. "This show is very unique. Children can appear on screen with the actors. It is interactive."

Each performance has two actors and 10 children watching. "The children go and help them solve a problem," she said.

Parents in advance are told of the items the show will need and they have to hide them around the house. The items are all simple household items, such as scissors, to serve as a "treasure hunt to help the elves solve the problems."

The show started its run on November 27 and will continue through December 13.

The play is recommended for ages 5 – 11 and has a running time of 50 minutes.

One of the nation's oldest and largest professional theatre companies for young audiences, BCT produces high-quality, professional theatrical entertainment and curriculum-relevant arts education experiences for children and families. BCT is the second largest employer of professional theatre artists in

Alabama, and is Alabama's only professional touring theatre company.

BCT tickets are inexpensive, \$8 to \$10

"They want to make the theater available to everyone," Skates said.

Before moving to Alabama, the family lived in Maine for five years. During that time, the family would regularly drive to Watertown on Friday night and send the kids to Saturday and Sunday school at St. James Armenian Church.

"I really wanted my kids to know about my

pretty interesting," she noted.

"On my mother's side (Sina Maritza Dinjian Najarian), her father was born in Harput (Deran Dinjian). He escaped with his family in 1915 when he was a young boy. Her mother, my grandmother, Maritza Dinjian, was born in this country. Her parents came over in 1905," she added.

Skates is now working on fiction aimed at kids in grades three through five.

"I may end up writing another of the virtual



culture. There is not a large community here. Boston is so rich and vibrant and all my children were baptized in the Armenian Church," she said.

Both branches of Skates' family fled to the US from Western Armenia. One branch fled in the 1895 massacres while the other side fled the Genocide. The heritage and

She is a proud descendent of Malatya and said that her family would often attend cultural events related to the province.

"On my father's side (Tom Najarian) his parents were born in this country. My grandmother, her parents were from Malatya. They came over in the late 1890s, after the massacres of 1895. We have a Najarian family tree that dates back hundreds of years. It's a family project and

shows for January and February. We need more of this," she said, something that can "give a spark of joy and light."

For tickets or information about "E.L.V.E.S.," visit the theater's website at <https://www.bct123.org/>

To watch two of her science videos on YouTube, visit

Science is Fun (10 minutes, puppet show 1 actor, any gender)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6HBFPN3UNeY>

Evy & the Pirates (10 minutes, puppet show 1 actor, any gender)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JBa2E5Dipsw>

SCHOLARSHIPS AVAILABLE

Students of Armenian Descent

Having Completed One Year of College by June, 2021

Applications and other information may be obtained from

ARMENIAN STUDENTS' ASSOCIATION
Scholarship Committee

333 Atlantic Avenue • Warwick, RI 02888
Tel. 401 461-6114 • Fax 401 461-6112

e-mail: headasa@aol.com

Deadline for returning completed Applications:
March 15, 2021

Together for Artsakh

This is a message for those who wonder how they could contribute today to counter the genocidal threat against the people of Artsakh.

The ongoing aggression against Artsakh is a continuation of the 1915 Armenian Genocide by Turkey. The tripartite alliance of Azerbaijan, Turkey, and Islamist terrorism continues attacking peaceful communities across Artsakh. The aggressors use their entire military might, including internationally banned cluster munition and chemical weapons.

The international recognition of independence of the Republic of Artsakh is the most practical way to end war crimes against Artsakh and to solve the Karabakh conflict. Artsakh's independence stands on a strong legal and historical platform; not only is it underwritten by the last 30 years of Artsakh's factual sovereignty, it also rests on the historical record of fifteen centuries of Artsakh's uninterrupted institutional self-governance, starting in the fifth century AD.

The Americans for Artsakh, Inc. (AFA) is a US-registered non-profit organization, working to bring together American supporters of Artsakh's recognition, and channeling the energy and expertise of Armenian American professionals into concrete ways to support the people of Artsakh in their democratic aspirations.

In consultations with the Government of the Republic of Artsakh, AFA is currently building a team of professionals willing to join hands in this battle. Please contact us if you would like to contribute your expertise and make a firm time commitment to this effort. Outnumbered and outgunned, Artsakh continues to defend its freedom on the battlefield. With the goal of leveraging Artsakh, we need professional supporters who have skills and contacts in the following areas:

- Human rights, especially in remedial self-determination and secession
- Democratic governance
- Former Soviet Union regional experts
- Journalism

We also need the following technical experts:

- Copywriter
- Editor
- WordPress Content Manager
- Video & Audio Producer and Editor
- Infographics Illustrator
- Graphic Designer
- Programmer: PHP, WordPress, Security
- Search Engine Optimization specialist
- Social media specialist
- Office Manager

At this point, we have to rely only on the help of accomplished professionals or companies who can quickly deliver high-quality products.

We look forward to receiving your offers. Let's stay strong for Artsakh!

For more information, please contact us at: Americans4Artsakh@gmail.com

Subject: Stay Strong with Artsakh!

In your message, please indicate the time you can dedicate to this project, and kindly include a link to your portfolio, CV, or website.



LIKE US ON FACEBOOK

Kemal Yalçın Releases New Book, *One-Winged Eagle*

BOCHUM, Germany – I conducted a long interview with Archbishop Sebul Chuljian on October 15, 2015 in Vanadzor. I have included this interview as a chapter in my book, *One-Winged Eagle*, which was published in Istanbul recently.

The opening of the Vortik Gulbenkian Nursing Home, built by the Albert Sevinç Hadodo Foundation, was held by Sebul Chuljian on August 18, 2018 in Gyumri. I was also invited to the opening. After the ceremony, we examined the publication file of my book, *One-Winged Eagle*, with Sebul *Serpazan* and made the final corrections. He was very pleased with it and provided the funds for it to be published.

The publication of *One-Winged Eagle* was delayed due to the Covid-19 epidemic. Unfortunately, Chuljian himself caught the virus and died on November 19, 2020, the day the book came out. He didn't see the book.

Chuljian said; "My father is from Adiyaman, I was born in 1959 in Malatya. The first years of my life passed in Adiyaman. I love Anatolia as the land I live in, Armenia as the land I live in! Armenia is my state, the country I live in. Turkey is, Adiyaman, Malatya, I can not forget my childhood friends there!"

We will never forget it either.

Archbishop Chuljian will now live in *One-Winged Eagle* and in our hearts! May his soul be heaven!

In fact, every Armenian is an eagle. Every Armenian has a wing in the land where he was born, and another wing remained where he lived. When you read the longing, love, and wishes of the One Winged Eagles in this book, your heart can be bled too; You can fly with longing and love!

I would like to thank Birzamanlar Publishing House, Publisher Owner Orlando Carlo Columeno and Publisher Manager Osman Köker for publishing my book.

**One-Winged Eagle*, 384 pages, Birzamanlar Publishing, Istanbul, 2020

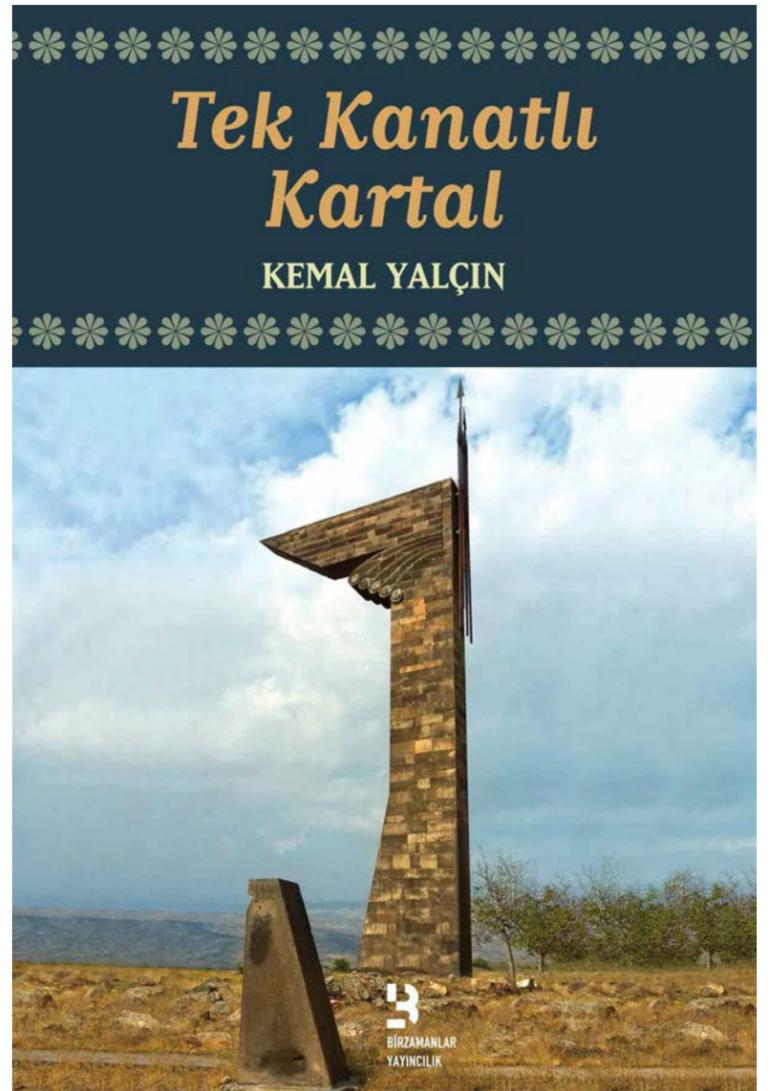
ISBN: 978-975-6158-41-2

www.birzamanlaryayincilik.com

– Kemal Yalçın



Kemal Yalçın



Calendar

MASSACHUSETTS

DECEMBER 5-6 – SAVE THE DATE Trinity's 2020 "Grab and Go" Christmas Bazaar Saturday, December 5 & Sunday December 6, 2020 Holy Trinity Armenian Church of Greater Boston 145 Brattle Street, Cambridge MA 02138 Pre-Order, Pre-Pay ONLY! WWW.TRINITYCHRISTMAS-BAZAAR.ORG

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 13 – Sunday at 4pm. Candlelit Labyrinth Virtual Walk: In Peace & Harmony. Let's Meet & Greet enjoying hot chocolate and cookies, Virtually Walk the Candlelit Labyrinth, Share Wishes for the Wishing Tree ; Music From Far & Near. For details, please email hello@ArmenianHeritagePark.org 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

DECEMBER 16 - Wednesday at 10am Celebrating What Unites Us! A virtual cooking series, a collaboration of City of Boston Age-Friendly Boston, OLDWAYS and Friends of Armenian Heritage Park to keep us connected, coming together. To register, email hello@ArmenianHeritagePark.org. Desserts! Chef Nathan Kibarian Pastry Chef, Island Creek Oyster Bar Chef/Owner, Desserts by Nathan

JANUARY 13 – Wednesday at 10am. Celebrating What Unites Us! A virtual cooking series,

a collaboration of City of Boston Age-Friendly Boston, OLDWAYS and Friends of Armenian Heritage Park to keep us connected, coming together. To register, email hello@ArmenianHeritagePark.org French Dinner Party! Catherine Katz Founder, Cuisinicity

JANUARY 27 – Wednesday at 10am Celebrating What Unites Us! A virtual cooking series, a collaboration of City of Boston Age-Friendly Boston, OLDWAYS and Friends of Armenian Heritage Park to keep us connected, coming together. To register, email hello@ArmenianHeritagePark.org Haley House Bakery Café Signature Dishes Chefs Brie Garner and Alima Mbabzi

FEBRUARY 10 – Wednesday at 10am Celebrating What Unites Us! A virtual cooking series, a collaboration of City of Boston Age-Friendly Boston, OLDWAYS and Friends of Armenian Heritage Park to keep us connected, coming together. To register, email hello@ArmenianHeritagePark.org French Cuisine Chef Tyler Stout Executive Chef, Troquet on South

MARCH 24 – Wednesday at 10am Celebrating What Unites Us! A virtual cooking series, a collaboration of City of Boston Age-Friendly Boston, OLDWAYS and Friends of Armenian Heritage Park to keep us connected, coming together. To register, email hello@ArmenianHeritagePark.org Seafood! Executive Chef Kathy Sidell Owner, Sidell Hospitality, Saltie Girl, Met Back Bay, Stephanie's on Newbury

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.

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", Virtuozzo Kamancha player



armenian
museum
of america | art
culture
eternity

WISHING YOU A BLESSED CHRISTMAS AND GOOD HEALTH, PEACE,
AND JOY IN THE NEW YEAR

Հանրահայր Լոր Տարի և Սուրբ Ծնունդ

Thank you for supporting our mission of collecting,
preserving, and promoting Armenian art, culture, and history.

GRATEFULLY YOURS,
THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES & STAFF
of the
ARMENIAN MUSEUM OF AMERICA
WATERTOWN, MA

To support the efforts of the Armenian Museum of America, please visit armenianmuseum.org/donate

DETAIL: This memorial altar plaque was inscribed by tradesmen in the Galatia district of Constantinople and donated to the St. Astvatsatsin Church in Sebastia in 1848. It is a magnificent bas-relief featuring a central image of the Coronation of the Holy Mother Mary, with the Child Jesus holding the Globus Cruciger.





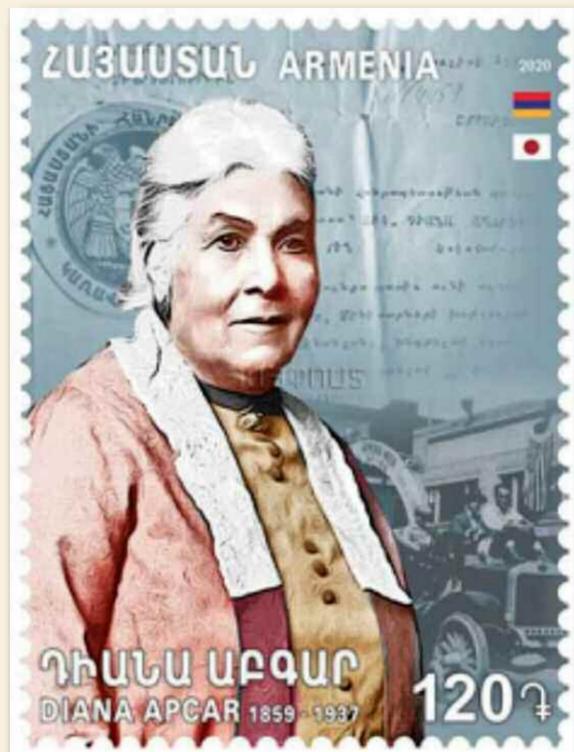
ARTS & LIVING

Stamp in Memory of Diana A. Apcar Issued in Armenia

YEREVAN – The postal services of Armenia, Haypost, recently announced the release of a postage stamp dedicated to Diana A. Apcar (1859-1937) as part of its annual “Armenian history” series. The postage stamp (30.0 x 40.0 mm) with the nominal value of 120 AMD depicts the Honorary Consul of the First Republic of Armenia (1918-1920) to Japan.

Born in Rangoon, Burma (present day Yangon, Myanmar) on October 17, 1859 to Armenian parents from New Julfa, Iran Diana Apcar was the youngest of seven children in the family. Apcar was raised in Calcutta and received her education in a local convent school. Diana Apcar became fluent in English, Armenian, and Hindi. He married Apcar Michael Apcar, a descendant of the prominent house of Apcar of New Julfa. In 1891, Diana and her husband moved to Japan, where she lived until her death on July 8, 1937. She was buried in the Foreigners Cemetery in Yokohama beside her husband and two sons. Her tombstone is engraved with the simple words befitting her life and faith. “Out of Earth’s shadows unto Heaven’s Glorious Day. We Loved Her, but God Loved Her Best.”

On July 20, 1920, out of respect to her humanitarian efforts, Hamo Ohanjanian, then the Foreign Minister of the Republic, appointed Diana Apcar the honorary consul to Japan. This made Diana Apcar the first Armenian woman diplomat and one the very first women to have ever been appointed in any diplomatic post in the twentieth century. After the fall of the First Republic of Armenia in the same year 1920, her post was abruptly terminated. However, for about two decades until her life she continued her humanitarian work helping survivors of the Armenian Genocide who had made it to the distant shores in the Far East find refuge in peaceful lands and start new life.



Armenian-Americans Grapple with Trauma and Cultural Identity in a Documentary Double Feature

DOCUMENTARY, from page 12 for the Armenians of Artsakh in response to the recent aggression in the region which resulted in thousands of deaths.

Detroit’s Armenian community is one of the oldest and largest in the country. Prominent Armenians have made their mark on the community, including creator of the popular Delta faucet Alex Manoogian, controversial euthanasia proponent Jack Kevorkian, and most recently Mari Manoogian, serving in the Michigan House of Representatives today. In October, Rep. Manoogian introduced a resolution that was passed in the Michigan House condemning Azerbaijani aggression against the Armenians of Artsakh. Every April 24th, Armenian-Americans from the Detroit area congregate at the Statue of Gomidas Vartabed in homage to the victims of the 1915 Armenian Genocide.

In “100 Years from Home,” the blueprint for the long-lost house was passed down from generation-to-generation until finally ending up in the hands of Pilikian. On the eve of the 100th anniversary of the Genocide, Pilikian embarked on an emotional journey to Armenia and Turkey in search of the house with her filmmaker husband Jared White.

The harrowing-yet-hopeful documentary was produced by the duo and directed by White, a non-Armenian who offers a unique outsider’s perspective on the subject. (The two were interviewed by Aram Arkun in August “100 Years from Home’ Takes Us to Kars and Back.”)

“My culture and identity is something I’ve always struggled with, and it’s probably something most people don’t even know about,” said Pilikian. “Jared and I were able to tell the ‘100 Years from Home’ story in a way that allows people who aren’t Armenian into this world.”

Born in Los Angeles, Pilikian never felt fully at home as an Armenian or as an American. Her struggles are common among American-born children of immigrants.

“100 Years” features interviews with luminaries like Reddit co-founder Alexis Ohanian, historian and UCLA professor Richard Hovannisian, social critic Vahe Berberian, documentarian Carla Garapedian, Armenian studies scholar Shushan Karapetian, and Archbishop Pargév Martirosyan of the Armenian Apostolic Church in Artsakh.

While these films deal with weighty issues, in the end, the stories are hopeful. Pilikian comes away from the experience with a much stronger sense of herself and her heritage. “Confronting these issues that I often avoided while growing up was difficult for me, but ultimately cathartic. I became more comfortable in my own skin, in my own story,” said Pilikian. “I realized I’m not alone in this.”

Recipe Corner

by Christine Vartanian



Rice Pilaf

Virginia Kizirian's Award-Winning Pilaf Recipe from Fresno

In summer of 2018, the St. Paul Armenian Church in Fresno, California held a Pilaf Cook-Off Contest at the California Armenian Home on Kings Canyon Road. Long-time Fresno resident and realtor Leonard Kizirian entered the contest that day using the same delicious pilaf recipe his beloved mother, Virginia Kizirian, taught him to make and that has been served at church picnics, luncheons, and dinners at Fresno’s Pilgrim Armenian Congregational Church for many years. “We made the pilaf that day in a turkey roaster using 18 cups of rice, and it was tested by two local judges. Attendees who wanted to taste the entries paid \$5.00 each, and happily, our recipe won the People’s Choice Award for First Place. The additional spice we use in our pilaf recipe (that my mother also used) is George Washington Seasoning.

It’s a special seasoning mix sold at The Market Grocery Store in Fresno, or it can be ordered online at Amazon.com,” Leonard says.

Virginia was born in 1915 to Harry and Vera Arakelian (Margosian) in Chicago, Illinois. She was taught this recipe by her mother, Vera, who was a member of the Holy Trinity Armenian Apostolic Church, and whose family moved to Fresno in 1916. Vera owned a successful café across the street from the Fresno Convention Center for many years, and Virginia enjoyed cooking and helping make family meals with her mother as she grew up. Virginia took several home education classes in school, Leonard says, and learned many recipes she would eventually make for her husband and family, including her Famous Chili Beans. She was very progressive in her thinking, Leonard adds, and believed in the importance of good health, diet, and fitness before it was popular. Virginia and her husband, Jacob Kizirian, raised three sons, Donald, Norman, and Leonard.

Virginia passed away in 2005, but she is remembered as a loving and devoted wife, mother and grandmother, and for the many unforgettable family meals and celebrations she took great pleasure in creating - where every family meal was a feast. Leonard’s wife Vicki is a food enthusiast and enjoys making the Armenian recipes that Virginia taught her when they were first married. Leonard, a board member of the William Saroyan Society in Fresno, and Vicki have been married for 52 years. This is just one of Leonard’s treasured family recipes, now an award-winning pilaf recipe, that is sure to please everyone at the table.



INGREDIENTS:

1 cup extra-long grain rice (Mahatma brand)
1/2 cube butter
1 14.5 oz. can chicken broth
1/2 cup water
1 package George Washington Seasoning
1 coil of vermicelli, broken into pieces
Oil, if using

PREPARATION:

In a large pot, brown the vermicelli in oil (or a little butter) until dark brown, tossing. Do not burn. Add the rice and 1/2 cube of butter to the vermicelli, melt the butter, and stir the contents together.

Add the water, chicken broth, and seasoning to the rice, and bring to a boil. Reduce heat, cover, and cook until the rice is tender, about 25 minutes. Allow to sit another 10-15 minutes. When the liquid is fully absorbed, it is ready to serve.

References:

<https://www.amazon.com/Washingtons-Seasoning-Broth-Golden-Ounce/dp/B00168AAW>

EDITORIAL

Is the War Behind Us or Ahead of Us?

By Edmond Y. Azadian

The defeat of the 44-day war against Azerbaijan and Turkey has brought with it despair and confusion to Armenia, in addition, predictably, to political instability.

The war not only cost the loss of much of Karabakh's territory, but also cast doubt on the very survival of the Armenian state.

The pandemic had already strained Armenia's healthcare system, which is now being crushed under the weight of thousands of wounded soldiers needing urgent care.

While the blame game is raging between political groups, the functioning of the government has been paralyzed and the regrouping of the army has been sidelined.

Peace came at a price and the recovery will take a long time.

Political and military developments are not waiting for Armenia to put its house in order. Particularly, two crises are looming in the region and the Karabakh war has already been relegated to the margins: the confrontation between Russia and Turkey seems to have placed both parties on a collision course in the Caucasus and Crimea and the fallout from both scenarios will damage Armenia further.

As we can see, Armenia is in a hot spot, right in the middle of crosscurrents of conflicts among major power.

Therefore, the peace deal, despite its shortcomings, offered the small consolation for Armenia that the war was behind it. Yet, the prospect of new conflicts can take away even that one bright point.

Returning Karabakh Armenians are greeting the Russian peacekeepers in Stepanakert with flowers and sweets, but that is not enough to conceal Russia's new intentions in this entire operation.

President Vladimir Putin has become very talkative recently, explaining and analyzing why Russia did not offer more help to Armenia during the war.

In an article by Jack Losh in Foreign Policy, Thomas De Waal, a senior fellow at Carnegie Europe, specializing in Eastern Europe and the Caucasus, is quoted as saying, "Putin's Russia doesn't really do humanitarian. Its agenda is to get its footprint back in the Southern Caucasus. Russia is reinserting itself into the region where it's been in retreat."

The true nature of Russia's behavior is disguised under its double game: Putin intended to intimidate the Pashinyan administration, to tame its anti-Russian posture. Indeed, since Pashinyan swept to power in 2018, he himself and his team have conducted themselves in a deliberately provocative manner toward Moscow. Former President (and Putin buddy) Robert Kocharyan's incarceration, the sacking of General Yuri Khachaturov, ignoring Putin's arrival at Yerevan's airport, all combined with an arrogant, anti-Russian rhetoric in Armenian media outlets, led to Kremlin's exasperation. Therefore, Putin retaliated in kind, although Armenia suffered tremendously in the process.

Today, President Putin is cynically defending Pashinyan and saying it is unfair to characterize him as a traitor. A reformed Pashinyan, who got rid of his irresponsible team, is a necessary hostage in Putin's hand to deliver on the disgraceful document he signed.

Second, the Karabakh war was an excuse for Russia to return in full force to Azerbaijan's territory. The size and caliber of the Russian forces reminds one of Tigranes the Great's statement about the Roman army. Indeed, when he noticed Lucullus' troops advancing towards his positions, the Armenian king exclaimed: "If they are delegates, they are too many and if they are soldiers, they are too few."

Of course, those "too few" defeated him.

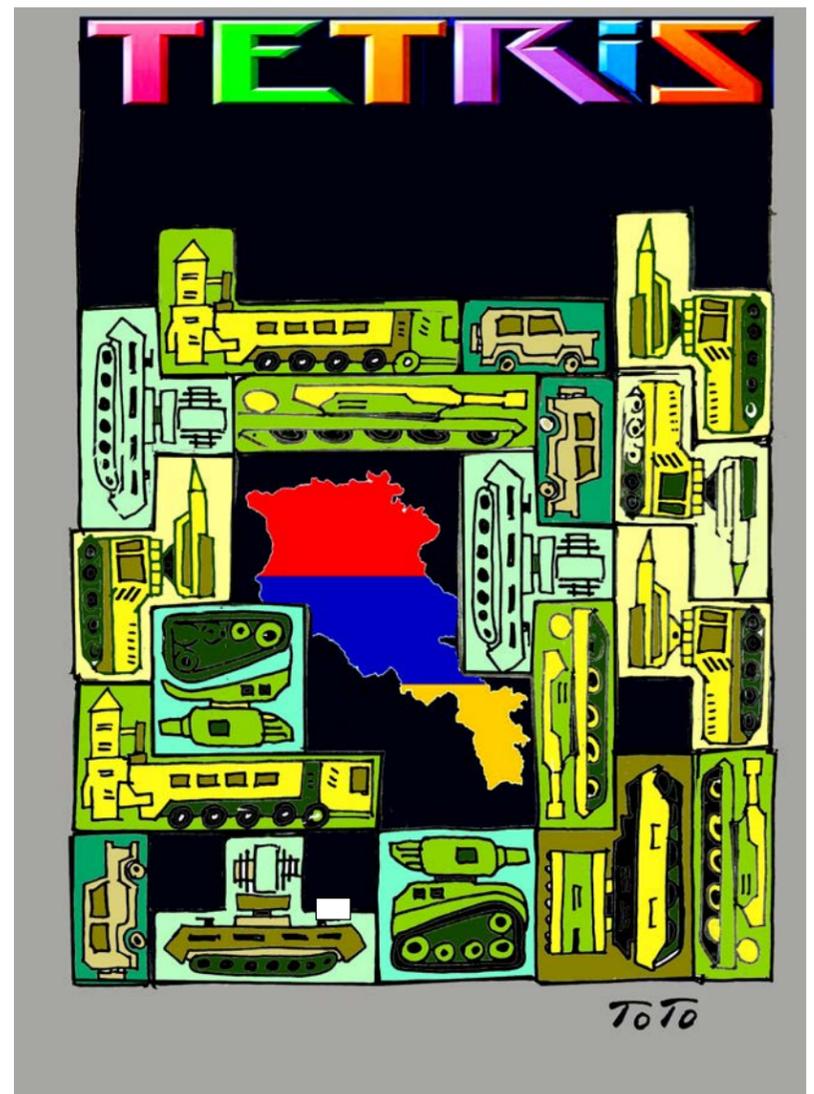
Similarly, the Russian peacekeeping force is almost twice the size it was supposed to be (1900) equipped with the most

modern arms, more than necessary to observe the peace. And the rapid deployment of Russian forces was almost a descent into a battlefield. Therefore, Russia is on Azeri soil for the long haul. For now, President Putin is under the impression that he outwitted President Recep Tayyip Erdogan of Turkey, but not for too long. Erdogan is a no lesser Machiavelli; he has already ordered his rubber-stamp parliament to approve stationing Turkish forces in Azerbaijan, to counter the Russian presence.

Despite assurances by Putin and Lavrov that no Turkish forces will serve as peacekeepers, Erdogan and Aliyev insist that they will.

As we can see, Armenia's fate and that of Karabakh will become incidental in this power play between the two rivals.

What is more alarming, Turkey has initiated troop concentrations on Armenia's immediate borders, near the city of Igdir. Turkish residual forces in Nakhichevan, combined with the forces in Igdir, have been keeping Armenia proper with-



Mirror Spectator

Established 1932

An ADL Publication

EDITOR

Alin K. Gregorian

ASSISTANT EDITOR

Aram Arkun

ART DIRECTOR

Marc Mgrditchian

SENIOR EDITORIAL COLUMNIST:

Edmond Y. Azadian

CONTRIBUTORS:

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

CORRESPONDENTS:

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

Contributing Photographers:

Jirair Hovsepian

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

Baikar Association, Inc.

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

Telephone: 617-924-4420

FAX: 617-924-2887

www.mirrorspectator.com

E-Mail: editor@mirrorspectator.com

For advertising: mirrorads@aol.com

SUBSCRIPTION RATES:

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

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

ISSN 0004-234X

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

Other than the editorial, views and opinions expressed in this newspaper do not necessarily reflect the policies of the publisher.

Copying for other than personal use or internal reference is prohibited without express permission of the copyright owner. Address requests for reprints or back issues to:

Baikar Association, Inc.

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

in easy grasp of the Turkish pincers.

Turkey has manifested its long-term plans for staying in Azerbaijan. It has already recruited 7,700 Arab Sunni and Turkmen mercenaries to settle in Karabakh, with the intention of scaring off returning Armenians to Stepanakert, but above all, to perform demographic engineering by planting a Sunni fifth column on Azerbaijani soil.

Sooner or later, the majority Shia population of Azerbaijan will realize that Turkey has entered their country as an occupying force, and therefore they may revolt. In that case, Turkey will use its Sunni column against the native Shiite population.

President Erdogan was betting on the re-election of President Trump. Now he has to win the good graces of the incoming Biden administration. He can succeed in that rapprochement by reducing tensions in Europe, where it has been increasingly hostile and reckless. Turkey has alienated fellow NATO member Greece and European Union member Cyprus, to the point of angering France's President Emmanuel Macron, who has been most vocal against Erdogan's mischief.

Incidentally, the French Senate's non-binding vote encouraging the recognition of Karabakh's independence was a slap for Turkey. In further bad news for Turkey, the EU sanctions against it will be operational soon. The German Bundestag is also under pressure to adopt a resolution on Karabakh.

continued on next page



COMMENTARY



My Turn

By Harut Sassounian

Ceasefire or Capitulation? Artsakh Agreement Should be Amended

The “Statement” issued jointly by the Prime Minister of Armenia, and the Presidents of Azerbaijan and Russia on Nov. 9, 2020 was described by Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan as merely a ceasefire document and not the final resolution of the Artsakh issue.

While this agreement brought to an end the ongoing war, it was in reality much more than a ceasefire. It included the return to Azerbaijan most of the territories liberated by Armenians in the 1990’s. It also made other concessions to Azerbaijan which are unrelated to Artsakh. Therefore, this document signifies a capitulation on the part of Armenia.

This “Statement” is a loosely worded document which needs serious clarification, if not renegotiation, to make it more precise. I will comment on all nine points of this “Statement”:

The first unusual point in this “Statement” is that while the three leaders agreed to stop the fighting “in their current position” (point 1), the Armenian side is obligated to return territories that were not conquered by Azerbaijan. Most ceasefires indicate a stoppage at the point of contact and the differences between the sides are later settled at the negotiating table. This is why I call this agreement a capitulation, not a ceasefire.

My second observation is that the “Statement” calls for the return of the Aghdam District to Azerbaijan without referring to the Armenian side as the one returning this territory (point 2). However, in point 6, the “Statement” names the Republic of Armenia as the side obligated to return the Kelbajar and Lachin Districts to Azerbaijan. This is a serious error on the part of Armenia since the liberation of Artsakh and the surrounding territories have always been presented as the work of the Armenian forces of Artsakh, not Armenia. With this sentence in the “Statement,” Armenia accepts that it was the one that occupied these territories, thus assuming legal liability for any compensation to Azerbaijan ordered by an international court. The reference to the “Republic of Armenia” should be amended to “Armenian forces.”

Point 3 of the “Statement”: The number of Russian peacekeeping forces in Artsakh is stated as 1,960.

However, there are reports that there are many more Russian troops there now and possibly even more would be coming in the future. This is a deviation from the “Statement,” which means that other changes can also be made to this agreement.

Point 4 of the “Statement”: The Russian peacekeepers are mandated to remain between the two sides for five years, unless Armenia or Azerbaijan asks them to depart six months prior to the five year period. While it is understood that no peacekeepers can remain forever, this provision should alarm Armenians because Pres. Aliyev has announced that Azerbaijan wants all of Artsakh back, not just a part of it. Therefore, Azerbaijan will most probably ask Russia to withdraw its troops in 4.5 years, opening the door for a complete Azeri takeover of Artsakh. Even worse, Russian troops could withdraw much earlier should a new war break between Armenia and Azerbaijan.

Point 5 of the “Statement” mentions that a “peacekeeping center shall be established to oversee the ceasefire” without mentioning who will manage such a center. Several days after this “Statement” was signed, it was disclosed that Russian and Turkish troops will jointly manage this center to be located on Azerbaijan’s territory, outside of Artsakh. This was probably a concession by Pres. Putin to Turkey for not allowing its troops to join the Russian peacekeepers.

Point 6 of the “Statement” asked Armenia to return Kelbajar to Azerbaijan on Nov. 15, 2020. However, this date was later changed to Nov. 25. Once again, this indicates that it is possible to amend the terms of the “Statement.” Point 6 also calls for the construction of a new route “within the next three years,” to connect Artsakh with Armenia, bypassing Shushi which is now occupied by Azerbaijan.

Point 7 of the “Statement” provides that “internally displaced persons and refugees shall return to the territory of Nagorno-Karabakh and adjacent areas under the supervision of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees.” It is assumed that both Azeri and Armenian refugees will have the right to return to their homes in Artsakh and the surrounding territories. It is doubtful that Armenians would want to return to the territories under Azerbaijan’s control. It is not clearly stated if Azeri refugees have the right to return to the Armenian controlled part of Artsakh which could lead to clashes between the two communities.

Point 8 of the “Statement” calls for the “exchange [of] prisoners of war, hostages and other detained persons, and dead bodies.” However, there is no deadline specified for such an exchange. Since there are many more Armenian captives than Azeris, this has created a serious problem for the Armenian families of the captives who are subjected to barbaric treatment by Azerbaijan.

Point 9 of the “Statement” is the most critical one and the most dangerous for the future of Armenia. It calls for the establishment of a corridor between the main territo-

ry of Azerbaijan and Nakhichevan through the southern part of Armenia, near Iran’s border. This is a red line that no Armenian leader should have crossed. It endangers the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Republic of Armenia. Such a corridor has been the dream of all Pan-Turanians to connect Turkey by land to Azerbaijan and beyond to the remaining Central Asian Turkic Republics. This is one point that Pashinyan should have adamantly refused to accept. I hope it is not too late to change this treacherous provision. One possibility is that should Azerbaijan violate any of the points of the “Statement,” Armenia would then declare point 9 of the agreement to be null and void. For example, if Azeri forces attack the currently Armenian inhabited part of Artsakh or shut down the new Lachin corridor, Armenia could then close down the Azeri corridor in the South of Armenia. Another opportunity could come in five years, if Azerbaijan asks the Russian peacekeepers to leave Artsakh. Armenia could then close the Azeri corridor crossing its territory, since the “Statement” requires that Russian troops guarantee the safety of this corridor. Pashinyan’s explanation, that this provision would allow Armenia to use the existing railroad through Nakhichevan and Azerbaijan to transport cargo to Russia, is a fantasy. No Armenian cargo will be allowed to cross through Nakhichevan or Azerbaijan. Furthermore, this corridor isolates Armenia from Iran, a critical border for Armenia. To make matters worse for Armenia and Iran, Azerbaijan plans to build a gas pipeline and a rail line through this corridor, thereby circumventing Iranian territory which would deprive Iran of lucrative revenues.

Most surprisingly, the ‘Statement’ makes no mention of the Jihadist mercenaries brought to Azerbaijan by Turkey. The presence of these terrorists is a violation of international law and poses a grave danger to Russia, Iran as well as Armenia. This is exactly what the French Foreign Minister pointed out during his recent visit to Armenia. This oversight must be corrected immediately by adding a new point to the ‘Statement,’ asking Azerbaijan to remove the Syrian mercenaries from its territory.

In addition to these specific points, the signed “Statement” should not be considered a legal document, since neither the Armenian Constitutional Court nor the Armenian Parliament has approved it. Pashinyan has no right to single-handedly sign a document on behalf of the Republic of Armenia without the consent of the appropriate bodies, as required by the Constitution.

Armenia now has at most five years to strengthen itself militarily by building or acquiring advanced weapon systems so it can repel a new attack by Azerbaijan and Turkey on Artsakh or Armenia. As mentioned before, Armenia should immediately recognize Artsakh either as an independent state or as part of the Republic of Armenia, thereby using this recognition as a bargaining card in negotiating a better agreement with Azerbaijan.

‘Is the War Behind Us or Ahead of Us?’

from previous page

Therefore, Erdogan can endear himself by reducing tensions within Europe and NATO membership by redirecting its actions against targets more favorable to the incoming US administration.

Erdogan administration has been reaching out, through back channels, to the Israeli government to restore the damaged relations. A move which should be welcome by the Biden team.

The Biden team plans to entice Iran to reconsider the nuclear deal and Turkey may play a more constructive role. Another target will, of course, be Russia, which can be harassed in the Caucasus, at Armenia’s expense, and in Ukraine.

Turkey has already entered into an agreement with Kiev to extract Crimea from Russia.

Biden’s Iran plans may fail if Trump’s Secretary of State Mike Pompeo and Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu decide on a preemptive strike on Iran before the incoming administration’s arrival.

The assassination of Iranian nuclear scientist Mohsen Fakhri-zadeh this week was an advance signal of that intention.

The removal of friendly Karabakh forces from the Iranian border will provide broader access to Israel to conduct its intelligence and military activities in the area, again at Armenia’s expense.

At this time, Israeli military planners are gratified and feel justified in their strategic

help for Azerbaijan in defeating the Armenian forces through the military drones sold to Baku.

An ASB military concludes its report with the following statement: “The lives of Armenian people were used as a negotiation chip between NATO’s Turkey, Israel/USA and Azerbaijan. The US, Israel and Turkey enabled another genocide against the Armenian people and their history, identity, culture and future. The war machine is not done yet and it is the Armenian people that paid and will continue to pay the price for it.”

By now, the only program which was carried out like clockwork has been the orderly deployment of the Russian forces. Confusion continues to reign regarding the other 8 out of the 9 points in the agreement, including the exchange of POWs and the bodies of those missing in action.

Aliyev’s administration is cynically keeping the exchange in limbo, to inflict further pain to the grieving families.

A rumor is also circulating that Baku is planning a victory parade, where Armenian POWs will be marched along with their captured armaments.

After mutilating and beheading Armenian soldiers, it seems the Azerbaijanis will not hesitate to commit another war crime by humiliating Armenian soldiers.

Many Karabakh Armenians have abandoned their homes and towns in Karabakh.

Neither the Russian authorities nor the Armenian government representatives are available to inform the displaced families which towns are being returned to Azerbaijan and which ones will remain in Armenian hands. This has created a humanitarian crisis.

The Russian forces are only concerned with repopulating Stepanakert, certainly not for altruistic reasons. Only the resettlement of Stepanakert can justify the peacekeeping mission. If Armenians do not return to their homes, there will be no need to observe the peace.

Both President Putin and Foreign Minister Lavrov have stated that the issue of status of the remaining Karabakh territories has not been decided yet and will be addressed at a later date. If, indeed, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) Minsk Group takes over the negotiations as planned, the only remaining principle – out of the three principles – is the issue of self-determination. Azerbaijan has violated one principle, that of the exclusion of the use of force, and should be held accountable.

Moscow does not seem to be sanguine about taking up the status issue, for reasons whose echoes are heard in Russian media. It is obvious that Russia intends to implement the Volsky plan.

Arkady Volsky was Moscow’s special envoy to Karabakh in 1989 when the Karabakh movement began.

At the time, he had suggested bringing Karabakh under Russian control, a proposal which was adamantly refused by the Armenian side.

But if precedents that Moscow has implemented in its “Near Aboard” are any indication, that is where the Karabakh status is heading.

When Russia took over Abkhazia and South Ossetia from Georgia, it offered Russian citizenship to their residents. That is in anticipation of keeping the control of the

regions in case Georgia’s territorial integrity is restored. In that case, Russia will have an excuse to protect its citizens, even under Georgian control.

Like Turkey has been doing in Cyprus, by occupying one third of its territory under the pretext of defending the Turkish minority.

When the dust settles and Armenians face the dilemma of choosing between Azerbaijani or Russian citizenship, they will certainly opt for the latter.

It is obvious that that choice will present itself sooner than later, because Baku will be the first one to request the removal of the Russian forces from its territory, when the mandate expires in five years.

At this time, all eyes are on Moscow to see how the turmoil will be settled after the debacle and reassure Armenia’s population against the potential encirclement of Armenia by Turkish forces.

President Armen Sarkissian is also in Moscow to rally the support of Russian Armenians.

During his contacts, the Russian Armenian elite has said it requires Pashinyan’s resignation and transferring the power to a caretaker government, until snap elections take place in more peaceful times.

Only a national unity government can take up the rebuilding of Armenia. If the population does not find immediate hope, immigration will only intensify.

While putting its home in order, Armenia also has to vigilantly guard its borders, which are under the shooting range of the Turkish forces.

We believed that war was behind us but it looks like it is also ahead of us.



When an Enemy's Cultural Heritage Becomes One's Own

By Hugh Eakin

Since its origins in the ninth century, Dadivank Monastery has withstood Seljuk and Mongol invasions, Persian domination, Soviet rule and, this fall, a second brutal war between Armenia and Azerbaijan. Now the majestic stone complex – which includes two frescoed churches, a bell tower and numerous medieval inscriptions – faces something that could be even worse: a dangerous peace.

Perched on a rugged slope in the western part of Nagorno-Karabakh, a disputed region, Dadivank is one of the hundreds of Armenian churches, monuments and carved memorial stones that will come under the control of predominantly Muslim Azerbaijan according to a cease-fire agreement reached earlier this month. Some of those structures – like the Amaras monastery and the basilica of Tsitsernavank – date to the earliest centuries of Christianity. For many Armenians, turning over so much of their heritage to a sworn enemy poses a grave new threat, even as the bloodshed has for the moment come to an end.

Their concern is understandable. Under the cease-fire, hundreds of thousands of Azerbaijanis uprooted by a previous war in the early 1990s will be able to return. In a victory speech on Nov. 25, President Ilham Aliyev of Azerbaijan suggested that Armenians have no historical claims to the region, asserting that the churches belonged to ancient Azerbaijani forebears and had been “Armenianized” in the 19th century.

Between 1997 and 2006, the Azerbaijani government undertook a devastating campaign against Armenian heritage in Nakhichevan, an Azerbaijani enclave separated from the main part of the country by Armenian territory: Some 89 churches and the thousands of khachkars, or carved memorial stones, of the Djulfa cemetery, the largest medieval Armenian cemetery in the world, were destroyed. And since the recent cease-fire, images circulating on social media suggest that some Armenian monuments and churches in territory newly claimed by Azerbaijan have already been vandalized or defiled.

On the other hand, Armenian forces laid to waste the Azerbaijani town of Agdam in the wake of the previous Nagorno-Karabakh war in the 1990s. The Azerbaijani government has also claimed that mosques and Muslim sites that had been under Armenian control were neglected or desecrated.

Now, as Azerbaijan takes possession of newly won territories, a longstanding problem acquires special urgency: How can a government be persuaded to care for the heritage of a people that doesn't fit into its view of the nation?

In any instance of intercommunal strife, preserving monuments must take a distant second place to saving lives and protecting human welfare. But the fate of cultural sites matters, too, for the prospects of long-term peace.

Until now, international efforts to protect monuments have overwhelmingly focused on acts of war and terrorist violence. Following the widespread destruction of museums, libraries and artworks during World War II, diplomats drafted the 1954 Hague Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict, which was eventually ratified by more than 130 countries. But the treaty had a significant loophole for “military necessity.”

Since the Cold War, deliberate attacks on an adversary's major monuments – the Croatians' shelling of the Old Bridge of Mostar, Bosnia, in 1993; the Taliban's dynamiting of the giant sandstone Buddhas of Bamiyan, Afghanistan, in 2001; the Islamic State's razing of Yazidi shrines in Iraq in 2014-15 – have pushed world leaders and international organizations to give more teeth to the existing legal framework.

In 2002, the International Criminal Court was established to prosecute genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes – including, in the case of war crimes, for the intentional destruction of cultural heritage. In 2008, following widespread outrage over the looting and damage to sites in Iraq during the American invasion and occupation, the United States Senate ratified

the 1954 Hague Convention.

More recently, UNESCO, the United Nations' cultural agency, launched a high-profile campaign to counter what Irina Bokova, a former UNESCO director general, called “cultural cleansing” by “violent extremists.” In 2016 the I.C.C. convicted a Malian jihadist of war crimes for leading attacks on the 14th-century Djinguereber Mosque and other sites in Timbuktu, Mali.

That year, several governments called for the creation of “an international network of safe havens” to protect cultural property at risk of imminent attack. In 2017, the U.N. Security Council also condemned the destruction of cultural sites by terrorist groups. President Trump's threat, in January, to target “important” cultural sites in Iran caused an uproar, as well as pushback from the Pentagon.

Yet some of the most systematic destruction in modern times has involved sovereign governments rather than military combatants or extremist groups. China launched a sweeping campaign against Tibetan monasteries, not during the annexation of Tibet in 1950-51, but years later, when the region was firmly under Beijing's rule. The Turkish government continued to seize or destroy Armenian sites in Eastern Anatolia many decades after the Armenian genocide, including even in recent years.

Since 2012, the Myanmar military has demolished hundreds of mosques and Islamic schools in Rakhine State – part of its brutal crackdown on Rohingya Muslims. Satellite evidence suggests that the Chinese authorities have destroyed 8,500 mosques in Xinjiang in the last three years alone.

Just a few months ago, India's Hindu-nationalist prime minister, Narendra Modi, laid the cornerstone for a new Hindu temple on the site of the 16th-century Babri Mosque, which was destroyed by a Hindu mob in 1992. President Recep Tayyip Erdogan of Turkey has ordered that two of Istanbul's most important Byzantine churches – Chora and Hagia Sophia – be converted from museums to mosques, raising fears that their extraordinary Christian mosaics might not be cared for.

But in all of these cases, the United Nations, the United States and its European allies have remained largely mute. UNESCO, which depends on many of the offending governments for funding and support, has shown little interest in intervening. And alliances and prevailing international norms tend to make foreign governments reluctant to interfere with the domestic affairs of other nations during peacetime.

By contrast, the case of Nagorno-Karabakh, where a hot war has just ended, could provide a rare opportunity.

As in other post-conflict situations, cultural sites are particularly vulnerable to score-settling attacks. In 1992, Georgian forces destroyed numerous Abkhaz cultural sites in the former Soviet republic of Abkhazia, including the archive containing much of the region's history; in the five years after Kosovo's 1998-99 war with Serbia, some 140 Serbian Orthodox churches and monuments in Kosovo were burned or destroyed.

Yet in the immediate aftermath of war, precisely because a peace effort is underway, foreign governments and international peacekeepers are unusually well-placed to intervene. Unlike during armed conflict, there is also a chance for international mediators and local communities to work together to prevent attacks before the damage is done.

The historical treasures of Nagorno-Karabakh need not become casualties of the recent war between Armenia and Azerbaijan – nor drivers of a next one.

Since antiquity, numerous sites and monuments have successfully passed from the control of one group to another, often across confessional lines. The Pantheon in Rome, one of the greatest pagan temples of antiquity, owes its remarkable survival in part to its adoption by the Catholic Church in the seventh century. After the fall of Constantinople, Mehmed II the Conqueror preserved Hagia Sophia as a mosque. During the Protestant Reformation, Martin Luther opposed the destruction of Catholic art in Germany, even as he sought to stamp out Catholicism.

In these cases, major buildings or artworks were recognized by their new stewards as having transcendent

value, aesthetic or otherwise. Prestige helped determine preservation: As later Catholic chroniclers argued, the Holy See, by converting one of the greatest Roman buildings into a church, had inherited the glory of the ancient world.

But legions of lesser-known buildings, artworks and sites have also been cared for and maintained across centuries and traditions. Typically, that has been because they spoke to the people living around them, regardless of the identity of their creators.

During the Syrian civil war, while Western leaders were wringing their hands about Islamic State attacks on Palmyra, the ancient trading city and UNESCO World Heritage site, residents of Idlib, a rebel-controlled city, courageously protected the ancient, pre-Islamic mosaics and structures in their communities. They viewed these artifacts and sites as crucial to their own contemporary Syrian identity.

In divided Cyprus, a joint cultural-heritage commission of Greek and Turkish Cypriots was created in 2012 to care for endangered monuments on both sides of the island. Funded by the European Union and the U.N. Development Program, the commission has been embraced by both communities for restoring churches as well as mosques and hamams, and ancient aqueducts and fortifications. Following recent arson attacks on mosques in Greek Cypriot territory, the Greek Orthodox community was quick to condemn the assailants.

In Nagorno-Karabakh, too, cultural reconciliation is still possible. Despite the dismal record of the past three decades, both sides have demonstrated awareness of – and admiration for – heritage that is not their own. In 2019, Armenians restored a prominent 19th-century mosque in Shusha (though they pointedly failed to note its previous use by Azerbaijani Muslims). And in his recent address, Mr. Aliyev acknowledged the importance of the region's churches – even as he denied their Armenian origin.

Security must come first. Russia has already deployed peacekeepers at Dadivank Monastery and has pressed Azerbaijan to protect other Armenian monuments now under its control. The European Union should make similar demands as part of its offer of humanitarian aid, as well as insist that Armenians' access to important churches is assured. The Azerbaijani government, which already has obtained much of what it wanted in the cease-fire, would have a strong incentive to comply.

But a durable future for Armenian sites – especially the numerous less known medieval churches and ornate khachkars – will require direct engagement by Armenians and Azerbaijanis themselves.

In fact, the two communities have coexisted at many points in the past. Baku, the capital of Azerbaijan, was once home to an Armenian population, and there were a number of mosques in Armenia. In the Nagorno-Karabakh region, the strategic town of Shusha, now under Azerbaijani control, has important 19th-century monuments from both nations – including the distinctive mosque with twin minarets that was controversially restored by the Armenians and a large cathedral, which was damaged by Azerbaijani forces during the recent fighting.

Despite centuries of regime change, many of the most important monuments in the region, including Dadivank and other early Armenian sites, have endured – a reminder that the supposedly ancient and intractable differences driving the current conflict are of recent manufacture. Like the beleaguered civilians around them, these buildings need the world's immediate attention. But their very survival – like that of the Pantheon or Hagia Sophia – so far points to a hopeful truth: It is the natural inclination of human beings to preserve; destruction takes special effort and motivation.



(Hugh Eakin, a Brown Foundation Fellow, has reported on endangered cultural heritage for *The New York Review of Books* and other publications. This commentary originally appeared in the *New York Times* on November 30.)



COMMENTARY

What Happened and Why: Six Theses

By Jirair Libaridian

We are living through a very difficult period in our history. From September 27 to November 10 our army fought a ferocious war, and suffered a significant defeat with enormous consequences.

Before we can find a way out of this dark tunnel, in fact in order to find a way out, we must first understand what happened and why it happened. And we need to come to terms with it, to accept it. Many colleagues have offered answers. This is my contribution to that debate.

1. Armenia, Artsakh and the Armenian world have suffered a loss of historical proportions.

- We have lost a war we should have avoided at all cost, a war we could not have won

- One more segment of our people have lost its ancestral homes and its collective life

- We have lost a whole generation of young men, one of our most precious assets

- We have lost the human and financial capital invested in Artsakh over many years

- Our Prime Minister has lost the three goals he had set for himself to resolve the Karabakh conflict:

- Bringing the leadership of Artsakh to the negotiating table

- Making any solution subject to the approval of all three peoples involved in the conflict: Artsakh, Azerbaijan, Armenia

- The possibility, even in a distant future, to secure independence for Karabakh.

- We have lost our self-confidence, our optimism, and much of the progress that had been made. We may have even lost our faith in democracy. We are a traumatized people not fully ready to accept what happened, and why.

- We have lost one more slice of our independence and sovereignty.

The November 10, 2020 cease fire agreement and subsequent statements by President Putin make clear that it is Armenia that speaks for Artsakh; it is not even clear how much voice Armenia itself will have in determining the future course of events. Regardless, in the eyes of all concerned Armenia is defined as the party that was and will be held responsible for any and all things in Artsakh.

2. In the aftermath of the defeat, we are confused and see confusion around us.

On the one hand, we are overwhelmed by the sense of disbelief, of being betrayed, not sure whether we can pick up the pieces of what appears to be a broken world. On the other hand, we are bombarded with mutual recriminations, with speeches and statements the purpose of which is to find some culprit other than us for the mistakes we have committed, with excuses and rationales for our actions and words, justifications as to why war was inevitable and why a defeat is not a defeat, with calls for revenge.

Adventurers, opportunists and super patriots

throw everything they have to the public, from the smallest deed that was done wrong during the war to the wildest conspiracy theories; from accusations of bad judgment, cowardice, and desertion to treason worthy of the guillotine.

Above all, we have doubts on whether we are focusing on what is now essential. We no longer trust our faculties to know if we are asking the right questions, let alone if we have the right answers on how to assess the path that got us here and what to do in the future.

3. Still, we continue to ask, why did we end up here? How did we manage to extract defeat out of the jaws of victory? What went wrong?

Most attempts to answer the question as to what went wrong so far have focused on mistakes and miscalculation during the war and on failures of our diplomacy. Many find fault also in the person of the Prime Minister.

Such answers have led us to solutions such as (a) to demand the resignation of the Prime Minister, (b) to reject the November 10 ceasefire agreement or seek to change it, (c) to push harder for the international recognition of the independence of Artsakh, (d) to correct the mistakes related to the execution of the war so that we prepare for a new round of fighting and this time expect a different outcome, so that we restore the status quo ante.

There were most probably many things that could have been done differently in the preparation for and execution of the war, but it is doubtful that we would have ended up with a significantly different result than what we have now. Experts, commissions, and historians will analyze these failures for a long time to come and will probably not agree on what went wrong.

None of these answers separately or taken together will provide a satisfactory answer to the fundamental problem we have.

4. We lost because instead of facing reality, for over two decades our leaders based their judgments on ideological, political, partisan and personal considerations. We lost because we refused to see the shifting balance of power, to accept that time was not on our side. We confused feeling good with thinking strategically.

In the specific case of Prime Minister Pashinyan, we must also take into consideration two factors: (a) his noble but fundamentally misplaced and dangerous belief that a democratic Armenia will secure the international support for Armenia's position on the Karabakh problem, that the "West" cares more for democracy than it does for its interests, that an appeal to the Azerbaijani people beyond President Aliyev's authority would produce a different Azerbaijani position, one that is closer to the Armenian maximalist one. And, (b) his unwillingness to act as a statesman and negotiate the return of occupied districts in an orderly and peaceful manner in return for equivalent security guarantees for our people on their land and for peace.

The West, the East, the South and the North

have been telling us for over 20 years that (a) they will not recognize Karabakh's independence, and (b) they consider the Armenian-controlled seven districts adjacent to Karabakh as occupied districts and that whatever the reasons for our having control over them, we must return them. Azerbaijan has been telling us during this time that they will go to war for those districts.

Having ignored them for so long, we still appealed to the West to help us keep the seven districts and to recognize Karabakh's independence when we started losing the war.

5. Our fundamental problem is in the way we think. (By "we" in this case I mean most of our political parties and leaders.) Our problem is the way we looked at the Karabakh conflict and the way we framed the questions related to its resolution: we started by the conclusion that corresponded to our dreams, and then asked only those questions that confirmed our conclusions and did not challenge our assumptions and logic. Our problem is our political culture that relies on dreams rather than hard facts; the way we strategize, the way we easily set aside what the outside world and our antagonists say and do if these disturb any of our prejudices and predetermined beliefs. We adjust political strategy to our wishes, to what will make us feel good about ourselves rather than take into consideration the simple facts that collectively make up the reality around us. Our problem is the way we allow our judgment to be obscured by the highest, noblest and ideal solutions of our problems, our illusions. Our problem is the way we insist on overestimating our capabilities so that we would not question our strategy and compromise our dreams. We thought that our strategy "not give an inch back" was the right one because our cause was just. And we believed we could bend the will of the enemy and of the international community and have them think and feel the way we do.

We thought our dreams were so noble that just having them constituted a political program and telling the world about them can replace strategic thinking. We did not want to disturb our comfortable way of feeling patriotic.

Since the antagonist was unwilling to give us what we dreamed of, we decided that the antagonist was inflexible, not willing to negotiate. And thus, we said war was inevitable, that it was a viable option, and that it was not our fault. At the end this logic reached its inevitable conclusion: that war was desirable; we would fight, and of course we would win, and compel the enemy to accept our logic, our terms, our solution. And any realistic assessment of the balance of power could be damned. It was better to take our chances with war than with peace.

Taking chances with peace was a defeatist's way out, we argued; there was no need to invest everything we had in negotiations, no need to sacrifice the purity of our dreams.

We even had the necessary framework to accommodate the inevitable loss of young lives. After all, is not our history full of heroes and

martyrs? Especially martyrs? Are we not blessed with the memory of the Vartanank Battle, when over a thousand fighters died and became martyrs? Did not our history and our Church tell us that it was acceptable to have young men killed, even though a thousand self-sacrifices do not amount to victory?

Peace was treated, at best, as a choice that need not be valued more than war; it could be taken or rejected. And our rhetoric corresponded to that arrogance and, I might add, dangerously unwise judgment.

Both solutions, through negotiations or through war, were risky. Each had its own dangers. But at worst, with a failed peace we would have ended up where we are now, possibly even better. With war, the November 10 ceasefire agreement is the best we could have hoped for.

6. What do we have today in the marketplace of strategic thinking as far as the government and the opposition that wants to replace it is extremely worrisome and dangerous. We see the continuing refusal to look at the real questions and the self-evident answers and repeat the same slogans, cling to the same illusions. We are offering the wrong solution to the wrong diagnosis.

By insisting on the continuation of the same failed and costly strategy, the government is trying to convince us, may be itself too, that the way it thought about the problem was the only way to think about it, that what was done was the only thing that could be done. The prime minister has confessed to minor mistakes that cover up the real failures of his thinking and strategy.

The parties opposing him in the street have not even done what Pashinyan did. They have yet to recognize having made any kind of a mistake, minor or major. That opposition is made up of the parties that have been the backbone of the faulty strategy and problematic way of thinking; a group that never raised a question about the path that would inevitably lead to war; an opposition that applauded when Pashinyan rejected a compromise solution offered by Lavrov that could have left us in better shape than we are now and done so without all the losses before the war and a short time into it. We have to ask: What problem were these people solving?

Some are even proposing to scrap the ceasefire agreement, force the other signatories to change it, or even to go back to war to avenge it. Did we need President Putin to warn us that any such move would be tantamount to suicide?

The likely consequence of continuing the thinking that led us to this historical loss is that the war may be renewed war as a result of which and we may lose whatever is left.

Now is the time to change course about the way we see our most recent past, if we want to develop a program for the future, one that will stand the tests of time and of common sense.

November 24, 2020

LETTERS

The Sad Fate of Karabakh

To the Editor:

Somewhere, half way around the world, a people living peacefully on its ancestral lands is being slaughtered. Drones and illegal cluster bombs are used to shell entire villages, targeting hospitals, nurseries, churches, monasteries. Thousands of soldiers have died. Approximately 90,000 civilians, more than half of the population, have been forced to abandon their homes, so the devil can claim it all. The intent is clear. It is, once again, an attempt to wipe a millennia-old culture off the face of this planet.

In an effort to stop the carnage, a cease-fire was imposed. The terms could not be more humiliating. 75% of the land is lost. The population is given a few weeks to clear out an area they have been living in for centuries. Only an

intervention by the super powers could have deterred the advancing beast. Yet the world, at least those who have the power to make a difference, chose to look the other way. And God allowed it to happen.

Ladies and gentlemen, why is it that a people hailed as the "Lighthouse of Civilization" and the "Cradle of Christianity" left alone to confront the Beast? The cross stones, the churches and the monasteries these people built are marveled at by the so-called civilized world. Why is it then that this same "civilized" world chose to remain silent? I see that my question surprises you. This is the way of the world, you say. The weak get trampled upon by the bullies. Brutal force dictates. Evil is of the nature of things. I am aware of all that, all too well, believe me. If I plead with you it is because pleading is all I have left. We have to show God that mankind still cares. Caring keeps us human. We have not devolved into another species. Not yet.

The hypocrisy is baffling. Those same powers

that enabled the atrocities and rewarded the aggressors are now offering humanitarian assistance. They want to help protect all cultural and spiritual artifacts. When asked if he planned to move the precious cross stones to safety, "Who am I to remove stones that have been here for over 800 years?" retorted Father Hovhannes of Dadivank monastery.

The blaming game is one we all play. Indeed, we are all too ready to accuse others, even God, for our failures. Whoever or whatever is to blame, however, some of the responsibility must rest on our shoulders. We could have been more vigilant and better prepared to confront the evil forces of the world. A strong military appears to be necessary. We have turned the other cheek far too often. Maybe there is no peaceful solution.

Ladies and gentlemen, I belong to that small nation. But I live far away from my people, in another remote corner of the world, because my parents and grandparents were also forcefully

removed from their ancestral lands. I try not to judge the evil-doers. People are not inherently evil. I honestly believe that, ultimately, it is understanding and love that will put an end to the hatred and the divisions. We could, in fact, make our trauma a stepping-stone to a fresh start.

But first things first. We are heartbroken and hurting now. We need to grieve our pain and mourn our loss so we can heal and carry on the fight. The Beast is not going anywhere.

Horror is difficult, but not impossible, to undo. We are broken, yes, but we are not defeated, and will prevail. We are still strong and beautiful. Subhuman species who hire hordes of mercenaries to behead their fellow human beings, and videotape the beheadings, cannot have the upper hand. God does not want his creatures to live in hell. Ultimately, the good wins. It is only when mankind gives up faith in this possibility that humanity will be doomed to eternal damnation.

— Arpi Sarafian



COMMENTARY

Discovering the Wines of Armenia

By Muriel Mirak-Weissbach

Special to the Mirror-Spectator

It was Winston Churchill who made Armenian brandy famous. When Stalin gave introduced him to it at Yalta, he was immediately hooked. One story has it that, when asked to explain how he had managed to stay so healthy at an advanced age, he answered: “Three things: never be late for dinner, smoke Havana cigars and drink Armenian cognac.” (Another version has it, he answered: “Cuban cigars, Armenian brandy and no sport.”)

No one who has tasted Ararat brandy could disagree.

But Armenia has not only brandy to tempt the palate. Together with its legendary cuisine, it also has a wide range of wines, product of a long history of winemaking. Recently two Germans have launched an initiative to publicize this little known fact. Michael Richter comes from Bernkastel on the Mosel, famous for its own wines. With a long family tradition behind him, the connoisseur has joined with Berlin journalist Rainer Schubert to launch a website, www.weinreisen.de which is carefully researched and documented. It is part of a wine project called www.wein-inside.de. Their aim is to spread the good news about Armenia’s wines, in hopes of encouraging tourism and promoting investment in the sector.

Armenia’s vineyards go back as far as 6,000 years ago, according to archaeological discoveries made in 2010. Since Armenia was part of the Soviet Union for 70 years, its wines were produced and consumed mainly there. But today about 16,000 hectares are cultivated with native types of grapes.

Rima Abrahamyan from the Vine and Wine Foundation of Armenia compiled an overview of Armenia’s wine landscape for www.weinreisen.de, divided into five wine regions. At an altitude of 1000 to 1800 meters above sea level, vineyards planted with indigenous grapes are cultivated, and thrive thanks to the varied conditions, 306 days of sunshine per year and a volcanic soil, rich in basalt, tuff and obsidian.

Aragotsotn is a wine region reaching back to the time of Noah. About 1000-1400 meters above sea level, the region lies near Yerevan, with Ararat visible in the distance. This is the birthplace of the old Armenian grape type Voskehat, known as the “queen” of Armenian grapes, and was first cultivated 3500 years ago. Among the wine-growing estates here are the Armenian Wine Company, Golden Grape ArmAs, Van Ardi, Voskevaz Winery, Mnatsakanyan Gastro Yard, Tsaghkents Maran Gastro Yard and Yeganyans’ Guest House and Wine Yard. Many of these winegrowers are family enterprises with a long tradition; others are younger and have benefited from cooperation with the United Nations Development Programme and high tech input from Italy.

Water has been transformed into wine since 4100 B.C. in the wine region Vayots Dzor. Two hours outside the capital, it is at the heat of the historic wine world and is a must for any wine enthusiast. Located in the village of Areni, on the banks of the Arpa river, is the Areni-1-cave, known as the bird cave, which provides proof of biblical and historical



accounts that the Armenian mountain areas were the birthplace of wine. In 2010, archaeologists unearthed a wine cellar that is the oldest example of deliberate wine production. The earthenware vessels and casks provide proof of well planned pressing and distilling of grapes in the copper age, that is, 6000 years ago.

In this region, also, many of the wine growers are family enterprises, like the Old Bridge Winery, Bed & Breakfast and the Matevosyan Wine Company. Other wine growers include the Trinity Canyon Vineyards, Vayq-Group – build on lava – the Aghavnadzor Gastro Yard (assisted by UNDP), and other Gastro Yards: the Arman Hakhverdyan, Ghazaryans’, Matevosyans’ and Noravank B&B.

Armavir is another region whose wine production reaches back to 4100 B.C. Considered the spiritual center of the first Christian nation, it is intimately bound to the country’s identity. The Blessing of Grape is a religious holiday here, celebrated on the second Sunday of August, when the entire grape harvest is blessed. Among the wine growers in Armavir are Alluria Wines, Apartney Wine, Karas Wines, and Maran Winery. Maran is a very old establishment, founded by Sargis and his wife Maran when they returned from Persia in 1828-1830. Among the wines it produces are “Noravank,” “Bagratuni” and “Malahi.” Voskeni Wines is a family venture in Sardarapat, founded by an Armenian American in the 1920s, whose enterprise was seized by the Bolsheviks and later restored by family members. Kalashyan’s Gastro Yard produces not only wine but also fruit vodka.

Tavush, famous for its monastery and breathtaking landscape, has been a wine-producing region since the middle of the 5th millennium B.C., as documented by grape seeds found in the neolithic Getahovit-2-Cave. Here Bekri Gastro Yard and Davtyans’ Gastro Yard offer their produce, together with musical events.

Ararat is the last region presented, Armenia’s second largest wine region, with 300 days of sunshine. Here the Tushpa Wine Cellar offers wines and interactive wine tours. “The next time you think about where you want to travel,” Rima Abrahamyan suggests, “whenever in the current situation we are able to do so, come to Armenia, to discover the history of mankind and wine growing with every bottle of Armenian wine.”



Donate!

<https://www.1000plus.am/en/>



Insurance Foundation for Servicemen in Armenia

The Insurance Foundation for Servicemen in Armenia was created in January 2017 to insure the social wellbeing of soldiers injured while on active duty as well as that of the families of soldiers who died while performing their duties. The insurance Foundation for Servicemen will provide monetary compensation to the families of soldiers as well as to soldiers injured or fallen

in combat on or after January 1st, 2017.

Every employed person in Armenia, gives 1000 drams (\$2) monthly from their salary to the Foundation, which will be raised to 3000 (\$6) drams in July 2021

Please encourage everyone to stand alongside the brave servicemen of Armenia by making a small donation for their insurance.

The Foundation operates on the principle of complete transparency. In enactment of this principle this website provides the possibility to see both your donations from overseas and every employed person’s contribution month to month in Armenia.

At any given time it is possible to see the total funds of the Foundation as well as the total amount of compensations.

<https://www.1000plus.am/en/>

