

Mr. President, with Honor, Dignity and Courage!

RECOGNIZE

The ARMENIAN GENOCIDE

CARROLL

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Billboards in MA Exhort President Biden to Recognize Armenian Genocide

BOSTON — During March and April 2021, on the eve of the 106th anniversary of the Armenian Genocide, Peace of Art (www.peaceofart.org) continues its annual campaign by erecting electronic billboards on busy highways in various cities in the state of Massachusetts, in the United States of America. The message on this year’s billboards is “Mr. President, with honor, dignity and courage, recognize the Armenian Genocide.”

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COVID-19 Vaccination Campaign Begins In Armenia Amid Rise in Cases

By Raffi Elliott
Special to the Mirror-Spectator

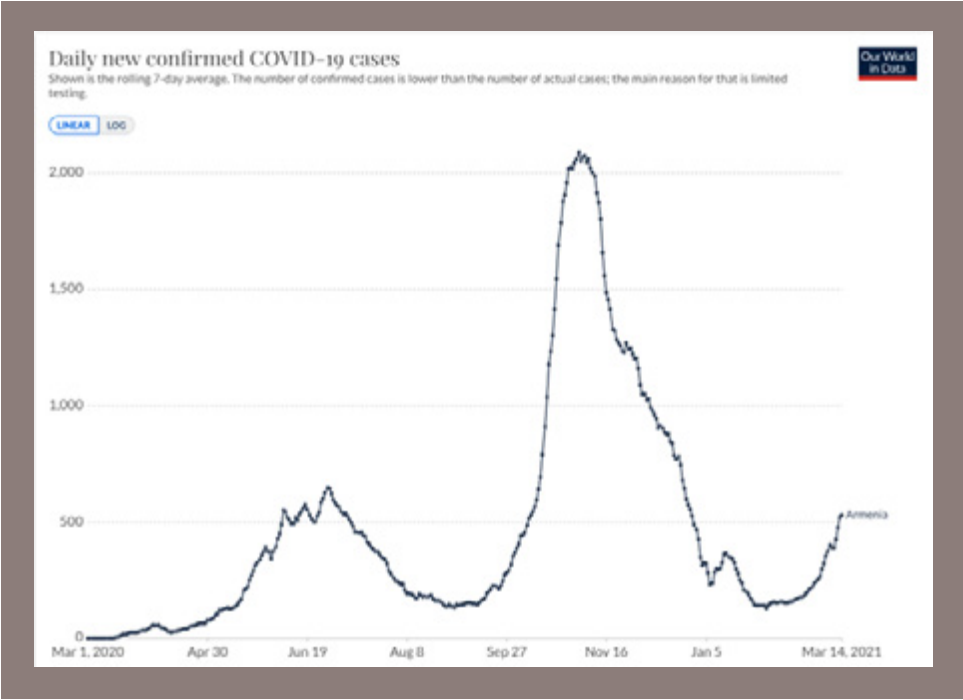
YEREVAN — Several hundred Armenians have already been inoculated against the COVID-19 virus as the country’s public health officials launch the first stage of its vaccination strategy. According to Health Minister Anahit Avanesyan, the first vaccination campaigns were expected to start in early February but were delayed by several weeks due to gaps in the global supply chain.

Armenia is a self-funding participant in the World Health Organization’s Covid-19 Vaccines Global Access (COVAX) initiative designed to provide equitable access for developing countries. Last year, Armenian authorities signed a \$6 million contract with COVAX to supply at least 600,000 doses of the vaccine. However the COVAX system doesn’t allow participating countries to select their vaccine of choice, instead supplying doses as they become available.

Armenia initially expressed interest in purchasing the vaccine developed by the American pharmaceutical giant Moderna, which is co-founded by Armenian entrepreneur and philanthropist Noubar Afeyan.



Health Minister
Anahit Avanesyan



However, with most of Moderna’s early doses already earmarked for US consumption, the Armenian government has instead approved the Russian-produced Sputnik V and the British-designed AstraZeneca for distribution. Both these candidates require a two-step inoculation process. Avanesyan explained that Armenia subjects vaccine candidates to a three-step testing process before approving them for public use.

Of the 200 candidates who were injected

with the initial testing dose for the Sputnik V vaccine, none experienced serious side effects, though several reported higher temperatures for up to two days after the inoculation. Vaccination will prioritize healthcare workers, the elderly, and other vulnerable demographics. Educators, civil servants, rescue workers, law enforcement and military personnel will be the target of the second phase before the vaccine will be made

see VACCINATIONS, page 2

Lebanese-Armenian Maral Najarian Freed from Azerbaijani Prison Lands in Beirut

By Kareem Chehayeb

BEIRUT (Middle East Eye) — A Lebanese-Armenian woman who spent four months in an Azerbaijani prison following last year’s conflict in Nagorno-Karabakh landed in Beirut on March 10.

Maral Najarian went missing on November 10 following a Russian-brokered ceasefire between Armenia and Azerbaijan, landed in the Lebanese capital late on Wednesday, March 10.

“Up until I got on the plane [to Beirut], I could not believe any of this was real,” a distraught Najarian told Lebanese-Armenian radio station Voice of Van.

“I kept thinking, ‘they’re going to come and kidnap me again’.”

Lebanon’s caretaker Foreign Minister Charbel Wehbe thanked the Armenian, Azerbaijani and Russian governments, as well as the International Committee of the Red Cross for facilitating her release following weeks of negotiations.

see NAJARIAN, page 5



Maral Najarian

Boston Mayor Walsh Rescinds Khojaly Proclamation

Confirms Strong Relationship with Boston Armenian Americans

By Aram Arkun
Mirror-Spectator Staff

BOSTON — Boston Mayor Marty J. Walsh announced in a letter addressed to the Greater Boston Armenian community dated March 3 that he was rescinding the proclamation issued by his office for Khojaly Commemoration Day at the end of February, and apologized for its promulgation.

Walsh explained why such a proclamation was issued, writing: “Unfortunately on our part, this was done without our typical review process, which includes conferring with all those potentially impacted.” Conversations with leaders of the Armenian-

see PROCLAMATION, page 7

OPINION

Centennial of Moscow Treaty Sealed with Armenian Blood



WASHINGTON

The Armenian-American Aides of General Dwight Eisenhower



NEW YORK

The Whiskered Old Toymaker of Baraka





ARMENIA

NEWS from ARMENIA

Handcuffed Citizens Rally Outside Parliament, Demand Return of POWs

YEREVAN (Panorama.am) — A group of “handcuffed” people on March 16 held a rally in front of the Armenian National Assembly building to call attention to the issue of the Armenian prisoners of war (POWs) being held in Azerbaijan. They demand that Armenia’s relevant state institutions immediately resolve the issue of the repatriation of POWs.

Before handcuffing themselves, the citizens stuck posters to the gates of the parliament building reading: “Either bring back the prisoners of war or stop the negotiations!” Meanwhile, Azerbaijan officially announced that there are no more Armenian prisoners in the country.

Armenian Pilgrims Visit Dadivank and Amaras, Accompanied by Russian Peacekeepers

STEPANAKERT (Panorama.am) — A group of Armenian pilgrims accompanied by Russian peacekeepers visited the ancient Armenian monastery complex of Dadivank in the Karvachar region which came under Azerbaijani control as result of the Nagorno-Karabakh trilateral statement signed on November 9. The Russian Defense Ministry said in its release that as a result of the agreements reached, the servicemen of Azerbaijan freely allow pilgrims to the territory of the complex, accompanied by Russian peacekeepers. To ensure security, one of the observation posts of the Russian peacekeeping contingent is located near the architectural complex. Russian peacekeepers also ensured the safety of Armenian pilgrims during their visit to the Amaras Christian monastery, which is located in the immediate vicinity of the line of demarcation between the parties in Nagorno-Karabakh.

UNICEF Representative To Armenia Forced Out

YEREVAN (RFE/RL) — The Armenian government has forced the United Nations children’s agency UNICEF to recall its permanent representative in Armenia, Marianne Clark-Hattingh. Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Anna Naghdalyan said last week that the government decided to cut short Clark-Hattingh’s tenure of because of “shortcomings in the execution of her mandate” and her “uncooperative work style.” She did not go into details. Yerevan UNICEF spokeswoman Zara Sargsyan denied media reports that Clark-Hattingh “hastily” left Armenia. Sargsyan said she remains to continue to perform her duties until the appointment of her replacement, while UNICEF has already named a new acting head of its Yerevan office and is now awaiting approval by the Armenian Foreign Ministry.

COVID-19 Vaccination Campaign Begins In Armenia Amid Rise in Cases

VACCINATIONS, from page 1
available to the general public. Vaccinations will be free for government workers and low income individuals.

Armenian public health authorities say that the country currently has enough doses to inoculate at least 15 percent of Armenia’s population by the end of 2021, but Avanesyan announced last week that the government was in negotiations with Russia to acquire a large shipment of the Sputnik V vaccine in order to ramp up the process.

The vaccination campaign launches amid a renewed rise in COVID-19 cases being recorded in the country, which some public health experts warn might be the beginnings of a third wave of the pandemic.

Armenia had been experiencing a steady decline in new infection rates in the first months of 2021 after registering new daily cases in the thousands at the peak of last year’s bloody war with Azerbaijan. Despite concerns over the low testing rates, this data has also been backed up by a corresponding drop in fatalities. Most hospitals which had been converted into special disease control centers have since been returned to their original functions. Some experts have speculated that these figures may be evidence that Armenia has already attained herd immunity. While Armenia has officially registered 178,702 total cases of COVID-19 infections across the country, the real figure is estimated to be at least three or four times higher, with the virus’ spread being accelerated by the movement of troops, refugees and aid workers during last year’s 44-day war, with most carriers likely being asymptomatic.

Still, despite averaging around 130 new cases per day throughout January and February, new infection rates have crept back

up in March, now averaging 407 daily cases. The health minister warned on March 11 that hospital beds are quickly filling up despite eight facilities being reconverted to help with the influx of patients. New beds are also being set up to meet the demand but “hospital space is not infinite,” the minister cautioned.

Around one thousand COVID-19 patients are suffering conditions severe enough to require hospitalization, while most of the 8190 active cases remain in self-isolation. Ten people have succumbed to complications from the virus on Monday, bringing the total number of fatalities to 3,265.

Despite this upswing in cases, authorities have denied rumors that the country would be going back into complete lockdown. Schools, businesses, and restaurants will remain open. Instead, they have urged citizens to go back to stricter observation of social distancing measures: to wear masks in public, remain 2 meters apart, and wash hands regularly. The Armenian police has also pledged to more actively enforce compliance with these rules, adding that it has ceased issuing fines in the months following the war as many grieved losses of family and friends.

Still, public health officials may face an uphill battle in the race to provide ubiquitous vaccination before mutated versions of the virus make their appearance in the country. Authorities insist that vaccination will remain voluntary, but the persistence of misinformation about the vaccine, as well as the virus itself has kept many Armenians wary about the prospects of vaccination. Tamara, a wine event planner in Yerevan, told the *Mirror-Spectator* that due to some childhood allergies, she is concerned over allegations that patients may have

died from the vaccine.

For others, their decision to get inoculated will depend on which vaccine is available. The Russian-developed Sputnik V vaccine initially caused concern in Armenia due to its fast-tracked testing and approval process, which some critics claimed was motivated primarily by a desire to be the first to market rather than public health. However, despite mixed results in peer-reviewed studies, it has proven to be mostly safe for consumption.

Syuzana, who works in a tech company in Yerevan explained to the *Mirror-Spectator* that she wasn’t so much concerned about vaccination as she was about the local Armenian laboratories’ ability to safely provide it. “I don’t know if they have the right facilities to store it at temperature, I don’t trust their sanitary practices,” she said, adding that she’s always had her son vaccinated in the United States, which she plans on repeating this time around.

For Dr. Kim Hekimian, Associate Director of Education for the Program for Global and Population Health at the Vagelos College of Physicians, this vaccine hesitancy is concerning. She points to a previous public health initiative to provide the human papillomavirus (HPV) vaccine to counter cervical cancer, which is a leading cause of death among Armenian women. The campaign was met with mixed success given that a sustained disinformation campaign convinced many would-be recipients that the vaccine would cause infertility.

“The fact that Armenia has registered so many positive cases will help reduce the virulence and transmission for a while, but the country may be susceptible to new infection variances,” Hekimian warned, “We don’t know yet.”

Yerevan Eyes OSCE Role in Final Karabakh Settlement

YEREVAN (RFE/RL) — Armenia sees a final political solution to the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict solely within the framework of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe’s (OSCE) Minsk Group Co-Chairmanship, Foreign Minister Ara Ayvazyan said on March 16.

At a joint news conference with Sweden’s visiting Foreign Minister and OSCE Chairperson-in-Office Ann Linde in Yerevan, Ayvazyan said that Armenia views the trilateral statement signed by Russia, Armenia and Azerbaijan on November 9 to end six weeks of fighting in Nagorno-Karabakh last fall as a document aimed at restoring the ceasefire and reaffirming the security.

“Although it contains some provisions concerning the peaceful settlement, however it does not address its key elements, and the most important among them is the issue of the status of Artsakh [the Armenian name for Nagorno Karabakh], based on the right of the Armenians of Artsakh to self-determination. A final political solution to the conflict is possible only within the framework of the OSCE Minsk Group Co-Chairmanship,” Ayvazyan said, referring to the format jointly headed by Russia, the United States and France that has had an international mandate to broker a peaceful settlement of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict since the early 1990s.

“Recent developments in the region have underlined the need for a strong, I emphasize, strong OSCE Minsk Group

Co-Chairmanship, which will be able to lead the peace process on the basis of principles and elements developed over the years. We also need a strong, cohesive OSCE as an institute responsible for regional security and peace. In this context, we attach importance to the role of the OSCE Chairmanship, including the Personal Representative of the OSCE Chairperson-in-Office,” the top Armenian diplomat underscored.

In her remarks at the news conference Linde also hailed the work of the Minsk Group co-chairs and the efforts of her personal representative towards finding a lasting solution to the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict.

The OSCE chairperson-in-office arrived in Yerevan late on Monday after visiting Baku.

The purpose of her regional visit is to discuss the Nagorno-Karabakh issue and the situation after the recent war with the leaders of Armenia and Azerbaijan.

In the Armenian capital the OSCE’s chairperson-in-office also met with Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan

later on Tuesday.

According to the Armenian prime minister’s press office, during the meeting Linde highlighted the importance of the work of the Minsk Group co-chairs in the settlement of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict.

Pashinyan, for his part, stressed the



Sweden’s Foreign Minister and OSCE Chairperson-in-Office Ann Linde with Foreign Minister Ara Ayvazyan

importance of close cooperation with the OSCE in ensuring stability and security. The Armenian premier, too, emphasized that the settlement of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict is only possible within the framework of the OSCE Minsk Group co-chairmanship. In this regard, Pashinyan also stressed the need for the clarification of the status of Nagorno Karabakh and the exercise by Karabakh Armenians of their right to self-determination.

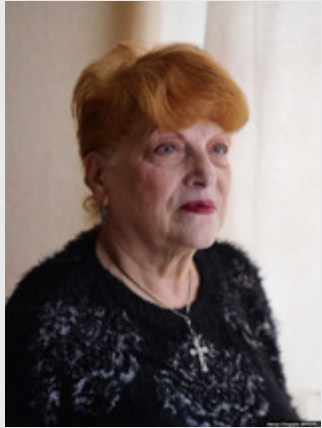


Meeting ‘Mother Armenia,’ The Woman Behind Yerevan’s Iconic Statue

By Amos Chapple

YEREVAN (RFE/RL) – In the autumn of 1960, Yerevan local Genya Muradian and her mother headed out for a shopping trip in central Yerevan that would change the face of their city.

As the two women waited in line to pay for a bag of tomatoes, Muradian noticed a mustachioed man staring at her with such intensity that the frightened teenager pointed him out to her mother. Her mother then placed the tomatoes back on their tray and strode out of the store, gripping the hand of her strikingly beautiful daughter.



Outside on the street, the man approached the two, apologized, and explained himself.

The man’s name was Ara Harutyunyan and he had recently been commissioned to create a sculptural epic that would replace Yerevan’s Stalin monument. The artist was looking for a woman who could visually represent the power of motherhood and the “Armenian motherland” and in

Genya Muradian he believed he had found exactly that archetype.

Sixty-one years after that encounter, the 78 year-old Muradian, who today lives in a central Yerevan apartment, explained what happened after the strange encounter.

“My mother immediately refused. Then the sculptor said, ‘OK. Well, if you change your mind, here’s my phone number.’”

When Muradian’s brother heard about the marketplace encounter, he excitedly intervened. Harutyunyan, the famous artist his sister had met, was his lecturer at the Terlemezyan College of Fine Arts.

Together, brother and sister then visited Harutyunyan’s studio and Muradian posed, standing with a hand on her waist, for the first of four or five sessions with the artist. Muradian says she is not sure about the material used, but thinks the artist shaped her likeness from clay.

Muradian says the artist was “not at all talkative” and during the posing sessions his concentration “was so intense that it was a little unsettling. When he looked at you, it felt as if he was seeing inside of you.”

In 1967, the monument sculpted in Muradian’s image was formally unveiled. But for 40 years, Muradian kept the fact that she was the model for the beloved statue a family secret, not tell-

ing even her own husband.

A close-up of the Mother Armenia copper monument, which features a hemisphere coated in gold leaf



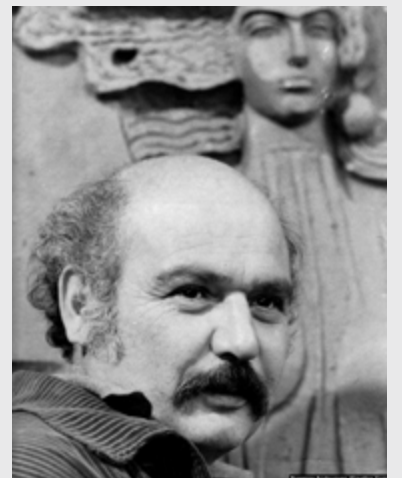
why she had been given a single, stern eyebrow. The artist told Muradian he took some creative license because “it’s the symbol of a strong woman, and that’s the strength I see in you.”

Muradian, who worked as a Russian-language teacher, says the monument helped her through some of the immensely difficult periods of her life, in part because of what the artist told her.

The retired teacher says the sculptor “said he saw power in me, but I didn’t feel it. I felt weak and easy to convince.... But I was chosen as an image of strength, so looking up at the monument reminded me that I needed to be just as strong. That helped give me the courage I needed through my life.”

Today, Muradian checks in on the monument from her apartment on most days “as if on a family member” and watches with pleasure the different techniques used to illuminate the hilltop figure on national holidays. Muradian says it is upsetting to see the statue not being cleaned or cared for in the same way many other Yerevan monuments are maintained.

The monument poses a towering logistical



Harutyunyan (1928-1999) was one of Armenia’s most prominent Soviet-era artists



A 50-meter-high monument to Soviet dictator Josef Stalin that was unveiled in Yerevan in 1950. In 1961, the bronze Stalin was pulled down but the plinth remained



Muradian poses with an early version of the face of Yerevan’s Mother Armenia monument

challenge for cleaning crews.

During the recent conflict with Azerbaijan, Muradian says she felt “physical pain” as the news was unfolding and she watched mothers mourning their children.

Muradian says she understands why many young Armenians are leaving their country but hopes more can seek to “create prosperity in the homeland” rather than departing for a life abroad.

(Amos Chapple is a New Zealand-born photographer and picture researcher with a particular interest in the former USSR.)

Muradian looks from her bedroom window toward the Mother Armenia monument



INTERNATIONAL NEWS

Central Bank Chief Says Many Loans to Killed Soldiers and Relatives Written Off

YEREVAN (Panorama.am) — A large number of loans of Armenian soldiers killed in the recent Artsakh war and their relatives were written off, Chairman of Armenia's Central Bank Martin Galstyan told a news conference on March 16. He noted that loans together worth about 2 billion drams have already been written off.

"According to our estimates, these processes will continue; the system will write off about 3 billion drams of loans for the families and relatives of our killed and wounded soldiers at its own expense, without receiving any support," he added.

He said that a government-drafted bill adopted by the National Assembly states that if banks write off or somehow assist in repaying loans of people, their tax liabilities are neutralized.

European Parliament Condemns Turkey's Use of Mercenaries in Karabakh

BRUSSELS (PanARMENIAN.Net) — The European Parliament has firmly condemned Turkey's use of Syrian mercenaries in the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. In a resolution marking 10 years after the uprising in Syria, the parliament on March 16 cited the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) Minsk Group co-chair countries — Russia, France and the United States — as saying that Turkey has transferred Syrian mercenaries to Karabakh.

Armenia was the first to report on Turkey's deployment of thousands of Syrian fighters to Azerbaijan. International media publications followed suit, as did reactions from France, Russia, Iran and Syria. The Nagorno-Karabakh Defense Army has already unveiled footage from the interrogation of two such terrorists captured on the front.

The resolution called on Turkey "to withdraw its troops from Northern Syria which it is illegally occupying outside of any UN mandate; condemns Turkey's illegal transfers of Kurdish Syrians from occupied Northern Syria to Turkey for detention and prosecution in violation of Turkey's international obligations under the Geneva Conventions; urges that all Syrian detainees who have been transferred to Turkey be immediately repatriated to the occupied territories in Syria; is worried that Turkey's ongoing displacements could amount to ethnic cleansing against the Syrian Kurdish population; stresses that Turkey's illegal invasion and occupation has jeopardized peace in Syria, the Middle East and the Eastern Mediterranean; firmly condemns Turkey's use of Syrian mercenaries in conflicts in Libya and Nagorno-Karabakh, in violation of international law."

Shenorhavor Tzenundehd (Happy Birthday) Heide Rieck!

Muriel Mirak-Weissbach

Mirror-Spectator Staff

BOCHUM, Germany — Under normal circumstances we would have organized a huge birthday party. There would have been music — Armenian music — and poetry and dancing, shish-kebab, with all the trimmings, paklava and Ararat cognac. Friends would have come from all over Germany — Armenians, Turks, Kurds, Germans, young and old, colleagues and students, as well as family members. No one would want to miss Heide Rieck's 80th birthday party.

But these are not normal times, so friends had to scotch any plans for such a gathering. Lockdowns are not conducive to festivities. And yet, celebrate we must. The best substitute we came up with was a tribute to our friend, and in an Armenian publication; for among the many, many friends of Armenia there are in Germany, Heide Rieck is at the top of the list.

I remember well how it all began. It was a cold January day in Cologne, in 2013. Guests of the Turm Theatre were glad to be inside, out of the cold. The play they had just seen was chilling but it ended with a warm kiss. "Anne's Silence" was a monodrama composed by the German-Turkish author Dogan Akhanlı, who had fled political repression in his homeland. His play tells the story of a Turkish-German girl Sabiha, who has been engaged in Turkish nationalist political rallies. After her mother's death, she discovers that she was Armenian, and the drama depicts Sabiha's struggle to come to terms with her identity. Her recovery of her Armenian roots unfolds as a process of confrontation with the truth of the 1915 Genocide, in part reflected through the story of Hrant Dink. Actress Bea Ehlers-Kerbekian, who provided the concept for the play, portrayed Sabiha and all other characters in a tour de force performance. Her Armenian heritage lent her added insight into the psychological turmoil experienced by the protagonist.

Heide Rieck was in the audience, and it was the first time she had found herself among Armenians. She stayed for the round table discussion that followed, during which the question arose, whether or not the German government would ever recognize the Armenian genocide. As a participant, I ventured to say that they might indeed do so; after all, there were two years to go to the centenary, and "a lot could happen." Heide was profoundly moved by the play, the stunning performance and now this note of optimism, which, she later wrote, "inspired me to dedicate three years to reading and writing about the fate of the Armenian people and to introduce Armenian culture to my region." She would bring the production to Bochum a year later.

As a result the German-Armenian Culture Project came into being and the three years have stretched into seven, with no end in sight. In the coming days or weeks, her new book will appear, compiled and edited together with her colleague, Azat Ordukhanyan, director of the Armenian Academic Society (AAV 1860), the oldest Armenian organization in Germany. The new volume, titled *Wurzeln in der Luft: Völkermord und Lebensspuren* (Roots in the Air: Genocide and Footprints of Life), is an anthology of personal stories, written by children and grandchildren of the Genocide generation. Most of the 20 accounts are by Armenians, but there are also Pontic Greeks and an Assyrian, Turks and Germans. The book is just the latest contribution to educating the public in Germany, especially youth, introducing them to the history and culture of Armenians and thereby building bridges between the two peoples.

Author Rieck was well equipped, both personally and professionally, to undertake such an ambitious cultural enterprise. Born in 1941 in Stettin (today Szczecin, Poland), she and her family were forced to flee in 1945 to Krefeld, a city on the Rhine. Expulsion, deportation and war are not vague historical references but lived realities. Her love for literature and drama developed early, and she studied acting at the Keller Theater; later she set up a students' theater group at the Pedagogical College, where her own first plays were performed. In 1963, she moved to the Ruhr region and taught theater and pedagogy there as well as in France. Theatre continued to be central in her teaching experience, during which she developed and produced more than 70 plays with her pupils.

Since 1999 she has been a freelance writer, has published 12 books and contributed to over 20 anthologies, her works spanning several genres, from poetry and short stories, to essays and novels. Many books have been translated into other languages, and she has travelled widely. On tours in Italy, Poland, Russia, Mexico and South Korea, she presented her book *Doch sieht wir leben – Vom inneren Widerstand -- Zwangsarbeit 1939-1945* (Vechta 2005: *Yet look, we are alive -On internal resistance – Forced Labor 1939 – 1945*), containing the literary and artistic



Heide Rieck

testimony of forced laborers during the second World War. In her 2012 novel, *Aber die Schatten...* (But the Shadows...), she follows the life story of a man from an extended Jewish-Christian family, who, though spared in the Holocaust, lives forever in its shadows. In addition to novels, she has published numerous collections of short prose pieces, like her *Herzverlies. 17 Episoden von Trost und Liederlichkeit* in 2006 (Heart Dungeon. 17 Episodes of Consolation and Chaos) and the very recent *Am Rand – Innere Landschaften und ein bisschen Wüste* (2020) (On the edge – Internal landscapes and a little bit of desert). She has won two prizes for poetry, is a member of the Union of German Writers, the European writers group Die Kogge, and is spokeswoman of the Bochum Writers.

In this most recent book, she records her very first meeting with an Armenian. He is a young scientist in Vienna for a conference; they meet in the hotel dining room at breakfast and exchange few words; schedules prevent further contact, there is an appointment and she has an early morning departing flight. It is a brief encounter, a cameo appearance, but one that will have far-reaching impact on her future work.

Heide Rieck is above all a poetess; even her prose works are poems in disguise. And the German-Armenian Culture Project, which she and Ordukhanyan have led over the years, is a highly poetical endeavor. In 2014, as a prelude to commemorating the centenary of the genocide, they organized an "Armenian Cultural Autumn." Ordukhanyan explained, the intent was to celebrate Armenian life. "We want to show that we are still alive, making music, creating, working, producing. We want to present our culture." From August 15 to November the program featured music dance, lectures, book presentations and a public colloquium. The renowned Armenian folk dance ensemble Geghart opened the program, the German translation of Dr. H. Martin Deranian's book, *President Calvin Coolidge and the Armenian Orphan Rug*, was presented, and academics in the humanities gathered for a round table discussion on the fate of Armenians from Iraq and Syria now forced to flee again: "Out of the Diaspora into the Diaspora."

When the German Shakespeare Society held its annual symposium in Bochum, and chose the theme of violence in Shakespeare's plays, Rieck organized a session for literary readings by an Armenian, a Kurdish poet, Akhanlı and German-Jewish authoress Jay Monika Walther.

For the events marking the centennial of the genocide, Rieck and Ordukhanyan drafted plans for an "Armenian Spring" in Bochum. And springtime is the time for planting. On April 18, 2015 Lord Mayor Dr. Otilie Scholz laid the foundation stone for a

see BIRTHDAY, page 5



INTERNATIONAL

Social Assistance Movement
Helps Istanbul-Armenian
Community Survive Covid

ISTANBUL (*Nor Marmara*) – Since the outbreak of the novel coronavirus, the Istanbul-Armenian community has seen the rise of a social assistance or social solidarity movement, encouraged by Patriarch Sahag Mashalyan. The focus of the movement is for the Armenian community of Istanbul to pool its resources in order to provide aid to the less fortunate Armenians and the Armenian neighborhoods of the city, which has been crucial during the pandemic. The Patriarchate recently released statistics on the activities of the past year in regard to the official program instituted by the Church for this purpose.

“The Social Aid Committee of the Patriarchal See of the Armenians of Turkey, formed under the auspices and with the blessing of Patriarch Sahag II Mashalyan, continues to widen its useful activities. The leaders of the committee presented to the patriarch the statistics of the first year of aid work which was realized in the pandemic period through the investment of the charitable bodies of the churches as well as benefactors, beginning in March 2020.

According to the report, 6,483 boxes of necessities were given to about 2,000 families for their daily needs. This were families who were in dire straits due to being immigrants, unemployed, or otherwise bereft of a social safety net. Aside from these provisions, the general list



Report of the Social Aid Committee

of the 276 families served by the charitable bodies of the churches was widened to 420 families to which aid was supplied six times in the course of the year. In addition, 243 computers were donated for the needy students among our children who are engaged in distance learning.

The leaders of the committee also conveyed their proposed plans for 2021. The Patriarch thanked the members of the committee, who are working on a volunteer basis and on the honor system, as well as the auxiliary benefactors.

Shenorhavor Tzenundehd (Happy Birthday) Heide Rieck!

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German-Armenian Friendship Garden. Just a week earlier, Ordukhanyan had been in Yerevan-Avan, Narekatsi district, to inaugurate a friendship garden. After planting the first tree there, he received 155 saplings to take back home — the number represented the 155 years of existence of the Armenian Academic Society, which was founded in 1860. In January, Norbert Lammert, then president of the German Bundestag, had met with Bochum citizens and decided to place the donation of plants for Armenia as well as the garden in Bochum officially under his patronage. Lammert was to lead the parliamentary debate later in April on the issue of genocide recognition.

Letters went out to schools, parishes and other local institutions, offering Armenian trees for their premises. On April 18, school children arrived with picks and shovels to join the effort, the mayor planted the first tree, and others followed there, as well as at the local zoo, the museum and

the city archives building.

Days later, Rieck presented a reading of poems by Paruyr Sevak, from a new German translation that she had co-authored (*Paruyr Sewak, Und sticht in meine Seele – 24 & 4 Gedichte Armenisch-Deutsch*. Schiler-Verlag 2015). On April 24 official commemorations took place in several German cities. Artist Lisa Stybor opened the “Trail of Tears,” an exhibition of works created during a trip to historic Armenia, where she documented historic 1915 sites. In May a book, *Die Armenierin*, (The Armenian Woman) by Thomas Hartwig was presented.

In September, Rieck invited Ordukhanyan for an open dialogue, entitled “Gardens of Friendship link Orient and Occident – Yerevan and Bochum.” After that, she continued planting trees, this time in Armenia. Together with Ordukhanyan, she flew to Yerevan and on October 17 opened the garden in Yeghegnadzor.

“The German beech, juniper and pine trees were donated by German friends

and flown to Yerevan,” Rieck later wrote. “There they were picked up by Armenian friends in their car. Helpers dug, planted and watered the young trees in the presence of the mayor and numerous photographers, and I watched as Armenian oaks were planted next to them — in front of the monument commemorating the victims of the war in Nagorno Karabagh.”

At the city school, they discovered that German was the most popular among foreign languages offered. Children greeted them with recitations of poems by Heine, Goethe and Schiller in excellent German. Rieck presented the book of Sevak’s poems in translation, her own contribution to intercultural exchange. She had the opportunity to visit the Sevak Museum in Sangakatun, and planted a rose bush in front of the house where he was born. She recalled that children helped plant it. “Each of them held an apple or a pear in their hand — from the trees that the poet himself had planted — a gift that certainly they will never forget: not far from Mount

Ararat an apple from a poet’s tree awakens in the heart of children the love of poetry! This, too, is Armenia.”

Rieck has never missed an opportunity to introduce Armenian culture to a German public. In March 2016, she published an article on the traces of Armenian culture in Germany, a subject that Ordukhanyan has researched at length. If some Germans knew that the great musicologist and composer Komitas studied in Berlin at the Humboldt University, where a commemorative plaque was placed in 2013, few if any would have known that the Armenian presence began with the spread of Christianity in the 4th century AD. Relics of Armenian doctor and martyr St. Blasius were brought to Germany and it was the missionary Servatius of Armenia who proclaimed Christianity in Rhineland and Low Countries in the same century. Churches in Cologne, Bonn and Siegburg bear his name. It was an Armenian-Byzantine princess Theophanu who married German Emperor Otto II in 972, in St. Peters in Rome.

In 2017, Rieck and Ordukhanyan organized an event at the Evangelical church in Bochum-Linden, entitled “Armenia in Luther Year” — the centenary of the Protestant reformation that was the occasion for an ambitious program of events throughout Germany all year long. One central element of the debate was the historical significance of Luther’s translation of the bible into German. Few, if any Germans, could know that an Armenian religious figure had preceded Luther by centuries. Renowned Armenologist Prof. Armenuhi Drost-Abgarjan was invited to present a lecture on the “Invention of the Armenian Alphabet and Bible Translations in the Mother Tongue in the 5th Century.” Almost 1,000 years before Luther, Mesrop Mashtots had translated Bible into the Armenian vernacular, and, as she demonstrated, the two employed similar methods.

Heide Rieck has a lot to celebrate on her birthday, and Armenians have good reason to join in with a toast — Ararat cognac, of course. We raise our glasses (albeit at a distance) with warm thanks for what she has contributed so far to German-Armenian cultural understanding, and look forward to the coming years, wishing her good health, energy, and joy in her creative activities!

Lebanese-Armenian Maral Najarian Freed from Azerbaijani Prison

NAJARIAN, from page 1

Born and raised in Lebanon, Najarian moved to Armenia in August 2020, just weeks after the devastating Beirut Port explosion.

She claimed her Armenian citizenship and moved to Artsakh (Nagorno-Karabakh) enclave.

After hostilities flared between Armenia and Azerbaijan, she temporarily moved back to the Armenian capital for the duration of the six-week conflict.

Upon returning to Nagorno-Karabakh the day of a Russian-brokered ceasefire, Azerbaijani forces arrested both Najarian and family friend Viken Euljekian.

The Azerbaijani foreign ministry told MEE on 11 February that Euljekian was being held on a number of charges including “terrorism,” but did not respond to questions about specific accusations against Najarian or details of the charges against her.

They confirmed she was detained, adding that she had an “unofficial marriage” with a family friend.

On February 13, Hagop Pakradounian, the president of the Lebanese-Armenian Tashnag Party, contacted the Lebanese Foreign Ministry to enquire about Najarian and help facilitate her release.

According to the party, the Lebanese Foreign Ministry called on ambassadors in Armenia, Russia, and Iran for information on her case. They said she would be released within the following two days, although that failed to transpire.

Najarian, 49, said on March 11 that she had contemplated self-harm after seeing several razor blades in one of the bathrooms at the prison.

Meanwhile, Najarian’s sister, Sossi, feared she would return in a “worse condition.”

“When her [Maral’s] daughter told me Wednesday morning that she was coming home while I was at work, I was so overwhelmed with emotion – my manager told me to take the day off,” she told MEE.

“We burst into tears when we saw each other. It’s a miracle that she’s home.”

Najarian’s family said she had been transferred to a hospital to run medical tests and see a therapist.

The United Nations has expressed concern about the alleged mistreatment of both military and civilian captives in Nagorno-Karabakh.

Amnesty International has also documented torture and extrajudicial killings of captives.



Community News

Ghaplanyan Speaks About Environmental Risks in Armenia for ARPA Institute

By Margarita Ivanova
Special to the Mirror-Spectator

LOS ANGELES — Dr. Irina Ghaplanyan, a former deputy minister of environment for the Republic of Armenia, climate policy professional, and political scientist, spoke about Armenian environmental security at a February 13 Zoom event organized by the ARPA (Analysis Research & Planning for Armenia) Institute.

Ghaplanyan declared that combating pollution and climate change must be a community effort. She gave the example of the gradual repair of the ozone layer. “After a few decades of active engagement from the global community, and commitments from virtually every country in the world, we see that the ozone layer is gradually recovering,” Ghaplanyan said.

Climate change implications not only affect the climate, but every aspect of natural resources. Since the pre-industrial period, Armenia has registered a 1.3 degree Celsius increase, as well as a 9-percent precipitation increase. These extreme climate shifts have had a negative impact on the economy, and especially on the agricultural sector, Ghaplanyan said.

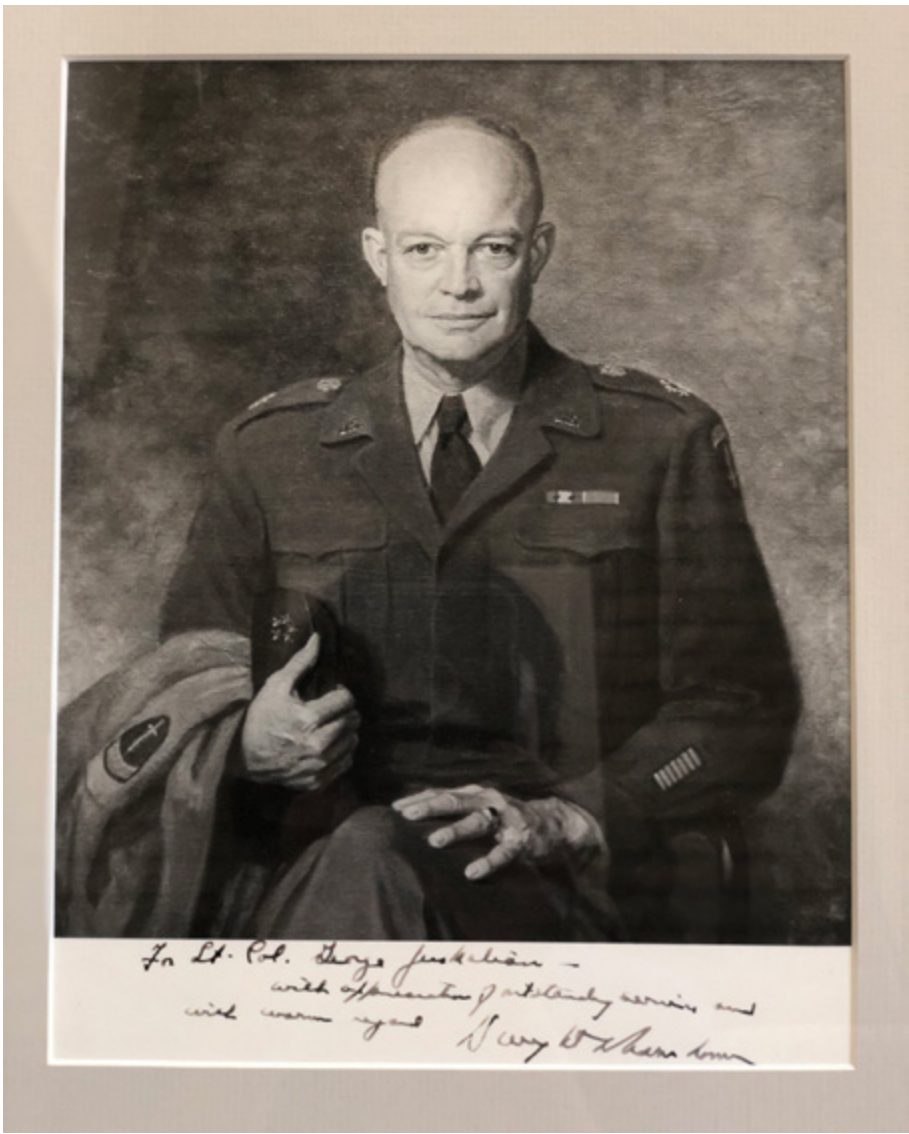
According to a Swiss Institute study forecast, if the world stays on this climate change track, Armenia’s average summer temperatures will surpass 40 degrees Celsius (104 degrees Fahrenheit). “So many layers of the economy will be affected, not just agriculture,” said Ghaplanyan.

Drastic changes throughout the community would be necessary in order to keep up with these drastic temperature changes. “This would include things like rewiring the entire infrastructure of certain buildings and reconstructing roads to sustain the heat,” she continued.

Climate change is not the only factor that has led to a shift in agriculture. “War itself is not only inhuman, but an environmental disaster,” said Ghaplanyan. The impacts of the war have led to an exponential increase in pollution, as well as the biodiversity of the ecosystems.

As Azerbaijan has continued to employ weapons containing phosphorus in Armenia and Artsakh, the air has become polluted from explosions, and

see ARPA, page 7
ARPA, from page 6
the soil has become extremely damaged. “Phosphorus has a similar effect on the ecosystem as it does to the human body. It is very toxic when it touches skin, and treatment is often a removal process,” said Ghaplanyan. Although the governments of Armenia and Artsakh governments prohibited the use of these chemicals unless targeting a military base, Azerbaijan



A photograph inscribed by General Eisenhower states “To Lt.-Colonel George Juskalian with appreciation of outstanding service and with warm regard, Dwight D. Eisenhower”

The Armenian-American Aides of General Dwight Eisenhower

By Haykaram Nahapetyan
Special to the Mirror-Spectator

WASHINGTON — On May 7, 1945, a US Army Air Force (USAAF) pilot, Roland Jehl flew the Nazi High Command to Reims, France, where they signed the Surrender Act, which officially concluded the war in Europe. General Dwight Eisenhower’s naval aide, Captain Harry Butcher, later wrote about this historic day in his book *Three Years with Eisenhower*: “Shortly after five o’clock I saw Sergeants Chick and Sarafin [sic] were craning their necks out of the window, and, sure enough, the Germans were arriving.” The person Captain Butcher referred to as “Sarafin” was Sue Sarafian, the personal secretary for the Supreme Allied Commander General Dwight Eisenhower between 1943-47. “He always misspelled my name,” added Sarafian in the oral history interview conducted by the Eisenhower Library researcher in 1991, referring to the misspelling of the “ian” Armenian suffix of her last name in Butcher’s book. Pilot Roland Jehl and Sue Sarafian married later, after which she became Sarafian-Jehl and retired from the US Army in 1947.

Sergeant Sue Sarafian was the only secretary that Gen. Eisenhower took with him back to the War Department after World War II. “Here, he promoted her to 2nd Lieutenant and trusted her to write down his dictation and transcribe his words in the famous book *Crusade in Europe*. Roland and Patty Jehl, the children of Sue Sarafian, texted back to respond to this author’s inquiry.

Sue Sarafian’s parents were born in in Keghi, Kharpert, in Western Armenia. Surviving the genocide of 1915, they, as thousands of other Armenians reeling from the trauma of the genocide, found refuge in America. In 1917 Sue was born in Malden, MA and was two years old when the family relocated to Detroit, MI.

In 1942, Sarafian joined the Women’s Auxiliary Armed Corps (WAAC) and is known as one of most successful WAAC officers of World War II. What is less known, however, is that before joining WAAC, she was a member of the Armenian Youth Federation (AYF): an American-Armenian community version of the American scouting organization, which is where Sue first received her first taste of a physical training regime.

“When the war started, I came from a family of five girls, no boys, and I was the oldest, and my reason for enlisting was true patriotism,” Sarafian said in the oral history interview. Sue joined Gen. Eisenhower’s staff in 1943 and later moved with the general to London.

Like Sarafian, radio-operator Greg Melikian was also in Reims, France, in May of 1945. When the Nazi generals handed the official document of surrender to General see EISENHOWER, page 8

New Interim Director at Eastern Diocese’s Zohrab Information Center

NEW YORK — The Diocese of the Armenian Church of America (Eastern) announced the hiring of an interim director for the Krikor and Clara Zohrab Information Center, the Diocese’s research and information facility, housed in the St. Vartan Cathedral complex in New York City.

Jesse Arlen has accepted the position on a part-time basis, which went into effect February 22, 2021. Arlen is currently completing his PhD at UCLA in Near Eastern Languages and Cultures, with a focus in Armenian studies. He is the author of numerous publications and papers, and has been a speaker at many academic workshops, panel discussions, and interviews, including events sponsored by the Diocese through the Zohrab Center.

“Jesse is a very promising scholar in the field of Armenian theology and early Christian studies,” said Diocesan Primate Bishop Daniel Findikyan. “He brings to the Zohrab Center not only strong scholarly and teaching credentials, but also sincere dedication to the Armenian Church and its vital Christian witness and ministry.” The Primate expressed thanks to the former Zohrab Center director, Dr. Christopher Sheklian, for helping to identify Arlen for the position.

“I am both humbled and enthusiastic about my appointment as interim director of the Zohrab Center,” said



Jesse Arlen

Arlen. “Bishop Daniel has played an influential and formative role not just in my intellectual life and academic career — including when I was his student at Notre Dame — but also in mine and my wife’s entry into the Armenian Church and the deepening of our faith in Christ.”

He added: “I look forward to the start of this next chapter, playing my part to help realize his episcopal vision and working alongside a staff filled with such wonderful people.”

Arlen is a recent recipient of the Dolores Zohrab Liebmann Fellowship, which has supported his doctoral studies at UCLA. “This makes me all the more eager for the opportunity to yield a good return on that investment and honor the legacy of Krikor and Clara Zohrab, and Dolores Zohrab Liebmann, by promoting Armenian language, literature, and culture in my new position.”

Arlen will work remotely for the coming months.



COMMUNITY NEWS

Boston Mayor Walsh Rescinds Khojaly Proclamation

PROCLAMATION, from page 1

American community made it clear that the proclamation was particularly hurtful, he said, thanking them for respectfully bringing this issue to his attention.

In his letter, he expressed his gratitude for the relationship the City of Boston enjoyed with the Armenian people, mentioning the creation of Armenian Heritage



"I CONTINUE TO BE PROUD TO STAND IN SUPPORT OF ARMENIAN-AMERICANS IN BOSTON AND THE SURROUNDING AREA,"

—MARTY WALSH
MAYOR OF BOSTON (OUTGOING)

Park and the 2015 commemoration of the centennial of the Armenian Genocide. He stated, "I continue to be proud to stand in support of Armenian-Americans in Boston and the surrounding area," and thanked Armenians for their contribution to civic life.

Many Armenians contacted the mayor's office after they became aware of the Khojaly proclamation, and very quickly the mayor's chief communications officer issued an apology via the *Mirror-Spectator* on March 2.

Middlesex Sheriff Peter J. Koutoujian played a key role due to his longstanding friendship with the mayor. Koutoujian declared, "When I first saw the mayor's proclamation, I reached out to him immediately, because I knew it did not sound like Marty. Why I say this is because I have known Marty since 1996 when we ran for office. We both started in the House of Representatives in the same year. Your class in a legislative body is something that really binds you and bonds you together, so much so that you maintain a very close and abiding friendship over these very many years. And the nice thing is that we both serve in public office so we see each other and share in that too."

Not only has the mayor attended various Armenian Genocide commemoration events over the years, and signed onto Genocide recognition resolutions, but has spoken at Armenian Heritage Park engagements in Boston and even visited the Armenian Quarter in Jerusalem.

Koutoujian recalled, "We traveled to Jerusalem together and I was going to visit the Armenian Quarter. He asked to join me. I know this is a very special memory for him because he speaks about it all the time."

The sheriff stated that as soon as he contacted the mayor, the latter understood the situation and felt badly, so he asked Koutoujian to arrange a meeting with a group of Armenian community leaders. At that meeting, Koutoujian said, the mayor did not hesitate to acknowledge that this was something that should not have happened.

Walsh accepted responsibility there and in the letter. The context to be understood is that Walsh is in the process of transitioning to become the US Secretary of Labor, which creates a lot of turnover in his office.

Koutoujian said, "I appreciate his candor and his respect for our community. It is not easy, as there is a lot going on right now for him, but he took the time to do this. I am proud of my friend Marty Walsh and I am proud of our community, because it engaged with him in a respectful way, and he responded in the same manner."

Co-chair of the Armenian Assembly of America Anthony J. Barsamian responded to the mayor's action, stating, "We thank

Mayor Walsh and very much appreciate the mayor's candor and commitment to do the right thing. I would also like to thank fellow Bostonians Peter Koutoujian, Berj Najarian and Aram Kaligian for their important work on this matter."

Koutoujian concluded, "This is important, and so I say this a lot: We can continue as a community to educate each other and remind each other about the Armenian Genocide and what is going on in Artsakh, but our great power is when we educate the non-Armenian community." Outreach and phone calls are important, but the story of

this proclamation shows how long-term relationships and friendships are crucial. It shows that standing up to propaganda is important, but also, as Koutoujian pointed out, "This is the benefit of having non-Armenians become part of our community, become part of our family, and understand what we go through. This is a proud day for our community. We saw an injustice, we acted and we were recognized, not just for our advocacy of the moment but for years of a positive relationship and educating people about what it is to be Armenian. This is a good day for us."



Billboards in MA Exhort President Biden To Recognize Armenian Genocide

BILLBOARD, from page 1

Daniel Varoujan Hejinian, the founding president of Peace of Art Inc., recently said, "Mr. Biden sponsored numerous bills in favor of recognizing the Armenian Genocide, as chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. Most recently, during the campaign for president, Mr. Biden promised to recognize the Armenian Genocide and to make human rights a priority if elected president. The Armenian Genocide is a human rights issue. We hope President Biden will have the courage to keep his promise and on the 24th of April recognize the Armenian Genocide."

Peace of Art Inc. was formally founded in Massachusetts in 2003, but has been active since 1996. It is a private non-profit, non-political, non-religious educational organization.

Peace of Art uses the universal language of art to raise awareness about human concerns, for the betterment of humanity, to promote peaceful solutions to conflicts, and to promote the international recognition of the Armenian Genocide. Peace of Art, Inc., is dedicated to the peacekeepers of the world, peace activists, all those who risk their lives for the welfare of the people. Since it was founded, Peace of Art has not solicited nor received funding from other sources.

See an accompanying video at the *Mirror-Spectator* website.

Ghaplanyan Speaks About Environmental Risks in Armenia for ARPA Institute

has knowingly targeted forests. This human rights violation can legally be qualified as an attempt at ecocide.

These constant threats that the ecosystem in Armenia is experiencing can be prevented to a degree if action is taken by the societies of Armenia and Artsakh.

Armenia has displayed activism in several spheres: increasing electric mobility, being a party to every international environmental convention, and minimizing GAG (Generation of Ammonia from Grazing) emissions. Dr. Ghaplanyan said that there is a lot more that Armenia can do in terms of minimizing these emissions. This includes investing in more solar power, and using the country's prominent IT sector and engineering to create more multidisciplinary projects.

One specific energy sector that needs to be targeted, Dr. Ghaplanyan says, is construction. Thirty percent of the general energy in Armenia goes towards heating buildings. Approximately 19,000 of these buildings are non-energy efficient.

Solutions

Ghaglanyan said that investing into constructive energy-efficient buildings is a start. This would not only tackle energy



Irina Ghaplanyan

poverty, but also bring new green jobs to the country. "If we connect further textile development to solar energy production, then economic growth can become more green."

One difficulty is an increase in deforestation, which is fueled by poverty. "Wherever you see the highest levels of poverty, you also have the highest pressure on the environment," said Ghaglanyan. Deforestation, illegal fishing, and water base reduction is very prominent in these areas. Turkey's construction of major water reservoir dams across Armenia's border, despite agreements that go back 100 years, has contributed to low water levels.

These are all problems that can be alleviated through policymaking, according to Ghaglanyan. "You need good policymaking which contains a long-term socioeconomic component. When it comes to foreign policy, it is more difficult to create these foreign policies when you have hostile neighboring countries."

The struggle of maintaining water levels at Lake Sevan dates back to when Armenia became part of the Soviet Union. Since then, the lake has dropped more than 20 meters, and eutrophication has increased. This has left the lake constantly exploited because of the constant waste flow, which communities around the lake contribute to due to the lack of waste water cleaning stations.

Mining sectors have also continued op-

erating; many operating without the proper environmental procedure put in place. This is something that the Armenian government overlooks because it relies heavily on the taxes that come from these mines, said Dr. Ghaglanyan. "Legislation has been very lax and hasn't put many checks in place."

Companies also over-rely on mining, and over-reliance leads to underinvestment in areas like agriculture and tourism, which can be prevented through checks put in place. These underlying situations affecting the environment all similar solutions.

At the end of the event, the audience was given the opportunity to ask questions chosen by moderator Ani Shabazian.

Ghaglanyan again connected the situation in Armenia with the rest of the world, declaring: "We need to talk about this on an international scale because it doesn't only impact countries like Armenia." At the same time, she remarked, Armenia is a country that has the potential to enforce carbon-neutral action that can benefit other countries.

"As the secretary-general of the United Nations referenced in a speech, 'No country is small enough not to make a difference,'" Ghaglanyan emphasized.

The Armenian-American Aides Of General Dwight Eisenhower

EISENHOWER, from page 6

Eisenhower, he ordered Sergeant Melikian to cable the cheerful and historic news to Washington, D.C. On September 2, Melikian was present at the ceremony of designating Wilmington, NC as the first American World War II Heritage City, attended also by the US president. Donald Trump recognized the presence and the incredible experience of Melikian in his official speech: "When Greg was 20 years old, he served as a radio operator in the headquarters of Supreme Allied Commander General Dwight D. Eisenhower. Oh, I'd loved to have heard some of those conversations," Trump said.

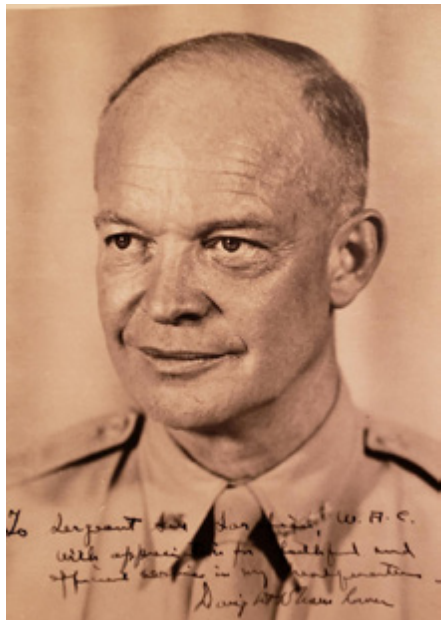
Ramona Melikian, the daughter of Mr. Melikian, replied to this author's inquiry to state: "The general chose my father because he was the youngest soldier on duty and could speak about the ending of World War II for the rest of his life." Earlier this year, during the May celebrations dedicated to V.E. 75th anniversary, Britain's Guardian dedicated an article to radio-operator Greg Melikian with an eloquent title "The Man who Stopped the War."

The 1st Infantry division of the US Army, stationed in Scotland in August

of 1942, was among the first American major detachments to be shipped to the European theater after America joined the war effort. Among other officers of the division was the American-Armenian George (Gevorg) Juskalian. In November of 1942, as an officer of the 26th Infantry Regiment commanded by Theodore Roosevelt Jr, George participated in Operation Torch: the landing in Africa. After advancing for three months, American troops met the increasing resistance of Nazis. It was at the battle of Kasserine Pass where Captain Juskalian was captured as he was searching for one of his officers who had gone missing on a reconnaissance mission. Juskalian was a POW for 27 months during which he was awarded the Silver Star for the rescue attempt of the missing private. After returning to Washington, D.C., he was honored by being tasked with the role of Secretary to the Chief of Staff of the Army under General Eisenhower. A great patriot of his country, Juskalian passed away on July 4, 2010. "Ideal man, a good commander," this is how in our phone communication Julius W. Becton, the U.S. Army three-star general described Juskalian, with whom he had



General Eisenhower with his staff during World War II: Sue Sarafian is second from the right



A photo inscribed by General Eisenhower for Sue Sarafian with the following words: "To Sgt. Sue Sarafian W.A.C. with appreciation for faithful and official service in my headquarters, Dwight D. Eisenhower"

been stationed in Europe for many years.

Juskalian was also a dedicated member of the American-Armenian community and was an active participant and supporter of Washington's St. Mary Armenian church. As he stated in one of our conversations, he had multiple interactions with General Eisenhower after he was elected President. "If he came to the Pentagon and saw me he would talk with me or wave his hand", Juskalian said. The colonel was posthumously honored in 2011 with the post office in Centerville, VA being named after him.

The list goes on. US Air Force Colonel Harry Sachaklian served in Eisenhower's staff in Europe during World War II and later.

These are but a few examples of the service and sacrifice American-Armenians community members have made on behalf of their adopted homeland of the United States. (Charles Yessaian of Maryland contributed to the reporting above. A video accompanies this article at the *Mirror-Spectator* website.)

OBITUARY

Internationally Renowned Opera Singer Anita Terzian Passes Away

FOREST HILLS, N.Y. – Internationally renowned opera singer Anita Terzian-Titus passed away from congestive heart failure at North Shore Hospital in Forest Hills, NY, on January 20.



Anita Terzian was born on October 12, 1945 in Teheran, Iran, and immigrated to this country at the age of twelve with her parents Arthur and Seda Terzian and her brother Nelson Terzian. They eventually took up residences in Forest Hills, NY. The family became members of the Armenian Church of the Holy Martyrs in Bayside, NY. Anita's love of classical music and opera led her to join the church choir, which was then under the directorship of Mary Selvinazian.

Anita applied to and was accepted by the Juilliard School of Music, where she obtained her Bachelor of Music and Master of Science degrees, all on full scholarship from the Rockefeller Foundation which obtained herself. At Juilliard, her two voice teachers were the famous Canadian-Jewish mezzo Soprano Jenny Tourel and the

world-renowned Maria Callas. While still a student, Anita entered and won the classical music contest sponsored by the German-American radio station program "Liederkrantz."

Subsequent to her graduation from Juilliard, Anita entered and won first place in the International Voice Competition held in Munich Germany. This launched her operatic career. Anita performed in many of the famous opera houses throughout Europe, South America, and the United States; also for many Armenian churches and organizations (gratis of course).

To Anita's many credits are several recordings, over 300 performances of the opera "Carmen," and other Rossini operas. One of which stands out, was her performance of "Chenerentola" [Cinderella] at the Paris Opera; recorded by the BBC and simulcast internationally, at which she received a full twenty-minute standing ovation for her performance. Anita was the guest of honor at the banquet of the Armenian Church Choir Association held in Richmond, VA. There Anita was presented an encyclical [gontag] from the Catholicos of All Armenians (Vehapar) by Archbishop Khajag Barsamian, for her representation and raising of the Armenian name throughout the world.

Anita Terzian and Richard Titus were married in December of 1989 and made their residence together in Forest Hills until Anita's untimely passing on January 20, 2021. Anita was predeceased by her parents, Arthur and Seda Terzian, in Florida. Anita is survived and sorely missed by her husband, Richard M. Titus of Forest Hills, and also her brother Dr. Nelson A. Terzian, and niece, Jennifer Terzian-Goldstein, and their families of Ocean Reef and Coral Gables, Florida.

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COMMUNITY NEWS

Leaders Share Their Experiences at Heritage Park Public Program

BOSTON — “Celebrating Art, Science, Service and Commerce: Leadership Sharing Experiences,” sponsored by the Armenian Heritage Park, will take place on Wednesday, April 7 at 5 p.m. ET, celebrating contributions being made to life and culture in Art, Science, Service and Commerce, the words etched around the Labyrinth’s Circle at Armenian Heritage Park on The Greenway, Boston.

Six thought leaders — each leading by extraordinary example — will speak about their professional experiences and commitment to social good and making a difference.

The leaders include Edward Casabian, an investor and early Uber employee; Julia Grove, picture editor for “This is Us,” NBC series; Avak Kahvejian, PhD, general partner at Flagship Pioneering; Councilor Julia Mejia, Councilor At-Large on the Boston City Council; Berj Najarian, director of football and head coach administration for the New England Patriots and Tracey Zhen, president of Zipcar.

Program Host is Cindy Fitzgibbon, WCVB TV meteorologist.

Ann Zacarian, Programs Planning Team for Friends of Armenian Heritage Park, will offer the welcome. Chief Marty Martinez from City of Boston Office of Health and Human Services will offer greetings.

Each leader will highlight their experiences, celebrating leadership and commitment to social good.

Edward Casabian

Edward Casabian has a background in finance and technology. He has worked for a number of startups in a variety of roles. He was one of Uber’s first 40 employees, helping to build New York’s operations from the ground up - focusing on customer service, social media, marketing and business development. More recently he worked at Lambda School, an online coding school where students don’t pay tuition until they get a job. He is passionate about new technology and invests and advises early-stage companies. Ed also loves to travel and explore cities. He has volunteered in Armenia through Birthright Armenia, and lived in Istanbul, Rome and the US Virgin Islands. He also once lived in 52 different neighborhoods across New York City in one year as part of his NYC Nomad project, which was featured by the New York Times, BBC News and NPR. He lives in Brooklyn with his wife and baby girl. Follow Ed Casabian on Instagram: @thenynomadon and on Twitter: @casabian



Julia Grove

Julia Grove is a television editor born, raised and based in Los Angeles. Her calling came while at Boston University when she realized she was thriving in a dim, windowless basement, with only a Steenbeck and 16mm reels to guide her. She has worked on numerous unscripted and scripted shows over the years, namely “The Bachelor/Bachelorette,” “Scandal” and “How to Get Away With Murder.” She currently edits on NBC’s “This Is Us,” a show she has been with since the first season. She is a member of a handful of Diversity and Mentorship groups in her industry, namely the Motion Picture Editors Guild’s Women’s Steering Committee, and helped establish the ACE Diversity Alumni Group in 2020. In the meantime, she enjoys strictly quarantined dance parties with her husband and 2-year-old son. Julia was recently nominated for an American Cinema Editors Award for her work on season five of “This Is Us.” Follow Julia Grove on Twitter @JAGeditress



Avak Kahvejian, PhD

Avak Kahvejian, PhD is a life sciences inventor, entrepreneur, and CEO. Since 2011, he has been a partner at Flagship Pioneering, where he leads a team to invent and launch new therapeutic platforms. His work has led to the creation of multiple high-value public and private companies including Cygnal



Therapeutics (pioneering new drugs that target neuronal pathways for the treatment of cancer, and autoimmune/inflammation disorders); Codiak BioSciences (developing engineered exosome therapeutics as cancer treatments); Rubius Therapeutics (NASDAQ: RUBY); developing Red Cell Therapeutics, engineered red blood cells capable of providing potent and prolonged therapy for rare diseases, cancer and autoimmunity; and Seres Therapeutics (NASDAQ: MCRB); the first microbiome therapy platform. At Cygnal, Avak served as founding president and CEO from 2017 until the end of 2018, and currently serves as Chief Innovation Officer, leading the establishment and application of a neuronal biology platform for target and drug discovery in the fields of oncology and immunology. At Rubius, he served as founding president and CEO from 2013 to 2017, and then as CIO until the end of 2018. There he established the Rubius Erythrocyte Design (RED)™ platform and conceived and developed dozens of Red Cell Therapeutics (RCTs)™ spanning a range of therapeutic modalities including enzyme therapies, immuno-oncology and oncology therapies, and tolerogenic drugs. Avak also serves as a board member at Codiak and as CEO of multiple FlagshipLabs companies including Cellarity, Ring, FL50, and FL56. Avak serves on the board of the International Institute of New England, an institution which creates opportunities for refugees and immigrants to succeed through resettlement, education, career advancement and pathways to citizenship. He is also on the board of the Canadian Entrepreneurs of New England. He earned his PhD and BS in biochemistry from McGill University. Follow Avak Kahvejian on Twitter: @AvakK and on Instagram @avakava.

Boston City Councilor Julia Mejia

Boston City Councilor At-Large Julia Mejia, after a historic recount, won her seat by a single vote and is now the first Afro-Latina to sit on the Boston City Council. Mejia is currently the Chair of the Committee on Civil Rights and the Committee of Small Business and Workforce Development. Councilor Mejia is focused on influencing and inspiring constituents to be actively engaged in all areas of decision-making processes. Since assuming her role in January, Councilor Mejia and her office have executed a series of innovative COVID-related projects in response to the need of Boston’s hardest-hit constituents. Her office has created culturally responsive food access projects to support small businesses and feed our most vulnerable, as well as a COVID business readiness program to build capacity for Black/Brown immigrant-owned barbers and hair salons. Her office has also designed and implemented a community-centered civic engagement model to address city-wide quality of life concerns and filed legislation to improve access and accountability in city government. Councilor Mejia was recently named Best City Politician 2020 in Boston Magazine. Follow City Councilor At-Large Julia Mejia on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram @juliaforboston



Berj Najarian

In his 27th season in the National Football League and 22nd season with the New England Patriots, Berj Najarian serves as the point person for the day-to-day operations of the team. Berj acts as a liaison across football departments such as team travel, equipment, training and player engagement as well as non-football departments such as marketing, media relations, content and Gillette Stadium operations. Berj manages several elements of head coach Bill Belichick’s off-field agenda, including football operations, player and staff communication, scheduling and personal requests. Berj has been part of all six Patriots Super Bowl championship teams.

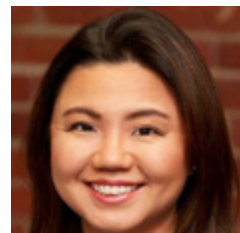


Entering the NFL in 1995, Berj was a public relations assistant with the New York Jets for five seasons following an internship with the New York Knicks of the National Basketball Association. Berj attended Boston University, earning a degree in English. He serves on the Board of Trustees of the Armenian Museum of America and as Board member and officer of the Bill Belichick Foundation. He was born in Brooklyn, NY and grew up

in Manhasset, NY. Follow Berj Najarian on Instagram @berj.najarian

Tracey Zhen

Tracey Zhen is president of Zipcar, the world’s leading car-sharing network, where she oversees all facets of the business. Tracey is focused on innovation and leveraging technology to grow Zipcar’s position as a category leader within the fast-growing mobility industry. Tracey has 20 years of experience in leadership roles at consumer technology companies, including senior management roles at TripAdvisor and Expedia where she oversaw business strategy, finance, operations, product development, and marketing. At TripAdvisor, Tracey oversaw the company’s vacation rental brands, scaling the business and growing revenue through strategic acquisitions and the restructuring of its business models. At Expedia, Tracey served as general manager for emerging markets and strategy, leading international business growth in Europe and Latin America. There she launched new markets, built a European strategy team, and scaled the business to multi-million-dollar growth. Tracey has a proven track record of scaling start-up businesses through product innovation, technology platform development, and consumer marketing. Tracey started her career in investment banking at Bear, Stearns and Co., Inc., and she held senior roles at IAC where she built and oversaw a finance and analytics team, was responsible for new business development and subsequent wind-down and aided corporate restructurings and capital financings. Tracey serves on the Advisory Board of the Harvard Kennedy School Taubman Center for State and Local Government. She is a graduate of New York University’s Leonard N. Stern School of Business holding dual B.S. degrees in Finance and Information Systems, she is a resident of Newton and a native of New York City.



Cindy Fitzgibbon, Host

Cindy Fitzgibbon is Meteorologist, WCVB TV NewsCenter 5’s EyeOpener and Midday. Cindy Fitzgibbon joined WCVB TV in 2013 but has been in the Boston market the past 20 years and a broadcast meteorologist for 25 years. In 2017, she won the regional Emmy award for outstanding achievement in weather broadcasting. She has also won an Associated Press award for “Best Weathercast” and has made guest appearances on ABC News.



Cindy is involved with and devotes her time to organizations that promote science to educate, particularly young girls, including the Discovery Museum “Smart Gals” Program, the Jr. Sci-Tech Girl STEM Expo, and the Science Club for Girls. Cindy repeatedly donates her time to help raise money for local organizations to fight ALS (Lou Gehrig’s disease) and MS (multiple sclerosis) and has become an ambassador in spreading awareness about Batten Disease. She makes frequent “Weather Visits” to schools across the area and has educated thousands of students about the weather over the years.

A native New Englander raised near Portland, Cindy earned her Bachelor of Science degree in meteorology from Lyndon State College in Vermont. She is a member of both the American Meteorological Society (AMS) and the National Weather Association. She has been awarded the AMS Seal of Approval for Television.

the past several years, Cindy has been the emcee for Sunday Afternoon for Families and Friends at Armenian Heritage Park on The Greenway, always joined by her two boys, fellow Armenian Americans and many friends. Cindy was the emcee for Celebrating Contributions of Our Nations Immigrants Honoring Dr. Noubar Afeyan, the gala benefit to raise funds for the Endowed Fund for Care of Armenian Heritage Park on The Greenway in September 2019. Follow Cindy Fitzgibbon on Instagram: @cindy.fitzgibbon and on Twitter: @Met_CindyFitz

Join us, register at armenianheritagepark.org/events-2 or bit.ly/3rHdPVJ

For further information or to support the Park’s ongoing care and maintenance, visit ArmenianHeritagePark.org/Support or email hello@ArmenianHeritagePark.org.



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Armenian Assembly of America Hosts Successful Virtual National Advocacy Conference

Washington, D.C. – The Armenian Assembly of America’s timely and impactful Virtual National Advocacy Conference and Advocacy Week started on Monday, March, 8, 2021 as American Armenian constituents throughout the country participated in panels featuring special guest speakers and met virtually with their Members of Congress to advocate for a robust assistance package to help the Armenian people, including at least \$100 million in assistance; enforcing Section 907 of the Freedom Support Act; urging support for legislation calling for the immediate release of Armenian prisoners of war held by Azerbaijan; and garnering support for this year’s April 24th Armenian Genocide statement by President Joe Biden.

The Assembly’s National Advocacy Conferences aim to reinforce awareness and support of Armenian issues in the U.S. and connect Armenian Americans with Members of Congress and Congressional staff.

U.S. Senate Foreign Relations Committee Chairman Outlines Key Priorities

Senator Bob Menendez (D-NJ), Chairman of the U.S. Senate Foreign Relations Committee, outlined key policy priorities and called on the Biden Administration to revisit and reexamine U.S. policy in the wake of the Artsakh war. He highlighted priority issues facing the people of Nagorno-Karabakh, including the displacement from their homes, lack of access to food, shelter and healthcare, and the need for demining activities. Senator Menendez said that the Biden Administration “must move quickly to recalibrate our relationships with Azerbaijan and Turkey.”

“The United States cannot be in the business of supporting a corrupt, authoritarian regime that has attacked innocent civilians and committed appalling atrocities in violation of humanitarian law,” he added.

Looking ahead to April, Senator Menendez has called on President Biden to officially recognize the Armenian Genocide. He praised the “sustained advocacy” of Armenian Americans, which will be vital to “press the executive branch to break its decades of silence and speak the truth of the genocide.”

Human Rights Panel Highlights Importance of Documenting Atrocities Against the Armenian People

House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence Chairman, Representative Adam Schiff (D-CA), headlined the panel “Defending Human Rights & Preventing Atrocities,” which featured former Republic of Artsakh Human Rights Ombudsman Artak Beglaryan, and the Director of the Program on Peace-building and Human Rights at Columbia University’s Institute for the Study of Human Rights, David L. Phillips.

Moderated by Assembly Co-Chair Van Krikorian, the panel focused on the documentation of human rights violations against the Armenian people of Artsakh, as well as steps undertaken to provide humanitarian assistance and a lasting resolution to the ongoing conflict in the region. Rep. Schiff indicated that perpetrators of human rights abuses should be held accountable and that the U.S. should demand the return of Armenian prisoners of war and bodies of the fallen. He also stated that he is working on introducing a resolution with his Armenian Caucus colleagues in this regard.

Rep. Schiff said that “the U.S. has to reclaim its legacy of being a cham-

countable,” said Phillips.

Phillips stated that the U.S. should provide more aid to Armenia to correct the imbalance with the security assistance it provided to Azerbaijan as a result of the waiver of Section 907 of the Freedom Support Act.

“Restoring U.S. credibility on the international stage starts by recognizing Turkey as a perpetrator which commits crimes against humanity,” said Phillips.

In his remarks, Artak Beglaryan focused on impunity and Azerbaijan’s exemption from punishment for its ongoing human rights violations against the Republic of Artsakh and its people.

“Azerbaijan has conducted a serious policy of isolation against Artsakh that has intensified since 2008,” said Beglaryan. He emphasized Turkey’s role in the war, which was “quite visible,” along with the hiring of mercenaries, who were promised money in exchange for each Armenian soldier killed.

“We have many confessions and witnesses that prove the direct engagement of Turkey in recruiting and transferring mercenaries to Artsakh,” said Beglaryan, who cataloged and investigated all of the war crimes executed against Armenians, including cluster munitions and suicide drones that targeted civilians who resided far from military sites.

“These were deliberate targeting attempts using reconnaissance drones,” said Beglaryan, who noted that public reports are available through the Republic of Artsakh Human Rights Ombudsman office.

Preserving Cultural Heritage Panel Conveys Urgency of Protecting Armenian Heritage Sites at Risk

As thousands of Armenian religious and cultural heritage sites are currently at risk of being expropriated and erased by Azerbaijan, Archbishop Hovnan



(l-r) Professors Lori Khatchadourian, Christina Maranci and Rachel Goshgarian and Archbishop Hovnan Derderian lead the “Preserving Armenian Culture and Heritage” panel

Derderian, Primate of the Western Diocese of the Armenian Church of North America, Professor Lori Khatchadourian of Cornell University, and Professor Christina Maranci of Tufts University, Jeff King, the President of International Christian Concern, shared their insights in a panel moderated by Professor Rachel Goshgarian of Lafayette College.

Emphasizing the importance of cultural heritage, Archbishop Derderian said that academic findings and studies, as well as the ongoing dialogue with political leaders and international cultural organizations, are key to helping find a resolution to the Armenian cultural heritage sites in peril.

Professor Khatchadourian, an archaeologist who teaches at Cornell’s Department of Near Eastern Studies, launched the Caucasus Heritage Watch to monitor, through high-resolution satellite imaging, the damage being done to Armenian cultural heritage sites. The project, which is in its early stages, documents the conditions of the monuments and may help hold perpetrators accountable in the future. She underscored the fact that UNESCO “shirks from calling out governments from which it depends for funding,” therefore there are “few tools for preventing state actors from damaging cultural heritage under their sovereign control or holding such actors accountable.”

Khatchadourian noted that over 1,000 Armenian cultural heritage sites fall under Azerbaijani jurisdiction, distributed across former provinces in Nagorno-Karabakh, and ranging from Armenian monastic complexes to khatchkars (cross-stones), cemeteries and fortresses, among other relics.

“The threats to these sites are real,” she said. “Between 1997 and 2006, Azerbaijan sought to fully erase traces of Armenians, destroying thousands of khatchkars and tens of thousands of historic tombstones in unprecedented acts of destruction in Nakhichevan. Those grave threats loom once again.”

Professor Maranci, the Arthur H. Dadian and Ara Oztemel Professor of Armenian Art and Architecture, as well as Department Chair of the History of Art and Architecture at Tufts University, has researched Armenian heritage loss and destruction, which she remarked is not only “material” culture but “gets to the very root of” Armenian spiritual culture. She cited the horrible consequences of war on heritage sites, such as the damage of the Ghazanchetsots (Holy Savior) Cathedral in Shushi, while noting that far worse would be the “complete erasure of sites.”

Panel moderator and Professor Rachel Goshgarian highlighted the importance of the Armenian American community becoming more aware of the destruction of cultural heritage and engaging as grassroots advocates.

As President of International Christian Concern, a Washington, D.C.-based nonprofit that serves the persecuted church around the world, Jeff King stated:

“At ICC, based on what we have seen and covered, we take the position



Congressman Adam Schiff (D-CA) participates in an Artsakh Human Rights panel with Van Krikorian, Assembly Co-Chair, David L. Phillips, Director of the Program on Peace-building and Rights at Columbia University’s Institute for the Study of Human Rights and Artak Beglaryan, former Human Rights Ombudsman of the Republic of Artsakh

pion of human rights and provide tremendous humanitarian support to the region, demand the return of POWs, and support Artsakh’s right to self-determination.”

As Director of the Program on Peace-building and Human Rights at Columbia University’s Institute for the Study of Human Rights, David L. Phillips prepared the Institute’s Artsakh Atrocities documentation page and said “it’s important to document and record the crimes against Armenians that occurred in plain sight and create a dossier for U.S. policymakers to hold the perpetrators, including Azerbaijan, Turkey and the jihadist mercenaries, ac-



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that recent conflict was a genocide against Armenian Christians due to this messaging of Pan-Turkism against Armenia and Christianity as a whole, and the brutality employed by Azerbaijani forces against soldiers and civilians alike,” said King. “The demolishing of Christian heritage sites is just one example of the religious underpinnings apparent throughout this conflict.”

Artsakh Post-War

Assembly President Carolyn Mugar, Assembly Co-Chair Anthony Barsamian and Assembly Board Member Annie Totah introduced the Republic of Artsakh’s Foreign Minister David Babayan and His Excellency Ambassador Varuzhan Nersesyan, Armenia’s Ambassador to the U.S., where both diplomats shared their perspectives and provided a post-war overview, including humanitarian and rebuilding needs, as well as the urgent priority to ensure the release of Armenian prisoners of war and civilians still detained by Azerbaijan in contravention of the Geneva Conventions, international humanitarian law, and the November 9, 2020 ceasefire statement signed by Armenia and Azerbaijan.

Minister Babayan noted that “It’s important to now concentrate on humanitarian aspects,” and to “go forward step by step.”

Ambassador Nersesyan thanked the Assembly and the community for their enormous humanitarian fundraising efforts during the war, which he said was a clear “symbolic act of unification.” Referencing the centuries-old “strength” of the Armenian people, Ambassador Nersesyan was confident that the “immense challenges will be overcome.”

The Ambassador also indicated that Armenia welcomes mediation efforts by the OSCE Minsk Group Co-Chairs - the U.S., Russia and France - to “find a peaceful solution to the outstanding issue of the status of Artsakh.”

Upon the conclusion of Minister Babayan and Ambassador Nersesyan’s remarks, a special “Artsakh Post-War” panel commenced, moderated by the Assembly’s Armenia Regional Director Arpi Vartanian, which featured the Republic of Artsakh’s Deputy Foreign Minister Armine Aleksanyan, the Republic of Artsakh’s U.S. Representative Robert Avetisyan, and The HALO Trust’s Development Manager Amasia Zargarian.

Deputy Minister Aleksanyan shared her insights and echoed Ambassador Nersesyan’s support for the OSCE Minsk Group to help find a peaceful and lasting settlement yet “not through force” as Azerbaijan attempted last Fall when it launched a full-scale war against the Armenian people. Deputy Minister Aleksanyan also discussed issues of human rights, POWs and the rights of children who have been deprived of shelter, housing, and education as a result of the war.

Mr. Avetisyan reflected on the positive momentum in pre-war Artsakh and the post-war vision to restore economic opportunities, particularly among diasporans who want to invest in Artsakh. Mr. Avetisyan discussed the current situation in the region and the vital steps that need to be taken to safeguard the people of Artsakh.

The HALO Trust Development Manager Amasia Zargarian focused on making Artsakh communities safer post-war. Over the last two decades The HALO Trust has diligently worked on the ground in Artsakh to clear almost 500 minefields, while employing the local population. The organization’s efforts have increased exponentially since the war, despite cuts in funding by the previous U.S. administration.

Mr. Zargarian noted that mines and explosives used to be a larger rural problem in agricultural zones, but are now more of an “urban threat.”

Armenian Caucus Co-Chairs Prioritize Issues Facing Armenian People

Armenian Caucus Co-Chairs Congressman Frank Pallone, Jr. (D-NJ) and Congresswoman Jackie Speier (D-CA) were featured during the Congressional Priorities and U.S. Policy Perspectives panel moderated by Assembly Executive Director Bryan Ardouny.

“U.S. leadership lacked during the war,” said Rep. Pallone. “We emphasized during the Trump Administration, and now we do so during the Biden Administration, that Armenia is one of the few democracies in the former Soviet Union and it should be protected.”

Rep. Speier said Armenia has been “deeply scarred” by the former Administration’s “willingness to be passive.”

Rep. Pallone commented that Turkey’s aggression in Artsakh is “not an isolated incident” and cited examples of its involvement in Libya, Syria, and beyond.

“They are not interested in agreements because they are creating a trans-Turkish empire and using war as a mechanism,” he said as he called for sanctions against Turkey, halting U.S. support of the country under Erdogan’s leadership, ending the waiver of Section 907 of the Freedom Support Act, and securing a major aid package for Artsakh.

“We need to find ways to create stronger ties,” said Rep. Speier, remarking that Artsakh needs assistance with the critical components of security, humanitarian aid, release of POWs, and access to clean water.

“The diaspora has to stay united with the people in Armenia and Artsakh,” concluded Pallone. “This is a rebuilding process and we have to look ahead.”

Contributing their perspectives and insights on U.S. policy, Ambassador Carey Cavanaugh, a former OSCE Minsk Group Co-Chair, and Dr. Michael Rubin of the American Enterprise Institute, participated in a panel moderated by the Assembly’s Congressional Relations Director Mariam Khalyan.

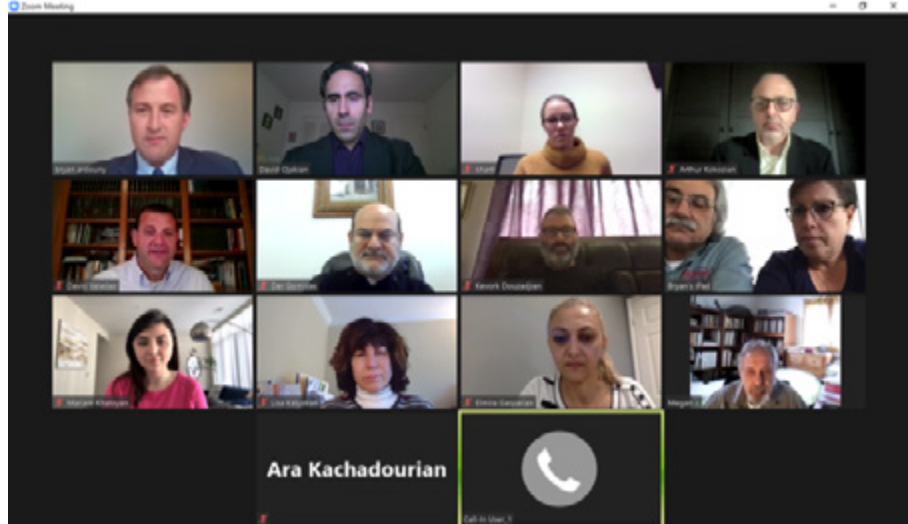
Ambassador Cavanaugh stated that President Biden has been “strident in reintroducing human rights as a fundamental tenet of American foreign policy.”

Regarding the November 9, 2020 trilateral statement, Ambassador Cavanaugh said it was “not a peace agreement” and despite Aliyev’s use of force as a desired solution, the conflict remains unresolved.

“Force will not solve the situation,” he continued. “There needs to be a definitive discussion and agreement between the countries that includes support from people in the region on how this can be finalized, and that includes status.”

Referring to the September 27, 2020 war as a “surprise attack,” Dr. Rubin said that the commitments Azerbaijan made in order to secure the Section 907 waiver were “wholly violated.”

“There are no mitigating factors here and the U.S. should make clear that it will stand by its own laws,” he continued, adding that sanctions should be



American Armenian constituents participate in an advocacy meeting with Congressman David Valadao (R-CA)

imposed on Azerbaijan in the coming year as a consequence of its actions. “Azerbaijan needs to stop getting a free pass.”

Dr. Rubin underscored Turkey’s expansionism, which has reached Libya, Cyprus, Syria, Iraq and Greece.

We see a pattern of aggression with the aim of ethnic cleansing,” said Dr. Rubin. “Turkey should be held accountable as a reasonable, responsible NATO partner.”

Virtual Meetings with Members of Congress

Throughout the week virtual meetings took place with Members of Congress from across the country including, Arizona, California, Colorado, Connecticut, Florida, Georgia, Illinois, Indiana, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, Missouri, Nevada, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Texas, Utah, Washington, and Wisconsin. These timely meetings allowed constituents to advocate for the letter circulating by Senate Foreign Relations Committee Member Bob Menendez (D-NJ) to President Joe Biden regarding affirmation of the Armenian Genocide as well as the Prisoner of War resolution spearheaded by House Intelligence Committee Chairman Adam Schiff (D-CA), along with the leadership of the Armenian Caucus leadership, which urges Azerbaijan to immediately release all POWs and captured civilians.

“The rich and diverse panels and productive virtual meetings with Members of Congress organized during the Assembly’s Virtual National Advocacy



(l-r) Senator Bob Menendez (D-NJ), Assembly Executive Director Bryan Ardouny, Assembly President Carolyn Mugar, Assembly Co-Chair Anthony Barsamian and Assembly Board Member Annie Totah

Conference showcased the breadth of experience and knowledge from our dedicated elected representatives, academics, policy experts and community members,” stated Executive Director Bryan Ardouny. “We appreciate the time and efforts of our panelists as well as our State Chairs and grassroots activists from across the country to make our voices heard.”

Established in 1972, the Armenian Assembly of America is the largest Washington-based nationwide organization promoting public understanding and awareness of Armenian issues. The Assembly is a non-partisan, 501(c)(3) tax-exempt membership organization.

Arts & Culture

Dr. Khatchig Mouradian Will Discuss Humanitarian Efforts in Ottoman Syria During Genocide

FRESNO — Dr. Khatchig Mouradian will speak on his new book, *The Resistance Network: The Armenian Genocide and Humanitarianism in Ottoman Syria, 1915-1918*, at 10 a.m. (Pacific time)/1 p.m. (Eastern Time) on Saturday, March 27. The presentation is part of the Spring 2021 Lecture Series of the Armenian Studies Program and is supported by the Leon S. Peters Foundation.

The Resistance Network is the history of an underground network of humanitarians, missionaries, and diplomats in Ottoman Syria who helped save the lives of thousands during the Armenian Genocide. Mouradian challenges depictions of Armenians as passive victims of violence and subjects of humanitarianism, demonstrating the key role they played in organizing a humanitarian resistance against the destruction of their people. Piecing together hundreds of accounts, official documents and missionary records, he presents a social history of genocide and resistance in wartime Aleppo and a network of transit and concentration camps stretching from Bab to Ras ul-Ain and Der Zor. He ultimately argues that, despite the violent and systematic mechanisms of control and destruction in the cities, concentration camps, and massacre sites in this region, the genocide of the Armenians



Dr. Khatchig Mouradian

did not progress unhindered — unarmed resistance proved an important factor in saving countless lives.

Mouradian is a lecturer in Middle Eastern, South Asian, and African Studies (MESAAS) at Columbia University. He holds a PhD in History from the Strassler Center for Holocaust and Genocide Studies at Clark University.

In Fall 2016, Mouradian served as the Henry S. Khanzadian Kazan Visiting Professor at California State University, Fresno. He is the author of articles on genocide, mass violence, and unarmed resistance, the co-editor of a forthcoming book in late Ottoman history, and the editor of the peer-reviewed journal *The Armenian Review*.

In 2021, Mouradian was appointed the Armenian and Georgian Area Specialist in the African and Middle Eastern Division (Near East Section) at the Library of Congress.

Zoom Registration Link: <https://bit.ly/armenianstudiesmouradian>



Whimsical toy by Kardash Onnig

‘The Whiskered Old Toymaker of Baraka’ *Kardash Onnig’s Latest Project*

By Arpi Sarafian

Special to the Mirror-Spectator

STANDFORDVILLE, NY – While quintessential-ly “Kardash”ian in its focus on the effort to create an alternative world, *COLLABORATION*, the latest in the series of Kardash Onnig’s ongoing Baraka Project, is also delightfully playful and colorful, attributes one does not typically associate with the artist’s work. The reproductions of the vividly colored pages of the children’s books — which Onnig, in collaboration with Vazo, an artist friend from France, salvaged from recycling bins, whitewashed “blank” and gave to children to draw and color, to “in effect start a new book” — put the spotlight on the children who, by the artist’s own admission, have become central to his creativity.

The book gives the reader a wonderful feeling of lightheartedness. One turns its pages in anticipation of yet another pleasing image of the artwork of the children it celebrates, or of the toys, the making of which has taken centerstage in the artist’s creative endeavors. A yellow zebra with blue stripes, an orange dragon, a sparkling unicorn, a green sea turtle . . . all burst with color and ingenuity. Making toys is “rewarding, fulfilling,” confesses Onnig. Indeed, “We The Children” give the artist hope for the future of mankind: “I have given up on grown-ups and instead concentrate on helping children.” Onnig is eternally optimistic and has unwavering faith in his vision of a more humane and compassionate world.

The handsome little volume also features the artist’s latest creations. The photographs of the “new finished work” Onnig has carved from a large beech chunk are incredibly appealing. Interspersed throughout are the reflections of artists of different backgrounds on their lifelong relationships with Onnig. The exchange between Onnig and Uli Boege, a friend artist of German descent with whom Onnig has enjoyed 53 years of intellectual collaboration, is especially illuminating. The two pals’ extreme positions on the women’s movement, on Nietzsche’s Dionysian Vision of the World and on much more, invite the reader to explore her own views on these controversial issues. Also included are short narratives of “a quintessential moment,” a unique personal experience the artist has asked visiting women to share “as part of an ongoing study to better understand the concepts of spirit and soul.”

With the Baraka Project, Onnig extends the concept of creativity into his collaborators whose very willingness to contribute evidences the respect they have for a guy that some dismiss as a “lunatic” with an unattainable vision of an “impossible” world. With his initiative, the artist aims to “connect people and experiences across the nation and internationally.” “It is an honor to have been selected as a visiting artist-in-residency at Baraka Center for 3-D Experimentation,” writes architect Nathan Williams whose work explores the African diaspora process. “Baraka is a space for simultaneous living and giving, creating and sharing,” he adds. All value the guidance Onnig provides and all claim to “learn from Kardash Onnig.” “Onnig is a master . . . I consider him a mentor, despite all his resistance to such titles,” writes Gregory MacAvoy, a sculptor from Brooklyn, NY, in his musings “On the nature of collaboration.”

see ONNIG, page 16



Bilal Focuses On Lullabies As Transmitters Of Genocide Trauma at BU Lecture

By Harry Kezelian
Mirror-Spectator Staff

LOS ANGELES / BOSTON — The Elie Wiesel Center for Jewish Studies at Boston University is hosting a virtual lecture series titled, “Encounters With Holocaust, Genocide, and Human Rights Studies.” Part of the goal of the series is to highlight the Holocaust, Genocide, and Human Rights Studies minor concentration which has been offered at Boston University since 2016. The first speaker in the series on March 9 was the Istanbul-born Armenian anthropologist, Dr. Melissa Bilal (currently of UCLA).

Program director of the Holocaust, Genocide, and Human Rights studies minor, Prof. Nancy Harrowitz, welcomed the virtual audience which tuned into Bilal’s lecture, entitled “Voicing and Silencing the Memory of Loss: Lullabies and Stories from Armenian Women in Istanbul.” Dr. Sultan Doughan, a fellow scholar, introduced Bilal, an historical anthropologist who uses ethnomusicology as her lens. Bilal’s lecture “illustrated the capacity of lullabies sung by Armenian women in Istanbul to produce knowledge, functioning as a survival strategy under the regime of denial following the 1915 Armenian Genocide.”

Bilal discussed her interactions with three women in Istanbul, all children of Genocide survivors. In her research, she stresses the connection between generations of women and how daughters of female Genocide survivors inherit their legacy through various ways, one of which is through information coded into music, song, and lullabies. Therefore, she focuses on working with women who are children of Genocide survivors, learning their stories and in particular how they learned about the trauma of the period from their mothers. One of those ways is how a mother sings lullabies to her children.

Bilal described meeting a woman named Naze who was born in Sasun to a family of survivors who managed to stay on their native land. Naze stressed that Sasun was historically Armenian territory referring to it as “*Sasun Kavar, Hin Hayastan*” [District of Sasun, Ancient Armenia]. Naze sang a lullaby she had learned from her mother *Ruri, ruri, nsdim hed orrotsin*. This was a folk lullaby from the region that Bilal had not heard before, in fact, probably very few people knew such songs. Modern Armenian lullabies such as *Kun Yeghir Balas, Ari Im Sokhag* and others produced by nationalist male poets and composers have taken up much of the floor in the years since the Genocide. Bilal was fascinated by Naze’s singing. She argues that music and songs

see LULLABIES, page 13



ARTS & CULTURE

Bilal Focuses on Lullabies as Transmitters of Genocide Trauma

LULLABIES, from page 12

perpetuate communal experiences; in Naze's case, the life of Armenians in Sasun and of course the massacres that took place there.

In 1923 the Treaty of Lausanne effectively recognized the modern Republic of Turkey by the Western Powers. In the treaty three official minorities of the country were noted: Greeks, Armenians, and Jews. All three have been suppressed to varying degrees. The Suryani or Assyrians, i.e. Aramaic-speaking Christians, are another minority group in the country. They do not have an official status, but have also suffered suppression by the authorities. As for Armenians after the Genocide, they were caught between a desire to give voice to their memories and remain silent in order to avoid repercussions.

As Bilal states "The affective [i.e. emotional] knowledge of Armenians in Turkey stands at the core of what we can conceptualize as 'double consciousness.'"

This of course includes the trauma of the Genocide passed down as emotions, feelings that mothers relay to their daughters, oftentimes without giving precise details.

The second woman Bilal spoke about in her lecture was Yerchanig. Yerchanig's mother was a survivor from Kurtbelen. Because she survived the *chart* (massacre), Yerchanig refers to her mother as a "Chart-Digin" [Massacre Woman]. Yerchanig's mother, unlike some others, described many of the events that took place in 1915 and afterwards. She told her daughter that on the Monday after Vartavar she was deported from Kurtbelen with other women. She lost all her loved ones and wanted to kill herself. Apparently Yerchan-

es that were still standing in Sivas when she was growing up. A family member was claiming that the Turkish government was going to let the Armenians open the church up again. Hripsime's father scorned this theory, saying "Do you really think that they will ever give it back?" Of course, they did not. The next morning the family woke up to find the church destroyed. Hripsime had a close relationship with her father who showed her various Armenian historical locations. One of the monasteries outside of Sivas was in a militarized zone. Hripsime's father pointed out a building through the wire fence and told her it was the sanctuary of that monastery.

Hripsime, like the others, learned many songs from her mother and grandmother and wanted to transmit them. Bilal played a recording of her voice, which was probably the most moving part of the entire lecture. Hripsime sang in Turkish:

Sleep my little one, let me sing you a lullaby

Do not depress my sorrowful heart

You are left to me by the one who is gone

Sleep my little one, let me sing you a lullaby

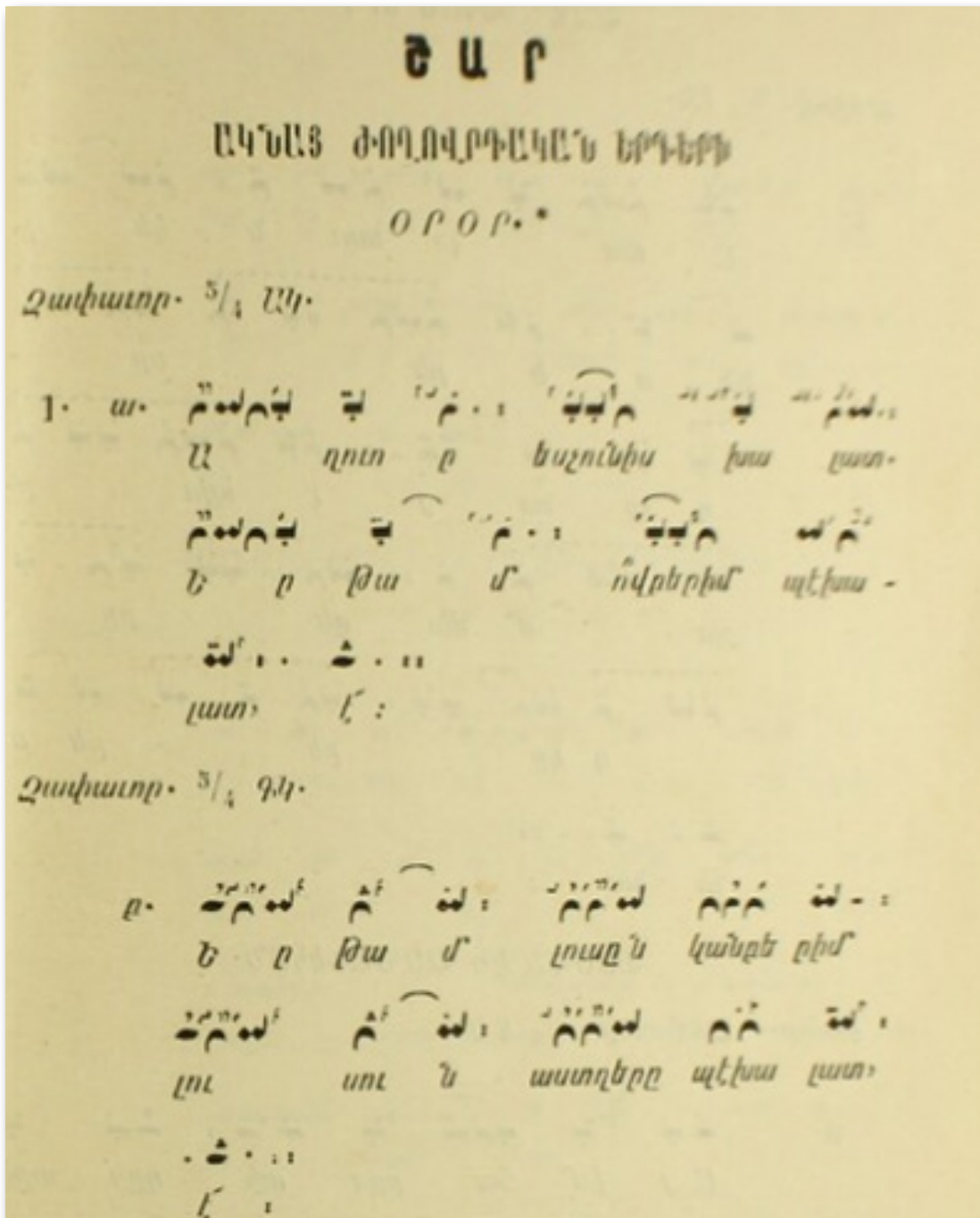
Bilal found it too painful to continue and changed to a lullaby in the Armenian language dealing with motherly love.

Armenians that were left in Anatolia turned their ruined churches into sacred sites. They would visit these sites and naturally without having to say much it was understood that these used to be Armenian churches and clearly horrible destruction and violence had taken place for them to be ruined and few Armenians to be left; in other words, merely taking children to these sites implanted the reality of the Genocide in their minds. Meanwhile, the Armenians born in Istanbul forbade their children to travel to their native lands in the interior as they were still considered dangerous.

Bilal explained she aims to challenge the conventional concept of a "minority" group. As seen in her research, the stories and songs of the women all mark Istanbul as both "home" and a "place of displacement." There is both loss and survival, and survival with tremendous losses. The songs accumulate and shape a memory, in everyday conversations or interviews to resist forgetting. These songs establish bridges between generations whose very existence is under the surveillance of the state. With such surveillance it is almost as if these women are talking in code. Common phrases in Turkish folk songs such as "I cried day and night," and "I am burning now," take on a different meaning spoken by an Armenian grandmother. As Bilal says, the memory of the Genocide is very much alive and inflicting pain up to the present.

After Bilal's lecture was finished, a Q&A session produced a number of interesting points. Prof. Roberta Micallef from BU's Department of World Languages and Literature served as moderator/respondent

One point Bilal touched on in the discussion was that an important part of her



The Gomidas Janigian Agntsi Oror



Dr. Melissa Bilal

ig's mother arrived in the Arabic provinces of the Empire (probably present day Syria) because she stated that she served an Arab family. Yerchanig's mother said that others were sent to Der Zor and that "there was *chart* everywhere in Anatolia." Eventually Yerchanig's mother came to Istanbul where she met the man she was to marry. He tentatively asked her "about proposals." Yerchanig's mother said the Arabs had made proposals but she had refused. However, there is no way to know what really happened, as survivor women often kept silent about sexual violence. Yerchanig stated, "my mother was one history."

The third woman discussed was Hripsime, born in Sivas in 1932. Her parents were from the village of Tavra, outside Sivas. Growing up, Hripsime heard from her elders that many of the people of Tavra were spared because they were millers who could supply bread to the Ottoman Army. Hripsime remembered the church-

work is unearthing women's voices. She is studying music memory through her oral interviews of women, and the history of the Armenian feminist movement through the written word. Bilal wishes to bring together the written and the oral arguing that they are not mutually exclusive.

The discourse on the Genocide has centered around war and Ottoman and Armenian politics and women and their stories have been sidelined, she said. Bilal noted that starting in 1879, Armenian feminists founded 50 girls' schools in what is now Eastern and Southeastern Turkey. Some of her subjects were born in the towns where these schools once existed; thus their survivor mothers may have attended these schools. Moreover, Bilal thinks about the possibilities and the losses the Genocide entailed; while the conventional story is the loss of churches, male clergy, and male poets and political leaders, Bilal stresses that had the Genocide not happened, the women she interviews could have gone to these girls' schools and possibly become writers, teachers, and so on.

Bilal's view of the generation she interviews is that they are active gatekeepers of the unwritten culture, but also that they took up the baton from their feminist "older sisters" (or aunts) whose work was destroyed in 1915. Bilal points out that not only is the Genocide the history of the Armenian community but an enormous loss for feminists in general, stressing that the history of women in Turkey cannot be written without working through this past.

The research is emotional for Bilal at times because she is dealing with the elder women of her own community. "Sometimes it makes me hopeless about the future, but sometimes they empower me,"

she said of her subjects. She added that "Some talk about the Genocide experience but some don't, but even when they don't, the language and dialect reminds that there was a community there, a language there that is lost today."

Finally, Bilal added that in her work she deconstructs the genre identification of "lullaby." She disagrees with the traditional understanding of lullabies, which according to her comes from a patriarchal point of view. Rather than being an impediment to objectivity, Bilal views being a "native ethnographer" (i.e. an anthropologist studying the group from which she came), as important. It gives her methodological openings that would be closed to others and helps her bring in the native voice.

Bilal disagrees with many of the approaches traditionally taken in anthropology. She believes in methodology that aims to "decolonize." Nineteenth century ethnographers, who were mostly men, identified lullabies as simple songs that mothers sing to their children. This understanding denigrates women's cultural and musical creations as simple and frivolous, and downplays their importance in transmission of history and culture. Bilal states that the lullabies she has studied are a repertoire of culture and musical memory. They can be political as well. How? Armenian lullabies are almost inherently political because they are singing in the Armenian language, which is discouraged by the Turkish state, and they were brought from a destroyed homeland (like Naze's *Sasun Lullaby* in the first example). In addition there are lullabies that directly or more often indirectly reference the Genocide.

The Boston University series continues through April 14.

A CONVERSATION WITH ...

David Arathoon

Heir of Illuminators And the Artist

By Artsvi Bakhchinyan
Special to the Mirror-Spectator

YEREVAN/TORONTO — Artist David Arathoon was born in India and lives in Canada. He has achieved national success with numerous solo and group exhibitions in many private and public galleries. His paintings are in numerous corporate and private collections in Canada, the US, Australia, Hong Kong and other countries. Some of the numerous showings that have recently been mounted by Arathoon's studio were titled: "Lilac Time;" "Autumn's Gold;" "Where the Wild Roses Grow;" "Sonnet for Spring;" "Lilies of the Field;" "Gather Ye Rose Buds;" "Forever Autumn;" "Autumn's Palanquin;" "The Floating World," etc.

His paintings are included in many homes and public locations. Some corporate collections include: Vintage Inns, Queen's Landing Hotel Niagara on the Lake, Toronto's Market Gallery, Holiday Inn, Toronto, Movenpick Restaurants, Board of Trade, Humber College, Sunnybrook and Wellesley Hospitals, Canadian Tire Corporation, and Bell Canada. Arathoon is represented by several well known galleries, including: Whitten Gallery, King City, Gallerie Shayne, Montreal, The Russell Gallery, Peterborough, Harbour Gallery, Port Credit and McLaren-Barnes, Oakville, Odon Wagner Gallery, Toronto, Pegassus Gallery of Canadian Art and Salt Spring Island B.C

David, nature and, particularly, flowers, seem to be your biggest inspirations. No wonder: you come from India, a country, that has various flower fests and festivals.

I mainly paint what I see and know. I do not live near palm trees, so I do not paint them. I choose the colors as that suit my palette, often exaggerating them. I do not have to make any painting like a photograph because I have a camera to take pictures if I need that kind of realism. My figure paintings are actually illustrations, much like fairy tale picture books. Some have been as large as 5 feet tall by 7 feet. I paint them mostly by custom order.

Canada seems to be a rather monochromatic country, yet you manage to keep the colorfulness of India.

Canada is very large and wide and has four distinct seasons. Each region has its own natural beauty and color schemes. The damp West Coast is very different from the colder East Coast. My favorite seasons to paint are spring and autumn. In the spring soft colors emerge in the leaves and grasses, and there are blossoms on the trees. In autumn, we get a vast range of colors in the changing leaves, combined with the evergreens, it is spectacular to see and paint.

Your paintings with many human figures seems to be very "Western," while your landscapes and still-lives are very "Oriental." The colorfulness is very typical for most of the artists of Armenian descent, even if they have never been in Armenia. So how we could characterize you? An Armenian artist? An Indian? Or will just Canadian cover all?

I am an Armenian artist born in Calcutta, India, as were my parents and some of their ancestors, who is now a Canadian citizen.

Charity work is a part of your life. You are



"In An Ontario Autumn" by David Arathoon

the founder of the successful and popular annual fundraiser: "Message in a Bottle," which has raised nearly \$1 million for the terminally ill Home Hospice Care Programs. What kind of projects have you been involved with?

I have used my paintings to create prints for a number of charities, for palliative care, health, the arts and education. I have started another project that has raised in excess of \$1 million Canadian for a local AIDS, palliative and home hospice care.



The Arathoon family is very familiar to those interested in the history of the Armenians in India and the Far East. In the 19th century Agha Hacob Arathoon and his brother established the Manuck and Arathoon Armenian School, as well as an Armenian chapel in Jakarta, Indonesia. The Arathoon family was involved with the Raffles Hotel in Singapore. And in an interview you said that among your great-grandparents were also two illuminators, the French Jean-Jacques Rousseau and Persian-Armenian Mirza Malkum Khan. Could you please provide us some details?

Arathoon, spelled many ways, is a well

known name used both as a first and last name. Malcolm is an Anglicized surname, from Malkomian and is my maternal side, close family to Mirza Malkum Khan and his maternal ancestors of the Rousseau family, which was Swiss-French, but that is going back into the 17th century. The Arathoon cousins are from the Raffles family. Other names in my family that were at Calcutta and or Rangoon are: Manuk, Lucas, Minas/Minos, Agabob, Seth. The latter is well known as the family. Seth is a branch of the well known Apcar family of India. One cousin of my great-grandmother Mary Lucas born Calcutta 1885 was the Armenian historian, Mesrobian Jacob Seth, author of *Armenians in India*. It is true my family were in Indonesia and Singapore as well and some cousins are still there. DNA testing has matched my family and myself up with several long lost branches.

And growing up in India you managed to receive an Armenian education.

I attended the Davidian Armenian school in Calcutta. David Avietic David born at New Julfa, Iran in 1858, was the founder and benefactor of Davidian Girls School, where junior aged Armenian boys and girls were sent for schooling, many would go to the Armenian College there after. It was opened in 1922 and in the entrance hall, there was a bust portrait of the founder. He is buried in the Church grounds of the Armenian Holy Church of Nazareth.

In 2010 you said you would like to travel to Armenia. Have you done it or is it still pending?

I have not yet made a trip to Armenia and wish to do so when I can! When I travel to Armenia it will be in springtime. I can imagine the ancient churches and temples will blend into the natural beauty of the Landscape. Fruit trees will be in pink and white blossoms, while poppies and other wild flowers, roll down hills and valleys in red and gold. I can imagine running mountain streams beneath bright blue skies. Heavenly turquoise blue skies which bring out the best in grapes and fruit that have been cultivated there for millennia. Like the still-life compositions of Armenian artist Hovsep Pushman, a favourite artist of mine, who worked later in America, I would be delighted to gather flowering branches and fruit and old pottery vessels and rugs to paint. Also I would have an interest in the local landscape and Armenian people wearing traditional clothing and jewelry. I would be happy to paint these in Armenia.



ARTS & CULTURE

Recipe Corner



by Christine Vartanian



Café Cat's Spicy Eggplant And Tomato Soup

English-born Linda Peek has cooked for rock stars, dignitaries, and royalty in her role as a diplomat's wife and is now sharing her stories and recipes at her amazing Canberra, Australia food blog.



There aren't many food bloggers who can list "Diplomat's Spouse" as a former career, but for Linda it was a natural progression from one experience to the other. She lived in Geneva, Switzerland until she met her husband Matthew, a member of the Australian Diplomatic Service. "We've been privileged to live on five continents with postings to Tel Aviv, Kuala Lumpur, Pretoria, Santiago, Paris and Copenhagen, with home postings to Canberra in between. That's fairly unusual. Diplomats who learn a difficult language like Arabic, Chinese or Japanese, tend to get posted back to countries where they can use those hard-earned skills," she adds. "The most important duty of an ambassador's spouse is entertaining, event man-

agement and catering. I was fortunate because I enjoyed these responsibilities and managed events without employing expensive caterers," she says. Having travelled the world for over 35 years in the diplomatic corps, Linda refined her cooking and catering skills for diplomatic events and receptions. (Linda manages her own brokerage company, Oztrade Pacific, which handles frozen fruit, juices and purees from various countries into Australia/New Zealand, Europe and South America and Australian cheese into South America.

"I began collecting recipes when I was at school. Some of the recipes in my large collection have been in my family for generations, others were passed on by friends and chefs around the world. Many have been adapted over the years to make them lighter or update their presentation. I've served them to royalty, PMs and other VIPs, and there have been no complaints."

Linda's Spicy Eggplant and Tomato Soup recipe was first published in 2013 at: www.cafecat.com.au. "This is a very satisfying soup. I created it when a friend was coming for lunch, and I had one lonely eggplant sitting in the fridge. I stuck the eggplant in the oven and let it cook for a while. The final mixing and reheating takes less than 10 minutes, and it's that easy," she says.

"While the subtle flavor of the eggplant is overpowered by the tomato, it does provide a nice texture," Linda says. "The peanut butter, garlic and red chili add an Asian touch to the flavor combination. I've made this recipe with crunchy and smooth peanut butter, and while they're both nice, I prefer the creamier result you get with the smooth variety."

INGREDIENTS:

- 1 large eggplant
- 1 clove garlic, crushed
- 1 500g jar tomato sauce for pasta or marinara sauce (about 4 cups)
- 1 jar of water (and maybe a bit more)
- 1 teaspoon sugar
- 1 chicken or vegetable stock cube
- 3 tablespoons smooth peanut butter
- 1 small red chili, seeded and chopped
- Salt and freshly ground black pepper, to taste

TO SERVE:

- Sour cream or Greek yogurt
- Fresh chopped coriander or parsley
- Fresh pita bread or crusty French or sourdough bread, or toast

PREPARATION:

Preheat oven to 350°F. Pierce eggplant a couple of times with a knife, so it doesn't explode in the oven. Place in the oven for 30-40 minutes, or until it feels soft when you squeeze it. Halve eggplant and scrape out the flesh into a food processor, discarding skin.

Add remaining ingredients and process until smooth. Pour into a saucepan and heat to boiling point. Check seasoning and add more water, if necessary, to make the desired consistency. (This will depend on the size of the eggplant.)

Ladle soup into bowls and top with a dollop of sour cream or yogurt and chopped coriander or parsley. Serve with warm pita bread, French or sourdough bread, or toast. Serves 4.

Photos and recipe courtesy of Linda Peek at cafecat.com.au

Assembly Panel Conveys Urgency of Protecting Armenian Sites Under Azeri Control

WASHINGTON — The second panel of the Armenian Assembly of America's Virtual National Advocacy Conference and Advocacy Week, on March 8, focused on "Preserving Armenian Culture and Heritage," a timely discussion as thousands of Armenian religious and cultural heritage sites are currently at risk of being expropriated and erased by Azerbaijan, especially in and around Nagorno-Karabakh.

Panelists included Archbishop Hovnan Derderian, Primate of the Western Diocese of the Armenian Church of North America, Prof. Lori Khatchadourian of Cornell University, and Prof. Christina Maranci of Tufts University, while Jeff King, the president of International Christian Concern, provided a written statement. Prof. Rachel Goshgarian of Lafayette College served as moderator.

Emphasizing the importance of cultural heritage, Derderian noted that "culture is born with a nation" and by learning the culture and heritage of the Armenian nation, "we see the layers of our history and aspirations of our ancestors, which have left a notable impact."

He noted that culture and heritage are the "bridges" between the past and the future of nations, and that the creative life of the homeland is reflected in the unique Armenian cultural heritage.

Derderian stated that critical academic findings and studies, as well as the ongoing

dialogue with political leaders and international cultural organizations, are key to helping find a resolution to the Armenian cultural heritage sites in peril.

Khatchadourian, an archaeologist who teaches at Cornell's Department of Near Eastern Studies, launched the Caucasus Heritage Watch to monitor, through high-resolution satellite imaging, the damage being done to Armenian cultural heritage sites. The project, which is in its early stages, documents the conditions of the monuments and may help hold perpetrators accountable in the future.

She underscored that UNESCO "shirks from calling out governments from which it depends for funding," therefore there are "few tools for preventing state actors from damaging cultural heritage under their sovereign control or holding such actors accountable."

Khatchadourian noted that over 1,000 Armenian cultural heritage sites fall under Azerbaijani jurisdiction, distributed across former provinces in Nagorno-Karabakh, and ranging from Armenian monastic complexes to *khatchkars* (cross-stones), cemeteries and fortresses, among other relics.

"The threats to these sites are real," she said. "Between 1997 and 2006, Azerbaijan sought to fully erase traces of Armenians, destroying thousands of khatchkars and tens of thousands of historic tombstones in

unprecedented acts of destruction in Nakhichevan. Those grave threats loom once again."

Satellite imaging has proven to be an "effective tool" to monitor cultural heritage at risk, according to Khatchadourian, who cited countries such as Syria, Egypt, Iraq, Afghanistan, Yemen and China, which have implemented this method of using geospatial technologies.

Maranci, the Arthur H. Dadian and Ara Oztemel Professor of Armenian Art and Architecture, as well as Department Chair of the History of Art and Architecture at Tufts University, has researched Armenian heritage loss and destruction, which she remarked is not only "material" culture but "gets to the very root of" Armenian spiritual culture.

She cited the horrible consequences of war on heritage sites, such as the damage of the Ghazanchetsots (Holy Savior) Cathedral in Shushi, while noting that far worse would be the "complete erasure of sites."

Preserving cultural heritage, Maranci noted, brings together historians and archaeologists who can use applicable tools and resources to address the problems of cultural destruction in Nagorno-Karabakh.

Panel moderator Goshgarian highlighted the importance of the Armenian-American community becoming more aware of the destruction of cultural heritage and engaging as grassroots advocates.

King, in his written statement, focused on the unprovoked attacks on Armenians by its neighboring countries, Azerbaijan and Turkey, who invaded Nagorno-Karabakh "as a promotion of Pan-Turkism."

"At ICC, based on what we have seen and covered, we take the position that recent conflict was a genocide against Armenian Christians due to this messaging of Pan-Turkism against Armenia and Christianity as a whole, and the brutality employed by Azerbaijani forces against soldiers and civilians alike," said King. "The demolishing of Christian heritage sites is just one example of the religious underpinnings apparent throughout this conflict."

A thought-provoking question and answer session followed the presentations, during which the panelists elaborated on civil society building, the impact that preserving Armenian cultural heritage can have on the world, and the potential of using satellite imagery as a forensic resource to hold perpetrators accountable and influence policy.

"On behalf of the Armenian Assembly, I would like to thank our distinguished panelists for their informative and insightful remarks, as well as the important work ahead to ensure that these treasured cultural sites referenced are protected as well as safeguarded against further expropriation," stated Assembly Executive Director Bryan Ardouny.

‘The Whiskered Old Toymaker of Baraka’

ONNIG, from page 12

Three-Dimensional Vision

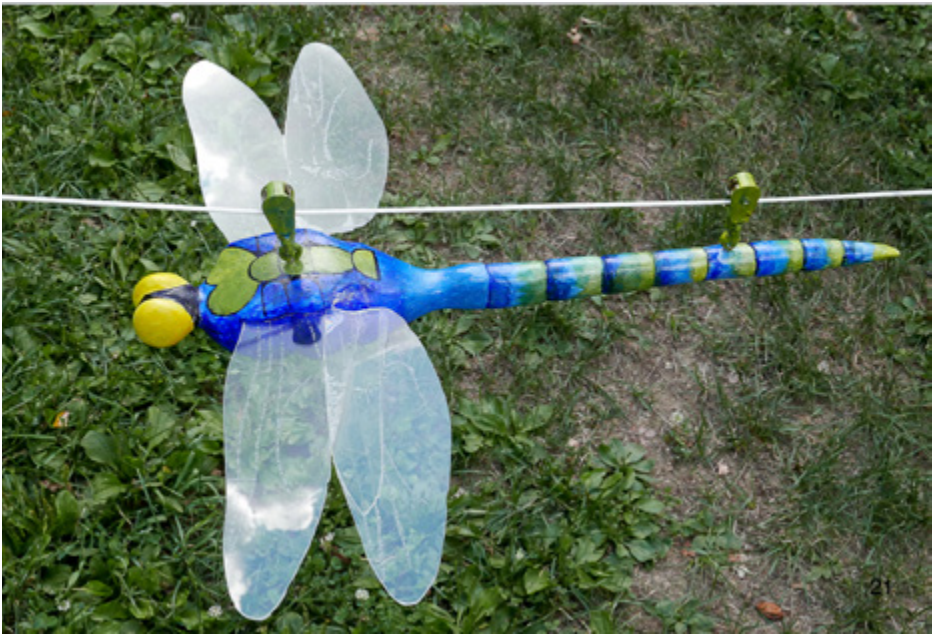
Onnig’s confidence in the possibility of making his vision of a three-dimensional world a reality is more rooted and anchored than ever. His has become a most appealing assertiveness which, rather than offend and turn off, reassures and inspires. The artist communicates his insights with an unusual calm. He also displays a “genuine and

sion, where he was “the recipient of the scorn,” “Onnig is a serious man, worthy of his point of view,” notes MacAvoy. A glance at the cover reveals that the book has a title but no author. “The following stories explore collaboration as an antidote to our egocentric mono-ism,” writes Onnig. Collaboration implies equal participation. Indeed, all of the artists, including the children the “whiskered toymaker” has great respect for, emerge as significant con-

it. The concept of Voki, the “experiencing of a transference: two others in collaboration,” (a concept I am yet to fully internalize) is Onnig’s. The spirit to include, to share and to give, give, give is Onnig’s. While others have died “giving,” to give, for Onnig, is life. More than with any of his numerous other projects, *COLLABORATION* is as much about the man behind the art as it is about the art itself.

Excitement is contagious and *COLLABORATION* has excitement written all over it. Indeed, the book is so entertaining that one loses sight of the seriousness and the urgency of the artist’s appeal to “redream this world.” The reader is equally oblivious of the ambition and the hard work that went into realizing the project. *COLLABORATION* is a labor of love, but it is also hard labor. Bringing the collaborators together to create an impeccably put together whole is a feat in itself.

COLLABORATION is a great finale, both in terms of summing up a decades-long career and also of leaving with a Bang! Fortunately however, as always with Onnig, the exit is also a new entrance.



Sculpture is by Greg MacAvoy

affectionate interest” in his interlocutor. Onnig listens mindfully, empathizes, and when possible, offers generous advice. Some of us may have witnessed the artist’s lashes and rages. These are never personal attacks, however. They are expressions of the frustration the artist feels over the fact that “the world looks away as blood is shed unjustly.” Commenting on one such explo-

tributors to the seventy-three page volume. All items for Baraka’s Pushcart Derby, for example, which included a traveling portrait workshop, were collaboratively designed and hand-made. Paradoxically, however, the book which Onnig describes as “working toward the fulfillment of the desire to reach out to an other” has Onnig’s unmistakable signature stamped on

CALENDAR

ON-LINE EVENTS & PROGRAMS

MASSACHUSETTS

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

APRIL 7 — CELEBRATING ART, SCIENCE, SERVICE & COMMERCE: LEADERSHIP, SHARING EXPERIENCES. Wednesday at 5 pm. A public program in a series to celebrate contributions to our life and culture in Art, Science, Service and Commerce, the words etched around the Labyrinth’s Circle This virtual program features influencers - each leading by extraordinary example – who will speak about their experiences and commitment to social good and making a difference. Ann Zacarian will offer the Welcome, Chief Marty Martinez, City of Boston Office of Health and Human Services, Greetings. Cindy Fitzgibbon, WCVB TV, is Host. Participants include Edward Casabian, investor, early Uber employee; Julia Grove, Picture Editor, “This is Us,” NBC series; Avak Kahvejian, PhD, General Partner, Flagship Pioneering; Councilor Julia Mejia, Boston City Council; Berj Najarian, Director of Football & Head Coach Administration, New England Patriots; and Tracey Zhen, President, Zipcar. For the link to register, please visit ArmenianHeritagePark.org/Events

RHODE ISLAND

MARCH-APRIL — The Sts. Sahag and Mesrob Armenian Church of Providence holds a series of events every Friday at 7.30 p.m. To watch the programs, go to: <https://www.facebook.com/armenianchurchprovidence>
March 26 – “The Birth of Sassuntsi David” Oratorio by Garbis Aprikian. From the large amphitheater of the Sorbonne, France
April 9 – “Sayat-Nova” State Minstrel Song Ensemble, Armenia
April 16 – “Cultural Genocide” - Film Presentation in English
April 23 – Memorial Concert, dedicated to Armenian Genocide
April 30 – “Armenia, The Land of Noah”- Film Presentation in English



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EDITOR

Alin K. Gregorian

MANAGING EDITOR

Aram Arkun

ART DIRECTOR

Mark (Mgrditchian) McKertich

SENIOR EDITORIAL COLUMNIST

Edmond Y. Azadian

STAFF WRITER

Harry Kezelian III

CONTRIBUTORS

Christopher Atamian, Florence Avakian,
Taleen Babayan, Artsvi Bakhchinyan,
Raffi Bedrosyan, Christine Vartanian
Datian, Dr. Arshavir Gundjian, Philippe
Raffi Kalfayan, Ken Martin, Gerald
Papasian, Harut Sassounian, Hagop
Vartivarian

REGIONAL CORRESPONDENTS

LOS ANGELES: Ani Duzdabanyan-
Manoukian, Kevork Keushkerian,
Michelle Mkhlian
YEREVAN: Raffi Elliott
BERLIN: Muriel Mirak-Weissbach
PARIS: Jean Eckian
SAN FRANCISCO: Kim Bardakian
CAIRO: Maydaa Nadar

PHOTOGRAPHERS

Jirair Hovsepien, Ken Martin

VIDEO CORRESPONDENT

Haykaram Nahapetyan

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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

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Editorial

Russia and Turkey Celebrate Centennial of Moscow Treaty Sealed with Armenian Blood



By Edmond Y.
Azadian

While Armenia is grieving over the loss of the 44-day war against Azerbaijan, Russia and Turkey are celebrating another painful anniversary — the Treaty of Moscow of 1921 — which formalized the border between Armenia and Turkey, sealing the fate of historic Armenia.

The recent centennial celebration of the Treaty of Moscow, signed on March 16, 1921, began in the Turkish Parliament on March 15, with the participation of the Russian ambassador to Ankara, Alexei Yerkhov. The speaker of the Turkish Parliament, Mustafa Sentop, stated that “Russia is not only our neighbor, but also our friend and cooperation partner, on the way to the future.”

Russia returned the compliment by congratulating Turkey on the two countries’ century of diplomatic ties, adding, “Today the [bilateral relations] are experiencing a rise, steadily moving to the level of strategic partnership in a number of areas and serve as an important factor in strengthening regional stability and security.”

The celebration and congratulatory messages were occasioned on the centennial anniversary of the Treaty of Moscow

The Moscow Treaty repudiated all previous treaties signed before which had been unfavorable to Turkey. That understanding, by extension, nullified the Treaty of Sevres of August 10, 1920. The latter treaty, signed but not ratified two years after the end of World War I, recognized the independent Republic of Armenia and held the former Ottoman Empire responsible for and obligated to pay reparations for the Armenian Genocide.

With these two new treaties, Russia ceded the regions of Kars and Ardahan to Turkey. What is more painful is that the region of Surmalu, where Mt. Ararat is, was also given to Turkey, along with the ruins of the medieval capital of Ani. Batumi was also given to Georgia — actually to Ajaria — under conditions favorable to Turkey.

The Armenian region of Nakhichevan, still with a sizeable Armenian population, became the Autonomous Republic of Nakhichevan, under the protectorate of Soviet Azerbaijan, on condition that Azerbaijan could not transfer the region to a third party, meaning Armenia. Turkey and Russia became the guarantors of these arrangements.

After the collapse of the Soviet Union, Azerbaijan absorbed the Nakhichevan exclave as part of its sovereign territory, in

breach of international law. All the countries and international organizations which recognize Nakhichevan as part of Azerbaijan have been contributing to the perpetuation of a compromise of international law.

In signing the Treaty of Friendship and Brotherhood, Mustafa Kemal duped Russian leader Lenin and his Bolshevik

government, by pretending that his Milli (National) movement would lead Turkey to a system of proletarian rule. The treaties opened the floodgate of Russian support for Turkey. Food, money and tremendous



of 1921, which was later finalized in Kars on October 13, 1921.

Russian and Turkish relations have historically improved at Armenia’s expense. The Treaty of Moscow finalized the current border between Armenia and Turkey, without Armenia’s participation. Later on, when Soviet rule was firmly installed in Armenia, the central government forced Armenia to sign the Kars Treaty.

As if international intrigues were not enough to disenfranchise the fledgling Republic of Armenia in its external relations, a domestic uprising in Yerevan denied Armenia its participation in the negotiations leading to the conclusion of the Treaty of Moscow.

Soviet rule was established in Armenia on December 2, 1920 and the new government had dispatched its delegation to participate in Moscow negotiations. While the delegation was on its way, an uprising took place by the Armenian Revolutionary Federation (Dashnakstutyun) Party on February 18, 1921, and for almost a month and a half, the Salvation Committee headed by the last prime minister of independent Armenia, Simon Vratsian, took the helm of the government and wired Moscow that the delegation did not represent the revolutionary government.

In the meantime, it appealed to the Sublime Port of Turkey for help. Of course, the Turks did not lend any help and left the Armenians to slaughter each other. The civil strife cost an additional 20,000 lives before the Soviet regime was installed in Yerevan. Thus, the Soviet Russians and the Turks gave a raw deal to the Armenian side, in its absence, by signing the Moscow Treaty.

amounts of armaments were donated to the Kemalist forces, to empower their war of liberation,” directed against the Armenians and Greeks.

Soviet Marshal Kliment Voroshilov, who later became president of the Presidium of the Soviet Union, served as a military advisor to Kemal. Also participating in Ataturk’s war of national liberation were Red Army commanders Mikhail Frunze and Semyon Aralov, which resulted in the expulsion of 150,000 Armenians from Cilicia and the defeat of Greek forces in Smyrna, who were driven to the sea, as well as the burning down of that city.

These political developments took place when two emerging powers were seeking international legitimacy, as neither was recognized as a sovereign country. Thus, both treaties are on shaky ground as far as international law is concerned.

When Mustafa Kemal signed the Treaty of Moscow, he was the head of the Grand National Assembly in Ankara, in a way a kind of opposition party to the government in Istanbul, headed by Sultan Mehmet VI, who was the only authorized party at the time to sign an international treaty on behalf of Turkey.

Lenin soon saw through Ataturk’s ruse, when Mahmut Soydan wrote in the Kemalist newspaper *Hakimiyet-i-Milliya* (National Sovereignty, April 25, 1921): “Those who believe that friendship between Russia and Turkey necessarily means the adoption of the Bolshevik system have a poor understating of political affairs.”

Thus, Ataturk thumbed his nose at Lenin.

Today, Russian President Vladimir Putin is also under the see TREATY, page 19



COMMENTARY

Revisiting Culture, Education and Statehood

By Vahan Zanoian

IN NOVEMBER 2019, when a bitter political controversy about education and culture was brewing in Yerevan, I published an article, in Armenian, entitled “Culture, Education, Statehood, Citizenship.” That was ten months before the outbreak of the Artsakh war, and more than a year before its devastating end. Armenia was a different place then, and, in spite of the acrimonious debate that had erupted around the “Super Ministry” of Education, Science, Culture and Sports, the country was a much happier place than today. Today, as the nation struggles to come to grips with the catastrophic defeat, discussing matters of culture and education seems like a frivolous luxury.

But the topic is even more relevant now than it was back then. One of the points of that article was that despite our otherwise very rich cultural heritage, fate has deprived the Armenian nation of a culture of statehood. Which means, we have not had the opportunity to develop a tradition of sovereignty, citizenship, governance, security, operational patriotism (versus emotional patriotism, of which we have plenty). Armenians have been citizens of many countries, but only very briefly citizens of Armenia. In the past 646 years, there’s been an independent and sovereign Armenian state for only 32 years, divided between the first and third republics; and another 71 years of non-sovereign statehood, during the second republic, when the Armenian Soviet Socialist Republic was part of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR). The rest of the time, even non-diaspora Armenians lived as subjects of various foreign empires — Russian, Ottoman, Persian.

The problem, and the point of this argument, is that as subjects of foreign empires, a significant portion of the Armenian population has been conditioned to accommodate the ruling authority in order to survive; it has learned to “trade” independence and sovereignty for economic and physical survival; beyond that, Armenians have managed to salvage an important cultural heritage. But, as a nation, we have not had the opportunity to focus on our own military security or state sovereignty. This was equally true for Armenian subjects of the Ottoman Empire, the Russian Empire, and for citizens of the Soviet Union, even though, as part of the Soviet Union, Armenia was not just an ethnic community within an empire, but a separate republic, with distinct borders, a local government and governmental institutions, and with a strong nationalistic culture and considerable autonomy when it came to preserving its cultural identity and practicing local governance. The economic, scientific and cultural achievements of the Armenian population were remarkable in this period, often in spite of the oppressive hand of the central authorities of the USSR. But the Armenian SSR was not a sovereign state; it could not conduct its own foreign policy distinct from that of the USSR, nor could it maintain a national army dedicated strictly to the defense of its own borders.

It is largely because of surviving without a sovereign nation state that Armenians have developed considerable “emotional patriotism.” Emotional patriotism flourishes with an idealized version of a lost or subjugated fatherland, and relates intimately to culture, language and faith, which sustain it. Operational patriotism, on the other hand, is tied to an existing sovereign state. The reality of an independent Armenian state is harsher than the idealized nostalgic fatherland, and, as importantly, comes with an enormous responsibility; consequently, it has not been easy for emotional and operational patriotism to overlap.

A notable exception are the fighting soldiers and volunteers of the Armenian defense forces, for whom fighting to defend the “fatherland” is a sacred mission, regardless of the “state” that sent them to war. Talking to dozens of military conscripts and officers since 2016, as well as family members of martyred soldiers and volunteers, I came out with an overwhelming confirmation that their sense of duty was to fight for the fatherland (Հայրենիք) and not necessarily for the prevailing government. Few parents, if any, would want their son to die defending the ruling elite, or the government, or even the abstract notion of Armenian Statehood. But most parents, and the soldiers themselves, would sacrifice their lives defending what they call their “*Hairenik*.”

What’s the difference? International law defines a sovereign state as a political entity that has a permanent population, defined territory, one government and sovereignty, i.e., the capacity to enter into relations with other sovereign states. The concept of a “*Hairenik*,” on the other hand, needs only a cultural heritage, a population and a territory. The ideas of “government” and especially “sovereignty” have not always been part of the understanding of “*Hairenik*,” and only marginally motivate the soldiers who would sacrifice their lives for it. Similarly, it was the notion of *Hairenik* that drove the people of Armenia to campaign for the unification of Artsakh with Armenia during Soviet times, when neither Armenia nor Artsakh had sovereign status. The Soviet Union could not extinguish the patriotism of Armenians, even often with the use of very brutal methods. That too was patriotism directed at a *Hairenik*, regardless of whether it was sovereign or not.

(Ironically, concern with the status of Artsakh has been an unintended contributing factor that diluted the significance of sovereignty among Armenians. To counter

Azerbaijan’s legal claims on Karabagh, Armenian diplomacy systematically rejected any reference to territorial integrity and sovereignty in the international fora, instead of challenging the Soviet-era maps and rejecting Karabagh’s status as part of the internationally recognized borders of Azerbaijan. But this factor falls out of the scope of this article.)

What is evident among the soldiers is emotional patriotism crossing the line into operational patriotism when it comes to the physical defense of the fatherland. Such crossovers are rare among the general population. They occur in face of an external threat, but not as a matter of course. They almost never occur within the general government bureaucracy. If there is no threat to the Fatherland, strengthening the state apparatus, in and of itself, does not inspire or motivate the average citizen. In the past 30 years, the state apparatus has, more often than not, been a tool for personal gain rather than a supreme national end, a syndrome largely inherited from traditions formed in the Soviet era but rooted in the absence of a culture and tradition of sovereign statehood.

The distinction between emotional and operational patriotism is neither simple nor absolute. One of the paradoxes that I have struggled with over the past three decades is to observe a fundamentally patriotic population in Armenia who nonetheless does not hesitate to migrate at the first opportunity, who constantly reelects the same Oligarchs even while complaining about their corruption and nepotism, who does not hesitate to accept and offer bribes, and who uses as many of the loopholes in the system as he can, knowing very well that those loopholes are weakening the country that he loves. This seemingly contradictory behavior can be explained, at least in part, by the relatively insignificant role that the notion of statehood plays in emotional patriotism.

The lack of a sovereign-state tradition runs deep. It is one of the root causes of Armenia’s weakness today. Capitulation to a stronger military force comes naturally to those who are a product of this culture. Rather than seeing sovereignty as the foundation of national security, they see it as an impediment to national security, because sovereignty implies true independence with all the responsibilities that come with it, which is an alien and frightening concept for them, and which precludes the explicit protection of a larger power.

This mindset has popped its ugly head again in Armenia today, most notably through those who favor a unification with Russia and those who claim that Artsakh “was never ours.” That is the extreme manifestation of the mindset, but there are many shades of it, all characterized by a lack of faith in our own statehood.

The culture of statehood has two distinct but interrelated sides: The conceptual/ideological side, whereby the importance of statehood manifests itself in the notion of self-governance and independence; and the governance side, the more practical aspects of running the state apparatus and governance. i.e., forming an effective government. One without the other is not only useless, but also dangerous. In Armenia, we have had one or the other in various periods since independence, but rarely both together.

It pains me to mention that what is going on in Armenia at present is further proof (and a consequence) of the lack of a culture of sovereign statehood. The quality of the political discourse, exemplified by an abundance of negatives with relatively few constructive ideas being aired (which get ignored), the alarming absence of accountability after the largest national losses of lives, territory and geopolitical position of the country since Independence, the persistent arrogance of a defeated and blatantly incompetent administration, the refusal of the opposition groups to accept their share of the responsibility for the complacency, negligence and mistakes of the past thirty years which haunt the country until today, the total disregard for the public’s right to know the details of what went wrong in the war, the failure of the National Assembly to put the national interest and the constitution above all other affiliations, the destructive conflict between the prime minister and the top leadership of the armed forces, the utter indifference of the entire political elite and the intellectual class to the destructive divisions in the country, are testimony that saving the sovereignty of Armenia is, at best, only secondary in the minds of both the politicians and the public.

A major, nation-wide paradigm shift is required to alter this psyche. But that will take time. We cannot afford to wait. It will also require a critical catalyst. Which at present we do not have.

In the short-term, until a process of nation-wide change is set in motion, the damage control has to come from a well overdue new generation of leadership. This would be a group with an understanding and vision of statehood and provide the Armenian public with a much needed third political alternative. Obviously, such a group will not have experienced the tradition of statehood firsthand and will suffer from the same lack of experience in that sphere as the past political leadership. So, it needs to be a generation that has learned the most relevant lessons from our own history, as well as the history of other nations who have overcome similar handicaps. It needs to intrinsically understand the significance of nurturing a sovereign Armenian state. It needs to have unquestioned operational loyalty to the state, irrespective of political/party affiliation, and be fully and solely dedicated to the vision of a strong Armenian state; it needs to be composed of professionals, meritocrats, solution oriented creative thinkers, who can think outside the box; it needs to be a group of individuals who have managed their egos, and are not after personal gain, power or fame; it needs to be a passionately nationalistic and at the same time a worldly group, incorruptible, mission oriented and ruthless in the pursuit of its mission.

Do enough people with these qualifications exist in Armenia and the diaspora? I believe they do. The real challenge is that they come together, develop an articulate a coherent agenda, secure buy-in from the public, and set an entirely new standard of governance and strategic thinking in Armenia. This needs to be done now. A group like this will not only manage the short-term damage control, but also act as the catalyst for the longer-term change in the national mindset.

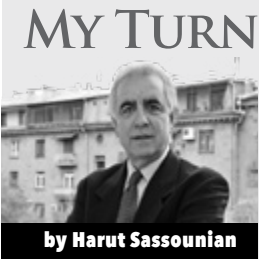
As for the more fundamental long-term solution, it starts with the education system. Even after independence, the education establishment in Armenia did not recognize,

continued on next page

**“WHAT IS EVIDENT AMONG THE
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SUCH CROSSOVERS ARE RARE AMONG
THE GENERAL POPULATION.”**



COMMENTARY



MY TURN

Azerbaijan Sold 500 Tons of Weapons To the Repressive Regime of Congo

by Harut Sassounian

This is the surprising story of Azerbaijan, a country that buys weapons from others for its own needs, selling tens of millions of dollars of weapons to a Central African country.

The article, titled “Congo-Brazzaville Strongman Buys Secret Weapons Haul from Azerbaijan,” was published by OCCRP (Organized Crime and Corruption Reporting Project) on February 22, 2021. It was written by Khadija Sharife and Mark Anderson. Congo-Brazzaville is another name for the Republic of Congo.

Here is the OCCRP’s summary of the key findings of the article: “Since 2015, Congo-Brazzaville has bought a huge weapons stockpile from Azerbaijan, with over 500 tons of weapons delivered to the country in multiple shipments.

In January 2020, more than 100 tons of weaponry was sent from Azerbaijan to Congo-Brazzaville’s Republican Guard, including 775 mortar shells and over 400 cases of rockets designed to be launched out of trucks.

Opposition figures claim that previous shipments of weapons from Azerbaijan were used to fuel a brutal post-election offensive in 2016 that led to a humanitarian crisis.

Saudi Arabia was listed as a ‘sponsoring party’ in at least two arms consignments sent in 2016 and 2017, around the same time Congo-Brazzaville’s admittance to OPEC [Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries] was being negotiated.”

According to OCCRP, “in January 2020, at the Turkish port of Derince on the eastern shores of the Sea of Marmara, a huge cache of weapons was loaded onto the MV Storm. Registered in the tax haven of Vanuatu, the ship set sail with an arsenal of mortar shells, multiple launch rockets, and explosives, en route from Azerbaijan to the Republic of the Congo, better known as Congo-Brazzaville.”

The above summary raises several serious questions: Why was Azerbaijan shipping weapons to the Republic of Congo, when Baku itself needed weapons? Is it Azerbaijan or Turkey the real source of the weapons shipped to Congo? Why did Saudi Arabia sponsor two of the weapon shipments in 2016 and 2017, meaning that the Saudi government paid for the weapons? Why were the dictators of Azerbaijan and Turkey trying to support President Denis Sassou-Nguesso, the dictator of the Republic of Congo, who has been in power ever since 1997? What did Azerbaijan or Turkey get in return for the arms shipments?

In January 2020, over 100 tons of weapons worth tens of millions of dollars were

shipped by Azerbaijan to the headquarters of Congo’s elite Republican Guard. This was the latest of at least 17 such shipments since 2015. In total, over 500 tons of weapons, including hand grenades, mortar systems, and millions of bullets were sent by Azerbaijan to Congo, according to OCCRP.

Opposition forces have claimed that these weapons are to be used by the President of Congo to maintain his rule by force in the March 21 presidential election. He recently had the constitution changed so he could be president for life!

How can a financially bankrupt country like Congo afford to buy such a large quantity of weapons? By funding two of the weapons shipments, Saudi Arabia wanted to extend its political influence over Congo.

The most recent shipment of weapons from Azerbaijan to Congo on January 2020 included 775 mortar shells and over 400 cases of rockets. They were transported from Baku to Turkey by a Bulgarian company and then loaded onto the ship MV Storm at Derince, a port managed by the Turkish government. An inside source confirmed that Congo bought the weapons at discount prices.

The Congolese government used the weapons from Azerbaijan against the opposition in a scorched earth strategy, according to the leader of a political party in Congo. Given the regime’s brutal human rights record, no European country would sell weapons to Congo. In the 2016 presidential election, the United States criticized the government of Congo for “widespread irregularities and the arrests of opposition supporters.” The presidential election this month is expected to be just as corrupt as the previous ones. “The government is carrying out a pre-election campaign of intimidation, harassment and arbitrary detention against its political opponents,” said a representative of Amnesty International.

The OCCRP reported that “the first shipments of arms arrived in Brazzaville on Azerbaijani Air Force planes, but starting in 2017 a private [Azeri] carrier, Silk Way Airlines, began flying the weapons instead. ...Silk Way is registered in the British Virgin Islands, a tax haven, and was previously linked to the Aliyev family. As well as previously winning lucrative contracts with the U.S. government to move ammunition and other non-lethal materials, Silk Way was found, in leaked correspondence reported by Bulgarian newspaper Trud, to have used flights with diplomatic clearance to secretly move hundreds of tons of weapons around the world, including to global conflict zones, between 2014 and 2017.”

The opposition in Congo is concerned that the weapons from Azerbaijan will increase the prospect of violence around the elections. “We are worried that the weapons that Sassou-Nguesso’s regime bought from Azerbaijan could be used to crack down on the opposition during the upcoming election,” said an opposition leader.

The United Nations should launch an investigation into these secret weapons sales from Azerbaijan to the dictator of Congo to oppress the human rights of the local population and rig the presidential election once again!

Revisiting Culture, Education and Statehood

from previous page

let alone meet, the challenge of nurturing statehood, state security and citizenship in students. A major overhaul of the educational system is required.

At the outset, let’s recognize that the education system should be based on the simple principle that human creativity, unlike natural resources, never gets depleted or devalued. It is renewable, and much more than renewable, because it tends to not just renew itself, but multiply itself exponentially. It knows no limits. It achieves what conventional wisdom deems impossible. It surpasses its own assumed limitations. There is no stronger force in nature. Any educational system that fails to impart this notion to its student body, fails Armenia.

One key addition to the national curriculum at the elementary and high school levels should be courses in civics — rights and responsibilities of citizenship, the constitution and the rationale behind it, the nature and role of military service, branches of government and the logic behind them, the concept of accountability in public office, the role of the courts, examples of good and bad governance with the consequences of each for the state and the nation. We need to nurture citizens who are aware, beyond the hollow rhetoric of “proud” citizens of the past few years. National awareness, patriotism (beyond clichés), civic duties, culture of citizenship should start from childhood and grow and mature into adolescence. The education system should be geared to address specific problems faced by a small country under constant military and often existential threat.

A key requirement for the above, in addition to rigorous courses in all modern sciences and disciplines, is the proper teaching of Armenian history, which must go beyond its current emphasis on memorization of dates and events, and into historical and geopolitical lessons learned as they affected the Armenian state or as they prevented the creation of one. The present curriculum in schools in Armenia imparts no real sense of history to the students. In the past 30 years, I have made a habit of talking to schoolchildren of all ages in Armenia — it started with members of my own large extended family and

soon extended to the children and grandchildren of friends — in Yerevan, and various villages in Vayots Dzor, Ashtarak, and Aparan. They can generally recite dates and events, and a few critical milestones in Armenian history, but they have been taught next to nothing about the significance of the history they have memorized, nor the overarching historical context within which the specific historical events that they cite have occurred.

The overhaul of the education system entails a fundamental paradigm shift in instruction and testing — away from standards and established systems of memorization. The dynamism, fluidity and creativity that Armenia should have in its economic and business model should be introduced in the education system. Established practices, standards and routines are deadly. Learning through experimentation, pushing the limits of the imagination, critical questioning and reasoning, improvisational skills (important both in military and civilian life), sense of mission, risk taking, are key. Quantitative stats alone — for example, number of schools, teacher/student ratios, etc., — are not indicative of quality of education. Quality and inventiveness of instruction methodology depend on how well the teachers understand their mission and how well they are trained.

The combination of the short-term catalytic trigger of a new generation of leaders with the fundamental overhaul of the education system could unleash a virtuous cycle of change in Armenia, which over time could spill into the culture, practice and legislation of civil service, thus transforming both the structure and modus operandi of the government. That would constitute a true revolution, because it would represent a change in the mindset of the nation. Only then Armenia will have a chance to finally uproot the post-Soviet oligarchic system and replace it with an effective, functioning state.

Otherwise, there is a good chance that we won’t be able to keep what we rebuild after the last war — even if we succeed to rebuild something worth keeping.

Russia and Turkey Celebrate Centennial of Moscow Treaty Sealed with Armenian Blood

TREATY, from page 17
illusion that by beginning the construction of a second atomic power plant in Akkuyu, Turkey, and paving Turkey’s way to the atomic club, he is pulling Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan away from NATO.

In November 2015, when a Sukhoi Su-24 Russian combat plane was shot down over the Syria-Turkey border, the Communist Party of Russia proposed a bill to abrogate the Treaty of Moscow; the Foreign Ministry considered the option for the moment. But on second thought, Moscow decided to deescalate the tension and keep the treaty as a bargaining chip over Turkey’s head.

Erdogan’s government is cognizant of the two treaties’ shaky bases and that is why he wanted to legitimize them by enticing Armenia to sign and approve the Protocols in 2009 in Zurich.

Fortunately, it was Ankara which shied away from taking the last step in ratifying the Protocols in deference to Baku.

Today, Ankara, believing it has the upper hand over Armenia, after the recent war, is dangling the same carrot in front of Armenia. President Erdogan has stated several times that Turkey will lift the blockade if “Armenia behaves.”

Yerevan should understand that under this “behavior” lies the recognition of the treaties of Moscow and Kars, finalizing and legalizing the border between the two countries.

Those two treaties may be null and void with the development of another international relationship.

Armenia becoming a sovereign country is not beholden to Moscow’s international obligations. Russia can no longer serve as a guarantor signatory of a third country’s border with its neighbor.

Turkey’s offer is infected with legal toxicity. Lifting the blockade, which can be reversed any time, is not commensurate with the historic concession of recognizing the finality of the current borders. Armenia has the soft power of refusing Turkey’s demand to legitimize the treaties and give away its right to pursue the international recognition of the Genocide.

It is time for Armenia to prudently consider its latent political power and use it judiciously.



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Opposition Calls for Lifting Martial Law in Armenia

YEREVAN (RFE/RL) — Opposition factions in the Armenian parliament have called for an end to martial law that was introduced in Armenia when a war with Azerbaijan broke out in Nagorno-Karabakh in late September.

This is the third time the Armenian parliamentary opposition has raised the issue since the end of hostilities in Nagorno-Karabakh.

During a session of the parliament's defense committee on March 15, the Prosperous Armenia and Bright Armenia factions claimed that the government has maintained martial law since a Russian-brokered ceasefire was established in Nagorno-Karabakh on November 10 for political purposes.

Prosperous Armenia lawmaker Arman Abovyan said martial law "does not correspond to the current situation and is a serious obstacle to political developments."

In particular, he pointed out one of the provision of martial law under which during its effect the prime minister cannot

be impeached.

Edmon Marukyan, the head of the opposition Bright Armenia faction, also claimed that martial law is currently maintained only for political purposes.

"The parliamentary opposition cannot start a no-confidence motion during martial law. In Yerevan's municipal assembly lawmakers cannot start a no-confidence vote in the mayor and so on. Elections that were scheduled in the town of Ijevan and some other communities have been postponed because the martial law has not been lifted yet," he said.

Pro-government lawmakers who sit on the committee said they were in favor of ending martial law but in due time. They said that most restrictions pertaining to freedom of assembly and speech were lifted still in December.

"If all the grounds for martial law are eliminated, of course, this martial law will be lifted as early as possible," said Armen Khachatryan, a member of the majority My Step faction.

At the same time, Khachatryan said that he expected the government to initiate a bill to lift martial law "within the next 7 or 10 days."

The committee's pro-government head Andranik Kocharyan said, for his part, that the sooner political agreements are reached about holding snap elections, the sooner the current martial law regime will be abolished. "The sooner we create harmonious political conditions or reach consensus, the sooner martial law will be lifted, because there will be snap elections, and there can be no elections during the effect of martial law," he said.

Eventually, the pro-government members of the defense committee did not give a positive conclusion to the opposition bill.



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The Hrant Dink School is located in the basement of the Armenian Evangelical Church in Gedikpaşa. Most of the students are children of natives of Armenia who have moved to Istanbul temporarily for work. The school's volunteers' work is under the leadership of Harutyun (Arto) and Talar Hisarli Horozoğlu. The principal is Heriknaz Avagyan.

Every year the graduating class goes to Yerevan for an examination certifying that they have passed 9th grade, and enroll in colleges in Armenia.

During the first wave of the pandemic, 20 students left with their families for Armenia. Last November, 22 more students returned to Armenia with their families. Now the total number of students is about 80. They receive free education, free breakfast and free lunch.

On January 28 of this year, by the request of the Hrant Dink School, divine liturgy was performed in the church in memory of the 14th anniversary of Dink's assassination. After the church ceremony, the school presented its financial needs, and donations were solicited. It was clear from the report that the school needed financial assistance. The parents could not afford to pay full tuition, although they worked full time.

The Tekeyan Cultural Association will transfer all donations to the school immediately. Donations received by April 15, 2021 will be matched up to \$20,000 by a benefactor who last month also donated \$15,000 to the TCA *Sponsor A Teacher in Armenia and Artsakh Program*.



NATO's Stoltenberg Expresses 'Serious Concerns' Over Turkey's Actions

BRUSSELS (Ahval) — The NATO secretary general on March 15, said he maintained "serious concerns" over actions by member state Turkey, but added the alliance was an important platform for resolving disputes involving Ankara.

"I have expressed my serious concerns and we all know there are serious differences and some issues, ranging from the eastern Mediterranean, the Turkish decision to buy the Russian air defense system S-400 or related to democratic rights in Turkey," Agence France-Press cited Jens Stoltenberg as telling lawmakers from the European Parliament. But the NATO secretary general added he believed the alliance can "at least can provide an important platform for discussing these issues, raising these issues and having serious debates and discussions about different concerns."

Though it has been a NATO member since 1952, Turkey has angered members of the alliance over the last few years in a string of moves. The country pushed ahead with the Russian S-400 missile deal despite repeated warnings the missiles risked breaching NATO operational security if used alongside the Western alliance's own hardware. It went further by conducting a test launch in October. The US put off sanctioning Turkey in July 2019 over the S-400, but the missile test ended any delay in issuing sanctions as required under American law.

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