

Detroit Knights Send \$1.6 Million Worth of Medical Supplies to Armenia

By Harry Kezelian
Mirror-Spectator Staff

DETROIT — The Nareg-Shavarshan Lodge #6 of the Knights of Vartan celebrated their 100th anniversary in 2018. Over the past century, between the Detroit lodges of the Knights and Daughters of Vartan, about 2 million in aid has been sent to Armenia and Armenians, beginning with the survivors of the Genocide at the time of the organization’s founding.

This past year, the lodge nearly doubled that amount by sending over \$1.6 million worth of medical supplies to Armenia.

The supplies were sourced through Metro Detroit-based organization World Medical Relief, and the transportation of three large shipping containers over the period of eight months was directed by Nareg-Shavarshan Lodge Commander Kazar Terterian working together with Peter Abajian of the Paros Foundation, Greg Baise, a lodge member who is also on the board of World Medical Relief, and a small circle of Knights. Due to the inherent risks of shipping supplies through Turkish waters into the Black Sea in order to aid Armenia, particularly in the middle of the 44-day war, the operation was kept



Unloading Container #2 In Armenia

secret and not even the broader Detroit lodge membership was made aware of what was going on.

Genesis of the Project

World Medical Relief is a Detroit-based charity focused on getting
see SUPPLIES, page 10

FINAL PUSH



Efforts to Help Needy Students at Hrant Dink School of Istanbul



WATERTOWN — After the independence of the Republic of Armenia, difficult economic and political circumstances led many Armenians to emigrate abroad. Some of them went to Istanbul in order to make a living, but their lives were not easy. Aside from all the basic issues such as housing and employment, those with children had to worry about how to educate them. They began to worry about their Armenian identity and culture being lost in a foreign land. The Hrant Dink School of Istanbul was created to provide a solution but it needs financial support to continue its mission.

see FUNDING, page 20

Without Support for Science, Armenia’s Future Is in Jeopardy

By Alin K. Gregorian
Mirror-Spectator Staff

BOSTON/YEREVAN — Many of us have heard of or used high-tech companies based in Armenia. It seems clear that those companies are doing well. However, research and pure science in Armenia are facing a dire future, one which may not even exist for them down the road if their government funding does not increase.

Three young scientists and entrepreneurs involved with a new effort called Gituzh (Power of Science), raised the



alarm in recent interviews, saying that close to half the scientists in the country are heading toward retirement age. In
see SCIENCE, page 2

Philanthropist and Homebuilder Hirair Hovnanian Dies

YEREVAN (Public Radio of Armenia, Hovnanian Foundation) — Philanthropist and homebuilder Hirair Hovnanian passed away early April 9. President and founder of Hovsons, Inc., he was a founding benefactor of the Armenian Assembly of America.

He was born in 1930 in Kirkuk, Iraq. From his arrival on a freighter in 1951 to the United States, Mr. Hovnanian built one of the most successful privately held land and housing development companies in his adopted country. In recent years he totally dedicated his time and efforts to the betterment of society and to the Armenian-American community.

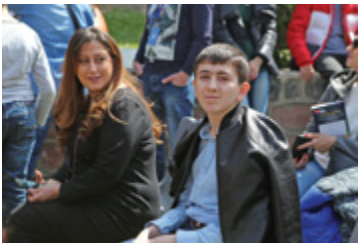


A 1956 Villanova University graduate with a bachelor’s degree in civil engineering, Hovnanian began his career with a consulting firm constructing the Connecticut Turnpike. In 1958, after seeing a cousin’s home being built in Toms River, NJ, Hovnanian moved there and started building homes. He was later joined by his brothers. After several successful years working with his brothers, Hirair Hovnanian broke out on his own and formed Hovsons, Inc. in 1963.

Within the first year, Hovnanian had built 74 homes and noticed that 80 percent of his buyers were retirees. That was an epiphany that changed his future. Hovnanian is referred to in books as one of the innovators of the concept of large scale adult communities of single family homes located on individual lots. This bold move became very successful, and the communities grew and grew later becoming mixed use communities including recreational, medical and commercial facilities. Over tens of thousands of adult community homes and home sites have been built by Hovnanian. Over the last five decades, his business activities diversified to include the development and construction of health care facilities, major retail centers, office complexes, rental apartments and a 7,200 acre mining business.

In addition to his corporate business achievements, Hovnanian was involved in numerous charitable and civic activities. He contributed greatly to the Armenian community worldwide with a variety of civic, charitable, educational,
see HOVNANIAN, page 8

ARMENIA
My Way Celebrates Creative Inclusion for Those with Autism



MOSCOW
On Palindromes and Parajanov with German Lukomnikov



NEW JERSEY
WorldFLATS Sees Opportunity with Lahmajun Aimed at Healthy Eaters





ARMENIA

Without Support for Science, Armenia's Future Is in Jeopardy

SCIENCE, from page 1

In addition, between advanced age and emigration, the country is facing the very real threat of having very few researchers in the coming years, no higher scientific institutions and all of these could translate into the demise of the country itself.

Gituzh is lobbying for an increase in government support for science and research. To a certain extent, their very insistent demands for more attention and funds for the sciences in Armenia have already worked as the government last month announced an increase in funding.

Hripsime Mkrtchyan, who is in the Boston area as for a year-long post-doctoral Fulbright Fellowship at MIT, Aram Jivanyan, and Tigran Shahverdyan, did not mince words to describe the plight of Armenia in the very near future if Armenia does not put more stock in science and research. And they noted that the diaspora can have a positive impact on this change of course.

"Because of the absence of strong scientific infrastructure we have faced lots of problems during past months," said Mkrtchyan, referring to the devastating war, for which Armenia was woefully underprepared technologically.

Added Shahverdyan, "We have a huge number of scientists in the Spyurk that can advise, remotely lead or co-lead a scientific team in Armenia or repatriate to Armenia and do what they are best at - science. Facilitating these processes should be one of the main components of the strategic solution we are talking about. Fixing the commitment in the law will send a strong signal



Hripsime Mkrtchyan

to the scientists and other professionals in the Spyurk that Armenia is taking a progressive and ambitious route, and talent in Diaspora will start planning and exploring how they can be much more involved in this future."

Mkrtchyan received her PhD from the Alikhanyan National Science Laboratory, affiliated with Yerevan State University, while doing her research at the Cosmic Ray Division of the Yerevan Physics Institute, perhaps the nation's best-known and most prolific public science institution.

According to Mkrtchyan, the main goal of Gituzh "is to demand from the government to increase investment into science which will help us to stop the migration of young scientists from Armenia and develop science by creating a strong country."

In a recent interview Mkrtchyan said she is not a founding member of Gituzh but is helping them spread information about the movement.

"The amount the government gives to the sciences is very low," she said. "We are struggling to get more sponsorship from them to help us with science projects."

Currently, she said, the government dedicates 0.25 percent of the GDP to financial support of and investment in the sciences. Gituzh is pushing to increase that figure to 1 percent.

The government announced recently that it intends to increase funding for science by 2.7 billion drams (\$5.1 million), Minister of Education, Science, Culture and Sport Vahram Dumanyan said on March 22.

In 2020, the financing of the sphere amounted to 14 billion drams (\$26.5 million).

However, the interviewees stressed the figure is far from meeting even the bare minimum in Armenia.

Jivanyan, while thankful for the increase, suggested that this is — or should be — only the beginning of a long and steep road. "The increase of 2.7 billion drams is well below the threshold we have demanded. One percent of the GDP will be well above \$100 million, while this increase made the total funding around \$30 million," he said.

Jivanyan, a cryptographer and mathematician who is the founding CEO of Skyr-cryptor and the cryptographer for Firo (formerly Zcoin), is one of the co-founders of Gituzh.

The Gyumri-born Jivanyan holds a PhD in applied mathematics and computer science.

"With the Covid situation and after the war it is even more important and crucial for us," Jivanyan said. "Without developing science, there is no future."

He added, "Gituzh's plans are not changed. We will continue our initiative until getting to our final goals, where the society and government will be turned toward science and knowledge and the country's development plan will be heavily reliant on science development."

Over the last 30 years, about 0.25 percent of annual GDP has been allocated for scientific research and experimental development. According to the group's website, "at this rate, we are close to Uganda and Burundi. For example, Burkina Faso spends 0.7 percent of its GDP, Iran 0.8 percent, Singapore 1.9 percent, Turkey 1 percent."

The goal is to dedicate up to 4 percent of the state budget by 2024 to scientific research by fixing it in the law or some other comparable mechanism.

Shahverdyan added, "We look at this situation as an existential threat to Armenia with no exaggeration, hence we initiated Gituzh. In a nutshell the goals are 1) +50% funding in 2021 and 2) commitment to increase the public spending on R&D (at least 4% of the country's budget by 2024) in such a way that it won't be able easily revert that commitment. For the second goal our proposed solution is fixing the long-term consistent commitment right in the law. Fixing the commitment just in Government decisions or programs is not strong enough."

"Recently the government announced that they will increase the funding this year by 2 billion drams or (they say 2.78B, however 0.78B was actually cut from the budget just 3 weeks ago, so overall it is 2 Billion dram increase). This is a clear step in the right direction and we welcome that. However this step is not a strategic solution to the above-mentioned threats. We are not satisfied with it and expect a strategic solution along with a long-term commitment," he concluded.

No Funds, No jobs

And it is not just the distant future that will benefit; according to both Mkrtchyan and Jivanyan, the recent devastating war showed that without deeper investment in

science, the country's military will also suffer, as well as its economy.

"During the war we saw that it had a huge impact on us. We don't have the infrastructure for our army," she said. "We need a strong country and for a strong country we need strong sciences."

She added, "There are very few private companies" involved in pure science.

According to Mkrtchyan, the local scientific community was disappointed that during a visit to Italy by Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan last year, he told his hosts that in Armenia scientists "just drink coffee. It was disappointing."

"The war has destroyed everything. There is a desperation inside people. They do not believe in the future," Mkrtchyan said. "We should become a technological center. That way, no one will touch us."

She added, "We don't want war. We just want a strong country that will be respected."

All three stressed that because of the attitude toward the sciences reflected in its funding. "There are many, many scientists that have emigrated from Armenia," Mkrtchyan noted.

"And that is why we don't have a strong country. It is a very, very tense situation. We don't have friendships with the neighboring countries and unless there is an increase in financial support," the future of the country is imperiled as there won't be any more scientists.

"Gituzh wants to tell the government that if you continue" in this way, "you will lose the scientific schools," she added.

Without a stronger focus on science, "it will be even more difficult to establish and exchange knowledge in the science if there are no young scientists," Jivanyan said.

Those who have the chance, leave the country, he added.

"We need to increase the state funding for science by 50 percent this year," Jivanyan noted.

Jivanyan said that Vice Premier Tigran Avinyan is "committed to increase funding a few million this year and 10 million next year. It is something but" not close to what



Tigran Shahverdyan

is needed, he added. "The basic national funding is at a low level."

Added Shahverdyan, "Our aim is to increase the public expenditures on R&D in the priority fields for Armenia through an ambitious program of increasing Armenia's public R&D capabilities and stop the final degradation of those R&D capabilities, which is happening right now at full speed. About 1000 out of 2500 scientists funded by the state are over 65 years. A scientific career is not interesting for the youth. The average base salary of the scientist is 100k AMD in a month (less than \$200). Whereas the salaries in the IT sector start from 200k-300k drams in a month on average

and goes up to 1.5 million drams. An experienced AI researcher can easily get 2.5M drams in a month in the industry. The number of PhD students in Armenia is about 1000 people and declining each year."

Jivanyan concurred that being a scientist is "the least respected profession in Armenia. It is ridiculous."

Shahverdyan noted that the government recently increased the salaries for some policemen to 300,000 drams monthly. "There is nothing wrong with higher salaries in the Police, however the contrast of salaries clearly shows to the youth which profession is the priority for the country," Shahverdyan said.

This lack of funding translates into lack of jobs as well as low pay for what jobs there are.



Aram Jivanyan

The monthly salary for scientists working in the public section, and not those working in private tech start-ups, is abysmally low. In fact, Mkrtchyan said, a store clerk might, on average, make \$400 a month, while a scientist might make \$200.

"It is disappointing. No one wants to work as a scientist as a result," she said.

Mkrtchyan has been working at the Cosmic Ray Division Institute, which was founded in 1940. The small center has an outsize footprint globally in the field of cosmic rays, especially because of its location, 3200 meters above sea level.

The center focuses on studying atmospheric physical phenomena. In 2018 it launched the Armenian Geophysical Network (AGN); measuring and analyzing tens of important environmental parameters for global change research and natural disaster forecasting. AGN's facilities operate on the slopes of Armenia's Mt. Aragats on heights of 2000 and 3200 m; in Yerevan; on the shore of lake Sevan; at Dilijan International High School; and at Shushi University in Artsakh.

"It is one of the treasures of Armenia," she said. Many of the scientists working there publish papers often, bringing further attention to the center.

Mkrtchyan said her ultimate goal is to create a strong atmospheric physics center that would study hailstorms, which can destroy crops globally.

Jivanyan said that the country should be proud of its history of great scientists. "Now it has been degraded to the level of the least respect profession. We need a mindset shift in the government."

Jivanyan added, "A strong STEM program should be developed in any possible way."

"There is no doubt this is the only chance for Armenia."

"We expect to work on project which will heavily rely on Armenian scientists

continued on next page



ARMENIA

Armenia Launches Vaccination Drive

By Raffi Elliot

Special to the Mirror-Spectator

YEREVAN — Armenia launched an large-scale COVID-19 inoculation drive on April 13, following months of delay. According to Health Minister Anahit Avanesyan, the elderly, vulnerable and essential workers will receive priority as the country continues to face the novel coronavirus pandemic.

Public health authorities will be administering the British AstraZeneca and Russian Sputnik V vaccines in the initial stages; Armenia having recently secured large quantities of both. However, following concerns by European regulators that AstraZeneca may be linked to blood clots among a small minority of recipients, the shot will be limited to those above 55 years of age. The Sputnik V vaccine will thus be reserved for older people until further research confirms that the British shots are safe for all.

In the meantime, Armenia is negotiating the purchase of a much larger shipment of the Sputnik V vaccine from Russia. Last week, Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan reportedly told Russian President Vladimir Putin that the country was ready to buy “at least a million doses” to meet its vaccination targets.

The Russian state-owned news agency TASS reported that the two countries are also in talks to produce the Russian vaccine locally in Armenia. Avanesyan was quoted in stating that investments in the country’s pharmaceutical infrastructure would be required in order to launch mass production.

In the meantime, Armenia is also close to securing a supply of the vaccine produced by the Maryland-based American pharmaceutical giant Novavax through the World Health Organization’s COVAX program, as well as an undisclosed amount of the Chinese Sinovax. Beijing’s donations come as Chinese officials pub-



licly admit that their vaccines have lower efficacy than previously claimed, now stating that their indigenously produced alternatives are about 50 percent effective. Unlike the mRNA vaccines developed by western manufacturers Moderna and Pfizer, Chinese viral vector, and protein-based vaccines are harder to scale. Additionally, China has been accused of engaging in a practice dubbed “vaccine diplomacy,”

in which free vaccine deliveries are prioritized for countries which have strong strategic relationships with Beijing, or in exchange for certain concessions, leading some to question the terms of Armenia’s involvement with the program.

Still, by relying on different sources of procurement, Armenia hopes to be able to vaccinate some 700,000 people — a quarter of its population — by the end of 2021.

This vaccination drive begins as the country continues to see a surge in new COVID-19 cases which experts call a “third wave” of the pandemic. The country has averaged at just over 900 new covid cases a day over the past week, with the number of daily recorded deaths also creeping up. On April 12, Armenia reported 510 new cases and 18 deaths. So far, 203,327 cases of the novel coronavirus have been recorded in the country since the pandemic began a year ago, with 3753 deaths. The surge in cases has been partially blamed on the new British strain of the virus which has recently been confirmed in Armenia.

from previous page

abroad to strengthen links and activate collaborations,” he added, adding the need for visiting scholars. “We absolutely need it, that external push. It can play an instrumental role.”

As for a specific Gituzh project, he said, it is still in the planning phases.

“The existence of Armenia should not be taken for granted. Science is not only about scientific results or patents. First and foremost, it is about people with higher education with a global perspective,” Jivanyan said. “Seventy percent of PhD students go to work for businesses or the government.

All three interviewees noted the importance of Armenia during the Soviet period, when it was a hub of science, producing a bevy of top physicists and mathematicians.

As Mkrtchyan said, Armenia was a sort of Silicon Valley of the federation.

“The situation in the sciences is almost a catastrophe in Armenia. It is absolutely underfunded,” he said, stressing like his fellow interviews that the republic needs to harken back to its former scientific heritage.

“It is absolutely neglected,” he said, adding that in the past 30 years, emphasis has been put on other areas of study.

So what changed?

Said Shahverdyan, “I don’t know the exact reasons. There is one observation though that might have been one of the reasons. The funding for science and technology in Armenia came directly from Moscow during Soviet era. There was no established science funding infrastructure in Armenian Soviet Republic. So when the Soviet Union

collapsed, there was no agency or a division in the Government that had inherited such a function and had the capacity to present a program for science funding.”

Founding Gituzh

Shahverdyan said Gituzh has more than 120 founders and top-managers mostly from high-tech industry community and 12 business and professional associations <https://gituzh.am/representing> about 700 businesses.

“I am a robotics and systems engineer and know first-hand how scientific training allows me to solve complex problems. I studied Physics and Math from school until PhD studies, which I dropped. However the knowledge and experience I received is critical for the types of problems I solve every day. I am a founder of 2 high-tech companies and throughout many years I was trying to hire talent in Armenia. There is a huge demand for talent in Armenia with deep knowledge in STEM fields. The only way we can make sure to train enough talent in STEM for the industry is through making the scientific career exciting for the youth. If the scientific career is not interesting, then the level of higher education degrades as we have seen during the last 30 years. Competitive science is what sets the bar for higher education,” Shahverdyan said.

Once the government starts dedicating more funding toward science, Mkrtchyan said, private investors will also up their game.

Many avenues are now closed for aspiring young scientists, including the noted

Luys Cultural, Scientific and Education Foundation founded in 2009 by former Armenian President Serzh Sargsyan and former Armenian Prime Minister Tigran Sargsyan. The government grant organization helped many brilliant Armenian students study at first-rate universities abroad. In addition, Mkrtchyan said, Luys “had very strong connections” with those institutions, thus being able to place 20 students at Cambridge University in the UK. As Luys was connected to the pre-Velvet Revolution government, its efforts were stopped and replaced with a new entity.

“We need to time to build it” up again,” she said, “It is very, very sad. The sciences should not deal with politics.”

(A small portion of Luys’ operations was taken up by My Step Foundation, headed by Anna Hakobyan, the wife of Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan.)

Shahverdyan said, “I urge my brothers and sisters in the Spyurk to pay more attention to the developing more scientific talent in Armenia. Only professionals of Science can give a quality higher education for engineers, next generation scientists, other professionals and particularly (I want to stress this) schoolteachers. Without addressing the disappearing scientific community in Armenia, we are predestined to have even faster degradation of the education level in Armenia.”

“We are just on the edge of a very catastrophic situation,” Jivanyan concluded.

To see the website for Gituzh, visit <https://gituzh.am/>; its Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/gituzh>

NEWS from ARMENIA

EU Envoy for South Caucasus Visits Yerevan

YEREVAN (Panorama.am) — The European Union Special Representative for the South Caucasus and the crisis in Georgia, Toivo Klaar, visited Yerevan on April 13. “Leaving Georgia for Armenia to get a better understanding of the situation along the eastern border and for meetings in Yerevan,” Klaar tweeted. He was in Yerevan this February and later in March held talks in Baku. Earlier, the EU Envoy reiterated the EU’s support for the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe Minsk Group format and the Nagorno-Karabakh peace process for a lasting and fair settlement of the conflict.

Kocharyan Bribery Trial Postponed

YEREVAN (Armenpress) — The trial of former President of Armenia Robert Kocharyan on charges of bribery was set to begin on April 13 at a Yerevan courthouse, but now will be delayed until May 4. Kocharyan is accused in accepting a \$3,000,000 bribe from a businesswoman in early 2008, in his final months as president. Then-Secretary of the Security Council Armen Gevorgyan is also facing bribery charges under the same criminal case. They both deny the accusations.

The businesswoman allegedly involved is Silva Hambardzumyan.

The trial was adjourned because Kocharyan was absent from the courthouse. His lawyer told the judge that the ex-president is in self-isolation after being exposed to COVID-19 through direct contact.

Kocharyan Again Sues Pashinyan

YEREVAN (RFE/RL) — Former President Robert Kocharyan filed another defamation lawsuit against Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan on April 8, just days after being cleared of coup charges. A lawyer for Kocharyan, Hayk Alumyan, said he is seeking 4 million drams (\$7,500) in damages and a public retraction of what he regards as slanderous claims made by Pashinyan during a March 1 rally in Yerevan.

Addressing supporters, Pashinyan accused Kocharyan of ordering security forces to shoot and kill opposition protesters in Yerevan in March 2008. He again claimed that investigators have solved the killings of eight protesters and two police servicemen during the post-election unrest and that the ex-president is dragging out his trial to obstruct justice.

Alumyan said Pashinyan slandered his client and violated the latter’s presumption of innocence.

Kocharyan had already sued Pashinyan in September 2018 and April 2020. He withdrew the first suit in June 2019 after Pashinyan clarified through a lawyer that he did not publicly accuse the ex-president of “organizing the killings.”



ARMENIA

My Way Celebrates Creative Inclusion For Those with Autism

By Muriel Mirak-Weissbach
Special to the Mirror-Spectator

YEREVAN — April had started with rain in Yerevan, one wet day after another, and the organizers of the My Way Center prayed for sunshine. On April 6, the day they had chosen for the event, board member Sona Petrosyan, looked up at the cloudy sky that morning and said to herself, “Dear God, please send us some sunshine around noon.” Right then a dove spread its wings and flew towards her, then soared gracefully up to the sky, and she said to herself, that must be a good omen.

Indeed it was. The weather turned out to be perfect for an outdoor celebration of World Autism Awareness Day. In late 2007, the United Nations General Assembly passed and adopted a resolution establishing the annual observance. Its aims are to raise awareness about autism, and contribute to research, diagnosis, treatment and acceptance of autism, which often develops very early in children and as yet has no cure.

This year, the theme treated in the events held worldwide was “Inclusion in the Workplace.” At the My Way Socio-Rehabilitation and Vocational Training Day Care Center, the “workplace” was the creative arena and the “work” was music and art.



UNICEF certificate (©UNICEF Armenia/2021/Galstyan)

Thanks to the friendly weather, organizers were able to set up their performance area outdoors in a spacious garden between the two large buildings that house the classrooms where the youngsters receive therapy and training. Tents were pitched, for musicians and audience, chairs placed all around, together with colorful “bean bags” also for sitting. Opposite these were paintings exhibited on easels, about 60 in all.

The paintings are the work of Edwin Hovsepyan, a



Opening speech by Ara Babloyan (©UNICEF Armenia/2021/Galstyan)

17-year-old young man who has been attending My Way for four years and studying at the Terlemezyan State College of Fine Arts for three years. His mother, Armine Hovsepyan, discovered his talent when he was only 2 ½ years old, and has dedicated her life to nurturing the further development of his skills. He has already held several exhibitions and it was time to schedule this one to coincide with World Autism Awareness Day. Complementing the visual art was music, in the form of an inclusive concert, featuring professional musicians together with My Way amateur singers and instrumentalists.

“Our guests,” Petrosyan said, “admired the saturated yet tender colors of Edwin’s works; there were sunny landscapes and still lifes, and many of them will brighten the homes of new owners.” The proceeds from sales of the works, organized online and at the event, will go to the artist’s mother, and will cover his travel expenses to the center and to college, as well as acquisition of materials.

Following messages of greetings by Dr. Ara Babloyan, the pioneer in addressing autism in Armenia, the concert began, with performances alternating between the professionals and the My Way students. The youngsters, together with parents, staff and guests, enjoyed performances by the Ruben Hakhverdyan Trio, the Armen Hyusnunts Artasax quartet, the Lav Eli rock band and the Hope for Coffee band.

The concert program spanned a vast range of musical genres, from folk to rock to classical. My Way student and pianist Raphael joined a trumpeter and flutist to play a piece by Greek composer Vangelis, then performed a piano-violin duet from Charles Aznavour,

and a piece by Johannes Brahms together with student Hamlet on the xylophone. A versatile musician, Hamlet also offered a work by Aram Khachaturian on the piano. Another student Eric sang *Yesterday* accompanied by pianist Raphael and a professional guitarist. My Way student Arthur performed the *Soldier’s Song*. The audience heard two Arno Babajanian pieces played by My Way student Vardan, who also studies at the Yerevan State Music College after Romanos Melikyan.



Rock band La Eli with students Gagik and Eric (©UNICEF Armenia/2021/Galstyan)

The inclusive concert featured ensemble performances with the professionals and the students playing together. Special guest Mary Ghazaryan, sister of flutist Artak Gazanyan, played the piano. My Way students Gagik and Erik sang along with the Lav Eli rock band, and the Hope for Coffee band accompanied My Way vocalist Vanik (who also studies music at college) in a song by Komitas. Student Gagik joined the same band on the tambourine, in an exciting performance of *Blue Suede Shoes*. The music was so lively that members of the audience joined in singing and dancing.

To conclude the warm and joyful day, students and musicians received certificates of appreciation for taking part in the awareness event and for their brilliant performances.

The management of My Way expressed deep gratitude to UNICEF Armenia for its cooperation and for supporting the awareness event, as well as the publication of an awareness brochure, “Understanding Autism,” in particular. The brochure, which was made available at the gathering, explains the nature and characteristics of autism spectrum disorder, presents the most important related issues and concerns, provides guidance for early diagnostics and intervention, and highlights those forms of therapy, classroom instruction and other activities that have proven effective in dealing with autism, both in children and adults.

The guests, in turn, expressed their gratitude for the positive emotions and warm atmosphere. “Everyone,” Sona Petrosyan said, “children and adults, young and old, neurotypical and special, speaks the same language when it comes to music, to art and to love.”

(Material for this article was provided by My Way co-founder and board member Sona Petrosyan.)



Works by Edwin (David Jotyan photo)



INTERNATIONAL

Armenia Accuses Azerbaijan of Reneging on Hostage Returns

YEREVAN (RFE/RL) — Armenian officials accused Azerbaijan on Friday, April 9, of reneging on a pledge to free Armenian soldiers and civilians remaining in Azerbaijani captivity five months after a Russian-brokered ceasefire stopped the war in Nagorno-Karabakh.

Armenian government representatives said late on Thursday that a new group of Armenian prisoners is about to be set free and repatriated. However, none of them was on board a Russian plane that arrived from Baku to Yerevan shortly after midnight.

“Unfortunately, the return of prisoners is again delayed,” the office of Deputy Prime Minister Tigran Avinyan said in a statement posted on Facebook. It said that Azerbaijan is continuing to violate one of the key terms of the truce agreement.

“Negotiations mediated by Russia are continuing and we hope that the Azerbaijani side will at last respect the statement signed by it and implement the humanitarian agreement,” added the statement.

Andranik Kocharyan, a senior lawmaker representing the ruling My Step bloc, said that Baku pledged to free more Armenian prisoners of war (POWs) and civilian captives as a result of Russian President Vladimir Putin’s latest conversations with Armenia’s and Azerbaijan’s leaders.

Putin met with Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan in Moscow on Wednesday and had a phone call with Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev the following day.

Kocharyan claimed that Lieutenant-General Rustam Muradov, the commander of Russian peacekeeping forces deployed in Karabakh, travelled to Baku to “escort the prisoners back to Armenia.”

Muradov, who reportedly arrived in Yerevan on board the Russian plane early on

Friday, categorically denied that, however. “It was an ordinary working visit,” he told the Armenian newspaper *Hraparak*.

The Armenian-Azerbaijani agreement, brokered by Putin on November 9, calls for the unconditional release of all prisoners held by the conflicting sides. The Russian peacekeepers arranged several prisoner swaps in December and early this year.

A total of 69 Armenian POWs and civilians have been freed to date. More than 100 others are believed to remain in Azerbaijani captivity.

Azerbaijan’s Foreign Minister Jeyhun Bayramov again claimed on Thursday that all of them were captured after the truce accord took effect on November 10 and are therefore not covered by it. He said Baku regards them as “terrorists” and does not intend to release them.

More than 50 of the remaining POWs were captured in early December when the Azerbaijani army occupied the last two Armenian-controlled villages in Karabakh’s southern Hadrut district. They all are army reservists who were drafted from Armenia’s Shirak province during the six-week war.

Scores of their angry relatives blocked on Friday morning the roads leading to Shirak to demand an urgent meeting with Pashinyan. Many of them gathered at Yerevan’s Erebuni airport late on Thursday after hearing reports about the impending release of their loved ones.

“No official at the airport bothered to answer our questions,” one of the protesters told RFE/RL’s Armenian Service.

“We are waiting to see when the country’s leader, our commander-in-chief, will agree to meet us. We won’t go to Yerevan anymore,” he said.

They tried at one point to break into the

compound but were stopped by riot police. The chief of the Armenian police, Vahe Davtyan, arrived at the scene to talk to the protesters.

Pashinyan’s government also faced strong criticism from the opposition. Edmon Marukyan, the leader of the Bright Armenia Party (LHK), accused the government of botching the prisoner release in a failed attempt to score political points.

“This is yet another result of their inept and sloppy behavior which was coupled with their attempt to use this tragedy for a publicity stunt,” Marukyan told reporters.

In related news, Armenpress reported that Loucas Fourlas, a member of the European Parliament, and the head of the EU-Armenia friendship group there, initiated an online discussion on April 12 about the immediate release and return of the Armenian prisoners of war from Azerbaijan.

“The issue of the Armenian captives and prisoners of war in Azerbaijan remains one of the most urgent and crucial humanitarian issues and should concern us all,” Fourlas said on Twitter.

The discussion titled “The fate of the Armenian captives in Azerbaijan” was joined by MEP Marina Kaljurand, Ombudsman of Armenia Arman Tatoyan, Executive Director of the European Armenian Federation for Justice and Democracy Heghine Evinyan, as well as a recently repatriated prisoner of war.

Similarly, a member of Luxembourg’s Alternative Democratic Reform Party, Fernand Kartheiser, addressed a parliamentary question to Parliament President Fernand Etgen regarding the Armenian POWs held in Azerbaijan, the Honorary Consulate of Armenia in Luxembourg informs. The question reads:

INTERNATIONAL NEWS

Turkish-Armenian MP Paylan Tells Erdogan To Apologize for Ethnic Slur

ISTANBUL (PanARMENIAN.Net) — Member of Parliament Garo Paylan, an ethnic Armenian and member of the Peoples’ Democratic Party (HDP), on April 13 asked Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan to apologize for using an ethnic and religious slur — *gavur*, meaning infidel — when criticizing the country’s opposition, Stockholm Center for Freedom reports.

Erdogan resorted to discriminatory language when criticizing the Republican People’s Party (CHP) during a speech at the Union of International Democrats (UID) Women’s and Youth Committee, Turkish media reported.

“We are sorry to see that although the opposition has a Turkish identity, they are resorting to the methods of the infidel in attacking us [the government] under the guise of criticism,” he said. The word used by Erdogan, “*gavur*,” which translates as infidel, is often employed as a religious and ethnic slur against non-Muslims and non-Turks. It also insinuates barbarity, and opposition politicians accused Erdogan of hate speech by using the word.

Paylan criticized Erdogan on social media for using the word *gavur*, saying: “You use this hate expression knowing there are citizens who have been victims of hate crimes fed with the slur of ‘*gavur*’ for generations. Shame on you!”

Emphasizing that Erdogan had engaged in hate speech, Paylan asked if Erdogan would apologize during his speech in parliament. “As an Armenian who has been subjected to hate speech with the word *gavur* many times, I want it to be known that it is unacceptable for the president to use this word,” he said.

Armenian Group in UK Expresses Condolences To Queen over Death of Prince Philip

LONDON — On behalf of the British Armenian Community, the Armenian Community Council of the United Kingdom wishes to extend sincere condolences to Her Majesty the Queen and the members of the Royal Family for the sad loss of The Prince Philip, Duke of Edinburgh.

In its note, the group wrote, “His Royal Highness served Her Majesty the Queen and his Country with the deepest devotion and dedication. By his extraordinary progressive outlook to life and his charitable and humanitarian works, he leaves a legacy as a selfless and loyal public figure.

“He was most highly loved and respected not only in the United Kingdom and the Commonwealth, but also throughout the world. May He Rest in Peace.”

‘Trophy’ Park to Open in Baku Featuring Military Equipment Seized from Armenia

YEREVAN (AFP) — Armenia on Tuesday, April 13, accused its historic rival Azerbaijan of fomenting ethnic hatred by displaying helmets of Armenian soldiers killed during their war last year.

A decades-long conflict over the disputed Nagorno-Karabakh region erupted into all-out war in September, killing more than 6,000 people.

On Monday, April 12, Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev visited a “park of trophies” showcasing military equipment seized from Armenian troops during the war.

Hundreds of helmets of Armenian soldiers who had been killed were displayed in the park as well as wax mannequins of Armenian troops.

The park, due to be opened to the public shortly, sparked uproar in Armenia with ombudsman Arman Tatoyan saying it was “proof of genocidal policy”.

“The opening of such a ‘park’ clearly confirms institutional hatred towards Armenians in Azerbaijan.”

This sentiment was shared by most people in Yerevan, where mass anti-government protests have been held regularly against Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan’s decision to agree on the humiliating truce, leading him to call snap polls in June.

“This is true fascism,” 41-year-old historian Mher Barseghyan told AFP. The park “recalls evidence of Hitler’s barbarism that is exhibited in museums around the world.”



Wax dummies representing terrified and hapless Armenian soldiers at the new Baku trophy park.



Community News

US Federal Court Finds Turkey Was Served With Lawsuit Despite Turkey’s Protest to State Department

LOS ANGELES – A lawsuit filed against the Republic of Turkey will proceed, after the US District Court for the Central District of California held that Turkey was properly served. The case, Ghazarian et al. v. Republic of Turkey, was filed almost two years ago by 89-year-old Barkev Ghazarian and his son Garo B. Ghazarian. Turkey has actively sought to reject service in the matter, despite repeated service attempts made through US statutorily-mandated processes.



Barkev Ghazarian, 89, is a plaintiff in the case against the Republic of Turkey that alleges violation of international law, breach of fiduciary duties, elder abuse, infliction of emotional distress, and interference with inheritance.



Plaintiff Garo B. Ghazarian, son of Plaintiff Barkev Ghazarian.

On October 13, 2020, Kerkonian Dajani LLP, counsel in the matter, successfully caused service to be effected on Turkey by diplomatic channels through the U.S. State Department. On November 20, 2020, Turkey returned the court documents to the State Department with a diplomatic note stating that Turkey expects the US District Court to refrain from exercising jurisdiction over the matter and even directing the US see LAWSUIT, page 7



Lighting candles at St. Vartan Cathedral (Photo credit Albin Lohr-Jones)

New Life Through The Resurrection

Easter at St. Vartan Cathedral

By Stephan S. Nigohosian

NEW YORK — As beams of sunlight streamed through the stained-glass windows of New York City’s St. Vartan Armenian Cathedral, Bishop Daniel Findikyan delivered a spiritually-uplifting Easter Sunday sermon, on the immeasurable significance of Christ’s resurrection. “Today is the crown of Great Lent, and the pinnacle of Holy Week,” he began. “Jesus died a gruesome death on the cross; but then on the third day, he rose to a new life which will never end.” The Primate of the Eastern Diocese of the Armenian Church of America continued his message by emphasizing that God has power over all things, including death. “The resurrection of Christ overturned everything on that third day, when Jesus appeared as living. What was dead became alive.” The Easter Sunday service marked two of the Armenian Church’s days of note: the culmination of Holy Week, the sacred commemoration of the events leading to the Resurrection of Jesus Christ, as well as the beginning of Eastertide, the 50-day period known as heenoonk in Armenian that lasts from Easter to Pentecost.

see EASTER, page 8



At St. Vartan Cathedral (Photo credit Albin Lohr-Jones)

UNLV Medical School Named For Kirk Kerkorian

LAS VEGAS (*Las Vegas Sun*) — The University of Nevada in Las Vegas (UNLV) School of Medicine will bear the name of prominent businessman and philanthropist Kirk Kerkorian, the first time the late Las Vegas icon’s name will be used on a building anywhere.

The naming, which requires approval by the Board of Regents, was announced on April 8 at the construction site of the medical school building. It will be known as the Kirk Kerkorian School of Medicine at UNLV. Kerkorian’s name will not be used on any other buildings, said Lindy Schumacher, a board member of the nonprofit Nevada Health and Bioscience Corp., which is overseeing the construction project.

Kerkorian, who died in 2015, had refused numerous offers throughout his life to have buildings named after him. “His anonymous generosity is everywhere, but his name is nowhere,” Schumacher said. “You can have his money. You cannot have his name — until now.”

In a statement, the Nevada Health and Bioscience Corp. said the Kerkorian estate’s donations toward the School of Medicine building, as well as Kerkorian’s prominence in the community and philanthropic history, made him a “clear choice for the naming.”

Construction on the 135,000-square-foot building started in October and is expected to be finished next year. The building, expected to cost about \$150 million, is being funded through a combination of charitable donations and state dollars. Gov. Steve Sisolak this year reinstated \$25 million earmarked for the project that was cut last year because of the economic crunch caused by the coronavirus pandemic.

Kerkorian’s influence on Las Vegas is massive, and he carried the unofficial title of the “father of the Las Vegas megaresort.”

He built three major hotels in Las Vegas: The International, now the Westgate; the MGM, now Bally’s; and the MGM Grand. He was also a prominent philanthropist and made large donations throughout his life, including \$1 billion to Armenia to help rebuilding efforts after a 1988 earthquake.

Schumacher, whose father, Anthony Mandekic, was a friend and business partner of Kerkorian, said Kerkorian’s philanthropy is evident around Las Vegas. Mandekic, who is the executor of Kerkorian’s estate, said she once asked Kerkorian why he worked so hard. “He said, ‘Lindy, your dad and I are great at making money, and the more money we make, the more money we get to give away.’”



COMMUNITY NEWS

A Sign of Hope Still Shines in San Francisco: Lighting of Mt. Davidson Cross Tradition Lives On

By Kim Bardakian
Special to the Mirror-Spectator

SAN FRANCISCO — On the evening of Saturday, April 3, 2021 a nearly 100-year-old tradition continued with the lighting of Mt. Davidson Cross. In 1923, an Easter tradition was born on the top of Mt. Davidson Cross in San Francisco. Nearly 100 years later, the tradition continues led by the Mt. Davidson Cross Armenian Council, to usher in the Easter holiday.

What started in 1923 had grown to over 50,000 visitors for an annual Easter Sunrise service. Volunteers have visited this iconic landmark and cross annually to light up the mountainside for Easter, the holiest of days for Christians. The cross, which sits at the highest peak in San Francisco, provides spectacular views year-round.

The Mt. Davidson Cross Armenian Council continues the beautiful tradition by lighting the cross which demonstrates hope and peace. COVID-19 didn't stop the cross from being illuminated this year but it did halt the Easter Sunrise Service for the second year in a row.

Mt. Davidson Cross is only lit two nights a year — on April 24 to mark the anniversary of the Armenian Genocide Remembrance and Easter Eve.

For more information about Mt. Davidson Cross, visit: <https://www.mountdavidsoncross.org/>



Tekeyan Cultural Association
SPONSOR



SINCE ITS INCEPTION
IN 2001, THE TCA
SPONSOR A TEACHER
PROGRAM HAS
RAISED \$734,590
AND REACHED OUT
TO 6,829 TEACHERS
AND SCHOOL STAFF
IN ARMENIA AND
ARTSAKH

20th
ANNIVERSARY
a TEACHER
IN ARMENIA AND ARTSAKH



☐ Yes, I want to sponsor teachers in Armenia and Karabagh to continue helping them educate the children, our future leaders. I would like to have the teacher's name and address.

☐ \$200 ☐ \$400 ☐ \$600 ☐ other _____

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Email _____

Make check payable to:
Tekeyan Cultural Association—Memo: Sponsor a Teacher

Mail your check to:
TCA Sponsor a Teacher
5326 Val Verde, Houston, TX 77056

Your donation is Tax Deductible



Federal Court Finds Turkey Was Served with Lawsuit

LAWSUIT, from page 6

State Department to share this information with the District Court “who should summarily dismiss these proceedings.”

Despite Turkey’s protests to the US State Department, on March 16, 2021, the US District Court agreed with Kerkonian Dajani LLP and specifically found that “Defendant was properly served.” Turkey has not responded to the lawsuit despite the December 12, 2020 deadline to do so.

Currently pending in the case is the Plaintiffs’ request for an entry of default for Turkey’s failure to appear before the US District Court and respond to the complaint. Turkey’s failure to respond may result in judgment being entered against it for the claims brought by the Ghazarians.

The lawsuit alleges violations of international law as well as statutory and common law claims against Turkey stemming from conduct committed by Turkey’s agents in the United States. It specifically alleges that Turkey’s agents harassed, demeaned and degraded Barkev Ghazarian, an elderly man from Glendale, California, because he sought to exercise religious and cultural rights in Turkey as a native Armenian Christian in 2017.

The pleading further alleges that Turkey’s agents interfered with the inheritance of Garo B. Ghazarian, Barkev’s son, by thwarting his father’s efforts to identify his family’s sacred sites within the borders of Turkey and pass to his son direct knowledge of the same and the native traditions practiced by generations of Ghazarians there.

The acts committed by Turkey’s agents were undertaken pursuant to a specific policy of Turkey targeting native Armenian Christians, as described in detail in the pleading. Plaintiffs claim that, in implementing this policy, Turkey intended and ensured that Barkev’s direct knowledge of his family’s ancestral traditions and pilgrimage sites would not pass to future generations of Ghazarians.

The case, brought by Kerkonian Dajani LLP, is a seminal one litigating the rights of Armenians to access and use Armenian cultural and religious heritage under Turkish control, and to do so on the basis of being indigenous to the land.

COMMUNITY NEWS/OBITUARY

Philanthropist and Homebuilder Hirair Hovnanian Dies

HOVNANIAN, from page 1

and philanthropic activities. He served as chairman of the Armenian Assembly's Board of Trustees and was a founding member of the Hayastan All Armenian Fund.

Hovnanian directly managed the construction of four housing component factories in Armenia after the 1988 earthquake, on behalf of the Armenian Assembly of America. Along with his contributions of time, his charitable contributions exceeded \$40 million.

In a statement released by the Armenian Assembly, they describe him as "a bold, daring and caring individual, a visionary leader, the founder and benefactor of many charities, and devoted longtime Chairman of the Armenian Assembly of America's Board" who has left "a remarkable legacy."

"At the helm of the Armenian Assembly of America, he helped shape non-partisan advocacy, creating an example of a united voice for Armenian Americans in Washington, D.C., and strongly believed in the unique role of American leadership in ad-



Hirair Hovnanian with his wife, Anna

vancing democracy and human rights. He lent every measure of support within his

means towards the affirmation of the Armenian Genocide, including the establishment of the [Armenian National Institute](#). He welcomed Armenian Assembly interns to his home every summer and embraced the next generation with his infectious enthusiasm for all things Armenian. Through his boundless generosity, he touched the lives of countless citizens in Armenia and Artsakh to whom he exemplified the best of the Armenian diaspora.

"We are all saddened by this great loss and remain immensely grateful to Hirair for his unparalleled legacy. He was the champion of every cause that benefited the Armenian people, and he never hesitated to lead from the front with unwavering dedication and commitment. May he rest in peace," the statement noted.

Edmond Y. Azadian, a member of the founding executive council of the Armenian Assembly of America, recalled the following about his colleague: "Hirair Hovnanian and Steve Mugar pioneered a new political path in Armenian-American life by founding the Armenian Assembly. Hirair Hovnanian with his Armenian

heart and practical mind was the propelling force of that new movement. His infectious warmth and vision inspired all of us who gathered around his charismatic personality."

Prime Minister of Armenia Nikol Pashinyan in a letter of condolence said, "His role in the development of Armenia and Artsakh is invaluable. He will always remain in the bright memories of our people with his patriotic activities both as an entrepreneur and philanthropist. Dozens of projects have been implemented with the efforts of Mr. Hovnanian aimed at the recovery of the disaster zone, the construction of Goris-Stepanakert highway, the creation of the Hayastan All-Armenian Fund, the solution of numerous socio-economic problems facing our people and the protection of Armenia's and Artsakh's interests abroad."

Hovnanian was aged 91. He was preceded in death by his wife, Anna. He leaves five children: Siran, Edele, Armen, Tanya, and Leela, two son-in-laws, Toros and Levon, and five grandchildren. His funeral service was held on April 10 in Yerevan.

Easter at St. Vartan Cathedral

EASTER, from page 6

With New Yorkers still living under strict regulations for public gatherings, worshipers in the cathedral observed the now familiar norms of social-distancing, mask-wearing, and limitations on the number of people present in the sanctuary.

Under these conditions, many people opted to watch the cathedral service from home. This year marked the 5th anniversary of the cathedral's Easter service broadcast, which used multiple camera angles to provide home viewers with an intimate and inclusive experience of the badarak. In the comments section of the Diocese's video platforms, typed sentiments of joy, prayers and blessings underscored the fact that, despite the many hardships mankind faces in the world today, the Easter message provides shelter, hope, and light in our lives.

Assisting Bishop Daniel throughout the Easter badarak was Cathedral Vicar Fr. Davit Karamyan, as well as Fr. Bedros Kadehjian and a number of altar servers. The angelic voices of the St. Vartan Cathedral Choir, such an integral and moving element of the Divine Liturgy service, ranged in tone from somber to exalted. Khoren Mekanejian conducted the choir, with accompaniment by organist Florence Avakian.

As Findikyan prayed over the chalice and raised the eucharist to the heavens, harmonious strains of the choir soloist and organ accompaniment deepened the beauty and sanctity of the blessing. As the faithful assembled into a single, socially-distanced line to receive Holy Communion, many bowed their heads in gratitude to be present at the cathedral on Easter Sunday.

With the experiences of 2020 in the background, on Easter Sunday 2021 one could more palpably feel the sacrifice that Christ made for man's salvation. The message of the empty tomb and Christ's resurrection, with its promise of being reunited with departed loved ones, is especially comforting after the losses so many suffered during the past year. It was a powerful theme struck by Bishop Daniel in his sermon. "When we suffer through the death of loved ones, Jesus' resurrection reminds us that that death is not forever," he said. "When the pious women went to the tomb of Jesus to pay their respects, they were filled with the sadness and grief that we feel whenever we lose a loved one to death."

Bishop Daniel also cited timely examples of current situations that appear catastrophic and tragic, yet can draw us closer to the power of the resurrection and are a means of accessing the eternal life of God.

"The pandemic that kills millions of people and causes pain and grief; the war in Artsakh that takes the lives of thousands of young Armenian boys who shed their blood on our holy land; the world that says you have lost everything: Through the light of the resurrection, the Son of God says to us, 'You Armenians, through faith, may be closer to God than anyone recognizes. You may have made the ultimate sacrifice that the Son of God made.' As a result, with the sadness and grief, we may already be on the doorstep of eternal life."

Findikyan concluded his sermon by pointing out that, through the resurrection of Jesus, the "rules" changed, and we live in a new world with a new hope. "They are not the rules of geopolitics, Washington, the United Nations or Wall Street," he explained; they are the rules of God. "The Son of God is alive and powerful among us in this world, and he is the one true God who rules."

Once again this year, the audience for St. Vartan Cathedral's Easter Sunday liturgy included thousands of viewers from across the Diocese and around the world, viewing the broadcast over the Internet. The production team included Yervant Keshishian, who directed the program, and host and narrator Christopher Zakian. Albin Lohr-Jones, whose photography has visually documented previous Eastern Diocese events and services, also photographed the Easter Sunday service.

A reception on the cathedral's outdoor plaza, organized by the St. Vartan Cathedral Council, concluded the day's sacred observance.

Kenneth Esperian

Air Force Veteran, Longtime Barber

WATERTOWN, Mass. — Kenneth Esperian, of Watertown, passed away on April 4, 2021 unexpectedly. He was 89.

He was the husband for almost 60 years of the late Ann Esperian, who was the love of his life.

He was born in Methuen, son of the late Martin Esperian and the late Olga Stepanian (Nina).

Esperian served in the United States Air Force. He then worked as a barber in Methuen and then Watertown for nearly 40 years.

He and his wife were active in the Mr. and Mrs. Club of St. James Armenian church

until her death.

He was an avid gardener, backgammon and horseshoe player, religiously devoted and was loved by all who knew him.

He is survived by daughter, Lisa, two sons, Gregory Esperian and Paul Esperian both of Waltham, MA; five grandchildren, Samira Hannoush Kulch, Marisa Murkidjian Andrews, Tanya Murkidjian, Nicole Murkidjian, and Sean Murkidjian; four great grandchildren, Dylan Kulch, Layla Kulch, Tessa Andrews, and Grayson Kulch. Private arrangements were with DeVito Funeral Home, Watertown.

Nardolillo Funeral Home

Est. 1906

John K. Najarian, Jr.

Rhode Island's Only Licensed Armenian Funeral Director

1278 Park Ave. Cranston, RI 02910 (401) 942-1220
1111 Boston Neck Rd. Narragansett, RI 02882 (401) 789-6300

www.nardolillo.com

Telephone (617) 924-7400

Aram Bedrosian Funeral Home, Inc.

Continuous Service By The Bedrosian Family Since 1945

558 MOUNT AUBURN STREET
WATERTOWN, MA 02472

MARION BEDROSIAN
PAUL BEDROSIAN
LARRY BEDROSIAN

Giragosian

F UNERAL H OME

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

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



COMMUNITY NEWS

NAASR Receives Mass Humanities Grant for Programming on Derounian Archive

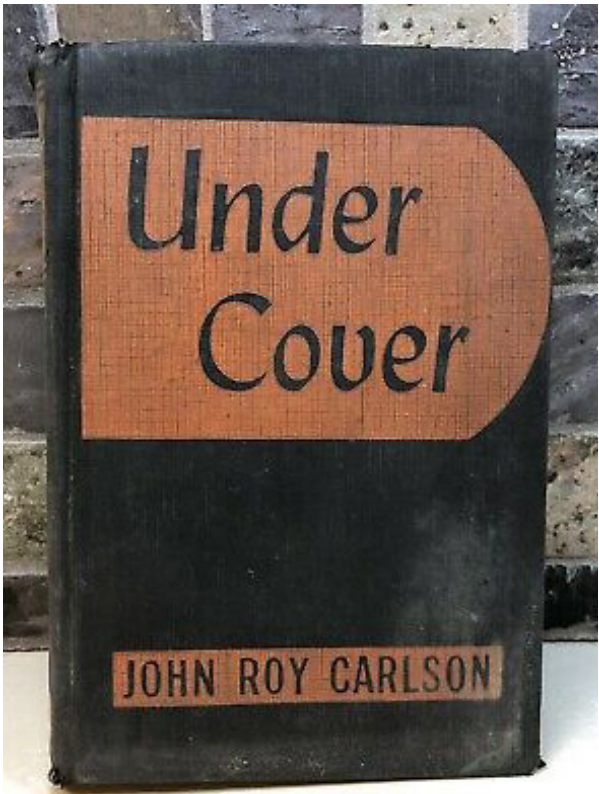
BELMONT, Mass. — The National Association for Armenian Studies and Research (NAASR) in early April received a Massachusetts Humanities grant for programming centered around one of NAASR’s most significant archives — that of Avedis Derounian, aka John Roy Carlson, who infiltrated the American Nazi underground and wrote *Under Cover* (E. P. Dutton, 1943), a *New York Times* best seller with at least 20 re-printings.

The grant for “The Avedis Derounian Archive at NAASR: A Vital Resource on US-Based Extremism,” is part of a new round of Mass Humanities grant-making, totaling more than \$250,000 to 59 cultural organizations to reach their audiences digitally due to the COVID-19 pandemic, with funding provided through the Massachusetts Cultural Council.

Under the name John Roy Carlson, Derounian infiltrated the American Nazi underground and wrote *Under Cover* in 1943 about these experiences. He also wrote *The Plotters* (E. P. Dutton, 1946) and *Cairo to Damas-*



Avedis Derounian signing a copy of *Under Cover*, circa 1943-44



cus (Alfred Knopf, 1951). NAASR’s Digital Capacity grant will support virtual programming to expand understanding of Derounian’s experiences with the threat of domestic fascism and extremism in the U.S. in the 1930s and 1940s as well as a new webpage with digitized materials from the Derounian collection.

Following Derounian’s death, his archives were transferred to NAASR. They are one of NAASR’s most significant special collections, comprising more than 75 boxes of unpublished writings, notes, photographs and other materials. His fascinating life experiences, contained in his archive, reveal striking details about U.S.-based fascist, pro-Nazi and other extreme right-wing

and extremist groups of that time. “His writings and insights have held immense fascination to the public since publication of his book *Under Cover* over 75 years ago, and they are all-too-relevant again today,” commented NAASR’s Executive Director Sarah Ignatius. “We are very grateful to Mass Humanities and the Massachusetts Cultural Council for recognizing the significance of these materials and supporting our digital programming to expand understanding about them and increasing access to them.”

Mass Humanities is a state-based affiliate of the National Endowment for the Humanities. More information can be found at www.masshumanities.org.

Annual Reconfiguration of Monument at Heritage Park to Take Place on April 18

BOSTON — The annual reconfiguration of the Abstract Sculpture at Armenian Heritage Park on The Greenway, Boston will take place on Sunday, April 18, beginning at 7:30 a.m. Rain date is April 25.

The annual reconfiguration is supported by the Park’s Charles and Doreen Bilezikian Endowed Fund.

Due to the pandemic, the reconfiguration did not take place last year.

On Sunday morning, a crane will lift, pull apart and reconfigure the two halves of the

Abstract Sculpture, a split rhomboid dodecahedron made of stainless steel and aluminum, to create a new sculptural shape.

The reconfiguration usually takes 3-4 hours depending on its complexity.

The annual reconfiguration of the Abstract Sculpture is symbolic of all who pulled away or were forced to pull away from their country of origin and came to these Massachusetts shores, establishing themselves in new and different ways.

“Luckily, the project had a designer, Don Tellaian, AIA who was sensitive to the imperatives of civic space...the design uses abstract, geometric forms...evokes the broader historic struggles of all immigrants...offers multivalent possibilities for interpretation shaped by visitors’ own histories...” wrote Jane Whitehead in *Forget Me Not*, ArchitectureBoston, the publication of the Boston Society of Architects.



2012



2013



2014



2015



2016



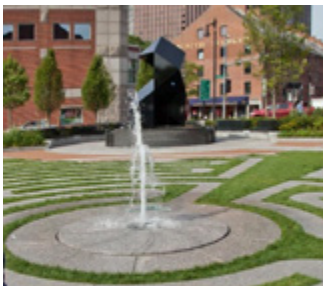
2017



2018



2019



Aurelian Mardiros oversees the annual reconfiguration of the Abstract Sculpture, fabricated by A&A Industries in Peabody, the generous gift of Park Benefactor’s

Anahid and Aurelian Mardiros, founders of A&A Industries, a leader in custom contract manufacturing.

Joining teams from A&A Industries and Jerry Rigging Corp are William Martin who oversees the Park’s Care & Maintenance, representing the Armenian Heritage Foundation, sponsors of the Park and Don Tellaian, AIA, the Park’s architect/designer.

The Abstract Sculpture, a key feature of the Park, sits atop a Reflecting Pool.

The Sculpture is dedicated to lives lost during the Armenian Genocide of 1915-1923 and all genocides.

The water of the Reflecting Pool washes over its side and re-emerges as a single jet of water at the Labyrinth’s center, representing hope and rebirth.

The Labyrinth, a circular winding path paved in grass and inlaid stone, celebrates life’s journey. Art, Service, Science, Commerce are etched around its circle in tribute to contributions made to American life and culture.

Armenian Heritage Park and its endowed programs is a gift to the City of Boston and the Commonwealth of Massachusetts from Armenian-Americans.

The Park is between the Carousel and the North End Park, and Faneuil Hall Marketplace and Christopher Columbus Park. For further information, visit ArmenianHeritagePark.org. email hello@ArmenianHeritagePark.org.

Detroit Knights Send Medical Supplies to Armenia

SUPPLIES, from page 1
needed medical supplies to developing countries. The organization is the 9th largest of its kind in the United States and has a 4-star rating from Charity Navigator. Instead, the organization relies heavily on volunteers from the Metro Detroit community to run its day-to-day operations. In fact, World Medical Relief for many years has been a very popular venue for individuals, organizations, and religious congregations to find a way to give back to the community.

Medical goods are sourced from doctors, patients, and especially hospitals. The materials are either leftovers from hospitals where it is more economically efficient to buy new supplies or are used supplies that are not considered up to code under US regulations but are still usable for all intents and purposes and could save lives in developing countries. The sorting of the goods into different categories to then be shipped is a rate-limiting factor for the organization's operations, which can be moved along in a major way by the simple act of volunteers coming in groups to help sort supplies. This is the reason that the organization, since its days of operating out of a Downtown Detroit warehouse, has been so popular for groups looking to do



Equipment that went into Container #1

tion it is today.

A deep devotion of faith underlies the organization's mission and most of those



Signing off on Container #1: Left to Right: Dr. George Sampson, Greg Baise, Kazar Terterian

community service.

World Medical Relief started as the initiative of a Detroit woman in the 1950s simply packing up bandages and mailing them through the postal system to war-torn Korea. It grew under the guidance of its founder, who felt she was doing "God's Work," until it became the vast opera-



Fr. Armash Baghdasarian and Kazar Terterian at the loading of Container #3



Unloading Container #2 In Armenia

in charge are people of strong religious convictions, yet the organization is non-denominational and not even explicitly Christian. The goal is simply to help others, which group leaders indeed believe is "doing God's work." Favored as a supplier by local missionary groups, World Medical Relief will help any organization donate medical supplies to those in need anywhere in the world and Armenia certainly fit into their mission statement.

In the early 2010s, the Armenian Church Youth Organization of America (ACYOA) chapter of St. John's Armenian Church in Detroit discovered World Medical Relief through an internet search and the organization's relationship with the Armenian community was born with an initial trip to help sort goods as a way for the ACYOA to engage in community service. In those days, the organization was still housed in its old building in downtown Detroit. A few other trips by St. John's auxiliary organizations followed, but it was really in 2017 when World Medical Relief purchased a new facility in Detroit's northern suburb of Southfield, where St. John's is also located close by, that the relationship really blossomed.

The church's various subsidiary organizations found World Medical Relief to be a simple and effective way to give back. Church member Greg Baise, who is also a member of the Knights of Vartan, recalled World Medical Relief from his days as a practicing pharmacist, when he would often drop off excess supplies to the old Detroit location. He became a member of the organization's board of directors and not long after this, when the Covid pandemic began, he wanted to find a way to help his ancestral homeland of Armenia through his new role by shipping medical supplies to Armenia.

Baise approached St. John's assistant pastor, Fr. Armash Baghdasarian, who suggested that the

two approach the Knights of Vartan with the idea, of which Fr. Baghdasarian has been a long-time member and which Baise had recently joined. Knights of Vartan Nareg-Shavarshan lodge Commander Kazar Terterian was excited by the prospect and worked hard to bring the project to fruition. Terterian, however, suggested that the project be done secretly due to the danger of shipments being intercepted by Turkish forces.

Navigating International Shipping

Terterian was now tasked with filling out paperwork for the shipments, which was a challenge as the forms are geared toward World Medical Relief's primary clients, missionaries who have specific medical objectives and will be travelling with the goods. To fill out the medical related portions of the forms, Terterian pulled in long-time Knight and physician, Dr. Gary Zamanigian, to assist him. In order to learn more about the process of shipping goods to Armenia and distributing them once they are in the country, Terterian reached out to Knight and Metro Detroit native Peter Abajian, director of the Paros Foundation, a charitable group in California.

The project was kept secret by all individuals concerned. They also worked closely with Dr. George Sampson, director of World Medical Relief.

Terterian and the small group of Knights helped Sampson to understand Armenia's needs and World Medical Relief put together the containers for shipment. Meanwhile, the project also had to be signed off by Armenia's Minister of Health and other officials. The receiving end of the project was assisted by Abajian and the desire at the time was for the shipment to go to one of Armenia's poorest regions, Tavush, on the Azerbaijani border.

The initial project began in June 2020 and the concern was the Covid pandemic, therefore personal protective equipment (PPE) was a major component of the shipment, along with cardiac equipment, dialysis machines and other items that are in need in poorer regions.

Former Commander of the Detroit Lodge, Howard Atesian and his wife, Cathy, were benefactors of the first shipping container, which included \$502,920 worth of medical supplies. The shipping cost was approximately \$17,000 which was also donated by the Atesians.

The shipment left Detroit for New York by rail on September 14 to catch an ocean liner. Crossing the Atlantic, it entered the Mediterranean and navigated the Dardanelles and Bosphorus into the Black Sea. However, due to the war that had broken out between Armenia/Artsakh and Azerbaijan, the Georgian authorities held up the shipment at the Black Sea port of Poti, extorting another \$1,200 out of the Atesians to store the shipping container temporarily, which, of course, he willingly gave. Regardless, the Georgians' cynical siding with Turkey in the conflict did not go unnoticed and was evident in many other similar events during the war when aid to Armenia was delayed. Finally, the shipment arrived on November 26, American Thanksgiving Day.

The second shipment was being put together as war was raging and Terterian requested that the supplies be geared more toward wound care. The second shipment was funded jointly by Herman and Arek Hintiryan and the Cultural Society of Armenians from Istanbul (CSAI). In an unprecedented move, Terterian asked the chairman of the CSAI, Vahe Akaraz, if there was any way he could secure the donation without informing his membership or even his executive board of the plans. The Detroit Bolsetsis, knowing the war was going on, and trusting Terterian and the Knights, with whom they have a long relationship in the tight-knit Detroit community, agreed to the large donation without knowing precisely what it was going toward. The donation from the Hintiryans and the CSAI amounted to \$583,560 worth of medical supplies,

continued on next page



COMMUNITY NEWS



Container #1 Team with map (Dr. Gary Zamanigian, Kazar Terterian, Howard Atesian, Greg Baise)

from previous page

placed in a second shipping container that departed on November 4 and arrived on January 31.

The process of the third shipment also began during the war, on November 9.

This time Terterian specifically requested prosthetics to be included in the shipment as he knew there would be a need for such items to help severely wounded warriors as well as civilians. The benefactor this time was St. John's Armenian Church and the shipping container held \$543,680 worth of medical supplies, broken down into 5,400 pounds of disposable "supplies" (including PPE) and 10,984 pounds of permanent "equipment" (including prosthetics, hospital beds, etc. etc.) The other containers had similar con-

tents. This final shipment left port on December 4 and arrived on February 11.

In the case of all the shipments, Terterian wrote letters to Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan and President Armen Sarkissian as well as the Minister of Health to inform them of the donations that were arriving. Also in the case of all shipments, Terterian did not inform his lodge members nor the public until the shipment was safely in Armenia.

In total, the three containers contained \$1,630,160 worth of medical supplies, which the Nareg-Shavarshan Lodge members hope will be of great aid to the people of Armenia, in continuing the goals of the founders of the Knights of Vartan.



EXECUTIVE MANAGEMENT OPPORTUNITY

Manoogian Manor, a licensed Home for the Aged in Livonia Michigan, is seeking qualified candidates for the position of Executive Director, the top management position at the Manor. Assisted by a dedicated staff, this position is accountable for all aspects of running a successful business, including financial accountability, compliance with local, state, and federal safety standards, marketing, facility management, food service, and staff supervision. The position reports to the Manor's Board of Directors. Requirements include a minimum four-year college degree followed by a minimum five years' demonstrated leadership experience in business administration, hospitality, marketing, medical or similarly relevant positions, coupled with a compassionate personality and keen business vision. Familiarity with Armenian culture and speaking the Armenian language are desirable. A competitive compensation and benefit package will be available to the person selected for this position, as well as financial assistance for a successful candidate who must relocate to the metropolitan Detroit area.

For more information about Manoogian Manor, visit: www.manoogianmanor.com.

Qualified candidates should direct inquiries, with resumé, to David Karapetian at: dkarapetian@comcast.net.



MANOOGIAN MANOR

SUMMER STAGES & STUDIOS

July 5 - August 27

Register today for youth art & theater programs!

Weekly programs, Grades K-12

Limited group sizes

All programs this summer in-person
at The Charles Mosesian Cultural
and Youth Center at St. James Church,
Watertown, MA

For more information contact
Director of Education, Allison Honea
617-923-0100, ext. 8331
education@mosesianarts.org

mosesianarts.org



THE DOROTHY AND CHARLES
MOSESIAN
CENTER FOR THE
ARTS



Arts & Culture

INTERVIEW

On Palindromes And Parajanov With German Lukomnikov

By Artsvi Bakhchinyan
Special to the Mirror-Spectator

YEREVAN/MOSCOW — German Lukomnikov is a Russian poet who also writes prose, palindromes and songs, as well as performer, translator, actor, anthology compiler, a master of poetic minimalism and combinatorial poetry. He was born in 1962 in Baku, in a Jewish-Armenian family: his father was poet and artist Gennady Lukomnikov. German was 13 years old, when the family moved to Moscow. He has written poetry since his childhood.

Lukomnikov’s works have been published in leading Russian magazines, in the anthology *Samizdat of the Century* (1997), in the collections *Very Short Texts* (2000) and *Time to Give Birth* (2001, 2002). He is an author of 14 books of poetry; participated in poetry slams and authors’ reading contests, being the winner of the Russian-Ukrainian slam in Lviv (2007) and in the All-Russian slam in Voronezh (2014), vice-champion of the World slam in Paris (2015), as well as of the Chukovsky Prize for Innovation in Children’s Literature (2015). He is one of the compilers of the *Anthology of the Russian Palindrome, Combinatorial and Handwritten Poetry* (2002) and *Russian Poems of 1950–2000* (2010). German Lukomnikov’s works have been translated into 12 languages.



Dear German, for several years I have been following your work. It is pleasant and funny to hear how you read your extraordinary poems — there is humor, positivity and surprises in them. I even tried to translate some couplets and quatrains into Armenian, although many of them are virtually untranslatable.

I am glad you are interested in my works and you are trying to translate them into Armenian. By the way, in the anthology of the poetry of Russian minimalism, published in translations into Armenian in Stepanakert several years ago, there is also selection from my works. It was compiled and translated by poet Hrant Aleksanyan. It is curious that the only Wikipedia article about my person, apart from Russian, is Armenian.

see INTERVIEW, page 14



Executive Chef Luigi Tripodi, from left, with WorldFLATS owners Nvair and Zareh Beylerian in the restaurant. (Tom Bergeron/ROI-NJ)

Founders of WorldFLATS See Opportunity with Classic Concept — Lahmajun Flatbread Aimed at Healthy Eaters

By Tom Bergeron

PARAMUS, N.J. (ROI-NJ) — For Nvair Beylerian, the goal is simple: Achieve the ultimate in word-of-mouth marketing — and hear it just a few bites into a meal from WorldFLATS.

“We want the wife to say to the husband — halfway through the meal — ‘You know there’s no meat in this, right?’” she said.

It’s the not-so-secret part of the recipes at WorldFLATS, which opened its first location in Paramus in mid-March. And it’s why, when the store had its ribbon-cutting, Beylerian did not announce that WorldFLATS was a vegetarian restaurant, a vegan restaurant — or even an Armenian restaurant.

“We just want to be known as having good, wholesome, fresh food,” she said.

WorldFLATS, co-founded by Beylerian and her husband, Zareh Beylerian, is a grab-and-go fast-casual restaurant specializing in their unique version of Lahmajun, a traditional flatbread meal of Armenia that many call “Armenian pizza.”

The Beylerians feel they have taken the centuries-old dish and put their own unique spin on it. No more meat — lots more flavors.

Along with Executive Chef Luigi Tripodi, they have created nine original recipes — each with its own protein spread and toppings.

Many replicate flavors from around the world: Euphrates best mimics the traditional Lahmajun — it uses a lentil veggie spread with near-Eastern spices topped with romaine, cucumbers, pickled red onion, tomatoes, red peppers and a lemon vinaigrette dressing. And there’s Athena (Greek), Roma (Italian), Rio Grande (Tex-Mex), Masala (Indian) and Mandarin (Asian), among others.

All bring the distinctive flavors of a region, but none comes with meat.

“It’s not a secret that we’re vegetarian,” Nvair Beylerian said. “But, we’re not really pushing that as our agenda, so to speak.

“We just want to be known as having food that is good and satisfying — and doesn’t give you a stomachache.”

Some feel starting any business during a pandemic — let alone a restaurant — would be enough to give you agita. The Beylerians don’t feel that way.

Zareh Beylerian, a lawyer who has done years of work in franchising, especially with food establishments, said the idea has been percolating in their minds for years. For him, it’s really been since he came to the U.S. from Lebanon more than 40 years ago as a teenager.

“I’m an immigrant,” he said. “We always look at this as a land of opportunity. I thank my lucky stars that I’m here in this country every day. And, you know, when there’s an opportunity, you never let go of it. It’s always in the back of your mind.”

The Beylerians said the pandemic actually made it easier to open.

For starters, the forced isolation enabled them to spend all of their time on the business.

“There were no social distractions,” Nvair Beylerian said. “No extended family responsibilities, no community events, no church events — we could completely focus on this.”

see LAHMAJUN, page 16



Cleveland Institute of Music Students Raise 10K in Support for Armenia and Artsakh

CLEVELAND — On March 31, “Haig Hovsepian and Friends” presented a concert entitled “Armenian Music for Peace.” This concert marked the first time an event of this magnitude had occurred at the Cleveland Institute of Music (CIM), where Hovsepian and his fellow musicians are students, for an Armenian cause. A strong manifestation of our indestructible cultural heritage it was also the first time that an entire program of Armenian music, never heard before in the region, was presented within the walls of a top music school in the country by professional music students and staff.

The program raised \$10,000.

The Almas Quartet, Jacob Bernhardt, Matias Cuevas, Emera Gurath, Christine Hill, Sasha Kandybin, Jiwon Kim, Lydia Rhea, Benjamin Richardson, Yuhang Wang enthusiastically volunteered their time and talent by accepting Hovsepian’s invitation to take part in this concert.

In addition to their very demanding curriculum requirements they undertook the new and never-before explored repertoire, and performed it with deep understanding, passion, and finesse. Music by Komitas, Khachaturian, Babajanyan, Mirzoyan, and Harutiunian written for piano, violin, cello, string quartet and trio filled the beautiful Mixon Hall and the internet waves via live stream.

It couldn’t have been more heart-warming to hear this music interpreted so authentically by those young and very talented musicians. Our sincerest gratitude and accolades not only for their musical skills, but also for their understanding and unlimited support of the war-stricken Armenia.

Initially the goal of the concert was to bring some of the rarely performed and for the most part unknown music to the CIM community. The borders were quickly broadened with CIM’s ability to live stream the event and the administration’s full support, allowing the event to turn this into a fundraiser. Next, Hovsepian reached out to the AGBU, which immediately offered their support for this initiative as well. And thus, the collaboration between “Haig Hovsepian and Friends”, CIM and AGBU became a bridge connecting this musical event with the war-stricken Armenia.

The school’s newly formed Programming Advisory Committee and the school’s president, Paul Hogle, wholeheartedly supported this idea and made CIM resources available in order to make the project come true. The “Armenian Music for Peace” also became the inaugural concert within the Programming and Advisory Committee “whose purpose is to inform a more inclusive curriculum, including the performance of compositions by composers from underrepresented backgrounds and demographic groups” (from the CIM’s Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion site).

Hovsepian is currently the only see SUPPORT, page 16



ARTS & CULTURE

Diversity or Disappearance?

The Situation of Christian Architectural Heritage in Turkey

By Bishop Hovakim Manukyan

LONDON – Recently, the Turkish newspaper *Daily Sabah* published an article in which it calls Turkey a “land of diversity” thanks to the six featured churches that have been “protected” by the Turkish Ministry of Culture (see “Land of Diversity: 6 Most Beautiful Christian Sites in Turkey,” by Argun Konuk, *Daily Sabah*, April 2, 2021). While everyone is grateful whenever cultural heritage is preserved and protected by a state, the *Daily Sabah* article tells a small part of the story of the thousands of churches – Byzantine, Armenian, Greek, Georgian, Syriac – that have existed in Anatolia (Western Armenia), often times for centuries, and their fates under the modern Republic of Turkey, established in 1923.

This brief response addresses the histories of only a handful of Armenian churches in the Republic of Turkey with the goals of: encouraging the press (both in Turkey and beyond) to do a better job of covering these topics; drawing attention to the long-term, intentional erasure of Armenian history in the Republic of Turkey; helping individuals (in Turkey and beyond) to see the destruction and neglect of Armenian cultural heritage as part of a serious problem related to the creation of nationalist narratives in Turkey that exclude the existence of indigenous Christian populations, thereby depriving individuals living in Turkey of truly knowing the histories of the lands in which they live and, thus, of their own cultural inheritance.

Most of the properties formerly belonging to Armenians were confiscated by the Turkish government and turned into military posts, hospitals, schools and prisons in the aftermath of WWI and the Armenian Genocide. The legal justification for the seizures was the law of Emval-i Metruke (Law of Abandoned Properties), which legalized the confiscation of Armenian property if the owner did not return. Still, some individuals (including some Turkish citizens) believe that the Treaty of Lausanne stipulates that the government of the Republic of Turkey preserve the heritage of its minority populations.

In a 1974 report, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) estimated that after the establishment of the Republic of Turkey in 1923, 913 Armenian historical monuments were still in existence in Turkey, with 464 completely destroyed or vanished, 252 in ruins, and 197 in need of immediate repair. UNESCO recently researched and authored a report uniquely on the heritage of Ani and its environs in 2015. In 2016, the archaeological site of Ani was inscribed on UNESCO’s World Heritage List.

Thanks to the interventions of UNESCO, the World Monuments Fund and the Turkish Ministry of Culture, recently some important preservation work has been completed on Armenian monuments in and around Ani.

We see these efforts as a step in the right direction, but they are not enough. There is much work to be done. Much history to be remembered. And many sites of distinct artistic, cultural and religious significance to be shown the respect they deserve, as part of the fabric of humanity.

For more information on Armenian, Greek, Jewish and Syriac cultural heritage in Turkey, see this interactive map created by the Hrant Dink Foundation in Istanbul:

<https://turkiyekulturvarliklari.hrantdink.org/>.

Bishop Hovakim Manukyan is Primate of the Armenian Churches of the United Kingdom and Ireland and Member of the Committee for the Religious and Cultural Heritage Protection of Artsakh of the Mother See of Holy Etchmiadzin, Armenia.

Khtzkonk (Beş Kilise), Kars

The remains of this complex, constructed between the 7th and 13th centuries, are located in the province of Kars, near Digor. Active as a site of pilgrimage until 1920 – when it was photographed by the archaeologist Ashkharbek Kalantar, the site was visited in 1959 by Jean-Michel Thierry who found that four of the five churches had been completely and intentionally destroyed. Only one of the five churches – that of Saint Sarkis – remains partially standing today. According to fieldwork done by Tessa Hofmann, locals reported that the churches were blown up with explosives by the Turkish military. See: Tessa Hofmann, “Armenians in Turkey Today: a Critical Assessment of the Armenian Minority in the Turkish Republic,” p. 40.

Surp Azdouadzadzin, Arapgir

The Cathedral of Arapgir named Holy Mother of God (or, Asdouadzadzin) was built in the 13th century. Looted and burnt during the Armenian Genocide, the structure was rebuilt after the end of World War I and used as a school until it was blown up on September 18, 1957. Today, in place of the cathedral are ruins. For more information, see “Between Exposure and Erasure: The Armenian Heritage of Arapgir in Present-Day Eastern Turkey,” by Laurent Dissard.

Msho Sultan Surp Karapet

The most important Armenian monastic complex beyond the Mother See of Holy Etchmiadzin (located today in the Republic of Armenia), Msho Sultan Surp Karapet (whose remains lie in Çengilli Köyü, Province of Muş) housed a reliquary of St. John the Baptist and was an extremely important site of pilgrimage for Armenians from the 4th through the 20th centuries. It was from this complex that the Mkrtich Khrimean Hayrig – an important church leader of the 19th century – printed one of the first Armenian newspapers in the vernacular Armenian. And it was at this complex that many a young troubadour (Armenian, ashugh) came to receive his divine blessing, including the Tblisi-born multi-lingual poet/musician Sayat-Nova. The complex was looted during the 1895 Hamidian massacres and, during the Armenian Genocide, became a safe-haven for Armenians attempting to avoid death; it was also during this time that, thanks to the interventions of Armenian volunteers and the Russian army, the monks at the complex were able to send around 1750 manuscripts to the Mother See of Holy Etchmiadzin, in order to save them from destruction. Sadly, the monks were correct to send those precious manuscripts to Holy Etchmiadzin, as after several thousand Armenians were murdered near the walls of the monastery, the site was sacked and robbed. Today, very little of the booming monastic complex remains. In 2017, the 13th-century wooden doors of the monastic complex were displayed at the Armenia! exhibition at the Metropolitan Museum of Art (New York

City). It would seem that a local family had saved the beautifully-carved doors from destruction and kept them for over one hundred years, only to sell them eventually to a private collector. For more information, see: <https://www.houshamadyan.org>.

Varakavank (Yedi Kilise), Van

This monastic complex – of seven churches – was founded in the 11th century and was initially home to a piece of the True Cross, deposited there by Saint Hripsime, according to Armenian tradition. Destroyed (by earthquakes and invasions) several times throughout its long history, the monastery was consistently rebuilt as it was a site of religious and educational importance for the indigenous Armenian Christian population. Similar to the monastery of Msho Sultan Surp Karapet, Varakavank was looted during the Hamidian massacres of 1895 and, similarly, became a site of respite for individuals trying to avoid extermination during the Armenian Genocide of 1915. The site was intentionally destroyed in 1915, according to the account of Clara Ussher. While many remnants of the site existed til the 1960s, it seems there was a second attempt at destruction during that decade. The current remains consist of a small portion of the monastery – namely, parts of the church of Surp Gevorg (Saint George) and are owned by a private individual, namely Fatih Aytayli. It was reported in 2017 that many of the stones of the remnants were intentionally taken down to be used as spolia in the construction of a mosque and some houses.

Surp Nishan, Sivas

Surp Nishan monastery was established by Prince Atom-Ashot in the 11th century. The monastery was named after a celebrated relic that Atom-Ashot’s father, Senekerim, had brought from Varakavank monastery, and which was returned there after his death. Surp Nishan was a notable center of scholarship for Armenians until 1915. In 1915, Surp Nishan monastery was the main repository of medieval Armenian manuscripts in the Sivas (Sebastia) region and at least 283 manuscripts are recorded as having been completed there. The library was not destroyed during World War I and most of the manuscripts survived. In 1918 about 100 of them were transferred to the Armenian Patriarchate in Jerusalem. The monastery was completely destroyed in 1978. Its space is now home to a military base.

Surp Toros, Surp Asdouadzadzin, Talas, Kayseri

The village of Talas (in Kayseri) was home to two Armenian churches, Surp Toros and Surp Asdouadzadzin. Surp Toros was built in the 17th century and was the only Armenian church in the village until the church of Surp Asdouadzadzin was built, in 1837. According to the work of Arshak Alboyajian (Arshak Alboyadjian, *Patmut’iwn Hay Gesario*, Cairo, 1937) the churches were in function until 1915, but upon his return to Talas in 1937, he notes that they had been completely destroyed. Today, it is impossible to find any trace of either church in Talas. For more on the disappearance of Armenian architectural heritage in Kayseri and its environs, please see: Francesca Penoni, “Armenian Religious Architecture in Late 19th Early 20th-century Kayseri: Spatial and Cultural Cleansing,” Unpublished M.A. Thesis (Sabanci

University, 2015).

Taylar, Kars

The plan of Taylar Church (likely constructed in the early 10th century) represents the Armenian “domed hall” on a smaller scale and in new proportions. Unlike mainstream examples, which depict the evolution of this architectural type in Bagratid times that show the eastern pair of pylons verged on the apse, the architect of Taylar reversed the traditional interpretation and situated the dome over the center of the naos. As a result, the dome’s position on the exterior is slightly displaced from the center of the main volume to the west. The structure is in a dangerous condition. There is serious damage on the southern and eastern support walls and the vault’s close-domed square is completely collapsed. The surfaces are marked with graffiti and the presence of small holes suggests that guns were fired at the walls. There are also indications that the site was previously used as an animal shelter. See: <http://www.virtualani.org/taylar/index.htm>

Bagnayr, Kars

Together with Argo Aritch, Karmirvank, and Horomos, Bagnayr was one of the ecclesiastic and cultural centers closest to Ani. It consisted of a large group of inter-related buildings and two separate churches. The main building of the complex is the large, domed hall of Surb Astvatsatsin Monastery, built between the tenth and eleventh centuries. One of the separate churches, Küçük Kozluca Church, also remains standing. Photographic evidence from the early twentieth century shows the large complex of monastic buildings intact but damaged. In the decades since the middle of the century, however, most of the structures have deteriorated and have been lost. Currently, only one of the original buildings, Küçük Kozluca Church, remains more or less preserved. This six-foil domed church has lost all of the coverings, and almost all of the exterior stone blocks have been scavenged, but the structure remains intact. At the primary building of the complex, Surp Asdouadzadzin Monastery, the eastern and northern walls remain along with two columns and the ceilings of the eastern nave of the zhamatun, allowing us to understand the original design.

Mren, Kars

Constructed in 638 C.E., at the height of the Byzantine-Persian wars and the start of the Arab conquests, Mren is a touchstone of a world ravaged by conflict and the fruits of collaboration among diverse political constituents. Historians of Armenia, of the late Roman and Persian empires, and of early Islam have studied its inscriptions and sculptures for precious insight into this poorly documented era. At the same time, scholars value Mren as a canonical monument of the “Golden Age” of Armenian architecture, as the largest preserved domed basilica from seventh-century Armenia, and as an inspiration for the celebrated nearby Cathedral of Ani (a.d. 989). At the same time, Mren is cherished by Armenians internationally as part of their cultural heritage. Satellite images reveal that Mren is surrounded by an extensive archaeological site. On the cathedral itself, there is graffiti and signs of illegal excavations. Mren was listed on the World Monuments Fund Watch List in 2014. For more information, see: <https://www.wmf.org/project/>

On Palindromes and Parajanov with German Lukomnikov

INTERVIEW, from page 12

Not surprisingly, we are sensitive and attentive to our compatriots — no matter how many percent of Armenian blood and their links to Armenia. But you also spoke about your Armenian origin in the form of a palindrome — “Iz armyan ya, mrazi” (“I am from Armenians, scums”). It is especially interesting that, without knowing Armenian, you composed a palindrome in Armenian — “Ara, sus ara” (“Chap, shut up!”).

Gee, I forgot about “Ara, sus ara”! Thank you for reminding me! This is what my Armenian Metz-mama (grandmother), used to say. It was only after several decades I realized that it was a palindrome and decided to write it down and include it in the corpus of my texts as a kind of “ready-made” work. By the way, I recently composed another Armenian palindrome. It is, of course, conventionally Armenian. Roughly like “Armenian jokes.”

In my youth, I also wrote so-called experimental rhymes, for example, a rhyme without words, only with punctuation marks. But when I read the American poet Aram Saroyan, who already in the 1960s did such experiments, I refused to continue (although I published some in an alternative literary journal). And then I got acquainted with your works and immediately noticed that both you and Aram Saroyan have Armenian-Jewish roots.

I, too, once stumbled upon Aram Saroyan’s experiments (in particular, his famous one-word poem “lightght”) and was also very interested. I wrote a note about him in *LiveJournal* about 15 years ago. And even without knowing English, it seemed to me that this poet is very close to me, I partly do similar things.

By the way, my friend Armine Ghachyan translated Aram Saroyan’s poem “lightght” into Armenian as “luyys” (“luys” - light). Maybe it can be translated into Russian as “svevet”? (svet – light in Russian).

The word-poem by Aram Saroyan is difficult to translate, at least into Russian. It seems to me important that the repeating letter block consists of consonants, and that there are three of them in it, and that only one of them is pronounced, and the other two are not pronounced in the original word, although they separately have an independent sound. Unfortunately, there are no analogues in Russian. Although with some exaggeration, you can try to get out somehow.

It is a great pleasure to listen to your reading - you are very artistic.

Thanks! From the age of five I dreamt of becoming a clown, then an actor (and director), being shone in school drama circles. My artistry is partly from my mother, who knows and constantly hums a huge variety of songs in Armenian, Azerbaijani, Russian. And she tells a bunch of different funny tales and was always famous among her family and friends with her ability to portray amusingly, imitate anyone. My Armenian cousin Sasha Martirosov, is a musician and singer, performs with the ensemble at weddings and parties, sings Armenian and Russian songs. True, clients sometimes complain that his songs are mostly sad, but such is the peculiarity of his talent. My other Armenian cousin, Vova, in his youth was just such a merry fellow and a joker that his relatives thought to show him to the famous Armenian clown Leonid Yengibarov. But he grew up and suddenly became a terribly businesslike person.

A trivial but inevitable question: how familiar are you with Armenian literature?

Unfortunately, practically not familiar. In my defense, I can say that among my favorite Russian poets there are Armenians. For example, an almost namesake of yours, Artsvi, Vagrish Bakhchanyan (mostly known as an avant-garde artist and performance artist) and Andrei Tovmasian (more known as a jazz musician). Actually, I associate Armenian poetry only with Sergei Parajanov’s film “The Color of a Pomegranate” about Sayat-Nova, whose poems are used there in the text splash screens between the parts. I watched the Russian version several times, and the poems were there in Russian translations. However, the originals, as you know, the author wrote in several languages. By the way, in the summer of 1986 I was in Tbilisi and talked a little with Sergei Iosifovich. It is a funny story. In the same summer of 1986, I was in Yerevan, paying visit to some kind people, and for the last time in my life I visited Baku. Then everything was still peaceful, nothing foreshadowed a calamity.

Will you tell us about your meeting with Parajanov?

In the summer of 1986, when I was 24, I was visiting friends in Tbilisi. I lived there for a week and at some point I thought: but here, in this beautiful city, lives one of my favorite filmmakers, the great Sergei Parajanov, the director of one of my favorite films, “The Color of Pomegranate.” I found his address, went there and entered a small courtyard. I dangled there for a while in confusion, and finally knocked on some door. A woman came out, such a typical oriental woman, dressed sternly. I asked if I could see Sergei Parajanov. She offered to wait in the yard. A few minutes later Parajanov came out of the same door. I vaguely remember how he was dressed, an oversized shirt, almost sweatpants and slippers. Without any exoticism, minus a large and somehow unusual ring that attracts attention. His room was small, with a table in the middle. Various spectacular crafts, collages and photographs hung on the walls. Fortunately, Sergei Iosifovich did not even ask where I got his address from. Obviously, he understood that finding him in Tbilisi was not a problem. He opened a bottle of red wine. I have always been indifferent to alcohol, but, of course, I could not help drinking with an idol when he offered it. The Master asked me why I came, what I was doing, and so on. I explained I had just come to thank and express my admiration for the film “The Color of Pomegranate,” which is fantastically beautiful, unlike anything, and that it made a kind of aesthetic revolution in my soul. It seems that my answers did not suit the Master, and he began to find fault with me. And somehow not too polite. He asked me: “Have you seen my new film, ‘The Legend of the Suram Fortress?’.” “Yes, I did, it is also, of course, wonderful,” I mumbled, but completely without the enthusiasm with which I spoke about “The Color of the Pomegranate.” “I did not understand you,” Parajanov told me. “Well, twenty years ago a man made some bullshit, you are going to distant lands to say thank you to him for that? What’s the point? When you yourself write *War and Peace*, then come, bring it to me, I will read it.” I do not know why he said that. In those years I practically did not write anything and, of course, did not even utter to him about my rare and timid youthful literary attempts. Almost 35 years have passed. I wrote my *War and Peace* in the form of several thousand strange poems. I do not know if I would have dared

to show them to Sergei Parajanov. Now I partly understand his reaction to my visit. I understand, and even on my own skin, that enthusiasm for early creativity, with indifference to the later, may not at all please and even hurt the creator. Moreover, after “The Color of Pomegranate” he was not allowed to work in films for 16 years. And he spent several years in prison in this interval. In addition, he was forced to completely remake this film. And in the end, the edited version was released, made by Sergei Yutkevich, who, perhaps, saved the film, otherwise it would not have been released on the screen at all. Now I know that the director was dissatisfied with this censored version. And I, not being aware of all these details, was delighted with it.

You were born in Baku. Your mother, Irma Martirosova, is Armenian. Where are her ancestors from?

My mother’s parents, my Armenian grandfather (we called him *harik*) and grandmother (*metz-mama*), Nikolai Gugasovich and Varvara Arutyunovna Martirosovs, like their parents (and probably more distant ancestors too), were from the village Tubikend. It was an Armenian vil-



German Lukomnikov with his mother

lage, inhabited almost exclusively by Armenians, in the Ismayli region, not far from the city of Ismayli in Azerbaijan. Grandfather and grandmother were from simple village peasant families. Since childhood, they and their parents were accustomed to growing wheat, thrashing and grinding it into flour, etc. At the same time, my grandfather’s mother, Shugi, was not only engaged in ordinary village work. She was a bright and well-known person in the village — a rural midwife and folk healer. She handled almost all childbirths in the village, and sometimes in neighboring villages. She healed everyone with herbs and other folk remedies. Her extraordinary knowledge and abilities were partly passed on to her son, my grandfather. He had many jobs in his life — shepherd, peasant, miller, laborer, barber, phaeton driver and in recent decades, a greengrocer in the market, but he also had a talent as a chiropractor, and he treated many acquaintances in this way. In addition, he played the *zurna* well. The grandfather’s original surname was Martirosyan, it was in the 1920s that the Soviet government Russified almost all Armenian and Azerbaijani surnames there, in Baku, so the whole family became Martirosovs. By the way, if you look at the Jewish part of my family tree, then I am not the first person in it with Armenian blood. One of my grandfather’s sisters was married to an Armenian and they had sons. One of them, Uncle Edik Osipov, in his youth moved from Baku to Yerevan, and my Moscow relatives and I a couple of times in the summer, during my school holidays, went there to visit him.

What about metz-mama?

Metz-mama, my Armenian grandmother, was a housewife. She had six children with *harik*. But in difficult years, in the 1930s-40s, already in Baku, she baked

large quantities of bread in her yard which also helped the family a lot. Her maiden name was Melkumyan, and her birth name was Vartie, later in the documents they wrote down Varvara. *Metz-mama* said that she had many siblings, but almost all of them were massacred during the Armenian pogroms (if I understand correctly, in 1919-1920). Only she and her older sister Katya survived. This aunt Katya was the first to move from Tubikend to Baku, and then she called my future grandparents there (around 1927). *Harik* and *metz-mama* spoke Russian very poorly, although they lived most of their lives in Baku, where Russian at that time was the main language of interethnic communication. The family spoke some kind of a mixture of Armenian (obviously, the Artsakh dialect) and Russian, even with Azerbaijani interspersed, probably such a linguistic melange. I almost did not understand anything when I came to visit my Armenian relatives with my mother, so they spoke to me exclusively in Russian. They lived on the outskirts of Baku, in an area called the village of Montina. It was an international region (as, indeed, the whole of Baku at that time), but there were especially many Armenians living there. My Armenian relatives lived there in several neighboring small one-story houses with a common system of courtyards. My mother and I came to them, as a rule, on weekends. *Harik* died, I think, in 1989, in Baku. Although the interethnic situation was already very tense, he, old and seriously ill, he refused to leave and died there. The rest gradually left — some to Armenia, some to Russia, some to Ukraine. *Metz-mama* was transported to Pyatigorsk to her youngest son Ernik, where she died a few years later. Now of the six sons and daughters of *harik* and *metz-mama*, only my mother, Irma Nikolaevna, remains, God grant her health. All her siblings are long gone. Ernik was the youngest of them, the favorite of the whole family. By the way, his daughter, my younger cousin Nellya, is an artist; she exhibits her works under the name Neka Demarty.

For many people with Armenian blood, the connection with their roots is associated with national cuisine. What about you?

I have several favorite Armenian dishes since childhood, which were constantly prepared by my mother and *metz-mama* - *tolma*, *zhingyalov-hats*, and especially, the magic soup *tanov*! True, few people know the last word. My culinary skills are not very extensive, but I make this soup quite often. I delight and surprise my friends and guests with it. It seems that in Armenia this soup is called *spas*. Google also suggests *tanapur*. In Baku, my Armenian relatives called it *tanov* (with *tan* – yogurt-based beverage). Even my Jewish grandmother loved it and cooked it. And I love it both hot and cold from the fridge. And when I get sick with the flu or a cold, I am always treated with a hot *tanov* - it always miraculously knocks my temperature down. Boiling it is such a meditative activity because it has to be stirred continuously until it boils. So that yogurt or kefir does not curdle. For some reason, *Metz-mama* threw a match into the pan (without a sulfur head, of course) — such a tradition — for some reason it was believed that then the likelihood of curdling is less. By the way, my cousin Karina is a genius of Caucasian cuisine, her *zhingyalov-hats* are breathtakingly delicious.

You, who were born in Baku, must have been shaken by the last war.

continued on next page



ARTS & CULTURE

Recipe Corner



by Christine Vartanian



Fresh Fig Layer Cake with Caramel Icing

From *Lost Recipes Found* (Photo and recipe courtesy of Monica Kass Rogers)

“Everyone has a childhood memory of a special recipe eaten at home, at grandma’s house or at a restaurant, that made a lasting and permanent impression. Forever after, the thought of that dish lingers, ready to be triggered by a related sight, smell, or taste, long after we enjoyed the original preparation. The point is, we all have special recipes we’ve loved and lost,” says author, home cook, editor and photographer Monica Kass Rogers. She is the author of *Lost Recipes Found*, the delightful food blog that exists to celebrate them. Before it was a food blog, Monica began *Lost Recipes Found* as a column for the *Chicago Tribune*, one of the many publications she’s written for over the last 30 years.

“I’d been writing for the food section of the *Chicago Tribune*, and I kept thinking about French novelist Marcel Proust and his childhood memory of a madeleine cookie. Even the scent of something similar put Proust back in connection with so many other lovely memories. I thought it would be fun to create a column about dishes that do that for all of us.” Eventually the newspaper column became Monica’s blog, and as she prepared, styled and photographed the recipes for each story, her professional photography business took off as well.

One of the recipes she developed is connected to her own childhood food memories, and those from her mother. “My mom,” says Monica, “grew up eating fresh figs from a large, spreading fig tree that grew by her house in Southern Texas. She spoke of that tree, the cool of its shade, the scent and flavor of its fruit, and passed that fondness down to me. I love fresh figs, the green ones, and the black ones, eaten right out of hand, or sliced and served with prosciutto. But when I have a lot of figs, I make them into preserves, so good on toast, brioche, or baked into this very moist

cake. It has two layers and is glazed with a caramel icing. The preserves used in this cake also make the perfect filling for my Not-Newton homemade fig bars, and can also be used in the lovely single-layer version of the fig cake.”

Among the oldest fruits consumed by humans, figs tell a complex and symbolic story in culinary history. Figs sweetened all types of dessert before the widespread use of sugar, and still appear as the main ingredient in dishes and desserts. Figs are most flavorful at room temperature. They are rich in nutrients while being relatively low in calories, making them an ideal addition to a healthy diet. Figs are great in jams, cookies, muffins, cakes, breads, preserves, in salads with sweet, tangy dressings, served simply with an added ingredient or two as an appetizer, and, of course, incorporated into a beautiful dessert like this one from Monica Kass Rogers.

INGREDIENTS:

- Fig Preserves:**
6 cups fresh, whole figs
2 tablespoons baking soda
3 cups water
3 cups sugar
1 fresh lemon, seeds, peel and pith removed

- Fresh Fig Cake:**
3/4 cup softened butter
1 cup sugar
3 eggs
1/2 cup milk
2 cups flour
1 teaspoon baking soda dissolved in 1 teaspoon vinegar
1/2 teaspoon vanilla
2 cups fig preserves (recipe above)

- Caramel Icing:**
3/4 stick unsalted butter
3/4 cup lightly-packed brown sugar (or 1/4 cup brown sugar and 1 grated cone of piloncillo sugar)*
1/4 to 1/2 teaspoon salt (to taste)
3/4 cup heavy cream
2 teaspoons vanilla extract
2 1/2 to 3 cups sifted powdered sugar

PREPARATION:

Make preserves: Snip stem ends from figs and discard. Rinse trimmed figs in colander. Mix baking soda into 1/2 gallon cold water in a large pot. Place figs in the pot and swirl around. Drain figs in colander and rinse with fresh water. Combine figs, sugar, water and lemon in soup pot. Cook, stirring occasionally, over medium-low heat, until fig mixture reaches desired thickness -- about 2½ to 3 hours. NOTE: Monica uses a hand-held immersion blender at the end of cooking the preserves to blend any remaining pieces of lemon or fig. This recipe will use most of the preserves. Place the rest in a jar and refrigerate to mix into yogurt or spread on toast later. The preserves will keep for one month to 6 weeks in the refrigerator; 6 months in the freezer.

Make cake: Cream butter and sugar together. Add eggs, one at a time, beating after each addition. Add milk. With mixer on low, slowly add flour followed by dissolved baking soda. Beat in vanilla. Add fig preserves and beat until just blended. If using a stand mixer, be sure to scrape sides and bottom of bowl to ensure even mixing. Pour batter into two, 8 1/2-inch cake pans you have lined with parchment circles and greased. Bake at 350 degrees for 40 minutes until cake layers spring back when touched in the center, and are deep golden brown. Cakes will flatten and pull away from sides of baking pans as they cool.

Make caramel icing: In a medium-sized heavy saucepan, melt butter. Add brown sugar and heat over low heat for 2 minutes, whisking. Stir in salt. Add cream and whisk until boiling. Remove from heat. Stir in vanilla. Sift in powdered sugar, whisking hard to incorporate until smooth and creamy.

Assemble cake: Place bottom layer on serving plate. Pour a bit of icing on layer. Top with second layer and pour more icing over. It should spread and drip over the sides of the cake. To set, place cake in the fridge. Icing will set up quickly -- you may have some left, it is delicious with sliced apples.

Serves 8.

For this recipe, go to <http://lostrecipesfound.com/fresh-fig-layer-cake-with-caramel-icing/>

from previous page

This is such a terrible and impossible fact that just does not fit in my head. My childhood was spent among Armenians and Azerbaijanis, Jews and Russians, and never in my environment did anyone particularly care about nationality. I had Armenian friends and Azeri friends, with some of them I still maintain relations. One of my childhood friends was half-Armenian, half-Azerbaijani. My Armenian cousin married an Azerbaijani and they have a wonderful family and wonderful children. Of course, they have not been living in Baku for a long time. And even my mother, after she divorced my dad, was in her second marriage married to an Azerbaijani

(or rather, a half-Azerbaijani-half-Russian), uncle Shamil. The Azerbaijanis stood up for me in the army. They interceded simply because I am from Baku. It did not matter to them that I was the son of an Armenian and that there was not a drop of Azerbaijani blood in me. It was in Tashkent in the early 1980s. We were not even friends with them (or rather, we were friends with only one of them), it was just that then there really was a Caucasian brotherhood. My Armenian relatives had many Azeri friends. One of them, one-armed uncle Mahmed, once, already in the late 1980s, was sitting in our courtyard in the village of Montana, and, as usual, played backgammon with my uncle Misha, my mother’s older brother. And sud-

denly nationalists burst into the courtyard and attacked him: they say, how dare you, as if nothing had happened, play with an Armenian. Later, the sons of Uncle Mahmed dealt with them. And Uncle Misha, a disabled war veteran, was teased by the boys on the street in his hometown, insulted. My mother is a refugee, she dragged on to the last, hoping that it would somehow resolve, and fled from Baku already in January 1990, during the days of the Armenian pogroms. Although I know that in those days, too, many Baku Azerbaijanis hid and protected Armenians, their old friends and neighbors. Since then, the conflict, alas, has only worsened. To tell the truth, I am depressed by the propaganda of both sides, which tries

to portray opponents as non-humans. In general, it’s even hard for me to talk and think about all this. Although, probably, it is necessary. Here my mother walks around the Moscow market, and here everyone respects and welcomes her - both Armenians and Azerbaijanis. And she says that here, in Moscow, on neutral territory, many of them continue to be friends and cooperate. So there is hope. At the same time, I absolutely do not want to delve into the political side of the conflict. I only want one thing - so that humanity becomes perfect as soon as possible and wars become a thing of the past, and that borders, and indeed states in general, be abolished as unnecessary. It is a pity that I will not live to see such times...

Founders of WorldFLATS See Opportunity with Lahmajun Aimed at Healthy Eaters

LAHMAJUN, from page 12

And, while they hate to admit it, the impact COVID had on society made the location they acquired — a former Dunkin Donuts — available.

“We are sorry for everything that has happened to everyone,” Zareh Beylerian. “But, we have to admit, COVID brought us an opportunity.

“And we had done our homework, so we were ready to take advantage of it.”

Unbeknownst to them at the time, the preparation actually began four years ago, when the Beylerians decided to go vegetarian as a lifestyle choice.

Nvair Beylerian, whose family came to the U.S. from Armenia three generations ago, wanted to see if she could make a vegetarian version of her favorite meal. Friends and family soon told her she had a hit on her hands.

Beylerian, however, knew she needed

some help.

Last fall, she went to the [Rutgers Food Innovation Center](#) in Bridgeton. There, working with food scientists, she was able to learn additional responsibilities. And, more importantly, learn a little bit about running a commercial kitchen.

She knew she still needed more.

While talking with sales rep for TurboChef and other equipment, they were honest with her: You need a professional behind the line, they said. They quickly introduced her to Tripodi, a longtime chef and restaurant expert who had been a victim of COVID-inspired layoffs just a few months before.

“They put us in touch with Luigi, and, by the end of that same day, we were on our back porch, completely connected,” Beylerian said.

“He took my basic flats and kicked them up another notch with the toppings, the punches of flavor and the presentation. He’s been amazing. He was just what we needed.”

And the best thing about him, Beylerian said, is that he isn’t a vegetarian.

“We needed a meat guy to make a product that other meat guys would eat,” she said.

###

It took the Beylerians just a few weeks to perfect the nine varieties. (There also are salads and soups to round out the menu.)

more than 100,000 cars pass by a day — the next location will be in a walkable town location.

Likely Westwood or Ridgewood, Beylerian said.

The plan is to create a hub-and-spoke approach. The Paramus location — which came with a large back of the house — could service up to 10 locations in the Bergen, Passaic, Hudson and Essex areas.

There’s talk of spots in Hackensack, Closter, Montclair — even Chatham, Summit, Morristown and Red Bank. It could also be a fit for college campuses, arenas or transportation hubs.

“Any place where people are looking for something new and something different,” Nvair Beylerian said.

WorldFLATS certainly is that.

The Beylerians don’t feel as if they have a real competitor in the space. That’s why they have no interest in identifying them-

CALENDAR

ON-LINE EVENTS & PROGRAMS

MASSACHUSETTS

APRIL 18 — 11th Annual Mentoring and Networking Forum, Armenian Engineers and Scientists Association, New England Chapter. 1p.m. ET via ZOOM. Admission is Free. A unique opportunity for college and high school students to network with professionals from a wide array of industry disciplines. Featuring Keynote Speaker Margarita Baghdasaryan, Expert @ the ROA Office of the High Commissioner for Diaspora Affairs. To Register: <https://shrink.name/mentor>

APRIL 18 — Annual Reconfiguration of the Abstract Sculpture of the Armenian Heritage Park, beginning at 7:30am, Armenian Heritage Park on The Greenway, Boston. Rain date: 4/25/21. A crane will lift, pull apart and reconfigure the two halves of the Abstract Sculpture, a split rhomboid dodecahedron made of stainless steel and aluminum, to create a new sculptural shape. The new configuration is symbolic of a new life of all who pulled away or were forced to pull away from their country of origin and came to these shores establishing themselves in new and different ways.

APRIL 22 — “Behind the Soldier,” a virtual presentation by Arlington-based documentary photographer Winslow Martin. Thursday, 7 p.m. Martin will chronicle with words and pictures what he witnessed in Armenia during the war with Azerbaijan. Presented by Holy Trinity Armenian Church of Greater Boston. Zoom registration Link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84562845628>

CONNECTICUT

APRIL 24 — The Armenian Genocide Commemoration Committee of Connecticut’s program on the 106th anniversary of the Genocide will take place on April 24 at 10:30 am, virtually on Zoom. The program will begin at 10:30 a.m. with the Martyrs’ Service which was created in 2015, on the occasion of the centennial of the Genocide and the canonization of the Martyrs. Clergy from all four Armenian Churches in Connecticut will participate in the service. Presenters at the program include Tatul Hakobyan speaking on “Why did the 44 day war take place” and Lilly Torosyan speaking on “From New England to old borders: A Connecticut Armenian’s personal account of the 44 day war.” Pre-registration is required to obtain the zoom link. To register go to : <https://bit.ly/3ti5iJ5>. If you are unable to pre-register online or do not have zoom capability, call 860-651-0629. This year, the Committee’s fund-raising efforts will support Fund for Armenian Relief House/Farm project in the southern Armenia city of Sisian for families from Artsakh. Checks should be payable to: “FAR Sisian AER” (Artsakh Emergency Relief), and mailed to: Armenian Genocide Commemoration Committee of CT c/o Diana Dagavarian Colpitts, Treasurer 236 Oxford St., Hartford, CT 06105 or by the following link: www.farusa.org/agcc

RHODE ISLAND

APRIL — The Sts. Sahag and Mesrob Armenian Church of Providence holds a series of events every Friday at 7.30 p.m., see <https://www.facebook.com/armenianchurchprovidence>. All programs dedicated to Victors and Saints of the Armenian Genocide. April 9 – “Sayat-Nova” Kousan Song Ensemble from Armenia April 16 – Yerevan Chorale, Memorial Concert April 23 – Armenian Chorale of Rhode Island, Memorial Concert April 30 – Cultural Genocide, Film Presentation in English

APRIL 27 — Armenian Historical Association of RI presents a zoom lecture by Asya Darbinyan, PhD on Tuesday, at 7p.m. Refugee Experiences: Investigating the Plight of the Armenian Genocide Refugees in the Caucasus. Virtual-Zoom and Facebook Live streamed on Facebook page: For Zoom link, contact AHARI at info@armenianhistorical-ri.org

MAY 7-28 — Sts. Sahag and Mesrob Church of Providence continues programming the Armenian Cultural Hour programs, every Friday at 7:30 p.m. The program can be livestreamed on the church’s Facebook page by everyone at <https://www.facebook.com/armenianchurchprovidence>

May 7 - ARMENIA The Land of Noah, Documentary in English

May 14 - Armenian music and songs (Concert from Montreal, Canada)

May 21 - Our Youth Talents, issue two

May 28 - Celebration concert, dedicated to 100th Anniversary of the First Republic of Armenia



Executive Chef Luigi Tripodi works on a flatbread. (Tom Bergeron/ROI-NJ)

They needed to be flavorful and filling, Tripodi said.

“We couldn’t have people leaving here thinking, ‘I wish I had chicken,’” he said. “Now, we’ve got people leaving, saying, ‘That was incredibly good.’

“I’ve got big guys from the gym coming in — they’re loving it. I’ve got the Indian community coming in — they’re loving it. I’ve got Armenians saying, ‘Where have you been?’”

The key, he said, is to use the freshest ingredients.

WorldFLATS gets deliveries of the flatbread from nearby [Toufayan Bakeries](#) in Ridgefield Park a few times a week. They are quickly covered with the protein spread — think of it as the pizza sauce — and stored in a large walk-in freezer in the back of the store.

They are pulled out as needed, covered with the proper combination of the more than two dozen available toppings, heated in the TurboChef and are ready to go.

Most of the employees are students or graduates of the culinary programs at Bergen County Academies, Passaic County Technical Institute or Eastwick College in Hackensack. It makes a difference.

“We have an extraordinary team here,” Beylerian said. “They really want to be here. They’re really enthusiastic. They’re learning a lot from Luigi.

“And, I’ll tell you something, they are going to grow with us.”

###

WorldFLATS opened on March 21. Zareh Beylerian was thinking about location No. 2 before then.

All involved said it’s important to get the first location running smoothly first — but there’s talk of opening five more in the next two years.

And, while the first location on Route 17 is great for branding — it’s in a spot where

selves in a specific way. That’s why they have a general marketing plan — they picked up more than 300 Instagram followers the first week. That’s why they are not targeting specific ethnic sectors.

“There already are too many Middle Eastern, hummus and vegan places,” Tripodi said. “We’re different. We’re the place you discover when you just can’t have another meal at Chipotle, Smashburger or Subway.”

WorldFLATS, Nvair Beylerian said, is a healthier option.

“We’re on a mission to promote this type of sustainable eating,” she said. “And we want it to become just a matter-of-fact way of life, something you have on average day, not necessarily a specialty option.

“So, we are definitely not marketing ourselves as a vegetarian institution. After all, we don’t want to scare anyone away.”

Cleveland Institute of Music Students Raise 10K in Support for Armenia and Artsakh

SUPPORT, from page 12

CIM student of Armenian descent. He is working on a five-year master’s program and studying under the direction of Professor Ilya Kaler. He was thrilled to find out that the concert brought \$10,000 in humanitarian relief.

The concert can still be viewed at <https://www.facebook.com/ClevelandInstituteofMusic/videos/349585819820759/> and donations can still be made at donate.AGBU.org/CIMartsakh

MIRROR SPECTATOR

SINCE 1932



An ADL Publication

THE FIRST ENGLISH LANGUAGE
ARMENIAN WEEKLY IN THE
UNITED STATES

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 Hovsepian, Ken Martin

VIDEO CORRESPONDENT

Haykaram Nahapetyan

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

Baikar Association, Inc.

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

Telephone: 617-924-4420

FAX: 617-924-2887

www.mirrorspectator.com

E-Mail: editor@mirrorspectator.com

For advertising: mirrorads@aol.com

SUBSCRIPTION RATES

U.S.A.	\$80 one year
Canada	\$125 one year
Other Countries	\$200 one year

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

ISSN 0004-234X

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

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

Editorial

Armenian Prisoners of War Now Hostages of Power Play between Russia and Turkey



By Edmond Y.
Azadian

The flight arriving from Baku to Yerevan

on April 8 was expected to be laden with

hope for the families of Armenian prisoners

of war who are still held captive in Azerbair-

jan. But those families had to face a huge

disappointment as no prisoners disembarked

from the plane. Indeed, the only person

aboard the flight was Lt. Gen. Ruslan Mu-

radov, the commander of the Russian peace-

keeping forces in Karabakh and Azerbaijan.

Exasperated families vented their anger by protesting out-

side the Ministry of Defense, as well as on the road connecting

Yerevan to Gyumri, since the majority of those held hail from

Gyumri and the rest of the Shirak region.

Why did this heartbreaking drama take place? On April 7,

Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan paid his much-anticipated vis-

it to Russian President Vladimir Putin. The talks lasted more

than four hours, but the most pressing issue was the fate of

the Armenian prisoners still being kept in Azerbaijan in order

to inflict maximal trauma to the families of the latter after the

44-day Karabakh war.

The guarded hope coming out of the Pashinyan-Putin meet-

ing was that the Russian president would work hard to resolve

the issue of the prisoners. Offering even more hope was the

news about Putin's phone conversation with Azerbaijan's Pres-

ident Ilham Aliyev. To complete the circle of expectations,

Gen. Ruslan Muradov flew to Baku with the obvious mission

of bringing back the prisoners to Ye-

revan.

Although the news about the im-

minent release of the captives came

from Moscow, officials in Yerevan

also confirmed it, heightening ex-

pectations. But one piece of news

which was not covered in the me-

dia concerned the visit of Abdullah

Bozkurt, speaker of the Turkish

Parliament, to Baku, for talks with

President Aliyev. The speculation is

that the visit led to the aborting of

the plans to release those prisoners.

The frustrated families back in

Yerevan were told by Deputy Prime

Minister Tigran Avinyan that the ar-

ival of the prisoners was delayed

while General Muradov chided the

Armenian government for feeding

false hopes to the families, suggest-

ing that his visit to Baku was not

connected with the POW issue. That

was certainly a face-saving announcement for the Russian side,

which had trumpeted that President Putin had exerted tremen-

dous efforts to solve the POW issue.

News emanating from Baku had indicated that President Ali-

yev was angry because the Karabakh authorities had not hand-

ed to the Azerbaijani authorities the maps for the minefields, as

a consequence of which many Azerbaijanis had fallen victim

to exploding mines.

Fueling Aliyev's anger further was that the plan for building

his coveted corridor through Syunik region in Armenia, con-

necting Baku to Nakhichevan, had hit some glitches.

Analysts believe that these issues cannot be sufficient causes

for Azerbaijan's reticence, since it is being manipulated behind

the scenes by Ankara, expecting to extract further concessions

from the Armenian side.

We need to remember that Foreign Minister Mevlut Cavu-

soglu of Turkey had stated recently that Ankara can lift the

blockade on condition that Armenia "behaves." Politicians

have been exploring many conditions which may define that

behavior. Turkey's demand, particularly in this critical period,

means that the government of Armenia should renounce the

pursuit of the recognition of the Armenian Genocide.

The director of the Caucasus Institute in Yerevan, Alexan-

der Iskandaryan, believes that the prisoner issue will not be

resolved anytime soon, and that Aliyev will not return the pris-

oners even at the request of President Putin.

Armenia's representative office at the European Court of

Human Rights had asked the court to intervene regarding 240

cases of prisoners still in Azerbaijani custody. Of those, 90 per-

cent have already been verified with documents, pictures and

videos. President Aliyev, on the other hand, has conceded that

more than 70 prisoners were returned to Armenia and only 60
are still held, because they were captured after the November 9
tripartite agreement was signed.

On the other hand, Azerbaijani Foreign minister Jeyhun
Bayramov announced that those remaining prisoners are con-
sidered terrorists and will be tried under Azerbaijani law. To
cover up the embarrassment of the Russian side, Sergei Lav-
rov, the Russian Foreign Minister, has accepted that assertion
at face value and during a recent press conference, maintained
that excuse that "the Azerbaijani authorities consider them ter-
rorists."

President Putin had personally drafted and signed the No-
vember 9 declaration which calls for the swap of POWs "all
against all" as stated in Point 8.

The Armenian side, believing that it will reduce the agony of
the affected families, rushed to return 69 detainees, fulfilling
its side of the bargain. Those returned to Azerbaijan includ-
ed among them two convicted criminals, Dilgam Askarov and
Shahbaz Guliyev, who were in custody of the Karabakh au-
thorities since before the war.

The Armenian side had committed a very serious blunder
by returning during the POW swap two jihadists from Syria.
In the first place, they had to be surrendered to the Syrian au-
thorities to face charges for the crimes they had committed.
Barring that, they had to be released to an international court as
living proof that the Turks had used those terrorists during the
war. Up until now, Turkish and Azerbaijani authorities deny the

involvement of Syrian jihadists in
the Karabakh war. It is all too ob-
vious that those jihadists have be-
come permanent features in any
and every military adventure Tur-
key concocts, yesterday in Syria
and Libya and today in Karabakh,
Yemen and Ukraine.

Now, Turkey has added incen-
tive to embarrass President Putin,
as it has officially joined its mili-
tary forces with Ukraine to drive
out Russia from the Black Sea
region and Crimea. This recent
drive is very much in sync with
the Biden Administration's new
foreign policy of standing up to
Russia and pushing Ukraine into
a conflict with Russia.

On the other hand, the Azerbair-
jani intransigence must be viewed
within the context of Turkish bel-
ligerence against Russia and Ar-

menia, now that Karabakh war is over, with Armenia's loss.
(But the bill of goods Turkey is selling to the West is that the
victory was against Russia.)

In early April, the combined forces of Turkey and Azerbair-
jan held war games on Armenia's borders. These are the fourth
such exercises since the beginning of the current year. Which
country is the intended target of those war games? This is a
tactic of continual pressure on Armenia to extract further con-
cessions. The issue of prisoners and Turkey's war policy are
also meant to influence Armenia's upcoming parliamentary
elections in June. We have to be reminded that President Er-
dogan will be visiting Shushi in May, as part and parcel of his
overall policy of intimidating and pressuring Armenia.

President Aliyev believes that he was the victor in the Kara-
bakh war and that he had "chased the Armenians like
dogs from Azerbaijani soil"; lo and behold, now he is paying
the price for "his" victory. The families of the Karabakh war
victims in Azerbaijan are demonstrating, other groups are
calling for Rus-sian troops to get out of Azerbaijani territory.

On top of all that, the Russification of Karabakh itself is in-
tensifying. The Russian language has become an official lan-
guage there. The prospect of offering Russian citizenship to
Karabakh residents is proceeding quickly, as it was done in
South Ossetia and Abkhazia. Political voices are rising in Mos-
cow to bring Karabakh under a Russian protectorate, like in the
days of Arkady Volsky. And pretty soon, the bear hug of Mr.
Erdogan will become too close for comfort.

It turns out that Karabakh's loss has affected both Armenia
and Azerbaijan, with families left grieving on both sides of
the border and Mr. Erdogan grinning and calculating his next
move towards his pan-Turanic plans.



Why President Biden Should Recognize the Armenian Genocide



By Prof. Roger Smith

Turkey, as usual, gets all wound up in the month of April, as Armenians around the globe commemorate Turkey's genocide of up to 1.5 million of its Armenian citizens starting in 1915 and ask the world to remember with them. Armenians do this to raise awareness of the historical fact of the crime of genocide committed by then Ottoman Turkey against the Armenians and to ask the world for a measure of healing, as Turkey has continued persistently to deny the Genocide to this day.

The late Turkish journalist, Mehmet Ali Birand, noted on April 24, 2012, "Again, as happens every year, the 70-million-person population of Turkey [now 84 million] will wonder what others are saying about the Armenian issue. What will Washington say? Which country will accept the Armenian genocide claims? Days will pass in stress... Turkey, as it has done before, will react harshly. It will utter threats, but they will remain ineffective."

Birand's statement was written in relation to the publication of the Turkish language edition of official documents of the German Foreign Office which clearly exposed Turkey's responsibility and Germany's complicity in the Armenian Genocide. After the original German language edition appeared in 2005, the German parliament voted to officially recognize the Armenian Genocide and did so conclusively in 2016.

Canada officially recognized the Armenian Genocide in 2004 over Turkish threats that "Canada would suffer economically [and] that Armenians would make claims against Turkey for confiscated land."

The Turkish machinations against recognition by Washington have been strenuous and sordid, even involving alleged bribery of the Speaker of the House in 2000. What will be Turkey's ploy this year to deter the US from recognition?

One likely option, as suggested by *Washington Post* Turkish analyst Asli Aydintasbas, will be Turkey's declaration of the border with Armenia open. She notes, "Critics say Turkey's apparent magnanimity smacks more of its recent efforts to fix its battered ties with Washington without making the concessions that are actually being demanded of it, namely, to get rid of its Russian S-400 missiles immediately."

With Turkey's participation in Azerbaijan's war against the Armenians in Artsakh (Nagorno Karabagh), including the use of Syrian jihadists, to help Azerbaijan win the war, they could use that victory to deceive other countries that there is no longer a conflict between Turkey and Armenia.

The United States and Switzerland were burned once already in 2009, when Turkey signed what was then hailed as a historic set of accords, they had helped broker with Armenia to forge diplomatic ties and reopen their common border, only to have Erdogan cave to Azerbaijani pressure and walk away.

Aydintasbas insists, however, that Azerbaijan no longer poses an obstacle. According to Al-Monitor, a senior Armenian diplomat speaking on condition of anonymity, contends that the Turkish overtures were linked to President Joe Biden's vow to join the growing number of nations that have formally recognized the mass murder of more than a million Ottoman Armenians in 1915 as a genocide.

The West's indifference to Turkish collective state violence against its Armenian civilians from 1894 through to the genocide of 1915 by Ottoman Turkey is well known. Less well known is its genocide of its Assyrian population at the same time and often the same places. Similarly, during the years 1912 to 1923, Turkey repeatedly massacred the Greeks of Asia Minor and Pontos, and since the founding of the Turkish Republic, its Kurdish citizens. Its persecution of its Jewish minority, and so many other ethnic and religious groups is also well documented and still is ongoing against the Kurds not only within Turkey, but beyond its borders in Syria and Iraq.

President Biden's full-throated acknowledgement of the Armenian Genocide is especially important not only to show support for a democratically run country surrounded by dictatorships; it is also a matter of US credibility. It was US ambassador Henry Morgenthau who warned the American Government in 1915 of Turkey's plan for "racial extermination" of the Armenians.

In 2019, both houses of Congress approved by overwhelming majorities Resolutions (H. Res. 296 and S. Res. 150) recognizing publicly the Armenian Genocide. The Senate's summary is as follows: "that it is the sense of the Senate that it is the policy of the United States — (1) to commemorate the Armenian Genocide through official recognition and remembrance;

(2) to reject efforts to enlist, engage, or otherwise associate the United States Government with denial of the Armenian Genocide or any other genocide; and (3) to encourage education and public understanding of the facts of the Armenian Genocide, including the role of the United States in humanitarian relief efforts, and the relevance of the Armenian Genocide to modern-day crimes against humanity."

Perhaps most importantly, the US should not give Turkey a free pass on its denial, as it would only serve to embolden Turkey and other perpetrators of genocide to commit mass violence in the future and get away with it, as Turkey has been doing against the Kurds (not only in Turkey but against those beyond its borders, and most recently the ethnic cleansing of Armenians in Artsakh (Nagorno Karabagh). The US will be on firmer ground when responding to countries like China violating basic human rights and engaging in genocidal policies.

(Prof. Roger Smith is chairperson of the Academic Board of Directors, Zoryan Institute and founder and past president, International Association of Genocide Scholars.)

Erdoğan Signs Bill Into Law, Paving The Way for Testing Turkish Arms, Military Equipment in Caucasus

By Abdullah Bozkurt

The Turkish president signed a bill on a defense industry cooperation agreement with Azerbaijan that will pave the way for the testing of jointly produced weapons and defense systems in the territories of both countries.

The agreement, put into effect with the approval of President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan on April 6, 2021, would deepen already intensive military and defense cooperation between the countries. The move came against the backdrop of Turkey's significant military help to its Caucasian ally against Armenia in a recent conflict with a supply of weapons, especially armed drones, and military advisors.

The agreement, a copy of which was obtained by Nordic Monitor, aims to solidify the Turkish military and defense industry's reach to the Caucasus and boost its arms market. It also places already ongoing military and defense cooperation schemes within the official framework.

"Implementation of the results of development and production projects in the field of military equipment in the territory of the states of the Parties" was one of the objectives according to Article 4 of the agreement, laying the groundwork for the modern military hardware developed by Turkey's growing defense and military industries to be tested on Azerbaijani soil.

BOTH COUNTRIES ARE
COMMITTED TO PROVIDING
"APPROPRIATE CONDITIONS
FOR JOINT RESEARCH,
DEVELOPMENT, PRODUCTION
AND MODERNIZATION OF
SPARE PARTS, TOOLS, DEFENSE
MATERIALS, MILITARY SYSTEMS,
TECHNICAL DISPLAYS AND
TECHNICAL EQUIPMENT
REQUIRED BY THE ARMED
FORCES OF THE PARTIES"

Both countries are committed to providing "appropriate conditions for joint research, development, production and modernization of spare parts, tools, defense materials, military systems, technical displays and technical equipment required by the Armed Forces of the Parties," the same article stated.

According to the text of the agreement, the mechanism focuses on improving defense industry capabilities through more effective cooperation in the fields of research, design, development, production and procurement, and maintenance of military and defense materiel as well as technical and logistical support, information sharing and research in the field.

The two countries also plan to sell jointly produced arms and defense goods to friendly third countries and to help those countries develop their own military and industry defense. For such a purpose, both sides agreed to encourage third countries to enter into agreements with Turkey and Azerbaijan.

The agreement reads like it was designed as a framework

continued on next page



COMMENTARY

MY TURN



by Harut Sassounian

Wounded Armenian Soldier Ignored, Denied Medical Care

I read the heartbreaking experience of an Armenian soldier who was wounded in the recent Artsakh War and repeatedly denied medical treatment in Armenia. This is so shameful. The Armenian government should see to it that

young men, who risked their lives to defend the homeland, have their wounds treated without any bureaucratic hassles and rude refusals.

Simon Hovhannisyan, a soldier wounded in the 2020 Artsakh War, wrote an open letter in Armenian, published by *Hetq* (an investigative journal in Armenia) on April 3, 2021, describing how he was turned away from numerous medical facilities when he sought treatment. Regrettably, his nightmarish experience is not unique. Many other wounded soldiers have faced similar inexcusable difficulties when seeking treatment.

Hovhannisyan wrote that on October 3, 2020 he went to the military center in Yerevan and volunteered to fight in the war. On October 25, having received the proper authorization, he was transferred to the Martakert military unit in Artsakh and served on the frontline from October 27 to November 18.

On November 10, shortly before the ceasefire, he was hit by missile shrapnel. For the next eight days, he tried contacting military officials seeking medical assistance. Facing indifference, he tried to go to the military regiment. On the way, he encountered an ambulance and convinced the driver to take him and two others to a medical facility to get help. They were referred to the temporary hospital in Drmbon village, where he was told that he suffered a contusion. However, since there was nothing they could do for him, they suggested that he go to Yerevan.

Hovhannisyan finally arrived in Yerevan after paying 45,000 drams (around \$90) from his own pocket. He went to the military unit there, explained his situation, presented the documents and sought assistance to be admitted to a hospital. The military unit told him: "You are no longer registered with us. It is not our job. Go to the Military Commissariat." The Commissariat in turn told him: "You are no longer in the service. You have to go to a civilian clinic."

At the civilian clinic, he was told: "We do not have the appropriate specialist for your ailment. The ear, nose and throat specialist will return from his vacation in a month. Come back, and he will check you. We don't even know where else to refer you to."

At the Commissariat, he was told: "My boy, I am already telling you for the second time, you are not on our list. Go to a civilian hospital."

At the privately-owned Asdghig hospital, he was told: "You need to be seen by several specialists. If you need the state to cover your medical bills, then bring a document that you have government insurance. We will then serve you."

He then went to the Kanaz hospital where he was told: "Your document from the Commissariat is old. Go get a new document, so we can give you fresh papers."

At the Commissariat, he was told: "Come back in two days to pick up your new document." When he went back, the hospital told him: "You are already discharged from the military. We can't give you such a document and can't examine you."

Tired of the run-around, the wounded soldier went to the Nayiri private hospital. After the examination, he learned that he had a contusion, loss of hearing and a concussion.

He paid for the prescription medication and the examination. He then found out that he was eligible for several government programs that could have offered him free medical care and could have applied for free military care for the handicapped.

So he applied to the Ministry of Social Services which promptly rejected his application. They said: "You are not on the list of the Defense Ministry." He then phoned the Ministry of Social Services and explained his problem. He was told to call another phone number. After two days of no one answering the hotline, he was given a third phone number. He called that number the whole day. Finally, in the evening, someone answered and rudely said: "Why are you calling me? I do not deal with such matters."

He called the hotline back. He was told to contact the Defense Ministry. No one answered there. He called the Defense Ministry's Treatment Center. No answer. He sent an email. Again, no answer!

He then called the Military Commissariat. They told him: "Brother, why haven't we received your papers from Artsakh until now confirming where you were?" He told them his whole story all over again. They replied: "We will inquire and call you." They never called back!

He called again the Defense Ministry's Treatment Center. He was told: "Give us the hospital's medical evaluation, so we can add you on our list." He responded that he could not provide that document since the hospital had refused to treat him. They told him to go to the Military Commissariat. He applied there one last time and asked for their assistance. He was told: "We have received no papers, all questions remain unanswered. If you want to solve your problem, go to Martakert, pick up your documents and come back."

The wounded soldier then wrote a letter to Antranig Kocharyan, chairman of the Parliament's Defense and Security Committee, explaining his whole story. He received two "absurd" phone calls saying: "Why did you write a letter? What is the problem?" He told them his story. They told him: "We need your medical evaluation." He said he did not have it because they did not treat him. They told him: "We will call you," but he never heard from them again.

The wounded soldier ended his sad saga with the following powerful words: "Now what? What's next? Where are you, officials? Wake up! It has been more than six months. There are thousands of other soldiers like me. Whichever office you go to, sitting with legs crossed, they are drinking coffee, writing posts on social media, saying how patriotic we are and expressing their regret: 'Sorry boys, you died for us.' How did it happen that you got blinded on the last day of the war and you don't give a damn about anyone's pain and problems? You are suggesting that this wounded soldier go to Martakert and bring back documents. In addition to psychological and security problems, I ask you, don't you see the degree of your cynicism? Are you saying the same things to the parents and relatives of lost soldiers or a badly handicapped volunteer with no documents? Please solve not only my problem, but those of all of us without any delay. Otherwise, we are the ones that will send you to hell, and I hope that the public is with us on this issue."

This is very shameful. I am surprised that not a single Armenian official has apologized to this wounded soldier and others like him and arranged for their immediate medical care. Otherwise, when the next war happens, no young men will volunteer or want to serve in the army. Regardless of any partisan political issues, these wounded soldiers are the sons of our nation, and they deserve the utmost care. They paid their dues to the homeland, and now it's the Armenian government's turn to take care of them.

Erdoğan Signs Bill into Law, Paving the Way for Testing Turkish Arms

from previous page

agreement as it permits new deals and cooperation in the military and defense industry in connection with it. That means some of the agreements made by Turkey and Azerbaijan won't be publicized but rather will be worked out as part of the existing agreement. On the Turkish side, at least, this would allow President Erdoğan to bypass review of any agreement by parliament, which has the constitutional authority to approve any international agreement.

It appears both countries were quick to exploit the agreement even before it became official with the Turkish Parliament's approval. The fast-tracked deals that followed the agreement included the 2018 deal in which Aselsan, a subsidiary of the Turkish Armed Forces Foundation (TAFF), signed an agreement with its Azerbaijani counterpart on the joint production of communication facilities.

In 2018, Aselsan, a subsidiary of the Turkish Armed Forces Foundation (TAFF), signed an agreement with its Azerbaijani counterpart on the joint production of communication facilities.

Similarly, Turkish Aerospace Industries (TAI), another TAFF subsidiary, inked a cooperation protocol with the Azerbaijan National Academy of Sciences (AMEA) in September 2018 to combine efforts in the fields of defense and aviation. The same year the Turkish Mechanical and Chemical Industry Company (MKEK) received a defense cooperation offer from Azerbaijan's Ministry of Defense Industry.

Turkey's Roketsan and Azerbaijani military-scientific enterprise Iglim have increased their cooperation in the joint work of developing a long-range missile system.

The cooperation between the Turkish and Azerbaijani armed forces has been intensifying since 2012, when a decision to that effect was adopted during an intergovernmental conference, the High Level Strategic Cooperation Council, which is chaired by Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan and Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev. In 2019 alone the two countries conducted 13 joint military exercises.

In another intergovernmental conference held in Baku on October 31, 2017, the 21-article defense industry cooperation agreement was signed. Azerbaijan rushed to approve the deal in February 2018. Although the agreement had not yet been approved in the Turkish Parliament, the effective cooperation started with the first meeting in Ankara in January 2019. Both sides hammered out the details of the cooperation including the training of Azerbaijani officers in Turkey.

By the end of 2019, nearly 18,000 Azerbaijani students had graduated from Turkish military schools, while another 8,174 troops received training in various courses and programs run by the Turkish military.

According to Article 7 of the framework agreement, the two sides will form a joint commission to implement the agreement and select projects to be carried out jointly. The joint commission will be responsible for the determination and definition of concrete fields of cooperation, the selection of joint projects, the exchange of information, the submission of proposals, recommendations and opinions to the relevant authorities, ensuring the preparation and publication of documents necessary for the realization of approved projects and decisions, the regular supervision of the project implementation and the assessment of the implementation.

The deal also sets forth conditions on the handling of classified information and documents produced or provided under the agreement, specifying how they shall be exchanged, used and protected. "Classified Information, Documents and Commercially Sensitive hardware and software will be transmitted between the Parties through government-to-government diplomatic channels or through other channels agreed by the Competent Security Authorities of the Parties," Article 9 (10) states.

The terms of the agreement will be executed by the Defense Ministry on the Turkish side and the Ministry of Defense Industry for Azerbaijan. The deal is valid for five years with automatic renewal for successive periods of one year. According to the agreement, either party must notify the other of the intent to terminate at least three months in advance.

The defense industry cooperation agreement was submitted to parliament for ratification on October 4, 2019 by President Erdoğan and approved by the Foreign Affairs Committee on November 13, 2019. It was approved by the General Assembly on February 10, 2021 and signed into law by Erdoğan on April 5, 2021. The Official Gazette published the agreement the next day, making it part of Turkish law.

The Turkish president, his family members and his business associates are poised to benefit immensely from the boost of sales in defense industry and military goods. Selçuk Bayraktar, Erdoğan's son-in-law and chief technology officer at Baykar Makina, manufactures armed and unarmed drones that were used in Syria, Libya, Iraq and Azerbaijan in the past.

(This analysis originally appeared in the online magazine *Nordic Monitor* on April 9.)

Aliyev Continues Statements Indicating Appetite for War, Aggression Against Armenia

BAKU (PanARMENIAN.Net) — Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev has repeated his desire for “returning to Yerevan” one day, Azeri media reported on Tuesday, April 13.

Aliyev has claimed on numerous occasions that Yerevan, the province of Syunik and Lake Sevan in Armenia are all “Azerbaijan’s historic lands.” Back in December 2020, U.S. Representative Jackie Speier spoke out against such remarks, describing them as “chilling,” which she said “evoke Ottoman rhetoric before the Armenian Genocide.”

While Aliyev claimed his statements don’t mean Azerbaijan has territorial claims against Armenia, he did say “we’ll return there, why not?”

“The time will come, we will do it. This is my position,” the Azerbaijani leader said.

Aliyev added there are “certain issues” in the settlement of the Karabakh conflict after the war, which need to be resolved, Sputnik-Azerbaijan reports.

He said although the ceasefire is holding, there are still many issues that need to be resolved after the conflict and that the peace is fragile.

The Azerbaijani leader also said his country considers Armenians living in Karabakh to be its citizens. There are no plans to use force on the territory of “the compact settlement” of Armenians in Karabakh, he added.


Young Turk No More

LONDON — The Armenian Institute recently received a wholly unexpected phone call from a popular independent British record label, Young Turks, which artists such as the xx, Jamie xx, FKA Twigs, and others, was about to announce the change of its name to Young on 6 April 2021 and made a donation to AI. As their representative explained to AI Director Tatevik Ayvazyan, they had come to realize more fully the implications of the name’s associations with the Armenian Genocide, and wanted to disassociate themselves from it. They also wished to make a donation to a UK Armenian organization and approached AI.

The full statement can be found on the company’s Instagram page. A number of major media outlets and magazines (*The Guardian*, *BBC*, *Rolling Stone*, *NME*, *Clash* and others) have also reported the story.

This change and donation is welcomed by AI as a generous gesture towards recognizing the genocidal violence of the historical Young Turk regime. The brave decision was driven by the company itself, and sets an important example for all organizations worldwide which have adopted hurtful names and symbols. AI hopes this example encourages other organizations to pause for thought and be encouraged to take similar steps to recognize the pain and offence caused.

The donation to the Armenian Institute will support its activities and programs, including two events held in April commemorating not only the Armenian Genocide, but also remembering fellow victim Assyrians and Greeks, as well as the Yezidi Genocide of 2014.





Tekeyan Cultural Association, Inc.

With Donations Matched Up to \$20,000
by a Friend of the Tekeyan Cultural Association

SPECIAL FUNDRAISER

for

HRANT DINK SCHOOL of Istanbul



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*.



Please make your tax deductible donation and mail it to:
Tekeyan Cultural Association
755 Mt. Auburn Street
Watertown, MA 02472
Memo: Hrant Dink School

or give online at <https://givebutter.com/0BK5z0>.



SCAN TO DONATE ONLINE

Final Push: Efforts To Help Needy Students at Hrant Dink School of Istanbul

FUNDING, from page 1

Named after the famous assassinated Turkish-Armenian journalist Hrant Dink, the school provides the children of natives of Armenia with an Armenian-language education, following the curriculum of schools in Armenia. It includes nursery, kindergarten and grades 1-9 and even provides students with breakfast and lunch. All the teachers are trained in Armenia and use the same textbooks as in Armenia’s schools.

This allows students to go back to Armenia in 9th grade to take an exam. If they pass, they can continue their education there and enroll in Armenian high schools and colleges, thus maintaining their ties with their native land and culture.

The Hrant Dink School is located in the basement of the Armenian Evangelical Church in Gedikpasha, Istanbul. Heriknaz Avagyan is its longtime principal, while its board of volunteers is led by husband-and-wife Arto and Talar Hisarli Horozoğlu. It is a private school, but the parents of the students usually cannot afford to pay full tuition, so it relies on the help it receives from Armenians in Istanbul and abroad.

The Tekeyan Cultural Association of the United States and Canada has started a campaign to help this school and its students who are in need of support. A friend of the Tekeyan Cultural Association pledged to match up to \$20,000 in donations. This means any new donation will be doubled and will have a greater impact.

So far, over \$11,000 has been raised for the school from generous donors but to fully take advantage of our friendly anonymous patron, the Tekeyan Cultural Association is making the push to raise another \$9,000 and will transfer all funds donated to the school rapidly.

Please make your tax-deductible donation via check to the Tekeyan Cultural Association at 755 Mt. Auburn Street, Watertown, MA 02472, with the memo Hrant Dink School, or donate online at <https://givebutter.com/0BK5z0>.