



A cargo plane carrying COVID-19 Vaccines lands in Armenia.

Large Shipment of AstraZeneca Vaccine Arrives in Armenia

By Raffi Elliott
Special to the Mirror-Spectator

YEREVAN — A Swiss Air cargo plane landing at Armenia’s Zvartnots International Airport on Monday, March 29, delivered a large shipment of the COVID-19 vaccine. The package contains at least 24,000 doses of the AstraZeneca vaccine which Armenia had applied for as part of the World Health Organization’s COVAX Facility initiative earlier this year.

The shipment, which was initially expected in mid-February, had been delayed due to disruptions in the global supply chain. The already-slow vaccine delivery process had been postponed even further when larger recipients such as Germany and France began emulating smaller countries in suspended acquisitions of the Swedish-British brand. This temporary ban, claimed to be over safety concerns related to the vaccine, is being investigated by the European Medicines

Agency (EMA).
At a press conference held in Yerevan on Monday, Deputy Director of the National Centre for Disease Control Gayane Sahakyan discussed the health concerns with WHO representative in Armenia, Yegor Zayts. Both speakers insisted that the vaccine was totally safe.
National Centre for Disease Control experts say that at this stage, the elderly and healthcare workers will be
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Is Armenia on Verge of a Diplomatic Blunder Which Might Derail Recognition Of Genocide by Biden?



We have been there before and we are almost there again. Twice during recent history, when US administrations were coming close to recognizing the Armenian Genocide, Turkey thwarted it through diplomatic maneuvering.

It first happened during the “soccer diplomacy” between President Serzh Sargsyan of Armenia and President Abdullah Gul of Turkey. The second time was during the signing of the protocols in Zurich between Armenia and Turkey in the presence of US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton.

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Foreign Minister Wants ‘Radical’ Change In Turkish Policy on Armenia

YEREVAN (RFE/RL) — Turkey must end its “hostile” policies towards Armenia if it wants to contribute to peace and stability in the region, Foreign Minister Ara Ayvazyan said on Monday, March 29.

“In order to have real peace in our region, we expect that Turkey will seriously and radically change its aggressive policy and end its hostile actions against Armenia,” he said.

Speaking in the Armenian parliament, Ayvazyan noted that Ankara has never reciprocated Armenian attempts to improve bilateral relations.



FM Ara Ayvazyan

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Third Dink Murder Trial Verdicts Issued, Dink Family Issues Statement

ISTANBUL (MiddleEastEye, Bianet, Dink Family) — An Istanbul court issued six sentences of life imprisonment and 23 jail terms, while 33 defendants were acquitted on March 26 in the third court case concerning the January 2007 Hrant Dink murder. One individual died during the trial, leading to charges against him being dropped.

Among those sentenced were former police chiefs and security officials. Reporters Without Borders (RSF) Representative to Turkey Erol Önderoğlu commented: “The Hrant Dink case is not over. This is the third trial and it does not comprise behind-the-scenes actors who threatened him with a statement, threw him before violent groups as an object of hate or failed to act so that he would get killed. As a matter of fact, the attorneys of the Dink family made an application to the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR) last year as they could not have over 20 officials put on trial.”

The 17-year-old Ogun Samast was convicted of the crime in 2011 but it was clear that he could not have carried out this alone. The first court ruling was issued



A protest calling for justice for Hrant Dink some years ago

in January 2012 but after some reversals in a court of cassation it was retried by the same court which gave its ruling on the cases of nine main defendants, including Samast, in July 2019. Seven people were given prison sentences.

In the current court, prosecutors claimed those sentenced were supporters of Fethullah Gülen and in fact the latter, living in the US, was listed as a fugitive along with 12 others whose cases were separated from those who received verdicts.

Dink was a spokesman for the rights of Turkish-Armenians and remains even in his death a symbol of the oppression that community faces. His family issued a statement on March 26 on the occasion of the new verdicts.

Statement by the Dink Family

On January 19, 2007, Hrant Dink was heinously murdered, shot from behind with two bullets, just in front of the offices of his newspaper, Agos, in the heart of Istanbul.

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LIECHTENSTEIN

Armenia Defeats Liechtenstein, Climbs to Top of World Qualifying Games

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Smooth or Bold, Soorj or Coffee

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MASSACHUSETTS

Molly Grace Zeytoonian Is Making New Music With Plenty of Heart and Soul

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ARMENIA

NEWS from ARMENIA

Turkey Will Further Harden Stance Toward Armenia, Historian Says

YEREVAN (Panorama.am)

— Turkey will further toughen its hostile stance towards Armenia since the latter has the status of a defeated state, Dr. Hayk Demoyan, a former director of the Armenian Genocide Museum-Institute, said in an interview on March 30.

His comments came in response to a question whether or not he believes Turkey will someday change its aggressive policy towards Armenia after Monday's statement of Foreign Minister Ara Aivazyan that he did not think Turkey would ever change its anti-Armenian attitude.

"It will further toughen, because we have assumed the role of a beggar and are in the status of a loser. There is no obstacle for Turkey, it only seeks one thing — to fulfill its main pan-Turkish agenda," the historian said.

Addressing the rumors of removing the issue of the Armenian Genocide recognition from the international agenda, Demoyan said: "I am not surprised; this is exactly what all this is leading to. Turkey wins with the use of a very cheap and high-quality option, without spending any resources, and, what is most striking, setting preconditions on the defeated authorities."

The historian spoke about the Syunik Province as Armenia's "trump card."

"There is a way out: to consider Syunik as a trump card, while today we are on our knees, bending our backs and ready to surrender Syunik. Meanwhile, all the pressure is for the sake of this corridor [through Syunik], while the government wants to use it as a bargaining chip," he added.

HALO Trust Denies Giving Minefield Maps To Turkish Forces

YEREVAN (Panorama.am)

— The UK company HALO Trust, which is engaged in demining in Artsakh (Nagorno-Karabakh), has denied a report of its passing minefield maps of Artsakh to the Turkish special services.

"The HALO Trust is aware of a claim that it handed minefield maps to Turkish forces before or during the 2020 conflict over Karabakh. There is absolutely no truth to this claim. For over 20 years HALO has worked in Karabakh to make the local people safe. The HALO Trust is only able to operate in conflict zones around the world because it is a totally non-political and neutral organisation. The claim is totally false," reads the HALO Trust's statement on Facebook.

The Artsakh President's representative-at-large, Boris Avagyan, had made this allegation.

"Because of this, the adversary was able to successfully pass through the minefields during the [recent Artsakh] war. Under the name of studying dangerous areas, this company has carried out reconnaissance operations in the whole territory of Artsakh," he added.

Armenian Constitutional Court Rules in Favor of Kocharyan

YEREVAN (RFE/RL) — Armenia's Constitutional Court on Friday, March 26, ruled that a penal code article under which former President Robert Kocharyan is being prosecuted does not comply with two articles of the country's basic law and is, therefore, invalid.

The ruling published by Constitutional Court Chairman Arman Dilanyan says that Article 300.1 of the Criminal Code that concerns "overthrowing the constitutional order" runs counter to articles 78 and 79 of Armenia's constitution that deal with the principles of proportionality and certainty in relation to restrictions of basic rights and freedoms.

Judge Dilanyan said that the decision of the Constitutional Court is final and comes into effect upon its publication.

The constitutionality of the penal code article was contested by Kocharyan, who faces up to 15 years in prison under the charge, as well as David Grigoryan, a lower court judge who ordered the former president's release from pretrial detention in May 2019, at the same time suspending the case and applying to the Constitutional Court regarding the matter.

Kocharyan's lawyer Aram Vardevanyan told media after the publication of the ruling that since it comes into effect immediately, it means that there is no longer Article 300.1 in the Criminal Code of Armenia.

"[Judge] Anna Danibekyan will terminate the criminal prosecution under Article

300.1. By virtue of the decision of the Constitutional Court, all the acts that referred to Article 300.1 are no longer in force and are subject to review starting from 2009," Vardevanyan said.

The prosecution did not comment on the Constitutional Court's ruling immediately.

To the question of journalists whether Danibekyan, who presides over the trial of Kocharyan and others, can resist it, Vardevanyan said: "There is no case for resisting here. There is no Article 300.1 in the Criminal Code anymore."

Kocharyan, his former chief of staff Armen Gevorgyan and two retired army generals stand accused of "overthrowing the constitutional order" in the wake of a disputed presidential election held in 2008.

The case concerns the alleged use of the army by the Kocharyan government to quell street protests.

Kocharyan and the three other defendants deny that the military was used in the dispersal of opposition demonstrations in which 10 people were killed.

They all reject the accusations as politically motivated.

Kocharyan's lawyers also find that since the article was not in the criminal code in 2008, it could not be applied retrospectively against their client.

Kocharyan was first arrested and indicted in July 2018, two months after the "Velvet Revolution" that brought current Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan to power.



Former President Robert Kocharyan (news.am photo)

Since then Kocharyan has been twice freed and twice rearrested before the Court of Appeals in June 2020 overturned a lower court judge's decision to deny him bail and ordered him freed.

Eventually, Kocharyan was freed after paying a record \$4.1 million bail set by Armenia's Court of Appeals.

In addition to charges related to the 2008 post-election crackdown, Kocharyan is also accused of receiving a \$3-million bribe from an Armenian entrepreneur when he served as president in 1998-2008.

Armenia Tree Project Receives EU Grant

YEREVAN — Armenia Tree Project has been awarded a 695,000-euro grant from the European Union to increase environmental protection and climate change adaptation capacities in Armenia's small regional cities and towns. ATP is the lead applicant of the grant, with the Jinishian Memorial Foundation and the Armenian Energy Agency Foundation as co-applicants.

The grant will finance the implementation of the action entitled "Green community — resilient future": introducing green urban development model aimed at Armenia's enhanced environmental protection and climate change adaptation.

Fifteen municipalities and their neighboring communities in the regions of Shirak, Lori and Tavush have been selected as beneficiaries. Funding will be used to:

- Green 50 schools and 10 parks
- Enhance urban greening capacity in targeted communities
- Establish 100 hectares of forests in 10 areas adjunct to the cities and towns
- Establish 150 backyard nurseries, modeled after ATP's award-winning backyard nursery program
- Establish 1 nursery near Gyumri, modeled after the successful Mirak Family Reforestation Nursery operated by ATP
- Create an online information sharing and learning portal
- Establish 10 Eco Clubs and enhance ATP's existing 5 in said regions
- Engage 7,000 schoolchildren in environmental education activities
- Hold eco-camps and annual country-wide clean-up competition campaigns to increase environmental awareness

ATP will be responsible for activities dedicated to advancing urban greening practices and the establishment of respective infrastructures as well as environmental education activities. The Jinishian Memorial Foundation will leverage its expertise and existing network of regional actors in the field of capacity enhancement to coordinate activities aimed

at advancing regional and municipal dialogues with stakeholders. The Armenian Energy Agency Foundation will design and deliver sub-activities aimed at the promotion of green energy, with particular focus on solar appliances and energy-efficiency practices.

New livelihood opportunities will be created in the selected communities as a result of the grant project. The project will help create additional income opportunities for a few hundred inhabitants who will be engaged in tree-planting activities.

"Through this grant project we will have a greater opportunity to scale up ATP's programs to include more communities, and not only do greening projects but also help those communities set up sustainable practices and infrastructure that will carry them into the future," says ATP Operations Manager Arthur Harutyunyan. "We are very grateful to be able to expand our environmental work and duplicate some of our most successful programs to contribute to the economic vitality of our communities."

"We, at the Armenian Energy Agency foundation, are delighted about being a co-partner within this project, which is another opportunity for us to talk about green energy, benefits of renewable and efficient energy. I congratulate ATP and the Jinishian Memorial Foundation, and wish good luck to all of us to achieve our goals," said Luiza Vardanyan, the general director of the AEA foundation.

EU4Environment: "Green community - resilient future" was launched on March 1, 2021 in Armenia, and will go on for 36 months.



ARMENIA

Large Shipment of AstraZeneca Vaccine Arrives in Armenia

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prioritized as the vaccine enters widespread distribution. Vaccination for private citizens will remain voluntary.

The delays in shipment of the AstraZeneca vaccine have pushed Armenia to negotiate the purchase of larger shipments of the Russian Sputnik V vaccine to keep up inoculation rates. Armenia had previously imported some 2,000 doses, which were mostly administered to volunteers and healthcare workers. Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan also brought up the topic during a call with Russian President Vladimir Pu-

tin. A large shipment of the Sputnik V vaccine will thus also be expected “in the near future.”

Health Minister Anahit Avanesyan insisted, during a recent question period at the National Assembly, that “Armenia is fully committed to ensuring the process of obtaining vaccines through various platforms including bilateral negotiations with producers and through international agreements.”

Avanesyan also added that the government is cooperating with private companies to import the vaccine in order to make it

available to those segments of society that are not considered “at risk.” These vaccines are expected to be administered “for a fee.”

This latest shipment comes as Armenia continues to experience a rapid increase in new COVID-19 cases, which experts say is part of a third wave of the virus hitting the country. On Monday, the Armenian Ministry of Health announced 424 new cases in the country for a total of 190,741 cases since the pandemic started, with 3,476 having succumbed to the virus. More than 14,000 cases remain active across the country.

Foreign Minister Wants ‘Radical’ Change in Turkish Policy On Armenia

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The remarks contrasted with recent days’ statements on Turkish-Armenian relations made by Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan and the secretary of his Security Council, Armen Grigoryan.

In an interview with Armenian Public Television, Grigoryan pointedly declined to clarify whether he believes that Turkey remains an enemy of Armenia after the autumn war in Nagorno-Karabakh.

“If we are opting for the unblocking of the region there have to be some corrections in our approaches, and we are working in that direction,” he said in that regard.

Pashinyan similarly stated on Sunday that Armenia also needs to review its policies towards Turkey as well as Azerbaijan. “We, the regional countries, must reappraise our mutual attitudes and postures,” he said.

Grigoryan’s comments were denounced by opposition leaders and other critics of the Armenian government. They portrayed them as further proof of Pashinyan’s desire to continue sacrificing Armenia’s national interests.

Some oppositionists went as far as to claim that the government is ready to thwart greater international recognition of the 1915 Armenian Genocide in return for the opening of the Turkish-Armenian border.

Ankara shut down the border in 1993 and has refused to establish diplomatic relations with Yerevan since then out of solidarity with Azerbaijan. It has yet to clarify whether a Karabakh settlement acceptable to Baku remains a precondition for normalizing Turkish-Armenian relations after the six-week war that resulted in the restoration of Azerbaijani control over all districts around Karabakh.

Answering a question from an Armenian opposition lawmaker, Ayvazyan insisted on Monday that he is not aware of any Turkish-Armenian talks or other diplomatic contacts.

During the six-week war stopped by a Russian-brokered ceasefire on November 10, the Turks supported the Azerbaijani army with weapons and expert advice. They also reportedly recruited thousands of Syrian mercenaries and sent them to fight in Ankara on the Azerbaijani side.

Armenian leaders have repeatedly described the hostilities as a “Turkish-Azerbaijani aggression” against Armenia and Karabakh.

According to Ruben Safrastyan, a Yerevan-based Turkey analyst, Turkey continues to pose a serious security threat to Armenia and has no intention to normalize relations with the latter.

“In these circumstances, I think that we would be wrong to pursue such a [conciliatory] policy,” Safrastyan told RFE/RL’s Armenian Service. “It would do us no good. It could only cause damage.”

USAID/ASHA-Funded AUA Student Residence Completed

YEREVAN — In 2016, philanthropists K. George and Dr. Carolann Najarian donated a semi-constructed building located in the Dzoragyugh district of Yerevan to the American University of Armenia (AUA). The following year, the university received a grant of \$999,000 from the American Schools and Hospitals Abroad (ASHA) unit of the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) to construct, renovate, and furnish the site to accommodate AUA students.

Located in Yerevan’s ethnographic-cultural district around the corner from the Sergei Parajanov Museum, the AUA Student Residence overlooks the Hrazdan gorge and river which weave through the city’s landscape. With striking architecture reminiscent of the late 19th and early 20th centuries, the facility was designed in constructive collaboration with NST Architects in order to promote student engagement, collaborative decision-making, leadership opportunities, and ideals of independence. Under the AUA Department of Facilities and Services’ effective leadership, the construction was completed in a successful and timely manner by Care Building Services, with the mechanical, electrical, and

plumbing aspects implemented by Consel and Zvezda.

The AUA Student Residence will house 56 students from Armenia and abroad. With an added floor, the completed build-



ing has four floors and 28 rooms, each room containing an individual heating and cooling unit, refrigerator, storage, and a private bathroom. The facility was constructed with the inclusion of all students in mind — ramps, an elevator, and large

bathrooms on the first floor ensure that students with disabilities can easily navigate the building.

Through communal living and engagement, the AUA Student Residence will serve as a platform that fosters sharing of knowledge and appreciation of cultural differences among resident international and local students. Designated spaces for professional activities and social gatherings provide a well-rounded experience, with a lounge area, kitchen, and study room on the ground floor. The Student Residence building is topped with solar panels which generate energy to support the water-heating system. Furthermore, not only does the building have 24-hour security, but doors to rooms are equipped with an access control system and can only be opened via ID cards.

Adjacent to the Student Residence is another building donated by the Najarian family. In coming years, this site will become a Center for Social Entrepreneurship where student residents and others can engage in innovative projects aimed at development and community service, thanks again to the support of USAID/ASHA.

“This development is significant to the advancement of our University as it will allow us to attract more students from around the world and the regions of Armenia, diversifying our student body and bringing in a greater variety of experiences and ideas, broadening the scope for on-campus collaboration,” AUA President Dr. Karin Markides remarks on the new facility.

Perhaps the most unique feature of the AUA Student Residence is the entirety of the space itself, where students have the opportunity to grow alongside their peers in a safe and secure environment. The facility aims to address the needs of AUA’s growing international student body by providing holistic living-learning programs and communities that typically exist in U.S. higher education institutions. Communal balconies grant students the space to gather with their classmates and reflect on their days, sharing their ideas as the sun sets over the Hrazdan river. These seemingly inconsequential moments have the capacity to shed light on identities, values, and aspirations. This addition to the University’s infrastructure will promote democratic values — diversity, inclusion, gender equality, community building, and student engagement and empowerment. In such challenging times for the Armenian nation, it is more important than ever for the future leaders of Armenia to have access to such spaces, through which they will find hope in the collective future and recognize their role in it.

Pashinyan Accused Of Illegal Election Campaigning

YEREVAN (RFE/RL) — Opposition leaders and civic activists accused Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan on Tuesday, March 30, of abusing his powers to illegally launch his political team’s campaign for snap parliamentary elections expected in June.

Pashinyan has toured villages in two Armenian regions and held rallies there after announcing on March 18 plans to hold the elections amid continuing opposition protests against his rule. The weekend trips were not announced beforehand and virtually no media outlets were able to cover them.

Pashinyan mentioned the anticipated polls when he addressed villagers in Armarir province on Sunday. Speaking at one of those rallies, he urged supporters to vote against “wolves seeking to come to power” and give his administration a “mandate to strangle the wolves.”

“I hope and believe that you will solve that problem,” said Pashinyan.

Opposition leaders condemned what they described as illegal campaign trips and gatherings facilitated by local government officials.

“Nikol Pashinyan is now doing some-

thing against which he had for decades fought as a journalist and a parliament deputy,” said Naira Zohrabyan, a senior member of the opposition Prosperous Armenia Party (BHK). “He is doing so in a much more ugly, immoral and open manner than the former authorities did.”

“Nikol Pashinyan’s every trip to the regions is a total abuse of administrative resources,” Zohrabyan said. She claimed that public sector employees and other local residents are forced to attend his rallies.

Daniel Ioannisyan of the Union of Informed Citizens, a Yerevan-based civic group, likewise charged that Pashinyan’s trips constitute a “blatant abuse of administrative resources.”

“When you meet with voters, speak about elections, the future and your programs, and say at the same time that you have just decided to pave roads in their village that gives those who possess administrative resources a clear advantage over other parties,” said Ioannisyan.

Pashinyan’s office could not be immediately reached for comment on these accusations.



INTERNATIONAL

INTERNATIONAL NEWS

Armenia, Georgia Said To Discuss Border Reopening

YEREVAN (RFE/RL) — Armenia and Georgia are discussing the possibility of reopening their land border closed one year ago due to the coronavirus pandemic, the Armenian Foreign Ministry said on Tuesday, March 30.

Both neighboring states shut down their border crossings for foreign travelers in March 2020 following the outbreak of the pandemic. The Georgian-Armenian border has since remained open for only cargo shipments.

The Armenian government completely lifted its entry ban foreigners in January this year.

By contrast, Georgia still maintains most of its travel restrictions. It allows only the citizens of some countries, including Armenia, to enter the country by air after testing negative for COVID-19.

Georgian Economy Minister Natia Turnava said on Monday that her government is now considering reopening the country’s border crossings.

Armenian Foreign Minister Ara Ayvazyan said last week that Yerevan is engaged in “very active contacts” with Tbilisi over the possible reopening of the Georgian-Armenian border.

“Both sides are committed to solving this issue,” Ayvazyan told Armenian lawmakers. “Obviously the pandemic is still having a negative impact. But there are also some technical problems. I’m sure that they can be quickly resolved.”

An Armenian Foreign Ministry spokesperson said on Tuesday that the “active contacts” between the two countries are continuing. The official did not say when the Armenian-Georgian border could be reopened.

Mekhak Apresyan, the head of the Armenian Tourism Federation, welcomed the possible border reopening. He said that it would boost the tourism sectors of both countries reeling from massive losses incurred as a result of the pandemic.

According to official statistics, the number of tourists visiting Armenia and Georgia plummeted by more than 80 percent last year.

Dr. Sevan Sivacioglu Elected to Central Body Of AKP Party

ISTANBUL (Nor Marmara) — On March 24, under the leadership of Recep Tayyip Erdogan, Turkey’s ruling AKP party convened its 7th general assembly, in order to hold elections for the administration of the party. Erdogan was re-elected as party chief. A new slate of the central council of the party was also elected, raising the number of members from 50 to 75, among whom was Armenian orthopedic surgeon Dr. Sevan Sivacioglu, who until recently, worked in the Surp Prgich Armenian Hospital, but currently works in the Acibadem hospital system.



Armenia Defeats Iceland And Liechtenstein

Climbs to Top of World Qualifying Games Group

By Haykaram Nahapetyan
Mirror-Spectator Video Correspondent

YEREVAN — With two victories in a row, Armenia’s soccer team climbed to the top of Group J, where it competes with Germany, North Macedonia, Romania, Liechtenstein, and Iceland for the World Soccer tournament, which will take place in Qatar in 2022.

A few days ago, Armenia defeated Liechtenstein in Liechtenstein when midfielder Noah Froemmeled accidentally scored a self-goal into his own team’s net, thus making Armenia off to a great start. Yerevan collected its first three points granted to the team, which gained its victory. On Sunday, March 28, after more than a year break because of COVID-19, an international soccer game was played in Yerevan’s Republican Stadium. Armenia hosted Iceland.

With the first half of the gaming ending with no goals, Armenians were significantly more successful during the second half. First, on the 53rd minute, Tigran Barseghian hit a goal, then, 21 minutes later, Khoren Bairamian doubled the score. On the 77th minute, Iceland’s coach made two substitutions, bringing a midfielder and a striker, aiming to increase the pres-

| MATCHES NEWS STANDINGS STATS PLAYERS | | | | | | |
|--------------------------------------|-----|---|---|---|-----|---|
| Group J | | | | | | |
| Club | MP | W | D | L | Pts | |
| 1 Armenia | 2-0 | 2 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 6 |
| 2 Germany | | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 3 |
| 3 Romania | | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 3 |
| 4 North Macedo... | | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 |
| 5 Liechtenstein | | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 |
| 6 Iceland | 0-2 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 0 |

sure over Armenia’s team.

Iceland attempted several goals during the remaining time; however, Armenia’s defense and the goalkeeper played well. Armenia temporarily leads its group with

six scores, although Germany’s predicted victory against Romania will bring the German team back to the leading position.

An accompanying video may be found at the *Mirror-Spectator* website.

Turkish Court Decision Affects Administration of Armenian Institutions in Istanbul

ISTANBUL (Nor Marmara) — On March 22, the 7th Administrative Court of Ankara issued a verdict of great interest to the minority communities of Turkey. The decision relates to the circular through which, in the year 2013 the General Directorate of Vakifs repealed the electoral by-laws for minority communities. The by-laws were repealed under the premise of preparing a revised version, but after 8 years no revised version has been prepared, and the relevant bodies have not issued permissions for the election of the boards of community institutions.

Lawyers Sebu Aslangil and Setrag Davudhan brought a case against both the repeal of the by-laws and the circular about new

members. The court found that the 2013 repeal of the by-laws was invalid under the law.

All Armenian community institutions, such as churches, schools, and the Surp Prgich hospital, are run by boards elected under the oversight of the General Directorate of Vakifs (religious foundations) of Turkey. When the Armenian community was allowed to rebuild Surp Giragos Church in Diyarbakir and briefly make use of it, for example, it had to done under the auspice of an Armenian “vakif” committee. The laws by which these operate are a combination of traditional Armenian Church bylaws and constitutions and the law of the modern Republic of Turkey.



INTERNATIONAL

Marking the Centenary of Tehlirian's Revenge

By Muriel Mirak-Weissbach
Special to the Mirror-Spectator

BERLIN — “I killed a man, but I am not a murderer.” These are the words spoken by a young Armenian, apprehended by passers-by right after he had shot and killed a man on the Hardenbergstrasse in Berlin a hundred years ago. The victim was Talaat Pasha, mastermind of the genocide perpetrated by the Young Turks regime against the Armenians and other Christian minorities during World War I. The man who pulled the trigger was Soghomon Tehlirian, whose family members were among the victims.

The shooting occurred in broad daylight on March 15, 1921. Exactly one hundred years later, a group of demonstrators gathered at the site, mainly Armenians, but including Kurds, Yesidis, a representative of a Jewish orga-



nization, and many Germans. Organized by a group called “United against Turkish Fascism,” the gathering demanded “justice for the victims of genocide.” Despite inclement weather, well over a hundred people turned out. Among the participants was Tessa Hofmann, from the Working Group for Recognition: Against Genocide, for Understanding among Peoples (AGA), who briefly addressed



Supporters at the march in Berlin decrying Turkish fascism

the gathering.

In her greetings, sociologist and genocide researcher Hofmann focused on the far-reaching effects that were to follow as a result of the assassination of Talaat. It was a young Polish-Jewish law student, Raphael Lemkin, who reflected on the fact that up to that time there did not exist any laws against crimes perpetrated against entire groups. “Tehlirian was avenging ... not only the murder of his extended family,” she said, “but the state-planned and executed extinction of 1.5 million Ottoman Armenian citizens, as well as a million Greeks and a half million Aramaeans, Assyrians and Chaldeans.” Talaat, she explained, had already been tried, convicted and sentenced to death by a post-war Ottoman military court, but in absentia, since he had managed to flee to Berlin. Germany rejected Turkish demands for his extradition due to his “loyalty to the alliance in the World War.”

Lemkin followed reports of Tehlirian’s trial in June 1921 with great attention. The accused was acquitted on grounds that he was mentally incapacitated at the time of the assassination. Lemkin’s interest in the trial focused on the nature of the crime, the mass murder of a people, and his in-depth study was to lead him to coin the term “genocide” and formulate the basis for its legal prosecution. “His life’s work,” Hofmann said, “includes the proposal for an international treaty that only in 1948, following yet another World War and even more monstrous mass murders, could come into force. There was a direct route that led from the scene of the crime on the Hardenbergstrasse to the UN Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide.” Lemkin welcomed the decision by Turkey in 1950 to enter the Convention; however, Turkish authorities have never acknowledged the genocide committed under the Young Turk and Kemalist regimes from 1912 to 1922, she said. Both official Turkey, “and, unfortunately, large portions of its society still contest, downplay or even justify the fact.”

This means not only that those painful wounds remain open; such denial — or outright justification — constitutes an obstacle to coexistence, and has a negative impact on

both the state and the society of the perpetrators, as well as their descendants. Hofmann made the link between denial of the crimes committed a century ago and the refusal to deal with the genocide against the Alevite population in Dersim in 1937 and 1938 — and against Alevites and Kurds beyond that. Speaking of the work of her organization AGA over the past two decades, Hofmann stated the conviction that reconciliation and trust between Kurds and Turks can only come into being after the past has been squarely faced; only when crimes are named and juridically prosecuted, can the victims and their descendants move to forgiveness.

There was one German press account of the March 15 demonstration that reported — incorrectly — that “no location commemorates this history,” that is, the history of the genocide, as reflected in the Tehlirian case. In point of fact there is such a location and it is a prominent one. Berlin-Charlottenburg is the site of an imposing monument, the Ecumenical Altars of Remembrance. (See <https://mirrorspectator.com/2018/03/01/ecumenical-altars-remembrance-berlin/>) Located in the Luisenkirchhof Cemetery are three huge altars, dedicated to the memory of the genocide victims from three Christian communities. One commemorates the Armenians, another, the Greeks from Asia Minor, Pontos and Eastern Thrace, and the third, the Aramaeans, Assyrians and Chaldeans.

The Berlin event was just the first in a series planned in Germany throughout this year, which marks the centenary not only of the Talaat assassination and Tehlirian’s trial, but of the Leipzig trials as well. The victors of World War I had demanded that Germans suspected of war crimes and crimes against humanity be extradited for trial in international courts, but later accepted Germany’s demand they be tried in their own country. Those trials took place in the city of Leipzig between May and July.

The upcoming events will include a forum on the Tehlirian trial and the performance of a theatre piece inspired by it. These public gatherings, accompanied by debate in the press, will contribute to educating the broader public on the true history of the genocide.

Third Dink Murder Trial Verdicts Issued, Dink Family Issues Statement

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The murder occurred at the end of a three-year period of threats and targeting by the General Command of the Armed Forces, politicians, the judiciary, the media and some so-called non-governmental organizations controlled by the state.

One week before he was killed, he left a message for all of us in his article “Why was I targeted?” and in the last speeches he gave, he explained that “This is an operation by the deepest elements of the state designed to put me in my place.” In the past 14 years, none of the events, people or relationships mentioned by Hrant Dink in his last article have been included in the investigation. And this when many of the things he witnessed or suspected were later proven with documentary evidence...

The operation did not end with the murder; it continued with negligence, cover-ups, the destruction of evidence and misleading information.

We will never be convinced by a judicial process that does not take into account this entire mechanism

The judgement made today is a long way from this truth. It is very difficult to understand the acquittals and sentencing that are even inconsistent within the decision itself. Indeed, some decisions leave the impression that what is being punished is not evil itself, but the fact that this evil was leaked.

At this point in the judicial process, it is said that the group known as FETÖ [Fethullahist Terrorist Organization], claimed to be responsible for the deaths of hundreds of our citizens and the wounding of thousands more in a shameful operation carried out on 15 July 2016, also killed Hrant in 2007. If this is true, had an effective investigation been carried out from the very beginning — an investigation that we demanded and strived to make happen — so many of our citizens’ lives would not have been lost almost 10 years

later. Therefore, do the families of these hundreds of people not deserve an explanation of why the Hrant Dink murder was not investigated in a timely fashion

At a time when the standing of the judiciary is at rock bottom, is it possible for any court to reach a fair judgement? Such an environment is of course very comforting for those responsible for such crimes... Unfortunately, we today see a similar climate and ideology to that which dominated during the years when Hrant Dink was targeted and when he was murdered. In such an atmosphere, how can we talk about truth and justice? Today, is it possible for anyone to stand up and honestly say that Hrant Dink’s murder had nothing to do with the fact that he was Armenian? How can anyone deny the racism that has worked its way into the very veins of this mechanism?

If this trial is ended in this way, if the deep-state mechanism that has existed for years is simply brushed aside as being the

work of FETÖ and no effective investigation is carried out, who will bear the responsibility for other lives that may be lost in the future? Just as the killer was a child, FETÖ and Ergenekon are also children. The mechanism itself, however, is much older. And we must not allow this mechanism to continue to take other lives

We need an immediate call for transparency, democracy and rule of law as much as we need air, bread and water. What we hope for is a confrontation: For society to confront this crime, for perpetrators to confront their own crimes, and for institutions to learn the necessary lessons

We, Hrant Dink’s family, together with his friends and lawyers and with the strength of those who carried his coffin on their shoulders, will never give up our legal battle or our attempts to understand and explain. Not until the entire mechanism is exposed and taken out of operation.



Community News

Roland Telfeyan Heeds Calling After 35 Years in Secular Career

By Florence Avakian

NEW YORK — “I am not going to leave this planet without serving my church,” Roland Telfeyan, now Der Garabed, stated with passion and determination, in a recent telephone conversation.

He is currently ensconced at the Armenian Prelacy in the spiritual 40-day period of meditation, prayer, studies and fasting, following his ordination by Eastern Prelate Archbishop Anoushavan Tanielian.

Following this period of spiritual solitude, on March 20 he will be celebrating his first Badarak at St. Illuminator’s Cathedral, in New York City. The Prelate will take him to his new parish, St. Stephen Armenian Church in New Britain, Conn., and install him on March 21.

On February 13, the Order of Calling took place at St. Sarkis Armenian Church in Douglaston, NY, a profound act with the priestly candidate walking on his knees from the church door into the center of the sanctuary, led by his sponsoring confessor, Fr. Nareg Terterian, and with godfather, Fr. Vahan Kouyoumdjian. The candi-



date characterized this unique experience: “I was thinking about Christ, humbly going down on his knees and washing the feet of His disciples.”

On Sunday, February 14, the ceremony continued with the celebration of the Divine Liturgy and ordination. Again, Deacon Roland came on his knees, but this time to the altar with the sponsoring clergyman. The archbishop invited the candidate to priesthood and following insightful prayers he faced the congregation which acclaimed three times, “arjani eh (he is worthy).” The climax of this profound ceremony was the anointment of the candidate with holy Muron, when he was renamed Der Garabed. The archbishop in his inspiring homily, reflected on the new name of Garabed, a title given to St John the Baptist, the forerunner of Jesus Christ.

“This action was an act of deep faith. It was the crowning, the anointing and the bonding to Christ, the church and to the blood family,” explained Der Garabed.

see CALLING, page 7



Hrag and Henry Kalebjian

Smooth or Bold, Soorj or Coffee

Your Choice at Henry’s House of Coffee

By Alin K. Gregorian
Mirror-Spectator Staff SAN FRANCISCO — If you are in the mood for good coffee, no matter how you take it, Henry’s House of Coffee has you covered.

The coffee shop, in the Noriega district of San Francisco, does not just sell coffee and espresso, but *soorj* and its accoutrements.

It’s not just at the coffee shop, on 1618 Noriega St., in the city’s Sunset District, which can offer caffeine to those in need of a shot; they can buy coffee varieties on the website (www.henryshouseofcoffee.com).

The website offers a whole slew of suggestions, from how to coordinate catnaps with cups of coffee for maximal alertness as well as suggesting flavors based on preferences.

“I want to make sure whatever we are in control of is amazing. We want to make sure that coffee tastes like coffee. Our style is the classical coffee that I enjoyed growing up,” said owner and proprietor Hrag Kalebjian, the son of founder Henry.

Coffee is near and dear to the younger Kalebjian, and he wants not only to caffeinate customers, but to educate them.

The word *soorj* makes frequent appearances on the website and it is not just popular with the Armenians. The Armenian coffees are a hit with non-Armenian customers.

House of Coffee supports the Armenian Eye Care Project – a non-profit organization dedicated to providing the Armenian people eye care. One dollar from the sale of every bag of Armenian coffee is donated to this organization.

In addition to selling the *soorj* roasted to extra dark and ground extra fine, they also sell limited edition bags with the bags featuring the art of graphic artist Arpi Krikorian. Henry’s also sells the accoutrements of Armenian coffee, including the pot and demitasses.

Most beans for *soorj*, he said, either come from Central and South America (Colombia, Costa Rica) or Africa (Ethiopia, Kenya).

“Each has a unique characteristic,” he said. There is no good or bad, but he said, he wants to make sure that the coffee process is at its best.

The website also offers a tutorial on how to make the best cup of *soorj* and how to ensure a rich crema on top.

The business was founded in 1965 by a Romanian-Armenian acquaintance, Antranik Devletian. According to Hrag, the store, then just called House of Coffee, sold teas, jams and bulghur and the like to the local clientele, in addition to coffee.

What Devletian did which was unusual at that time was roast the beans for richer, more delicious flavor and not just serve a regular cup of American joe.

Henry Kalebjian arrived from Lebanon in the 1970s and started working as a

see COFFEE, page 10

SSAES Alumni Roundtable Speaker Series

WATERTOWN — St. Stephen’s Armenian Elementary School (SSAES) launched a Virtual Speaker Series titled “SSAES Alumni RoundTable” on March 9.

The featured alumnae were Teny Avakian (‘94), Araz Chiloyan (‘05), Nairi Krafian (‘07), and Meghri Der-Vartanian (‘08). These graduates are either employed in Armenia, involved in non-profits in Armenia or have close ties to the homeland.

SSAES Principal Houry Boyamian, welcomed the panelists and attendees in Armenian and English. She hoped that the Alumni RoundTable would help parents and the community gain a greater understanding of what the school’s alumni have done, are doing and how the school has been a part of their journey.

SSAES Interim Curriculum Coordinator Heather Krafian shared that all the panelists had similar experiences as students, shared similar paths in their life journey pursuing passions while giving back to the Homeland. Biographies of the panelists can be found on the SSAES Facebook and Instagram.

The evening was an opportunity to ask alumnae questions that highlighted their various journeys. They all shared that lifelong friendships and close bonds, along with amazing teachers made lasting impressions on them. For each of them, SSAES was a family.

The panelists shared that although leaving SSAES was emotionally difficult, their academic and social transition to secondary and higher education went smoothly. They felt prepared as they entered high level math classes, pursued honors and AP courses. They were passionate that the school set them up for success as they were taught respect as well as discipline for learning and hard work. They noted the teachers instilled a passion in them, especially in Armenian, which they carry with them as adults until today. This culminated in their establishing nonprofits in and for Armenia, as well as living and working there.

When asked how their Armenian education at SSAES prepared and shaped their life experiences, both academically and professionally, they shared that they appreciated the various sacrifices their parents made to send them to an Armenian School as well as appreciation for the opportunity and gift of reading, writing and speaking Armenian. They shared the value of the Armenian language and becoming bilingual.

In closing, the guests answered a two-part question. If they could offer one piece of advice to the students, what would it be? If they could offer one piece of advice to the parents about the importance of sending their child to an Armenian School, what would it be? The graduates reminded students to enjoy their time at SSAES and cherish the friendships they developed, advising all to maintain

see ROUNDTABLE, page 11



COMMUNITY NEWS

Roland Telfeyan Heeds Calling after 35 Years in Secular Career

CALLING, from page 6

“One of the most refreshing parts of this journey was studying with *Srpazan* and the priests and scholars of the Prelacy.” He called this “the gem on the crown of all jewels,” and commented that the Prelate was “thoughtful, caring, patient, wise and time-giving. He is a father to me, directing my educational plan, and always on top of things.”

A Financial Whiz

For 35 years, Roland Telfeyan had been deeply involved in the scientific and financial world as a research scientist, engineer, manufacturer and financier on Wall Street, the Bank of America as vice president, and the owner of his own company, dealing with institutional clients. He received a master’s degree in music theory from the University of Michigan, and is a proficient organist of church music. He also has a BA in mathematics and computer science from Northwestern University.

When he was a graduate student at the University of Michigan, he served as president of the Armenian Students’ Cultural Association. Every Sunday he took students to church, then came back and held

an open-house Sunday dinner for the entire Armenian student body of the university, cooking for and feeding some 50 kids every week.

When asked again how he ended up on this path, he responded, “The Lord has opened the door of every single endeavor in the history of my life, university, marriage, career, and now my calling as a priest. May Christ continue to guide and bless all of us.”

“As a kid, always attending church with my family, I remember hearing the Gospel readings and taking them seriously. I enjoy learning, but I was not fulfilled with math and finance,” said the 58-year-old priest who was born in Garden City, NY to mother Nora (née Ohanian), and father Gary, a specialist in military math and physics, and in U.S. Air Force nuclear weapons division. He was married in 1992 to Maro Azizian, and has two daughters, Anahid and Hasmik. Prior to his candidacy, Rev. Garabed served in several churches in different capacities, including choir director, and Sunday School teacher.

Life in Antelias

Why enter the priesthood after a 35-year



Rev. Garabed Telfeyan at his ordination

successful career? “Love,” he answered without hesitation, and defined it as “the giving of everything without the expectation of anything in return. I was also beat up in life, and experienced the tribulations of being responsible to others.”

Roland studied with the priests and scholars of the Eastern Prelacy from 2019 to 2020. When he went to Antelias to strengthen his spiritual life, the high-

light for him was the daily hourly prayers with the lighting of the candles and incense and “spending quality time with all the people of the Catholicosate,” including those in the bookstore, printing press, administration, kitchen staff, doorkeepers, and groundskeepers.

“All the people, Aram Catholicos, the bishops, priests, deacons and staff, were all so welcoming and loving, sharing time, respect, and friendship. I miss them every day.”

“In Lebanon, the Catholicosate was deeply involved with the people, providing food, clothing, and basic needs to the Armenians. They impressed me with their compassion and love. This is truly an Armenian mission with the Church undertaking the service of philanthropy. I saw love between the people towards each other and to the Church.”

While in Antelias, he spent time at the Theological Seminary in Bikfaya and the Bird’s Nest Orphanage in Jebeil where he attended *Badarak* every Sunday. “The children are so lovingly cared for by devoted ladies, including an Armenian nun. The Antelias experience gave me leadership skills of communication and wisdom,” he said.

Before leaving Antelias, Aram Catholicos advised him that when he addresses his flock, he should always remember that “we are all together,” and not “you and me.” Roland in commenting said “the Catholicos is a loving pastor and father, and his priests should be an extension of him.”

Future

As a priest, Telfeyan “hopes always to be available, a partner, a friend, and a listener,” he said. “I love our Armenian Church and people. Christ loves his children, and we are here to love Christ’s children. There is no other way for us to show love to Christ than by loving his flock. May Christ continue to guide and bless all of us.”

The Prelate commented on the ordination of Rev. Garabed Telfeyan, “From day one when I met Roland Telfeyan, carefully listening to his life journey from his childhood to the present time, I felt that he is a Christ-centered candidate, full of love and dedication to the Universal Church in general, and to the Armenian Church and community, in particular. I shared my impression with my colleagues, the Religious and Executive Council members of the Prelacy, and gladly they welcomed his candidacy with great anticipation.”

The Prelate continued, “I am more pleased with his experience in the Armenian Catholicosate in Antelias, Lebanon, where he enjoyed the care of His Holiness Catholicos Aram I, and the members of the Brotherhood, which deeply rooted him in his vocation. I am positive that he will be a precious asset in our Prelacy, serving the community for the glory of Him who came and taught us the true spirit of serving.”

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OBITUARY

Missak Alexanian

Family Man, Tailor

DETROIT — A family man and successful tailor, Missak Alexan Alexanian, passed away on March 20, 2021.

He was born on July 21, 1944 to Alexan and Nazeli Alexanian, and grew up in Zahle, Lebanon. Missak was one of five siblings: Anahid Donikian, Hagop and George

Alexanian, and Adrine Avant.

Missak Alexanian lived an incredible life surrounded by wonderful people who loved him. He was a beautiful person and made an impact on so many people's lives.

Missak arrived in the United States in the early 1970s. As a natural-born tailor, he



would become his wife. Missak married Denise in 1977, and they eventually had twins, Ani and Berj Alexanian, whom he cherished dearly. Last year, Missak and Denise celebrated their 43rd wedding anniversary.

Missak was a lifetime Armenian Democratic Liberal Party and Tekeyan Cultural Association member and supporter.

Son Berj stated: "The wonderful thing about Missak was that he didn't live for just himself. He found joy in helping others and brightening people's lives. Missak was a beautiful human being in many ways. He was a remarkably selfless person. He has touched many, and he threaded deep friendships with his mighty needle.

Sister-in-law Debra Alexanian declared: "Missak was a decent, upstanding man of good moral see ALEXANIAN, page 9

found himself working at Osmonds clothing store where he met the woman who

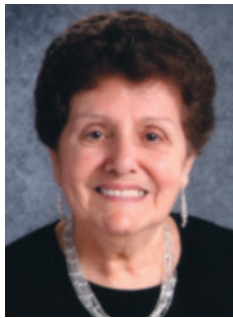
Anahid Joubanian (Digin Anahid)

Beloved Longtime Educator

WATERTOWN — Anahid Joubanian, a wife, mother, grandmother, mother-in-law and teacher, passed away at home after a short illness on Saturday, March 27, 2021 at the age of 87.

Born March 8, 1934 in Aleppo, Syria to Aram and Iskuhi (Azdian) Kim-Almazian, and a graduate of Karen Jeppe Armenian College, she was a dedicated educator for 52 years who taught Armenian at the primary school level in three countries.

Originally discovered by a headmistress in Aleppo for her limitless patience with young children, she was encouraged to pursue a teaching career in primary education. Recruited by the newly-opened Armenian School of Kuwait, she joined her husband there in 1965, where she would teach Armenian language and culture for 20 years. After moving to Watertown, Massachusetts in 1986, she taught Armenian at St. Stephen's Armenian Elementary School alongside Principal Houry Boyamian for 32 years, until her retirement at age 84. On the



25th anniversary of the founding of St. Stephen's, she was awarded the Mesrob Mashdots Medal by Archbishop Oshagan Cholyan, Prelate of the Eastern United States, the highest honor

awarded to a layperson by the Holy See of the Great House of Cilicia of the Armenian Apostolic Church.

Preceded in death by her husband of 52 years, Vartkes Joubanian, she is survived by four children and eight grandchildren.

Private funeral services will be held at St. Stephen's Armenian Church, Watertown to be followed by private cemetery services at Ridgelawn Cemetery, Watertown. Due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, current public health and safety measures will be followed.

William J. Purcell

Loved Traveling, Piloting Vintage Plane

WALTHAM, Mass. — William J. Purcell of Waltham died on March 27, 2021.

He was the husband of Shirlee (Zartarian) Purcell; son of the late William J. and Alice (Moynahan – Landry); brother of Frank Landry and his late wife Patricia, Paul Landry, and the late Elizabeth Boyle; brother-in-law of the late Stephen Zartarian. He also leaves many nieces and nephews and friends.



Purcell was raised in Watertown and was a graduate of Boston University. He joined the Air National Guard and was inducted into the U.S. Air Force in 1961.

Bill worked as an aircraft mechanic for Northeast then Delta Airlines at Logan Airport.

He and Shirlee, the love of his life, loved to travel. They spent time in most countries in Europe, as well as countries in Asia and Africa.

Bill was also an avid reader devouring books like popcorn. But Bill's real passion was his Ryan PT22, WWII Training Aircraft that he flew out of Marlborough Airport. With an open cockpit and no radio on board, Bill would follow the highways below to reach his destination. And because of his mechanical ability, he would perform all of his own repairs, even to replacing the Irish linen skin on the plane's wings. It seemed like there was nothing that Bill couldn't repair from mechanical to electronic, a true Renaissance Man.

Funeral and Cemetery services are private. Due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, current public health and safety

measures will be followed. Social distancing and facemasks will be required for everyone's safety.

Kris V. Hagopian

Dedicated Father

WATERTOWN — Kris V. Hagopian of Watertown died unexpectedly on March 27, 2021. He was 56.

He was the son of Shake Hagopian and the late Vahram Hagopian. He leaves a sister, Ani Hagopian; children Cesar, Kristine and Daniella and a his niece and nephew, Nicholas and Gabriella and many other family members.

He was the former proprietor of Coolidge



Liquors in Watertown, where he established numerous lifelong friends.

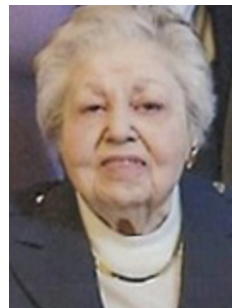
He was an admired figure in his community and was known as "Lucky" to many.

Private funeral services were held at Saint Stephen's Armenian Church, Watertown followed by private cemetery services at Ridgelawn Cemetery, Watertown.

Mary A. (Guleserian) Bergoudian

Dedicated to Family

BELMONT, Mass. — Mary A. (Guleserian) Bergoudian of Belmont passed away peacefully at home on March 23, 2021; she was 91 years old.



She was the daughter of the late Dertad N. Guleserian and the late Vergine (Maserejian). She was the wife of 46 years to the late Nerses G. Bergoudian; mother

of Susan M. Hazarvartian and her husband Dr. Kim Eric of North Andover and the late Gary Dertad Bergoudian; grandmother to Drtad Krikor and Deran Nerses Hazarvartian; sister of the late Walter Guleserian

and Edward Guleserian. She is also survived by many relatives in the Guleserian families including two generations of nieces and nephews.

Visiting hours were held in the sanctuary of St. James Armenian Church, 465 Mt. Auburn St., Watertown on March 26. The funeral was held at the church on March 27. Due to capacity restrictions, reservations will be required for those wishing to attend in person. All are welcome to join virtually for the livestreamed funeral services.

Memorial donations may be made in her memory to St. Nersess Armenian Seminary, 486 Bedford Rd., Armonk, NY 10504, Fund for Armenian Relief (FAR) directed to Education Programs, 630 Second Ave., New York, NY 10016 or St. James Armenian Church.

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COMMUNITY NEWS

Eastern Diocese Publishes a New Edition of Church Lectionary

NEW YORK — A new, English-language edition of one of the central books of the Armenian Church has just been published by the Eastern Diocese of the Armenian Church of America.

The Lectionary of the Armenian Church — known as the *Jashots Kirk* — compiles all of the Biblical passages read during the church's liturgical celebrations. Typically, specific passages from the Gospels, the Old Testament, and the Epistles are read on a given feast day. With rare exceptions, every day of the year is assigned a set of distinct readings, and the complete cycle repeats itself, with certain variations, year after year.

The practice of reading Scripture in a worship setting dates back to the earliest days of the Christian movement. The formative centuries of the Christian Church saw various selections of readings dedicated to specific occasions in the liturgical year. The Armenian Lectionary has unique features of its own, and has been in use for centuries. It was first published in book form in Venice, in 1686, and has seen several editions and revisions since then.



Fr. Arshen Aivazian spent a decade assembling the relevant texts in authoritative English translations.

This new edition, titled *The Lectionary of the Armenian Apostolic Orthodox Church*, presents the complete lections for Sundays and feast days of the liturgical year, in English. Its publication at this time is the fruit of many years of labor by the Rev. Fr. Arshen Aivazian, a longtime pastor in the Eastern Diocese, now retired, who also served in the Western Diocese.

"This project began more than 10 years ago, during the time I was serving as pastor in Fresno, California," recalled Aivazian. "Gradually, week by week, I would collect the Scripture readings of the church, and also gather the materials from the church fathers that are often hard to come by."

Some of the latter resources had never been translated from their Armenian versions into English—and creating such translations thus became part of Aivazian's overall task.

After painstaking effort, the resulting volume represents the first complete translation of the Armenian Church Lectionary into English — indeed, into any modern language. It gathers in a single volume all of the Bible readings for every day of the year (not just for Sundays), including the special readings assigned to feast days, and commemorations of the saints.

This edition of the Lectionary also standardizes the English version of Scriptural passages read in parishes. As Aivazian explains in an introductory note, after much consideration he obtained permission to reproduce the readings in the English translation known as the New King James Version, which he chose for its "sound reflection of Orthodox theology and its authorized usage in other Orthodox jurisdictions."

The volume also contains complete English translations of some unique prayers for special observances of the Armenian Church.

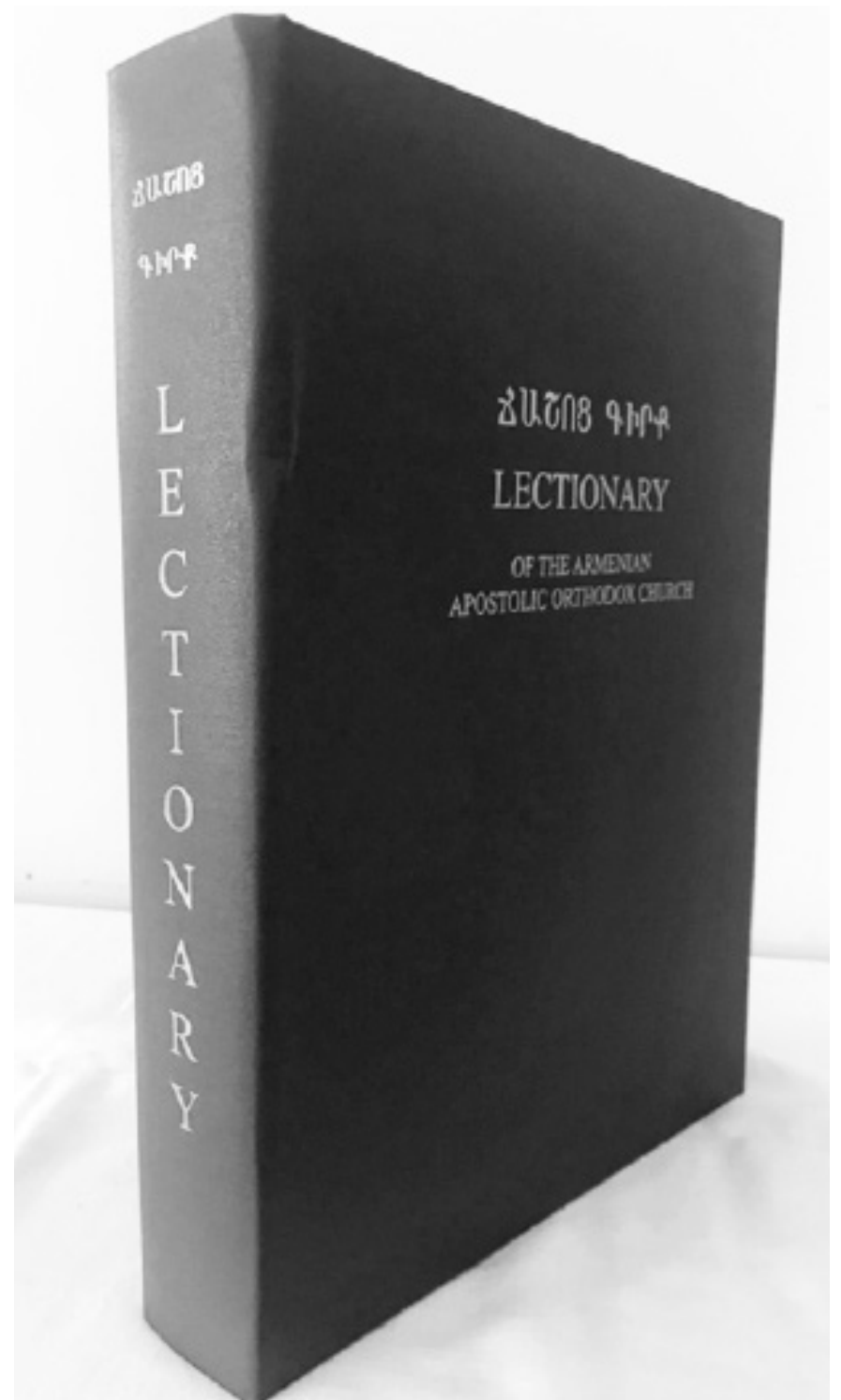
More generally, it reveals the importance of the Bible for understanding the Armenian Church, its liturgy, and faith.

"This Lectionary will assist our churches in many ways," said Diocesan Primate Bishop Daniel. "The Word of God, as presented in the Bible, is proclaimed in every liturgical service of the Armenian Church. It is the magnet that draws us into the life and light of God. Only when we devote ourselves to that sacred Word, as individuals, as families, and as the Church, can we truly begin to 'Build Up the Body of Christ.'"

The Primate continued: "I applaud Fr. Arshen for his meticulous work, over many years, to bring the Armenian Church's ancient compilation of Scriptural readings and Psalms to greater public awareness, especially for English-speaking Armenians. The Armenian Lectionary, in all its forms, is a call to re-dedicate ourselves to God's life-giving Word."

A Vehicle For God to Speak to His People

With all the material it contains, this new Lectionary clocks in at well over 600 pages. In addition to the readings themselves, that volume includes a general introduction by Aivazian, surveying the long history of the Armenian Church Lectionary and his own efforts in assembling a modern edition; an overview of the Armenian liturgical calendar; and a selection of homilies and treatises by various Church Fa-



thers, translated (some for the first time) into modern Armenian and English.

One very useful inclusion is an article setting forth practical instructions to the lectors themselves—that is, the altar servers who read the Scriptures to the public at every service. Along with advice on vocal style and preparation, Fr. Aivazian instructs lectors to "Always bear in mind that you are placing yourself in the service of God. You are making yourself a vehicle through whom God is speaking to his people."

A grant from the Dadourian Foundation subsidized the publication of the book.

In addition, a generous donation by Mr. and Mrs. George Mekenian and Mr. and Mrs. Steven Mekenian will allow each clergyman of the Eastern Diocese to receive a complimentary copy of the book. The donation was made in memory of Rose Mekenian, the late wife of George, and Steven's mother, who passed away in 2002.

"Rose was a gracious Armenian woman, a woman of the deepest faith, who served the church with great love and kindness all her life," recalled Bishop Daniel. "She was a true leader of our Diocese — one of the very first women ever to serve on the Diocesan Council — and she was an inspiration to so many people. It's fitting that such a gift should be made in her memory."

The new English-language edition of the *Lectionary of the Armenian Church* is a hard-bound volume, available for purchase from St. Nersess Armenian Seminary, at a cost of \$100 (plus shipping). A portion of proceeds from the sale of the book will benefit the mission and work of the seminary. Place orders through the seminary website, www.stnersess.edu.

Missak Alexanian

ALEXANIAN, from page 8
character. He was an honorable gentleman, as well as a gentle man. His upbeat personality and positive mood was reliable. He smiled constantly, laughed easily, and had a good sense of humor. He never spoke negatively about anyone, engaged in gossip, or raised his voice in anger."

Nephew and godson Peter Alexanian said: "For me, Uncle Missak was a quiet and gentle person. I never heard him yell

or lose his temper. Maybe I only saw one side, but this is the side that I saw. With a short stature and really big ears, in an imaginative way I could see him as being somewhat like a big gnome or elf. . . . bear with me ... for he really could do magic with his hands. He could mend any clothing issue in minutes. If gnomes are known for protecting the earth or earthly treasure, in Uncle Missak's case, his treasure was his family, including his extended family. I can't tell you how many times he helped me out, and on such short notice, to alter pants, shirts, suits, etc. including the

tuxedo I wore during my first wedding. On that big day, with less than an hour before the start of the service, uncle Missak was searching high and low through the rented hall for something that he could use to help make my tuxedo vest and jacket fit better. Lo and behold, he came back into my room with a black stapler. As he lifted the stapler near my head, you might wonder, did I trust him? There was no doubt in my mind, I had every bit of confidence in his abilities, and sure enough he managed to resolve the issue. He was my hero that day.

"Uncle Missak, Uncle Mike ... your spir-

it shines and inspires through your loving generosity."

Berj concluded: "Missak, thank you for being part of this world and our lives. You were such a special person to so many, and your legacy will live on in the beautiful memories you leave for all of us. We will always love and remember you."

The family requests that any donations in lieu of flowers be made to the Tekeyan Cultural Association for its Sponsor a Teacher Program and sent c/o Jack and Diana Alexanian, 1415 W. Square Lake Road, Bloomfield Hills, MI 48302.

Smooth or Bold, *Soorj* or Coffee

Your Choice at Henry's House of Coffee

COFFEE, from page 6

draftsman at an engineering firm. When he was laid off, however, he decided to chart his own way. Devletian was ready to sell his business and in 1983, the older Kalebjian took over.

As Henry Kalebjian notes on the website, “My roasting roots began in Lebanon where my father owned a bakery and served coffee to the locals. Back then coffee wasn’t easily sourced, so you had to roast your own coffee if you wanted to drink it. As the business grew, my father pulled me out of school at the age of 12 to help him with the store. My job was to roast the coffee.”

For Hrag Kalebjian, Henry’s House of Coffee has practically been a part of his entire life. “When he [Henry] bought it, I was in kindergarten. I grew up in it. My dad would take me to work with him on Saturday mornings when I wanted to stay home and watch cartoons. I didn’t have fond memories” then, he joked.

He continued to work there through his teens, when he would roast coffee and do whatever else necessary.

Hrag Kalebjian decided to step away from the business and studied economics at college and when he graduated from the University of California, Davis, he entered the world of corporate finance, where he stayed for 10 years.

However, the scent of the coffee was too hard to ignore,



Armenian coffee and its accoutrements

and he decided to join his father in the business starting in 2013.

One of the reasons, he said, was the “amazing following and retention of customers” that the shop and the on-line business have.

Now, he said, he sees it far differently than the chore he saw as a teen working the weekends; instead, he said Henry’s “is telling the story of our family and culture and Armenians. We are educating the coffee culture with our history.”

While the Internet can offer them exposure to the entire world, he said that it was their neighborhood in San Francisco that has been their heart.

“The majority of our customers are from the community around the shop. They are used to the café and the love we show them. People from all sorts of cultures come,” he said.

A Good Cup

Henry’s itself is known for its dark roast, which has no bitterness. Hrag prefers the flavors of his lighter roasts. He said at home brews them in a Chemex, the hour-glass



Hrag Kalebjian poses with bags of coffee

shaped container, with the pour-over option.

“That makes the best cup of coffee,” he said.

Kalebjian noted that Chemex may not work for quick weekday cups of morning coffee, but that is his brew of choice for when he has the time. “It is the purest way to go,” he said.

But before you get to making the coffee, there are the beans to grind. As far as he is concerned, a burr grinder (or burr mill) is the way to go, and not a blade grinder. A burr grinder crushes beans between two discs that are sitting on top of each other and pressing against the coffee, whereas a regular grinder has a blade in the middle at which the beans are thrown for quick but uneven pulverization. The latter, he noted, “works way too fast, burning some of the beans and doesn’t grind evenly.”

The burr, he said, “grinds evenly and [leads to] a nice even extraction.”

He also said he loves the OXO Barista Brain Coffeemaker, which controls everything, including the temperature of the water; for a perfect cup, the water should be heated to 203 degrees, a temperature which many coffee makers don’t reach. In addition, it roasts the coffee for a few seconds for a “much richer extraction.” And finally, it offers a larger spray head which evenly covers the coffee “for full and even extraction.”

Henry’s has also started carrying a line of teas, with a

couple from Armenia, one mint, and the other thyme.

Kalebjian and his wife, Taleen, have three boys ranging



Hrag Kalebjian brews some coffee

in age from 8 to 14.

And the namesake of the café, Henry? The younger Kalebjian said that his father still spends a couple of hours every day at the café.

So get some *soorj* and don’t forget to turn the cup over.



COMMUNITY NEWS



DETROIT — Armenian Assembly of America Michigan State Director, John Jamian, and his brother, Greg Jamian, hosted a meeting on March 25, 2021 at their office with Michigan US Representative John Moolenaar (Republican, 4th Congressional District), in order to discuss healthcare concerns as well as the Assembly’s legislative priorities. Joined by Archbishop Paren Avedikian of the Mother See of Holy Echmiadzin and Maggie Ornazian, the Assembly delegation urged Moolenaar to cosponsor the Congressional Armenian Caucus-endorsed House Resolution 240 (H.Res.240), which calls upon Azerbaijan to release and repatriate upwards of 200 Armenian POWs and captured civilians, some of which have been tortured and abused according to recent Human Rights Watch reports. To contact your Member of the House of Representatives and request their co-sponsorship of H.Res.240, the Armenian POWs and Captured Civilians resolution, you may do so via the following Action Alert link: <https://www.armenian--assembly.org/advocacy>. Pictured from left, are Greg Jamian, CEO of AmeriCare Medical; John Jamian, the Assembly’s Michigan State Director; Rep. John Moolenaar; Abp. Paren Avedikian; and Maggie Ornazian.

Armenia
Consul General
Meets with
State Assembly
Member Rubio

GLENDAL — Consul General of Armenia in Los Angeles Ambassador Armen Baibourtian held a virtual meeting with the California State Assemblymember Blanca E. Rubio.

Baibourtian expressed his gratitude to Assemblymember Rubio for being a member of the California Armenian Legislative Caucus and for contribution to the work of the Caucus for three consecutive years.

Rubio noted that although her electoral constituency does not include the California cities that have heavy-Armenian populated communities, however, warm and close cooperation with the Armenian community exists throughout the multicultural California. Rubio expressed her delight for the warm cooperation that was developed through the California Armenian Legislative Caucus at the California Capitol, thanks to which close relations with the community are also being carried on.

The two discussed the areas of cooperation between Armenia and California. The Consul General noted that the Framework Agreement on Cooperation signed in 2019 between Armenia and California constitutes a strong foundation and conducive environment for deepening bilateral relations between the State of California and Armenia.

Baibourtian briefed Rubio on the consequences of the Azerbaijani aggression with the support of Turkey against Artsakh and the humanitarian crisis created in the post-war period. The interlocutors stressed the importance of the issue of the immediate release of the Armenian prisoners of war (POWs) and civilians held in Azerbaijan that is in violation of provisions of the November 9, 2020 trilateral statement.

Rubio represents California’s 48th Assembly District since her election in 2016. She is a member of the Assembly’s Standing Committees on Aging and Long-Term Care, Budget, Elections, Governmental Organization, Rules, and Water, Parks, & Wildlife, as well as chairs the Select Committee on Domestic Violence.

SSAES Alumni
Roundtable
Series

ROUNDTABLE, from page 6
these connections beyond graduation into their young adult lives, as these friends were now a part of their community. They reminded graduates that they would become ambassadors in their school communities and beyond and to take all they have learned and impart that knowledge to others. The alumnae shared sound advice for the parents on the importance of sending their child to an Armenian School and the value of being bilingual. This Speaker Series is available on the SSAES YouTube Channel <https://youtu.be/dsVZvc887c4>. Enjoy watching the discussion, which will confirm that SSAES is not just a School but a Family.

She shared that the next Alumni Roundtable would be held on Tuesday, April 20.

Moving forward the gatherings will be held every third Tuesday of the month at 7:30 p.m.



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

COMMUNITY NEWS

AGBU Summit Addresses Toll of Pandemic, Artsakh War

NEW YORK — In response to the collective toll the global pandemic and the trauma of the Artsakh War has taken on Armenians everywhere, a virtual summit on the psycho-social dynamics of these transformative crises was organized by AGBU in conjunction with the American University of Armenia (AUA) and the Armenian Mental Health Initiative (AMHI). The two-part virtual event, which took place on February 21 and February 22, was hosted by the AGBU Armenian Virtual College (AVC), enabling a diverse panel of experts to connect with an audience of over 200 participants across 26 countries.

Each day's program was divided into multiple segments that explored different dimensions of coping with crisis—from social media overload and news misinformation, activism burnout, unresolved traumas triggered from previous tragedies in Armenian history, and second-hand wounds from relentless reports with disturbing news and imagery from the homeland. Every session featured a panel of authorities in relevant fields, from licensed mental health professionals and researchers to educators and media specialists. They not only analyzed the issues at play but also provided practical solutions and words of inspiration, based on their current professional wisdom and experiences, both clinical and personal.

In explaining the motivation behind the summit, AGBU Central Board Member and education specialist Lena Sarkissian, stated, "Wars do not simply end on the day of truce, they live in the collective mind, and thus, shape the future perspective of a people," adding that turning to the community of experts would help explore the transformative power of resilience building. "It is a tangled interplay of experiences and coping skills, a complex dynamic between lived experiences and the resources available to manage, adapt, and most importantly, thrive."

kle, and Tamar Sevajian, in addition to trauma specialist Keghani Mardikian, the focus was mending old wounds. Panelists agreed that using different forms of strength-based therapy—most importantly restoration therapy—can aid in the healing process. "We often replay moments of powerlessness until we understand how to interrupt that pattern," said Sevajian, concluding with: "Only then are we able to move into a peace cycle based in our truth."

The conversation moved to consider the crucial role of digital media in the Artsakh War and the subsequent toll it took on social channel users confronted by constant Azerbaijani-backed misinformation campaigns, traumatizing pictures of war, and a fixed attachment to our screens.

The next panel, "Don't Just Yell at the Internet: Overcoming Social/Media Triggers," moderated by educator Dr. Ani Shabazian, featured licensed marriage and family therapist and anger management specialist Anita Avedian, and psychiatrist Lara G. Shirikjian and Lara Setrakian. They honed in on techniques to avoid such triggers during a social media frenzy.

For Setrakian, the answer is as simple as tailoring one's "information diet" and turning down the volume of news for extended periods of time. "You don't have to read everything; you don't even have to watch everything," she posited. "You can pull back and save your energy." While obsessive social media consumption is a pressing issue that will likely affect future generations to come, the next panel, moderated by EBM specialist Yerado Abrahamian, took a step back to focus on the trauma we've inherited from our ancestors and how to move forward with these physiological and psychological changes.

"Intergenerational Pain: Anxiety, Uncertainty and Quieting the Inner Critic" with licensed clinical psychologist and founding executive director of AMHI Yeraz Markar-

day's sessions began with a look at the resilience of the genocide generation with Dr. Roberta Ervine, professor of Armenian Christian Studies at the St. Nersess Seminary. She examined the role of blame and guilt among survivors of genocide, an all too familiar feeling for Armenians today who lived through the first war, the earthquake, the Lebanon explosion, and now the Artsakh War. Yet, random acts of kindness, community, and resilience have historically banded our nation together—a lesson that can be applied today. "All of you who are present already are called upon to do the same in this generation," said Dr. Ervine. "May you find the immoral fortitude to take the threads in your hands by doing what seems to need doing, simply because you are the ones here to do it."

The following panel examined the present-day situation with a look at "What We're Seeing Right Now, How We're Coping," moderated by child psychiatrist Dr. Louis M. Najarian, featuring discussants Dr. Khachatur Gasparyan and Dr. Sevan Minassian, a psychologist and psychiatrist from Armenia and France, respectively. Through the lenses of a local and diasporan, both have observed firsthand how to overcome the sense of hopelessness in Armenia. The only way to confront such feelings, all panelists concluded, is to acknowledge the pain, thereby creating both tolerance and confidence. As Minassian put it, "We have to negotiate with our feelings of powerlessness with the war. As Diasporans, we have to deal with our cultural countertransference. We have to take this into account and decentralize ourselves with reflectivity."

In natural succession, the next panel of the day answered the question on everyone's mind: Where Are We Going? Delving into strategic mechanisms to move towards post-traumatic growth, licensed clinical psychologist Dr. Ani Karayan, AUA adjunct professor Dr. Vahe Khachadourian, and psychiatrist Dr. Najarian concluded that looking at disaster studies from the past can help inform trained professionals on how to bounce back in the present, using targeted interventions that address specific needs in the population. Dr. Khachadourian summarized it best: "A lesson we can learn from this is practicing and promoting individual-level factors; education, positive thinking, and mindfulness. We want to advocate for efficient and evidence-based targeted interventions."

The final panel of the summit focused on shaping the future of Armenia with "Success and Resilience in Business and Life." AGBU Central Board Member and Founding President of AVC Dr. Yervant Zorian moderated the conversation with senior manager of research and development at Synopsys Armenia Hripsime Hakobyan, business coach and prosperity mentor Rita Hovakimian and global branding expert Vasken Kalayjian. The panel discussed best practices for good business and successful lifestyles, including meditation, creating values-based organizations, and cultivating optimism. "When difficult things happen in life, unless we have the

strong muscle of resilience, and an optimistic way of dealing with difficult situations, we will self-sabotage," said Kalayjian, who has witnessed the downfall of businesses due to the unresolved personal issues of CEOs. "Exercising a vision and building value around that is key, which can translate that into our personal lives," he suggested.

Zorian, in his closing remarks, noted that the participant demographics covered all age groups and an array of countries. "This shows us that resilience is a need, whatever age group or country we are in," he said, after which he announced plans are underway to host a subsequent resilience summit in the Armenian language in spring.

Positive and congratulatory comments in the virtual chat room reinforced how necessary and overdue this event was for the Armenians in communities across the globe. In an intentional move to continue the conversation on healthy coping in times of extreme crisis, the resources and advice provided by panelists are accessible on The Resilience Summit portal on the AVC platform at (www.avc-agbu.org).



The first session, moderated by journalist and thought leader Lara Setrakian, tackled the war's effect on the soul with psychotherapist and author Dr. Edward Tick, an expert on moral injury and Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) for veterans in his course, War and the Soul: Healing a Wounded Society. Dr. Tick pointed out the similarities civilians might share with those returning from war, asserting that both experience a damaged soul and must hide wounds seen and unseen. The cure for a broken spirit, Dr. Tick concluded, can be found with spirituality in community. "It's absolutely essential that you bring that wisdom back, share it with society, help everybody become initiated to what war and violence really do, and become a teacher and a servant for healing. And that will restore your purpose," Tick concluded.

While this panel examined how to rewire the soul, the next panel, "Managing Grief," moderated by educator and nonprofit director Nanor Balabanian, focused on how to rewire our brains. In a conversation with licensed marriage and family therapists Debi Jenkins Frankle, Mark Fran-

ian, along with licensed clinical psychologist and executive co-director of AMHI Valentina Ogaryan, addressed the use of social connections as an "emotional vitamin" and how to use hope to achieve resilience-building. Ogaryan aptly stated: "Resilience is the ability to bounce back and to move forward. We are impacted by adversity. It means that we have obstacles as human beings that we need to overcome."

Recognizing that laughter can often be the best medicine to relieve stress and sorrow, there seemed to be no better way to end the first day of the summit than with actor, artist, and writer Vahe Berberian, globally recognized for his sharp-witted humor and stand-up comic sets. Berberian's philosophical premise was resilience as love, and consequentially love as art, which can heal our nation. "We should take a close look at ourselves in the mirror, both individually and as a nation, because our national character is the sum total of what we are individually."

After a welcome by Dr. Varduhi Petrosyan, Dean of the AUA Turpanjian School of Public Health, the second



Arts & Culture

Resurrecting Kahlil Gibran's *The Prophet*

By Dr. Arpi Sarafian
Special to the Mirror-Spectator

I was recently gifted a copy of the 1984 translation into Armenian (Technopresse Moderne, Beirut-Lebanon) by renowned poet Vahe-Vahian of Kahlil Gibran's *The Prophet*. An article I had read earlier that week about another translation into Armenian of Gibran's internationally acclaimed classic prompted me to take a close look at my newly acquired treasure. In his "Markaren," ["The Prophet"] published in the February 10, 2021 issue of *Nor Or* weekly, Archbishop Hovnan Derderian refers to Very Reverend Father Pakrad Bourjekian's 1999 translation into Armenian (St. James Press, Jerusalem) of *The Prophet* as "a gem . . . impossible to compare with other existing translations." The archbishop's comments are undoubtedly well-founded. Bourjekian's translation must have its merits and deserves to have its rightful place in our literary canon. My intention here is not to compare the two texts. Instead, I



wish to draw attention to the earlier translation as well, still waiting to be resurrected and known to those who cannot, or perhaps have no desire to, read the book in the English original.

Not too long ago, I had read Vahe-Vahian's translations of Bengali poet Rabindranath Tagore's *The Gardener, Gitanjali, and Fruit-gathering*, works I was not familiar with at the time. I remember being captivated by the musicality and the lyricism of the Armenian translations of these classics. I could therefore not wait to read *The Prophet*, a book I had long ago adopted as "my little Bible," in our mother tongue.

The Prophet has been a favorite of mine because of Gibran's deep insights into the condition of man and of his infinite compassion for an ailing humanity. The protagonist, a visionary hermit living in the wilderness around the fictional port city of Orphalese, in a country away from his native land, shares his wisdom and knowledge with the town's inhabitants, gathered to hear "of

see GIBRAN, page 13



Molly Grace Zeytoonian is Making New Music With Plenty of Heart and Soul

By Harry Kezelian
Mirror-Spectator Staff

BOSTON — The Armenians and the Irish perhaps don't have all that much in common. But what comes to mind when either nationality is mentioned is a long history of culture and struggle, and a love for music and singing.

So it's no surprise to meet an Armenian-Irish-American girl with the musical magic of both peoples and an inclination for the jazz, blues, soul, funk, pop, and rock'n'roll of her birthplace, the US.

Molly Grace Zeytoonian, who goes by the stage name Molly Grace, is a talented singer-songwriter new to the music scene — in fact, she's only a freshman in college — whose fresh, optimistic tunes and beautiful, soulful voice is sure to catch some attention.

Born and raised in Lexington, Mass., to Armen and Mary Zeytoonian, Molly Grace comes from a family in love with music. Her Irish-American maternal grandfather, Billy Bennis, was a rock'n'roll and doo wop musician in the 1950s and an original member of the band Dickie Doo and The Don'ts. Her paternal grandfather, the late Carl Zeytoonian, was a longtime pillar of the Armenian community as a deacon and in his early years as an oud player and singer with the Orientales Band out of Watertown in the 1950s. Great-Uncle Joe Zeytoonian is an active oudist to this day in South Florida, who, along with his wife, dancer Myriam Eli, has collaborated with the likes of Shakira. Well, with a lineage like that, a music career is almost inevitable.

Molly says her mother sang all the time in the house and she herself always gravitated to music, listening to everything from Armenian music to Country; from Heavy Metal to the Spice Girls. Molly, who has always loved singing, notes that she was blessed to grow up in Lexington, whose public schools have a great arts program. Throughout middle and high school, she participated in choir, a Capela ensemble, musical theatre, improv troupe, and many other musical and performance opportunities. But her love has always been singing. At the age of 10, her parents bought her a guitar and she taught herself to play and started writing her own songs. By high school she was already on her musical journey and knew what she wanted to do in life. But like many young artists she experienced writer's block. That's when she started listening to a host of artists which Molly describes as "retro soul" or "neo-soul," a sort of jazz/funk fusion genre.

see MOLLY, page 15



Helen Evans and Berj Najarian Join Leadership of Armenian Museum Of America

WATERTOWN — The Armenian Museum of America recently announced that Dr. Helen C. Evans, Mary and Michael Jaharis Curator of Byzantine Art Emerita at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, has joined its leadership team as an academic advisor, while Berj Najarian, New England Patriots Director of Football and Head Coach Administration, has joined as a Trustee.

"We are excited about the expansion of our Trustees and our group of esteemed Academic Advisors," said Michele Kolligian, President of the Armenian Museum's Board of Trustees. "While museums have been temporarily closed during the pandemic, we hope the community has taken notice of the expansion of our online programs, and we are excited about our eventual re-opening later this year."

Najarian was born in Brooklyn, NY and grew up in Manhasset, NY. He is in his 27th season in the National Football League (NFL) and 22nd season with the New England

Patriots, serving as the point person for the day-to-day operations of the team. Berj acts as a liaison across football departments such as team travel, equipment, training, and player engagement as well as non-football departments such as marketing, media relations, and Gillette Stadium operations. Berj manages several elements of head coach Bill Belichick's off-field agenda including football operations, player and staff communication, and scheduling. Berj has been part of all six Patriots Super Bowl championship teams.



Berj Najarian

Entering the NFL in 1995, Najarian was a public relations assistant with the New York Jets for five seasons following an internship with the New York Knicks. He attended Boston University, and he is a board member and officer of the Bill Belichick Foundation.

While he tends to work behind-the-scenes with the Patriots, he has taken several opportunities to publicize issues related to his ancestral homeland including providing an Armenian flag pin to Coach Belichick to wear at the White House after winning the Superbowl. Most recently he joined the NFL's "My Cause, My Cleats" campaign by wearing a custom designed pair of cleats to raise awareness about the war in Artsakh. The cleats were highlighted by the top players on Instagram, and they set an NFL auction record in support of Armenia Fund's humanitarian programs. The winning bid went to the Museum's President, Michele Kolligian, and Bob Khederian, Vice President, who announced

see MUSEUM, page 14

A CONVERSATION WITH...

Ghasem Ebrahimi

*'To Work in Armenia Was a Dream That Came True'*By Artsvi Bakhchinyan
Special to the Mirror-Spectator

YEREVAN/NEW YORK CITY — Cinematographer and director Ghasem Ebrahimi was born in 1953 in Iran. He studied film at the University of New York. In 1977 he made his first (short) film, "Willie," which won best drama award in 1981 and was shown in many festivals and American and European TV channels. In 1982 he founded the production company "Ebra Films" with Coleen Higgins; together they directed more than 25 short documentary films.

Ebrahimi also directed "The Suitors" (1988), "The South Bank Show" (TV series documentary, co-director, 2002), "Logic of the Birds" (co-director, 2002), "The Sacred and the Absurd" (2005) and "Roads to Mecca" (2010), often based on his own scripts.

I met Ghasem Ebrahimi in Yerevan, where he spent several months in the first half of 2020 working as a director of photography on a feature film project with a working title "Amerikatsi" (American) by Michael Goorjian, produced by the People of Ar film studio of Armenia (producer – Arman Nshanian). It was a great pleasure to work and socialize with that very positive, cheerful person, sharing common interests in cinema, Iran and Armenia.

Ghasem jan, your activities in film is quite versatile. What do you consider yourself?

I consider myself a filmmaker and a director of photography, although I have worked as writer and director on my own personal projects.

What are the main subjects you were interested in?

Looking back at my own work I think my main subjects are about displacement that involves some sort of journey.

In film production the DOP is considered the second person after the director. I think, actually the most part of the visual success of a movie depends on camera work. How do you characterize the DOP's role in the creation of a film?

The DOP's role begins early on, once the script is presented. It takes many months before the camera is rolling. The collaboration between the director and cinematographer is quite essential. It is through this cooperation that the look and mise-en-scene of the film is established. There is a constant dialogue and attention to the translation of a scene into cinematic art form. The major focus then goes towards HOW it is done and WHY it is done. The major and basic considerations are: camera angle, composition, continuity, close-ups and editing.

Although you received your film education in the US, does Iranian cinema have some influence on you?

There are many influences that I have had, Iranian cinema and literature included. Cinema has no borders. I always remember my father telling me: "If you want to know a country, watch the movies they make." I have



been fortunate to have been exposed to world cinema and it has given me so much inspiration to this day.

I was surprised to find out that you have some Armenian heritage. Iranian Armenians usually never mixed with local people; your family history seems to be unusual.

Maybe unusual in recent times and after the Iranian revolution, but Armenian and Iranian heritage goes back to many centuries, and intermarriages were not uncommon.

My father had a well-known restaurant. I lost my father to a car accident more than thirty years ago.

My Armenian grandfather was a wine maker in the city of Neyshabur. Unfortunately, my father lost his dad during a horseback riding accident when my father was only 2. My grandmother, who was Iranian, then took my father to another city and raised him in another household. So my father never really got to know his father; nor did I. My father was a film enthusiast and always encouraged me to watch movies. When I was a teenager in high school he bought me a super 8 mm camera. After high school he sent me to America to study cinema. By 1980 I graduated from film school.

Because of this weird world situation, last year you spent almost half year in Yerevan, including the forced lockdown in condition of state of emergency. How you would characterize this period of your life?

Although the pandemic slowed down our production, we were so lucky to continue and finish the film. Perseverance paid off at the end. I consider it the silver-lining that allowed for more days of filming. We were super lucky as no one on the cast and crew had a health issue.

Did you get a special feeling to be in your ancestor's country?

When I am asked that question over the years, I am reminded of a poem by Iranian poet Nima Youshij. The poem starts with: "The world is my home." Of course, to work in Armenia was a dream that came true.

How did you connect to Michael Goorjian's project?

Sol Tryon, our producer whom I have worked with over the past 20 years, introduced me to Michael.

What kind of advantages and disadvantages are

there to shooting in Armenia?

Over the years I have had the privilege to work in many countries: France, Italy, UK, Indonesia, Iran, Morocco, Peru, Japan, and the US. What is so moving to me that when you work with film professionals in these countries, there is a universal language of cinema that emerges from



Rodin Hamidi (first assistant camera/camera operator), Hovik Keuchkerian (actor), Ghasem Ebrahimi at the film set of "Amerikatsi." June, 2020. Ashtarak

these collaborations. I may not know the local language, but the language of cinema drives us to be able to work with one another. In Armenia I had a wonderful relationship with all cast and crew: the gaffer, grip, sound, costume and art department. The language of cinema was there to guide us!

Now you have many friends in Armenia, who always will wait for your return.

It would be a great privilege and an honor to come back to Armenia. Leaving Armenia and soon after hearing that the senseless war had broken out was truly heartbreaking. I do hope that peace will prevail for Armenia. It would be an amazing gift for me to come back to Armenia for the premier of the film and catch up with all my Armenian friends and colleagues. I truly miss Armenia.

Helen Evans and Berj Najarian Join Leadership of Armenian Museum of America

MUSEUM, from page 13

they were donating the Artsakh cleats to the Museum. The cleats will be presented to the Museum for display in the upcoming months.



Dr. Helen Evans

Evans curated the MET's renowned "Armenia!" exhibition in 2018. She co-curated "Treasures in Heaven: Armenian Illuminated Manuscripts" at the Morgan Library and Museum in 1994 and included Armenian works in her award-winning exhibitions at

The MET on "The Glory of Byzantium" in 1997 and "Byzantium: Faith and Power" in 2004. Her installation of The MET's Mary and Michael Jaharis Galleries of Byzantine Art displays Armenian works as exemplars of an important East Christian culture on the Empire's border. The AGBU recently announced a Helen C. Evans Scholarship in her honor, which will fund students studying Armenian art, art history, and the early church.

Evans has lectured and published widely and taught Armenian art and culture as the Nikit and Elenora Ordjanian Visiting Professor of Armenian Studies at Columbia University. Armenia's president recognized her efforts with the Republic of Armenia's

Order of Friendship. His Holiness Karekin II, Catholicos of All Armenians, presented her with the Order of Saint Sahak and Saint Mesrop, and the Eastern Diocese of the Armenian Church of America recognized her with its Friend of the Armenians Award, while the Prelacy of the Great House of Cilicia presented her with the Mesrop Mastots, Queen Zabel, and Spirit of Armenia awards.

Evans was elected a Fellow of the Medieval Academy of America in 2020. She is chairwoman of the board of the Mary Jaharis Center for Byzantine Art and Culture and former president of the International Center for Medieval Art and the Association of Art Museum Curators. She received her BA with Honors from Newcomb Col-

lege of Tulane University and her MA and PhD from New York University's Institute of Fine Arts. Her dissertation was on Manuscript Illuminations at the Armenian Patriarchate in Hromkla and the West.

"The addition of Dr. Evans and Berj to our leadership group could not have come at a more important time for the Armenian Museum," concluded Kolligian. "We are witnessing ethnic cleaning in Artsakh today, so this is a time to reinvest and expand efforts to preserve and promote our heritage. We are confident that the growth of the museum's leadership will introduce new ideas for revitalizing programs and exhibitions for our members and the community at-large."



Book on Yerevan State University Notable Scholars and Prominent Figures Published

By Fr. Untzag Nalbanian

TRUMBULL, Conn. — During the summer of 2018 when I visited Yerevan State University (YSU) with my daughter Dr. Ani, in the lobby we saw the busts of famous university professors, scholars and authors such as Hrachia Ajarian, Manoug Apeghian and Catholicos Karekin Hovsepian. Right there, I thought about the importance of a book which will give the brief biography of these great individuals so those who are born in the diaspora like my daughter — and why not even non-Armenians — can learn about those great people who have cultivated the minds of generations and prepared experts in different fields.

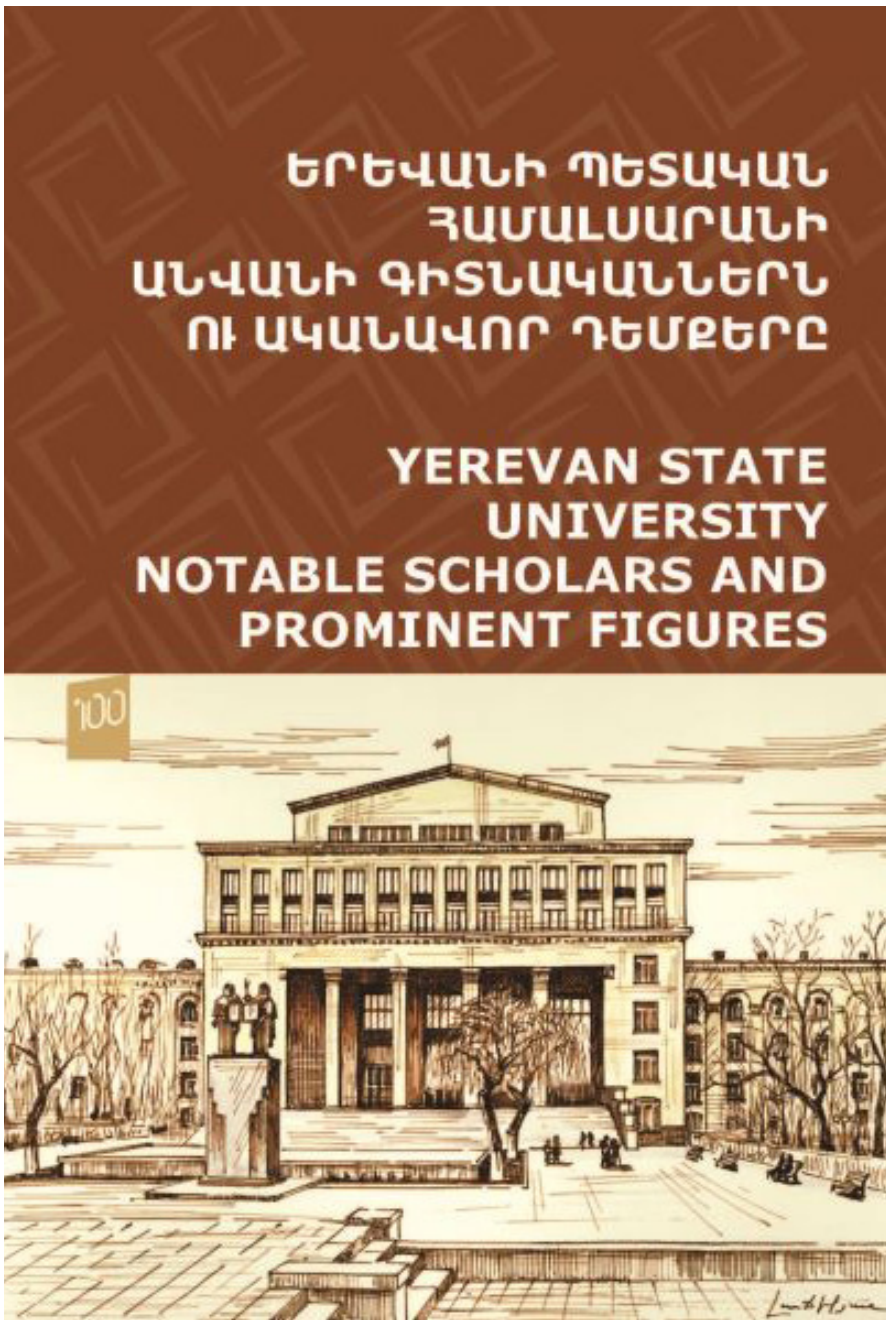
Upon my return I first presented this idea to my Parish Council at Holy Ascension in Trumbull, CT, which unanimously supported and approved to sponsor the publication of such a book. I then spoke with the Fund for Armenia Relief (FAR)’s project manager, Arto Vorperian, after which the project started to roll. I also contacted Fr. Mardiros Hakobyan, the pastor of St. Kevork Armenian Church in Houston, TX, and asked him if he would want to co-sponsor the publication of this book with his community. His answer was, “With great pleasure and love, we also will sponsor and take part.”

The rest is history.

During these past few months, we worked closely with Vorperian, Edik Karapetyan, FAR’s Yerevan office representative and the Yerevan State University administration and decided the details of this book. I must say, we were satisfied with all and the result was the publication of this book, *Yerevan State University Notable Scholars and Prominent Figures*.

Yerevan State University is near and dear to my heart because after my graduation from Kevorkian Seminary, with the permission of the late Catholicos Vazken I, from 1974-1975 I attended Yerevan State University and took courses in Krapar (Classical Armenian) and French languages. I especially would like to mention Prof. Bavel Sharapkhonian whose student I was in Krapar class and which I enjoyed so much.

This book is the gift of our two church communities on the occasion of the 100th anniversary of YSU. Together with Fr. Mardiros, we decided to dedicate this book to one of the pioneer teachers of the newly established university, Archbishop Hovsepian, who later also became the Primate of our Eastern Diocese from 1938-43,



prior to his election as catholicos to the Cilician See in Antelias.

We are thankful that this honor was given to our two communities and we are thankful to all who worked on this book, especially the authors and those who did the translation from Armenian to English. We also thank all the donors and we say long live Yerevan State University, wishing it greater success in its second centennial. We do not want to forget also to thank the crew of Shoghakat TV of the Mother See of Holy Echmiadzin for finding time to interview those who worked on this book and broadcasted a special program for all to learn about this publication.

Molly Grace Zeytoonian is Making New Music With Plenty of Heart and Soul

MOLLY, from page 13

The artists that inspired Molly were just barely older than her, and as she says “a lot of them aren’t huge, but they have devoted fan bases.” Artists like Sammy Rae & The Friends, and the bands Lake Street Dive and Lawrence may be unknown to many readers. However, what these artists have in common is that they are very young, seem unconcerned with the traditional music industry and huge commercial success, are influenced by every American roots genre you can imagine, from jazz to country, play their own instruments, write their own songs, and are fronted by mostly female singers who pattern their style after the vocalizations of Soul music.

Molly Grace knew she wanted to be a part of this scene as soon as she heard the music. The positive yet soulful vibe carries more meaning than most trivial pop music on the radio. The jazzy influences are something that attracts people who are true musicians, and not just those who are “trying to make it big.” So as soon as Molly graduated high school (i.e., last year) she headed for the musical Mecca of the coun-

try — Nashville — where she enrolled in Belmont University as a commercial voice major. What is a commercial voice major? It’s a music major focusing on singing in all styles but classical. Aspiring jazz, soul, country, rock, and pop musicians can learn how to hone their vocal talents without having to vocalize like an opera singer.

Molly Grace’s dream is to become a musician and make a living doing it. She writes all her own material and performs it, inspired by elements of soul, jazz, funk, and pop. Some people call it Neo-Soul or Retro-Soul, but perhaps it’s best to look to jazz legend Duke Ellington’s definition: “there are two kinds of music, good music, and the other kind.” When she got to Belmont, Molly wrote a song called *Sunday Dinner*. It was an epiphany. “I said, ‘this is me’.” She felt she was finding her voice after the writer’s block of her high school years.

How does she go about writing? “It kind of depends,” she says. “Some say good songwriters write every single day. But I write when inspiration strikes. The chord progression usually comes first. Usually I

write about my life.”

Her environment is helpful too: “Belmont University is largely a music school. Some of my best friends are songwriters, so we get to workshop each other’s songs.”

Her first single, now available on all streaming services, is entitled *Here I Am*. “It’s a very empowering song, a fun song. It’s a breakup song but it’s not negative.” Molly’s affirmation that women can be tough as nails and still emotional is sure to resonate with many young female listeners. And even better, she spins it as someone not to worry about, rather than bemoaning unfortunate circumstances. Her positivity is sure to help young people get over issues that they face and in the words of her song, be “on to the next endeavor.”

As for the future, Molly is planning on releasing more music this year, probably another single and then an EP. She also envisions a future for herself in music promotion if she needs a more business-oriented side to her career in order to pay the bills. “I love Nashville, and I enjoy doing the marketing and promo for my own music.”

Just what keeps her going in such a tough business? “People reached out to me and they said ‘your song makes me feel energized.’ Stuff like that makes me happy. There’s a meaning that connects with people....I describe my music as very conversational. And I love that connection...these are songs about my life so it’s like, sharing my experience and having it connect with someone I don’t know.” And as to why she ultimately chose this career: “Writing songs is so helpful with understanding my own feelings. It’s my language. I couldn’t imagine going a week without singing, even if I had a sore throat. I feel the most true and best version of myself when I’m on stage. I feel just true to myself when I’m singing and performing. It’s the best feeling in the world.”

Molly Grace is a young lady who simply radiates with positivity. If she succeeds in her aspirations, it will most certainly be due not only to her jazzy compositions and beautiful voice, but also to her rare ability to transmit to her audiences that “best feeling in the world” which is at the heart of all great music.

Recipe Corner



by Christine Vartanian



Vegan Tahini Cake

“Here I am finally, after a long time, with a fasting vegan tahini cake with walnuts, raisins and chocolate. I haven’t had the time to share a blog post since last November,” says Evi. “I don’t really know how the time passed. It’s not that I didn’t make new recipes, though. Those of you who follow me on social networks see the recipes and articles I am preparing for AB Vassilopoulos, on the site #allazoumesinithies (site in Greek).”

“Having worked at an airline for about two decades, I have tried food from almost all corners of the globe. I like to “mix up” recipes from various cuisines, but my favorite are the Mediterranean, and especially Greek cuisine. I like spices, ginger, lime, coconut, nuts, yogurt, legumes and other materials that you will discover by reading my posts.”

“This cake is a kind of quarantine cake. And that’s because these days when you are out of e.g., whole meal flour, you can use whatever you have on hand, since we limit our visits to the grocery store as much as possible due to Covid-19. That’s what I do. So today’s cake did not come out very healthy, but the next time I make it I will use whole meal flour and honey. And it’s ideal for those fasting during the Holy Week.”

“It is very convenient because you use the same measuring device for all materials. And so it should be, the same cup for everything. Depending on how big your cup is, the bigger the cake will be. Also, you can add any kind of raisins or not use icing at all. It is generally easy to customize this recipe depending on the materials you have on hand,” adds Evi.

INGREDIENTS:

3/4 cup tahini
1 cup sugar
2 cups orange juice, lukewarm
1/2 cup golden raisins
1/2 cup Corinthian black raisins
1 cup coarsely ground walnuts
1 cup chopped (or grated) chocolate or truffle or chocolate chips
2 cups all-purpose flour
2 cups durum-wheat flour
Zest of 1 orange
3 teaspoons baking powder
1 teaspoon baking soda
1 cup dark chocolate
1 teaspoon coconut oil

PREPARATION:

Mix the two flours with the baking powder and baking soda in a bowl. Put the raisins in a bowl and sprinkle with a little flour to cover the all. Do the same with the walnuts.

In a mixer bowl, beat the tahini and sugar, slowly adding the orange juice and the zest. Stop the mixer and gradually add the flour mixture and mix well. Add the walnuts, raisins, and chopped chocolate or truffle.

Pour the mixture into an oiled and floured cake pan, and bake in a preheated oven at 350 F for about 45 minutes.

Let cake cool completely on a rack, and after 10-15 minutes, remove the pan carefully.

Melt the chocolate in a bain-marie (double-boiler) together with the coconut oil. Pour over the cake and let icing cool before serving.

Resurrecting Kahlil Gibran’s *The Prophet*

GIBRAN, from page 13

your truth,” before he sails back to his homeland after twelve years of exile. With “a bent head” and “tears falling upon his breast,” the “Prophet of God” speaks: “Forget not that I shall come back to you . . . the spirit of the earth shall not sleep peacefully upon the wind till the needs of the least of you are satisfied.” The “wanderer” beseeches his “brothers” to wait patiently for their reward in some other transcendent realm. (Is going to another place the point of life?) The notion of a “reward” affirms their pain: “Not without a wound in the spirit shall I leave this city.”

“I grieve, therefore I am,” comes closest to expressing the “truth” about the lives of the people of Orphalese. Pain is indeed the essence of their existence: “Even as the stone of the fruit must break, that its heart may stand in the sun, so must you know pain. . . the bitter potion by which the physician within you heals your sick self.” The prophet’s desire to give his fellow men relief from their tears is key to understanding Gibran’s vision. Desire implies lack. It implies the lack of something essential for the well-being of the soul of man. And even if it is true that the rage and the anger of Gibran’s earlier work against unjust laws and corrupt customs have been mitigated in *The Prophet*, the need for something that transcends their primitive bodily existences and contaminated lives remains. “The prophet wants to wake up the universal . . . he wants to revive the divine light in the human soul,” writes Vahe-Vahian. I find the Armenian poet’s focus on the need to lift humanity from the surrounding putridity to loftier heights extremely appealing.

Vahe-Vahian undertook the translation because of his disappointment with existing renderings of the celebrated classic. There was indeed no adequate Armenian translation of a book that, despite changing audiences, had been ever-present since its publication in English in the United States in 1923, with translations into over twenty languages. Vahe-Vahian started translating in 1958, when Gibran was at the peak of his popularity. He gave his task the serious attention it deserved, and it was not until 1984 that he felt “ready” to commit his manuscript to publication.

Working on the project was a continuing joy to the translator. In the course of those 25 years, “my desire to translate grew with every new reading of the book,” he writes. And while its realization was postponed, the project was never forgotten: “I waited long without severing my mental connection with Gibran and his ‘odd little book.’” The poet was in fact “preparing myself” by studying the celebrated Golden Age translation of the Bible into Armenian, to further familiarize himself with the language that “the magical appeal, the warmth and the intimacy” of Gibran’s words recalled for him. *The Prophet* underwent three altogether new translations, and endless revisions, before it saw the light in 1984.

Vahe-Vahian’s translation is elegant and fresh. The sounds and the rhythms of the prose poems in translation are appropriate to Armenian prosody, at no point giving a hint that this is a text originally written in another language. The easy flow of the words in our *kaghtsrakhos* Armenian is never at the expense of liberties taken with the original either. *Markaren* is a faithful rendering of Gibran’s meaning, true to the spirit, the content and the style of the original. I shall venture to add that Vahe-Vahian’s rendition often surpasses the original in its musicality. Reading *The Prophet* in Armenian was a uniquely rewarding experience.

The 30-page Introduction itself is a valuable addition to the volume. It highlights the Armenian poet’s critical skills and also his mastery of Western Armenian prose. Besides giving a compelling overview of Gibran’s tragic life both in his native Lebanon and in exile, the Introduction outlines the key elements of his poetry.



Kahlil Gibran

Vahe-Vahian’s commentary on the immediate popularity of the book when it was published in 1923 is particularly illuminating. The translator attributes the wide reception of the “slim volume,” that would eventually be hailed as Gibran’s masterpiece, to the mood of disappointment, of hopelessness, and of bitterness in the aftermath of World War I. The book did, in fact, provide spiritual and personal counsel. People found consolation in its statements of timeless truths, which were also relevant to their daily lives. “A book that had become the healer of grieving souls, gained even more popularity in the fifties because of the even greater disquietude caused by World War II,” writes Vahe-Vahian.

Gracing the cover of the 1984 translation is renowned artist Paul Guiragossian’s painting of a voyager standing between the sails of his ship. The deep red and the dark brown colors of the rather indistinct figure evoke a sunset against a darkening sky and capture the mystery and the spirituality of the prophet of the title. Indeed, the elegant cover heralds the beauty within and belies the old adage, “Don’t judge a book by its cover.”



Lost Religious Relics from Dikranagerd and Akhtamar Find New Home at Ararat-Eskijian Museum

MISSION HILLS, Calif. — Ararat-Eskijian Museum has acquired five unique items from the 18th and 19th centuries, which were used in Armenian churches in the cities of Van and Diyarbakir, Turkey.

The flabellum (kshots, in Armenian), or ceremonial fan, dates from the late 1700s, and originates from the Cathedral of Holy Cross on the island of Akhtamar in Lake Van. The four oil lamps (*gantegh*, in Armenian) date from the late 1800s, and originate from St. Giragos and St. Sarkis Cathedrals in Dikranagerd (Diyarbakir).

The Armenian inscriptions on the objects explain that they were originally gifted to the corresponding churches by patrons and parishioners on different occasions.

During the atrocities of the Armenian Genocide in the early 20th century, as religious and cultural sites were pillaged and looted, these relics, along with countless other treasures and heirlooms of Armenian heritage, were stolen and seemingly lost forever to the Armenians.

However, about 35 years ago, these four oil lamps “resurfaced” when they traveled from Trabzon to Istanbul into the hands of an antique dealer. Recognizing the Armenian script engraved on the objects, the dealer realized their significance and brought them to the attention of an Armenian family that collects such relics. The flabellum was “found” in similar fashion 20 years ago.

Considering the important and active role the three cathedrals, from where these relics originate, played in the spiritual, religious

and cultural lives of the Armenians of the region, Ararat-Eskijian Museum Director Maggie Mangassarian-Goschin says the Museum is proud of this acquisition and

deface and erase the Armenian inscriptions and, thus, their provenance. They are silent witnesses of a lost time but have now found a new, eternal home here.”

Memorial Chapel.

Following COVID-19 restrictions, Ararat-Eskijian Museum welcomes visitors on Saturdays and Sundays, from 1 to 5 p.m.,



Oil lamps (St. Giragos & St. Sarkis - Dikranagerd), flabellum (Holy Cross - Akhtamar)

grateful to the generous donation from the Abrahamian Trust that made it possible. “These objects had an interesting journey through history undergoing attempts to melt,

The items are currently displayed in Ararat-Eskijian Museum, but they will soon be moved to their permanent and more appropriate location in Ararat Home’s Sheen

or on weekdays by appointment, which can be made by calling the museum. The museum is located on the Ararat Home campus at 15105 Mission Hills Road, in Mission Hills.

Author James Robins to Discuss Book on Australia, New Zealand and Armenian Genocide

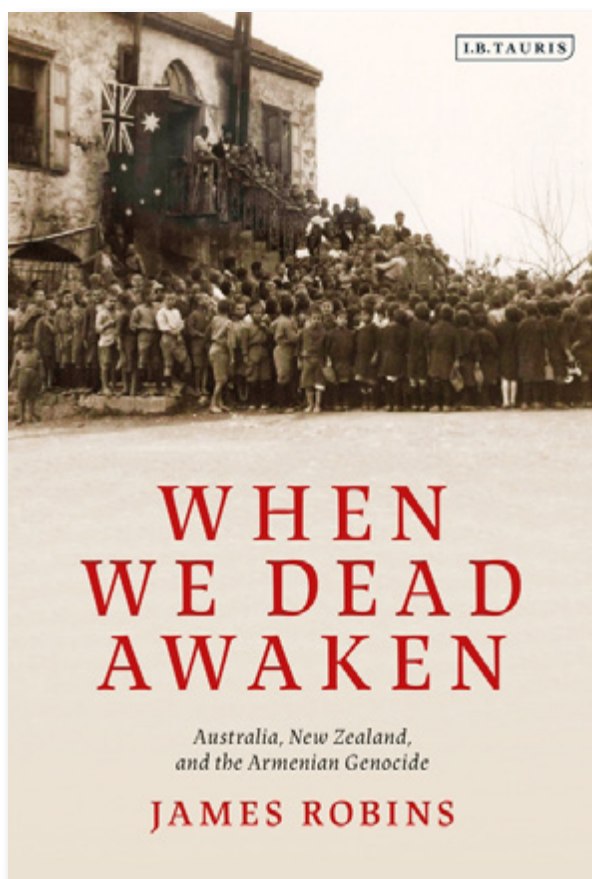
BELMONT, Mass. — The National Association for Armenian Studies and Research (NAASR) and the Society for Armenian Studies (SAS) will present a webinar

War, the famous Anzacs landed ashore at Gallipoli. At the exact same moment, leading figures of Armenian life in the Ottoman Empire were being arrested in vast numbers. That dark day marks the simultaneous birth of a national story — and the beginning of a genocide.

When We Dead Awaken draws these two landmark historical events together. Robins explores the accounts of Anzac Prisoners of War who witnessed the genocide, the experiences of soldiers who risked their lives to defend refugees, and Australia and New Zealand’s participation in the enormous post-war Armenian relief movement. By exploring the vital political implications of this unexplored history, *When We Dead Awaken* questions the national folklore of Australia, New Zealand, and Turkey — and the mythology of Anzac Day itself.

Robins is an award-winning journalist and historian. His work has appeared in the *Guardian*, *Times Literary Supplement*, the *Spectator*, *Current Affairs* and the *New Statesman*. He is the former managing editor of TheBigQ.org, and the creator of “The Great Crime: A Podcast History of the Armenian Genocide.” He lives in London.

For more information contact NAASR at hq@naasr.org.



with author James Robins who will discuss his recent book, *When We Dead Awaken: Australia, New Zealand, and the Armenian Genocide*, on Tuesday, April 13, at 7 p.m. (Eastern). The program will be accessible live on Zoom (registration required) and on NAASR’s YouTube Channel.

On April 25, 1915, during the First World

CALENDAR

ON-LINE EVENTS & PROGRAMS

MASSACHUSETTS

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

APRIL 11 — Virtual Concert Featuring Nairyan Vocal Ensemble. Sunday, 2 p.m., EST. Join the Armenian Museum for the fourth of our bimonthly Online Concert Series featuring the Nairyan Vocal Ensemble, which consists of five young women with professional music training and was created in 2015 to popularize Armenian composers, spread classical and spiritual music, and to help empower women. This concert series is supported by a generous grant from the Dadourian Foundation and it is curated for the Armenian Museum by Maestro Konstantin Petrossian, artistic director, composer, and conductor. It is free, open to the public, pre-registration is not required, and the video will be made available the day of the concert on the museum’s website, YouTube Channel, and social media pages.

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

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Editorial

Armenia Trapped in Web of Russo-Turkish Politics



By Edmond Y. Azadian

Throughout the Cold War, Turkey was considered a bulwark against Soviet expansionism, but with the end of that standoff, Moscow and Ankara have become competitors in many regions of the world and they have brought their competition to its conclusion in compromises that affect the vital interests of the indigenous people in a particular region.

Thus, Russo-Turkish deals were made in Syria, Libya and most recently, in the Caucasus. The latter compromise was made at the expense of the Armenians.

After the fall of the Soviet Empire, Russia played the role of guarantor of Armenia and it established its regional military base there. But when the chips were down, the Armenians discovered that there were nuances in the guarantee which made a difference of life and death on the receiving end.

During the 44-day war between Armenia and the combined forces of Azerbaijan, Turkey, Pakistan and freelance jihadists, the Russian-supplied SU-30 combat planes remained parked with their missiles missing and the awesome Iskandar missiles did not fire because the keys were kept in Moscow.

And, after all those calamities, Armenia had to thank President Vladimir Putin for brokering a ceasefire and “sparing” Armenians from further losses. The Russian President could have used his influence if he really meant to defend a strategic ally. The Russian behavior boils down to the fact that it created the problem in order to be in a position to resolve it.

Right now, there are more than 100 Armenian POWs in Azerbaijan, contravening the terms of the November 9 agreement. It is within the power of the Kremlin to ask President Ilham Aliyev of Azerbaijan to release them, and not to use them as bargaining chips to extract further concessions from the beleaguered Armenia.

Thus far, all calls from Armenia and the international community to free the prisoners have fallen on deaf ears. Besides the issue of the prisoners, most of the nine points of the declaration remain frozen because of Azerbaijani intransigence.

A recent announcement by the former Azerbaijani Foreign Minister Tofiq Zulfugarov, sheds light on this stalemate.

He stated recently: “Azerbaijan has chosen the international format which helps the reintegration of those regions into its territory. That format excludes any status for Karabakh. The Russo-Turkish tandem that we depend on for the issue of reintegration is perfectly acceptable for us. The efforts to revive the issue of Karabakh’s status by the OSCE [Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe] Minsk group and the EU [European Union] will go nowhere.”

Armenians had been wondering why the OSCE had not taken over the process yet. Now we get the answer from Mr. Zulfugarov’s statement, where the collusion between Moscow and Ankara is clear.

The two co-chairs of the OSCE Minsk Group, the US and France, have criticized the terms of the November 9 declaration. They claim that the use of force has not resolved the Karabakh conflict. As a matter of fact, the use of force has violated one of the fundamental principles on which the Minsk Group operates. Moscow claims that the issue of Karabakh’s status has not yet been determined and that it will be decided at a later date.

President Aliyev, for his part, claims that he has solved the Karabakh conflict through the use of force and that there is no issue regarding the enclave’s status.

The Armenian side has pinned its hopes on the OSCE process, where Azerbaijan may be held accountable for initiating the war. Blame has to be shared also with Turkey for its participation in the war and for introducing the Jihadists onto the battlefield. Washington and Paris have already raised their ob-

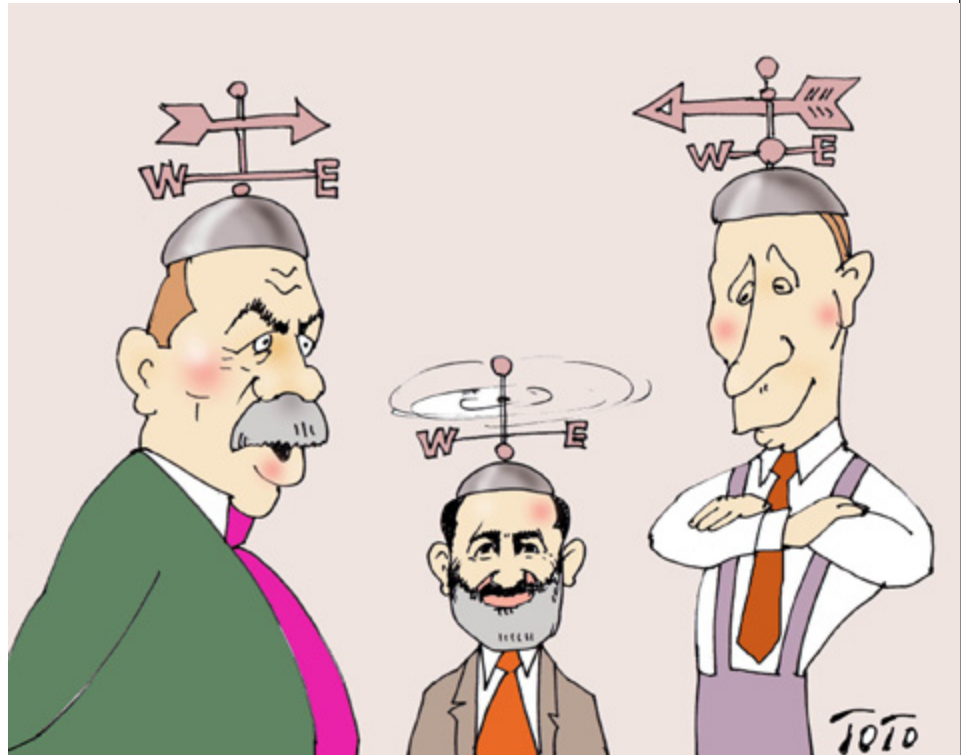
jections to the move.

Azerbaijan’s intransigence is supported by Turkey and encouraged by Russia.

Turkey was armed and financed by the West to become independent and defy all major powers. During the most recent NATO meeting, the US Secretary of State Anthony Blinken stated, “It is no secret that we have differences with Turkey. It’s also no secret that Turkey is a longstanding and valued ally and one that I believe we have strong interest in keeping anchored to NATO.”

Although this statement was made to win over Ankara, after the recent escalation of tensions between the two countries, Turkey’s Foreign Minister Mevlut Cavusoglu, who was attending the same NATO meeting, did not shy away from responding bluntly to criticism of Turkey acquiring Russian-made S-400 missiles. “On the S-400, we are reminded once again why Turkey had to buy them” and then repeated that Turkey had bought them and this is a “done deal.”

President Recep Tayyip Erdogan himself was very indignant in chiding another NATO ally, France, when its president, Em-



manuel Macron, criticized Turkey for exploring hydrocarbons in Greek territorial waters.

In fact, Erdogan told Macron to go and check his head.

Turkey has been conducting a two-pronged policy vis-à-vis Russia. On the one hand, it operates under the pretense of containing Russia’s influence at the behest of NATO, which is in compliance with US policy towards Russia (particularly after Biden called Putin a killer), while pursuing its own ethnic agenda of working towards building a Turkic empire on Russia’s periphery.

Currently, Washington is at odds with Ankara not only on the S-400 missile issue, but also on some human rights issues which have become the centerpiece of President Biden’s foreign policy; one is the harassment and push to ban the third largest political party, the pro-Kurdish HDP and the other is the withdrawal of Ankara from the Istanbul Convention regarding the protection of women from violence, which will return Turkish society to the Middle Ages.

It will take a lot of time and political maneuvering between the two capitals to overcome these differences. This situation offers an opportune time for President Biden to recognize the Armenian Genocide. In 2019, when Turkey attacked and massacred the US’s Kurdish allies in Syria, the two US legislative houses moved overwhelmingly to pass a bill recognizing the Armenian Genocide.

Turkey is equally defiant against its friendly foe, Russia. The latter’s footprints are on Azerbaijani territory, thanks to the good graces of Ankara.

Russian peacekeeping forces were introduced into Azerbaijan, on condition of Turkey sharing the same strategic space, bringing its guns closer to Armenia’s borders.

continued on next page



COMMENTARY

MY TURN



by Harut Sassounian

Azerbaijan, a So-Called Ally of Israel, Friend of Jews, Betrays Israel at the UN

For three decades, the government of Israel and Jewish-American leaders have been showering Azerbaijan with excessive and undeserved praise for its alleged tolerance for its Jewish community and friendship with Israel. There have been several visits by Israeli leaders and prominent Jewish-Americans to Baku, glorifying the government of Azerbaijan and flaunting the special affinity between them.

This is hypocrisy of the highest form. The truth is that relations between Azerbaijan and Israel have nothing to do with the treatment of Jews in Baku. The two countries are basically engaged in mutual exploitation, ignoring all humanitarian and ethical concerns. Azerbaijan has purchased billions of dollars of advanced lethal weapons from Israel in exchange for the sale of Azeri oil to Israel, which imports 40 percent of its oil from Azerbaijan. It is disgraceful that descendants of the Holocaust are arming Azerbaijan to kill survivors of the Armenian Genocide for a fistful of dollars.

Israel has two other reasons for maintaining good relations with Azerbaijan. The first is Israel's interest in gathering intelligence on Iran and having access to Azerbaijan's airfields in case of an Israeli attack on Iran's nuclear stockpile. This is probably what Azerbaijan's President Ilham Aliyev meant when he compared his country's relations with Israel to an iceberg: "Nine-tenths of it is below the surface." Israel's second reason is to cultivate good relations with a Muslim country, given the Arab-Israeli conflict and its isolation from the Muslim world. However, in light of the recent rapprochement between Israel and several Arab nations, the value of Azerbaijan to Israel in this regard is diminishing.

On the other hand, Azerbaijan expects to maximize its political interests in the United States by benefiting from the influence of Israel and Jewish-Americans in Washington, to counter the Armenian-American lobby.

Nevertheless, Azerbaijan and Israel are concealing some of the irritants in their relationship. First of all, Israel has opened its Embassy in Baku in 1993, whereas Azerbaijan has refused to open its Embassy or even a Consulate in Israel, out of concern for its relations with Arab and Muslim nations, particularly Iran. This fact alone belies the supposed friendly relations between the two countries.

Another contradiction is Azerbaijan's anti-Israel votes and speeches at the United Nations and the Organization of Islamic Cooperation. Azerbaijan's most recent critical action of Israel occurred at the United Nations Human Rights Council meeting in Geneva, Switzerland on March 18, 2021.

The Simon Wiesenthal Center, a frequent apologist for Azerbaijan, quickly condemned the Azeri Representative's remarks at the UN by harshly accusing Azerbaijan of committing "a virtual 'blood-libel' against the Jewish state."

Speaking on item 7 of the Council's agenda, "human rights situation in Palestine and other occupied Arab territories," Kamran Seyfullayev, Third Secretary at the Permanent Mission of Azerbaijan to the UN in Geneva, gave a three-minute speech on March 18, in which he severely criticized the treatment of Palestinians by the State of Israel. Here is what he said:

"I have the honor to deliver this statement on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) [Azerbaijan's President Ilham Aliyev is the Chairman of the movement which is composed of 120 countries].

"For many years, the Non-Aligned Movement has maintained a firm position of solidarity with the Palestinian people and their just cause, and the condemnation of massive, flagrant and systematic violations of human rights and of international humanitarian law committed by Israel.

"The NAM also underscores the need to continue providing political, economic and humanitarian support to assist the Palestinian people and to bolster

their resilience and efforts aimed at achieving their legitimate national aspirations, including their inalienable right to self-determination and freedom in their independent State of Palestine.

"We recognize and commend the efforts of the United Nations and its agencies and particularly the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine refugees in the Near East and the Committee of Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian people. The Movement encourages continuation of their support. The NAM takes note with appreciation of the report of the Secretary General presented to the 43rd Session of the Human Rights Council on the Israeli settlements in the occupied Syrian Golan.

"The NAM expresses its grave concern at the continuing Israeli settlement policy and related activities, including the expansion of settlements, the expropriation of land, the demolition of houses, and the confiscation and destruction of property, which has changed the physical character and demographic composition of the occupied territories and the occupied Syrian Golan.

"The General Assembly, the Security Council and the Human Rights Council have all confirmed that the construction and expansion of Israeli settlements and other related activities in the occupied Palestinian Territory and the occupied Syrian Golan are illegal under international law. The NAM is also deeply concerned over numerous UN official reports, particularly by the recent report of the Secretary General, which have reaffirmed the continued human rights violations of the Palestinian people by Israeli force, throughout the occupied State of Palestine.

"In this regard, the NAM urges the international community to exert its pressure in order to cease immediately the continuation of this illegal trend by Israel which is a blatant violation of international law.

"Furthermore, the NAM strongly believes that Israel, as the occupying power, has to be held accountable for its continued grave and systematic violations of both international human rights law and international humanitarian law in all occupied Arab territories, including Syrian Golan.

"The NAM emphasizes that Israel, as the occupying power, should immediately release all Palestinian prisoners, particularly children and women. It should also cease serious violations of international law and fully lift the blockade of Gaza to remedy the ongoing punitive measures against the civilian population and release Palestinian children in detention in accordance with international standards, in particular the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

"In conclusion, the NAM extends its full support to the Government of the State of Palestine in its ongoing efforts to put an end to the occupation of the land of the State of Palestine and realize the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people."

It is ironic that the Simon Wiesenthal Center officials, after years of kowtowing to Azerbaijan, repeatedly visiting that country, and praising it as a close friend of Israel, are now complaining about Baku's harsh criticism of Israel. I hope Jewish and Israeli leaders realize that they have been fooled by Azerbaijan all these years and learn the valuable lesson that a wolf in sheep's clothing cannot be trusted. They should also realize that, as the saying goes, when you go to bed with dogs, you wake up with fleas. Israeli and Jewish officials do not seem to have learned anything from their experience of being deceived by Turkey. After decades of backing Turkey, even going as far shamefully blocking the congressional recognition of the Armenian Genocide, Israeli and Jewish officials are now accusing Turkey of anti-Semitism and hostility to Israel. Armenians kept warning them for years, to no avail, not to trust Turkey and that they will be stabbed in the back when they least suspect it. In this vulgar game of mutual exploitation, Israelis and Jewish Americans got the short end of the stick. The same thing is happening now in their relations with Azerbaijan. It will only get worse, unless they quickly come to their senses.

Not everything should be measured by oil, weapons and money. There is something much more valuable like humanity, justice and truthfulness than financial gain and self-interest. But in this selfish world, it is too much to expect such decent behavior.

Armenia Trapped in Web of Russo-Turkish Politics

from previous page

Russian peacekeeping forces are tolerated and conditioned by the excuse of defending Karabakh Armenians. Although Armenian presence in Karabakh is a historic and legal right, it also provides an excuse for Russian presence there.

On the flipside, it is also in line with the perennial Russian policy of defending the Christian Armenians against the Turks, a policy which began in 1878 when the Russian forces had reached the Strait of Bosphorus.

While Russia and Turkey have been accommodating each other on Azerbaijani soil, at the expense of Armenians, Ankara is openly challenging Russia on the issue of Crimea.

When Russia took over Crimea, Turkey's former Minister of Foreign Affairs Ahmet Davutoglu stated that "we will defend our Tartar brothers in Crimea," while the Tartars barely constitute 12 percent of the territory's population. The peninsula has been

under Russian rule since 1773, during the reign of Catherine II (the Great). Currently, the Russians constitute the majority of the population, 65 percent. The Western powers have made Crimea a cause celebre as a victim of Russian aggression. If East Timor and South Sudan can hold a referendum to declare independence, which international law forbids, why can't the majority Russians in Crimea vote to join Russia the same way?

Crimea was turned over to Ukraine in 1954, during the celebration of the 300th anniversary of Ukraine becoming part of Russia. Rumor has it that Nikita Khrushchev, after imbibing excessive quantities of vodka, signed Crimea over to his native Ukraine.

This reminds me of my own encounter with Yakov Zarobyan, a patriotic Soviet statesman, during whose rule as the Communist party chairman in Armenia, resulted in many reforms and major projects. At that time, internal borders within the Soviet Union did not matter.

During that encounter in 1962, I asked

Mr. Zarobyan when Karabakh will be returned to Armenia. His answer was "Borders within the Soviet Union don't matter."

Then I asked, "How about joining Karabakh to Armenia and still claiming that borders don't matter in the Soviet Union?"

Then he got very serious and said in a muted voice, "My son, you think we Armenians are nationalists, but I assure you that the Azerbaijanis are more nationalistic."

This statement was made by a Soviet official in the heyday of the Soviet empire, when internationalism was the cornerstone of their credo.

Today, Ukraine has become a bone of contention between the West and Russia, and Turkey has become the West's point person in this confrontation. Indeed, Turkey has recently entered into a military alliance with Ukraine, to help the latter liberate Donbass and Crimea from Russian rule. Ankara, in particular, has supplied Bayraktar drones, which defeated Russian armaments in the recent Karabakh war.

As we can see, Turkey's arrogance has been intimidating Russia on all fronts. Turkey has surrounded Armenia on its border in Kars and from Nakhichevan, where it has concentrated its troops.

Russia is the guarantor of the autonomy of Nakhichevan by the Treaty of Kars, which also allows Moscow to challenge the Turkish takeover of Nakhichevan. Instead of using the provisions of the Treaty of Kars to push away the Turkish army occupying Nakhichevan, Moscow and Ankara have been celebrating the centennial of the Treaty of Kars (March 16, 1921) and renewing their "friendship and brotherhood."

When the 11th Red Army moved into Armenia on December 2, 1920 to snuff out the independence of the First Republic, its last prime minister, Simon Vratzian, wrote: "Armenia is caught between the Russian hammer and the Turkish anvil."

It looks like little has changed in the last 101 years.

Armenia, Pan-Armenian Charity to Fund Housing Construction in Nagorno-Karabakh

YEREVAN (RFE/RL) — Authorities in Yerevan have announced that a total of 110 billion drams (nearly \$210 million) in government and charity money will be spent on housing construction and infrastructure projects in war-torn Nagorno-Karabakh.

The announcement was made during a joint meeting of the Security Councils of Armenia and Nagorno-Karabakh in Yerevan on Friday, March 26.

The meeting was chaired by Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan and Nagorno-Karabakh's Arayik Harutyunyan.

According to the office of the Armenian prime minister, Pashinyan informed the participants of the meeting about "productive discussion" with ethnic Armenian officials from Nagorno-Karabakh that took place in Yerevan on March 25 and as a result of which it was proposed to implement housing and infrastructure construction programs in Nagorno-Karabakh at the expense of both government money and the funds donated by Armenians from around the world to the

pan-Armenian Hayastan charity.

According to the report, the Armenian government suggested implementing the projects through Hayastan, with 52 billion drams coming from government money and 58 billion drams to be provided by the charity that raised the funds during the latest fundraiser last fall.

"In other words, we will have a sum total of 110 billion drams, with which we will implement housing and infrastructure construction programs. We have also made several other decisions, by which we will implement not only the provision of the roadmap that I published on November 18, 2020, that is, the restoration of normal life in Artsakh [the Armenian name for Nagorno-Karabakh], but also development programs in Artsakh in order to have sufficient, high rates of socio-economic development. I think that the decisions made yesterday can be a very solid basis for ensuring these developments," Pashinyan said, adding that today's discussions would



Nikol Pashinyan and Arayik Harutyunyan, near the Armenian flag

LETTERS

Armenia Must Do What Is Right for Its Future

To The Editor:

Here we go again.

I read with anger and interest the article in the *Mirror-Spectator*, March 6, 2021, p. 6, "United States, Turkey Warn Armenian Military Not to Meddle in Politics."

At the minimum, Armenia must demand the recall of its ambassador from Washington in order to clarify the position of the US relative to the support of Armenia. If the US continues to support the aggressive actions of Turkey relative to Armenia, then diplomatic relations between Armenia and the US must be ruptured. The US is not a loyal supporter of Armenia and rarely has been, if ever.

The US must put a bridle on its client state, Israel. Why? Israel has provided Azerbaijan with weapons of aggression--this is no secret. Why does the US not maintain parity of supplying Armenia with similar weapons? Armenia must sever diplomatic relations with Israel. As far as the US supporting Armenia's so-called road to democracy, Armenia does not need it! Nor is the US a proper example to emulate in this regard.

Armenia must pursue a stance by which the republic is protected and use any means militarily and politically to ensure this.

Walter Bandazian
Virginia

also focus on issues related to "the security environment and strategic visions regarding the future."

The need for large-scale housing construction in Nagorno-Karabakh arose after last year's six-week war with Azerbaijan in which tens of thousands of ethnic Armenians were displaced from their homes. The armed conflict also resulted in vast destruction in Stepanakert and other towns and vil-

lages.

"We already have plans to build around 4,000 houses. In the coming months we are going to develop projects for the construction of 2,000 more houses. In these projects, we always take into account our current reality, at the same time planning land allocations, providing further employment for residents, and discussing modern models of cooperation," Harutyunyan noted.

Is Armenia on Verge of a Diplomatic Blunder Which Might Derail Recognition of Genocide by Biden?

RECOGNITION, from page 1

Both times, it was stated by Turkey that the parties were negotiating and third-party involvement could endanger the process.

Today we are facing the same scenario and we are afraid the Armenian government is on the verge of falling for it a third time and playing into the hands of Turkey.

We learn from political analyst Ian Bremmer's statements on GZero Media and Twitter that White House sources have told him that this April, the Biden Administration will recognize the Armenian Genocide as conducted by the Ottoman Empire during World War I, becoming the first US president to publicly do so.

Indeed, this well-respected analyst of the Eurasia Consulting Group announced on March 22, 2021 on GZero: "But the big news is that Erdogan is about to face another diplomatic challenge, which is from the United States, as I've heard from the White House, that President Biden is going to recognize the 1915 killing of Armenians under the Ottomans' rule as a genocide."

Bremmer then delves into the history of this issue during the Obama Administration.

President Biden's recognition will complete and complement the overwhelming support of both legislative houses of the United States for recognizing the Armenian Genocide in 2019.

But at this very crucial moment, we find a hesitation by Armenia's government bordering on a form of diplomatic blunder.

The world Armenian community has to be alerted that once again the Armenian government is stepping into a trap set by the Turkish government and Armenia is bound to lose an historic opportunity.

Indeed, on March 23, 2021, the talk show host Bedros Ghazaryan on Armenian Public TV 1 interviewed Mr. Armen Grig-

oryan, Secretary of the Security Council of Armenia. To a direct question by Mr. Ghazaryan as to whether Armenia considers Turkey to be an enemy, Mr. Grigoryan answered: "If we are heading towards deblocking the region, we must introduce some changes in our approaches and they are moving in that direction."

When the talk show host rephrased the question as whether Turkey is no longer an enemy, Mr. Grigoryan's answer was, "It would be wrong to state that Turkey no longer poses a threat. However, the developments in the entire region present other prospects."

These statements coming from a most authoritative source have alarmed political circles in Armenia and many political groups have been mobilized to avert the danger.

A news item in the *Azg* newspaper of Yerevan did attract much attention at the time, but in the light of further recent developments, the situation appears even more serious. Samson Özararat, a French citizen of Armenian descent who was born and grew up in Turkey, visited Yerevan. Özararat has played the role of messenger every time the Turkish government has initiated backdoor diplomacy with Armenia.

It is anyone's guess what message Mr. Özararat carried from Yerevan to Ankara, but his appearance in Armenia must give cause for concern in all quarters in Armenia and the diaspora.

The ADL Supreme Council would like to sound the alarm and caution the Armenian authorities that the entire Armenian world is on vigil to not allow another historic catastrophe.

ADL Supreme Council
Boston

March 28, 2021

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